
Cultural Identity in the Perspective of Psychology

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[Abstract] In a modern society where the globalization process is deepening, continuous contact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds will lead to thinking about cultural identity. Cultural identity is the cornerstone of national identity and national identity. In recent years, it has become an important field of interdisciplinary and one of the topics of interest to psychologists. In the perspective of psychology, the study of cultural identity mainly focuses on the fields of developmental psychology, social psychology and cross-cultural psychology. The perspective of developmental psychology emphasizes that the construction and formation of individual cultural identity is a complex process of change. Social identity theory focuses on the relationship between cultural identity and self-esteem. Safe national identity strongly promotes the level of individual self-esteem. The theory of cultural adaptation emphasizes the different coping strategies of individuals in the development of cultural identity, such as integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization.

[Keywords] Cultural identity; Developmental psychology; Social identity theory; Cultural adaptation

6. Introduction

Psychology has always emphasized that external objective reality must have value through the internal psychological activities of individuals, and the study of cultural identity is no exception. Psychologists are better at selecting core variables, designing rigorous experiments to examine the phenomenon of cultural identity of a group, and establishing theoretical models to explore causes, predict behaviors, and provide empirical support for understanding the nature of cultural identity.

At present, the psychological research of cultural identity can be divided into two major categories. First, in countries where immigration is more common, the research targets are mainly immigrants and refugees. Second, in a single country with multiple ethnic groups, the research subjects are mainly focus on different ethnic minorities. Although the first type of research is more common, many psychologists have begun to pay attention to the second type of research, because the frequent contacts of different ethnic groups in the same country have promoted cultural integration to a certain extent, which has aroused the interest of researchers. China's unique geographical and historical conditions have created a colorful national culture, providing a broad stage for psychologists to study cultural identity.

Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the relevant theories of cultural identity and the factors affecting cultural identity from the perspective of psychology. In theory,

thinking about these issues is conducive to understanding the essence of cultural identity and laying the foundation for expanding and creating a cultural identity theory with Chinese characteristics; in practice, it can also help individuals to better self-regulate and make them fully developed and well adapted.

7. The Concept and Structure of Cultural Identity

Domestic and foreign scholars have formed some consensus on the understanding of cultural identity. First, from a macro perspective, cultural identity consists of two parts, the identity of the nation to which it belongs, that is, the identity of the nation and the identity of the country to which it belongs, that is, national identity. Second, from a micro perspective, cultural identity has a multi-dimensional character, which contains internal psychological processes such as attitudes, cognition, and emotions to specific groups. Regardless of the angle from which the researcher defines cultural identity, the construction of cultural identity will be implemented to the individual's psychological level. It is the process by which an individual constructs a self in a social environment and as an embodiment of the individual's social meaning in a group.^[1] We also believe that cultural identity exists both at the social level and at the individual level. It is the social adaptation process of individual in different situations and groups conducting cultural attitude decision-making and self-positioning.

8. Relevant Theory of Cultural Identity

In the context of psychology, most studies of cultural identity are developed in the fields of developmental psychology, social psychology, and cross-cultural psychology. Although these three perspectives overlap in the understanding of cultural identity, the emphasis they emphasize is different.

3.1 Cultural Identity Theory Based on the Perspective of Developmental Psychology

Developmental psychologists have been concerned with the formation and construction of individual cultural identity. The development theory of cultural identity can be traced back to Eriksson's theory of identity or identity theory. Eriksson believes that national identity is a form of identity of immigrants or ethnic groups. It has important implications for the self-development of the individual in the teenager period.^[2] On the basis of the theory of identity, according to the two dimensions of behavioral exploration and emotional commitment, Marcia proposed the state identity state model.^[3] She divides identity into four categories: decentralized (neither behavioral exploration nor emotional commitment), exclusion (no behavioral exploration but emotional commitment), delay (with behavioral exploration but no emotional commitment), maturity (existing behavioral exploration and Emotional

commitment). Although both theories and models attempt to emphasize the role of positive identity, they do not reflect the development process and dynamic changes of individual national identity.

3.2 Cultural Identity Theory Based on the Perspective of Social Psychology

Cultural identity is also one of the important issues of social psychologists. Social identity theory is an important basis for studying cultural identity. The theory of social identity has three core contents: first, the role of motivation, such as the need for individuals to obtain positive social identity; second, the difference in status of different groups in society; and third, as an independent individual or a member of a certain group, how do individuals solve identity problems.^[4] People are born with a need for classification, tend to divide themselves into a group, distinguish them from others, and use their membership to construct identity, thereby gaining self-esteem, improving cognitive security, and satisfying a sense of belonging. And the need for personality development.^[5]

The nationality is a natural and important classification. If immigrants or ethnic minority individuals have positive evaluations of their own nationalities, they will have a pleasant emotional experience and establish a safe national identity, thus achieving a high level of self-esteem. Therefore, the social identity theory places great emphasis on the relationship between group classification and self-esteem. Previous studies have also supported the conclusion that “strong national identity and self-esteem are positively correlated”.^[6] In addition, factors such as the evaluation of immigrants or minority groups, the relationship between immigrants or ethnic groups and other social groups will affect self-esteem and thus affect their status of identity.

3.3 Cultural Identity Theory Based on the Perspective of Intercultural Psychology

Among cross-cultural psychology, the most representative is the theory of cultural adaptation. Cultural adaptation (acculturation) refers to the cultural and psychological changes^[7] caused by continuous contact between two or more different cultural groups and members, including both the group and the individual. Cultural adaptation at the group level mainly includes changes in social structure, economic foundation, political organization, and cultural practices. Cultural adaptation at the individual level refers to the process of adapting the psychological and behavioral changes of individual values and attitudes to the new environment.^[8]

Psychologists are more concerned with the cultural adaptation at the individual level. Although both sides of the culture are subject to change in cultural adaptation, Berry^[8]

argues that immigrant or minority groups face greater challenges. They not only have to learn new skills, new knowledge, from the behavioral response to the requirements of different cultural norms to adapt to social, but also to distinguish different cultures to form a sense of belonging in the mind. It can be said that cultural adaptation and cultural identity are processes and outcomes that are intertwined and interact.

9. Influencing Factors of Cultural Identity

There are many factors that influence cultural identity, such as macroeconomic external factors such as social, cultural, political, historical, and economic. Factors such as the number of immigrants or ethnic minorities, the scope of their residence, the rights and resources they enjoy, and their relationships with other groups also have different meanings for cultural identity. This article focuses on factors that are relevant to the individual level and that influence the formation and development of cultural identity.

4.1 Demographic Indicator

The relationship between demographic indicators and cultural identity has always been a topic of concern to researchers, including gender, age, and socioeconomic status. Usually, women seem to be the inheritors of national culture. They have higher levels of national identity than men, but this conclusion has different performances in different countries, different immigrant groups and different nationalities, and does not form a consistent conclusion.^[8,9] Age is an important indicator of cultural identity. As the age increases, the level of individual cultural identity also increases. The role of socioeconomic status in cultural identity is also a major concern of researchers.

4.2 Cultural Difference

Generally speaking, the greater the difference between the two cultures, the more difficult the process of individual cultural adaptation is, which in turn affects their cultural identity. Language is a manifestation of cultural differences and one of the important contents in the field of cultural identity research. But the relationship between language and cultural identity has not been conclusive. There are two main viewpoints when investigating the relationship between language and cultural identity in foreign countries. One view is that language is a key factor in cultural identity and has a positive impact on cultural identity.^[10] Imbens-Bailey's study of Armenian American children shows that bilingual children who understand their native language and English have a higher level of national identity than monolingual children who only know English.^[11] Another view is that there is little relationship between language and cultural identity,^[12] and even if the language of the nation is lost, the individual will still have a higher level of national identity.

4.3 Social Support

Social support is an important resource for individuals to cope with stress and improve their adaptation in the process of cultural adaptation, including parents and peers. First, parents can influence the individual's cultural identity. The individual's national beliefs, values, and behaviors are largely learned from parents. A survey of parents of children with high levels of cultural identity found that these parents have a strong awareness that they are trying their best to cultivate their own children so that they can live and develop better in different cultural contexts.^[13] From the perspective of development trends, the influence of parents on the cultural identity of immigrants or minority children and adolescents is gradually weakening. This may be because young people learn and master different cultures far more than their parents, so it is impossible to get comprehensive help from their parents. In this case, the companion played an important role.

10. Conclusion

Although there are many psychological studies on cultural identity at home and abroad, and there is a vigorous research situation, some problems need to be improved. In theory, first of all, researchers have different understandings of cultural identity, which leads to differences in research design and further research conclusions. Secondly, the theoretical backgrounds of developmental psychology, social psychology and cross-cultural psychology on which cultural identity depends are similar and different, but these theories are born in the Western context. The main target of attention is immigration. Therefore, it is necessary to treat differently when interpreting the cultural identity of ethnic minority groups in China.

In addition, the shortcomings of these theories themselves need to be investigated by researchers from different angles. What is the relationship between cultural adaptation theory and ethnic contact? There are many interactions that require further combing and mining. This requires researchers from all over the world to test the universality of the theory. On the other hand, according to the specific national conditions and research objects, we should expand and improve relevant theories, and generalize the principle of cultural identity from the local phenomenon, reflecting the innovation of theoretical development.

In summary, factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, cultural differences and social support are of great significance in individual cultural identity. It is worth noting that these factors do not work alone. They are often intertwined and have an impact on the construction and development of individual cultural identity.

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