

Analyzing the Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Overseas Chinese Students Based on the Interpersonal Circle Perspective

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Abstract: This paper stands from the social network point of view, uses the form of questionnaire investigation and interview, adopts the qualitative and quantitative research methods, and studies the specific function of social network in intercultural adaptation. This paper discusses the problem of the social network state quo of Chinese overseas students, the relationship between social network and intercultural adaptation. The research is carried out through questionnaire investigation and interview 50 Chinese overseas students in America, England, Canada, France, Australia and so on.

1. Introduction

For the main question of this study is focus on Chinese international students' social networking influence, overseas students' expectations and the social support they get. Literature both on social network perspective and intercultural adjustment are presented as the research foundation of the present study. Then the methodology and research approaches are also concerned in this paper. Then the result of the research will be discussed and the limitation of the present study and suggestion for further studies will be pointed out.

2. Methodology

A combined methodology of quantitative study and qualitative study is adopted in this study. Questionnaires and interviews are designed to obtain data in order to provide an overview of what under investigation.

An international group of researchers compiles the measures used in the study. Measures are either developed for the project, or taken directly or with modification from existing scales, as described below. Some other research papers inspire a questionnaire and the author modifies some items according to the particular context and participants in foreign countries. With the exception of demographic items, all the items reported here were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire is made available in Chinese. The items are randomly ordered in the questionnaire and assess a wide range of variables related to acculturation and adaptation.^[1]

The questionnaire contains many questions covering the following parts to test various constructs related to Intercultural Adaptation. Then I search the relevant information through the

network and library resources, access books that is related with this topic. Paper should have a clear point of view, well-informed, reasonable structure and rigorous, fluent statement. Under the contact with the instructor, on the thesis writing report the specific problems encountered in the process of writing to the teacher, thesis-writing tasks under the guidance of the instructor, completed in accordance with the regulations. The thesis is completed, the required format printing and stapled into a book, seriously ready paper defense. To solve the main problem of the subject is literature collected and refined their arguments on this basis, prominent topics innovative, complete literature review; topics, according to the argument, organizational literature, writing an outline , complete opening report; can start from the living environment depicted in the works, as well as the character of the hero, trying to find the relationship between the two; Finally, according to the outline and the opening report completed thesis writing.

3. Research of Intercultural Adaptation

This paper adopts both qualitative and quantitative research methods, examine the specific role of social networking in the intercultural adaptation process. And a group of people will be invited to answer some questions related to the topic and do the questionnaire, in order to do statistics and figure out the general information.

4. Language Adaptation

After investigating the information of Chinese overseas students in English-speaking countries & non-English speaking countries, it can be seen that the great majority of students choose English-speaking countries as destination countries. For those who study in English-speaking countries such as USA, UK, Australia, Canada, language is not a big issue.

For some overseas students, they even do not need to frequently interact with others in foreign language, since they can also get by without interacting with foreigners. For example, as H.Z. said, “there’s no need to communicate much with foreigners, besides having classes. I spend most of my spare time at home with my Chinese roommate. I major in math; most of the students are from China, I can communicate well with my co-nationals, and I don’t have to talk to students from other countries. Besides, I have nothing to discuss with them except things of studies.”

This is very common among Chinese overseas students who pursue their studies in English-speaking countries, such as USA and Australia. Chinese-speaking people comprise a considerable amount of population there. Especially in those popular majors, such as economics, math, accounting, etc, students are easy to find co-nationals.

However, in non-English speaking countries, language is still a big challenge. Students are forced to communicate in second language.

Before studying abroad, nearly all the students have already taken language courses; however, the limited language-training course is not of much help, especially for those studying in non-English speaking countries. Besides, there are few Chinese overseas students in those countries. Therefore, Chinese overseas students in non-English speaking countries are faced with more challenges in language.

Therefore, we can get the conclusion that Chinese overseas students in non-English speaking countries are more willing to communicate in foreign language, partly because they have few people that they can speak Chinese with, thus they are forced to speak their language. Besides, they interact more than students in English-speaking countries do.

5. Psychological Adaptation

A “Psychological adaptation”, also known as Evolved Psychological Mechanism, is evolved human or animal behavior resulting from evolutionary pressures. Having analyzing the statistics about students with overseas experience and those without overseas experience, we can see that most students do not have overseas experience before. When asked whether they have traveled abroad before, most of them give negative answers. Ella has been to Hong Kong and Macau before; Vivian has been to Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Among all the respondents who have taken the questionnaire, 25 have overseas experience before, which accounts for 36.8%, while 63.2% have never been abroad. Their expectations of overseas life are different from the reality.

At the same time, loneliness is the most reported topic during the interviews. It is common both among female students and among male students. Many report a sense of loss, isolation, anxiety, and disappointments. During the first few months, they do not have so many people to talk. They try to figure out all the information they need, but finding no one to turn to. The feeling of alienation and disappointment add to their loneliness and homesickness.

Early feelings of loneliness are intense even with those who have regular contact with people from their own. They are not ready to adapt to the new period of life, with no familiar environment or acquaintances. However, in most cases, the feeling of alienation will diminish. Once they get to know more new friends and people, they will enlarge their life circles and extend their social networks.

Thus, we can see that if there are acquaintances in that country, it will help overseas students to shorten the adaptation period. Some students suggested that if possible, one can choose a country where one has friends or relatives there, thus it will save lots of troubles.^[1]

6. Conclusion

Going abroad for further studying has been a hot issue in not only China, but also in the whole world, therefore, the communication between these students can also be seemed as the communication between the countries, the different culture and the world. Therefore, we should pay more attention to overseas students and their lives, in order to find a favorable way of adapting to their social networks better.

Unlike several decades ago, Chinese international students take overseas studying as another opportunity of gaining life experience. It is widely recognized that Chinese overseas students gain most is not knowledge, but adaptability. It is the most valuable lesson one can learn.

On the basis of the whole survey’s result, this paper concludes that: (1) Student organizations can play instrumental roles in helping students to adapt to the overseas life by providing social support. (2) Chinese social network is the primary source of emotional help. (3) Chinese international students in non-English speaking countries are more concentrate in foreign language setting and host culture. (4) Interacting with co-nationals helps students to identify with the co-culture.^[2]

The present study found that both co-national ties and non-conational ties affect overseas students’ intercultural adaptation. Chinese overseas students with higher level of foreign language skills, frequent social networks are more likely to adjust better to their life overseas.

The study fills the gap of international social network literature. The results of this study have important significance for Chinese overseas students to provide some recommendations so that they quickly adapted to the new environment.

With the growing number of Chinese overseas students studying in foreign countries, there is an urgent need to provide essential help to those students to adapt to the exotic culture soon.

The present study is far from perfect, but it has fulfilled its purpose and has contributed to the research of Chinese overseas students’ intercultural adaptation. The hopes more similar research will be done to further investigate the correlation between social ties and intercultural adaptation.

References

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