Factors Affecting the Mental Health of International Students: Academic Pressure, Social Intercourse and Financial Situation

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Abstract: As one of the most currently remarkable topics, some attention is beginning to be paid to these groups of students studying abroad in recent years. These attentions mainly show on the investigation of their mental health, the specific views stated by international students in a certain aspect, Difficult current situation and difficulties they faced under the spread corona virus, as well as the advantages and disadvantages brought by their experience of studying abroad, etc. This paper aims to assess the mental health level of some international students and the factors affecting their mental well-being. However, the selection of subjects has always been difficult to obtain regional universality, which not only affects the reliability of the data, but also has high limitations. This article presents a more comprehensive and extensive research to cover the international students from different countries and mainly focus on their academic pressure, social intercourse and financial situation. Here, this work uses the Perceived Social Support Scale, Satisfaction With Life Scale and Center for Epidemiological Survey, Depression Scale, to measure international students' mental health level. In the analysis, it shows that social status and economic status will have a significant negative impact on the self-rating depression scale. However, learning status seems did not affect the self-rating depression scale.

Keywords: international students, mental health level, academic pressure, social intercourse, financial situation

1.   Introduction

For a long time, international students s had been suffering from mental health problems, 36% of international students consider themselves to have "poor mental health", and as many as 55% report having poor mental health for more than two year. They have felt, at some point, suicidal. Furthermore, only 23% of international students understood that help was offered by their halls of residence [1]. In Australia, according to the Council of International Students Australia. by May 2021. 93% of international students stranded overseas have experienced significant mental health issues [1].

There are some news about international students who hurt themselves or even lose their lives due to mental health problems. All these phenomena show that attention should be paid to this special group of students immediately. They traveled far away from their hometown, apart from their close relatives and friends, and come to study in a new environment with totally different culture or

language. In any case, this decision is full of dangers and challenges. These students even have not formed the mature sense of worth and do not have the corresponding ability to deal with emergencies. Therefore, the reasons that lead them to suffer from psychological disorders are complex, which will be closely related to the sudden changes in environment, interpersonal relations, language, culture and mentality.

Previous investigators have mentioned the influence from different levels of college degrees and the length of residence [2], lack of linguistic skills, academic pressure and acculturation stress [3], emotional and stress-related problem, social environment, expectations and competition in education and rapid technological advances [4], dramatic changes in social identity, a need to adapt to a new culture, language, environment, and way of living [5].

Generally, this work shows that the factors usually around in those significant part. First is the most common category –academic part, which includes the college degrees, linguistic skill, and the compete pressure. Secondly, a lot of study involve the impact of the adaption of new culture and environment, which can represent to the social intercourse. In addition to these two extremely significant factors, the wider issue that international students are facing today is usually be ignored by the researchers, should be their financial situation. Base on the actual circumstances and the life of international students. finally, the pressure, financial situation and the social intercourse have been choose from study as the main direction of this article.

2. Research Approach

2.1. Research object

In this study, Chinese students over the age of 18 who have been studying abroad for more than three months were selected as the subjects, including 10.68% in the UK, 24.08% in the United States, 13.2% in Australia, 14.37% in Canada, 10.49% in Japan, 6.8% in Germany, 5.83% in France, 6.99% in Singapore and 4.47% in other European countries, 2.72% studied in other Asian countries and 0.39% in other countries. A total of 515 questionnaires were collected and 492 were valid.

2.2. Research material

The first part (basic personal information): this part sets up five questions, Questions set corresponding with the five aspects of subjects，which are : gender, age, grade, length of study abroad and country of study abroad, these questions are aim to screen out the target subjects and classify them preliminary.

The second part (evaluation of specific factors): according to the different factors investigated, this part is divided into financial situation part, academic pressure part and social intercourse part. In the financial situation part, questions are set to reflect the recent expenses of subjects so that their consumption ability can be shown. In addition, there are questions evaluated the financial situation of international students by further tracing the source of living expenses and disposable funds. In the academic pressure part, questions are focused on the possible impact of language, including life and learning. In addition, the questions do not set fixed options, but only involve specific intervals, so as to help the subjects more accurately describe the academic pressure they feel and the impact of language. For the last factor—social intercourse, this factor is hard to analyze by the obvious questions. Since Individual based differentiation cannot be ignored, it is difficult to find a standard suitable for every subject to judge their social situation. To avoid the appearance of data deviation. In this part, this work chooses the Perceived Social Support Scale to measure the social intercourse for the subjects, which is more professional and precise.

The third part is different from the first two parts. As the core part of the questionnaire, it is mainly used to comprehensively and widely evaluate the subjects' psychological state, multi-dimensional feelings, the subjects' stress level and emotional state. In order to make the research more standardized and accurate, this work used the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Center for Emotional Survey, Depression Scale to investigate the emotional and mental health status of the subjects in the process of studying abroad.

2.3. Statistical method

For the final experimental data, this work will analyze the reliability and validity of the data to ensure the consistency, stability and reliability of the research results. Furthermore, regression analysis and correlation analysis will also be used in the final result statistics. The three branch factors in the second part of the questionnaire will be selected and combined with the data in the third part to explore the relationship between academic pressure, social intercourse and financial situation and international students' mental health.

3. Result

3.1. Reliability and validity analysis of questionnaire

Cronbach's alpha reliability test was performed on the questionnaire. The statistical results are shown in Table 1: Cronbach's α of Economic Status is 0.666, Cronbach's α of Learning Status is 0.701, Cronbach's α of Social Status is 0.893, Cronbach's α of Life Satisfaction is 0.922, Cronbach's α of Self Rating Depression scale is 0.908. Learning Status, Economic Status, Social Status, Life Satisfaction and Self Rating Depression scale α The values are above 0.6, and the reliability is very good.

Table 1: reliability analysis

Name	No	Cronbach's α
Economic Status	5	0.666
Learning Status	5	0.701
Social Status	4	0.893
Life Satisfaction	5	0.922
Self Rating Depression	20	0.908

The validity of the questionnaire was analyzed by factor analysis. The validity of the questionnaire was tested by kmo and Bartlett sphere test. The test results are shown in Table 2. Among them, the kmo result of the validity analysis of the five dimensions of economic status, learning status, social status, life satisfaction and self rating depression scale is greater than 0.6, and $P < 0.001$ in Bartlett's sphericity test, indicating that there are relevant factors among the variables, which is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 2: validity analysis

Name	KMO and Bartlett sphere test	Sig.
Economic Status	0.658	0.000
Learning Status	0.629	0.000
Social Status	0.827	0.000
Life Satisfaction	0.887	0.000

Self Rating Depression	0.989	0.000

3.2. Summary of questionnaire results

3.2.1. Correlation Analysis

It can be seen from the table in Table 3 that correlation analysis is used to study the correlation between learning status and life satisfaction. There are two items in the self rating depression scale, and Pearson correlation coefficient is used to express the strength of the correlation. Specific analysis shows that:

The correlation coefficients between learning status and life satisfaction and self rating depression were 0.001 and 0.025 respectively, and the correlation coefficients were greater than 0, but the correlation was not significant. The correlation coefficient between life satisfaction and self rating Depression Scale was significantly negative, and the coefficient was -0.826. The reason why the relationship is negative is that the Richter four point scale is used in this paper; For the self rating depression scale, 1 represents the rare occurrence of depression; And 4 represents the frequent occurrence of depression; Therefore, the higher the score, the more depression.

Table 3: Correlation between learning status and life satisfaction and self rating depression

	Learning Status	Life Satisfaction	Self Rating Depression
Learning Status	1		
Life Satisfaction	0.001	1	
Self Rating Depression	0.025	-0.826**	1
* p < 0.05 ** $p < 0.01$			

It can be seen from the Table 4 that the correlation coefficient between social status and life satisfaction is 0.316, and the correlation coefficient is greater than 0, which means that there is a positive correlation between social status and life satisfaction; The correlation coefficient between social status and self rating depression scale is -0.318, and the correlation coefficient is less than 0, which means that there is a negative correlation between social status and self rating depression scale.

Table 4: Correlation between social status and life satisfaction and self rating depression

	Social Status	Life Satisfaction	Self Rating Depression
Social Status	1		
Life Satisfaction	0.316**	1	
Self Rating Depression	-0.318**	-0.826**	1
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$			

It can be seen from the Table 5 that the correlation coefficient between economic status and life satisfaction is 0.244, and the correlation coefficient is greater than 0, which means that there is a positive correlation between economic status and life satisfaction; The correlation coefficient between economic status and self rating depression scale is -0.241, and the correlation coefficient is less than 0, which means that there is a neWgative correlation between economic status and self rating depression scale.

Table 5: Correlation between economic status and life satisfaction and self rating depression

	Economic Status	Life Satisfaction	Self Rating Depression
Economic Status	1		
Life Satisfaction	0.244**	1	
Self Rating Depression	-0.241**	-0.826**	1
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$			

3.2.2. regression analysis

It can be seen from table 6 that taking learning status, social status and economic status as independent variables and self rating Depression Scale as dependent variables for linear regression analysis, it can be seen that the model formula is : $self\ rating\ depression\ scale = 3.117 + 0.044 * learning\ status - 0.133 * social\ status - 0.181 * economic\ status,$ and the R square value of the model is 0.136, which means learning status, social status, Economic status can explain the 13.6% change of self rating depression scale. When F-test was conducted on the model, it was found that the model passed the $F-test\ (F = 26.895, P = 0.000 < 0.05)$, which means that at least one of learning status, social status and economic status will have an impact on the self rating depression scale. The analysis shows that social status and economic status will have a significant negative impact on the self rating depression scale. However, learning status did not affect the self rating depression scale.

Table 6: Regression on Self Rating Depression

	Non standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	p	VIF	R^2	$Rdj\ R^2$	F
	B	Std Err	Beta						
Constant	3.117	0.209	-	14.903	0.000**	-			
learning status	0.044	0.056	0.033	0.785	0.433	1.033	0.136	0.131	F （3,511） = 26.895, $p = 0.000$
social status	-0.133	0.019	-0.287	-6.808	0.000**	1.055			
economic status	-0.181	0.042	-0.183	-4.320	0.000**	1.059			
Y：Self Rating Depression									
D-W：1.405									
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$									

It can be seen from table 7 that taking learning status, social status and economic status as independent variables and life satisfaction as dependent variables for linear regression analysis, it can be seen from the above table that the model formula is: $life\ satisfaction = 2.515 - 0.016 * learning\ status + 0.303 * social\ status + 0.441 * economic\ status$, and the R -square value of the model is 0.135, which means learning status, social status, Economic conditions can explain the 13.5% change in life satisfaction. During the F-test of the model, it is found that the model passes the $F-test\ (F = 26.623, P = 0.000 < 0.05)$, which means that at least one of the learning status, social status and economic status will have an impact on life satisfaction. The analysis shows that social status and economic status will have a significant positive impact on life satisfaction. However, learning status does not have an impact on life satisfaction.

Table 7: Regression on Life Satisfaction

	Non standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	p	VIF	R^2	$Rdj\ R^2$	F
	B	Std Err	$Beta$						
Constant	2.515	0.490	-	5.136	0.000**	-			
learning status	-0.016	0.132	-0.005	-0.121	0.903	1.033			F（3，511）= 26.623，p = 0.000
social status	0.303	0.046	0.281	6.642	0.000**	1.055	0.135	0.130	
economic status	0.441	0.098	0.191	4.501	0.000**	1.059			

Y：Life Satisfaction

D-W：1.200

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

4. Conclusion

The mainly parts been looked in this work, starting from academic pressure, social intercourse and financial situation, which are the three significant factors of international students' life, to analyzes how those factors affecting the mental health of them and what current situation they are in by using the method of questionnaire collection.

According to the data analysis, the financial situation and social intercourse of international students have a more significant impact on their mental health level. In my opinion, because international students usually choose more developed countries as their study countries, there will inevitably be an exchange rate gap, which may make the economic situation of international students more difficult, and the necessary deliberate frugality caused by the economic situation will greatly affect the quality of life and learning efficiency of foreign students, even bring a certain degree of psychological pressure and physiological distress.

In addition, with regard to the impact of social intercourse, one of the biggest problems faced by international students comes from this. First, compared with ordinary students, international students are more likely to become alienated from their old friends. The time difference caused by the large geographical gap makes it difficult to maintain this kind of long-distance friendship. And foreign students are far away from their familiar culture and region. It is necessary to change their way of life to adapt to the new environment, which leads to the poor social situation of foreign students to a certain extent. For international students who have lost the company of their family and friends, the situation is like trying to walk through the dark bushes on a foggy night. Their emotions are difficult to vent, and there is no place to pour out their difficulties, so that their emotions may collapse or fall into depression and pain for a long time.

As a student studying abroad, the highlights of this work can be the perspective of this paper is closer to the real situation of international students. Besides the combination of those three factors mentioned in the paper is the first systematic research in this field. The analysis is fairly comprehensively including the situation of international students from different dimensions with the more in-depth investigation and research on the mental health problems of international students.

The significance of this study is undeniable, since the group of international students has become larger and larger in recent years, and the society should pay attention to the mental health problems. This paper explores three factors that may affect the mental health of foreign students, which can help to understand the situation of foreign students, and give a clear direction for improving the mental health of foreign students. It is hoped that and more and more researchers can participate in the research of improving and helping the mental health of foreign students in the future.

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