

The Role of Communication Platforms in the Study Experience of Nepalese, Indian and Chinese International Students in Northern Territory (NT), and How Communication Platform Usage Has Changed in the Post-Pandemic Era

The Australian international education sector has been heavily affected by the pandemic. CDU's report (2020) shows that most international students come from Nepal, India, and China. Communication platforms like WhatsApp, WeChat, and Messenger are crucial for these students as they adjust to studying abroad. My study using ethnographic research and discourse analysis will examine communication patterns among Nepalese, Indian, and Chinese students in the Northern Territory. The study aims to uncover the elements of a positive study experience, explore how students navigate social and cultural factors, and identify ways to enhance the international student experience post-pandemic.

Abstract

In recent years, the global pandemic and its aftermath have significantly impacted the Australian international education landscape. The Northern Territory (NT) has a unique blend of traditional indigenous culture and Western influences, and Charles Darwin University (CDU) has identified Nepal, India, and China as the top three countries of origin for international students (Charles Darwin University Annual Report 2020 in review). Communication platforms, such as WhatsApp, WeChat and Messenger, are a critical medium for international students to adapt to their new environment and to transition to Australia for continuing or starting their studies. This exploration aims to examine the significance and functionality of communication platforms in relation to the study experience of Nepalese, Indian, and Chinese international students in the NT to shed light on what constitutes a positive study experience. The study will employ ethnographic research methodology including survey and in-depth interview to collect data. To understand the social context and power relations beyond the communications, the study will also use discourse analysis to analyse how different student groups use media platforms to interact with each other and their environment in NT. The study will also apply the concept of Social Network Theory to understand the structure of students' social networks, how communication platforms create different networks, and how these networks influence the international study experience. By examining how these groups use communication platforms, the study seeks to identify opportunities to create better international student experiences, especially in the post-pandemic era. The research will present a way of understanding of the pattern of media use among these student groups, factors and conditions that affect their actions in a regional context in Australia.

Keywords: media sociology, communication platforms, international students, Australian international education industry