



Social media and international students' opportunity for social inclusion in Australia: A comparative study of Chinese and Indian international students

Shi Zhang

The University of Melbourne

Corresponding author: * Shi Zhang
Tel.: +234 Email: shiz3@student.unimelb.edu.au

Received Date: Sept 24, 2020
Published Date: Sept 30, 2020

Abstract:

Social media has fully permeated into international students' life. However, how this new power influences their opportunities to engage the host society is under-researched. This study addresses this question through qualitative interviews with twenty Chinese and Indian international students in Australia's university. The result shows that social media plays an instrumental role with generally positive effects. It specifically promotes three dimensions of social inclusion: 1) connection with local people; 2) culture inclusion; and 3) participation in the local community. Moreover, Indian participants feel more included than Chinese students, which could be attributed to social media choice and language proficiency. As part of a growing body of research on international students, this project promotes the understanding of the largest international student groups in Australia and provides a new perspective to understand the impact of social media in influencing international students' engagement. In general, it contributes to future studies on similar topics.

Keywords: Social media; International students; Social inclusion; Chinese students; Indian students

INTRODUCTION

Between 1950 and 2019, the number of international students worldwide increased from 107,000 to over 5.3 million, and more than half of this growth was in the last decade (Shields, 2013, p. 610; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019). In this trend, Australia is one of the main destinations, holding 637,415 international students as of June 2020 (The Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2020, p. 1). This group has injected over \$32.4 billion a year into Australia's economy since 2017 (Ferguson & Sherrell, 2019, para. 1). However, as humans, rather than merely a link in the education industry, the scholarly attention to their experience is insufficient. Scholars have noted that the disengagement of international students could have negative impacts on their physical and mental health (Khanal & Gaulee, 2019; Jakubowicz, 2010). Therefore, it is

critical to profoundly explore and understand international students' experience in Australia and find effective methods to improve it.

Central to the study on this issue is international students' social inclusion (Paltridge, Mayson, & Schappe, 2012, p. 31). Researchers have identified some common impacting factors such as language barriers, educational difficulties, self-awareness, discrimination, and financial difficulty (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Ashong & Commander, 2017; Mwangi, 2016; Sano, Ahn, & Li, 2013). However, the fast development of social media in recent years has profoundly reshaped this field (Martin & Rizvi, 2014, p. 1017). On the one hand, social media has greatly changed international students' life pattern by creating a virtual and diasporic living space where people could connect with multiple, geographically distant and culturally distinct worlds (Hossain & Veenstra, 2013, p. 2697). On the other hand, it does not only have a direct impact on international students' experience but also influence other impacting factors. For example, Kanoh (2016) finds that social media influences user's self-awareness, which further impacts an individual's engagement. Therefore, different from traditional impacting factors, social media exerts a comprehensive impact on international students' social inclusion. However, there has not been enough research examining the relationship between social media and international students' social inclusion. Moreover, the extant studies on the impact of social media are controversial. Some scholars believe that social media is effective to promote social inclusion (e.g., Sin & Kim, 2013; Park et al., 2014), while others argue what social media creates is the illusion of connection, and in reality, it decreases the actual human interaction (e.g., Hassan, 2019; Lovink, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an empirical study in Australia's specific context to examine the actual role of social media in this process.

From this, this project proposes the primary research aim:

To explore the role of social media in shaping international students' opportunities for social inclusion in Australia.

The research aim is pursued within the context of Chinese and Indian students in Australia's university. Chinese and Indian students are selected because they are the first and second-largest international student sources in Australia (The Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2020, p. 1). More importantly, many similarities and otherness exist in their backgrounds (Rüland & Michael, 2019, p. 186-193). For example, Indian students have access to international social media before coming to Australia, while most of the international social media are forbidden in China (Crampton, 2011, p. 28), which implies the different usage habits of social media between Indian and Chinese students. Besides, although Hindi in Devanagari script is India's official language, English is widely used in business and official purposes (Puri, 2018, p. 343). As a result, Indian students will be more proficient in English than Chinese students before coming to Australia. Such differences also exist in the customs, values, politics, and culture, which create a valuable and content-rich comparative context for this research. Moreover, Gunawardena and Wilson (2012, p. 54) state that international students should not be treated as a homogeneous group because the differences within the cultural groups could lead to different behavior patterns. Therefore, a comparative study could provide a more refined understanding of different groups, which helps stakeholders take more targeted measures to deal with international students' issues.

The significance of this study lies in three intended outcomes. The first one, on a theoretical level, is to identify the role of social media in influencing international students' social inclusion, which contributes to clarify the debate in the literature. The second intended outcome is to present the experience of different international student groups, which will enrich literature in Australian context and set the ground for the elaborative study on specific groups in the future. The third intended outcome, on a practical level, contributes to a more mutual understanding between international students and Australian society, which could benefit international students' mental and physical health (Lubkin & Larsen, 2006, p. 97) and promote social stability and prosperity (Yanicki, 2015, p. 125).

This thesis consists of an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. The next Chapter—background—first discusses the theoretical underpinnings of social inclusion and social media. Then, it examines the literature in Australia's context. Further, based on the understanding of the core conceptions and existing studies, the literature gaps are identified, and the research question is put forwarded accordingly. Chapter. 2 present the research design and the methodology. It justifies the employment of the multi-grounded theory (MGT) to address the research question. Then it proceeds with the theoretical and procedural description of instruments to collect, present, and analyse data. Chapter. 3 present the result of this study. The main categories are identified with the theoretical coding system and presented in visual diagrams. Chapter. 4 is the discussion, where the key findings are thematically analysed, and the research limitations are discussed. Finally, the conclusion chapter first clearly presents the answer to the research question. Then, it discusses the implication and purposes the further research agendas.

Chapter 1: Background

1.1 Social inclusion and international students

An important understanding of social inclusion lies in the difficulty of drawing a universal definition. In the report of World Social Situation, United Nations (2016, p. 17) emphasises that "No single global, goal-setting agenda can adequately address the multiple dimensions of inclusion, particularly given the diversity of circumstances around the globe." Ruth Lister (2000, p. 41) takes Germany and Sweden as an example to illustrate this issue. She states that compared with other European countries, the relatively generous social security and the active labour market policy in Germany and Sweden markedly reduced the unemployment's exclusionary influence. As a result, even under similar long-term unemployment, the unemployed's feeling of inclusion in these two countries is much better than other European countries. Besides the national level, social inclusion is also a very subjective feeling (Davey & Gordon, 2017, p. 235). Angus Stewart (2000, p.66) argues that the praxis of social inclusion points to the realisation of personal good life, while the conception of good life varies from person to person. Therefore, a perfect model of social inclusion is illusory.

That said, many scholars and organisations have tried to give definitions. For example, Liz Sayce (2001, p. 122) defines social inclusion as a virtuous circle of improved rights to participate in the social and economic world. She tries to abstract the conception and leave room for interpretation. By contrast, United Nations (2016, p. 20) take a descriptive approach, defining social inclusion as "the process of improving the terms of participation... on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion..., through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights."Although in different expressions, both definitions highlight the importance of "participation" , which is indicated as the manifestation and result of social inclusion. Moreover, as stated above, it is unreasonable and impractical to draw a universal standard of social inclusion, so the specific standards of social inclusion should be generated from the targeted groups and therefore an abstract and results-oriented definition is more appropriate. From this, this research follows John Gray's(2000, p. 23), who defines social inclusion as a situation that "people fully participate in the society." Under this guidance, this research generates the specific dimensions of social inclusion from the participants' opinion by asking them, "What is your definition of social inclusion?" and "What factors do you think influence your participation in the host society?"

International students refer to students who travel from their home countries to study in a different one (Flair, 2019, p. 1). To understand their experience in the host country, social inclusion has become a significant perspective (Paltridge, Mayson, & Schappe, 2012, p. 31). Smith and Khawaja (2011) systemically reviewed inclusion models as applied to international students worldwide, and identified five main

difficulties that obstacles international students to get included, including language barriers, educational difficulties, loneliness, discrimination, and financial difficulty. Besides, other factors such as cultural differences (e.g., Ashong & Commander, 2017), race (e.g., Mwangi, 2016), job opportunities (e.g., Wang, X., Wang, C., & Wang, J, 2019), and lacking family supports (e.g., Sano, Ahn, & Li, 2013) are also mentioned in the literature. However, it is less noted that the current citizenship system is a primary cause of international students' difficulties. Tran and Hoang (2020, p. 599) find that international students are usually treated as important economic subjects and human capital by the host country, but there is not a coherent and coordinated mechanism to protect their rights entitlements and well-being, which makes them vulnerable citizens. Similarly, Robertson (2011, p. 2211) identifies the complex system of international students' role in Australia as student-migrant-workers and argues that this system is essentially exploitative. In a broader context, Lister describes this situation as "conspiracy against outsiders", where the control of transnational population and the welfare entitlement are increasingly exclusionary. As the system tends to gloss over diversity and does not take good responsibility for social and economic policy of justice and redistribution towards transnational population, the newcomers are naturally marginalised (Lister, 2000, p. 45-46).

Another important perspective to understand social inclusion is its relationship with social exclusion, which provides a way to understand how social media intervenes in this field. Initially, the concept of social inclusion is based on that of social exclusion (Wilding, 2009, p. 161). Two conceptions share all the main dimensions (Stewart, 2000, p. 55). However, social inclusion is not merely a mirror image of exclusion (Díaz & Doolin, 2016, p. 406). A primary difference lies in the initiative. According to Burchardt (1999, p. 229), "An individual is socially excluded if he or she would like to so participate, but is prevented from doing so by factors beyond his or her control." It could be seen that social exclusion indicates a situation that is out of control of the subject to it. However, social inclusion highlights not only the chance and capacity but also the subjective willingness (Stewart, 2000, p. 9). The distinction between these two conceptions reveals an important feature of social media's intervention in this field, namely empowerment. Social media is a representative of Web 2.0, characterised by user-generated content, participatory culture, and interoperability (Humphreys, 2016, p. 17). Compared with the traditional information flow, where users are merely receivers, Web 2.0 enables users to react actively (Darwish, A., & Lakhtaria, 2011, p. 196). Before the digital age, newcomers usually have to abandon their loyalty to their state of origin and adapt themselves to the local society (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 46). However, social media offer alternative and personalised pathways through which people could achieve the mode of inclusion that they desire (Zhao, 2017, p. 166). Therefore, social media enhances the subjectivity of social inclusion and leads the study of social inclusion into a new stage.

1.2 The intervention of social media

'Man is born free, and everywhere he is on Facebook' is how Graham Meikle modifies Jean-Jacques Rousseau's famous line ('Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains') (Meikle, 2016, p. 1). In today's world, social media has permeated in almost every corner of people's lives (Hassan, 2008, p.viii). However, do social media only mean Facebook?

In the extant literature, various definitions of social media follow the axis from narrow sense to broad sense. In the narrow sense, social media is equal to social network sites (SNS), which emphasises the public or semi-public communication within a bounded system (Boyd, & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). Meikle (2016, p. 6) follows this view and defines social media as 'the networked database platforms that combine public with personal communication.' In the broad sense, Cooper (2019, para. 3) argues that any application that allows users to create a profile and build a friend list should be considered as social media, where multiplayer online games, online forums, and streaming media are included. Aichner and Jacob (2015, p. 259) conclude thirteen types of social media that resonate with Cooper's argument. Obar and Wildman

(2015, p. 2) draw an inclusive definition that social media is a series of interactive computer-based technologies that promote the creation or sharing of contents, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through digital communities and virtual networks. In this research field, scholars have proved that besides SNS, other digital services such as online video games, streaming media, and digital news media all play important roles in shaping international students' experience (Zhang, Eyerman & Goodman, 2017; Byun & Lou, 2018; Astarita & Patience, 2020), so a definition in the broad term could be appropriate for this research.

According to the literature, there are two main features of social media's intervention in this field. Firstly, compared with the traditional impacting factor, whose impact on international students is onefold, social media exerts comprehensive impacts on international students. For example, Elega and Özad (2017) find that social media directly promotes the communication between international students and local people in Cyprus, while Zhao (2019) finds that social media changes the intimacy between Chinese students and their families, which further influences their engagement in Australia. That is, social media does not only directly influence social inclusion as an independent factor, but also have indirect influences through other impacting factors. Another feature is the connection across time and space (Frouws et al., 2016; Dekker & Enberson, 2014; Baldassar et al., 2016; Papastergiadis, 2012). Nedelcu (2012, pp. 2-3) states that social media increases the intensity of transnational exchanges and activities and creates a ubiquitous communication system that allows people to connect with multiple, geographically distant and culturally distinct worlds to which they identify and participate on a daily base. By this way, international students could keep their original social relationships and lifestyle in the new environment, which reverses the past involuntariness of transnational population (Papastergiadis, 2012, p. 46). These two features distinguish social media from traditional impacting factors and challenge the traditional perspectives of social inclusion study. Therefore, a digital perspective is in need to reexamine social inclusion in today's world.

1.3 Debate on social media

The significant role of social media in influencing international students' experience is recognised worldwide (Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016; Yang, Brown, & Braun, 2014; Lee & Ranta, 2014; Sin & Kim, 2013; Park et al., 2014; Henze & Zhu, 2012). However, whether it promotes or hinders inclusion is contradictory. For example, Henze and Zhu (2012) find that the discussion group on social media help Chinese students engage the host society in the United States. Chen and Yang (2015) have a similar finding with them that the national digital community built on social media helps international students in Singapore adapt to the host society. Besides, Yang, Brown, and Braun (2014) argue that social media is an important platform for international students to make friends with local students. Moreover, many researchers identify the crucial role of social media in providing daily information about the host society for international students (Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016; Sin & Kim, 2013; Lin et al., 2012).

On the contrary, some critics argue what social media creates is the illusion of connection, and in reality, it decreases the actual human interaction (Hassan, 2019; Lovink, 2011). Many researchers draw the opposite conclusions with researchers above. For example, Park et al. (2014) find that Facebook is an effective platform for international students to connect local people. In contrast, Lee and Ranta (2014) conduct a quantitative study and suggest that there is no statistically significant correlation between the use of Facebook and the connection with local people. A more controversial situation occurs in the study of using home country social media. Lee et al. (2011) find that Chinese students in South Korea prefer to use Chinese-based social media, which limits their social networks within the Chinese groups. However, Lin et al. (2012, p. 435) argue that the more connections international students build with people sharing the same culture, the more engaged they feel in the host society. Mikal and Grace (2012, p. 300) have a similar opinion with Lin et al. They explain this phenomenon as "continuity provided by a sense of connectedness and the consistency of online communities."

The controversy could be caused by two reasons, which need to be explored. On the one hand, some scholars indicate that the nature of social media is contradictory (Zhao, 2017; Akram& Kumar, 2017; Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). For example, Zhao (2017, p. 168) finds that different functions of social media could exert opposite impacts on social exclusion. As discussed in section 1.2, the impact of social media on social inclusion is comprehensive, so focusing on one or several functions cannot objectively reveal the overall role of social media in this issue and therefore a comprehensive perspective is in need. Meanwhile, research participants' background could also affect the result. Gunawardena and Wilson (2012, p. 2) argue that different backgrounds of international students significantly influence their behavior pattern in the host society. That is, even in the same context, different international students groups could react differently. However, less scholarly attention has been paid to the differences of social media's impacts on different international student groups.

1.4 Studies in Australia

With the theoretical conceptions at hand—social inclusion, social media, and the debate on social media, this chapter now turns to the Australian context. First of all, the general disengagement of international students in Australian society is noted (Arkoudis et al., 2019, p. 799). Pekerti et al. (2020, p. 75) identify six main challenges that constitute the disengagement of international students, including the language barrier, cultural misunderstandings, and institution's lack of multicultural resources, stereotypes, marginalisation, and racial as well as cultural discrimination. Jakubowicz (2010, p. 12) describes the relationship between international students and Australian society as ghosts and hosts, which interestingly resonates with Ruth Lister's citizenship theory in section 1.1.

Secondly, the role of social media in Australia's context is controversial as well. Some scholars argue that social media is a significant information source for international students to engage the Australian society and an important platform for them to make friends with local people (Gomes et al. 2014; Choudaha & Chang, 2012; Lee & Ma, 2012). Gomes et al. (2014) argue that the instant and transnational communication enabled by social media provides international students with constant support from families and friends in their home country, which help them transit to the new environment. However, others argue that social media form a digital enclosure that obstructs international students from receiving diversified information and limits their social network within people sharing similar backgrounds (Olding, 2013; Turner, 2018; Zhao, 2017). The debate resonates with section 1.3, and likewise, the overall role of social media and the driven force behind it need to be explored.

Furthermore, scholars in Australia pay close attention to the parallel and hybrid living space created by social media (Sleeman et al., 2016; Martin & Rizvi, 2014; Özad& Uygurer, 2014; Hossain & Veenstra, 2013; Binsahl, Chang, & Bosua, 2015). Sleeman et al. (2016, p. 397) find that most international students in Australia either keep a close connection with their home country or mix home and host country connections. Martin and Rizvi (2014, p. 1018) argue that international students in Australia live in two places at once. One is called "back home," which enables a feeling of ongoing connection with the home country. The other one is called "out here," which refers to their interaction with Australian society. However, the interaction between these two places is syncretic rather than simply hybrid, which forms a complex heterogeneous experience for international students in Australia (Martin & Rizvi, 2014, pp. 1019-1022). Qiu (2011, p. 103) holds a similar opinion with them arguing that international students in Australia move between the digital home country and the Australian society and adapt themselves to the society through comparing and negotiating cultural differences. Soong (2016, p. 165) concludes that the prevalence of social media makes international students live and flow in a "parallel society" in Australia.

However, international students' movement in this "parallel society" is not synchronously. Many scholars argue that Asian students are less engaged than other groups (Gomes, 2015; Olding, 2013; Weiss & Ford,

2011; Yuan, 2010). Gomes identifies three reasons behind this phenomenon. The first reason is connected to cultural differences and language. The conspicuous cultural difference between Asian countries and Australia is a natural barrier that obstructs the interaction, while international students' inability to speak English 'properly' enhances this barrier (Gomes, 2015, p. 528). Secondly, Asian students develop a sense of identity as foreign students, which are based on their common experiences as foreigners living in Australia (Gomes, 2015, p. 519). Thirdly, he argues that the increasing public racial tension enhances the disengagement of Asian students (Gomes, 2015, p. 520). This situation is intensified during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, on April 17, 2020, a Singaporean student from the University of Melbourne was attacked by a racist on Elizabeth Street (Woolley, April 17, 2020). In summary, cultural similarity and shared experience as foreign students make it easier for Asian students to make friends with each other, which, however, distance them from Australian society.

The disengagement of Asian group to some extent indicates the heterogeneity inside international student cohort in Australia, but it is not specified enough because according to Gunawardena and Wilson (2012, p. 54), each cultural group has a distinctive history in relation to the British education and social system as historically adopted in Australia, so different international student groups could react differently to Australian society. However, the study on the differences between specific groups is insufficient. Particularly, the role of social media in influencing different groups' engagement is under-researched. To address the gaps, Chinese and Indian groups show research potential. Firstly, many scholars find that Chinese students mainly use Chinese social media such as WeChat and Weibo, which enhance the closure of their community and limit their access to diverse information (Yu & Sun, 2019; Shu & Scott, 2014; Chang et al., 2012), while Indian students do not have this problem. Secondly, compared with other Asian students, Indian students' social network seems more diversified. Basu (2016, p. 8) interviewed 41 Indian students in Queensland and found that 51 percent of the participants indicated that their friends were a mix of Australian and international students, while a similar study shows that this figure for general Asian students was 29 percent (Gomes et al., 2015, p. 6). However, it does not mean that Indian students are always well included in Australia. Some scholars argue that Indian students are vulnerable to discrimination and violence attacks, which tension the relationship between the Indian community and Australian community (Rafi & Lewis, 2013; Mason, 2010, 2012; Dunn et al., 2011). Wade (2016, p. 93) finds that 62 percent of Indian respondents of India-Australia poll believe Australia is a dangerous place for Indian students. Therefore, Chinese and Indian groups, as the largest two international student sources in Australia, have significant differences in various domains but also face many similar challenges, which create a valuable and content-rich comparative context.

1.5 Summary and research question

So far, this chapter has been concerned with highlighting the relationship between social inclusion, social media, and international students. Theoretically, social media challenges the traditional theory of social inclusion, which requires an exploratory research perspective. Three main gaps have been identified. Firstly, the specific dimensions of social inclusion should not be decided in advance, but should be generated from the targeted groups. However, the opinion from international students in Australia about social inclusion is lacking. Secondly, the role of social media and the driven force behind it are not clarified, which requires the empirical research to examine its actual impact in Australia's context. Thirdly, the comparative study on how social media influences different international student groups' engagement in Australia is insufficient, while Chinese and Indian groups provide a valuable and content-rich comparative context. From this, this research proposes the principal research question,

What is the role of social media in shaping international students' opportunities for social inclusion in Australia?

To address this question, this study specifically explores: What are Chinese and Indian students' definition and experience of social inclusion in Australia; how does social media influence their social inclusion; and what are the similarity and difference between Chinese and Indian students in this process.

The next chapter—Research Method—will first examines the research approaches and techniques used in the literature and select the appropriate method for this research. Then, the research procedure, data collection, interview procedure, and data analysis are presented.

Chapter 2: Research method

2.1 Qualitative research

Quantitative and qualitative methods are both used in this field (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012, p. 3). Compared with the qualitative method, a quantitative method could present a more explicit relationship between variables and enable the generalisation of results (Mander, 2017, para. 4). However, many scholars question the rationality of employing the quantitative method to study international students' experience in Australia's context. Firstly, some scholars argue that the positive outcomes of the quantitative method coincide with marketing purposes, which aims at generating marketing strategies rather than exploring international students' real experience (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012; Dalglish, 2006; Rizvi & Walsh, 1998). As a result, international students' voices are not well heard, and their real difficulties remain unexplored. Another problem is that the quantitative method only measures the degree of agreement on topics already known but does not generate new information (Samuel, 1973, p. 31). However, this research aims at exploring how social media reshapes international students' social inclusion, so the quantitative method is epistemologically inconsistent with social constructivism, and therefore, not appropriate for the research aim. By contrast, the qualitative method is exploratory, aiming to collect and analyse non-numerical data on meaning-making level (Babbie, 2014, p. 304). DeFranzo (2011) emphasises that qualitative analysis is an effective method to gain insights into underlying reasons, attitudes, and motivations. As this research seeks to explore the role of social media, the attitudes of international students, and the reason, motivation, and consequence of the interaction between social media and international students, the qualitative approach is appropriate.

2.2 Grounded theory and Multi-grounded theory

Grounded theory was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967, referring to a systematic methodology relying on inductive reasoning to construct theories through collecting, coding, and analysing data, which is one of the most widely used qualitative methods (Glaser & Strauss, 2017, p. ix; Creswell & Poth, 2007, p. 63). Compared with traditional research methodology, where researchers collect and analyse data under a preset theoretical framework, grounded theorists theories data from people who experience the phenomenon rather than 'off the shelf' (Merriam, 2009, p. 30). However, grounded theory is criticised for over-relying on the empirical data and ignoring the established theory and studies, which risk "reinventing the wheel" (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010, p. 190). Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 5) stress that grounded theory should be generated from data and the established theoretical categories should be excluded during the coding process. Nevertheless, Göran Goldkuhl and Stefan Cronholm argue that if a theory is developed in isolation, there will be a risk for noncumulative theory development. Thornberg (2012, p. 244) also criticises that ignoring established theories and research findings implies a loss of knowledge. To address this problem, Goldkuhl and Cronholm proposed the Multi-Grounded Theory (MGT) to force researchers to take the method 'grounded' seriously and enhance the research finding's authority by capturing and explaining context-related studies and existing theories (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2018, p.

4). The prime difference between MGT and grounded theory lies in that MGT is not only grounded in the empirical data but also grounded in theoretical grounding (existing theory and studies) and internal grounding (an explicit congruence of data) (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2018, p. 1). Since MGT appears, many researchers have employed this approach in many domains (Freeman, 2018; Asadifard et al., 2016; Sekeleni, 2017; Ali, Cullen & Toland, 2015; de Leeuw, de Boer & Minnaert, 2018). For example, de Leeuw, de Boer, and Minnaert (2018) used MGT to explore students' voices of social exclusion in the Netherlands. In their research, Causey and Dubow's self-report coping theory was adapted into five coping categories. Besides, Ali, Cullen, and Toland (2015) used this method to study how ICT influences tourism in small island developing countries, where they drew eight factors from existing studies to assist categorising data. MGT is appropriate for this research because on the one hand this research is exploratory; generating theory from participants' perspective, on the other hand, the relevant studies has developed worldwide, where the existing studies and theories has reference value.

This study refers to the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and the categories drawn from previous studies to assist categorising and interpreting data. UGT is a way to understand how individuals seek to media to meet their needs and lead to gratification (Lariscy et al., 2011). It has been widely used in both traditional media studies and digital media studies (Pang, 2016, p. 264). According to UGT theorist McQuail's mass communication theory, five categories are selected to categorise social media usage, including information achieving, recreation, social interactions/companionship, relief, and escape. Also, the frequent categories from previous studies are drawn to assist categorising the dimensions of social inclusion, which include social participation; social interaction; economic integration; cultural identity; equality; cultural comprehensiveness (Díaz & Doolin, 2016; Paltridge, Mayson, & Schapper, 2012; Stewart, 2000; "Australian Community Participation Questionnaire," n.d.).

2.3 Research approach

The research approach primarily relies on the systematic approach of grounded theory proposed by Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2015), but also include Charmaz's constructivist approach in the interview to increase the richness and reflexivity of data (Charmaz, 2006). This mixed design is suggested by John Creswell (2007, p. 63). The systematic approach develops a theory that explains the context, causal and intervening conditions, interaction, and consequences. Usually, the researcher conducts approximately twenty interviews by the constant comparative method (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Then, the theoretical coding procedure, including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, is used to identify the core category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In comparison, the constructivist approach is more flexible and focuses on the experience embedded in the hidden networks, paying more attention to the feelings, beliefs, values, and ideology of respondents than the method (Creswell, 2007, p. 64). Creswell (2007, p. 65) believes such a mixed design could provide a clear and logical research process and also increase the richness of data.

2.4 Participants

Twenty participants are recruited by snowball sampling (ten from India and ten from China, ten females and ten males). Snowball sampling is a non probability sampling technique where existing respondents recruit future respondents from their acquaintances, which could increase the efficiency of the recruitment (Cohen & Arieli, 2011, p. 427). Participants' length of stay in Australia ranged from four months to six years, with an average of two years. The participants are from the University of Melbourne, Deakin University, University of New South Wales, Monash University, Swinburne University, and Victoria University. The degree ranges from bachelor to Ph.D. After the researcher gained ethics approval from the Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG), the first five participants were recruited through 'Find A Study,' a

recruitment platform provided by the University of Melbourne. The plain language statement and the consent form were sent to them by Gmail. Participants are voluntary, and they are informed of their right to view and amend transcripts of interviews and withdraw any data they provided at any point during the project. The participants' recruitment was ongoing until the main categories were saturated (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Saturation was reached when further data comparison showed no new categories (McMahon, 2018, p. 38). Both Chinese and Indian groups' saturation occurred after the ninth interview, and then one more interview for each group was conducted to confirm and refine the saturation.

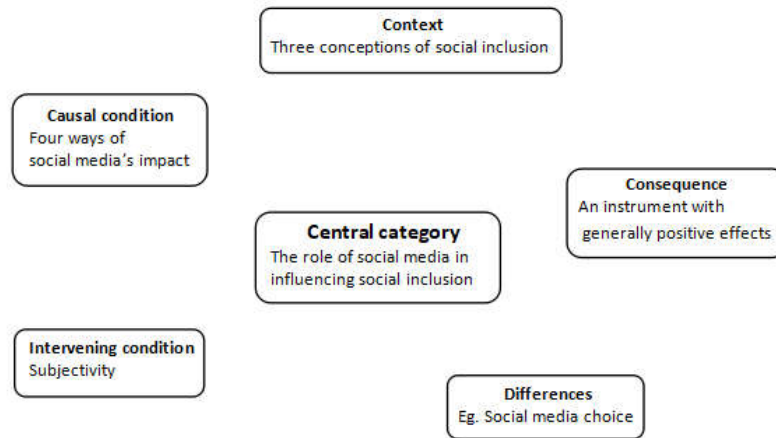
2.5 Interview procedure

Because of the Covid-19 lockdown, all the interviews were conducted on Zoom. As the interview was semi-structured, in which participants played an active role in the conversation, the interview duration varied from thirty minutes to one hour. An interview protocol was designed, which included a series of questions about social media usage, opinions about social inclusion, and the social, academic, and cultural issues experienced by participants. Before the interview, the participants were required to sign the consent form, and then interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. For protecting participants' identity, pseudonyms were assigned to them (CN refers to Chinese participants; ID refers to Indian participants).

2.6 Data analysis

In the open coding stage, the interview was transcribed verbatim, and the data was coded synchronously. The researcher read the transcripts line by line, labeled the data, and then grouped them into the original categories. In this stage, 61 categories were first identified. The researcher then regrouped the categories and identified three main dimensions of social inclusion and four main ways of social media intervention. The former includes connection with local people, culture inclusion, and participation in the local community. The latter includes information achieving, social interaction, communication facilitation, and addiction. Besides, an unexpected factor—subjectivity emerged frequently, which was grouped independently. In the axial and selective coding stages, the categories were reorganised according to the systematic coding paradigm. The central category—the role of social media in influencing social inclusion, was first set up. Then, according to the frequently-occurring principle (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), the categories were restructured into context, causal condition, intervening conditions, and consequence (Creswell & Poth, 2007, p. 67). Besides, at this stage, the differences between Chinese and Indian participants were drawn into an independent group. Diagram 1 shows the coding paradigm. The coding process constantly and iteratively continued until the main categories were saturated. NVivo 2020, software for qualitative research, was used to organize the data.

Diagram 1. Coding paradigm



Chapter 3: Results

This research identified four main findings. Firstly, most participants (18 out of 20) thought that social media played a positive role in promoting their social inclusion in Australia. Secondly, both positive and negative impacts were identified, which resonated with the debate in the literature. Thirdly, an unexpected factor—subjectivity emerged, which provided a new perspective to understand the role of social media in this issue. Lastly, Indian students felt more included than Chinese students, which could be largely attributed to the social media choice and language proficiency. This chapter first presents the conceptions of social inclusion generated from participants' perspectives. Then, in terms of these conceptions, the positive and negative impacts of social media are presented. In the third section, the unexpected factor—subjectivity was illustrated. The first three sections are based on the common points of Chinese and Indian participants, while the last section elaborates the differences between them.

3.1 Conceptions of social inclusion

Chinese and Indian participants share similar opinions about social inclusion. Three main conceptions of social inclusion were identified, including: 1) Connection with local people; 2) Culture inclusion; 3) Participation in the local community. Diagram 2. Shows the specific factors in each conception.

Diagram 2. Conceptions of social inclusion

Social inclusion	Factors
Connection with local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local people’s attitude; ● Language proficiency;
Culture inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lifestyle; ● Conversation topic;
Participation in the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Belonging to a certain group; ● Finding the personal “place” in the host society; ● Having a job;

Social inclusion as connection with local people

Connection with local people is the most frequent category emerging from the question "What's your definition of social inclusion?" For example:

ID 6: I guess social inclusion is having meaningful conversations with local people. I guess that's what social inclusion is. The feeling that way you can actually talk to them like friends.

CN 7:I think social inclusion means good interaction with local people. We can learn from each other, help each other, and maybe build the life here.

Such statements reflect that the connection with local people is significant in their understanding and expectation of social inclusion, which, however, could also be the most lacking part in their lives. When they try to build the connection, local people's attitude and the language proficiency were identified as two main impacting factors. Firstly, participants from both countries mentioned local people's attitude. For example,

(Q: Have you ever experienced exclusion in Australia?)

CN8: Yes. I remember a student accommodation I lived. The receptions, they are all local people. But in that building, there are many Chinese students. I found that every time when Chinese students go to ask them questions, especially for those freshman, whose English is not very fluent, their (receptions) attitude is really bad. Sometimes they are very unfriendly and just don't want to answer you and they just ignore your questions. That makes me feel very bad when I was at the beginning in Melbourne. So I think it's also a reason for why I think there are distance between me and local people. Some of them don't have patient to listen to you. Then next time I'll just leave the big issues to let you know. That is not a health model of friendship, I think.

ID 3 expressed a similar opinion when asked his definition of social inclusion: *I would call social inclusion as something that you are a part of. Like you are studying somewhere and the people who are already there try to welcome you, instead of like maintaining their distance.*

Secondly, language proficiency is believed as another crucial obstacle for participants to connect with local people. Particularly for Chinese participants, 9 out of 10 of them considered English as a problem. For example, CN6 spoke the most fluent English among all Chinese participants, but he said:

(Q: What factors do you think influence your social inclusion?)

CN6: *I think language plays a really big part in this. Like sometimes I am just afraid that I am not making myself understood. And then people would just be like, "I don't really know what you're talking." So I think in a sense, it creates some kind of fear.*

Although Indian participants generally have a better English proficiency than Chinese participants, many of them expressed the similar concern about the language. For example,

(Q: What do you think are the differences between making friends with Indian and Australian?)

ID1: *...I really like to point this out that there is sense of hesitation. When I talk to someone who is Australian, I have that hesitation, that's mostly language barrier. I feel that because English is my second language, it's not my mother tone, no matter how fluent. I can give them English, but at the end of the day, I love talking in Hindi. That's my mother tone. So if somebody is Indian and he talks in Hindi, I can talk more openly.*

Social inclusion as culture inclusion

The second frequent category is culture inclusion. Many participants believed that culture comprehensiveness was an important dimension of social inclusion. For example:

(Q: What's your definition of social inclusion?)

CN8: *Social inclusion, actually, I'm not an expert of social inclusion. But when I first heard this, what I think it's like a culture of inclusion. The degree of inclusion you fall in this unfamiliar society.*

However, participants from both countries indicated the difficulty in culture inclusion. Firstly, they recognised the apparent gaps in the lifestyle. For example,

(Q: What factors do you think influence your social inclusion?)

ID 5: *The culture is very different. The words they use, the slang they use is very different. Like we don't use the same slang, even it is also English. And the eating habits are also very different. So you cannot get along with the eating pattern. They try to eat some bread or butter in the morning, but we try to eat something heavy in the morning. Sometimes it causes problems. It's great cultural differences.*

Moreover, the conversation topic is another frequently mentioned issue. Particularly for Chinese participants, many of them mentioned the ideological difference behind the cultural difference. For example:

(Q: What factors do you think influence your social inclusion?)

CN 9 : *Maybe the culture and the value. As Chinese, we think that the powerful government is a really good thing, but the local students they don't really agree with us, and that is really different from us. In my opinion, I just think a powerful government is more suitable to manage such big*

population. But most of the local student just thinks I am wrong. So sometimes we don't have a good talk.

Social inclusion as participation in the local community

Participation is another highlighted conception. For some respondents, participation means belonging to a certain group in the host society. For example,

(Q: What is your definition of social inclusion?)

CN1: Social inclusion probably means you are socially included in certain group. Or like say, in certain community.

Many respondents believed that participation in a certain group helps them to connect local people and understand Australian culture. For example,

(Q: Why do you like to participate in local activities?)

ID 7: More opportunity to know local guys, I guess. I was sent to an improvisation workshop once in the city. It's part acting. You can do improvisation stuff on the spot, and there were lots of games. It's really fun. They were all Australians. It helped me to know them and understand Australian culture. Sometimes you have to really go out of your way to understand what is Australian, what they like, and so on.

Besides, CN 6 thought that participation means finding a "place" in this society, which was the start of social inclusion. He said, " Like inclusion means that you have to know your place in the society. Like you have a certain place that you occupy. And from that, you can blend into like a broader social, cultural aspect of this society." *(Q: What is your definition of social inclusion?)*

Moreover, having a job is also considered as a type of participation. For example, CN3 looked enjoyable when describing her colleagues in a local cafe:

(Q: Do you think having a job helps you engage the host society?)

CN3: Yes, I think so. I once worked in a local cafe. They're pretty nice, and they do teach you different things about Australia. When I am working, they tell me what I should do, but like off work, they're always very open to chat all the time. It is a very good way to get involved and to know people, and to make them know you as well. It's a true relationship.

It could be seen that participation is not only a manifestation of social inclusion, but also a promotion of connecting with local people and culture inclusion, so it actually plays a primary role in social inclusion, which resonates with John Gray's argument that social inclusion is people's participation in the society (Gray, 2000, p. 23).

In summary, this research identified three main dimensions of social inclusion from participants' perspective, including the connection with local people, culture inclusion, and the participation in the local community. In terms of these three dimensions, the functions of social media identified in the open coding stage were reconstructed as positive and negative impacting factors.

3.2 Positive impacts

The positive impacts that social media exerts on international students' social inclusion is comprehensive. Diagram 3 reflects specific factors.

Diagram 3. Positive impacts

Social Inclusion \ Social Media	Connection with local people	Culture inclusion	Participation in local community
Information achieving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide opportunity to make new friends; ● Select friends; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn Australian culture; ● Find common points; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local activity opportunity; ● Job opportunity;
Social interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote mutual understanding 	
Communication facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist instant communication (Translator and grammar correction); ● Improve language proficiency; 		

Promoting the connection with local people

Social media promotes the connection with local people in four ways: Providing opportunities to make friends, selecting friends, maintaining relationship, and weakening language barrier. Firstly, participants from both countries thought that social media provided broad opportunities for them to connect local community, where they could make friends with local people. For example,

(Q:Do you think social media help you engage the host society? Why?)

ID 5: ...For me, there was no medium to connect with people in my community. But through social media, I can find various cultural groups and social groups that I am interested in, where I have made many friends with local people.

Secondly, many participants thought that social media enabled them to make friends with people sharing same interest, which helped to develop a more profound and long-lasting friendship. For example,

(Q: What do you think are the advantages of using social media?)

CN1: ...I am pretty active on Instagram. I posed some of my weekend activities on my story. And then a girl saw it, and we shared like same interest. I found she goes to gallery a lot. She likes live music. So I think probably we could become really good friends. And then she just asked me out, said that, 'Do you wanna enjoy live music with me?' And now she's my best friend.

Thirdly, respondents from both countries highlighted that social media helped them to maintain relationship, especially during the Covid-19 lockdown. For example,

(Q: How do you think the role of social media in keep connection?)

CN6: I think it's easier to connect with people while you stay at home. I think that was the point of starting the social media that you don't have to like meet people all the time. Like especially during Covid-19, like all of us like separated from each other. We don't have any face-to-face

activities for like almost two months. But like social media, the Facebook messenger feature, it helps us to stay connected with people by just posting something and like say, 'hey guys, how are you going today?'

Lastly, many participants thought that social media facilitated their communication with local people. For example,

(Q: Do you think social media help you communicate with local people?)

ID 7: Yeah, I think they can do that because it's all done digitally. Like if I'm messaging someone on Facebook, I use Google translate, which I can communicate my idea by translating it. And Facebook can edit the grammar for me also.

Such statement indicates that social media, embedded in the broader digital translating and writing technology, weakens the language barrier. It does not only facilitate the instant communication, but also improve their language proficiency in the long term through knowing new words and correcting the grammar mistakes.

Promoting culture inclusion

Social media promotes culture inclusion in two ways. Firstly, the information achieving function enables participants to learn Australian culture. For example,

(Q: How do you think social media help you understand Australia?)

ID1: I am a very Indian person. I think I'm the most Indian girl you'll ever meet. But at the same time when I came here, I realised that I needed to know some Australian things. I searched social media and I did this stupid thing like search "top 10 things that you need to know to keep up to an Australian person". For example, there is a thing called vegemite that I should eat. It sounds stupid, but it is useful.

Secondly, social media is an open and confluent space where international students could find common points with local people, which promotes the mutual understanding between international students and Australian. For example,

(Q: How do you think the role of social media in the culture differences?)

CN3: I think it's definitely you can find things in common on social media. Like I watch this show and they watch it too and I know what's their opinion on this. And we give "like" to each other's Facebook posts. It's like you are relating issues together, I guess. It's a good way to find things in common and open up a conversation a bit more.

Promoting participation

In this aspect, it is still information achieving function of social media that comes into play. Social media mainly provides two types of opportunity for international students to participate in the Australian society, including local activity opportunity and job opportunity. Firstly, many participants indicated that social media was an effective information source to find local activities. For example,

(Q: How do you find the activities?)

ID7: Like I follow the local music scene, so I find out about their events here. So social media was a gateway of discovering events and related events. Like one of my favorite bands that I listen to now, Australian Bush. I discovered all their information through social media... And sometimes I'll see what my friends are attending through Facebook. And those events will relate to other events. So things like that, it's really useful.

In this dimension, the significance of university's social media platforms was highlighted. Many participants mentioned that university social media platforms were their most important information source to participate. For example, ID 5 spoke highly of Monash University's social media platforms:

(Q: Do you think your university's social media help you engage the society?)

ID 5: Definitely. Just from the social media I found everything. It helps me to know various activities in Monash. Through social media, I got to know the gym membership, the table tennis club, and other sports club... They have all pictures and characters about the events. They just help me know everything.

Secondly, social media is becoming the most important source of job opportunity. Most participants who once worked in Australia (10 out of 13) found their job on social media. Meanwhile, they thought social media was much more effective than the professional job-seeking websites. For example,

(Q: How do you find your job?)

ID 9: ...I've tried with a couple of platforms like SEEK until it didn't work out for me. Honestly, I got this job through a friend who was studying at Deakin. She had posted it on WhatsApp.

CN3: I spend like a solid one month to find my job on Yiyi (A Chinese job-seeking platform in Australia). And I think I handed out like 19 CV, but it's hard to find a job there.

In summary, as a critical information carrier in today's world, social media dramatically accelerates the information flow and exposures international students to more opportunities to get included in the host society. Besides, the continuous, expressive, and instant communication mode makes it easier for international students to make friends, select friends, maintain relationship, and promote the mutual understanding between them and Australian society. Moreover, the inherent technology advantages effectively weaken the language barrier and facilitate the communication. All these features guarantee the generally positive role of social media identified in this research, and the participants' opinion also indicates that the positive impact of social media is primary.

3.3 Negative impacts

Although most participants from both countries agreed on the generally positive impacts of social media in promoting their inclusion, some negative impacts were identified as well. Diagram 4 reflects the specific factors of negative impacts.

Diagram 4. Negative impacts

Social Media \ Social Inclusion	Connection with local people	Culture inclusion
Information achieving	● Truthfulness of information	● Culture bubbles
Social interaction	● Social network enclosure	
Addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lock people in the virtual life; ● Hard to get rid of; 	

Obstacles in the connection

When asked “Do you think social media help you connect with local people?” two main obstacles were identified, including social network enclosure and truthfulness of information. Firstly, participants from both countries mentioned that their original social network on social media became an enclosure that hinders them from making new friends, particularly for local friends. For example,

CN4: Not really, in my opinion. I think social media is only a tool. It's a easy way to chat with your friends, but it's not a friendship provider. Cause in China, we use a lot WeChat. And all my friends also use WeChat. And some of those friends I have known for 15 years... I also download Facebook, but I don't know anyone on Facebook, so I didn't get any friends from Facebook. So I think social media just help our communication with our friends, but it's not a friend provider.

Statement like this indicates that the Chinese social media plays a noteworthy role in building social network enclosure for Chinese students. This issue will be elaborated in the last section. However, many Indian participants also highlighted this problem, even if they use international social media. For example,

ID4: No, I don't mean to agree. Because honestly, I have no idea how it would help me connect with local people. Most of my friends are Indian, so I think If you don't know any local at first, it's almost impossible to make friends I think.

Secondly, the truthfulness of information is another obstacle identified under the same question. For example,

ID2: Not really. I think that the element of trust comes into play. If someone has seen you before, someone knows you by your name, and then they know that you can be trusted and you can take your connection from there on. But otherwise, in social media, it is very difficult. As a stranger, you cannot just message anyone and try to connect with them.

Also, CN8 thought that the information overload made it impossible to verify the authenticity of the information. She explained:

(Q:What do you think are the disadvantages of social media?)

CN8: ...You cannot just trust it. Social media is information overloaded. So if you want to like verify the authenticity, it will take lots of your time.

Culture bubbles

Culture bubbles, the phrase used by CN5, is similar to the social network enclosure on social media. It is kind of culture enclosure that obstacles culture interaction. Chinese participants attributed it to the choice of the content on social media. For example,

(Q: Do you think you are well included in Australian society?)

CN5: Not very well...You don't really understand their culture because actually we are browsing on different social media. Like we are browsing on Weibo (similar to Twitter), but they are looking at Facebook. You don't know what the latest thing on Facebook. So it just means our culture bubbles are separated.

Indian participants also face this problem, but compared with Chinese participants they thought it was the culture differences per se that decided. For example,

(Q: What do you think are the cultural differences?)

ID7: Indian people will make friends with you based on how many points of similarity you have with them. They are more likely to be friends with you if you speak the same language or have a similar culture as them...so there's resistance on the start to engage people from other cultures.

Besides such physical separation, social media also establishes some kind of invisible enclosure, which is realised by the algorithm. For example,

(Q: What do you think are the disadvantages of social media?)

ID7:...There are algorithms that will track your behavior. They'll keep on feeding you things to distract you from finding new things. Like they will find out what you like and keep showing you more of that.

It is therefore to note that not only the choice of the content on social media could obstacle cultural inclusion; the algorithm of content recommendation could also disturb users to engage new cultures.

Addiction

Besides the functions, a built-in problem of social media—addiction was also considered as a negative impact for social inclusion. Firstly, 16 out of 20 participants thought social media costed too much time. For example,

(Q: Do you like social media?)

CN6:...sometimes you just don't realise that you've already spent like three hours. Like at the end of the day, you can calculate it on your phone. And it tells you how much time you spend on each social media platform. And it surprised me every time.

Although aware of it, participants also indicated that it was quite hard to get rid of social media. For example,

(Q: Do you like social media?)

ID3: ...We already way too deep inside it. I don't think we can leave it. We are already at a stage that there's no way backing off...I don't think it's possible to stay away from it.

Moreover, as social media is a multifunctional platform, which does not only enable communication but also provide broad ways for self entertainment. Many participants mentioned that they could spend hours watching TV shows or playing online video games on social media. ID 10 even realised that sometimes he just unconsciously browsed the social media for hours. In this way, the addiction of social media reduces the communication opportunity, whatever is online or offline.

In summary, the negative impacts of social media concentrate on the social and cultural enclosure and the addiction. Some opinions oppose the positive impacts above. For example, participants disagree about the role of social media in promoting the connection with local people, which is also a focus of controversy in the literature. However, the unexpected factor identified in this research—subjectivity provides a new perspective to rethink the actual role of social media in this issue.

3.4 Subjectivity

In this research, participants from both countries constantly stressed that it was subjectivity that really mattered in influencing social inclusion, which was rarely seen in the literature. They usually used words such as “personality”, “character”, and “willing” to express this opinion. For example, ID1 told the researcher at the end of the interview, *“I think we give too much emphasis to social media, while it (social inclusion) is in our personalities.”* This unexpected factor provides a new perspective to understand the impacts of social media and extract its nature from the impacts. For the positive impacts, social media broadens opportunities and provides convenience for international students to engage the host society, but many participants indicated that the driven force was people’s willingness and personalities. For example, CN6 highlighted the significance of willingness,

(Q: How do you evaluate the role of social media in your social inclusion?)

CN6: I think definitely for me, social media makes me more included. Like I said, social media has a lot of functions. You can find many useful information and you can talk to people in private chat. But social media is a media, I mean it is still how people use it. If you don't try to expose yourself to different kinds of of cultures and stuff, then you're in a way excluding yourself out of this society.

ID 3 emphasised the importance of personality:

(Q: What factors do you think influence your social inclusion?)

ID3: I think it mostly depends on us. Like because we are the one coming to a new country to study, right? So I think it depends a lot on how open you are, or like how outgoing you are. Because if you decide to stay indoors or watch Netflix all day, I don't think you can get included socially anywhere.

Moreover, participants noted that some negative impacts of social media were de facto caused by subjectivity. For example, social network enclosure was identified as a main obstacle by participants from both countries. However, when talking about this issue, CN6 argued that it was not social media’s problem, but people’s problem. He said, *“I feel like it's always about you reaching out. Every friend at beginning is new. You can't just sit there and then complain that I'm not having a good time. I'm sure there would be people who's willing to help, who's willing to get to know you and also make friends with you. It is you really matters.”*

The arguments above, on the theoretical level, refute the technological determinism and highlighted the instrumental nature of social media in this issue. The interview transcript shows that the words such as “tool”, “instrument”, “method” and “channel” were frequently used by participants when describing social

media, which confirmed such arguments. Besides, as participants generally agree on the positive impact of social media, social media's positive instrument nature appeared. Therefore, CN6's statement could conclude social media's role,

(Q: How do you evaluate the role of social media in your social inclusion?)

CN6: I think social media is a crucial and useful tool for me when I am abroad. Because I need social media to collect the information of the host city, like Melbourne. And I can make friends and do many things with it. I just think it is a great channel for me to get included in this city.

However, as social media has fully permeated in people's life and reshaped the communication patterns, it should not be considered as merely a passive tool either. The relationship between subjectivity and social media will be elaborated in the discussion chapter.

Furthermore, during the interview, all the participants expressed clear willingness to get included in Australian society. This finding provides another perspective to understand the generally positive role of social media recognised by participants, which is that the positive willingness motivates them to use social media in the positive way. A representative example mentioned in section 3.2 is how ID1 use social media to learn Australian culture. As she wants to get included in Australia, she actively use social media to search the "top 10 things that you need to know to keep up to an Australian person". In this way, she found it useful.

3.5 Differences between Chinese and Indian participants

The sections above are generated from the common points of Chinese and Indian participants, while this research also found some differences between them. In general, Indian participants feel more included in Australia than Chinese participants. 8 out of 10 Indian participants think they are included, while the number for Chinese participants was only one. Another two main differences—social media choice and language proficiency, were identified as well, which to some extent explained the general finding. Firstly, WeChat and Weibo are the most commonly used social media for Chinese participants. Although all the Chinese participants use Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, the percentage of these international social media in their usage is very limited. On the contrary, Indian participants use Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter most frequently. CN4 thought the ban on international social media in China is the main reason for this situation,

(Q: Do you think you are included in Australia?)

CN4: ...In China, we can only use Wechat. I don't have opportunity to use international social media until I came to Australia. So all my friends use WeChat. I don't have friends on Facebook. If the restriction can be cancelled someday, Chinese students can have a better relationship with foreign people.

Such statement indicates that the long-term rely on Chinese social media locks Chinese students' social network within Chinese group and also makes them lack the experience to use international social media, which make it harder for them to develop an internationalised social network in a foreign country than Indian students.

Besides, Chinese participants also mentioned that the political environment in China made it hard for them to participate in the conversation on international social media. For example,

(Q: Why do you prefer Chinese social media?)

CN8: ...I have a sense of attachment with them (Chinese friends) because we talk about something we are familiar with. But on western platforms, sometimes people talk about some political things and the politicians that I never heard before. You know we don't usually talk about political things in China, then I just don't know what to say.

Moreover, she thought the language barrier also played a role in social media choice,

CN8: When I read news on WeChat, I find it's very easy for me to read. And I only need to spend very short time to get the main information. But if I read news on Facebook or Twitter. Sometimes I met some new words. Then I need to spend time to check the dictionary. So it's some exhausting.

In fact, the language proficiency plays a much more crucial role in distinguishing Chinese and Indian participants. 9 out of 10 Chinese participants stressed English was a main obstacle for them to get included. By contrast, only one Indian participant (ID1) thought English was a problem. At this point, a limitation of this research should be aware of. Some Chinese students who had agreed to participate refused to take part in after knowing the interview would be conducted in English. Although the researcher told them they could speak mandarin, they still refused to participate. Therefore, the actual impact of the language barrier for Chinese students may be more significant than the result shows.

Finally, It is noteworthy that Covid-19 may be a disruptive factor in Chinese students' self-evaluation of social inclusion. For example, CN10 shared her unbelievable experience of racism in April.

(Q:Do you think you are included in Australia?)

CN10: ...Just in April, on my way to Queen Victoria market, three people shout at me and called me coronavirus within 20 minutes. The first one is a man, a homeless man, who chased me into the shop and calls me corona. And no one helped me, they just look at me. And I have to go quickly because he's strong and I'm afraid I will get hurt. And three minutes later on Elizabeth street, the second person, an old woman, looked at me and shout very loudly, "go away Chinese corona! Fxxk you!" And the third one is at the entrance of the Queen Victoria market. And a lady about 30 or 40 years old, do the same thing.

However, CN10 showed understanding to those people and she believed that most Australian people were friendly, even though she felt so frustrated in such racism.

Chapter 4. Discussion

This research sought to identify the role of social media in shaping international students' opportunity for social inclusion within the context of Chinese and Indian students in Australia. The result suggests that social media plays an instrumental role with generally positive effects that helps international students to get included in Australia. Moreover, the comparison of Chinese and Indian students indicates the heterogeneity of international students in Australia.

4.1 An effective instrument

The findings of this research refute the technological determinism, which however is popular in this field (Zhao, 2017, p. 166). Many researchers explain the issues occurring in international students' life through some function of social media. For example, the "parallel society" mentioned in the background chapter is

attributed to the transnational communication enabled by social media (Martin & Rizvi, 2014, p. 1016). However, it is important to note that social media does not force international students to live in such a "parallel society", but it is students that chose to maintain strong relationship with people in the home country. More importantly, this research finds that not all the international students live in the "parallel society. Some participants' life focus primarily lies in Australia. For example, when asked whether India or Australia weights more in the life, ID 6 said, *"Definitely Australia. Like no matter how close you are with family or friends back home, I guess you end up not being in touch after some time. Because everyone's got their own lives right? I live here. I meet people here, and I build my life here."* It is therefore significant to note that some students like ID 6 can but choose not to live in the "parallel society".

Essentially, those researchers presuppose international students as passive receivers of social media, which is theoretically problematic. On the one hand, a critical feature of social media is empowerment, which enables users to act at will (Humphreys, 2016, p. 17). On the other hands, social inclusion is a subjective conception, which is not only about opportunity and capacity but also the subjective willingness (Stewart, 2000, p. 9). Therefore, when using social media to engage the host society, international students in reality play an initiative role and social media reflects the instrumental nature.

However, social media either should not be simply considered as a "neutral" and "passive" tool because the reshaping power of social media is prominent (Seth, 2015, p. 1). In today's world, social media has widely permeated into almost every corner of people's life, changing the outlook of life pattern and the way people participate (Miller et al., 2016). Again, take the "parallel society" as an example. The instant and transnational communication enabled by social media forms a new type of transnational life pattern never seen before, which realises some international students' willingness of keeping close connection with the home country. Ketter and Avraham (2012, p. 285) argue that social media essentially transforms users from passivity to initiative. Nikos Papastergiadis indicates this transformation in his transnational study. He expounds that before the digital age, newcomers usually have to abandon their loyalty to their state of origin and adapt themselves to blend in the local society, while the digitisation nowadays enables them to choose their lifestyles and reshaped the life patterns in the host society (Papastergiadis 2012, p. 46). Therefore, it could be seen that social media is also a way to realise and shape the subjectivity.

In terms of this research, social media significantly accelerates the information flow and broaden the interaction opportunities, making it easier for international students to achieve information and expand social network. Also, the technological advance helps them to weaken the obstacles in the communication. For example, participants from both countries thought that the online translator and grammar corrector facilitate their conversation with local people. Therefore, social media generally plays an effective role in promoting international students' social inclusion. Admittedly, there are still some negative impacts of social media, but some of them are de facto attributed to the subjectivity. Such as how CN6 disproved the social network enclosure on social media in the section 3.4. It is important to note that social media does not stop people from making new friends, but on the contrary, it provides more opportunities. It is still peoplw themselves that decide how to use it. Christain Fuchs (2017, p. 7) stresses that "social" is the nature of social media, which essentially is a tool for communication and creation of community.

To conclude, international students and social media form a interactional system. International students' subjectivity drives the use of social media, while social media has reshaping power on international students as well. Also, considering the generally positive effects of social media in promoting social inclusion, this research argue that social media plays an instrumental role with generally positive effects that helps international students to get included in Australian society.

4.2 Heterogeneity of international students groups

Another main finding is that Chinese and Indian students have significantly different experiences, which indicates the heterogeneity inside the general international student cohort in Australia. Gomes et al. (2015) argue that Asian students are generally disengaged in Australia. However, this research suggests that the research unit should be further specified because even in the Asian group, students from different countries could have significant different experiences. According to the findings, Indian students feel more included than Chinese students. Two main impacting factors, language proficiency and social media choice, were identified. On the one hand, because of the language environment in the home country, Indian students have a better grasp on English than Chinese students before coming to Australia, which makes it easier for them to engage the local society. On the other hand, the choice of social media also contributes to the result. Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social media for Indian participants, while Chinese participants largely rely on Chinese social media. As a result, the international social media exposes Indian students to the Australian and international social environment more than Chinese students, which provides more opportunities for them to get included. Moreover, the reasons of the different social media choice indicate further differences in the backgrounds of Chinese and Indian groups. Therefore, even though Chinese and Indian students both belong to Asian groups, there are still many differences from the general experience to the specific factors between them. Accordingly, it is reasonable to argue that international students should not be treated homogeneously and the future research should be further specified.

Moreover, another noteworthy finding is that participants from both countries all expressed clear willingness to get included in Australia, but the result is very different, which indicates that the subjectivity is crucial but does not guarantee the result. In other words, the external impacting factors like language proficiency and social media use play their roles in this process. This finding resonates with the argument in the last section that the relationship between social media and international students is interactional. Neither of them is totally passive or initiative. This relationship need to be elaborated in the future research. Furthermore, this finding also indicates that although crucial, subjectivity and social media are neither decisive but two of all impactors factors, which together decide international students' complete experience. However, the strength of each factor is under-researched. Therefore, the future research should focus on these two gaps, which could contribute to a more profound understanding of international students' experience.

4.3 Research limitations

The first limitation is the representativeness. The small sample cannot represent the overall situation of Chinese and Indian students in Australia. Moreover, as different international student groups could have different experience, the study on Chinese and Indian groups cannot represent all the international students in Australia. Another problem of representativeness is derived from the snowball sampling. The method is heavily reliant on participants' vertically network. The first participants have a strong impact on the sample, which could cause bias in the target population (Etikan, et al., 2016, p.1). Therefore, this research could be used as a pilot study for the future generalised project. Another limitation occurs in the recruitment. As language proficiency is an important impacting factor in influencing international students' engagement, it is necessary to inform participants in advance that the interview could be bilingual, or some non-native speakers might be unwilling to participate even if they are allowed to speak their first language later. This limitation could filter the participants in terms of the language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This research argues that social media plays an instrumental role with generally positive effects in shaping international students' opportunity for social inclusion in Australia. Social media provides broad opportunities for international students to connect with local people, promote cultural inclusion, participate in the local community, and facilitate communication. It significantly reshapes the communication mode for international students. However, despite the great power, the instrumental nature of social media should not be neglected because according to the participants, it is the subjectivity that drives the use of social media. Moreover, the differences identified between Chinese and Indian students suggest the heterogeneity of international student in Australia, which requires the elaborated study on different international student groups in the future.

The implication of this study lies in four aspects. Firstly, it identified three main conceptions of social inclusion in Australian context, including connection with local people, cultural inclusion, and participation in the local community. This finding reveals the main aspects of social inclusion highlighted by international students in Australia, providing targeted areas for stakeholders to improve international students' social inclusion. Secondly, the heterogeneity of international students reminds government and universities to take diversified measures to help different international student groups. Particularly for the university, many participants mentioned that university social media platforms are their most important information source, so the diversified and elaborated content on the university social media platforms could be helpful. Thirdly, this research identified the general positive impact of social media in influencing international students' social inclusion, which responds to the debate in the literature. Lastly, by identifying the unexpected factor—subjectivity, this research provides a new perspective to understand the role of social media and refute the technological determinism in this field.

Based on the findings, this study proposed three future research agendas. Firstly, the interactional relationship between subjectivity and social media requires further investigation, which could contribute to a more profound understanding of social media and users. Secondly, the comparison indicates that different groups could have significantly different experience. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct the large-scale studies based on the country and region unit to generate the authoritative report of international students' situation in Australia. Moreover, the strength spectrum of impacting factors of international students' social inclusion should be explored as well. All these future research agendas will deepen the understanding of international students' experience in the digital age.

Acknowledgments

To Professor Robert Hassan, who guided me throughout this project and constantly challenged me so I could achieve my best, I would like to say thank you. Thank you for your supervision, for your mentorship, and for caring so much.

To all the participants that took the time to participate in the interview, I would like to say thank you. Thank you for your willingness to help, for your interest in my study, and for your valuable insights.

Bibliography

- Aichner, T., & Jacob, F. (2015). Measuring the degree of corporate social media use. *International Journal of market research*, 57(2), 257-276.
- Akram, W., & Kumar, R. (2017). A study on positive and negative effects of social media on society. *International Journal of Computer Sciences and Engineering*, 5(10), 351-354.
- Ali, V., Cullen, R., & Toland, J. (2015). ICTs and tourism in small island developing states: The case of the Maldives. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, 18(4), 250-270.
- Anderson, M., Toor, S., Rainie, L., & Smith, A. (2018). Public attitudes toward political engagement on social media. Pew Research Center. URL: <https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/07/11/public-attitudes-toward-politicalengagement-on-social-media>.
- Arkoudis, S., Dollinger, M., Baik, C., & Patience, A. (2019). International students' experience in Australian higher education: can we do better?. *Higher Education*, 77(5), 799-813.
- Asadifard, R., Fani, A. A., Azar, A., & Alvani, S. M. (2016). Public Policy Analysis Model in Iran.
- Ashong, C., & Commander, N. (2017). Brazilian and Nigerian International Students' Conceptions of Learning in Higher Education. *Journal of International Students*, 7(2), 163-187.
- Astarita, C., & Patience, A. (2020). Chinese students' access to media information in Australia and France: a comparative perspective. *Media International Australia*, 175(1), 65-78.
- Australian Community Participation Questionnaire. Retrieved 9 May 2020, from <https://rtcom.umn.edu/database/instruments/acpq>
- Babbie, E. R. (2014). *The basics of social research* (6th ed.). Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Baldassar, L., Nedelcu, M., Merla, L., & Wilding, R. (2016). ICT-based co-presence in transnational families and communities: Challenging the premise of face-to-face proximity in sustaining relationships. *Global Networks*, 16(2), 133-144.
- Basu, S. (2016). Expectations and Experiences of Indian students in Australia: Findings from a Survey and Focus Group Study. *Journal of the Australian & New Zealand Student Services Association*, 47, 1.Indian socail mediausage
- Binsahl, H., Chang, S., & Bosua, R. (2015). Identity and belonging: Saudi female international students and their use of social networking sites. *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture*, 6(1), 81-102.
- Boyd, Danah M.; Ellison, Nicole B. (October 2007). "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship". *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 13 (1): 210-230. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x.
- Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J., & Piachaud, D. (1999). Social exclusion in Britain 1991—1995. *Social policy & administration*, 33(3), 227-244.

- Byun, S. E. & Lou, Y. (2018). Stress-driven spending: Correlates of international students' adjustment strains and compulsive online buying. *Journal of International Students*, 8(4), 1522-1548.
- Chang, S, Alzougool, B, Gomes, C, Berry, M, Smith, S and Reeders, D. (2012), 'Communicating with International Students: How do their social networks impact on where they go to for information?', in Dr Katie Richardson, Dr Shanton Chang, Mr Terry McGrath (ed.) *Proceedings of the International Education Association Inc*, Auckland, New Zealand, 4-7 December 2012, pp. 1-10.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.
- Chen, L., & Yang, X. (2015). Nature and effectiveness of online social support for intercultural adaptation of Mainland Chinese international students. *International Journal of Communication*, 9, 2161-2181.
- Cohen, N., & Arieli, T. (2011). Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(4), 423-435.
- Choudaha, R., & Chang, L. (2012). Trends in international student mobility. *World Education News & Reviews*, 25(2).
- Cooper, P. G. (2019). Social Media. *Salem Press Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 9 August 2020, from <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=ers&AN=89139034&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research* (4th ed.). London: SAGE.
- Crampton, T. (2011). Social Media in China: The Same, but Different. *China Business Review*, 38(1), 28–31.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research method: Choosing among five approaches*.
- Darwish, A., & Lakhtaria, K. I. (2011). The impact of the new Web 2.0 technologies in communication, development, and revolutions of societies. *Journal of advances in information technology*, 2(4), 204-216.
- Dalglish, C. L. (2006). The international classroom, challenges and strategies in a large business faculty. *International Journal of Learning*, 12(6), 85-94.
- Davey, S & Gordon, S (2017). Definitions of social inclusion and social exclusion: the invisibility of mental illness and the social conditions of participation, *International Journal of Culture and Mental Health*, 10:3, 229-237, DOI: 10.1080/17542863.2017.1295091
- DeFranzo, S. (2011). Difference between qualitative and quantitative research. Retrieved 9 May 2020, from <https://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/qualitative-vs-quantitative-research/>
- de Leeuw, R. R., de Boer, A. A., & Minnaert, A. E. M. G. (2018). Student Voices on Social Exclusion in General Primary Schools. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 33(2), 166–186.
- Dunn, K., Pelleri, D., & Maeder-Han, K. (2011). Attacks on Indian students: The commerce of denial in Australia. *Race & Class*, 52(4), 71-88.
- Díaz Andrade, A., & Doolin, B. (2016). Information and Communication Technology and the Social Inclusion of Refugees. *MIS Quarterly*, 40(2), 405–416.

- Dekker, R., & Engbersen, G. (2014). How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. *Global Networks*, 14(4), 401-418.
- Elega, A. A., & Özad, B. E. (2017). Technologies and Second Language: Nigerian Students' Adaptive Strategies to Cope with Language Barrier in Northern Cyprus. *Journal of International Students*, 7(3), 486-498.
- Etikan, I., Alkassim, R., & Abubakar, S. (2016). Comparison of snowball sampling and sequential sampling technique. *Biometrics and Biostatistics International Journal*, 3(1), 55.
- Ferguson, H., & Sherrell, H. (2019). Overseas students in Australian higher education: a quick guide. Retrieved 19 August 2020, from https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/6765126/upload_binary/6765126.pdf
- Flair, I. (2019). International students. Salem Press Encyclopedia.
- Forbush, Eric & Foucault-Welles, Brooke. (2016). Social media use and adaptation among Chinese students beginning to study in the United States. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 50. 1-12. 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.10.007.
- Freeman Jr, S. (2018). Utilizing Multi-Grounded Theory in a Dissertation: Reflections and Insights. *Qualitative Report*, 23(5).
- Frouws, B., & Phillips, M., & Hassan, A., & Twigt, M. (2016). Getting to Europe the Whatsapp Way: The Use of ICT in Contemporary Mixed Migration Flows to Europe. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. 10.2139/ssrn.2862592.
- Fuchs, C. (2017). *Social media: a critical introduction* (2nd edition.). SAGE.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory; strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Pub. Co.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (2017). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.
- Goldkuhl, G., & Cronholm, S. (2010). Adding Theoretical Grounding to Grounded Theory: Towards Multi-Grounded Theory. (2010). *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 9(2), 187-205.
- Goldkuhl, G., & Cronholm, S. (2018). Reflection/Commentary on a Past Article: "Adding Theoretical Grounding to Grounded Theory: Toward Multi-Grounded Theory." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918795540>
- Gomes, C., Chang, S., Jacka, L., Coulter, D., Alzougool, B., & Constantinidis, D. (2015, December). Myth busting stereotypes: The connections, disconnections and benefits of international student social networks. In 26th ISANA International Education Association Conference, Melbourne (pp. 1-4).
- Gomes, C. (2015). Negotiating everyday life in Australia: unpacking the parallel society inhabited by Asian international students through their social networks and entertainment media use. *JOURNAL OF YOUTH STUDIES -ABINGDON-*, 4, 515.
- Gomes, C., Berry, M., Alzougool, B., & Chang, S. (2014). Home away from home: International students and their identity-based social networks in Australia. *Journal of International Students*, 4(1), 2-15.
- Gray, J. (2000). Inclusion: A Radical Critique. In Askonas, P. F., & Stewart, A. M. A. (Eds.), *Social inclusion: possibilities and tensions* (pp. 19-37). Macmillan.

- Gunawardena, H., & Wilson, R. (2012). *International students at university: understanding the student experience*. Peter Lang.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, 18(1), 59-82.
- Hassan, R. (2008). *The information society: Cyber dreams and digital nightmares*. Polity.
- Hassan, R. (2019). *Uncontained: Digital Disconnection and the Experience of Time* (p. 2). Melbourne: Grattan Street Press, University of Melbourne.
- Henze, J., & Zhu, J. (2012). Current Research on Chinese Students Studying Abroad. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 7(1), 90–104. <https://doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2012.7.1.90>
- Hossain, M. D., & Veenstra, A. S. (2013). Online maintenance of life domains: Uses of social network sites during graduate education among the US and international students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 6, 2697. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.07.007>**
- Humphreys, A. (2016). *Social media: enduring principles*. Oxford University Press.
- Jakubowicz, A. (2010). *International student futures in Australia : a human rights perspective on moving forward to real action*. Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.
- Kanoh, H. (2016). *Analysis of Usage Trends of Social Media and Self-Esteem by the Rosenberg Scale*. International Association for Development of the Information Society.
- Ketter, E., & Avraham, E. (2012). The social revolution of place marketing: The growing power of users in social media campaigns. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 8(4), 285-294.
- Khanal, J., & Gaulee, U. (2019). Challenges of International Students from Predeparture to Post-Study: A Literature Review. *Journal of International Students*, 9(2), 560-581.
- Lariscy, R.W., Tinkham, S.F. & Sweetser, K.D. (2011) 'Kids these days: examining differences in political uses and gratifications, internet political participation, political information efficacy, and cynicism on the basis of age', *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 55, No. 6, pp.749–764.
- Lee, C. S., & Ma, L. (2012). News sharing in social media: The effect of gratifications and prior experience. *Computers in human behavior*, 28(2), 331-339.
- Lee, K., & Ranta, L. (2014). Facebook: Facilitating Social Access and Language Acquisition for International Students? *TESL Canada Journal*, 31(2), 22–50.
- Lee, E. J., Lee, L., & Jang, J. (2011). Internet for the internationals: Effects of internet use motivations on international students' college adjustment. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14(7-8), 433-437.
- Lin, J.H., Peng, W., Kim, M., Kim, S. Y., & LaRose, R. (2012). Social networking and adjustments among international students. *New Media & Society*, 14, 421-440. doi:10.1177/1461444811418627
- Lister, R. (2000). Strategies for social inclusion: Promoting social cohesion or social justice. In Askonas, P. F., & Stewart, A. M. A. (Eds.), *Social inclusion: possibilities and tensions* (pp. 37-55). Macmillan.
- Lovink, G. (2011). *Networks without a Cause: A Critique of Social Media*. Cambridge: Polity. Print.
- Lubkin, I. M., & Larsen, P. D. (2006). *Chronic illness : impact and interventions* (6th ed.). Jones and Bartlett.

- McMahon, P. (2016). A grounded theory of international postgraduate students in a British university : making the grade.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. Sage publications.
- Mander, J. (2017). Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods | GlobalWebIndex. Retrieved 1 September 2020, from <https://blog.globalwebindex.com/trends/qualitative-vs-quantitative/#:~:text=Quantitative%20Research%20Pros%3A,relates%20to%20close%2Dended%20information.>
- Mason, G. (2010). Violence against Indian students in Australia: A question of dignity. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 21(3), 461-465.
- Mason, G. (2012). 'I am tomorrow': Violence against Indian students in Australia and political denial. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 45(1), 4-25.
- Martin, F., & Rizvi, F. (2014). *Making Melbourne: digital connectivity and international students' experience of locality*. SAGE PUBLICATIONS LTD.
- Meikle, G. (2016). *Social media : communication, sharing and visibility (1 edition.)*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research : a guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Mikal, J. P., & Grace, K. (2012). Against abstinence-only education abroad: Viewing Internet use during study abroad as a possible experience enhancement. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 16(3), 287-306.
- Miller, D., Sinanan, J., Wang, X., McDonald, T., Haynes, N., Costa, E., ... & Nicolescu, R. (2016). *How the world changed social media* (p. 286). UCL press.
- Mwangi, C. A. G. (2016). Exploring Sense of Belonging among Black International Students at an HBCU. *Journal of International Students*, 6(4), 1015–1037.
- Nedelcu, M. (2012). Migrants' new transnational habitus: rethinking migration through a cosmopolitan lens in the digital age. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(9), 1339-1356.
- Obar, J. A., & Wildman, S. S. (2015). Social media definition and the governance challenge—an introduction to the special issue. Obar, JA and Wildman, S.(2015). Social media definition and the governance challenge: An introduction to the special issue. *Telecommunications policy*, 39(9), 745-750.
- Olding, A. L. (2013). *An investigation of the social relationships and social interactions amongst international students studying in Australia: a case study using Facebook* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Tasmania).
- Özad, B. E., & Uygurer, G. (2014). Attachment needs and social networking sites. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 42(1), 43S-52S.
- Paltridge, T., Mayson, S., & Schapper, J. (2012). Covering the gap: Social inclusion, international students and the role of local government. *Australian Universities' Review*, The, 54(2), 29.
- Pang, H. (2016). Understanding key factors affecting young people's WeChat usage: An empirical study from uses and gratifications perspective. *International Journal of Web-Based Communities*. 12. 262. 10.1504/IJWBC.2016.077757.

- Papastergiadis, N. (2012). 'Kinetophobia, Motion, Fearfulness' *Cosmopolitanism and Culture* Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press: 36-56.
- Park, N., Song, H., & Lee, K. M. (2014). Social networking sites and other media use, acculturation stress, and psychological well-being among East Asian college students in the United States. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 36, 138-146. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2014.03.037
- Pekerti, A. A., van de Vijver, F. J. R., Moeller, M., & Okimoto, T. G. (2020). Intercultural contacts and acculturation resources among International students in Australia: A mixed-methods study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 75, 56–81.
- Puri, V. (2018). Focus in Indian English and Hindi Late and Simultaneous Bilinguals. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, 8(3), 343–371. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lab.15009.pur>
- Qiu, W. (2011). Language adjustment of international students in the US: A social network analysis on the effects of language resources, language norm and technology (pp.
- Rafi, B., & Lewis, P. (2013). Indian higher education students in Australia: Their patterns and motivations. *Australian Journal of Education*, 57(2), 157-173.
- Rizvi, F. & Walsh L. (1998). Difference globalisation and the internationalisation of curriculum. *Australian Universities Review*. 41 (2): 7–11.
- Robertson, S. (2011). Cash cows, backdoor migrants, or activist citizens? International students, citizenship, and rights in Australia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(12), 2192-2211.
- Rüland, J., & Michael, A. (2019). Overlapping regionalism and cooperative hegemony: how China and India compete in South and Southeast Asia. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 32(2), 178-200.
- Samuel J. Bernstein, Roman Ferber, & A. Isaac Bernstein. (1973). The Problems and Pitfalls of Quantitative Methods in Urban Analysis. *Policy Sciences*, 4(1), 29.
- Sano, H., Li, Y. X., & Ahn, R. (2013). Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Chinese Students in Japan: School Adjustment and Educational Support. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 9(3), 154–168.
- Sayce, L. (2001). Social inclusion and mental health. *Psychiatric Bulletin*, 25(4), 121-123.
- Sekeleni, N. (2015). Women-driven entrepreneurship within the information and communication technology sector: a grounded analysis of small, micro, and medium enterprises in the Eastern Cape Province.
- Seth C. Lewis. (2015). Reciprocity as a Key Concept for Social Media and Society. *Social Media + Society*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115580339>
- Siddiqui, S., & Singh, T. (2016). Social media its impact with positive and negative aspects. *International Journal of Computer Applications Technology and Research*, 5(2), 71-75.
- Sin, S.-C. J., & Kim, K.-S. (2013). International students' everyday life information seeking: The informational value of social networking sites. *Library & Information Science Research*, 35, 107-116. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2012.11.006
- Shields, R. (2013). Globalization and International Student Mobility: A Network Analysis. *Comparative Education Review*, 57(4), 609. <https://doi.org/10.1086/671752>

- Sleeman, J., Lang, C., & Lemon, N. (2016). Social media challenges and affordances for international students: Bridges, boundaries, and hybrid spaces. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 20(5), 391-415.
- Shu, M., & Scott, N. (2014). Influence of social media on Chinese students' choice of an overseas study destination: An information adoption model perspective. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 31 (2), 286-302.
- Smith, R. A., & Khawaja, N. G. (2011). A review of the acculturation experiences of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(6), 699–713.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.08.004>
- Soong, H. (2016). *Transnational Students and Mobility: Lived Experiences of Migration*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Stewart, A. (2000). Never Ending Story: Inclusion or Exclusion in Late Modernity. In Askonas, P. F., & Stewart, A. M. A. (Eds.), *Social inclusion: possibilities and tensions* (pp. 55-73). Macmillan.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 17(1), 273-285.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques & Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.
- The Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2020). INTERNATIONAL STUDENT DATA monthly summary. Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/International-Student-Data/Documents/MONTHLY%20SUMMARIES/2020/Jun%202020%20MonthlyInfographic.pdf>
- Thomberg, R. (2012). Informed grounded theory. *Scandinavian journal of educational research*, 56(3), 243-259.
- Tran, L. T., & Hoang, T. (2020). International Students:(Non) citizenship, Rights, Discrimination, and Belonging. *The Palgrave Handbook of Citizenship and Education*, 599-617.
- Turner, K. K. (2018). International student identity development at two private comprehensive institutions. Widener University.
- UNESCO. (2019). Education : Outbound internationally mobile students by host region. Retrieved 15 July 2020, from <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=172>
- United Nations. (2016). 2016 Report on the World Social Situation | DISD. Retrieved 15 July 2020, from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/world-social-report/rwss2016.html>
- Wilding, R. (2009). "Refugee Youth, Social Inclusion, and ICTs: Can Good Intentions Go Bad?," *Journal of Information, Communication & Ethics in Society* (7:2/3), pp. 159-174.
- Wang, X., Wang, C., & Wang, J. (2019). Towards the contributing factors for stress confronting Chinese PhD students. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health & Well-Being*, 14(1), 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2019.1598722>
- Wade, M. (Ed.). (2016). *Big News : The Indian Media and Student Attacks in Australia*. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 7(3).

- Weiss, M. L., & Ford, M. (2011). Temporary transnationals: Southeast Asian students in Australia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 41(2), 229–248.
- Woolley, S. (2020). Melbourne students assaulted in 'disgusting' racist attack. Retrieved 23 September 2020, from <https://7news.com.au/lifestyle/health-wellbeing/coronavirus-university-of-melbourne-international-students-assaulted-in-unprovoked-racist-attack-c-983675>
- Yanicki, S. M., Kushner, K. E., & Reutter, L. (2015). Social inclusion/exclusion as matters of social (in)justice: a call for nursing action, *Nursing Inquiry*, 22(2), pp. 121–133. doi: 10.1111/nin.12076.
- Yang, C. -c., Brown, B. B., & Braun, M. T. (2014). From Facebook to cell calls: Layers of electronic intimacy in college students' interpersonal relationships. *NEW MEDIA AND SOCIETY*, 1, 5.
- Yu, H., & Sun, W. (2019). Introduction: social media and Chinese digital diaspora in Australia. *Media International Australia*, 173(1), 17-21.
- Yuan, W. (2010). Investigating international student perceptions of adjustment through Q methodology. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 19(2), 235-252.
- Zhang, B., Robb, N., Eyerman, J., & Goodman, L. (2017). Virtual worlds and gamification to increase integration of international students in higher education: An inclusive design approach.
- Zhao, X. (2017). International students and social exclusion in the age of social media. *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration*, 1(2), pp. 163-175.
- Zhao, X. (2019). Disconnective intimacies through social media: practices of transnational family among overseas Chinese students in Australia. *Media International Australia*, 173(1), pp. 36-52.