Cross-cultural Adaptation and Management Strategies of Pakistani Students' Daily Life in China

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Abstract – **According to the Ministry of Education of China, a total of 492200 overseas students from 196 countries and regions studied in 1004 colleges and universities in 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) of China in 2018 (MOE, 2018). With the development of global internationalization, the exchange of students between countries is becoming more and more frequently. Facing the growing number of international students, the cross-cultural adaptation of international students is more and more concerned by researchers. These researchers conduct cross-cultural adaptation research from the perspectives of anthropology, linguistic, psychology, sociology and pedagogy, presented various research results. At the same time, the researchers also found various factors affecting cross-cultural adaptation. After the analysis, these researchers also put forward a variety of ways to eliminate or reduce the problem of cross-cultural adaptation of international students. It is found that both domestic and foreign researchers hold different opinions on the cross-cultural adaptation of international students studying in China.Some domestic researchers believe that international students in China facing psychological barriers, poor adaptability (Wang, 2013), moderate adaptation difficulties (Lee & Gan, 2004) and even more difficult adaptation (Yang, 2005). The aim of this study was to investigate the cross-cultural adaptation of 221 Pakistani international students living in Yichun, Jiangxi Province, China, and to obtain results closer to the actual situation.**

Key words–**International students; Cross-cultural adaptation.**

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I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of global internationalization, student exchanges between different countries are becoming more and more frequent. According to UNESCO statistics, the number of people studying abroad increased from 1.4 million in 1999 to 4.8 million in 2016. Students from 209 countries study in at least 143 host countries (UNESCO, 2018). The growth rate of international students reflects the speed of the university's internationalization. From 2000 to 2014, the global number of international students more than doubled, with an average annual increase of about 7% (OECD, 2016). From a global perspective, five English-speaking countries (UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) enroll 45% of the world's international students (UNESCO, 2016). By region, European universities enroll the most international students, accounting for 48% of the global total. It is followed by North America and Oceania (OECD, 2015). The US and UK accounted for the largest share of international students, 16 per cent and 13 per cent respectively in 2014.Take the United States as an example. In 2014, about 900,000 foreign students came to study in the United States, mainly from China, South Korea and India (Henry, 2014). In March 2018, this number increased to 1.21 million, with 50% of international students coming from China and India (Zong & Batalova, 2018). Traditionally, China is one of the three countries exporting international students (OECD,2013,2016), but with the rapid development of China's economy, the continuous improvement of its international status and the continuous optimization of various policies, the status of China's higher education has also improved. For example, the Outline of The National Medium - and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) issued by the Ministry of Education in 2010 clearly points out that further expanding the number of foreign students and continuously improving the quality of Education in China is an important goal.

(MOE, 2010). Since then, China has not only sent a large number of students to study abroad, but also warmly welcomed students from other countries to study in China. It has become the destination country with the largest proportion of international students in Asia (Asian Development Bank Institute, 2014).

According to the Ministry of Education of China, in 2018, 492,200 international students from 196 countries and regions studied in 1,004 colleges and universities in 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) (MOE, 2018).

Under the influence of the trend of internationalization of higher education, foreign students have a more comprehensive understanding of China. These understandings will help them better integrate into China's social and cultural environment. Among them, Pakistan is one of China's staunchest Allies and most popular countries, with the number of Pakistani students in China increasing year by year.

According to official statistics from the Chinese government's Ministry of Education, in 2016, South Korea had the largest number of students in China, while there were more than 18,000 students from Pakistan. By 2017, the number of Pakistani students studying in China had increased to more than 22,000, making Pakistan the third largest source of foreign students of China (MOE, 2018).

According to the 2017 Pakistan domestic survey data, the most willing and desired place for Asians to study is China (Wang Miao, 2017). Therefore, it is of great significance to strengthen the research on cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani students in China.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Each culture contains different social environment, way of life and way of thinking. With the increase in the frequency and quantity of international student exchanges, a series of problems such as exclusion and acceptance, assimilation or isolation gradually emerge when these students come to host countries and face cultures difference from their own countries. Regardless, many international students experience a clash of cultures between their own and the host's culture, which if not dealt with could have detrimental effects on areas such as studies, social-circles, and self-esteem (Jamal & Wok, 2020). International students

encounter various challenges when pursuing their higher education outside their home nation (Bradley, 2000). This poses a challenge for international students' cross-cultural adaptation.

Although Pakistan, like China, belongs to the Asian plate, there are great difference in culture, history, living customs and religious beliefs. This difference is mainly reflected in the view of time, gender, hierarchy, morality, way of thinking and way of discourse (Zhao, 2007).In recent years, China has expanded the enrollment of international students from friendly Pakistan in accordance with the outline of the National Medium - and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) issued by the Ministry of Education of China in 2010. At the same time, due to the friendly atmosphere between the two countries, more and more Pakistani students choose to study in China. While they bring foreign cultures into China, different cultural backgrounds also bring cross-cultural adaptation problems to these international students to a certain extent.

The cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani international students has attracted the attention of Chinese researchers. They studied the cross-cultural adaptability of existing Pakistani international students after coming to China from the aspects of psychological adaptation, social adaptation and academic adaptation. They found that Pakistani students do have cross-cultural adaptation problems during their study in China (An, 2017). Influenced by cultural differences and other factors, they have a large number of disorders in language barrier, daily life, religious belief and other aspects (Zhang, 2018). Pakistani students do have great problems of cross-cultural pressure adaptation in China (Cao, 2015).

Therefore, we can extend Oberg's theory of culture shock. Oberg points out that when people are exposed to a different culture, they have a variety of psychological problems, such as insecurity, anxiety, changes in mental behavior, and mood disorders (Oberg, 1960).According to the culture shock theory, when Pakistani international students encounter insurmountable obstacles in their cross-cultural adaptation, they will experience culture shock, resulting in tension, anxiety, confusion of values, inadequate interpersonal communication and loss of life security. This creates all kinds of obstacles that negatively affect their studies in China. For international students,

severe culture shock can lead to disruption of their studies and failure to plan their lives (Zhao, 2007). For Chinese universities, international students who cannot successfully survive the culture shock phase will expand their personal experience, which will affect their evaluation of the quality of international student management in Chinese universities. The most serious problem is that if they do not successfully survive the culture shock phase, they will make a negative evaluation of the effectiveness of the Chinese government's international student exchange policy (Su, 2017).

Therefore, it is necessary to accurately capture the cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani international students in China, analyze the causes of cultural shock, and put forward targeted intervention measures to help international students successfully survive the period of cross-cultural shock. It is also necessary to help universities improve the software and hardware upgrade of foreign student management and improve the quality of international student management. It plays an important role in helping countries and governments stabilize development policies for foreign students and enhance the reputation of international educational exchanges.

Through reading a large number of relevant articles, it is found that the following theories are generally accepted by most researchers.

Cross cultural adaptation theory (Kim, 1998), Culture adaptation is a process in which people who have completed the basic socialization process in one culture are constantly in direct contact with another unfamiliar culture for a long time (Kim, 1998).

Culture shock theory (Oberg, 1960). In 1960, Oberg summarized and named all kinds of psychological problems that people will have in the process of cross-cultural adaptation as "cultural shock", but this maladjustment will gradually become adaptation, and people will slowly integrate the new culture into their existing cultural structure (Chen, 2010).

Cross cultural U-curve adaptation theory many researchers refer to the U-curve model in the process of studying cross-cultural adaptation. This U-shaped curve model divides the cross-cultural adaptation period into four stages: honeymoon period, crisis period, recovery period and bicultural adaptation period (Lysgaard, 1955; Deutsch & won, 1993; Morris, 1960; Oberg, 1960; Smalley, 1963). They observed the psychological state of the respondents who experienced cross-cultural adaptation and recorded the psychological and emotional ups and downs of these respondents.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Global cross-cultural adaptation

Almost all international students will face cross-cultural adaptation challenges when they first arrive, whether European students come to Asia or Asian students go to Europe. Even student exchanges between Asian countries can lead to cross-cultural adaptation. International students with different cultural backgrounds face many problems in the process of entering new socio-cultural and academic fields (Garvey, Rolfe, Pearson, & Treloar, 2009). Students must develop new ways of thinking, learning, and communicating (Mclean & Ransom, 2005). Similarly, it applies to other regions. As long as they come from places with different cultural backgrounds, there will be cross-cultural migration. Previous ways of communication begin to become a challenge in newer environments, so people must also learn and develop new ways of communication (Liu et al., 2019). If they want to study and live freely in the new cultural background, the problem of cross-cultural adaptation will arise.

International students encountered problems pertaining not only to socio-cultural adaptation, such as adjustment to social customs and norms (Schwarzer, Hahn, & Schroder, 1994), and psychological adaptation, such as feeling depressed, anxious, and lonely due to the loss of their social support networks (Sandhu & Asrabadi,1994; Yang & Clum,1995), but also academic adaptation (Hayes & Lin,1994; Kagan & Cohen, 1990; Ying & Liese, 1994).

Different directions of cross-cultural adaptation research

Up to now, most researchers of cross-cultural adaptation in the world still study the population with cultural transfer from two aspects of social adaptation and psychological adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990). Social adaptation refers to cultural skills acquired in order to survive in a specific social and cultural environment. Psychological adaptation refers to emotional stability and satisfaction.

Guided by the research theories of these predecessors, combined with the current situation of increasingly frequent international population mobility, many researchers around the world are interested in this and carry out research from their respective scientific fields on the cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants and international students in different countries. Researchers look at such a wide range. They conducted research on cross-cultural adaptation of interviewees from the perspectives of anthropology, linguistics, psychology, sociology and pedagogy, showing a variety of research results and providing valuable references for other researchers.

They focus on the cross-cultural adaptation of international students, arguing that international students make a great contribution to overseas academia and that they often face challenges in adapting to new learning environments, with many facing daily language and academic challenges (DeVos, 2003; leader & forgasz, 2004; Skyrme, 2007).

They also looked at the problem from anthropological and psychological perspectives and found that international students who are secure, affectionate and attached to their family cultures have less acculturation pressure and less discrimination against the host culture (Desiree, 2017).

In view of these phenomena, researchers have carried out investigations and studies, and analyzed the deep causes of these cross-cultural adaptation problems. Psychologists believe that the ability of sojourners to adapt to the new culture may be affected by their existing attachment, internalized psychological environment and biological sensitivity to the environment (Desiree, 2017). Sociologists believe that the problem of cross-cultural adaptation is caused by the migrants' lack of understanding of the host culture (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Through surveys of international college students, some researchers have found that international students lack ways to relax and unwind, which may inadvertently exacerbate loneliness or depression (Beyers & Goossens, 2002; sawir, 2007).

Factors affecting cross-cultural adaptation

At the same time, they also found various factors affecting cross-cultural adaptation. Psychologists and anthropologists believe that cultural intelligence is highly correlated with cross-cultural ability, showing a positive correlation (Ming, 2020). Friendly people, perfect infrastructure and beautiful and safe living environment are important external factors (Sun, 2019). The reduction of uncertainty is the key to the reduction of cross-cultural adaptation anxiety, which is the core of cultural adaptation (Jian & Hua, 2015). More researchers have found that meaningful social contact will have a significant impact on the emotional well-being and learning of international students in host countries (Tran & vu, 2017; Yang, 2016). This means that the researchers believe that social support is critical to the process of cross-cultural adaptation. Sojourners who receive a higher level of support from others tend to feel better than those who receive little support (Zhang & Goodson, 2011).

Solutions for cross-cultural adaptation

After analysis, these researchers also proposed a variety of methods to eliminate or reduce the cross-cultural adaptation problems of international students. Many of them put forward solutions from the perspective of university management, such as encouraging teachers to contact more international students to learn and understand cultural differences, deal with these cultural differences reasonably and skillfully in teaching skills (Carie & Kylar,2021).

Some researchers also seek solutions from the perspective of foreign students. For example, it is suggested that international students should participate in the national interaction of the new culture, participate in unfamiliar daily activities, and solve problems in the new environment to adapt to the new social environment (Hunley, 2010). At the same time, it is also suggested that international students should establish friendship with the nationals of the host country and make more contacts with members of foreign groups, this can reduce stereotypes and prejudices and promote tolerance and acceptance (Ozer, Kunst, & Schwartz, 2021). It is believed that social support from friends can significantly improve cultural adaptability (Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie, 2005). The aim of intercultural adaptation for international students is to have cultural resonance, open mind, maintain emotional stability, and always maintain initiative and flexibility in social activities.

IV. METHOD

Through reading and comparing the literature of cross-cultural adaptation research in China and the world, the design of this research is a systematic literature review on studies of the culture, the pressure of cross-cultural adaptation, the stage of cross-cultural adaptation, cultural shock and the coping mechanism of cross-cultural adaptation. It provides a better foundation for empirical research and lays a theoretical foundation.

V. FINDINGS

In addition, through reading a large number of literature, it is found that domestic and foreign researchers have different views on the cross-cultural adaptation of international students studying in China. Some domestic research literatures generally believe that international students in China face psychological barriers, poor adaptability (Wang, 2013), moderate adaptation difficulties (Lei & Gan, 2004) and even more difficult adaptation (Yang, 2005).

(Peng, 2017) also believe that the three dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation of international students in China have good performance. Foreign students from Africa and Asia see no obvious discomforts other than the language barrier when living and studying in China (Yuan, 2018).

Also published overseas, some researchers believe that, it was revealed that international students' s level of satisfaction in terms of study, administration and living services to be consistently and remarkably lower than those of students in other countries and international benchmarks (Ding, 2010; Wen, Chen, Bai, & Cao,2013).

Regarding the social and cultural experience in China, the Pakistani students seemed highly satisfied. Most of the students didn't find any difficulty in their adjustment to the new environment as well as in adopting the social culture environment of China (Sehrish, et al., 2019).

On the contrary, it is also described in overseas literature that international students in China had low levels of satisfaction, received inadequately social support, and felt separated from local communities (Ding, 2016; Li, 2015).

VII. CONCLUSION

With the frequent cross-cultural communication around the world, more and more foreigners come to live or study in China. Faced with the increasing number of international students, many researchers began to pay attention to the cross-cultural adaptation of international students. Especially in the past decade, many Chinese researchers have become interested in it. They have studied the cross-cultural adaptation of international students in different degrees from psychology, anthropology, sociology, pedagogy and other aspects, and the research results show diversity.

From the perspective of cross-cultural adaptation studies of international students around the world, there are few studies on the cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani international students by non-Chinese researchers, and even fewer studies on the cross-cultural adaptation of Pakistani students studying in China.

This is a very interesting phenomenon. The aim of this study was to investigate the cross-cultural adaptation of 221 Pakistani international students living in Yichun, Jiangxi Province, China, and to obtain results closer to the actual situation.

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