

Study on Psychological Adaptation of International Students from Countries along the “B&R” in Nanjing Higher Vocational Colleges

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ABSTRACT. *Taking three vocational colleges in Nanjing for example, this paper analyzes psychological adaptation of international students from countries along the “B&R”. First, it analyzes their adaptation problems, including homesickness and depression. Then, it explores causes of them: great academic pressure, difficulties in social and cultural adaptation, employment pressure as well as weakening or breaking of social support network. Finally, it analyzes psychological endurance of international students from countries along “B&R”.*

KEYWORDS: *psychological adaptation; international students ; B&R; higher vocational college*

1.Introduction

In addition to having trouble in academic learning and daily life, international students from countries along the belt and road also feel uncomfortable psychologically. They bear great psychological pressure, such as homesickness and depression, which often affect their emotions and the rhythm of their adaptation to Chinese culture. 156 students from the “B&R” in three higher vocational colleges have been surveyed and the research results are as follows.

2. Overview of Psychological Problems of International Students from countries along the “B&R”

Psychological problems, to a certain extent, are deep-seated inner psychological structure formed by the long-term influence of certain cultural and social factors on a person. In other words, cross-cultural psychological adaptation is a deeper problem, but these deep-seated problems can also be expressed through students' emotions in different forms^[1]. The article will explore this issue from the perspectives of homesickness and depression.

2.1 Homesickness

The most intuitive feeling of students from countries along “B&R” in China is missing their hometown, family and friends. Many students say that although they can call or video-chat with their families every day, they can't be with their families physically, which makes them want to finish their learning and return home as soon as possible.

It is natural that international students from countries along the route may have certain difficulties in coping with homesickness. On the one hand, it shows that their homesickness in China is apparent and sometimes quite serious, and it can also be reasonably assumed that they may have some difficulties in coping with it in China. On the other hand, China is an utterly new living environment for most foreign students, who not only have to face the great pressure of learning, but also have to adapt themselves to the new environment. It is inevitable that they will miss their parents and friends who are far away from them. However, if they can find a way to let them integrate into the life in China as soon as possible, maybe they will forget all these bad emotions for the time being and take an active part in the new life.

2.2 Depression

For different students, the symptoms of depression may be different. Some students say that when they do not understand teachers' lecture, they will feel extremely depressed; some say that they will feel extremely depressed when they see others do some unacceptable behavior; some students say that they will be extremely depressed when they encounter difficulties in their life in China; some students say that they will feel extremely depressed when they want to go home but can not make it. All these indicate that the psychological depression of international students from countries along the belt and road is a very big problem in China^[2].

3. Causes of Psychological Problems of International Students from Countries along the “B&R”

3.1 Great Academic Pressure

The main purpose of international students is to learn Chinese, which plays an important role in their life. However, their poor English makes them in a more disadvantaged position compared to students from English-speaking countries as English can be a very useful middle language when foreign students learn Chinese. Only 12.8% of the surveyed students feel that it is not difficult to cope with the learning pressure, that is, 87.2% of the students have some difficulties in coping with academic achievement.

3.2 Difficulties in Social and Cultural Adaptation

The social and cultural adaptation of international students from countries along the belt and road in China mainly includes living environment, interpersonal communication and so on. The living environment mainly includes diet, climate, urban traffic and so on. Nanjing's food is spicy, which brings some problems to these international students. Many students reported that when they first came to China, whether on campus or off campus, as long as they ate spicy food, many of them had diarrhea and gastroenteritis^[3]. As for traffic, on the one hand, Nanjing city traffic is quite convenient; on the other hand, traffic congestion is also serious. Almost all the students interviewed said that the weather in Nanjing changed too fast. Once summer passed, it was winter, and there was no autumn at all. It was really uncomfortable. International students from countries along the belt and road have serious interpersonal problems, and most of them only communicate with their classmates and compatriots.

In interpersonal communication, language barrier will lead them to gradually exclude communication with others. According to the results of the interview, they also have the habit of clustering. No matter in class or after class, students from the same country are always together. They communicate neither in Chinese nor in English. Instead, they prefer to communicate in their mother tongue. Only when they don't understand a certain problem, they will ask for help in Chinese. In life, they will choose to isolate themselves because of language barrier. Therefore, generally speaking, international students only communicate with their own compatriots and their teachers.

3.3 Employment Pressure

There are not many students from countries along the belt and road who come to China for work. However, from a deeper level, learning Chinese is a means for them to survive in the future. The final purpose of learning is to secure a good job after graduation. To achieve this goal, they should learn Chinese well, get high marks, and pass HSK-4 or HSK-5, which makes them face great pressure all the time.

3.4 Weakening or Breaking of Social Support Network

Social support is a sociological term. It was proposed by Raschke in the 1970s^[4]. Social support network refers to the contact between a group of individuals, through which individuals can maintain their social identity and obtain emotional support, material assistance and services, information and new social contacts. When the social support network of individuals is larger, more extensive and fully utilized, the ability of individuals to cope with environmental challenges is stronger.

International students have leave their parents, classmates and friends to pursue

their study. Studying abroad means that they are alienated and obstructed in time and space^[5]. Those social support networks that provide them with help and support in the past will have the risk of weakening or disappearing, and it will take a certain time and conditions to re-establish the social support network. To a certain extent, it makes cross-cultural adaptation more difficult to leave the original social support network. In fact, all kinds of psychological pressure caused by learning and life, the weakening or breaking of the original social support network of international students should be responsible for them to some extent. Therefore, it is imperative to solve the psychological adaptation difficulties for international students and rebuild their social support network in time.

4. Analysis of Psychological Endurance of International Students from Countries along “B&R”

Students from 65 different countries and regions along the route have different cultural backgrounds, different personal interests and hobbies, and different personalities, so there are great differences in psychological endurance of each person.

Based on the survey results, first of all, boys' bearing capacity is generally higher than girls' and boys will be more calm in dealing with problems, while girls tend to cry. Secondly, students with cheerful personality is better than those introverted students. Cheerful students are willing to, and will actively integrate into the new life in China. In classroom, they ask questions if they don't understand, and communicate with classmates harmoniously; in life, they actively participate in various activities, deal with different people, and have the courage to try all kinds of different life to make many different friends, which enables them to ask for help from different people when they encounter problems and get quick solutions. The introverted students have a small social support network. In addition to asking their parents and their closest friends for help, they also seek the help of their compatriots. However, in the face of problems, the solutions are limited, so it is more difficult for them to adapt, which in turn increases psychological burden on them. Finally, the biggest factor of psychological endurance ability of these international students is language proficiency. Students with higher language level have better psychological adaptation than students with poor language level. International students from countries along the belt and road have limited Chinese and English proficiency. Therefore, in the process of living in China, there are certain obstacles in their communication with Chinese and other foreigners. Over time, their psychological endurance will reach the limit, which will affect their study and life in China.

5. Conclusion

Under the cross-cultural background, international students encounter many and varied psychological problems. Not only academic pressure will bring many psychological problems, but also all kinds of feelings and discomfort in life in China will contribute to students' failure to adapt effectively. If we do not interfere with their psychological adaptation process timely, some international students will have psychological depression, which will be a serious obstacle to their physical and

psychological health, causing negative effect on their life and study in China.

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