

A Study on the Factors Influencing the Overseas Study Experience of Chinese International Students

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Abstract: Chinese youth who go abroad to study often face difficulties caused by differences in the education system and language communication. This study is based on qualitative research methods and adopts purposive sampling method. Through in-depth interviews, this study aims to understand the current situation of Chinese international students' overseas study experience from their perspective. Combining student development theory, it explores the influencing factors of Chinese international students' overseas study experience. The paper proposes suggestions from both schools and students, providing reference for improving the quality of international student education and enhancing the international competitiveness of international student education in universities.

Keywords: Chinese International Students; Overseas Study Experience; Influence Factor; International Student Education; Case Study

1. Problem Statement

With the advancement of global modernization, international exchanges in education, culture, economy, and other fields are becoming increasingly frequent. Studying abroad for further education has become an important manifestation of the internationalization of higher education.

Chinese youth who go abroad to study not only seek better personal development, but also undertake the important task of learning advanced knowledge and technology, and assisting the country's development after learning. However, after studying and living abroad, they often face difficulties caused by differences in the education systems and language between China and foreign countries. The study found that even Chinese international students with high foreign language proficiency

and strong learning abilities often face the above-mentioned difficulties during their contact with their classmates. Conducting this study will help to understand the specific learning experience of Chinese international students and provide reference for the development of international student education in universities.

Research on the overseas learning experience of international students focuses on four aspects. Firstly, the concept of localized learning experience is developed based on theoretical research abroad. Secondly, a study on the factors influencing the learning experience of international students. Thirdly, research on the constituent elements of learning experience for international students. Fourthly, research on strategies to effectively enhance the learning experience of international students. The existing research has achieved rich results, but there are still the following shortcomings: firstly, there is relatively little research on the micro level of Chinese international students studying abroad; secondly, there is currently a lack of qualitative research on the learning status of Chinese international students studying abroad from a student perspective, which provides research space for this study.

2. Research Purpose

This study aims to conduct an empirical survey on the overseas study experience of Chinese international students. It aims to understand the current situation of the learning experience of Chinese international students from seven dimensions: motivation for studying abroad, impressions before and after studying abroad, knowledge and academic experience, daily life experience, campus support environment experience, facing pressure, and reflective experience. Based on the current survey, it attempts to analyze the influencing factors of Chinese international students' overseas study

experience, effectively promote the development of international student education in universities and enhance their competitiveness in the international education market, reference is provided.

3. Theoretical Background

3.1 Core Concept: Learning Experience

Dilthey believed that experience is first and foremost a life process and action, and then an inner form. Experience is an individual's unique grasp of the hidden essence of life, obtained through repeated experience [1]. Scholars have not yet formed a unified standard concept of learning experience. Learning experience has not been defined more clearly until the Glossary of Education Reform funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation of Education in the United States roughly defined learning experience. This study defines learning experience as: "Any course, practice, or interactive experience of learning behavior, whether it occurs in a traditional learning environment (classroom, school) or a non-traditional learning environment (off campus or outdoors), and whether it is a traditional learning method (students learn from teachers) or a non-traditional learning method (students learn through games or interactive software)" [2]. It can be seen that the generation of learning experience cannot be separated from the interaction between learners and the learning environment.

Combining the definition of learning experience with the characteristics of Chinese international students, this study defines the learning experience of Chinese international students in South Korea as a comprehensive and unified process at seven levels: motivation for studying abroad, impressions before and after studying abroad, knowledge and academic experience, daily life experience, campus support environment experience, facing pressure, and reflective experience. In this process, there will be both positive and negative experiences, which combine to form a comprehensive experience process for Chinese international students to construct knowledge and meaning, as well as generate emotions and cognition.

3.2 Student Development Theory

The student Development theory originates from the development of Student affairs management

in American colleges and universities. In the early days, American colleges and universities implemented the system of replacing parents, and schools took the role of parents to discipline students. The real root of the Development theory of American college students lies in three aspects, namely psychology, career guidance movement and Student affairs management [3]. Rogers, a humanistic psychologist, defined "student development" as "a way for students to continuously grow and progress in higher education institutions and improve their abilities in all aspects". He believes that student development is a result of students in higher education institutions, mainly manifested in the process of students' growth, progress, and development abilities [4].

Pascarella built a general assessment model for college students' change based on previous research (see Figure 1). The theoretical model believes that the influencing factors of students' learning and cognitive development can be divided into direct influencing factors and indirect influencing factors. The direct influencing factors are students' background, quality of effort, and social interaction, while the indirect influencing factors are the organizational characteristics of the school and its environmental support [5].

The learning experience of Chinese international students is a comprehensive result of factors such as individual characteristics of students, teacher-student communication, student-student communication, campus environment, and university management [6]. Under the guidance of the students' Development theory, it is reasonable to explore the current situation and influencing factors of overseas learning experience of Chinese students, so as to propose effective measures to enhance the overseas learning experience of Chinese students and promote the quality of education of foreign students in colleges and universities.

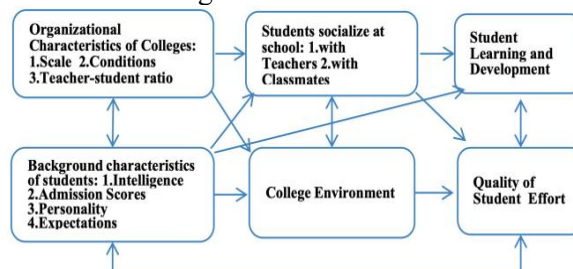


Figure 1. General Assessment Model for College Students' Change

4. Research Methods

4.1 Research Objects

In order to pay attention to the overseas study experience of Chinese international students, the researcher chose the narrative research method from qualitative research methods, and used purposive sampling method to select a Chinese international student C who is currently pursuing a doctoral degree as the research object. She described and revealed the meaningful activities and experiences in her overseas study experience. This is a research based on facts, which can help readers and relevant researchers to glimpse the overseas study experience status of the Chinese international student group from this case.

The reason for choosing student C as the research object lies in:

Firstly, student C comes from China and has been studying at S University of South Korea for over a year; Secondly, Student C has two overseas study experiences in different countries. By comparing the experiences of the two periods in multiple dimensions, it's easier to find similarities and differences in the overseas study experiences of Chinese students, and it's also conducive to analyzing the key influencing factors of Chinese students' overseas study experiences.

During the research period, the study conducted two in-depth interviews with student C before and after, focusing on understanding their motivation, their preparation before going abroad, and their experiences and psychological journey when arriving at school to start their overseas life. For the sake of research ethics, the names and schools of the research subjects were given pseudonyms in this study. All interview recordings were obtained with the consent of the research subjects, and the "Interview Informed Consent Form" was signed. The compiled recording text was also submitted to the research subjects for confirmation.

4.2 Research Procedure

Firstly, select suitable research participants. Then, a semi-structured interview outline was adopted, and in-depth interviews were conducted with the research participants using the method of in-depth interviews to understand the current learning experience of Chinese international students. After the interview, use the obtained interview materials and relevant

theories to analyze the influencing factors of the learning experience of Chinese international students. Finally, suggestions are proposed to effectively promote the quality of international student education in universities, providing insights for the development of international student education in universities.

4.3 Research Tools

This study used the semi-structured question interview method to conduct in-depth interviews around two overseas study experiences in the state of nature of the research object.

4.4 Data Analysis

The stage of data organization and analysis in qualitative research is not completely separate, and organization is inevitably based on a certain analytical foundation, and any organization behavior is subject to a certain analytical system [7]. After the formal interview was completed, a total of 2 recordings were obtained, and each recording was promptly converted into text. In order to pursue the authenticity of research materials, researchers repeatedly reviewed the recordings. The specific steps are as follows: first, converting the recording into text in a timely manner within 24 hours. After organizing and analyzing, sending the manuscript and recording to the research participants to confirm the accuracy of the content. Then, conducting data analysis on the recorded text. Finally, a total of 10105 words of interview materials were compiled.

Based on the characteristics of the research participants, this study used category analysis method to analyze the data, categorize the recorded text, and label meaningful words, sentences, or paragraphs with labels, which were extracted from the repeatedly highlighted phenomena in the interview data. The final writing was classified and organized based on category analysis, searching for the phenomena and values behind each category.

5. Current Situation of Chinese International Students' Overseas Study Experience

5.1 Motivation

Before coming to South Korea, student C had 6 months' experience of study abroad as an exchange student at K University in Norway. The two periods of study abroad happened before and after graduation, with different

motivation.

Before working, as a master's student, her purpose of studying abroad was to relax and go out to see the world before graduation.

After working, student C wanted to improve her education level to contribute to her future development in the unit. Learned that the school provided an opportunity to study abroad, she signed up for the selection.

5.2 Comparison of Impressions before and after Studying Abroad

Due to Student C's initial understanding of two countries before going abroad, some of her understanding of these two countries was verified after arriving.

However, student C has never been to these two countries before, so after living for a period of time, she felt a lot of differences with her previous impression.

5.3 Knowledge and Academic Experience

Dewey believed that "Education is a developmental process based on experience, and education is the continuous reorganization and transformation of experience" [8]. The development of educational activities is a key way for students to gain experience, among which classroom organization form, course content, and student learning pressure are all carried out in educational activities, and ultimately comprehensively affect individual students.

Student C explained the course organization form of K University in Norway and the highly dedicated teachers, but they were not very suitable for the arrangement of class hours. While in S University of South Korea, although it was all in the form of taking credits, the course categories and the teacher's arrangement of classroom activities were different. Student C felt unsuitable for tightly arranged courses.

Regarding the teacher's classroom content, Student C felt an obvious difference. One was that they would intersperse some content that matched the students' age group interests; the other was that they only focused on professional knowledge, lacking novelty and youthfulness.

According to Student C's account of the interaction patterns between teachers and students in Norway and South Korea, the way teachers interacted with students varies from person to person.

Chinese universities generally adopt the training

mode of graduate Mentor-ship. From the perspective of social exchange theory, the guidance of supervisors to graduate students is "not only a kind of guidance behavior, but also a complex social interaction behavior" [9]. Student C compared the timing of selecting mentors and believed that the selection of mentors should be carried out in the first semester, which was beneficial for cultivating teacher-student relationships and determining research field as soon as possible.

5.4 Daily Life Experience

Student C said that the restaurant of S University in South Korea provides students with compulsory meals from Monday to Friday, but the dining experience for Chinese international students was not ideal due to differences in food between China and South Korea. Compared to China, there are relatively fewer types of dishes, which is also one of the reasons why international students have an unsatisfactory dietary experience.

In addition, due to China's mature electronic payment methods, people are accustomed to carrying only their phones when going out. However, this has not been widely promoted abroad, which has brought many inconveniences. The social security of the two countries is relatively safe, and when choosing which country to study in, C had already made a comparison and considered it as one of the main motivations for studying abroad.

When studying abroad, cultural exchange experience is essential. Student C found that Chinese culture was not understood to the same extent in these two countries. Interpersonal communication is the direct psychological connection between individuals formed through mutual interaction and interaction in daily life [10]. Studying abroad in different countries can lead to differences in interpersonal experiences. Student C has an introverted personality and mainly interacts with Chinese international students, occasionally with locals.

5.5 Campus Support Environment

On one hand, the geographical location and surrounding facilities of the campus. S University was far from the city center and the surrounding transportation was not very convenient. It mainly relied on two or three buses, and its remote location brought many inconveniences to the lives of international

students. On the other hand, the library and learning resources were hard to use. The library of S University had abundant books and learning resources, covering multiple disciplines such as engineering, education, and science. However, the book resources were mainly written in Korean, and for Chinese international students, English and Chinese materials were not that enough. Therefore, international students did not often go to the library for self-study, but preferred to study in dormitories or self-study rooms. In addition, the living accommodation needed to be improved. What S University provided for international students was a serviced student apartment. The dormitory was double rooms. Each dormitory is equipped with an independent toilet. On the first floor, it provided students with printers, washing machines, microwave ovens, Water dispenser and other equipment. However, because the equipment was not maintained in time, failures often occur, affecting the life experience.

5.6 Facing Pressure

Student C talked about the main sources of pressure and ways to relieve it when studying abroad.

Stress mainly came from academic, professional development, language barriers, daily life, and other aspects. The decompression methods varied from person to person, and there are three main decompression methods for student C.

5.7 Reflective Experience

Based on interview data, it is found that Chinese international students had gained both knowledge and reflective experiences in their studies and life at K University in Norway and S University in South Korea. They had various insights into their personal cognition and study abroad journey.

Firstly, when considering a problem, one would view it from a higher perspective and had a broader perspective. Secondly, after living continuously for several months each time, students' behavior and habits would be influenced by the customs and habits of the country they lived in, resulting in some changes. Thirdly, through studying abroad and living abroad, both English and Korean had been exercised and improved. Fourthly, experienced different education and lifestyles abroad, Students felt more passionate about loving my motherland.

6. Factors Influencing the Overseas Study Experience of International Students

The overseas study experience of Chinese students is affected by multiple factors. Pascarella's general assessment model for college students' change divides students' learning and cognitive development factors into direct and indirect factors. Students' development is the result of multiple factors.

6.1 Individual Difference

6.1.1 Individual personality traits

The learning experience starts from the internal feelings of individual students, which tends to be strongly subjective. The impact of personal personality on the learning experience is an endogenous influence, which is closely related to individual subjectivity. The impact of individual personality traits of Chinese international students on their learning experience is reflected in interpersonal communication. According to the interview, Student C stated that in the communication between mentors and students, the mentor play a leading role. When asked if Student C often proactively contact the mentor, her answer was negative. She explained that she is an introverted and passive person, and in addition to completing necessary studies and interacting with her supervisor and classmates, she is more willing to study in the dormitory and is more inclined to communicate with familiar Chinese international students in daily life.

6.1.2 Learning engagement

The measurement of student engagement in learning has become a highly persuasive "process" indicator in the international education community to evaluate the quality of higher education [11]. Learning engagement includes three dimensions: behavior, emotion, and cognition [12]. The learning engagement of Chinese international students is mainly manifested in classroom learning and self-learning behavior after class. In terms of classroom performance, Student C believes that there is a significant difference in the learning engagement of international students. Some students in the class have made sufficient preparations for publication, but some only participate in the class and do not actively raise their hands to publish.

At the same time, Student C also stated that due to the busy communication with the supervisor

and the newly established relationship between the supervisor and the student, she was accustomed to completing learning tasks on her own. However, due to the lack of guidance from the supervisor, she repeatedly encountered obstacles during the learning process. In fact, doctoral supervisors usually guide a large number of students, and their busy work makes them exhausted. If students do not actively contact their supervisors, they also have little energy to pay attention to a particular student's learning situation.

6.1.3 Foreign language proficiency

Language barriers are usually considered the biggest problem that international graduate students encounter during their study abroad process. Based on interview data, it can be seen that foreign language proficiency is an important factor affecting the learning experience of Chinese international students. Student C's major is foreign language, and she uses English and Korean for communication in the country of study. However, when it comes to various professional knowledge and academic language expressions, there are still many inconveniences caused by language barriers. The acquisition of language skills is a long-term process that requires continuous learning and repeated training.

6.1.4 Academic planning

Academic planning consists of overall goals, tasks, steps, and methods [13]. Usually, academic planning is related to students' acquisition of vocational skills and planning for the future. Chinese international students who are good at academic planning can effectively utilize their time, complete their academic studies, meet the standards of academic development, and gain both professional skills and learning pleasure during busy academic pursuits. The motivation of student C to study abroad was to enhance the education level and achieve better development in the workplace. However, her learning motivation weakened as the time goes by. In the interview, it was mentioned that she was a bit confused about the role of obtaining a doctoral diploma in professional and career development in the workplace. In addition, there are also cases where students have to postpone their graduation due to failing to meet the graduation requirements, especially for student C, whose major had a low graduation rate, which made her very anxious. These phenomena led to a poor

experience of studying abroad.

6.2 The Influence of Significant People Such as Teachers and Peers on Learning Experience

6.2.1 Teacher's cross-cultural communication ability

The teaching behavior of teachers is an important factor that affects and determines the learning effectiveness and teaching quality of students [14]. The cross-cultural professional abilities and qualities possessed by teachers, such as language ability, professional knowledge, and teaching ability, have a significant impact on the classroom learning experience of Chinese international students. The main target audience for international students at S University is students from Chinese countries, and most of them have not received language training before enrollment. Therefore, language issues after enrollment became an important factor affecting the life and learning experience of Chinese international students studying abroad. Although S University offered two semesters of introductory Korean courses, due to the tight schedule, the content learned was difficult to apply in learning. From classroom knowledge learning to scientific research learning, the cross-cultural communication barrier centered on language was the gap separating teachers and students from in-depth exploration of learning issues.

6.2.2 Harmonious interaction between teachers and students

Students are the main part of learning, and teaching activities in schools require communication and interaction between teachers and students. The exchange and interaction of knowledge, emotions, and behaviors between teachers and students, as well as between students, have a significant impact on students' learning experience. During the interview, it was found that the interaction effect between Chinese international students and teachers varies from person to person, including interaction with teaching teachers, interaction with mentors, and interaction with management personnel. The interaction between teachers and students is mainly reflected in classroom teaching and exam evaluation. The interaction and communication between teachers and students mainly takes the classroom as the field, with the transmission and understanding of knowledge as the main content. The interaction

between mentors and students is mainly manifested in their academic guidance. The guidance mode of mentors towards students is closely related to their learning outcomes. Therefore, compared to the professional knowledge of teachers, Chinese international students have paid much more attention to their cultural understanding ability and care.

6.2.3 Peer group assistance

Chinese students studying abroad are moving from a cultural circle to a new cultural circle. Being in a new cultural circle cannot be separated from the care and help of peer groups. Friendly interaction between peer groups can help Chinese international students quickly adapt to their overseas study life. Chinese international students at S University were concentrated in their dormitories, and after spending time together, they had also established deep relationships. In a foreign country, people who shared the identity of "international students" were more able to understand each other's feelings and were more emotionally friendly.

It can be seen that the support and assistance of peer groups play an important role in the knowledge learning and psychological adaptation of Chinese international students, which cannot be ignored.

6.2.4 The impact of international student service management

The International Student Management Center, as the department with the most contact with Chinese international students, basically needs to solve the living and learning problems of Chinese international students in school through the International Student Management Department. During the interview, it was found that the factors that have a significant impact on the learning experience of Chinese international students include the accommodation environment and the management system of international students. The impact of the accommodation environment and the management system for international students is significant. A humanized management system for international students helps Chinese students integrate into the mainstream local culture. The establishment and implementation of the management system for international students is not a one-way decision of the institution, but should be formulated under the guidance of the national macro system, combined with the characteristics of the students in the institution,

and implement the concept of service and internationalization to provide Chinese international students with a better learning experience.

7. Suggestions for Effectively Promoting the Quality of Education for International Students

The focus of this study is to improve the quality of education management for international students in overseas universities and enhance their international competitiveness. As mentioned above, the survey results from the four dimensions of professional knowledge learning, academic interpersonal communication, campus support environment and reflective experience of Chinese foreign students show that the learning experience of Chinese foreign students is affected by multiple factors, such as individual differences, Significant other such as teachers and peers, and the management system of foreign students in the school. Based on comprehensive research analysis and interview feedback, the following suggestions are summarized to improve the quality of international student education management in universities.

7.1 From the Colleges' perspective: Improve the Training System for International Students

The cross-cultural understanding ability of university teachers is an important manifestation of the internationalization of higher education in universities. The process of Chinese international students studying abroad is also an experience of being exposed to different cultures. In this context, the teaching teachers have different attitudes towards international students and language communication skills, which have different perceptions of Chinese students' learning.

7.1.1 Enhance teachers' cross-cultural understanding ability

Firstly, the teaching ability, teaching methods, and professional competence of the teaching teachers directly affect the classroom learning experience of Chinese international students. From interviews, it was found that Chinese international students generally express their affirmation of the teacher's professional literacy and abilities, but there are slight criticisms in terms of teacher-student interaction and teaching methods. They believe that the teacher's teaching

methods are "very monotonous", "only sitting in the classroom, without any cultural experience outside of school", etc. Therefore, improving the teacher's teaching methods and enhancing the experiential and interactive nature of the curriculum can better enhance students' sense of curriculum experience.

Secondly, teaching teachers need to possess cultural understanding and cross-cultural communication skills. Especially, it is necessary to have an understanding of the basic situation and source background of Chinese international students, and to be able to understand their inner needs and learning difficulties from the students' hearts. Finally, strengthening the cross-cultural communication and understanding abilities of teaching teachers is an important aspect of effective interaction and knowledge transfer between teachers and students.

Thirdly, language communication issues are also frequently mentioned by Chinese international students in interviews. Due to language communication barriers, course knowledge cannot be digested in a timely manner, and it is difficult for teachers and students to conduct in-depth discussions on a certain issue effectively. Therefore, the improvement of teachers' language and cultural understanding ability can enhance emotional communication between teachers and students, and also help Chinese international students integrate into the classroom, thereby integrating into the university environment. In addition, extending language courses in universities is also an important way to alleviate language barriers.

7.1.2 Improve the management mechanism of the international student management department

For Chinese international students studying alone at S University, the International Student Management Center is their window of communication with the school. After enrollment, Chinese international students not only face academic adaptation, but also adapt to multiple aspects such as life, culture, and interpersonal communication. This requires each department of the school to clarify their own responsibilities, clarify the responsibilities of international student training, coordinate relevant departments of each department to do a good job in management, and help students in foreign countries integrate into the new campus environment as soon as possible.

7.2 From the Students' Perspective: Adjusting Mindset and Making Academic Plans

7.2.1 Enhancing institutional identity and actively addressing academic challenges

Chinese students need to have a positive mental attitude. To obtain a good learning experience, in addition to relying on external measures, it is more important for Chinese international students to actively participate in their academic adaptation. The establishment of academic interpersonal relationships in the host country, including teacher-student relationships, and relationships between Chinese and foreign students, is essential for obtaining a good learning experience. The establishment of good academic interpersonal relationships can help Chinese international students overcome the period of unadaptation to studying abroad.

7.2.2 Improve self-discipline, language proficiency and knowledge literacy

Firstly, Chinese international students need to realize their own value and significance, and realize that it is not easy to experience studying abroad, and the rare opportunities should be cherished.

Secondly, Chinese international students need to strengthen their foreign language learning, as the high level of foreign language proficiency has a significant impact on their learning adaptation and cultural adaptation.

7.2.3 Rectify the mindset and actively build an emotional community between teachers and students

Chinese international students should realize that studying abroad is the beginning of a new stage. Although they may encounter obstacles from language and cultural backgrounds that may affect their learning outcomes, the ultimate goal is to acquire knowledge and skills in order to seek better development. Teaching teachers, mentors, and international student management center personnel are all educational activities centered around the goal of collaborative education. It is natural for students to seek help from teachers. Therefore, it is extremely important to have a positive attitude and actively communicate with mentors.

8. Conclusion

This study starts from the perspective of the learning experience of Chinese international students, exploring their motivation to study abroad before enrollment, preparation before

departure, and their insights into academic adaptation, interpersonal communication, environmental feelings, and personal growth after enrollment. It is of great significance to understand their true study abroad situation. Based on this, this study focuses on the theme of "The Overseas Study Experience of Chinese International Students" and focuses on the learning experience of Chinese international students. One Chinese international student was selected as the research object, and a deep interview was conducted on the overseas study experience from seven dimensions: motivation for studying abroad, impressions before and after studying abroad, knowledge and academic experience, daily life experience, campus support environment experience, facing pressure, and reflective experience. Finally, the paper concludes that the influencing factors of Chinese foreign students' learning experience include: individual differences, Significant other such as teachers and peers, and management services for foreign students

Qualitative research is an iterative process, from the design of interview outlines to the implementation of interviews, the collection and writing of data, each step requires researchers to devote themselves to research and repeatedly consider. Especially in the final writing stage, it is necessary to code and analyze the large amount of text data obtained, and read the necessary materials for text extraction research multiple times. However, there are inevitably some limitations in the process of conducting this study. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this can provide inspiration and reference for future research.

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