Academic Globalization via Online Intercultural Exchange
- Sharing and Exchanging Ideas on Fan Tourism between University Students in Italy and Japan

Chieko NAKABASAMI
International Tourism Management, Toyo University
Bunkyo, Tokyo, 1128606, Japan

Miho MASUKO
International Tourism Management, Toyo University
Bunkyo, Tokyo, 1128606, Japan

ABSTRACT [1]

In this article, we would like to introduce a cross-cultural communication exchange between the University of Venice in Italy and our university in Japan, and we try to show how effective intercultural communication is for the processes of academic globalization. The aim of the exchange is to share ideas with presentations from students based on a theme of Fan Tourism. We incorporate Osland's model of working abroad based on the hero's journey and show the relationship between intercultural communication and Osland's model. We also show the exchange output and discuss how transnational exchange can become a force driving and accelerating academic globalization.

Keywords: Online Intercultural Exchange, Fan Tourism, Osland's Model, Transnational Exchange, Academic Globalization.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this article, we would like to introduce a cross-cultural communication exchange between the University of Venice in Italy and our university in Japan, and we try to show how effective intercultural communication is for the processes of academic globalization. We belong to the Graduate School of International Tourism Management, and since 2019, we have been collaborating with CISET, *Centro Internazionale di Studi sull'Economia Turistica* (Center for International Tourism Economics) regarding sustainable tourism research.

This academic exchange is for graduate school students at Venice University and Toyo University. The aim of the exchange is to share ideas with presentations from students of both graduate schools based on a theme of tourism management. We started the exchange last autumn, then again in June of the spring semester, and for a third time in December. This exchange of December 1 successfully achieved more than we expected. Through the exchange, we would like to show how transnational communication can work for the forces driving and accelerating academic globalization [1][2]. Especially, tourism study requires international perspectives and mutual cultural understanding between host and guest countries/regions. The best way to realize these goals is to visit the target place; however, this can be too expensive for students. Online exchange can be one promising tool. We suppose that online exchange can be one key to motivating students to go abroad in the future to deepen their intercultural communication [3][4][5].

In Section 2, we explain about Fan Tourism, which is the main subject of the exchange, and why we chose fan tourism as the subject. In Section 3, we incorporate Osland's model of working abroad based on the hero's journey and show the relationship between intercultural communication and Osland's model. In Section 4, we show the exchange output and discuss how transnational exchange can become a force driving and accelerating academic globalization. In Section 5, we conclude and describe our future work. In the Appendix, we show some pictures of online presentation exchanges on December 1, 2021.

2. FAN TOURISM

What is Fan Tourism?
Fan tourism is a travel activity in which fan tourists (participants in fan tourism) visit places for concerts or matches to support their idols or to remember scenes from movies, TV series, or novels [6][7][8][9]. The interests of fan tourists are very diverse: sports, film, TV

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drama series, animation, etc. Fan tourists also visit the birthplaces or cemeteries of artists or celebrities. From a tourist marketing perspective, fan tourism can be expected to bring large economic benefits, as fan tourists not only support their idols or remember places but also enjoy other activities, such as visiting local attractions at the destination. Lately, fan tourism has been growing increasingly popular around the world [10].

We chose fan tourism as the presentation theme because both students are studying in graduate schools of tourism studies in Italy and Japan. Their generation is especially interested in contemporary content such as media and subculture, and students are eager to know each other's content culture. In addition, thanks to fan tourism currently becoming global phenomenon, we can share and exchange ideas between fans in different countries regarding fan tourism. We think that picking up tourism studies can contribute to academic globalization, and the globalized world enables academic activities to transform in a better direction.

Fan Tourism as Intercultural Communication
We aim to realize intercultural communication through presentations on fan tourism. For students, composing the content of their presentations regarding fan tourism can be strongly linked to their cultural interest, and they will express their own cultural point of view. At the same time, the students prepare the presentation slides while considering their peers with different cultural background, so they imagine and elaborate as to how the slide content might affect their peers. Also, they want to exchange their cultural way of thinking. Such a pre-presentation process should be very important for promoting intercultural communication, and the students are expected to obtain global perspective skills naturally.

This time, student presentations were held online. This is not only due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As written in Section 1, it would be rather difficult for students to visit their peers' location due to travel expenses and geographical distance. We think that online presentation exchange can be a sustainable tool for academic globalization as well as intercultural communication regardless of the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

However, online exchange has limitations for intercultural communication from an educational perspective. It goes without saying that it would be ideal for students to visit their peers' location in reality in the future. Online exchange is thought to be a preparing phase for future real global academic exchanges. In the next section, we would like to introduce one acculturation process model and incorporate online cultural exchange into the model.

3. THE HERO'S JOURNEY OF OSLAND'S MODEL OF WORKING ABROAD

Six Parts in The Hero's Journey of Osland's Model
This model is adapted from Joseph Campbell's work on mythic heroes and Joyce Osland's own experience abroad [11]. Based on numerous interviews and observations of expatriates (anyone living in a country other than the one in which he or she was raised), Osland found many similarities between the expatriate acculturation experience and Campbell's work on mythic heroes [12]. Mythic heroes departing for adventure have had many unexpected experiences. During their journeys, they encountered many supporters and enemies; finally, they found something they were seeking before returning to their homeland. Also, although they returned safely, they may not always be happy in their homeland. Osland tried to explain multiple acculturation processes according to such a hero's journey story. Table 1 shows Osland's model corresponding to the hero's journey. Osland's model is composed of six parts: *The call to adventure, in the belly of the whale, the magical friend, the road of trials (paradoxes), ultimate boon, and return.* Osland intended to adapt the model to people working abroad; in contrast, we use the model for the academic globalization process.

Table 1. Osland's model adapted from the hero's journey, excerpted from [12], pp. 293-297.

Hero's journey part	Description
1. The call to adventure	The opportunity to go abroad and experience a new way of living in a new world.
2. In the belly of the whale	Entering an unknown culture; crossing a threshold from one's past life into a totally different life.
3. The magical friend	Regardless of mistakes one may make and challenges that one may face in this new land, eventually, one seems to find a magical friend or a cultural mentor.
4. The road of trials (paradoxes)	Even with a magical friend to serve as mentor, the hero must eventually go down his and her own road of trials. These trials must be experienced, although mentors can help during this process. Paradoxes are the seemingly contradictory but equally true ideas that emerge as one tries to mediate between two cultures.
5. Ultimate boon	Transformation of the self. Finding ways to deal with the trials of the road results in an empowered person.
6. Return	Finding that things have changed. Certain things were idealized, but they may no longer have the same elevated status.

Relationship between intercultural communication and Osland's model

We adapted an intercultural communication process in our exchange in accordance with Osland's model. As shown in Figure 1, we regard the online exchange process as In the belly of the whale, the second part of Osland's model. Metaphorically, it may be so dark in the belly of the whale that one cannot see anything; however, one must advance in search of the exit. On the way, one may touch the sides of the belly to understand what is going on. According to Osland's model, to acculturate oneself successfully in a totally different world, one should cross a threshold; in fact, crossing the threshold is made difficult by some factors, such as culturally inappropriate constraints. Based on Osland's description, we interpreted this part of *In the belly of the whale* as being the presentation phase in which students are struggling and making efforts to convey what they want to express to their peers online. Also, touching the belly of the whale can be likened to getting the reaction of online peers during the presentation. Questions and answers after the presentation are very important because students got unexpected questions from their peers and must answer considering different the cultural backgrounds.

Our online exchange can motivate the students to communicate transnationally and to explore global thinking. Online exchange can be said to play a satisfying role in place of real experience. However, we think that the online exchange should only be considered to be the phase of *In the belly of the whale*. As shown in Figure 1, online and offline parts are separated with a dotted line. After the phase of In the belly of the whale, students should make transnational experience a reality to meet the magical friends indicated in Osland's model.
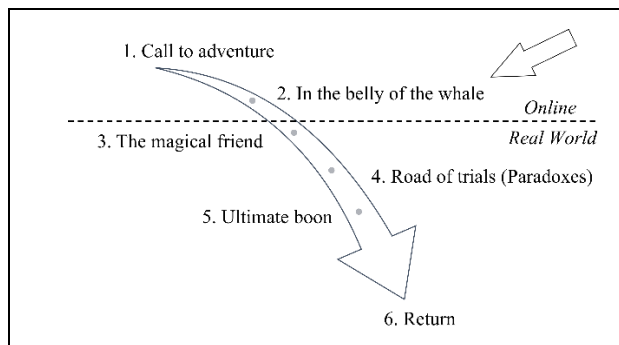

Figure 1. Osland's model with a dotted line (made by the authors based on [11])

4. TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE FORCES DRIVING AND ACCELERATING ACADEMIC GLOBALIZATION

Presentation exchange results

The exchange class featured nine presentations from each graduate school. Some presentations were made by a group and others by a single student. Student presentations were made alternately by the countries. In Table 2, we summarize the student presentations on fan tourism. In Table 2, we can find some interesting differences between the students of each side. CISET students at Venice University in Italy tend to choose TV series as presentation titles; on the other hand, Toyo University students choose animation.

Table 2. Summary of the student presentations on fan tourism

CISET students ITALY		
Title	Fan	Destination
Queen	artist	London
Gomorra	TV series	Naples
Outlander	TV series	Scotland
Curon	TV series	Curon Venosta[1]
Toyo students JAPAN		
Title	Fan	Destination
If You Are the One	animation	Hokkaido[2]
Anohana[3]	animation	Chichibu[4]
Kimi no Na wa[5]	animation	Hida[6]
Initial D	animation	Shibukawa[7]
Detective Conan	animation	Tottori[8]

[1] A small town located in South Tyrol, northern Italy, on the border with Austria and Switzerland
[2] The northernmost prefecture in Japan
[3] In English, The Flower We Saw that Day
[4] A city located in the west of Saitama Prefecture north of Tokyo
[5] In English, Your Name
[6] A city located in Gifu Prefecture, in the middle of Honshu Island, Japan
[7] A city located in the middle of Gunma Prefecture, north of Tokyo
[8] A northern prefecture located in the northwest of Honshu Island

The importance of transnational education - crossing over the belly of the whale

In Table 2, a difference can be found in the choices of fan categories between groups of students. We think that such choices should not be important; however, it is valuable to evaluate what students from each side think of this phenomenon. We expect that the students can understand some cultural differences from the presentation results. We would like to show two comments from our university students.

Student A: *I don't know Italian culture very well, so I have no knowledge about what TV series are popular in Italy. In Japan, we know that Japanese animation is well known globally, which persuaded me and my colleagues to choose animation as fan tourism. Next time, I hope we can exchange our cultures mutually. Especially, I want to talk about our histories, because knowing the history behind their culture is the best way*

to understand each other.

Student B: *I have the impression that the presentation content reflects the most well-known popular culture in each country. When we introduce the most popular culture in Japan, we will first choose animation unintentionally, as we know Japanese animation is very famous all over the world. In Italy, fans often visit the places broadcasted in TV series. On the other hand, in Japan, fans visit the places introduced in animation. In the future, I would like to discuss common problems and differences in inbound tourism both of Venice and Tokyo with CISET students because the two cities are very famous tourist places in the world.*

What we are especially interested in about their comments is that the students chose animation as fan tourism content for the reason that Japan's animation is very famous throughout the world. They again recognize their own culture and how popular it is in culturally different countries. They are proud of their own culture and want to show it to others; at the same time, they seem to want to understand their peers' culture.

Excerpted from [12], pp. 296:
Osland notes that her interviewees felt that this was the most significant of the paradoxes they faced. A hero tends to recreate the identity in very unique ways even as she or he is more aware and accepting of different identities.

The above quote expresses something a bit different from our case on the point of working abroad, but we would like to apply them to our case. Through online presentation exchange, the students are aware of their own culture, and at the same time, we hope the students will accept different cultures more willingly.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we introduced a presentation exchange as a cross-cultural communication project between the University of Venice in Italy and our university, and we showed how effective intercultural communication is for academic globalization processes. Our academic exchange is related to the second part of Osland's model, *In the belly of the whale*. Currently, we have yet to try many things with our exchange project. We should try more exchange sessions, not only related to fan tourism, but also including more diverse themes. Moreover, choosing themes on tourism studies can be one of the most promising directions, as the field of tourism studies has strong potential for intercultural communication. As travelers, people around the world are moving transnationally and exchanging local host culture and their own. Finding suitable themes in tourism studies can give students a more positive outlook on intercultural communication and academic globalization.

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8. APPENDIX: SOME PICTURES OF ONLINE PRESENTATIONS