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Intercultural Adaptation through Social Media: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

In order to adapt to a new culture, overseas students, immigrants, and sojourners often use a variety of methods and strategies. Social networking sites (SNSs), one of these plans, are examined in this paper to see how they affect intercultural adaptation. A number of common models of intercultural adaption are also discussed in the article, including SNS definitions and various types of SNSs. The literature shows that SNSs have been used for a variety of purposes during the intercultural adaptation process, including: (1) to keep in touch with family and friends back home, (2) to build social capital, and (3) to adapt to educational environments. Connections and relationships, community, and acculturation are the three pedagogical implications of the literature.

KEYWORDS: social media, oversea students, social networking sites (SNSs), intercultural adaptation, adjustment,

1. INTRODUCTION

The Adaptation and acculturation of newcomers to foreign cultures has been aided by the use of various technologies. For newcomers, social media has become the most common and effective method for bringing people from all over the world together to share and exchange knowledge and traditions. In fact, the integration of social media applications has reduced the world to a smaller village. As a result, social media sites allow people to interact and communicate with each other, but they can also learn about other societies. As a result, people from different cultures can understand and respect each other's traditions and norms.

In order to avoid being misunderstood by a person from a different culture, the term “intercultural adaptation” refers to the adjustment of various behaviours (Cai & Rodrón, 1996). In the process of intercultural adaptation, people use social media to learn about other cultures, build relationships with their peers, and keep up with events related to their cultures. Social media has a direct impact on how international students adapt to their new surroundings because of the ways in which they interact and communicate with each other online.

Research on social media's impact on cross-cultural adjustment has been summarised here. The paper also discusses how social media can assist international students in adapting to a new culture and obtaining a university degree, among other purposes. When it comes to overcoming cultural barriers, such as cultural shock, there are a variety of approaches and strategies employed by each individual. The following questions are addressed in the article:

- What role do social networking sites (SNSs) play in the process of intercultural adaptability?
- How can SNSs be used as a teaching tool for intercultural adaptation?

A review of the literature on the impact of SNSs on intercultural adaptation is presented in the following sections of the paper, which begins by highlighting some important terms and definitions.

Teachers and international students alike can benefit from this research's final pedagogical implications, which discuss ways to help them integrate into their new environments when they travel to other countries for various reasons. Companies can use the information in this study to better prepare their workers for acculturation.

2. METHOD FOR REVIEWING

A comprehensive and systematic literature review was conducted to identify primary sources relevant to the intercultural adaptation process through the use of social networking websites. Numerous peer-reviewed journals from different fields were searched using various methods to locate relevant articles. A list of keywords, databases, and journals that could yield accurate results was compiled first. ERIC, Science Direct, EBSCO, Scopus, and Google Scholar were the only databases we searched for peer-reviewed articles, (Sawyer, 2011). Intercultural adaptation, cross-cultural adaptation, cultural impacts, cultural adjustment, social network sites (SNSs), social media, Facebook + adaptation/adjustment, Twitter + adaptation, and YouTube + adaptation are just a few of the keywords we used in the research.

As the technology advances rapidly, we randomly set the cut-off date for articles to be considered recent to 2015. As a result of the search for primary peer-reviewed research articles on intercultural adaptation, a list of journals dealing with intercultural adaptation studies was compiled: Intercultural Communication Research, the Journal of International & Intercultural Communication, and the Journal of Intercultural Communication Studies.

3. ADAPTATION TO A NEW CULTURE

As a result of people's experiences moving from one culture to another and integrating successfully, the multicultural world has become a better place (Kim, 2001). When someone enters a new culture, they may first find themselves in a state of "disequilibrium," but they will eventually find their way back to equilibrium. This is what is meant by the term "intercultural adaptation" (Kim, 2001). Being in this position is a natural result of the fact that the individual lacks knowledge of the new culture. New cultural adaptation is defined as "the dynamic process by which individuals establish (or restore) and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment upon moving to an unfamiliar cultural environment" (Gudykunst, 2003, p. 244).

Adaptation to a new culture involves a variety of aspects, including behavioural and psychological changes, since people from different cultures interact with each other in different ways (Kim, 2005). Engaging with a new culture necessitates an individual's ability to adapt as well as his or her ability to learn about the new culture. This includes having an apparent understanding of the distinctions and similarities between one's own culture and the new civilizations. When it comes to intercultural competency, for example, curiosity and openness are important qualities to cultivate. As part of the intercultural process, communication is critical in breaking down barriers and eventually adapting to a new culture via speaking with people from the new culture. While many of these talents may be learned, and taught, many of them can only be learned and discovered by the individual, especially in the initial few days of arriving at a new cultural environment.

In terms of psychological aspects, emotions play a key role in the adjustment process. People can think clearly about intercultural occurrences without resorting to psychological barriers if they have a strong emotional control (Matsumoto, Hirayama, and Le Roux, 2006). As a result, if people are unable to manage their emotions, they may have a difficult time adapting to new cultures. Because of this, people need to regulate their emotions in order to adapt to the host culture more easily.

3.1 Models of Intercultural Adaptation: One of the most commonly used models in the literature on intercultural adaptation is called the recuperation model. This model describes how people adapt to a new culture by recuperating from their previous experiences, relearning, and then reintegrating into their new environment (Anderson, 1994; Chen, 2013; Chen & Starosta, 2005; Manu et al 2021)

3.1.1 The Recuperation Model: The "cultural shock" phenomena is used to explain the recovery concept (Oberg, 1960). Culture shock refers to an individual's worry when they enter a new cultural environment (Oberg, 1960). When a person is at ease, this type of anxiety subsides. When a newcomer experiences culture shock, he or she must overcome it before adapting to the new environment.

After the honeymoon stage, as depicted in Figure 1 by Lysgaard (1955), sojourners begin to adapt by integrating into their hosts' society. When the sojourners reach this point, they're in crisis mode (i.e., culture shock). U-curve recovery is possible for sojourners who have overcome culture shock after a given period of time and are able to adapt progressively to their new culture until they achieve a state of full adjustment, in which they are able to operate satisfactorily in their new culture (Chen, 2013).

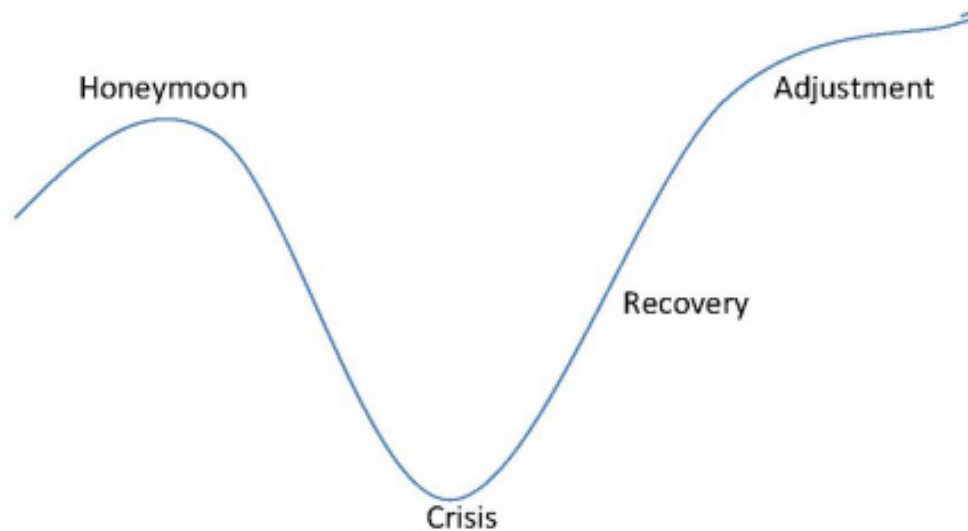


Figure 1: depicting U-shape curve by (Lysgaard, 1995)

3.1.2 The Model of Education: Understanding and absorbing the cultural traditions and norms of the host culture, such as perception and behaviour guidelines, is an important part of intercultural adaptation. The process of developing intercultural communication competency involves three essential elements: sensitivity, awareness, and effectiveness across cultures (Chen, 2010). Learned behavioural and perceptual principles and cultural norms are crucial in the model of social learning theory (Triandis, 1980). Newcomers, on the other hand, are urged by communication advocates to learn how to communicate effectively with people from the new culture (Chen, 2010; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1987).

3.1.3 The Recovery Model: Recovery is a third paradigm that focuses on an individual's intercultural adaptation as "a step-by-step psychological journey from the margins to the centre of an unfamiliar culture, [and] from a condition of denial or ignorance to a state of comprehension and empathy" (Anderson, 1994, p. 295). There are many examples of this concept, including Lysgaard's U-shaped curve process (1955). In addition, Bennett's (1986) intercultural adaption model is another example, in which intercultural sensitivity growth "moves from an ethnocentric stage to the final stage of ethnorelativity" (Chen, 2010, p. 2).

3.1.4 The Dynamic Tension Reduction Model: The dynamic tension reduction model regards intercultural adaptation as a dynamic process of reducing uncertainty or tension. Sojourners' mental systems begin to face a struggle or become disrupted when they encounter new cultural aspects from their new host society (Cheng, 2010, p. 2). This kind of event might cause a sense of ambiguity and anxiety. As a result, the sojourners learn to deal with their own internal imbalances in order to relieve their stress. This method can be seen in (Torbiorn's, 1982) subjective adjustment model. As Torbiorn noted, sojourners are better able to adjust to a new culture when they are content with their perceptions of their experiences in the host society, and vice versa.

3.1.5 The Dialectical Model: The intercultural adaption process is viewed as a cyclical and recursive process in the dialectical paradigm. Some concerns that came up as a result of interacting with people in the new culture are addressed by sojourners in this approach (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Sojourners in the process of intercultural adaption have a sensation of "rebirth" with each problem-solving cycle, according to Anderson (1994). Sojourners are compelled to develop problem-solving methods in order to adapt to the host culture. Intercultural sojourners create problem-solving skills to overcome difficulties as part of the cyclic process of intercultural adaptation, and this model incorporates elements from prior intercultural adaptation approaches.

4. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (I.E., SOCIAL MEDIA)

There are numerous reasons why individuals throughout the world use social media nowadays. For example, social media can help people connect and get to know one other. The Internet makes it possible for people to gain a better understanding of various cultures. Various internet interactions encourage dialogue to help people better grasp each other's viewpoints and impressions of the world. There's no such thing as an anonymous critic or an anonymous publisher in the world of social media. As a result, everyone has a social media account, allowing them to post views, opinions, and criticisms whenever they choose.

It's common for social networking sites to be referred to as "social media," "social networks," "social websites," or "internet social networking." "a series of Internet-based apps that build on the conceptual and technological roots of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" is what social media refers to (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). It is important to note that social networking sites are "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile with their own network of connections, (2) articulate their own network of connections, and (3) view and traverse their own network of connections as well as those made by others within the system" (Boyd and Ellison, 2007, p. 211). Using social networking sites (SNSs), people from all over the world may connect and communicate with each other in real time (Rui & Wang, 2015). SNSs also give users with a tool that may be used by, for, and for the users. User roles in the realm of Web 2.0 fall into one of five categories: consuming; creating; sharing; facilitating; or communicating (Slot and Frissen, 2007).

Boyd and Ellison (2008) claim that SixDegrees.com was the first social networking site that allowed users to establish profiles and communicate with their friends in 1997. According to Miriam (2017), other SNSs have evolved to serve the services listed earlier, as well as additional functionality, like sharing live videos and exchanging messages with various online groups in multiple online platforms and applications. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are three of the most popular social networking apps.

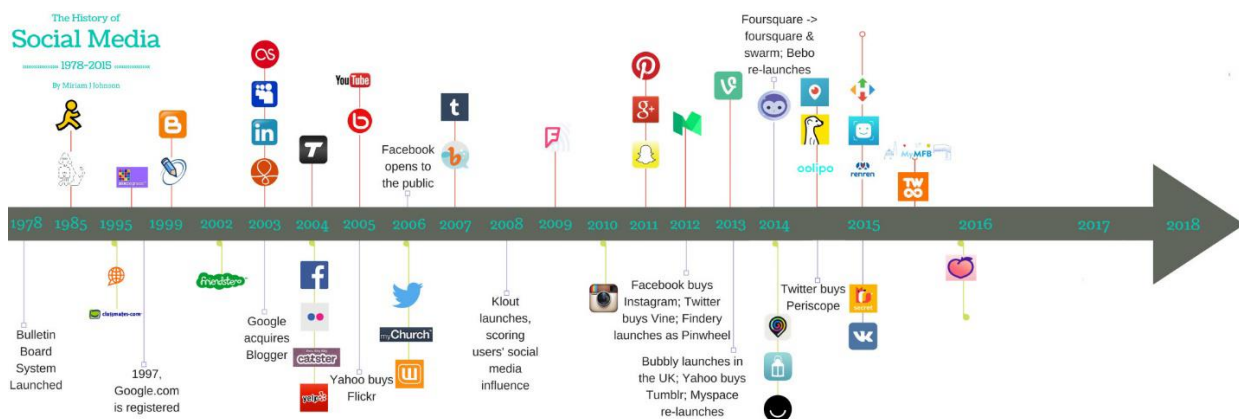


Figure 2: depicts a timeline of Social Networking Sites (Miriam, 2017)

Facebook is the most widely used social networking application. Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 as a way to connect individuals from around the world. Recent data about Facebook members and their activities is available, thanks to Facebook (2018). For example, on June 30th, 2018, Facebook had 1.47 billion daily active users, and 2.23 billion monthly active users. Officially, this is the case.

“Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what’s going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them” (Facebook, 2018).

Tweets are short 280-character messages that can be used to broadcast information about a person's day-to-day activities on Twitter, an online social networking site (Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2007). Odeo founder Tim Dorsey introduced an SMS-based notion that allowed the company's employees to maintain tabs on one another, and the platform was based on that idea. "A brief rush of meaningless information is described as "Twitter" (Georgetown University, 2010). People can follow their friends, professors, leaders, musicians, and others to keep up with them. People throughout the world are sharing and discussing cultural characteristics of each other on Twitter, which has influenced intercultural dialogues. A virtual face-to-face contact and debate platform called Twitter has helped bridge the gap between people from diverse cultures (Sawyer, 2011).

Finally, YouTube is a video-sharing website that "allows individuals to interact with the worldwide community by viewing and sharing user generated video content" (Georgetown University, 2010). Users can comment on videos and participate in debates in addition to uploading them and sharing them. Video clips, live channels, music videos, short original videos, instructive films, and more are all available. The majority of YouTube views are viewed on mobile devices, with more than half of all views coming from PCs, tablets, and smartphones. Since then, this breakthrough has inspired millions of people all around the world to effect positive change (Ostrow, 2010). In addition to more than 1.8 billion logged-in monthly users, YouTube has more than a billion hours of video watched every day, and 400 hours of video are posted to YouTube every second (YouTube, 2018). YouTube is primarily used for amusement, information, or persuading purposes.

Hence, the main impact that social media has in cross-cultural conversations is providing a channel of communication among people for exchanging verbal or written messages. Without a doubt, people around the world can use social media not only to communicate and collaborate with others, but also to engage in debate and discussion about cultural issues regardless of the geographical distance.

5. THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

Several studies have been conducted to examine the impact of social networking sites on the intercultural adaptation process. New social media is used by international students, sojourners, and immigrants for a variety of objectives, including cross-cultural acculturation. In addition to keeping in touch with their loved ones back home, they also want to stay in touch with their new friends and classmates in their new countries of residence (Hendrickson & Rosen, 2017; Sawyer & Chen, 2011; W. Chen, 2010; Sawyer, 2011). In addition, the goal is to build social capital (Alencar, 2018; Croucher, 2011; Naseri, 2017; Sandel, 2014). (Ahmad, Mirza, & Mohd, 2014; Cao & Zhang, 2012; Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016).

5.1 The Drive of Communicating with Friends and Families: Chen (2010) conducted a nationwide telephone survey of Chinese immigrants in Singapore to evaluate the association between Internet use and intercultural adaptability. There was a correlation between time spent in the host nation and acculturation, according to the study's findings. To put it another way, immigrants who stayed for longer periods of time in the host country and engaged in more social media interactions with the locals were more rapidly immersed in the new culture. In addition, the author observed that immigrants' intercultural adjustment was influenced by their use of social networking sites (SNSs). As a result, immigrants' social media connections could have a bearing on how well they adapt to their new nation.

Accordingly, Sawyer and Chen (2012) conducted research to determine the impact of social media on the intercultural adaption process. This study involved in-depth interviews with 10 overseas students studying at a US university. According to the study results, the relevance of social media contacts in intercultural adaption was highlighted in terms of overcoming adjustment difficulties and developing a feeling of community with nationalities.

In a similar vein, Sawyer (2011) looked into how international students' use of social media affected their intercultural adjustment. The results showed that social media enabled international students form personal ties with people from both their home and host countries, as well as foster a sense of belonging to the host culture, in a simple and accessible way. International students' intercultural adjustment process was clearly aided by the use of social media. Students also relied more on social media to stay in touch with their relatives and friends after they arrived in the host nation in order to overcome psychological concerns such as cultural shock, according to the report. As a result, the sojourners felt more at ease in their new surroundings.

It was recently discovered that SNSs and video chat apps play a role in the establishment of friendship and cross-cultural adaption in a longitudinal mix-method study by Hendrickson and Rosen (2017). The study surveyed and interviewed 105 international students, 34 of whom had studied in Argentina's various universities. SNSs were used by international students to keep in touch with family and friends, according to the study. The study also found that social networking sites (SNSs) assisted international students better grasp local communication practises, in which they may communicate and integrate in the intercultural adjustment process. In the following stages, social media was used to interact with the host nationals in order to assist them adapt to their new environment.

5.2 The Drive of Gaining Social Capital: According to Bourdieu (1985), "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources associated to the existence of a long-term network of mutual acquaintance and recognition" is social capital (p. 248). 195 international students in the United States were studied in this regard by Lin, Peng, Kim, Kim, Kim, and La Rose (2011). Facebook, in particular, was found to have a considerable impact on students' social capital, emotional stability and college attachment. When it comes to social media and online communication, Sandel (2014) conducted a similar study. Researchers interviewed 23 American and international students who had just completed or were currently participating in a study abroad programme. Students' experiences and psychological well-being, as well as their sociocultural and informational demands, were positively impacted by online communication programmes such as Facebook and Skype, according to the findings.

In recent months, Alencar (2018) conducted in-depth interviews with 18 refugees from Syria, Eretria, and Afghanistan who had filed for asylum in the Netherlands. The purpose of the study was to examine the use and implementation of social networking sites in the cultural adaption process. SNSs helped refugees learn the language and culture of the new nation, as well as connect with friends and family in the new culture, according to the findings of this study. While other social media programmes like YouTube and LinkedIn were also mentioned, Facebook community pages were the most popular method of adapting cultural norms in the Netherlands for participants.

Through the integration of cultivation theory and ethnic group vitality, Croucher's (2011) study attempted to show a theoretical framework for explaining the relationship between social media applications and cultural adaptability. The findings showed that two propositions are made during the process of cultural adaptation. Immigrants' interactions with the mainstream culture and their communication within their own group will be impacted by SNSs.

According to Naseri (2017), the Internet and SNSs, particularly Facebook, have a significant impact on two types of social capital: bonding and bridging. The findings demonstrated that the Internet has a significant impact on the growth or decline of both categories of human capital. Through the creation of online social groups, as well as face-to-face gatherings, Facebook has helped to expand and solidify relationships.

5.3 The Purpose of Socially Adjusting in the Educational Settings: Research by Cao and Zhang (2012) found a link between Chinese overseas students' SNSs and their ability to adjust to life in New Zealand's educational system.

The authors conducted interviews with students in order to learn more about their use of social media in their transition to a new educational setting. Research shows that SNSs assisted Chinese international students create personal and social networks to aid in their educational and cultural adjustment. – Renren and Facebook were also found to be commonly used by the participants.

The U-Curve model of Lysgaard (1955) was also used by Ahmad et al. (2014) in order to describe the process of cultural adaptation. The researchers conducted four focus groups with Malaysians who had studied in either Australia or the United Kingdom and returned to their home country. Adaptation to a new culture, as well as the importance of social media in this process, was explored by the researchers. Students from Malaysia were able to keep in touch with their relatives back home because of contemporary technology, according to the study. To aid in the process of adapting, the students agreed that social media can be very helpful in this regard.

As part of the first phase of intercultural adaptation, Forbush and Foucault-Welles (2016) studied how SNSs influenced social network construction among 120 Chinese students in the US. SNS use was found to have a positive effect on students' social and academic development. Furthermore, the quality and type of links were more important than the size of social networks.

6. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The educational and cultural ramifications of social networking sites are influenced by the techniques taken by the instructors and the students themselves. SNSs, as well as other Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 technology, must be incorporated in the cultural education of kids in order to give them a wide range of cultural resources and real local language use (Hong, 2013). There are three ways in which social networking sites (SNSs) might help with intercultural adjustment: connections and ties, community, and adjustment.

6.1 Relationships and Connections: With the use of social media, international students and sojourners can stay connected to people from all over the world, regardless of their geographic location (Rui & Wang, 2015). Internet-based social networking sites (SNSs) can be a useful tool in the intercultural adjustment process. Relationships can be strengthened or built or maintained through social media. A sense of belonging to the new group can be achieved through these kinds of contacts and relationships (Sawyer, 2011). By replacing face-to-face contact with more efficient methods such as social media, students are able to share a variety of sorts of knowledge and build and maintain meaningful relationships (Ryan, Magro, & Sharp, 2011), and (Rui & Wang, 2015). Facebook, for example, might be used by those on the road to make new acquaintances and to receive social support (Lee et al., 2012; Sawyer, 2011).

6.2 Community: While adapting to a new culture, one's sense of community is also influenced by social media. Sojourners are advised to use social media to build friendships and integrate into the new culture as soon as possible after arriving in the host nation. In addition, overseas students and sojourners must keep in touch with their families and friends back home. SNSs allow people to stay up to date, alert, and informed about current events by allowing them to contact with friends and family, according to Sawyer (2011). There are a lot of tools available on social media for people who wish to learn how to cultivate a sense of community and belonging to diverse cultures. Teachers and professors who use social media in their classrooms with multicultural students should establish a course-related Facebook group and encourage students to participate and engage with their peers by exchanging information about their own cultures, as well as information about the cultures of their peers.

6.3 Acculturation: In order to successfully adapt to a new culture, acculturation and adjustment are critical components, according to Sawyer (2011). In a variety of ways, social media are crucial for intercultural adjustment. When transitioning into a PhD programme, for example, doctoral students need to use Facebook groups to build their social capital (Magro, Ryan, Sharp, & Ryan, 2009). In other words, PhD students benefit from social capital when it is used to share knowledge, provide emotional support, and foster a sense of community. Student newly arrived in a new culture must use social media to adapt and grasp the cultural norms of the new society. Sojourners' ability to adjust to a new culture will be enhanced if they use social networking sites (SNSs) (Rui & Wang, 2015).

7. CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

The existing literature on the impact of social networking sites (SNSs) on intercultural adaption has been reviewed in this paper. After arriving in a new culture as an international student/sojourner/immigrant, the researchers wanted to know how SNSs were used by these individuals. Several pedagogical implications were presented to assist faculty members, students, and educational institutions in dealing with intercultural adaption. In order to provide a more complete picture of the world's population, new studies are needed in a variety of settings. Then there's the possibility of focusing on a specific app like telegram. People from a variety of cultural backgrounds can connect with each other through social media applications, which improves their ability to adapt to a new culture.

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