Research on Cultural Adaptation and Enhancement Strategies for South Asian International Students in China under the "Belt and Road" Initiative—Taking Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives as Examples

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Abstract: With the advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the number of South Asian students studying in China has continued to grow, and the various challenges they face during their study abroad have become increasingly prominent year by year. Notably, the difficulties encountered in the process of cross-cultural adaptation have emerged as a significant issue that cannot be ignored in the research and development of international student education in Chinese universities. Based on a literature analysis method, this study explores the cultural backgrounds and characteristics of South Asian students studying in China, analyzes the challenges they may face in aspects such as social life, academic adaptation, mental health, and interpersonal relationships, and examines the cultural difference roots of these issues. Finally, the study proposes measures such as conducting language and cross-cultural adaptation training, establishing international student associations, improving the care system, and reforming educational management models to enhance the cross-cultural adaptation level of South Asian students. The aim is to improve their learning quality and living standards in China and promote the healthy development of international education cooperation.

1. Introduction

Pragmatic cooperation between China and South Asian countries has been deepening, and under the impetus of the "Belt and Road" construction, the cooperation system of "common business, common construction and sharing" has become increasingly close, and the cooperation mechanism has been developing continuously, and the cooperation has achieved effective results in the areas of infrastructure connectivity, humanistic exchanges, and economic and trade development. As of the end of 2024, there are five countries in South Asia participating in the Belt and Road Initiative: Pakistan is an important participant in the Belt and Road Initiative, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the core project, including infrastructure construction such as

Gwadar port; Bangladesh is a major player in infrastructure construction, energy and energy resources; and Bangladesh is a major player in infrastructure construction, energy and energy resources. Bangladesh has deepened its cooperation with China in the fields of infrastructure construction and energy, and is an important partner in South Asia; Nepal cooperates with China in the fields of transportation and energy, and hopes to enhance its economic development through the Belt and Road Initiative; Sri Lanka's cooperation projects include the Hambantota Port, which is one of the important achievements of Sino-Sri Lankan cooperation; and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is its core project, including the Gwadar Port and other infrastructural projects. The Maldives is an active participant in the Belt and Road Initiative, and has extensive cooperation with China in the fields of tourism and infrastructure; these countries play an important role in the Belt and Road Initiative by promoting regional economic development through infrastructure construction and trade cooperation. These countries play an important role in the Belt and Road Initiative by promoting regional economic development and connectivity through infrastructure construction and trade cooperation.

As an important way of humanistic exchanges, cooperation and exchanges of international students with South Asian countries have flourished under the support of the "Belt and Road" policy. By 2023, there will be a total of more than 530,000 international students from 196 countries and regions in China, among which the number of international students from Asian countries and regions will be the largest, accounting for 77.3% of the total number of international students in China. Overall, the continuous growth in the number of international students coming to China from South Asia reflects, on the one hand, the increasing internationalization of China's higher education as well as the growing attractiveness of China to international students from South Asian countries. On the other hand, the various challenges faced by international students during their study in China have been highlighted year by year, especially the difficulties encountered in the process of cross-cultural adaptation, which has become an important issue that cannot be ignored in the research and development of international student education in universities.

2. Cultural characteristics of South Asian countries

South Asia has a long history and a culture characterized by distinctive diversity and deep historical heritage, which is mainly manifested in the following aspects:

2.1. Obvious religious diversity

Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and other religions have a deep influence in South Asian countries. For example, Islam is predominant in Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Maldives, while Buddhism and Hinduism coexist in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

2.2. Linguistic and Literary Diversity

Pakistan's linguistic system exhibits remarkable diversity, consisting of an official language, a national language, and a number of local ethnic languages: Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, belongs to the Indo-Iranian group of the Indo-European family of languages and is written using the Arabic alphabet. Although spoken by only about 8% of the population (mainly in urban areas), Urdu is widely used in government, media and education as an inter-ethnic lingua franca, and is spoken fluently by about 60% of the country's population. English is the official language of Pakistan and is used primarily for legal documents, higher education, and international affairs, and is particularly dominant among the elite and government sectors. This phenomenon has its roots in the British colonial past, but it has also led to "linguistic segregation", whereby English speakers

tend to belong to the elite, while Urdu and local languages are more widely spoken. There are also major national languages such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Baluchi, and dozens of local languages such as Shilaji, Sinki, Kashmiri, and others.

Bengali, the national and main official language of Bangladesh, belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-Iranian group of the Indo-European family of languages, and uses the Bengali alphabet (comprising 11 vowels and 40 consonants), which evolved from the Brahmi alphabet of ancient India, and is spoken by more than 230 million people in the country, accounting for 98% of the total population. English, the second official language, is widely used for government documents, higher education, international business and law, especially among the educated and elite classes. Bangladesh also has a number of local languages such as Chittagong, Sylhet, Rohingya, and minority languages such as Chakma, Santhali, Bihari, etc., which are spoken by a relatively small number of people and are mostly restricted to intra-ethnic exchanges, presenting a regional and non-dominant pattern, a pattern that reflects both history (the legacy of British colonialism) and national identity, and adapts to the needs of the globalized economy.

In Nepal, the official language is Nepali, which belongs to the Indo-Iranian group of the Indo-European family of languages, and is closely related to Hindi and Urdu in India. English is widely spoken in Nepal's upper class and in the field of education, and is an important foreign language, as well as Nirvar (spoken mainly among the Nirvar people in the Kathmandu Valley), Magar (spoken in the eastern part of the country), Bhogap (spoken in the southern part of the country), and more than 90 other languages, Nepal's linguistic diversity reflects its complex ethnic and cultural structure, with different languages spoken in different regions and ethnic groups.

Sri Lanka has dual official languages of Sinhala and Tamil in parallel. Sinhala belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family and is mainly spoken by Sinhalese in the western, southern and central parts of Sri Lanka, while Tamil belongs to the Dravidian language family and is mainly spoken by Tamils in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. English is also very important in Sri Lanka and is the de facto third official language. Due to its historical colonial background, English is widely used in the fields of education, business, government documents and law, especially in major cities such as Colombo. In addition, Moorish is spoken in the Muslim community, as well as local dialects of Creole languages mixed with Portuguese, Dutch, English and Sinhala.

The official language of the Maldives is Dhivehi, which belongs to the Indo-European group of Indian languages and is closely related to the Sinhala language of Sri Lanka. Dhivehi utilizes a unique alphabetic system known as the Thana alphabet, which is written from right to left. It is the most widely spoken language in the Maldives, with approximately 300,000 to 350,000 speakers, and as the Maldives is an important international tourist destination, English is widely used, particularly in the areas of tourism, business and education. English is almost the lingua franca in the capital Male and on the major resort islands, and on some remote inhabited islands, some local dialects may be spoken in addition to Dhivehi. This multilingual environment may affect their cultural expressions and communication styles.

2.3. Festivals and customs

Religious diversity in South Asian countries has led to numerous festivals, such as Diwali (Festival of Light), Sankranti (Festival of Colors), and Holi in Hinduism, Gurban (Eid al-Adha) and Eid al-Fitr in Islam, Desai in Nepal, and Buddha's Birthday and Vesak in Buddhism. These festivals also reflect a high degree of integration of religious and social customs. In addition, there are ritual taboos: the left hand is considered unclean (in Islamic countries) and the head is a sacred part (avoid touching it freely).

The South Asian diet is known for its abundance of spices, such as curries, tandoori kebabs, and naan in India and Pakistan, coconut curry and black tea (Ceylon tea) in Sri Lanka, and fish curry and desserts (e.g., Rasgulla) in Bangladesh. Vegetarian and meat diets differ according to religious practices, e.g. Hindus are mostly vegetarian and forbid beef, Muslims forbid pork and prefer beef and lamb; Buddhists partially fast.

2.4. Art and architecture

In art and architecture, South Asia has unique architectural styles, such as the Taj Mahal (Islamic style) in India, the Khajuraho temples (Hindu carvings), the Lion Rock (ancient palaces) in Sri Lanka, the Temple of the Buddha's Tooth (Buddhist shrines), the Mughal-style buildings (such as the Lahore Fort) in Pakistan, and the Buddhist temples in Nepal. There are various forms of traditional dance and music, such as Indian classical dance (e.g., Brahmaputra) and Kathak dance, Pakistani kavali music, and Sri Lankan traditional drumming.

2.5. Social structure and modern changes

South Asian countries have a strong sense of family and generally emphasize extended families and extended family and community relationships. Weddings are mostly arranged, with complicated ceremonies. In the process of urbanization, the younger generation is gradually challenging arranged marriages and gender roles (with an increase in women's participation in the workplace), and there are still remnants of the caste system in some parts of India and Nepal, which affects marital and occupational choices. The status of women is low in some areas (e.g., Afghanistan), but there has been a significant increase in the prevalence of female education in cities in Sri Lanka and India.

2.6. Impact of colonization and globalization

As a result of British colonial influence, English is popular in South Asia, the legal system is greatly influenced by the British legal system, and cricket has become the most popular sport in South Asia. Fast food culture and traditional food culture coexist (e.g. curry is added to pizza in India), and the information technology industry is developing rapidly in many countries (e.g. the Silicon Valley in India promotes cultural export and transnational exchanges).

3. Difficulties and Challenges of Cross-cultural Adaptation for South Asian International Students

Teseng, an American scholar, believes that international students will face four aspects of problems when studying abroad: the first one is the social and cultural adaptation problem, the second one is the psychological adaptation problem, the third one is the learning adaptation problem, and the fourth one is the problems in life. For the cross-cultural adaptation problems of South Asian international students coming to China, according to the related literature analysis and research, there are mainly the following parts.

3.1. Social and Cultural Adaptation

The social and cultural adaptation problems of international students from South Asia include whether they can communicate effectively with local residents, whether they have the ability to adapt to the local society and culture, and whether they are adapted to the customs and morals of the

place of study.

3.1.1. Climate and routine conflicts

South Asia is hot all year round, while China has four distinct seasons. This makes South Asian students feel especially cold and uncomfortable in the winter in China, and prone to illness. They are often accustomed to later sleeping hours, such as going to bed at one or two o'clock in the middle of the night or even two or three o'clock in the morning, whereas Chinese colleges and universities generally have strict work and rest schedules, and the strict work and rest schedules and management may lead to difficulties in their adaptation.

3.1.2. Religion and value conflicts

Most of the international students from South Asia are religious, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and so on have deep influence in South Asian countries, and there is a high degree of integration of religion and social customs. Religious diversity has led to the fact that South Asian students from China attach great importance to many religious festivals, and the implementation of their religious teachings is very strict, such as the "five worships a day" of Islam and fasting during the daytime, etc. The Chinese tend to be atheistic in their religious beliefs, and at the same time, they worship their ancestors, and are more pragmatic in their pursuit of a materialistic life. As a result, the difference in values makes it difficult for South Asian students to be fully respected for their religious customs, and the corresponding needs of the places and communities can not be fully satisfied.

3.1.3. Dietary habits and taboos

Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism have their own food taboos for believers, such as pork, not eating meat, not eating beef, not drinking alcohol and so on. In Chinese colleges and universities, especially in the southeast coastal region, they may be difficult to find food that meets the requirements of their own beliefs, habits or tastes, so many international students have difficulty in adapting to this aspect. In addition, there are etiquette taboos: the left hand is considered unclean (in Islamic countries) and the head is sacred (avoid touching it freely).

3.2. Academic Adaptation Problems

The main task of South Asian students coming to China is to study, however, they also face various difficulties in their study. Academic adaptation problems mainly include: difficulty in learning Chinese, difficulty in communicating in Chinese, and not adapting to China's education system and classroom teaching methods.

3.2.1. Difficulty in learning Chinese

Studies have shown that international students from South Asia generally face difficulties in learning Chinese, especially in the mode of all-Chinese teaching in specialized courses. First of all, there is a big difference between Chinese language and the languages of South Asian countries; in addition, Chinese language carries the connotation of China's long history of culture, and the process of learning the language is also the process of accepting the baptism of Chinese culture, which is bound to be a tortuous and lengthy process; secondly, the education level of South Asian countries is relatively backward, and the competition is comparatively small, so it is inevitable that there will be difficulties in facing the fast-paced and demanding learning.

3.2.2. Difficulty in Chinese communication

Learning is an interactive process, and communication between students and teachers is very important. Language communication barrier is one of the main challenges for South Asian students coming to China to adapt to their studies. Although some majors are taught in bilingual or full English, daily communication with most Chinese teachers and classmates still needs Chinese language support. According to the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges of the Ministry of Education (MOE), the number of international students coming to China who chose the English-medium program of MBBS already exceeded 10,000 in 2013[1]. In contrast, our teachers have strong English reading skills but relatively weak oral communication skills, and these two factors aggravate the communication difficulties.

3.2.3. Not adapting to the education system and classroom teaching methods

Chinese students have developed the ability to sit and listen to lectures for a long time in the classroom system, and teachers are more accustomed to the teaching mode of "I talk, you listen". However, South Asian students are more free to learn in their home countries and generally feel uncomfortable with the Chinese teacher-driven teaching style. In addition, cultural differences affect academic understanding, such as the conflict between Chinese collectivist values and South Asian individualistic thinking.

3.3. Psychological Adaptation Difficulties

The study found that the psychological health of South Asian international students is generally lower than that of their Chinese peers, 52.6% of international students have experienced negative life events (e.g. homesickness, economic pressure), and senior students also face employment anxiety. Difficulties in the psychological adjustment of international students coming to China lie in the development of loneliness, frustration, homesickness, lack of social recognition of self-worth, and self-enclosure during the study period. Compared with their peers, international students who arrive in a foreign country for the first time have to bear greater psychological and social pressure, and may develop many abnormal emotions and behaviors such as sensitivity, frustration, anxiety, homesickness, etc[2].

3.3.1. Loneliness and homesickness caused by culture shock

International students from different countries and regions may have significant differences in their cultural backgrounds, values, religious beliefs and lifestyles. At the same time, when they come to China to study and leave their familiar environment and family, they often miss the food, culture and lifestyle of their hometowns, and this homesickness becomes especially strong when they encounter difficulties or setbacks.

3.3.2. Lack of identity and sense of belonging

When international students come to China, they are confronted with a brand new cultural environment, including eating habits, social etiquette and values. This difference makes it difficult for them to integrate into the Chinese classmates' circle, social circle and academic circle. This culture shock may cause them to feel lost, doubtful, fearful, or even powerless, and thus doubt their ability to overcome difficulties and gain recognition, and lose their sense of security and belonging.

3.3.3. Self-isolation, anxiety, depression

Loneliness, academic pressure and culture shock may lead to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. International students show low mood, loss of interest, sleep disorder, change of appetite, and may show withdrawal and avoidance in social activities, which further aggravate their self-isolation.

3.4. Interpersonal difficulties

3.4.1. Communication Barriers

From the point of view of national character, the Chinese people are deeply influenced by Confucianism, which advocates the middle ground, harmony in everything, and euphemism in expression, which can easily cause misunderstanding with South Asian students in the process of communicating with Chinese students; in different cultures, there are some ethical habits rooted in cultural connotations, for example, some taboos of homophones in Chinese characters: when giving gifts, you can't give clocks, umbrellas, and other objects, because "clock" is homophonic with 'end', and 'umbrella' is homophonic with 'scatter', implying bad symbolism; the multi-meaning word 'Convenience', idiom 'hua she tian zu', metaphor 'ye mao zi', dialect 'dao guai zi', slang 'di dao'; in addition, there are many dialects in China, and although Putonghua is widely used as the official language, it is still the main communication tool in many areas, and all of the above are barriers to interpersonal communication among international students.

3.4.2. Conflict of social etiquette

First of all, China pays great attention to courtesy and etiquette, and in the interaction of Chinese culture, party, dinner and drinking play a major role, with unique table manners (elders are seated, chopsticks are moved first, clinking cups are lower than others to show respect, etc.), and international students who do not understand these etiquette norms may make inappropriate behaviors in the party occasion. In addition, there is a big difference in gift-giving in China. In terms of choosing and giving gifts, there are more mature principles and taboos in China, and they usually tend to be implicit and hidden, and in terms of accepting gifts, Chinese people don't like to open them in front of each other, and there is also the habit of returning items of comparable value.

3.4.3. Modernized media and information technology

Currently, communication network technology in China is developing rapidly compared with that in South Asia, and the mode of using social tools as the main mode of interpersonal communication has been formed, which has also formed a certain obstacle for South Asian students to integrate into Chinese interpersonal circles and carry out interpersonal communication, forcing them to re-learn and adapt to the Chinese media network when they are living in China.

4. Main Factors Affecting Cultural Adaptation of South Asian Students Coming to China

4.1. Factors affecting the difficulties of socio-cultural adaptation

4.1.1. Lack of attention to language learning

Language is an important carrier of culture. Strengthening language and culture learning can help international students better understand the cultural customs, historical background and social phenomena of the countries they study in, so as to enhance their cross-cultural communication

ability and adaptability. However, because many South Asian students lack a strong passion for Chinese culture and a strong motivation to learn the Chinese language, they are unable to acquire sufficient knowledge of the Chinese language even after years of study in China.

4.1.2. Solidification of South Asian students' original cultural values

Most of the international students in China are adults who have grown up under the long-term cultivation of their own cultures and have formed a relatively stable worldview and values. Therefore, when they are in unfamiliar cultures, they often use their original cultures as the standard to judge whether the behaviors of other people are correct or appropriate or not[3]. Overseas students tend to understand or implement the policies and systems of foreign countries from their own perspectives and in accordance with their domestic habits, and this kind of typical "culture clash", which justifies their own habits and cultures, often occurs in the management process of international students[4]. For example, the caste system of Hinduism is deeply rooted in South Asia, and for international students from this region, even if they set foot on the land of China during their university years, this hierarchical concept has not been diluted due to the geographical change. On the contrary, facing the loneliness brought by the unfamiliar environment, they may have a stronger sense of alienation and fear of foreign people, which may hinder their cultural adaptation in China.

4.1.3. Non-culturally biased motivation to study abroad

Motivation is an important factor in the process and outcome of international students' studies. Most students go abroad to obtain a degree or professional training rather than to acquire a second culture or personal development, because the acquisition of a degree or professional qualification means increased opportunities for career advancement and upward social mobility[5].

4.2. Factors affecting academic adjustment difficulties

4.2.1. Unreasonable school management system

In universities, international students are generally managed separately and divided into classes. International students usually have special dormitories and their courses are separated from those of local students. As a result, international students lack the opportunities to communicate with local students, participate in local social affairs, fully integrate into Chinese culture and learn Chinese language.

4.2.2. Chinese language proficiency needs to be improved

There are big differences in phonetics, vocabulary, grammar and writing systems between Chinese and the languages of South Asian countries, such as Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, etc., which cause big language barriers for international students. The language barrier is an important factor affecting the academic adaptation of South Asian students. Although South Asian students may have passed a language test prior to enrollment, their actual language skills may not be sufficient to cope with the complexities of academic communication and daily life. Language barriers may make it difficult for them to understand what is being taught and participate actively in discussions in class, which may affect their academic performance.

4.3. Factors affecting psychological adaptation difficulties

4.3.1. Stereotypes and prejudices of local people towards international students

Not all international students have equal, voluntary and cooperative intercultural exchanges with members of the host country, and not all of them form correct stereotypes, which is prejudice, and prejudice manifested in their behaviors constitutes discrimination. For example, there is the impression that Indian men do not respect women and girls should stay away from Indian men; Nepalese people are very poor and unsociable; and Pakistanis are very lazy. The wrong stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination of local people will negatively affect the physical and mental health of international students and prevent them from realizing the goal of cross-cultural psychological adaptation.

4.3.2. Lack of social support

Since international students lose their original social culture and social support system in a short period of time after coming to China, they lack the support of emotional communication and social interaction, and are prone to various psychological problems and personality disorders[6].We are in a socio-cultural environment from birth. We have been in the social and cultural environment since we were born, in comparison, we are more comfortable to meet the challenges in our life in the familiar social environment. At the same time, we are able to obtain timely social support from our surrounding groups and environments, which strengthens our determination to overcome difficulties.

4.4. Factors affecting interpersonal difficulties

4.4.1. South Asian students rely heavily on their home countries' international student groups

Due to language barriers, religious beliefs and other reasons, they have very strong in-group cohesion and have little contact with out-groups such as local students. However, the hypothesis of intergroup contact suggests that intergroup contact is beneficial to the understanding of outgroups and effective in eliminating intergroup prejudice[7]. If they only interact with their compatriots, they will not be able to fully integrate into the local cultural environment and lose the opportunity to learn other cultural practices, values and behaviors. At the same time, communication with local students is also an effective way to improve language skills.

4.4.2. The management of international students pays too much attention to the conflict between Chinese and foreign students of different races

Considering the differences in the living habits and values of international students, universities usually manage international students differently from Chinese students, so they favor international students, especially in policies and treatment. This invariably creates a gap between international students and Chinese students, making international students feel that they have certain privileges and a sense of superiority in China, while Chinese students often feel that the university treats them "unfairly".

5. Strategies for Promoting Cross-cultural Adaptation of South Asian Students

5.1. Countermeasures to promote socio-cultural adaptation

5.1.1. Training on cross-cultural adaptation

First of all, develop and carry out special culture comparison courses; in addition, through organizing cultural exhibitions, traditional festival celebrations and other activities, international students can gain a deeper understanding of China's history, culture and society.

5.1.2. Forming international student unions and forming a tradition of mutual assistance

The "old" international students help lead the "new" international students to adapt to the study life. For example, introduce the local culture, which is different from their own culture, and remind them of the places they need to pay special attention to; recommend restaurants, dishes or suitable consumption places, such as halal, vegetarian, no beef; organize various activities to help the new students adapt to the new culture, such as group building, friendship, etc.; increase the contact between the international student group and the local group, those who have built friendship with other groups tend to have a positive attitude towards these groups, and develop a positive attitude towards cultural differences.

5.1.3. International students should be proactive in understanding Chinese culture

It is a crucial preparation for international students to come to China to study and take a proactive approach to understanding Chinese culture. This can not only help them adapt to the new learning and living environment faster, but also deepen their understanding and recognition of China and lay a solid foundation for cross-cultural communication.

First of all, Chinese social customs, etiquette and values are closely related to Chinese culture. Understanding Chinese culture helps international students better integrate into the local society. Secondly, learning Chinese culture can improve international students' cross-cultural communication ability. During the study period, international students need to communicate and cooperate with people from different cultural backgrounds. An in-depth understanding of Chinese culture will enable them to more accurately grasp the cultural differences in communication, avoid misunderstanding and conflicts, and promote more effective communication.

5.1.4. Cultivate cross-cultural sensitivity

Cross-cultural sensitivity refers to an individual's ability to cope with cultural differences in a flexible way when different cultures meet. Cultivating cross-cultural sensitivity helps international students to adapt to the Chinese cultural environment more quickly. They will be able to better understand Chinese behaviors, ways of thinking and social customs, and respect cultural differences, thus integrating into the local society faster and reducing cultural conflicts and misunderstandings. Therefore, cultivating cross-cultural sensitivity becomes a possible path for individuals to get rid of parochialism and stubbornness, to balance their personalities, and to adapt to the new culture.

5.2. Countermeasures to promote academic adaptation

5.2.1. Strengthen language training

Provide specialized graded language training courses to help international students improve their Chinese language skills. Activities such as language corners, role-playing and Chinese language

banning competitions can also be organized to provide international students with more language practice opportunities. In addition, academic guidance can be carried out for majors, and special courses on academic writing and research methods can be provided to help them master common professional academic vocabulary and understand Chinese academic norms.

5.2.2. Change the teaching mode

Chinese students have long been used to fill-in-the-blank teaching, and they can listen to the teacher quietly for three or more lessons in a row, while South Asian students can't stand this kind of disciplinary constraints, they are active in thinking and often stand up and ask questions in the course of lectures[8]. Therefore, teachers need to change the original way of teaching and provide a more open and inclusive classroom atmosphere to maintain students' motivation in the classroom.

5.3. Countermeasures to promote psychological adaptation

5.3.1. Improve the psychological care system

Colleges and universities should set up psychological counseling agencies, conduct regular psychological tests for international student groups, discover problems in time, provide psychological counseling services for international students (e.g. psychological guidance for Muslim students), and help them adjust their mindsets and solve the psychological problems encountered in the process of cross-cultural adaptation through psychological counseling, group discussions and other activities.

5.3.2. Provide social support

Call on the government to introduce relevant policies to protect the legitimate rights and interests of South Asian students in China, such as work permits and residence policies. Try to meet their material needs, such as improving the necessary infrastructure. If necessary, customized services can be provided for South Asian students, such as language translation, legal counseling and language training. In addition, Belt and Road-related enterprises can be contacted to provide job opportunities and related employment counseling for South Asian students coming to China, so as to enhance their motivation to study.

5.4. Countermeasures to promote interpersonal communication and adaptation

5.4.1. Reform and improve internal management and publicize multiculturalism

Strengthen the training of relevant management personnel, who should fully understand the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures and take "respect, understanding, equality and care" as the cornerstone of their work. Colleges and universities should not only introduce Chinese culture to international students, but also pay more attention to the learning of cultures of different countries by their own students[9]. Multicultural activities, such as cultural festivals and international food festivals, can be organized to give South Asian students a chance to show their own cultures and at the same time enhance their understanding of Chinese culture.

5.4.2. Implementing convergent management for domestic and foreign students

Colleges and universities should tend to implement the same management and education and teaching mode for international students as that of their home students[10]. At the same time, open management is practiced in life service to provide convenience for international students and

enhance their sense of identity and belonging. Colleges and universities often assign international students to separate dormitory areas, but the dormitory door-to-door culture plays an important role in promoting interactions among students.

6. Conclusion

Through literature analysis, this paper summarizes the difficulties and challenges of cross-cultural adaptation of South Asian students in China, analyzes and discusses the influencing factors of these problems, and proposes countermeasures to promote cross-cultural adaptation, so as to improve the quality of study and learning experience of South Asian students in China. The cross-cultural adaptation of international students is not only crucial to their academic achievements, but also profoundly affects their perception of the country they study in when they return home, which in turn has a bearing on the image of China in the international arena. In addition, actively promoting the development of education for international students in China plays a pivotal role in enhancing mutual understanding among the people of the countries along the Belt and Road, cultivating future talents, and promoting cultural exchanges and dissemination.

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