



Conflict and Adaptation: The History and Future of China-Pakistan Cultural Exchange

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Abstract: The relationship between China and Pakistan has a long history, and the two countries have maintained a long-term cooperative partnership. Under this relationship, fruitful cultural exchanges have taken place, although occasional cultural conflicts have occurred. Based on the foundation of long-term cooperation, conflicts in cultural exchanges have been effectively resolved through mutual visits, promoting deeper understanding and trust between the two sides. Therefore, it can be said that cultural exchange between China and Pakistan is an important tool for adjusting cultural conflicts, promoting diplomatic relations, and bridging the gap between the two countries. This article reviews and examines the history of cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan and proposes a conflict adjustment framework based on "respect-understanding-communication-trust." Specific measures are also proposed, such as "establishing smooth cultural communication channels, improving conflict resolution mechanisms, deepening cultural exchange projects, and strengthening joint research projects" to adjust cultural conflicts and promote deeper cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Keywords: China-Pakistan cultural exchange; history; conflict; adaptation.

Introduction

China and Pakistan are one of the world's longest-standing partners, having strengthened exchanges in politics, economy, culture, and other fields since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1951. They have developed into strategic partners, elevating their relationship to an "all-weather strategic cooperative partnership" in 2015. Under this relationship, the cultural exchange between China and Pakistan has also gained a strong and lasting vitality, which is of enlightenment significance to world international relations.^[1] However, like any relationship, cultural differences and conflicts can also create barriers to mutual understanding and knowledge exchange between the two sides. Therefore, analyzing the conflicts in cultural exchange between China and Pakistan, as well as how to adjust to these conflicts, becomes the fundamental starting point of this article.

From existing research, one of the important issues scholars have explored is the impact of cultural exchange on the development of China-Pakistan bilateral relations. According to Ahmed and Hussain's (2017) research, cultural exchange between the two countries has promoted the development of friendly relations and cooperation in various fields such as trade, investment, and tourism.^[2] Similarly, Li, X, and Li, Y (2018) argue that cultural exchange plays an important role in enhancing bilateral cooperation and creating a favorable environment for people-to-people diplomacy. However, existing research also emphasizes some conflicts and adjustments that arise during the cultural exchange process between the two countries.^[3] For example, Rashid and Liu (2019) believe that cultural differences and language barriers pose significant challenges to the successful implementation of cultural exchange projects between China and Pakistan, and suggest adjusting cultural exchange projects according to local conditions and providing language and cultural skills training for participants to overcome these challenges.^[4] Another research area regarding China-Pakistan cultural exchange is the role of cultural diplomacy in promoting national interests. Asif (2020) believes that cultural diplomacy plays an important role in improving national soft power and promoting national interests. The author suggests that China and Pakistan should use their cultural heritage to conduct cultural diplomacy to promote their national interests and

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enhance their global influence.^[5] In addition, some studies explore the impact of China-Pakistan cultural exchange on the protection and promotion of cultural heritage. Wang and Liu (2018) believe that cultural exchange projects between China and Pakistan help protect and promote cultural heritage, and provide an opportunity to showcase the rich cultural diversity of the two countries.^[6] Similarly, Xia and Hu (2019) argue that cultural exchange promotes the protection and dissemination of traditional cultural customs, art, and crafts.^[7]

It is evident that research on cultural exchange between China and Pakistan has yielded abundant results. However, there has been a relative lack of comprehensive and systematic research on this topic. In particular, there is a lack of research on establishing a framework for resolving conflicts in cultural exchange and promoting the integration of research on conflict resolution and cultural exchange. This is undoubtedly a key issue that needs to be addressed in this study.

I. A Review of the Historical Sections of Cultural Exchange between China and Pakistan

The cultural exchange between China and Pakistan has a long and rich history. Based on the characteristics of cultural exchange in different historical periods, the history of cultural exchange between China and Pakistan can be divided into four stages: "ancient contact, British colonial period, post-independence Pakistan, and a period of closer relations." Each stage reflects the constantly changing political and economic backgrounds of the time. Cultural exchange has played an important role in strengthening the connection between the two countries. Understanding these four stages can help to better understand the history and essence of cultural exchange between China and Pakistan.

(I) Ancient Contacts

Cultural exchange between China and Pakistan can be traced back to ancient times, from around the 2nd century BC to the 16th century AD. This period witnessed the exchange of goods, ideas, and beliefs, which had a profound impact on the development of culture and civilization in both regions. The Silk Road played a crucial role in promoting these exchanges, as it connected the East and West in a vast network of trade routes, enabling the exchange of commodities, ideas, knowledge, and faith between China and Pakistan, as well as other regions along the Silk Road.

One of the most significant cultural exchanges during this period was the spread of Buddhism from India through Pakistan to China, which led to the establishment of Buddhist temples in both regions and had a profound influence on the development of Buddhist art and architecture in China and Pakistan. The legacy of this cultural exchange can still be seen in the rich cultural traditions of both countries today.

However, due to transportation, economic levels, and cognitive limitations, early exchanges were mainly focused on the exchange of goods, and cultural exchanges only occurred in some fields and did not spread widely.

(II) Colonial Period

The second phase of cultural exchange between China and Pakistan lasted from around 1842 to 1947, a period when British colonialism played a dominant role in the region. Although direct contact between China and Pakistan was limited during this period due to British colonial rule, most cultural exchanges were carried out through British domination. For example, during World War I and World War II, the British brought soldiers from India and Pakistan to fight, and these soldiers had the opportunity to interact with Chinese soldiers also engaged in the war, allowing for the exchange of ideas, culture, and traditions between different countries. During this period, the British also established schools in British Pakistan. These educational institutions provided opportunities for students from both countries to learn and understand each other's culture.

During this phase, cultural exchange between China and Pakistan was influenced by British colonial rule. For instance, newspapers and publications like *The Times of India* and *Dawn*, although widely read in China and Pakistan, provided a platform for exchanging ideas and information between the two regions, but were not conducive to a deep cultural exchange or mutual understanding of the political and cultural developments in the region. Similarly, Chinese and Pakistani intellectuals and scholars, such as Liang Qichao and Chen Duxiu, Muhammad Iqbal, and Chaudhry Rehmat Ali, played important roles in cultural exchange during this period, but remained a minority.

(III) After Pakistan's Independence

The third stage of cultural exchange between China and Pakistan refers to the period from 1947 to 1978. With Pakistan's independence from British rule in 1947, the interaction between China and Pakistan increased, and cultural delegations, civilian exchanges, and media played an important role in promoting better understanding and appreciation of each other's culture and traditions, laying the foundation for further cultural exchange between the two countries in the future. In 1950, Pakistan recognized the People's Republic of China and became one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with China, significantly increasing cultural exchange between the two countries. During this period, Chinese universities began to enroll Pakistani students, and Pakistani universities also began to offer courses in Chinese language and culture, greatly promoting understanding of each other's culture. Cultural delegations from both countries also visited each other and held cultural events. Another important aspect of cultural exchange during this period was the role of media. Radio broadcasting and newspapers played an important role in disseminating information about each other's culture and traditions.

During this stage, cultural exchange between the two countries was mainly government-led. Although civilian exchanges between China and Pakistan were also encouraged, the opportunities and numbers of people from both countries studying, working, and visiting each other's countries were still relatively small, and the existing exchange platforms were mostly limited to political diplomacy between nations, with cultural exchange projects often dependent on political diplomacy,

with limited diversity and autonomy.

(IV) The Era of Closer Relations

The fourth stage of cultural exchange between China and Pakistan began in 1978, marked by increased economic cooperation, which promoted further development of cultural exchange and closer political ties. Although China and Pakistan have different political systems, cultures, and traditions, they have built a warm and friendly relationship, becoming a beautiful story in the history of international relations.^[8]

In 2005, China established a Confucius Institute in Pakistan, and since then, several Confucius Institutes have been established. These institutions have played an important role in promoting Chinese language and culture in Pakistan and deepening cultural exchange between the two countries. At the same time, both sides have continued to expand the scale of student exchanges, allowing more students to study in each other's countries. Student exchanges enable us to better understand and appreciate each other's culture.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), launched in 2013, further deepened economic ties between the two countries. With the support of the economy, cultural exchange activities have also increased, especially under the booming tourism industry in both countries. The exchange of visiting tourists has not only increased interaction between the people of the two countries but also promoted cultural exchange. At the same time, exchanges of students, tourists, and food have also increased, further promoting understanding and appreciation of each other's culture.

However, under the influence of the anti-globalization trend, cultural exchange between China and Pakistan has also been affected, especially in the face of the world's unprecedented changes. The political and diplomatic relationship between China and Pakistan has been constantly challenged, which has also affected the existing cultural exchange cooperation between the two sides. Therefore, how to continue to consolidate the close relationship between cultural exchange between the two sides has become an important concern for the development and security of each other's relationship.

II. Conflicts and Causes Analysis in China-Pakistan Cultural Exchange

Over the years, cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan have flourished, but like any relationship, conflicts and challenges remain an unavoidable issue in China-Pakistan cultural exchange. From the factors that lead to cultural exchange conflicts between China and Pakistan, it can be seen that they mainly stem from the differences in cultural values and norms between the two sides, and are also closely related to history, economy, society, globalization, and other factors.

(I) From the perspective of value conflicts

The root of the value conflicts between China and Pakistan lies in their different cultural and historical backgrounds. China has a long history of collectivism, emphasizing the importance of the group over the individual, which is reflected in Confucianism's philosophy of harmony and order, and values social stability and obedience to authority. On the other hand, Pakistan places more emphasis on individualism, and people tend to prioritize individual interests over collective interests. This is mainly due to its colonial history and exposure to Western ideas and values, which has made Pakistanis value personal freedom and autonomy. The differences in cultural values are likely to lead to misunderstandings in various fields of cultural exchange, especially in social norms and customs, which may cause misunderstandings and differences. For example, in business negotiations, the former may expect more collective decision-making methods, while Pakistani businessmen may prefer individualistic methods. If both parties are not aware of these differences, it may lead to trade friction.

(II) From the perspective of religion

One of the main areas of conflict in cultural exchange between China and Pakistan is the issue of religion. Pakistan is a predominantly Muslim country with over 96% of the population practicing Islam, while China is an officially atheist country. This difference in religious belief can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, further exacerbating the cultural divide between the two countries. Therefore, given the importance of religion in shaping cultural identity and values, it may still be an important issue in cultural exchange between China and Pakistan.

(III) From the perspective of political systems

Research on postcolonialism suggests that Pakistan has been heavily influenced by British culture, and its political system has exhibited some discomfort and rigidity during the modernization process.^[9] On the other hand, As a socialist country, China's national system is based on a long history of more than 5,000 years, forming a stable political system and social norms, while other cultures have little influence on China. Therefore, there are obvious differences between the two sides in terms of political systems, and these differences can also lead to misunderstandings and disagreements. Some scholars even point out that Chinese culture, due to its internal dynamics, is more unique and difficult to be assimilated by Pakistani culture.^[10] In 2020, when Indian media accused China of providing military support to Pakistan, the tension between India and China spread to Pakistan, causing tension in the China-Pakistan relationship and affecting cultural exchange between the two countries.

(IV) From the perspective of the economy

Conflicts arising from economic factors also exist in cultural exchange between China and Pakistan. For example, although the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has brought a large amount of investment and development to Pakistan, it has also been criticized by some Pakistanis who believe that the benefits of the project have not been fairly

distributed. Some people are concerned that Chinese companies will bring their own workers to Pakistan instead of hiring local workers, leading to job losses for Pakistanis. In addition, the impact of the imbalance in China-Pakistan trade can also ripple and affect cultural exchange. Although China is Pakistan's largest trading partner, the development of globalization has led to a growing trade deficit for Pakistan with China. This has prompted some Pakistanis to call for a more balanced trade relationship and criticize the authorities for sacrificing local industries by importing Chinese goods, which can also have an impact on cultural exchange between the two sides.

III. Basic Framework for Resolving Cultural Exchange Conflicts between China and Pakistan

Resolving cultural exchange conflicts between China and Pakistan has dual value: on the one hand, it can promote mutual understanding, trust, and respect between the two countries, and strengthen their bilateral relations; on the other hand, by resolving conflicts, it can promote coordinated responses to regional conflicts, and promote global peace and stable economic development. However, achieving the above values requires good cooperation, which is based on "respect, understanding, communication, and trust". Therefore, constructing a conflict resolution framework with "respect-understanding-

communication-trust" as its elements is not only the key to resolving cultural exchange conflicts between China and Pakistan, but also the driving logic for promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Firstly, maintaining respect is fundamental to resolving cultural exchange conflicts between China and Pakistan. Respect includes respecting each other's cultural values, beliefs, and practices. From the long history of cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan, it is not difficult to see that the establishment of long-term stable diplomatic relations between the two countries cannot be separated from respect for each other's culture. On the one hand, both sides recognize and accept each other's cultural differences; on the other hand, both sides encourage and support cultural diversity, thus promoting mutual respect. Therefore, in this framework for adaptation, "respect" embodies recognizing the unique cultural values, beliefs, and practices of the two countries, which can help to understand cultural differences between the two and promote mutual respect and understanding.

Furthermore, promoting understanding is key to resolving cultural communication conflicts between China and Pakistan. Cultural exchange between nations can only be inclusive when there is a full understanding of each other. With mutual understanding, cultural differences between both sides can be appreciated and respected rather than being viewed as a source of conflict. In the case of China and Pakistan, promoting understanding can be achieved through various initiatives such as language exchange programs, cultural exchange programs, and joint research projects. These initiatives can help people from both countries to understand each other's customs, beliefs, and viewpoints and develop a greater appreciation for each other's culture. Additionally, promoting understanding can also help eliminate any misunderstandings and stereotypes that may exist about each other's culture. Although China and Pakistan have a strong friendship and strategic partnership, many ordinary Pakistanis do not have a complete understanding of China.^[11] Through understanding, people from both countries can gain a deeper understanding of each other's culture, values, and historical traditions.

Moreover, enhancing communication is essential to resolving cultural communication conflicts between China and Pakistan. Effective communication helps bridge cultural differences and promote mutual understanding. Although China and Pakistan have a long history of cultural exchange, cultural misunderstandings and misinterpretations are still difficult to avoid due to differences in language, values, and traditions. Therefore, strengthening communication is essential, and by improving communication channels such as language training programs, cultural exchange programs, and joint educational programs, people from both countries can better understand each other's customs, beliefs, and viewpoints. At the same time, communication can also promote mutual respect and understanding, thus reducing the possibility of cultural conflict. In addition, effective communication can also help build trust and strengthen cooperation in various fields such as business, education, and tourism, which will ultimately contribute to enhancing the relationship between China and Pakistan.

Finally, strengthening trust is the guarantee for resolving cultural communication conflicts between China and Pakistan. Trust is the foundation of any healthy relationship, and in the international community, it can bring countries with different interests, cultures, and histories together, and based on this, reach a common understanding and form a partnership.^[12] When promoting cultural exchange between China and Pakistan, building trust is particularly important as it involves two countries with vast differences in history, culture, and political systems. Through trust, China and Pakistan can communicate openly and without fear of being misunderstood or misinterpreted. This can not only reduce the tension and conflict that may arise due to cultural differences but also help establish long-term partnerships and resource sharing between both sides. Additionally, trust can create an environment of mutual respect and understanding, promoting acceptance of new ideas and viewpoints, and viewing cultural differences as opportunities for learning and growth, fostering a sense of cooperation and partnership rather than competition and conflict.

In summary, the basic framework of "respect-understanding-communication-trust" provides an overall approach for adjusting cultural conflicts in Sino-Pakistani cultural exchanges. In this framework, respect, understanding, communication, and trust are interrelated and interdependent concepts. Firstly, respect is the foundation of any relationship, and only by respecting each other can big countries have equal and effective dialogue. Secondly, understanding is based on respect, and understanding built on respect can promote stronger relationships between both sides, thereby promoting a deeper understanding of each other's culture. Finally, effective communication

is necessary for building understanding and trust, and trust is based on respect, understanding, and effective communication. Therefore, under the basic framework of "respect-understanding-communication-trust," open communication, cultural exchange, and cultural prosperity between different cultures become possible.

IV. Exploring the Future Path of China-Pakistan Cultural Exchange

With the help of the basic framework of "respect-understanding-communication-trust", in order to deepen the cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan in the future, relevant measures need to be taken in areas such as "establishing smooth cultural communication channels, improving conflict resolution mechanisms for cultural exchanges, deepening cultural exchange projects, and strengthening cultural joint research projects", to coordinate and work together in promoting cultural exchange and adjusting cultural conflicts.

(I) Establishing smooth cultural communication channels

Smooth communication channels between China and Pakistan are crucial to eliminate misunderstandings and conflicts in cultural exchanges between the two sides. To establish smooth communication channels between China and Pakistan, the following measures can be taken. First, the two countries can establish regular bilateral meetings between government officials and cultural exchange project organizers, which can provide a platform for both sides to discuss any concerns or issues that may arise in cultural exchange projects. Second, regular meetings can be organized to discuss the progress of cultural exchange projects and resolve related issues. These meetings can also provide an opportunity for participants to share their experiences and ideas with each other. Third, joint working groups can be established to oversee the implementation of cultural exchange projects. These working groups can be composed of representatives from China and Pakistan and be dedicated to addressing any problems that may arise in exchange projects.

It is worth noting that throughout this process, we must always adhere to the principles of "respect, understanding, communication, and trust", ensure the openness and transparency of the above-mentioned communication channels, and ensure that all stakeholders, including project participants, cultural exchange project organizers, and other relevant parties, can participate. By promoting open, transparent, and barrier-free communication, the two countries can strive to establish a stronger relationship based on mutual respect and understanding.

(II) Improving Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Establishing effective conflict resolution mechanisms is crucial to addressing conflicts that arise in cultural exchanges. Through conflict resolution mechanisms, a fair and just process can be provided for resolving conflicts in cultural exchanges. From the perspective of mechanism construction, the following steps should be included.

Firstly, clear and transparent procedures should be developed for identifying and reporting conflicts. For example, by establishing a hotline or an online reporting system, individuals participating in cultural exchange projects can promptly and accurately report any conflicts or misunderstandings. In this process, these reports should be reviewed by a designated committee, including representatives from both countries, to ensure a fair and just review process.

Secondly, a set of clear and objective standards should be established for evaluating and resolving conflicts. These standards should be based on a common understanding of cultural values, beliefs, and practices, with a focus on resolving conflicts.

Furthermore, to ensure timely and effective conflict resolution, a dedicated conflict resolution team or committee should be established. This team should be composed of experts in conflict resolution and cultural exchange, as well as representatives from both countries. They should be responsible for assessing conflicts and proposing fair and just solutions for all parties involved.

In addition, a monitoring and evaluation system for the effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanism must be established. This system should include regular reviews of the conflict resolution process and feedback from individuals participating in cultural exchange projects.

By establishing clear communication channels and effective conflict resolution mechanisms, China and Pakistan can promote mutual understanding, respect, and trust between their respective cultures, prevent misunderstandings and conflicts from escalating into a comprehensive crisis, and promote more active and productive cultural exchanges in the future.

(III) Deepening Cultural Exchange Projects

Cultural exchange projects are another important aspect of promoting mutual understanding and respect between different cultures. Given the rich cultural heritage and diversity of China and Pakistan, cultural exchange projects can provide a platform for individuals from different backgrounds to learn about each other's cultures, traditions, and ways of life, thus promoting mutual understanding between the two countries.^[13] Examples of cultural exchange projects include student exchange programs, cultural exchange exhibitions, and exchange programs for artists and musicians.

Firstly, student exchange programs can provide an opportunity for students from both sides to learn from each other, appreciate each other's culture, and build good relationships. Especially through higher education, students can experience each other's education systems and cultural customs, deepen their understanding of each other's cultures, and help eliminate biases and prejudices, deepening the understanding and respect between the two countries. Similarly, exchange programs for teachers and scholars can effectively promote cultural exchange between the two countries. For example, through the exchange of professional knowledge, research, and teaching methods, teachers and scholars from both countries can better understand each other's education systems and practices, allowing them to gain a more in-depth

understanding of each other's culture and history.^[14]

Secondly, cultural exchange exhibitions are another way to promote cultural exchange between China and Pakistan. Such exhibitions can showcase the cultural traditions, customs, and artistic forms of both countries, promote understanding of each other's cultures, and deepen mutual understanding and respect. Similarly, exchange programs for artists and musicians can also promote cultural exchange between the two countries. Through artistic exchanges, unique and innovative works of art can be created, promoting the exchange of ideas and knowledge between the two countries and deepening understanding of each other's cultures.

In conclusion, cultural exchange projects can play an important role in promoting mutual understanding and respect between different cultures. China and Pakistan have rich cultural heritage and diversity, and promoting cultural exchange projects between the two countries can deepen understanding of each other's cultures and traditions. Such projects can create a sense of unity and belonging between the two countries and bring about a more peaceful and prosperous world.

(IV) Strengthening Cultural Joint Research Projects

Cultural joint research projects can provide an effective way to promote mutual understanding and knowledge sharing between China and Pakistan. Through these projects, scholars and researchers from both countries can collaborate on cultural, historical, linguistic, and other research, deepening their understanding of each other's culture and history, and helping to build trust and understanding as a common foundation for cooperation.

Firstly, joint research on the history, geography, and cultural heritage of both countries should be strengthened. For example, scholars from both countries can enhance their cooperation on related projects such as ancient civilization, art, and architecture research, in order to deepen their understanding of each other's cultural heritage and history, and promote deeper cultural exchanges. One example of such a joint research project is the China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences. This research center, jointly operated by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the National Center of Excellence in Geology of Pakistan, primarily researches the geology, geophysics, and natural resources of the Karakoram Mountains shared by both countries. Through cooperation, Chinese and Pakistani scientists can share their knowledge and expertise, deepen their understanding of the geology and natural resources of the region, and lay the foundation for further cultural exchange and cooperation.

Secondly, joint research on language and literature between the two countries should be strengthened. Scholars from China and Pakistan can collaborate on researching each other's language and literature, promoting language learning, enhancing communication, and deepening cultural understanding. In addition, joint linguistic research can also provide new approaches to academic research, new avenues for cultural exchange, and new opportunities for theoretical exchange for scholars from both countries.

Thirdly, joint research centers can be established in both countries to promote joint research projects. These centers can not only provide facilities and resources for researchers to collaborate on various research projects, but also serve as platforms for exchanging ideas, knowledge, and best practices. Furthermore, joint research centers can also provide opportunities for researchers to collaborate with industry partners and decision-makers, translating research results into practical applications.

In addition to cooperation on history, geography, cultural heritage, and linguistics, further cooperation on trade, investment, and security can be deepened based on shared research objectives.

Conclusion

Although there has been a bottleneck in the cultural exchange between China and Pakistan, it is still an important part of the relationship between the two countries. Through cultural exchange, the two countries can better bridge the gap between their cultures and promote mutual respect, understanding, and trust. Looking to the future, there is great potential for cultural exchange between China and Pakistan, especially with the orderly development of China's Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The road to cultural exchange between the two countries will become even smoother and wider.

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