

Educational Adaptation of Chinese International Students amid Chinese–Thai Cultural and Educational Differences: A Grounded Theory Study at Lampang Inter-Tech College

Shuangyu Zhang¹, Anlin Huang², Yang Liu³, Xinyan Zhou⁴

^{1,2,3,4}, Department of Educational Management, Lampang Inter-tech College, Lampang, Thailand 52100
THAILAND

ABSTRACT: This qualitative study explored the educational adaptation of Chinese international students at Lampang Inter-Tech College in Thailand within the context of Chinese–Thai cultural and educational differences. As a Sino–Thai cooperative institution offering multilingual instruction in Chinese, English, and Thai, the college provides a distinctive educational setting in which differences in cultural norms, communication styles, value orientations, and educational practices shape students’ adjustment to academic and campus life. Guided by several perspectives on cross-cultural adaptation, the study employed semi-structured interviews and grounded theory analysis. The interview data were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding to examine students’ adaptation experiences, practical challenges, and coping strategies across language use, classroom learning, teacher–student interaction, beliefs about learning, and everyday life. The analysis generated a three-stage process model—shock, exploration, and adaptation—showing how students gradually responded to cultural and educational discontinuities through support seeking, self-regulation, and active engagement with the host environment. The findings offer practical implications for strengthening international student support in Sino–Thai cooperative higher education institutions.

Keywords - Chinese international students, Chinese–Thai cultural and educational differences, cross-cultural adaptation, educational adaptation, Lampang Inter-Tech College

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Expanding International Student Mobility in the Context of Globalization

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, globalization has accelerated international educational exchange, which has become an important means of promoting intercultural understanding, talent development, and scientific and technological collaboration [1]. UNESCO data indicate that the global population of internationally mobile students has grown steadily over the past two decades and exceeded six million in 2023 [1]. China remains one of the world’s largest source countries for international students. In recent years, Chinese students have increasingly diversified their study destinations beyond traditional Western countries to include countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. Thailand, a major economic and cultural center in Southeast Asia, has become an increasingly attractive destination because of its educational opportunities, comparatively affordable cost of study, geographic proximity, and long-standing historical and cultural ties with China [2].

1.1.2 Sino–Thai Educational Cooperation and the Institutional Context of Lampang Inter-Tech College

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, bilateral cooperation has expanded steadily, particularly in education. Lampang Inter-Tech College adopts a multilingual model of instruction in Chinese, English, and Thai and maintains cooperative relationships with several Chinese universities. This institutional setting offers a valuable context for examining how Chinese international students adapt to differences in Chinese and Thai cultural and educational practices. Variations in cultural traditions, communication styles, value orientations, and educational environments may shape students' learning, interpersonal interactions, and broader campus experiences [3], [4].

1.1.3 The Need to Examine Cross-Cultural Educational Adaptation

Cross-cultural adaptation has long been a central topic in international student research. However, much of the existing literature has focused on Western host countries, with comparatively less attention paid to Southeast Asian destinations such as Thailand [5]. By examining Chinese international students at Lampang Inter-Tech College, this study seeks to clarify their educational adaptation process and generate practical implications for Sino–Thai cooperative higher education institutions.

1.2 Significance and Contribution of the Study

1.2.1 Theoretical Significance

This study draws on Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation [6], Ward and Kennedy's framework of sociocultural adaptation [7], and Huber and Reynolds' three-dimensional cultural framework [4]. Grounded theory is used to analyze the interview data and to develop an empirically grounded account of Chinese international students' educational adaptation [8], [9].

1.2.2 Practical Significance

The findings may inform the development of teaching support, intercultural orientation, and student services for Chinese international students at Lampang Inter-Tech College and other Sino–Thai cooperative institutions.

1.2.3 Contribution of the Study

The study contributes a context-sensitive analytical framework for understanding educational adaptation amid Chinese–Thai cultural and educational differences and applies grounded theory to identify the stages, challenges, and coping processes reported by Chinese international students.

1.3 Research Focus and Methods

1.3.1 Research Focus

The study examines language adaptation, classroom culture, teacher–student interaction, beliefs about learning, campus life, coping strategies, and the factors that shape educational adaptation.

1.3.2 Research Method

A qualitative design based on semi-structured interviews was adopted. The data were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding in accordance with grounded theory procedures [8], [9].

1.3.3 Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. Twelve students were initially interviewed and included in the coding process, after which one additional participant was recruited to assess theoretical saturation, resulting in a total sample of 13 participants.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Cross-cultural adaptation refers to the dynamic process through which individuals entering an unfamiliar cultural environment learn, adjust, and interact in ways that support psychological well-being, behavioral competence, and social integration [6], [10]. For Chinese international students, educational adaptation extends beyond academic learning and language use to include cultural understanding, adjustment of values and learning beliefs, classroom participation, and social integration [2]. This study primarily draws on Ward and Kennedy's two-dimensional framework of cross-cultural adaptation [7] and stage-based perspectives on cultural adjustment.

Ward and Kennedy [7] conceptualized cross-cultural adaptation as comprising two related dimensions: psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation. Psychological adaptation concerns emotional well-

being, perceived stress, life satisfaction, and mental health in a new cultural environment. Sociocultural adaptation refers to the ability to function effectively in everyday settings, including language use, classroom participation, interpersonal communication, and practical life skills. Although analytically distinct, the two dimensions interact and jointly shape international students' overall adjustment.

Stage-based perspectives suggest that international students may move through a series of phases after entering a new cultural environment, commonly described as honeymoon, culture shock, recovery, and adjustment [11]-[13]. Over time, students may develop more effective coping strategies, strengthen their intercultural communication competence, and shift from passive response to more active engagement with the host environment [6]. Together, these perspectives provide a useful foundation for interpreting the educational adaptation of Chinese international students.

2.2 Research on the Educational Adaptation of Chinese International Students

As international educational exchange has expanded, the educational adaptation of Chinese international students has received increasing attention in both Chinese and international scholarship [2], [14].

International studies have focused primarily on language proficiency, cultural distance, classroom interaction, social support, and mental health. Language competence is widely regarded as a central condition of educational adaptation because effective communication facilitates participation in academic learning and campus life [2], [10]. Institutional support—including academic guidance, peer support, and psychological counseling—may also reduce acculturative stress and facilitate adjustment to the host educational environment [14].

Chinese scholarship has increasingly examined the experiences of students across different destination countries. Existing research suggests that differences in teaching methods, assessment practices, expectations for independent learning, and teacher–student relationships shape students' academic experiences and adaptation outcomes [15]. Compared with the learning environments familiar to many Chinese students, Thai higher education often places greater emphasis on collaborative learning, classroom interaction, and student participation. Students with limited experience of self-directed learning or active classroom participation may therefore encounter adjustment difficulties during the early stages of study [5].

Research conducted in Thailand further indicates that Chinese international students may face challenges related to language use, classroom engagement, cultural understanding, and adjustment to the local living environment. The coexistence of English-medium instruction and a Thai-speaking social environment can create a dual-language challenge. Differences in food, religion, everyday routines, and interpersonal communication may also influence the pace of adaptation. With longer residence, however, students may gradually develop support networks, participate more actively in classroom and campus activities, and improve their overall educational adjustment [16], [17].

2.3 Summary of the Literature

Previous studies provide a substantial theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the educational adaptation of Chinese international students. Nevertheless, two gaps remain particularly relevant to the present study.

First, the literature has concentrated largely on Western host countries or on institutions located in Bangkok, while higher education settings in northern Thailand have received comparatively limited attention [5].

Second, many studies have identified factors associated with educational adaptation, but fewer have examined how Chinese–Thai cultural and educational differences interact to shape the underlying adaptation process [3], [4].

Accordingly, this study uses grounded theory to examine Chinese international students at Lampang Inter-Tech College. It explores the stages, influencing conditions, and underlying processes of educational adaptation within the context of Chinese–Thai cultural and educational differences. The findings are intended to inform the educational management of international students in Thai higher education and contribute to broader discussions of higher education internationalization [8], [9].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative grounded theory design to explore the educational adaptation of Chinese international students within the context of Chinese–Thai cultural and educational differences. Grounded theory emphasizes the inductive development of concepts and explanatory categories from empirical data and is therefore well suited to the study of dynamic social processes such as educational adaptation [8], [9].

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Following grounded theory procedures, the transcripts were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding, allowing initial concepts to be progressively organized into categories and an explanatory model of educational adaptation.

3.2 Research Participants

The participants were Chinese international students enrolled at Lampang Inter-Tech College. Purposive and theoretical sampling were used to recruit 13 students with varied academic majors, stages of study, lengths of residence in Thailand, and gender backgrounds. This diversity was intended to capture a range of adaptation experiences. In grounded theory, theoretical sampling supports the ongoing refinement of concepts and categories until additional data no longer produce substantively new insights [9].

3.3 Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide served as the principal data-collection instrument. The guide ensured that each interview addressed the central research topics while allowing the interviewer to probe participants' experiences in greater depth. This balance of consistency and flexibility is well suited to grounded theory research [8].

3.4 Data Collection

Participants were recruited with assistance from faculty members and the college's International Student Office. Interviews were conducted after informed consent had been obtained. All interviews were carried out in Chinese, lasted approximately 20–30 minutes, and were audio-recorded with participants' permission. The recordings were transcribed promptly after each interview. Identifying information was removed, and participant codes were used throughout the analysis to protect confidentiality.

Table 1. Grounded theory coding structure for the educational adaptation process

Selective Coding (Core Category)	Axial Coding (Major Category)	Open Codes (Initial Concepts)	Participant Sources
Educational Adaptation of Chinese International Students amid Chinese–Thai Cultural and Educational Differences	Stage 1: Shock	Language barriers; errors generated by translation software; reliance on gestures and other nonverbal communication; difficulty adjusting to the sweet, spicy, and sour profile of Thai food; hot and humid weather with little seasonal variation; the college's relatively remote location; unfamiliar etiquette and institutional practices, including kneeling or bowing to teachers, the wai, and uniform requirements; questioning by customs officers and penalties for prohibited items; a mismatch between accommodation conditions and prior expectations; sleep disruption caused by geckos; early closing times at local markets; unfamiliar religious practices, electrical infrastructure, and campus security arrangements; unfamiliar classroom formats and difficulty with interdisciplinary thinking; limited social networks and reluctance to initiate communication; concerns about personal safety and physical adjustment; and difficulty understanding locally used academic terminology.	A–M

Selective Coding (Core Category)	Axial Coding (Major Category)	Open Codes (Initial Concepts)	Participant Sources
	Stage 2: Exploration	Planning to bring familiar foods such as hot pot seasoning and sausages from home; using AI-assisted translation tools; gradually trying milder local foods; visiting night markets and engaging with local handicrafts; observing and comparing Chinese and Thai patterns of thinking, etiquette, and daily routines; seeking advice from teachers, senior students, and classmates; using online resources to address academic and everyday problems; preparing familiar meals in the dormitory; participating in opening-ceremony and other campus cultural activities; learning about Thai laws and prohibited items before entry; using AI tools for independent study; completing course tasks through group collaboration; observing local residents' everyday practices; and planning study visits to nearby cities.	A–M
	Stage 3: Adaptation	A stable psychological state and no intention of withdrawing; greater self-confidence and willingness to communicate; stronger independent living skills; growing acceptance of Thai food, etiquette, and local culture; adaptation to self-directed and discussion-based classrooms; reduced procrastination and stronger learning initiative; regular exercise during leisure time; development of new social networks and a greater sense of security; adjustment from an academic staff role to that of a student; greater tolerance of Chinese–Thai cultural differences; a stronger sense of belonging to the college community; emotional relaxation and reduced anxiety; and improved capacity for self-regulation.	A–M

3.5 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the three-stage coding procedure associated with grounded theory. During open coding, the transcripts were examined line by line to identify initial concepts that captured participants' educational adaptation experiences. During axial coding, related concepts were grouped into broader categories and the relationships among these categories were examined. Selective coding was then used to identify the central process underlying educational adaptation and to develop a three-stage model of shock, exploration, and adaptation [8], [9].

The constant comparative method was used throughout the analysis to compare data across participants and refine the emerging framework. The initial analysis was based on interviews with 12 participants. One additional participant was subsequently recruited to assess theoretical saturation. Because the additional interview did not generate substantively new concepts or categories, the analytical framework was considered sufficiently saturated for the purposes of this study [8].

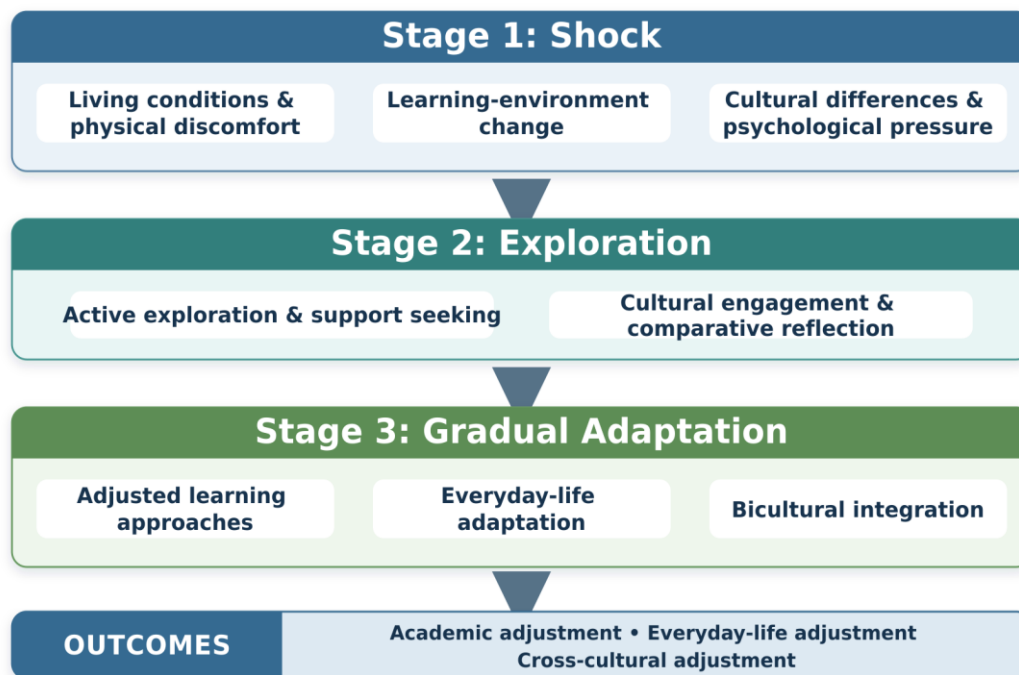


Figure 1. Three-stage model of Chinese international students' educational adaptation

3.6 Trustworthiness

Several procedures were used to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, including member checking, peer debriefing, maintenance of a research journal, and constant comparison across cases. Interview data were also considered alongside research records to support triangulation and strengthen the credibility and interpretive consistency of the findings [8].

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with established principles of research ethics. Participants were informed of the purpose and procedures of the study, participated voluntarily, and provided written informed consent before data collection. All personal information was anonymized, and the data were used solely for academic research and were not disclosed to third parties.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Interview data from 13 participants were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding. Through constant comparison, categorization, and abstraction, the analysis generated a three-stage model of educational adaptation: shock, exploration, and adaptation. The model depicts adaptation as a dynamic process in which students respond to unfamiliar cultural and educational conditions, develop coping strategies, and gradually establish more stable academic, sociocultural, and psychological adjustment. The following sections examine the principal features of this process.

4.1 Stages of the Educational Adaptation Process

The coding results suggest a staged pattern that broadly resembles Lysgaard's [11] U-curve perspective on cultural adjustment. On arrival in Thailand, several participants reported curiosity and positive expectations regarding the new environment. As their studies progressed, however, unfamiliar teaching practices, language demands, and everyday living conditions generated difficulties in classroom comprehension, communication, and daily life. With longer residence, participants described becoming more familiar with local practices, developing more effective coping strategies, and achieving a more stable level of educational adjustment.

This pattern is broadly consistent with Berry's [10] account of cross-cultural adaptation and Kim's [6] stress–adaptation–growth framework, both of which conceptualize adaptation as an ongoing process of adjustment, learning, and personal development.

4.2 Academic Adaptation

Academic adaptation emerged as a central challenge in participants' accounts. Thai higher education was described as placing considerable emphasis on independent learning, group collaboration, and classroom presentations, which differed from the more teacher-directed learning environments familiar to some participants. English-medium instruction and continuous assessment added further demands. As a result, participants reported difficulties with classroom participation, course comprehension, and the management of academic tasks.

These accounts are consistent with previous research identifying academic pressure as a major source of stress for Chinese international students and as an important component of cross-cultural educational adaptation.

Zhu et al. [15] similarly found that classroom participation, adjustment of learning strategies, and teacher support shape international students' academic adaptation. The present findings are broadly consistent with that conclusion.

4.3 Sociocultural Adaptation

Participants' sociocultural adaptation was reflected in their interpersonal relationships, understanding of social norms, and adjustment to everyday life. Several participants reported that they initially formed social networks primarily with other Chinese students and found it difficult to develop close relationships with local students. Differences in religious practices, dietary habits, daily routines, and communication styles also contributed to the challenges of sociocultural adjustment.

Ward and Kennedy [7] emphasized the importance of language competence and intercultural communication for sociocultural adaptation. Sun et al. [5] likewise reported that host-country language ability and access to local social networks are associated with stronger sociocultural adjustment among Chinese international students. The present findings are consistent with these observations.

4.4 Psychological Adaptation and Social Support

Psychological adaptation was closely connected to the availability and use of social support. When facing difficulties, many participants initially sought help from family members and friends in China. Such support helped to reduce homesickness and emotional distress, although reliance on home-country networks could also limit opportunities to engage with the local community. Participants who drew on support from teachers, classmates, and college services generally described a stronger sense of security and psychological stability.

Previous research has shown that social support can reduce acculturative stress and facilitate psychological adjustment among international students [2]. Berry [10] similarly emphasized the value of local support networks while noting that exclusive reliance on co-national support may constrain engagement with the host society. The present findings are broadly consistent with these perspectives.

4.5 Individual Differences and Self-Regulation

Participants' adaptation experiences varied according to their language competence, length of residence in Thailand, and willingness to engage in intercultural communication. Those who reported stronger Thai-language skills, longer residence, and more active engagement with the local environment generally described more stable adjustment. These patterns suggest that language competence and cultural participation are important conditions of educational adaptation.

Self-regulation also emerged as an important resource. Participants who actively adjusted their learning strategies, sought clarification, joined classroom activities, and communicated across cultural boundaries reported more positive academic, social, and psychological experiences.

Kim [6] argued that active engagement with the host culture facilitates cross-cultural adaptation, while Ward and Kennedy [7] linked sociocultural participation to more effective adjustment. The findings of this study are broadly consistent with these perspectives.

Overall, the educational adaptation of Chinese international students at Lampang Inter-Tech College emerged as a dynamic process shaped by cultural differences, the educational environment, social support, and

individual capacities. Self-regulation and locally available support were particularly important in helping students respond to academic and sociocultural challenges. These findings inform the implications discussed in Section 5.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusions

Drawing on interview data and grounded theory coding, this study examined the educational adaptation of Chinese international students at Lampang Inter-Tech College. The analysis identified three broad stages—shock, exploration, and gradual adaptation—and several related categories, including adjustment to living conditions and physical discomfort, changes in the learning environment, cultural differences and psychological pressure, active exploration and support seeking, cultural experience and comparative reflection, adaptation of learning approaches, adjustment to daily life, and bicultural integration. Together, these categories formed a dynamic model of shock, exploration, and adaptation.

The shock stage was characterized by multiple difficulties associated with entering an unfamiliar cultural and educational environment. Participants described challenges related to food, accommodation, climate, transportation, language use, religious and cultural practices, etiquette, and classroom organization. Their prior learning experiences did not always align with the expectations of Thai higher education, resulting in difficulties with classroom participation, interdisciplinary thinking, and locally used academic terminology. These experiences are broadly consistent with Smith and Khawaja's [2] observation that international students commonly encounter language barriers, academic pressure, loneliness, and environmental change during cross-cultural adaptation. The open codes identified in this study—such as language barriers, unfamiliar classroom formats, and difficulty understanding academic terminology—therefore reflect the interconnected nature of educational, everyday-life, and psychological adjustment.

The exploration stage marked a shift from passive exposure to difficulty toward more active coping. As participants became more familiar with their environment, they sought assistance from teachers, senior students, and classmates and used translation software and online resources to address academic and everyday problems. They also participated in Thai cultural activities and compared Chinese and Thai practices, thereby developing a more nuanced understanding of the host environment. This pattern is consistent with Zhou et al.'s [18] account of cross-cultural adaptation as involving cultural learning, stress coping, and the development of social relationships. The categories of active exploration and support seeking and cultural experience and comparative reflection capture this transition.

The gradual adaptation stage was characterized by greater stability in academic, everyday-life, and psychological adjustment. Participants described developing more autonomous learning habits, participating more actively in class, and becoming increasingly familiar with local ways of life. They also reported a stronger sense of security and a growing capacity to understand and respect Thai culture while maintaining their Chinese cultural identity. Rather than indicating complete assimilation, this pattern reflects movement toward bicultural integration.

This interpretation is broadly consistent with Sun et al. [5], who found that the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese students in northern Thai universities involves academic, sociocultural, environmental, and psychological dimensions and may develop over time in a pattern resembling the U-curve of adjustment.

In summary, the educational adaptation of Chinese international students at Lampang Inter-Tech College can be understood as a process that begins with disruption, develops through active exploration, and moves toward more stable adjustment and bicultural integration. Chinese–Thai differences in language, religion, etiquette, classroom practices, and teacher–student interaction initially create adaptation pressures. Over time, teacher support, peer support, social interaction, cultural engagement, and students' self-regulatory efforts help them respond to these pressures and develop more effective forms of adaptation.

5.2 Discussion

A central finding of this study is that educational adaptation is closely intertwined with adjustment to everyday life and psychological well-being. Language barriers affect not only classroom comprehension and course learning but also communication with teachers, classmates, and local residents. Difficulties in the living

environment may further intensify anxiety and loneliness, which can in turn undermine confidence and engagement in learning.

This finding is consistent with Smith and Khawaja's [2] review, which emphasized the interrelationships among academic pressure, second-language anxiety, and psychological adjustment. By incorporating adjustment to living conditions and physical discomfort, as well as cultural differences and psychological pressure, the present study extends conventional accounts of educational adaptation beyond the academic domain.

The findings also highlight student agency as an important mechanism through which participants moved from shock toward gradual adaptation. Zhu et al. [15], using grounded theory and structural equation modeling, found that course learning, academic communication, and self-regulation jointly influence international students' academic adaptation and that learning experiences may strengthen self-regulatory capacity.

The present coding results—including consulting teachers, using translation tools, applying AI tools to independent learning, and completing course tasks through group collaboration—illustrate this agentic process. Educational adaptation was not simply a matter of passively accepting the host institution's practices; rather, participants actively reconstructed their approaches to learning through information seeking, experimentation, and ongoing self-regulation.

The findings further suggest that cultural integration does not require students to abandon their original cultural identity. Participants described learning to understand and respect Thai culture while retaining a sense of connection to Chinese culture. This pattern is better characterized as bicultural integration than as one-way assimilation.

Berry's [10] acculturation framework identifies integration as a strategy associated with maintaining one's heritage culture while participating in the host society. Kim [6] similarly conceptualizes cross-cultural adaptation as an ongoing process of interaction and growth. The present findings are compatible with these perspectives.

Overall, the findings converge with previous research on language, academic, sociocultural, and psychological adaptation while also highlighting the specific institutional context of Lampang Inter-Tech College. They show how the living environment, learning practices, social interaction, and psychological pressure shape students' educational adaptation and how active exploration, self-regulation, and cultural engagement support gradual adjustment.

Improving the educational adaptation of Chinese international students therefore requires both institutional support and student agency. Institutions should strengthen orientation programs, language assistance, intercultural preparation, and teacher–student communication. Students should also be encouraged to adjust their learning strategies, broaden their social networks, participate in local cultural experiences, and develop their capacity for self-regulation and cross-cultural engagement.

These implications are consistent with Sun et al. [5], who recommended that Thai higher education institutions support Chinese international students through orientation programs, language training, campus cultural activities, and the development of stronger teacher–student relationships and social support networks.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The findings are based on 13 students at one Sino–Thai cooperative college and are therefore analytically rather than statistically generalizable. The 20–30-minute interviews captured participants' retrospective accounts at one point in time. Future research could include multiple institutions, longer or repeated interviews, and observational or longitudinal data to examine how educational adaptation changes across stages of residence.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global flow of tertiary-level students*, 2023. Available: <https://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>.
- [2] R. A. Smith and N. G. Khawaja, "A review of the acculturation experiences of international students," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(6), 2011, 699–713. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.08.004>.

- [3] G. Hofstede, *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001).
- [4] J. Huber and C. Reynolds (Eds.), *Developing intercultural competence through education* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2014).
- [5] K. Sun, P. Yossuck, C. Panyadee, and B. Ek-lem, "The process of Chinese students' cross-cultural adaptation and their main difficulties encountered while studying in the upper northern Thai universities," *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*, 20(2), 2020, 343–372. <https://doi.org/10.14456/hasss.2020.13>.
- [6] Y. Y. Kim, *Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001).
- [7] C. Ward and A. Kennedy, "The measurement of sociocultural adaptation," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(4), 1999, 659–677.
- [8] K. Charmaz, *Constructing grounded theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 2021).
- [9] J. Corbin and A. Strauss, *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2015).
- [10] J. W. Berry, "Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation," *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46(1), 1997, 5–34.
- [11] S. Lysgaard, "Adjustment in a foreign society: Norwegian Fulbright grantees visiting the United States," *International Social Science Bulletin*, 7(1), 1955, 45–51.
- [12] K. Oberg, "Cultural shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments," *Practical Anthropology*, 7, 1960, 177–182.
- [13] J. T. Gullahorn and J. E. Gullahorn, "An extension of the U-curve hypothesis," *Journal of Social Issues*, 19(3), 1963, 33–47.
- [14] S. Ecochard and J. Fotheringham, "International students' unique challenges—why understanding international transitions to higher education matters," *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 5(2), 2017, 100–108. <https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v5i2.261>.
- [15] J. Zhu, M. Gu, L. Yang, S. Xun, M. Wan, and J. Li, "Academic adaptation of international students in China: Evidence from the grounded theory and structure equation model," *Sustainability*, 15(1), 2023, 692. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15010692>.
- [16] X. Wang and S. Na Ranong, "Chinese students' intercultural academic adaptation at a Thai university," *Journal of Studies in the English Language*, 20(3), 2025, 26–51. <https://doi.org/10.64731/jsel.v20i3.283250>.
- [17] N. Wenjing and A. Chayanuvat, "Intercultural adaptation of Chinese students studying in Thailand: A case of a Thai private university," *Rangsit Journal of Educational Studies*, 11(2), 2024, 59–79.
- [18] Y. Zhou, D. Jindal-Snape, K. Topping, and J. Todman, "Theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education," *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(1), 2008, 63–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701794833>.

INFO

Corresponding Author: **Shuangyu Zhang**, Department of Educational Management, Lampang Inter-tech College, Lampang, Thailand 52100 THAILAND.

How to cite/reference this article: **Shuangyu Zhang, Anlin Huang, Yang Liu, and Xinyan Zhou**, Educational Adaptation of Chinese International Students amid Chinese–Thai Cultural and Educational Differences: A Grounded Theory Study at Lampang Inter-Tech College, *Asian. Jour. Social. Scie. Mgmt. Tech.* 2026; 8(4): 194-203.