

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF PAKISTANI STUDENTS' DAILY LIFE IN CHINA

Gong Mengchen^{1*} and Diyana Kamarudin²

¹Yichun University, 336000 Yichun City, China.

²City University Malaysia, 51800 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

ABSTRACT – This study aims at the cross-cultural adaptation of 192 Pakistani students majoring in MBBS in Yichun University, Jiangxi Province, China. Taking perceived stress, coping mechanism, Chinese proficiency and social support as independent variables, social interaction adaptation, communication adaptation, study environment adaptation and living environment adaptation as dependent variables, research and analysis of gender and grade as regulatory variables and university support as intermediate variables. The researchers studied the positive and negative relationship between their variables and dependent variables. Through the distribution of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, their cross-cultural daily life and learning during university were observed.

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INTRODUCTION

Study in China

According to China's Ministry of Education, 492200 international students from 196 countries and regions studied in 1004 universities (MOE,2018) in 31 provinces in China in 2018. With the deepening of China's reform and opening up, the gradual enhancement of China's comprehensive national strength and the continuous improvement of its international status, the education of international students in China has also been greatly developed. In terms of structure and level, it has developed from a single language student to a compound structure including Short-term study students, undergraduates and graduate students. In terms of educational background, the proportion of high-level students is increasing (Yang, 2004).

Pakistani Students Studying in China

According to official statistics from the Ministry of Education of the Chinese government, China had more than 18000 students from Pakistan in 2016. By 2017, the number of Pakistani students studying in China had increased to more than 22000, and in 2018, the number of Pakistani students studying in China had reached 28023 (MOE, 2019). Make Pakistan the world's third-largest source of international students in China (MOE, 2018). According to the 2017 Pakistan domestic survey data, the place where Asians are most willing and want to learn is China (Wang, 2017). Therefore, it is of great significance to strengthen the research on the cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani students in China.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

International students face a variety of problems, such as academic stress, language difficulties, climate and diet discomfort, no fixed residence, financial constraints, and no relatives, and usually communicate in languages other than their mother tongue. In addition, it is difficult to be accepted by the host society, health problems, and some students even face racial discrimination. The differences in language and culture further aggravate the adaptation difficulties of international students. Eating disorders and irritability, paying too much attention to health, general depression, mistrust, and even hostility to host country members are all external manifestations of the mental stress brought about by cultural differences (Yang, 2004). In any case, many international students have experienced conflicts between their own cultures and those of their hosts, which, if left unaddressed, may adversely affect areas such as research, social circles and self-esteem (Jamal & Wok, 2020).

Research Scope

In this study, 192 Pakistani students from Yichun University were investigated by distributing online questionnaires. The content of the questionnaire includes basic demographic informatics contents such as gender, grade, Chinese proficiency and so on. As well as the survey of the perceived stress, coping mechanism, social support and university support while studying in China and their communication, social interaction, study environment, and living environment adaptation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cross-cultural Adaptation

In 1936, American anthropologists Redfield, Linton and Heskowitz jointly drafted the Memorandum on Cultural Adaptation, during which they put forward the concept of "cultural adaptation". It was pointed out that cultural adaptation refers to "changes in cultural patterns caused by continuous contact between two groups of different cultures" (Redfield, 1936). It can be explained that continuous or direct cultural contact between individuals and two groups with different cultural backgrounds will lead to a change in the original cultural pattern of one or two groups (CabasseLJJ, 2003).

U-shaped Curve Model of Cross-cultural Adaptation

The study found that they can learn to adapt to American culture in three stages: the initial stage, the lonely stage and the recovery stage. These three stages can be expressed by the u-shaped curve model, from the beginning of the decline of fresh feeling satisfaction to the stage of emotional recovery.

Deutsch & won (1993), Morris (1960), Oberg (1960), 1960) and Smoli (1963) improved their u-curve model. Their research constitutes a relatively complete u-shaped curve cross-cultural adaptation model. The complete u-curve cross-cultural adaptation model includes four stages: the honeymoon stage, crisis stage, recovery stage and bicultural adaptation stage.

Cross-cultural Adaptation Stress

Both real and perceived cultural differences may cause sojourners to face many difficulties in life, work and study and feel a lot of stress. Smart and Smart (1995) defined the stress that students feel after entering a new environment as the stress of cross-cultural adaptation (Has him & Yang, 2003). Berry (1997) proposed that cultural adaptation stress is a stress response to life events based on cultural adaptation experience. They can come from different aspects of life stressors, such as physical, biological, social, cultural and functional aspects (Hamamura & Laird, 2014).

The Coping Mechanism of Cross-cultural Adaptation

When cross-cultural adapters with different characteristics experience cross-cultural stress, different coping mechanisms will lead to different adaptation results. Berry's theory of major cultural adaptation is based on the early research of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) on stress and coping. To some extent, the four "cultural adaptation strategies" adopted by culturally adapted groups or individuals, namely, assimilation, separation, marginalisation and integration, reflect their coping strategies (Berry, 1997, 2006) to manage their relationship with the host / dominant cultural group.

METHODOLOGY

Research Hypothesis

H1: There has an impact of correlation between Pakistani students' perceived stress, coping mechanism, social support, university support and their cross-cultural adaptation when gender as a regulating variable.

- H2: There has an impact of correlation between Pakistani students' perceived stress, coping mechanism, social support, university support and their cross-cultural adaptation when grade as a regulating variable.
- H3: The perceived stress has a negative impact on cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani students.
- H4: The coping mechanism adopted by Pakistani students after they feel stress has a positive impact on their cross-cultural adaptation.
- H5: The Chinese proficiency of Pakistani students has a positive impact on their cross-cultural adaptation.
- H6: The social support received by Pakistani students has a positive impact on their cross-cultural adaptation.
- H7: The university support received by Pakistani students has a positive impact on their cross-cultural adaptation.
- H8: When university support exists as an intermediate variable between perceived stress, coping mechanism, Chinese proficiency, social support and the cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani students, we assume that it can play a mediating role.

Research Object

The use of the Flipped Classroom method in this study was also carried out to see if there were differences in the aspects of dance sports in the experimental group that had used the Flipped Classroom method. The average achievement of dance sport aspects in the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group can be seen in Table 4. The results showed that the average mastery of dance sports aspects in the post-test was higher when compared to the average for the pre-test. The average performance of dance sports aspects in the pre-test was 12.2 with a standard deviation of 1.643, while the post-test showed 26.0 with a standard deviation of 3.162.

Research Design

According to the actual situation and influencing factors (gender, perceived stress, coping mechanism, Chinese proficiency, social support and university support), 38 questions were designed for the cross-cultural adaptability of Pakistani students at Yichun University. And ten students were selected to conduct a face-to-face semi-structured interview.

Questionnaire Content

Question 1-3 is to register the demographic information of the interviewees. Question 4-7 is a survey of the stress perceived by Pakistani students coming to China; Question 8-10 is a survey of the coping mechanism adopted by Pakistani students when they feel the stress; Question 11-14 is a survey of social support received by Pakistani students while studying in China. Question 15-19 is a survey of university support received by Pakistani students while studying in China. Question 20-24 is a survey of the social interaction and adaptation of Pakistani students while studying in China; Question 25-28 is a survey of the communication and adaptation of Pakistani students while studying in China; Question 29-32 is a survey of the adaptation of Pakistani students to the study environment during their study in China. Question 33-38 is a survey of the adaptation of Pakistani students to their living environment while studying in China.

Semi-structured Interview Content

The first is to ask the interviewees about their basic personal information, including gender and grade; the second is to ask the interviewees about their Chinese proficiency, especially what they think they really know, rather than the certificate of passing the exam. Third, ask the interviewees about the use of Chinese to communicate with the locals. The fourth is to ask the interviewees about the stress they perceive in their life and study, as well as the changes in stress and the coping mechanism. The

fifth is to ask the interviewees about their social support and university support, and finally, ask about their adaptation to the living environment and study environment.

Research Methods

The main research methods used in this study include literature research, questionnaire survey, interview survey and comparative study, as well as the combination of qualitative and quantitative research to analyse the survey data.

Data Analysis

Using SPSS22.0 to analyse the reliability of the questionnaire by Cronbach α . Using Bartlett sphere test & KMO to test the validity, coverage and scientificity of the survey index system.

CONCLUSION

Reliability and Validity

The design and survey data of this questionnaire are of high quality and have the conditions for further model analysis. The Pakistani students who participated in the survey had moderate stress on studying in China, adopted a high-level coping mechanism for studying in China, and received a high level of social support. In terms of the degree of adaptation to studying abroad in China, the overall adaptation of social interaction, communication, study environment and living environment is good. The reliability of perceived stress, coping mechanism, social support, university support, social communication, communication, study environment and living environment meets the requirements, the overall reliability is good, and the validity basically meets the requirements.

Model Aggregation Validity and Discriminant Validity

The inherent quality of the model is ideal, the observed variables can effectively reflect the potential characteristics of its common factor dimension, and the aggregate validity is good. There is a good discrimination validity among the variables in the overall model, such as perceived stress, coping mechanism, social support, university support, social communication, communication, study environment, living environment and so on.

Prediction Ability and Test Results of the Model

The endogenous variables of university support, social interaction adaptation, communication adaptation, study environment adaptation and living environment adaptation meet the requirements of predictive ability. There are no serious collinear problems among perceived stress, coping mechanism, social support, university support, social communication, communication, study environment, living environment and variables, and the results of the model test are reliable.

Questionnaire result statistics

Chinese Proficiency of the Participants

The distribution of Chinese proficiency of the participants was as follows: HSK1 level, three students accounted for 1.56%; HSK 2 level, seven students accounted for 3.65%; HSK 3 level, 37 students accounted for 19.27%, HSK 4 level, 137 students accounted for 71.35%, HSK 5 level, eight students accounted for 4.17%.

Perceived Stress of the Participants

Dietary adaptation was 59% satisfactory, 27% neutral and 14% dissatisfied, while environmental adaptation was 61% satisfactory, 28% neutral and 10% dissatisfied. 84% were satisfied with social adaptation, 13% were neutral, and 3% were dissatisfied. In terms of adaptation to the new civilisation, 73% are satisfied, 12% are neutral, and 5% are not satisfied.

Coping Mechanism of the Participants

Positive response to difficulties, 80% satisfied, 7% neutral, 3% dissatisfied, 79% satisfied, 17% neutral, and 4% dissatisfied in seeking solutions. In terms of a sense of belonging, 80% are satisfied, 15% are neutral, and 5% are dissatisfied.

Social Support Received by Participants

When it comes to getting help from friends, 78% are satisfied, 14% are neutral, and 7% are not satisfied. In terms of friend sharing, 80% are satisfied, 13% are neutral, and 7% are not satisfied. As for the companionship of friends, 81% were satisfied, 6% were neutral, and 3% were dissatisfied. In terms of listening and conversation, 81% were satisfied, 12% were neutral, and 7% were dissatisfied.

University Support Received by Participants

In terms of relationships with teachers, 81% were satisfied, 11% were neutral, and 8% were dissatisfied. In terms of accommodation, 79% were satisfied, 14% were neutral, and 7% were not satisfied. In terms of restaurant diet, 56% were satisfied, 24% were neutral, and 20% were dissatisfied. In terms of hospital services, 69% were satisfied, 21% were neutral, and 10% were dissatisfied. In terms of university activities, 80% are satisfied, 13% are neutral, and 7% are not satisfied.

Social Interaction Adaptation of Participants

In terms of seeking help in social interaction, 84% were satisfied, 9% neutral and 7% dissatisfied. In terms of willingness to self-expression, 58% were satisfied, 21% were neutral, and 11% were dissatisfied. In terms of self-expression ability, 78% were satisfied, 17% were neutral, and 5% were dissatisfied. In terms of communication with other ethnic groups, 80% were satisfied, 17% were neutral, and 3% were dissatisfied. In terms of the ability to deal with problems independently, 76% are satisfied, 20% are neutral, and 4% are dissatisfied.

Communication Adaptation of Participants

In terms of the ability to make friends, 78% are satisfied, 18% are neutral, and 4% are not satisfied. In dealing with interpersonal relationships, 93% were dissatisfied, 6% were neutral, and 1% were dissatisfied. In terms of willingness to participate in social activities, 87% were satisfied, 11% were neutral, and 2% were dissatisfied. In terms of Chinese communication ability, 63% are satisfied, 28% are neutral, and 9% are not satisfied.

Study Environment Adaptation of Participants

In terms of library use, 85% are satisfied, 13% are neutral, and 2% are not satisfied. In terms of teachers' teaching methods, 86% are satisfied, 11% are neutral, and 3% are not satisfied. In terms of understanding the content of the class, 91% are satisfied, 8% are neutral, and 1% are not satisfied. In terms of the scoring system of Chinese teachers, 69% are satisfied, 22% are neutral, and 9% are not satisfied.

Living Environment Adaptation of Participants

In terms of compliance with rules and regulations, 72% were satisfied, 15% were neutral, and 13% were dissatisfied. In terms of shopping convenience, 92% are satisfied, 6% are neutral, and 2% are not satisfied. In terms of dietary convenience, 58% were satisfied, 22% were neutral, and 20% were dissatisfied. In terms of climate adaptation, 85% are satisfied, 12% are neutral, and 3% are not satisfied. In terms of accommodation, 79% were satisfied, and 17% were not satisfied with 4%. In terms of the pace of life, 86% were satisfied, 11% were neutral, and 3% were dissatisfied.

Questionnaire's Summary

Through research and analysis, it is found that gender and grade play a regulatory role under certain conditions; perceived stress has no significant negative impact on social communication adaptation but has a significant negative impact on other cross-cultural adaptation; coping mechanism has no significant negative impact on communication adaptation and study environment adaptation, but has a significant negative impact on other cross-cultural adaptation. Chinese proficiency has no significant positive effect on communication adaptation but has a significant positive effect on other

cross-cultural adaptations, while social support has no significant positive effect on study environment adaptation and living environment adaptation but has a significant positive effect on other cross-cultural adaptations. University support has a significant positive impact on all cross-cultural adaptations, and university support has a significant mediating effect among all independent variables.

According to the analysis of the interview results, it is found that the Pakistani students of Yichun University are good at social communication adaptation, communication adaptation and study environment adaptation. In addition to diet adaptation and religious adaptation, the rest of them adapt well.

Summary of Semi-structured Interview

Most of the respondents think that their Chinese proficiency is between HSK3 and HSK4, and they all express their desire to continue to learn Chinese and improve their Chinese communication skills.

All the interviewees have Chinese friends and said they had received help from Chinese friends and strangers. The help of Chinese friends is mainly focused on language learning and professional learning, introduction and payment of goods in offline supermarkets and online shopping, as well as directions.

All the interviewees felt varying degrees of stress, which came from financial support, diet adaptation, taking homework exams and the implementation of daily religious rituals. Among them, all the respondents said that dietary adaptation brought the most stress, certain stress due to the relevant system of religious management in China during the implementation of daily religious rituals, and made it clear that there was no stress for daily study.

The respondents highly affirmed the support provided by the university, including the curriculum, teaching methods, dormitory conditions, study environment and so on.

But at the same time, they also put forward higher requirements, hoping that universities can set up public kitchens to facilitate international students to cook their own meals and alleviate the difficulties caused by dietary adaptation. The other is to ask the university to change the closing time of the dormitory adjusted due to the epidemic, from 10:00 to 10:30. So that students can exercise late and buy midnight snacks.

Although all the students feel that the university's management system is very strict, they all think that the strict management regulations are to ensure the safety of international students' lives and study in China, and they all say they can understand and accept them.

In terms of living environment, respondents said that dietary adaptation was the biggest problem. They are well or even very well adapted to the rest of the living environment, such as climate, transportation, clothing style and mode of payment.

In terms of religious adaptation, respondents said they did feel stressed, but considering that this rule applies to foreigners of all other religious beliefs, respondents said it was very fair and acceptable.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

According to the analysis of questionnaire data, gender plays a regulatory role in perceived stress and living environment adaptation, social support and university support, while grade plays a regulatory role in university support and study environment adaptation.

Perceived stress has no significant negative effect on social communication adaptation but has a significant negative effect on other cross-cultural adaptation; The coping mechanism has no significant negative effect on communication adaptation and study environment adaptation but has a significant negative effect on other cross-cultural adaptation; Chinese proficiency has no significant positive effect on communication adaptation, but has a significant positive effect on other cross-cultural adaptation;

Social support has no significant positive effect on study environment adaptation and living environment adaptation, but has a significant positive impact on other cross-cultural adaptation; University support has a significant positive impact on all cross-cultural adaptation; The mediating effect of university support among all independent variables is significant.

According to the analysis of the interview results, it is found that the Pakistani students of Yichun University are good at social communication adaptation, communication adaptation and study environment adaptation. Except that it is difficult to adapt to diet and a little stress to adapt to religion, all the others adapt well.

Recommendation

This study summarises the current situation of cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani students at Yichun University and analyses the causes of the problems. Finally, it is proposed that international students face cross-cultural pressure correctly and improve their ability to cope with the pressure. First of all, international students should prepare for studying abroad in advance, treat different cultures with an open mind, enhance their cross-cultural communication skills, adapt to the living and learning environment of the host country as far as possible, strengthen the management of their own cross-cultural adaptability, and participate in more social activities.

This study also puts forward how to strengthen the cross-cultural social adaptation of international students from the aspects of increasing social communication, getting more social support and participating in more social activities.

First of all, it requires the whole society to make clear the correct direction of international education and create a friendly environment for international students. Finally, it is necessary to constantly improve the management ability of international students in all sectors of society.

Finally, this study puts forward some suggestions from the aspects of university support and cross-cultural adaptation of international students to create a harmonious cross-cultural environment within the university and standardise the daily management mechanism of international students in the university. And set up a platform to pay close attention to the physical and mental health of international students, and finally improve the logistics support system of the university.

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