



# **The Investigation and Study of the Cross-Culture Social Adaption of Students from ASEAN in Jiangxi Province**

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The social network of foreign students and its heterogeneity are the important factors that influence the cross-cultural adaptation of international students. In this paper, some colleges and universities in Nanchang ASEAN students studying design as an example, the heterogeneity of the questionnaire of social network, analyzes the social network heterogeneity present situation, then using two element Logistic regression analysis to examine various dimensions of heterogeneity affect cross-cultural adaptation. At last, drawing conclusions and recommendations for improvement, improving the cross-cultural adaptability of students.

*Keywords: Cross cultural adaptation; heterogeneity; ASEAN international students.*

## 1. INSTRUCTIONS

### 1.1 The Research Status and Significance

#### 1.1.1 Research status and trends

Intercultural adaptation research abroad began in the early 20th century, put forward by the American anthropologist Robert Reid, Ralph Linton and Melville Covey Hess, most studies of cross-cultural adaptation can be divided into social adaptation and mental adaptation, namely individual mental adjustment of cross-cultural social situation and social relations in the tolerance and the coordination degree of cross-cultural group. Intercultural adaptation is the term used to describe what happens when people from one culture enter a different culture. It refers to an individual's learning and adopting the norms and values of the new host culture. The individual must find a new source of livelihood and build a new life. This adaptation to the new host culture is called acculturation. For the complex process of cross-cultural adaptation, foreign scholars have put forward four kinds of typical models, the U-shaped pattern proposed by anthropologist Oberg (Kalvero Oberg); the model of cultural change curve proposed by Gass; Louis put forward the surprise and rational seeking patterns and Korean scholars Yong Yun Kim the pressure - adaptation - growth model. Intercultural adaptation also refers to the incremental identity-related change process of sojourners and immigrants in a new environment [1]. The intercultural adaptation refers to the process of acclimatizing to the demand of a new cultural environment. At present, the education circles consider that factors that influence the cross-cultural adaptation can be divided into external factors and internal factors, external factors are: values, cultural distance, social support networks, environmental changes, etc; Internal factors are: ethnocentrism, image tags and discrimination, evaluation and coping styles, such as demographic variables. The results of this study can help us better understand the cross-cultural adaptation problems, understand the historical process of multiple social mobility has been increasing.

With the increasing number of international students in China, the research on problems of cross-cultural adaptation of overseas students in China is highly valued. And it gets quite a few of research achievements. Huang Xinxiang, who is the editor of *problems of education for foreign*

*students* (1994), devotes a separate chapter to the issue of intercultural communications of international students in China, including the matter of values, language, culture conventions and other obstacles of intercultural communication. And he put forward that carry out the tentative exploration of Chinese culture education the foreign students. Wang et al. [2] researched it refers to the traumatic experience that an individual may encounter when entering a different culture. Thereafter, three scholars, Cheng and Starosta [3] studied the adaptation of Chinese students in America from the sociology, culture, intercultural communication and pedagogy and interdisciplinary perspective Zhen Xue [4], Zhang [5], Chen [6] explored the China cross-cultural adaptation of foreign students in Japan, Canada from the point of psychology. Yan [7] widely collected various countries' overseas students of culture adaptation cases in Chinese universities. Wang et al. [8] made a systematic summary and classified generalization for the present study of cross-cultural research and came up with some modified thoughts for the future development.

#### 1.1.2 The practical significance of the research and theoretical significance

ASEAN is the third largest trade partner of China, whose trade in services is also China's fifth largest export market. China-ASEAN center was formally established in 2011 to promote the two sides in trade and investment, culture, education, tourism, exchanges and cooperation in various fields such as transportation of important service platform. Jiangxi, one of the members of the "pan delta", has a certain geographical advantages in collaboration with ASEAN. Lately, Jiangxi province has been paying more attention to the association of ASEAN in the field of education, economic, trade exchanges and cooperation, the association of ASEAN, and international students have become one of the main parts of the students in Jiangxi province. This special group is the achievement of the continuous development of China-ASEAN relationship. Now and in the future, this kind of relationship will contribute a lot to the relationship of Jiangxi province and the ASEAN countries. Therefore, a study of this special group in Chinese learning life has important academic value and practical significance.

By studying this group, we can not only make understanding of the cross-cultural adaptation and its effect elements of students from the ASEAN,

but also have knowledge of their contribution made for all aspects in Jiangxi's social and economic development. On one hand, we are allowed to see how much influences the unique culture of Jiangxi has had for fostering overseas students and the group size development. On the other hand, we can observe the transformation and development for ways of overseas student's communication with their mother land; Investigate whether they has built a social field domain between their native country and Jiangxi; explore its reaction effect for promoting the exchanges and cooperation between Jiangxi and the ASEAN.

## 1.2 Summarize

### 1.2.1 Relevant concepts

#### 1.2.1.1 Cross-cultural adaptation

German sociologist Simmel put forward the concept of "stranger" in 1905, believed in people of different cultural groups is a stranger to each other, people cannot determine and predict the behavior of strangers, so they always with doubts. Later on, Park, who extended the concept of stranger into immigrants and marginal man, which refers to those who live in the the cultural margins. They are strange to two culture, they are "cultural hybrids". Sociologists Merton derived the concept of "world citizen" from the concept of stranger,said individuals and their social and cultural exchanges reached a very high degree of outside of system. In 1950, Hall published the book named "silent language", combined culture with communication, marked the creation in the field of cross-cultural research. Hybrids from "stranger" to "culture" to "world citizen", in order to achieve this transformation, we must depend on cross-cultural adaptation, cross-cultural adaptation is one of the most important aspect in the field of cross-cultural research.

#### 1.2.1.2 Culture shock

American cultural anthropologist Berg [9], puts forward the concept of "culture shock", it refers to in his familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse suddenly disappeared, and still not familiar with each other under the condition of social symbols, will cause a sudden anxiety and uncertain, the uncertainties of the left suddenly grow on your own culture can produce all kinds of uncomfortable and inadaptation, the idealized old culture model would unsatisfied with new culture,brought prejudice and stereotypes, and

generally speaking, cultural shock has negative negative effects, but also some scholars (Adler) think it has great significance on the development of self-awareness and personal growth. He thought it is a kind of profound learning experience, is a new start for a man in a new cultural system.

### 1.2.2 Summarization about the cross-cultural adaptation research abroad

#### 1.2.2.1 Single dimension cultural adaptation model

Parks and Miller [10] proposed the single dimension models of cross-cultural adaptation, they thought that cross cultural adaption is a single dimension and single direction course that sojourners consistantly adapt to a mainstream culture, finally depart from the original culture, and fully integrated into the mainstream culture. That is to say, when sojourners came to a new culture environment, at the same time,they influenced by the local mainstream culture and their mother culture, the more the local culture influence, the less the mother culture influence. In the end,they were assimilated by mainstream culture. Early American society is a typical representative of "bath furnace" nature, people think that the United States is a large national bath furnace, national immigration here integrated into a new kind of American, different ethnic groups also gradually merged into a new nation.

#### 1.2.2.2 Double dimensions of cultural adaptation model

Berry [11] thinks, cross-cultural adaptation includes two dimensions, one is to keep the traditional culture and identity, another is the communication with other cultural groups. In the process of cross-cultural adaptation,individuals shows different characteristics in these two dimensions, they were combined into four kinds of cross-cultural adaptation strategy: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. When sojourners think that to keep their own culture, identity are of same significant with to keep the communication with the local community and intergrate into the local society ,that belongs to the integration of strategy; Emphasize only to keep their own culture, and don't want to blend in the local social groups to communicate with them, that belongs to the separation of strategy; If they would rather give up their own culture, only pay attention to the

communication and relationship with the local community, that belongs to the assimilation strategy; Those who cannot neither keep their culture nor willing to contact with the local community, is the edge of the policy strategy. Many studies have shown that in the four intercultural adaptation strategies, integrate is the most effective one, then is the assimilation, marginalized is the most difficult.

### 1.2.2.3 Multi-dimensional cultural adaptation model

With the deepening of the research on cross-cultural adaptation, some psychologists put forward three or more dimensions of intercultural adaptation model. Berry [12] considering the immigration can not be free to choose their intercultural adaptation strategy, he put forward the third dimension: the mainstream group's cultural adaptations expectations and interactions for the non-mainstream groups. As the reality of the middle 20th century, the mainstream groups saw American society as a "bath furnace", used a variety of tough means to prompt immigrants assimilate into the mainstream American culture; If mainstream groups adopt segregation strategy, immigrants had to take separate intercultural adaptation strategies; If mainstream group "reject" the foreign groups, immigrants can only use marginal intercultural adaptation strategies; Finally, when the mainstream groups admit the equality and diversity of other cultures, they adopt a "multicultural" doctrine, immigrants usually adopt the strategy of integration of cross-cultural adaptation.

## 2. THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN) IN JIANGXI PROVINCE, MAKE INVESTIGATIONS FOR THE CROSS-CULTURAL SOCIAL ADAPTABILITY OF ASEAN OVERSEAS STUDENTS

### 2.1 The Designing of Questionnaires and Basic Instruction

#### 2.1.1 The designing of questionnaires

This research is based on the examples of previous studies, chooses the time students live in Jiangxi as dimension. The questionnaire is divided into four parts, each part has five topics, a total of 20 questions. The first part is learning, we make brief understanding of overseas students in the aspects of class, examinations

and spare times. The second part is the life, which refers to the climate, food, shopping, transportation, entertainment and other major aspects, investigate the degree of their living adaptation. The third part is the interpersonal relationship, including their communications with local citizens and schoolmates, aimed at investigating their degree of happiness as well. The fourth part is the cultural values, involving beliefs, cultural traditions and so on, in order to investigate their's understanding to the Chinese's values and way of thinking.

#### 2.1.2 The basic instruction

This questionnaire is based on that of Deism and Junhong Yang used previously, and did some relevant modifications in order to better work for overseas students from ASEAN in Jiangxi province. Taking regarded that overseas students from ASEAN were distributed among all universities in Jiangxi, this research only refers to 100 students in four universities students (Jiangxi Normal University, Jiangxi University of Finance, Nanchang University, Jiangxi Agricultural University). I handed out 100 pieces of questionnaires, and handed back 100 in practical. Interviewees are among 20-26 years old, all of them are bachelors. 90% of them pay for themselves, the last are pay at public expense. In addition to the questionnaire, I also make interviews with individuals, spares no efforts to understand the experiences and feelings of overseas students from ASEAN directly and truly. Finally, the survey results are obtained through a statistical questionnaire.

Brief introductions for the overseas students from ASEAN that participate in the research:

#### Nations distribution:

Thailand 15 (15%), the Philippines 27(27%), Vietnam 13(13%), Indonesia 30(30%), Burma 4(4%), Cambodia 6(6%).

#### Gender:

Male 64, female 36

#### Age distribution:

20-22 years old: 34  
22-24 years old: 55  
24-26 years old: 16

#### How long they live in Jiangxi:

1-6 months: 10

6-12 months: 58  
12-18 months: 22  
More than 18 months: 10

## 2.2 The Attitude and Motivation

I made investigations with the overseas students for their attitude and motivation to come to Jiangxi, and make conclusions. Just as the followings.

That is to say, most of them come here to see china's culture. The rest three are of same importance, respectively are "good study conditions"; "improve the level of Chinese"; "affordable fees". All of them come here of their own accord.

## 3. MAKE ANALYSIS FOR QUESTIONNAIRES, MAKE CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANT ANALYSIS

### 3.1 Learning Adaptability

#### 3.1.1 Problems in learning adaptability

According to the survey, 90% of students can understand what the teacher said in class, however, still 10% of them are puzzled. 70% of them are willing to make preview seriously before

class, and 60% are able to pass the exams. Nevertheless, only one of fifth will read Chinese newspapers, watch television, and read Chinese magazines. What's worse, few of them learn extracurricular cultural knowledge by themselves.

#### 3.1.2 Analysis for problems in learning adaptability

The language barrier is one of the biggest problems that students had, at the beginning of each students came to China, the first dilemma they meet is the language barrier. According to the different contexts, a Chinese characters can have a variety of meaning and usage, it has brought great difficulties for foreign students study Chinese. Combined with the vast territory and long history, different language customs, dialects of our country, they not only affect the students in the daily life of normal communication, but also affect their learning interest and attitude, it is very difficult for some part of the students to understand teaching contents and theoretical concepts. All these lead to their not fully participation in class discussions, unable to solve their own things, unable to participate in the school held a variety of academic activities.

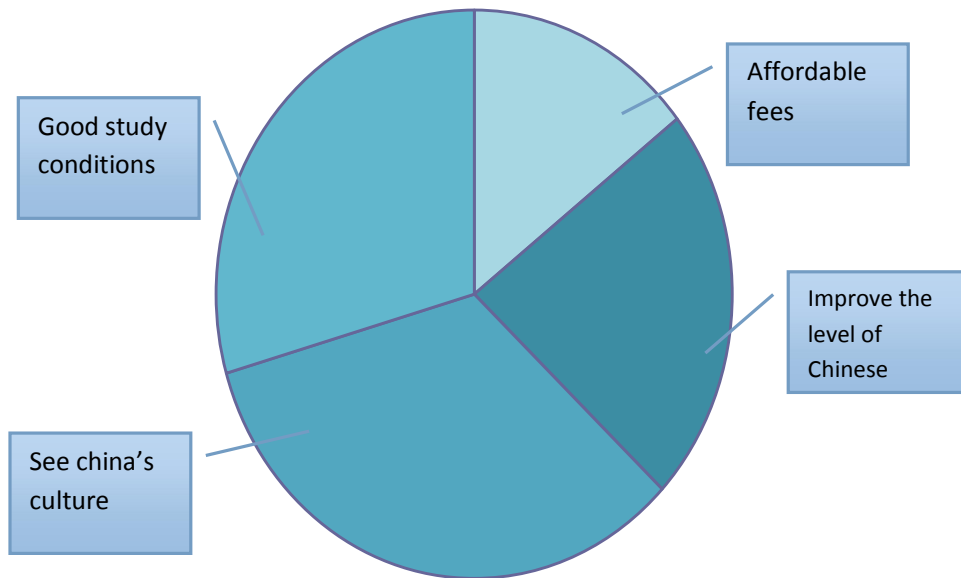


Fig. 1.

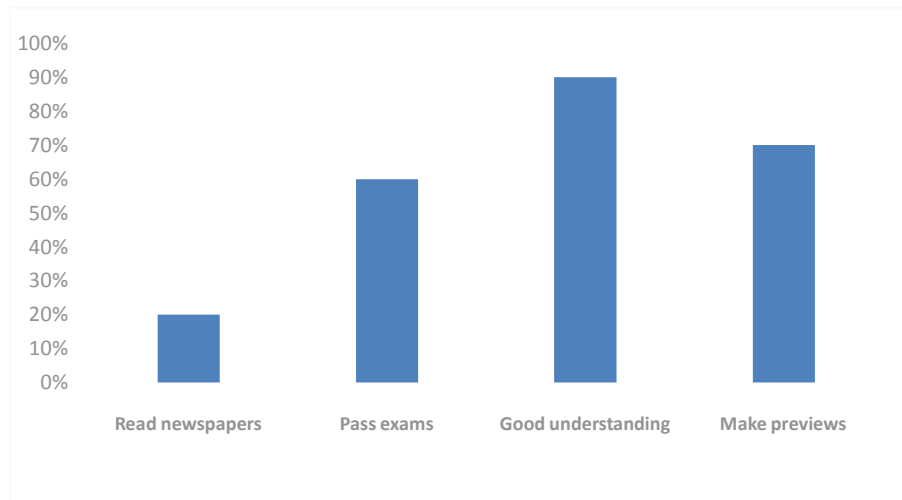


Fig. 2.

### 3.2 Living Adaptability

#### 3.2.1 Problems in living adaptability

We can draw from the graph that 40% of students are dissatisfied with their study and living in China. By investigation and comparison, reasons contribute to the dissatisfactory can be classified into several parts. First of all, 37% of them cannot shopping and see doctors well. Second, 70% of them merely not take part in the extracurricular activities. Third, 23% of them still cannot adapt to the climate here. All these lead to their dissatisfactory in different degree.

#### 3.2.2 Analysis for problems in living adaptability

Because the ASEAN are not so close to Jiangxi, the climate is not the same, it needs a long time for overseas students to adapt, especially in eating habits. Thanks to the beliefs, some usual foods in Jiangxi are unsuitable for overseas students; they need to strengthen their communication at that time. Also, thanks to different living habits and fundamental realities of the country, they have to accelerate their living space, so that they would not out of time. However, this makes them feel stressed, not only in mental, but also in physical.

### 3.3 Interpersonal Adaptability

#### 3.3.1 Problems in interpersonal adaptability

Interpersonal communication is the necessary mean of human existence. communication can

satisfy the demand of people to exchange ideas and promote feelings. In addition to strengthening the study of knowledge and skills, students are eager to make friends with Chinese people, experience the Chinese life as will. for a number of foreign students, it not only relates to the improvement of foreign students education quality, but also affect the internationalization of higher education in our country to let them overcome interpersonal communication obstacle and blend in university as soon as possible. But, only 25% of interviewees think that it is a easy thing to make friends with Chinese people, 90% of them hold the idea that it is hard to communicate with local citizens. 40% of them are glad to make new friends, all of them believe that it makes a big difference for their study and living.67% of them feel happy when they are making new friends.

#### 3.3.2 Analysis for problems in living adaptability

Interpersonal problems caused loss of social skills. Many colleges and universities have established the foreign student community, but most of these clubs is given priority to Chinese students, only a small number of foreign students want to participate in. Due to a lack of mechanism and channels of communication with Chinese students in colleges and universities, foreign students even became friends with Chinese students, different living experiences result in the lack of common topic, which in turn affects the interpersonal adaptation of overseas students.

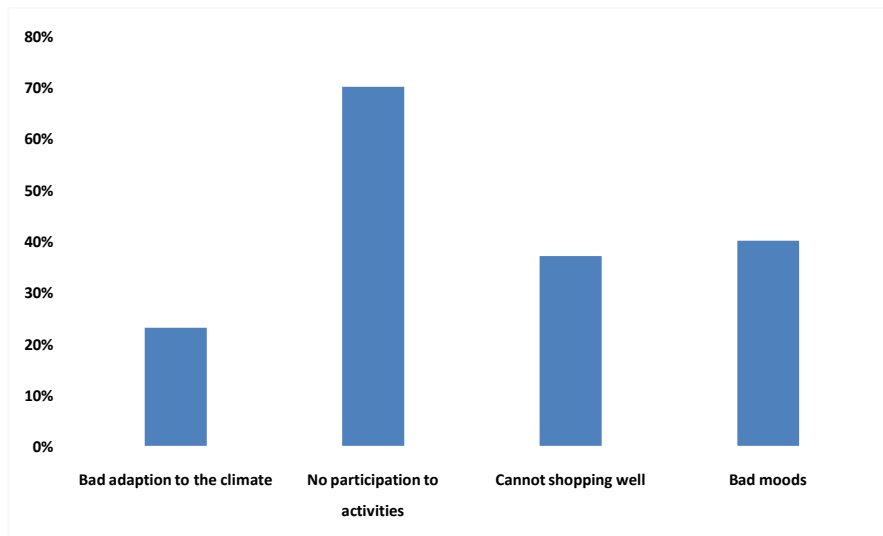


Fig. 3.

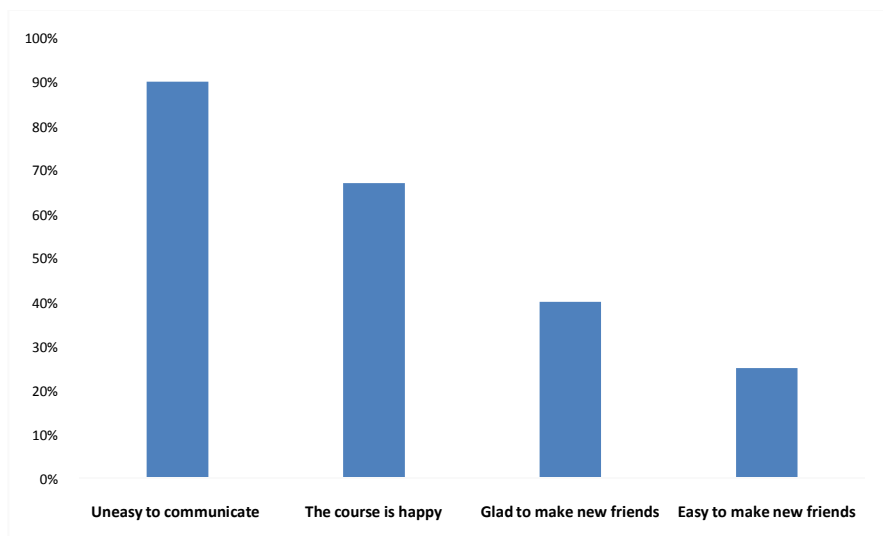


Fig. 4.

### 3.4 Interpersonal Adaptability

#### 3.4.1 Problems in interpersonal adaptability

87% of students regard that it is not so easy to make a understanding of Chinese traditional culture, 78% of them are very hard to comprehend Chinese people's cultural values, 60% of them think their local culture always make conflicts with Chinese culture, 57% of students can overcome the bias in cultural value. A large number-92% of them think cultural values will affect their daily lives in Jiangxi.

#### 3.4.2 Analysis for problems in cultural values adaptability

The contrast between the political system and social forms prominently reflects on the impact result from the nationalism. That is, members of a particular culture tend to believe that their own culture is superior to other cultures, they impose their own values on others. So people often subconsciously to judge the behavior of members of other cultures with their own cultural values, they use their own values as the standard to measure and judge all people. what's

worse, some of them form judgement standard and expectation based on their cultural values.

Jiangxi, the influences are limited, so does population composition.

#### 4. MAKE DEEP INTERVIEW WITH OVERSEAS STUDENTS FROM ASEAN FOR THE IMPACTS THEY BRING INTO JIANGXI AND ASEAN

#### 6. SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING THE CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTION OF OVERSEAS STUDENTS FROM ASEAN IN JIANGXI PROVINCE

##### 4.1 Content

ASEAN is the third largest trade partner of China, whose trade in services is also China's fifth largest export market. And the unique geographic position of Jiangxi province result in frequent contact with the ASEAN, the ASEAN's influence in Jiangxi also increasingly strengthened. By asking 30 students, we make a better understand of their intentions in working and immigration. At the same time, we are able to comprehend the form of the social network of overseas students from ASEAN.

##### 6.1 Suggestions for Universities in Jiangxi

Universities in Jiangxi province exist lots of problems, such as an old international education concept, old-fashioned management mode; all these restrict the rapid development of the international education in Jiangxi. Universities in Jiangxi should not only afford a comfortable living and studying condition, but also transfer their concept about education. They should strengthen their assistance for the adaptation of cross-culture of overseas students, establish various kinds of supplementary project, and create a tolerant, friendly, harmonious school environment. They can distribute booklets that introduce the relevant information with the overseas students daily lives, for example, the place of restaurant, bank, supermarket and hospital; how to transact procedures, how to dredge network, how to make use of transportation system; to arrange guides for overseas students, the guides can be students from abroad or students that are good at English, so that they can learn living and study experiences from them, and adapt to the lives here as soon as possible, that can also do a favor to minimize their anxiousness and terrify.

##### 4.2 Purpose

Intentions after graduation

Table 1.

	Number of people		Ratio			
Will you work at Jiangxi after graduation?	2	6%	25	83%	5	11%
Will you ask your friends to study in Jiangxi?	13	43%	10	33%	17	24%
Will you migrate to Jiangxi?	1	3%	27	91%	2	6%

##### 6.2 Suggestions for Overseas Students from ASEAN

Overseas students from ASEAN were born and raised in a totally different cultural backgrounds compare to us, it is a common phenomenon for them to know little about our complex cultural values. In order to better adapt to a diverse environment, they should learn more about China's rule and values, be open and tolerant, don't see things with bias. When they are in difficult, they should not be prejudice and stubborn, nor should they stay in the place where they are at first, they are asked to understand others, stand in different position to treat divergence. What's more, barriers in language would always affect overseas students from ASEAN with their study and communication, as well as their understanding to China's social culture and values. Language is the tool for

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

##### 5.1 Economic Impacts

Most of students from ASEAN will introduce their friends to study in Jiangxi province, no doubts, that will promote the development of education and economy in Jiangxi to some degree. But few people would still stay in Jiangxi, that is to say, their economic influences are limited.

##### 5.2 Social Impacts

Overseas students from ASEAN play an important role in social ideology, it helps more and more ASEAN citizens know about Jiangxi. However, most of them are going back to their countries when they finished their study in



learning and communicating, use it proficiently can better comprehend the core value of local cultural, and then melt into the social livings related to this kind of value. To achieve their goals, only improve their language level increasingly can they get a better understanding of China.

### 6.3 Suggestions for the Local Citizens

Cultural adaptation need coordination and communication of both side, when overseas students from ASEAN adjust their way of communication, if students and citizens in Jiangxi province cannot make aware of their culture difference, misunderstanding and unhappiness would occur. We should be more active, take part in the cross-culture training, have a mind to comprehend cultural diversity among different countries, increase our cultural sensitiveness, treat diverse culture with a mind of understanding and appreciate, make relevant adjustment in communication, never discriminate overseas students from ASEAN, increase our ability of cross-culture communication, establish a good relationship with them.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

#### Cross cultural adaptation questionnaire for Jiangxi ASEAN foreign students

Nationality :                      Sexuality:

Age :                                  Time honored in China :

#### Part 1、 Learning

1、 I can understand what the teacher said in class, and answer the teacher's questions.

A often                      B general                      C sometimes                      D never

2.I seriously prepare for the university examination.

A often                      B general                      C sometimes                      D never

3.I watch Chinese TV, newspapers, magazines and so on .

A often                      B general                      C sometimes                      D never

4.I take the initiative to learn extracurricular cultural knowledge.

A often                      B general                      C sometimes                      D never

5.It's easy for me to pass college exams.

A often                      B general                      C sometimes                      D never

#### Part 2、 living

1. I can adapt to the climate of Jiangxi .

A nothing                      B general                      C grater difficulty                      D very difficulty

2. I'm used to the diet in Jiangxi .

A nothing                      B general                      C grater difficulty                      D very difficulty

3. I can overcome homesickness .

A nothing                      B general                      C grater difficulty                      D very difficulty

4.Deal with shopping, transportation and medical care and other daily life problems.

A nothing                      B general                      C grater difficulty                      D very difficulty

5.Participate in various recreational activities .

A nothing                      B general                      C grater difficulty                      D very difficulty

#### Part 3 、 Interpersonal relationship

1. I think it's easy to make friends.

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

2. I think the locals are easy to get along with.

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

3. I'd love to meet new people.

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

4. Interpersonal relationship has a great influence on my study life .

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

5. On the whole, I have a pleasant relationship with Chinese friends.

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

#### Part 4 、 Cultural values

1. It's difficult to understand Chinese traditional culture.

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

2. It's hard for me to understand the cultural values of China.

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

3. My native culture and Chinese culture often conflict.

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

4. I can easily overcome the deviation of cultural values.

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

5. Cultural values affect my daily life in Jiangxi .

A very agree      B agree      C disagree      D disagree completely

#### Interview

- 1、 Do you intend to immigrate after graduation?
- 2、 Are you going to work in Jiangxi after graduation?
- 3、 Will you introduce your friends to study in Jiangxi?

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