Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Chinese International Students in Europe

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Acknowledgment

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Abstract

Chinese students have increasingly chosen European countries as destinations for oversea education. Cross-cultural adaptation is a great challenge for Chinese international students in their oversea education endeavors in Europe.

The study aims to understand cross-cultural adaptation challenge of Chinese students studying in Europe, and analyzes the main factors affecting their cross-cultural adaptation. Specifically, this study investigated the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese international students in Europe on three dimensions of daily life, academic and communication. This study was conducted by semi-structured interviews of 20 Chinese students with studying experience in Europe.

The study found the following results. Most respondents in this study have a high degree of cross-cultural adaptation. The respondents have higher socio-cultural adaptation than psychological adaptation in daily life and academics, but lower social-cultural adaptation than psychological adaptation in communication. Among the influencing factors, the purpose and expectation of coming to Europe have a significant impact on the cross-cultural adaptation of international students; economic factors are an important variable affecting cross-cultural adaptation of international students.

Key words: Chinese students studying in Europe, cross-cultural adaptation, social and cultural adaptation, psychological adaptation.

JEL Classification: O15 M16

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Resumo

Os estudantes chineses escolhem cada vez mais os países europeus como destino para os seus estudos no estrangeiro. A adaptação intercultural é um grande desafio para os estudantes chineses internacionais que estudam na Europa.

Esta pesquisa teve como objetivo compreender os desafios da adaptação intercultural de estudantes chineses na Europa e analisar os principais fatores que influenciam a adaptação intercultural. Especificamente, a pesquisa analisou a adaptação intercultural de estudantes chineses na Europa, nas dimensões da vida cotidiana, acadêmica e comunicacional. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas com 20 estudantes chineses com experiência de estudo na Europa.

O estudo encontrou os seguintes resultados. Neste estudo, a maioria dos entrevistados apresentou um alto grau de adaptação transcultural. A adaptação psicológica na vida cotidiana e na academia fica atrás dos efeitos da adaptação sociocultural, interação social e adaptação psicológica e sociocultural.

O estudo encontrou os seguintes resultados. Neste estudo, a maioria dos entrevistados apresentou alto grau de adaptação transcultural. A adaptação sociocultural dos entrevistados foi superior à adaptação psicológica na vida cotidiana e acadêmica, enquanto a adaptação sociocultural foi inferior à adaptação psicológica na comunicação. Entre os fatores de influência, o propósito e as expectativas de vir para a china tiveram um impacto significativo na adaptação intercultural dos estudantes estrangeiros; Fatores econômicos são importantes variáveis que influenciam a adaptação transcultural de estudantes estrangeiros.

Palavras-chave: Estudantes chineses que estudam na Europa, adaptação transcultural, adaptação social e cultural, adaptação psicológica.

Classificação JEL: O15 M16

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

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List of Tables

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1 Growing Chinese Students Studying Abroad

With the development of China's economy, Chinese people's living standards and economic standards have been continuously improved, and more and more families have the economic ability to support their children to study abroad. Statistics from Chinese Ministry of Education (2019) showed that from 2009 to 2019, the total number of Chinese students studying abroad was 703,500 (Figure 1-1).
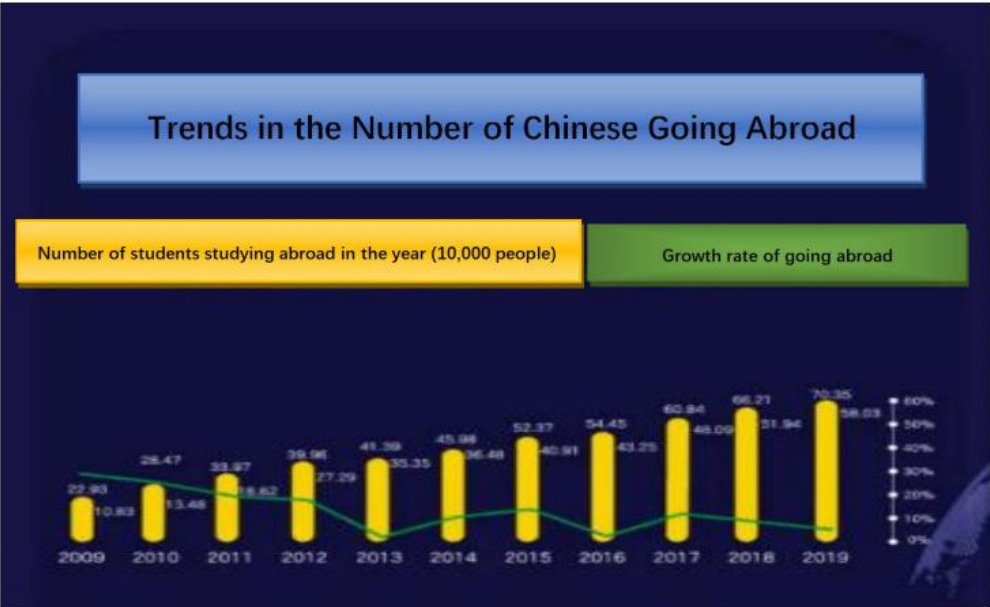
Figure 1–1: Chinese Students Studying Abroad and Trends (2009-2019)

Source: Chinese International Students Report Blue Book 2020

Since 2020, the choices of international students have undergone significant changes. In 2020, the United Kingdom surpassed the United States as the first choice for international students for the first time. The degree of intention to study in the two countries was 42% and 37%, respectively. By 2021, the data of the United Kingdom will maintain a high growth trend, reaching 44%, while the United States will drop to 32% (Figure 1-2). At the same time, the number of people who intend to study abroad in relatively small study countries such as Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and Portugal is also increasing.

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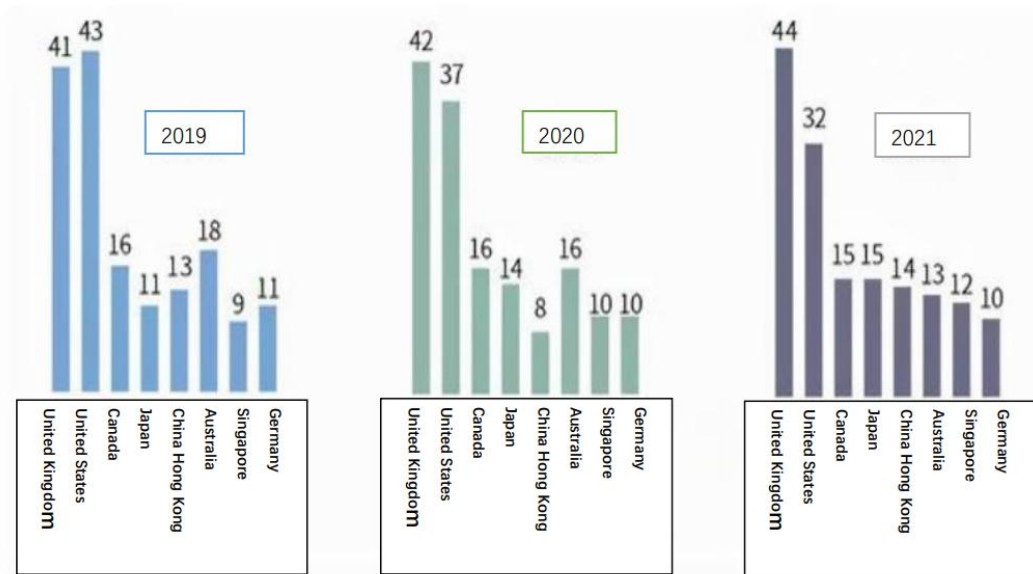
Figure 1–2: 2019-2021 Data Excerpt of the Preferred Countries for Chinese Students to Study Abroad

Source: 2021 White Paper on Studying in China

Since China became the first international source country for international students from European and American countries in 2016, cultural distance and differences in education models has become the main problem for Chinese students to adapt to cross-cultural studies.

So far, there are few studies investigating the cross-cultural adaptation of international Chinese students encounter in Europe. Here is a short review of the literature in this field. The cross-cultural adaptation studies show that the primary cross-cultural adaptation problem faced by Chinese overseas students is language. Chinese scholars Chen (2014) used Oberg's culture shock theory to study the academic adaptation of Chinese students studying in the UK, and pointed out that there are three main aspects: lack of language ability, difficulty in classroom integration and academic writing. In addition, personal characteristics, hobbies, interests and other factors also have a profound impact on the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese overseas students. Tang (2009) from the perspective of cross-cultural communication, focusing on the current situation of Chinese students' communication circle and the relationship between Chinese students' communication circle and cross-cultural adaptation.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.2 Research Purpose, Research Significance and Research Questions

1.2.1 Research Purpose

With the continuous growth of the number of students studying abroad, more and more people are concerned about the issue of cross-cultural adaptation. The result of adaptation refers to the process of dealing with acculturation. It is a dynamic process in which individuals migrate into a new cultural environment, establish or rebuild a relatively stable, mutually beneficial, functional relationship with the environment (Dubos, 1965). The experience of Chinese students studying in Europe will have an impact on their future life. It will also have an important impact on the security and stability of European society and even on the future development of Chinese society. For example, if the problems of Chinese students studying in Europe in the process of cross-cultural adaptation are not properly resolved, some personal emotional problems such as depression, negativity, loneliness, and unease may appear, and conflicts may arise, and violent crime incidents may affect Europe.

This study targets Chinese students studying in Europe as the research object, which has considerable practical significance. Due to the geographical relationship and the limitations of COVID-19, this dissertation will choose more students from universities in Portugal to conduct interview research. First, Chinese international students in this paper refer to individuals with Chinese nationality (including mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan) who were born and raised in China. They have entered European countries like Portugal, mainly for higher education. Secondly, the Chinese students in this study must have certain contacts and communication with European countries, mainly universities and other institutions.

1.2.2 Research Significance

The study of cross-cultural adaptation can help to discover the possible challenges and practical limitations that China, as a major exporting country of foreign students, may face in

Chapter 1 Introduction

the process of internationalization of higher education, which is conducive to improving the quality of "going out" and helping international students better adapt to the local cultural environment when they learn advanced knowledge and skills overseas and complete their studies. In this regard, it is also conducive to promoting peaceful and friendly exchanges between China and the EU. As a bridge of communication, Chinese students in Europe represent the construction of China's image in Europe; in the process of studying and living in Europe, they can also have a deeper understanding of Europe. After returning to China, they serve as a disseminator to deliver information. How well they adapt in the process of cross-cultural learning directly affects the change in their impression of Europe, and even the continuous exchange of future peace.

Although the previous research theories on cross-cultural adaptation are relatively rich, more new dynamic empirical studies are needed to enrich the theories of cross-cultural adaptation. The cross-cultural adaptation of international students is not a static process, but an active process generated by participating in the common social behavior of the host country (Xu, 2008).

In Europe and the United States, there is a certain accumulation in the field of cross-cultural adaptation research results of international students. However, the cultural environment of the East and the West is very different, and it is still difficult to effectively understand the adaptation process of international students. Moreover, in the existing research on Chinese students' cross-cultural learning, most researchers are accustomed to studying Chinese students from the perspective of art, science and economics as a whole, and the research results are often comprehensive but vague, lacking pertinence and reference significance.

Therefore, based on the increasingly prominent problem of cross-cultural adaptation among Chinese students and the lack of pertinence of most related studies, this study tries to take root in reality, obtain first-hand information and data through in-depth interviews, and the main research object is the group of Chinese students studying in Europe, especially business

master students studying in Portuguese universities. Trying to explore the process of learning across cultures, Chinese students' cultural ability and adaptability when adapting to the university system of European countries, analyzing the reasons and putting forward corresponding opinions and suggestions are valuable not only for empirical research but also for theoretical research.

1.2.3 Research Questions

This paper mainly investigates the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Europe in the process of studying and living in Europe. The main research questions are:

1. What are the motivation and expectations of Chinese students studying in Europe?

2. To what extent, Chinese international students adapted to the daily life, academic and communication in Europe;

3. What are the influencing factors of cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students in Europe?

1.3 Dissertation Structure

Chapte1 is introduction, including the thesis background, research background, research purpose and research questions.

Chapter 2 is literature review. Based on review of existing research, a theoretical framework was proposed.

Chapter 3 is the research methods. The first section discussed the research objects, which focused on Chinese students in Europe for more than one year as the research objects; the

Chapter 1 Introduction

second section introduced the research methods, mainly the literature research method, qualitative; the third section is the research procedure, the design of the interview outline and the test, as well as the transcription and arrangement of the recorded data.

Chapter 4 is the research results. Three sections are an investigation of the status of cross-cultural adaptation in daily life, academic, communication, from the perspective of socio-cultural adaptation and psychological adaptation, respectively. Section 4 & 5 are discussion of the results, giving a summary of this chapter, including summarizing the current situation of cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Europe in terms of daily life, academic and communication.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion. Including analyzes the influencing factors, the deficiencies in the research and gives suggestions, and future research desires.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Definition of Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Different cultures breed different social groups, and thus produce concepts such as cultural distance and cross-culture. The in-depth research on "culture" is mainly based on Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, which is mainly used to study cultural differences between countries. Hofstede (2008) summarizes six dimensions of measuring cultural values: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, long-term versus short-term, indulgence versus restraint.

Cross-cultural adaptation is a slow and gradual process in which subjects in the cultural atmosphere of different ontological cultures gradually adjust, accept, adapt, and integrate into the culture. After the 1980s, the research focus of cross-cultural adaptation has shifted from cultural change and cultural integration at the group level to the discussion of cross-cultural communication and various factors at the individual level. Anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists, linguists. have all incorporated the issue of cross-cultural adaptation into their research horizons, demonstrating the rich connotation and multi-structure of multi-disciplinary and multi-perspective mutual learning and common discussion.

In today's China, the cross-cultural contacts brought about by increasingly international cultural exchanges are not only new, but also stressful. Based on differences in national conditions and cultures, whether a set of conceptual systems constructed by Western theoretical circles can meet the local adaptation to the Chinese cultural environment deserves further discussion. Therefore, the study of cross-cultural adaptation not only becomes a practical need, but also helps to increase cultural awareness.

2.2 Theories and Models of Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Chapter 2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The concept of "adaptation" as a general theory encompasses all changes arising from contact with people and groups of different cultural backgrounds, it is mostly used in cross-cultural research on immigrants, refugees, international students and other cross-cultural sojourners. Redfield (1936）first introduce and define the term in the academic field: that is, when groups of different cultures come into continuous and direct contact, the original cultural pattern of both parties or one party is changed, and is usually considered to be the change caused by the culture itself. Berry (1970) starts from the perspective of groups and points out that cultural adaptation also includes material adaptation, physiological adaptation, policy adaptation, economic adaptation, and social adaptation.

The main factors of acculturation stress are considered from two aspects: the existing factors before acculturation and the factors produced in the process of acculturation, including adjustment factors and media factors. Factors such as motivation to study abroad, age, and education level related to personal attributes can predict their cross-cultural adaptation status. Berry (2006) proposed FPA (moderating factors existing prior to acculturation), which includes age, education level, motivation to immigrate or study abroad and other personal characteristics that existed before cultural contact. The FDA (moderating factors arising during acculturation) includes the frequency of contact with cross-culture, cross-cultural adaptation strategies, social support and other factors.

Therefore, this study will introduce both the pre-cultural and cultural-adaptive factors, including personal attributes before staying in Europe, such as interviewees' age, gender, education level, foreign language level, motivation to stay in Europe, expectation to stay in Europe.

There are many categories of cross-cultural adaptation (Bennett,1986), but the categorization of cross-cultural adaptation that most researchers now agree with is the one proposed by Ward and his colleagues (1996): Social-Cultural Adaptation and Psychological Adaptation. Social-cultural adaptation refers to an individual's external psychological state of being

connected to a new environment, particularly the ability to deal with everyday problems in areas such as family life, work, and school. Psychological adaptation refers to an individual's internal psychological outcomes, including in the process of cross-cultural contact, to observe whether negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and disappointment occur.

- **Daily life aspect**

The social-cultural adaptation in daily life mainly refers to the adaptation of sojourners under the new cultural system. The adaptability to life will directly affect the adaptability of international students to study (Spradley, 1972). Summarizing the research basis on life adaptation, it can be found that in basic aspects such as clothing, food, housing and transportation, which are most prone to problems of adaptation, psychological feelings and economic foundations also have an important impact on the life adaptation of international students (Yeh, 2003).

The main influencing factors of sojourners in the local cultural environment are: social support, local cultural factors, time in contact with new culture, existing knowledge of new culture, identification with current cultural system, number of interactions with local people, cultural distance, cultural interpenetration mode, language level and communication ability, past experience of living abroad. Among them, the most widely studied variables are time of exposure to a new culture, social support, language proficiency, economic factors, and pre-existing cross-cultural experience (House, 2004).

- **Academic aspect**

"Academic adaptation" is often defined as a learning ability or a learning process.

In cross-cultural academic adaptation research, social support factors are considered to be one of the most important influencing factors. Furnham & Bochner (1986) believed that

international students depend on different social relations for different purposes and maintaining good contact with the people of the host country is particularly effective for cultural learning.   On the one hand, social support directly affects academic adaptation, and on the other hand, it affects indirectly through the mediating effect of mental toughness. College students with higher social support will show higher learning adaptability. Cynthia (2001) pays attention to the social support of international students. She believes that this is an important influencing factor for overseas students, and regards students' loneliness, self-efficacy and academic satisfaction as more important research contents. Chinese scholars Dong Kaisha (2010), Peng (2019) have also shown in relevant research results that the more social support they receive, the stronger the learning adaptability of college students.

Zhu (2011) believed that the academic adaptation of international students is the process of integrating international students with the academic system and social system of the host country's universities, which includes academic performance and intellectual development. The explicit performance of the student's ability to meet the local academic system and the evaluation of the student by the academic system are highlighted respectively. This part is generally considered to be mainly family support and campus support centered on teachers and classmates (Guo 2010).

In addition, factors that affect academic adaptation include demographic characteristics such as age, gender, language ability.as well as some situational factors, including the types of institutions, majors, education quality and other life factors also have an important impact on the academic adaptation of college students.

● **Communication aspect**

In the cross-cultural adaptation, interpersonal communication is the most concerned level. As the subject of cultural behavior, human beings are inevitably faced with interaction and communication with people in another cultural system in any cross-cultural scenario. Edward

(1976) proposed the influence of context level on human communication. Zhao (2009) added the context of communication differences under this concept: access to information, language use, responsibility for successful communication, written, and degree of dependence on rules. Through a variety of situational simulation comparisons of high and low context people, it is generally believed that low-context people are more sensitive to language information itself, but high-context people are more likely to adapt to cross-cultural communication through the connotations conveyed by the context rather than a single language (Du 2010).

"Extended communication" is a situation mainly used to explore group communication based on social support theory, which helps to improve or even eliminate negative expectations between different groups. The positive influence produced when an individual interacts with a group of different cultural backgrounds has a generalization effect, which is extended more widely through the internal communication network of the communicator, and even affects the entire group (Liu, 2017). For example, Chinese students can build friendships with the locals in the countries where they are studying, and convey the image of the country to the local people in the form of personal behavior representation, which is more likely to improve their stereotypes about China. At the same time, it can also spread goodwill signals from foreign people through the extension theory.

Based on the research of the above scholars, this study examines the cross-cultural adaptation status of Chinese students studying in Europe in terms of daily life, academics, and communication, from the two dimensions of social-cultural adaptation and psychological adaptation. (Figure 2-1)
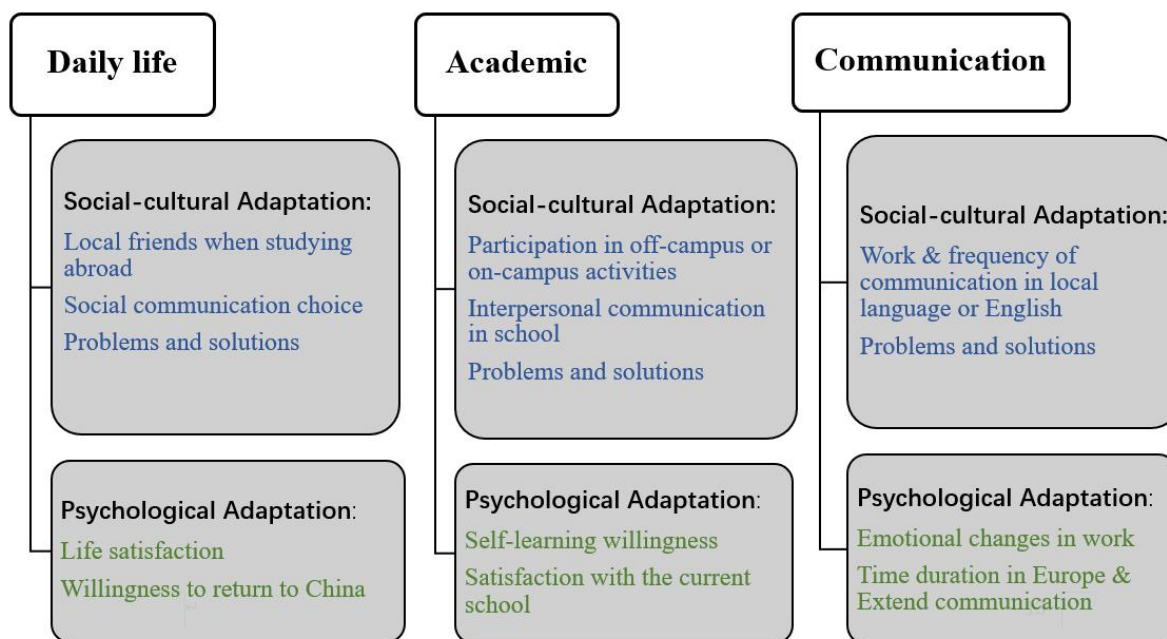
Figure 2–1: Proposed Theoretical Framework of Cross-cultural Adaptation

2.3 Influencing Factors of Cross-Cultural Adaptation

The process of cross-cultural adaptation is affected by many factors. Although there is no unified classification in academia, researchers with different disciplinary backgrounds study different factors affecting cross-cultural adaptation from different perspectives. In general, it includes values, cultural distance, social support networks, environmental change, ethnocentrism, stereotypes and discrimination and prejudice, evaluation and coping styles, demographic variables.

- **Values**

Stephen Bochner (1972) proposed a Core-value Hypothesis that affects sojourner adaptation. He believes that the main reason for cultural distance is the difference in values, and it is also the main reason for cultural shock and cultural incompatibility.

- **Cultural distance and contact frequency**

Cultural distance refers to a certain sense of unfamiliarity when people communicate with each other due to the different regions and environments they live in and belong to different cultural circles (Babiker, 1980). Research shows that the smaller the cultural distance, the easier it is to understand each other accurately. The greater the cultural distance, the more difficult it is to establish and maintain a harmonious relationship in cross-cultural communication, and there are great differences between Chinese and European cultures. Therefore, Chinese students studying in Europe will suffer a greater cultural shock. There are a series of changes in cross-cultural contact, such as eating habits, life rhythm, climate. These changes can cause stress, that is, life changes brought about by cross-cultural contact can affect people's psychological adaptation.

● **Social support network**

A social support network is a relatively stable social relationship among a range of individuals. It is an important social environmental factor that affects the adaptation of sojourners. Social support is regarded as an important external resource for various material and related emotional support. So far, most people think that social support is related to personal mental health. An individual's social support network is a social network through which an individual can obtain support from various resources (such as money, emotion, friendship). With the help of social networks, sojourners can gain psychological safety, reduce stress, anxiety, feelings of helplessness and alienation, and gain self-respect and a sense of belonging (Yuh, 2002). But it may also hinder the sojourners from learning the local culture and communicating with other group members and thus affect their adaptation.

● **The impact of ethnocentrism, stereotypes and discriminatory prejudices**

Anthropologists believe that nationalism is a universal phenomenon and psychological tendency, under the influence of this doctrine, people use their own cultural values to judge

the behavior of other cultural groups, view members of other cultures in stereotyped ways, often subconsciously enhance their own culture and depreciate other cultures. Therefore, ethnocentrism is easy to hinder the communication and understanding of both sides in the process of cross-cultural contact (Larry, 1991).

- **Evaluation and Solution**

A variety of individuals will show individual differences in the process of cross-cultural adaptation (Berry 1997), different ways of cognition and evaluation of life changes. Realistic expectations that match the actual experience can promote the good adaptation of the sojourners and increase the actual life satisfaction.

In addition to the above points, foreign language proficiency, understanding of the country of residence, cross-cultural experience, and demographic attributes (including gender, age, education level, and total income) will also affect the situation of cross-cultural adaptation.

Chapter 3　　Research Methods

3.1 Research Method

The researchers used semi-structured interviews, selected interviewees according to the principle of purposeful sampling, obtained the consent of the interviewees before the interviews, conducted interviews according to the interview outline, and recorded the interview process. After the interview, the researcher transcribes the recorded data into a written transcript (word document format) and listens to the recorded data repeatedly for proofreading. According to the principle of information saturation, the interview ends when no new information appears. Transcribed profile data were analyzed by thematic analysis methods.

In the past related research, most of the research methods adopted are quantitative research. However, because of the great differences between individuals, many complex factors are difficult to be abstracted into several indicators for measurement. At present, most of the quantitative research observation indicators are mainly objective indicators, and rarely involve the subjective feelings of the international students themselves, such as quality of life, communication, academic and other related indicators. Through interviews to understand the values and preferences of Chinese students in the process of studying in Europe. From the communication process between the interviewer and the interviewee, obtain knowledge, attitudes, perspectives, goals, expectations, to understand the study life and interpersonal relationship of the interviewees in the study process, to discover the obstacles in the study process in Europe. Evaluating the subjective feelings of international students can better analyze and solve problems, reflect humanistic thinking, and help supplement the understanding of cross-cultural communication, which will make the research results more complete, and the research conclusions can be better applied to study abroad life. It also guides Chinese students to choose foreign exchange and study in the future.

Chapter 3 Research Methods

3.2 Sampling

The interview time for this study is from September 2018 to August 2022, with 20 subjects. The interview locations are different, adopting a combination of online and offline methods. Most choose a quieter environment or an environment in which Chinese is used without any scruples. The interview time is generally about 30 minutes to1 hour, with the consent of the interviewee, the recording is made (Table 3-1).

Table 3- 1: Interviewees' basic information

NUMBER	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION LEVEL	TIME TO ARRIVED EUROPE	STUDY ABROAD COUNTRY	STUDY DURATION
1	M	35	PhD	09/2012	Portugal	6 years
2	M	30	PhD	09/2015	Italy	5 years
3	M	28	Master	09/2017	Portugal	4 years
4	F	25	Master	09/2017	Portugal	2 years
5	F	27	Master	09/2017	Portugal	3 years
6	F	28	Master	09/2017	Portugal	3 years
7	M	25	Master	09/2017	France	2 years
8	F	26	Master	09/2017	Belgium	3 years
9	F	26	Master	09/2017	Portugal	2 years
10	F	33	Master	09/2017	Portugal	3 years
11	F	31	Master	09/2017	Portugal	3 years
12	F	25	Master	09/2017	Portugal	3 years
13	M	26	Master	09/2017	Portugal	3 years
14	F	25	Master	09/2017	Portugal	2 years
15	F	25	Master	09/2017	Portugal	3 years
16	M	25	Master	09/2015	U.K.	2 years
17	F	25	Master	09/2010	U.K.	7 years
18	F	28	Maser	09/2016	Italy	3 years
19	F	27	Master	09/2016	Italy	2 years
20	M	30	Master	09/2017	Portugal	5 years

Note: No.17 Obtained undergraduate and master's degree in the UK.

3.3 Interview Procedure

Before designing and formulating the interview outline, the researcher prepared a

pre-interview outline through literature review and preliminary consultation of experts, and after soliciting the opinion of the supervisor, pre-interviewed two interviewees who met the conditions, and the pre-interview subjects were not included in the formal interview list, and the pre-interview content was not included in the result analysis. In the pre-interview process, pay attention to reflective listening, take reflective notes, revise the original interview outline after summarizing, and adjust the attitude during the interview process, and finally draw up the interview outline.

The researcher made detailed notes on the process of data transcription and analysis, focusing on introspection in the process of data analysis, using network technology and video software communicating through internet interviews, telephone interviews, and e-mail interviews. Observation notes and texts are recorded in detail.

The purposeful sampling method was adopted for sample collection, and Chinese students who came to study in Europe from 2012 to 2017 were selected, and they were college students or postgraduate groups who met the inclusion criteria. The interview time period was October 2018 to July 2022. A total of 27 interviewees were invited for this interview, and 20 of them were successfully interviewed and recorded data. The interviewees are mostly classmates and friends in the life circle of the author while studying abroad. Interview invitations are contact and appointments through face-to-face and social media. Two of them are pre-interview subjects, and this part of the content will not be disclosed. The reasons for the failure of the other five interviews include but are not limited to the time and incompleteness of the interviews, so they are not recorded on file.

The researcher first introduced herself, and then orally introduced the research purpose, content, process, and issued an informed consent form for the interviewees to read. Explain in detail the research purpose, research content, work to be done in the research process, requirements for interviewees, confidentiality principles to be followed by the researcher, rights of the interviewees. Before the start of each interview, the interviewee's opinion was

again obtained on the recording issue, and the rights of the interviewee were fully respected. The researcher first introduced the interview into a natural state by chatting, so that the interview process can be carried out smoothly in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, and gradually introduced interview questions. The interviewer asked questions according to the order of the interview outline, flexibly adjusted the order and method of asking questions according to the interview situation, and explained the questions appropriately based on the actual situation of the interviewees. During the interview, always pay attention to summarizing, clarifying questions, and asking why. Appropriate questioning of valuable responses from interviewees, especially commonly asked questions related to cross-cultural adaptation. During the whole interview process, pay attention to and consider the emotional fluctuations of the interviewees.

All interviews are recorded with a voice recorder, numbered according to the sequence of the interviews, and the personal information such as the names of the interviewees is kept confidential. Considering the actual situation of the interviewees, the duration of each interview is controlled within 30mins-1h. After the interview, the researcher transcribes the interview recording in time, recalls the interview scene and records it in detail.

Specific interview questions outline in the appendix A.

3.4 Data Analysis

The approach chosen to evaluate the interviews was the interpretivism. Interpretivists are more likely to draw meaning from the subjective experiences of individuals engaging in social interaction (Schwandt, 1994). When using this method, the researcher's focus is the contents of each interviewee's answer, as they reveal something about the phenomena or processes occurring either in the participants' inner realities or external reality, which are the true object of study of the researcher.

Furthermore, the data analysis component of the research embodied three different stages:

● Before going to study in Europe

This part mainly talks about the influence on Europe, the motive and way of coming to Europe, the expectation of coming to Europe, through the understanding of the interviewees' pre-study situation, it is possible to analyze how the pre-existing factors at the individual level affect the subsequent cross-cultural adaptation.

● During study in Europe

According to the actual situation of Chinese students studying in Europe, the interviews during the study abroad process are mainly divided into daily life, academic studies, and communication. This part is mainly from the main problems they encountered in their study abroad life and their psychological state and solutions when they encountered stress, to investigate the current situation of cross-cultural adaptation and related influencing factors of Chinese students studying in Europe, the relevant influencing factors include the existing factors before cultural adaptation and the production factors in the process of cultural adaptation.

● Reflection after studying

Regarding the future, such as plans after graduation. The degree of achievement of expected goals can judge their satisfaction with their study abroad life, and it is also an indicator to verify their current status of cross-cultural adaptation; even whether they have immigration tendencies.

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Chapter 4   Results

4.1 Cross-cultural Adaptation in Daily Life

The cross-cultural adaptation level of daily life mainly evaluates the life adaptability of Chinese international students from their experience of solving basic life needs and psychological cognition.

4.1.1 Social-cultural Adaptation Status

The observation items of social and cultural adaptation are judged from if the interviewees have local friends, handling daily administrative procedures, and coping strategies for seeking help when encountering difficulties. The specific interview content and analysis are as follows.

- **Local friends when studying abroad**

In daily life, the cross-cultural adaptation status of international students can be judged by whether there are local friends or not. The results show that almost all interviewees make friends with the locals. When it comes to the way of making friends:

" I usually meet new people through school project teams, and happen to be in the same class with them several times, it's easy to become friends later." (No.12)

"If you rent a house online, you will inevitably have some contacts in life when you live together, such as making an appointment to go to the market together on weekends and check in at a nearby Internet celebrity restaurant." (No.6)

"I was introduced by a friend of a friend. When I first came, I often played together, and I became familiar with it. I often go shopping and buy things together." (No.19)

Surely, everyone's definition of a friend is different. In addition, except for the interviewees No. 5 and No. 11, all the other interviewees had the experience of going abroad. It is also mentioned in related research that international students with experience abroad have a higher ability to adapt to different cultures because they have lived in a cross-cultural environment (Liu, 2008). The presence or absence of local friends is used as a measure of social and cultural adaptation in daily life of Chinese students studying in Europe.

Making European friends to a certain extent proves that the interviewees have the ability to integrate into European society, indicating that their ability to adapt to different cultures is high.

● **Social communication choice**

The choice of social communications can refer to the first person of assistance that encounters a problem, which varies according to the actual situation. Regarding the presence or absence of European friends, among the twenty interviewees, they generally believed that they had European friends.

However, in the selection of the next test items, the probability of choosing local friends is much lower than that of Chinese people. The choice varies according to the actual situation. For example, if you encounter language problems, you usually turn to your mobile phone first; For daily life issues, such as paying utility bills, we usually ask our Chinese friends or seniors for help first, and we choose to ask local friends first for time-sensitive local characteristics or traditional festivals such as watching football games or music festivals.

Some interviewees (No. 3, No. 4, No. 17) sought psychological support from relatives and friends in China. If Chinese students have nowhere to complain while studying in Europe, it will cause some kind of psychological problem for a long time. The choice of complaint varies according to individual differences. Among them, No. 3 and No. 17 seek psychological support from Chinese friends, while material help is from family members; while No. 4 seeks

psychological support from domestic friends and relatives. But her own character is forbidding, when she found that she had accumulated a lot of mental and life pressure, she mentioned,

"Everyone around me has their own troubles, and I don't have a Chinese friend in my professional class. Because of the difference in living habits, I don't get along well with my Chinese roommates, so I don't have much communication with them, and it's easy to feel lonely. My boyfriend is in China, and I don't have any friends in Europe who can share my worries, so I want to go back to China as soon as possible after a holiday. Although there are many wonderful places in Europe that I haven't visit yet, I'd rather go back to China as soon as I have a holiday. "(No.4)

In addition to English, European countries have their own languages. Because of the language barrier, Chinese students studying in Europe have become cramped in interacting with locals. The majors studied by the interviewees in this study were all taught in English. Therefore, except for those on the No.7 and No.18 who had learned Portuguese and Italian, the other interviewees still considered learning the local language because of their basic living needs.

"The school offers Portuguese training courses for international students, which are not too expensive. Most of my Chinese classmates have signed up, so I joined them." (No.11)

"Before I came to Italy to study, I didn't plan to learn Italian, but then I married a local Chinese, considering that I would live here in the future, so I seriously studied Italian." (No.18)

In summary, Chinese students studying in Europe are more active in the Chinese social circle, which hinders their social and cultural adaptation to a certain extent. The company and help of their compatriots are also the source of strength for Chinese students studying in Europe.

● **Problems and solutions**

Although the interviewees in this research sample all have local friends in Europe, however, the first choice of asking help is always the Chinese people, which is a true portrayal of the social-cultural adaptation of the daily life of Chinese students in Europe. That is to say, when they interact with European groups, they often withdraw to "Chinese circles" to seek warmth, and it can be considered that they tend to "separate" in terms of cultural integration strategies, pay more attention to their own home culture, and are reluctant to interact with other cultural groups (Table 4-1).

Relevant studies have shown that in the process of cross-cultural adaptation, in order to reduce ABCs (Affective, Behavioral, Cognitive stress), sojourners will adopt different methods and coping strategies (Ward,2001). Broadly divided into three categories: problem-oriented, emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented. Problem-oriented is to change the stressor through action to solve the problem; emotion-oriented, refers to devoting efforts to reduce tension and sorrow; avoidance-oriented is to distract and divert attention, avoid problems, and passively obey. It is generally believed that good social-cultural adaptation is positively related to problem-oriented, and negatively correlated with emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented. (Li, 2015).

Table 4- 1: Part of the original interview sentences and coping strategies of the problems encountered by international students in daily life

Stressor (conflict sources)	Interview original sentence	Solution	coping strategies
language problems	When I want to buy something, I don't know how to say it, sometimes I don't dare to say it, and then I check my mobile phone. If there are too many people, I give up. *(No.5)*	Abandon	Avoidance-oriented
European waiter attitude	There is no habit of tipping in China. When eating in Europe, tipping is often required, or it is directly included in the	Accept	Avoidance-oriented

	bill. I was not used to it at first, but I accepted it later. However, it seems that there is no difference in service, just a cultural difference. *(No.3)*		
Accused by Europeans for no reason	Speaking Chinese on the road, was deliberately accused by Europeans of blocking the way. *(No.20)*	Argue	Problem-oriented
Being remarked by the European homeless	Some homeless people in Europe will beg or ask for money directly. If you don't give it or ignore it, you will be chased and scolded by foul language and insult the Chinese. Not afraid and arguing with a group of people, when we only have one or two people, we can only run away. *(No.10)*	Seek help from friends	Problem-oriented
European service attitude problem	I went to a luxury store several times to make purchases, and I pointed to the pictures on my phone and asked the waiter. The waiter's attitude was very perfunctory and his eyes were very contemptuous. Later, I asked a local friend to help me communicate. *(No.20)*	Ignore	Avoidance-oriented
Money stolen	It was stolen twice, once was the wallet, and once was the mobile phone and wallet together. Because it was placed in the innermost layer of the bag, when I got off the subway, I found that the bag was opened. *(No.9)*	Call police	Problem-oriented
suffer a complaint	Once at a house party with friends, the music was a bit loud, and the residents complained. But they basically have the same situation every weekend, we didn't talk about it. *(No.11)*	Behavior change	Problem-oriented
Service attitude of Chinese tourists and Europeans	In recent years, more and more Chinese tourists have come to Europe. Everyone likes to buy, buy, and buy. The European waiters have a very good attitude when they see the Chinese. There are even many shopping malls that have special activities for the China Shopping Festival. Basically, there is no need to worry about language barriers. *(No.6)*	Friendly, great shopping experience	Emotion-oriented

It can be seen from the above results that the interviewees who choose avoidance-oriented mainly have two influencing factors: personality tolerance and language limitation.

Language problem is one of the main problems of basic life, because there are many languages in European countries. Chinese students in daily life are more likely to live in their Chinese circle, and they are not used to using English and cannot communicate well with local waiters in daily life. In the face of similar treatment of homeless people, they will choose the strategy of patience or giving up when they cannot fully ensure safety.

The excessive number of Chinese tourists also affects the social-cultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Europe. In 2018, the number of people booking European tours increased by 27% year-on-year. Europe is the second largest destination region for Chinese tourists, accounting for 11%, second only to Asia. The "explosive buying" of Chinese tourists is already one of the trends in Europe, although it may affect some of the interests of some people living in Europe. However, in the process of participating in the observation, I found that almost all Chinese students studying in Europe have a history of part-time purchasing, although only one person insists on it for a long time.

No.6 mentioned in her expectations before coming to Europe, *" If I had come to Europe to study, I could also be a purchasing agent while traveling." (No.6)*

No.20 also said *"I can earn a lot of living expenses, and I buy more, and the membership level is also higher. Now the short video platform is popular, also I have the title of a fashion buyer." (No.20)*

In the process of the author's contact with the local people in Europe, although the European people's impression of China has been greatly improved in recent years. But there are still Europeans who said: *"Although the Chinese travel to Europe and spend a lot of money, which has helped the development of the European economy, the quality of some tourists is really*

unflattering."

The public order and personal qualities of tourists coming to Europe are the most disgusting and complaining aspects of Europeans. Moreover, in recent years in Europe, refugees have flooded into the trend, and some behaviors that are not easy to distinguish in many scenic spots will unilaterally affect Europeans' views of the home country of tourists, and then affect the attitude of students in the home country to be treated differently by the local people.

Considering actors arising from cultural adaptation, the acceptance attitude of the host country society is also one of the relevant factors affecting the cross-cultural adaptation status of Chinese students studying in Europe. As a group of developed countries, Europe attracts Chinese students to study in cultural and economic aspects. Due to the disparity in economic status and social habits, it is not surprising that Chinese students in Europe are discriminated against.

When shopping in a luxury store, No.20 mentioned a similar experience *"VIP customers are also buying limited editions or commemorative items. Compared with Europeans, I always have to buy more items or wait in line for a longer time to let the waiter gave me an order."* *(No.20)*

Another 13 interviewees also said that at the beginning of their arrival in Europe, they had the experience of forgetting to tip when eating out, and the waiters were more or less dissatisfied with their service attitudes.

In addition to the above factors, the factors arising from social interaction and social support also affect the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students in Europe. Because of the perfunctory service attitude of the European shop staff, the interviewees felt contemptuous, so they chose to ask local friends for help and communicated with each other to make the shopping experience smooth. The first reaction to being burgled in Europe is to call the police

for help. However, because of the noise at home, they chose a different attitude from the residents and were patient.

4.1.2 Psychological Adaptation Status

Observations of psychological adaptation state range from life satisfaction, such as physical condition and loneliness. At the same time, their psychological adaptability is judged by their willingness to return to China. The specific interview content and analysis are as follows:

- **Life satisfaction**

The results showed that the psychological adaptation in daily life was closely related to life satisfaction. If the problem cannot be solved effectively, declining life satisfaction then accumulated psychological pressure will eventually affect sleep and study, and the excessive psychological pressure will cause some interviewees to have symptoms of poor health. Through participating in the observation, the author learned that in Europe, Chinese students may not be able to integrate well into European society for various reasons, and tend to turn to Chinese compatriots when solving problems.

During the in-depth interviews, 5 interviewees (No. 4, No. 9, No. 17, No. 18, No. 19) were found to be in poor health, showing: lack of sleep, endocrine disorders, stress gastroenteritis, hair loss, physical Pain symptoms, listlessness. Because of the lively personality and participating in too many social activities, the body cannot get the time it deserves to repair.

Among them, No. 19 showed the worst situation: *"I usually study financial management in school, and the class is heavy; but because I like fashion, my friends in Milan and Florence often invite me to go to fashion shows. It's not good to rest back and forth, and sometimes even skip class to sleep. Although I was very happy when I participated in the activity, my body function was declining. When I took the final exam, I was very stressed and my hair fell out. Even, I had to retake the exam and retake several classes. "(No.19)*

28

The other 4 interviewees were unable to sleep at night due to heavy academic pressure. Notably, interviewees No. 4 and No. 9 mentioned that they have a strong sense of loneliness in Europe, so they prefer to complain to domestic friends for help when they have problems. Therefore, the biological clock is often disturbed, and there is a situation of "passing China time in Europe".

● **Willingness to return to China**

According to the in-depth interview, the interviewees all showed a high willingness to return to China. Three interviewees chose to return to China once every six months; thirteen interviewees chose to return to China once a year; the remaining four interviewees had no intention of returning to China within 5 years after graduation.

The specific factors affecting the high willingness to return to China are as follows: Life experience in Europe is one of the main reasons why interviewees decide whether to return to China, including their physical and psychological feelings in daily life. If the experience is not good, the interviewees will feel that there is no value in staying, and they will choose to leave Europe and come back to China. Although when asked about their impressions of Europe, all the interviewees expressed a positive attitude, and highly appreciated Europe's economic development and highly income level, as well as the attractive advantages of working hours and holidays.

"In general, if it is in 10 days for holiday, I might be spots around Europe to play, feeling has many interesting characteristics of culture, but if after a long time, feel is comfortable in China." (No.11)

The motivation for studying in Europe is based on planning for a future career and investing in academic qualifications. However, after coming to Europe, due to lack of language skills

and economic pressure, there was a large gap between expectations and actual feelings in Europe, which also caused most of the interviewees to have a large or small psychological gap. Among them, No. 2 and No. 4 have always had a strong desire to return to China after they came to Europe.

"I've always wanted to go back, from the very beginning. The reason is that the doctoral program is too tiring and hard. However, as an overseas student appointed by the country, I have no pressure of life and economy, so the sense of mission forces me to stick to it. In short, I hope to graduate and return to China as soon as possible." (No.2)

Increasing income is the main motivation of interviewees to study in Europe. If the motivation is not realized, or in the process of realization, if a great price is paid for the respondent, the consequence is that the mental pressure is getting bigger and bigger, and the desire to return to China is getting stronger and stronger.

"Because there is a yearning for the future, the family business is also in transition, so I want to change. But it is indeed too much pressure, language is not good, and inter-professional learning is also a lot of obstacles." (No.3)

4.2 Cross-cultural Adaptation in Academic

The academic cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Europe is studied from two dimensions of self-regulation and external environment (Guo,2016). The self-regulation part is mostly related to demographic factors, personality factors. They will not be described here. The social and cultural adaptation aspects include: ① Participation in off-campus activities or on-campus activities. ② Interpersonal communication in school ③ Problems and solutions. The psychological adaptation level includes: ① Self-learning willingness ② Satisfaction with the current school. The specific interview content and analysis are as follows.

Chapter 4 Results

4.2.1 Social-cultural Adaptation Status

The social and cultural adaptation is assessed from the participation of campus clubs and extra-campus activities, interpersonal communication on campus, and coping strategies for problems. The specific interview content and analysis are as follows:

● **Participation in off-campus or on-campus activities**

Judging from the participation in off-campus or on-campus activities, most students choose to participate in on-campus and off-campus activities, mainly because they have enough time and no financial burden. Only four of the interviewees did not participate in on-campus or off-campus activities. Two people did not like to participate in activities due to personal character problems, and one said that because he did not have time.

"Before entering school, I wanted to join a club, but the actual situation was that I was too busy with schoolwork. My major is only me, one Chinese. Besides, my English level is limited, so it is difficult to integrate well, and I will not consider it after that." (No.4)

The reason why some interviewees joined the on-campus activities was that the school required them to participate. Fifteen interviewees also had to participate in off-campus trainee activities due to the curriculum arrangement of compulsory courses.

"When I was in the first grade, I happened to have a 100-year-old school celebration. The school stipulated that freshmen must participate. In fact, it was all kinds of chores. From 6:00 in the morning to 11:00 in the evening, I was very tired." (No.16)

"There is a class that requires us to visit the coffee bean factory. There are almost two classes of students together. It takes about 20% of the grade to write a report after taking part. It took us several hours on the bus. The whole activity was very fulfilling and very exciting. It's fun and feels good." (No.7)

There are also interviewees who chose to participate spontaneously. The main reason is social support. For example, because of the need for resource acquisition, No.5 participated in two local Chinese organizations to celebrate the New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival (traditional Chinese festival).

"If the activities held do not conflict with the class time, I will basically go to participate. On the one hand, there is no need to pay extra and there may be subsidies. On the other hand, I can meet more friends. I am very happy." (No.5)

No. 8, who is also in need of resources, and she did eventually get a good paid internship through a local Chinese organization.

"I hope that participating in these social activities will enable to obtain favorable resources from local Chinese groups or international students. Such as employment, etc." (No.8)

Regardless of whether the motivation to participate in on-campus and off-campus activities is subjective, it reflects the social and cultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Europe to a certain extent. Although they chose to participate in activities partly because of school intervention, as an observation, it still contributed to their social-cultural adaptation.

● **Interpersonal communication in school**

Although the interviewees' participation in on-campus and off-campus activities was better under objective conditions, in terms of subjective choices, interpersonal interactions in school still showed similar results to those in daily life. It is worth noting that, when they get rid of school intervention, their original intention of interpersonal communication is always inclined to Chinese students.

In fact, most Chinese students are often seen eating together in the school cafeteria, and most of them are compatriots, and a few are with local students.

"In general, in addition to having easy discussions with group members during class, I always choose to sit with Chinese friends. We can ask each other if there is anything we don't understand. We also have lunch with Chinese friends in the school cafeteria. I chat between classes or play games at ordinary times. Sometimes I go to the gym or the supermarket with my Chinese classmates. Local friends usually just saying hello, very simple conversation, and I don't speak foreign languages well," (No.3)

Language ability is the main influencing factor. The lack of language ability leads to the inability of the interviewees to effectively express their views, poor communication with the local people, and gradually distance from social relations. This also shows from the side that the emergence of the Chinese social circle can easily make the social and cultural adaptation poor.

● **Problems and solutions**

Compared with the other two aspects (daily life and communication), there are fewer problems encountered in academics. Among the problems encountered, the problem-oriented coping strategy selection is the majority. The results are shown in the Table 4-2:

Table 4- 2: Part of the original interview sentences and coping strategies that students encounter problems in academic aspects

Stressor (conflict sources)	Interview original sentence	Solution	Coping strategies
Etiquette	Some teachers like to carry small snacks such as chocolate or cheese with them. They often share them with students, and they also accept small gifts prepared by students. *(No.15)*	Easy to get along with	Problem-oriented
Examination	Once I applied for a make-up exam and	Explain to	Problem-oriented

system	missed the registration time. After communicating with the teacher, the teacher agreed. *(No.9)*	the teacher	
Dissatisfied with teachers	A teacher is always very casual in her lectures, and often talks about her own affairs. I feel that it has little to do with the course, and learnt very little. *(No.11)*	No idea	Emotion-oriented
Insufficient motivation to learn	The language is not good, the teacher speaks fast, can't keep up, always distracted. *(No.3)*	Give up	Avoidance-oriented
How to hand in homework	Basically, the assessment method for each course is different. Although they have to report, sometimes don't understand the teacher's meaning. I forgot whether the assignments were handed in paper or electronic. *(No.19)*	Explain the situation to the teacher	Problem-oriented
The content is difficult to understand	I don't understand some content, and I don't understand even after reading the materials. I will check it privately, but if I still don't understand it, I may give up. *(No.7)*	Check first, give up later	Problem-oriented and avoidance-oriented

From the results, it can be concluded that most of the interviewees have chosen the problem-oriented coping strategy and are willing to solve the problem. The main purpose of the interviewees coming to Europe is to complete their studies. Therefore, they will attach importance to the activities inside or outside the school to help them fulfill their expectations of coming to Europe. No. 1 and No. 12 are about working in Europe after graduation, and it is necessary for them to get a degree if they want work in Europe, so things about getting credits become very important in terms of academics; No.14 came to Europe with the expectation of obtaining a master's research diploma, as long as it does not conform to the rules of European school etiquette, she has a high attitude to change.

Some interviewees who also expected to come to Europe for their studies showed an attitude of indifference. For example, on the No.6, No.10, No.18, and No.19, their expectation is to obtain a graduate degree, but as long as it does not matter much in terms of obtaining a

diploma, they generally choose to ignore it.

Students are the main group in the school, and tuition fees are the main source of income for the school, so they will naturally be treated well. The school's social support is shown in the following: There is a special international student office, which provides Chinese students with teachers who understand Chinese or who are Chinese in Europe, so as to reduce the inconvenience of the academic process due to language problems.

The school system is also one of the factors affecting the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Europe. The interviewees in this study are all in the category of higher education, and they all belong to universities with high local reputation and academic status in Europe. Relatively speaking, the subdivision research in terms of school type and educational level is slightly pale. The subdivisions are not explained here. However, judging from the types of courses that the interviewees are studying, the academic assessment of Chinese students studying in Europe is generally composed of attendance, daily homework, group reports and final exams. It is different from the Chinese learning assessment system, so initially the interviewees all said that the academic pressure was slightly higher, and there were symptoms of academic anxiety. When the interviewees recalled after completing their education, they said that the European school system is quite flexible, and it is not difficult to graduate smoothly.

4.2.2 Psychological Adaptation Status

The psychological adaptability is examined from two aspects: Self-learning willingness and satisfaction with the current school. The specific interview content and analysis are as follows.

● **Self-learning willingness**

Self-learning willingness refers to the willingness to learn relevant knowledge voluntarily

without the request of the school. In terms of language learning, fifteen interviewees chose to participate in local language training classes after class.

"My English level is C1, I belong to the category of people with good English, I can fully meet the needs of daily life and study, and I have the will to stay in Europe. Therefore, I signed up for the Portuguese class in the first year I came to Portugal, and now I have basically reached the B2 level, but I am still willing to continue my studies. "(No.12)

With the increase of time in Europe, the desire to study decreases, especially after the interviewees have adapted to life in Europe, they generally think that the experience of life is more important in ordinary times, and the study during the final exam is more important.

"In addition to taking classes and completing group homework, I rarely take the initiative to study the content of professional courses. In my spare time, I may choose to travel or do other things, but when I have an exam, I will study hard." (No.16)

Some interviewees also expressed that they wanted to study but were powerless.

"Sometimes there are always other things, and I may think that I am not so nervous about studying and arrange many other activities for myself." (No.3)

● **Satisfaction with the current school**

The psychological adjustment in terms of academics was also investigated from the satisfaction with the current school (such as the willingness to change schools or continue to further study), and the results showed that thirteen interviewees had the idea of continuing to study and wishing to further study. European schools fully provide Chinese students with social support to meet their needs for future employment and expectations for coming to Europe.

"Because I have higher requirements for myself, I used to be a recommended student when I was in China, so I have higher academic pursuits. During the two-year study abroad life, I was fortunate to choose exchange study and apply for double degree study, and finally completed it earlier. It was very fulfilling and basically fulfilled my expectations for coming to Europe. "(No.7)

Judging from the expectations of Chinese students studying in Europe before coming to Europe: two people choose to immigrate; five people get employment; fifteen people improve their economic power; four people go to school and work; four people choose to go to school. Compared with their expectations for the future after studying in Europe: thirteen people returned to China; six people stayed in Europe for employment; one person went to school. In this study, five interviewees had a half-year exchange study, two interviewees had completed a double-degree academic study, and one interviewee had continued her master's program after completing her undergraduate study.

The interviewees in this study came from prestigious universities in Europe. All the interviewees had high expectations for their target schools before studying abroad. Although there were differences in the study process, such as different majors and graduation time, they all expressed high satisfaction with their schools after graduation. It can also be seen from the in-depth interviews that the level of most interviewees' current schools basically meets their expectations for coming to Europe, so their willingness to change schools has little effect on their academic psychological adaptation.

4.3 Cross-cultural Adaptation in Communication

The investigation of the social and cultural adaptation status of the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students in Europe in terms of communication is carried out from social support and high-low language communication context switching. Psychological adaptation was investigated from differences in duration of study in Europe and extended communication.

Chapter 4 Results

The specific interview content and analysis are as follows.

4.3.1 Social-cultural Adaptation Status

The observation items are mainly based on if work & frequency of communication in local language or English and coping strategies for problems. The specific interview content and analysis are as follows.

- **Work & frequency of language communication in local language or English**

Whether to work and the frequency of contact with local people with foreign language communication are two measurement indicators in this part. According to the actual situation of the interviewees, a total of six interviewees in this research (No. 1, No. 6, No. 8, No. 18, No. 19, No. 20) have participated in studying abroad and working locally. The social-cultural adaptation problems of the interviewees during their stay in Europe were concentrated on the work side, far higher than the social-cultural adaptation of the academic side and daily life side.

According to the frequency of foreign language usage from high to low and the foreign language level of the interviewees, their occupation categories are: No. 1 school teacher, No. 6 bank clerk, No. 8 private company employee, No. 18 and No. 19 restaurant waiter, No. 20 fashion buyer. Combined with reality and pre-existing factors of cultural adaptation, foreign language level is one of the main influencing factors.

Previous work mode in Europe, there are three common types of work for international students: "apprenticeship", "internship" and "part-time work". These three work methods all require close communication between international students and local people, which virtually increases the requirements for international students' personal communication skills, language skills, and forces them to familiarize themselves with the local social and cultural

environment. Considering that Asian culture is a high-context culture, while Europe is a low-context culture. The frequency of communication in different contexts is a great test of whether Chinese students can interact freely with local people in the European social and cultural environment. The ability to interact with people in different contexts has an important impact on cross-cultural communication adaptation.

"I was originally not good at English, but because of my work needs, I often cooperated with local buyers. Then, I gradually became more and more confident, and my spoken language has changed a lot. And got lot of resources from local friends." (No.20)

Work is the area where Chinese students studying in Europe have the most contact with local people. European colleagues and guests are the objects of direct contact. As practitioners and service personnel, the interviewees at work are treated and under pressure only as parties or experiencers can understand their difficulties.

- **Problems and solutions**

Although only 1/4 of the interviewees in this study participated in social work, the data feedback they received is still worthy of careful study. The work aspect is also one of the worst areas for problems and coping strategies. The results show that the greater the contact frequency, the more problems will arise and the worse the degree of adaptation will be. Good social and cultural adaptation is directly proportional to problem-oriented, and inversely proportional to emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented. Although only 5 interviewees were involved in the work, according to the results, only 2 people (No. 1 and No. 8) were selected with problem-oriented strategies.

From the perspective of the objects encountered: ① local guests ② local colleagues ③ Chinese colleagues/guests in Europe. Major Problem Items: Different ways of doing things; being looked down upon; European character problems; thought to be deliberately difficult.

Chapter 4 Results

The results of the in-depth interviews are summarized in the Table 4-3:

Table 4- 3: Part of the original interview sentences and coping strategies for the problems encountered by international students at work

Stressor (conflict sources)	Interview original sentence	Solution	coping strategies
The way Chinese people do things in Europe	Some Chinese students, when they encounter a problem, subconsciously ask me to solve the problem. Although it is my job, but once or twice is fine, it is inevitable that I have a bad impression on him. *(No.1)*	Accept the problem and fix it	Problem-oriented
Deliberately made things difficult by the Chinese	When I was working part-time in a Chinese restaurant, I was originally just a waiter. The manager always embarrassed me because of lack of staff. I have done a lot of things, and I even went to sort out the goods and wash the dishes in the back kitchen. *(No.18)*	Forbearance and finally resign	Emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented
European guests deliberately trouble a lot	When the restaurant is open late, a local old man who is drunk and thinks that Chinese girls are weak and easy to bully, so they will always find trouble and make some bad jokes. *(No.19)*	Ignore	Avoidance-oriented
European colleagues are lazy	I have always known that Europeans are more rambunctious, and I have a more impatient personality. I always want to complete tasks quickly, so I want to finish the work quickly, but he always wants to drink coffee. Take it slow, and sometimes I advise him to hurry up. He even will make fun of me. *(No.6)*	First persuade, endure ridicule, and then do more tasks by myself, if it really fails, I will ask the leader for feedback	Problem-oriented, emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented
Work intensity is high	I feel very unhappy because I feel too tired from work. *(No.19)*	Mood adjustment	Emotion-oriented
Different ways of doing things in China and Europe	Europeans and Chinese may have different ways of doing things. If you do it your own way, the locals will say you can't do it. But it doesn't actually make a difference. *(No.1)*	Change behavior, listen	Avoidance-oriented
European	When you are happy, you have a very	Ignore	Avoidance-oriented

colleagues moody	good relationship. When he was upset, he was furious. For a while, I don't understand. *(No.20)*		
Troubled by European Boss	I do the same amount of work, but I am always told that Chinese people don't understand European work rules, and he can't see it even if I try hard, and I like to frame me for being lazy if I don't do it well. *(No.6)*	Resignation	Avoidance-oriented
Being stared at by European bosses	My friend was hospitalized for a while, and I helped her work at the clothing store. The boss agreed, but when I went to work, the lady boss was very annoying and kept staring at me, making me feel uncomfortable, like preventing a thief. *(No.18)*	Forbearance, for the work of a friend	Emotion-oriented

The society acceptance attitude in the host country is also one of the influencing factors. In the conversation with the interviewees and the author's participation in the observation, we found that, although the civilization of the European continent is open, almost all Chinese students who stay in Europe have been discriminated against or despised because they are Chinese and foreigners. The specific reasons for Europeans' xenophobia are unknown, but relevant research has mentioned or is related to personal experience and personality factors.

Indeed, work is the area with the most problems in studying abroad, and the problem-oriented choice of coping strategies is lower than that of daily life and academics. The fundamental reason is that economic factors dominate the adaptation trend of studying abroad. Due to personal privacy concerns, although they have been informed in advance that they will remain anonymous, the interviewees still expressed their unwillingness to disclose their actual income. Therefore, this part of the data is not made public.

"Working in a Chinese restaurant is very tiring, but there is no conflict between time and studies. The salary plus tips is also a very good income. Basically, I can be completely self-sufficient in terms of food and lodging, not having to take money with my family makes me feel free. " (No.18)

From the data of in-depth interviews, compared with the traditional sense of "making a living", some interviewees are more motivated by personal pursuits or time surplus, such as accumulating social experience and expanding their social circles.

"I worked after graduating from undergraduate and then re-selected as a graduate student. Although my family conditions are good, I can feel that I still need exercise in my studies and other aspects when I work. When a good opportunity arises, I try to seize it, maybe it's a personality issue. "(No.6)

No. 8 said: *"When I was in China, I couldn't be idle, I always liked to schedule my life to the fullest, I always had the habit of working part-time, and social work allowed me to make more friends, regardless of age group. I like to make friends."(No.8)*

4.3.2 Psychological Adaptation Status

The observation item of psychological adaptation is to observe whether there is emotional change after work, time duration in Europe and extended communication. The specific interview content and analysis are as follows.

● **Emotional changes in work**

From the research results, most of the interviewees chose problem-oriented after choosing emotion-oriented. Most of the interviewees did not actively solve problems when they encountered problems, but chose "forbearance" for emotion-oriented and "resignation" for avoidance-oriented.

In the process of work, the international students have a deeper understanding of European

society and culture, can make more friends, and have exercised their communication skills and language skills.

"Before I started working, I was a relatively cold person and I spent a lot of time alone. Later, with colleagues and students, I became much more active and integrated into the Europe society." (No.1)

International students with wage income will have higher communicative adaptability than those who only rely on parental support, may have higher language proficiency, and be more adaptable to new environments. It suggests that in the process of European social work, the unfavorable interpersonal communication will affect their social and cultural adaptation, and then have an impact on psychological adaptation.

"Since my part-time job, I met my later husband, and the relatively independent income makes me more confident to survive in Italy, and because of the economic strength, so I dare to fall in love here." (No.18)

● **Time duration in Europe & Extend communication**

Differences in the length of stay in Europe. Relevant research data shows that there are significant differences in the communicative adaptation of international students with different study periods.

"When I was a freshman in high school in China, my parents chose a British language class for me, and then a preparatory university, I took a total of 7 years from a high school student to a master's degree. At the beginning, I was young and felt that everything was very fresh and curious. Later, I was under a lot of pressure to study and I was still in adolescence, so I did have a bit of a psychological burden in the first few years. Fortunately, I made new friends very quickly. I feel that during that time I spent time with my language class friends. As soon

as the long vacation comes, I can't wait to go back to China to play with my old friends. After a long time, I became very adaptable to life abroad. When I finally graduated, I was still reluctant to return to China. "(No.17)

The interviewees' study time durations from 2 to 7 years, the communicative adaptation of international students can learn from the "U-shaped" curve theory (Lysgaand 1955) and culture shock theory, that is, after the international students have passed the initial excitement period, after "16-24 months", they began to experience the "crisis period" of the cross-cultural stage. After the third year in Europe, they overcame the difficulties of communication and entered a recovery period, and their adaptation to the new environment reached a higher level. Especially in the fifth year or so, the communication adaptation of international students increased rapidly.

In the long-term study abroad life, the subjective feeling of the international students is the standard that can best judge the communicative adaptation. After getting the company of peers and the same group in the circle where international students interact frequently on a daily basis, the communication adaptation of the international students will be positively energized accordingly.

4.4 The Degree of Adaptation in Daily life, Academic and Communication

This section firstly refers to Ward's measurement method of the two dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation (psychological adaptation and social-cultural adaptation), and investigates the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Europe.

4.4.1 Analysis of the results of daily life adaptation research

- **Social-cultural adaptation**

From "If have Europeans friends", we can see their interaction with local people. The social

communication situation of Chinese students studying in Europe in daily life can also be judged by dealing with daily administrative procedures, those who encounter difficulties and seeking help, and those who interact with them in entertainment. The choice of coping strategies as a way of social and cultural adaptation can also judge their adaptive state. The results are shown in the Table 4-4.

- **Psychological adaptation**

Psychological adaptation is judged from their mental health and life satisfaction, respectively, from their physical health, loneliness, and willingness to return to China. The worse the physical condition, the worse the mental health item; the stronger the loneliness, the stronger the willingness to return to China and the worse the mental health item; the willingness to return to China of Chinese students studying in Europe is negatively correlated with their satisfaction with daily life. The results are shown in the Table 4-4.

Table 4- 4: Cross-cultural adaptation analysis in daily life

Observations	Number	Daily life Adaptation
Do you have European friends?	20 people	Excellent
Ask Chinese people for help	20 people	Poor
Problem-oriented coping strategy	7 people (No. 1, No. 6, No. 8, No. 12, No. 13, No. 14, No. 15)	Intermediate
Loneliness	7 people (No. 2, No. 4, No. 7, No. 9, No. 15, No. 19, No. 20)	Intermediate
Poor physical health	7 people (No. 4, No. 5, No. 10, No. 11, No. 17, No. 18, No. 19)	Intermediate
Willingness to return to China	16 people	Poor

4.4.2 Analysis of the results of academic adaptation research

● **Social-cultural adaptation**

By understanding the on-campus contacts of Chinese students studying in Europe and their participation in activities, it is possible to predict their academic social-cultural adaptation. The higher the degree of participation in activities organized by the school, the higher the academic social-cultural adaptation state, and the better the academic social-cultural adaptation state. From the perspective of on-campus contacts, most of them are Chinese in Europe, which shows that the social and cultural adaptation of Chinese students in Europe is still in a poor state. The results are shown in the Table 4-5.

● **Psychological adaptation**

Psychological adaptation: By observing the willingness of Chinese students to study in Europe, the higher the willingness to self-learning, the higher the psychological adaptation in terms of academics, and there is a positive correlation between the two. The discussion on whether there is a willingness to continue to study expresses the level of school satisfaction. The results are shown in the Table 4-5.

Table 4- 5: Cross-cultural adaptation analysis in academic aspects

Observations	Number	Academic Adaptation
Participate in off-campus activities	16 people	Very good
Chinese people in school contacts	19 people（except No.4）	Poor
Problem-oriented coping strategies	13 people	Very good
Self-learning willingness	13 people	Very good

Willingness to continue studying	6 people (No. 1, No. 7, No. 12, No. 13, No. 15, No. 17)	Intermediate

4.4.3 Analysis of the results of communication adaptation research

- **The current situation of Social-cultural adaptation**

Chinese students studying in Europe in terms of communication, it is mainly carried out from the aspect of work, with special attention to the two items of job content and foreign language use. By adopting solutions and coping strategies to the main problems encountered by Chinese students in Europe during their adaptation, it is also possible to understand their adaptation status. Good social-cultural adaptation was positively correlated with problem-oriented, and negatively correlated with emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented. The results are shown in the Table 4-6.

- **The current situation of psychological adaptation**

Anxiety affects the psychological adaptation state of Chinese students studying in Europe. The more the number of people with work anxiety caused by various reasons, the worse the overall psychological adaptation of the interviewees. During the process of staying in Europe, the higher the frequency of psychological negative emotions caused by interpersonal communication or work, it indicates that the lower the work-life satisfaction is, the more easily the psychological adaptation state is affected. The results are shown in the Table 4-6.

Table 4- 6: Cross-cultural adaptation analysis in communication

Observations	Number	Communication Adaptation
Problem-oriented coping strategies	2 people (No. 1 and No. 8)	Poor

Frequent contact with Europeans	5people	Intermediate
Anxiety at work	3 people (No.6, No.18, No.19)	Intermediate
High frequency of social and psychological emptiness when staying in Europe	14 people	Poor

4.5 Summary of Cross-cultural Adaptation of Chinese Students Studying in Europe

The author conducted interviews with twenty interviewees from October 2018 to July 2022. Through the interview and analysis of adaptability in three aspects: "daily life", "academic" and "communication", the basic situation of cross-cultural adaptation of contemporary Chinese students in Europe is obtained. The results of the survey according to the context are shown in the following Table 4-7.

Table 4- 7: The current status of cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Europe

Study abroad life categories	**Social-cultural adaptation**	**Psychological adaptation**
Daily life	Excellent	Intermediate
Academic	Excellent	Intermediate
Communication	Poor	Excellent

On the whole, the results of the study show that the majority interviewees have a high degree of cross-cultural adaptation. Social-cultural adaptation is higher than psychological adaptation, showing different differences in various aspects of daily life; psychological adaptation in daily life and academics is lower than social-cultural adaptation; and psychological adaptation in communication is higher than Social-cultural adaptation. Due to the expectations and

economic factors of coming to Europe, socio-cultural adaptation in daily life and academics is higher than psychological adaptation. The social and cultural adaptation in communication is lower than the psychological adaptation, which is mainly related to the emotional factors that the interpersonal relationships of local people in Europe may be affected by the language level and the relief of tension and pressure brought by the Chinese circle.

In addition, it is worth noting that during the process of cross-cultural adaptation in Europe, the respondent's conflict (stress) handling methods, learning willingness and life-style aspects have also changed significantly. Due to the personality characteristics of the characters, the differences are very large, and they will not be explained here.

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Chapter 5   Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Research Findings

5.1.1 The Motivation & Expectations of Chinese Students Studying in Europe

When Chinese international students determine to study abroad, they often give priority to education level, safety issues, and recognition of future employment.

"Broadening international horizons" and "enriching life experiences" are always the top two options. At the same time, more and more people who intend to study abroad have begun to pursue "learning advanced foreign knowledge" and "studying in famous foreign schools" with the main purpose of improving their own ability and quality.

For the past three years, remote, flexible or distributed learning has become the most popular type of provision for those studying in the Europe. However, the interviewees in this study are all studying and living in Europe, so the sample data can better reflect the state of cross-cultural adaptation in real life and have a long-term perspective.

5.1.2 The Influencing Factors of Cross-cultural Adaptation

- **Preexisting factors before cross-cultural adaptation**

Language level. The interviewees in this sample all mentioned this keyword, because the language problem has a wide range of invariance and influence, and it first affected poor communication with local people. That is to say, the most basic interpersonal communication is restricted, and they are often confined to the European-Chinese social circle. In basic life, such as shopping, eating, accommodation, medical treatment, entertainment are also limited due to language problems. It affects the rhythm of Chinese students studying in Europe integrating into European society; it also affects the choice of stress strategies for Chinese

51

students to adapt to different cultures. The results show that it is easier to be oriented by emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented, resulting in the weakening of problem-handling ability, which in turn affects the state of cross-cultural adaptation; in terms of the object of help, due to the influence of language communication, they are more inclined to choose relatives and friends in Europe or China.

Personality factors are also one of the main factors that affect cross-cultural adaptation in daily life. Personality factors include self-esteem, need for cognitive, introversion/extra version, self-efficacy, locus of control, of which self-esteem has a significant impact on cross-cultural adaptation in life. Social psychologists believe that if sojourners are motivated to maintain their self-esteem, they will strive to present a positive self-image to the sojourn group and society (Li, 2015). Sojourners with high self-esteem are more inclined to actively adapt to the new environment, and tend to be problem-oriented in the choice of coping strategies when encountering problems. Problem-oriented is positively correlated with good cross-cultural adaptation, so Chinese students with high self-esteem in Europe have relatively good cross-cultural adaptation.

In the study of cross-cultural adaptation, the motivation to study abroad is also widely investigated as a factor. The motivations of Chinese students studying in Europe in this study are not single, but diverse, and these different motivations directly affect their interpersonal relationships with local groups. The research results show that: some interviewees are not so fulfilled in the process of realizing their motivation, which is often easy to cause psychological unhappiness, which in turn affects their psychological adaptation; some interviewees have complex motivations to study abroad, resulting in a low degree of completion of their goals. Taking goal completion as an indicator of satisfaction of international students has a great impact on their adaptability.

The importance of economic status in the pre-accumulation factors has been mentioned many times above, but from the research and investigation of international students' cross-cultural

adaptation, it is still under-emphasized. In fact, economic factors are one of the main reasons for all cross-cultural adaptation pressures. In previous research cases, there was a situation where work was required to continue studying. In this study, the leading role of economic factors was weakened due to the generally good economic status of domestic households of the interviewees.

● **Factors arising in the process of cross-cultural adaptation**

The social acceptance attitude of the host country has been mentioned in many relevant studies. There are huge cultural differences between China and the West. If international students fail to gain a favorable impression of the experience during cross-cultural adaptation, it will cause a lot of psychological pressure, which will affect cross-cultural adaptation. Different social circles play different roles in cross-cultural adaptation. Bochner(1972) divides the circle of friends of international students into three from the inside out: A single social circle for material and emotional support within the country's compatriots; a double social circle for students or staff in the foreign country who provide vocational and academic assistance; a multi-faceted social circle for leisure and entertainment with students from other countries around (Yang, 2005).

As a school management system, the school system is the basic regulation to ensure the overall operation of the school. On-campus and off-campus activities are used as reference items, regardless of whether they are mandatory or not, they have played a positive role in the social and cultural adaptation of the interviewees compared with the psychological adaptation state.

Social support is all supportive activities and is an extremely important resource for cross-cultural adaptation. For example, it shows the support for the interviewees to complete their studies and the corresponding impact on the psychological adaptation of the international students. Good social support relieves the pressure brought about by poor language to a

certain extent, and is beneficial to cross-cultural adaptation in academics.

The higher the contact frequency, the poorer the cultural adaptation state, and the two are inversely correlated. In this study, the high and low contextual transition of Asian culture and European culture clearly shows the touch signal of the cross-cultural adaptation state of international students given by communicative culture and language. The results show that the interviewees tend to choose avoidance-oriented and emotion-oriented in terms of work, mostly because of the estrangement caused by the high frequency of contact with local people, which leads to poor cultural adaptation.

Social system is also one of the factors that affect cross-cultural adaptation in communication. In the long-term stay in Europe, the contact and collision with social culture and the growing growth. It is also a process of becoming familiar with the social system, so it is easy to feel nervous in an unfamiliar state, and then gradually adapt to it calmly.

5.2 Implications

As this study was performed with a practical framework in terms objectives, it is now possible to infer some practical implications for cross-cultural adaptation which can be derived from both research and discussion.

- **Improve language skills**

Both previous studies and the results of this interview have confirmed the important influence of language factors on international students' cross-cultural adaptation. A good language proficiency can help international students to complete their studies better. To a certain extent, language can reflect the learning ability of international students. Higher language proficiency means higher acceptance of academic content and academic performance, listening to changes in lectures, interacting with tutors, and completing academic assessments, which in turn

improves learning adaptability in the process. In addition, a good language level can help international students get more social support, make more friends, and support from peers and the outside world will help international students to overcome difficulties more easily, such as good interaction and psychological support and emotional comfort, in turn promotes the level of adaptation in communication, academics and life. Improve the language level, form a virtuous circle of cross-cultural, and enhance the mutual understanding of Eastern and Western cultures.

● **Actively pursue job and scholarship opportunities**

Work not only provides a source of income for international students, but also relieves the financial pressure of their families and themselves. It also provides opportunities for Chinese students studying in Europe to have a deep understanding of European society, so that Chinese students studying in Europe can better obtain favorable resources in the process of cross-cultural adaptation. At work, international students can improve their language proficiency by forcing themselves to communicate with others, and the professional knowledge and skills learned at work can also feedback their academic knowledge. But it is worth noting that international students should focus on their studies and never forget the original intention of studying abroad. Whether it is a Chinese or a European university, the pursuit of scholarship is also an important project. The scholarship not only relieves the financial pressure of international students, enables them to focus more on their studies, but also affirms their learning ability, which has a positive effect on the improvement of international students' learning adaptability.

● **Pay attention to physical and mental health trends**

A good physical and mental health is the most subjective and intuitive adaptive feedback for every cross-cultural sojourner. The huge difference between Asian culture and European

culture may cause differences in world outlook, values, and outlook on life, which may cause certain physical and mental discomfort within a certain period of time. At this stage, the society reports that more and more young people are prone to have a certain degree of physical and mental sub-health, therefore, actively adjusting the status is very important for the cross-cultural adaptation process of Chinese students studying in Europe.

● **Choose the right major and college**

Different majors have different requirements for students, which will also affect the academic performance of international students. When international students choose to study in Europe, they should reasonably analyze their motives and application conditions, and do not blindly follow popular trends. Individual international students should make rational judgments on the choice of majors. In addition to language level, the nature of the school, the level of teaching resources, course selection and future employment are all aspects that need attention and consideration. Adapting to a new learning environment requires international students to adjust themselves according to the needs of the environment and learning, so as to achieve a psychological and behavioral balance with the learning environment. Reasonably and carefully consider comprehensively, and avoid being unable to graduate due to various adaptation issues.

5.3 Research Limitations

The selected subjects of this study are Chinese students studying in Europe, but the group selection is mostly postgraduate students, and there are not many interview samples, which has limitations to a certain extent, which may cause a lot of data errors. This study focuses on three aspects of daily life, study and communication, which are biased towards aspects of social and cultural adaptation, while the focus on psychological adaptation is slightly weak. Furthermore, this research mainly focuses on the overall process of cross-cultural adaptation, and does not subdivide specific professional categories. Due to the global pandemic of

Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion

COVID 19, the progress of the thesis has been put on hold again and again, which lacks timeliness to a certain extent and lacks attention to the emerging online international study groups.

5.4 Conclusion

There are great differences in the adaptation status of Chinese students studying in Europe. Gender, time length of stay in Europe, majors studied, and personalities are all factors that affect the cross-cultural adaptation of international students, especially in terms of academic adaptation and daily life adaptation. Personality is not static. Although it will be in a stable state to a certain extent due to genetic factors, changes in the social and cultural environment will also lead to changes in personality. The influence of personality factors in the process of cross-cultural adaptation may be manifested in a better temper, outgoing, self-confidence or inferiority. In addition, a higher level of communication adaptation is conducive to improving the living adaptation level of international students. If international students can better understand and adapt to the local communication culture, get more social support, peer support and improve your own stereotypes of Europeans and better integrate into the daily life of locals.

Sojourners adapt to the local society, and effective communication with local people is an indicator of social and cultural adaptation. Chinese students studying in Europe may limit their social circle to their own compatriots due to their own communication skills and different values from Europeans. In reality, the objects of entertainment and assistance also mostly choose to be with the Chinese in Europe, and the objects of complaint are domestic friends. As a result, it led to their poor social-cultural adaptation, but to a certain extent alleviated the psychological adaptation problems such as tension, low humility and anxiety caused by cultural adaptation stress.

Through this research, it is found that students who come to study in Europe generally have a clear purpose. But even if the purpose is clear, when there are multiple actual purposes, if the

goal cannot be achieved, psychological problems such as anxiety and negative emotions will easily occur, and the adaptation effect will not be optimal. Insufficient grasp of information before studying abroad is also a factor that leads to maladaptation across cultures. If international students participate in European social and cultural life with a positive attitude, the state of cross-cultural adaptation will achieve better results.

Language proficiency is an important factor affecting international students' communication and studies. The influence of language level is reflected in all aspects of study abroad life, and also affects psychological adaptation and social-cultural adaptation to varying degrees. Moreover, it is not comprehensive to judge the standard based on pure language level. It is necessary to focus on the application of language in the actual life environment, which can be more truly and accurately reflected.

Economic pressure is a practical problem that every international student must face, and it is also the most prominent stressor in life in Europe (Barrant, 1994). The interviewees surveyed in this paper generally have good family support, so intuitively, there is no obvious difference between the social and cultural adaptation of academics and daily life. However, in terms of psychological adjustment and social interaction, it can be seen that students with working income show higher adaptability than students who only rely on their parents to provide living expenses. And in the process, international students continue to deepen their understanding of Europe, on the one hand, language ability and communicative ability have been exercised; on the other hand, if the work content is in line with the major, it will also have a positive effect on academic studies. Living expenses are an important economic factor to measure the quality of life of international students. This study found that international students with higher living expenses have a more advantageous position in the process of cross-cultural adaptation.

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60

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Appendix A

Interview outline questions

- **Before going to Europe to study**

① What is your reason for studying in Europe? (Why choose Europe, why choose this university, this major)

②How was your English level before coming to Europe? Do you have the language level of the destination country? Can it meet the language needs of your daily life when you first came to Europe to study?

③What kind of preparations have you made for cultural adaptation/learning adaptation before coming to Europe? (For example, about the school, the city where you are located, whether you have received any form of training before studying abroad? Do you think it is necessary?

- **During your studies in Europe**

① Difficulties or difficulties you encountered when you first came to Europe to study? How did you solve it?

②Do you think you can adapt to the European way of education in your studies? What do you think are the differences between Chinese and European education? How do you feel about the university in general? What are the main difficulties encountered in learning? What measures has the school taken to help international students overcome their learning difficulties? What do you think are the obvious advantages or disadvantages of Chinese students studying abroad? What advice do you have for Chinese students studying in Europe?

③How is your relationship with school teachers and international/domestic classmates? Do you think it had an impact on your studies? As an international student, do you think your

professional studies have changed your perception or made an impact on your life?

④ Do you often participate in activities and parties on or off campus? Do you have a job or a part-time job? Are your friend circles in Europe mainly Chinese or foreigners? Why? Do you usually use a foreign language or Chinese? Do you think it is difficult to make friends with foreigners? What obstacles exist? What do you think is the attitude of foreigners towards Chinese people? Have you ever met a foreigner who doesn't understand China, has prejudice against China or even is hostile to China? How did you cope?

⑤ Overall, what was the most difficult thing for you to study in Europe? What are you least used to? What are you most used to? What do you like about Europe? What do you dislike about Europe? How satisfied are you with your study/life in Europe?

⑥ Looking back on the problems you encountered, which ones do you think are caused by cultural differences? Has it been misunderstood because of cultural differences? Can you give an example?

- **Reflection after study**

①Do you think you have adapted to studying and living in Europe? Compared with other Chinese students, what aspects do you do differently? Do you plan to stay in Europe to study or work after graduation?

②Did your study abroad life in Europe have an impact on your ideas? What changes? What advice do you have for students who want to study in Europe in the future?