

The Mediating Effect of Self-Efficacy on Emotional Intelligence and Cultural Intelligence of Chinese Overseas Students in Thailand

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Abstract

This study investigates how self-efficacy plays a mediating role between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence among Chinese students who studied in Thailand. The research presents the perspective of categorization theory to explain how the effect of emotional intelligence on cultural intelligence is mediated by self-efficacy. This research collected data from 70 Chinese students in Thailand by using the questionnaire survey. The result of data analysis from the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression supported that self-efficacy acted as a complete mediator in the positive association between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence. Overall, the consequences from the study suggest that it is necessary for Chinese students to obtain some cultural knowledge and emotional knowledge to develop their self-efficacy and help them eliminate the non-adaptive process of acculturation. And universities need to provide some courses to help themselves to reduce the managerial cost by enhancing the students' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Cultural Intelligence

1. Introduction

One of the most significant characteristics of the 21st century is globalization; it is a powerful force that creates a shared international arena for social, cultural, economic, and political integration (Jibeen & Khan, 2015). It created an unprecedented expansion of interactions across culture and prospects for individual and business development. Globalization facilitates many aspects of cooperation, not only business but also education. But from the previous research, there is a opposite perspective about globalization, there are arguments that if these patterns continue, the increasing exposure of different world regions to each other may lead to a loss of uniqueness and individuality. If this occurs, the educational advantages of traveling and experiencing foreign perspectives will likely decrease, or even disappear altogether (Falk & Kanach, 2015), consider about the motivation and unequally educational resources between developed and developing country (Falk & Kanach, 2015), we argue that study abroad is still attractive to those developing country students for making them more opportunities to obtain knowledge widely.

In cross-cultural research has shown that one important characteristic that gained significance in cross cultural competency is cultural intelligence (CQ) and CQ enables individuals to successfully adjust to the diversified cultural practices (Ang et al., 2007). CQ is capability to operate productively in culturally different situation (Earley & Ang, 2003). The increase of CQ can help overseas students to deal with the stress of acculturative process. Another ability believed to have a tremendous contribution to students' psychological and socio-cultural adjustments is emotional intelligence (EQ)

(Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Therefore, overseas students need to know their emotions and others in order to communicate effectively and avoid misunderstanding.

Numerous studies have investigated how individual differences, including self-efficacy and resilience, impact acculturation outcomes, coping style, personal traits, social support (Araujo, 2011; Mesidor & Sly, 2016; Yusoff, 2011). Consider about the different performance among international students, this study uses self-efficacy to illustrate and try to find the reason of it. In the human beings' self-regulation mechanism, self-efficacy plays an important role, it can regulate people's changes of thought and choices of behavior through its influence on cognition, emotion, motivation and physiology.

1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

Researchers documented a wide range of factors that contribute to students' academic, language barriers and insufficient comprehension. However, the majority of these studies are pointed out in North America, Australia and Europe but mostly absent in Asia especially China and Thailand. The study centers around Chinese students pursuing their education in Thailand, specifically examining their emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and self-efficacy, then conducted quantitative analysis to investigate the mediating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence. This paper aims to make theoretical contributions to the field of cross-cultural knowledge. Moreover, the findings of this study hold practical significance as they can provide guidance to host university communities and mental health service providers in supporting the positive acculturation process of international students and enhancing their psychological well-being.

1.2 Research Question

- 1) What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence?
- 2) How does self-efficacy affect emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence?
- 3) What is the mediating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence?

1.3 Research Objective

- 1) To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence.
- 2) To examine if self-efficacy affects emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence.
- 3) To assess the mediating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

Previous researchers identified emotional intelligence (EQ) as a broad cognitive capacity that enables an individual to effectively recognize their own and others' emotions, utilize and express

emotions in a mature manner, and adaptively comprehend and manage emotions to encourage positive thinking and emotional growth (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Wong & Law (2004) divided emotional intelligence into four dimensions based on the mixed model of emotional intelligence: Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA) is defined as an individual's ability to precisely comprehend and assess their own emotions, and to identify how they impact one's thoughts, behaviors, and relationships. Other-Emotion Appraisal (OEA) encompasses the skill to identify and understand the emotions of other individuals. This involves precisely perceiving and comprehending the emotional states of others, demonstrating empathy towards their views and emotions, and reacting suitably to their emotional state. Regulation of Emotions (ROE) refers to the skill of managing and controlling one's own emotions in a positive and adaptive manner, and effectively dealing with stress, conflicts, and challenges. Use of Emotion (UOE) involves the ability to use emotions effectively in diverse situations.

The researchers defined cultural intelligence (CQ) as the capabilities for individual to conduct appropriately in diverse intercultural contexts (Earley & Ang, 2003). Firstly, cognitive cultural intelligence pertains to an individual's overall understanding of the customary standards, customs, and traditions in a cross-cultural milieu. (Ang & Dyne, 2003). Secondly, meta-cognitive CQ denotes the mental aptitude to acquire, comprehend, and implement cultural knowledge in intercultural circumstances (Ang et al., 2015). Thirdly, motivational CQ refers to abilities to redeploy motivation and self-efficacy towards better adapting in multicultural settings (Ang & Dyne, 2008). Finally, behavioral CQ pertains to an individual's ability to exhibit suitable verbal and nonverbal behaviors in order to adjust to an intercultural environment (Ang et al., 2008).

The concept of self-efficacy is a self-generating capacity, the ability to generate self-responses, and Bandura states that efficacy is a generative capacity that integrates cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral subskills and can organize them to be used effectively and integrally for multiple purposes (Bandura, 1997).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

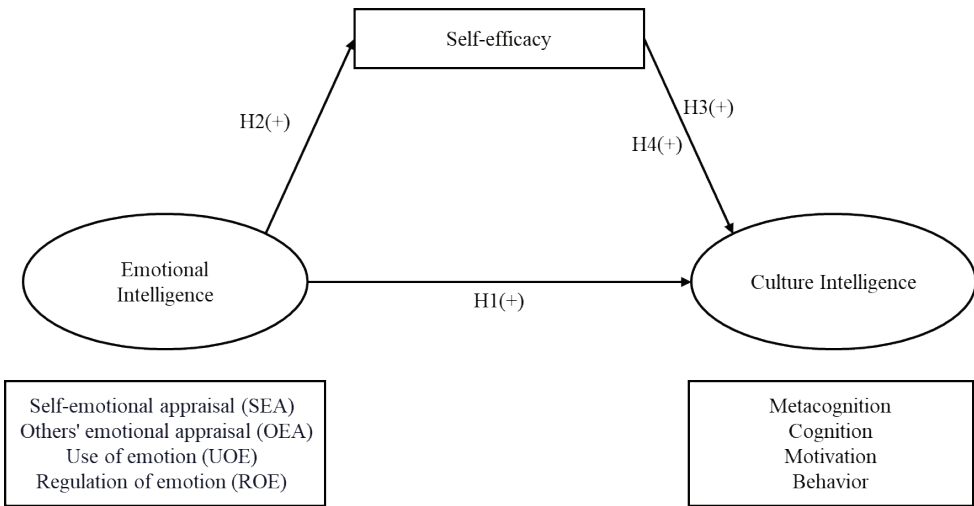


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

2.3 Research Hypothesis

H1: There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence.

H2: There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

H3: There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and cultural intelligence.

H4: Self-efficacy mediates the effect of emotional intelligence on cultural intelligence.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To make it clearer of each relationship between different variables, this research chosen quantitative methods. Based on the previous research and the definition of each variable, this paper focus on investigating what is relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence, and the effectiveness of self-efficacy between them.

3.2 Population and Sample

This research collected data from 70 Chinese students in Thailand by using the questionnaire survey.

3.3 Research Instruments

Emotional intelligence was measured by using the scale of emotional intelligence developed by Wang, Law & Song (2004). Self-efficacy was measured by using general self-efficacy scale (GSE) developed by Schwarzer & Jerusalem (1995). The cultural intelligence scale (CQS) developed by Ang et al. (2007) was utilized to assess an individual's cultural intelligence in this study. All these items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree to 5 (strongly agree).

3.4 Data Collection

This preliminary study gathered data from Chinese stayed in Thailand. Scale has been translated to Chinese, but questionnaire was bilingual including Chinese and English in order to avoid misunderstanding.

3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

This research used IBM SPSS Statistic version 19 to perform the data and utilize the Ordinal Least Squares (OLS) regression method. Sobel test was used to confirm the significance of the mediating effect.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

According to the data collection and data analysis, some statistical results have been presented below.

Table 1 Result from Reliability Test

Variables	Emotional Intelligence	Self-Efficacy	Cultural Intelligence
Cronbach Alphas (α) coefficient	0.919	0.935	0.949
Number of Items	15	10	20

Second, the correlations among three variables in the model are presented in Table 2

4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data

Table 2 Correlations among Variables

		Gender	Age	Overseas duration	Degree	EQ	SE	CQ
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	0.034	0.000	-0.208	0.102	-0.036	0.000
Age	Pearson Correlation		1	0.225	.418**	0.006	0.054	0.035
Overseas duration	Pearson Correlation			1	0.227	-0.067	-0.084	-0.154
Degree	Pearson Correlation				1	0.021	0.015	0.052
EQ	Pearson Correlation					1	.845**	.787**
SE	Pearson Correlation						1	.860**
CQ	Pearson Correlation							1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								

Third, the model was estimated by using OLS regression, and the results of hypothesis testing are shown each table.

Table 3 Regression between EQ and CQ

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.009	0.379		2.664	0.010
EQ	0.781	0.075	0.786	10.381	<0.001
Gender	-0.090	0.093	-0.076	-0.975	0.333
Age	0.034	0.059	0.048	0.574	0.568
Overseas duration	-0.055	0.036	-0.119	-1.520	0.134
Degree	0.026	0.083	0.027	0.311	0.756

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relation between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence. A positive beta coefficient of emotional intelligence is obtained ($\beta = 0.781$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 4 Regression between EQ and Self-Efficacy

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.137	0.391		0.350	0.728
Gender	-0.199	0.096	-0.139	-2.077	0.042
Age	0.073	0.061	0.087	1.203	0.233
Overseas duration	-0.018	0.037	-0.033	-0.489	0.626
Degree	-0.070	0.086	-0.061	-0.819	0.416
EQ	1.027	0.078	0.857	13.224	<0.001

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relation between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. A positive beta coefficient of emotional intelligence is obtained ($\beta = 1.027$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 5 Regression between Self-Efficacy and Cultural Intelligence

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.113	0.295		3.777	0.000
Gender	0.058	0.076	0.049	0.756	0.452
Age	-0.018	0.049	-0.026	-0.375	0.709
Overseas duration	-0.044	0.030	-0.095	-1.465	0.148
Degree	0.079	0.069	0.082	1.150	0.255
SE	0.708	0.052	0.854	13.636	<0.001

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relation between self-efficacy and cultural intelligence. A positive beta coefficient of emotional intelligence is obtained ($\beta = 0.708$, $p < 0.01$).

The Sobel test was used to confirm the significance of the mediating effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The result has been presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Results of Mediating Effect Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.932	0.310		3.006	0.004
Gender	0.022	0.078	0.019	0.284	0.778
Age	-0.008	0.049	-0.01096383	-0.158	0.875
Overseas duration	-0.045	0.030	-0.096	-1.506	0.137
Degree	0.066	0.068	0.068229051	0.962	0.340
EQ	0.199	0.119	0.200	1.675	0.099
SE	0.566	0.099	0.682964873	5.724	<0.01

The outcomes from the Sobel test indicated a type of positive mediating effect of intercultural communication competence (Sobel $t = 5.24$; $p < .001$).

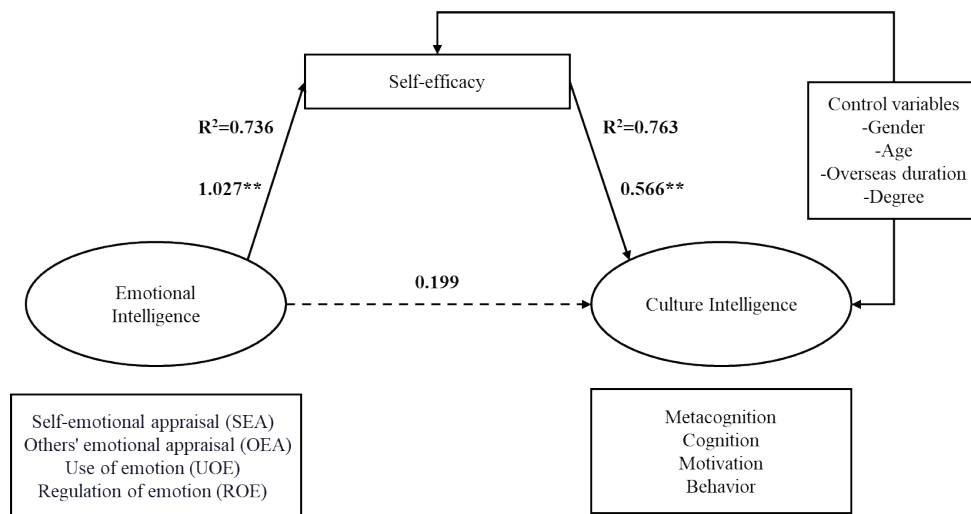


Figure 2 Results from OLS Regression

4.3 Summary of the Results

The consequences from the study suggest that it is necessary for Chinese students to obtain some cultural knowledge and emotional knowledge to develop their self-efficacy and help them eliminate the non-adaptive process of acculturation. And universities need to provide some courses

to help themselves to reduce the managerial cost by enhancing the students' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion and Discussion

There are a number of suggestions for future research that could improve our understanding. Firstly, future studies can investigate the association between the specific facets or subdimensions of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. to find whether different subdimension of EQ have different effect on self-efficacy.

5.2 Recommendation

Future research can collect personal traits as a variable to measure the effect between EQ and self-efficacy. Thirdly, future research can examine which subdimension of CQ is most significantly affected by self-efficacy and also whether different personal traits will affect CQ subdimensions differently.

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