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*Student exchange and identity development: A study of students' perceptions of the processes of change*

Exchange experiences of university students are associated with many positive outcomes. However, relatively little is known about the individual and social mechanisms that promote personal growth during exchange. The aim of this qualitative study was to use an integrated identity framework to explore how exchange students conceptualise the processes of change and development during exchange. Twenty interviews were conducted with Australian and French exchange alumni (age  $M = 20.22$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ , 65% female). Thematic analysis identified two major themes of change along with specific associated driving experiences. The first theme, titled 'I did it, so I can do it', related to participants feeling more confident through managing adversity abroad. The second theme, termed 'I know who I am, I know what I want', captured how participants clarified their self-perceptions and worldviews through cultural learning, changing networks, and trying new activities overseas. This theme also included two subthemes addressing an increased valuing of diversity and interest in international experiences. Exchange students described using their clarified sense of self as a foundation to guide their subsequent decision making. Three themes of influencing factors showed that students' attitudes, previous experience, and networks at home could impact exchange outcomes. The results suggest that identity development is central to development during exchange. The findings align with pre-existing models from the individual identity literature. Future research should examine the processes identified in this study across different emerging adult cohorts, as they may provide opportunities for novel interventions to facilitate identity development in emerging adulthood.