



# Changes in Attitudes Towards the Two Countries After Chinese Emigration to the United States

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**Abstract.** Since international migration is on the rise in the current situation, the issue that the change of immigration towards host country and home country has become one of the most fundamental topics. This study focuses on changes in attitudes towards the two countries after Chinese emigration to the United States. The questionnaire survey of Chinese students who intend to go to college in the United States and Chinese students who insist on staying in China to continue their studies provides a wealth of data. According to findings and discussion, One of the most likely outcomes is that Chinese immigrants to the United States will improve their liking for the United States. Supported by data and relevant literature, this research can provide implications for immigration identity issues.

**Keywords:** Immigration · Attitude · Chinese · United States

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Changes in Attitudes Towards the Two Countries After Chinese Emigration to the United States

The profile of international migration has changed considerably in the last two years since the last IOM World Migration Report was released in late 2019. In 2020, the number of international migrants worldwide will reach 281 million, representing 3.6% of the world population, up from 272 million in 2019. However, the number of international migrant populations rose by 3.5%, a slight decrease. Of these, 87 million migrants are in Europe (30.9% of the international migrant population), while only about 9 million international migrants live in Oceania (about 3.3% of all migrants) [1]. These data on international migration suggest that international migration remains widespread but uneven across the world. Each particular region has its own unique migration patterns that are shaped by its economic, geographic, demographic, and other factors.

At the macro level, migration can be divided into two categories: first, negative factors such as persecution, poverty and oppression that expel people from their home countries; and second, positive factors such as family reunification, better education or employment opportunities that attract people to the target country [2]. This suggests that, in general, international migrants driven by pull factors usually have positive perceptions of their new host country.

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However, even the attitudes of international migrants driven by push and pull factors are not entirely positive toward the host country. In situations where international migrants actively travel to another country and live there for a period of time, they cannot avoid encountering different cultural values and people of different ethnicities, which may lead to group bias (group bias is the tendency of people to favor others in the same group as them). In the case of immigrants to another country, a key classification of the local public that exhibits a tendency toward group bias is the rejection of inbound immigrants by culturally and ethnically diverse activists, especially the United States. Immigration has been a divisive issue in U.S. federal, state and local politics in recent decades [3]. Certain federal agencies oppose legislation that protects immigrants and even actively create many exclusionary programs for them. In addition to this, there is considerable discrimination against immigrants by the masses in the community. For example, nearly one in five Asian Americans reported significant discrimination (18%) because they were Asian when applying or attending college (19%) or interacting with police [4]. This racial discrimination tends to make people feel unwelcome, and as a result they may have negative effects and emotions towards their host country.

From the late 1970s to the present, following normalization of U.S.-Chinese relations and changes to U.S. and Chinese migration policies, a second wave came [5]. Now that China has become the third largest country of immigration and the number one migrant-sending country in mainland China is the United States, the immigration situation is positive and conducive to further globalization. However, caught by the general environmental conditions in the post-epidemic era, the scale of international population migration shows a certain trend of contraction. How to break the ice of the current migration situation has become one of the most important world issues. This issue has led to a corresponding reflection on how to change the perceptions of international migrants toward their host and home countries. It also raises a series of questions about whether and how international migrants motivated by positive factors to migrate change their perceptions of a new country after living there for a few years. Also, what factors lead international migrants to view and perceive their host countries differently from their countries of origin are directions worth exploring.

In order to further explore the changing attitudes of international migrants, this study will use a questionnaire method with a Likert scale model to quantitatively examine the changing attitudes of international migrants towards the host country and the country of origin, so as to further pave the way and explore the changing mindset of international migrants and their future.

## **2 Method**

### **2.1 Hypothesis**

Based on the we first came up with the hypothesis that in five years, people's attitude towards the host country will become more positive, but they still tend to favor their home country more.

## 2.2 Participant

Initially, the premise is that all participants in this survey are students in Grade 12 who are determined to enter a higher education level. Secondly, the participants will reflect the characteristics of diversity as much as possible. Firstly, participants will be selected from more than 20 different cities, including Shanghai and Wuhan. Secondly, their institutions and curriculum systems also include different types, such as IB courses, AP courses and China National College Entrance Examination. Last but not least, participants need to fully confirm their future decisions about their direction of entering a higher school. The participants are divided into two groups according to the determined college entrance aspirations. The first group members are Chinese students in Grade 12 who determined to go to the United States for their graduate study (G1). The second group is the control group, whose members are Chinese students in Grade 12 who stay in China for further education(G2).

A number of general and international high schools across China will cooperate with this survey to select 500 12th grade students out of nearly 10000 people who met the age and future academic needs of Groups 1 and 2, respectively, for this study. However, since a certain number of these students refused to cooperate with the second part of the study, the potential number of students would be roughly 400 in each group.

## 2.3 Procedure

Based on the hypothesis made after the comprehensive literature review, the research is designed as two independent but related questionnaires, whose time of the two questionnaires will be set as five years. To begin with, the question settings of the two questionnaires will be consistent. What's more, the questions designed by the questionnaire will be divided into two parts: personal background survey and specific attitude survey. Firstly, in the personal background survey part of the questionnaire, some routine personal information questions of the participants will be collected, such as their gender, age, e-mail, English proficiency, etc., mainly to help us master the basic information of the participants. However, in the basic information, in addition to personal information, English proficiency is used as one of the variables for the change of immigrants' attitudes towards the host country and the country of origin. Second, in the specific attitude survey part of the questionnaire, the Likert scale was adopted. This is an easy to operate scale for students, which can concretely express the abstract and complex attitudes of participants towards the host country and home country into simple figures, thus intuitively showing people's attitudes towards the two countries. In the design of the scale, ten statements describing countries will be repeatedly used to describe two countries in the two scales, and the contents will cover political policies, economic development, welfare policies, neighborhood relations, racial discrimination and other statements. For each sentence, we will append a number from 1 to 7. Different numbers represent different degrees of agreement (1 means very agree, 2 means almost agree, 3 means partially agree, 4 means neutral, 5 means partially disagree, 6 means almost disagree, 7 means very disagree). For example, if a participant agrees with the statement "China is a democratic and open country", he or she will check box 1 in the table. After ten sentences of judgment by the participants, the sum and average of the scale data will be calculated automatically.

Therefore, the results of the scale will show that the more people like the country, the smaller the sum and average of the scale; vice versa.

After the questionnaire is designed, the questionnaire survey will be carried out on this basis. The questionnaire survey will be carried out in two parts, with an interval of five years between the two parts. First of all, in the first part, an email with the first questionnaire will be sent to two groups of eligible students (G1 students who decide to go to the United States for college and G2 students who stay in China to continue their studies). In this round of questionnaire, a special question for students in G1 will be asked: participants will be asked whether they are willing to continue to cooperate to complete the second part of the study in five years. After screening, for students who choose "Yes" in this special question, we set the questionnaire obtained from their questionnaire as a valid questionnaire, and extract the information and data that need to be retained from their first questionnaire. After these students in G1 have lived in the United States for five years, my second questionnaire will be used to conduct a separate survey on them. The content of the second questionnaire is identical to that of the first questionnaire to help control appropriate variables. After the second questionnaire is completed, the current data will be collected and analyzed based on the data of the first questionnaire five years ago to verify the conjecture.

In the data analysis, first of all, during the preliminary analysis, the data collected from the two questionnaires collected from G1 will be divided into four scales, and the data collected from G2 will be divided into two scales, and the total and average values of each scale will be recorded. The mean and sum values collected from G2 will be used as control group data for comparison with G1 data. In addition, in addition to comparing the data of G2 group and G1 group horizontally, we also compared the data of G2 group within the group for vertical comparison (five years ago and five years later). In addition, we will use the T test to analyze the validity of the data. Secondly, during further analysis, the data in the two questionnaires will be grouped according to the English level filled in by the two questionnaires (primary group, intermediate group and advanced group), and the sum and average values will be compared between the groups, so as to explore other possibilities for the change of migrants' attitudes towards the host country and the country of origin.

## 2.4 Results

Due to the lack of resources, we were unable to conduct large-scale formal research. In order to further clarify the results and discussion, we obtained the following prediction results through a small range of research and literature reading. First of all, the prediction result of high probability is that in the first round of the questionnaire, the total and average values of participants in the China Statement Scale were significantly smaller than those in the United States Statement Scale, while in the second round of the questionnaire, the total and average values of Chinese immigrants in G1 in the United States scale decreased, but still not lower than those in the China Statement Scale. This shows that Chinese people coming to the United States will change their preference for the United States and improve their liking for the United States, but they still have a higher liking for China than the United States. However, there are two possibilities. One

possibility is that there is almost no difference between the results of the two questionnaires, that is, the attitude of immigrants towards China and the United States has hardly changed. Another possibility is that participants' preference for the United States has risen to more than that of China. In addition, a surprising discovery is that students with higher English proficiency usually have a better liking for the United States after five years.

### 3 Discussion

The attitudes of student immigrants to the United States toward their host and home countries were quantitatively analyzed through a questionnaire survey method and a Likert scale model. The probability prediction of this study was that after a certain period of residence in the U.S., Chinese student immigrants would increase their favorable perceptions of the U.S., but still have positive attitudes toward China beyond the U.S. Previous studies have reported that in the process of cultural assimilation, Chinese immigrants exhibit different personality traits and social behaviors than American-born Chinese who have lived in the U.S. for more than one generation, but traditional Chinese value systems and the use of their native language continue to play an important role among contemporary Chinese immigrants [6–9]. The results of these studies are consistent with the measured results of the current study in that immigrants have elevated positive attitudes toward their host over, but still do not surpass their home country. Based on these data and information, the prediction that immigrants will somewhat elevate their favorable feelings toward the host country (the United States) after residing through the host country, but still maintain a higher level of positive attitudes toward the home country (China) than the host country is derived. This section will be expanded in the discussion section.

However, there are still some possible results that differ from the ones we predicted. The first possible outcome that runs counter to our speculation is that the reason why Chinese students studying in the U.S. maintain the same attitudes toward their host and home countries after five years may be due to the growing nationalism of the Chinese in recent years. As a political issue, immigration is associated with strong notions of national identity and borders, and it has an emotional resonance that many issues do not [10]. The rapid growth of new global migrants since the 1980s has fundamentally changed the face of the Chinese diaspora. The "Chinese diaspora" (Chinese citizens living outside of China and having permanent residency in a different country) has resurfaced on a large scale and has become an important part of the overseas Chinese population. The increase in the Chinese diaspora has been accompanied by the formation and development of new Chinese communities around the world, as well as the increasing frequency and scale of exchanges between the Chinese diaspora and mainland and overseas Chinese [11]. They provide fertile ground for a possible revival of overseas Chinese nationalism in the 21st century, offering sporadic but consistent signs of a revival of overseas Chinese nationalism among the current new Chinese immigrants. Such nationalism would allow people to remain highly critical of their home country without rising to the level of favorability of the host country.

Moreover, a second, opposite result showing a preference for the host country over the home country may be due to immigrants' English language proficiency. English

fluency is also considered to be an important indicator of acculturation level [12] and immigrants' social distance from mainstream society [13]. It has been noted that fluency in English may increase students' belief that they will be able to understand college-level material, obtain better test scores, and research information about college requirements [14]. Better academic performance in college could help Chinese immigrants have more to look forward to in their immigrant life. Most of the participants in this study who decided to continue their education in the United States at a higher level came from international high schools with a longer background in teaching English, which gives them a better level of English proficiency than students in the Advanced Placement system. This would further improve their ratings of the host country over a five-year period, even to the point of rating the host country higher than the home country.

In addition, the study found a strong and significant link between the home and host country identities of parents and children. Traditional Chinese socialization practices appear to be more restrictive and controlling than the more liberal and permissive American socialization practices [15]. This suggests that if second-generation Chinese immigrants in a family have traveled to the same host country as their parents, their impressions of that country will be heavily influenced by their parents' very favorable perceptions of the host country, as their parents perceive it to be.

There are some limitations to the results of this study. First, due to limitations, a formal large-scale research experiment was not conducted. Therefore, there is no real and accurate data to support the hypothesized results. Second, some of the references that were used and drawn upon were relatively outdated. With the passage of time, their conclusions may not be fully applicable to the current situation. Therefore, the results inferred from these more outdated literatures are not extremely convincing. More scholarly research related to changes in immigrants' attitudes toward home versus host countries should be encouraged. Third, the home and host countries are relatively homogeneous, and the age range of the study subjects is too narrow to be convincingly generalized to a generalized pattern. Therefore, future research should be conducted in a wider range of developing and developed countries.

In addition, the methodological limitations of the study were that the accuracy of the results was affected by the characteristics of the Survey, which is a research method that collects answers from participants by distributing a certain number of questions to them. This results in a number of contingent factors that may affect the accuracy and reliability of the information and data derived from Surveys. For example, participants who are psychologically or physically uncomfortable may tend to rate the scale negatively. The presence of these contingent factors is a variable that cannot be controlled, thus hiding the true thoughts of the participants. Although methods to avoid self-report bias such as designing questionnaires to those around the participants are employed among others, valid and credible questionnaires are difficult to reach. Implicit association tests may be a better alternative. Implicit association tests are physiologically based on a neural network model. This model assumes that information is stored on a series of nodes of neural connections organized hierarchically, according to semantic relations, and thus the connection between two concepts can be measured by measuring the distance between them on such neural connections. It allows for greater recovery of participants'

internal tendencies while reducing the degree to which participants' true inner thoughts are hidden.

The current study completes a breakthrough for future research on immigration attitudes. First, future research could further explore which specific variables influence immigrants' perceptions of their host and home countries and the extent to which the variables affect attitudes. The results of this study reveal that immigrants' English proficiency may be one of the variables that influence immigrants' attitudes toward their host and home countries, but there is still no quantitative research on the specific extent of their influence. In contrast, in numerous literature and sources, in addition to English proficiency, the experiences and perceptions of participants' family members about the host country also have a significant impact on the results. Second, this study focused on people who migrated to the host country by push factors, and future research could expand the study to include migrants by pull factors to complete a more comprehensive study. Third, building on the selection of the current study, the changing attitudes of local residents toward immigrants who have first arrived as well as those who have lived there for a period of time is also a topic worth exploring to explore the impact of cross-cultural and immigration on local communities and countries. For example, some studies have tracked the evolution of prejudice in immigration law, finding a shift from explicit "old-fashioned" prejudice to more subtle "modern" and "aversive" prejudice against immigrants [16].

## 4 Conclusion

This study used a questionnaire research method and a Likert scale model to collect data and information in a sample of twelfth grade students. The study is expected to have a more reliable time span of up to five years. The data results indicate that after a certain period of residence in the host country, immigrants will enhance their favorable perceptions of the host country, but still maintain a high level of positive attitudes toward the home country. In addition, those with higher bathing levels in the host country will have higher favorable feelings toward the host country. In the era of globalization where migration is intertwined with geopolitics, trade, and culture, this study is beneficial to provide constructive suggestions in enhancing the positive impact of migration on the economy, public political sphere, and social culture of home and host countries. Future research directions will further focus on other variables that influence changes in immigrants' attitudes toward home and host countries as well as qualitative research and explore changes in local people's attitudes toward immigrants who have first arrived as well as those who have lived there for some time.

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