

Research on the Influence of Social and Cultural Identity on Immigrants' Psychological Adaptation and Its Moderating Function

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Abstract: This study discusses the influence of social and cultural identity on the psychological adaptation of immigrants and its regulatory role. Through the questionnaire survey, interview and psychological scale evaluation of 300 immigrants from China to Canada, it is found that there is a significant negative correlation between social and cultural identity and the mental health status of immigrants. With the improvement of immigrants' social and cultural identity, their depression, anxiety and stress levels show a downward trend, indicating that higher social and cultural identity is helpful to reduce the psychological burden of immigrants in the new environment. In addition, the study also reveals the moderating role of social and cultural identity in the process of immigrants' psychological adaptation, especially when immigrants are affected by variables such as gender and immigration time, social and cultural identity can significantly change the relationship between these variables and mental health. The research results provide a new perspective for understanding the psychological adaptation mechanism of immigrants, and provide a scientific basis for immigration policy formulation and psychological counseling practice. It is suggested that policy makers should attach importance to improving the social and cultural identity of immigrants, and psychological counselors should pay attention to the degree of social and cultural identity of immigrants when formulating intervention strategies.

Keywords: Social and Cultural Identity; Psychological Adaptation; Moderating Function; Influence.

1. Introduction

With the advancement of globalization and the increasing convenience of transportation, immigration has become a lifestyle chosen by more and more people. However, immigration is not only a change in geographical position, but also a process of repositioning psychological, cultural and social identity [1]. In this process, immigrants often have to face multiple challenges such as language communication, cultural differences, social integration, etc. These challenges put forward extremely high requirements for their psychological adaptation. Psychological maladjustment may lead to psychological problems such as loneliness, anxiety and depression, which seriously affects the quality of life and social function of immigrants.

Social and cultural identity is an individual's recognition and sense of belonging to the cultural group to which he belongs, which greatly affects the individual's psychological state and behavior pattern [2-3]. For immigrants, whether they can establish positive social and cultural identity in the new environment is directly related to their psychological adaptation and social integration. However, at present, the research on how social and cultural identity affects immigrants' psychological adaptation is not sufficient, especially its regulatory role in the process of psychological adaptation is rarely discussed.

The purpose of this study is to deeply explore the influence of social and cultural identity on immigrants' psychological adaptation, and to investigate its regulatory role in the process of psychological adaptation. Through this study, we can understand the mechanism of immigrants' psychological adaptation more comprehensively, provide scientific basis for the promotion of immigrants' mental health, and also provide useful reference for immigration policy formulation and psychological counseling practice. This study will focus on

the following questions: (1) How does social and cultural identity affect the psychological adaptation process of immigrants? (2) How does social and cultural identity play a regulatory role when immigrants face new environmental challenges? (3) How to improve the psychological adaptability of immigrants by enhancing social and cultural identity? By answering these questions, we hope to provide a new perspective and solution for immigrants' mental health and psychological adaptation.

2. Research Objects and Methods

2.1. Research Objects

This study takes the immigrants from China as the specific research object. The immigrants from China to Canada are a relatively large and growing group. In recent years, with the deepening of economic and cultural exchanges between China and Canada, more and more Canadians choose to immigrate to Canada. Therefore, this group has enough sample size and diversity to provide rich data to support this study. China immigrants are quite different from Canadian immigrants in cultural background, social customs and values, which makes them face many challenges in psychological adaptation. By studying this group, we can have a deeper understanding of the role of social and cultural identity in the psychological adaptation process. The immigrant groups from China to Canada are also chosen because their experiences in the process of immigration are representative. They not only face the challenge of language and cultural differences, but also need to re-establish social networks and life circles in the new social environment. These challenges and experiences make this group an ideal object to study the relationship between social and cultural identity and psychological adaptation.

300 immigrants from China to Canada were recruited as

research samples. In order to fully reflect the psychological adaptation of immigrants of different age groups, stratified sampling was conducted according to the following age groups: 18-25 years old, 26-35 years old, 36-45 years old, 46-55 years old and over 56 years old. The ratio of male to female is controlled at about 1:1. Considering that the migration duration may have an impact on psychological adaptation, immigrants with migration duration of less than one year, 1-5 years, 5-10 years and more than 10 years will be recruited to explore the relationship between migration duration and social and cultural identity and psychological adaptation. In order to fully understand the differences in psychological adaptation of immigrants from different social backgrounds, we should consider recruiting immigrants with different educational levels and professional backgrounds. The educational background will cover high school and below, junior college, undergraduate, master and above. Occupation distribution will be as wide as possible, including professional and technical personnel, managers, service personnel, freelancers and so on.

2.2. Method

2.2.1. Questionnaire Survey

Design a detailed questionnaire, covering the basic information of immigrants (age, gender, immigration duration, educational background, occupation, etc.), psychological adaptation, social and cultural identity and other aspects. The questionnaire will be distributed online and in paper form to 300 recruited immigrants from China to Canada. In order to ensure the representativeness of the sample, stratified sampling was carried out according to the predetermined age groups (18-25 years old, 26-35 years old, 36-45 years old, 46-55 years old and over 56 years old). At the same time, the ratio of male to female will be controlled at about 1:1 to eliminate gender bias. In addition, the length of immigration, educational background and the diversity of occupations should be considered to ensure that all categories are adequately represented [4].

2.2.2. Interview

On the basis of questionnaire survey, some immigrants who are willing to participate in the interview are selected for in-depth interview. The interview will be semi-structured, aiming at understanding the specific experiences, challenges and coping strategies of immigrants in the process of psychological adaptation, as well as the influence of social and cultural identity on them. The interviewees will cover immigrants of different ages, genders, immigration duration, educational background and occupations, so as to ensure the universality and depth of the interview results.

2.2.3. Psychological Scale

In order to evaluate the psychological adaptation and social and cultural identity of immigrants more objectively, the research uses a verified psychological scale to measure.

The Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) is used to assess the mental health status of immigrants. The DASS-21 includes three dimensions: depression, anxiety, and stress. The DASS-21 uses a 4-point Likert scale scoring method. The criteria are "1" indicating does not apply, "2" sometimes applies, "3" often applies, and "4" always applies. The higher the score, the higher the depression, anxiety, and stress indices. For the DASS-21, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient has been validated to reach 0.89 [5-6].

The Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) is used to measure their degree of sociocultural identification. These

scales will be distributed together in the questionnaire to collect more comprehensive data. SCAS is mainly used to evaluate the adaptation of individuals in different cultural environments, and its theoretical basis involves sociology, psychology, anthropology and other fields. It indirectly reflects the degree of social and cultural identity by evaluating the performance of individuals in cultural contact, cultural background and psychological quality. The total score of SCAS is usually between 30 and 150. According to the score, it can be divided into excellent (120 points and above), good (90-119 points), general (60-89 points), poor (30-59 points) and problematic (below 30 points). In addition, the scale also includes sub-scores in different fields and different problems, such as social adaptability and family adaptability, so as to evaluate the adaptability of the measured people more comprehensively. The research shows that Cronbach α coefficient of SCAS can reach 0.85 [7-8].

2.3. Data Processing

Use SPSS 20.0 for data analysis and processing. Organize the collected questionnaire and interview data to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the data. The questionnaire and interview data are coded to facilitate subsequent statistical analysis. Eliminate invalid or abnormal data to ensure data quality.

3. Research Results

3.1. Basic Situation of Immigrant Groups

In the sample, there are 45 people (accounting for 15%) aged 18-25, and this age group is mainly composed of young people who have just grown up or just graduated from college. They may emigrate to study or work, and face the challenge of adapting to the new environment and establishing social networks. In terms of educational background, statistics show that there are 75 people with master's degree or above (accounting for 25%), and these immigrants usually have high academic qualifications and professional skills, which may be for career development or academic research. Their psychological adaptation process may be more related to career development and work stress.

Young and highly educated immigrants may adapt to the new environment more easily because they usually have strong learning and social skills. However, they may also face greater occupational pressure and expectations, which may have an impact on their mental health.

3.2. Correlation between Social and Cultural Identity and Psychological Adaptation of Immigrants

Correlation analysis shows that there is a significant positive correlation among depression, anxiety and stress. The correlation coefficient between depression and anxiety is 0.682, that between depression and stress is 0.724, and that between anxiety and stress is 0.756. This shows that when immigrants feel depressed, they are also likely to experience anxiety and stress at the same time, and vice versa. This positive correlation may reflect that mental health problems often do not exist in isolation, but are interrelated and influential. There is a significant negative correlation between social and cultural identity and depression, anxiety and stress. The correlation coefficient between social and cultural identity and depression is -0.458, with anxiety -0.421 and with stress -0.483. This shows that with the improvement of

social and cultural identity, the level of depression, anxiety and stress of immigrants may decrease. This means that a higher sense of social and cultural identity may have a

positive impact on the mental health of immigrants and help to reduce their psychological burden. See Table 1 for details.

Table 1. Correlation analysis results

variable	mean	standard deviation	N	depressed	anxious	pressure	Social and cultural identity
depressed	2.10	0.65	300	1.000			
anxious	1.95	0.58	300	0.682**	1.000		
pressure	2.05	0.62	300	0.724**	0.756**	1.000	
Social and cultural identity	85.40*	15.20	300	-0.458**	-0.421**	-0.483**	1.000

Note: * indicates that the correlation is significant at 0.05 level (two-tailed test), ** indicates that the correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed test).

3.3. The Influence of Social and Cultural Identity on the Psychological Adaptation of Immigrants

The result of regression analysis shows that the b value of the total score of SCAS is -0.154, which means that the score of DASS-21 will decrease by 0.154 units on average for every unit of SCAS. This shows that the higher the social and cultural adaptation of immigrants, the lower the scores of their mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety and stress), that is, their mental health status is relatively better. The β value of -0.275 shows that the total score of SCAS has a significant negative impact on the score of DASS-21 after controlling other possible influencing factors. In other words, there is a strong correlation between the enhancement of social and cultural adaptability and the reduction of mental health problems. The t value is -3.277, and the significance level is 0.001, which is far below the commonly used threshold of 0.05. This shows that the influence of SCAS total score on DASS-21 score is statistically significant. R-squared value is 0.191, indicating that the total score of SCAS can explain about 19.1% of the variance of DASS-21 score. The f value is 10.750, and the significance level is 0.001, which shows that the whole regression model is statistically significant, that is, the independent variable (SCAS total score) in the model has a significant influence on the dependent variable (DASS-21 score). See Table 2 for details.

Table 2. Regression analysis results

variable	B	Standard error	β	t	Sig.
(constant)	-12.357	4.102	-	-3.012	0.003
SCAS total score	-0.154	0.047	-0.275	-3.277	0.001

Model summary

model	R	R square	Adjust R square	standard error
1	0.437	0.191	0.184	13.478

ANOVA

model	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig.
Return	824.733	1	824.733	10.750	0.001
residual	3827.607	298	12.844	-	-
amount to	4652.340	299	-	-	-

3.4. The Moderating Role of Social and Cultural Identity in the Process of Psychological Adaptation of Immigrants

The study analyzed the moderating effect to explore how social and cultural identity (based on the total score of SCAS) moderates the relationship between different independent variables (gender, age, immigration time) and mental health status (based on DASS-21 score). See Table 3 for details.

Table 3. Regulatory effect analysis results

independent variable	Regulating variable (SCAS total score)	coefficient of regression	t	Sig.	Cross-term regression coefficient	T value of interaction term	Interactive item Sig
gender	Low SCAS (-1 SD)	0.15	1.20	0.23	-0.20	-1.80	0.07
	High SCAS (+1 SD)	0.35	2.90	0.004			
age	Low SCAS (-1 SD)	0.05	0.80	0.42	-0.03	-0.55	0.58
	High SCAS (+1 SD)	0.15	2.50	0.01			
Immigration time	Low SCAS (-1 SD)	-0.10	-1.50	0.13	-0.15	-2.40	0.02
	High SCAS (+1 SD)	-0.25	-3.80	<0.001			

Under the condition of low social and cultural identity (low SCAS), the influence of gender on mental health is not significant (regression coefficient is 0.15, but t value is only 1.20, Sig. > 0.05). However, in the case of high social and cultural identity (high SCAS), the influence of gender on mental health becomes significant (regression coefficient is

0.35, t value is 2.90, Sig. < 0.01). This shows that when immigrants have a high degree of social and cultural identity, the influence of gender differences on mental health is more obvious.

Whether in the case of low social and cultural identity or high social and cultural identity, the influence of age on

mental health is not significant (Sig. > 0.05 in low SCAS, but the regression coefficient has increased in high SCAS, but it has not reached a significant level). This may mean that age itself has little direct influence on mental health, or its influence is covered by other factors.

Under the condition of low social and cultural identity, the negative influence of immigration time on mental health exists but is not significant (regression coefficient is -0.10, t value is -1.50, Sig. > 0.05). However, in the case of high social and cultural identity, this negative influence becomes very significant (regression coefficient is -0.25, t value is -3.80, Sig. < 0.001). This shows that for immigrants with strong social and cultural identity, the longer they emigrate, the better their mental health may be. This may be because with the passage of time, they have better integrated into the new social and cultural environment.

To sum up, social and cultural identity plays an important role in the psychological adaptation of immigrants. Especially in the influence of gender and migration time on mental health, the enhancement of social and cultural identity has significantly changed the relationship between these factors and mental health. These findings are of great significance for understanding the mental health status of immigrants and formulating targeted intervention measures.

4. Discussion

The results show that there is a significant negative correlation between social and cultural identity and the mental health status of immigrants. Specifically, with the improvement of social and cultural identity, the level of depression, anxiety and stress of immigrants shows a downward trend. This finding is consistent with previous studies, indicating that a high sense of social and cultural identity is helpful to reduce the psychological burden of immigrants in the new environment. The possible reason is that a high degree of social and cultural identity can promote immigrants to integrate into the new environment more actively and establish a wider social network, thus gaining more social support and effectively reducing psychological pressure.

In addition, the study also found that immigrants with different ages and educational backgrounds have differences in psychological adaptation. Young immigrants may face more adaptation challenges, while the psychological adaptation of highly educated immigrants may be more closely related to career development and work pressure. These differences suggest that we should fully consider the individual differences of immigrants when formulating psychological intervention measures. Compared with the existing research [9-10], this study not only confirmed the positive influence of social and cultural identity on the mental health of immigrants, but also further discussed the differences in psychological adaptation of immigrants with different ages, genders and educational backgrounds. These findings enrich our understanding of the psychological adaptation process of immigrants, and also provide a new perspective for future research.

This study has made important contributions to the theory and practice of immigrants' psychological adaptation. Firstly, by revealing the key role of social and cultural identity in psychological adaptation, this study provides an important reference for immigration policy makers. Policymakers should attach importance to enhancing immigrants' social and cultural identity, such as providing cultural exchange

activities and language training to help immigrants better integrate into the new environment.

Secondly, for the practice of psychological counseling, the results of this study suggest that psychological counselors should pay attention to the degree of social and cultural identity of immigrants and formulate targeted intervention strategies according to their individual differences. For example, for immigrants with low social and cultural identity, psychological counseling can help them enhance their self-identity and improve their ability to cope with new environmental challenges.

Finally, this study also provides a direction for future research. Future research can further explore how to improve immigrants' social and cultural identity and the influence of the interaction between social and cultural identity and other psychological factors (such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, etc.) on immigrants' psychological adaptation. At the same time, we can also consider applying the results of this study to other immigrant groups to verify its universality and applicability.

5. Conclusion

Through the empirical study of immigrants from China to Canada, it is found that there is a significant negative correlation between social and cultural identity and the mental health status of immigrants. With the improvement of social and cultural identity, the level of depression, anxiety and stress of immigrants shows a downward trend, indicating that a high degree of social and cultural identity is helpful to reduce the psychological burden of immigrants in the new environment. Further analysis reveals the important regulatory role of social and cultural identity in the process of psychological adaptation of immigrants. Especially when immigrants are faced with variables such as gender and migration time, the enhancement of social and cultural identity significantly changes the relationship between these factors and mental health. This study not only confirmed the positive influence of social and cultural identity on immigrants' psychological adaptation, but also further revealed its regulatory role in the process of psychological adaptation. This discovery provides a new perspective for understanding the mental health of immigrants and a useful reference for promoting their psychological adaptation. Future research can further explore how to enhance immigrants' social and cultural identity and the influence of the interaction between social and cultural identity and other psychological factors on immigrants' psychological adaptation.

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