

A Study on Peculiarities, which Increase Social Identification among the Foreign Students

Xiu Jin¹, Sang-Woo Hahm² and Hyungwoo Park³

Department of Business, Soongsil University 369 Sangdo-Ro, Dongjak-Gu, Seoul, Korea

¹soohua1122@126.com, ²bload@ssu.ac.kr, ³pphw@ssu.ac.kr

Abstract

During study abroad, they are confronted with new culture and environment. In effect, social identity is important for students to adapt the culture of Korea. The issue of social identity has been investigated several viewpoints. For enhancing social identity, we investigate what kind of peculiarity could enhance social identity. This research focuses on the peculiarities which are foreign language ability, person-culture fit, social behavior and investigate their effects on social identity. Furthermore, such peculiarities would make the students to adapt successfully to the new environment and lead to positive performance for students who study abroad over time. From the regression analysis, all the peculiarities had positive effects on the social identity. It shows that if improve such peculiarities, the social identity will be better and stronger. Moreover, students adapt the culture of Korea successfully and they are satisfied with their life in studying abroad.

Keyword: *Social identity, Foreign language, Student, Culture*

1. Introduction

So far, there have been a large number of foreign students in Korea for achieving their goals in such global society. But all of foreign students do not succeed in Korea such as not getting diploma and go back their countries. Although foreign students get diploma, they have experienced so many difficult lives in Korea. From a long-term point of view, the number of Chinese students will decrease and students from other countries will also be able to decrease. In addition, some problems would come up such as academic communication, globalization. Furthermore, the negative images of each other would also occur so that it can impact on the relationship between the two countries. If international students are satisfied with the life in host country and get good job in Korea or China after graduating, they will have a positive effect on the globalization of schools as well as the relationship between the two countries. This study focuses on social identity for Chinese students' success. In order to adapt to Korean society, students' social identity with the Korea should be increased. If social identity is high, they can learn Korean culture, language, adapting new social, making Korean friends, personal growth, and performance during they study in Korea. So, the research question of this study is that which resources could enhance social identity and if such resources could lead to successful life of studying in Korea. This study will explain the relationship between the antecedents of factors and the effects of these factors. Thus, this study offers a special way for the purpose of enhancing Chinese students to adapt better in Korea society and better

Article history:

Received (July 17, 2016), Review Result (September 25, 2016), Accepted (October 15, 2016)

performance.

2. Literature review

2.1. Identity

Identity refers to recognition of oneness with or belonging to a certain group and involving directly or vicarious experiences of its success and failure [1]. They suggested that identity could engender internalization of and adherence to group values, norms, homogeneity in attitudes and behaviors. Identity tempts that individual to engage in and derive satisfaction as well as conventionally associated with group formation such as interaction and cohesion. Identity is powerful terms because they are very definition of an organization, a person, a group, and an entity. Identity is a root constructs in several organizational phenomena [2]. Identity is commonly regarded as individual's personally held self in relationship to social group such as ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and religion that the ways one shows that relationship [3].

2.2. Social identity

Social identity is first introduced and originally defined as “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” [4].The social identity refers to a social psychological analysis that the role of self-conception among group processes, group membership, and intergroup relationships [5]. In various social categories, people are disposed to classify themselves and others. For example, religious affiliation, gender, age cohort, and organizational membership [6].Social identity is a cognition of the wholeness with a certain group of persons and it derives from the salience of outgroups, categorization and individuals, prestige of group and factors and outcomes that are traditionally associated with group formation. And it also supports for leading to activities which are congruent with identity, moreover, reinforcing the antecedents of identification [1]. They asserted that according to the social identity theory, the individuals define himself or herself partly in a regard salient group membership. The social identity theory focuses on discrimination, conditions, and bias that promote the different types of the intergroup behaviors such as cooperation, social change, conflict, and social stasis. They also argued that organizational identity is a particular form of social identity. Social identity theory views that People are disposed to classify themselves and other people according to various social categories which belong such as age, gender, organizational membership and so on [6].The individual's social identity could be derived from organizations as well as his or her work group, union, age cohort, department, fast-track group, lunch group, and so on [1]. They suggested that social identity theory is inconsistent conventional point of group relations. The reason that in order to it in-group favoritism is inclined to take effect even in the absence of member interdependence or strong leadership, cohesion, or interaction. So, many difficulties such as stresses for students when they study abroad should be confronted with new environments and communicate with new social members in host country. Given that students who study abroad are faced to the new lifestyle and new cultures because in response to new lifestyles and circumstances they encounter, it would seem to be worth to measure how foreign students' behaviors and identities develop while they study abroad. And the current studies investigate a creating framework of theory within which to understand students' identity processes that develop while the foreign students are confronted with a new culture [7]. Thus, for enhancing the social identity, it is

valuable to investigate the antecedents of social identity which increase social identity. This study focuses on foreign language ability, person-culture fit, and social behavior (life events).

2.3. Social identity and adapting to social

Social identity theory literature suggests that three general consequences relate to organizations. Individuals tend to choose some activities which are congruent with essential aspects of their identities. In addition, individuals support institutions embodying identity. Second, social identity impacts on outcomes conventionally related to group formations, including cooperation, altruism, and intragroup cohesion. Finally, social identity would reinforce antecedents of identity such as distinctiveness. So social identity enables individual to feel loyal to organizations or corporate culture [1]. Research investigated Singaporean and Malaysian students in New Zealand. The finding showed that life events, extraversion, and satisfaction with host country relations predicted the psychological adjustment [8]. Another research investigated 232 students who study abroad. The findings showed that study abroad could enhance students' global understanding and cross-cultural skills [9]. Thus, if the students who have high level of social identity with the host country in new environment, they would adapt to new culture and commit the social or group than the students who have low level of social identity with host country.

2.4. Foreign language ability

Foreign language ability is widely used in host country. Its main contents contain reading, listening, writing. People have to communicate with the host country members in foreign language. Therefore, people who have excellent foreign language ability, they will be melded together with local environment and easy to comprehend what someone said. Furthermore, excellent foreign language ability may increase the social identity. On the contrary to this, if students who have poor foreign language ability, they are hard to communicate to host country members, make friends, comprehensive the local culture, develop identity with host country. Thus, they would feel loneliness and it could lead to negative behavior during they study abroad so that personal outcomes also would be decreased.

2.5. Person-culture fit

Some studies have proposed the various interactional model of person-situation fit or congruence [10][11][12]. The models focus on degree of matching with the relationship between situation and person and presume the better outcome and fit [12]. Person-group fit is defined as compatibility between the individuals and groups which they work and belong to them [13]. So, person-culture fit refers to compatibility of relationship between people and cultures which they live in a certain country. Foreign students or individuals can find themselves that the cultural milieu is quite different from their original societies. Even within individual's native culture and personality could be disparate from the behavioral tendencies and personalities. Therefore, failing to match cultural norms [14]. When students study abroad, they should be confronted with new culture. So, person-culture fit is an important resource for students who study abroad. It could affect on students adapt to the new culture and more comprehend it.

2.6. Social behavior

Sociocultural adaptation is defined as in terms of the behavioral competence and it is more affected by social skills acquisition and culture learning [15]. A diversity of social behavior abroad such as living with a host country member were correlated with the identity change [6]. They explain that various of social behaviors contain conversations with people who are from host country, talking to people in the foreign language of host country, making friends from host country, eating host country food, attending cultural events, and traveling within host country.

2.7. The relationship between the antecedent factors and social identity

The findings of research showed that the relationship between conversations with host country member was correlated with the identity with the host country. And attending cultural events and person-culture fit were also correlated with the identity with the host country [6]. So, students who have excellent foreign language ability could conversations with host country people than the students who have low level foreign language ability. Thus, the foreign language ability may play a key role for social identity with Korea. In addition, attending cultural events such as traveling, eating traditional food, and visiting museums also enhance social identity because such events contain lead to students comprehend local culture and learn more traditional custom so that life events also enhance the social identity with Korea. The contents of Person-culture fit explain about the personal value. Individuals who match his or her cultural environment would experience the better psychological well-being than individuals who do not [14]. Drawing from this theoretical, empirical, and practical literature, we derive the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Excellent foreign language ability will have positive effect on social identity.

Hypothesis 2: Person-culture fit will have positive effect on social identity.

Hypothesis 3: Life events will have positive effect on social identity.

3. Method

3.1. Sample and procedure

The data will be collected from the Chinese students who study in Korea. We will collect the surveys when the students at school. We will tell them the purpose of survey that just for investigating if they adapt the social successfully and we will also tell the survey is kept a close secret. All items will be measured with a 7-point Likert scale, and the ranging from 1 (Strongly-Disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

3.2. Measures

The instrument of 6-item will be used to measure social identity. This social identity scale was developed by [16]. Sample items included "I am very interested in what others think about Korea." and "When someone praises this school, it feels like a personal compliment."

The instrument of 3-item will be used to measure foreign language ability. This foreign language ability scale was developed by the components of Test of Proficiency in Korean. It contains reading and speaking Korean, writing Korean, and listening Korean. Sample items included "I can read and speak in Korean what I want to say." and "I can understand what Korean people say."

The instrument of 6-item will be used to measure social behavior. This life events scale was developed by [6]. Sample items included "I always eat Korean food." and "I always participate in cultural activities in Korea."

The instrument of 3-item will be used to measure person-culture fit. This person-culture fit scale was developed by [17]. Sample items included "What degree do the Korean values reflect your values?" and "What degree do you feel your personal values fit Korea?"

3.3. Research model

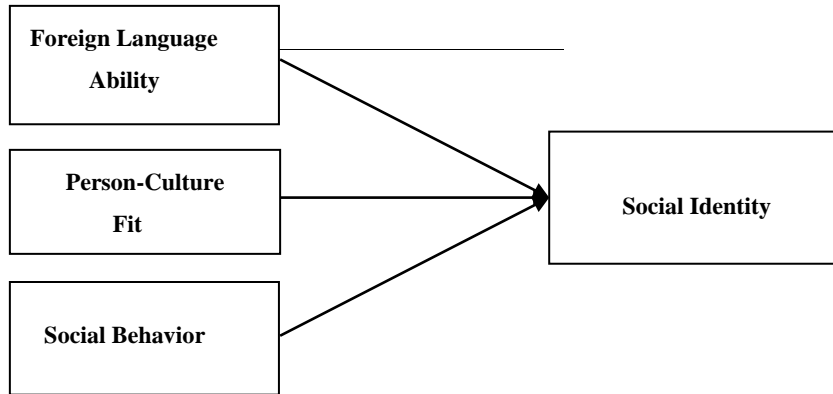


Figure 1. Research model

5. Conclusion

The results of this research will demonstrate foreign language ability, person-culture fit, and social behavior will be positively related to social identity. This study will focus on the importance of social identity, and investigate which factors could increase the social identity. So students will show high level of social identity with host country who have such characteristics. This study also suggests the importance of variables play key roles in society and social identity is also important among the foreign students. If they have high level of social identity, they could be willingness to make host country students and communicate them. Furthermore, they could learn the local traditional culture, language, and experience personal growth. Therefore, they have successful experience of studying abroad to get high-powered job in Korea or come back own their country after graduating. Identity is mightily important for students who study abroad. It will positively impact on the life in study abroad. The factors which are explained above will increase social identity. If the social identity with host country is higher, international students will adapt the new culture and lead to satisfactory life well.

References

- [1] B.E. Ashforth and F. Mael, "Social identity theory and the organization", *Academy of management review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 20-39, (1989).
- [2] S. Albert, B.E. Ashforth and J.E. Dutton, "Organizational identity and identification: Charting new waters and building new bridges", *Academy of management Review*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 13-17, (2000).
- [3] V. Torres, S.R. Jones and K.A. Renn, "Identity development theories in student affairs: Origins, current

- status, and new approaches”, *Journal of College Student Development*, Vol. 50, No. 6, pp. 577-596, **(2009)**.
- [4] H. Tajfel, “Social categorization. English manuscript of ‘‘La cate’gorisationsociale.’’In S. Moscovici (Ed.), *Introduction a` la psychologiesociale*, Paris, Vol. 1, pp. 272-302,**(1972)**.
- [5] M.A. Hogg, “Social identity theory. Contemporary social psychological theories”, Vol. 13, pp. 111-1369, **(2006)**.
- [6] H. Tajfel and J.C. Turner, “The social identity theory of intergroup behavior”, In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations*, Chicago, 2nd ed., pp. 7-24, **(1985)**.
- [7] S.K. Angulo, “Identity change in students who study abroad”, *ProQuest*, **(2008)**.
- [8] W. Searle and C. Ward, “The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions”, *International journal of intercultural relations*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 449-464, **(1990)**.
- [9] A. Kitsantas, “Studying abroad: the role of college students' goals on the development of cross-cultural skills and global understanding”, *College Student Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 441-453, **(2004)**.
- [10] R.A. Kulka, “Interaction as person-environment fit”, *new directions for methodology of behavioral science*, pp. 55-71, **(1979)**.
- [11] L.A. Pervin, “Performance and satisfaction as a function of individual-environment fit”, *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 69, pp. 56-68, **(1968)**.
- [12] E. Diener, R.J. Larsen and R.A. Emmons, “Person x situation interactions: choice of situations and congruence response models”, *Journal of personality and social psychology*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 580-592, **(1984)**.
- [13] A.L. Kristof, “Person-organization fit: An integrative review of its conceptualizations, measurement, and implications”, *Personnel psychology*, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp. 1-49, **(1996)**.
- [14] C.A. Fulmer, M.J. Gelfand, A.W. Kruglanski, C. Kim-Prieto, E. Diener, A. Pierro and E.T. Higgins, “On ‘feeling right’ in cultural contexts: how person-culture match affects self-esteem and subjective well-being”, *Psychological Science*, Vol. 21, No. 11, pp. 1563-1569, **(2010)**.
- [15] C. Ward and A. Kennedy, “The measurement of sociocultural adaptation”, *International Journal of intercultural relations*, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 659-677, **(1999)**.
- [16] F. Mael and B.E. Ashforth, “Alumni and their alma mater: A partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification”, *Journal of organizational Behavior*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 103-123, **(1992)**.
- [17] D.M. Cable and T.A. Judge, “Person–organization fit, job choice decisions, and organizational entry”, *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, Vol. 67, No. 3, pp. 294-311, **(1996)**.
- [18] G.E. Kreiner, B.E. Ashforth and D.M. Sluss, “Identity dynamics in occupational dirty work: Integrating social identity and system justification perspectives”, *Organization Science*, Vol. 17, No. 5, pp. 619-636, **(2006)**.
- [19] A.W. Kruglanski and D.M. Webster, “Motivated closing of the mind: ‘seizing’ and ‘freezing’”, *Psychological Review*, Vol. 103, No. 2, pp. 263-283, **(1996)**.