A STUDY ON CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF CHINESE EMPLOYEES IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Along with the increasing trend of globalization, exchanges between countries in economic, political, and cultural aspects are becoming more and more frequent, and exchanges between countries are developing in a vertical direction. The relationship between Thailand and China has also become closer along with the trend. This has also generated more jobs. Therefore, in recent years, many Chinese people have chosen to take up employment in Thailand, which has become a new trend. However, the work and life of these Chinese employees in Thailand are not always smooth sailing. China and Thailand represent two different cultures respectively. Coming from an already familiar culture to another completely new one, Chinese employees often encounter many unexpected cultural differences and even difficulties. These have many implications for the work and life of Chinese employees in foreign countries.

This study is entitled "A study on cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese employees in Thailand", and 11 Chinese employees who have been working in Thailand for more than six months were used as the research subjects. Through personal interviews, we investigated the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese employees in Thailand and the factors of cultural differences that affect their cross-cultural discomfort and analyzed and interpreted the findings from the theoretical perspectives of cultural shock and cultural dimension.

The paper is divided into five major parts. The first part is an introduction, which introduces the background of the selected text, the research questions, and the purpose of the study. The second part is a literature review, which introduces cross-cultural, culture shock, and culture dimension theories. The third part is the research methodology, which mainly introduces the research method, the object, and the interview question design. The fourth part is data analysis, which mainly introduces the results of the survey and discussion. The fifth part is the conclusion and recommendation, which mainly presents some opinions and recommendations for Chinese employees and companies based on the survey and analysis results in the previous section.

KEY WORDS: Chinese employees / Cross-cultural adaptation / Cultural shock / Cultural dimension

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The ancient Chinese book "Hanshu - Geography", (Ban, 105) records the history of the earliest Chinese contacts with Thailand. During the Han Dynasty, Chinese officials and merchants were sent from Xuwen in Guangxi, China, to enter the Gulf of Siam. In addition, Song & Wang, 1370 records that the Sukhothai dynasty, a Thai dynasty at that time, wanted to pay tribute to China in the past when they were enthroned and wanted to be enthroned by the Chinese emperor. Even, Sukhothai dynasty had sent ambassadors to China nine times, in 1292, 1294, 1295, 1297, 1299, 1300, 1314, 1318 and 1322. The friendly relations and trade between China and Thailand date back to more than 700 years ago, and diplomatic relations were formally established on July 1, 1975. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries have become closer, exchanging visits and exchanges more frequently and cooperating intensively in various aspects. These include different aspects of politics, economy, trade, investment, tourism and so on. For example, on the political front, China and Thailand have established a strategic partnership based on the principles of mutual respect and trust, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Thailand has established working groups with three Chinese provinces. These are the Thailand-Yunnan Working Group, the Thailand-Guangdong Working Group, and the Thailand-Guangxi Working Group. On the economic front, Sino-Thai economic cooperation is an important core of this relationship. 2010 saw the implementation of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area Agreement. The construction of the China-Laos-Thailand high-speed railway was carried out. The China-Japan-Thailand trilateral cooperation on the construction of a high-speed rail linking three airports and the development of only cities in Thailand's Know-Nothing Economic Corridor (EEC). In terms of trade, China is Thailand's second largest export market and the country's top importer as of 2019. Thailand is China's thirteenth largest trading partner. In terms of investment, according to data, from 2017

to 2019, China's cumulative investment in Thailand reached $11.1 billion in second place, followed by the first place, the United States, with $11.8 billion. In terms of tourism, according to official data given by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Thailand received as many as 39.8 million international tourists in 2019, of which Chinese tourists supplied 10.98 million, up 4.2% year-on-year, spending a total of 5.5 trillion baht in Thailand. Thailand has become the largest country for Chinese tourists to travel out of the country.

Figures 1.1 Tourism situation in December 2019 from Economics, Tourism and Sports Division in Thailand

Due to the long-standing friendship between China and Thailand, different jobs and careers have been created in the industries under the cooperation between Thailand and China. This has led to more Chinese people choosing to work in Thailand. According to the early labor statistics given by the Thai Ministry of Labor in 2004, Chinese people are more popular to work in Thailand. A total of 7,358 people are residing in Thailand and have registered for work permits, standing at 7.1% of all legally registered people in Thailand, ranking second (after Japan). It also means that Chinese working in Thailand bring new technology, advanced management concepts to the region. Therefore, they are more popular and do not constitute a conflict of interest to

the locals. The latest figures show that the number of Chinese working in Thailand has increased to 16774 in 2022. China has a long historical record of friendly relations with Thailand. Chinese cultural customs have also permeated and blended into the lifestyle of modern Thai people. In addition, the Chinese in Thailand make up 12-14% of the total Thai population. The two countries have a long history of promoting family ties between the two countries, which is why the saying "China and Thailand are family" has been spread between the two countries. Although, there are few cultural differences between the two countries. However, Chinese people working in Thailand are still affected by cultural differences. When they come to Thailand for the first time to start living or working, their Chinese culture and Thai culture will collide and they will have new and different experiences. These experiences will bring them cultural shock and thoughts and influence their behavior.

Table 1.1 China's labor service in Thailand in 2004 from ministry of commerce of the people's republic of China

China's labor service in Thailand (Statistics from the Ministry of Labor of Thailand in November 2004)					
Work classification	Service application approval category				Proportion (%)
	Temporary application	Investment promotion	Normal application	Total	
Total	4751	1889	718	7358	7.1
Legal person, senior civil servant, manager	2953	766	5	3724	3.59
Various professionals	744	153	7	904	0.87
Technicians and related personnel	419	493	3	915	0.88
Secretaries and other staff	43	17	22	82	0.08
Waiters, store and marketing staff	195	9	277	481	0.46
Agriculture, fishery technician (primary processing)	3	–	34	37	0.04
Technicians in other industries	110	160	21	291	0.28
Factory workers, mechanical control and assembly personnel	83	97	6	186	0.18
Elementary occupations	31	4	343	378	0.36
Interns	29	1	–	30	0.03
Others	141	189	–	330	0.32
Note: At present, the total number of foreign workers in Thailand is 103643 (the data are those who have registered for labor service)					

To this end, scholars have done research on the cultural adaptation of expatriates working in Thailand. A study of Thai and other nationalities (including Chinese, American, Australian, Burmese, Japanese, and others) working in Thai and

international enterprises discovered that intelligence correlates with cultural adaptability (Dsouza, 2022). with their adaptation to unfamiliar cultures and long-term contracts. Short-term sojourners, when faced with their own cross-cultural problems, learn the lifestyle of the local residents or host country to improve their own adaptation so that they can handle daily life and work (Kim, 1988). Previous research further suggests that when expatriates work in host countries, there are corresponding cultural adaptation issues. However, relatively little research has been conducted on the cultural adaptation of Chinese working in Thailand. To address these gaps, this paper analyzes the cross-cultural adjustment of Chinese employees in Thailand.

As the relationship between China and Thailand is growing steadily, more Chinese people are attracted to work and settle in Thailand. However, moving from one country to another to live and work internationally is not seen to be easy. They face many problems caused by cultural differences in the culture and environment of the host country. Thus, this study will take 11 Chinese people who have been working in Thailand for more than six months as an example.

1.2 Research questions

1. Which cross-cultural adaptation problems did Chinese employees experience in Thailand?

2. How do they cope with these adaptation problems?

1.3 Research objectives

The study will investigate Chinese employees in Thailand, their culture shock and cultural dimensions, and their possible coping strategies. The aim is to help Chinese people who are already working in Thailand, or will be working in Thailand, to have a deeper understanding of the cultural differences they face. The study aims to help them adapt to the local culture better and faster, and to eliminate as much as possible the discomfort and conflict caused by cross-cultural differences. At the same time, this study also gives some reference value to scholars of related studies.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cross-cultural adaptation

Cross-cultural adaptation is the process by which an individual or group makes a response to a new cultural environment when faced with a new one. For example, when people live in a host country, they need to transition from their home culture to the new host culture, and of course, they can choose to make adaptation to the local culture or not. Different scholars have different definitions of cross-cultural adaptation. Ward & Kennedy (1999) point out that there are two main forms of cross-cultural adaptation, the first one is psychological adaptation. For example, people's psychological well-being and satisfaction, etc. The second type is social adaptation. Kim (2001) also states that cross-cultural adaptation is an attempt on behalf of people to establish and maintain a relatively stable and functional relationship with the foreign cultural environment. In addition, Kim (2017) states that cross-cultural adaptation means that the newcomer learns to adjust his or her old cultural habits and is able to live in the new environment and reach a certain level. In addition, the process of adaptive change includes the removal of old cultural habits and the adaptation to new cultural habits. Kutor, Raileanu, & Simandan (2021) indicated that the experience of international migration and cross-cultural interaction can be understood as the development of personal wisdom. Therefore, Cross-cultural adaptation is the effect when two or more different cultures meet and interact. The role of one's own culture and the host culture when one leaves a place or country to settle, live and work in another place or host country. When people from different cultures interact with each other and they mutually understand each other as different from themselves, then cross-cultural adaptation takes place.

2.2 Culture shock

The most closely related topic to cross-cultural studies is culture shock. Different scholars have studied culture shock in different ways. Oberg (1960) has described culture shock as the anxiety that arises when we lose the signs and symbols of familiar social interaction. When people go into unfamiliar cultures, most of these familiar cues are removed. For example, how to shake hands, how to meet and greet, how to buy, etc. He also notes that symptoms of culture shock include excessive hand washing, excessive attention to drinking water, food, tableware, or bedding. There may also be a fear of physical contact with those around you, or a distracted gaze into the distance, or a desire to go home, etc. The degree of impact of culture shock varies for each individual. Oberg (1960) suggests that culture shock can be divided into four stages, namely, honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment, and adaptation.

2.2.1 Stage1: Honeymoon

The Honeymoon stage represents when a person arrives in an unfamiliar environment or another country, they become curious about the new environment and are attracted or fascinated by all the new things. This stage usually occurs within the first few weeks of arrival in the host country and lasts for a few days or weeks to six months. For example, when some foreigners arrive in Thailand, they will be curious about the culture, language or food, etc. When meeting Thais, they greet each other by placing their palms together in front of their chest and making the "wai" gesture. When foreigners feel new and curious about this polite gesture, they will follow it. Even, they will try to understand more. If they are traveling, then they will take 1 week or a few weeks in the host country, and they are in the honeymoon period, then their impressions or memories of the host country are mostly good. However, if they are in the host country to cope with the trivial things in life, this tourist mentality will not last long.

2.2.2 Stage2: Regression

Regression represents the characteristics of hostility in people towards the host country. These characteristics are caused by the difficulties they encounter in the process of adaptation. For example, difficulties with language, finding a house, shopping, transportation, work, and other difficulties in life. This feeling is that you have

developed a hostile mentality towards the host country. Oberg (1960) has stated that in a sense, this stage of the situation is a crisis of illness. For example, some foreigners find language learning difficult, they will insist on living in their own language and appear to socialize only with their compatriots and develop a hostile mentality toward the host country.

2.2.3 Stage3: Adjustment

Adjustment represents the behavioral adjustments that people make as a result of these shocks. For example, when people have learned the local language, they start to try to move around and learn the local language to help them re-enter the new culture. Although they are not fully integrated into the local environment, they are able to communicate with the local people through the language and gain a deeper understanding of the local culture or way of life. They may even display humor and joking behavior during this phase. All these can show that they are on the road to recovery. This allows them to continue to walk around the host country with confidence.

2.2.4 Stage4: Recovery

This stage of recovery means that people in this stage have pretty much adjusted. They begin to slowly accept the customs of the host country and choose to integrate into the local way of life. The local way of life no longer bothers them. For example, they accept the local food, language, habits or customs, etc. Even, when they leave the host country, they miss the life in the host country.

Other scholars have provided their own insights into the description of culture shock. For example, Byrnes (1966) compared culture shock to "role shock," a state of failure to establish good relations with people of the same nationality, the same status, and a higher status in the host country. culture fatigue" to describe culture shock, which refers to the fatigue of people living in a different country or culture where they need to continuously adjust themselves. In summary, each person encounters a different duration of culture shock with different lengths and degrees of intensity. Different feelings will arise at each stage. Therefore, culture shock needs to be discussed according to different individuals with different feelings at different periods.

2.3 Cultural dimensions

In cross-cultural research, cultural dimension theory is one of the most important topics. Cultural dimensions were first proposed by management scholar Hofstede, who conducted a research study in the 1970s on the attitudes of IBM employees in different countries. Hofstede (1978) indicated that there are four main different dimensions of national culture, including Individualism vs. collectivism (IDV), Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI), Power distance index (PDI) and Masculinity vs. femininity (MAS). The fifth dimension of Hofstede's (2005) cultural factors indicating employees' values and work perceptions is Long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation (LTO). Hofstede (2011) again indicated that the sixth dimension of cultural factors of employees' values and work outlook is Indulgence vs. restraint (IND).

2.3.1 Individualism vs Collectivism (IDV)

Hofstede (2009) defines it as the degree to which people in society are integrated into the group. Individualism represents a society in which individuals are loosely connected to each other in an individualistic society. Individualistic people generally take care of only themselves and their immediate family. In contrast, collectivism represents a collectivist society in which people are socially tightly connected. They receive the protection of the collective for life and they will remain absolutely loyal to the collective. The difference between individualism and collectivism can be more clearly understood from the following table.

Table 2.1 Individualism vs Collectivism (IDV)

Individualism	Collectivism
Support the use of the word "we"	Support the use of the word "I"
Employee-employer relationships are based on contracts based on common interests	Employee-employer relationships are based on ethical guidelines, such as family relationships
Management is the management of individuals	Management is the management of a collective
Individual interests are more important than collective interests	Collective interests are more important than individual interests
Higher education can improve income and self-worth	High education can improve social status

2.3.2 Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI)

UAI refers to dealing with society's tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity. The degree to which members of a culture are threatened by ambiguous and uncertain situations and try to avoid them. This feeling of being threatened manifests itself primarily through stress, tension, or the need for predictability. An example is the need for rules. The difference between low UAI and high UAI can be more clearly understood from the table below.

Table 2.2 Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI)

Low UAI	High UAI
Uncertainty is acceptable as a normal part of life	Uncertainty is a danger in life and is strongly avoided
Ability to accept ambiguous realms and unknown risks	Ability to accept known risks, not ambiguous situations and unknown risks
Low stress and low anxiety	High stress and high anxiety
Does not show aggression and emotions	Showing aggression and emotions depending on the situation
People feel happy	People feel less happy
Venture Capital	Conservative Investment

2.3.3 Power distance index (PDI)

PDI refers to the degree of acceptance or expectation of unequal distribution of power among people at the bottom of various institutions in a country. Examples include in the home, school, and workplace. Simply put, countries with a large power distance have a more hierarchical membership. Conversely, countries with small power distances tend to have more equality among members of society. The following table gives a clearer picture of the difference between small PDI and large PDI.

Table 2.3 Power distance index (PDI)

Small PDI	Big PDI
Inequality should be minimal	Inequality is expected and needed
There should be interdependence between those who have less power and those who have more power	Those with less power should rely on those with more power
The more educated a person is, the less he or she perceives power	Consistency in perceptions of power for those with higher or lower levels of education
Subordinates expect to be involved in decision making	Subordinates expect to be ordered and told what to do
The ideal boss is a well-informed democrat	The ideal boss is a benevolent dictator

2.3.4 Masculinity vs femininity (MAS)

Masculine values refer to the extent to which the dominant values in society are "masculine". In a masculine value society, the gender distinction is clear: men are expected to be assertive, resolute, and eager to succeed in their careers. However, those who are not are expected to be humble, gentle, and focused on quality of life. However, in a feminine value-oriented society, gender roles are less clearly differentiated and even overlap. Both men and women are expected to be humble, gentle, and to focus on quality of life. The following table provides a clearer understanding of the difference between Masculinity and Femininity.

Table 2.4 Masculinity vs femininity (MAS)

Masculinity	Femininity
Money and career are the most important	People and intimate relationship style is the most important
Everyone should pursue career success, perseverance, and self-confidence	Everyone should remain humble
The father in the family deals with facts and the mother with feelings	Both parents in the family deal with facts and feelings
Worship the strong	Compassion for the underdog
Life for work	Work for life
Girls can cry, boys can't cry	Both boys and girls can cry

2.3.5 Long-term orientation vs short-term orientation (LTO)

It represents the degree to which a culture values tradition and the past, as well as the present and the future. Long-term orientation is also referred to as "Confucian dynamism" for short. For example, it focuses on the future and takes a dynamic view of things. The following table provides a clearer understanding of the difference between Long-term orientation and Short-term orientation.

Table 2.5 Long-term orientation vs short-term orientation (LTO)

Long-term orientation	Short-term orientation
Focus on the future	Focus on the present
Examine things with a dynamic view	Focus on immediate benefits
Focus on saving	Focus on social responsibility
When people deal with things, they will first consider and understand the causes and consequences of things before they start to do	People are used to get straight to the point and talk about things

2.3.6 Indulgence vs restraint (IND)

IND refers to the degree of freedom a society gives its citizens to fulfill their human desires. Indulgence refers to a society in which individuals are relatively free to fulfill their desires. restraint, on the contrary, refers to a relatively strict and regulated society. The difference between Indulgence and Restraint can be more clearly understood from the table below.

Table 2.6 Indulgence vs restraint (IND)

Indulgence	Restraint
High percentage of happy people	Low percentage of happy people
More focus on spare time	Low attention to spare time
Smiling as a norm	Smiling as suspect
Freedom of speech is important	Freedom of speech is not a primary concern

2.4 Hofstede's graphs for China and Thailand
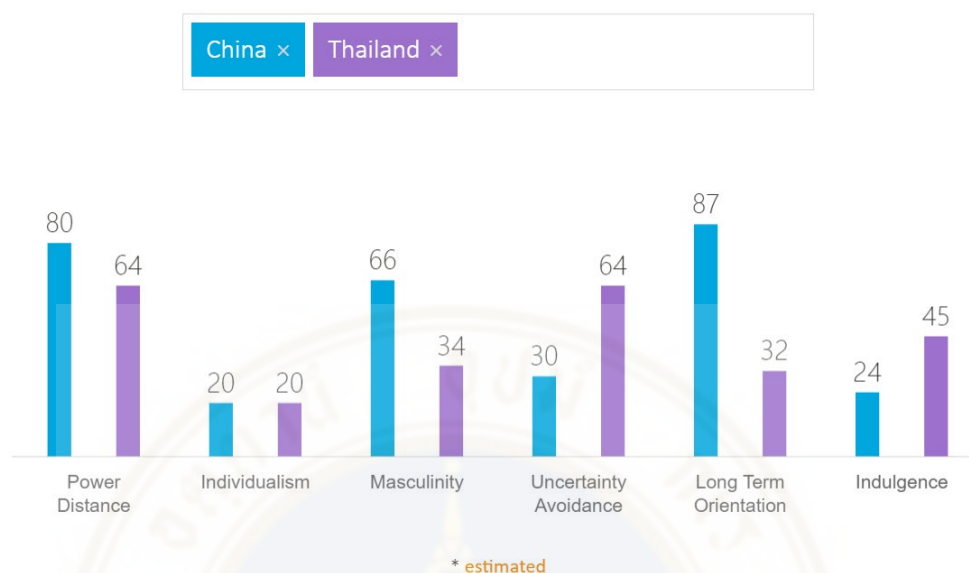
Figures 2.1 Hofstede's graphs for China and Thailand

Through the cultural comparison of the two countries and the analysis of the 6-D model, the final results of the analysis :

PDI

China scored 80, ranking highest in the PDI. Simply put interpersonal inequality is acceptable in society, and relationships between superiors and subordinates tend to be bifurcated. Individuals receive formal authority and sanctions and are generally optimistic about people's ability to lead and take initiative. This compares to Thailand's score of 64, which is below the Asian country average of 71. In terms of scores, Thailand is also a country that accepts power distance, but with less acceptance than China.

IDV

Both China and Thailand scored 20. China is a highly collectivistic culture where people are willing to give their personal interests to the group. In-group considerations can influence hiring and promotion. In contrast to Thailand, Thais are less confrontational and "yes" in communication may not mean acceptance or

agreement. Offense can lead to losing face, and Thais can be sensitive and do not feel shame in front of their own group.

MAS

China scored 66, which represents a masculine society in China that is predominantly success oriented and driven. The need to ensure success can be seen through the fact that many Chinese will sacrifice family and leisure time to have a job. For example, the Chinese will sacrifice more personal time to devote to work and achieve success. Thailand scored 34, which represents a feminine society. Thailand's masculinity ranking is at 53rd place on average for Asian countries, and 50th lowest position on the world average. Thai society lacks self-confidence and competitiveness.

UAI

China scored 30, which means that Chinese people are more willing to accept uncertainty, they are adaptable and entrepreneurial. Compared to Thailand, which scored 64, Thais are more likely to avoid uncertainty. To minimize this uncertainty, they are more likely to adopt strict rules, laws or policies.

LTO

China scored 87, which means that the Chinese are more pragmatic. They believe that truth is largely dependent on context, background and time. Compared to Thailand, Thailand scored 32. This indicates that Thai culture is more prescriptive than pragmatic. They are very concerned with establishing absolute truth and their thinking is normative. They show great respect for tradition. Saving for the future is relatively small and more focused on achieving results quickly.

IND

China scored 24, which represents a constrained society where people are more inclined to pessimism. Thailand scored 45, and the data shows that it is not possible to determine Thailand's preference on this dimension. However, Thailand is a bit more permissive than China.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese employees working in Thailand from the perspective of cultural shock. And by analyzing the cultural factors that affect the cross-cultural generated maladjustment of Chinese employees from the perspective of cultural dimensions. Finally, the strategies to cope with the cross-cultural maladjustment of Chinese employees working in Thailand are identified. And the corresponding suggestions are made for the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese employees working in Thailand.

This study utilizes the research method of semi-structured interview, one of the most common methods of data collection in qualitative research. Semi-structured interview are primarily one-on-one conversations in which the interviewer asks the interviewee targeted questions, the interviewee responds accordingly, and the researcher analyzes the interview data (Weiss, 1995). Therefore, this study will collect data through individual interview. 11 Chinese employees from the whole group of Chinese employees working in Thailand will be taken as a sample and they will be effectively interviewed individually. even, the interviewees' permission will be asked for recording to help this study to be able to record the data effectively. Then will go through the data collected for collation and analysis. Based on the initial organization and screening of the entire recorded data, the data will be transcribed into a text version for post-analysis.

3.2 Research subjects

The population of this study is Chinese employees who have been working in Thailand for more than six months. The age background spanned from 24 to 35 years old. The occupational background includes different kinds of jobs and different

positions. The years of living in Thailand ranged from half a year to more than 10 years. The total number of participants in the individual interview was 11.

3.3 Interview question design

The questions for this individual interview were designed based on the four stages of cultural shock theory and the six dimensions of cultural dimension theory. The first part of the questions was based on the basic information of the interviewees, including age, occupation, position/rank, years of living in Thailand, reasons for working in Thailand, and familiarity with Thai language. The second part focuses on the interviewees' adaptation in Thailand. It is divided according to the four stages in the culture shock theory in order to investigate the process of culture shock and adaptation that Chinese employees encounter when working in Thailand. The third section focuses on investigating the main cultural factors that trigger cultural discomfort for the interviewees while working in Thailand and their coping strategies. The six dimensional divisions of the cultural dimension were used to investigate the degree of cultural identification of Chinese employees, as well as to investigate the main causes of cultural discomfort and their coping strategies while working in Thailand. Please refer to the interview questionnaire below for the interview questions and subject to the final interview questions.

Table 3.1 Interview questions

NO.	Part I (basic information about the interviewee)
1	How old are you?
2	What kind of work are you currently doing?
3	What is your current job title? At what level?
4	How long have you lived in Thailand?
5	Why did you choose to work in Thailand?
6	What language do you generally use to communicate with your colleagues at work?
7	What is your level of Thai?

Table 3.1 Interview questions (cont.)

NO.	Part II (Interviewees' adaptation in Thailand)
	Honeymoon
8	Can you recall how you felt during the first few months when you first came to work in Thailand? Please give us an example.
	Regression
9	Are there times when you feel uncomfortable working in Thailand?
10	When did you start feeling this way and why ?
11	How long did this feeling of discomfort last?
12	Did you ever consider going back to China due to cultural difficulties in Thailand?
	Adjustment
13	Around when did you start to feel like you were getting used to working in Thailand? Please give us an example.
14	How long did it take you to get used to it?
15	What helped you to adjust? Which strategies did you use to familiarize yourself with Thai culture?
	Recovery
16	Are you now comfortable with your current work environment in Thailand? Why?
17	What would you suggest to others who think of coming to work in Thailand?
18	How should they prepare and what should they expect?
	Alternate interview questions（To go into more detail）
19	Do you like this work environment? Why?
20	What is the Thai way of working in your work? Please give examples
21	What do you think about this way of working? Why?
22	What do you think about the company management system? Why?
23	Will you continue to stay and work in Thailand in the future? Why?

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Information about the interviewees

A total of 11 Chinese employees working in Thailand were interviewed for this data collection. Four were men and seven were women. Their age range was between 24-35 years old. They have lived in Thailand between 1 year and 15 years. According to the interview data, nine respondents chose to work in Thailand because they decided to stay after studying in Thailand, one was sent from a Chinese company, and 1 chose to work in Thailand because they wanted to experience Thai life. Even, two of them had already established close relationships with Thai people. This was one of the factors that influenced them to stay and work in Thailand. Most of the respondents speak Thai and they use a mixture of Thai and Chinese together in their work. However, one of them does not speak Thai and only communicates in Chinese and English at work. Details are shown in the following table.

Table 4.1 Data on the basic information of the 11 interviewers

	Gender	Age	Industry	Position	How long (year)	Reasons for working in Thailand	Language used	Speak Thai
A	Female	24	Foreign trade	Translation Assistant	3	Studying in Thailand	Chinese-Thai	Yes
B	Male	25	Hotels	Assistant Lobby Manager	6	Studying in Thailand	Chinese-Thai-English	Yes
C	Female	26	Railroad Bridge Engineering	Commercial Contracts Team Leader	3	Want to experience	Chinese-Thai-English	Yes

Table 4.1 Data on the basic information of the 11 interviewers (cont.)

	Gender	Age	Industry	Position	How long (year)	Reasons for working in Thailand	Language used	Speak Thai
D	Female	28	Foreign trade	Assistant Manager	5	Studying in Thailand	Chinese-Thai	Yes
E	Male	29	Railroad Bridge Engineering	Level II Designer	1	Outposting	Chinese-English	No
F	Female	32	Retailing	Department Manager	6	Studying in Thailand	Chinese-Thai-English	Yes
G	Female	32	Tourism	Operations Specialist	6	Studying in Thailand	Thai-English	Yes
H	Female	33	Retailing	Entrepreneurs	10	Studying in Thailand	Chinese-Thai	Yes
I	Female	33	Tourism	Operator	12	Studying in Thailand	Chinese-Thai-English	Yes
J	Male	35	Hotels	Marketing Executive	15	Studying in Thailand	Thai	Yes
K	Male	35	Media and real estate agents	CEO	12	Studying in Thailand	Chinese-Thai	Yes

4.2 Analysis of Respondents' Adaptation in Thailand

The results of the interviews show that each of the 11 interviewees showed different feelings and reactions at different stages, and these reactions are all roughly the same as the culture shock theory. The following will be analyzed according to the different stages.The four stage include the honeymoon , the transition period, the adjustment period and the adaptation period.

4.2.1 Honeymoon

From the results of the interviews, they were all curious and new to Thai culture during the honeymoon period. The results showed that 9 out of 11 interviewees chose to stay and work in Thailand because they had studied in Thailand and had a good impression of Thailand. Another interviewee was also an exchange student who came to Thailand for 3 months to study and then came to work in Thailand because he wanted to try working in Thailand after working in China. The last interviewee came to Thailand because a Chinese company had a need for a project in Thailand and was sent out by the company. For example, Interviewee A said that everything around her was new to her in the first few months and she had never experienced working alone abroad. Therefore, she felt happy and excited. As an example, Interviewee A explained that her Thai employees are very neatly dressed, and they all iron their clothes. But in China, very few people would do that. Thais take dress code very seriously. She thought that the Thai employees were very conscious of dressing and makeup compared to the Chinese, which surprised her and gave her a sense of admiration. Interviewee B said that he was excited and nervous before he even worked because he had never worked abroad and with foreigners before. Interviewee C said that he was curious about many aspects of Thai culture during the first few months of working in Thailand. For example, the way Thai colleagues greet each other is to put their hands together in front of their chest and say "WAI". However, interviewees J and K said that they already had a deep understanding of Thai culture because they had studied in Thailand before they started working there. Therefore, they did not have any special feelings when they transitioned to work. However, they recalled that they had curiosity and excitement about Thai culture during the early stages of their study abroad. Overall, all nine respondents showed interest in Thai culture at this early stage of their work, and two respondents also showed interest in Thai culture when they first arrived in Thailand. Their feelings about Thai culture were described as novelty, excitement, and nervousness, respectively. This suggests that the initial psychological feelings of the respondents when they first entered Thai culture are generally consistent with the first stage of the cultural shock theory, namely the "honeymoon period.

4.2.2 Regression

From the results of the interviews, all interviewees experienced cultural discomfort during the transition period. The main discomfort of the interviewees included differences in the way locals work, local food habits and living habits and. In this interview, eight respondents reported discomfort with work habits, four respondents reported discomfort with food habits, and three respondents reported discomfort with living habits. The following analysis is based on the different discomfort situations.

Discomfort in work habits

Interviewee A said that before she was uncomfortable, she believed that the difference in cultural background and geographical location, as well as the difference in mindset caused these discomforts. She mentioned that Thai people live a more leisurely life, they work at a slow pace and are more focused on enjoying the present moment. The Chinese, on the other hand, work at a faster pace, they also focus on efficiency, work more overtime, and have no personal life. Interviewee C said that in her work, Thais do not speak straightforwardly. For example, if her co-worker feels that one of her tasks or behaviors needs to be corrected, her co-worker does not convey or communicate it to her by expressing it directly. Instead, her co-worker tells the higher-level manager directly that. This caused misunderstandings between her and her co-workers. She also said that Thais are very inefficient. As an example, she said that if it is a report, she can finish it in a day and can revise it. Her colleagues, on the other hand, take 2-3 days to complete it. This greatly increases the cost of time and delays the work process. Interviewee G also said that her colleagues work at a slow pace and can't keep up with their work, and are often seen taking their time to get coffee or gossiping with other colleagues. In addition, she also said that her Thai colleagues do not like to work overtime and go home as soon as it is time to leave work. From the interview information, eight interviewees indicated that the work efficiency of Thai people is slower compared to Chinese people. As well as being more focused on their lives rather than their work. These differences also caused the interviewees to feel discomfort in their work.

Discomfort in eating habits

Interviewee A said, "I am not used to Thai food habits, Thai food tastes sweet and spicy, and there are a lot of fried food, so I feel tired of eating it for a long

time. In China, there are 34 provinces, and the cuisine is diverse, and there are many flavors, such as light or spicy. Our company has hired a Chinese chef to make Chinese food for us." Interviewee B said, "I used to work in a hotel in China, and there were many different choices of food in the staff canteen. But in the staff canteen of the hotel where I work now, there are basically only a few dishes here and there, and when we go out to eat at restaurants, it's the same menu with very few dishes." Interviewee F said, "It's so uncomfortable, the air conditioning in the office is very cold, and there is no hot water in the office, Thai people like to drink ice water, while we Chinese like to drink hot water and hot tea. The bathroom provided in the office only has cold water, not hot water." Overall, four of the interviewees expressed discomfort with Thai food habits, mainly in terms of taste and less variety. According to the information provided by most of the interviewees, most of their discomfort is mainly a matter of living habits. For example, food. There is a Chinese proverb "People's food is the sky". It means that people rely on food as the basis of survival. Chinese people think that food is very important. Chinese people pay more attention to cooking methods. Because of the large population in China and the different cuisines in different cities, there are eight common Chinese cuisines (including Shandong cuisine, Sichuan cuisine, Cantonese cuisine, Su Cuisine, Fujian Cuisine, Huizhou cuisine, Hunan cuisine and Zhejiang cuisine). Hunan cuisine and Zhejiang cuisine) and 24 cooking methods (including Stir Fry, Saute, Pan fry, Sear, Brown, Braise, Stew and Gradual simmering, etc.). Therefore, this formed the Chinese people are very concerned about their food and when they come to live in Thailand, the taste of Thailand is different from what they usually eat and it causes them to be uncomfortable with the food.

Discomfort in living habits

Interviewee B stated that during his discomfort he felt lonely. He thought that living alone in Thailand, he could not find friends to hang out with. In China he had his own circle of friends and they could go anywhere together. But in Thailand, he could not fit in with the locals because he could not fit in at that time and saw that his Thai colleagues had formed small groups and could not fit in with them. As a result, he felt a sense of loneliness and isolation. Interviewee D said that there are few like-minded friends in Thailand. She also expressed that she missed the atmosphere of friends and family gathering together during Chinese holidays. As well as whenever it comes to

holidays in China, it makes her miss her hometown and family very much. From the interview information, three interviewees said they did not make their own friends over here, which led the interviewees to feel lonely and homesick.

4.2.3 Adjustment

From the results of the interviews, all interviewees made self-adjustment behaviors during the adjustment period in order to adapt themselves to the current culture and work demands. The interviewees adjusted themselves to their environment and culture mainly by taking the initiative to learn more about the local culture, accepting it, and learning the local language. For example, Interviewee A stated that it took her 2 months to adjust herself to working in Thailand. She accepted the hot climate of Bangkok, the Thai food, and she tried to familiarize herself with the work environment and work processes. She also said that she tried to understand the ideas and habits of the local people, for example, by communicating with her Thai friends to understand their thoughts and how they see things. At the same time, she learns about Thai people's work behavior by observing their usual work rhythm and methods. These can help her to quickly understand the culture of Thai people and to quickly join and integrate into the local culture. Interviewee G said that it took her 3 six months to adapt to the local culture. She said that after she became familiar with the work, she slowly got to know her leaders and colleagues, as well as accepting their habits, such as working slowly and being late for work, which she was used to. Acceptance was a way for her to quickly integrate into the culture of the locals. In addition, interviewee F said that she spent 3 months is adjusting herself. She would learn the etiquette and behavior of the locals. For example, when greeting elders, she learned the Thai way of greeting "WAI" and the Thai honorific words. Interviewee J said that it took him six months to adjust himself. He believes that the way for him to quickly integrate into the local culture is to master the Thai language. He also said that he uses Thai to successfully communicate with his colleagues and partners. He also increases his insight, such as watching Thai news and buying Thai stocks. This has given him more common topics with his colleagues and partners. Interviewee E said he was still in the adjustment phase and said he was trying to accept the Thai climate as well as his eating habits. For example, trying to eat Thai food 2-3 times a week. However, since he does not speak Thai in work

communication, this makes it difficult for him to understand how the locals feel and to get a deeper understanding of their thoughts, even though they speak English. Since it takes time to learn a new language. Thus, it can be assumed that not knowing Thai is currently one of the factors that prevent him from being able to quickly integrate into the local culture in a short period of time.

In addition, the 2 interviewees in the adjustment phase also indicated that external environmental factors helped them to adapt to the local culture. For example, regarding the issue of the overtime system in Thai companies, many interviewees also said that the system in Thai companies is more lenient and there is no mandatory overtime work. Compared to Chinese companies, the overtime system is more stringent, which causes many workers to take the initiative to work overtime for the company after work. For example, interviewee J said that most Thai companies do not require overtime work, and he has worked for many Thai companies and has never been asked to work overtime. He said that he usually gets off work at the end of the day and does not need to come to work on weekends, unless the company has special requirements. He thinks this kind of work and rest time is more normal, and he is satisfied with it. Interviewee F also said that there is no strict requirement for overtime work in her department, and most of her colleagues leave the company at the end of the day. There are no mandatory requirements for overtime work, and the management in this area is relatively lax. From this, it can be judged that the Chinese company culture is mandatory for employees to work overtime, and plays a high restraining role for employees, who spend more time on work and less on their personal spare time. The Thai company culture is more relaxed on the issue of overtime work, and employees spend more time in their spare time, and Thai companies give employees more freedom to dispose of their spare time and satisfy their personal desires.

Overall, 10 interviewees reported adjusting themselves in different ways, and 1 interviewee reported that they are still in the adjustment period. According to the interview transcripts, interviewees spent a minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 2 years in the adjustment period. They used internal and external forces to integrate themselves into the local culture through understanding, acceptance, and learning. Most of the interviewees reported that they began to adapt to the local culture once they

became familiar with the job and once they were on track. Thus, the interviewees' behavior is similar to the third stage of culture shock theory, the "adjustment".

4.2.4 Recovery

The results of the interviews show that all 10 interviewees made adjustments during the transition period, allowing themselves to slowly begin to adapt to the local culture and work environment. Only one interviewee is still in the adjustment period, trying to adjust himself to the current environment. After adjustment, those 10 interviewees were mainly satisfied with the working environment in Thailand. For instance, interviewee C said that the working environment in Thailand is relaxed and harmonious, and there is not much competitive pressure within Thai companies compared to the working environment in China. Interviewee D said that the work pressure is low and there are many holidays. She feels that the work tasks in Thailand are much easier than those in China. Interviewee G also said that working in Thailand is less intense, less competitive pressure, and slower pace of work. She said she likes the state of life in Thailand, where she can still have extra time to do what she wants to do in a relaxed job. In addition, interviewees B, F and I all said that the work atmosphere in their departments was good and that their Thai colleagues were friendly. They felt that the Thai office culture was more harmonious compared to the Chinese office culture. They like this atmosphere better. The information from the interviews shows that the respondents are satisfied with their work pressure and work atmosphere. Regarding the future plans of the respondents, two interviewees said that they will always live in Thailand because they are already married to locals and this is the reason why they chose to settle in Thailand for a long time. One interviewee said he would follow his company's projects to other countries, and since the reason he came to Thailand was that the Chinese head office had a joint project in Thailand, he would go to his next destination if the work ended or if the work demanded it. The other eight interviewees said they would stay in Thailand for a while, and three of them said they planned to return to China in the future because their families were there. Overall, the majority of respondents chose to stay and work in Thailand for the time being, mainly because of the harmonious and relaxed working atmosphere. This makes the interviewees like working in Thailand.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The current study found that each of the eleven Chinese employees working in Thailand showed different behaviors in each of the four stages of cultural shock. During the honeymoon phase, they showed novelty, excitement, and nervousness responses to Thai culture. During regression, they all showed discomfort with Thai culture, including their discomfort with the differences in Thai food habits, living habits, and work habits. In adjustment, eleven interviewees tried to adjust themselves, using internal and external forces to adjust themselves, including learning about the local culture, accepting the local culture, and learning the local language. However, one of them indicated that they are still in the adjustment period and have not yet adjusted. This resulted in him still being in the adjustment period due to the fact that he did not learn Thai and the long time it takes to learn the language. In recovery, ten interviewees have done self-adjustment to get themselves adjusted to the current environment and life. All of them said they were satisfied with the working environment, the working atmosphere, and their colleagues in Thailand. They said they would choose to stay in Thailand for the time being. In addition, two interviewees have already married local people and have indicated that they will settle in Thailand for a long time. One interviewee has no plans to stay in Thailand for a long time due to the expatriate factor.

The information about living habits from this research shows that both Chinese and Thai cultures tend to be more collectivist; they prefer to move in groups, they seek out familiar people or groups and fit in. They prefer to use the word "we" to strengthen relationships. This suggests that the Chinese and Thai cultures broadly fit the individualism versus collectivism theory of the cultural dimension, with both Chinese and Thai cultures receiving a score of 20. It is also clear from the interview information on work habits that the Chinese culture tends to be more masculine, they are more concerned with career success and will spend most of their time at work. They believe

that everyone should pursue career success and perseverance. The Thai culture, on the other hand, tends to be more feminine, they care more about people and their intimate relationships, and they work for a living. They believe that everyone should remain humble. Even the information from the interview also shows that Chinese culture and Thai culture are basically consistent with the expressions in the masculine-feminine theory in the cultural dimension and also with the expressions of 66 points in China and 34 points in Thailand. As well as the interview information on the company's overtime system, the Chinese and Thai cultures are broadly consistent with the indulgence and restraint theory in the cultural dimension, with China scoring 24 and Thailand scoring 45. Therefore, from this information it can be judged that the reactions and behaviors caused by cultural differences are consistent with these three cultural dimensions.

5.2 Recommendations

This study was conducted to investigate the cross-cultural adaptation problems of Chinese employees while working in Thailand and how they faced and dealt with these cultural adaptation problems. Cross-cultural adaptability is very important for a Chinese employee working in Thailand. The strength of adaptation not only affects but also determines the performance of Chinese employees. From a long-term perspective, adaptability affects their perception and impression of the host country and their future direction. From a macro perspective, the overall cross-cultural adaptation ability and level of a country's overseas employment group also reflects the image of that country and nation, as well as the internationalization level of the country. Therefore, in order to achieve the purpose of this study, combining the different suggestions given by the 11 interviewees in this interview and the findings of this survey, the following suggestions will be given so that more Chinese employees who choose to work and develop in Thailand can adjust themselves more quickly and integrate themselves into the local culture.

5.2.1 Recommendations for employees

Chinese employees can improve their intercultural communication skills in response to their inability to adapt to work in Thailand. For example, Chinese employees

can take the initiative to learn about the local culture, the rules of communication and the way to communicate with local people by purchasing relevant books, daily observation, or consulting with people in the field. This can reduce the sense of unfamiliarity with the local culture and thus reduce the psychological pressure and discomfort caused by cultural differences. In addition, Chinese employees can also increase their communication skills by learning the local language. This will allow them to communicate deeply with the locals and understand their ideas.

Chinese employees who do not adapt to life in Thailand, the employees can enrich their cultural and spiritual life. Due to the differences in the way the two countries try to live, the differences in food, transportation, and living habits can lead to psychological resistance in Chinese employees. For example, the interviewees can participate more in the activities held locally, or activities held by the company. This can enrich their cultural life and also increase communication with the locals.

5.2.2 Recommendations for company

The company with Chinese employees, it is important to help Chinese employees quickly integrate into their new work environment. Companies can provide language courses or give employees the opportunity to learn the local language so that they can increase their communicative skills. In addition, the company can also conduct group activities to increase cultural exchange between foreign employees and help Chinese employees to get to know more about Thai culture and Thai friends.

5.3 Limitation

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of the following limitations. The first is the number of individual interviews. Since 11 people were interviewed in this study, the number of data collected was relatively small, which may lead to data not being comprehensive. Secondly, due to the limited time of this study, the interview and data analysis took one month to complete, so it is necessary to extend the research time if we want to study more deeply and obtain more comprehensive information. Therefore, in order to obtain more detailed and comprehensive research

data, further in-depth research is needed in future studies to ensure comprehensive and accurate data.

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