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Preparing Intercultural Competence for English Language Pre-service Teachers in Vietnam

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Abstract

Vietnamese English language teaching and learning has been dramatically developing and improving, especially since the Vietnamese National Foreign Language Project 2020 was founded and implemented in 2008 and then extended to 2025. The tertiary programs to train bachelors of English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) are invested to review and revise to meet with the new and highly demanded requirements of the globalisation era. This paper was to investigate if the ELTE programs provided sufficient preparation about cultural and intercultural knowledge and skills for ELTE students. A qualitative study was conducted with institutional and national policy documents and individual interviews with lecturers and administrators from ELTE programs across major parts of Vietnam. The interview data results indicated that there was significant difference in perceptions of lecturers about insufficient preparation of intercultural competence for students. The policy documents supported the findings of interview data. The study provides insights that emphasises the necessity of reviewing and revising both intended and enacted ELTE programs, which are helpful in preparing pre-service teachers to achieve the best preparation for demanding employment markets. The findings also bring attention to stakeholders who would like to contribute to the development of ELTE in particular and education in general.

Keywords: culture; English language teaching; interculture; policy; practice