

The Research of Anxiety and Depression for the Chinese International Students

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Abstract: Purposes: This study investigates the life and experience of 17 students from Chongqing China while they are studying with Federation University Australia for the qualification of certificate II in Automotive Servicing Technology within one year, and the factors causing them to be anxious and depressed are investigated. As well as the advice and the suggestions of getting from the Federation University are studied. This research aims to help administrators and their teachers to improve the level of service for international students. Procedures: The study was conducted over two periods: the first stage was in the third month after the students arrived at the university, and questionnaire survey was conducted on 17 international students to investigate the anxiety and depression about the difficulties and challenges encountered by them. In the second stage, 17 Chinese international students were surveyed again in the tenth month and interviewed in depth to find out their status and suggestions about the university. Conclusions: This study finds that about 64.7% of the Chinese international students have depression symptoms and 41.18% has anxiety symptoms. And in the third month, the top four factors contributed to depression and anxiety of Chinese international students is: language difficulties, professional learning difficulties, financial problems and homesick. While in the tenth month, the top four are: looking for a job, the difficulty of English language learning, financial problems and daily life trivia. Some recommendations are put forward for university.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, international students experience a number of difficulties of economic, social culture and academic pressures, which present to be different in degree from those experienced by 'home' students, and mental health problems, may be triggered by these factors ^[1]. Chinese international students will encounter many problems when studying abroad. Xuesong investigates that there are about 45% of 130 Chinese international students at Yale in depression symptoms and 29% in anxiety symptoms ^[2]. The mental health of 125 foreign students from 50 countries shows that gender, age and experience of cross-cultural are not related to the depression; how long they will stay in China and what grade they are in are related to depression: the longer international students live in China, the higher depressed ^[3]. A research showed that the degree of depression was 53.25% for one or two years, 47.22% for more than two years and 51.56% within one year. The depression and anxiety of different grades of International students were also different. The highest degree was 40% with depression in 4th year and the lowest was 5% in 3rd year. As for anxiety, the highest was 52.3% in 1st year and the lowest was 12.1% in 3rd year, and the depression scores of academic or diploma students are significantly higher than those of the students to study for a short time ^[4]. Our study investigates the life and experience of 17 students from Chongqing China while they are studying with Federation University Australia for the qualification of certificate II in Automotive Servicing Technology within one year.

Berry has suggested a model that was used for cultural adaptation with acculturation experience, the appraisal of acculturative stressors, and the coping skills used ^[5]. There are many stressors leading to international students' emotional anxiety and depression. The appraisal of stressors whether it is positive or negative will impact on students' mental health. A research found that international students in China had had negative events of life in one year, and they are more likely to have psychological problems such as terror, hostility and depression than that of 'home' students, and they worry about being reunited with their family, the problem of interpersonal relationship, the heavy learning burden, family financial pressure and religious problems ^[6].

2. Methodology

2.1 Procedures

This survey is to focus on the natural resilience of Chinese international students and their concerns through two phases. The first phase of the study is to survey the anxiety and depression of 17 Chinese international students on the third month. The short Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7) were sent to Chinese international students. They were asked to answer and describe the challenges and difficulties they encountered and to indicate what was useful and helpful to them when considering the university resources available to them.

The second phase of the study is on the tenth month. The survey of anxiety and depression of the 17 Chinese international students are investigated again, and the in-depth interview is conducted. This phase is a qualitative survey about the life events and suggestions to university administrators. Qualitative research such as grounded theory are more suitable for the cross-cultural studies and exploring the unique experience of international students with diverse backgrounds. The researchers have 11 years of rich interview and Chinese qualification of certificate II in consultants. Finally, the conclusion is drawn through SPSS data processing and discussion for the results of the survey is conducted.

2.2. Instruments

The research will be conducted in English. The Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9) for depression assessment ^[7] and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7) for anxiety assessment ^[8] are used, and some optional multiple choice questions and finally three open questions are answered by Chinese international students for the problems encountered by international students and the suggestion of university service. PHQ-9 and GAD-7 are brief self-report scales which carried out in clinical practice and research for depression and generalized anxiety. The scores of 5, 10, 15, and 20 for PHQ-9 represent respectively for mild, moderate, moderately severe, and severe depression; the scores of 5, 10, and 15 for GAD-7 represent respectively for mild, moderate, and severe anxiety.

2.3 Survey subject

The subjects are 17 Chinese international students who have one year of study at Federation University to get Australian vocational qualification certificate II. This survey was conducted in the form of an actual English questionnaire. "Chinese international students" were defined as non-immigrant students with citizenship of their own Chinese country. Their ages range from 22 to 29 and average age is 25.5

3. Result

3.1 The Depression and Anxiety of the Chinese Students in Federation University

The depression and anxiety for Chinese students in the third month are illustrated in the Table 1:

the depression of Chinese international students, According to Table 1, a total of 17 students (52.94%) endorsed mild depression symptoms and followed 11.76% were moderate depression. Only 29.41% of the total reported none depression symptoms. As for the anxiety, 58.82% of the total is none anxiety symptoms, and 41.18 showed mild anxiety symptoms.

Table 1. The depression and anxiety severities among Asian international students at federation in the third month

PHQ-9			GAD-7		
score	Depression severity	Respondents (%)	score	Anxiety severity	Respondents (%)
0-4	None	29.41	0-4	None	58.82
5-9	Mild	52.94	5-9	Mild	41.18
10-14	Moderate	11.76	10-14	Moderate	0.00
15-19	Moderately severity	0.00	15-21	Severity	0.00
20-17	Severity	0.00			
Note: PHQ-9=Patient Health Questionnaire. GAD-7=Generalized Anxiety Disorder					

3.2 The Natural Adaptation of Chinese International Students

17 Chinese international students were retested at the tenth month to see if their anxiety and depression had changed for their natural adaptation. SPSS data analysis and Paired T Test were conducted to see if there were any differences in the third month and in the tenth month. The results are as follows:

Table 2. The comparison of scores for depression and anxiety in the third and tenth month

	M	SD	t	df	sig.(double)
PHQ-9(in the third month)	6.06	2.68	-.389	16	.702
PHQ-9(in the tenth month)	5.76	2.61			
GAD-7(in the third month)	4.29	2.66	-.513	16	.615
GAD-7(in the tenth month)	4.58	3.64			
Note: PHQ-9=Patient Health Questionnaire. GAD-7=Generalized Anxiety Disorder					

According to Table 2, there is no significant difference ($t_{\text{PHQ-9}} = -.389$, $\text{sig.} > 0.05$; $t_{\text{GAD-7}} = -.513$, $\text{sig.} > 0.05$) about the scores of the anxiety and depression for the Chinese international students at the third month and the tenth month. This shows that the natural adaptation is flat without any intervention with the passage of time.

3.3 Factors which Lead to Depression and Anxiety for Chinese International Students

In the third month, we asked: "What difficulties do you have encountered at present? What is your biggest challenge currently facing? What kind of support do you require the University?" in the optional open question at the end of the survey. The following showed the results in the Table3.

In the tenth month, 17 Chinese international students were interviewed in depth about their current state. They were asked for four questions according to the structural questionnaire. The results are shown in the Table 4.

Table 3. The factors Associated with depression or anxiety symptoms in Chinese students at federation in the third month

Causes (the third month)	Number (n)	Requirements(the third month)	Number (n)
language difficulties	12	Provide English practice support and activity	12
professional learning difficulties	8	Communicate with local students	9
financial problems	5	provide more learning opportunities	6
homesick	5	Need tutor support	3
Career planning problems	3	Provide local jobs	3
Travelling problems	3	Improve writing skills	2
Physical health problems	2	Be respected by teachers	1
Time management problems	1	Hope to have class later	1

Table 4. The factors Associated with depression or anxiety symptoms in Chinese students at Federation University in the tenth month

Causes (in the tenth month)	Number (n)	Requirements(in the tenth month)	Number (n)
Looking for a job	11	Hope teachers and students can adapt to each other's styles	13
The difficulty of English language learning	6	Lengthen English language learning time	9
Financial difficulties	5	Hope to make friends with local people	6
Daily life trivia	5	Provide more new knowledge and advanced technology	4
Difficult to communicate with peers	5	Raise service awareness	1
Poor Self-management ability	4	Not to change teachers halfway	1
Feel bored	4	Hope to have classes with local students	1
Further promotion	3	Hope to get specific arrangements from Chinese college	1

In the third month, language difficulties was the most frequently cause, followed by professional learning difficulties, financial problems, homesick and others (Table 3). In the tenth month, looking for a job was the most frequently cause, followed by the difficulty of English language learning, financial difficulties, Daily life trivia, Difficult to communicate with peers, Poor Self-management ability and others (Table 4).

3.4 Hope to Get Support from the University

According to Table 3, the most students' requirement is to provide English practice support and activity in the third month, followed by communicating with local students, providing more learning opportunities, needing tutor support, providing local jobs and others (Table 3). While according to Table 4, in the tenth month, the students' requirement for the university the top three are: Hope teachers and students can adapt to each other's styles, Lengthen English language learning time, Hope to make friends with local people, Followed by Providing more new knowledge and advanced technology, Raise service awareness, Not to change teachers halfway, Hope to have

classes with local students and Hope to get specific arrangements from Chinese college.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Depression and Anxiety of the Chinese Students in Federation University

According to this survey, among Chinese international students from Chongqing China for the qualification of certificate II in Automotive Servicing Technology within one year at Federation University, 52.94% are mild depression symptoms and 11.76% are moderate depression. Although Forbes-Mewett and Sawyer, A-M. (2011) researched that the international students in Australia had severity of mental health problems; the proportion of depression among Chinese international students in this study is higher than that of previous survey. These Chinese international students left their country and came to a new environment and they have some adaptation problems. Another study showed that Chinese international students in depression symptoms were about 45% of 130 at Yale University ^[2]. This result of survey show 64.7% of the total have depression symptoms, the reason for this may have something to do with the students chosen and the time of the test, and they were tested at the third month in Australia.

According to the results, their anxiety in the third month shows that 41.18% of the total endorsed anxiety symptoms. There are 58.82% of the total reported none anxiety symptoms. The proportion of anxiety among Chinese international students in this study is also higher than that of previous survey. A research shows that Chinese international students are about 29% of 130 in anxiety symptoms ^[2]. This is because the international students came to a new environment at the first year and may be encounter many problems, such as climate, food, friends and homesick and so on.

4.2 The Natural Adaptation of Chinese International Students

According to the results, there is no significant difference about the situation of the anxiety and depression for the Chinese international students at the third month and the tenth month. This may be due to the following reasons: Firstly, there may be have some emotional distress before coming to Federation University; Secondly, the Chinese international students' mental health did not change much within only seven months without any intervention; Thirdly, the Chinese international students may be pressure for leaving from Federation University at the twelfth month, worrying about the future, such as finding a job or other things.

4.3 Influencing Factors which Lead to Depression and Anxiety for Chinese International Students

The survey illustrates that there are a large number of factors that influence Chinese international students' anxiety and depression in the third month and in the tenth month. According to Table 3 and Table 4, in the third month, language difficulties is the most cause for Chinese international students while looking for a job is the most in the tenth month. Professional learning difficulties is the second causes of anxiety and depression in the third month. And the professional learning difficulties can be summarized into four aspects: academic activities (curricular-related activities, scientific research and extracurricular academic activities), academic resources (libraries and other hardware and software resources), language barriers (difficulties in understanding professional English terms and following lectures in English) and time management ^[9]. Another survey revealed that Chinese students living in the United States also have many stressors and they have endured multifaceted life stresses: such as job opportunity, academic pressure, marriage pressure, language barrier and financial concern ^[10]. In this study it was found that the challenges faced by Chinese international students changed over time.

4.4 Hope to Get Support from the University

This results show that providing support for English practice in the third month and in the tenth month is very necessary. So the University can provide all kinds of activities to meet the needs of the international students, such as interesting academic groups, making friends with local students, regular or irregular morning tea for local and international students, online communities, which can enhance the social support for international students. And Social support could predict significantly depression and anxiety among international students. Social support messages are effective for international students to adapt to their new lives in Singapore^[11]. Nowadays, online communities are more important for the international students because of making more social connections with others.

It is important to set up various groups for international students, such as groups for making friends with local people. And the Universities can be important roles in supporting the different kind of aspects for the international students. So the university needs to pay attention to the challenges faced by international students, and to provide adequate support for them.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study finds that about 64.7% of the Chinese international students have depression symptoms and 41.18% has anxiety symptoms. And this study shows that the natural adaptation is flat without any intervention with the passage of time. And in the third month, the top four factors contributed to depression and anxieties are: language difficulties, professional learning difficulties, financial problems and homesick. While in the tenth month, the top four are: looking for a job, the difficulty of English language learning, financial problems and daily life trivia.

Therefore, in the third month, the University could provide some kind of services, such as providing support for English practice and activity, providing more learning opportunities. While in the tenth month, the University could consider the adaptation between teachers and students, lengthening English language time, the activity for making friends among international and local students, providing more new knowledge and advanced technology. Acting on these suggestions also can convey the message that these students are cherished guests who enrich the university campuses.

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