The Impacts of Personality, Face-to-Face Interaction, Social Media and Mass Media Use on Perceived Social Support and Intercultural Adaptation Among Mainland Chinese Students in Hong Kong

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Graduation Project
Presented to the Faculty of Graduate School of
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science
in
New Media

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School of Journalism and Communication
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May 2015

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of online and offline interaction with different groups on sojourners' perceived social support and also examined the influence of home media use, host media use as well as four types of perceived social support on the intercultural adaptation of Mainland students in Hong Kong. A paper-based survey was conduct among 411 Mainland students in two universities in Hong Kong. Results showed that both online and offline interaction with host society members positively predicted perceived information support, while connection with ethnic groups was positively related to companionship support. However, no relationship was found between interaction with long distance social networks and all the four types of social support. Regarding the relationship between media use and intercultural adaptation, psychological adaptation was positively correlated with Facebook use, while negatively related to home SNSs use. Though face-to-Face interaction with ethnic groups positively related to sociocultural adaptation, offline interaction with natives found no relationship with intercultural adaptation. What's more, host mass media use positively predicted both psychological and sociocultural adaptation; home media use was only negatively related to psychological adaptation. Information support was found to positively relate to both socio-cultural and psychological adaptation, while companionship support only positively predicted sociocultural adaptation. Neither emotion support nor tangible support had significant relationship with intercultural adaptation.

Introduction

Due to the differences between cultures, sojourners will go through a tough time after coming into host societies. In order to adapt to unfamiliar culture environment and reduce stress, sojourners will consciously or unconsciously learn host language, values, norms, etc. This gradual adaptation process is theoretically called intercultural adaptation. Over decades, scholars have explored the factors impacting sojourners' adaptation. Host mass media usage and interpersonal communication with host society members are regarded as powerful factors facilitating acculturation, while home, ethnic mass media use and interaction with ethnic community may prevent adaptation in a long run (Kim, 1978). In recent years, the popularity of social networking sites (SNSs) enables sojourners to maintain old relationships, like family and close friends left behind home country and build new social networks with host society members and ethnic groups, therefore are assumed to be helpful in sojourners' intercultural adaptation. Indeed, previous studies have already examined the significant role of Facebook in helping sojourners adapt to host society (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Lin, Peng, Kim, Kim, & LaRose, 2012). However, these studies only focused on host SNSs use, it is reasonable to assume that home SNSs may also influence sojourners adaptation process in some way. In this sense, this paper examines the effects of home SNSs and host SNSs on sojourners adaptation separately. Facebook and WeChat, as the most popular of SNS in Hong Kong and Mainland China, are chose as the subjects of this study.

What's more, most of previous studies only explored the influence of either traditional media or SNSs on international students' adaptation and seldom have them focused on the relationship between intercultural adaptation and both of the traditional and new media use. Given currently sojourners can get access to and thus be influenced by all sorts of media simultaneously, this paper also aims to uncover the role of SNSs, mass media,

face-to-face interpersonal interaction in sojourners' process of adaptation.

Besides media use, social support is regarded as another significant factor predicting intercultural adaptation, due to its potential in providing sojourners with necessary resources to reduce anxiety and overcome social difficulties (Adelman, 1988). Considering different types of social support come from interactions with different social networks, like, kin are important sources of emotion and tangible support instead of daily companionship support; friends usually are daily companions; weak ties more likely to provide information support (Schweizer, Schnegg, & Berzborn, 1998), this study also explores the relationship between interactions with different social networks online and offline and four dimensions of social support, which may further impact intercultural adaptation.

Mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong are chosen as the study sample for three reasons: (1) According to the annual report of Hong Kong Immigration Department (2013), among the total 27,927 non-local students studying in Hong Kong, 19,067 were Mainlanders. Obviously, Mainland student is the largest population of international students in Hong Kong; (2) Although Hong Kong is part of China and to some extent share the similar culture with Mainland, differences from political system to social behaviors, etc. still exist due to historical reason. Thus, exploring questions like to what extent will Mainland students meet problems during intercultural adaptation in Hong Kong and whether the examined power of media and social support in the process of acculturation is still available in this unique context will definitely enrich the academic understanding in this area; and (3) Moreover, in recent years, the tension between Hong Kong people and Mainlanders has been gradually escalated. On the one hand, Hong Kong people possess no good impression on Mainlanders, which even induced social conflicts. For instance, some local communities held "anti-parallel trader demonstration" in major department stores in Hong Kong during February and March

2015. Mainland tourists were surrounded, verbally abused and even physically injured by groups of locals. On the other hand, with the increasing economic power and the hostile sentiments from Hong Kong people, the ethnic identity of Mainlanders increases drastically and they think the development of Hong Kong to a large extent relies on Mainland China and Mainlanders deserve better treatment in Hong Kong. Therefore, in the context of Hong Kong -- Mainland conflict, exploring the impact of overall media use, perceived social support on Mainland students' intercultural adaptation process also has considerable realistic significance.

Literature Review

Communication and Social Support

Cohen and Hoberman (1983) defined social support as the resources or aids exchanged between individuals through interpersonal ties and classified four types of social support: self-esteem, appraisal, belonging, and tangible support. Other scholars (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991; Wellman & Hall, 1985) classified social support into different dimensions, such as emotion support, instrumental support, information support, affection support, positive interaction，and social companionship, etc. Though different classifications in this area exist, most of scholars agreed that social support basically functions to provide tangible support, information support, emotional support, and companionship.

Before the emergence of Internet, researchers mainly paid attention on the relationship between interpersonal interactions and face-to-face social support, and claimed that due to the different characteristics of relationships, interactions with different ties will generate different dimensions of social support. Strong ties, like friends, are the significant sources of emotional aids and companionship but not necessarily tangible support; immediate kin are

more likely provide emotion support and tangible support rather than daily companionship;

weak ties are important sources of information support (Hall & Wellman, 1985; Wellman &

Wortle, 1990). In recent years, the development of CMC enables users to sustain strong and

old social ties without time and space restriction (Haythornthwaite, 2005; Wright, 1999).

Also it ensures users to build new online weak ties according to common interests, ideas

instead of relationships in physical world. In this situation, an increasing number of scholars

have turned their interests into the relationship between online social support and online

communication and even proposed that face-to-face social support pales in comparison with

online social support (Chen & Choi, 2001). Based on the study of computer-supported

networks, Wellman et al. (1996) thought "the much more uninhibited, creative and blunt

online interactions within both specialized and broadly based relationships can provide

information and social support". Similarly, Bakardjieva (2003) asserted that social support

received from online groups interactions can help deal with life problems.

In the area of intercultural adaptation, scholars posited interaction with new established

social networks, like ethnic groups or host culture members, would generate companionship

and information support and enable international students to form a sense of belonging and

a bettering understanding of host society (AlSharideh & Goe, 1998; Kim, 1988). While

interaction with old social networks left behind home, like family members and close friends

would generate emotion support and can help sojourners maintain comfort and stability and

thus go through intercultural transition (Ying & Lises, 1991).

In this study, Mainland students in HK are more likely to communicate with host society

members and co-ethnic groups in physical world. While in online world, they can not only

interact with Mainlanders in Hong Kong and members of host culture, but also maintain

relationship with long distance networks, like family and friends. Thus, it is fair to ask:

RQ1: How interactions with different groups via SNSs and face-to-face interpersonal

communication relate to Mainland students' different types of perceived social

support?

Communication and Intercultural Adaptation

After entering a new culture environment, sojourners will undergo a series of changes and

disruptions, which will cause social difficulties as well as psychological symptoms, like

homesickness, nightmare, waking up suddenly while sleeping, etc. (Furnham, & Bochner,

1986). In order to handle changes, relieve stress and solve social difficulties, sojourners will

gradually adapt to host culture by endorsing host cultural values, norms and behaviors, etc.

This process is theoretically called intercultural adaptation. Ward and Kennedy (1999) once

claimed that this adaptation process mainly involves two dimensions: (1) sociocultural

adaptation, referring to the social skills and abilities sojourners learned to meet host society

demands; (2) psychological adaptation, means the psychological well-being and satisfaction

of sojourners. They emphasized the importance of distinguishing the two types of

adaptation and examining them simultaneously. Thus, in this study, Mainland students'

intercultural adaptation level will be measured by: (1) sociocultural adaptation and (2)

psychological adaptation.

Over the last decades, scholars examined the factors influencing intercultural adaptation

process (Berry et al., 1987; Ward, 1999). Communication behavior is viewed as a significant

factor predicting sojourners' intercultural adaptation. Depending on the research of Korean

immigrants' communication behaviors, Kim (1988) came up with the communication and

cross-cultural adaptation theory. According to this theory, the frequency of host mass media

use and interpersonal communication with members in host society can facilitate

intercultural adaption. While, in a long run, the intensity of ethnic mass media usage and interactions with ethnic communities would slow down or even prevent the process of cross-cultural adaptation. Similarly, by observing the mass media use behaviors of ten first generation Chinese-American families living in Silicon Valley, Huang (1993) asserted that ethnic mass media usage on the one hand can equip immigrants with information about host society; on the other hand may help sojourners maintain ethnic identification and therefore enhance resistance to acculturation. Jeffres (2000) also found that the usage of home country or ethnic media is positively related to ethnic identification and thus negatively correlated with acculturation. Besides, some scholars were interested in the different power of mass media usage and interpersonal communication on sojourners intercultural adaptation. For instance, Shah (1991) found that though both host mass media usage and interpersonal communication positively predicted Asian-Indian community's adaptation, host interpersonal communication was comparatively more helpful than host mass media use in facilitating adaptation. In all, scholars in the field of intercultural adaptation agreed that host mass media usage and interpersonal interactions with host societies members can facilitate intercultural adaptation, while relying on home mass media and interpersonal interactions with co-ethnic groups will hinder acculturation.

Recently, the popularity of SNSs, with its feature of universal access and connection, provides intercultural adaptation researchers with another significant field to study. For example, based on studying the Internet use behaviors and intercultural adaptation of Chinese immigrants in Singapore, Chen (2010) claimed the more time immigrants spend on Chinese websites, the less likely they will socio-culturally adapt to host society. Also, by studying the influence of Facebook usage on international students' online and offline social capital and cross-cultural adaptation, LaRose and colleagues (2012) found Facebook usage,

especially communication with host members via Facebook, positively predicted social adjustment adaptation. Similarly comparing with international students using home SNSs, Park, Song and Lee (2014) claimed those only using Facebook possessed comparatively lower level of acculturation stress and higher level of psychological well-being. Considering that the most popular SNS in HK: Facebook, is blocked in Mainland China and Mainland students mainly use WeChat, a SNS platform combining the functions of What's app and Facebook and possessing 549 million monthly active users during 2015 (Tencent, 2015), to contact old social networks left behind home; therefore it is reasonable to ask whether the different using intensity of Facebook and WeChat will cause different level of adaptation?

H1: Facebook usage is positively related to Mainland students' intercultural adaptation.

H2: WeChat usage negatively predicts Mainland students' intercultural adaptation.

H3: Face-to-face interpersonal interaction with locals is positively related to Mainland students' intercultural adaptation.

H4: Face-to-face interpersonal interaction with ethnic groups is negatively related to Mainland students' intercultural adaptation.

H5: The intensity of host mass media use is positively related to Mainland students' intercultural adaptation.

H6: The intensity of home mass media use is negatively related to Mainland students' intercultural adaptation.

Social Support and Intercultural Adaption

In the area of psychology, social support, for a long period of time, has been regarded as a crucial factor predicting sojourners' psychological adjustment (Ward, 1999). Researchers in this area mainly focused on the direct or buffering effects of social support on acculturation

anxiety and stress. For example, depending on buffering effect theory, Lee et al. (2004) suggested that social support is valuable in buffering sojourners' acculturative stress and improving their psychological well-being. Mallinckrodt and Leong (1992) found that for international students, the lack of social support positively related to depression, anxiety and other physical symptoms. By studying Korean-American families' psychological well-being, Choi (1997) also reported the negative relationship between four types of social support and acculturative stress and depression.

Those mentioned studies were conducted from a psychological perspective. In the area of social science, studies mainly focused on how social support from interactions with different social groups influence intercultural adjustment. For instance, Ye (2006) found that perceived social support from long distance network is negatively related to psychological disturbance, while perceived social support from online ethnic social groups is negatively related to social difficulties. But it is also noticeable that social support itself is an significant coping resource for sojourners to reduce uncertainties and enhance perceived mastery over new environment and different types of social support functions differently on adjustment (Adelman, 1988). Tangible support is significant for both initial and long-term adaptation phases of immigrants, since such support will give them a sense of controlling. Companionship support (acceptance or assurance), especially from co-ethnic groups undergoing similar life changes, provides sojourners a sense of belonging and helps reduce homesickness. However, such support may also function to fortress immigrants' home culture identification and thus prevent the process of adjustment in a long run. Emotion support (ventilation) is crucial for immigrants to reduce stress and gain psychological well-being, since they can find someone listen to their problems and therefore vent negative feelings. Information support, mainly generate from interaction with natives, can enhance

sojourners' understanding about host society and also help them learns necessary skills to meet society demands. Based on those previous studies, RQ2 is proposed:

RQ2:   What is the relationship between different types of social support and intercultural adaptation?

Extraversion and Social Support

As a dimension of the Big Five Model, extraverts are those outgoing, talkative and full of energy person (Thompson & Edmund, 2008). Previous studies have found that extraversion is an important predictor of perceived social support (Bolger & Eckenrode, 1991; Cutrona & Russell, 1987). In a study of exploring the relationship between personality, social support and academic adjustment, Halamandaris (1999) found that extroversion is positively correlated with social support, while negatively related to anxiety. Similarly, Swickert (2002) found perceived available support, particularly tangible support and belonging support are positively related to extroversion. Though both of the mentioned studies demonstrated a positive relationship between extraversion and social support, consensus about the relationship between extraversion and social support has not been made yet in academic world and still some researchers claimed extroversion has no relationship with social support and support satisfaction (Sarason et al., 1983). What's more, only few studies explored the relationship between extraversion and social support among sojourners. Considering the unique characteristics of sojourners, it is fair to ask:

RQ3:   What is the relationship between extroversion and perceived social support among Mainland students?

Extraversion and Intercultural Adaptation

As a part of the big five personality traits, researchers have also examined the impact of extroversion on intercultural adaptation (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). Some of them found that the higher extravert individuals are, the better intercultural adaptation they will be (Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004). The possible reasons are that people with higher level of extraversion are more likely have more intercultural friends (Ying, 2002) and a lower level of extroversion was correlated to individuals' negative psychological feelings (Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets, & Heck, 1999). Other scholars (Lin, Peng, Kim, Kim, & LaRose, 2012; Park, Song, & Lee, 2014) pointed out the significant role of extraversion on sojourners' emotion adaptation and psychological balance after entering new societies. Based on these studies, we hypothesize:

H7: Extraversion is positively related to Mainland students' intercultural adaptation.

Methodology

Data Collection

To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, paper-based questionnaire was employed to reach the Mainland students at two famous universities in Hong Kong. Both of the two universities began to recruit Mainland Chinese at earliest time and attract thousands of Mainland students to entry every year due to its reputation in academic world. The questionnaires were distributed in both libraries and learning rooms, since the period of distribution was during the final term, and almost all the classes were suspended. To reduce misunderstanding of items, the initial questionnaire was made in simplified Chinese. In all, a total of 411 Mainland students from the two universities responded the questionnaire.

Participants

As shown in Table 1, among the total 411 respondents, 176 (42.8%) of them were male, while 235 (57.2%) of them were female. For the age distribution of respondents, 145 (35.3%) were between 19-22 years old; 240 (58.4%) were between 23-25 years old; 23 (5.6%) were more than 25 years old; and only 3 (0.7%) respondents were under 18 years old. When it comes to the degree students were pursuing for, 94 (22.9%) of respondents were undergraduate students; 285 (69.3%) of them were in one-year taught master programs. MPhil (research master) or PhD students only accounted for 7.8% (32). With regard to the length of residence in HK, 300 (73%) students had resided in HK for less than 1 year. The rest of respondents' residence length varied from 1-2 years to more than 5 years. Regarding to the future plan after graduation, 263 (64%) of respondents reported leaving Hong Kong immediately after graduation; 122 (29.7%) of them wanted to stay in Hong Kong for years and leave Hong Kong eventually; and only 26 (6.3%) of respondents wanted to stay in Hong Kong for the purpose of immigration.

(* Insert Table 1 about here*)

Measurement

Socio-cultural adaptation. To measure the level of socio-cultural adaptation level, students were asked to indicate to what degree they adapt to 13 areas of daily life, like housing, local food, making friends, etc. A 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very adapt to) was used. Higher scores mean higher level of sociocultural adaptation (M = 3.52, SD = .56, α= .86). This scale was once used in Rohrlich and Martin's (1991) study to measure intercultural adaptation.

Psychological adjustment. A slightly modified Gao and Gudykunst's (1990) 8-item scale (M =

3.25, SD = .56, α= .77) was used to measure Mainland students' psychological adaptation. Students were asked to indicate to the degree of their satisfaction or comfort towards items related to Hong Kong. Sample items included, how comfortable do you feel living in Hong Kong; how satisfied are you with your academic performance in Hong Kong, etc. A 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1(not satisfied at all) to 5 (extremely satisfied) was used.

Extraversion. To measure extraversion, 8 items in the Big Five Inventory (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008) measuring extraversion was used in this study (M = 3.09, SD = .52, α= .77). Mainland students were asked to indicate to what extent they agree each of the following items with a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not agree at all) to 5 (extremely agree). Example items included ''I see myself as someone who is talkative'', ''I see myself as someone who has an assertive personality," and "I see myself as someone who is sometimes shy, inhibited.

Perceived Social Support. To measure perceived social support, an adapted 12-items scale was developed by reviewing established social support scales, like Sherboume and Stewart's (1991) MOS-SSS (Mediacal Outcome Study-Social Survey) and Chen and Choi's (2011) CMSS (Computer Mediated Social Support). The initial scale had 4 dimensions: information support, emotion support, tangible support, and companionship support, and each dimension has 3 items. Respondents were asked to report "when you need them, how often each of the following types of support is available to you from either online or offline world" with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = None of the time, 5 = All of the time). After data collection, factor analysis was conducted and 2 items with low communalities scores were deleted (Table 2). The final scale had 4 dimensions with 10 items: information support (M = 3.69, SD = .80, α= .86), emotion support (M = 3.50, SD = .87, α= .87), tangible support (M = 2.91, SD = 1.14, α= .84) and also companionship support (M = 3.95, SD = .83, α= .93).

(* Insert Table 2 about here *)

Media Use. WeChat and Facebook, the most popular SNSs platform in Mainland and Hong Kong respectively were chose to represent home SNSs and host SNSs. Firstly, students were asked whether they have a Facebook/WeChat account. If they have, then they were asked to report how often they used WeChat and Facebook during the last month with a 5-point Likert scale (0=Never, 1 = several times a month, 2 = several times a week, 3= several time a day, 4 = more than 10 times a day). Finally, they were asked to report the average length of each logging in time from 1 to 5 points (1 = 0 – 5 minutes; 2 = 6 – 15 minutes; 3 = 16 – 30 minutes; 4 = 31 – 60 minutes, and 5 = more than 60 minutes). The intensity of using Facebook and WeChat was measured by multiplying the value of these two items and then recoded into 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). To measure the frequency Mainland students communicate with different social groups, students were asked to report the time percentage they spend on interacting with (1) HK people, (2) ethnic groups in HK, (3) family members or friends far away from HK via either WeChat or Facebook during the last month. A 5-point Likert scale (1= 0 – 10%; 2 = 11% – 30%; 3 = 31%– 60%; 4 = 61% - 90%; 5= 91% - 100%) was used.

To measure mass media usage, respondents were asked to report the intensity they use host mass media (newspapers, TV dramas and programs) and home mass media (newspapers, TV dramas and programs) via either Internet or traditional forms (TV or paper) during last month. A 5-point Likert Scale (1=Never, 5=Always) was used in this study.

Face-to-face interpersonal interaction was measured by asking respondents to report how frequently they face-to-face interacted with HK people/ ethnic groups in HK for more than 15 minutes each time during last month. A 5-point Likert Scale was used with "1"=Never, "2"=Seldom, "3"=Sometimes, "4"=Often, "5"=Always.

Language Competence. Considering language competence is also regarded as a significant factor influencing sojourners' adaptation. Respondents were also required to report their Cantonese competence (M = 2.51, SD = 1.12, α= .956) by answering the following 3 items: "I feel comfortable speaking Cantonese"; "I prefer to talk with others in Cantonese" and "I like to speak Cantonese in public, since I think I am good at it." Park and colleagues (2014) once used a similar scale.

Demographic. Age, gender, education and period of residence were asked at the end of questionnaire as control variables. Also students were also required to report their future plan after graduation (1 = Leave Hong Kong immediately after graduation; 2 = Stay in Hong Kong for years and leave Hong Kong eventually, 3 = Stay in Hong Kong for the purpose of immigration).

Findings

Media Use Description

Regarding SNSs use, as shown in Table 3, 371 (90.3%) respondents had a Facebook account. While almost all the respondents had a WeChat account (99.8%). Moreover, the majority of respondents reported that they never (16.3%) or seldom (62%) use Facebook, while sometimes (41.8%) or often (19.7%), even always (20%) use WeChat during the last month. When it comes to the face-to-face interaction behaviors, the majority of respondents indicated that they never (23.8%), seldom (46%), sometimes (24.1%) contacted with locals, while sometimes (33.8%) and often (38.9%) interacted with Mainlanders in HK. About mass media use patterns, it is also clear that respondents used home mass media (M = 2.93, SD = 1.03) more frequently than host mass media (M = 3.64, SD = .95) (Table 3). When asked the percentage of time spending on interaction with different social networks via either

Facebook or WeChat, respondents mainly interacted with ethnic communities (M = 2.62, SD = .74) or Mainlanders not in HK (M = 2.54, SD = 1), instead of locals (M = 1.56, SD = .93) (Table 4).

(* Insert Table 3 and 4 about here*)

Communication and Social Support

Research question 1 and 3 explored the impact of interactions with different groups of people via SNSs or face-to-face interpersonal communication and extraversion on four types of perceived social support. To answer these questions, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted (Table5). Firstly, the blocks of demographic information and extraversion were entered as control variables. The following entered block was the time percent of Mainland students' interactions with different groups through either Facebook or Wechat. Mainland students' face-to-face interaction intensity with locals and ethnic groups in HK was entered last.

Results show that extraversion is significantly and positively correlated to all four types of support: information support (β =.142 , p <.01, $\triangle R^2$ = .018) emotion support (β = .248 , p <.001, $\triangle R^2$ = .059), tangible support (β =.191 , p <.001, $\triangle R^2$ = .034), and companionship support (β =.184 , p <.001, $\triangle R^2$ = .031). Education is negatively associated with information support (β = -.213, p < .001), tangible support (β = -.104, p < .05), and companionship support (β = -.189, p < .001). Gender is positively related to emotion support (β = .178, p < .001), and tangible support (β = .152, p < 0.01). Age is negatively related to emotion support (β = -.114, p < .05). The block of demographic variables explained 4.3% variance of information support is .043; 4% variance of emotion support; 2.9% variance of tangible support, and 3.4% variance of companionship support.

When taking demographic variables and extraversion into consideration, interaction with locals via SNSs is positively correlated to information support (β = .123, $p < .05$, ΔR^2 = .012), emotion support (β = .158, p = .001, $\triangle R^2$ = .022), and tangible support (β = .126, $p < .01$, ΔR^2 = .014); interaction with ethnic groups in HK via SNSs is positively related to social companionship (β = .145, $p < .01$, $\triangle R^2$ = .018). While, no significant relationship was found between interaction with Mainland Chinese not in HK and four types of support.

As for interactions in offline world, results show interpersonal communication with ethnic groups is positively related to both emotion support (β = .116, $p < .05$, $\triangle R^2$ = .011), and companionship support (β = .13, $p < .01$, ΔR^2 = .013), while information support is positively related to face-to-face interaction with locals (β = .126, $p < .05$, ΔR^2 = .01).

In sum, this regression explained 8.3% variance of information support; 13.2% variance of emotion support; 7.7% variance of tangible support and 9.6% variance of companionship support.

Communication and Intercultural Adaptation

H1 to H6 indicated the relationship between intercultural adjustment and media use behaviors. H7 proposed a positive relationship between intercultural adaptation and extraversion. To test these hypotheses, another hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. To filter the effects of demographic factors, such information still entered first as control variables. Extraversion and Cantonese competence were put secondly as additional control variables. After control variables, the blocks of SNSs, mass media use patterns and face-to-face interaction behaviors entered step by step (Table 6).

Results show the length of residence in HK is positively related to both sociocultural (β = .14, $p < .01$) and psychological adaptation (β = .142, $p < .01$). Future plan also positively

predicts both sociocultural (β = .111, *p* < .05), and psychological adaptation (β = .227, *p*

< .001). Education is negatively related to sociocultural adaptation (β = -.188, *p* < .001),

while age negatively predicted psychological adaptation (β = -.094, *p* < .05). The ΔR^2 of

demographic information for sociocultural adaptation is .059; for psychological adaptation

is .073. Also both extraversion and Cantonese competence are significantly and positively

related to sociocultural adaptation (β = .218, *p* < .001; β = .45, *p* < .001; ΔR^2 = .228), and

psychological adaptation (β = .135, *p* = .001; β = .54, *p* < .001; ΔR^2 = .283). Therefore,

hypothesis 7 that extraversion is positively related to intercultural adaptation was

supported.

When it comes to the relationship between intercultural adaptation and host and ethnic

SNSs use, results show Facebook use intensity has a positive relationship with psychological

adaptation (β = .081, p < .05). While the correlation between the Wechat use intensity and

psychological adaptation is negative (β = -.088, *p* < .05). However, no significant relationship

was found between SNSs use and sociocultural adaptation. This block in total explained 1%

of the variance. Thus, results only partly support H1: Facebook use is positively related to

intercultural adaptation and H2: WeChat use is negatively related to intercultural adaptation.

Hypothesis 3 and 4 proposed intercultural adaptation positively predicts face-to-face

interaction with locals, while negatively predicts face-to-face interaction with ethnic groups

in HK. However, no significant relationship was found between face-to-face interaction with

locals and intercultural adaptation. Therefore, H3 was rejected. And results only show a

positive relationship between face-to-face interaction with ethnic groups in HK and

sociocultural adaptation (β = .118, *p* < .01, ΔR^2 = .012). In this sense, H4 was rejected.

With regard to H5 that a positive relationship exists between host mass media use and

intercultural adaptation and H6 a negative relationship exists between home mass media

use and intercultural adaptation, results show host media use does positively correlate to both sociocultural (β = .135, *p* < 0.01. ΔR2 = .011) and psychological adaptation (β = .135, *p* < 0.01). Thus H5 was supported. While results only partly supported H6, that is, home mass media use is negatively correlated to psychological adaptation (β = -.094, *p* < 0.05), not sociocultural adaptation. The block explained 1.3% of the variance for psychological adaptation.

Social support and Intercultural Adaptation

Research question 2 explored the relationship between the four types of social support and intercultural adaptation. After entering the blocks of communication patterns, the block of perceived social support entered. The results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis show information support positively predicted both of the sociocultural (β = .139, *p* < .01) and psychological adaptation (β = .161, *p* < .001). A significant positive relationship was also found between companionship support and sociocultural adaptation (β = .151, *p* < 0.01). However, neither of emotion support nor tangible support possessed significant relationship with intercultural adaptation (Table 6). The $\triangle R^2$ of this block for sociocultural adaptation is .045; for psychological adaptation is .04.

    In sum, the blocks of communication patterns and perceived social support explained 35.5% variance of sociocultural adaptation, and 41.9% variance of psychological adaptation.

(* Insert Table 5 & 6 about here *)

Discussion

The current study explored the influence of both online and offline interaction with different social networks on the perceived social support of Mainland students in Hong Kong, and

also investigated the impact of SNSs or face-to-face interactions with locals and ethnic groups in Hong Kong and mass media use on intercultural adaptation. Individual personality and language competence were also taken into consideration.

In all, sojourners still interacted more frequently with ethnic groups than natives in both online and offline world. In fact, they even contact with old social networks left behind home more frequently via SNSs than interaction with members of host society. Though sojourners still use more home mass media via Internet or traditional media forms than using host mass media, the difference between home mass media and host mass media use is not so significant. This may be because Hong Kong TV dramas or programs had been familiar and attractive to Mainland students even before they come Hong Kong.

As for four types of social support, the highest social support perceived by sojourners is companionship support, while the lowest is tangible support. The possible reason is that tangible support mainly from immediate kinships. Thus the disruption of old ties after sojourners entering host society may cause a lack of such social support. While companionship support mainly comes from strong ties, like friends. After entering host society, students can immediately build relationships with ethnic groups undergoing similar acculturative stress and therefore get accompanies. What's more, results show sojourners' sociocultural adaptation level is comparatively higher than psychological adaptation. It is reasonable since it is easier for sojourners to learn necessary social skills to meet host society demands, especially when the host society is similar to home culture. However, it is harder to for sojourners to gain psychological balance, especially considering the current tension between Hong Kong and Mainlanders.

Regarding factors predicting sojourners' perceived social support, extraversion was found to positively related to all four types of social support. This is consistent with previous

study and their explanation was extraverts are good at establishing and maintaining both online and offline relationships; therefore can benefit more from social interactions (Ross et al., 2009). Gender was found to positively relate to emotion support and tangible support. The possible explanation might be females are more sensitive and empathy and thus are more likely to perceive emotion and tangible support (Wellman, 1990). While, education is negatively related to information, tangible and companionship support. This may be because in undergraduate students in Hong Kong comparatively have more local classmates, therefore interact more frequently with locals and get information and tangible support. Also they mainly live on campus and have more extra-courses activities, thus more likely get companionship support.

Concerning with the relationship between four types of perceived social support and SNSs use patterns as well as face-to-face interaction behaviors, interaction with locals in either online or offline world positively predicts information support even after controlling demographic variables and personality. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Adelman, 1988; Kim, 1978) that sojourners depended on weak ties, like host society members, to get immediate information to better understand host society. Results also show that both online and offline interactions with ethnic groups are positively related companionship support. This finding is similar to previous studies that strong ties, such as friends, organization members, etc., are more likely to be companions (Adelman, 1988; Wellman & Wortle, 1990). In the context of this study, ethnic community also undergoing the stress of cultural shock and thus would be more likely gather together to reduce homesickness and initial acculturative anxiety. Emotion support is positively related to interaction with locals via SNSs. These might be the acceptance from locals can make sojourners feel better under the current situation of Hong Kong – Mainlander conflict. But,

communication with Mainlanders not in HK via SNSs cannot get any types of social support. This might be because family and close friends are the crucial sources of tangible, emotion and companionship support, instead of information support. Therefore, it's hard for sojourners to get tangible support due to the absence of family or close friends in host society. Also as Lin et al. (2012) suggested that people more likely seek bridging social capital online, while pursue bonding social capital, like emotion support through physical interaction, thus it's reasonable for the absence of emotion support from long distance social ties. This suggestion also explains the positive relationship between emotion support and interactions with ethnic groups in physical world rather than online world. In all, this study indicates that interaction with host culture members is an important way to get information support. While interaction with new established strong ties, that is ethnic groups, can get more emotion support and companionship support. Interaction with long distance social networks seems have no influence on perceived social support.

As for the relationship between intercultural adaptation and media use patterns and face-to-face interaction behaviors, the present study showed positive relationships between intercultural adaptation and the residence length, extraversion, and language competence, like many previous studies (Park et al., 2014). Education was found to negatively relate to sociocultural adaptation, while age was found to negatively predict psychological adaptation. This might be because undergraduate students have more opportunities to contact with locals and thus will get more information about host society and learn Cantonese faster than graduate students, whose classmates are mainly Mainland students and thus can better adapt to Hong Kong socio-culturally and psychologically. Using Facebook was found to positively relate to psychological adaptation and using WeChat was negatively correlated to psychological adaptation. However, neither of Facebook use nor WeChat use was related to

sociocultural adaptation. This finding is inconsistent with Chen's (2010), Lin et al.'s (2012) studies that time spent on host Internet websites and host SNSs positively correlate to sociocultural adaptation, instead of psychological adaptation. This might be because in face-to-face context, Mainland students may have some considerations restricting their interactions, while in online world, students may feel much freer to vent their negative feelings and thus would feel better. Later studies should further examine the relationship between the use of SNSs and psychological adaptation. With regard to the role of offline interaction behaviors in intercultural adaptation, only face-to-face interaction with Mainlanders in Hong Kong was found to significantly and positive relate to socio-cultural adaptation. This finding is inconsistent with Kim's (1978) study, suggesting negative relationship between interpersonal communication with ethnic groups and intercultural adaptation. However, the sampling of Kim's study is immigrants in American, while the sampling of this study is sojourners who have only resided in host society for a short period of time. Thus, it is possible that they have not build relationships with lots of natives yet, but have already built relationships with ethnic groups due to empathy, the same culture values, etc., and accordingly can only depend on ethnic groups to exchange some information about host society instead of natives. For mass media use patterns, using host mass media, like newspapers, TV drama or programs via either traditional media forms (Newspaper, TV) or Internet is positively associated with both psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation. While, using home mass media is negatively related to psychological adaptation. This finding support Huang's (1993) study that host mass media use can equip sojourners with necessary information about host society and thus facilitate acculturation, while using home or ethnic mass media will fortress sojourners' identification towards home culture, thus prevent adaptation.

Concerning about the relationship between four types of social support and intercultural adaptation, the present study found information support is positively related to psychological adaptation. Since information support can ensure sojourners to cognitively better understand host society, to learn necessity skills to meet social demands and thus to gain a sense of controlling, the positive relation between information support and psychological adaptation is reasonable. Companionship support, which mainly comes from online and offline interaction with ethnic group was found to positively related to sociocultural adaptation, but not psychological adaptation. While no significant relationship was found between intercultural adaptation and perceived emotion support and tangible support. This might be because, emotion support or tangible support are generated more likely from physical rather than online interaction with like family members and close friends. However, after sojourners entering a new culture, such ties will be to a large extent disrupted and it is impossible for them to get emotion or tangible support from long distance networks. Even though sojourners can build new strong ties with ethnic groups, previous studies suggested such ties are not necessarily sources of tangible support (Adelman, 1988; Wellman & Wortle, 1990). Given this situation, it is reasonable that tangible support is unavailable to sojourners and cannot help sojourners adapt to host culture.

This study also has several limitations. Firstly, the sample is not randomly selected. Therefore, it's likely that the sampling of this study is not representative. Secondly, the measurement of media use depends on respondent's memory. However, to some extent, such memory may be recalled inaccurately thus influence the findings. Third, the scales employed in this study mainly come from Western society. Thus it might be unsuitable to measure Mainland students in Hong Kong. Future studies should come up with scales suitable for adaptation to similar culture, like Hong Kong and Mainland China. Finally, this

study only explored the relationship between intercultural adaptation and different types of social support, rather than social support from different social networks. However, examining the relationship between perceived social support from different social ties and intercultural adaptation can better justify the effects of interaction with different social networks on intercultural adaptation.

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Table 1. Summary of Demographics

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	176	42.8%
	Female	235	57.2%
Age	Under 18	3	.7%
	19-22	145	35.3%
	23-25	240	58.4%
	More than 25	23	5.6%
Education	Undergraduate	94	22.9%
	Taught master	285	69.3%
	Research master or Phd	32	7.8%
Length of residence	Less than 1 year	300	73%
	1-2 years	51	12.4%
	More than 2 years and less than 4 years	45	10.9%
	4-5 years	15	2.4%
	More than 5 years	5	1.2%
Future Plan After Graduation	Leave Hong Kong immediately after graduation	263	64%
	Stay in Hong Kong for years and leave eventually	122	29.7%
	Stay in Hong Kong for the purpose of immigration	26	6.3%

Note: N = 411

Table 2. Factor Analysis of Perceived Social Support (N = 411)

When you need them, how often each of the following types of support is available to your from either online or offline world?	Mean	SD	Factors			
			1	2	3	4
Companionship support						
1. Someone to do something enjoyable with	3.99	.85	.92			
2. Someone to have a good time with	3.93	.90	.89			
3. Someone to get together for relaxation	3.94	.89	.88			
Emotional support						
4. Someone to listen to your fears and private worries	3.54	.95		.87		
5. Someone to encourage and comfort you	3.45	.98		.82		
6. Someone who cares about your health condition	3.52	.99		.72		
Information support						
7. Someone to give you information to better understand a situation	3.75	.83			.92	
8. Someone to give you advice about a crisis	3.64	.87			.85	
Tangible support						
9. Someone to take you to doctor if you were sick	2.95	1.23				.88
10. Someone to help you if you were confined to bed	2.88	1.22				.82
Eigenvalue			5.12	1.56	1.13	.73
Variance explained (%)			51.17	15.56	11.27	7.29
Cronbach's alpha			.93	.87	.86	.84

Table 3. Description of SNSs, mass media and face-to-face interaction behaviors

Frequency	Facebook		WeChat		F2F with locals		F2F with ethnic group		Host mass media		Home mass media	
	N	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*
Never	67	16.3%	2	0.5%	98	23.8%	17	4.1%	29	7.1%	8	1.9%
Seldom	255	62%	74	18%	189	46%	44	10.7%	126	30.7%	49	11.9%
Sometimes	68	16.5%	172	41.8%	99	24.1%	139	33.8%	117	28.5%	89	21.7%
Often	13	3.2%	81	19.7%	22	5.4%	160	38.9%	119	29%	202	49.1%
Always	8	1.9%	82	20%	3	0.7%	51	12.4%	20	4.9%	63	15.3%
Mean	2.12		3.41		2.13		3.44		2.93		3.64	
SD	.79		1.02		.86		.97		1.03		.95	

Note: N = 411

Table 4. Description of percentage of interaction with different groups via SNSs

Percentage	Interaction with locals via SNSs		Interaction with ethnic group via SNSs		Interaction with Mainlanders not in HK via SNSs	
	N	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*
0-10%	229	55.7%	45	10.9%	34	8.3%
11%-30%	147	35.8%	163	39.7%	204	49.6%
31%-60%	25	6.1%	116	28.2%	97	23.6%
61%-90%	8	1.9%	74	18%	68	16.5%
91%-100%	2	0.5%	13	3.2%	8	1.9%
Mean	1.56		2.62		2.54	
SD	.74		1		.93	

Note: N = 411

Table 5. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis for predictors of Mainland students' perceived social support.

Predictors	Information Support		Emotional Support		Tangible Support		Companionship Support	
	β	Adjusted ΔR^2	β	Adjusted ΔR^2	β	Adjusted ΔR^2	β	Adjusted ΔR^2
Block 1: Demographics		.04		.04		.03		.03
Gender	-.07		.18***		.15**		.04	
Age	-.03		-.11*		-.02		.01	
Education	-.21***		-.05		-.10*		-.19***	
Length of residence in HK	-.03		.05		.03		-.03	
Block 2: Personality		.02		.06		.03		.03
Extraversion	.14**		.25***		.19***		.18***	
Block 3: SNSs Interaction		.01		.02		.01		.02
Interaction with locals through SNSs	.12*		.16**		.13**		-.01	
Interaction with ethnic groups in HK via SNSs	.05		.06		.04		.15**	
Interaction with Mainlanders not in HK via SNSs	.06		.02		.02		-.04	
Block 4: Face-to-face Interaction		.01		.01		.00		.01
F2F interaction with locals	.13*		-.01		-.04		-.01	
F2F interaction with ethnic groups	.04		.12*		.06		.13**	
R^2	.09		.14		.09		.11	
Adjusted R^2	.08		.13		.08		.10	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; N = 411

Table 6. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis of factors predicting Mainland students intercultural adaptation

Predictors	Sociocultural adaptation		Psychological adaptation	
	β	Adjusted ΔR^2	β	Adjusted ΔR^2
Block 1: Demographics		.06		.08
Gender	-.06		-.07	
Age	-.02		-.09*	
Education	-.19***		-.01	
Length of residence in HK	.14**		.14**	
Future plan	.11*		.23***	
Block 2: Personality		.23		.29
Extraversion	.22***		.14**	
Cantonese Competence	.45***		.54***	
Block 3: SNSs Interaction		.00		.01
Facebook use	.05		.08*	
WeChat use	-.04		-.09*	
Block 4: Face-to-face Interaction		.01		.00
F2F interaction with locals	.06		-.21	
F2F interaction with ethnic groups	.12**		.03	
Block 5: Mass Media Use		.01		.01
Host Mass Media	.14**		.14**	
Home Mass Media	-.00		-.09*	
Block 6: Social Support		.05		.04
Information Support	.13**		.16***	
Emotional Support	-.03		-.03	
Tangible Support	.04		.08	
Companionship Support	.15**		.06	
R^2	.37		.43	
Adjusted R^2	.36		.42	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; N = 411