

The Effect of Cultural Intelligence on the Cross-cultural Adaptation of International Students: The Moderating Effect of Perceived Cultural Distance

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Abstract: This study explored the relationship between the cross-cultural adaptation and cultural intelligence, and discussed the moderating effect of perceived cultural distance on this relationship. This study used a sample of 723 international students studying in China who completed the Cultural Intelligence Scale, Sociocultural Adaptation Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale and Perceived Cultural Distance Questionnaire. The results indicated that cultural intelligence had significant positive correlations with life satisfaction and sociocultural adaptation and that perceived cultural distance moderated the relationship between cultural intelligence and sociocultural adaptation. Cultural intelligence can more positively predict sociocultural adaptation under a low perceived cultural distance than under a high perceived cultural distance. However, perceived cultural distance cannot moderate the relationship between cultural intelligence and life satisfaction.

Keywords: cultural intelligence; perceived cultural distance; sociocultural adaptation; life satisfaction; international students in China

I. Introduction:

In recent years, the number of international students who study in China has been increasing by the day. According to statistics, the number of the international students studying in China in 2015 was 397,635, not including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. This number represents an increase of 20,581 students since 2014 for a rate of increase of 5.46%. International students represent a communication bridge among these countries and a communication link among cultures. However, international students may not always transition well to new cultures and may encounter various difficulties in adapting to the new cultural environment. To determine the reasons for this phenomenon, individual and environmental factors must be considered.

Cross-cultural adaptation is one of the main areas of focus in cross-cultural psychology. This branch of psychology addresses cross-cultural adaptation at the individual level and suggests that after individuals come into contact with other countries' cultures, their psychological and sociocultural experiences change as they harmonize their perspectives with those of the new culture. Cross-cultural adaptation is divided into two dimensions: psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1992). Psychological adaptation focuses on individual emotional factors and manifests as individual life satisfaction, well-being and psychological health in the cross-cultural context. If individuals have fewer negative emotions, then their psychological adjustment quality is relatively high. This study will use life satisfaction as a measure of psychological adaptation. Different from psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation represents the ways in which an individual adapts to the host country's social and cultural environment and communicates effectively with the people who live in that environment (Chen, Che, & Zhu, 2003). This process includes not only basic social skills and effective communication patterns but also adaptation to new life patterns, rules and values.

The influencing factors of cross-cultural adaptation can be decomposed into internal and external factors (Wang, 2011). In practical terms, internal factors include demographic factors (e.g., gender, age, education, occupation), personality, knowledge and skills, evaluation and coping strategies and others (Chen, Che, & Zhu, 2003). This study examined these types of knowledge and skills, which are termed cultural intelligence in cross-cultural psychology. Cultural intelligence is the ability of people in a new cultural environment to gather information, make a series of judgments and take corresponding actions to adapt to the new culture (Earley & Ang, 2003). Earley and Ang (2003) suggested that cultural intelligence included cognitive cultural intelligence, motivational cultural intelligence and behavioral cultural intelligence. Later, inspired by the four-dimensional intelligence theory of Sternberg (1986), they added another dimension termed metacognitive cultural intelligence. Metacognitive cultural intelligence refers to the consciousness and perceptions possessed by individuals when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds and reflects the individual's psychological ability to master and understand cultural knowledge. This type of intelligence can promote individuals to modify their own strategies to improve their cultural adaptability and achieve ideal results in cross-cultural adaptation (Ang, Earley, 2003). Cognitive cultural intelligence, which has an impact on individual behaviors, reflects an individual's

grasp of customs, traditions and norms concerning different cultures, including mastery of common cultural knowledge and understanding of cultural differences. Motivational cultural intelligence refers to the motivation and interest of individuals to adapt to different cultures and reflects the ability to focus their energy on learning and adapting in an intercultural context. Behavioral cultural intelligence refers to the flexibility (ability) of individuals communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds in appropriate language and nonverbal behaviors, and high behavioral cultural intelligence can allow people to more flexibly adjust their performances according to different cultural background characteristics. NG & Earley (2006) believe that cultural intelligence is an important factor in the process of cross-cultural adaptation and that individuals with high cultural intelligence can adapt to the new cultural environment more quickly and smoothly. Templer et al. (2006) explored the relationships among motivational cultural intelligence, work adaptation, general adaptation and interaction adaptation in 157 global professionals. The results showed that motivational cultural intelligence could positively predict the three types of adaptation. Ang et al. (2007) conducted a study on the cross-cultural experiences of 794 undergraduates from Singapore and the United States. They found that motivational cultural intelligence and behavioral cultural intelligence significantly predicted cultural adaptation. Li (2012) also showed that metacognitive cultural intelligence has a significant positive predictive effect on the environmental, communication and academic adaptation of international students.

Ward et al. (2001) proposed a model of the acculturation process. This model holds that both psychological and sociocultural adaptation results are affected by situational and individual traits. The common effects of situational factors and individual traits will affect the individual's cultural adaptation process. Ecosystem theory also states that individual traits * environment will interactively affect the physical and mental development of the individual; thus, in the same environment, different individuals may exhibit different performance development. In the field of cross-cultural adaptation research, cultural distance is one of the most common situational factors. At the national level, cultural distance represents differences in cultural values or cultural affinities between countries, whereas at a personal level, cultural distance represents the gap between the mother culture and the host culture, including the social and material (e.g., clothes, food and policies) differences perceived by the individual (Cheng & Leung, 2012). This study is based on the personal level of cultural distance (i.e., perceived cultural distance).

From the perspective of context theory, subjective cognitive theory states that when the external environment influences individual psychological cognition, it affects individual behavior. Many studies have examined the mechanism of situational factors and usually consider these situational factors stimulating or interruptive; these factors are described as moderators of individual behavior that can describe differences in individual behavior in different situations. For international students, a stronger relationship between the original culture and the new culture and the higher inherent potential of cultural adaptation will help solve the contradictions and conflicts of the dual culture. Therefore, individuals with higher cultural intelligence and a lower perceived cultural distance can adapt to the new cultural environment more quickly and smoothly. With improvement in the cultural

intelligence level, individuals who perceive a lower cultural distance may adapt to the new environment faster than those who perceive a higher cultural distance. In other words, the mean perceived cultural distance is a contextual factor that may moderate the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adaptation. Furthermore, Cox, & Miller (1990) found that cultural distance was a moderator between the pressure felt by sojourners and cross-cultural adaptation. Triandis (2006) proposed that situational factors, such as cultural distance, could play a moderating role in the relationship between cultural intelligence and intercultural effectiveness. This series of studies hints that perceived cultural distance is an important moderator in cross-cultural studies. However, previous studies have examined only the relationships between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adaptation, perceived cultural distance and cross-cultural adaptation separately; researchers have not considered cultural intelligence and cultural distance at the same time when exploring their roles in cross-cultural adaptation. Therefore, the role of perceived cultural distance in the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adaptation warrants exploration.

Given the abovementioned information, this study considers international students who are studying in China the research participants and attempts to explore the role of perceived cultural distance in the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adaptation. Based on the results of previous studies, this study proposes the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Cultural intelligence has a significant positive correlation with the cross-cultural adaptation of international students studying in China.

Hypothesis 2. Perceived cultural distance moderates the relationship between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adaptation.

2.Methods

Participants

Participants were international students from universities in Beijing, Shanghai, Shandong, Fujian, Guangdong and other regions; a print questionnaire and a network questionnaire were administered to these participants. A total of 801 questionnaires were recovered, but 78 of these questionnaires lacked some demographic information. So, the number of valid questionnaires, including those from international students from South Korea, Japan, Russia, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Africa and other countries (a total of 100 countries or regions), was 723, and the effective response rate was 90.262%. The demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table1. Demographic information of the participants

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	285	39.419%
	Female	438	60.581%
Age	<18	6	0.830%
	19-23	477	65.975%
	24-28	194	26.833%
	29-34	31	4.288%
	34-40	7	0.968%
	41-49	8	1.106%
Time spent in China (days)	0~30	21	2.904%
	30~90	114	15.768%
	90~180	47	6.501%
	180~365	154	21.300%
	>365	387	53.527%
Learned Chinese before	Yes	416	57.538%
	No	307	42.462%
Took the HSK test before	Yes	449	62.102%
	No	274	37.898%

Measures

Demographic Characteristics. This study collected data on the age, gender, country or region, number of days spent in China, current identity in China, identity before coming to China, economic source for studying abroad, native language (first language), Chinese level, whether the subjects had any Chinese learning experience before coming to China and other information.

Cultural Intelligence Scale. We used the Cultural Intelligence Scale developed by Ang et al. in 2007. This scale consists of four sub-dimensions: metacognitive cultural intelligence; cognitive cultural intelligence; behavioral cultural intelligence and motivational cultural intelligence. The responses are rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “1” to “7”. The scale consists of 20 items, and a high total score reflects a high cultural intelligence level. In the current sample, the Cronbach’s α is 0.86 for the entire scale and 0.69, 0.78, 0.73 and 0.85 for the four sub-dimensions, respectively.

Sociocultural Adaptation Scale. We used the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale, which was developed by Ward and Kennedy in 1999 and adapted by Zhu (2011), to measure the sociocultural adaptation of international students. The adapted version has an increased number of items, including “using public toilet facilities”, “queuing”, “understanding the local accent/language”, “making yourself understood”, “adapting to local etiquette”, “getting used to the population density” and “relating to members of the same sex”. The scale consists of 35 items with response options on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1” to “5”. High scores reflect good sociocultural adaptation. The Cronbach’s α for the current sample is 0.88.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, which was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985), was adapted to measure the psychological adaptation of international students. Each item added the qualifier "During this period of time in China" before the original item. The scale consists of 5 items, with response options on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1” to “5”. A higher total score represents higher life satisfaction. The Cronbach’s α for the current sample is 0.80.

Perceived Cultural Distance Questionnaire. The Cultural Distance Questionnaire, which was compiled by Babiker et al. (1980), was adapted for use in the present study. This questionnaire takes 16 factors, including climate (such as the temperature and the rainfall), physical environment, transportation, food, clothes, types of leisure activities, pace of life, material comfort, language, communication style, education style, level of literacy and education for most people, religion, family structure, and the values of family and cultural values and traditions as the objects of investigation. Response options are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1” to “5”. The higher the total score, the larger the cultural distance. The Cronbach’s α for the current sample is 0.81.

All measurement tools were available in Chinese, English, Japanese, Russian and Korean. The versions in English, Japanese, Korean and Russian were translated by professional teachers, and they were then revised by a foreign language teacher whose first language was the language to which the questionnaire was being translated.

Procedure

The person in charge at each university distributed the questionnaire to international students. The students selected the appropriate language versions and volunteered to complete the questionnaires. Then, the questionnaires were collected two weeks later, and small gifts were given to each participant to express thanks. On all versions of the questionnaire, the instructions were clear that the questionnaire was used only for this study and that answers were confidential. The students were told to read the instructions carefully and complete the questionnaire according to the requirements. After collecting the questionnaires, we eliminated invalid questionnaires and used SPSS 17.0 for data collection and analysis.

3.Results

Descriptive Statistics and Variance Analysis of Variables.

The descriptive statistics of the different groups of international students in China are shown in Table 2. Regarding cross-cultural adaptation, the results of the

different tests found that the sociocultural adaptation of the boys was significantly higher than that of the girls ($t(721)=2.258, p=0.024$); however, no significant gender difference was observed in life satisfaction ($t(721)=1.643, p>0.05$). Students without a Chinese foundation perceived higher culture distances than those who learned Chinese before arriving to the country ($t(721)=-2.688, p=0.007$), and students who came to China more than 90 days previously perceived significantly higher cultural distances than those who had been in China for fewer than 90 days ($t(721)=-5.803, p<0.001$). Figure 1 shows the changing trend of perceived cultural distance with the increase in time in China.

Table 2. The descriptive statistics of the different groups of International students ($M \pm SD$)

Variable	Category	Cultural Intelligence	Perceived Cultural Distance	Life Satisfaction	Sociocultural Adaptation
Sample		94.68±16.61	54.80±10.67	16.22±3.81	116.53±19.26
Gender	Male	94.02±17.21	54.33±10.41	16.50±3.87	118.53±19.67
	Female	95.10±16.22	55.11±10.84	16.03±3.76	115.23±18.89
Time in China	<90	94.56±15.24	50.52±9.20	16.00±4.01	115.47±19.09
	>90	94.70±16.93	55.78±10.75	16.27±3.76	116.77±19.30
Learned Chinese before	Yes	94.34±16.41	53.89±10.20	16.42±3.78	116.61±17.71
	No	95.13±16.90	56.04±11.18	15.93±3.83	116.41±21.18

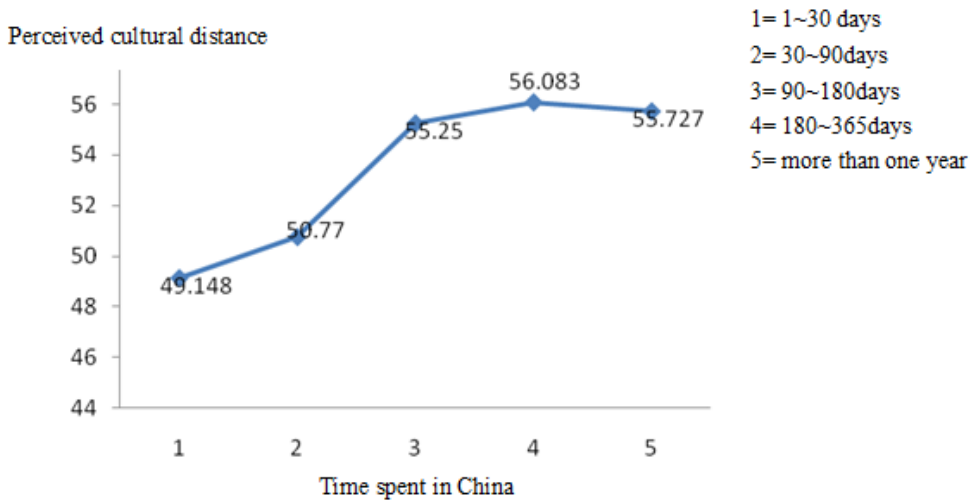


Figure 1. Changing trend of perceived cultural distance with the increase

Correlation Analysis of the Relationships Among Cultural Intelligence, Perceived Cultural Distance and the Cross-Cultural Adaptation of International Students

A correlation analysis found that cultural intelligence and its four dimensions were positively correlated with life satisfaction and sociocultural adaptation. Additionally, a significant positive correlation was found between cultural intelligence and perceived cultural distance. No significant correlations were found between perceived cultural distance and cross-cultural adaptation. The correlation coefficients between each set of variables are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 .Correlation coefficients

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Cultural intelligence	94.675	16.614	-							
2 Cognitive cultural intelligence	24.516	6.621	.687**	-						
3 Motivational cultural intelligence	25.932	5.604	.742**	.284**	-					
4 Behavioral cultural intelligence	24.204	5.667	.741**	.276**	.468**	-				
5 Metacognitive cultural intelligence	20.024	5.085	.728**	.323**	.423**	.432**	-			
6 Perceived cultural distance	54.799	10.672	.212**	.140**	.154**	.094*	.237**	-		
7 Life satisfaction	16.215	3.809	.276**	.207**	.258**	.144**	.188**	-.021	-	
8 Sociocultural adaptation	116.526	19.257	.372**	.290**	.347**	.262**	.164**	-.069	.372	-

**

note : * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

The Moderating Effect of Perceived Cultural Distance

We used hierarchical regression analysis to investigate the relationship between cultural intelligence and the sociocultural adaptation of international students and the moderating role of perceived cultural distance on this relationship. Cultural intelligence served as an independent variable, perceived cultural distance was the moderator and life satisfaction and sociocultural adaptation were the dependent variables. All of these variables were standardized and added to the regression equation in the following order: first, the number of days spent in China and gender were added; second, we added certain dimensions of cultural intelligence; third, we added perceived cultural distance and fourth, we added the interaction item of the independent variable and the moderator to investigate the interaction between two variables. We performed collinearity diagnostics for all variables and found no multicollinearity based on an admissible value of all variables greater than 0.9 and a variance inflation factor (VIF) less than 0.2 (Ding, Sun, Mao, 2004). After controlling for gender and the number of days spent in China, the multiple linear regression analysis (Table 4) revealed that the interaction items cultural intelligence and perceived cultural distance significantly predicted sociocultural adaptation ($\beta = -0.064$, $t = -2.068$, $p = 0.039$) but did not significantly predict life satisfaction. Thus, perceived

cultural distance could not moderate the relationship between cultural intelligence and life satisfaction. To further explore the relationship between cultural intelligence and social acculturation, we used the four dimensions of cultural intelligence as independent variables to conduct regression analyses. The results (Table 4) show that the interactions of metacognitive cultural intelligence with perceived cultural distance and behavioral cultural intelligence with perceived cultural distance significantly predicted the sociocultural adaptation of foreign students in China, whereas the interaction between intellectual and motivational cultural intelligence and cultural distance had no significant predictive effect on sociocultural adaptation.

Table 4 .Regression analysis

Model	Added variable	F	ΔF	B (SE)	β	ΔR^2
1	Time in China	4.487**	4.487**	0.087** (0.028)	0.107	0.012
	Gender			-0.200** (0.069)	-0.098	
2	Cultural intelligence	43.639***	120.455***	0.406*** (0.035)	0.406	0.142
3	Perceived cultural distance	39.757***	23.935***	-0.164*** (0.035)	-0.164	0.027
4	Cultural intelligence* Perceived cultural distance	32.807***	4.278*	-0.064* (0.031)	-0.070	0.005
1	Time in China	4.487**	4.487**	0.078** (0.030)	0.095	0.012
	Gender			-0.194** (0.074)	-0.095	
2	Metacognitive cultural intelligence	10.368*	21.870**	0.204** (0.037)	0.204	0.029
3	Perceived cultural distance	10.852**	11.833**	-0.120** (0.038)	-0.120	0.016
4	Metacognitive cultural intelligence * Perceived cultural distance	10.636**	9.272**	-0.112** (0.037)	-0.110	0.012
1	Time in China	4.487**	4.487**	0.092** (0.030)	0.112	0.012
	Gender			-0.193** (0.072)	-0.094	
2	Behavioral cultural intelligence	22.549**	57.963**	0.268** (0.037)	0.268	0.074
3	Perceived cultural distance	19.499**	9.543**	-0.104** (0.036)	-0.104	0.012
4	Behavioral cultural intelligence * Perceived cultural distance	16.448**	3.929*	-0.062* (0.031)	-0.072	0.005

We used simple slopes analysis, which was proposed by Aiken and West (1991), to further analyze the moderating effect of perceived cultural distance. The independent variables and moderator were divided into a high score group, which

was the mean plus one standard deviation, and a low score group, which was the mean minus one standard deviation.

Figure 2 showed that cultural intelligence had a stronger predictive effect on sociocultural adaptation in the low-perception cultural distance group than in high-perception cultural distance group (β low=0.47, $p<0.001$; β high=0.34, $p<0.001$), which showed that the perceived cultural distance reduced the predictive ability of cultural intelligence for sociocultural adaptation.

Figure 3 showed that in the context of a low perceived cultural distance, metacognitive cultural intelligence significantly positively predicted social and cultural adaptation ($\beta=0.316$, $t=5.977$, $p<0.001$), whereas under the circumstance of a high perceived cultural distance, this predictability became nonsignificant ($\beta=0.092$, $t=1.770$, $p>0.05$).

Figure 4 showed that for individuals with both high and low perception cultural distance, behavioral cultural intelligence positively predicted sociocultural adaptation, but perceiving the cultural distance could buffer this positive predictive effect (low perceived cultural distance: $\beta=0.33$, $t=7.765$, $p<0.001$; high perceived cultural distance: $\beta=0.206$, $t=3.863$, $p<0.001$).

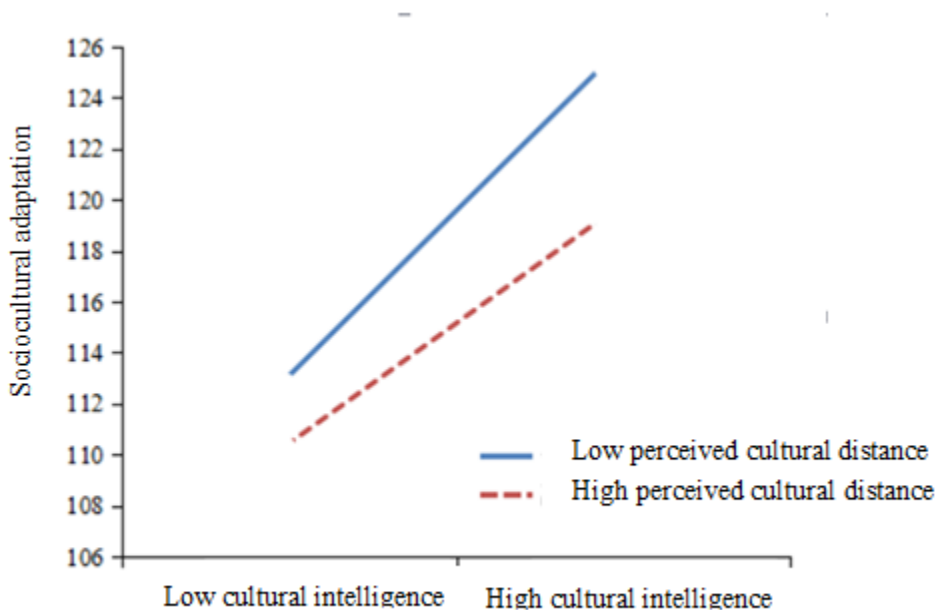


Figure 2 . The moderate effect of perceived cultural distance between cultural intelligence and sociocultural adaptation

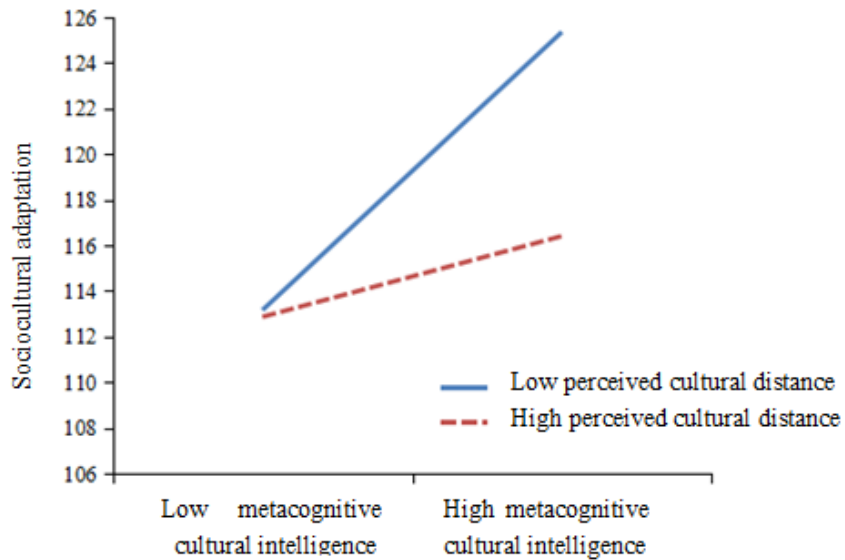


Figure 3. The moderate effect of perceived cultural distance between Metacognitive cultural intelligence and sociocultural adaptation

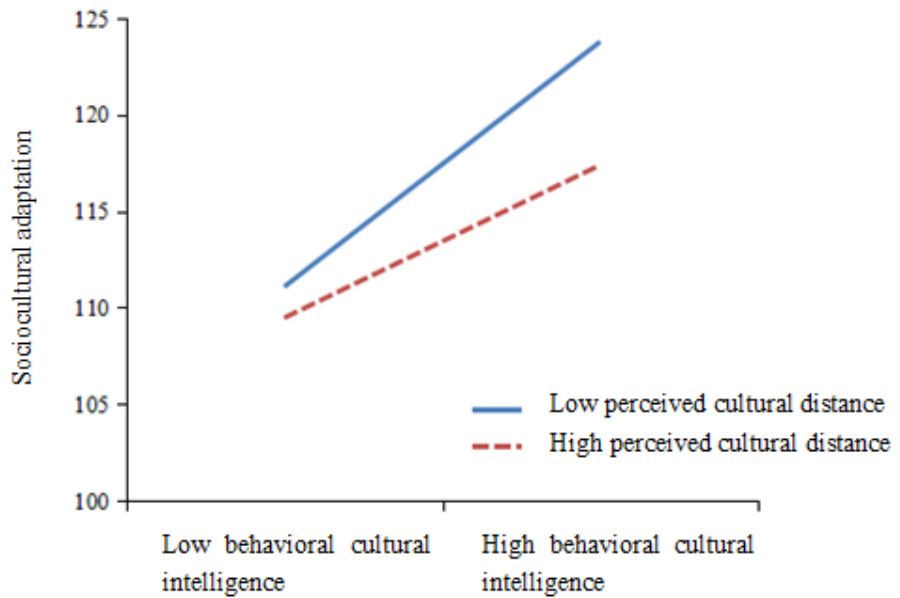


Figure 4. The moderate effect of perceived cultural distance between behavioral cultural intelligence and sociocultural adaptation

3. Discussion

3.1 General Situation of Cultural Intelligence, Perceived Cultural Distance and the Cross-Cultural Adaptation of International Students in China

Descriptive statistics found that the cultural intelligence of international students was relatively high. According to Figure 1, perceived cultural distance showed an evident trend of an increase followed by a decreasing as the number of days spent in China increased. Based on the five-stage model hypothesis of cultural adaptation, one of the causes of this phenomenon may be that the international students had just arrived in China; because they were in the initial stage of contact and had few opportunities to effectively communicate with people, they also felt less cultural shock (Wang & Li, 2004) and perceived a short cultural distance. As the number of days spent in China increased, the number of effective contacts increased, and these students learned more about Chinese culture. Cultural shock subsequently deepened (Wen, 2009), and perceived cultural distance was longer.

This study also found that psychological adaptation (life satisfaction) and sociocultural adaptation were at medium-high levels, which was consistent with previous findings (Li, 2009; Wang, 2016). The statistical analysis results showed significant gender differences in sociocultural adaptation, with a significantly higher level of sociocultural adaptation for men than for women, which was similar to the results of previous studies (Chen, Che, & Zhu 2006). This finding may be attributed to the different ways in which men and women address challenges in their environment and in life events. Men were bolder and more open, and women were more veiled and cautious (Wei, 2015; Wang, 2015).

3.2 Correlations Among Cultural Intelligence, Perceived Cultural Distance and the Cross-Cultural Adaptation of International Students in China

The correlation analysis showed that cultural intelligence was positively correlated with life satisfaction and sociocultural adaptation; however, different dimensions had different predictive effects on cross-cultural adaptation, which was consistent with previous studies (Templer, 2006; Ang, 2007; Li et. al, 2012). Hypothesis 1 was supported. Indeed, high cultural intelligence can help relieve students' pressures in the cross-cultural context and promote cultural adaptation and subjective well-being (Gao & Li, 2009). Additionally, the correlation analysis showed a significant positive correlation between cultural intelligence and perceived cultural distance. One reason for this phenomenon may be that cultural intelligence includes not only the ability of an individual to adapt to a new cultural background but also the individual's awareness of strange cultural backgrounds and the identification of differences between cultures. Therefore, individuals with high cultural intelligence may be more sensitive to differences between their home cultures and host cultures and thus may experience a greater cultural distance.

3.3 The Moderating Effect of Perceived Cultural Distance

The hierarchical regression analysis showed that the perceived cultural distance moderated the relationship between cultural intelligence and social and cultural adaptation by providing a buffering effect. When the cultural distance was

relatively small, the improvement of an individual's cultural intelligence could promote cross-cultural adaptation more effectively, whereas this promotion effect was weakened with the increase in cultural distance. This finding hints that a sojourner should seriously consider the differences between the host country and their home culture, because a large cultural difference is a serious challenge for everyone. In addition, for those with low cultural intelligence, increasing their understanding of their host country and reducing their cultural distance are less helpful for their cross-cultural adaptation. We need to consider other effective measures to help these individuals achieve cross-cultural adaptation, such as social support and objective environmental factors.

Respectively taking the four dimensions of cultural intelligence as independent variables and conducting a hierarchical regression analysis showed that the perceived cultural distance had a significant moderate effect on the influences of metacognitive cultural intelligence and behavioral cultural intelligence on social and cultural adaptation. The high perceived cultural distance hindered the positive predictive effect of metacognitive cultural intelligence on social and cultural adaptation. In the case of low perceived cultural distance, the sociocultural adaptation level of students with high metacognitive cultural intelligence was significantly higher than that of students with low metacognitive cultural intelligence. However, in the context of high perceived cultural distance, the difference in the level of sociocultural adaptation between the two groups was not significant. This result shows that different components of cultural intelligence have different effects on cross-cultural adaptation. Metacognitive cultural intelligence emphasizes metacognitive components, such as planning and monitoring abilities in cultural intelligence, and sufficient cognition is not the same as the ability of the individual to apply these components to real life. People with high metacognitive cultural intelligence have a strategic thinking ability and tend to think about rules and interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds in an attempt to organize the ambiguity of cross-cultural environments. However, when the cultural distance is large, this cognition does not fully guarantee that people can adapt smoothly to the new cultural environment. After all, the transformation of ideas and cognition is only one part of cross-cultural adaptation, and the external appearance of habits and norms formed by people over a long period of time is also an important aspect of measuring the quality of adaptation. The perceived cultural distance also plays a buffering role between behavioral cultural intelligence and sociocultural adaptation, because as the perceived cultural distance increases, the positive predictive effect of behavioral cultural intelligence on social and cultural adaptation decreases.

Notably, the perceived cultural distance plays no significant role in the relationship between cultural intelligence and life satisfaction. This result shows that changing the cultural distance cannot compensate for the impact of the different levels of cultural intelligence on life satisfaction. The main reasons are as follows. Life satisfaction emphasizes psychological adaptation, which is related to the basic emotions of a series of people, such as anxiety and depression, and may be influenced to a greater extent by personality characteristics and social support. Therefore, a discussion of psychological adaptation may be more suitable from the perspective of

cross-cultural adaptation stress, and further explorations of the barriers to or protectors of cross-cultural psychological adaptation are necessary.

4. Conclusion

The main conclusions of this study were as follows:

First, cultural intelligence and its four dimensions positively predicted life satisfaction and sociocultural adaptation.

Second, the perceived cultural distance moderated the relationship between cultural intelligence and sociocultural adaptation. A high perceived cultural distance will buffer the positive predictability of cultural intelligence on social and cultural adaptation. However, the perceived cultural distance cannot moderate the relationship between cultural intelligence and life satisfaction.

However this study had some limitations. First, the use of the self-reporting research method may lead international students to disproportionately focus on psychological feelings during the evaluation process and thus may result in evaluation errors in determining the level of sociocultural adaptation. Regarding investigation in the field of cross-cultural psychology, researchers generally use qualitative methods, such as interviews and observation, or a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to gain information about the subject. Follow-up studies can add a questionnaire-based interview to make the results more precise. Second, due to the cross-sectional study design, the validity of the research results needs to be verified by longitudinal studies.

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