Prospective Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural Competence:

A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Preparing prospective teachers for classroom diversity has gained importance as schools have become a place where pupils, teachers, staffs, and parents from diverse cultural backgrounds interact with each other daily. Intercultural competence has become crucial for teachers in facilitating learning of pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds as well as to prepare all pupils for living and working in a global society. However, while the demand for such competence has heightened, the concept of teachers' intercultural competence does not seem to be fully explored yet. Moreover, most research about prospective teachers' intercultural competence appears to focus more on developing and evaluating prospective teachers' intercultural competence from a normative viewpoint, while less is known about how the prospective teachers perceive and understand such competence. To address this gap, this thesis presents a study of prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence explored among seven student teachers at a five-year integrated master program in teacher education at the University of Oslo. Through semi-structured interviews, the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence were analyzed in relation to their personal experiences and beliefs. Moreover, this study paid attention to prospective teachers' teaching subjects as important factors, which make a difference in their experience in the teacher education program, thus, in their perceptions.

As an analytical framework, the relational model was created and used to understand the relationship between the participants' perceptions, beliefs, and personal experiences including disciplinary characteristics as factors which influence prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence. The model included three major components of intercultural competence, namely knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) by referring to Deardorff's (2004, 2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence. Also, the concepts of prospective teachers' beliefs, their personal experiences, as well as disciplinary characteristics were adopted by referring to relevant literatures.

Through thematic analysis, the interview data was analyzed first, by looking at the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence, especially KSAs components. Second,

the relationship between their perceptions and their personal experiences were examined by focusing on three types of experiences: experiences as a pupil; cross-cultural experiences; and experiences in the teacher education program and practicums. Lastly, the differences in their perceptions were investigated by looking at how the participants discussed intercultural competence in relation to their teaching subject areas.

The findings of this study revealed that while the teachers' intercultural competence was identified as being important by the participants, they also expressed their unfamiliarity with the topic as well as uncertainty of applying the competence in their teaching. The participants also recognized necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes of intercultural competence from teachers' perspectives. Moreover, two teacher-specific components of intercultural competence were recognized, namely knowledge of pupils and pedagogical skills. The relationship between their perceptions of intercultural competence and their personal experiences was observed as they used such experiences to justify their ideas of intercultural competence. Finally, differences were found in the participants' perceptions in relation to the application of intercultural competence within their teaching subject field.

While the participants have recognized important aspects of teachers' intercultural competence, these findings also showed that the application of intercultural competence in their teaching was rather unclear, especially for those who are specializing in natural science subjects. Moreover, the findings partly supported but also brought some other components of intercultural competence forward compared with Deardorff's (2004, 2006) model, that seem especially relevant for prospective teachers' understanding of intercultural competence. Lastly, their experiences in the teacher education program, especially experiences during practicums seemed to influence directly on their perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence.

The findings of this study suggest for further research on teachers' intercultural competence based on their teaching subjects. At the same time, it suggests teacher education programs to pay more attention to the various pre-understanding of intercultural competence that their students have as a basis for more systematic education on this topic.

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1 Introduction

Preparing children for the world where a wide range of cultures intermingle closely has long been a global concern. There is an increasing interest in intercultural or multicultural education often aiming to "include ethnic minorities and transnational identities in the community of nation" (Nordgren & Johansson, 2015, p.2). Indeed, schools have become a place where an increasing number of pupils from various cultural backgrounds gather and learn together. Thus, fostering pupils' sense of belonging in a multicultural society as well as facilitating their capacity to "recognize, interact with, and build upon cultural difference" (Smolcic & Katunich, 2017, p49) through education seems to be crucial. This is no exception in Norway, where a growing immigrant population appears to have contributed to a growth in ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity in Norwegian society (Garthus-Niegel et al., 2016; Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The Official Norwegian Report 'The School of the Future' (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015) emphasized fostering pupils' linguistic skills and understanding of different regions and cultures as important approaches that prepare pupils for a more international world.

To achieve these goals, which aim to prepare pupils for living and working in a multicultural society, requires teachers who are interculturally competent themselves. Indeed, training teachers to be able to effectively engage learners from various cultural backgrounds is one of the biggest challenges facing teacher educators today (DeJaeghere & Zhang, 2008; Gay, 2018; Lucas et al., 2008; Morrison et al., 2008; Smolcic & Katunich, 2017). However, while there is much interest in developing and evaluating prospective teachers' intercultural competence, their perceptions of such competence is often overlooked. Prospective teachers are in a critical transition to become a teacher (Goodwin, 2010), and this implies that their beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence are likely to affect their teaching practice in the future (Beijaard et al., 2004). Thus, understanding their perceptions of intercultural competence will be a useful insight towards helping their development of such competence, and will contribute to the knowledge of teachers' intercultural competence. This thesis will aim to fill this gap by examining prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence in relation to their personal experiences and beliefs.

In order to explore prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence, this study employed an analytical framework which combined concepts and categories from different theories. First, Deardorff's (2004, 2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence was used to identify and categorize main components of intercultural competence: knowledge; skills; and attitudes (KSAs). Next, this study focused on prospective teachers' personal experiences and beliefs (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Goodman, 1988b; Richardson, 2003) as possible sources of their perceptions of intercultural competence. The relational model was constructed to bring these perspectives together and address the relationship between prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence, their beliefs of such competence, and their personal experiences. Lastly, as an important factor which may create a difference in prospective teachers' perceptions, their teaching subject specialization was examined by accounting for the way disciplinary characteristics (Becher, 1987) may matter for prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence.

In the following section, a brief literature review in the field of intercultural competence will be presented including the definition of intercultural competence as well as (prospective) teachers' perceptions of classroom diversity and intercultural competence. This review will serve to frame and justify the focus of the current study, while more insights from relevant research will be included in chapter 2 in connection with the theoretical concepts and perspectives employed in this thesis.

1.1   An Overview of Intercultural Competence

1.1.1   The definition of intercultural competence

Intercultural competence has long been explored in various research fields such as sociology, anthropology, education, and communication (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017). Because of the application of intercultural competence in multiple disciplines, there seem to be varied and nuanced understandings of the concept. In addition, other similar terms such as intercultural sensitivity, intercultural communicative competence, and intercultural effectiveness are used interchangeably in literature (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Bradford et al., 1998; Chen & Starosta, 2000). However, while the complexity in

defining intercultural competence is notable, many scholars have insisted the importance of having a clear definition. Deardorff (2006) published the first document which presented the definition and components that were agreed on by institutional administrators of internationalization strategies and a panel of nationally (the U.S.) and internationally known scholars. Through a questionnaire completed by the institutional administrators and a Delphi method which was used to develop consensus among the panel of scholars, the author reached a conclusion that the most preferred definition of intercultural competence among the intercultural experts was "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2004, p.194). The definition further explains effectiveness as "the ability to achieve one's goals in a particular exchange" and appropriateness as "the ability to do so in a manner that is acceptable to the other person" (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017, p.9)

In the current study, the definition above will be used as a guiding description. Since this study will not aim to measure prospective teachers' intercultural competence but rather to understand their perceptions of such competence, and how it relates to their personal experiences, the definition will be helpful in learning the concept of intercultural competence rather than being used as an indicator or a criterion of such competence.

The next section will summarize four empirical studies which investigated (prospective) teachers' perceptions of classroom diversity and intercultural competence.

1.1.2 Prospective teachers' perceptions of diversity

In order to examine the intercultural competence of prospective teachers and ways to prepare them for classroom diversity, Guo et al. (2009) conducted a critical incident study with 33 Canadian pre-service teachers. Through questionnaires and focus groups, the study found that many participants understood intercultural competence as learning about the differences of 'others' rather than learning about themselves and their own roles in diverse classrooms. Similarly, most of the participants recognized diversity as people who were not from Canada. When it comes to classroom diversity, there were multiple understandings of diversity among the participants. Some of the them recognized

diversity based on pupils' skin colors or other visible differences while some understood diversity more comprehensively (pupils' racial/ethnic diversity, socio-economic diversity, physical/mental diversity, etc.). The study revealed different degrees of prospective teachers' understandings of diversity.

Another study conducted by Paine (1990) investigated prospective teachers' orientations towards diversity through questionnaires and interviews with 233 prospective teachers in the U.S. The findings showed that most of these student teachers viewed diversity as 'individual differences' (e.g. individual traits such as shy, smart, thin, fat) and, to a lesser extent as 'categorical differences' (e.g. social class, race, gender). Through the study, the author pointed out that prospective teachers tend to view diversity among pupils as static personal characteristics rather than as a concept which is involved in a larger, dynamic social context, namely 'contextual difference'.

Both studies above showed multiple understandings of prospective teachers' perceptions of diversity among pupils. Also, the studies revealed that prospective teachers tend to recognize pupils' diversity superficially rather than viewing it as differences embedded in a dynamic social context. Although the current study does not aim to examine prospective teachers' perceptions of diversity, teachers' intercultural competence and classroom diversity are often interrelated as teachers' intercultural competence responds to cultural diversity in the classroom to develop meaningful learning experiences for all pupils (Smolcic & Katunich, 2017). Thus, the findings of these studies will be helpful for the analysis in the current study, which aims to examine prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence.

1.1.3 (Prospective) teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence

Jokikokko (2005) examined teachers' conceptions of diversity and intercultural competence through the phenomenographic research with 20 newly qualified teachers and 5 people working in educational dominants in Finland. The research found that their conceptions of intercultural competence formed three different orientations which were: ethical orientation; efficiency orientation and; pedagogical orientation. Most participants viewed intercultural competence as ethical orientation which refers to teachers' ethical

deliberations in their actions and decision making in the classroom. This involves teachers' attitudes such as openness, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity, in addition to their ability to act with care, empathy, courage, and hope. Intercultural competence as efficiency orientation involves teacher's ability to "cope with different tasks in various roles and situations" (p.77). Effective organizational skills and ability to handle many issues at the same time were discussed by the participants. Although it gained little attention by the participants, language and communication skills were discussed as important in effectively communicating with pupils and their family members who are from culturally diverse backgrounds. Lastly, intercultural competence as pedagogical orientation was described as "how to encounter students and other people in school environments in order to encourage diverse students' learning" (p.78). The participants recognized the importance of gaining knowledge of intercultural, pedagogical skills. Also, the ability to differentiate or individualize students' learning as well as an ability to interact with students' parents appropriately were recognized. From the findings, the author discussed that the participants' conceptions of intercultural competence were less related to specific skills and knowledge that can be used in an intercultural environment. Rather, it was perceived as a holistic approach to issues or as a philosophy which "guides a person's thinking and behavior" (p.80).

Czura (2016) investigated prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and its use in second language (L2) classrooms. The study also tried to examine whether their opinions were influenced by their major field of study. The questionnaires with 162 pre-service English teachers in Poland found that the majority of the participants viewed the concept as "the ability to communicate in cross-cultural situations with a variety of speakers" (p.93) and appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes as key to the success of intercultural communication. Even though such perceptions seemed to follow some widely known definitions and models of ICC, the author pointed out that the participants failed to integrate them into their teaching techniques, which could help to facilitate interculturality at school. Furthermore, the author found that the participants' understanding of ICC and its role in the language classroom slightly differed depending on their field of study. For instance, English major pre-service teachers and German major pre-service teachers (English as their minor

teaching subject) seemed to emphasize "communicative, attitudinal and social aspects of ICC" (p.95) while history major pre-service teachers (English as their minor teaching subject) highlighted the "knowledge-oriented objectives of culture teaching" (p.93) including history, geography, literature and arts of the target language culture. The study suggested that prospective teachers' perceptions of ICC and its use in the classroom are affected by their academic background.

The studies revealed that teachers' intercultural competence was perceive broadly, rather than focusing on specific skills and knowledge used in their teaching. The findings of the studies will help to understand prospective teachers' perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence in the current study by comparing with the results of these studies. Furthermore, Czura (2016) found prospective teachers' perceptions of ICC can be affected by their academic background. This finding supports the idea of the variations in prospective teachers' perceptions are influenced by their teaching subjects.

1.2 Research Questions and Design of the Current Study

While the literatures presented above help to learn what is already known within the field of the current study, there still appears to be a lack of studies that examine the components and meanings of intercultural competence in educational settings (Smolcic & Katunich, 2017). Moreover, as already mentioned, most literatures about prospective teachers' intercultural competence seem to focus more on development and evaluation of their competence, rather than how they perceive teachers' intercultural competence and its components. In order to fill this gap, the present study will try to investigate prospective teachers' perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence through the following research questions:

1.) How do prospective teachers perceive intercultural competence?

2.) How are their perceptions related to their personal experiences?

3.) Are there differences in their perceptions of intercultural competence related to different teaching subject areas?

Through semi-structured interviews, which allow to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives, this study explored perceptions of seven prospective teachers in the teacher education program at the University of Oslo in Norway. The participants were invited to reflect on their thoughts about teachers' intercultural competence and the application of such competence into their teaching as well as their related personal experiences. Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of interview data by looking at the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence and three major components: knowledge; skills; and attitudes (KSAs). Also, the relationship between their perceptions and personal life experiences were examined by focusing on three types of experiences: experiences as a pupil; cross-cultural experiences; and experiences in the teacher education program and practicums. Lastly, the differences in their perceptions were investigated by looking at how the participants discussed intercultural competence within their teaching subject areas.

By exploring prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence for teachers, this study aims to contribute our knowledge about such competence so that teacher education programs can effectively help prospective teachers to develop their intercultural competence.

1.3   Thesis Outline

In chapter 2, the analytical framework used to analyze the data in the current study will be presented along with literature reviews of relevant concepts. First, Deardorff's (2004, 2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence will be introduced to identify and categorize the basic elements of intercultural competence. To accommodate this model to the current study, three main components of intercultural competence: knowledge; skills; and attitudes (KSAs) were employed from the model. Second, the chapter will discuss prospective teachers' beliefs as well as their personal experiences as important sources of their perceptions by referring to related literatures. Also, prospective teachers' teaching subject specialization will be discussed to examine whether such specialization influences their experience in the teacher education program and their perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence by looking at the disciplinary

characteristics. Finally, the relational model will be presented to describe the relationships of prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence, their beliefs of such competence, and their personal experiences.

Chapter 3 will present the research design and methodology used to examine the research questions in the study. The chapter will include study design and methods for data collection, research context, development of interview guide, participants recruitment, conduct of the interview, transcribing and analysis, ethical consideration, trustworthiness, and limitation of the research.

Chapter 4 will present the analysis of the data obtained through the selected methodology and its findings. It will begin with the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence and necessarily knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs). The participants' personal experiences and their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence will be examined with the relational model presented in chapter 3. Lastly, the participants' perceptions will be compared by looking at their teaching subject specialization and disciplinary characteristics.

Finally, chapter 5 will discuss the findings of the study. The chapter will also give reflections and implications to summarize the current study.

2 Analytical Framework

In this section, I will present theoretical concepts and perspectives that are used in this study to examine the research questions: 1.) How do prospective teachers perceive intercultural competence?; 2.) How are their perceptions related to their personal experiences?; and 3.) Are there differences in their perceptions of intercultural competence related to different teaching subject areas?

I will take two approaches to examine the questions above. First, to present current knowledge of intercultural competence and its components, Deardorff's (2004, 2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence will be introduced. The model is useful to learn what elements are included in intercultural competence so that it can be applied to this study. To accommodate Deardorff's pyramid model to the current research, I will employ three main components of intercultural competence: knowledge; skills; and attitudes (KSAs) from the model. The KSAs will be used for the analysis of prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence in the current study.

Second, this study will focus on prospective teachers' personal experiences and beliefs as possible sources of their perceptions of intercultural competence. (Prospective) teachers' belief system as well as their personal experiences will be examined by reviewing relevant literatures. Furthermore, by assuming that prospective teachers' teaching subject specialization creates a difference in their experience in the teacher education program, disciplinary characteristics will be investigated. Finally, as a summary of the second approach, I will present a relational model of prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence, their beliefs of such competence, and their personal experiences including teaching subject specialization as a factor which might influences their experience in the teacher education program. The model will be used for the analysis along with KSAs in this study.

2.1 The Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

As introduced in chapter 1, the current study will use Deardorff's definition of intercultural competence: "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in

intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2004, p.194) as a guiding description. Furthermore, the study will use Deardorff's (2004, 2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence to learn the elements of such competence (See Figure1). The pyramid model presents a normative construct which describes the elements of one's intercultural competence as well as how such competence can ideally develop from a personal level to an interpersonal level. Moreover, it places attitudes at the bottom of the pyramid, regarding it as a prerequisite to knowledge acquisition as well as skills (Cushner & Mahon, 2009).

The attitude domain contains *respect*, *openness*, and *curiosity and discovery*. *Respect* corresponds to valuing all cultures, while *openness* indicates a positive approach towards other cultures and adaptation to new situations. *Curiosity* and *discovery* illustrate one's ability to tolerate cultural ambiguity and uncertainty. People with these attitudes tend to not be afraid of stepping outside of their comfort zone and are resistant to stress, which comes from adapting themselves to new cultures.
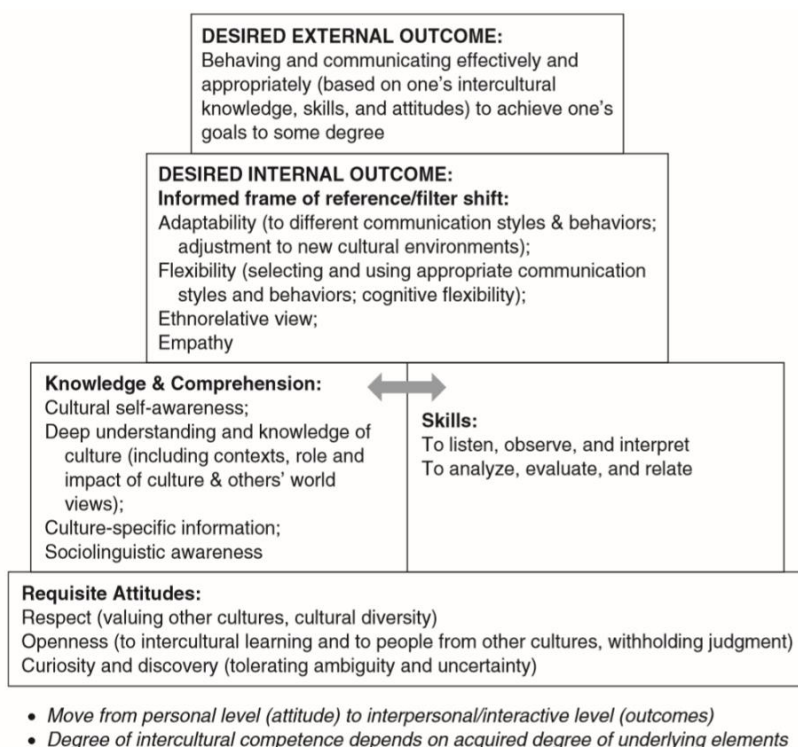
Figure 1 Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

Source: Deardorff (2006, p.254)

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The knowledge domain contains *cultural self-awareness, deep understanding and knowledge of culture, culture-specific knowledge, and sociolinguistic awareness.* *Cultural self-awareness* illustrates the importance of being aware of one's own culture as well as others. Understanding how one's culture affects his/her perspective or worldviews is critical (Deardorff, 2006). *Deep understanding and knowledge of culture,* as well as *culture-specific information,* talk about one's level of understanding and knowledge of other cultures, including cultural contexts, roles, impacts and worldviews. *Sociolinguistic awareness* considers linguistic competence as significant (Byram, 1997, p. 34) for communication across cultural divides. The appropriate and effective use of both verbal and nonverbal language is also highlighted.

The skills domain is comprised of *listen*, *observe*, and *interpret,* as well as *analyze*, *evaluate*, and *relate*. These skills are regarded as tools to acquire and process knowledge, therefore, the two-headed arrow indicates their relations in the model.

The model suggests that the personal attributes described above need to be acquired before individuals can achieve their internal as well as external outcome (Cushner & Mahon, 2009). Internal outcomes include one's shift in frame of reference, which enhances external outcomes that involve effectiveness and appropriation in intercultural communication and interaction. While the model has been widely used to investigate how (prospective) teachers develop intercultural competence and to assess the way teacher education programs enhance this development, it can also be used more descriptively for understanding how intercultural competence is conceptualized along with the components of the competence. Thus, the current study, which aims to understand prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence will employ the components of personal attributes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) from the pyramid model to focus on student teachers' perceptions of these key elements of teachers' intercultural competence. The three components will be further discussed in the following section.

2.2   Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes in Intercultural Competence

Competence is normally described as an integrated body of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Stoof et al., 2007). Similarly, Deardorff (2004, 2006) explored the components of knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) of intercultural competence in the pyramid model as ingredients for one's desired outcomes of intercultural competence (See Figure 1). Using Deardorff's model of intercultural competence, this study will focus on these three components of intercultural competence by creating the table below.

Intercultural Competence		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Attitudes**
Cultural self-awareness; Deep understanding and knowledge of culture; Sociolinguistic awareness	To listen, observe, and interpret; To analyze, eveluate, and relate	Respect; Openness; Curiosity and discovery

Table 1 KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes) for Intercultural Competence

Based on Deardorff (2004, 2006)

The table depicts these KSAs components, which can be considered as key personal attributes of one's intercultural competence. In each component, there are sub-components which were described in detail in the previous section. In the current study, however, even though the KSAs model includes specific components, they will not be regarded as criteria or categories but rather as possible components that prospective teachers might emphasize as important. Again, the purpose of the present study is not to assess prospective teachers' intercultural competence but to understand their perceptions of intercultural competence for teachers, thus, it can be said that the presented KSAs

provide a spectrum of possible components of intercultural competence which will be advantageous for the analysis in this study.

In the next section, I will discuss the role of prospective teachers' belief systems which seem to influence their perceptions of intercultural competence.

2.3 Prospective Teachers' Beliefs of Intercultural Competence

The current study assumes that prospective teachers' beliefs of intercultural competence affect their perceptions towards intercultural competence. This section will examine (prospective) teachers' belief systems as well as their personal experiences as the main sources of their beliefs. In the literature, Pajares (1992) described perceptions as beliefs in disguise. Indeed, these terms, as well as other similar terms such as images, values, worldviews, and ideology are often used interchangeably. However, this study will differentiate the terms by defining beliefs as "the feeling of being certain that something exists or is true" (Cambridge English Dictionary, n.d.) and perceptions as "awareness of the elements of environment through physical sensation" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). While beliefs are based on one's confidence about something, perceptions indicate the way of noticing and understanding something through the senses. This study will assume prospective teachers' beliefs of intercultural competence as the foundation of their ways of seeing, namely, their perceptions. Therefore, it seems important to learn what beliefs are and where beliefs come from.

The following part will briefly describe how people's beliefs are understood in the literature. This will be followed by a discussion about the sources of prospective teachers' beliefs.

2.3.1 Beliefs

Despite their complex nature, beliefs are widely understood as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson, 2003, p.2) among researchers in various fields of philosophy, anthropology,

and social psychology, to name a few. People's beliefs are normally characterized by having cognitive content (implying it is about something perceived, learned, or discovered) that includes some affective loadings, described as some kind of "approval, endorsement, or commitment – conscious or otherwise" (Sanger, 2017, p.3). Furthermore, beliefs are known to form structures or networks where varying beliefs are related to or are influencing, each other in a 'psychological ecosystem' (Rokeach, 1968) where some beliefs are stronger than others and more resistant to change. In addition, Green (1971) suggested that beliefs formulate clusters within belief systems, with conflicting beliefs being kept in different clusters, which do not usually 'cross-fertilize'. Therefore, it is possible that people hold 'incompatible' or 'inconsistent' beliefs.

These notions teach us how the construction of one's belief system can be complicated or messy (Pajares, 1992) and does not always make clear sense. Due to this complex nature of people's beliefs, the link between people's beliefs and their actions is not always a one-way street, but rather, it is understood that beliefs act as a 'guide' or a 'filter' for people's cognitive/behavioral action (Richardson, 2003). Similarly, Fives and Buehl (2012) described three functions of one's beliefs: "filters for interpretation; frames for defining problems; and guides or standards for action" (p. 478).

As many studies suggest (Levin & He, 2008; Pajares, 1992), it seems that people's beliefs do indeed influence how they process information and react to situations even though people are not often conscious of their beliefs. Lastly, although beliefs are considered to be shaped by various factors, people's personal experiences are known to be one of the major sources of beliefs (Levin & He, 2008; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996, 2003) which will be discussed further in the next section.

2.3.2 The Sources of Prospective Teacher's Beliefs

It is crucial to understand the sources of belief in order to account for what forms prospective teachers' beliefs. It is widely considered that people's beliefs have a strong relationship with their personal experiences (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Goodman, 1988a; Richardson, 1996, 2003). When it comes to prospective teachers, for example, their pedagogical beliefs are often influenced by their memorable experiences as a pupil

(Calderhead & Robson, 1991). Similarly, in their study with 84 preservice teachers, Levin and He (2008) found three major sources of their pedagogical beliefs: "their family background and personal experiences as K-12 students; their teacher education coursework including exposure to various readings, theories, and professors' ideas; and their experiences observing and practicing in classrooms during their teacher education program" (p.62).

In terms of prospective teachers' beliefs about cultural diversity, Pohan (1996) discovered a strong relationship between their beliefs and their previous cross-cultural experiences. She found students who had more multicultural life experiences showed more positive attitudes toward cultural diversity than those who did not. It seems that prospective teachers' personal experiences do indeed affect their pedagogical beliefs as well as beliefs of cultural diversity.

Another important factor to consider when examining sources of prospective teachers' beliefs is that these beliefs are often influenced by context and situations. Levin (2015) described the relationships between teachers' beliefs and contexts that they are involved in. She described these two as inseparable in such a way that teachers' beliefs and practices heavily depend on their social, political, and economic situations as well as their school context. In terms of (prospective) teachers' beliefs in cultural diversity, Gay (2015) explained that teachers' beliefs towards cultural diversity can be biased by simply living in the society that they have lived in for their entire lives. Furthermore, those (prospective) teachers who come from a monocultural background are thought to have a less positive attitude toward cultural diversity, regardless of their ethnic and racial identities (Pohan, 1996). In sum, it seems important to look at the context of prospective teachers' personal experiences to understand what forms their beliefs of intercultural competence.

Utilizing the notions presented so far, this study will be analyzing the data, keeping the following three possible sources of prospective teachers' beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence: (a) experiences as a pupil; (b) cross-cultural experiences and; (c) experiences in the teacher education program and practicums. It should be noted, however, that there can be overlap between cross-cultural experiences and experiences as

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a pupil/experiences in the teacher education program and practicums. For example, one can have cross-cultural experiences as a pupil (e.g. having classmates form different cultural backgrounds) or in the teacher education program or through practicums. For this reason, cross-cultural experiences in this study will focus mainly on 'travel' (e.g. moving, vacationing, and other experiences abroad) (Smith et al., 1997, p.54).

I will briefly summarize these types of experience below.

Experiences as A Pupil

Prospective teachers' experiences as a pupil is considered as one of the most influential sources of their pedagogical beliefs (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Goodman, 1988a; Richardson, 1996, 2003). Since prospective teachers have a considerable amount of schooling experiences as pupils, they tend to already hold strong images of teaching and learning when entering a teacher education program. Lortie (1975) called this phenomenon, 'apprenticeship of observation', describing prospective teachers as having internalized their teachers' beliefs, values, and practices through their experiences as a pupil (Anderson & Piazza, 1996; Richardson, 2003; Stuart & Thurlow, 2000). Furthermore, a study which compared the content and sources of pedagogical beliefs of American and Chinese prospective teachers (He et al., 2011) found that, for both American and Chinese prospective teachers, their learning experiences as K-12 students had the most influence on their pedagogical beliefs about "who teachers are, what teaching is, what the classroom environment is like, what facilitates student learning, about students and student learning, and about the relationship between teaching and learning" (p.163).

Richardson (2003) pointed out that strong beliefs may be challenged or somehow changed during their time in a teacher education program, where prospective teachers learn and gain experience from a teacher's perspective, in contrast to their time as pupils. However, he and other researchers still claim that the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers gained through their experiences as pupils are normally resistant to change as beliefs are gained over a longer period of time (Brousseau et al., 1988; Feiman-Nemser, 1983) in comparison to the length of time that they participate in a teacher education

program.

Cross-cultural Experiences

As mentioned above, teachers' cross-cultural experiences seem to influence their beliefs about cultural diversity in the classroom. Cross-cultural or intercultural experience is not necessarily limited to overseas experiences but can also include experiences that prospective teachers gain by subjectively interacting or collaborating with cultural others no matter where they are. For instance, He et al. (2017) pointed out that study abroad programs can indeed give teachers opportunities to develop their teaching beliefs. However, simply being abroad is not sufficient enough to prepare them to incorporate cross-cultural learning opportunities into their teaching. "Intentional and meaningful integration of cultural experiences," (p.155) seems to be key in influencing prospective teachers' pedagogical beliefs. As for study abroad experiences, Sumka (1999) and Wilson and Flournoy (2007) found that studying abroad can help students gain a deeper understanding of different cultures and to develop a "greater awareness of different ways of seeing and reflecting on issues, which assist in challenging students' existing views, beliefs and assumptions" (Kissock & Richardson, 2010, p.89).

Garmon (2005) pointed out that intercultural experiences can have both a positive and negative influence on students' intercultural perceptions. He found that students who had positive perceptions toward different cultures had experienced meaningful and varied personal interactions with cultural others (Pattnaik,1997). Many researchers seemed to emphasize the content of cross-cultural experiences and how prospective teachers approached these experiences as being key to their personal and professional development.

Experiences in The Teacher Education Program and Practicums

Even though experiences as a pupil are said to play a significant part in prospective teachers' pedagogical beliefs, it seems that experiences in the teacher

education programs and practicums also influence their beliefs of classroom instructions, management, about the qualities of a good teacher (Levin & He, 2008).

Both course work in the program and school practices seem to be important experiences that help in the construction of prospective teachers' pedagogical beliefs. When it comes to prospective teachers' practicums, appropriate mentoring and supervision, as well as opportunities to critically reflect on such experiences are thought to be key factors (Bean & Zulich, 1992; Brousseau et al., 1988; Gay, 2015; Richards et al., 1987). Furthermore, Groulx (2001) found that prospective teachers who had a practicum in a more homogeneous setting did not demonstrate changes in their attitudes when compared to the ones who were involved in a more urban and diverse school setting. Similarly, Guo et al. (2009) pointed out that prospective teachers' learning experience can be influenced greatly by the interests of individual instructors as well as by the schools in which they are placed for their practicum. In the current study, this provide insight into how prospective teachers' teaching subject(s) can also influence their experiences in the teacher education programs due to varying disciplinary characteristics in each subject domain. The disciplinary characteristics will be discussed in the following part.

2.7   Disciplinary Characteristics

Now, I will turn to prospective teachers' teaching subject specialization and disciplinary characteristics which this study assumes are important factors that create a difference in their experiences in the teacher education programs as well as their perceptions of intercultural competence for teachers. In this section, the disciplinary characteristics will be discussed in relation to the current study whose participants are prospective teachers specializing in different teaching subject areas.

Clark (1983) described discipline as a "specialized form of organization which specialize by subject, that is, by knowledge domain" (p. 29). Similarly, Bailey (1977) compared discipline to a 'tribe' which shares a common culture in its own community. As these notions imply the uniqueness of each discipline, it seems wise to take disciplinary characteristics into account when examining prospective teachers who are specializing in different teaching subject(s).

Like most disciplines do, teacher education has what Becher (1994) called, 'sub-disciplinary specialisms', which are based on students' teaching subjects (e.g. mathematics, history, language) and levels of teaching (e.g. elementary school, lower- and upper-secondary school, high school). Becher (1994) mentioned that understanding the characteristics of these sub-specialisms is essential in order to appreciate not only their parent disciplines, but also the phenomena of intellectual change and development. This notion applies to my research, which aims to examine the perceptions of students in the teacher education program who have different main teaching subject areas, namely history, language, biology, and physics.

These four subject areas can be divided into two disciplinary groups: humanities (history and language) and natural sciences (biology and physics). These two disciplinary groups are so different that they are almost thought to be opposites of each other. As table 2 shows, for example, the nature of knowledge in humanities disciplines are characterized as "reiterative and holistic, concerned with particulars, qualities, and complication" (Becher, 1987, p.154). In natural science, on the other hand, knowledge is more "cumulative and atomistic, concerned with universals, quantities, and simplification". Furthermore, disciplines in humanities often aim for "understanding and interpretation", while disciplines in the natural science aim for discovery and explanation. It can be said, therefore, that comparing students' perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence in these subject areas which vary in character, will be fruitful.

In terms of intercultural education and competence, one can assume that humanities disciplines are easier to relate to cultural issues or phenomena as these concern particulars within an interpretive frame. Thus, it can be easier for these disciplines to facilitate pupils' intercultural competence (Nordgren & Johansson, 2015) than natural science disciplines which is more concerned with universals, quantities, and simplification in order to discover or explain nature of the universe.

Disciplinary grouping	Nature of knowledge
Natural Sciences	Cumulative; atomistic; concerned with universals, quantities, simplification; resulting in discovery/explanation
Humanities	Reiterative; holistic; concerned with particulars, qualities, complication; resulting in understanding/interpretation

Table 2 Nature of Knowledge by Disciplinary Grouping Source: Becher (1987, p.154)

This study assumes that prospective teachers who are specializing in these four subject areas as their main teaching subject, have different experiences in the teacher education programs and practicums due to the disciplinary characteristics discussed above, and thus, develop their beliefs towards teachers' intercultural competence in different ways.

2.8   Analytical Framework for the Current Study

Finally, I will briefly summarize this chapter by describing how this study will utilize the concepts and analytical frameworks in the analysis of the current study. First, KSAs components which were employed from Deardorff's (2004, 2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence will be used as a spectrum of components that prospective teachers might perceive as important. Even though the model is about intercultural competence in general, the participants will reflect on intercultural competence specifically for teachers based on KSAs. Furthermore, based on the analysis of the data from interviews, an adjusted model of KSAs components will be suggested in chapter 4.

To deepen the understanding of prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence, their personal experiences will be taken into account based on the assumption that their personal experiences are the sources of their beliefs which influence their perceptions. This study will try to examine the relationship between prospective

teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and personal experiences by asking the participants to reflect on teachers' intercultural competences as well as three types of their personal experiences: (a) experiences as a pupil; (b) cross-cultural experiences; and (c) experiences in the teacher education program and practicums. These personal experiences are considered as possible sources of prospective teachers' beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence, thus, influencing their perceptions. Moreover, this study will consider prospective teachers' teaching subject specialization as having an influence on their experiences in the teacher education programs due to differences in focus and disciplinary characteristics.

Finally, the analytical framework for this study is summarized in Figure 2 below, which presents a relational model of prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence and how these relate to their beliefs and personal experiences.
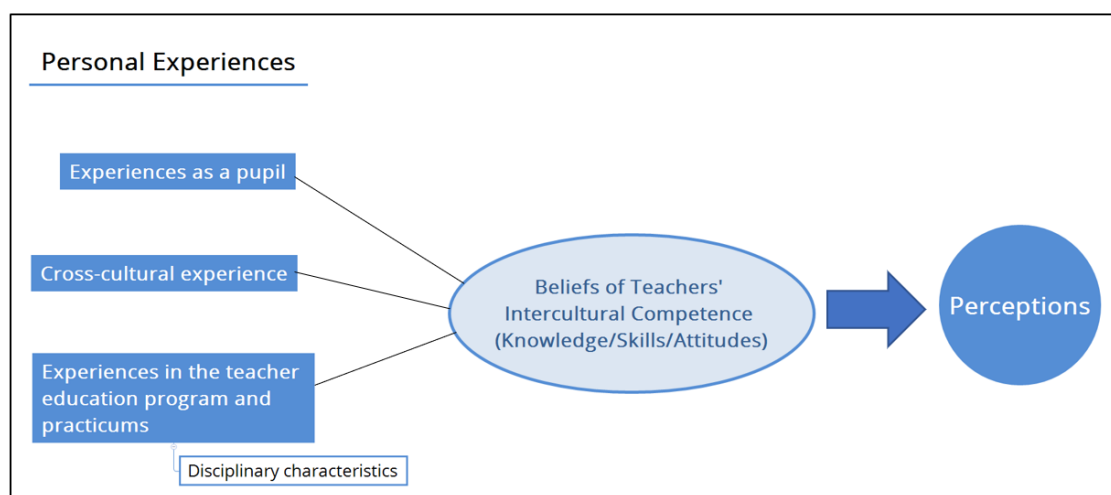
Figure 2 Relational Model

The left side of the model describes the three types of experiences which are thought to be the main sources of prospective teachers' beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence which is depicted in the center. Also, as described previously, this study assumes disciplinary characteristics affects prospective teachers' experiences in the teacher education program and practicums. In terms of beliefs of intercultural competence, the study also focuses on the three components of intercultural competence: knowledge; skills; and attitudes (KSAs). Such beliefs are assumed to be the root of one's way of thinking, namely perceptions. Therefore, beliefs are thought to influence how prospective

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teachers perceive intercultural competence for teachers, as the blue arrow indicates. This model depicts the relationship of prospective teachers' personal experiences, their beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence, and their perceptions. It considers their personal experiences as a main source of their beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence, which influence their perceptions. Normally, just paying attention to people's perceptions does not reveal where the perceptions come from. The current study will try to explore the relationships of prospective teachers' perceptions, their beliefs, and personal experiences in order to investigate how their perceptions of intercultural competence are related to their personal experiences.

By using the relational model in addition to KSAs, this study will aim to examine prospective teachers' perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence and how their perceptions are related to their personal experiences including disciplinary characteristics as an important factor which affects their experiences in the teacher education program.

3   Methodology

When planning a design for a research study, it is crucial to select a research design and method that can bring out the most relevant data for the purpose of the study and its research questions. In this chapter, I will describe the research methods used in the current study including study design and methods for data collection, research context, development of interview guide, participants, conduct of the interview, transcribing and analysis, ethical consideration, trustworthiness and limitation of the research.

3.1   Study Design and Methods for Data Collection

Qualitative methods are considered as suitable with the current study since it is an exploratory case study which seeks to know more about prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence for teachers. The main data collection method used in the study is semi-structured interviews. Its "relatively unstructured nature and its capacity to provide insights into how research participants view the world" (Bryman, 2016, p.467) is suitable for the current study, which emphasizes interviewees' own perspectives. Using semi-structured interviews will allow me to obtain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the participants and to explore my research questions: 1.) How do prospective teachers perceive intercultural competence?; 2.) How are their perceptions related to their personal experiences?; and 3.) Are there differences in their perceptions of intercultural competence related to different teaching subject areas?

3.2   Research context

In the case study, the term 'case' is often associated with "a location, such as a community or organization" (Bryman, 2012, p.67). The study focus is normally on the deep examination of the setting. It should be noted, however, that the purpose of the current study is to explore prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence. Therefore, the study focus is on the examination of the participants' viewpoints. Hence, it appears to be more appropriate to regard the teacher education program at the University of Oslo as a context of the research rather than as a so called 'case'.

Lektorprogrammet (hereinafter called "teacher education program") is a five-year integrated master program in teacher education at the University of Oslo which attempts to produce secondary/upper-secondary and adult schoolteachers with solid academic knowledge and professional teaching skills (Universitetet i Oslo, n.d.b). Students in the program specialize in two school subjects among five study areas: English; foreign language; Norwegian and Nordic literature and languages; cultural and social sciences and; science (main subject with 80 credits and sub subject with 60 credits) through compulsory and elective courses as well as school practices.

As an international aspect of the study program, all students in the program are encouraged to study abroad through an exchange program. There are different options in terms of countries and study period based on the teaching subjects mentioned above. Unfortunately, there seems to be no clear mention about students' intercultural competence as a student learning outcome in the program as a whole, however, one of the learning outcomes states "The student has knowledge of youth culture and youth development and learning in various social and multicultural contexts" (Universitetet i Oslo, n.d.-a). This outcome implies that students in the program are expected to be able to understand and adapt to the social and cultural diversity of their future pupils through the program. Lastly, this program is provided in the Norwegian language, therefore, the majority of students and lecturers are Norwegian or Norwegian-speaking students/lecturers, which reveals a rather monocultural aspect of the program.

3.3 Development of Interview Guide

The interview guide was created based on the research questions and analytical framework (See Chapter 2). First, I considered what I needed to know to answer each of the research questions and formulated interview questions by referring to the analytical framework. In particular, to learn the participants' perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence and its components, I used KSAs model (See Table 1) by including questions that cover what kind of knowledge, attitudes, and skills the participants consider as necessary for interculturally competent teachers. Also, I included questions about the participants' personal experiences in order to see the relationship between their

perceptions of intercultural competence and their experiences. Lastly, questions regarding intercultural competence within the participants' teaching subject areas were formulated to examine if disciplinary characteristics of their teaching subject makes a difference in their perceptions of intercultural competence. I made sure that the questions were not too specific, as this study emphasizes the participants' perspectives. After coming up with a list of questions, I arranged them in an order that would flow naturally and reasonably well.

Before the actual interviews, I conducted two pilot interviews with a draft interview guide. I recruited the participants for the pilot interview by asking friends who had teaching experiences, assuming they were familiar with the research topic to some extent. During the pilot interview, I took memos so that I could review and revise the interview guide later. Also, I asked the participants to give feedback after the interview so that I could learn what they had noticed as an interviewee (e.g. attitudes of the interviewer, difficulties they had during the interview, how comprehensible the questions were) to improve the quality of the interview. Furthermore, I transcribed the pilot interviews to check whether the interview questions covered the areas I needed to answer the research questions. Finally, I modified the contents and the order of some questions as well as deleted some ineffectual questions. The final interview guide can be seen in the appendix (See Appendix I).

3.4   Recruitment of Participants

The method used to recruit the interviewees was the convenience sampling method which is "the method simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility" (Bryman, 2016, p.201). This method was chosen because of the possible access to the target students by attending their lecture. With a help of my supervisor, I contacted an associate professor who agreed on my short presentation of the current project to recruit participants for the interview in the lecture. The lecture was one of the lectures in the pedagogy course called 'PROF3025', where all the third-year students in the teacher education program attend regardless of their subject specialties. The 5-minute power point presentation (See Appendix II) was conducted before the break time so that the

students who were interested in participating could come speak to me during the break. I had prepared a sign-up sheet in advance for the purpose of getting necessary information of the candidates including name, email address, and teaching subject specialties to contact them later. In total, seven students signed up for the interview.

3.4.1 Participants

As mentioned, seven students in the teacher education program participated in the interview. All of them were third-year students who had experienced 15 days of practicum at a local high school or middle school in their second year. The below table contains their information including their subject composition in the program, teaching experiences, and experience of semester abroad through the program.

Student	Teaching subjects (80 credits/60credits)	Teaching experiences	Study abroad experience through the program (1 semester)
Participant 1 (P1)	History/Nordic	Substitute teaching Teaching Norwegian language to immigrants	Asia
Participant 2 (P2)	Physics/Mathematics	None	N/A
Participant 3 (P3)	English/German	None	N/A
Participant 4 (P4)	English/German	Substitute teaching	Europe
Participant 5 (P5)	Biology/Chemistry	None	N/A
Participant 6 (P6)	Biology/Chemistry (Mathematics)	Substitute teaching	N/A
Participant 7 (P7)	History/Nordic	None	N/A

Table 3 Participants

The participants were given a code name (e.g. P1) for their privacy protection. In addition, I refer to all the participants as 'she' in this paper for the sake of their anonymity. The ethical considerations for the participants will be further discussed later in this

chapter.

3.5   Conduct of The Interview

Before the interview, the informational letter and consent forms (See Appendix III), created by following the regulations of the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) were sent to each participant to ensure that they were well informed about the project and the interview in advance. The interviews took place in one of the group study rooms in the Humanities and Social Sciences library (Georg Sverdrups hus) at the University of Oslo. Before the interview, all the participants were briefly introduced to the interview process and asked to sign the printed consent form. The interviews were conducted in English and lasted approximately 40-60 minutes. The interviews were voice recorded by using 'Nettskjema diktafon' which is an authorized audio recorder application by the University of Oslo, downloaded on my personal phone. After the interview, the participants were given a 200-krone gift card and were delivered a thank you email later. The total interview process took one month to complete and was followed by the transcription process.

3.6   Transcribing and Analysis

The recorded interview was transcribed by using Microsoft Word, which is stored in UiO OneDrive, an online storage authorized by the University of Oslo. In the transcription, the participants' names were replaced with a code name (e.g. P1) for their privacy protection. As a way of analyzing the data obtained from the interviews, thematic analysis was used in the current study.

Thematic analysis is a method for "identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6). It helps to identify important themes in the data used to describe the phenomenon of the study. I followed Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework: *become familiar with the data; generate initial codes; search for themes; review themes; define themes; and write-up"* (p.16) for the analysis in the current study. Each phase will be described below.

Become familiar with the data

In this process, I read the transcriptions thoroughly in order to familiarize myself with the data. I also reviewed the notes I took during the interviews. While doing so, I highlighted the parts which seemed useful in examining the research questions, which seemed relevant to the literature I reviewed and analytical frameworks.

Generate initial codes

Based on the research questions and analytical framework, I labeled words, phrases and sentences in the transcriptions which I thought were related to the research questions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). For example, since I wanted to examine perceived knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) of teachers' intercultural competence to examine the research question 1, I labeled the related statements by giving titles like 'IC (intercultural competence) Knowledge', 'IC Skills', and 'IC attitudes'. I used data analysis software 'NVivo' for this process.

To organize the codes emerged through this process, I made a matrix-form which enabled me to find patterns of the information and identify sub-codes. As an example, for 'IC Knowledge', I reviewed each statement within the code and recognized three potential sub-codes: knowledge of culture; knowledge of pupils; and knowledge of language. During this process, I also combined some related codes together or dropped ones which I decided were not relevant enough. The finalized initial codes and sub-codes are presented in table 4 below.

Research question	Codes and Sub-codes
1. How do prospective teachers perceive intercultural competence?	General perceptions of IC
	IC Knowledge • Knowledge of culture • Knowledge of pupils • Knowledge of language
	IC Skills • Communication skills • Pedagogical skills • Research skills
	IC Attitudes • Openness • Curiosity • Critical viewpoint
2. How are their perceptions related to their personal experiences?	Experiences as a pupil
	Cross-cultural experiences
	Experiences in the teacher education program and practicum
3. Are there differences in their perceptions of intercultural competence related to different teaching subject areas?	History
	Foreign language
	Natural sciences (physics/mathematics)

Table 4 Initial Codes and Sub-codes

Search for themes

A theme is understood as "a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data and/or research question" (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p.6). I grouped the codes that emerged in the previous phase based on the research questions and created categories or themes. For instance, the codes "General perceptions of intercultural competence", 'IC Knowledge', 'IC Skills', and 'IC Attitudes' were categorized as 'Perceptions of intercultural competence'. I also searched for sub-themes or a variation in each theme by paying attention to the relations between codes (e.g. repetitions or overlaps as well as similarities and differences). For instance, under the theme 'perceptions of intercultural competence', the sub-themes 'KSAs (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) components', 'Importance of IC', and 'Uncertainty/Unfamiliarity of IC' were

generated through this process. At the end of this step, all the codes and sub-codes fit into one or more themes which seemed to say something about the research questions.

Review themes, Define themes, and Write-up

During this step, I reexamined themes as well as codes within each theme to ensure coherence between them. Also, I reread all the transcriptions and notes to make sure there were no missing codes/themes.

Finally, I tried to figure out the "essence" of each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.23) by reviewing the themes and sub-themes once more as well as looking for relationships or connections between different themes. I used a mind map to visualize this process and to help me understand the relationships of themes/sub-themes. The below map presents a summary of generated themes and sub-themes in relation to the research questions and analytical frameworks
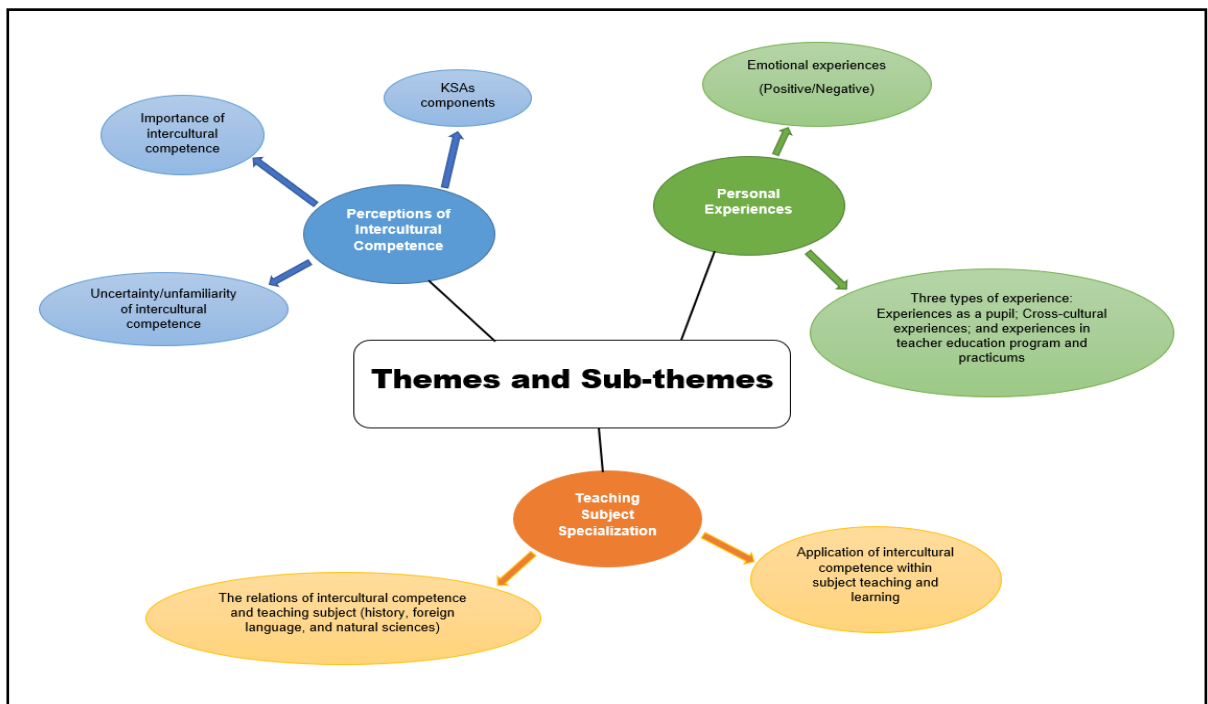

Figure 3 Final Thematic Map

The data obtained through this process was used to write the findings and discussion of this study.

3.7   Ethical Consideration

Tracy (2010) suggested four types of ethics in qualitative research, including *procedural*, *situational*, *relational*, and *existing ethics*. Based on these four ethics, I now reflect ethical considerations given in the current study.

Procedural ethics refer to "ethical actions dictated as universally necessary by larger organizations, institutions or governing bodies" (Tracy, 2010, p.847). Under the instructions or regulations of such larger systems, researchers must insure the accuracy of data and avoid fabrication and fraud as well as respecting participants' right to know about the research. The current study was assessed and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (See Appendix IV[1]). By following NSD guidelines as well as the EU Privacy Policy (General Data Protection Regulation), participants' rights and privacies were protected. Before the interview, all the participants were informed about the nature of the study, protection of their privacy, and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time through the informational letter delivered by email. Furthermore, they were asked to sign the consent form to show their agreement to the above conditions of the study and their voluntary participation. By recording and transcribing the interview verbatim, the accuracy of the data was secured. Furthermore, the participants were delivered the transcriptions of their interviews and allowed to ask any questions at any time. The data obtained from the interviews were kept and secured in password-protected storage (Nettskjema, UiO OneDrive) and devices that only the researcher has access to. The participants' names were coded (e.g. P1) in all the documents and the stories shared by them were written in a way that contained no identifiable information.

Situational ethics talk about "ethical practices that emerge from a reasoned consideration of a context's specific circumstances" (p.847). It requires that researchers reflect, critique, and question their ethical decisions in each different circumstance. As teachers' intercultural competence had not been prominently addressed or focused on in the teacher education program up to the point when I could approach the participants, it could be estimated that the participants were not familiar with the topic. To avoid making the participants feel confused or uncomfortable due to their unfamiliarity with the topic,

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[1] The title of this study has slightly changed after submitting the notification form to NSD.

I explained the situation to the participants in advance. During the interview, I tried to be a good listener as well as tried to give responses properly so that the participants could feel safe and comfortable to talk about the topic. I also reflected on each interview by listening to the audio recording after the interview so that I could make use of my reflections in the next interview. When there was a sudden change or when responding to requests from the participants, I tried to be as flexible as possible.

Relational ethics are related to "an ethic of care that recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness between researcher and researched" (Ellis, 2007, p.4). Through the whole data collection process, I tried to ensure that the participants were not humiliated, made to feel insecure, or alienated by my attitudes. Also, I did not forget to show them my appreciation for their participation in my research during the whole process of data collection.

Finally, *existing ethics* involve continuous ethical considerations "beyond the data collection phase to how researchers leave the scene and share the results" (p.847). Existing ethics emphasize researchers' foresight to consider how their works will be read, understood, and used by various readers. Moreover, accuracy of the data is also highlighted when presenting the stories of the participants. In the current study, the transcriptions of the interviews were double-checked by the researcher and participants to make sure that there were no misrepresentations by the researcher. Also, when quoting what had been said by the participants, I did so in a way that would not distort the stories for my own convenience.

In summary, as Tracy (2010) states in the article, "ethics are not just a means, but rather constitute a universal end goal of qualitative quality itself" (p.846), I positioned ethics at the heart of the whole research process.

3.8   Trustworthiness

Examination of trustworthiness is said to be crucial to assure validity and reliability in a qualitative study (Golafshani, 2003). According to Seale (1999), the "trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and

reliability" (p. 266). Qualitative researchers should be aware of trustworthiness when designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study. There are four criteria that make up trustworthiness in qualitative research: *credibility; transferability; dependability and; confirmability* (Bryman, 2012, p.390; Guba et al., 1994). I will examine each criterion in relation to the current study below.

Credibility, which is equivalent to internal validity, entails "a good match between researchers' observations and the theoretical ideas they develop" (Bryman, 2012, p.390). It also emphasizes following the precept of good practice through the research process as well as respondent validation or member validation. In the current study, to ensure a good match between concepts and observations, I carefully created interview questions based on the analytical framework. Moreover, through the pilot interviews, I checked if the questions covered the areas necessary for the analysis and modified the interview guide so that the interviews would make the most of it to answer the research questions. When it comes to analyzing the data, I carefully followed the steps of thematic analysis suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006). Also, as discussed in previous section, I followed NSD guidelines as well as the EU Privacy Policy (General Data Protection Regulation) throughout the research process. Respondent validation seeks confirmation of the participants that the researcher has correctly understood what has been said during the interview. In the current study, the participants received the transcription of the interview and were asked to check if there were any mistake or misunderstanding in it. Also, they were told to raise any questions about the research at any time during the research period.

Since qualitative research often involves an intensive study of a small group, its *transferability*, or generalizability of the research results to a wider population is not the focus in this type of research (Bryman, 2012). Instead, the question is how well the data supports the theoretical arguments generated in the study. This view is known as 'analytic generalization' (Yin, 2013) and emphasizes the inductive nature of qualitative research. Even though the current study does not aim for generating a new theory, it tries to test the analytical framework introduced in chapter 2 in order to explore the research questions. To do so, the interview guide was carefully made based on the analytical framework (See Appendix I) to investigate the participants' perceptions within said framework. When analyzing the data, I made sure that the relations between the data and the analytical

framework were thoroughly investigated by following the steps of thematic analysis methods.

Another way to achieve transferability in qualitative research is by providing a 'thick description' that is a rich and detailed depiction of a culture (Geertz, 1973). Thick description includes an interpretation of the context and the participants' thoughts and emotions as well as their intentions and motivations (Ponterotto, 2006). The current study that focuses on participants' perceptions especially needed to be sensitive about these points. During the interviews, I had taken notes about everything I noticed (e.g. the participants' facial expressions, their way of speaking, etc.) that might be useful for the analysis of the data. Also, the participants were asked to share their backgrounds and experiences during the interview, which helped me contextualize their answers.

Dependability involves 'auditing' approaches among peer researchers by providing an access to all the research records of the research process (Bryman, 2012). Unfortunately, as this study is a self-study, it was unable to go through the audit process. However, as mentioned above, the transcription of the interview was checked by the individual participants. Also, some important materials (e.g. interview guide) used in the research are presented in the appendices of this paper which I believe contribute to the dependability of this study.

Finally, *confirmability* concerns the objectivity in the research; although complete objectivity is almost impossible in social research, it should be obvious that the researcher has not "overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of the research and the findings deriving from it" (Bryman, 2012, p.393). Objectivity was especially important for the current study which tried to examine the participants' perceptions. During the interviews, I focused on bringing out their thoughts or ideas and tried to avoid manifesting my personal perspectives. Also, when writing the findings of the data analysis, I did it in a way that they were not distorted for my own convenience.

3.9   Limitations

The research methods used in this study bring some major limitations. First and foremost, the small number of the participants in this study makes the study results difficult to generalize. I am aware that seven participants are not enough to make a generalization about all the students who belong to the program. Thus, to draw a general conclusion out of the study results is not the focus or the purpose of the current study. Since it is an exploratory case study, the purpose is to investigate a small group of people intensively to examine their perceptions toward intercultural competence for teachers. As discussed in 3.8, 'analytical generalization' which tries to investigate generalizability of the data towards theory will be focused in this study. Even though it is not possible to make a grand conclusion out of the current study, the study will aim for a theoretical contribution to learning about prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence so that it can be built upon by future studies.

Second, the study focused on prospective teachers' perceptions and beliefs at a point in time when teachers' intercultural competence had not been theoretically addressed in the program. Therefore, it could be estimated that there is a lower awareness of such competence among students compared to, for example, students who are in a teacher education program which has more explicit focus on intercultural dimensions. Furthermore, students in the teacher education program mainly study their subject contents during their first two years in the program[2]. Since all the participants were in their third year and had just started their pedagogy course, their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence have the potential to change after taking the pedagogy course as well as 25 days practicum at a local school which was scheduled after the interviews. These facts should be taken into account when discussing the findings obtained through the interviews. Even so, it is still valuable to get insight in the students' pre-understandings of intercultural competence because it will help teacher educators to reconstruct student teachers' prior understandings in order to develop their intercultural competence.

Lastly, this is a self-study conducted by a foreign person who has never had any

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[2] https://www.uio.no/studier/program/lektorprogrammet/studieretninger/engelsk/oppbygging/eng-tysk14.html

experience of studying in the teacher education program in Norway. This increases the possibility of the researcher's misinterpretation of what is mentioned during the interview. In addition, the interviews were conducted in English which is not a native language for neither the researcher nor the participants, which also increases the possibility for miscommunication or misunderstanding between the two. Even so, being a third person more or less helped me to avoid biases or subjectivity during the interview and later in the analysis. Furthermore, double-checking of the interview transcriptions by both the researcher and the participants hopefully decreased the possibility of such misunderstanding.

These limitations are important when considering the validity of the study. Despite these limitations, however, I believe the data obtained through the interviews can contribute to an interesting and useful discussion of the intercultural competences for teachers.

4 Analysis and Findings

This chapter will turn to the analysis of the interview data and its findings. First, the overall picture of participants' perceptions of intercultural competence will be presented as well as their perceptions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes for teachers' intercultural competence.

Second, the relationship between the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence and their personal experiences will be examined by looking at the relational model (See Chapter 2). Three types of experiences: experiences as a pupil; cross-cultural experiences; and experiences in the teacher education program and practicums are considered as main sources of their beliefs of intercultural competence for teachers.

Furthermore, the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence as well as its use in their teaching will be examined by taking their teaching subject specialization into account. Since prospective teachers' teaching subject(s) may call for different type of awareness or understandings of intercultural competence in a school situation, their subject specialization and its disciplinary characteristics will be considered as important factors when studying their perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence and its application into their teaching.

The participants' perceptions and experiences are presented through quotes form the interviews. In some instances, unnecessary repetition of words and phrases have been removed. Also, some explanations have been added to some of the stories [in square brackets] to improve a reader's understanding.

4.1 Perceptions of Intercultural Competence

In the interview, the participants were asked how they would associate themselves with the concept of 'intercultural competence' before reflecting on its relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes to learn their overall perceptions of such competence. Among the seven participants, five participants expressed intercultural competence as being especially important for teachers. Most of them talked about cultural diversity in today's classrooms due to globalization which makes intercultural competence more

important for teachers to have. Two participants, on the other hand, recognized intercultural competence as "different things" or a "big term" for them. They stressed variations of intercultural competence depending on which perspective one looks at. Even so, they did seem to recognize important aspects of teachers' intercultural competence when they reflected upon necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes of such competence later in the interview that I will discuss in the following section.

Among five participants who emphasized the importance of intercultural competence for teachers, however, two of them mentioned that they are not sure how they can learn it or how it will impact on their teaching in the future. Similarly, another participant mentioned that intercultural competence may get more complicated or "tricky" when applying it into teaching. Furthermore, one participant stated that she had never heard of the term before, thus, she had to look up what the term meant before the interview.

Overall, while the majority of the participants agreed on the significance of intercultural competence for teachers, most of them also pointed out its complex nature, their unfamiliarity of the term, or expressed uncertainty as to how it was related to them and their professions.

In the following section, participants' perceptions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers' intercultural competence will be further presented.

4.2 Perceptions of Components for Interculturally Competent Teachers

The types of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) perceived by the participants as important components for teachers' intercultural competence are presented in a below table. This table is a revised version of the one introduced in chapter 2 made based on what have discussed by the participants in the interviews. Under the knowledge, skills, and attitudes components, there are sub-components that were discussed by the participants and categorized by the researcher during the process of thematic analysis. Now, each domain will be discussed one by one.

Table 5 Perceived KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes) for Teachers' Intercultural Competence

4.2.1 Knowledge

As knowledge necessary for interculturally competent teachers, *knowledge of culture, knowledge of pupils,* and *knowledge of language* were recognized by the participants.

Knowledge of culture was mentioned by all the participants but from several points of view. Most of them identified knowing basic cultural information (geographies, histories, religions, manners, or "anything") as crucial to understand pupils and their families from culturally diverse backgrounds. At the same time, however, avoiding stereotypical knowledge of culture was emphasized by two of the participants. Moreover, P4 emphasized looking at not only differences but also similarities when encountering different cultures.

Knowledge of pupils was discussed by four participants. Even though all the participants noted the importance of cultural knowledge in understanding pupils and their family backgrounds, these four participants also argued for the importance of knowing individual pupils and not generalizing them by their cultural backgrounds. Similarly, the participants also claimed that pupils are diverse in various ways, not just because of

cultures. Therefore, knowing individual pupils' various aspects is also crucial for teachers.

Lastly, *knowledge of language* was identified as important knowledge by five participants. Most of them recognized knowledge of language as useful to communicate with cultural others and that it enhances one's cultural experience. As language teachers, however, P3 and P1 perceived the knowledge of language differently. For example, P3 explained how knowing languages spoken by pupils may enhance her teaching in the classroom:

> …as a teacher in the classroom, there're so many different languages and of course knowing some here and there or perhaps how their [pupils] language could interact with the language that I teach could help in teaching them better English or German, and it could also add an understanding to certain grammatical language errors that they do (P3)

While P3 focused on teachers knowing foreign languages spoken by pupils so that they can facilitate their pupils' language learning, P1 emphasized the inclusion of a variety of the Norwegian language used by people who are ethnically non-Norwegian as well as slangs used by young generation especially those who are from different cultural backgrounds that are normally not recognized in the classroom:

> I think it's just called like Norwegian Somali, for example, they have basically developed like a hybrid language like Somali-mix which has become somewhat formalized because now we have like second or third generation of Somali living in Oslo …which is super interesting academically but it's also very relevant to the classrooms. …there are languages we don't use in the classroom, which is such a shame, right? Because they have so much fun doing it and we don't even recognize it (P1)

P1's reference implies knowing and sharing a variety in Norwegian language in the classroom will enhance pupils' learning of the Norwegian language as well as different cultures.

As presented above, even though how they saw knowledge of language varied,

both participants seemed to agree that the knowledge is useful in their teaching. On the other hand, P2 and P4 mentioned that even though the knowledge of language can be an advantage of one's intercultural competences, it's not essential to have such knowledge. P2 claimed the focus should be on understanding different culture through various ways of interactions with cultural others rather than mastering their languages. Moreover, P4 pointed out knowing how languages function, for instance, that language influences how people see the world is more important when it comes to knowledge of language.

In summary, while the participants have recognized certain types of knowledge: *knowledge of culture; knowledge of pupils; and knowledge of language* as important for teachers' intercultural competence, they had various perspectives on each knowledge category as shown above. When it comes to *knowledge of culture*, while all the participants agreed on the importance of basic cultural knowledge for teachers' intercultural competence, some pointed out the importance of not clinging to stereotypical knowledge and to try to look at cultural similarities, not just differences. *Knowledge of pupils* was discussed in a way that seeing not only pupils' cultural differences but also their various aspects and knowing them individually are crucial for teachers. *Knowledge of language* was perceived differently by the participants. Both, as a language teacher, P3 mentioned that her knowledge of foreign languages can help her to enhance her pupils' learning of English/German languages while P1 emphasized the inclusion of languages that are spoken by pupils in classrooms. Also, while some participants acknowledged such knowledge as "very important", others claimed mastering foreign languages is not the center of one's intercultural competence.

4.2.2 Skills

Skills recognized by the participants were divided into three categories: *communication skills*; *pedagogical skills*; and *research skills*. *Communication skills* were recognized by six participants and were expressed as "important", "key components", or "central". In *communication skills*, the importance of being able to work with people from different cultures, in addition to the use of language, were discussed by the participants. Moreover, P7 talked about the importance of knowing the social codes or "manners" in

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different cultures when communicating with cultural others. P4 mentioned communication skills would depend on one's knowledge and attitudes:

> …I guess they're all intertwined. I think communication skills also depend on the knowledge and maybe attitudes as well. …in order to communicate cross-culturally, you have to know, or it would be an advantage to know something about another person's culture (P4)

Her reference implies a connection between communication skills and knowledge/attitudes and how it is necessary to have cultural knowledge and appropriate attitudes to communicate cross-culturally.

Pedagogical skills were identified by three participants. They described pedagogical skills as skills to guide and lead pupils, to adapt depending on different learners, and to facilitate the classroom environment. P7 discussed the significance of adaptability and flexibility in classroom teaching:

> …you should have the skill to kind of adapt and to be open to change your point of view. …Also, not feel that I have all the answers and I'm not the oracle of how the teaching situation should be …but to be open to other people when students interact with me and how I perform in the classroom (P7)

P2 also discussed the importance of adaptability pointing out that different classrooms might require teachers' different types of adaptability:

> …if you are at the school where all the students are really motivated and really good at school, then the challenge is probably to make them better than they already are but if the students are really struggling, then you may have to motivate them to do something (P2)

She identified pedagogical skill being able to guide pupils by adjusting teaching approaches based on their needs or challenges.

Research skills were identified as being able to conduct research when encountering problems with understanding cultural others and were directly recognized by one participant. P3 described research as asking questions to cultural others because "they [pupils] know themselves the most, what they want, what they feel comfortable with". Although she did not call it 'research skills', P5 emphasized the importance of being able to research relevant theories so that one can apply them to intercultural situations s/he encounters. P3 also claimed that issues of diversity among pupils should be taken up and discussed more in the teacher education program because prospective teachers would face these issues in their future. She mentioned that it is important for prospective teachers to be introduced to issues that come from diversity among pupils (e.g. racial discrimination) with concrete examples and discussions about what can be done in different situations to be aware of these matters.

Unlike the skills in the original KSAs model presented in chapter 2 (*skills to listen, observe, and interpret; skills to analyze, evaluate, and relate*), the participants recognized skills for teachers' intercultural competences with rather broad terms (*communication skills, pedagogical skills, and research skills*). Moreover, in the original KSAs model, skills are regarded as tools to acquire and process knowledge, however, the skills discussed in the current study were instead seen to be skills necessary to draw upon both knowledge and attitudes. *Communication skills* were recognized as key skills by most of the participants. In addition to verbal communication, P7 argued the importance of knowing social codes when communicating with cultural others. P4 pointed out the interrelationship of cultural knowledge and attitudes in a cross-cultural communication. *Pedagogical skills* were recognized as skills to guide and lead pupils as well as facilitating an open classroom environment. Moreover, adjusting one's behavior to teach based on current needs and challenges was emphasized by P2 and P7. Although mentioned directly by only one participant, *research skills* can be considered as important skills in teachers' intercultural competence as well. While P3 mentioned conducting research by simply asking questions to cultural others, P5 emphasized learning theories to apply to intercultural situations. P3 also claimed that it is important for prospective teachers to be

aware of and discuss issues that come from classroom diversity.

4.2.3 Attitudes

As important attitudes for interculturally competent teachers, mainly *openness*, *curiosity* and *critical viewpoints* were discussed by the participants. O*penness* was mentioned by four participants as a key attitude:

> I think you have to meet every student with open-mindedness and curiosity and trying to figure out who they are and being getting to know the student …I think it's important to just get to know the students and try not to see differences as an obstacle, but rather resource and also perhaps think of it as there're more similarities than differences (P4)

P7 also described being open and having inviting attitudes as well as to like their pupils as being important for interculturally competent teachers.

Furthermore, P2 described the attitude 'openness' as key to obtaining new knowledge:

> …if you're not open to the new culture or new ideas or whatever, I don't think you are ready to obtain knowledge about the culture either. …I think knowledge and general attitudes are again something important to combine if you actually want to learn it. It's the same with me, if I had a bad attitude against physics or mathematics, it would be way harder for me to study it as well (P2)

Her reference implies the fundamental role of one's attitudes in one's intercultural competence.

Curiosity was discussed by the four participants. P1 described curiosity as willing to learn from other people and other cultures. P6, while arguing that curiosity is an important starting point for one's intercultural competence, also pointed out personal difference in what to be curious about:

I think that curiosity of other cultures as one of the main components. To get that [intercultural] competence, you need curiosity. …That isn't something that everybody can learn. The curiosity of culture. I believe that's a lot more difficult to achieve than anything else. …I believe it to be hard to achieve because that takes a changing of your whole mindset (P6)

P6 described how her interest in anime made her curious about Japanese culture and made her learn more about Japan. She pointed out that it always depends on the person in terms of what to be curious about, therefore, it is not something people can learn.

Critical viewpoints were discussed from different perspectives by three of the participants. For instance, P3 discussed the importance of being aware of one's own privilege and trying to see things from different people's viewpoints:

…And always be keenly aware of your own privilege. I'm, like for example, a white person. I'm extremely privileged in my position, so be keenly aware of that but also to fight for those that can't fight for themselves in a sense, that always be accepting and always trying to see things from their perspective (P3)

P6 and P7 also discussed the significance of not being Eurocentric minded and not only looking at Norway but also what is happening around the world. Furthermore, P7 discussed how having a critical viewpoint is also important for pupils:

…teach students to be critical about information and to teach them you know, just look further than their own nose to see the world as a whole …And to teach them skills to handle information and to process information and to have thoughts about the information and not just... you know, reproduce the information (P7)

P7 mentioned the information pupils get from the media, friends and families, and even textbooks is often biased. Therefore, it is important to teach them how to have critical

viewpoints. This notion implies that teachers first should have critical viewpoints and then teach pupils to obtain such an ability as well.

Overall, the participants seemed to have recognized attitudes as a "starting point" of teachers' intercultural competence. *Openness* was described as essential for teachers when interacting with individual pupils. P2 further discussed that without openness to new culture or new ideas, one is not ready to obtain knowledge of the culture. This notion again implies a fundamental role of an open mind when meeting new cultures. *Curiosity* was also mentioned as an important starting point to learn about pupils and different cultures. P6 pointed out the personal nature of curiosity, referring to it is not something people can learn. *Critical viewpoints* were talked about from several points of view, however, most of the participants seemed to emphasize the importance of seeing things from various perspectives. P7 also pointed out the significance of teaching pupils to have critical viewpoints.

4.2.4 Summary

This section has explored the participants' perceptions of intercultural competences for teachers as well as its three main components, namely knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In this section, I will shortly summarize what was found through the analysis of the participants' perceptions.

First, the study observed two ways of perceiving intercultural competence among the participants. While most of the participants recognized such competence as important especially for teachers, they also pointed out unfamiliarity with the term and uncertainty of the use of such competence in their teaching. It seemed that most of the participants understood the significance of intercultural competence but did not have a clear idea of what competence meant especially in teaching context.

Secondly, it seemed that KSAs components discussed by the participants in this study were more or less similar to the original KSAs components (See Table 1) but were discussed from teachers' viewpoints. For instance, one of the knowledge components, 'knowledge of culture', is about one's good understanding and knowledge of other

cultures (Deardorff, 2006). In the current study, many participants emphasized the value of acquisition of such knowledge so that they can understand culturally diverse pupils and their family background better. Furthermore, the data from the interviews found two teacher-specific components; knowledge of pupils and pedagogical skills. These components were discussed especially from teachers' viewpoints. The comparison of the components in the original KSAs model and the KSAs recognized in the present study will be further examined in the next chapter.

Thirdly, some of the participants have pointed out the interrelationship among knowledge, skills, and attitudes. For instance, one's open attitude towards different cultures was discussed as a "starting point" for obtaining new knowledge. Communication skills were also pointed out in relation with knowledge and attitudes. It was discussed that to successfully communicate with cultural others, one needs certain knowledge and attitudes. It seems that for some participants, KSAs components were seen to be interacting with each other rather than functioning separately.

Lastly, most of the participants reflected on intercultural competence for teachers in a Norwegian context. Many of them pointed out the cultural and socio-economic gaps among schools in Oslo. The point system that determines which school pupils can enroll depending on their grades, for example, seems to widen the gap of pupils' academic performance among schools. Also, the geographical differences in Oslo (e.g. east side and west side divide) were mentioned to describe such gaps. As many researchers have pointed out, intercultural competence is characterized as context dependent (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017). It can be assumed, therefore, that these context-specific issues mentioned by the participants might have influenced how they perceive teachers' intercultural competences.

4.3   Personal Experiences and Beliefs

Next, I will examine the participants' personal experiences and those beliefs which seemed to have influenced their perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence. As discussed in chapter 2, beliefs are assumed to help in the construction of people's worldviews which have a strong impact on their cognition and behavior (Koltko-Rivera,

2004). Also, people's personal experiences are understood as main sources of their beliefs. Therefore, this study will try to see the relationships of the participants' personal experiences, their beliefs of intercultural competence for teachers, and their perceptions.

In chapter 2, three types of experiences were introduced as possible sources of prospective teachers' beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence. These experiences are: (a) personal experiences as pupils; (b) cross-cultural experiences and; (c) experiences in the teacher education program. Furthermore, the relational model (See Figure 2) has suggested how these experiences may form prospective teachers' beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence, which influence their perceptions of such competence. In the following part, each experience discussed by the participants will be examined in relation to their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence.

4.3.1 Personal Experiences as Pupils

As the participants discussed teachers' intercultural competence and its relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes, they also shared their various experiences to support or describe their ideas. Personal experiences as a pupil, especially their intercultural experiences at school was shared by the participants as they reflected on teachers' intercultural competence. For instance, P1 looked back at her elementary school where she studied together with many classmates from various cultural backgrounds. There, she had opportunities to learn different cultures through everyday life and events like "international days" where pupils, teachers, and parents presented and shared their own culture and learned from each other. P1 mentioned it was a great chance to learn about other cultures as well as her own culture as a Norwegian. Also, she described her teachers who had actively included cultural learning as very resourceful since they had had various international experiences themselves. She emphasized the importance of teachers' intercultural competence especially in Oslo where there are multicultural schools like her own elementary school was. She also emphasized the importance of practical experiences of interacting with different cultures in order to develop one's intercultural competence.

P2, who also claimed the importance of practical experiences to grow one's intercultural competence shared her experience in high school. She had grown up among

almost exclusively Norwegian people until she entered high school where her classmates were from all over the world. She mentioned that she sometimes encountered "weird experience", which clashed with her previous ideas about other cultures. She reflected that her experience in high school helped her to develop her awareness and understandings of different cultures:

> …when I was in high school …[I] got a lot of friends who weren't from Norway, who were from like Korea or Spain or Chile or they were from all over the world and that sort of helped me realize that even though we speak the same language, there are still some cultural differences and I also feel it's interesting to discuss where those cultural differences are …where we can learn from each other and I think that's the most important part of being aware of cultural difference (P2)

P3 shared her experience of changing her school in which she had many classmates with culturally diverse backgrounds to a school whose pupils had a more monocultural or culturally homogeneous background. After moving to the new school, she had shocking experiences hearing her classmates' "very racist jokes" and their discrimination of people who were not as "white" as them. She shared that the experience made her angry, especially because she had had an experience of attending a multicultural school. She claimed prospective teachers should be aware of issues in the classroom which arise from a lack of understanding and appreciation towards cultural diversity and to be prepared to deal with these issues.

The participants shared both their positive and negative experiences as a pupil which seemed to influence their beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence. P2's and P3's "weird" and "shocking" experiences imply that their memorable or emotional experiences especially impacted their beliefs.

4.3.2 Cross-cultural Experiences

All the participants shared various cross-cultural experiences they have had through a study abroad program, short-term study visit, Au Pair program, backpacking,

volunteering, and sightseeing. Most of the participants seemed to reflect on their cross-cultural experiences as good opportunities to learn about different cultures. For instance, P4 looked back on her study abroad in the UK where she gained a lot of benefits as a language student by living in a country where the language is spoken. She also pointed out being a foreigner made her more conscious about cultural differences. Moreover, she had a chance to study "racism in classrooms" in the course she took during her stay which taught her that many teachers and students are not prepared on how to deal with situations that arise because of racism. P4 described the semester abroad in the UK as fruitful and "the best semester at the university so far".

P7 shared her experience of moving to the U.S. where she struggled to get used to the social codes in communications:

> …from my year in America, I felt very strongly, even though you would think Norway and America are similar but when you're there, it is so not. …like you have the reference points that you're lacking, and the social codes are so different …you very easily, you do something wrong or you can misunderstand or get misunderstood (P7)

From this experience, she shared that she learned not to judge people by how they act or what they say. Moreover, she stressed the importance of not generalizing pupils by following stereotypes or based on where they come from but seeing them individually and showing interest in their backgrounds as an interculturally competent teacher.

While most of the participants seemed to consider their cross-cultural experiences as helpful to gain knowledge of different cultures, P7's experience appears to affect her beliefs of not being judgmental about cultural others and trying to see them individually.

4.3.3 Experiences in The Teacher Education Program and Practicums

Even though all types of experiences were referred to by the participants during the interview, experiences in the teacher education program and practicums seemed to be

the most mentioned experiences in relation with teachers' intercultural competence. In addition, most of the participants shared their experiences during their practicums rather than experiences through academic courses when reflecting on teachers' intercultural competence.

P6 shared her experience of meeting pupils who came to Norway as refugees during her practicum. She mentioned that she had to be careful what kind of examples to use and emphasized the importance of knowing what trauma those pupils might have by being a refugee. She further pointed out teachers may struggle when interacting with pupils who are not only culturally different but who also have some traumatizing experiences:

> …if you have the trauma that also comes with being a war refugee or regular refugee, that's probably where I think the whole intercultural competence really starts to struggle because it's not as much the culture of the people but the background and it makes it a lot harder to connect with them and they probably have a harder time adjusting to our culture (P6)

She claimed teachers should take each pupil's backgrounds into account as well as be aware of issues around the world in order to interact with them "properly".

P1 mentioned her experience during practicum where she learned to be open to all the pupils and different cultures as a professional teacher:

> …that's [openness] something they give us a lot at lectures and stuff. And all the people that I had as a supervisor in practice, they also reemphasized it all the time saying you don't need to like your students personally but professionally, you have to like them. You have to like them all. It kind of involves openness to different kinds of people. Like even though people embody qualities and even cultures you don't like, for example, you have to respect them, open to them and see them (P1)

She seemed to have learned that sometimes teachers have to force themselves to be open to and respect individual pupils and their cultures as a professional teacher through

lectures and practicums.

P5 shared her experience at a school during her practicum. She attended a school which had a "mix" of pupils who were ethnically Norwegian and pupils who were not. She reflected that there was a nice environment for pupils and there was no bullying because of the cultural differences at the school. She also had a coordinator who had a very welcoming and positive attitude towards cultural diversity among pupils. P5 reflected that this experience has influenced her way of approaching cultural diversity.

The experience during practicum seemed to influence more directly on the participants' beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence than the other two experiences. P6's experience implies interculturally competent teachers need to be able to have knowledge of pupils who have not only different cultural backgrounds but also some struggling experiences by being a refugee or by simply coming to a foreign country in order to interact with and teach them. P1 and P5's experiences seemed to have an influence on their beliefs of interculturally competent teachers' attitude; being open and respect each pupil.

4.3.4   Summary of Personal Experiences as Important Sources for Their Beliefs

Considering its complex nature of people's belief system (Pajares, 1992), it is difficult to prove that the participants' personal experiences shared in the interviews have formed their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence. However, the interviews revealed that all the participants used their memorable experiences to justify their ideas about intercultural competence. As the relational model (See Figure 2) suggests, this fact makes it possible to explain the relationship of their experiences and their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence which influence their perceptions of such competence. Furthermore, some participants mentioned more than once that their own experiences have shaped who they are today. This notion reinforces the significant role that experiences play in forming people's mindset or worldviews. Thus, it seems possible to think that prospective teachers' personal experiences form their beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence that in turn affect their perceptions of said competence.

All the three types of experiences (experiences as a pupil, cross-cultural experiences, and experiences in the teacher education program and practicums) seemed to affect the participants' perspectives on intercultural competence but the experiences in the teacher education program and practicums appeared to more directly influence on their perceptions of intercultural competence for teachers than the other two types of experiences. This can be explained by the fact that prospective teachers experience teaching as teachers (Richardson, 2003) in the teacher education program, thus, it might be easier for them to relate their experiences as a teacher with teachers' intercultural competence. The further discussion of each experience will be presented in the next chapter.

Lastly, the next section will discuss disciplinary differences which are assumed to make a difference in prospective teachers' experiences in the teacher education program, thus, their beliefs and perceptions of intercultural competence in their teaching.

4.4 Disciplinary Characteristics and Beliefs in Intercultural Competence

As mentioned earlier, this study assumes that prospective teachers' teaching subject and its disciplinary characteristics may create a difference in prospective teachers' experiences in the teacher education program as well as their beliefs and perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence. This section outlines the participants' perceptions of how intercultural competence matter within their teaching subject areas. Later, I will analyze these perceptions based on the disciplinary characteristics discussed in chapter 2 to examine what kind of differences their subject specialties bring to their perceptions in teachers' intercultural competence.

In the interview, the participants were asked the role of intercultural competence in teaching and learning within their teaching subject areas. P1 and P7 who taught history as their main teaching subject identified that, as a history teacher, they have obtained knowledge of different areas of the world, how things are different in different countries, and how the world has developed. When it comes to teaching history, however, they had

different ideas about how they would apply intercultural aspects in their teaching. P1 who emphasized the importance of practical experiences, suggested to take pupils outside the classroom as a history project to let them be exposed to different places to learn cultural diversity in Oslo. She mentioned that just talking about cultural diversity in classroom is too abstract for pupils, especially in a classroom where culturally homogeneous group of pupils attend. On the other hand, P7 discussed how history can be taught in the classroom so that it grows pupils' intercultural competence. She emphasized teaching history from different points of view. She described it is important for history teaching not to be Eurocentric and to teach pupils to see history from various perspectives:

> I think that in history it's very important to... like especially here and probably in Europe, not to be very Eurocentric that you are able to teach about the whole world and not just how Europe had an effect on the world and the world hasn't affected Europe. And to fight with us-against-them-thoughts …in conflicts, it's not one good side and one bad side. …They [pupils] have to see that all the people are on one side, they are always fighting the good cause in their mind (P7)

She further suggested to let pupils learn historical events from different perspectives and relate each of them to see how various parts of the world have seen the historical events differently and how they have influenced each other.

Compared to history, P3 and P4, who were prospective foreign language (English/German) teachers, seemed less confident of the relevance between language teaching and intercultural competence. P4 expressed that, even though she understands the importance of intercultural competence, she does not know how to apply it in language teaching:

> I mean, in didactics, as the professors have talked about, trying to use languages as an advantage, not an obstacle, I mean different languages. But how exactly you do that? We're not really taught, so I think it's like you're being told to drive a car and you've never driven a car and you don't know how it works …I don't feel unprepared to be in the classroom, but I feel like we haven't focused a lot on how to actively use that [intercultural

competence] in the classroom rather than trying to be open-minded, but that's the thing in general and not necessary part of intercultural competence (P4)

P3, on the other hand, mentioned knowing languages spoken by pupils from culturally diverse backgrounds can be useful in language teaching to help them to learn English or German better. At the same time, she pointed out teachers' small actions as important when applying intercultural aspects in classroom:

> Sometimes it is the small things that matter most, for example, if I am going to teach about a text, I can choose a book purposely that is not stereotypically either Norwegian or British English, but in Indian English because that is also an English that is important to recognize (P3)

P3 also suggested not to use only typical names in textbooks (e.g. typical English names in English textbooks) but to include diverse names as well. She claimed those small efforts can sometimes make pupils from culturally diverse backgrounds feel included.

The participants who were specializing in natural science subjects (physics and biology) seemed more reluctant to associate intercultural competence with their subject fields and the application of such competence in their teaching. They described intercultural competence and intercultural education within their fields as "not important", "not natural to talk about", or "want to distant from". In addition, P2 talked about the universal character in physics and mathematics which is beyond cultural differences:

> I think one of the best things about physics and mathematics is that it's an universal language. It applies in the same way for every culture, every language, and everything. So, it both combines culture and hates culture because the culture of the person doing physics or mathematics is irrelevant and I think that's great in a way because it elevates or beyond a single language or single culture …so I think maybe my knowledge of cultures is not as important as for teachers of, for example, history or Norwegian or some other more non-scientific [subjects]. Because I feel science is sort of, it's universal (P2)

While P2 and P5 claimed the irrelevance of intercultural competence in their subject fields, P6 suggested a potential for science to be associated with "cultural aspects" by teaching science history and collaborating with other subject areas and relating it to global issues like climate change:

> That is probably one of our biggest jobs as natural science teachers to make students aware of stone-cold facts, how it is, how everything is in relation to each other. And when you open or tell people about natural sciences and globalization and also the climate crisis, you can force them to think about what other countries do as well (P6)

Furthermore, even though they claimed intercultural competence is not directly relevant to their subject fields, all of them recognized it as crucial for teachers especially when interacting with pupils.

4.4.1 Summary

As one can observe, although the participants recognized teachers' intercultural competence as being important, they seemed to have differing views on the application of intercultural competence within their teaching subject areas. As it was assumed in chapter 2, for the participants who were in humanities disciplines (history and foreign language), it seemed to be easier to associate intercultural competence and education with their subject specialties, in comparison to the participants who taught natural science disciplines (physics and biology).

The nature of disciplinary knowledge (See Table 2) was also mentioned by some participants. For example, P2 pointed out the universal character of physics and mathematics when describing the irrelevance of intercultural competence within such subject areas. P7, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of learning historical events holistically as well as trying to interpret and understand history form different viewpoints in history learning.

The different focus of these subject areas also seemed to make a difference in their experiences in the teacher education program. For instance, history teachers agreed that they had gained knowledge of different parts of the world by specializing in history as their teaching subject. This type of knowledge is thought to be important in one's intercultural competence as discussed in the previous section. Moreover, both participants who studied abroad through the program were from humanities disciplines, while all the participants who were in natural science disciplines talked about the difficulties for science students to apply for the study abroad program due to the strictly set program structure of science disciplines.

Even though the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence within their subject fields differed between humanities and natural sciences, most of them perceived intercultural competence as important for teachers in general. Those who were in natural sciences field advocated for the importance of such competence in interaction with pupils while emphasizing its irrelevance to the contents of their teaching subjects. P6 has suggested, however, that by collaborating with other subject areas and by relating science to global issues, the possibilities in science subjects within intercultural education might be able to expand.

4.5   Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the analysis organized around three main topics of this study. First, the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence were examined by focusing on three key components: knowledge; skills; and attitudes (KSAs). Second, how their personal experiences have influenced their perceptions was examined by looking at the relationships between their personal experiences and their beliefs of intercultural competence. Third, the differences in their perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence within their teaching subject areas was investigated in relation to disciplinary characteristics. These findings will be summarized and discussed in relation to your literature review and analytical perspectives in the next chapter.

5 Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to explore three main research questions: 1.) How do prospective teachers perceive intercultural competence?; 2.) How are their perceptions related to their personal experiences?; and 3.) Are there differences in their perceptions of intercultural competence related to different teaching subject areas?

This final chapter will discuss these three topics by reflecting on the findings together with analytical frameworks and literatures as well as suggesting implications for future researches.

5.1   Perceptions of Intercultural Competence for Teachers

As discussed in the previous chapter, nearly all the participants perceived intercultural competence as important for teachers. At the same time, however, many of them did not seem to be clear about what the term meant, how to acquire such competence, and how to put their intercultural competence into practice. The discrepancy between the emphasis of the importance of intercultural competence and its complex nature as well as its impracticality have also been pointed out by researchers in this field (Deardorff, 2006; Guo et al, 2009). The researchers have argued that, in order to lessen these ambiguities in intercultural competence and enhance prospective teachers' acquisition of such competence, teacher education programs need intentional strategies. As some studies have shown (Akpinar and Ünaldi, 2014; Binder, 2017), intercultural competence is teachable and learnable through various tasks and assignments (e.g. reading relevant articles, creating portfolios, doing reflective tasks). Moreover, assessing students' intercultural competence in the study program is important (Binder, 2017; Deardorff, 2006) in order to lessen the uncertainty and complexity of such competence by setting criteria for assessment. These studies imply that planned tasks, assignments as well as assessment can help to clarify what intercultural competence is, how it is acquired, and how it is applied in practice. As mentioned previously, the study focused on prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence at a point in time when intercultural competence had not been theoretically addressed in the teacher education program at the University of Oslo. This could be one of the reasons for the uncertainties that participants

expressed during the interviews. Also, as most of the participants pointed out, the prospective teachers' experiences during their practicums differed dramatically in terms of teaching culturally diverse pupils depending on which school(s) they are placed. It appears that in the teacher education program, prospective teachers' acquisition of intercultural competence still relies greatly on individual students' experiences which can widen the gap of such competence among them.

5.2   Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Intercultural Competence

The participants were also asked to consider knowledge, skills, and attitudes of intercultural competence through the eyes of teachers. As mentioned, most of the components of the original KSAs (See Table 1) were discussed by the participants, however, there are some components that the participants did not identify, or new components which emerged during the present study. The below table (Table 6) shows the components of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the original KSAs and KSAs recognized in the current study. The blue cells indicate the components which were included in original the KSAs model (See Table 1) but were not explicitly identified in the current study. The orange cells indicate the new components that appeared in the present study.

Table 6 Comparison Between Original KSAs model and KSAs Recognized in The Current Study

	Original KSAs model (Table 1)	KSAs found in this study (Table 5)
Knowledge	Cultural self-awareness	Knowledge of culture
	Deep understanding and knowledge of culture	Knowledge of pupils
	Sociolinguistic awareness	Knowledge of language
Skills	To listen, observe, interpret	Communication skills
	To analyze, evaluate, relate	Pedagogical skills
		Research skills
Attitudes	Respect	Openness
	Openness	Curiosity
	Curiosity and discovery	Critical viewpoint

Among the blue cells, *Cultural self-awareness* emphasizes awareness of one's own culture, as well as the understanding of how culture affects one's perspectives (Deardorff, 2006). The knowledge of one's own culture did not seem to be emphasized by the participants in the present study. Just as, Guo et al. (2009) found in their study that many prospective teachers understand intercultural competence as learning about differences or 'others' rather than learning of oneself and their own roles in diverse classrooms, the participants in the current study also emphasized knowing different cultures as one's intercultural competence. Learning about one's own culture is said to increase awareness of one's cultural biases and privilege, and therefore, may help to adopt a worldview that is respectful of multiple cultural identities. In the present study, being aware of one's privilege and avoiding a Eurocentric mindset were indeed discussed by

some of the participants. Even so, as necessary knowledge for teachers' intercultural competence, knowing "other" cultures as well as how to interact with cultural others were greatly highlighted by the participants.

As already mentioned, skills were explained with broader terms (*communication skills, pedagogical skills, and research skills*) in the current study compared to the skills in the original KSAs (*skills to listen, observe, and interpret; skills to analyze, evaluate, and relate*). Even so, those skills mentioned by the participants included some of the skills from the original model. For instance, listening skills can be an important element for communication skills (Griffin et al., 2012) and skills to analyze and relate can be included in research skills (Stokking et al., 2004; Waite & Davis, 2006). Otherwise, skills seemed to be perceived more widely and more individually rather than as tools to acquire and process knowledge like skills in the original KSAs were meant to be.

Three new components appeared in the present study, indicated in the orange cells. As teacher-specific components, *knowledge of pupils* and *pedagogical skills* were identified by the participants. *Knowledge of pupils* was highlighted as knowing individual pupils including their culture, personalities, and other various aspects. This implies that some participants regarded diversity in pupils not just as cultural differences but rather as a broad sense that included various personal traits. This way of seeing diversity is understood as "individual differences" (e.g. individual traits such as shy, smart, thin, fat) and "categorical differences" (e.g. social class, race, gender) as Paine (1990) suggested. However, as the same study pointed out, the participants in the current study still seemed to recognize pupils' diversity rather superficially instead of viewing it as differences embedded in a large social context ("contextual differences"). Moreover, it should be noted that while it is important to recognize pupils' individual traits, overly emphasizing individuality and ignoring pupils' cultural diversity can result in teachers' "colorblindness" or misconceptions of "equity" which can create even more discrimination against cultural minority pupils (Gay, 2015; Howard, 2016; Jokikokko *, 2005; Schofield, 2010)

Pedagogical skills were also a new component recognized by the participants in the present study. Skills to guide and lead pupils as well as skills to facilitate classroom environment were mentioned by some of the participants. Also, skills to adjust one's

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teaching depending on pupils' learning styles and learning ability were recognized as important skills for teachers. The skills were also recognized in the study conducted to investigate teachers' conceptions of intercultural competence (Jokikokko *, 2005). In the study, participant teachers conceived intercultural competence as pedagogical orientation expressing the need of more knowledge of intercultural, pedagogical skills. Also, teachers recognized the importance of teachers' abilities to differentiate or individualize learning as well as to interact with parents who have different educational values or when there is no common language between teachers and parents. In the current study, the participants did not identify the ability to communicate with parents as teachers' intercultural competence, however, it can also be highlighted as parents play an important role in facilitating pupils' learning.

The two components discussed above (*knowledge of pupils* and *pedagogical skills*) are, considered especially important for teachers in regard to intercultural competence as these are more directly connected to the teachers' work.

Finally, critical viewpoints were a newly emerged component in the current study. Being critical about racial advantages and disadvantages, avoiding a Eurocentric mindset, as well as seeing things from others' perspectives were discussed by some participants. These notions can be related with ethno-relative view, which refers to the degree of preparedness to shift perspectives (Bennett, 2004; Hammer et al., 2003). Ethno-relative view has been considered as an important part of one's intercultural competence(Bennett, 2004; Hammer et al., 2003; Leutwyler et al., 2018). Leutowyler et al. (2018) described teachers with a high degree of ethno-relative worldview are more likely to recognize that the pupils' viewpoints may be affected by their different cultural contexts (Leutwyler & Petrović, 2011). They also show empathy toward different cultures and possess a relativistic point of view (Fuertes et al., 2000). In addition to acquiring such viewpoints, in the present study, teaching pupils to have critical viewpoints was also mentioned. To have critical viewpoints or an ethno-relative worldview, seems crucial in teachers' intercultural competence so that teachers can prepare their pupils to have such a perspective as well.

Now, this chapter will move from the components of intercultural competence to

a discussion of how we can understand variations in prospective teachers' perceptions of such competence by focusing on their personal experiences and beliefs as well as their teaching subject specialization.

5.3 Personal Experiences and Beliefs in Teachers' Intercultural Competence

This study paid attention to the sources of prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence by focusing on the relationships between their beliefs and personal experiences. As the relational model suggests (See Figure 2), prospective teachers' personal experiences are assumed to contribute to the formation of their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence. Such beliefs are said to function as a filter for their cognitive/behavioral action (Richardson, 2003), therefore, prospective teachers' beliefs seem to influence their perceptions and teaching practice.

The participants in the study shared various experiences to support or explain their perspectives on teachers' intercultural competence. Their experiences were analyzed into three types of experience: (a) experiences as a pupil; (b) cross-cultural experiences; and (c) experiences in the teacher education program and practicums. These experiences were assumed as key to influencing the beliefs (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Goodman, 1988a; B. Levin & He, 2008; Pohan, 1996; Richardson, 1996, 2003) of teachers' intercultural competence.

As discussed in the previous chapter, experiences in the teacher education program, especially experiences during practicums, seemed to have a bigger influence directly on the participants' beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence more than the other two types of experiences. This implies that their experiences during practicums have had a significant impact on their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence. The questions the notion of Richardson (2003), who argued that it is difficult for a teacher education program to drastically influence prospective teachers' beliefs within the short time period of the program. He mentioned that, since prospective teachers' experiences as pupils are more influential sources of beliefs about teaching and learning, it is difficult for teacher

education programs to influence or change such beliefs. Indeed, the considerable amount of time and experiences with schooling and instruction may construct deep-seated beliefs about teaching and learning which they bring with them when entering teacher education programs. Even so, as teacher education programs offer teaching and learning experiences as a 'teacher' (Richardson, 2003), and not as a 'pupil', the experiences may form new types of beliefs in teaching and learning. Also, as the current study focuses on prospective teachers' beliefs especially of intercultural competence, the experiences in the teacher education program may have given them related opportunities which have influenced forming their beliefs in intercultural competence for teachers. Indeed, many participants shared various experiences during their practicums when describing their thoughts about teachers' intercultural competence.

Experiences as a pupil also seemed to impact prospective teachers' perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence. The participants shared their memorable experiences especially studying together with friends or classmates from different cultural backgrounds as well as having teachers who had a lot of international experiences. Those experiences appeared to have affected their beliefs of intercultural competence. For example, the participants who had a lot of opportunities to be exposed to different cultures at school tended to emphasize the importance of such opportunities in order to develop teachers' as well as pupils' intercultural competence. Furthermore, some participants shared their emotional experiences of encountering racism in the classroom or experiences of having so-called 'culture shock' by meeting classmates with very different cultural backgrounds from them. Frijda & Mesquita (2000) have suggested that people's emotions are able to awaken or shape their beliefs. Similarly, some researchers pointed out that prospective teachers' strong emotions (e.g. anger, shame, joy) can impede or promote their professional learning process (Zembylas, 2007; Farouk, 2012). The participants' emotions felt through their various experiences, thus, may have played an important role in forming beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence. Hyry-Beihammer et al. (2019) emphasized that it is important for teachers to be able to control their emotions so that they can alter them into meaningful actions in the classroom and avoid unjust practices.

As Pohan (1996) pointed out, there seems to be a relationship between prospective

teachers' beliefs and their cross-cultural experiences. She argued prospective teachers who have more multicultural experiences tend to show more positive attitudes toward cultural diversity than those who don't. In the present study, all the participants seemed to have had such experiences through a study abroad program, Au Pair program, backpacking, volunteering, sightseeing, and so forth. These experiences might have provided a positive influence on their perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence as most of them expressed such competence as being important. When it comes to study abroad, some studies showed its positive influence on (prospective) teachers' development of intercultural competence (Akpinar and Ünaldi, 2014; He et al., 2017). In this study, the participants who joined a study abroad program through the teacher education program also described such experiences as fruitful.

The relationship between the participants' personal experiences and their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence could be especially seen when they used those experiences to explain their perspectives on teachers' intercultural competence. For example, some participants who emphasized practical experiences as key to developing one's intercultural competence have also had such experiences in their life.

The three types of experiences discussed in the study seemed to be equally important in forming their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence, however, it can be emphasized that their experiences in teacher education programs and practicums (especially experiences during practicums) seemed to have more direct influence on their beliefs of teachers' intercultural competence.

In the next section, I will further examine prospective teachers' teaching subject specializations and disciplinary characteristics, which are assumed to create a difference in their experiences in the teacher education program.

5.4   Subject Specialization and Disciplinary Characteristics

In the study of pre-service teachers' perceptions of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), Czura (2016) found that the participants' understanding of ICC and its use in the language classroom slightly differed depending on their academic

background. While the language major pre-service teachers emphasized "communicative, attitudinal and social aspects of ICC" (p.95), history major pre-service teachers highlighted the "knowledge-oriented objectives of culture teaching" (p.93) including history, geography, literature and arts.

Similarly, the current study assumed that disciplinary characteristics of the participants' teaching subject(s) would make a difference in their experiences in the teacher education program, thus, their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence.

In this study, although there were no big differences observed in the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence and its KSAs components, how they perceived intercultural competence in teaching and learning within their teaching subject areas was different. The differences were remarkable, especially between humanities subjects (history and foreign languages) and natural sciences subjects (physics and biology). In this section, first, intercultural competence and education within three teaching subject areas (history, foreign language, and natural sciences) will be discussed by referring to the relevant literature. Later, the comparison of these subject areas will be discussed in relation to prospective teachers' experiences in the teacher education program as well as disciplinary characteristics in two disciplinary groups, namely humanities and natural sciences.

5.4.1 History

Nordgren and Johansson (2015) pointed out the shifting position of history education from a once "homogenizing nationalistic project" (p.2) to one which tries to foster students' intercultural understandings (Faas, 2011; Wilschut, 2010). They suggested that history education should focus on today's societal diversity and history of everyday life; "the fundamental and radical influences of such processes on the history of mankind" (p.20) to promote citizenship in a global society. It can be said, therefore, that history teachers need to be prepared for this transition and become interculturally competent themselves.

In the present study, prospective history teachers shared their views on intercultural

competence within their subject area. They seemed to relate content knowledge (e.g. histories of different parts of the world) with such competence. The importance of decentering or shifting one's perspectives when learning history was emphasized, as well as a need for having critical viewpoints in history learning. In order to apply such aspects into teaching, fieldwork in historical places as well as studying historical events from different points of view were suggested by the participants.

As discussed above, the participants who specialized in history were able to recognize some important components of intercultural competence in relation with the history subject. For instance, knowledge of the histories of different parts of the world can be included as one of the knowledge components in intercultural competence, namely 'knowledge of culture'. Also, learning historical events with ethno-relative and critical viewpoints is related to the attitude components of intercultural competence discussed in the previous section. It appears that history as a school subject has the potential to contribute to intercultural education as suggested by the participants. Therefore, one can say that it is especially necessary for history teachers who are interculturally competent to promote pupils' learning and their intercultural competence.

5.4.2 Foreign Language

When it comes to intercultural competences in language, Byram (1997) introduced intercultural communicative competence with an emphasis on language use in intercultural communications. He argued that foreign language teachers are "asked to guide learners through the process of acquiring competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to intercultural competence while using a foreign language" (Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p.7). Activities to foster learners' intercultural competences in the language classroom have been explored by many researchers in this field (Bickley et al, 2014; Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Nunn & Sivasubramaniam, 2011).

In the current study, the participants specializing in foreign language (English and German) as their main teaching subject discussed intercultural competence from a foreign language teacher's perspective. They seemed to agree that learning foreign languages can deepen one's understanding of different cultures and can enrich cross-cultural

experiences. When it comes to the application of such competences into their teaching, teachers' "small efforts" were suggested. For example, including diversity in their choice in teaching materials (e.g. include not only British English texts but also Indian English texts) and using people's names of various cultures in the textbooks.

Though they identified the importance of linguistic competence in one's intercultural competences, they seemed to be rather uncertain about the application of intercultural aspects into their teaching (classroom activities, assignments, etc.). Even so, linking between language and culture in foreign language classroom has been emphasized due to increased globalization, immigration, and migration (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Therefore, teachers' intercultural competence as well as intercultural education, which fosters learners' intercultural competence within this subject, are certainly needed.

5.4.3 Natural Science (Physics/Biology)

For the subjects which teach about the natural world, intercultural competence appears distant from their focus (Barrett et al., 2014). This seems apparent when looking at the small number of literatures talking about intercultural education in the natural science field. However, Barrett et al. (2014) saw potential in these subjects, suggesting that the analysis of natural phenomena from various perspectives with attitudes of openness and curiosity can be a part of intercultural competence. Moreover, they described that the way in which teachers organize the learning process is key in the development of learner's intercultural competence in these subjects.

In the interviews, the participants described intercultural competence as unrelated to the contents of their teaching subjects. However, they all recognized such competence was important when it came to pedagogical aspects (e.g. interaction with pupils), therefore, it would be crucial for them to have intercultural competence. Furthermore, even though they seemed reluctant to associate intercultural competence with their teaching subjects, teaching science history was indicated as a potential for intercultural education. Also, collaboration with other subjects, as well as learning global issues from a scientific point of view, were discussed as possible ways to include intercultural aspects into natural science fields.

Even though intercultural education and competence do not seem to be a central concern in natural science subjects, there is a potential to include such aspects into these subject areas as discussed above. Still, it seems that some drastic measures are needed to include such aspects in natural science fields (e.g. implementing school policies or official curriculums which aims for intercultural education) considering the nature of their disciplinary knowledge which emphasizes universals, quantities, and simplification (Becher, 1987). Also, as suggested by Barrett et al. (2014), teachers' intercultural competence as well as their awareness of intercultural education seem to be key to successfully integrate intercultural aspects into natural science subjects.

5.4.4 Summary

Although the general views on intercultural competence and the components of such competence did not seem to have huge variety among the participants because of their teaching subject specialization, there appeared to be differences in their perceptions when discussing the application of intercultural competence in teaching and learning within their teaching subject areas. While history teachers showed rather positive attitudes for the application of intercultural aspects into their teaching, practical application still seemed uncertain for foreign language teachers. Moreover, teachers in natural science subjects discussed the difficulties of integrating intercultural competence into teaching and learning in their subject areas. These differences may arise from the different characteristics between humanities disciplines and natural science disciplines (Becher, 1987) as discussed in chapter 2. Different, or almost opposite, concerns and foci in these two disciplinary groups make it easier for humanities disciplines to include intercultural aspects as their focus is on "the social world and/or the world of the individual human being" (Barrett et al., 2014, p.18).

Furthermore, such differences in the participants' perceptions of intercultural competence within their subject field might be derived from their experiences in the teacher education program. Students specializing in natural science described their first two years of subject-content study as not related to intercultural competence at all, while history teachers seemed to have had more chances to develop their knowledge and skills that are

more directly related to intercultural competence (e.g. classroom discussion of historical events from different perspectives). Also, accessibility or level of difficulty to apply for study abroad programs seemed to vary between humanities students and natural science students, as discussed in the previous chapter. These differences in their experiences in the program may have affected the participants' perceptions of the relationships between intercultural competence and teaching and learning within their teaching subject field.

In summary, there seemed to be differences in the participants' perceptions of the application of intercultural competence within their teaching subject areas, even though they do consider such competence as important for all teachers regardless of their subject specialties. The importance of applying intercultural competence in teaching and learning in different subject areas has been called for in the literature (Barrett et al., 2014; Byram, 1997; Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Nordgren & Johansson, 2015). Therefore, even though intercultural competence is normally considered as a more generic kind (Nordgren & Johansson, 2015) which is an important competence for teachers in general, how teachers can apply their intercultural competence within their teaching subject areas may need more research by taking into account disciplinary characteristics.

5.5   Implications for Future Research and Educational Practice

Why is it important to learn prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence? As schoolteachers take great responsibility for their pupils' intercultural competence in this global society, teachers' acquisition of such competence and its application in their teaching has been emphasized by international organizations, such as UNESCO (2013), teacher education programs, teacher educators, and many researchers in this field (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017). However, the concept of 'intercultural competence' is rather a general one, and the components of such competence, especially for teachers, do not seem to have been sufficiently explored. Studying prospective teachers' perceptions of such competence can help to fill this gap especially because they are in a transition to becoming a teacher, which means that their perceptions of teachers' intercultural competence is likely to affect their teaching practice in the future. Also, since they are studying to become a teacher, it can be expected that

they are keenly aware of issues surrounding teaching and learning as well as being able to see the concept more openly than those who are much more experienced. For these reasons, the current study explored prospective teachers' perceptions of intercultural competence for teachers as well as their personal experiences and beliefs as sources of their perceptions. The findings of the study suggested that even though the components of intercultural competence proposed by Deardorff (2004, 2006) can be built into teachers' intercultural competence, there seem to be unique components for teachers as recognized by the participants. Also, the study showed that prospective teachers' personal experiences can play a significant role in constructing their beliefs in teachers' intercultural competence, which influenced how they perceived such competence. Furthermore, the difference in the participants' perceptions of application of intercultural competence within different teaching subject areas was observed.

Based on its findings, the present study may suggest two insights that can be helpful to future researches and teacher education programs.

First, there seems to be room for further research on the components of teachers' intercultural competence in relation to different teaching subject areas. Although all the participants identified important components for teachers' intercultural competence, how to apply such competence into teaching and learning within their teaching subject areas still seemed uncertain, especially for those who teach natural science subjects. Even though intercultural competence is equally important for all teachers in general, the application of such competence in various teaching subjects should be studied more by taking disciplinary characteristics into account so that teachers can learn how to apply their intercultural competence in order to foster pupils' intercultural competence efficiently through their daily teaching.

Second, to enhance prospective teachers' intercultural competence and promote their awareness of such competence in their teaching practices, teacher education programs should pay attention to the various pre-understandings of intercultural competence that student teachers have and explicitly encourage their acquisition of such competence. The findings of this study suggest that prospective teachers' experiences in the teacher education program seem to directly influence their perceptions of teachers'

intercultural competence. As literatures suggested, intercultural competence can be learned through intentional and meaningful integration of cultural experiences, teaching opportunities, reflection, and collaboration (He et al., 2017). In the current study, however, some participants pointed out that intercultural experiences they had in the program depended mostly on their own voluntary choices (e.g. study abroad program) or on which school they were placed in during practicum. Again, this is likely to be because the teacher education program at the University of Oslo does not specifically focus on its students' intercultural competence at the time of this writing. However, the new curricula will be introduced in August 2020 to August 2022 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, n.d.), which emphasize the inclusive learning environment and fostering pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Even though the change was not made directly for the teacher education programs, it has influenced and will continue to influence the teacher education program so that it can prepare prospective teachers for the shift. It seems possible that teachers' intercultural competence will play an important role within this new scheme.

Teachers' intercultural competence is key to leading pupils to a more harmonious and peaceful world. I hope the findings of this study can contribute to the understanding of teachers' intercultural competence and raise awareness of the importance of such competence.

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Appendices

Interview Guide : *Prospective Teachers' Conceptions of Intercultural Competence and Its Development through Their Personal and Academic Experience*

General research outline

"The purpose of this interview is to hear from you about your experience as a student studying in the lecturer program at University of Oslo. Your interview will be used for master thesis project. The main purposes of the research are to examine what it means to have intercultural competence for prospective teachers specializing different subject areas and to investigate how prospective teachers conceive they learn such competence through their experience especially in the lecturer program."

Part 1: Introduction

1. **Can you tell me briefly about yourself? (Name, age, come-from)**

2. **Can you tell me about your experience so far in lektorprogrammet?**
   a. What subject area have you been studying?
   b. What made you decide to study in lektorprogrammet? Why did you choose (biology; chemistry/ history; Nordic/ English; German/ physics; mathematics) as your professional subject?
   c. Do you have any teaching experience before joining this program?
   d. Do you have any experience abroad (study abroad, volunteer, sightseeing) ?

Part 2: Perception of intercultural competence

3. **Intercultural competence is said to be important for teachers' qualification today. How would you associate yourself with this concept?**
   a. In what ways do you think intercultural competence is important for teachers? Why?

4. **How would you describe your knowledge about intercultural competence? What do you know about IC in general?**
   a. Can you share any experiences which have influenced your conception of IC?
   b. As a student, do you think you have had many intercultural experience at school (elementary, middle-, or high school)?
   c. In your private life, do you often hang out or have chance to interact with people who are culturally different from you?

5. **What do you think about intercultural competence needed especially for teachers?**
   a. Competence is usually interpreted as an integrated body of knowledge, skills and attitudes. What kind of (knowledge/attitudes/skills) do you think are necessary to an intercultural competent teacher?

6. **The subject areas in school may differ in their way of approaching toward multiculturalism. What do you think about intercultural competence needed especially**

for (biology; chemistry /history; Nordic /English; German) teachers?
  a. What kind of (knowledge/attitudes/skills) do you think are necessary to an intercultural competent (biology; chemistry /history; Nordic /English; German /physics; mathematics) teacher?
  b. What are the differences between teaching (biology; chemistry /history; Nordic /English; German /physics; mathematics) and teaching other subject areas in how intercultural competence appears in teaching and learning?
  c. How do you think you can apply intercultural dimensions in (biology; chemistry /history; Nordic /English; German /physics; mathematics) domain?

Part 3: Development of intercultural competence

7. **You've been studying in lektorprogrammet for 3 years. Do you think your conception of intercultural competence have changed or developed during the time you've been studying?**
  a. Can you share any specific moments or experience in the program which required your intercultural competence or helped you to develop your intercultural competence?
  b. Have you had any experience of challenging situations relating to intercultural competence or interculturality?
  c. Do you often reflect what you have learnt or experienced in the program? In what form?

8. **In your experience, in what ways is teachers' intercultural competence emphasized in lektorprogeammet?**
  a. During your study, have you ever had a chance to listen to the teacher directly talking or discussing teachers' intercultural competence in the class?
  b. Do you have any suggestion on how academic staff or the program could help prospective teachers to improve intercultural competence?

Part 4: Concluding question

9. **Can you tell me if there is anything that you think you miss during our discussion or more information you would like to add?**

Appendix II – Power Point Presentation

Needed: Research study participants

Teacher Education Students' conceptions of Intercultural Competence (Master thesis project)

◆ The study aims to examine:
 1) What 'intercultural competence' means from the perspective of prospective teachers
 2) Students' experiences of how such competence is developed in teacher education

◆ Participation includes: A semi-structured interview that takes 45-60 mins (In English)

◆ Each participant will receive a 200kr gift card

◆ For more information or to sign up, please contact: Ayaka Mihara (Master student in the international Higher Education program, Faculty of Educational Science, the International Higher Education Program, University of Oslo) via Email: ayakami@student.uv.uio.no or Telephone: 9254 0829

Any questions are welcome! Hope to hear from you ☺

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

"Prospective Teachers' Conceptions of Intercultural Competence and Its Development through Their Personal and Academic Experience"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to investigate prospective teachers' conceptions of intercultural competence as well as their perceived development of such competence through the lecturer program at University of Oslo. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

This research is a master thesis project of the Department of Education at University of Oslo. The research aims at examining prospective teachers' conceptions of intercultural competence as well as their perceived development of such competence. The study also illuminates how students have perceived and developed intercultural competence depending on their subject specializations. Finally, it will discuss how students can improve their intercultural competence throughout the program, and what additional support they would have needed.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The Department of Education at University of Oslo is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You are being invited to take part in this research study because your experience as a student studying in the lecturer program at University of Oslo can contribute much to our understanding of prospective teachers' conceptions of intercultural competence. This understanding can support educators to better take prospective teachers into account to support them to improve their intercultural competence during the study in the lecturer program.

What does participation involve for you?

This research will involve your participation in an interview that will take about 45-60

minutes. The interview will include questions about your conceptions of intercultural competence and your perceived development of such competence in the lecturer program. Your answers will be recorded electronically by recording app 'Nettskjema-dictaphone' which is authorized by University of Oslo.

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data
We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- The responsible student will have access to your personal data (contact information provided below).
- The audio recording will be transcribed without any information that could identify you. Your name and contact details will be replaced with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.
- All information which is collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All research information will be kept in locked files at all time. No one outside the researcher will be allowed access to the original recordings.
- 'Nettskjema-dictaphone' will be used to collect and store audio data. Transcribed data will be processed and stored in UiO OneDrive.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end approx. 1st, December, 2020. After the study is completed, all collected data will be deleted.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

To exert your right, you can contact the responsible student (contact information provided below).

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent. Based on an agreement with the Department of Education at University of Oslo, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- The Department of Education at University of Oslo via Ayaka Mihara: Master student in Faculty of Educational Science, University of Oslo, by email: (ayakami@student.uv.uio.no), or by telephone: +47 9254 0829 / Supervisor: Monika Bærøe Nerland: Professor at the Department of Education, University of Oslo, by email: (m.b.nerland@iped.uio.no), or by telephone: +47 22 85 81 72
- Our Data Protection Officer: Markgraf-Bye, Roger
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Ayaka Mihara/ Monika Bærøe Nerland

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "*Prospective Teachers' Conceptions of Intercultural Competence and Its Development through Their Personal and Academic Experience*" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- ☐ to participate in an interview
- ☐ for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I cannot be recognised

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 1st, December, 2020

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix IV – NSD Assessment

NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

NSD's assessment

Project title

Internationalizing Teacher Education Students' Development of Professional Awareness and Intercultural Competence

Reference number

332849

Registered

14.01.2020 av Ayaka Mihara - ayakami@uio.no

Data controller (institution responsible for the project)

Universitetet i Oslo / Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet / Institutt for pedagogikk

Project leader (academic employee/supervisor or PhD candidate)

Monika Bærøe Nerland, m.b.nerland@iped.uio.no, tlf: 22858172

Type of project

Student project, Master's thesis

Contact information, student

Ayaka Mihara, ayakami@student.uv.uio.no, tlf: 92540829

Project period

01.02.2020 - 01.12.2020

Status

16.01.2020 - Assessed

Assessment (1)

16.01.2020 - Assessed

Our assessment is that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 16.01.2020 as well as in correspondence with NSD. Everything is in place for the processing to begin.

NOTIFY CHANGES
If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify NSD. This is done by updating the information registered in the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified. Wait until you receive an answer from us before you carry out the

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changes.

TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION
The project will be processing general categories of personal data until 01.12.2020.

LEGAL BASIS
The project will gain consent from data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn. The legal basis for processing personal data is therefore consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a).

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA
NSD finds that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

- lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient information about the processing and will give their consent
- purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes
- data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary for the purpose of the project will be processed
- storage limitation (art. 5.1 e), in that personal data will not be stored for longer than is necessary to fulfil the project's purpose

THE RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECTS
Data subjects will have the following rights in this project: transparency (art. 12), information (art. 13), access (art. 15), rectification (art. 16), erasure (art. 17), restriction of processing (art. 18), notification (art. 19), data portability (art. 20). These rights apply so long as the data subject can be identified in the collected data.

NSD finds that the information that will be given to data subjects about the processing of their personal data will meet the legal requirements for form and content, cf. art. 12.1 and art. 13.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, the data controller has a duty to reply within a month.

FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES
NSD presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.

Nettskjema is a data processor for the project. NSD presupposes that the processing of personal data by a data processor meets the requirements under the General Data Protection Regulation arts. 28 and 29.

To ensure that these requirements are met you must follow your institution's internal guidelines and/or consult with your institution (i.e. the institution responsible for the project).

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT
NSD will follow up the progress of the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the project!

Contact person at NSD: Tore Andre Kjetland Fjeldsbø
Data Protection Services for Research: +47 55 58 21 17 (press 1)