Mini Review

Psychological Alienation's Mediation Effect on Online Social Support

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, academics have focused a lot of attention on the acclimation of transient international sojourners, such as expatriates and international students. A typical definition of acculturation is the interaction of cultural maintenance—the sojourner's wish to preserve their cultural identity—and host nation participation—their desire to engage with other members of the host society. The focus of the current study is on the part that social networking sites play in this group's process of acculturation. We investigated through a survey how 126 short-term sojourners in the Netherlands use SNS to engage with friends and family in both their home and host countries, and how this impacts their cultural maintenance and host country participation. Also, as potential mediators, we looked at psychological estrangement and online social support.

Keywords: International, Psychological

INTRODUCTION

Traveling overseas for employment or school has become more frequent than ever because to recent increases in globalisation and international mobility (Albert Mathieu et al., 2007). According to estimates, there are currently more than 5 million international students studying abroad and 50 million expatriates globally. An estimated 57,000 expats and 48,000 international students reside only in the Netherlands, and these numbers are projected to rise. International sojourners are different from regular migrants in that they only want to stay abroad for a brief period of time (Anspach Renee R, 1988). The process of acculturation into the new environment is crucial for working or studying abroad, as it has been demonstrated with various types of migration. However, it's still not apparent how social networking site use affects these people's acculturation and wellbeing. Examining potential mediators of these interactions is the study's second goal. We notably concentrate on psychological estrangement and online social support, two factors that have been found to be crucial in sojourner acculturation based on prior research (Bassett Andrew Mark et al., 2018).

Theoretical framework

Every person who undertakes a protracted stay to a nation other than their own is referred to as a "international sojourner" in the original definition of the term. In a later taxonomy, Berry establishes a distinction between people who relocate overseas with the intention of staying temporarily and those who desire to stay permanently. According to previous research, the term "international sojourners" is used in the present study to refer to the former group, but only those who sojourn for job or study, such as expatriates and international students (Beagan Brenda L, 2000). So, the definition disallows those who travel abroad for pleasure or with the intention of settling down more firmly in the host nation. Research on acculturation has its roots in anthropology, where it is described as a two-way process of cultural change that occurs when people of various cultures interact. One of the numerous difficulties faced by sojourners is adjusting to a new environment, which may be very different from their previous home. The success of the adaptation process is crucial in order to foster a sense of belonging to the host society. Finding one's place in a new community is not easy, and occasionally, antagonistic attitudes in the host

society, such as those at work or in the classroom, can make the adjustment process even more challenging (Beagan Brenda, 2003). The theoretical acculturation framework developed by Berry, which distinguishes between the need to preserve one's own culture and the desire to join in and engage with the host community, captures the perspective of migrants on acculturation. Four different acculturation approaches are possible when these two dimensions are crossed: integration, where interacting with the host society and one's own culture are both valued, separation, where only the preservation of one's own culture is valued, assimilation, where only belonging to the host society is valued, and marginalisation, where neither of the two cultures are valued. It has been demonstrated that these four acculturation processes can predict various socio-psychological and behavioural consequences (Grace S, Higgs J, 2010).

Technological advancements have created a wealth of new opportunities for social connection, particularly for those who travel internationally. First off, social networking sites (SNS) and other digital media now make it possible for us to have instant long-distance communication and maintain close contact with people around the world, whereas only a few decades ago, an international move would involve prolonged disconnection from friends and family in the home country (Templeman K et al., 2011). Recent research, such as that by Billedo, Kerkhof, Finkenauer, and Ganzeboom in 2019, has demonstrated that overseas sojourners use all available methods to stay in touch with their home countries and that they benefit from social support from online relationships. Social support has been extensively researched in the context of acculturation and has typically been demonstrated to positively enhance migrant and sojourners' adaption and well-being. In light of Berry's theory, we conclude by predicting that both of the processes discussed above may also have an impact on the acculturation characteristics of short-term sojourners (Lake J et al., 2012). Contact with family members in the home country can help migrants feel more socially identified with their cultural in-group, according to earlier study on SNS use. We anticipate a similar impact to be observed for short-term sojourners: individuals who frequently connect on SNS with friends and family back home maintain strong social and psychological linkages with the home culture, and as a result may exhibit a higher degree of cultural maintenance. We further believe that this association may be explained by the degree of social support received from home country connections, which may in turn heighten the desire to uphold and identify with that cultural (Pengpid S et al., 2018). The aforementioned hypotheses were examined in a sample of people who were neither Dutch nationals or natives of the country but were temporarily employed or enrolled in school there. Contact with respondents came from a variety of traditional and online networks. For instance, international students were attracted through the Dutch chapters of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

and the International Association of Students in Economics and Management (AIESEC), which sent out invitations via their respective online communities. Local expat groups in addition to a number of online forums and social networking sites that discuss living abroad in the Netherlands were used to recruit new expats. There was no payment for taking part (Stepleman LM et al., 2015).

The current study has some restrictions, much as all other research. Its reliance on self-reported data is the most significant. The respondents' own judgement of the amount of time or frequency spent on SNSs may be incorrect. To get around this issue, the current study used a more objective measure of SNS use that was based on a Likert scale. The use of SNS would be more accurately measured in the future if there was a direct way to measure online communication with host and home country relationships, such as through content analysis of SNS. Another significant drawback is that because the conclusions in this research are based on cross-sectional data, we are unable to directly test for causal effects.

CONCLUSIONS

Previous studies have shown how crucial social relationships are to the wellbeing of foreign visitors, including engagement with citizens of both the host and home countries. The impact of the internet, and particularly the usage of social networking sites, on these people's assimilation is an issue that hasn't received enough attention. This study offers proof that SNS have a significant impact in this area. First, our data support the notion that SNS use in home and host country relationships is connected to, respectively, cultural preservation and host country engagement. The two acculturation dimensions boost happiness. SNS communication with home country relationships, however, has a negative impact on wellbeing since it increases emotions of homelessness and loneliness. Cultural preservation seems to be a coping strategy for overcoming emotions.

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