

**CULTURE SHOCK THAT AFFECTS THE CROSS-CULTURAL
ADAPTATION OF THAI STUDENTS IN CHINA**



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entitled
**CULTURE SHOCK THAT AFFECTS THE CROSS-CULTURAL
ADAPTATION OF THAI STUDENTS IN CHINA**

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OF THAI STUDENTS IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the culture shock that Thai students face while studying in China and how they manage to adapt to the Chinese culture. This research was adopted using the semi-structure interview with 8 Thai students who are currently studying at Peking University in China. Autoethnography was used as another method of collecting data.

The 4 stages of culture shock by Kalervo Oberg will be used for the understanding of culture shock and the adaptation of Thai students who study in China. The findings show the reason why Thai students want to study in China, the experiences of the Thai students relating to the 4 stages of culture shock and the adaptation process of the students.

KEY WORDS: Culture Shock/ Thai Students/ Thai Culture/ Chinese Culture/ Cross-Cultural
Adaptation

38 pages

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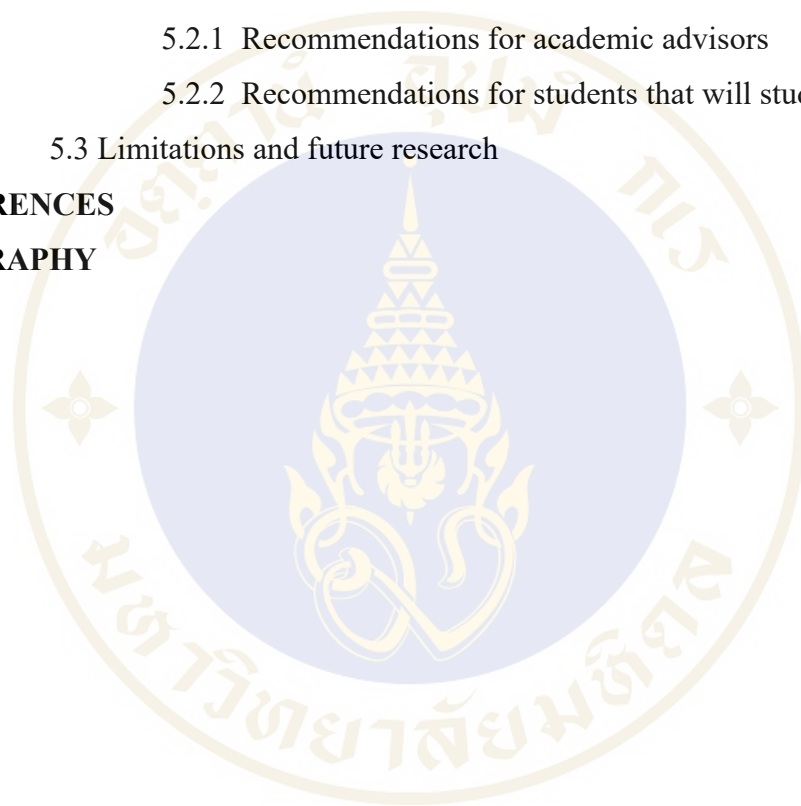
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For the past few decades, China had an incredible period of rapid economic growth due to economic reforms and the opening-up of the economy. One of the major steps of economic transition was China joining the WTO in 2001, which allowed the country to succeed in reforming towards modernization. With the effort of important leaders such as Deng Xiaoping, China transformed from a closed economy to one of the most economically influential players in the world. Therefore, this allowed China to develop the education system and transform the country into a hub for international students.

Giving scholarship to a large number of international students from different countries was one of the strategies that China used in order to attract more international students. In 1997, The Ministry of Education established the Chinese Scholarships Council (CSC) with the main mission of overseeing enrollment and administration concerning international students in China. According to a statistical report on international students in China for 2018 from Ministry of Education, there were a total of 492,185 international students from 196 countries. Of that, 28,608 of them were Thai students who ranked second most in Asia after South Korea. Some students took short language courses while others were full-time students. (Ministry of Education of China, 2019)

For students who want to study in China, living there can be challenging especially during the process of adaptation. Being away from home whilst having to face an unfamiliar culture and way of life can result in culture shock during the first few months. According to the Cambridge dictionary, “Culture Shock is feeling of confusion by someone visiting country they do not know.” (McIntosh, 2017)

Although both the Thai and Chinese cultures are believed to be similar in some aspects, living in China is a huge difference. Some Thai students might face many culture shocks in China in the beginning stages of which includes language barrier, different food, different communication styles, etc. that might lead to stress, frustration,

loneliness and homesickness. After some time passes, they will be able to adjust themselves to the Chinese culture. Some students might take a few weeks while others might take a few years in order to settle down with the new culture.

Therefore, the topic of this thematic paper is Culture Shock that affects the cross-cultural adaptation of Thai students in China. The objective of this research is to explore the culture shock that Thai students face while studying in China and how they manage to adapt to Chinese culture. The method of collecting data is a semi-structured interview with 8 Thai students who are currently studying at Peking University in China. Each of them has had different lengths of stay in China, ranging from 1 year to about 2.25 years. Open-ended questions will be used in order to gain a more in-depth understanding. Also, another method for collecting data is autoethnography which is used to understand the whole picture and gain empathy through personal experience.

The results of this study can provide information to education advisors for a better understanding of Thai students who face culture shock with the Chinese culture, allowing education advisors to be able to effectively and efficiently prepare students for studying and living in China. With this research, the education advisor can provide assistance to students with their settlement needs according to the stages of culture shock. Furthermore, it will benefit Thai students who want to learn about the culture shock in China and have some self-preparation before leaving to study in China.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Chinese Miracle

China's rapid growth for the past 30 years is an economic miracle that was achieved from both internal factors and the external environment. It was stated that the result of this miracle was from the policies. China was in the process of integrating with the global economy which brought the country both opportunities and challenges. (Yuan, 2014) In 1970, China began its economic reform and announced the open-door policy in order to encourage the development of its economy without changing the socialist structure. (Démurger, 2000) In 1979, as part of the reform, China increased its international trade and gained access to capital and new technologies, conducting the policies to attract more foreign direct investment. China's policy towards FDI were successful at that time. (Lemoine, 2000) There was also an establishment of three Special Economic Zones of Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou at the beginning of 1979. (Démurger,2000) There were some factors that supported continuous growth which were high capital accumulation, shifting industrial structure from the labor force to higher-value-added industry and the advantage of backwardness in technology which means imitating developed countries' technology. (Li, 2009) With fast development, China was able to develop its education system and utilize various policies to attract more international students.

2.2 Reasons to study in China and Statistical report on international students in China 2018

2.2.1 Reasons to study in China

As students have the choice of studying at their home country or studying abroad, each option has its own advantages and disadvantages. There is a study which

states that the reason why Gen Y students study abroad is to gain more experience, seek individual growth and realize their potential. (Pope, Sánchez, Lehnert&Schmid, 2014) Another study stated that the reason the students choose to study abroad is to experience a different culture and language. Other benefits of studying overseas are living and working there, adding on to their CV and reputation of the overseas university. In contrast, there are some factors that need to be considered which are the cost of living and being away from family or friends. (Doyle, Gendall, Meyer, Hoek, Tait, McKenzie & Looiparg, 2009)

A study found that the main factors that positively affect the number of international students in China are educational and economic motivation. Improving language skill is the concerned for students from developing countries more than the students from developed countries. Moreover, it is said that the main reason that influence student's choice to study in China is the reputation of the institution. Some Chinese universities have a high world ranking which can be one factor that attracts more international students. Furthermore, an interview revealed that the admission policy for international students are not as strict as domestic students. Another economic factor is that China provides a lot of scholarships and the cost of living is quite low. Example of scholarships are the China-ASEAN scholarship, Great Wall Scholarship⁷, and Study in ASIA scholarship.(Wen, W., & Hu, D.,2018). As a result, China is likely to become a hub for international students through various policies.

2.2.2 Statistical report on international students in China 2018

In 2018, there were 492,185 international students from 196 countries. More than half of the international students come from Asian countries at 59.95%, Africa 16.57%, Europe 14.96%, America 7.26% and Oceania 1.27%. The top three cities with most foreign students are Beijing, Shanghai, and Jiangsu. Compared by educational level, 52.44% of all foreign students studied in an undergraduate degree program, 32.95% of them studied postgraduate-level and only 14.61% of international student studied in the non-degree program. There were 12.81% of international students who received Chinese government scholarships and 87.19% were self-funded. The top 5 home countries of international students were as follows: South Korea 50,600 students, Thailand 28,608 students, Pakistan 28,023 students, India 23,198 students, and the United States 20,996

students. (Ministry of Education of China,2019) It is obvious that the large number of international students are from various countries which have their own respective cultures. In order to live in China, all of them need to adapt themselves to the Chinese culture. Therefore, there is the potential that those groups of students will experience culture shock.

2.3 Definition and the 4 stages of culture shock by Oberg

2.3.1 Definitions

Oberg describes Culture Shock as an occupational disease of a person who has been moved to live in another country. The explanation for the culture shock is the concern of losing all the acquainted signs and symbols of social intercourse. Those signs are the way we interact in daily life which can be a gesture, facial expression or norms. (Oberg, 1960) While the other explanation of culture shock is “the loss of familiar cues, the breakdown of interpersonal communications, and an identity crisis” (Weaver, 1994, 169) Another study stated that culture shock is an emotional reaction which occurs due to the misunderstandings of the new experience. It tends to make a person have bad temper and become suspicious. (Adler, 1975) It is a common; however, it is an unpleasant experience that allow people to learn and gain understanding of other culture and improve confidence in themselves (Milstein, 2005)

2.3.2 Four stages of Culture Shock

Oberg (1954) explains that when someone faces a new culture, it is like a fish out of water. Regardless of how flexible the person is, he or she will still feel shocked. Later on, frustration and anxiety will occur.

First Stage: Honeymoon The honeymoon stage is when people first arrive in the host country and still enjoy with the new experience and culture. This stage may last from a few days or weeks to six months depending on circumstances. They might stay in a hotel and interact with the staffs who are able to speak their language and are polite to foreigners. They will be impressed by this abroad experience but if they remain abroad, they will face real-life conditions which leads to the next stage.

Second Stage: Crisis People start to have a more aggressive attitude and hostile feeling towards the host country due to the difficult experiences that they face. It is different from the visitor experience that they face in the first stage. People in the country are unsympathetic to the person's problem. They start to criticize the host country and have the stereotypical actions. If they can deal with it, it will lead to the next stage. But if they cannot live with it, it will potentially lead to a nervous breakdown.

Third Stage: Recovery People start to get around by themselves, learn the language of the host country and try to adjust with the new culture. They still experience some difficulty in living but they have the attitude of being willing to accept it. They start to have a sense of humor by using their difficulty to joke with others instead of criticizing others as in the second stage. They gain more confidence in speaking and getting around by themselves.

Fourth Stage: Adjustment People completely change and accept the custom or culture of the host country. They can live without anxiety and accept that this is another way of living. They begin to have more understanding of what people in the host country are trying to say and begin to enjoy living in the host country.

Things to do to get over from culture shock: The study mentioned that the person needs to know the people of the host country by learning some of the language. Moreover, it will be useful to learn what and how people do things and how they perceive money and time. Then, use this topic to get into a conversation with people. Also, join the activities of the locals and learn of their response. By talking, it will help the person understand the reason why they behave in a certain way. (Oberg, 1954)

2.4 Cultural differences between Thai and Chinese

Hofstede defined the meaning of culture as the collective programming of people's mind which differentiate groups of people from one another. Culture is a system of collective values. (Hofstede, 1980) Both the Thai and Chinese have their own unique and distinguished culture. In order to adjust to the other culture, a person needs to have an understanding of the other culture.

2.4.1 Hofstede's cultural dimensions

The graph below shows 6 of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which is a framework for cross-cultural communication, developed by Geert Hofstede

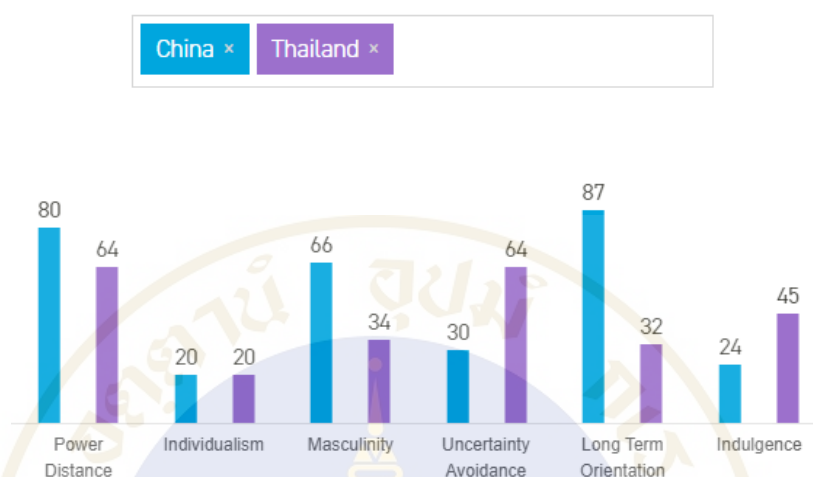


Figure 2.1 Hofstede's cultural dimensions comparing between China and Thailand

The scores used for the fifth dimension are based on the research of Michael Minkov as published in the 3rd and the latest edition of *Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind* (2010), pages 255-258.

For power distance, it's obvious that China scores 80 while Thailand scores 64. Therefore, inequality of distribution of power tends to be more acceptable in China. For individualism, Thailand and China have the same score at 20 which shows that they are collectivists which gives more value to the group. However, China has a higher score in masculinity and long-term orientation which means that they are driven by success and perseverance to achieve the future result. Moreover, Thailand scores higher in uncertainty avoidance and indulgence which means that Thailand tends to have more rules in order to reduce uncertainty. For indulgence, the score is average which cannot be identified.

From the framework of Hofstede's dimension above, it can be expected that the biggest culture shock for Thai students in China will be about long-term orientation because there is a big gap in the score between Thai and China. Then, the other components of culture shock will be masculinity and uncertainty avoidance.

2.4.2 Culture as local cultural values

Cultures can also be characterized by local cultural values which are specific to each culture only. Here is the example of Thai culture, study about “Khwam-Kreng-Jai” (KKJ). This refers to how concerned people are of others’ feelings, peace of mind and consideration of the benefit of others which is different from politeness. Politeness is more about the image and sense of worth. (Intachakra, 2012) Therefore, if Thai people have to adjust to other cultures which do not value “Khwam-Kreng-Jai”, it might lead to culture shock and become an obstacle of adjusting themselves with that culture.

Moreover, another example of Thai culture is saving face, face referring to the ego and rank. Hence, losing face is avoided. With this value, it also leads to criticism avoidance. Another important value is a grateful relationship which means returning the favor of kindness and remembering the goodness that other people have done. (Komin, 1990) Both the Thai and Chinese give value to face. Therefore, Thai people are more likely to understand the concept of saving face in China which will influence the process of adapting to Chinese culture.

Another Thai cultural value is “Sanuk” which means enjoyment and not taking things too seriously. This concept was widely used by Thai people to judge their class and university experience. Even in a Thai classroom, the instructors normally use examples which are fun and enjoyable. Thai people expect work and fun to go hand in hand. (Kempner and Tierney, 2018)

According to Harvard Business Review (John&Mark, 2003) of negotiation with the Chinese, they mentioned that the Chinese way of thinking includes being collectivists, hierarchical, seeking the way, holistic and relationship-oriented. In Chinese culture, there are some main local cultural values that are important for the Chinese. Firstly, Chinese people value “Guanxi” which means personal connections. In order to do business in China, a person builds a network through friends, relatives and close associates. Another concept is facing “Mianzi” which means face. The display of anger and aggressiveness will lead to losing face and losing social status. Saving face is considered to be very important in Chinese culture. (John & Mark, 2003) Therefore, these main concepts need to be learnt by Thai people in order to facilitate adaptation with the Chinese culture and reduce the effects of culture shock.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The objective of the research is to explore the culture shock that Thai students face while studying in China and how they manage to adapt to the Chinese culture. Therefore, in order to answer the research question, this will be a qualitative research which includes in-depth interviews and autoethnography as research methods because I was an exchange student from Thailand and lived in China for 6 months.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 In-depth interview

The method of collecting data is using an in-depth interview. Open-ended questions are used because it allows respondents to give more information such as understanding, explanation of the cause of actions, feelings, intentions and attitude. The respondent can answer freely which helps discover something new and unique. A list of open-ended questions are developed in order to discover what culture shock the Thai student faced with Chinese culture and the period of time that each of them experienced according to the 4 stages of culture shock by Oberg and how they managed to adapt themselves with the new culture.

Open-ended question list

1. Could you please introduce yourself? How long have you been living in China? Why do you choose to study in China?
2. Could you tell me about your feelings when you were planning on coming to China (E.g. environment, people, language, food) and also how you felt during the first few months of living in China? (E.g. excited, scared)

3. Could you tell me about your experiences of culture shock in China or any unpleasant events? How is it different from Thailand?

4. Have you ever felt lonely, sad or homesick (Missing friends or family)? Please elaborate.

5. How do you manage to adjust yourself with the cultural differences? When did you feel that you have gotten used to the Chinese culture? Were there any obstacles?

6. How do you feel about your life in China now (nearing the end of stay)? What do you like about studying and living in China?

7. What aspect of Chinese culture that you are still not used to? Have you gotten used to the culture shocks that you experienced during your initial arrival?

8. What advice would you give to a Thai person who is planning on moving to China?

To ensure validity of the data, the probing technique is adopted. The probing technique is a strategy that helps find more detail from the respondents by helping the interviewee think more deeply about the question. By asking follow-up questions whenever the researcher does not have a clear understanding of the answer or when the interviewee gives a vague answer, making sure the information obtained is correct.

Moreover, reflective note taking is used to record observed data because it allows the researcher to think about personal reactions to the answer during the interview. Also, it provides connection among the interviewee's answers, conceptual framework and theory. Reflective note-taking requires evaluation and analysis from researcher's point of view.

3.2.2 Autoethnography

Autoethnography is self-reflection on the researcher's experience by seeking to describe and analyze those experiences. It will be used in order develop a more holistic understanding of the situation. By experiencing living and studying China myself, it assists in understanding the reaction of Thai students towards Chinese culture. Also, observing all non-verbal action and culture in daily life contributes to the validity of research. It also allows discovery of the information that the interviewee might not mention during the interview.

3.3 Sample Selection

The sample is convenient as interviewees are 8 Thai students who are currently studying Master Degree at Peking University, Shenzhen, China as they all have direct experience of living and studying in China. Therefore, the interviewees can provide insightful information in cultural perspective for the research. Even though all of them are students, they have different backgrounds. Some have been in China for a long period of time while others have been in China for a shorter period of time. Also, each of them has a different level of Chinese language skills which might affect the experience of living and studying. They are studying in different majors such as finance, economics and management which might have a different atmosphere for studying. Some of the participants used to study in a Chinese language course in China before joining the university. With these different backgrounds, it can provide the research with more various perspective towards culture in China.

Table 3.1 Interviewee list

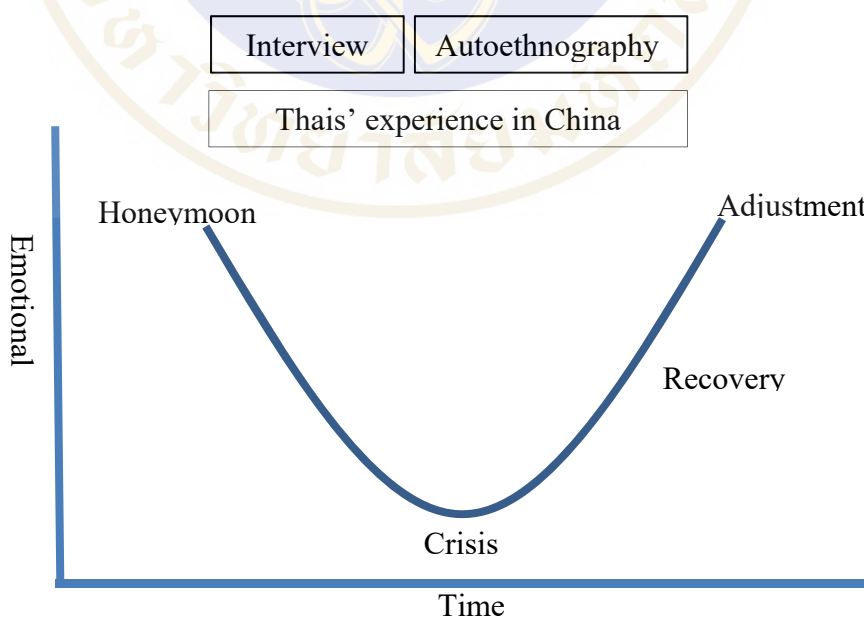
No.	Program	Total duration in China	Age	Gender	Chinese Level	Previous experience of living in China before study Master Degree
1	Full Time Student	2.5 years	27	Female	HSK 5	Short Chinese Language Course in China (6 months)
2	Full Time Student	1 year	24	Male	HSK 2	None
3	Full Time Student	2 years	26	Female	HSK 5	None
4	Full Time Student	2.25 years	27	Male	HSK 3	Short Chinese Language Course in China (4 months)
5	Full Time Student	2 years	23	Male	HSK 5	Travel in China (1.5 weeks)
6	Full Time Student	2.25 years	26	Male	HSK 5	Travel in China (4 months)
7	Exchange Student	1.5 years	27	Female	HSK 4	Chinese Language course (1 year)
8	Full Time Student	2 years	31	Male	HSK 4	None

Table 3.2 Autoethnography list

No.	Program	Total duration in China	Age	Gender	Chinese Level	Previous experience of living in China before study Master Degree
1	Exchange student	6 months	26	Female	HSK 2	Training in China (2 weeks)

3.4 Research Framework

Following the previous studies from Oberg, there are 4 stages of culture shock including Honeymoon, Crisis, Adjustment and Recovery. Each stage can be varied in period depending on individuals. The research framework is adopted in order to collect and analyze data of each Thai student that experienced living and studying in China. By interviewing and using autoethnography, it will provide information of how participants adjust themselves overtime through each stages of culture shock. With this framework, it allows researchers to explore what kind of culture shock Thai students face and how long each of them experienced each stage. Then, it also helps to explore the pattern of cross-cultural adaption of the participant.

**Figure 3.1 Research Framework**

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

The first question began with asking general information of each participant and the previous abroad experience that they have faced before coming to China. Also, the interviewees were asked about the reason why they chose to Study in China.

4.1 Reasons to study in China

4.1.1 Impression on China's development

All of the 8 interviewees have good impression of China's developing economy, infrastructure and technology which is why they decided to study in China. One of the students said that "China's economy is growing so fast. The country is becoming more and more powerful in the world." (student #4) As a part of autoethnography, I was impressed with China's development and heard the news that China is becoming more powerful and it is continuously developing which is also the reason why I wanted to study in China.

4.1.2 University's rank and reputation

There are 6 out of 8 Thai students that said China was chosen as a place to study because of the reputation, world ranking of the university and lots of scholarship opportunity (Full funded and half-funded scholarship). As a result, it became the factors that affected students' decision to study in China.

4.1.3 Increase job opportunity

By studying in China, 2 Thai students expected to find more job opportunities in China than Thailand and expected to build their network to do a start-up business in China. One student stated that "I chose to study in China because it will increase the

opportunity of expanding my family business and making connections with others” (student #5).

4.1.4 Learning Chinese Language

There are 5 Thai students who chose to come to China because they want to improve their Chinese language skills. As the student said “I want to have Chinese as my third language. So, I came here because I want to practice using it” (student #8).

4.1.5 Similar cost of living

Another reason that are mentioned by student number 6 is the cost of living compared between Thai and China is similar. As the student said “I think the cost of living in China is the same as in Thailand but it also depends on the city you live” (student #6)

To conclude, the most mentioned reason during the interview that makes Thai students choose to study in China is the impression on China’s economic development and technology. Then, the other reasons are university’s rank and reputation and improving their Chinese language skill, job opportunities and similar cost of living accordingly.

4.2 Feelings before going to China

Four of the Thai students that have a basic level of Chinese and used to live abroad before do not feel worried about living in China and have a positive idea towards China when they were planning on coming to China. Those four students have no concern about food, people and environment because they expect that they will be able to adapt with the Chinese culture and food. However, student number 1 expects the studying environment to be different from Thailand because she is worried about the intensity of the course. She expected the course to be more difficult and more assignments to be given by the lecturers.

On the other hand, two of the students (student number 2 and 8) that have never studied Chinese or have very limited knowledge of the Chinese language feel very worried before coming to China because they expect that they will need to use Chinese in their daily lives such as ordering food and talking to taxi drivers. They expected that first

few months will be a struggle for them. As the student said “It was very difficult for me. Everything was in Chinese and I cannot speak Chinese at all.” (student #2). Student number 2 also did not get support from his family because of China’s negative image. In his family’s point of view, China is perceived as undeveloped as it was in the past. The Chinese tourist that came to Thailand talk by shouting to each other loudly which is different from Thailand. Therefore, they are perceived as impolite. His family preferred him to pursue his master’s degree in a European country which is the thing that Thai families usually do.

Moreover, two students were worried because they have heard a lot of negative news about China. For example, Thai people heard the story of the Chinese toilet being undeveloped and unsanitary. Also, they were told by their friends or have seen from Chinese tourist in Thailand that Chinese people cut queues, talk loudly and spit in public places. Therefore, they are worried that they might have to face and adjust themselves with these things.

There is one student that is concerned over Chinese food, fearing that it does not fit with his tastes as the student said “I have heard that Chinese food is oily so I am a bit worried that I will not be able to eat Chinese food” (student #8)

As a part of autoethnography, before coming to China, I was both worried and excited because my Chinese language skills were very limited. However, I have the same impression as all of the 8 Thai students before going to China about China’s fast pace of economic and technology development. Also, one of the reasons why I chose to attend an exchange semester at Peking University is the high world ranking and reputation of the university. Moreover, the cost of living in China is about the same as in Thailand.

4.3 First few months of living and studying in China (Honeymoon stage)

The experience of each student is varied. 3 students’ experience are positive about their first few months in China. While another 3 students have a negative view on their experiences in first few months. The rest of 2 students are neutral towards those experiences. Also, each of them has had a different feeling in each situation. Some of

the students said that he/she can adjust to the situation quickly, while some needed a longer time to adjust.

Three of the students expected the Chinese and Thai culture to be the same. One of the students said “I don’t think Thai and Chinese culture will be different. Also, this is a more international program which uses English in classes and within the campus.” (student# 4) Therefore, he expected himself to adjust to the environment in campus smoothly. Whereas one of the students mentioned “I don’t have much problem with culture shock because I am quite familiar with this country. However, I still feel that Thailand and China are still different in terms of culture and norms.” (student #8)

Three of the students are very impressive with the technology of China which is very convenient for them. WeChat pay is widely used in China including paying money in supermarkets, metro, restaurants, train stations, airport, taxis, etc. Moreover, the applications in China are very convenient for them. One of the students said “Most of the people in Shenzhen do not use cash, they use only WeChat pay. By scanning a QR code they can pay money for everything, even for street food.” (Student #5)

With this positive attitude towards China, it tends to lead students to the Honeymoon stage. According to the four stages of Culture shock by Oberg, students were still fascinated and enjoyed the new cultural environment. From the interview, the period that they experienced this stage was quite different, from 2 days – 2 months. As student number 1 think that she can adjust herself very well in first month but after that she started to feel lonely and homesick. She said “When I feel stress from studying, I feel so lonely and miss my home. During that time, I always spend time alone after class in my dormitory.” (student #1)

Student number 2 felt happy with the campus during first 2 days. Then, he realized that it was different from what he had expected. He expected that he can find new friends in the first month and he expected himself to be able to catch up with the lessons in class. Moreover, he expected himself to rely on the translating application to communicate in daily life. However, he had difficulty in catching up with the classes and almost dropped out. It was difficult for him to make friends with Chinese students during the first few months. All of the application such as calling taxis, ordering food, and shopping are in Chinese. So, he cannot order food for himself. It was a very stressful first two months for him. He said “I did not like Chinese food and was afraid to go out

for food because I could not speak Chinese and did not know directions. Therefore, I only ate in the campus's canteen for the first few months." (Student#2) There are 5 students who experienced the crisis stage a few days after they arrived. While one of the students experienced culture shock after she had been in China for 2 months.

For autoethnography, my Honeymoon stage lasted around 1 month. During the first month, I enjoyed many kinds of new foods and traveled to new places with international friends. I was happy with the freedom that I have compared to my life in Thailand. Then, I started to miss home and feel lonely sometimes.

Therefore, from the interview, the results show the pattern of moving from the Honeymoon stage to the Crisis stage. However, each student experienced a different period of time for these two stages. According to Weaver (1994), about the definition of culture shock, it is the anxiety from losing familiar signs which can be gesture or norm in daily life. Moving to China makes the students lose their previous daily life in Thailand which might lead to anxiety.

4.4 Cultural Differences and Culture Shock (Crisis Stage)

4.4.1 Last Minute Work

Four of the students said that the most shocking thing when they worked in groups with Chinese students is that Chinese students usually do the work during the very last minute. When it is close to the deadline of submission, they start to work. One of students said "If the submission date is on Friday, my Chinese friend will start to do the work on Thursday night. So, I do not have enough time to review their work and the work will be done in a rush". (student #1) From the interview, she mentioned that she expected the work to be completed two or three days before deadline because she needed time to review and edit it. Therefore, it was quite difficult for Thai students to work as a group with Chinese students. Sometimes it led to a conflict within the group.

One student mentioned that it is not only about groupwork. The way the university organizes events is also last minute. The university never gives an advance notice for students. One student said "The university just told me about the mandatory

event that I need to pay some amount of money only a few days before the trip. I think they should have told me at least a week or two weeks before the trip.” (student #1)

It also can be observed that it was even more last minute than I used to see from Thais. For example. It can be seen from the schedule of registration which occurred only a few days before the semester began which is very different from what I experienced my Thai university which was at least a month before semester began. The student club that I joined also informed me about volunteering events only one day before it happened so I did not have enough time to prepare or clear my schedule for the event. I expected them to tell me about the event at least a week in advance. Another example is the announcements for seminars with guest speakers. It was opened for registration only two days before the seminar day. In Thailand, even though students and people might put off things but I do not think the school event or notice of events will be this last minute. It will be announced in advance in order to be prepared for the event.

According to Hofstede on cultural dimension, as it is mentioned that China has quite a low uncertainty avoidance (30) compared to Thailand (64). It is understandable that Thai students expect Chinese group members to get ready and complete the work before deadline in order to avoid the risk of making mistakes or face any unknown obstacles for the work. Whereas, Chinese students are used to doing the work closer to submission date. Consequently, it led to culture shock for Thai students.

4.4.2 Speaking Chinese during discussions

Another culture shock is when Thai and Chinese students work in groups, Chinese students mostly speak Chinese to each other. This culture shock was mentioned by 6 Thai students. Therefore, the Thai students felt upset that they do not understand what Chinese students are talking about and cannot fully contribute to groupwork. In the group chat for groupwork, Chinese students also write in Chinese. Two students stayed silent while the other 4 students tell Chinese students directly that they want them to speak in English. One of the students said “I told my group directly to use English. So, they discussed in Chinese first and told me in English. But I am upset that I cannot fully participate in groupwork. Sometimes when they translate, some important contents were missed.” (student #2)

4.4.3 Hard-working Chinese students

After Thai students worked in groups with Chinese students for few months, there are 3 Thai students that mentioned that Chinese students are different from Thai students in terms of studying style. Chinese students are very hard-working and competitive. Student number 5 talked about university's admission policies. In order to apply for a master's degree for top universities in China such as Peking University, Chinese students must pass their national exam which is very difficult. While international students do not need to pass this exam, they need to have some specific qualifications that the university requires. Therefore, he thinks that Chinese students spend lots of time and effort for getting into university. Another student said "Chinese students are hard-working. I always see them studying at the library after class until late night or even in the weekends". (students #6) He thinks that after class or in the weekend, students should have a break and do something fun and relaxing.

According to Hofstede's cultural dimension, Thailand and China has the biggest gap in long-term orientation. China scored 87 while Thailand scored 32. Therefore, it can be implied that Chinese students are willing to spend effort and time for education in order to make sure that they will have a good job in the future. Additionally, it can also be observed that Thai culture focuses more on "Sanuk" which means enjoyment as mentioned in literature review. Thai people tend to believe that the things they do and pleasure should go together. Therefore, students expect to relax and have fun after having stressful classes. However, this is quite different from Chinese students that feel the pressure of competition and study hard both inside and outside of the class. This can become culture shock for Thai students in China.

4.4.4 Intensive competition in class

Two of the students mentioned the bell curve distribution at the university which limited the number of people who can achieve a certain grade. Student number 5 believed that it makes him feel stressful with this type of competition for a good grade in class. There are 5 of students that felt the high pressure of studying and intensive competition in class. Two of the students said that they know that sometimes when Chinese students get past examination papers, they tend to be unwilling to share or teach others. A student said "As I know, my classmates are quite unfriendly and they do

not like to share information to international students.” (student #8) Therefore, he believes that Chinese friends in class only focus on their own studying without caring about the relationships with others.

It can be observed that there is high competition in class. In two of the classes that I have attended, students needed to answer the lecturer’s questions as much as possible in every session. At the end of each class, the students need to go to the TA (teaching assistant) and report the number of the times that they answered questions in that class. From my point of view, it helps to increase participation in class but it is also creating a competitive atmosphere in class. Another story is when one of my lecturers distributed psychological questionnaires in which a higher score does not mean a good grade. It is just about self-assessment. I notice that my Chinese friend tried to make a high score in the questionnaire. I think that my friend was unconsciously used to competition in class. Therefore, she wanted her score to be high.

4.4.5 Difficulty of having Chinese friends

All of the 8 Thai students said that it was difficult for them to make friends with Chinese students and it requires a lot of time to gain trust. One of the students said “It’s quite difficult for me to make friends with Chinese students, they are nice but sometimes it is just about groupwork. It took me a shorter time to become friends with international students.” (student #2) Four of the students mentioned that Chinese students prefer to speak English only in the class and Chinese language is the main barrier for them to be friends. Another reason that was mentioned about Chinese students was that they are not opening up to international students and Chinese students are too busy with their studies that they do not have time to hangout.

Moreover, as mentioned in Hofstede’s literature review, there is a gap of masculinity between Chinese (66) and Thai (34). Therefore, it implies that the Chinese society tends to be driven by competition, achievement and success more than the Thai society. Whereas Thai people are likely to focus more on relationships. It can be seen from the interview that Chinese students are perceived as hard-working but unwilling to help other students which might be because of the masculine society that focuses more on achievements and competition. Therefore, it is obvious that the students believe that it is difficult for them to be friends with Chinese students.

From observation, most of the Thai students that I have interviewed have few Chinese friends. Most of the time, Thai students usually hang out with other international students. I also experienced the same situation where Chinese students already have their own cliques and it is quite difficult to get into their circle of friends compared to the international students. Another example is that international students join a buddy program which will match us with Chinese students in order to improve language skills and exchange culture. In the first week, I still kept contacting with my buddy over WeChat. However, after a few weeks, there was no more chatting until the end of the semester. This case also happened with my other international friends as well.

4.4.6 Do not answer and ask questions in the classroom

For class atmosphere, two Thai students said that it seems to be similar as in Thailand that sometimes when the teacher asks a question, students normally do not want to raise their hand to answer the question or ask questions in the class. It can be linked to the concept of “Mianzi” or face which is the same concept of face saving in Thailand as in the literature review. The students do not want to answer because they are afraid of giving the wrong answer or making a mistake and it will cause them to lose face. Also, they do not want to challenge the lecturers by asking them questions to make them lose face. As one student said “I think the class atmosphere is like in Thailand. The students do not answer or ask questions during class” (student #5)

4.4.7 Begin conversations with compliments

Another cultural difference is about the style of communicating which is mentioned by 3 students. When Thai students need to talk with Chinese professors or ask for help from Chinese friends or Chinese professors, the conversation should begin with praises and/or a beautiful sentence. This is also referring to the concept of “Mianzi” or face in China. Beginning conversation by praising is the way to give the face to other party. Compared to Thailand which also have saving face concept, personally from what I observed, I believe that China has a higher degree of giving importance to saving face. From one of the classes that I joined, the professor usually invites guest speakers from outside of school. The professor always praises the guest speaker every time before

they give a speech or presentation. From observation, he also expects students to have an opening speech which praises or talks about the achievements of the guest speaker.

4.4.8 Ignorant public behavior

Due to cultural difference, 6 Thai students said when they go outside of the campus, they are still not used to public behavior such as spitting, talking in loudly, burping, shouting, and singing in public. One of the students said “At first I think it is quite rude to spit or talk loudly, but after I have been here for a while, I understand that it is part of their culture and got used to it”. (student #1) The most culture shock that was mentioned by 5 students is cutting queue. Four of the Thai students tell the person who cut the queue directly that they should not do it. They acknowledge and go to the back of the line without dispute. The student said “Sometimes Chinese people unconsciously cut queues. This is because they are used to the competition in their society that is always crowded. We just need to tell them and they will listen and stop.” (student #3)

Four students were quite surprised that Chinese people talk loudly, thinking that they are angry. One student said “Chinese people talk really loudly, so much so that I think they are arguing. Sometimes they also talk really loudly when they are on their phones.” (student #5) Moreover, when Thai students use public transportation such as the metro, three of them faced the problem of not letting people in the train exit first. People from outside the train will push themselves into the car first or they will block the entrance of the train. Sometime in the metro, Chinese people stand really close to each other and tend to look in the mobile phone of the person next to them. “Once I was on the train in the metro, a guy next to me stared at the screen of my phone.” (student #6) He is shocked with this because he really values his own privacy and this is quite different from Thailand. Therefore, it is a shocking story for Thai students.

Moreover, student number 7 almost had a dispute with the guy on the road when he spat next to her leg and she showed dissatisfaction on her face. Another culture shock is throwing things to each other. This was mentioned by student number 7. Normally, Thai people will not throw things to each other because it is considered to be rude. Instead, Thai people will hand it to other people nicely. One of the students said “It seems like in China, the waiters in restaurant can throw the menu on the tables for customers or even pass something over the head of the customer. This is the thing I am still not used

to. I do not like it when someone throws things to me or pass something over my head.” (student #7)

The difference of the two cultures lead to conflicts because Chinese people behave differently to “Khwam-Kreng-Jai”. Thai people tend to be considerate to others which affects the way they behave in public whereas they consider some of the Chinese peoples’ actions to be rude and ignorant of others’ feelings.

4.4.9 Positive perceptions on food and eating habit

Convenient Application and QR code: As mentioned by 6 Thai students, most Chinese students order food from applications as it is very convenient for them. There is an application called “Meituan Waimai” and “E-le-me” which can be used to order food and it is paid for online. A student said “I always order my dinner using the application because it is convenient, fast and the taste is better than the canteen’s food.” (student #2) Also, at some restaurants, the customer does not need to call the waiter. By just scanning a QR code on the table, they can order food and pay the bill without talking to the waiter.

Eating hotpot alone is lonely: From observations, Chinese people really believe that eating hotpot alone equates to being very lonely. Therefore when someone goes to hotpot alone, the famous Chinese hotpot restaurant called “Haidilao” will put a teddy bear on a chair to accompany the customer who is alone, which is surprising. Therefore, it also shows that Chinese people value relationships as well.

4.4.10 Negative perceptions on food and eating habit

No Ice: Two of the Thai students mentioned that they are surprised that the restaurants do not serve ice and supermarkets also do not sell ice. Thais normally put a lot of ice in drinks, unlike Chinese people, because the weather is hot. Chinese people believe that drinking cold drinks are bad for health. So, the place selling beverages with ice are typically bubble tea shops. One of the Thai students said “When I first arrived here, I was very surprised that most of the drinks that I ordered were served at room temperature.” (student #7)

Early dinner time: Student number 4 mentioned that the time for eating dinner is quite early compared to Thailand. The dinner time is around 6 p.m. in China which is

earlier than he has experienced in Thailand. Furthermore, when eating in China, bones or scraps are placed on the table which is different from Thailand where the bones are placed on plates. The student said “I was quite shocked to see that they put the bones on the table and that makes me feel uncomfortable. I wash my hands so many times a day because I am very sensitive about hygiene. When I went to see the doctor in Thailand, he said that I washed my hands too often.” (student #3)

Excessive drinking habit: One student talked about the drinking culture as he thinks that it is different from Thailand. “It is perceived that the more you drink and get drunk, the more the Chinese like you”. (student #5) Especially if he drinks with someone who is a senior, he needs to drink with them a lot. He said in Thailand, the senior will not force you to drink as much as in China.

Juniors hold the glass lower than seniors: The drinking manner was taught by one of the Chinese guest speakers about business etiquette in my China Studies class. When Chinese people toast, the one who is younger must hold the glass lower than the one who is more senior. Normally, they will say “Ganbei” which means bottoms up.

Long queue for the restaurant: I was surprised that if I want to go out for food during dinner time on a working day or have a meal in weekend, I have to wait for a long queue which takes me lots of time, ranging up to about 3 hours because there are just too many people. It is different from Thailand as I usually do not have to wait for a long time in order to have the meal at any restaurants.

4.4.11 Positive perceptions on technology

Convenient mobile applications: All 8 Thai students mentioned that the daily life is heavily reliant on mobile applications which is really different from Thailand. In Shenzhen, it is a cashless society as most of the transaction are done on “WeChat Pay” or “Alipay”. All of the 8 Thai students use “WeChat Pay”. The online-shopping application called “Tao Bao” also plays an important role in their lives. A student said “We can buy almost anything from the application including fresh produce, medicine, clothes, cosmetics, accounts for websites, etc.. It is very convenient and the price of products are cheaper than Thailand’s”. (student #4) Three of the students also talked about another necessary application called “Didi” which used for ride hailing and has lots of other functions as well.

From my own observation, the application on mobile phones are really necessary in order to live in China comfortably. Few days after I arrived on campus, the university offered a session to help international students install all necessary applications on our mobile phones. Therefore, technology really plays an important role in the daily life in China.

4.4.12 Negative perceptions on technology

Blocking the usage of foreign social media and Google: Three Thai students mentioned that they have the obstacle in accessing certain social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Line, Google's search engine and Google maps. As China blocks all of the mentioned applications, two students said that they have the feeling of being blocked from their friends and family. Even though they use VPNs which help bypass the firewall, it was not stable. One of the students said "Sometimes I cannot send texts to my family using Line or I cannot get updates about my friend's life from Facebook. Google maps also does not work and I have to use a Chinese map which is only available in Chinese." (student #5)

All of the above-mentioned experiences of Thai students in China are examples of culture shock. According to Oberg's four stages of culture shock, the students are in the Crisis stage. Referring to the research framework below, this is the time that students tend to feel stressed. Due to experiencing difficulty in daily activities, students might start to criticize the differences and begin to have a hostile feeling towards the host country. Also, some people might feel homesick and lonely as well. It can be observed that the main culture shock that Thai students experience during the Crisis stage is doing last minute work. For culture shock on campus, they perceive that Chinese friends are hard-working and competitive but need time to build trust. Culture shock outside campus is when they experience queue cutting, different food & drinks, different eating habits and new technology.

4.4.13 Homesick and loneliness

Three students said that they do not feel homesick at all. One of the students believed that it is because he has experience living abroad and was able to easily adapt

to living abroad alone. While another student said that she was too busy with assignments that she has no time to feel homesick or lonely, only occasionally.

There are three main 3 strategies to deal with homesickness that can be identified from the interview.

Calling family and friends: The first strategy was mentioned by two students. Whenever they feel homesick and lonely, they will call their family and/or friends in Thailand. One of the two students said “When I first arrived here, I did not have friends and felt like I cannot rely on anyone. Everything seemed so difficult. I missed my friends and family, so, I called them at least 1 hour every day.” (student #1) After settling down, she said she focused more on studying and started having friends in China to do activities with them.

Hanging out with friends: The second strategy is to hang out with friends in China. One student said “when I feel lonely and homesick. I will hang out with my friends and it really helps.” (student #6)

Find a hobby: The last strategy is to find a hobby. One of the students found that talking with friends, watching television series and reading books helped him to reduce his homesickness and loneliness.

Two students started to be homesick when they faced stress from studying and doing their thesis. One student mentioned that he always has a plan to visit his family during semester breaks which helps him feel less lonely. For the period of being homesick, each student had it around 1-2 months. While one of the students said “For me, homesickness and loneliness comes and goes but only stays when I feel stressed.” (student #2)

Homesickness and loneliness imply that the students are still in the Crisis stage. From observation, it depends on the person. Some students do not feel homesick at all while others experience homesickness and loneliness with various periods of time. Each of them comes up with a way to feel better on their own.

As a part of autoethnography, I personally experienced homesickness and loneliness after I spent roughly a month in China. Along with the pressure of assignments from class, I started to miss home. Plus, I did not have any close friends at that time. So I did not have anyone to talk or consult with. Even though the university I joined offered

counseling services for students, I did not want to go there. Hence, I usually made video calls to my parents whenever I am homesick and/or lonely.

4.5 Adjusting to Chinese culture (Adjustment stage)

The interviewees were asked about the strategy that they used to adjust to Chinese culture. The responses comprises of three main strategies.

4.5.1 Accept and do like the Chinese do

All 8 Thai students mentioned that they try to adapt themselves by acting like Chinese people. For example, when there are Chinese people cutting queue or pushing others, the students would respond by doing the same. She said “If they are fast, I need to be faster. If they hit me in the line, I need to hit them back. Otherwise, I will not be able to survive in this society.” (student #1)

Also, three students shared their stories about going out and hearing people speak/shout loudly. Previously, they might have thought that the Chinese people were angry and arguing with each other. Now, however, they know that they are just talking. Those Thai students will ignore them and mind only their own business. A student said “Nowadays, when I see them talking on the phone loudly or someone is shouting, I just ignore them.” (student #2) Two students also mentioned that sometimes, some people just sit on the floor in the metro or some people just sing in public. Thai students used to be shocked about this behavior but are now used to it and have learnt to ignore.

From the interview, five students can adjust well with the application that Chinese people normally used in daily life such as WeChat, Taobao (online shopping), Didi (calling taxi), and Meituan Waimai or E-le-me (ordering food). They install those applications and used it almost every day as locals.

One student learnt to give opinions indirectly to Chinese friends. He said “Before I will ask my Chinese friend, I will begin with a compliment first.” (student #5) Therefore, it shows that he knows about the culture of giving face to others. Therefore, this also shows that he follows what other Chinese people do.

4.5.2 Directly tell Chinese people what they can and cannot accept

There are three Thai students who said that they directly tell Chinese people if there is something that they cannot accept which happened. When they do groupwork, for example, with Chinese students and they start to speak only Chinese to each other, the Thai student will tell them directly that they prefer them to speak in English so they can contribute to the group work. Moreover, when Chinese people try to cut the queue, three students chose to tell them directly that they are waiting in the line. “At the train station, I told Chinese people off politely, that they should not cut the queue and they listened to me and did not take it personally.” (student #5)

4.5.3 Come up with new way of doing things to make life easier

Two Thai students mentioned that they came up with new ways of doing things to make their lives in China easier. As mentioned that Thai students found it is difficult doing group work with Chinese students because they tend to do last minute work, one of the students adjusted herself by setting the deadline within the group 4-5 days prior to the actual deadline. This is so that she will have enough time to review what the group did and edit the work before submission. She said “I set the deadline earlier than the real one so I can have enough time to review their parts before submission.” (student #1) Another student clearly assigned work for each person and makes sure that she finishes her part first and send it into the group chat. After that, she lets her group manage at their own pace.

Another example is my strategy to prevent the cutting of queues where my friends and I will try to block the space to prevent a chance for people to move past us by using our arms and bags while also standing very close to the person in front. Otherwise, our line might be cut by someone out of nowhere. Also, I have learnt the necessary vocabulary in order to assist my daily life such as asking for more ice from the bubble tea shop in Chinese.

Other stories related to adjusting to Chinese culture

Three students did not feel that they have changed or adjusted to the Chinese culture, but they did realize that they have changed when someone told them. One of the students said “My mother said that I have become more aggressive and competitive.” (student #3)

Only two of the students mentioned that they have improved their Chinese language skills. Four students believed that it really helped them adjust to Chinese culture and be able to live in China more comfortably. “The only burden is language. Chinese language is quite hard for me because it is not similar to my mother tongue, but it is really helpful.” (student #8)

Two students still cannot adapt with Chinese food. So, one student goes outside of campus to eat other types of cuisine instead of Chinese more often. The student said “The only thing is boring Chinese food on campus. The solution is to just go out and find nicer cuisines such as Western.” (student #8)

According to Oberg’s four stages of culture shock, the last two stages are called recovery and adjustment respectively. It can be observed that the student starts to adapt themselves with Chinese culture when, for example, it can be seen from the case where the student sets the deadline before the real submission date in order to have time for final checks. Another example is when Thai student told his Chinese friends directly that he wants them to speak in English during the group meeting. The Thai students have started to accept and have found a way to compromise comfortably. Then, the Thai students have reached the adjustment stage where they have completely changed and accepted the Chinese culture. The last stage can be observed when the students live without anxiety and begin enjoying life in China.

For autoethnography, it is quite difficult for me to notice myself and how much I have changed or adapted to the Chinese culture. It is easier for me to check with my close friends and parents in Thailand as, when I went back to Thailand, I also realized that I got used to not using cash but applications for my daily life and I am used to Chinese peoples’ behavior.

4.6 The Present Thai students’ attitude towards China (Recovery stage)

Convenient application and infrastructure: Five of the students are positive and happy with the development of China and the convenience that they get from the applications and infrastructure in China. One of the students said “Living in China is quite convenient. It is a cashless society. No need to have cash to pay for everything.

Commuting is also quite good because the subway system is developed and we can order taxis (Didi) very easily via mobile phone applications.” (student #5)

Different style of teaching: Student number 2 was quite upset and said that studying in China was different from what he previously expected. At the beginning, he wanted to make connections with others and learn something more practical. However, he said by studying in China, he only spent a lot of his time reading books and facing the stress of keeping up with assignments from classes. He expected to learn everything in a Chinese context but at the end he mostly only learned about theoretical side.

Changing of Chinese youth: Three students show admiration of Chinese students’ hard-working characteristics. One student believed that Chinese culture is gradually changing. He said “I think the new generation of Chinese are becoming more and more international.” (student #6) But he still feels that it is difficult to become friends with Chinese students.

4.7 Cultural aspects that students are still not used to

Crowded place: Even though they can adjust to some of the Chinese culture, there are some aspects that the Thai students are still unfamiliar with. Two of the students are not used to crowded places because Chinese people stand really close to them which makes them feel uncomfortable in regards to personal space. The student said “I do not like places such as the metro as I stand too close with the locals and that makes me feel uneasy.” (student #2)

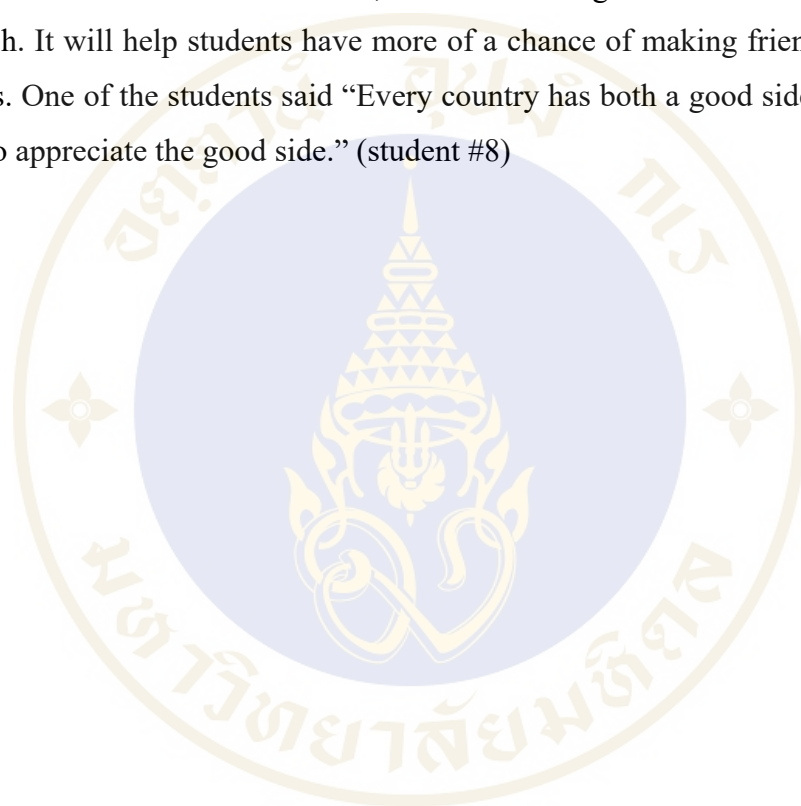
Using VPNs to unblock social media: Using a VPN (a program to bypass the internet censorship) is still an obstacle for students to keep in touch with their family. As a part of autoethnography, I am also not used to using a VPN in order to have access to foreign social media such as Line, Facebook and Instagram. The way that I contact and know about my friends’ life is blocked in China. Also, it is really difficult for me to go out by myself because I need to use a VPN for Google maps as all of the local map applications are only available in Chinese.

4.8 Advice for Thai students in China

Learn the Chinese Language: This suggestion was mentioned by four students as learning the basic level of Chinese will help in daily life and reduce miscommunications.

Be flexible: There are four students who suggest that other upcoming students should be flexible and open-minded. Learning how Chinese people live their lives and adapt but, at the same time, not lose your own Thai identity and avoid being judgmental.

Approach first: Student number 5 suggested to approach first. Be the person who starts the conversation with locals, ask them to hang out and do not wait for them to approach. It will help students have more of a chance of making friends with Chinese students. One of the students said “Every country has both a good side and a bad side. Learn to appreciate the good side.” (student #8)



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

According to research framework, the research explores culture shock that Thai students face while studying in China and how they manage to adapt to the Chinese culture by interviewing 8 students who are currently studying for a master's degree at Peking University in China. The theory used is Kalervo Oberg's 4 stages of culture shock as shown in the research framework. To summarize, please see the table below.

Table 5.1 Summary of culture shock and related concepts

Stage of Culture Shock	Main topic mentioned by the interviewee and autoethnography	Other related concepts
Honeymoon	Reasons to study in China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impression on China's development - University's rank and reputation - Increased job opportunity - Learning the Chinese Language - Similar cost of living to Thailand Feelings before going to China First few months of living and studying in China	-
Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Last minute work - Speaking Chinese during group discussions - Hard-working Chinese students - Difficulty of having Chinese friends - Students do not answer and ask questions in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hofstede's cultural dimension - Uncertainty Avoidance - Long-term orientation

Table 5.1 Summary of culture shock and related concepts (cont.)

Stage of Culture Shock	Main topic mentioned by the interviewee and autoethnography	Other related concepts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beginning conversations with compliments - Ignorant public behavior - Positive perceptions on food and eating habits (Applications and QR code) - Eating hotpot alone is lonely - Negative perceptions on food and eating habits (No ice, early dinner time, excessive drinking habit, juniors hold the glass lower than seniors, long queues for restaurants) - Positive perceptions on technology (Convenient mobile applications) - Negative perceptions on technology (Block the usage of social media and Google) - Homesickness and loneliness (Talking with friends and family, hanging out with friends and finding a hobby) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masculinity and femininity - Concept of “Khvam-Kreng-Jai” - Concept of “Sanuk” - Concept of “Mianzi”
Adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accept and do like the Chinese do - Directly tell Chinese people of what they can and cannot accept - Coming up with new ways of doing things to make life easier 	-
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current Perspective on China (Convenient applications, infrastructure, different styles of teaching and the changing of Chinese youths) - Aspect of culture that they are still not used to (crowded places, using VPNs to unblock foreign social media) - Advice from Thai students (Learn the Chinese language, be flexible and be proactive by approaching first) 	-

5.2 Recommendations

It is hoped that the results of this study can provide information to education advisors and Thai students who are interested studying in China with a better understanding of Thai students who face Culture Shock with Chinese culture.

5.2.1 Recommendations for academic advisors

Before going to China, the education advisor should encourage students to have awareness about their Thai culture. This will give them a clearer picture of how Thai and Chinese cultures differ. Also, students should be encouraged to learn about the culture of China as much as possible before going there. This will help them gain more insight, reducing the chance or amount of culture shock. The most important thing is to learn some basic Chinese because it cannot be expected that everyone will speak English with the student. With this basic language skill, it will help in daily life and reduce the miscommunications between Thai students and Chinese people.

During Honeymoon stage, students still enjoy and are excited with new environment. Later on, during crisis stage, the education advisors should pay closer attention to students' actions. They might start to face some difficulty during living, have a lot of stress, feel lonely and homesick. Therefore, it is suggested to provide counseling services for students and make sure that the students know that have someone to rely on both physically and emotionally. This stage is the most critical stage which requires the close attention from the academic advisor. The academic advisor can also help by sharing the experience of culture of other Thai students and how they dealt with it. Therefore, they might also help students by encouraging them to have a positive attitude and be flexible.

During the adjustment stage, students might want to start exploring the cultural differences by themselves. Academic advisors can let them learn on their own and allow them to make mistakes while emphasizing that counseling services are available for them at any time. If the students start to rely less on the academic advisor, it means that they are at the recovery stage. The student can completely adjust themselves with the Chinese culture.

5.2.2 Recommendations for students that will study in China

For Thai students that will go to China, they need a clear understanding about their own Thai culture. Before going to China, it will also be very helpful for them to learn some survival Chinese. Then, they should be open to learning the Chinese culture and be ready to accept new ways of doing things without being judgmental. The negative news that they have heard about China in the past might not be true anymore. The students need to hold themselves from judging because the way they look at other cultures is shaped their own cultural perspectives. Also, they need to understand that adapting themselves with another culture takes time. Hence, they should allow themselves to make mistakes, be patient and learn from it all while enjoying the new adventure. Culture shock is normal and it can happen to anyone, even people who have experience abroad.

5.3 Limitations and future research

As the study was conducted with only 8 students in Peking University, the limitation is that Thai students in other cities and universities in China might have different experiences. The way people experience culture shock is different and depends on each individual. Therefore, we can gain a deeper understanding of culture shock for Thai students if there was a larger sample size or some quantitative research on this topic. This topic can be discussed further on how the life of the students continues after they reach the adjustment level or after they graduate, right before it is time for them to go back to Thailand. They have already have changed. Will they experience another culture shock in their home country?

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