

# The Relationship between Psychological Adaptation and Sense of School Community of College Students

Yunpeng Gao<sup>1</sup>, Hua Li<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Innovation and Entrepreneurship Department, Sichuan University of Arts and Sciences; Dazhou, 635000, China;

<sup>2</sup>Guangdong Hisense Refrigerator Marketing Co. Ltd.Chengdu Branch, Chengdu 610000, China.

## Abstract

**The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between Psychological Adaptation and Sense of School Community of College Students, 387 college students were investigated by using the Chinese College Students Adaptation Scale and the College Students Sense of school community Index. The results show that: (1) College students' psychological adaptation and sense of school community are above the average level; (2) There are significant differences in psychological adaptation and sense of community among college students of different grades and disciplines. (3)There is a significant positive correlation between psychological adaptation and school community sense, and psychological adaptation can better predict the Sense of school community.**

## Keywords

**Sense of school community; Psychological adaptation; College students.**

## 1. Introduction

University is the preparation for social integration of college student, the learning and life style is obviously different from that of middle school, students should not only pay attention to learning, but also pay attention to interpersonal communication, social practice and The learning and life style is obviously different from that of middle school. Because of some students are not well adjusted, there are tired of learning, lack of goals, interpersonal relationship tension and other maladaptive problems. Psychological adaptation is an inner response of the subject to environmental change [1], it is the ability of mind and behavior to change with the environment. People with strong mental adaptability are more confident, optimistic, and have better relationships [2], In other words, it is one of the indicators to measure individual mental health and development level with higher psychological adaptation. Researchers have done a lot of research on the psychological adaptation of college students. On the whole, college students have good psychological adaptability, can better adjust the changes of the environment and the pressure brought by life and study [1-3], and there is a study found that the college students with different psychological adaptability have different coping styles [ 4] , Xiao Qiong and Xiao Wei [5] discussed the process of college students' psychological adaptation, and proposed that the participation of individual activities is an important part of college students' psychological adaptation, that is, psychological adaptation is a deep reflection of integrating into the environment, reflecting the individual's enthusiasm and initiative. The higher the level of psychological adaptation, the more activities they participate in. Therefore, it can be seen that the adaptation of college students will affect their state of study and life. If they cannot adapt to the university environment for a long time, they will lose their initiative and sense of purpose, and even reduce their major and school satisfaction, sense of identity and belonging, which are exactly what the sense of community focuses on.

The sense of community is the most dynamic and characteristic concept in the research of community psychology [6]. With the deepening of the research, the concept of multiple community sense is gradually accepted by more and more researchers, and the sense of school community is considered as one of the multi-community sense. The sense of school community is the sense of belonging and security that students have in school [7], as well as an attitude experience of school members [8]. Many studies have shown that a good sense of community in school can improve the learning effect [9], improve the mental health level of college students [10], reduce students' problem behaviors [11], and reduce the feeling of being alienated [12]. Moreover, the sense of school community is significantly related to overall well-being and can well predict the development level of overall well-being [13]. It can be seen that the enhancement of the sense of community has far-reaching significance for the learning and development of college students. In the research of Deneui[14] and Ludden[15], it is found that students' initiative and enthusiasm in participating in activities are related to students' sense of school community, and students who actively participate in school activities have a higher level of school community sense. Based on the above analysis, the establishment and improvement of college students' sense of community depends largely on their adaptation to the environment, so we discuss the relationship between college students' psychological adaptation and sense of school community.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

387 college students were randomly selected to conduct a questionnaire survey. A total of 400 questionnaires were issued and 387 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 96.8%. 129 boys and 258 girls; Liberal Art 166, Science and Engineering 133, PE & Art 88; and there are 59 freshmen, 129 sophomores, 153 juniors and 46 seniors.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Chinese College Student Adaptation Scale (CCSAC)

Psychological adaptation was measured with a sixty-item scale, was compiled by Fang Xiaoyi, Wo Jianzhong et al, It is widely used to evaluate the adaptation of Chinese college students. This scale includes seven dimensions of learning adaptation, interpersonal adaptation, job-hunting adaptation, campus adaptation, emotional adaptation, satisfaction and self-adaptation. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (disagreement) to 5 (agreement), the higher the score, the stronger psychological adaptability. The scale demonstrated good reliability ( $\alpha=0.90$ ) in this study.

#### 2.2.2. Community Sense Index Scale

A sense of community, defined as a feeling of belongingness within a group, was measured using the Sense of Community Index (SCI-2) (Chavis, 2008) was revised by Zhang Hao, the scale consists of 24 questions and includes four dimensions of need satisfaction, membership, influence and emotional connection. Respondents could select one out of four responses: 1=untrue, 2=slightly untrue, 3=slightly true and 4=true. With a higher score indicating a stronger sense of community at school. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.92 in this survey.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Status Analysis

Descriptive statistics showed that the psychological adaptation ( $3.25\pm 0.41$ ) and sense of school community ( $2.86\pm 0.42$ ) of college students are higher than the median, it is show that college

students' psychological adaptation and the sense of school community is higher, and some other research results also support it.

### 3.2. Between Grade Analyses

In order to examine the differences between college students' psychological adaptation and sense of community at school in different grade, use one-way ANOVA, found that there are significant grade differences of sense of school community, integration and fulfillment of needs, membership and emotional connection with the higher grade increasing, and have significant differences in grade particularly (Table1). No other grade differences emerged in the psychological adaptation.

**Table 1.** Differences of Sense of School Community between grade

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	F	p
Needs fulfillment	2.61±0.42	2.78±0.43	2.86±0.47	2.89±0.61	4.69**	0.00
Membership	2.74±0.47	2.81±0.42	2.94±0.46	2.92±0.46	3.74*	0.01
Emotional connection	3.00±0.50	2.88±0.50	3.02±0.50	3.11±0.47	3.30*	0.02
Sense of school community	2.78±0.39	2.80±0.39	2.92±0.45	2.94±0.45	3.34*	0.02

Through the multiple comparison analysis by LSD, the freshmen's integration and fulfillment of needs were significantly lower than sophomore, juniors and seniors, and the other three variables (membership, emotional connection, and sense of school community) shows different characteristics. In particular, there was no significant difference of freshman and sophomore, the same results reflected in junior and senior students too, but there is an obvious different from membership, emotional connection, and sense of school community of sophomore and junior.

### 3.3. Between Disciplines Analyses

We also examined the differences of all variables between different disciplines; the result shows that there were significant difference about occupational adaptation, membership, emotional connection and sense of school community between Liberal Art students, Science and Engineering students, and PE & Art students. In order to further explore the distinction, LSD were used to multiple effect comparison, the occupational adaptation of Liberal Art students were better than other students, but in membership, emotional connection and sense of school community, arts students rather than Liberal Arts students, Science and Engineering students (see Table2).

**Table 2.** Differences of Psychological Adaptation and Sense of School Community between disciplines

	Liberal Art	Science and Engineering	PE & Art	F	p
Occupational adaptation	3.35±0.56	3.20±0.56	3.22±0.56	2.89*	0.04
Membership	2.84±0.46	2.81±0.40	2.98±0.50	3.91*	0.02
Influence	2.77±0.48	2.76±0.46	2.96±0.54	5.56***	0.00
Emotional connection	3.00±0.51	2.89±0.53	3.07±0.43	3.67*	0.03
Sense of school community	2.85±0.42	2.81±0.39	2.97±0.43	3.96*	0.02

### 3.4. Correlation Analyses

Table 3 presents correlations for all study variables. From the table, College students' psychological adaptation and its factors was positively and significantly correlated with the sense of school community and its factors. The stronger the psychological adaptation of students, the higher their sense of school community, among them, the correlation between interpersonal adaptation and needs fulfillment was the highest( $r=0.51$ ), and the correlation between self-adaptation and influence was the lowest ( $r=0.17$ ).

**Table 3.** Correlations for all study variables

Psychological adaptation	Needs fulfillment	Member ship	Influe nce	Emotional connection	Sense of school community
interpersonal	0.51**	0.36**	0.29**	0.35**	0.45**
learning	0.43**	0.42**	0.34**	0.39**	0.47**
campus	0.44**	0.39**	0.32**	0.47**	0.48**
emotion	0.51**	0.36**	0.24**	0.41**	0.45**
Occupation	0.34**	0.26**	0.27**	0.29**	0.35**
self	0.31**	0.24**	0.17**	0.26**	0.29**
satisfaction	0.47**	0.35**	0.32**	0.41**	0.47**
SUMSCORE	0.59**	0.47**	0.38**	0.50**	0.58**

### 3.5. Regression Analyses

The results of correlation analysis showed that psychological adaptation was highly correlated with school community sense, in order to better understand the role of psychological adaptation on school sense of community; a regression was run using psychological adaptation to predict sense of school community. Independent variable included campus adaptation, interpersonal adaptation, learning adaptation, emotion adaptation, occupational adaptation, self-adaptation and satisfaction. Before regression analysis, it is need to be checked the presence of Multicollinearity in the predictive variables. Therefore, we investigate multicollinearity with VIF as the index, and the VIF of the predictive variables from 1.32 to 1.67, so there is no Multicollinearity between the predictive variables. Through stepwise regression analysis, except emotional adaptation ( $t=0.60$ ,  $p=0.55$ ) , occupational adaptation ( $t=0.42$ ,  $p=0.68$ ) and self-adaptation ( $t=1.68$ ,  $p=0.09$ ) did not enter the regression equation, the other four factors of psychological adaptation all had significant predictive effect on school community sense, which explained 38.1% of the variance in sense of school community scores(Table 4).

**Table 4.** Regression of Psychological Adaptation and Sense of School Community

Predictor variable	B	$\beta$	t	$\Delta R^2$	R <sup>2</sup>	F
Campus adaptation	0.40	0.18	3.54	.24	0.38	63.29***
Satisfaction	0.74	0.22	4.88	.08		
Interpersonal adaptation	0.40	0.21	4.74	.04		
Learning adaptation	0.37	0.20	4.24	.03		

## 4. Discussions

### 4.1. Characteristics of College Students' Psychological Adaptation and School Sense of Community

The main aim of the present study was to investigate the characteristics and the relationship between psychological adaptation and school sense of community. The results show that both college students' psychological adaptation and sense of school community are above the average level, psychological adaptation is the highest in learning adaptation and the lowest in satisfaction, at the same time, the sense of community is manifested as higher emotional connection and lower integration and fulfillment of needs. Although the learning methods and teaching contents of college students have changed, most of them still keep their learning attitude in high school and are willing to accept professional knowledge, it indicates a strong motivation to learn. What cannot be ignored is the professional interest, learning effect, campus environment, employment pressure and the gap between ideal and expectation all of them will reduce their satisfaction. Even their own needs cannot be satisfied because they cannot adapt to college life well. Of course, the change of environment also means that college students must have stronger initiative and clear goals, have more opportunities to participate in associations and social practices. Therefore, there are more and more emotional connections between teachers and students, as well as between students and students. The collective cohesion and sense of belonging are also stronger and stronger, which further enhances the sense of community of the school.

### 4.2. Analysis on the Differences of Psychological Adaptation and School Sense of Community Among College Students of Different Grades and Disciplines

Through statistical analysis, it is found that college students of different grades have significant differences in the sense of community, which is consistent with the research results of Yu ruying [8] and Liao meiling [10]. The results of this study further indicate that the sense of school community is the highest in the senior, the lowest in the freshman, and there is a clear boundary between sophomore and junior. Although there is no significant difference in the psychological adaptation of college students in different grades, but it also shows some characteristics, that is sophomore students have the strongest learning adaptation and campus adaptation, while senior students have the best self-adaptation. College students have high expectations of college life after entering the university, actively participate in various activities in the new environment, and after a two-year adaptation period, they have obvious adaptation to the study and life of the university, however, due to professional learning, changes in the environment, interpersonal and other factors will lead to the original expectations cannot be achieved, enthusiasm will also be reduced. And Junior college students are more familiar with college life, have better connections with their classmates, and have a stronger sense of belonging to their majors and schools. Senior college students are about to go into the society and face a more complicated working and living environment. They will also cherish their last moments in school.

From the perspective of different disciplines, except for Liberal Arts students' occupational adaptation is slightly higher than that of Science and Engineering students and PE & Art students, the differences of other factors are not significant, indicating that the psychological adaptation of students in different disciplines will not be affected by disciplines and majors, while the sense of school community of the PE & Art students is significantly higher than Liberal Art students, Science and Engineering students. The reason may be that the PE & Arts teaching mode is small class teaching, there are more opportunities for teachers and students to communicate, combined with long-term artistic edification, these students are more perceptual, pay attention to personal feelings, so their feelings more exquisite. In addition, various campus

activities organized by the school have also provide a platform for the professional practice of PE & Art students. Through activities and competitions, there is a greater sense of participation and acquisition, as well as a stronger sense of identity and belonging to the school, and the emotional connection between teachers and students is stronger too. Therefore, building a perfect campus activity platform, improving students' enthusiasm and participation in school activities, cultivating good collective consciousness and sense of responsibility will be of great help to enhance the cohesion and sense of belonging of college students, thus enhancing the sense of school community.

#### **4.3. Analysis on the Relationship between College Students' Psychological Adaptation and Sense of Community at School**

This study explored whether psychological adaptation predicted sense of school community among high school students. The findings showed that there was a significant positive correlation between psychological adaptation and school sense of community, and 38.1% of the school sense of community could be predicted. Good interpersonal adaptation, learning adaptation, campus adaptation and school satisfaction are important to improve the sense of school community. Some researchers have shown that psychological adaptability is highly related to personality traits, especially the active, resilient and easy-going college students whose psychological adaptability is also strong [16]. Peer counseling can significantly improve the adaptability of college students [17]. Therefore, schools can build a good campus environment, expand students' social support system, cultivate students' positive personality traits, and enhance students' sense of responsibility and mission, establish the correct self-values in order to obtain higher psychological adaptability, and then improve the sense of school community. On the contrary, a good sense of community can enhance students' recognition of school and major, gain more pleasant experience in study and life, and enhance the learning effect. If effective guidance is given to students so that they can feel the support and attention from the school, they will be more willing to participate in various activities to enhance school satisfaction, maintain physical and mental health, and improve their personal development.

#### **Acknowledgements**

Project of Sichuan Special Education Development Research Center (SCTJ-2020-D-01); Project of Sichuan University of Arts and Sciences(2019JJ004Y)

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