

THE STUDY ON LEISURE ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION, MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCE AND ACCULTURATION STRESS ON WELL-BEING

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Summary

This study aims to explore the impact of leisure activity participation, multicultural experiences, and acculturative stress on well-being. The research targets foreign students at Chaoyang University of Technology and uses an online survey for data collection through the snowball sampling method. The research instruments include the leisure activity participation scale, multicultural experience scale, acculturative stress scale, and well-being scale. A total of 98 questionnaires were distributed, and after excluding invalid responses, 96 valid responses were obtained, yielding a valid response rate of 97.96%. The results show that foreign students tend towards multicultural contact in their experiences, with a moderate level of cultural adaptation stress, and the highest well-being is felt in interpersonal relationships. Multicultural interaction positively influences well-being, while acculturative stress does not significantly affect well-being. Additionally, multicultural experiences do not significantly impact acculturative stress. Educational institutions should actively encourage both foreign and domestic students to participate in leisure activities to enhance the well-being of foreign students, promote interaction among them, strengthen cross-cultural exchanges, and help students better adapt to a multicultural environment.

Keywords: Educational, Activities, Social activities, Multicultural Interaction, International Exchange Students

INTRODUCTION

With the development of globalization and global mobility, the international residents and students has been steadily increasing (Hofhuis et al., 2019). It is estimated that in 2017, there were already 50 million foreigners and over 5 million international students worldwide (ICEF Monitor, 2017; Nations, 2017), and these figures are expected to continue rising (voor de Statistiek, 2020). Unlike traditional immigrants, international residents' stays abroad are temporary (Geeraert & Demoulin, 2013; Hechanova et al., 2003). Living within two cultures (their home country and the current host country) presents challenges and dilemmas due to the bicultural identity they navigate (Ward et al., 2021), which can negatively impact their psychological well-being (Gebregergis et al., 2020). Given this context, the process of acculturative adaptation may bring stress to individuals. Although encountering foreign cultures (cultures other than one's own) may elicit rejection responses (Chiu et al., 2011), frequent interaction with citizens and elements of foreign cultures may highlight perceived

similarity and common fate among all humans (Campbell, 1958), thereby increasing individuals' group identification. When individuals find themselves in unfamiliar cultural environments, they face language barriers, value differences, and cultural conflicts, all of which may lead to anxiety and increased stress, thereby reducing personal well-being. Searle and Ward (1990) pointed out that cultural adaptation outcomes involve psychological and socio-cultural adjustments, with psychological adaptation including outcomes such as satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, through exposure and experience with different cultures' arts, philosophies, and thoughts, individuals can broaden their horizons. As individuals' spiritual growth and thought inspiration occur, positive feelings such as happiness and satisfaction are generated. Leisure activities can promote cultural diversity by engaging in various complex and interwoven contexts (Fornäs, 1995). Therefore, leisure activities can serve as a way for people to understand and experience different cultures, values, and traditions. When people participate

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in various leisure activities, they can understand and respect other cultures after interacting, sharing, and learning from people with different cultural backgrounds. Iwasaki (2007) also noted that people from different racial and cultural backgrounds can improve their quality of life and gain positive identity and self-esteem through leisure activities. In summary, the purpose of this study is to understand whether participation in leisure activities can enhance the cognitive experience of multiculturalism and alleviate acculturative stress, thereby increasing individuals' sense of well-being. Finally, it is hoped that the research findings can provide practical recommendations for educational professionals or relevant government agencies.

RESEARCH METHODS

The subjects of this study are foreign students enrolled at Chaoyang University of Technology in 2023. The research employs Snowball sampling and collects data through an online questionnaire survey. The study subject is foreign students from Chaoyang University of Technology. Between June 15, 2023, and July 30, 2023, foreign students at Chaoyang University of Technology were asked to distribute the Google Forms online questionnaire to their fellow foreign classmates through Line groups. This study uses IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0 for various analyses. First, descriptive statistics were used to understand the basic background information of the foreign students at Chaoyang University of Technology. Next, multiple stepwise regression analysis was employed to explore the effects of leisure activity participation, multicultural experiences, acculturative stress, and well-being. A significance level of $\alpha = .05$ was used for statistical tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From June 15, 2023, to July 30, 2023, foreign students at Chaoyang University of Technology were asked to distribute the Google Forms online questionnaire to their fellow foreign classmates through Line groups. A total of 98 questionnaires were distributed, and 96 valid responses were received, yielding an effective response rate of 97.96%.

Current Status of Leisure Activity Participation, Multicultural Experiences, Acculturative stress, and Well-being among Foreign Students.

The gender distribution of foreign students at Chaoyang University of Technology in this study shows a higher proportion of females at 65.63% and males at 34.37%. The majority nationality is Vietnamese, accounting for 65.60%. Most students have been in Taiwan for one to two years, representing 41.70%. Regarding current academic degrees, the majority are pursuing bachelor's degrees (93.80%), with 6.30% pursuing master's or doctoral degrees. The distribution of whether students have had exchange or study-abroad experiences in other countries shows that 84.40% have not had such experiences, while 15.60% have.

Responses to Various Measures of Leisure Activity Participation, Multicultural Experiences, Acculturative stress, and Well-being among Foreign Students at Chaoyang University of Technology.

The overall average response for leisure activity participation among foreign students at Chaoyang University of Technology is 3.04 (SD = .62). For the dimensions within leisure activity participation: sports activities average 2.85 (SD = .91), mass media activities average 3.51 (SD = .70), outdoor activities average 3.25 (SD = .90), cultural activities average 3.01 (SD = 1.03), social activities average 3.07 (SD = .76), and hobby activities average 2.56 (SD = .83). The overall average response for multicultural experiences is 3.70 (SD = .75). Within this measure, the multicultural contact dimension averages 3.72 (SD = .77) and the multicultural interaction dimension averages 3.67 (SD = .85). The average response for acculturative stress is 2.80 (SD = .66). The overall average response for well-being is 3.54 (SD = .76). For the dimensions within well-being: life satisfaction averages 3.70 (SD = .89), interpersonal relationships average 3.75 (SD = .83), self-affirmation averages 3.66 (SD = .89), and physical and mental health average 3.12 (SD = .89). The study finds that foreign students at Chaoyang University of Technology participate most frequently in mass media activities within

Table 1. Analysis of the Influence of Leisure Activity Participation on Cross-Cultural Experience

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	Collinearity Statistics		<i>F</i>
	B	Std. Error	β		Tolerance	VIF	
(Constant)	1.58	0.33		4.771*			21.627*
Mass Media Activities	0.47	0.10	0.45	4.892*	0.86	1.16	
Cultural Activities	0.15	0.07	0.21	2.286*	0.86	1.16	
R = .56 R ² = .32 Adj-R ² = .30							

leisure activities. They show the highest agreement with multicultural contact within multicultural experiences. Their acculturative stress is moderate, and in terms of well-being, they agree most strongly with the interpersonal relationships dimension.

Impact of Leisure Activity Participation, Multicultural Experiences, Acculturative stress, and Well-being

Impact of Leisure Activity Participation on Multicultural Experiences

According to the research findings, participation in mass media activities and cultural activities within leisure activities can influence multicultural experiences, as shown in Table 1. The multiple correlation coefficient is .56, explaining 32% of the variance, with an adjusted R² indicating that mass media activities and cultural activities jointly predict 30% of the variance in multicultural experiences. The VIF value is 1.16, which is not greater than 10, indicating that multicollinearity between independent variables is not severe, and the regression model can effectively influence the dependent variable. The best regression formula obtained from the data is: Multicultural Experiences = 1.58 + .47 × Mass Media Activities + .15 × Cultural Interaction.

From the above, it can be concluded that participation in leisure activities (mass media activities and cultural activities) has a 30% impact on multicultural experiences. This finding is similar to the results of Taylor (2001) and McClinchey (2017). This study suggests that mass media is one of the easiest mediums for interaction and contact nowadays, and cultural-related information can also be

promoted or disseminated through media. Therefore, participation in leisure activities is the easiest way to engage with foreign cultures.

Impact of Leisure Activity Participation on Acculturative stress.

According to the research findings, participation in social activities within leisure activities can influence acculturative stress, as shown in Table 2. The multiple correlation coefficient is .25, explaining 6% of the variance, with an adjusted R² indicating that social activities have a 5% impact on acculturative stress. The VIF value is 1.00, which is not greater than 10, indicating that multicollinearity between independent variables is not severe, and the regression model can effectively influence the dependent variable. The best regression formula obtained from the data is: Acculturative stress = 2.14 + .21 × Social Activities.

From the above, it can be concluded that participation in leisure activities (social activities) has a 5% impact on acculturative stress. This finding is contrary to the results of Dali (2012) and Middleton et al. (2020), whose studies indicated that leisure activities are associated with acculturative stress and that participating in leisure activities can have a positive impact on cultural adaptation, helping individuals adapt to the culture and reduce stress. However, frequent social activities may lead to psychological anxiety, as individuals need to face unfamiliar environments and language communication issues. Therefore, an increase in social activities may increase acculturative stress.

Impact of Multicultural Experiences on Well-being

According to the research findings, within multicultural experiences, multicultural

Table 2. Analysis of the Impact of Leisure Activity Participation on Acculturative stress

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	Collinearity Statistics		<i>F</i>
	B	Std. Error	β		Tolerance	VIF	
(Constant)	2.14	0.27		7.860*			6.266*
Social Activities	0.21	0.09	0.25	2.503*	1	1	
R = .25 R ² = .06 Adj-R ² = .05							

Table 3. Analysis of the Impact of Multicultural Experience on Happiness

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	Collinearity Statistics		<i>F</i>
	B	Std. Error	β		Tolerance	VIF	
(Constant)	1.98	0.31		6.441*			27.517*
Multicultural interaction	0.43	0.08	0.47	5.245*	1	1	
R = .47 R ² = .23 Adj-R ² = .22							

interaction can influence well-being, as shown in Table 3. The multiple correlation coefficient is .47, explaining 23% of the variance, with an adjusted R² indicating that multicultural experiences have a 23% explanatory power on well-being. The VIF value is 1.00, which is not greater than 10, indicating that multicollinearity between independent variables is not severe, and the regression model can effectively influence the dependent variable. The best regression formula obtained from the data is:

Well-being = 1.98 + .43 × Multicultural Interaction. From the above, it can be inferred that multicultural experiences (multicultural interaction) have a 22% impact on well-being. The findings of this study are similar to those of Chen (2012) and Chen & Lee (2021). This study suggests that when individuals interact with the new culture, society, and locals, they experience a sense of belonging, leading to positive emotions at the psychological level, thereby feeling energized and happy.

Impact of Acculturative stress on Well-being

According to the research findings, the F-value for acculturative stress did not reach significance, indicating that acculturative stress does not have the ability to influence well-being, as shown in Table 4. This contradicts the findings of Berry (2008). It is speculated that

individuals from different cultural backgrounds may perceive acculturative stress and well-being differently. Additionally, since well-being is a subjective experience, it may take longer to truly experience an increase in well-being.

Impact of Multicultural Experience on Acculturative stress

Based on the research findings, the F-value for multicultural experience did not reach significance; therefore, multicultural experience does not have the ability to influence acculturative stress, as shown in Table 5. This contrasts with the results of Mendenhall and Oddou (1985). It is speculated that students coming to Taiwan voluntarily participate in multicultural experiences, suggesting a level of pre-existing interest or proactive attitude. This may equip them with greater capability to cope with acculturative stress. However, multicultural experiences may expose individuals to differences and conflicts between cultures. If these encounters do not lead to increased happiness or result in cultural shock, despite the high level of multicultural experience, the emotional responses generated by these cultural conflicts and differences, if not processed by the individual, may lead to an increase in perceived stress.

Table 4. Analysis of the Impact of Acculturative stress on Happiness

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	F
	B	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	3.46	0.34		10.110*	0.069
Acculturative stress	0.03	0.12	0.03	0.263	

Table 5. Analysis Table of the Impact of Multicultural Experience on Cultural Adaptation Pressure

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	F
	B	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	2.56	0.34		7.451*	0.89
Multicultural contact	-0.08	0.13	-0.09	-0.622	
Multicultural interaction	0.14	0.11	0.19	1.271	

CONCLUSION

The participants in this study were predominantly female in gender, Vietnamese in nationality, with most having spent one to two years in Taiwan and holding bachelor's degrees. They also had more experience with exchange or study programs. In terms of leisure activity participation, they tended to engage more in mass media activities. Regarding multicultural experiences, they leaned towards multicultural encounters, with a moderate level of acculturative stress. The highest level of happiness was reported in interpersonal relationships.

Participation in leisure activities (mass media and cultural activities) can influence happiness, with an impact of 30%; participation in leisure activities (social activities) can affect acculturative stress, with a predictive power of 5%; within multicultural experiences (multicultural interaction), there is an influence on happiness, reaching 23%; acculturative stress does not affect happiness, and multicultural experiences do not impact acculturative stress.

Recommendations

Research findings indicate that foreign students at Chaoyang University of Technology prefer to engage in leisure activities related to mass media, with multicultural experiences primarily focused on interacting with different cultures. Their level of acculturative stress is

moderate, with the highest level of happiness reported in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the university should offer a variety of multicultural activities, especially those related to mass media, to enhance the willingness of foreign students to participate and their cultural experiences. For example, organizing cultural festivals, international exchange events, and language courses while inviting local students to participate can broaden international perspectives. Additionally, the university should provide psychological counseling and support services, including cultural sensitivity training and psychological counseling, to help foreign students cope with acculturative stress.

The results of this study indicate that participation in leisure activities has a positive impact on multicultural experiences and happiness. Therefore, schools should actively encourage both foreign and local students to participate in various leisure activities, which not only enhances happiness but also promotes cross-cultural exchange. Schools should create an environment supportive of multicultural experiences by organizing international cultural exhibitions and cultural exchange days to foster cultural interaction and understanding. Additionally, providing cross-cultural training and courses can help students better adapt to multicultural environments.

For international residents living abroad for work or study purposes, their social circles and the challenges they face are complex, and it is difficult to simplify the influencing factors. Therefore, it is recommended that future research consider the relationships between more variables and identify key influencing factors.

This study only investigates the influence of leisure activities, multicultural experiences, acculturative stress, and happiness among foreign students. In the future, further discussion could delve deeper into this aspect, exploring how the process of integrating into different cultures by foreign students is influenced by local students, whether accelerating or hindering, thus adding more value to this research.

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