

Review Paper

Social Media Use and Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Chinese Students Overseas: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: Due to the progress of globalization, as well as the advancement of transportation and communication tools, there is a greater interconnectedness among nations and regions worldwide. A common trend of it is the increasing prevalence of students opting to pursue tertiary education overseas. Asia has emerged as the largest exporter, sending the largest proportion of international students to the world, especially China. When studying in foreign countries, international students may encounter challenges from life and studies; then, social media has become a pivotal tool in their lives for obtaining information and interpersonal communication. This study intends to conduct a systematic review of the influence of social media on the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese overseas students, who constitute the largest cohort of international students, and adopts databases Web of Science, Scopus and ScienceDirect. From 2014 to 2023, 15 studies met the inclusion criteria. The United States was the most studied geographic country, and most studies delved into cross-cultural adaptation from socio-cultural and psychological aspects, with less research from the academic aspect. Besides, these studies largely proved the positive role of social media in facilitating the attainment of social capital and enhancing psychological well-being among Chinese overseas students. Nevertheless, a few studies also showed the drawbacks of social media use. There is a call for studies on the correlation between academic adaptation of Chinese overseas students and social media use, as well as to explore international students' proper use of social media.

Keywords: Social media; cross-cultural adaptation; impact; role; Chinese overseas students

Introduction

As a result of globalization and internationalization, as well as the betterment of transportation and communication technologies, many students embarked on journeys to different countries to pursue tertiary education and enhance their career prospects (Yu et al., 2019). Data from UNESCO illustrated that there were approximately 6.4 million international students studying abroad by 2023, which witnessed an obvious increase compared to the 2 million in 2000. Data from the Institute of International Education (IIE) in 2023 showed that most international students come from Asian countries, particularly the countries China and India, constituting 33% and 21% of the global international student population, respectively. For international students, preferred destinations are the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Germany, France and so forth.

When international students study in different countries which are culturally different from their own, they may encounter several challenges, such as language barrier, cultural shock, pedagogical differences, discrimination, and more (Pourazli & Lopez, 2007; Ren & Mao, 2017; Wang, 2018). To adapt into the host

countries and cultures, these newcomer students may be required to embrace and adhere to its cultural norms, regulations and local customs. In addition, social support is essential for international students during their stay abroad. It helps them deal with the difficulties they face in an unfamiliar milieu, provides advice in different situations, and reassures them of value (Li & Peng, 2019).

Then, the advantages of social media are highlighted as it facilitates international students' cultural adaptation through information exchange and private groups for information seeking, emotional support, and community building (Li & Peng, 2019). For example, Malone (2019) found that international students who pursued education in Australia and Finland communicate with friends, meet new people, obtain information, and engage with host cultures via Facebook. The diverse applications of Facebook demonstrated the significance of social media as a means of assistance for international students. Similarly, in Singapore, international students from countries of Indonesia and Vietnam utilized social media as an acculturative tool to familiarize themselves with Singaporean attitudes towards outsiders, enabling them to better prepare for interactions with the local population (Lim & Pham, 2016). In the United States, social media contributed to the construction of Chinese international students' social networks. The more Chinese students used US-based social media, the higher level of acculturation they achieved (Forbush & Foucault-Wells, 2016; Yang, 2018).

China, since the year 2009, has had a stable increase in the number of international students seeking overseas education and has emerged as the leading country in terms of outputting international students worldwide. Chinese international students predominantly select the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, as their favourite locations, where they are Western countries and typically enjoy the cultural pattern of individualism. Samovar (2012) describes individualistic cultures as prioritizing personal rights and responsibility, privacy, stating opinions, freedom, innovation, and self-expression. Conversely, China is a country of collectivism which is viewed as a "culture that attaches great importance to community, collaboration, shared interest, harmony, tradition, the public good, and maintaining face" (Samovar, 2012). Therefore, it appears challenging for Chinese international students to adapt to countries with individualistic culture.

Given this aforementioned circumstance, social media serves as a tool to offer international students a chance to become acquainted with the culture of the country they are studying in and obtain social support from host and home nations. Although there was research on investigating international students' usage of social media, surprisingly, a notable absence of efforts has been devoted to systematically reviewing how Chinese overseas students' cross-cultural adaptation is influenced by their involvement in social media. Thus, this research aims to systematically examine empirical studies pertaining to how social media affects the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese overseas students, and attempts to answer two questions: 'What impact does social media have on the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese overseas students?' and "What is the role of social media in Chinese overseas students' cross-cultural adaptation?"

Cross-cultural Adaptation

The process that immigrants and sojourners experience in unfamiliar cultures is defined with different terminologies. For instance, the process was described by Berry (2005) as "acculturation", referring to the dual process of cultural and psychological change that is the consequence when two or more cultural groupings and their individual members come into touch with one another. It focuses on groups of people interacting with other groups that enjoy different cultural backgrounds and consequently make changes in their original culture (Zhu, 2016). Adjustment depicts short-term sojourners' psychological response to cross-cultural challenges (Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2016), while adaptation is applied to portray long-term sojourners. Assimilation refers to individuals' acceptance and internalization of the host culture, which means their ethnic culture is replaced by the host culture (Kim, 2001; Berry, 1997). The interpretation of this process and the adoption of terminologies is various, so researchers examined the process from different angles, such as psychological well-being, language, interpersonal relationships, etc.

Then, to embrace these terms and generate a general concept, Kim (2001) proposed her definition of the process as "cross-cultural adaptation" and explained it as a dynamic process, meaning that when individuals relocate to a new, unfamiliar or changed cultural milieu, they establish and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and function relationship with the environment. Adaptation, for sojourners, is to have an overall fit

between themselves and the environment. Scholars, in agreement with Kim's theory, study cross-cultural adaptation from two dimensions: socio-cultural and psychological adaptation (Gaitán-Aguilar et al., 2022). Socio-cultural adaptation is examined from the perspective of cultural learning and involves sojourners' ability acquire the social learning paradigm and dealing with everyday tasks in the host culture. Then psychological adaptation pertains to individuals' feelings of happiness and satisfaction with the new host culture (Ward, 2001). To be specific, from the perspective of stress and stress solution, it is considered as individuals' ability to handle psychological pressure overseas (Hofhuis et al., 2023).

It is important to note that, given the upsurge of international students, some scholars proposed to learn academic adaptation as international students adapt to the new educational context. Only studying their psychological and socio-cultural adaptation is insufficient when examining international students' cross-cultural adaptation (Lai et al., 2023). Lou (2021) put forward the existing academic differences between home and host countries, including the education system, instructional methods, teaching style, assessment and so forth. International students are set in a different educational system or environment, meaning-they need to adjust to the course, campus organization and lecturers (Li & Peng, 2019). Hence, academic adaptation should be incorporated into the study of international students' cross-cultural adaptation.

Methodology

This literature review ascertains the pertinent research on investigating the application of social media and its impact on international students from China. Databases Web of Science, Scopus and ScienceDirect are employed to conduct electronic retrieval. The selection of these three databases was based on their comprehensive provision of relevant and authoritative articles. The main search items are (1) Chinese students, (2) social media, (3) cross-cultural adaptation. But the possible combination and synonyms (4) international students, (5) acculturation, (6) Social Network Sites, are also regarded as search items to ensure the article coverage.

1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ascertain the suitability of research results in accordance with the research questions, selected articles should match the specific inclusion criteria: (1) edited in English language; (2) included Chinese overseas students pursuing higher education abroad; (3) examined the effect of social media use on the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese international students; (4) presented data clearly to prevent misinterpretation and (5) peer-reviewed articles. Exclusion criteria include review articles, conference articles and book chapters. In addition, articles with unextractable data on Chinese international students were also excluded.

2. Selection Process

A total of 127 articles were identified after the database searches on ScienceDirect, Scopus and Web of Science (WOS). Due to the relatively small number of articles, 84 articles were removed directly for their irrelevance by screening titles and abstracts, and the remaining 43 articles were considered suitable for full-text reading. 17 articles that were closely related to Chinese overseas students and social media use. However, one article was a conference article, and the other one was associated with international students, making it difficult to extract specific data on Chinese international students. Consequently, 15 articles met the inclusion criteria and remained. In addition, no article was found through hand or ancestral searches. Figure 1 depicted the selection process. The method of descriptive analysis was employed to analyze these 15 papers by categorizing the essential information of these studies, as presented in Table 1. This analysis also uncovered their publication rates, types of studies, sample characteristics, and, most importantly, the correlation between social media and cross-cultural adaptation.

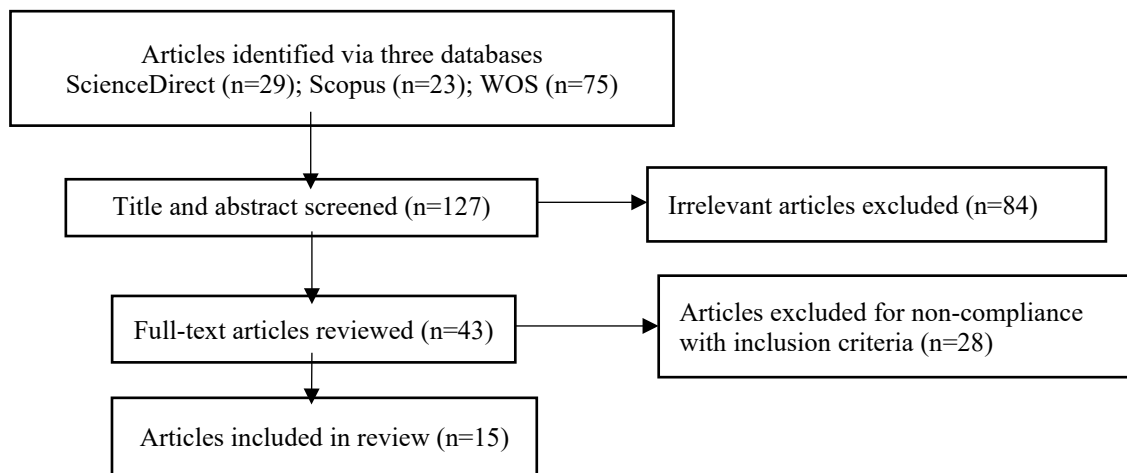


Figure 1. Flowchart illustrating article selection process

Table 1. Matrix of literature review

| Authors | Sample Characteristics | Nation and Recruitment setting | Dependent Variables | Theoretical Framework/ Foundation | Methods | Analytical Methods | Findings on Social Media and Cross-cultural adaptation |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Li & Chen (2014) | n=210 Chinese students (female=106, male=104) | the United States, one university | social capital | unlisted | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | multiple regression | Both Facebook and Renren are beneficial for Chinese students' bridging social capital in the United States, especially Facebook. Renren was more commonly used to preserve social capital in host country. |
| Guo et al (2014) | n=142 Chinese students (female=86, male=56) | Japan, one university | perceived social capital, psychological well-being | unlisted | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | multiple regression | Chinese students' perceived social capital and life satisfaction levels increased when they used SNS for social and informational purposes. However, entertaining recreational functions not only failed to predict their satisfaction level, but also increased their loneliness. |
| Park et al (2014) | n=283 int'l, 183 Korean students, 94 Chinese students | the United States, two universities | acculturative stress, psychological well-being | unlisted | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | multiple regression | Facebook use was good for Chinese students' psychological well-being and adaption into the American culture. Students who solely used Facebook had less acculturative stress than those use both home and host SNS, home SNS only, and none of SNSs. |
| Chen & Yang (2015) | n=21 Chinese students (female=10, male =11); 1736 posted message | Singapore, LSg members | intercultural adaptation | unlisted | Qualitative (content analysis, interview) | content analysis, conventional content analysis | Singaporean online social support group LSg provided Chinese students a platform to attain informational, emotional, instrumental and network support. |
| Mao & Qian (2015) | n=12 Chinese professionals (female=8, male=4) | the US, the UK, Canada, Netherlands | acculturation | acculturation, identity management | Qualitative (interview) | thematic analysis | Facebook was adopted to maintain social capital, particularly bridging social capital, and worked as a supplementary role on insufficient off-line social capital. It also helped Chinese students learn new cultures and lifestyles. |
| Forbush & Foucault-Wells (2016) | n=120 Chinese students (female=64, male=53, 3 unknown) | the United States, one university | social networks, adaptation | unlisted | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | path analysis | Intensive use of social media allowed students develop diversity of social network and its size. Students who had diverse social network enjoyed a higher level of social and academic adaptation. |

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|------------------|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| Yang Chen (2018) | n=408 Chinese students, aged from 19 to 43 | American colleges and universities | acculturation and adaptation | unlisted | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | multiple regression | Chinese students with active use of Facebook and Twitter better acculturated into the U.S., and the network size of these two SNSs predicted their acculturation level. Students' adaptation was influenced by frequent response received from Facebook and Twitter. |
| Pang Hua (2018) | n=206 Chinese students (female=99, male=107) | Germany, one public university | social capital, psychological well-being | social capital/psychological well-being | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | correlation analyzes, OLS hierarchical regression | Social use of SNS brought benefits on students' psychological well-being, bridging, bonding and maintained social capital. Recreational use of SNS didn't associate with well-being but was a predictor of bridging social capital. |
| Pang Hua (2018) | n=228 Chinese students (female=109, male=119) | Germany, one public university | subjective well-being | unlisted | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | preliminary descriptive analyses, correlation analysis | Wechat use positively influenced students' social integration, bonding and bridging relationships, which affected students' subjective well-being. Wechat use contributed to gratification of life abroad and well-being. |
| Pang Hua (2018) | n=212 Chinese students (female=105, male=107) | Germany, one public university | psychological well-being, perceived social capital, | social capital/psychological well-being | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | preliminary descriptive analyses, correlation analysis | Wechat use positively affected Chinese students' bonding and bridging social capital and contributed to life satisfaction in Germany, and also preserved social capital in China. |
| Li & Peng (2019) | n=322 int'l from 47 countries. 55.59% Chinese mainland students, 6.21% Indian students, 6.21% Korean students and so forth. | The United States, a large Midwestern University | acculturative stress | unlisted | Quantitative (cross-sectional) | descriptive statistic, correlation analyzes, path analysis | Students experienced less acculturative stress when they adopted SNS to attain social support in the US. They received perceived social support and decreased acculturative stress by non-SNS mediated communication with conational and host national. |
| Tai et al (2019) | n=19 Chinese students (female=13, male=5) | the United States, one university | social media dependency relations | media system dependency (MSD) theory | Qualitative (ethnography, field observation, in-depth interview) | narrative analysis | Students mainly used social media to accomplish different tasks and assignment in the U.S. In addition, they also used it to present themselves, promote interpersonal communication with both weak and strong ties and attain recreational content. |

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|----------------------|--|--|---|---|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Yu et al (2019) | n=368 Chinese students (female=215, male=153) | the United Kingdom, three universities | psychological and behavioral acculturation | acculturation theory | Quantitative: (cross-sectional) | structural equation modelling (SEM) | Students who adopted social media to share knowledge, conduct social interaction and entertainment better acculturated in host culture in psychological and behavioral perspectives. |
| Pang Hua (2020) | n=298 Chinese students (female=132, male=166) | Germany, one public university | cross-cultural adaptation, academic integration | cross-cultural adaptation theory | Quantitative: (cross-sectional) | descriptive analysis | Social media allowed students to obtain social support from Germany and China. The social support from China was good for their psychological adaptation and academic integration in Germany, and its active use play a vital role in psychological & socio-cultural adaptation and academic integration. |
| Hofhuis et al (2023) | n=147 International students in Netherlands; N=102 Chinese students in Germany (54.9% female and 45.1% male) | Institutes in Netherlands and Germany | well-being of international students | international students' well-being, adaptation, acculturation | Quantitative: (cross-sectional) | descriptive analysis, correlation analysis. | Using SNS from home country was positively linked to cultural maintenance but negatively related to host country participation, which is associated with lower level of socio-cultural and psychological adaptation. Host country SNS was positively linked to host country participation and life satisfaction. |

Findings

1. Publishing Rates

Fifteen articles since 2014 met the inclusion criteria. By searching the databases, articles published before 2014 primarily examined the media's influence on Chinese overseas students. However, as technology advanced, more studies investigating the correlation between Chinese international students and social media emerged. Prior to 2018, there were 4 studies that particularly studied the impact of Facebook, Renren or Twitter on social capital and psychological well-being of Chinese international students, which proved the widespread use and popularity of these social media. The publishing rate in these ten years (spanning from 2014 to 2023) is 1.5 studies per year. To be specific, 2018 and 2019 are the productive years, with 7 articles published. But in the years 2017, 2021 and 2022, no studies were conducted to identify the interplay between social media and the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese overseas students.

2. Study Types

Among these fifteen studies, twelve studies utilized quantitative methods, while three adopted qualitative methods. They are all empirical studies. Quantitative research employed online questionnaires as a prevalent method to complete data collection regarding social media used by Chinese overseas students while residing abroad. Besides, all the quantitative studies proceed with the cross-sectional investigation to dissect the correlation between social media use and cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese overseas students. No study was conducted with a longitudinal method. Interview, content analysis, ethnography and field observation were recruited in qualitative studies to collect data.

3. Sample Characteristics

Of these fifteen studies, six were conducted in the United States, four by the same researcher in Germany, two in Asia (Japan and Singapore) and one in the United Kingdom. Two studies were conducted across different countries; the first one was organized in the Netherlands and Germany, while the second involved four countries: the US, the UK, Canada and the Netherlands. Research respondents in twelve studies are all Chinese students, varying in different lengths of stay and educational backgrounds from undergraduates to PhD candidates. Respondents in the three studies were international students coming from different countries, but most of them were Chinese students and provided clear data. What's more, in quantitative research, the sample size is adequate, with a minimum of 120 respondents and a maximum of 408, respectively. For most quantitative studies, the number of respondents is around 200. The study conducted in Singapore applied content analysis and analyzed 1736 messages posted by Chinese students to learn their social support achieved from social media (Chen & Yang, 2015).

4. Social Media and Cross-Cultural Adaptation

These studies unpack the influence of social media on Chinese overseas students' information attainment, social capital and psychological well-being. Tai et al. (2019) specifically carried out research to dig out the goals and motivations which drove Chinese overseas students to adopt social media and transition to American SNS use. Social media was a major tool for students to carry out academic activities and daily life. Once students received assignments, they adopted both home and host social media to obtain information, recruiting interviewees without taking national boundaries into account. In addition to these dominant task-oriented and assignment-driven motivations, they also presented their public persona, promoted interpersonal communication to preserve social capital and got entertainment content on social media. Chinese overseas students who studied in Singapore relied on the online social group LSg to seek informational support, including everyday life information, academic information for coping with study problems and personal development information (Chen & Yang, 2015). Social media makes it easier for Chinese overseas students to attain information by removing geographic boundaries.

Regarding social capital, six studies particularly analyzed the benefits that social media brings to social capital. Social capital can be succinctly explained and categorized from the individual level into two types: bridging social capital and bonding social capital. Literally, bridging capital encompassed the resources and

values from weak-tie social networks, such as acquaintances, colleagues, strangers and so on. While bonding social capital is associated with a strong-tie social network with close and trusted relationships, such as those close friends, family members, etc. (Pang, 2018). Firstly, social media allows Chinese students who study abroad to develop a diversity of social networks and sizes. The more diverse networks they had, the greater levels of academic and social adaptation they achieved (Forbush & Foucault-Wells, 2016). Yang (2018) had a similar inference by proposing that Chinese students with active use of Facebook and Twitter better acculturated into the United States, the network size of these two SNSs was the predictor of their acculturation level, and frequent responses from them affected their adaptation.

Secondly, social media not only aided Chinese students to develop social networks, more importantly, promoted their social capital attainment and maintenance. Li & Chen (2014) found that Facebook and Renren were both beneficial for Chinese international students studying in the U.S. to maintain bridging social capital, but neither of them was significantly related to bonding social capital. Facebook was used more to preserve bridging social capital in the U.S., while Renren played a similar role in China. Mao & Qian (2015) came to a similar conclusion. They carried out studies across four countries and improved the facilitation of Facebook on preserving social capital, particularly in fostering bridging social capital. The online social capital compensates for Chinese students' insufficiency of offline social capital in host countries. Pang, in 2018, organized three studies in Germany, all of which confirmed the positive role of SNS and Wechat on social capital maintenance, integration into the new college environment and provision of channels to expand and sustain networks, which directly affect Chinese students' psychological well-being.

In addition to building up and maintaining social capital, social media provided Chinese students a means to receive support from both host and home countries. Chinese students studying in Singapore posted messages on LSG to express their pressure and anxiety because of the uncertainty of their careers and homesickness. Then, in response to these negative messages, other users replied with encouragement and hope to express their empathy. What's more, Chinese students looked for instrumental support messages and network support to acquire practical assistance and cultivate a sense of social belonging and then to facilitate migration into mainstream culture (Chen & Yang, 2015). Li and Peng (2019) summarized from their study that the greater social support Chinese overseas students obtained from the United States when they used SNS with host nationals, the less acculturative stress they experienced. Yet, they additionally disclosed a noteworthy finding that non-SNS mediated communication, such as phone calls and text messages, with both host country and home nationals, were also linked to less acculturative stress because Chinese students received increased levels of perceived social support. Pang's research (2020) is consistent with Li and Peng's as she revealed that Chinese students who actively used social media reported a higher level of perceived social support from both their host and home countries.

When Chinese overseas students attained social capital and social support from both China and host nations, their psychological well-being was improved. Out of these fifteen studies, nine of them suggested a favourable relationship between social media use and psychological well-being. Social and information functions of social media boost the perceived social support and life satisfaction of Chinese students who studied in Japan (Guo, 2014). Yu and her teammates (2019) arrived at a comparable finding as well. Chinese overseas students who actively participated in sharing knowledge, social engagement and entertainment on social media were more likely to successfully acculturate into the host culture both psychologically and behaviorally because social media enabled them to look for peers' advice and help. Pang's studies (2018) verified Wechat's edge on Chinese overseas students' life satisfaction. However, her findings on the recreational use of SNS contradicted Yu's. She found the entertainment use of SNS has no relationship with well-being but with bridging social capital. Pang, in 2020, further proved the positive correlation between the active use of social media and Chinese students' academic integration, psychological and socio-cultural adaptation.

In general, the role and advantage of social media are reflected in building and sustaining social capital and boosting mental well-being. Nevertheless, some studies disclosed different aspects of social media use. Guo's research (2014) proved the drawbacks of social media by saying that Chinese students' SNS use for recreational functions in Japan led to an increased sense of loneliness. Similarly, Yang (2018), in the United States, proposed a warning that the frequent use of US-based social media would confine Chinese students'

social circle online and reduce their exposure to real life. The quantity of international and American friends on social media did not show a notable effect on Chinese students' adaptation. Hofhuis et al. signified in 2019 that interacting with relations in one's place of origin via SNS is associated with psychological alienation. In 2023, they further probed the impact of home country SNS use and validated that it was positively linked to Chinese overseas students' cultural maintenance but negatively to host country participation, which might bring the consequence of lower levels of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation. While host country SNS use was positively correlated with host country participation and life satisfaction. It can be seen that social media use appeared to be a double-edged sword for cross-cultural adaptation.

Discussion

The fifteen identified articles show a focus on understanding how social media affects Chinese overseas students' cross-cultural adaptation. Chinese students, being the biggest cohort of overseas students globally and coming from a collectivism culture, face many challenges in countries with individualism. Their smooth adaptation in host countries guarantees their accomplishment of the study. Most of these identified articles admitted the advantages of social media use and provided evidence supporting the positive role of social media in assisting social capital attainment and maintenance in both host and home countries, and additionally, claiming the benefits of social media on Chinese overseas students' psychological well-being, namely in terms of attaining social support from family, peers, classmates, co-nationals via Social Network Sites. These findings align with other research on probing the social media use among overseas students. Lin et al. (2012) proposed in their research that social media use offers overseas students platforms to build up social capital or even attachments in the host countries. Rui and Wang (2015) confirmed the facilitation of SNS on international students' cross-cultural adaptation and supplement of SNS on offline communication in the United States. Yet, the prerequisite of it depended on international students' degree of host language proficiency on SNS. Hendrickson and Rosen (2017) also manifested SNSs and video chat's contribution to international students casting about common interest groups, establishing social networks in new environments and reducing acculturative stress. Dwumah et al. (2023) proved the beneficial impact of social media in promoting international students' school engagement by information sharing, establishing contact and recreation.

However, there are not always benefits of social media. According to Zhang et al. (2012), Chinese social media was applied by Chinese overseas students at the initial stage to preserve their original selves while encountering cultural shock and acculturating into the host culture. As the cultural shock reduced and the familiarity with the host culture increased, they became less dependent on the host social media. Furthermore, social media use also exhibits its drawbacks, such as loneliness resulting from engagement with social media recreation, restriction of social circle online and less exposure to real-life experience, psychological alienation, limited host nation involvement due to home SNS use (Yang, 2018; Hofhuis et al., 2019; Hofhuis et al., 2023). Similarly, in Lim and Pham's research (2016), Indonesian and Vietnamese students studying in Singapore communicated with distant family and friends to attain support. But this communication confined their leisure time and went against their engagement with local people. Social media communication caused the formation of cultural silos, indicating that these students remain close to their fellow nationals. Another outcome derived from this literature review is that there is a limited amount of research on the correlation between social media and academic adaptation, which is a crucial aspect of overseas study. With the advancement and development of technology, online courses, online teaching platforms or school forums, etc., are common ways for international students to access learning resources. Online learning is commonly embraced by universities worldwide, particularly during the global COVID-19 pandemic (Wong et al., 2022).

Conclusion

This study reviewed fifteen articles and identified the influence of social media on the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese international students. The majority of studies affirmed the benefits of social media on both social capital attainment and maintenance, as well as psychological well-being. The utilization of social media for social purposes is beneficial for Chinese overseas students in building up social capital in both China and host countries. As students obtained social support from social capital through social media, their psychological

status improved. Meanwhile, the drawbacks of social media were identified. The use of social media for entertainment may reduce Chinese overseas students' exposure to real life and lead to a sense of loneliness. Engaging extensively with family and friends on social media may impede their communication with the host nationals and lead to alienation, which negatively impacts their socio-cultural and psychological adaptation. Overall, social media plays a significant and double-edged role. Chinese international students should utilize social media appropriately, capitalizing on its advantages while also mitigating its negative impact on their socio-cultural and psychological adaptation overseas.

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