



Adjustment in the Management of International Students of Haikou University of Economics

Li Huajian¹

E-Mail: 64609630018@rpu.ac.th

Laddawan Petchroj²

E-Mail: ladrojch@gmail.com

Abstract

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the adjustment in the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics (HUE), 2) to compare international students' opinions about the adjustment in the management of HUE, 3) to propose the guidelines of supporting adjustment in the management with international students work. The mixed-methods research was employed. The samples consisted of 80 international students and interview 5 administrators, selected by simple random sampling classified by student year. The research instrument was a 5-rating scale questionnaire with item validity (IOC values) between .67 to 1.00, and a reliability value of .912. The data were statistically analyzed by using percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, One-way ANOVA, LSD and the content analysis.

The results of the research showed that: 1) adjustment in the management of international students' opinions at HUE that was at the highest level in total and all aspects. The highest mean was psychological adjustment, followed by academic adjustment, cultural adjustment, and social adjustment. 2) The compare of adjustment in the management of international students at HUE, classified by gender was statistically significant at .05 level in total, academic adjustment and cultural adjustment, male give higher mean than female, meanwhile student year was no different. 3) Administrators provide relevant opinions and suggestions on the adjustment in the management of international students.

Keyword: Adjustment management, International Students, Haikou University of Economics

¹ Master of Education (Educational Administration), Rajapruk University

² Lecturer of Master of Education (Educational Administration), Rajapruk University



Introduction

With the deepening development of globalization, universities in various countries are constantly exploring and innovating in the management of international students' education. They strive to improve the quality of education and overall experience of international students by improving the policy system, strengthening the construction of the teaching staff, and providing diversified services. As for China, the Ministry of Education of China has taken a series of measures in the management of international students. It requires all universities to establish and improve the recruitment, training, management, and service systems for international students. These regulations require universities to standardize the management behavior of international students, improve the level of internationalization of education, and formulate specific management methods based on actual conditions.

Mesidor et al. (2016) stated that international students studying abroad encounter many adaptability problems in the new university environment. From a management perspective, the author proposes adjustments for the academic, social, cultural, and psychological adaptation of international students.

International students are extremely important to the higher education of any country for both academic prestige and financial advantage (Baklashova and Kazakov, 2016). With the development of "One Belt and One Road", China is increasing its level of openness, increasing international influence, and new prospects for the internationalization of higher education. Education for international students in domestic universities has achieved rapid development, and a large number of international students have come to study in China. Cultural collisions and exchanges of ideas with different countries have promoted the flow of talents and academic development between countries. The increasingly developing education for international students in higher education institutions has also become an important bridge for friendly exchanges between China and the world. International students in China have developed rapidly, and the number of students, educational content, and management effectiveness have steadily improved. At the same time, some contradictions need to be resolved in terms of student quality, development



adaptation, and management compatibility (Zhang et al., 2023).

Many international students face challenges as they get higher education outside their home countries. They face obstacles such as different food, unfamiliar living conditions, financial problems in life, finding balance between studies and work. They have to fit themselves into the schedule of classes, learning styles, and other possible difficulties related to language, culture, and personal barriers. A student may encounter a number of difficulties in the transitional period from everyday situations in daily life to cultural adaptation (Haikou University of Economics, 2023).

International students at Haikou University of Economics faced significant adjustment challenges in four areas: academic, social, cultural, and psychological. To strengthen the management and services for international students, Haikou University of Economics must make full use of all management functions. This will enable faculty and staff to effectively supervise and coordinate all aspects of the organization's functions and provide adequate services to international students. The faculty of Haikou University of Economics needs to have the necessary management capabilities, and effective training programs must be implemented and provided with the necessary resources. To better serve international students, Haikou University of Economics has established a dedicated international student management team equipped with full-time teachers who are responsible for the daily management and psychological counselling services for international students. These measures help meet the needs of international students in academic adaptation, social adaptation, cultural adaptation, and psychological adaptation and promote international students to better integrate into campus life and learning environment.

To promote the internationalization of higher education in Hainan Province, accelerate the development of education for international students in Hainan Province, and better adapt to the needs of the construction of Hainan as an international tourist island, the Hainan Provincial Government established the "Hainan Provincial Government International Students Office." The Haikou University of Economics has launched a "scholarship in tuition fee" since 2013. Haikou University of Economics began recruiting international students in 2018. Starting in 2019, the Hainan Provincial



Government has been providing scholarships to some international students every year. Many international students go to the Haikou University of Economics to study Chinese language courses for one year and obtain the HSK4 language proficiency certificate, which exempts them from 4 years of tuition fees and allows them to study for a bachelor's degree at the Haikou University of Economics. Between 2019 and 2023, Haikou University of Economics admitted 100 international students who are pursuing their bachelor's degrees. These students come from various countries including Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Congo. Out of the total students, 34 are males and 66 are females, and they are distributed across different academic years.

According to the problem and concept of higher education, the researcher would like to study the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics. The result of this research will help international students and faculty members analyze, and their feedback will be used to propose effective management strategies that can help them adjust to their unfamiliar environment, plan their academic careers, and lay a strong foundation for their future career development. This approach can also offer valuable insights for other schools that are looking to improve their management of international students.

Research Objectives

1. To study adjustment in the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics.
2. To international students` opinions on the adjustment in the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics.
3. To propose the guidelines of supporting adjustment in the management with international students work.

Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component involved the distribution of questionnaires via WeChat to examine factors affecting adjustment in the management of international students from the perspective of students at Haikou University of Economics. The qualitative component utilized interviews to gain deeper insights into issues related to adjustment and management practices.

The research population consisted of 100 international students at Haikou University of Economics. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970, as cited in Petchroj et al., 2019) sampling table, a sample of 80 students was selected through simple random sampling. In addition, a group of nine faculty members was identified, from which five participants were purposively selected to provide complementary perspectives.

The primary research instrument was a questionnaire, which was validated by three experts for content validity using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), yielding values between .67 and 1.00. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha produced a coefficient of .912, indicating high internal consistency. An interview form was also developed, focusing on open-ended questions related to adjustment in the management of international students.

The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data were statistically analyzed through percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Least Significant Difference (LSD) post hoc test. Qualitative data from interviews were examined through content analysis to identify key themes and patterns.

Results

1. In response to the first research objective, the study found that international students at Haikou University of Economics demonstrated the highest levels of adjustment in management across all dimensions, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Means and standard deviation of the adjustment in the management of international students of Haikou University of Economics in overall.

(n=80)

Aspect	Adjustment in the management of international students	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level	Ranking
1	Academic Adjustment	4.53	.24	Highest	2
2	Social Adjustment	4.49	.27	High	4
3	Cultural Adjustment	4.52	.26	Highest	3
4	Psychological Adjustment	4.56	.29	Highest	1
Total		4.53	.23	Highest	

From Table 1, it found that the adjustment in the management of international students of Haikou University of Economics was considered at a high level (\bar{X} =4.53, S.D.= .23) in overall, when considering in each aspect, 3 aspects were at the highest level, ranking from the highest to the lowest mean: psychological Adjustment (\bar{X} =4.56 S.D.=.29), followed by academic adjustment, and cultural adjustment. And it was at a high level was social adjustment.

2. To address the second research objective, the study compared the adjustment in the management of international students across different respondent statuses, with the results summarized in the following table.

Table 2 Comparison of the adjustment in the management of international students of Haikou University of Economics classified by gender.

(n=80)

Aspect	Adjustment in the management of international students	Gender				t	Sig.
		Male		Female			
		\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.		
1	Academic Adjustment	4.59	.26	4.46	.20	2.46*	.02
2	Social Adjustment	4.53	.28	4.45	.27	1.30	.20
3	Cultural Adjustment	4.59	.25	4.45	.25	2.43*	.02
4	Psychological Adjustment	4.60	.30	4.50	.27	1.42	.16
Total		4.58	.23	4.47	.22	2.17*	.03

*Statistically significant at level .05

From Table 2, it found that among male and female there was statistically significant at level .05 in total and individual aspect in academic adjustment and cultural adjustment. Male having mean higher than female.

Table 3 Mean and standard deviation of the adjustment in the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics (HUE) classified by student year.

(n=80)

Aspect	Adjustment in the management of international students	Student year								F	Sig.
		Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior			
		\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.		
1	Academic Adjustment	4.58	.28	4.48	.19	4.55	.29	4.51	.16	.70	.56
2	Social Adjustment	4.54	.28	4.35	.19	4.56	.32	4.51	.24	2.4	.08
3	Cultural Adjustment	4.58	.24	4.43	.23	4.55	.28	4.55	.28	1.24	.30
4	Psychological Adjustment	4.62	.30	4.44	.29	4.54	.30	4.63	.25	1.77	.16
Total		4.58	.24	4.43	.18	4.55	.27	4.5	.19	1.76	.16

From Table 3, it found that the opinions of the adjustment in the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics classified by student year. The highest mean was freshman, followed by the senior, junior and sophomore in overall. When concerning about data analysis of One-way analysis of variance for student year, it found that there was no different.

3. Results from interviews and the opinions of administrators found that adjustment in the management of international students.

According to the interviews with 5 administrators at Haikou University of Economics, the management of international students' needs to start from the four aspects of planning, organization, actuating and control to form a complete and efficient management system. By formulating a detailed annual work plan, setting up a professional management team, establishing a reasonable incentive

mechanism and strengthening the construction of information systems, the education quality and management level of international students can be effectively improved, and the further development of foreign exchanges and cooperation can be promoted.

3.1 Organizing international students to participate in off-campus social practice activities, establish multicultural student clubs, actively communicate with local people, and participate in local social activities.

3.2 Offering special cultural courses; help international students overcome language barriers and guide them to become familiar with and adapt to the living environment in China; encourage international students to participate in university club activities; provide cross-cultural exchange courses; international students can visit cultural performances to experience Chinese culture

3.3 Scientifically design training programs; develop internationalized courses and implement bilingual teaching; improve the internationalization level and cross-cultural management ability of the teaching team; set up general courses on international education

3.4 Establish a professional mental health service department; organize mental health cultural festival activities; establish courses such as cultural adaptation and psychological quality training; encourage all international students to develop a healthy lifestyle; pay attention to the cross-cultural adaptation of international students.

The summary of the research results revealed that.

1) In response to the first research objective, the study found that international students at Haikou University of Economics demonstrated the highest level of adjustment in management across all dimensions. Among the four areas assessed, psychological adjustment was rated the highest, followed by academic adjustment and cultural adjustment, while social adjustment was also evaluated positively, though at a slightly lower level. Overall, the results indicate that international students are generally well-adjusted in terms of academic, cultural, psychological, and social



aspects of their university experience.

2) In response to the second research objective, the study examined international students' opinions on adjustment in the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics. The results revealed differences when classified by gender, where male students reported higher levels of adjustment in academic and cultural aspects compared with female students. However, when classified by student year, no significant differences were found, indicating that students across different years of study generally shared similar perceptions of adjustment. Overall, these findings suggest that while gender may influence certain dimensions of adjustment, the year of study does not appear to affect students' opinions on their adjustment experiences.

3) In response to the third research objective, the study proposed guidelines to support adjustment in the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics. The findings emphasized that effective management should integrate planning, organization, implementation, and control to establish a comprehensive system. Key guidelines include promoting international students' participation in multicultural and social activities, offering cultural exchange and language support programs, and encouraging involvement in university clubs and community engagement. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of scientifically designed training programs, bilingual instruction, and internationalized curricula to enhance cross-cultural competencies. In addition, the establishment of professional mental health services, cultural adaptation courses, and wellness activities was recommended to support psychological adjustment and overall well-being. These guidelines collectively aim to improve the quality of management, foster integration, and strengthen the international learning environment for students.

Discussion

1. The research results in total, and every aspect showed that the highest level except social adjustment, the highest aspect of international students' opinions for adjustment in the management was a psychological adjustment. International students

need to face unfamiliar environments, cultural differences and language barriers, and their studies abroad are usually more arduous and complicated than at home. They live alone in a foreign country far away from home, and are prone to loneliness, homesickness and other factors that will bring problems to international students. This finding was consistent with the research of Liang et al. (2017), The impact of social anxiety, loneliness, and coping styles on the mental health of international students in China. This study proposes that international students should cultivate different interests and hobbies, release their potential by participating in various activities, maintain a happy spirit, relieve tension, enrich their inner world, and promote mental health by communicating with international students from distinct cultural backgrounds. International students should actively participate in psychological lectures to understand the ways and methods of psychological counselling. When considering each aspect, it was discussed as follows:

2. International student's opinions on academic adjustment. The aspect of academic adjustment ranks second in the adjustment in management. In this aspect, the highest item was adapting well to the course schedule of international students and using multimedia resources in classrooms to facilitate learning. International students think that learning exchanges, course learning and self-adjustment are the main factors affecting the academic adaptation of international students. This finding was consistent with the research of Zhu et al. (2022), Academic Adaptation of International Students in China: Evidence from the Grounded Theory and Structure Equation Model. This study proposes that the university should consider the unusual circumstances of international students and try to arrange simple courses, including reducing the number of courses appropriately. This is very conducive to international students' rapid adaptation to the new learning environment and provides significant help for their academic adjustment. International students will only adjust their learning behavior, overcome the difficulties and challenges in the unfamiliar academic system, and ultimately achieve the goal of living in harmony with the learning environment.

3. International student's opinions on cultural adjustment. The aspect of cultural adjustment ranks third in the adjustment in management. In this aspect, the

highest item was accepting different cultures in different countries. Because it might be that international students have moderately high difficulty in identifying with interpersonal relationships, social interactions, and school life. At the same time, there are differences between regions and religious beliefs, which shows that many international students are unable to identify with or accept certain Chinese values. This finding was consistent with Zhong et al. (2013) Correlation analysis between cultural adaptation and mental health of international students. This study proposes that the cultural adjustment of international students should be strengthened through communication with Chinese students, joint learning, and creating opportunities for international students to participate in various activities to enhance their sense of Chinese cultural identity. While maintaining their original culture, international students also need to actively interact with Chinese culture and adopt an integrated cultural adjustment strategy.

4. International student's opinions on social adjustment. The aspect of social adjustment ranks lowest in the adjustment in the management. In this aspect, the highest item was sharing traditional buildings with your friends. It might be that as international students adjust to Chinese society, they may interact with their surroundings in various ways, which may include sharing and discussing Chinese cultural elements such as traditional architecture. This finding was consistent with Yin (2023) Empowering international students in China to better integrate into China. According to Li & Zizzi (2018), A Case Study of International Students' Social Adjustment, Friendship Development, and Physical Activity. The social adjustment ability of international students is not only related to whether they can successfully spend their study abroad life but also directly affects their mental health, career development and personal growth. Therefore, international students should actively participate in social activities to continuously improve their social adjustment ability.

2. In terms of gender, it has differences in academic adjustment and cultural adjustment. The mean scores of males' recognition of academic adjustment, social adjustment, cultural adjustment, and psychological adjustment were higher than females. It might be that during their study abroad, males have a stronger overall ability



to adjust than females because males are more willing to accept new challenges and are more optimistic. The innate sensitivity and delicacy caused by gender differences make females have a lower level of adaptation in various aspects. Related to Zhong et al. (2013). Correlation analysis between cultural adaptation and mental health of international students.

The comparison of opinions on adjustment in the management of international students classified by student year was no different. Related to Quan (2011). Cross-cultural education and management of international students. Cultural anthropologist Oberg believes that "the loss of familiar social interaction signals or symbols, and unfamiliarity with the other party's social symbols, leads to deep anxiety in psychology". In general, there will be a U-shaped curve through the honeymoon period, depression period, adjustment period and adaptation period. International students who have been exposed to another cultural model for a long time will go from the initial excitement of the honeymoon period to the discomfort of the depression period and then adjust to adaptation.

Recommendation

According to the research results, the following suggestions are put forward for adjusting the management of international students at Haikou University of Economics. The author hopes that universities can improve the adjustment and management capabilities of international students in the following four aspects.

1. Guide and educate international students by improving their use of WeChat to connect with others. Ensure that international students understand the functions and security of WeChat, know how to effectively use the WeChat platform for social and professional network building, and effectively expand their own network of contacts.

2. Universities can strengthen the Chinese cultural education and international communication capabilities of international students in China and improve their cultural adaptability and sense of identity with Chinese culture. This will not only help them better integrate into Chinese culture but also promote the exchange and mutual



learning of diverse civilizations.

3. Build an internationalized curriculum system with Chinese characteristics, innovate international development models, fully use Internet technology, and provide flexible and diverse learning resources for international students through online courses, distance education, etc., to help them better adapt to and integrate into the Chinese learning environment.

4. Universities should strengthen institutional construction, provide strong guarantees and support for the sustainable development of internationalization of universities, and ensure the quality and effectiveness of courses by establishing and improving relevant systems, such as course certification mechanisms and teacher training programs.

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