

# Education Study on Minority Students in Universities from the Perspective of Intercultural Adaptation

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**Abstract**—Minority students in colleges and universities are the national valuable human resources, the growth of their success is related to the prosperity and development of the ethnic minority areas, ethnic unity and social stability. In order to explore the education problem of minority students from the perspective of intercultural adaptation theory, the authors first elaborate the basic connotation and theoretical method of intercultural adaptation theory. At the same time, the authors should apply the intercultural adaptation theory to the adaptability of college minority students' education, and then analyze the characteristics of college minority students and existing problems. Finally, the authors will propose the application of this theory in education for minority students in universities, so as to provide effective methods for it.

**Keywords**—intercultural adaptation; ethnic minority students; education

## I. INTRODUCTION

General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed at the central ethnic work conference that the relationship between the Chinese nation and all ethnic groups is the relationship between a large family and its members, and the relationship between all ethnic groups is the relationship between the common members of a large family. To properly handle ethnic issues and do a good job in ethnic affairs is of great importance to the reunification of the motherland and the consolidation of the border areas, to ethnic unity and social stability, and to the long-term stability of the country and the prosperity of the Chinese nation. The issue of minority education is a prerequisite for the prosperity and development of minority areas. With the introduction of a series of preferential policies of minority education issued by the state and government, more and more minority students are going to mainland universities to study. In 2010, there were 1.58 million minority students in junior college, accounting for 6.8% of the total number of students in junior college. [1] At present, universities in the mainland have set up courses for ethnic minority students in Tibet and Xinjiang, including pre-undergraduate, pre-specialist and ethnic minority classes.

Although the proportion of minority students in mainland universities is not high, the unique characteristics of minority students have put forward a new topic for education management of university students. It has become an

important topic in the management research field of education for minority students to deeply understand the adaptation difficulties of minority students in mainland universities and formulate effective solutions.

## II. BASIC CONNOTATION AND THEORETICAL METHOD OF INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

Intercultural adaptation is a constant game process led by the cultural spirit of the interlocutors. Karuna argues that the constant game is not about winning, but about playing without stopping. [2] Chen Guoming et al. believed that only from the perspective of comprehensive harmony, across cultural differences, through mutual penetration and mutual identification and communication, the two sides can be converted from adversary to partnership.[3] The most interesting intercultural adaptation theory is berry's theoretical framework, which emphasizes the process of cultural adaptation and actually has an impact on two different cultures in contact with each other, but the theory has little impact on mainstream culture. But the theory has little impact on mainstream culture: multicultural view and cultural interaction view.

The multicultural view recognizes the differences between different cultures, it advocates that people of different nationalities and different cultures have equal status, it believes that every culture should be respected. The multicultural view [4], which holds the static cultural view and the cultural interaction view, also recognizes the differences among cultures and advocates cultural equality. However, it insists that the dynamic cultural concept is universal among different cultures, and emphasizes the mutual respect, interactive communication and integration innovation among different cultures in particular. [5]

There are many theoretical models of intercultural adaptation, among which the single-dimensional model and the two-dimensional model are widely accepted and applied. According to the single-dimension model, acculturation is the process of the individual gradually being assimilated into the host culture from the original culture, which is one-way and inevitable. According to the two-dimension model, culture should have two basic dimensions, namely, the tendency to maintain its own traditional culture and identity, and the tendency to communicate with other cultural groups, so that human interaction can be sustained continuously.

Intercultural contact is the core of the theory of acculturation. There are three theoretical methods: cultural learning, stress coping and social identification. The cultural learning method mainly analyzes the intercultural contact and changing behaviors. What he emphasizes is the acquisition process of cultural skills necessary for survival in the new social and cultural environment. Stress coping is an emotional element that emphasizes cultural contact and change. Social identification focuses on cognitive factors such as how people perceive and perceive themselves and others. [5]

In the era of digitization and informatization accelerating globalization background, the common countries and different ethnic blend and collision are more frequent, reduce between countries, between ethnic discrimination and prejudice and conflict, make the national culture is compatible with each other, and harmonious development, cross-cultural adaptation theory, presents a valuable theoretical guidance and reference value. Cross-cultural adaptation theory with ethnic minority college students' education in Chinese theory of native culture mutual fusion, and further development, not only expand and deepen the universality of cross-cultural adaptation theory application, rich to mineralization theory research, and to promote China's ethnic minority college students' cross-cultural adaptation ability, guide the minority college students' innovative education and management in China, has important theoretical significance and practical significance.

### III. THE CHARACTERISTICS AND ADAPTABILITY OF MINORITY STUDENTS IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

#### A. *The Inadaptability of the Cultural Environment in Universities Leads to the Confusion in the Study and Life of Minority College Students*

The university culture environment is the university's internal social environment system formed in its development process, which can be divided into materialized form (Such as school capacity, physical facilities and so on) and ideological form (Such as values, school ethos, and campus spirit).

College culture is actually a kind of environment and atmosphere, a kind of explicit curriculum and implicit curriculum, and a non-compulsory education means to participate in the whole process. Minority college students and ordinary college students, has the strong self-consciousness and independent consciousness, like to use the rich national characteristics of the Angle of view to understand and accept the knowledge skills and ideas, values, etc., it is because of this kind of knowledge and ideas on national consciousness that they accept that there is a watch more complex psychological process of experience. With minority students are in their world outlook, outlook on life and values formation of the critical period, to acceptance of new things requires a complex thinking process, sometimes driven by narrow national consciousness, lead to the mainstream social cultural environment, to lose interest in learning, and even to feel confused about university life.

#### B. *The Weak Learning Foundation Leads to the Uneven Learning Level of Minority College Students*

Because the minority students are all from mainland remoter western border, local economic conditions, education system and education resources are relatively backward, the Chinese language teaching is rarely used in some places. This leads to their insufficient level of listening, speaking, reading and writing ability of Chinese, which is often under the level of high school. Coupled with the special policy of the college entrance exam for minority students, after entering the university, minority students often suffer from difficulties in the learning of common basic courses and specialized courses. Failing to find suitable learning method for their own, they have to far greater rates of course retaking and make-up examination taking than the Han nationality students resulting in their failure of adapting to college life. This causes serious negative emotions, even thought problem in their mind.

#### C. *The Differences of Living Habits Lead to the Confusion of Interpersonal Communication Among Minority College Students*

Minority students face many problems in their studies in mainland universities, such as language barriers, eating habits and dress habits. China's 56 ethnic minorities, widely distributed, grasps the Chinese level is not the same, although there is a special Chinese learning courses, but hardly to the point to adapt to the university level, individual minorities have their own diet features, such as Uyghur students do not eat pork, will definitely halal restaurant to enter, the scope of their diet is relatively homogeneous. While studying in the mainland, some ethnic minority students wear their own ethnic costumes, such as turbans and Tibetan robes, so that when Han students and ethnic minority students interact with each other, they tend to have a sense of distance and otherness.

#### D. *Intense National Religious Consciousness Leads to the Loss of the Individual Pursuit of Ethnic minority College Students*

As minority students comes into contact with the other students in the university, they will apparently realize the self-difference from other's in customs, habits and beliefs, which will enhance their national consciousness. [6] Since nationalities and religious are closely related, there is some religious component in the belief of some minority students, which some extreme pursuit of intense individual consciousness with national consciousness. Grown up in their own ethnic agglomeration, they have inherited the behavior, religious faith, manners and customs from their ancestors, with the improvement of their knowledge level and the broaden horizon, more concerns and attention are given to their nation. Trapped in the pursuit of the masses and the inner belief, they are eager to be respected and understood, however, sometimes they cannot be integrated, which leads to their psychological imbalance. At the same time, the blind national pride may lead them into narrow nationalism.

*E. The Generation of Psychological Problems Leads to the Incompatibility of the Self-development of Ethnicminority College Students*

As the questionnaire given by Yuan Lin demonstrates, all of the SCL-90 factors in 982 ethnic minority college students, such as compulsion, interpersonal relationship, depression, hostility, paranoia, terror, anxiety and nervousness, may lead to their self-confusion, biased self-knowledge, scarceness of social support system, and will have a negative effect. Still, some of them are highly personalized, the superiority of ethnic minority in their blood, obstinate, brutal, poor emotional self-control can trigger serious brawls when they can't vent their emotion.

*F. Economic Difficulties Lead to Great Pressure and Burden on Minority College Students*

Most of the minority students come from the western part of the country, and the economic development is relatively backward. When they come to the big cities, their consumption level will be raised, and coupled with the high tuition fees and living expenses, the burden is heavy for them. They have a strong sense of self-esteem, they are tightly-closed and underfed in school, and some students have made up their living expenses through part-time-work and part-time-study. However, it is almost impossible to solve these problems since they have a heavy study work.

#### IV. APPLICATION OF CROSS CULTURAL ADAPTATION THEORY IN EDUCATION OF MINORITY STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

*A. Strengthening the Ideological and Political Education of Minoritystudents, and Promoting the Harmonious Development of Multi-culture*

The mainstream of minority students' thoughts is positive and upward, but people should be soberly aware that in the context of today's economic globalization, some minority students have confused and vague political beliefs and ideas to varying degrees. In the theory of cross-cultural adaptation, the concept of cultural interaction refers to providing people from different cultural a platform to show themselves. Acculturation strategies mainly include assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization among which several studies have confirmed that the integration strategy is often the best choice. [5] If individuals pay attention to maintaining their own unique cultural identity when they interact with other groups, the use of integration strategy works best. Minority students shoulder the expectations from society, family, and their ethnic group, so education workers should accurately grasp the ideological characteristics of minority students. By conducting patriotism education, concept education, the national spirit education, moral education, education of democracy and legality, and mental health education, the school can inject the strong national emotion into the minority student education management. The Marxist concept of state and the Marxist ethnic view should be given prominence, and promoting patriotism and unity should be the focus in the management work of minority students education. In the work, educators should

care about minority students and respect their principal status; respect the law of education and promote the development of education, while serving the unity of the country and giving full play to the role of "think tank" and "melting pot".

*B. Establishing Favorable Platform for Education, Management and Service of the School, and Promoting the Intercultural Adaptation Process of Minority Students' Growth and Development*

The process of cross-cultural adaptation is dynamic. The results of cross-cultural adaptation include the improvement of cultural knowledge and skills, the sensitivity to the ideal belief, values and moral standards in the new culture, and the acquisition of cross-cultural communication skills. Einstein said, "It's not enough to use professional knowledge to educate people, through professional education, he can be a useful machine, but he cannot be a man of harmonious development." The school should use a variety of channels to cultivate the spirit of self-improvement and self-reliance of minority students and reduce their "uncertainty" and "anxiety" after entering a new social and cultural environment. Colleges should strengthen the attraction and appeal of education in terms of both form and content so as to make them feel that they need to study, they must study, they are happy to study. In this way can the gap between the ability of minority students and other students be narrowed. More platforms should be set up to show the ethnic advantages so that they can adopt correct attitude towards the cultural difference between their ethnic group and others. This will contribute to the integration and co-prosperity of all the ethnic groups. This will lead to the harmony in which "Just as you recognize the merits of your own culture, so allow different cultures the same recognition. By doing so, we may reach the world of Great Unity."

*C. Constantly Enhancing the Level of Mental Health Education, and Cultivating Healthy and Optimistic Character of Minoritystudents*

In cross-cultural contact, pressure is the emotional factors of change, it is considered the pressure in cross-cultural and thinks these cultural conflicts and problems produced cannot be solved. [8] After entering the university, ethnic minority students move from their ethnic areas to multi-ethnic areas and from their ethnic cultural environment to multi-cultural environment, which is a huge transformation. The research points out that the expectation consistent with actual experience is helpful for people to adjust, and the greater the difference between expectation and actual experience, the greater the problem of psychological adjustment and psychological pressure will be. These objective conditions require minority students to have higher psychological quality and self-adjustment ability than ordinary ones. Colleges and universities should set up special mental health education classes to establish mental health archives for minority students, and expand the form of mental health education such as experiential learning, sand table games, group training, to improve the minority students' ability to deal with stress, and the level of self-regulation, active coping strategies, namely, find a way to adapt to the pressure

planned and actively. In the process of cross-cultural adaptation, especially in stressful situation, the lack of social support could easily lead to a series of individual psychological stress, emotional confusion and low life satisfaction, and even serious psychological diseases. [9] The effective hierarchical network, which will be founded by colleges and universities, include minority students' family, friends, teachers, students, the circle of friends of their nation, the circle of classmates around partners, the circle of teachers who are familiar with predecessors, and the circle of teachers in professional institutions. The establishment of these circles, the early discovery, early guidance and early cure of minority students' psychological problems are efficient social support systems.

#### *D. Enabling Minority Students to Finish Their Studies Smoothly Solving Practical Difficulties in Life*

For minority students, they are confronted with such problems as homesickness far away from home, high economic pressure of consumption, inadaptability of Chinese language environment and high pressure of employment, which bring great challenges to the college life of minority students. According to the theory of intercultural adaptation, when individuals are fully prepared culturally and socially, they have the confidence and ability to maintain positive and healthy harmonious social relations in the new cultural society and achieve academic or professional success. For minority students, education should pay attention to solving practical problems while solving ideological problems. For example, at the beginning of school, by interpreting policies in minority areas and school rules and disciplines, by increasing the daily thoughts and behaviors of minority students, colleges guide them to have a reasonable plan for college life, not to overreach, not to underestimate themselves from grasping the overall perspective. Colleges should establish system of assistance for students from ethnic minorities, and set up a comprehensive support system for students from ethnic minorities, including national student loans, school work-study assistance, and special scholarship grants, loans and subsidies for students from ethnic minorities. Colleges should strengthen employment guidance, make it a policy of a lifetime, and specifically improve the employability of minority students.

### V. CONCLUSION

Under the background and development plan of keeping close contact, communication and integration between ethnic minority areas and the mainland, the educational management of ethnic minority students in colleges is particularly important. The management of ethnic minority students in colleges needs to be more scientific and standardized, and the methods of education need to be constantly reformed and innovated. Colleges should correctly understand the deep structural characteristics of minority students' culture and objectively analyze their adaptability, so as to obtain beneficial enlightenment from the process of education and management of minority students in colleges, and make every outstanding minority

student become the mainstay to promote the common development and prosperity of all ethnic groups.

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