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学 位 論 文 内 容 の 要 旨/Dissertation Abstract

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学 位 論 文 題 名/Title of Dissertation

A case study of social ties among Chinese overseas through social media in the digital age
（デジタル時代におけるソーシャルメディアを介した中国在外居住者の社会的結びつきに関する事例研究）

With the increase in global population mobility and the widespread adoption of social media, the social relationship patterns of sojourners have undergone a significant transformation. The traditional pattern centered on geographic proximity and ethnic communities is now increasingly being supplemented or even replaced by online interactions through social media. This shift has transformed the way sojourners build and maintain social ties from geographically based connections in physical locations to network-mediated relationships in digital spaces. As a result, the meaning and functions of community have been redefined, and novel forms of social ties have emerged in this new environment.

This study aimed to explore how sojourners reconstruct their social ties in the digital age, the mechanisms through which this reconstruction operates, and its impact on their cross-cultural adaptation and quality of life (QoL). From the perspective of digital empowerment, this study suggested how individuals utilize social media to mobilize and reorganize their personal resources to reproduce social capital and reshape their social ties. Chapter 2 explored sojourners' situations at the group level, focusing on interaction and mutual support mechanisms, and showed how social media facilitates information exchange, mutual assistance, and indirect participation in the local communities under geographically dispersed conditions. Chapter Three, on the other hand, investigated how diverse personal networks constructed via social media influence individuals' experiences, highlighting the roles of digital and real-world social interaction from the individual's perspective.

Chapter 2 examined an online organization named "Hokkaido Huaren Zhi Jia (HHZJ)," established by Chinese residents in Hokkaido. Participant observation was conducted from August 2021 to January 2023 to figure out the way it works. Questionnaire surveys on the impression of HHZJ were carried out in December 2021, resulting in 100 responses, and in August 2022, yielding 60 responses. And 22 participants were interviewed between April and December 2022. This chapter employed Lasswell's communication model and social capital theory as the theoretical frameworks to reveal HHZJ's operational mechanisms and functional characteristics. The results indicated that participants of HHZJ, broadly defined as Chinese individuals, function as both information senders and receivers. Topics discussed in HHZJ cover all aspects from secondhand goods transactions to house rentals, demonstrating high practicality. Participants have reached consensus on HHZJ's positive role in information dissemination and mutual support, while the degree of usage varies. HHZJ can be

regarded as an online community and an ethnic community from existing theoretical framework perspectives. However, as a novel form of online ethnic community, it also transcends the boundaries of online communities or traditional ethnic communities, which were centered on cultural identity and connected through weak ties via social media. It represents a new trend in the utilization of co-national ties among sojourners in the digital age.

Chapter 3 examined friendship networks, QoL (measured using the WHOQOL-BREF), and their relationships with basic sociodemographic attributes among Chinese international students worldwide. Based on an international questionnaire survey (covering 38 countries and regions across four continents with 637 valid responses), the results indicated that homeland friends constitute the largest proportion of international students' friendship networks. Students with more foreign friends scored higher across all domains of QoL. Regression analysis further revealed that students with longer duration of stay, higher language proficiency, stronger migration intentions, and younger ages are more likely to have more foreign friends. This study, for the first time, positioned homeland friends on an equal footing with friends from the study abroad destinations, revealing they play similarly significant roles. This chapter not only reaffirmed the findings on international students' friendship networks and QoL but also supplemented and extended the friendship networks functional model in the digital age.

This study proposed that in the digital age, the reconstruction of social ties among sojourners is a dynamic process mediated by social media and centered on cultural identity and social capital. The usage of social media enables sojourners to simultaneously maintain existing social ties and expand new ones, forming a social relationship structure characterized by fluidity and multidimensional connections. Unlike traditional cross-cultural adaptation theories emphasizing assimilation and integration, this study suggested that the adaptation process is not a resocialization process of discarding previous experiences and starting from scratch, but rather a flexible negotiation between existing and newly acquired resources. In the dynamic digital environment, social capital has become a capability that can be mobilized and flexibly utilized at any time.

This study theoretically constructed a framework for the reconstruction of social ties from the digital empowerment perspective, revealing that social media are not merely for information dissemination but also critical tools for reproducing social support and reshaping social ties. Practically, it provides new insights and pathways towards inclusive societies and multicultural coexistence in the digital age by understanding the mechanisms through which sojourners reconstruct their social ties via social media.