

From Cultural Conflict to Happiness Reconstruction: Exploring the Growth Path of Immigrants

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Abstract: Globalization is driving the continuous expansion of transnational population mobility. While bringing vitality to the host countries, immigrants also face profound cultural conflicts, which directly impact their social integration and well-being. This paper, focusing on the "growth path" of immigrants, integrates theories from cultural anthropology and social psychology through a literature review approach to systematically examine the dynamic process from the emergence of cultural conflict to the realization of happiness reconstruction. The study finds that immigrant cultural conflict primarily manifests itself in differences in values, lifestyles, and linguistic symbols, the intensity of which is influenced by factors such as individual cultural capital, psychological resilience, cultural inclusiveness in the host country, and cultural distance. Acculturation, as a mediating mechanism, mitigates conflict through cognitive restructuring, behavioral adjustments, and emotional regulation. Happiness reconstruction relies on the multidimensional coordination of social integration, economic stability, identity, and psychological satisfaction, and requires a multi-agent support system from the government, society, and individuals. This study aims to deepen understanding of the laws governing immigrant cultural adaptation, provide theoretical references for improving immigrant well-being and promoting the harmonious development of multicultural societies, and reveal the phased characteristics of immigrant growth paths and the core value of support systems.

Keywords: Immigration, Cultural Conflict, Happiness Restoration, Cultural Adaptation, Growth Path.

1. Introduction

With the rise of globalization, transnational population mobility has become increasingly common, and immigrant communities have gradually become a vital part of the social fabric of many countries and regions. However, upon entering a new cultural environment, immigrants' preexisting cultural cognitions and behavioral patterns often clash with the host culture. This cultural conflict has significant consequences, not only causing individual identity anxiety and social barriers, but also potentially leading to long-term social integration difficulties, ultimately significantly reducing their sense of well-being.

Existing research, most scholars focus on a single manifestation of cultural conflict or explore only partial strategies for improving well-being. Inadequate attention has been paid to the dynamic transition between cultural conflict and happiness restoration—that is, the process by which immigrants, starting with coping with cultural conflict, gradually achieve happiness restoration. This lack of systematic theoretical analysis and a comprehensive logical framework in this area hinders existing research from comprehensively addressing the core issues facing immigrants in cross-cultural adaptation and providing sufficient theoretical support for the growth of immigrant communities. Based on this current research landscape, this study, taking "From Cultural Conflict to Happiness Restoration" as its central thread, utilizes literature research and theoretical integration, drawing on research findings from related fields such as acculturation theory and happiness dimension theory. This study systematically analyzes the specific manifestations of cultural conflict among immigrants and the various factors influencing it. It further explores the mediating role of acculturation in alleviating conflict and building happiness, identifies the core dimensions of happiness restoration, and proposes a collaborative support

system involving multiple stakeholders[1].

This research is highly significant. From a theoretical perspective, it helps fill the gap in the "conflict-adaptation-happiness" chain in immigration research. From a practical perspective, it can inform the development of more targeted immigration support policies, promote the development of multicultural societies towards greater inclusion, and ultimately lay a solid theoretical foundation for improving the quality of life of immigrants and supporting their personal growth.

2. Specific Manifestations of Cultural Conflict among Immigrants

Let's first consider values. Different cultural backgrounds have different value systems, and this is the deepest root of conflict. People who come here from their hometowns often bring the whole family to the table: they worry about their children's schooling together, they all contribute to the elderly's care, and they often ask acquaintances for job inquiries. But here, they discover that people here prioritize "making their own decisions"—children choose their own hobbies, the elderly choose nursing homes, and finding jobs is entirely up to them. This creates numerous setbacks: raising children according to hometown rules is criticized as too strict; wanting to move in with the elderly is met with accusations that "the elderly deserve their own space"; asking for help finding a job is criticized as "not independent." These issues can't be fixed simply by changing behavior; they remain uneasy and indecisive[2].

The awkwardness in life arises from the little things. Back home, I used to have daily family dinners and chatted for half an hour with the neighbors. Here, neighbors simply nod and greet, then retreat after a few words. When I offer a home-cooked dish to a neighbor, they politely accept it, but the next time they avoid it. My hometown loves heavy, oily, and salty

food, but restaurants here tend to be more light. Bringing hometown dishes to the office is always a headache for colleagues. Being punctual is even more of a headache. It used to be normal for me to be ten minutes late for an appointment, but here, if I'm five minutes late, they'll demand the reason. After so many times, I've become afraid to even meet up.

Etiquette in speech and conduct is even more challenging. Language barriers can be learned gradually, but subtle gestures can be incredibly different. Last time, I compared my hometown "no problem" gesture to a client, and they immediately turned their face away[3]. I later realized it was

a sign of contempt. Back home, I'd say "think about it" when someone turns me down, but here, I'd say "no" directly. Last time, a colleague asked me to get together, and I said "let's see," and they simply crossed me off their list. With so many incidents like this, I'm increasingly afraid of interacting with locals. I'm constantly afraid of making mistakes, and gradually, I've stopped hanging out.

These complications compound, becoming increasingly complex. Differing perspectives make life difficult, and constant missteps in speech and conduct only exacerbate the awkwardness. Newcomers here need to navigate these hurdles first, or they'll find life unpleasant, see Figure 1.

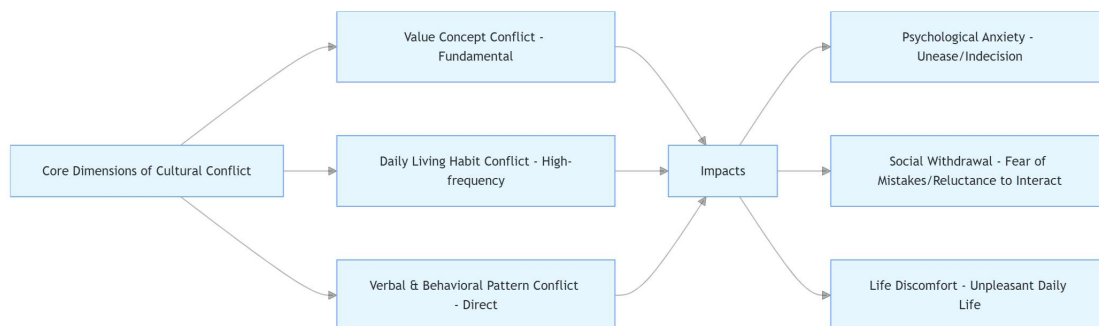


Figure 1. Diagram of Core Dimensions of Cultural Conflict and Their Impacts

3. Deeper Factors Influencing Immigrant Cultural Conflict

The severity and duration of cultural conflict among immigrants depends not only on the cultural differences between the two places but also on the immigrant's own circumstances and the local social environment. These two factors, combined, directly determine the difficulty of coping with the conflict and the direction it will develop.

For individual immigrants, "cultural capital" is particularly crucial. Whether one can speak the local language, understand the local culture, and interact smoothly with others directly influences the frequency and effectiveness of conflict[4]. If one struggles to speak fluently, inquiring about matters and communicating with others will be difficult, and misunderstandings of local culture are also likely. Understanding local dos and don'ts can help avoid inadvertently offending others. Being able to flexibly resolve minor disagreements can prevent minor frictions from escalating into major conflicts. Those without these skills often find themselves anxious when faced with conflict, making it more difficult to adapt.

Mental resilience is also crucial. Immigrants who can handle conflict will view conflict as an opportunity to learn and grow, proactively adjusting their mindset and seeking solutions. However, if you're too fragile and become anxious and angry when things go wrong, hiding or confronting others, you'll only worsen conflicts, creating a vicious cycle that makes integration even more difficult.

Local society's tolerance of immigrants is a crucial external factor. If communities encourage the coexistence of different cultures and value equality, conflicts will be much less frequent. For example, if locals are willing to accept immigrants, the government has anti-discrimination regulations, and regularly organizes cross-cultural exchange activities, immigrants will have a more equal opportunity to

find jobs and make a living. Communities that provide counseling, legal assistance, and organized community activities can also help immigrants adapt more quickly. However, if local communities consistently discriminate against immigrants and relevant systems fail to keep up, immigrants will only feel more isolated and conflicts will intensify.

Furthermore, "cultural distance" cannot be ignored. The greater the cultural differences between the country of origin and the country of arrival, the more values and behavioral patterns immigrants must adjust, and the greater the likelihood and intensity of conflict. For example, migrating from a collectivist East Asian society to an individualistic Western country presents far greater challenges in cultural adaptation than migrating within the same cultural circle[5].

In summary, immigrant cultural conflict results from the interplay of multiple factors. Beyond visible cultural differences, immigrants' personal resources and psychological state, as well as the social atmosphere and institutional support in the host country, all profoundly influence the development and resolution of conflicts. Understanding these underlying factors will help promote more effective cross-cultural integration policies and practices.

4. Cultural Adaptation: A Mediating Mechanism from Conflict Mitigation to Happiness

Cultural adaptation isn't about immigrants passively conforming to the local culture. Rather, when encountering conflict, they proactively adjust their thinking, practices, and empathize with it, gradually integrating with the local culture. This can alleviate conflict and is crucial for immigrants to live a comfortable life.

There are many ways for immigrants to adapt, but their

effectiveness varies widely. The most effective is "cultural integration": The core culture of one's homeland must be preserved, such as upholding New Year's customs and the importance of family. At the same time, one must actively learn appropriate local practices, such as social etiquette and workplace etiquette. Ultimately, by balancing both cultures, one's thinking and work habits can be compatible[6]. This approach prevents a loss of belonging and avoids conflict, naturally reducing the pressure of conflict.

However, other approaches have obvious problems. "Cultural assimilation," which completely abandons one's home culture and conforms entirely to the local one, can easily lead to a sense of identity fragmentation and psychological distress. "Cultural separation," which deliberately distances oneself from the local culture and only recognizes the local one, can lead to isolation over time, deepen the gap, and fail to resolve conflict. "Cultural marginalization," the worst, involves neither recognizing the home culture nor accepting the local one, resulting in rejection from both sides and the greatest pressure of conflict. Therefore, cultural adaptation is truly effective only if you choose the right method.

Cultural adaptation begins with a shift in mindset. We must abandon the outdated notion of "either accepting only the homeland culture or the local culture" and approach differences with an objective and open mindset, avoiding arbitrary judgments about right and wrong. We must understand that these differences are caused by the different

historical and social circumstances of the two places. For example, while the locals prioritize the individual, we tend to prioritize the collective. If we understand the social structure and historical reasons behind this, we will be less repulsive and can even use conflict as a learning opportunity, laying a solid psychological foundation for adjusting our approach[7].

Once your mindset has changed, your approach must also be adjusted. This is the most direct way to ease conflict. Observe how locals do things and learn to adapt your own practices, such as workplace communication and public etiquette, to minimize conflicts caused by inappropriate behavior. However, you don't need to learn everything. You must first understand the ins and outs of local culture. Adapting to local norms and meeting local expectations while maintaining a firm grasp of local customs will help you integrate more confidently.

Emotional regulation is also crucial and directly impacts whether you can maintain your adaptation. When feeling lonely or anxious, talk to other immigrants or participate in cross-cultural activities for support. You can also find personal enjoyment, such as developing hobbies to distract yourself. If you don't manage well, negative emotions can accumulate, affecting your thinking and approach to adaptation, and may even make you reluctant to adapt[8].

Ultimately, thoughts, actions, and emotions must be coordinated to form a strategy for adaptation, helping immigrants move from coping with conflict to a more comfortable life, see Figure 2.

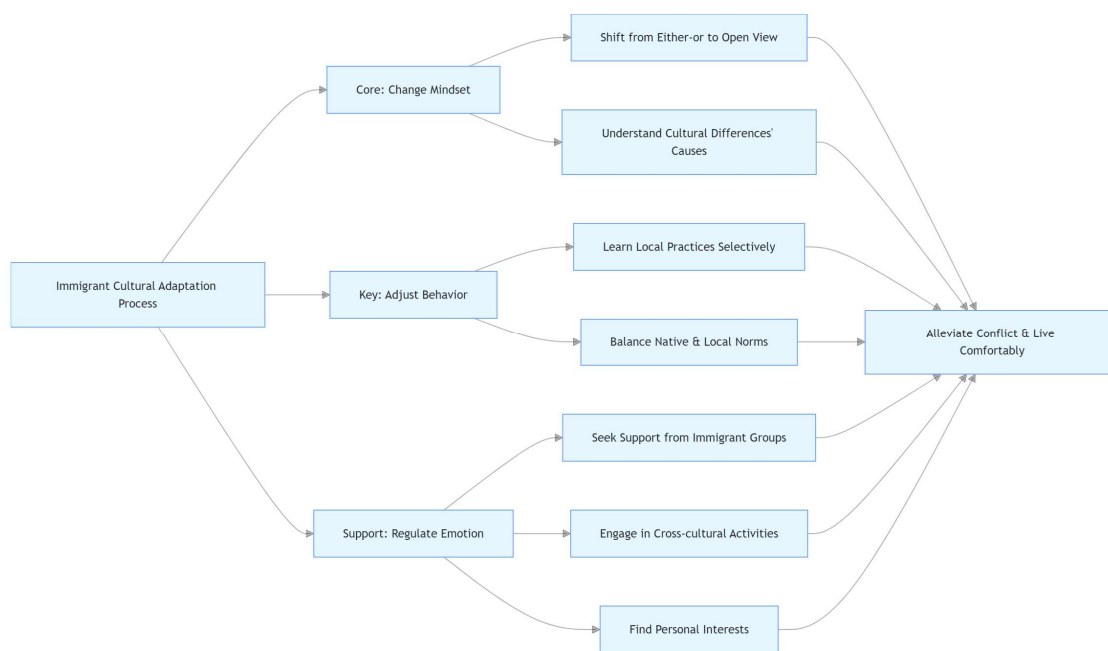


Figure 2. Diagram of the Immigrant Cultural Adaptation Process and Strategies

5. The Multidimensional Components and Core Connotations of Immigrants' Happiness Restoration

Immigrants seeking a comfortable life can't rely on just one aspect. They need to integrate social integration, economic stability, a sense of identity, and a sense of peace of mind, all of which must complement each other.

Social integration is fundamental, but it doesn't mean becoming identical to the locals. The key is mutual tolerance.

Immigrants should interact with locals, learn about local culture, and access useful resources. They should also connect with their compatriots and feel a sense of security. By regularly lending a hand in the community, participating in cultural activities, and engaging in public events, they'll gradually feel like part of the community, not outsiders. Only then can happiness take root.

Economic stability isn't just about making money; the quality of the job and the opportunities for growth are even more crucial. Finding a job that matches your abilities and

provides guaranteed benefits, with money to spend and peace of mind, gives you a sense of control over your life and a sense of self-worth[8]. Opportunities to learn new skills and pursue promotions can free you from being stuck in a job with no future and provide a sense of purpose.

Identity is a root in your heart. Many immigrants are caught between two cultures, unsure of their place and increasingly confused. Effective identity reconstruction, however, involves balancing both-maintaining the traditional customs and core culture of one's homeland while also being willing to understand and embrace local norms[9]. This allows one to navigate any situation with ease, without internal struggles, and thus alleviates many anxieties.

Psychological satisfaction is the result of the combined efforts of these three aspects. This doesn't mean being free of worries, but rather being able to face challenges with a smile, find joy in daily life, and grow in confidence. This positive attitude, in turn, encourages greater socialization, increased work ethic, and a more proactive adaptation to the culture, forming a positive cycle.

Lack of any of these four aspects is crucial. Integration requires financial support; acceptance of one's identity directly impacts one's mood; and a positive mood can enhance other aspects of life. Only by fostering these shared values can immigrants truly find comfort in an unfamiliar culture and rebuild their own happiness, see Table 1.

Table 1. Core Elements of Immigrants' Happy Life and Their Mutual Support

Elements of Immigrant Well-being	Key Points	Mutual Support
Social Integration	Interact with locals and compatriots, participate in various affairs to enhance a sense of belonging.	Economic stability provides material basis; identity recognition facilitates cultural interaction; psychological satisfaction promotes active participation.
Economic Stability	Find matching and promising jobs, learn new skills to gain a sense of control and value.	Social integration provides employment resources; identity recognition increases career confidence; good psychological state enhances work motivation.
Identity Recognition	Retain the core culture of the home country and accept local rules to reduce cultural confusion.	Social integration helps understand local culture; economic stability ensures cultural inheritance; psychological satisfaction reduces identity confusion.
Psychological Satisfaction	Face difficulties positively, find joy in life, and form a virtuous cycle.	Drives social integration, economic pursuit and identity construction, and benefits from the progress of the three.

6. Collaborative Path to Building a Support System for Immigrants' Happiness Reconstruction

For immigrants to overcome cultural conflict and live a comfortable life, they can't do it alone. The government, society, and individuals must work together to build a framework of mutual support.

The government must first lay a solid policy foundation. On the one hand, systematic language and cultural training should be provided, with free or affordable courses to help immigrants master the local language and understand local customs and practices, so they can quickly adapt to the pace of their new lives. On the other hand, more assistance is needed in the employment sector-creating an information platform to eliminate the need for immigrants to search for jobs; providing more vocational training to help them improve their skills and better match them with new jobs; and monitoring businesses to ensure they do not discriminate against immigrants in recruitment and employment, while encouraging them to provide adjustment counseling to new immigrants to help them avoid unnecessary setbacks on the job market[10]. Furthermore, basic living security-medical reimbursement, children's schooling, and elderly care-must be met to ensure that immigrants are not hindered by these trivial matters.

On the societal side, social organizations and communities can provide substantial and practical assistance. Social organizations can organize more down-to-earth activities, such as organizing cultural fairs and handicraft workshops for immigrants and locals, or providing counseling for struggling immigrants. They can also find long-time immigrants to mentor newcomers and build bridges of communication. Communities should establish dedicated service windows where immigrants can go, whether they need water repairs or inquire about social security policies. Promote the concept of "we are all one family" in the community, encouraging neighbors of different cultures to chat and interact more often. Organize volunteer activities for immigrants to participate in, gradually making them feel that "this is also my home."

Immigrants' own attitudes and actions are also crucial. Maintain an open mindset and proactively participate in training and learning to improve their language and work skills. Pay attention to local cultural norms and avoid clinging to the old ways. Don't always isolate yourself at home; attend community events to meet new people. Don't try to resist challenges by seeking help from the government or the community. This will help you integrate more quickly[11]. Only with the government providing guidance, society providing adequate support, and immigrants willing to move forward, can these three aspects work together to ensure that immigrants find their place in their new environment and truly build a happy life.

7. Conclusion

This study examines the path from cultural conflict to rebuilding happiness for immigrants, clarifies the characteristics of their cross-cultural adaptation, and establishes an analytical framework: "Conflict Manifestations - Influencing Factors - Adaptation Mechanisms - Dimensions of Happiness - Support Systems."

It can be seen that cultural conflict among immigrants is not simply a matter of one aspect; it encompasses differences

in values, ways of doing things, and communication symbols. The severity of the conflict is influenced by the immigrants' own cultural reserves and psychological resilience, as well as the cultural differences between the two places and the level of local tolerance. Cultural adaptation is a key step in this process. Adjusting one's thinking, changing one's behavior, and regulating one's emotions can alleviate the stress of conflict and lay the foundation for rebuilding happiness. A happy life requires the coordinated support of social integration, economic stability, identity, and psychological satisfaction, forming a positive cycle.

In terms of support, sustained support for immigrants requires a concerted effort from government policies, social services, and the efforts of immigrants themselves. The value of this study lies in, firstly, filling a gap in the research pipeline of "conflict-adaptation-happiness," viewing immigrant growth as a dynamic, multi-stage process, not an isolated event, and deepening our understanding of cultural adaptation and the building of happiness. Secondly, it provides guidance for immigration policies and social services, such as language training, employment assistance, and psychological counseling, which can help immigrants improve their well-being and better integrate.

However, the study has shortcomings: it primarily relies on literature and theoretical synthesis, lacking field research on different immigrant groups, thus failing to capture group differences. It also lacks in-depth discussion of how the various actors in the support system collaborate, such as the division of labor between the government and social institutions. Future field research could be conducted, using questionnaires and interviews to validate the model and optimize support measures based on the characteristics of different immigrant groups.

In short, immigrant growth is a process from coping with conflict, actively adapting, to rebuilding happiness. Cultural conflict is not just a challenge; it also holds opportunities for growth. With a multifaceted support system, immigrants can better realize their self-worth and live a good life. They can also contribute to building a more inclusive society and provide insights for global governance.

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