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Online Coping with Culture Shock: The Role of Motivational and Social Factors in Psychological Adjustment Among Chinese Students Abroad

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Abstract

The present study examines the underlying motivational and resource factors relevant to users of online communities. The participants were 72 Chinese students adjusting to a foreign culture. Specifically, we tested the motivations for social networking site (SNS) use and perceived social support—both online and offline—as predictors of SNS addiction and loneliness, which serve as outcome variables. Our findings revealed that SNS addiction and loneliness were significantly related to two out of five motivational factors for SNS use, indicating that not all motivations contribute equally to these undesirable outcomes. In addition, both online and offline social support were found to be negatively correlated with SNS addiction and loneliness, suggesting that greater access to social resources can mitigate these issues. These results highlight the importance of understanding the complex interplay between motivations for SNS use and the availability of social resources in fostering healthier adjustment experiences for students in foreign cultures.

Keywords: loneliness, mental health, online communities, SNS addiction, well-being

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