

THE STUDY OF CHINA STUDENT'S LIFE STRESS, HAPPINESS AND STUDY PERFORMANCE IN TAIWAN

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Abstract

The number of foreign student increase constantly in recently year due to Taiwan government policy and college abroad student recruitment. The major foreign students come from China. It is necessary to investigate the life stress and study performance of foreign student in order to strengthen the administration performance of college and export the advantage to abroad. This study has interviewed 192 china students in Case Study College in southern Taiwan. The results show below. Respondents' life stress average score is 71.44. The life stress score is slightly higher than normal score. After four months in Taiwan college. The civil knowledge, innovational thinking ability and democratic speculation ability score of respondents are higher

than in China. There is a positive correlation between happiness and study performance. On the contrary. There is a negative correlation between life stress, happiness and study performance. According to the regression analysis result. Happiness will positive influence study performance. Different background respondents have score difference on life stress, happiness and study performance.

Keywords: China, Student, Life Stress, Happiness And Study Performance.

Introduction

According to statistics of Ministry of Education (2017), there were 116,416 foreign students registered in colleges and universities for school year 2016, accounting for 8.9% of college and university students in Taiwan. In comparison to 2015, the number increased by 5,067. As to categories of foreign students, in 2016, graduate students from China were still the most (32,648 students and percentage was 28%), followed by 24,626 overseas Chinese students (percentage was 21.2% and they were mostly from Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Macao) and 19,977 Chinese study students (percentage was 17.2% and they were mostly from Japan, South Korea, and America). As to the statistics of origin countries of students, in 2016, most of foreign students in colleges and universities were from China (there were 41,981 students and percentage was 36%). They were mostly for short-term study, followed by students from Malaysia (16,051, 13.8%). In terms of types, there were overseas Chinese students (47.6%), foreign students of formal degree study (31.4%) and overseas youth program (13.8%). Hong Kong and Macao were in the third and fifth places, and they were respectively 8,662 and 5,295 subjects. They were mostly overseas Chinese students; Japan was the fourth place, including 7,548 students. Among them, 58.1% were in Chinese centers and 20.6% were short-term study

and personal study students.

Number of foreign students in Taiwan are increasing. It is associated with governmental policy and overseas Chinese student recruitment of colleges. Moreover, numerous students expect to experience study and life in Taiwan. In order to continuously enhance operational performance of colleges and universities and export the advantage of higher education in Taiwan, it is necessary to explore life stress and study performance of foreign students in Taiwan as the criteria for overseas recruitment, student life and study management of schools. According to Schuler (1980), Yerkes and Dodson (1980), it is inferred that university students' stress influences study performance. In order to reinforce students' study performance, can we start by upgrading individual happiness? Thus, this study treats one university in southern Taiwan as the case, collects China students' perception of life stress and happiness in case university and attempts to find if life stress and happiness influence China students' study performance.

Literature Review

1. Life stress

Life stress means psychological threat and physical stimulus caused by daily events which harass individuals. It also means pressure of change encoun-

tered by individuals in daily lives. Chang (1993) argued that stress is individuals' feelings when they cannot release stress sources in short time. Continuity of the said feeling because of certain life events results in life stress. Tsai (2009) stated that life stress is perplexity degree of life events to individuals. This study defines life stress as psychological and physical reaction toward possible perplexity degree of individuals in daily life events.

2. Happiness

Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012) argued that happiness is a kind of dynamic level and it means the balance between individuals' psychological, social and physical challenge and resources. Ryff and Keyes (1995) defined happiness as individuals' positive, happy and satisfying states toward life. Theories of happiness can be classified as follows:

- (1) Need Satisfaction Theory,
- (2) Characteristic Theory,
- (3) Judgment Theory,
- (4) Dynamic Equilibrium Theory.

This study defines happiness as well-being perceived by individuals with different characteristics on daily life events, health, interpersonal relationship and personal realization (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders, 2012).

3. Study performance

Learning satisfaction includes teachers' instructional style, course design, class management, learning method and class climate. Therefore, many studies adopted "learning satisfaction" as the variable to measure study performance (Alavi, 1994; Alavi, Wheeler & Valacich, 1995, Piccoli,

Ahmad & Lves, 2001). There are various theories associated with learning satisfaction, including (1) Murray (1938) "Need and Environment Interaction Theory", (2) Argyris (1964) "Need Theory", (3) Herzberg (1966) "Two-Factor Theory", (4) Walberg (1968) and Moos (1976) Class Learning Climate Theory, (5) Locke (1969) Discrepancy Theory, (6) Gai (1979) Investment and Production Theory. Learning satisfaction includes almost all investment and output related to learning. In order to focus on Chinese university students' self-evaluated learning outcome, this study adopts Chinese university students' personal perception of learning performance as the variable to measure study performance. It defines study performance below: Chinese university students' core and professional competence acquired in formal and informal learning by teachers' teaching style, course design, course content, extracurricular activities on campus.

Research Design

1. Research Structure

This study aims to explore relationship among Chinese university students' life stress, happiness and study performance. By related research and literature review, it develops research structure (Figure 1) which includes demographic background variables, life stress, happiness and study performance. This study proposes hypothesis: Chinese university students with different demographic variables show different self-evaluations on perception of life stress, happiness and study performance. Besides, life stress and happiness influence Chinese university students' study performance. (see Figure 1)

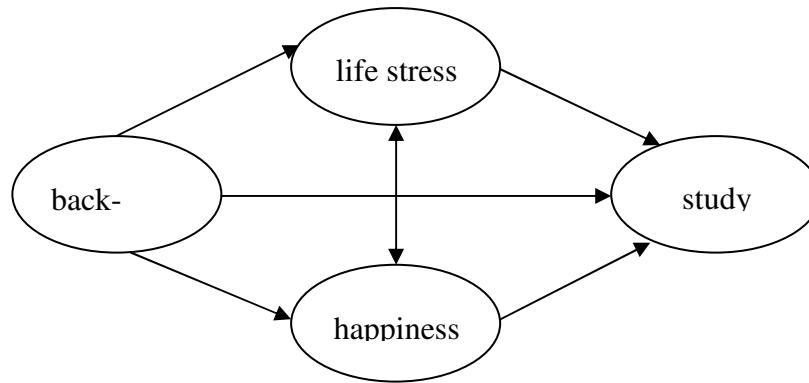


Figure 1. Research Structure

2. Subjects and sampling

Case study school is the university in southern Taiwan with the most China students¹ and it is practical for sample selection and sampling. Besides, the researcher taught in case study college and has observed and instructed China students for years to integrate personal teaching experience and observation with questionnaire survey result. As to sampling survey on respondents, this study published questionnaire survey content and time on online group of China students and provided rewards for responses. In short time, it established four rounds of questionnaire survey, including 210 applicants of China students. In 4 rounds of questionnaire survey, there were 195 participants. After deleting 3 samples with incomplete answers, the researcher obtained 192 valid samples.

3. Measurement tool

(1) Life stress

¹ China students in case university are short-term students of one semester.

This study adopted physical and mental stress reaction scale proposed by Greenberg (1983). When respondents' total scores are lower than 50, it means they are in the state of normal stress. When total scores are 51~119, it means they have higher stress. Professional consultation or personal stress release are suggested. When total scores are higher than 120, it means the stress is too high. Immediate professional treatment is suggested.

(2) Happiness

This study adopted "happiness scale" designed by Lai (2009) and 10 items of happiness according to the researcher's observation of Chinese university students. Scoring is based on Likert 5-point scale. "Always", "often", "normal", "sometimes" and "never" refer to 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. When score is higher, happiness is more significant.

(3) Study performance

This study adopted "investigation of self-perceived study performance" of Chiu (n.d.) to evaluate Chinese university students' study performance. The scale shows positive reliability and validity. Thus, this study measures Chinese university students' study performance

by the scale.

Results Analysis

1. Subjects' background analysis

This study obtains 192 valid questionnaires, including 108 males and 84 females. Most of them are students aged 19-20 and 21, including respectively 76 and 74 students. There are few students above 22 years old, including 42 students. Numbers of students with monthly consumption NTD 10,000 and NTD 10,001-20,000 are the same and they are respectively 84 students. Few students show monthly consumption as above NTD 20,001, including 24 students. Most of students are from college of management (70 students) and the following are international college (48 students), college of engineering (32 students), college of science (26 students) and medical college (16 students). 108 students come from inland provinces and 84 are from coastal provinces.

2. Descriptive statistics analysis

(1) Life stress

Students' mean of life stress perception is 1.786. It means their current stress in Taiwan is normal. Never is 1 point, rarely (more than once in 6 months) is 2 and occasionally (once every month) is 3.

(2) Happiness

Students' mean of overall satisfaction is 3.89. Top three items with the highest scores are "I can control my life" (M= 4.29, SD=.68), "I am interested in others' affairs" (M= 4.22, SD=.71), "generally speaking, I am healthy" (M= 4.14, SD=.81).

(3) Study performance

Chinese university students' self-evaluated overall study performance in Taiwan is 4.04 which is relatively high. It means that students are satisfied with their learning performance in Taiwan. As to item analysis of study performance, means higher than 4 points are the following: civil knowledge, responsible service attitude, interpersonal competence, growing and learning ability, innovational thinking ability, confidence and self-reflection competence, democratic speculation ability, life value comprehension and independence learning competence. Noticeably, students suggested that after studying in Taiwan, their civil knowledge, innovational thinking ability and democratic speculation ability were significantly upgraded. (see Table 1)

3. Correlation analysis

According to one-tailed test result of correlation analysis, when students' perceived life stress is higher, happiness and study performance is more inferior. When happiness is more significant, study performance is more positive. (see Table 2)

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Of Study Performance

Study performance	Average mean	Standard deviation	Reliability
1. After living and learning in Taiwan, my professional knowledge is significantly enhanced	3.74	0.94	.937
2. After living and learning in Taiwan, my professional skill is significantly enhanced	3.78	0.89	
3. After living and learning in Taiwan, my thinking comprehension is significantly enhanced	3.91	0.78	
4. After living and learning in Taiwan, my practical application competence is significantly enhanced	3.90	0.77	
5. After living and learning in Taiwan, my occupational development competence is significantly enhanced	3.80	0.83	
6. After living and learning in Taiwan, my growing and learning competence is significantly enhanced	4.05	0.77	
7. After living and learning in Taiwan, oral expression competence is significantly enhanced	3.99	0.72	
8. After living and learning in Taiwan, my reading comprehension is significantly enhanced	3.72	0.81	
9. After living and learning in Taiwan, my data collection competence is significantly enhanced	3.86	0.79	
10. After living and learning in Taiwan, my writing ability is significantly enhanced	3.71	0.87	
11. After living and learning in Taiwan, my software application competence is significantly enhanced	3.70	0.87	
12. After living and learning in Taiwan, my interpersonal competence is significantly enhanced	4.11	0.76	
13. After living and learning in Taiwan, my civil knowledge is significantly enhanced	4.32	0.74	
14. After living and learning in Taiwan, my service responsible attitude is significantly enhanced	4.13	0.74	
15. After living and learning in Taiwan, my life value comprehension is significantly enhanced	4.00	0.81	
16. After living and learning in Taiwan, my diligence is significantly enhanced	3.97	0.79	

Study performance	Average mean	Standard deviation	Reliability
17. After living and learning in Taiwan, my confidence and self-reflection competence is significantly enhanced	4.04	0.78	
18. After living and learning in Taiwan, my innovative thinking ability is significantly enhanced	4.05	0.84	
19. After living and learning in Taiwan, my independent learning competence is significantly enhanced	4.00	0.82	
20. After living and learning in Taiwan, my democratic speculation ability is significantly enhanced	4.04	0.88	

Table 2. Correlation Analysis

	Life stress	Happiness	Study performance
Life stress	1	-.408**	-.122*
Happiness	-.408**	1	.347**
Study performance	-.122*	.347**	1

** $P < .014$. Regression analysis

According to multiple regression analysis, happiness significantly and positively influences study perform

ance. Effect of life stress is insignificant. (see Table 3)

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.
Constant	2.532	.376		.000
Life stress	.025	.083	.023	.759
Happiness	.350	.073	.356***	.000
R Square	.347			
Adjusted R Square	.289			
F(p)	12.966 (.000***)			

*** $P < .00$

5. One-way analysis of variance

(1) Age

In comparison to subjects above 22 years old and aged 19-20, those of 21 years old show higher perception of life stress.

(2) College

As to life stress, in comparison to students of college of engineering, those of college of management and college of science show higher perception of life stress. As to happiness, in comparison to students of college of science and college of engineering, those of college of management, international college and medical college show higher perception of happiness.

Discussion

Because of teaching, besides questionnaire survey, the researcher had more opportunities to interact with China students. As to life stress, respondents suggested that living and learning stress in China is higher than Taiwan. In China, peer and school climate emphasizes competition. Everyone fights for the best grades and resources. However, in case study college, most of Taiwanese students do not treat grades as the most critical objective. Many students must obtain part-time jobs because of family financial state.

Thus, overall learning climate is significantly different from that in China. Since China students' learning opportunity in Taiwan is rare, they cherish every course and they actively interact with teachers and ask questions. For them, Taiwanese teachers' and Chinese teachers' teaching styles are completely different. In China, teachers mostly follow the textbooks and it lacks questions and

lively interaction in class. In Taiwan, the teachers are mostly young and they remain positive relationship with students. They tend to teach lively and combine computer skills. Thus, China students perceive more interesting learning in Taiwan. It enhances their learning intention and thus their living and learning stress perceived is lower.

Generally speaking, after arriving in Taiwan, China students are indifferent to issues of democracy, governmental system and nationality. Except for acquaintances, they rarely show inner thoughts on these issues. In this questionnaire survey, according to China students' self-evaluation, after learning in Taiwan for four months, their civil knowledge, service responsible attitude, interpersonal competence, growing and learning competence, innovational thinking ability, confidence and self-reflection ability, democratic speculation ability, life value comprehension and independent learning competence are significantly enhanced. Among others, civil knowledge, innovational thinking and democratic speculation are interesting aspects for this study.

According to observation of this study and daily interaction with China students, many China students are interesting in election system and political programs after arriving in Taiwan since they do not experience the same in China. Some China students suggest that China should arouse more reflection and discussion on corruption of officials and unethical products manufactured by businessmen. In addition, in case study college, in order to reinforce students' participation in class, some teachers allow students to vote for assessment of final grades at the beginning of the class. Some manage the classes by discussion, innovative thinking and interactive questions. China students thus recognize

the effect of democracy of Taiwan in class. They look forward to such civil society with free discussion and encouragement of thinking. This study argues that with similar language and cultural conditions, democracy, academic freedom and instructional quality of Taiwan can easily influence China students and lead to identification. It is the competitive advantage of colleges and universities. Besides, it is the base for China students in terms of future

Cross-Strait Exchange And Trust

There is negative correlation among life stress, happiness and study performance. In other words, when China students perceive higher life stress in Taiwan, their happiness and study performance will be more inferior. Happiness positively influences China students' study performance. Nevertheless, life stress does not show significant effect. This study argues that the reason can be in that for China students, there is only negative correlation between life stress and study performance. Even when life stress is higher, it should not influence their study performance. The author's daily observation of China students demonstrates the findings. In the semester, some China students mentioned that they caught a cold, suffered from diarrhea or they were injured when traveling; however, they were never late in class or absent. It validates the finding of this study.

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In China students' short-term stay in Taiwan for 4 months, by questionnaire survey, the author investigated China students' life perception in Taiwan and self-evaluated study performance. Through daily teaching and instruction on China students, the author recognized that their performance and academic grades in all courses were more outstanding, including questions in class, comprehension, responsive ability, report and briefing competence, which were superior to most of Taiwanese students. China students visited the spots and cities in Taiwan on the weekends and during holidays and they attempted to satisfy their expectation before arriving in Taiwan. There were positive and negative experiences. For instance, Taiwanese's enthusiasm and friendliness are out of their expectation. Nevertheless, city construction does not meet their expectation. These are the media of communication and trust between Taiwan and China. With the arrival of China students, their active and serious attitude can be the model for Taiwanese students. In addition, they introduce civil society and democratic speculation acquired from Taiwan back to China and allow more Chinese people to recognize the significant learning and tolerance anticipation between Taiwan and China. These are the critical base of Cross-Strait exchange and the following development.

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