

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS'  
SATISFACTION WITH HIGHER  
EDUCATION SERVICE AND ITS  
INFULUENCE ON THEIR CROSS-  
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT IN  
JIANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA**

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## ABSTRACT

The population of international students in China is increasing sharply and their needs in hosting universities are getting diverse. This study investigates the experiences of international students across 9 universities in Jiangxi Province, China, focusing on their Cross-Cultural Adjustment (CCA) and Satisfaction with Educational Services (ES).

Through a mixed methods research approach, the study combines a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and satisfaction levels among international students. The quantitative aspect involves a survey distributed to 294 participants, employing SPSS and Smart-PLS for data analysis. Qualitative insights are gathered through in-depth interviews with 18 selected participants, utilizing the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) for analysis.

Results indicate an overall increase in satisfaction, primarily attributed to universities prioritizing services for international students. However, challenges persist, notably in faculty services due to a shortage of English-proficient professors. In terms of CCA, international students are facing more emotional and social challenges than academic ones. Notably, psychological issues linked to insufficient support during the COVID-19 pandemic are identified. The study also sheds light on the unique management approach in Chinese second-tier cities, where international students are entirely separated from local students, and strict policies, such as prohibiting off-campus housing, impact social adaptation. This closed-campus environment and stringent policies intensify challenges for international students, hindering their social integration. This study confirms that Satisfaction with ES played a mediating role in the process of cross-cultural adjustment, and its impact on the adjustment process was significant. It pinpoints academic experience and campus life as key for international students to overcoming adjustment difficulties. More importantly, collective satisfaction with ES is proved to be as a mediator in Personal-Emotional Adjustment (PEA), Academic Adjustment (AA), and Social Adjustment (SA). The findings provide valuable insights for improving international students' educational experience and well-being in Chinese second-tier cities (These are mid-sized cities in China with strong economic growth and development, ranking below first-tier cities like Beijing and Shanghai but above smaller cities).

In summary, the study highlights the intricate equilibrium needed between enhancing satisfaction and nurturing CCA. It quantifies the influence of Satisfaction with ES on the adjustment procedure and illustrates the role of collective satisfaction with these services in this process. Recommendations include enhancing language support, addressing faculty service issues, providing targeted psychological support during crises, and reconsidering strict management policies. By addressing these challenges, universities can enhance the overall educational experience for international students, contributing to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment and ultimately increasing Jiangxi Province's appeal as a destination for international students.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The internationalization of education is a crucial strategy for education development, and it is expected to contribute to the establishment of international economic cooperation and cultural integration (Lee & Rice, 2007; Ammigan, 2019; Ward et al., 2020). The increasing number of international students in China is a vital component of the country's efforts to improve relations with other nations. Implementing the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative has created a new historical opportunity for China and international students. In 2018, over 0.49 million international students were from 196 countries and regions in China, and 53% were from areas and countries along with China's OBOR initiative (MOE, China, 2018). Since then the number has remained stable at approximately 500,000 (Wen & Hu, 2023). China, the world's largest developing country, has become the third destination for studying abroad after the US and the UK.

Although China has made great efforts to attract international students, there is still a long way to go to cultivate a mature, multicultural campus culture and offer high-quality educational services (Gao & De Wit, 2017; Wen & Hu, 2023). China's universities undertake the duty of recruiting and cultivating international students, but there are some problems in academics and non-academics. Management and supervision skills of teachers and supervisors in Chinese higher institutions are limited in cross-cultural environments, which negatively impacts the training quality of overseas students in China (Gao & De Wit, 2017; Wen & Hu, 2023). Many universities in China fail to provide adequate management and service to their international students (Ding, 2016; Wen et al., 2018; An & Chiang, 2019; Jiang et al., 2020). Some simply