
Cultural Identity in Intercultural Communication

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Abstract: Culture is a nation's deepest historical accumulation and a country's most distinctive spiritual banner. Overall cultural strength and competitiveness of the country, an important symbol of national rejuvenation, is an important part of overall national strength. Through two-thousand-year history of East-West exchanges between various cultures, various ideological beliefs intertwined, and various ideological trends were agitated. China is able to really improve and strengthen the cultural soft power only by good solutions to the problem of cultural identity in global communication and the firm establishment of core values.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Communication, Cultural Identity, Core Values

1. Introduction

Culture always play an important role in a country's full development process. It is a nation's deepest historical accumulation and a country's most distinctive spiritual banner. Especially after three decades' fast economic development in China, the development of cultural soft power is getting more and more urgent. From APEC summit in Beijing in 2014, we can find Chinese central government not only focus on economic strategies, but pay more attention to cultural strategies. Overall cultural strength and competitiveness of the country, an important symbol of national rejuvenation, is an important part of overall national strength. With the globalization's development, the world is getting a "village". Villagers and neighbours like to communicate and know each other through different ways in order to cooperate and help each other to finish some difficult jobs. Looking back two-thousand-year history of East-West exchanges between various cultures, various ideological beliefs intertwined, and various ideological trends were agitated. Misunderstanding and prejudice often occur in global times. Only finding good solutions to the problem of cultural identity in global communication and establishing nationally cultural core values, China can really improve and strengthen the cultural soft power.

2. What is Cultural Identity

"Identity" is one of the basic concepts of social studies. It generally refers to the subjectivity consciousness of an

individual in the social life belonging to a group different from other group. It was a philosophical category connecting with a historic, integrity and identity self-consciousness together. On psychoanalysis, "identity" refers to personal discovering, imitating, and taking in the others' value, norms, and outlook, then forming their own behavior patterns. Psychologically speaking, people like to accept certain things means the appropriate psychological sense of belonging. "Identity" has two meanings in modern Chinese: First is they have same backgrounds and interests and feel intimate; Second is acceptance and approval. Identity will greatly influence people's behavior and guidelines, such as making some choices, establishing specific relationships with others, and gaining personal strength and resilience (Peiqun He & Yinxuan Yu, 2006:45).

"Cultural identity refers to individuals with a common culture follow a common cultural philosophy, use the same cultural symbols, and adhere to common thought patterns and behavior norms. Identity is one of the basic functions of the inherent culture. Having a common culture is the basis for national identity and social identity. While the personal identity of the community is mainly in the socialization of the individual who can learn and accept the culture created and owned by the society; social identity of the individual is reflected by the basic social cultural norms' popularity, promotion and dissemination among people; cultural identity is mainly expressed through the two sides' same cultural background, cultural atmosphere, or the culture recognized and accepted by each other" (Xinjian Cui, 2004:103).

Cultural identity is divided into internal and external

dimensions. Internal cultural identity refers to the cultural identity: by means of a common, glorious history and cultural origins of the centripetal force, all the members of a nation gather together against the cultural hegemony, but we do not oppose the absorption of foreign advanced culture. External cultural identity is the understanding and acceptance process of other cultures. With the gradual understanding and acceptance, we learn to take the initiative to learn from superior and beneficial part of other cultures, and integrate it into our own cultural system to improve and perfect our own culture.

3. Chinese Cultural Identity Performance in Intercultural Communication

3.1. History of Human Development is also a Conflict, Friction and Integration Cultural Identity History Among Different Cultures

3.1.1. The Historical Confidence of Chinese Cultural Identity

In the history of cross-cultural exchanges with the West from the middle of the Qin and Han to the Ming Dynasty, China in all aspects of social development, economy, politics, science and technology led the world. On the ancient Silk Road not only business travelers left footprints, but also we created the brilliant cultural exchanges; Jianzhen went to Japan to spread Buddhist sutra; Zheng He's seven voyages sent Chinese porcelain; four great inventions entered the West promoting the European Renaissance. Different civilizations sought for dialogues and exchanges in this period. With "East Studies Introduced to the West" during this period, people had a strong confidence in Chinese cultural identity. Needham believed that China from the third century to the thirteenth century had maintained the highest level of science. Chinese culture was still at the forefront of the world's heads until the 17th century.

3.1.2. The Inferior Performance of Chinese Cultural Identity in Modern Times

In the 17th and 18th centuries, European and American countries led by Netherlands gradually embarked on the road of capitalism. The Industrial Revolution starting from the UK made machine instead of manual labor, which greatly improved the efficiency of production and liberated the productive forces. Second industrial revolution of the 19th century furtherly promoted the development of productive forces, so the economic, social and cultural structures of Western countries have undergone profound changes. From the late Ming Dynasty to the late Qing Dynasty, the Western modernization opened the door of China, from missionary Matteo Ricci to Xu Guangqi Chinese intellectuals as the representatives had made an outstanding contribution for the mutual exchange and dissemination of Chinese and Western cultures. After the Opium War cross-cultural exchange became "All Western Learning"--overwhelming trend. The famous "Westernization Movement" was a good example:

Western powers forced China to open the door for them with gunboats, so Chinese intellectuals realized that "learning technology from westerners to challenge and win them." was urgent. The "cultural revolution" almost made Chinese traditional values broken, so people after that truly desired to absorb advanced culture to enrich their lives. At the beginning of reforming and opening times, long-term detention of the country's door once was opened, and Western material culture, institutional culture and spiritual culture flowed into China suddenly, so Chinese people felt new and strange, and some people blindly learned and followed the western culture. With the profound changes in the economic system, the profound changes in the social structure, and the profound changes in ideology at the same time, some people begin to doubt the original and traditional culture Value.

3.1.3. The Lost Cultural Identity of Contemporary Chinese

After thirty years' reformation, China has become the world's second largest economy and made great progress in social development, and people's living standards have been greatly improved. However, in globalization and multi-polarization times, information technology and networking projects make the culture disseminated and impacted at unprecedentedly speed. The US-led Western dominant culture through advanced communication technologies and means, flow into almost every corner of the world. Individual heroism, consumer hedonism, money worship and other ideas continuously influence the traditional Chinese values. Chinese culture is more and more take in Western elements: from the KFC, Apple cell phone, and Hollywood movies to different groups' English learning enthusiasm; from coke, Nike, and English novels to studying abroad, Western culture has been pervasive and all-encompassing. At the same time, we are losing the essence of Chinese traditional culture. Some people even think the various positive, successful and profound changes we have gained should thank to Western culture, and all the ugly elements should thank to Chinese culture. Therefore some people form lost and torturing self-identities" (Xingcheng Zhang, 2011:33). Nowadays many people in conflict between East and West, traditional and modern, ideal and reality, individual and society, reason and faith blow hot and cold. Not only because of the developed countries' influence from economy, culture and values, more importantly, because of low self-esteem due to our country's poverty and backwardness, Chinese people are not confident, even belittle ourselves in cross-cultural exchange. Especially when Chinese culture conflicts with developed culture, Chinese will lose their cultural identities (Wang Lizhou, 2011:50).

3.2. How to Solve the Issues of Cultural Identity from Cross-Cultural Exchanges' Perspective

3.2.1. The Reality of Chinese Cultural Identity Problems

In the context of globalization, the economy is operated as a cultural industry; culture is as economical one to operate, and the two parts achieved themselves in each other's areas. The United States as the world's largest economic power in the

world has successfully exported the largest commodity - "culture" which is American image. China's participation in globalization is a historical necessity. But China as a good cultural community and an independent nation-state is also involved in this process to rebuild Chinese cultural identity, to reshape the country's image and re-establish the international status. Therefore, in order to effectively deal with the challenges of Western culture, enhance national cohesion, and improve cultural soft power, we must firmly establish the guiding position of Marxism. With the guiding ideology of unification to lead diverse culture. Expanding Chinese cultural identity in different cultures, forming an inclusive and diverse ideological consensus, and focusing on the effective combination of traditional culture and modern Western culture, we try our best to reinforce the nation's cultural identity which is Chinese core value system: Mao Zedong Thought (i.e. Marxism with Chinese characteristics) is the soul; Chinese common ideal is the theme; national spirit and the spirit of the times is the essence; the concept of honor is the foundation. Culture is the nation's blood and the core value system is the core of culture which determines the nature of culture, cultural stance and cultural choices. It is the rejuvenating soul which determines the direction of development of whole country, and it is our Chinese people's cultural identity foundation. In the era of globalization, economic factors enter into the culture; cultural factors enter into the economy. Both of them interact with each other to finish mutual penetration. "An initial step towards developing respect for cultural differences is to look for situations in our own life in which we would behave like a person from another culture"(Fons Trompenaars & Charles Hampden-Turner,1998:197). Especially when more and more Chinese people do business, study, travel, or visit relatives in different countries all over the world, they like to learn and accept other cultures, but they meet different kinds of cultural challenges at the same time. With rapid economic development, various ideologies and cultures are intertwined, and international relations are increasingly complicated, so "who we are" such cultural identity issue becomes more important than anytime, which is an important and hot research topic. Although culture is invisible, its impact is everywhere; although culture seems weak, it is very strong in nature. As the wheel of history rolls on, only the culture will not stop to nourish the soul of this nation in the shape of material and non-material state and become our self-identification credentials, so we are able to have confidence and courage to face the future. Without culture positive leading, a country's or a nation's fast development in modern times is impossible.

3.2.2. Solutions to the Problem of Cultural Identity

(i) Reshaping People's Confidence of Chinese Cultural Identity

Chinese long history and profound culture cultivated a lot of excellent traditional culture essence. People's cultural identity can not be separated with historical and cultural traditions. China's cultural tradition is nurtured in the process of long-term national development, reflecting the cultural

heritage of this country and thought quintessence. Chinese nation has a long history, so our ancestors have created a splendid civilization which is our precious spiritual wealth. We should interpretate Chinese culture into new version with the requirements of the times to refine, generalize, and inherit fine traditional culture. For example, the core concept of Laozi thought - "being natural" is the earliest version of the current sustainable development concept; "people-oriented" ruling ideology comes from the core concept of Confucianism-"Benevolence"; Shang Yang's core value is ruling a country by law and equality before the law. These traditional ideas still shine sparkling wisdom now. Meanwhile, Western culture also exposes its limitations and defects. Some people think that pleasure-style consumerism and greed of egoism is the cultural factors that led to the financial crisis since 2008.

(ii) Absorbing the Essence of Foreign Culture

Any outstanding culture should have a double features of human commonality and their individuality. The outstanding culture firstly keeps and reflects the unique feature, but this unique feature should be in the context of human civilization and keep the consistency with direction of human civilization's progress. From a historical perspective of the development, the spread of Chinese civilization promotes world civilization's progress, and similarly, the absorption of other civilizations also promotes Chinese civilization's progress. Being brave to absorb and learn the essence of foreign culture is a kind of national cultural confidence. We must accept the fact that the cultural differences from different ethnic groups, different countries and regions are caused by differences in living form. Understanding the cultural diversity, we are not standing on the position of our own national or cultural values to downgrade different values. We should focus on the development of the whole human civilization, absorb common achievements and value consensus, response human ideals and values, serve the Chinese civilization, and promote the progress of world civilization. The course of thirty years of reforming and opening up is having enough courage to absorb the essence of foreign culture course. It is this courage and self-confidence that contributes to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. So, continuing to absorb foreign culture essence will be bound for further development of the nation.

(iii) Establishment of Core Value System

The Chinese Central Government is advocating being prosperous, democratic, civilized, and harmonious; initiating freedom, equality, justice, and ruling by law; promoting patriotism, dedication, integrity, and kindness; actively cultivating and practicing the national core values. Cultural identity ought to have specific cultural connotations, so the national core value system should be the basis of contemporary cultural identity. The national core value system necessarily reflects social form and social nature of a country. It has dominant position in the system of social ideology, which determines the basic principles of social operation and restricts the basic direction of social development. We should

extensively promote the education of ideals and beliefs, and combine personal ideal with common ideal of all Chinese. We should rich people's spiritual world and enhance People's spiritual strength. "When core value system of any society is really deep-rooted into the moral consciousness of the members of society and internalized into the hearts of the members of society, and the unity of social value's requirements and personal identity value is realized, it can play the central role and its dominant function in society" (Kailing Tang,2007:(8)23). Governments should improve cultural development and prosperity of the whole society to form an effective public cultural service system, enriching means of communication, expanding the spread and influence of social advanced culture, and transforming national core value into specific persons and events in reality. Hence people like to accept it and take it as a guide to action. Thus the social core value system will really dominate in the whole society. At the same time we should make full use of the opportunities of globalization and actively participate world civilization dialogues to promote Chinese culture to the world. Our goal is to get more understanding of Chinese culture and identity all over the world.

4. Conclusion

Chinese civilization has Five thousand years of history, and we can proudly say that Chinese civilization is the only civilization which is not broken in the world today. But at the same time, we worry about China's overall cultural strength and influence is unequal with China's international status. The structure of international culture and public opinions that western culture is more powerful and important than Chinese culture has not been fundamentally reversed. People in many parts of the world, especially those who have never been to China, will tend to connect China with poverty, backwardness, and pollution. We have long attention and protection of cultural heritage of ethnic minorities. Especially when some

minorities who received higher education strengthen self-identity constantly, the cohesiveness of the Chinese national culture is declining. We must promptly alert to seize the opportunities brought by globalization to fully carry out various forms of foreign exchanges and actively involve in the dialogue with world civilization to expand Chinese cultural influence. Through our efforts, we must push other countries to understand, accept, trust, and support Chinese culture gradually.

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