

Challenges and Difficulties Encountered by Thai Doctoral Candidates: A Qualitative Exploration of Specializing in Chinese as a Second Language in China

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Abstract

This study delves into the experiences of Thai doctoral candidates studying in China, an area of growing relevance in the context of increasing international educational exchange and the global prominence of China. The primary objective was to explore the motivations, prospects, academic and cultural challenges, and coping strategies of Thai students, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of international student experiences in non-Western contexts. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 Thai doctoral candidates majoring in Chinese language and literature across various Chinese universities. Thematic analysis was utilized to interpret the interview data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences. The research unveiled that motivations for studying in China included advanced educational opportunities, scholarship availability, career enhancement, and the growing global demand for Chinese language skills. Prospects were identified as academic networking, job market advantages, and opportunities for academic and professional advancements. However, students also faced significant challenges, including language barriers, knowledge gaps, and cultural differences in thinking and lifestyle. To overcome these challenges, strategies such as enhancing language proficiency, increasing academic engagement, and cultural adaptation were adopted by the students. The study concludes that while Thai doctoral candidates in China encounter a unique set of challenges, they also perceive significant opportunities for personal and professional growth. The findings underscore the importance of supportive educational policies and cross-cultural training programs in enhancing the international student experience. This research contributes to the field of international higher education by providing a nuanced understanding of Thai students' experiences in China, offering valuable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and future research in this evolving domain.

Keywords: Chinese Language Learning; Teaching Chinese as the Second Language; Thailand; China Foreigner Students; Thematic Analysis

Introduction

In recent years, the global landscape of international education has undergone significant transformations, influenced by phenomena such as globalization, digital advancements, and strategic geopolitical initiatives like China's ambitious One Belt One Road (OBOR) policy. These developments have notably impacted the flow of international students, with China emerging as a prominent destination for language and cultural studies. This surge is partly attributed to China's active cultural export and the increasing global influence of the Chinese language, fueled by the nation's expanding economic and political footprint.

The digital era has further facilitated this trend, allowing for a broader dissemination of the Chinese language and culture, thus enticing a growing number of international students, particularly from Thailand, to pursue higher education in China (Chen, 2021). Thai students, in particular, have been increasingly drawn to Chinese higher education institutions, motivated by the prospects of linguistic proficiency and cultural immersion in an environment that is both challenging and enriching.

The core objective of the research is to explore the challenges and difficulties these students encounter while adapting to the academic, linguistic, and cultural landscapes in China. This study aims to provide qualitative insights into their experiences, highlighting not only the struggles but also the strategies and adaptations they employ.

The research seeks to contribute to the understanding of the academic and cultural dynamics of Thai students in China, offering perspectives that could inform educational policies and practices in a global context (Chaiyasat, 2020). Furthermore, it aims to shed light on the broader implications of such cross-cultural academic experiences in the context of China's expanding role in the global education sector and its cultural diplomacy.

Literature Review

1. Sino-Thai Language and Cultural Exchanges

The linguistic and cultural exchange between China and Thailand has a long and rich history, deeply rooted in shared cultural practices and historical interactions. This historical context sets the foundation for contemporary educational and linguistic collaborations. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in language and cultural exchange programs between China and Thailand. These programs are often supported by both governments as a means of strengthening bilateral relations and mutual understanding. The popularity of Chinese media and pop culture in Thailand has played a crucial role in fostering an interest in Chinese language and culture among Thai youth, thereby motivating them to pursue further studies in China (Chen et al., 2021).

2. Thai Students Studying in China

The number of Thai students studying in China has been steadily increasing, influenced by factors such as China's growing global presence, scholarship opportunities, and the appeal of Chinese culture. Both Chinese and Thai governments have implemented policies and programs to facilitate and encourage educational exchange. This includes scholarships specifically targeted at Thai students and the establishment of Chinese language centers in Thailand (Guo et al., 2020). Literature highlights the experiences of Thai students in China, focusing on their adaptation to the academic environment, cultural differences, and the challenges of living abroad. This encompasses both the academic and socio-cultural adaptation processes.

3. Learning Chinese as a Second Language

Chinese is considered one of the most challenging languages for Thai students due to its tonal nature and the complexity of its writing system. Studies have explored the specific

linguistic challenges faced by Thai learners of Chinese. The literature also delves into the teaching methodologies employed in Chinese language instruction, particularly those that are effective for Thai students (Bakoko et al., 2023). This includes a focus on interactive and immersive learning environments. Several studies have examined how proficiency in the Chinese language impacts the overall academic success and integration of Thai students in China. Language proficiency is often linked to better academic performance, social integration, and a more positive study abroad experience.

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the key areas relevant to your study: the historical and contemporary Sino-Thai language and cultural exchanges, the trends and experiences of Thai students in China, and the specific challenges and methodologies associated with learning Chinese as a second language.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach, specifically utilizing semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore the experiences of Thai doctoral candidates majoring in Chinese in China. The qualitative method was chosen due to its effectiveness in obtaining detailed and personal insights into the experiences and perceptions of the participants.

The study focused on 20 Thai doctoral candidates enrolled in Chinese studies programs at various universities across China. These participants were selected to provide a diverse range of experiences and perspectives. The selection criteria included their nationality (Thai), current enrollment in a doctoral program in China, and their major in Chinese studies. Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection method. This approach allowed for flexibility in the conversation, enabling participants to express their views and experiences in their own words while ensuring that all relevant topics were covered. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted mainly via online video interviews, considering the geographical dispersion of the participants and the convenience of digital platforms. Table 1 uncovers the details of the outline of the interview. The interview questions were designed to explore several key areas:

Motivation for Study: Understanding the reasons behind choosing to pursue a PhD in China.

Future Prospects and Opportunities: Exploring the participants' perceptions of the opportunities and prospects that studying in China offers.

Academic Challenges: Investigating the academic difficulties encountered while studying in China, including language barriers, coursework, and research challenges.

Cultural and Lifestyle Challenges: Discuss the cultural and lifestyle difficulties faced by the students, such as adaptation to local customs, living conditions, and social integration.

Coping Strategies: Learning about the strategies and methods the students employ to overcome the challenges they face.

The interview data were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. This method involved coding the data and identifying patterns or themes that emerged from the participants' responses. Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility and effectiveness in interpreting qualitative data, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Table 1. Interview Outline for Understanding the Experiences of Thai Doctoral Candidates in China.

Question Number	Interview Questions
1	Why did you choose to study for a PhD in China?
2	What are the prospects and opportunities for the future of coming to China to study for a PhD?
3	What are the academic difficulties of studying for a PhD in China?
4	What are the life and cultural difficulties of studying for a PhD in China?
5	How do you plan to overcome these difficulties?

Table 1 outlines the structured format of the interview questions designed to explore the experiences of Thai doctoral candidates studying in China. This table serves as a guide for the semi-structured interviews, ensuring that key areas of interest are consistently addressed across all participant interactions. The questions are sequenced to first understand the motivation behind choosing China for doctoral studies and then to explore both the positive aspects (prospects and opportunities) and challenges (academic, cultural, and life difficulties) faced by the students. The final question aims to uncover the strategies and methods these students use to overcome the challenges identified, providing insights into their adaptability and resilience. This structured approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the student's experiences, facilitating a thorough analysis of the qualitative data collected.

The study adhered to ethical research standards, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were informed of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Results

1. Descriptive Analysis of the Participants

Table 2 introduces the information of the participants. The study involved 20 Thai doctoral candidates, identified by their respective codes from P1 to P20, enrolled in various universities across China. The participants represented a mix of gender, age, and specialization within Chinese studies, reflecting a diverse range of experiences and perspectives. Below is a summary of the participant demographics:

The ages of the participants ranged from 24 to 39 years, with a mean age of approximately 30.4 years. This age range indicates that the participants are in a mature stage of their academic and professional development. Of the 20 participants, 9 were male and 11 were female, showing a balanced gender representation in the sample. This diversity in gender provides varied insights into the experiences of studying in China. The participants were majoring in areas related to Chinese language and literature, with a focus on Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages, Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Chinese Ancient and Modern Literature, and other related fields. This variety in majors highlights the breadth of academic interests among Thai doctoral candidates in Chinese studies. The participants were from several prestigious universities in China, including Beijing Language and Culture University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing Normal University, Tsinghua University, Shandong University, Shanghai International Studies University, Southwest University, Sichuan University, Sun Yat-sen University, Yunnan University, Renmin University of China, Zhejiang University, and Wuhan University. This range of institutions indicates a wide geographical and academic representation.

Table 2. Introduces the information of the participants.

Code	Age	Gender	Major	Institution
P1	31	F	Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages	Beijing Language and Culture University
P2	26	M	Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	Beijing Foreign Studies University
P3	29	M	Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	Beijing Normal University
P4	33	F	Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	Tsinghua University
P5	25	F	Chinese Ancient Literature	Shandong University
P6	37	M	Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages	Beijing Language and Culture University
P7	33	M	Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (Literature)	Shanghai International Studies University
P8	31	F	Chinese Modern & Contemporary Literature	Southwest University
P9	39	M	Linguistics & Applied Linguistics	Sichuan University
P10	24	F	Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	Sun Yat-sen University
P11	34	M	Linguistics & Applied Linguistics	Yunnan University
P12	26	F	Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	Beijing Normal University
P13	27	M	Linguistics & Applied Linguistics	Southwest University
P14	28	F	Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages	Beijing Language and Culture University
P15	31	M	Chinese Philosophy	Renmin University of China
P16	30	F	Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	Beijing Language and Culture University
P17	28	M	Chinese Language and Literature	Zhejiang University
P18	28	F	Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages	Yunnan Normal University
P19	38	M	Comparative Literature and World Literature	Shandong University
P20	27	F	Linguistics & Applied Linguistics	Wuhan University

2. Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. By reading through the interview responses, a deep understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives was developed. Specific statements within the interviews were coded based on their content. For example, mentions of 'scholarship availability' or 'career enhancement' were coded accordingly. Patterns in the coded data were identified. For example, several participants mentioned financial support and academic reputation, which were grouped into a broader theme of "Motivations for Studying in China." Each theme was reviewed to ensure it was supported by multiple data points and accurately represented the participants' responses. Themes were then clearly defined, such as "Academic Challenges" and "Cultural and Lifestyle Challenges." The final report (the thematic analysis presented earlier) was structured around these themes, using direct quotes and summaries from the interview data to illustrate and support each theme. By following these steps, thematic analysis helped to systematically break down and interpret the interview data, providing a nuanced understanding of the experiences of Thai doctoral candidates studying in China.

To conduct a thematic analysis of the interview content provided, we'll identify and analyze themes across the five interview questions, which address the reasons for studying in China, prospects, academic and cultural challenges, and strategies for overcoming these difficulties. Here's how the thematic analysis could be structured.

2.1 Motivations for Studying in China

The Motivations for Studying in China can be understood as the various reasons that drive Thai doctoral candidates to pursue their studies in China. This encompasses a range of factors from academic to financial, career-oriented, and cultural aspects (Kang et al., 2020). Each dimension reflects a unique aspect of motivation, revealing the diverse factors that influence these students' decision to study in China. Table 3 indicates the dimensions of motivations for studying in China

Table 3. Different Dimensions of Motivations for Studying in China

Dimension of Motivation	Description
Advanced Educational Opportunities	The maturity of China's international education programs, advanced technology, and the presence of renowned professors.
Scholarship Availability	Access to scholarships like the Chinese Government Scholarship and Confucius Institute Scholarship, provides financial relief.
Career Enhancement	Obtaining a doctoral degree for career advancement, particularly for securing university positions in Thailand.
Increasing Demand for Chinese Language	The growing global trend of learning Chinese presents opportunities for future teaching positions.

Each of these dimensions plays a significant role in influencing Thai students' decision to study in China, highlighting the multifaceted nature of their motivations. Advanced educational opportunities in China attract students looking for high-quality research programs and expertise. The availability of scholarships provides necessary financial support, making doctoral studies more accessible. Career enhancement is a crucial factor for those aiming to secure academic positions or enhance their professional standing (Sae-thung & Boonsuk, 2022). Lastly, the increasing global demand for Chinese language skills opens up opportunities in teaching and other fields, making the study of Chinese a strategic choice for future career prospects.

2.2 Future Prospects and Opportunities

The "Future Prospects and Opportunities" section discusses the anticipated benefits and opportunities that Thai doctoral candidates foresee as a result of their studies in China. These prospects are not only related to their immediate academic achievements but also encompass broader career and professional advancements.

Table 4. Future Prospects and Opportunities for Thai Doctoral Candidates in China

Aspect	Description
Networking and Academic Collaboration	Opportunity to build valuable academic networks for future collaborations.
Job Market Advantage	A Chinese doctorate is seen as valuable and beneficial for enhancing job prospects.
Academic and Professional Advancements	Opportunities for entering academia and pursuing research as key prospects.

Each aspect in Table 4 represents a different dimension of the potential benefits that Thai doctoral candidates expect to gain from their studies in China:

Networking and Academic Collaboration emphasize the value of the academic connections made during their doctoral studies, which can lead to future research collaborations and academic exchanges. Job Market Advantage indicates that a Chinese doctorate will provide a competitive edge in the job market, likely due to the growing global influence of China and the recognition of its academic standards. Academic and Professional Advancement highlights the opportunities that open up in academic circles and research fields post-graduation, allowing candidates to engage in advanced studies and contribute to their fields of expertise. These prospects and opportunities reflect the multifaceted benefits that Thai doctoral candidates anticipate, extending beyond academic achievements to long-term career and professional development.

2.3 Academic Challenges

The "Academic Challenges" section addresses the key difficulties faced by Thai doctoral candidates during their studies in China. These challenges range from language barriers to cultural differences in thought processes, each impacting the student's academic experience in distinct ways. Table 5 summarizes these academic challenges.

Table 5. Academic Challenges Faced by Thai Doctoral Candidates in China

Challenge	Description
Language Barrier	Difficulty in comprehending academic literature and participating in class discussions due to language differences.
Knowledge Gaps	Challenges in coping with in-depth course content and engaging in discussions due to a lack of prior knowledge.
Cultural Differences in Thinking	Divergent ways of thinking between Chinese and Thai cultures affect discussions and problem-solving.

Language Barrier is a primary challenge, as academic success in China heavily depends on understanding and using the Chinese language effectively. Difficulty in language comprehension can hinder participation in class discussions and the ability to grasp complex academic literature.

Knowledge Gaps refer to the challenges faced due to insufficient background knowledge in certain subjects or topics. This can make it difficult for students to keep pace with the course content and actively participate in academic discussions.

Cultural Differences in Thinking highlights the impact of differing cultural perspectives on academic work. Thai and Chinese cultures may approach problem-solving and critical thinking in different ways, which can lead to misunderstandings or difficulties in academic interactions.

These academic challenges reflect the complex nature of pursuing higher education in a foreign cultural and linguistic environment, underscoring the need for effective strategies to navigate these hurdles.

2.4 Cultural and Lifestyle Challenges

The "Cultural and Lifestyle Challenges" section explores the various non-academic difficulties that Thai doctoral candidates face while studying in China. These challenges range from financial concerns to social and environmental adaptation issues. Table 6 summarizes these cultural and lifestyle challenges:

Table 6. Cultural and Lifestyle Challenges Faced by Thai Doctoral Candidates in China

Challenge	Description
Cost of Living	Higher living expenses in China compared to Thailand.
Limited Interaction with Locals	Segregated living situations lead to fewer opportunities for language practice.
Dietary Adjustments	Challenges in adapting to the local food.
Climate Adjustment	Difficulty in adapting to varying climatic conditions.
Cultural and Ideological Differences	Challenges in understanding and adapting to Chinese cultural norms and ideologies.
Language Dialects	Difficulty in understanding and communicating with locals speaking in dialects.

Cost of Living refers to the economic aspect of living abroad, particularly the higher cost of living in China compared to Thailand, which presents a significant challenge for the students. Limited Interaction with Locals in segregated living situations, there are fewer opportunities for meaningful interaction with local Chinese people, which can impede language acquisition and cultural immersion. Dietary Adjustments aiming to adapt to different food habits and cuisines can be challenging, affecting the students' comfort and overall well-being. Climate Adjustment refers to varying climatic conditions in different parts of China compared to Thailand can pose adaptation challenges. Cultural and Ideological Differences uncover navigating the nuances of Chinese culture and ideologies, which may be different from Thai culture, require significant adjustment, and can lead to misunderstandings. Language Dialects emphasis the diversity of dialects in China can create additional language barriers, complicating communication and everyday interactions. These challenges highlight the diverse range of adjustments and adaptations required by Thai students, not just academically but also in their daily lives and social interactions.

2.5 Strategies for Overcoming Difficulties

The "Strategies for Overcoming Difficulties" outlines the methods and approaches employed by Thai doctoral candidates in China to navigate and mitigate the challenges they face. These strategies are crucial for their academic success and overall well-being during their study abroad experience. Table 7 summarizes these strategies.

Table 7. Strategies for Overcoming Difficulties by Thai Doctoral Candidates in China

Strategy	Description
Language Improvement	Emphasis on improving Chinese proficiency through practice and extensive reading.
Academic Engagement	Greater interaction with faculty and peers, along with increased literature review, to enhance academic capabilities.
Cultural Adaptation	Adjusting mentality to adapt to the new environment and actively engaging with Chinese culture and people for better understanding.

Language Improvement indicates recognizing the importance of language proficiency, students focus on enhancing their Chinese language skills through consistent practice and reading. This approach is fundamental for academic success and better integration into the local culture.

Academic Engagement aims to overcome academic challenges, students increase their engagement with faculty and peers. This involves more active participation in academic discussions and a thorough review of relevant literature, thereby deepening their understanding and academic competence.

Cultural Adaptation encourages adapting to a new cultural environment and requires a mental shift. Students work on adjusting their mindset to better understand and assimilate into Chinese culture. This includes actively engaging with locals and embracing the cultural nuances, which aids in reducing cultural and social barriers (Chaiyasat, 2020).

These strategies demonstrate the proactive efforts of Thai doctoral candidates to address the various challenges they encounter, highlighting their resilience and adaptability in the face of academic and cultural hurdles.

Discussion

1 Theoretical significance

The study's findings provide a detailed insight into the experiences of Thai doctoral candidates studying in China. The identified themes encapsulate various aspects of their journey, including motivations for choosing China for their studies, prospects and opportunities, academic and cultural challenges, and the strategies employed to overcome these difficulties.

Motivations: Advanced educational opportunities, scholarship availability, career enhancement opportunities, and the global demand for Chinese language proficiency emerged as primary motivators.

Future Prospects: The potential for building academic networks, enhanced job market prospects, and opportunities for academic and professional advancement were highlighted.

Academic Challenges: Participants faced challenges such as language barriers, knowledge gaps, and cultural differences in academic thinking.

Cultural and Lifestyle Challenges: The cost of living, limited interaction with locals, dietary adjustments, climate adaptation, cultural and ideological differences, and language dialects were significant challenges (Gong et al., 2021).

Overcoming Strategies: Strategies like improving language proficiency, increasing academic engagement, and adapting to the cultural environment were employed.

This study contributes to the existing body of research by providing a nuanced understanding of Thai doctoral candidates' experiences in China. While previous research has often focused on the experiences of international students in Western contexts, this study shifts the focus to an East Asian context, specifically the experiences in China. The detailed exploration of motivations, such as the specific emphasis on the advanced technological and educational infrastructure in China, adds to the understanding of why China is becoming an increasingly popular destination for international students (Lee, 2019). Furthermore, the study highlights the growing global importance of Chinese language proficiency, aligning with the global shift towards recognizing the significance of China on the world stage.

The findings regarding academic and cultural challenges add depth to the existing literature on cross-cultural educational experiences, especially highlighting the unique challenges faced by Thai students in adapting to the Chinese academic and cultural environment. The emphasis on language barriers and cultural differences in academic thinking provides specific insights that are less explored in existing literature.

This research expands the geographical focus of international education research to include Chinese higher education, an area that is under-represented in current literature.

By the way, this research provides empirical evidence on the specific experiences of Thai doctoral students in China, a demographic that has not been extensively studied before. On the other hand, we highlight the role of China's educational advancements and scholarship opportunities in attracting international students, which adds a new dimension to the understanding of international student mobility (Yin & Zong, 2022). Finally, offering insights into the specific academic and cultural adaptation strategies employed by Thai students, thus contributing to the broader understanding of how students from ASEAN countries adapt to education in China.

In summary, this study extends the current understanding of international education by focusing on a non-Western context and offering unique insights into the experiences of Thai doctoral candidates in China, thus contributing new knowledge to the field of international higher education.

2 Practical significance

Educational institutions in China can play a pivotal role in enhancing the experience of international students. To address language barriers, there's a need for stronger Chinese language support programs, including intensive language courses and language assistance in academic subjects. Additionally, fostering inclusive environments through programs that promote interaction between international and Chinese students can help overcome cultural and social barriers (Juvonen et al., 2019). Expanding scholarship opportunities for students, particularly from ASEAN countries, is also crucial in attracting and supporting a diverse student population.

Students preparing to study in China should engage in comprehensive pre-departure preparations. This includes intensive language learning and cultural orientation to ease the transition. Once in China, it's important for students to actively utilize university resources such as academic workshops, language tutoring, and counseling services. Building networks with peers, faculty, and professionals is also essential for academic collaboration and future career opportunities.

Policymakers in Thailand and China have the opportunity to enhance educational collaboration through bilateral agreements, ensuring mutual degree recognition and facilitating easier transitions for students. The promotion of cultural exchange programs is vital to enhance understanding and reduce cultural barriers. Additionally, developing programs or policies that assist students in leveraging their international experience for career opportunities within Thailand, especially in sectors where Chinese language skills are valued, is essential.

3 limitations and future study

The present study, while providing valuable insights, has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample size of 20 Thai doctoral candidates, though diverse, is relatively small and may not fully represent the entire population of Thai students in China. Additionally, the study focused predominantly on students in Chinese language and literature programs, which could limit the generalizability of the findings to other academic disciplines. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data through interviews might introduce subjective biases in the responses. Lastly, the study was conducted at a specific point in time and does not account for the dynamic nature of international education and student experiences over time.

Future research in this area can address these limitations by expanding the sample size and including Thai students from a broader range of academic disciplines and universities across China. Longitudinal studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving experiences and long-term outcomes of Thai doctoral students in China. Additionally, incorporating quantitative methods along with qualitative interviews could offer a more robust and objective analysis. Research could also explore comparative perspectives by examining the experiences of students from other ASEAN countries or other parts of the world, providing a global context to the findings (Singh & Jamil, 2021). Finally, investigating the post-graduation trajectories of these students would provide valuable insights into the long-term impact of their education in China on their career and personal development.

Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive exploration of the experiences of Thai doctoral candidates studying in China, shedding light on their motivations, prospects, challenges, and strategies for overcoming difficulties (Tang, 2020). The research highlights the multifaceted nature of their journey, from the allure of China's advanced educational opportunities and scholarship offerings to the personal and professional growth anticipated post-study. It also underscores the complexities of academic and cultural adaptation, reflecting

the resilience and resourcefulness of Thai students in navigating these challenges. The insights gained from this study contribute significantly to our understanding of the international education landscape, particularly in the context of Sino-Thai academic exchanges.

The findings of this research have important implications for stakeholders in the realms of international education, including educational institutions, policymakers, and students themselves. They underscore the need for comprehensive support systems, inclusive educational policies, and cross-cultural training to enhance the experience of international students. Looking ahead, this research lays the groundwork for further studies that can expand on these findings, exploring the experiences of a wider range of students and delving into the long-term impacts of their education in China. As the global education landscape continues to evolve, studies like this one are essential in informing policies and practices that foster an enriching and supportive environment for international students worldwide.

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