

Attitudes of Korean-Chinese and Korean-American High School Students Toward Korea and Its Role in the Global Community

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Abstract

The U.S. has been a key ally of Korea for decades, but China has emerged in the last decade as a powerful rival to the U.S. from the perspective of Korea's international relations. This poses a serious dilemma for Korea because, while the U.S. represents a partner in an indispensable military alliance, China, with its geographic proximity and vast economic potential, has become a neighbor whose economic and political power Korea cannot ignore. Therefore, Korea has attempted to strike a balance in its relationships with the U.S. and China but faced many difficulties. This is relevant because, for Korea to sustain and build on its achievements, it must not only continue its economic growth but also assume a leadership role in the global community through effective international relations with both the U.S. and China. In this context, people of Korean heritage living overseas may play an important role in fostering Korea's leadership role in the global community. These individuals have adapted to their local societies and thus may serve as a social, economic, and political bridge across Korea, China, and the U.S. In particular, because second-generation and later immigrants are more likely to be assimilated into their local society than first-generation immigrants, the former's attitudes toward Korea may be a stronger predictor of Korea's ability to leverage overseas people of Korean heritage to strengthen its role in the global community. This study examines the attitudes of Korean-Chinese and Korean-American high school students toward Korea because their attitudes may determine how successful Korea may be in striking a delicate but sustainable balance in its relationships with the U.S. and China. Korean-Chinese and Korean-American high school students had generally favorable attitudes toward Korea and its role in the global community, and there was a significant difference between these two groups, with Korean-Chinese students having more favorable attitudes. Both Korean-Chinese and Korean-American students were most likely to highlight Korea's responsiveness as its key strength, and there was no significant difference between them. Korean-Chinese students were most likely to highlight Korea's preparedness as its key weakness, whereas Korean-American students, Korea's proactiveness.

Keywords: Attitudes, Korean-Chinese and Korean-American High School Students, Korea, Korea's Role in the Global Community