

Cross-Cultural Learning Experiences of International Students in Chinese Universities

Zhao Da, Srikrishna Banerjee

¹²*Lincoln University College, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

This article assessed the effect of financial assistance on the cross-cultural education of international students at Chinese higher education institutions. Chinese students studying abroad rose quickly because of economic growth, global participation, and more places to go to college. Even though there was an increase, there were concerns with educational, cultural, and student satisfaction. To tackle these concerns, the study analysed the influence of financial assistance on the academic interactions, social integration, and overall well-being of international students at Chinese universities. Quantitative research was utilised to achieve the study's objectives. Chinese schools gave international pupils a standardised questionnaire. After taking out the missing answers, 450 of the 550 questionnaires supplied were maintained for study. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale to gather demographic information and student perspectives on multicultural education and financial assistance. Researchers used secondary data to back up their real-world conclusions. Statistical analysis was done using Excel and SPSS 25. Descriptive statistics presented a general picture of the information, whereas factor analysis examined how the variables were put together. Students from whole world experiences in Chinese universities were closely linked to the availability of financial help. Kids who got financial help were able to do better in school, go on cultural trips, and get along better with their teachers and classmates. It also helped them deal with their money problems. Also, financial assistance helped with academic consistency, retention, and enrolment. The study concluded that financial help has a substantial influence on the learning and cultural experiences of international students of Chinese university.

Keywords: Educational Experiences; International Students; Chinese Universities; Financial Aid Availability; Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

It is important to understand that many things including diplomatic and economic issues, affect the growth of foreign students in Chinese universities. China is able to draw in students from other nations because its economy is doing extremely well and its influence is growing throughout the world. This has helped China get students from all around the world. The new Silk Road is one of the most well-known factors that is helping to grow China's educational prospects for students from other nations. Many people see it as a major investment in China's soft power related to culture. The Chinese higher education system has also developed a lot of progress in both its standing in the world and its capacity to welcome students from other nations. This is something that cannot be overlooked. Higher education schools that are rated "double-first class" attract students from many different nations throughout the world (Tian et al., 2022). This is mostly due to the large financing that is supplied by the government, notably in the fields of research, technology, and medicine. When it comes to higher education, quality is commonly acknowledged to be the most crucial aspect in every single country on the planet. There has been an increasing variety of students attending higher education institutions in China since the 1990s. This trend has continued into the current decade. A tendency like this has been seen in universities in China. There is no denying the fact that China has been successful in attracting a significant number of students from different countries and regions that are seen as being relatively disadvantaged. It is possible that some students from these countries may opt to relocate to China rather than pursue academic learnings in English-medium institutions in English-speaking nations or in the flourished nation. Alternatively, they may be forced to relocate to China due to

circumstances that force them to do so. The reason for this is that the Western world is seeing an increase in the prevalence of protectionism and isolationism (Gao & Hua, 2021).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the last few years, there has been an enormous growth in the number of foreign pupils joining colleges and universities in China. As of 2018, the number of foreign students attending universities in China has climbed from 52,150 to 492,185. This represents a significant growth. This is equivalent to a growth rate of around 10% each year every year. In 2018, information was gathered from 1,004 educational institutions in China that had overseas professors present at their universities. These students came from 192 different nations and areas, making up a total of 192 distinct countries and regions. During the last few years, China has risen to become the third most popular country in the world for pupils to study abroad (Sheng et al., 2022). In addition to this, it is the most populous country in Asia that offers lodging for foreign students while they are studying in other countries. The proportion of students enrolled in non-degree programs is still high, even if the number of overseas students studying in China is rising. Furthermore, a small amount of recent research has revealed that international students are not very satisfied with their education at Chinese universities, and there are worries about Chinese universities' ability to keep an eye on degree courses to meet these students' needs and expectations for academic advancement. China's Ministry of Education, which was aware of the problems, said in 2015 that the "Study-in-China" quality certification system would be formed to improve the nation's program for ensuring the quality of education received abroad. The Chinese Ministry of Education issued the Quality Standards for the Tertiary Level of Education for International Students in China in 2018. These standards, which will be referred to as "the Standards" from this point forward, were created with the goal of controlling the education of overseas students at the institutional level. On the other hand, there is a need for an empirical study on the effect of the standards (Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This research focused on the role of financial aid in examining the academic experiences of overseas learners enrolled in Chinese institutions, particularly in the context of cross-cultural education. Overseas students' experiences with learning in China's higher education structure are influenced by variations in cultural background, academic expectations, language setting, and social integration. The study also sought to identify the challenges students have while adapting to various institutional and cultural environments. The study investigated financial aid, scholarships, and support in relation to students' academic achievement, mental well-being, and overall contentment with their education. If students had help with money, they could be able to do more academic and extracurricular pursuits, worry less about money, and make important relationships with people from other cultures. Researchers also looked at how students' access to various types of financial aid affects fairness in education, help from schools, and a sense of belonging. The objective of this research was to provide an extensive overview of the effects of financial support on matters such as cultural transformations and educational prospects. The research aimed to illustrate to lawmakers and university administrators the need of improving the educational experiences of foreign students in China via the integration of effective student care practices and culturally responsive teaching approaches.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Countries all across the world are putting greater effort into making higher education more international. It is vital for fostering national growth, encouraging cross-cultural engagement across countries, and cultivating international talent. Earlier research examined the primary factors affecting the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese short-term overseas students concerning daily life, education, and psychological aspects. The research aimed to ascertain the impact of personal characteristics, social support, linguistic proficiency, and cultural distance on learners' adaptive learning possibilities during their short international trips. It

sought to provide factual data to enhance the understanding of the obstacles faced by Chinese students in short-term worldwide educational experiences and to inform the formulation of effective support strategies for host institutions. The study's findings demonstrated that psychological, intellectual, and life adaptability were interrelated and affected by various factors. Learnability and communication were impacted by language proficiency. Mental stress and adjustment concerns increased with cultural distance. Social assistance from classmates, teachers, and host communities increased children's emotional well-being and adaptability. Prior overseas experience and intercultural understanding helped adaptation. Due to limited cultural immersion, short-term students have substantial but ephemeral adaptability restrictions. The findings showed that Chinese short-term foreign students needed intellectual, psychological, and intercultural help to adjust to other cultures (Zhang & Li, 2022). The major purpose of another previous research was to compare the different social situations in China and the United States that affected students' educational experiences in active learning classrooms. The research's purpose was to examine how cultural norms, communication techniques, and classroom expectations affected students' participation, communication, and involvement with active learning environments. Cross-cultural disparities in classroom educational experiences were evident in the study's findings. Cultural norms of regard for authority and fear of making errors led Chinese students to engage less in open conversations and group activities. Verbal and peer interaction were easier for US students. The research also indicated that learning environments and supportive classrooms reduced participation disparities. Culturally sensitive teaching practices promoted inclusive and successful active learning, according to the findings (Chiang et al., 2023). Utilising an experiential learning approach, the purpose of another previous study was to investigate how leisure activities helped Chinese overseas students' socio-cultural adaptation. The purpose of the research article was to analyse how leisure activities promoted social interaction, cultural learning, and the growth of intercultural competency in the host community. It aimed to comprehend how students really used leisure time as a setting for adaptation outside of official school environments. The study's findings indicated that leisure activities enhanced socio-cultural adaptation. Students gained linguistic, cultural, and social abilities via scheduled and unstructured leisure activities. Active participation with host neighbourhood residents boosted cultural understanding and belonging, studies showed. The findings showed that experience learning in the leisure sector assisted Chinese abroad students in adjusting to their culture (Zhang et al., 2022).

RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the impact of Financial Aid Availability on International Students in Chinese Universities?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher utilised SPSS 25 for accomplishing the complete analysis of collected quantitative data. The intensity and direction of the statistical connection of the variables were examined by employing the 95% confidence interval along with odds ratio. A statistically significant threshold was established by the investigators along with a p-value not greater than 0.05. To identify the most important aspects of the gathered data, an appropriate method of descriptive analysis was accomplished. Collected data was transformed by different statistical instruments for analysis of statistical data gathered from surveys and questionnaires were frequently investigated by employing quantitative methods.

Sampling

The researchers used simple random sampling method to conduct the study. Participants in the research were prompted to complete questionnaires for this study. Researchers sent out 550 questionnaires after utilising the Rao-soft programme to determine that there were 430 members of the chosen sample population. A sample size of 450 out of 512 was obtained by the researchers after 62 replies were eliminated due to incompleteness.

Data and Measurement

The current research study employed a survey questionnaire as its primary quantitative data gathering tool. In the second section of the survey, participants were enquired to rate various elements of both the online and offline channels on a pre-structured 5-point Likert scale, while first section asked for basic demographic information. The required secondary data came from a list of effective resources, mostly internet databases.

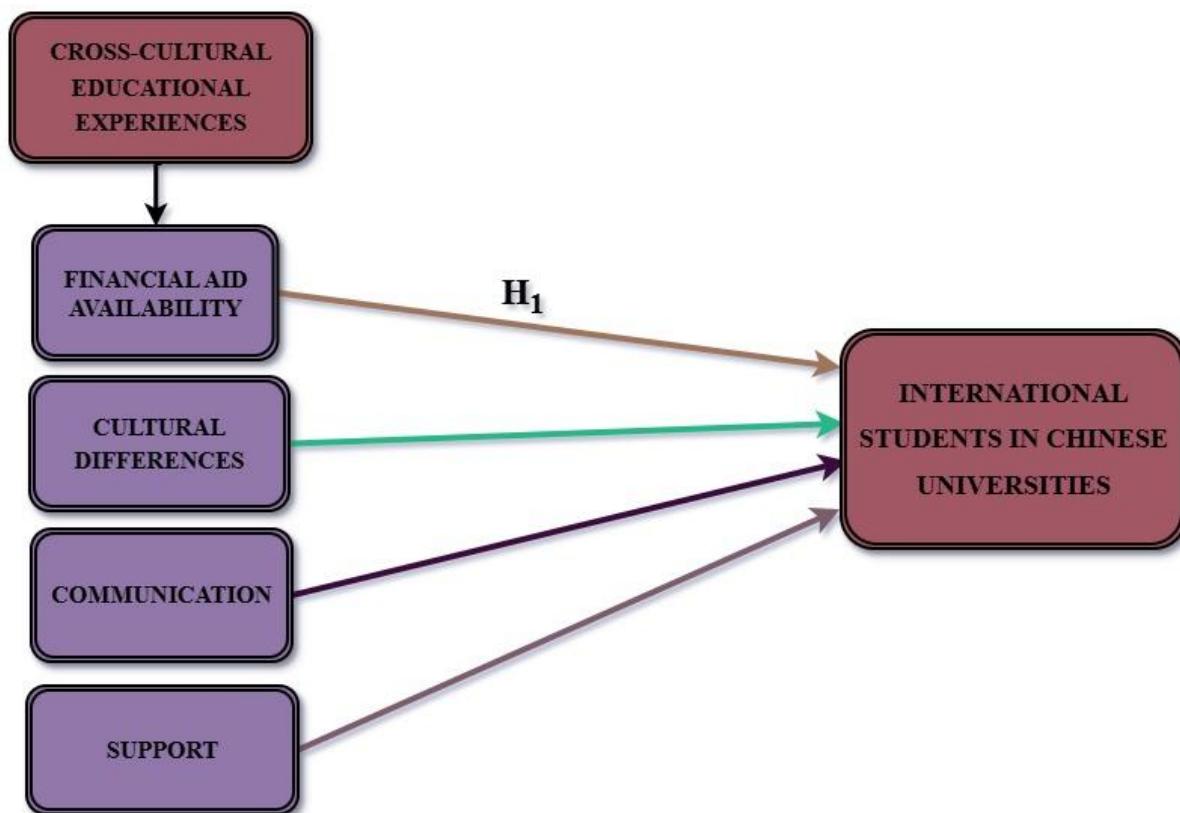
Statistical Software

The researcher employed SPSS version 25 software and Microsoft Excel for conducting the statistical analysis.

Statistical Tools

The data's essential nature was understood using descriptive analysis. It is essential that the researcher use ANOVA to examine the data.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



RESULT

- **Factor Analysis**

Factor analysis (FA) method aims to investigate undiscovered factors in the apparent statistical data. When there are insufficient observable indicators or influencing variables, regression coefficients are often used in evaluations. Modelling focusses on vulnerabilities, violations, and possibly clear connections. Many datasets acquired from various efficient regression analyses are evaluated by utilising the "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test". Initial results demonstrate that acquired theoretical framework and associated sample parameters provide reliable predictions. The data may show any signs of duplication. Smaller data makes it simpler to read. The researcher receives a number between 0 and 1 from KMO. If the value of KMO lies between 0.8 and 1, the collected sample size is deemed adequate.

These satisfy the acceptable levels, as mentioned by Kaiser: Kaiser has set the mentioned standards for approval.: 237

A pitiful 0.050 to 0.059, below average 0.60 to 0.69. Middle grades frequently lie within the range of 0.70-0.79.

Along with a quality point score, which ranges from 0.80 to 0.89. They marvel at the range of 0.90 to 1.00.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Testing for KMO and Bartlett's Sampling Adequacy Measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin: 0.920

The findings of Bartlett's test of Sphericity are as mentioned below:

Approx. chi-square= 3252.968

df =190; sig =.000

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.920
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Usually, the acquired number helps to organise the data obtained for the chosen sample. The statistical importance of the significant connection signals was evaluated by the researchers by employing the test of "Bartlett's Test of Sphericity." Researchers are certain they have a good sample while the estimated value of "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin" is the value of 0.920. The researchers' evaluation of "Bartlett's Sphericity test" accumulated a p-value of approximately 0.00, indicating the results being statistically significant. The correlation matrix fits in well with the "Bartlett's Sphericity test" findings, which were positive.

❖ **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

• **Cross-Cultural Educational Experiences**

Cross-cultural educational experiences are learning environments where students engage with a school system that differs from their own cultural background. Students may have these types of educational experiences when studying overseas or in a classroom with a diverse student body. For them, constant social interaction and educational activities are essential. Students' thoughts, words, and behaviours are influenced by their culture. Students must change their conduct and viewpoint to adjust to a new educational culture (Chudnovskaya & Millette, 2023). People's learning and teaching styles are influenced by their culture. It affects classroom behaviour, assessment practices, and student-teacher relationships. In certain cultures, debate and discussion are highly valued. Some emphasise how important it is to listen to others and obey instructions. In cross-cultural educational experiences, students must understand these differences. This understanding helps students succeed academically and socially. In a significant way, these educational experiences are formed by institutions. Academic guidance and orientation services assist transition. Students are more engaged when teachers use inclusive methods. Interaction is fostered via cultural exchange events. A sense of more relaxed and less alone is possible in an environment of care (Liu, 2022).

❖ FACTOR

• Financial Aid Availability

The amount of assistance that students may get in covering the cost of their education is determined by the availability of financial aid. Higher education is strongly dependent on it. For many students, assistance with housing, books, tuition, and other daily living costs is a lifeline. When financial aid is easily available, educational equality and inclusion increase significantly. There are several different financial assistance programs. Scholarships are often given out based on academic merit or extraordinary talent (Khoso et al., 2024). The recipients of grants are often students who need financial assistance. Students may take out loans and repay the money later. Several educational institutions also provide work-study opportunities. These options might lessen the financial burden on families and students. The availability of financial help greatly influences students' decision-making. For many students, affordability is a key consideration when choosing a school. Financial assistance may have an influence on students' eligibility for and choice of school. The lack of financial support might cause conflict. Additionally, students could experience pressure to work longer hours. This affects both academic performance and health. For international students, financial aid is often more limited. There may be fewer scholarships available. There may be strict criteria. Living expenses in other countries are an additional strain. When assistance is available, anxiety is reduced. This might lead to learning and integration taking front stage. Consistent funding improves completion and retention rates (Wilson et al., 2023).

❖ DEPENDENT VARIABLE

• International Students in Chinese Universities

Considering the recent decade, Chinese universities have seen a rise in overseas students. International students are visiting China more. Many like the affordable tuition and high-quality education. Foreign education is heavily supported by China. There are scholarships and aid for overseas students. Asia, Africa, and Europe provide most international students. Students prefer China for several reasons. Few students pursue medical, engineering, or science. Others want to learn Chinese. For many, studying in China boosts career prospects. Chinese universities have more international programs. There are English and Chinese classes. These events attract non-Chinese speakers. Schools upgrade campus amenities (Cao et al., 2022). International students may use their housing, library, and sports. Experiences in China vary for international students. Chinese history and food fascinate them, but Chinese pay less than Westerners. Language difficulties may complicate life and education. Adjusting to cultural differences may be difficult. The students are lonely and homesick. Chinese universities tackle these issues where students may take Chinese and orientation. Therapy and language help exist. University inclusion is rising as they promote international-local student exchanges (Yang, 2022).

➤ Relationship between Financial Aid Availability and International Students in Chinese Universities:

A initial number of global students in different Chinese universities is closely linked to financial aid. Financial aid determines who may study in China and how successfully they can pursue their degree in the universities. Many students looking to study abroad worry about expenses. Financial aid gives Chinese students additional academic options. Financial aid affects enrolment. Scholarships help poor students as many poor and affluent students desire to attend Chinese universities (Qi et al., 2022). This progress is being supported by government programs and scholarships. Students who get financial aid often choose China. Since many students may not even apply, assistance is required. Financial aid also affects college preferences. International students bear the costs of housing, food, health insurance, and transportation. Insufficient cash may cause anxiety. Some students may choose to work part-time. Studying takes less time and effort. Enough financial aid allows students to focus on their studies. Attendance in class and academic achievement both improve. Additionally, completion and retention rates are linked to financial aid. When students get steady financial

assistance, dropout rates are reduced. They may plan their academic endeavours with assurance. Schooling is often interrupted by unforeseen financial difficulties. Students can continue their education due to emergency funds and scholarships. This boosts university graduation rates in China (Wang et al., 2023).

As determined in the above discussion, the hypothesis has been created based on the consideration of exploring the strong connection among Financial Aid Availability and International Students in Chinese Universities:

"H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Financial Aid Availability and International Students in Chinese Universities."

"H₁: There is a significant relationship between Financial Aid Availability and International Students in Chinese Universities."

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	56516.128	156	5783.562	1085.299	.000
Within Groups	253.221	293	5.329		
Total	56769.349	449			

The research study acknowledged important findings. At the 0.05 alpha level, statistical significance was determined by the acquired F-value of around 1085.299 and the determined p-value of approximately 0.000. The results indicated that the alternative hypothesis, "*H₁: There is a significant relationship between Financial Aid Availability and International Students in Chinese Universities*" was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The initial fundamental argument of the study was the importance of academic success and socialisation for international students studying in different provinces of China. According to studies, most common cultural challenges experienced by students were language obstacles, unequal educational styles, and varied expectations for classroom involvement. They initially lacked intellectual or international trust, but when they enrolled in mixed-gender classes and participated in other positive school activities, their confidence grew. Financial aid has a considerable impact on students' assessments of their school experience. The results indicated that students receiving assistance for living costs, tuition waivers, and scholarships displayed reduced financial concerns, allowing for greater focus on learning and cultural inquiry. Students possessing substantial financial resources indicated a higher level of interest in academic and extracurricular pursuits. Again when financial resources weren't steady or weren't enough, worry levels went up, part-time jobs became more important, and chances to adapt to different cultures went down. Durable finances made it possible to buy language classes, fun activities, and teaching tools, all of which helped with adjusting to life in a different culture. A study found that both institutional support networks and financial aid help students do well in school and be happy in the long run. There was a strong link between cross-cultural education in Chinese schools and getting money, the data showed. These results show that foreign students need a lot of different kinds of help to do well in school. This includes financial aid, help with schoolwork and culture, and other tools.

CONCLUSION

The research concluded that financial assistance affected foreign students' cross-cultural education at Chinese colleges. Financial assistance particularly affected students' academic participation, cultural adaptation, and academic experience. Financial assistance availability

was positively associated with overseas students' involvement and achievement in Chinese higher education institutions, according to a statistical study. The removal of the null hypothesis indicated that financial assistance was crucial to students' education. Children who got financial aid focused on school and friends. Financial aid helped students succeed academically, participate on campus, and participate in extracurricular activities. This increased student-host institution relations and academic performance. Research showed that students with constant financial help were less likely to drop out. The conclusions also showed how important it is for institutions and governments to foster fairness in education. China was more enticing to students from many socioeconomic and cultural contexts because of scholarships, internships, and other financial aid programs. Financial aid made it easier for Chinese schools to become more international and for people from different cultures to interact with each other.

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