



**Factors Affecting the Adjustment and Well-being of International Students
at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Human and Social Development**

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Thesis Title Factors Affecting the Adjustment and Well-being of
International Students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai
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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the adjustment of international students by two objectives; 1) identifying the relationship between demographic factors and academic adaptation and examining the levels of differences in accordance with demographic factors in four dimensions of academic adaptation, and 2) examining the relationship among personal resources, such as emotional resources, intercultural communication skill and self-esteem, academic adaptation, and well-being.

The research was conducted at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand and the research methodology was the mixed methods; a set of questionnaire consisted of demographic questionnaire, 1) WHO Well-being Index (1998), 2) the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), 3) the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), 4) Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA), and 5) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used for collecting quantitative data and semi-structured interviews for collecting qualitative data. Participants were 151 of international students for the quantitative data and 13 key informants for the qualitative data.

Firstly, the results indicated that while ‘Length of Stay’ significantly differed in academic adaptation, no significant differences were found for the other five variables: gender, age, group of nationalities, religion and English proficiency. Secondly, path analysis showed that ‘Self-Esteem’ was the only personal level factor that affected academic adaptation, which in turn led to an increase in well-being. Thirdly, because the three personal resources were highly correlated without multicollinearity issues, the theoretical model was adjusted by treating each of the

resources as a manifest indicator of the latent factor, 'Personal Resources'. The results showed that personal resources significantly and positively affected academic adaptation, which in turn significantly influenced levels of well-being.

In addition, the qualitative data were used to explain the quantitative findings, specifically, a thematic analysis identified overarching themes to suggest the factors contributing to adjustment and well-being of international students: 'Successful Academic Achievement', 'Importance of Languages', and 'Empowering Personal Resources'.

Finally, the research suggested practical implications for enhancing international students' adjustment and well-being by fulfilling their needs. Taken together, the findings suggest an urgent need for the University to provide academic writing in English and Thai language courses for international students.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

| Abbreviations/Symbols | Meaning |
|------------------------------|--|
| AGFI | Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index |
| ANOVA | Analysis of Variance |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| AUN | ASEAN University Network |
| GFI | Goodness of Fit Index |
| IAM | Intercultural Adaptation Modeling |
| ICS | Intercultural Communication Skill |
| MGI | Model Goodness Fit |
| OECD | The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OHEC | Office of High Education Commission |
| PSU | Prince of Songkla University |
| PRICA | Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension |
| RMSEA | Root Mean Square Residual Error of Approximation |
| RSES | Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale |
| SRMR | Standardized Root Mean Square Residual |
| SACQ | Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire |
| SEM | Structural Equation Modeling |
| SMC | Squared Multiple Correlations |
| SSEIT | Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test |
| THE-AC | The Thailand's Education Hub for Southern Region of ASEAN Countries |
| U.S.A. | The United States of America |
| U.K. | The United Kingdom of Great Britain |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

LIST OF PUBLISHED PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS**S/NO****List of Published Papers and Proceedings**

- 1 Toward a Better Adjustment of International Students in Thailand: A Case Study at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus (Manuscript submitted for publication to *Journal of International Students* [JIS]). ERIC Platform and indexed in Thomson Reuters, ESCI/Clarivate, Analytics, Scopus, ProQuest, EBSCOHost, OCLC/WorldCat, IDP Database of Research on International Education, CiteFactor, DRJI, Questia, GIF, and Google Journal Metrics
- 2 Academic Adaptation of International Students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand. Paper presented at 10th International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences, 10th ICHiSS 2018, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) 11th May 2018-13th May 2018. Organized by National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Papers

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Track: Regular Track

Title: Toward a Better Adjustment of International Students in Thailand: A Case Study at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus

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Name of Presenter: Yejin Kim

Paper ID: ICHISS 10 066

Theme: 7 - TEACHING AND EDUCATION

Status of Paper: Conference proceeding

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE FOR 10th ICHISS 2018

Thank you for your kind interest in participating in the 10th International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences (ICHISS) 2018 which will be held this year from 11th – 13th May 2018 at The Royale Chulan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

We are pleased to inform you that your abstract is accepted to be presented in the 10th ICHISS 2018.

The panel of evaluator is in opinion that your paper does contain information linking with one of the sub-themes of our conference. It will be better and more relevant if it shows linkage to the main theme of the conference which is "Understanding Regional and Global Integration on Humanities and Social Sciences". We hope, if possible, you will try to improve on this when you write your full paper.

Kindly submit your full paper, registration form and copyright form via online to submission@upnm.edu.my with the subject of e-mail: 'Your Paper ID: ICHISS 2018' before 15th March 2018. You are advised to edit and adhere to the format stated in our website when submitting your full paper and copyright form either Option 1 or Option 2.

For registration fees and payment method, please refer to our conference website at: <http://ichiss.upnm.edu.my/index.php/2016-02-12-09-20-52/registration-fees>. Kindly take note on the advantage of the 'early bird' registration fee promotion and send the evidence of payment and a copy of active student card (only for student) to submission@upnm.edu.my.

Should you have any inquiries or require further clarifications, kindly contact us at: submission@upnm.edu.my. Thank you for your kind cooperation and attention on the above matter. We look forward to see you at the conference.

"DUTY, HONOUR, INTEGRITY"

With best regards,

Organizing Committee of 10th ICHISS 2018

Introduction

Background

Humans have an ability to adjust to different situations from birth. It is undeniable that it is part of human's nature. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2007), 'Adjustment, in psychology, is the behavioral process by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles in their environments'. Mesidor and Sly (2016, p. 263) noted that 'adjustment, derived from the Latin word ad-justare, is the process by which one balances needs and obstacles in his or her environment'. The change from previous behaviors to current behaviors is called 'adjustment' or 'adaptation'.

When humans encounter obstacles or difficulties and are not able to fulfill their needs, they make a change in their own behaviors to maintain a balance among their needs. The adjustment can occur in different circumstances. Feldman (1990) stated several circumstances, such as 1) defining and maintaining one's individuality, 2) maintaining physical and mental health, 3) forming relationships with others, and 4) living with others in a complex society.

One of those occurs when humans leave their home country to start living in the host country. If the period of living in the host country is relatively short, they are titled as 'sojourners' and the process as 'adjustment' (Church, 1982). 'Sojourners Adjustment' is one of the crucial topics to be researched for understanding human behaviors in enhancing the quality of their lives and to foster the achievement of their own goals in the host countries.

Among the various types of sojourners, students who started living in the host countries for a short term are the significant collective body to be observed and studied since 1950s. After the initial study was conducted by Lysegaard in 1955 for the sake of Norwegian students in the U.S., titled 'Adjustment in a Foreign Society: Norwegian Fulbright Grantees Visiting the U.S.', many other researches have been performed targeting the same group of people.

The definition of International student, Pare and Tsay (2013) concluded after studying different countries and contexts, such as, Australia, the United States,

Japan, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 'is used essentially to refer to people who are studying in foreign educational institutions'.

Since ASEAN University Network (AUN) has actively taken its role in Asia, students in higher education have been exchanged in ASEAN countries. AUN originated from the idea 'to hasten the solidarity and development of a regional identity through the promotion of human resource development so as to further strengthen the existing network of leading universities and institutions of higher learning in the region at 4th ASEAN Summit in 1992. This was established in November 1995 with the signing of its Charter by Ministers from six-member countries, and with initial participation of eleven universities from six countries (AUN Website, 2016).

Strategically, AUN has the specific focus area which is 'Higher Education' from the beginning. AUN and the universities which signed A Memorandum of Agreement on the establishment of the ASEAN University Network tackled two main issues of 'Higher Education' among ASEAN. The first may be implied by the word, 'New and Common Higher Educational Mechanism', as it is dealing with hardware of Higher Education: for instance, programs, degrees, common research projects and visiting professors. The other is about 'practical and prompt cooperation' which they could implement by using the existing networks, scholars, researchers and academic programs (AUN Website, 2016).

Consequently, successful and visible results from the second category of AUN's strategy were found in ASEAN member countries in 2018. Gradually, the member of universities to join AUN has been increased: 11 universities from 6 countries in 1995, 17 universities from 10 countries in 1999, 20 universities in 2006, 21 universities in 2007, 22 universities in 2009, 26 universities in 2010, and 30 universities in 2013 (Gahaseni, 2015). Prince of Songkla University (PSU) joined the network in 2013 and has been fulfilling and performing the roles of the members in achieving the purpose of AUN.

The number of international students in Thailand is numerous. According to the data from an annual survey by The Office of Higher Education Commission, 16,999 international students enrolled at 107 higher educational institutes in Thailand in 2012 (OHEC, 2015). After Prince of Songkla University (PSU) joined as a member of AUN (ASEAN University Network) in 2013, the numbers of

internationals who enrolled at PSU increased rapidly from 11 in 2013, to 160 in 2017 (Graduate Office, 2017).

Looking at Table 1, 242 international students studied in the first semester in 2017 as the first or the second year of Master's degree program students, or the first, second or third year Ph.D. program students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand.

Table 1: The Analysis of International Students Registered in the First Semester of 2017

| Faculty | Number of International Students | Faculty | Number of International Students |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Agro-Industry | 18 | Medicine | 39 |
| Environment Management | 19 | Management Science | 3 |
| Engineering | 45 | Science | 43 |
| Dentistry | 4 | Traditional Thai Medicine | 3 |
| Natural Resources | 14 | Liberal Arts | 15 |
| Nursing | 19 | Health System Management | 2 |
| Pharmaceutical Science | 12 | Marine And Coastal Resources Management | 6 |
| Total | | 242 | |

Note: This was limited to the 1st or 2nd year of Master's degree program, or the 1st – 3rd year of Ph.D. program.

Statement

Internationalizing or globalization, undoubtedly, is one social phenomenon in 21st century. In this distinctive current trend of time, more than 242 students from other countries decided to study at Prince of Songkla University in Thailand in 2017.

The obvious thing is the fact that they had left from their home countries and have been staying in the new environment; South Thailand. International students, undoubtedly, encounter problems or difficulties after their arrivals in host countries (Mustaffa & Ilias, 2013).

Homesickness, prejudice and discrimination, language proficiency, culture shock, fear and financial challenges are predicted as the sources of acculturative and academic stress (Akhtar, 2012). Academic system, accommodation, food, religious environment, and social norms and values might trigger difficulties for international students in new and foreign countries (Zapf, 1991; Mustaffa & Ilias, 2013; Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac, & Elsayed, 2013; Rujipak & Limprasert, 2016; Alemu & Cordier, 2017).

Although it is very natural that students meet difficulties and even national students have more stress than international students in some parts (Akhtar, 2012), the necessity to understand international students' problems and difficulties for adjustment cannot be ignored.

Consequently, academic attempts of scholars to understand those who suffer from the cross-cultural circumstance have been made since 1950s. It, presumptively, contains a remarkable fact that the first scholar on the issue possessed the positive attitude to solve the social problem and the neutral one to focus on the explanation of the students' adjustment in U.S.A. by dividing several stages; the well-known theory, the U-curve theory, was designed (Lysegaard, 1955).

Countless researches in psychology, management or social science have been conducted to explain and to predict the issue, "Adjustment or Adaptation". In psychology, one of the keywords of studies on the adjustment is a 'stress' or 'acculturative stress', and psychologists try to measure its level. For instance, Akhtar (2012) studied acculturative stress and psychological well-being of international students in Germany with various measurements. In the focus of management science has been to examine migrant workers' stress and antecedents (Palthe, 2004) and to develop the framework for the adjustment of migrant workers or expatriates.

However, most of these studies have been performed in Northern America and Europe, while, few studies relatively have been conducted in Asia

continent and particularly since the commencement of ASEAN. Moreso, although the headquarter of the AUN is located in Thailand, little research on the adjustment among international students in Thailand has been done (Jareonsubphayanont, 2014; Rujipak, 2016; Rujipak & Limprasert, 2016).

Therefore, the research may be able to contribute to the understanding of the adjustment among international students in one of the Asian countries, Thailand, and to influence stakeholders' action.

Purposes

Tackling the issue effectively with the previous academic achievement on the adaptation or adjustment among international students in host countries, the research was designed to fulfill two fundamental purposes. The first is to identify demographic factors differing the academic adaptation of international students at PSU, the other was to understand the relationships among personal resources, academic adaptation of international students, and their well-being.

The first purpose of the research is to obtain the fundamental results on the adjustment among international students at PSU in Thailand. Which demographic factors of international students at PSU differ in their own academic adaptation. The demographic factors of this research are consisted of six factors: gender, age, group of nationalities, religion, length of reside, and English languages proficiency (see Figure 1).

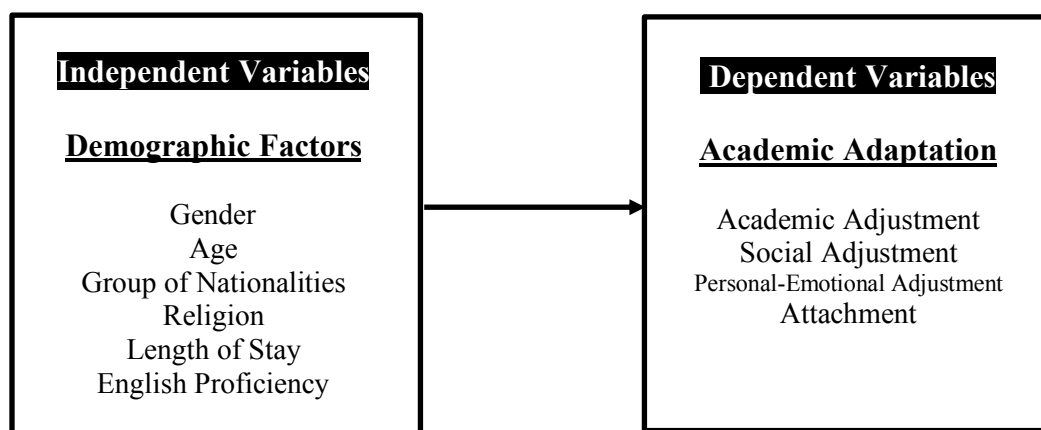


Figure 1: The Framework of the First Research Purpose

To measure the levels of the academic adaptation of international students by demographic factors, the research was adopted the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Baker and Siryk (1999). It is one of the authentic measurements for researching the level of adjustment of international students in four dimensions: 1) academic adjustment, 2) socio-cultural adjustment, 3) personal-emotional, and 4) environment adjustment or attachment to the college or university.

Secondly, the research studied the relationships between personal resources and academic adaptation, and between academic adaptation and well-being. Previous study in Thailand, for instance Rujiprak (2016) studied the relationships between personal resources and cross-cultural adjustment in Thailand, based on the acculturation model by Ward and colleagues (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). She studied how social support and self-efficacy affect cultural adjustment and how cultural adjustment influences psychological stress and life satisfaction.

This research adopted three significant factors, which have not been researched in Thailand yet, but well-known components affecting human behaviors: emotional intelligence, intercultural communication skill (apprehension) and self-esteem. In the research, it was expected that emotional intelligence, intercultural communication skill (apprehension), and self-esteem as independent variables affect academic adaptation as the dependent variable, and in turn, academic adaptation factor affects well-being.

The model of this study was developed by the research, since there is no previous theory to explain the relationships among personal resources, academic adaptation, and well-being. Although it is true that previous studies were conducted to identify the relationships between personal resources to academic adaptation and well-being of international students, no theory explaining relationships among those has been presented. Therefore, this research developed to the model to explore and understand the relationships among three personal resources, academic adaptation and well-being after studying previous research related and linked to the issue.

Figure 2 displays the second purpose of the research. It was hypothesized that 1) emotional intelligence, intercultural communications, and self-esteem predict academic adaptation and well-being, 2) academic adaptation affect the

levels of well-being of international students in the host country, and 3) academic adaptation act as a mediator between three independent variables and the last dependent variable which is well-being.

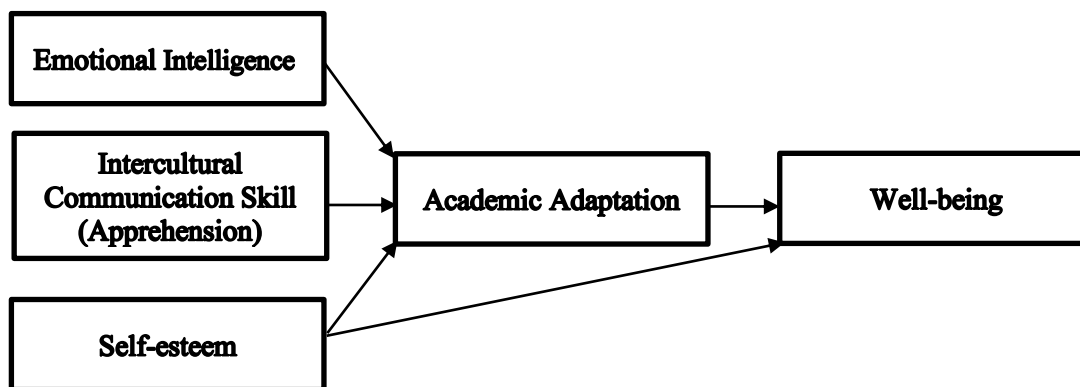


Figure 2: The Framework of the Second Research Purpose

Objectives

- 1) To identify demographic factors differing in the academic adaptation of international students at PSU, and to see the levels of academic adaptation in four dimensions by comparing means of it with demographic factors
- 2) To describe how personal resources, such as emotional intelligence, intercultural communication and self-esteem, affect the academic adaptation, in turn how the academic adaptation affects well-being of international students at PSU, and to examine whether academic adaptation acts as a mediator between personal resources and well-being

Significance

In the circumstance that there is little research on the adjustment of the international students in Thailand, this research may trigger the academic interests among the stakeholders in Thailand by presenting the results on the international students' adjustment at PSU.

Secondly, it is expected to contribute to accumulation of knowledge on the crucial demographic factors related to the international students' adjustment in the host country. It is strongly believed that the findings of this study will form a

fundamental data base for further studies and might be used to prepare a framework for the international students who need to adjust to the cross-cultural environment in Thailand,

Lastly, as the research might discover how much three personal resources contribute to the academic adaptation to the new environment of international students and how their academic adaptation at PSU affects their well-being, it might be expected to provide insight on how to enhance the adjustment of international students by developing some activities or projects to strengthen the personal resources.

To sum up, all the findings of the research may be valuable for compiling an initial data on adjustment of international students in Thailand, and for encouraging the stakeholders at PSU and in Thailand to evaluate and develop their policies, projects or activities for enhancing the quality of international students' adjustment in Thailand.

Study Limitations

1. Design of the Research

- 1) Prince of Songkla University (PSU); PSU has five campuses in South Thailand, Trang, Phuket, Surattani, Pattani, and Hat Yai. The research has defined Hat Yai Campus as the representative of PSU due to the largest population of the total students and the international students.
- 2) The research limited the sampling group of international students in the Graduate department due to the population to the 1st and 2nd year of Master's Program, and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of Ph.D. Program students who registered in the first semester in the academic year, 2017.

2. Contents

- 1) The research presented several remarkable points rather than stating all the results.
- 2) The research did not evaluate the effectiveness of policies, projects, or activities related to the adjustment of international students at PSU.

Definition of Terms in the Research

- 1) ASEAN; It is the abbreviation of the name of the organization, Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- 2) AUN: AUN is the abbreviation of the name of the sub-organization of ASEAN, ASEAN University Network which including ten countries.
- 3) Prince of Songkla University (PSU); PSU has five campuses in South Thailand, Trang, Phuket, Surattani, Pattani, and Hatyai. The research has defined Hatyai campus as the representative of PSU due the largest population of ASEAN students.
- 4) ASEAN students; as the research focuses on the International students from ASEAN member countries at Prince of Songkla University in Thailand, it is called 'ASEAN students' due to the AUN.
- 5) Thailand culture; Although the research will be conducted in South Thailand only, it is very reasonable to call the context as a Thailand culture due to the location.
- 6) TEH-AC; It is the abbreviated term of the scholarship, the Thailand's Education Hub for Southern Region of ASEAN Countries, bestowed to the international students that meet its required qualification
- 7) Well-being: The WHO-5 Well-being Index (1998) was hired to measure the level of well-being.
- 8) SACQ; Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire designed by Baker and Siryk in 1999 was used to measure the level of Academic Adaptation.
- 9) RSES: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure the level of Self-esteem.
- 10) SSEIT; Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (Schutte et al., 1998) was used to measure the level of Emotional Intelligence.
- 11) PRICA; Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension was used to measure the level of Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension: Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997)

Literature Review

Adjustment have been studied by various scholars in social science, psychology, education and management, to conceptualize, to suggest variables affecting it, and to develop a framework to enhance the adaptation of international students in host countries. The chapter is divided into two parts to understand the adjustment: 1) three categories as a theoretical background and 2) related previous studies.

Three Categories

There are various academic efforts to explain previous research of adjustment of international students with different categories developed by researchers: it is beneficial that their efforts have provided feasible angles to understand the complexity of it.

Simmala (2008, p. 66) emphasized two functions of most theories on cross-cultural adjustment as ‘explaining’ and ‘predicting’. Hwang, Martirosyan, and Moore (2016) studied previous research with two categories, ‘conceptual applications of existed models or typologies’ and ‘the nature of problems faced by international students’. The recent study reviewed international students’ adjustment research by Vasilopoulos (2016) suggested two approaches to categorize previous research with Deleuzian ontology: ‘the problem-solving approach’ and ‘the language socialization and language identity approach’.

The first approach was related to finding individual factors, complex variables and its relationships, roles of language in cross-cultural environment, and social context affecting adjustment. The other focused on examining the meanings of their identity in host country with different linguistic standpoints, such as conceptualizations of international students, essentialized identities, and homogeneous processes (Vasilopoulos, 2016).

It would be beneficial to divide previous research into three categories based on its purposes: 1) conceptualization of the process of adjustment, 2)

identification of factors affecting adjustment, 3) frameworks enhancing adjustment of international students.

1. Conceptualization of the Adjustment of sojourners

According to the Wikipedia (2016), the term, 'adjustment in English' is used in several different sciences: law, mathematics, metrology, chiropractic practice, and psychology. Among all the definitions in each of the areas, it is worth stating the psychological definition, 'In psychology, adjustment refers to the behavioral process of balancing conflicting needs or needs against obstacles in the environment'.

Psychologists have had the initiative to study on adjustment in many circumstances from the beginning however, adjustment of sojourners in host countries has been studied in psychology vigorously.

The significant aspect on the definition of adjustment above is to elucidate it with 'the behavioral process'; in other words, it is recognized to have a process aspect, rather than a steady aspect. This similar attempts and efforts are found in conceptualizing the adjustment of sojourners. There are two well-known theories on the adjustment of sojourners: the U-curve theory and the W-curve Theory.

1.1 The U-curve Theory and the W-curve Theory

In the U-curve theory, designed by Lysgaard in 1955, the cross-cultural adjustment is described with four stages, which has distinctive features: 1) honeymoon stage, individuals are attracted by the new and different culture, 2) culture shock stage, which begins after newcomers start to cope with real conditions on daily basis, and frustration and hostility towards the host country and its people, 3) adjustment stage, individuals gradually adapts to the new social norms and values of the host nation and can have more appropriate behaviors than before, and 4) mastery stage, individual can behave in the host country appropriately (Zapf, 1991). However, the U-curve has the weakness due to the poor data and little empirical support (Church, 1982; Klineberg & Hull, 1979).

In spite of the academic limitation, the U-curve has been employed as an easy tool to describe and explain the sojourners in their new social circumstances

by the stakeholders to help their more comprehensive understanding of the cross-cultural adjustment.

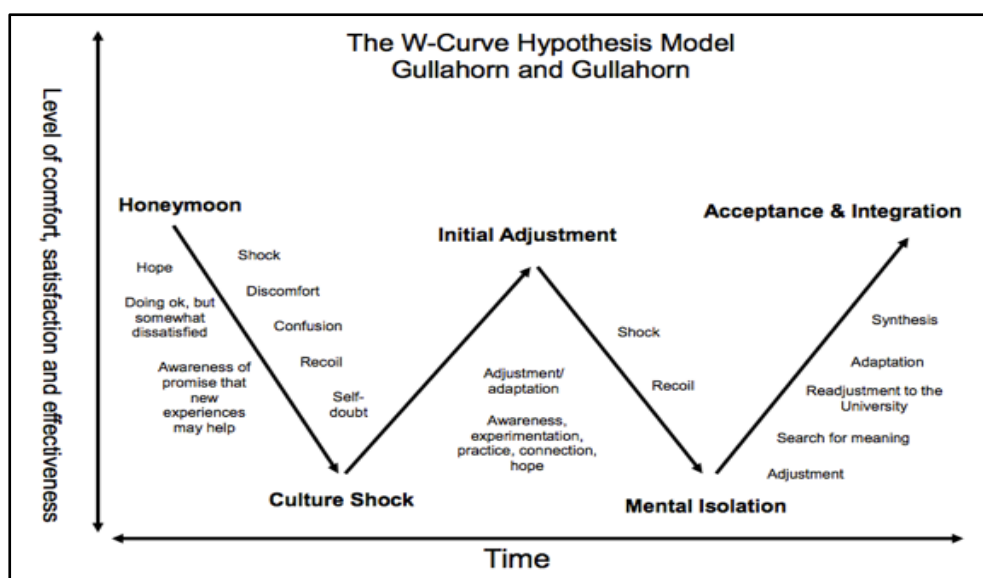


Figure 3: The W-Curve Model by Gullahorn and Gullahorn. (Source: Hoffenburger, K., Mosier, R., & Stokes, B.(1999). Transition experience. In J.H. Schuh(Ed.), Educational programing and student learning in college and university residence hall, Columbus, OH: ACUHO-I)

In 1960s, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1968) extended the U-curve pattern into the W-curve pattern (see Figure 3) to explain adjustment of sojourners in host country in detail. It is called the W-curve, which a U pattern is found twice. They divided the adjustment with 5 states: 1) honeymoon, 2) culture shock (low stage), 3) initial adjustment, 4) mental isolation (low stage), and 5) acceptance and integration (Chang, 1997). The W-curve model has been widely accepted due to the more comprehensive understanding of sojourners' adjustment.

In addition, different conceptualization of adjustment was attempted. Simmala (2008) summarized two other longitudinal perspectives on the adjustment: five stages by Alder (1975), and Ito's model (2003). The first has five stages: the contact stage, disintegration stage, the reintegration stage, the autonomy stage and independence stage. The other also has five stages; building the Dream, Discovering, Reactions, overcoming obstacles and Reflecting on the journey.

These academic efforts contributed to understanding the adjustment as a process of behavioral changes or transformation in new environment, no matter what each of stages was titled.

2. Identification of Factors Affecting Adjustment

Adjustment of international students is a complex, multi-faced and dynamic process (Mustaffa & Ilias, 2013; Brown & Holloway, 2008). Thus, the second academic trend of studies on the adjustment is related to how to measure the levels of quality of adjustment, to examine its' various dimensions to uncover the multi-facets, and to identify factors affecting the adjustment of international students.

2.1 Measuring the Levels of the Adjustment

Scholars have been making academic efforts to device measurements for examining the levels of adjustment of international students in host countries. While the first academic category is to examine the process of adjustment of international students longitudinally, the second one is to see the levels of adjustment in various dimensions. This academic approach creates measurement tools to the quality of adjustment in different dimensions:

As a result, Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) was developed by Baker and Siryk in 1999 to measure students' adjustment in higher-education. The measurement tool consists of four dimensions to find the variables: academic, socio-cultural, personal-emotional and environment adjustment dimensions (Baker and Siryk titled it as subscales, the research used the term, dimensions, due to its multi-faced character).

The research is based on SACQ's dimensions, the four subscales or dimensions, are arguably regarded as fundamental dimensions: 1) academic adjustment, 2) socio-cultural adjustment, 3) personal-emotional adjustment, and 4) attachment to college, the other term for this dimension is institutional attachment.

2.2 Finding Predictors

With the measurements, scholars have been studying to find predictors of adjustment of international students in new environment. The predictors can be

divided into three groups: one is socio-demographic factors, the other is personal resources, and the last is environment or experience.

Socio-demographic factors, such as gender, age, origin of birth, program, status, style of residence, etc., have been studied as possible predictors affecting or influencing adjustment of international students.

Personal resources, such as self-esteem, intercultural communication skills, emotional intelligence, coping styles, locus of control, etc., have been regarded as predictor of adjustment. Mohadmed (2012) studied to identify predictors of adjustment of university students; the study examined personal resources, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, social support, attachment security, and emotional intelligence as predictors to adjustment of university students. Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac, and Elsayed (2013) found that international students' personal strength may decrease acculturative stress with increasing better adjustment.

Lastly, scholars have been studying which environment or experience factors affect adjustment of international students, for instance, previous experience abroad. Alemu and Cordier's study in Korea (2017) found that the factors, such as satisfaction in academic and education quality, socializing with Koreans and foreigners, information accuracy received about academic and social life, influenced positively international students' satisfaction, while experiencing difficulties on public services influenced their satisfaction negatively.

3. Developing Frameworks for Enhancing the Adjustment

The third academic approach towards conceptualizing the process of cross-cultural adjustment and identifying factors affecting adjustment of international students in various dimensions is to help individuals, who are struggling to adapt to the situations in the host countries. This can be done by enhancing their adaptation abilities, or eliminating or reducing their stress in the new conditions through various attempts, or developing a framework for preparation of the individuals' cross-cultural adjustment through 1) clinical approach, 2) social skill learning approach, 3) social cognition approach, and 4) developing framework for the adaptation approach.

For instance, Abe, Talbot & Geelhoed (1998) found out that participant of International Peer Program (IPP) at Michigan had higher score of Student

Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) than the nonparticipants on average. After affirming the effectiveness of the IPP, the study suggests implications for the future project such as the way of pairing students, training of academic skills to host students, and planning and implementing a service project for campus development. (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998, p. 546).

Related Previous Studies

1. Demographic Factors Affecting the Adjustment

It is common to assume that some demographic factors influence the adjustment of international students in the host countries. Mohamed (2012) studied the relationship between socio-demographic variables and adjustment of university students. The socio-demographic variables were gender, age, marital status, socioeconomic and general Status, residential/home-leaving Status, international student Status, ethnicity and disability, and Course of Study.

Gender can be a factor significantly affecting international students' academic achievement (Khan, Hamdan, Ahmad, & Mustaffa, 2015). Clinciu, and Cazan (2014) restated from Gadzella and Carvalho's study in 2006 that women declare more stressful experience than men do. However, the result of the study conducted in Thailand (Rujiprak & Limprasert, 201) was contrary: there was no significant difference for male and female in socio-cultural adjustment. On the other hand, Lee, Park, and Kim (2009) found significant gender differences in psychological adjustment, but female had the higher scores.

Age. Yusoff and Chlliah (2010) cited Sumer et al.'s work in 2008 that older students were more likely to report higher levels of anxiety in the adjustment. A study by Rujiprak and Limprasert (2016) found significant difference of age in cross-cultural adjustment of international students in Thailand: over 25 years old international students reported better adjustment than two other groups, under 20 years and 21-24 years old.

Group of nationalities. The relationship between the origin of nationalities and academic adaptation was researched. According to Ruiprak and Limprasert's study (2016), the different country of origin groups affected well-being

and the socio-cultural adjustment. However, interestingly, Western student performed better in socio-cultural adjustment than Asian students. On the contrary, Alemu and Cordier (2017) found that international students from the East Asia were more satisfied than other international students while studying in Korea.

Religion. According to perceived cultural proximity theory (Espina, 2013), the more similarity of culture found between home and host countries, the more satisfaction is found in the host countries. Religion is one of the factors considered in cultural proximity because it creates common identity similar to same ethnic group (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The study of Alsahafi and Shin (2017) noted that Saudi students faced limitation in social life including religion. Religion is also regarded as one of key factors identifying an individual's identity in Malaysia (Hashim, Baker, Mamat, & Razali, 2016).

Length of Stay. The longer length of reside in the host country was associated with lower levels of psychological distress among Asian and Latin American international college students (Yusoff and Chlliah, (2010) cited Wilton and Constnatine (2003)). Alemu and Cordie (2018) identified that the number of years residing in Korea had a positive and significant correlations with international students' satisfaction in Korea. On the contrary, Ruripark and Limprasert (2016) found no significant difference of length of stay in Thailand on socio-cultural adjustment and well-being.

English proficiency. Mustaffa and Ilias (2013) found that differences in Language proficiency, English language and Malay language, significantly affected the cross-cultural adjustment in Malaysia. Baklashova and Kazakov (2016) stressed that language was one of the barriers that international students have to overcome for communications with professors and colleagues and for academic achievement.

2. Personal Resources

Recent research by Rujiprak (2016) studied the relationships between personal resources, such as social support and self-efficacy, and international students' adjustment in Thailand. Khan, Hamdan, Ahmad, and Mustaffa (2015) stressed the importance of successful adjustment in academic achievement and found that personal

resources, such as self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, significantly influence international students' academic achievement.

Emotional Intelligence, Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension) and Self-esteem. In this research, three independent variables, emotional intelligence, intercultural communication, and self-esteem in personal resources affecting human behaviors, are presented. According to the Coleman's definition of Emotional intelligence (2008), "it can be defined as the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior". Mesidor and Sly (2016) defined that "Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, evaluate, manage one's emotions, and interact with others".

Mesidor and Sly (2016) stated that cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are regarded as 'two important concepts pertaining to adjustment' (p. 264). In their study, emotional intelligence enhances cultural intelligence. It means that emotional intelligence is the fundamental personal resource that affects the adjustment of international students.

Secondly, intercultural communication is regarded as an ability to interact through verbal and/or non-verbal behaviors between different cultures. As Mingli (2015) stated that communication in host countries is one of the challenges that the sojourners need to overcome. It means that the more the sojourners adjustment in new host countries, the more the level of the intercultural communication behavior should be.

According to Intercultural Adaptation Modeling (IAM), communicative behavior acts a role to catalyze understanding others in cross-cultural interactions (Cai, & Rodriguez, 1996). It means that there might be a relationship between the level of intercultural communication and the adjustment in cross-cultural circumstance. They concluded that 'individuals who have had positive experiences should be better adapters than those persons who have not had positive experiences' (Cai, & Rodriguez, 1996).

Thirdly, self-esteem, is one of the concepts which have been widely and constantly studied in sociology, psychology and counseling. Since the first

definition of 'self-esteem' was made by William James in 1892 (Magic, 1996), many scholars have been tried to suggest the right definition of self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967; Wells & Marwell, 1976; Harter, 1999). It is arguably accepted that an individual's positive feeling toward oneself is known as 'self-esteem' or 'self-concept' (Auweele, 1999; Liukkonen, 2007; Tavakolizadeh, Abedizadeh, & Panahi, 2012).

At present, self-esteem is one of the most essential core self-evaluation dimensions, which locus of control, neuroticism and self-efficacy are included, to predict individual's abilities for producing work outcomes, especially, job satisfaction and job performance (Jodge, Locke, & Durham 1997).

Self-esteem is not only one of the main positive factors for individuals to adjust in different environments, but also one of the essential psychological features (Malee, 2005). One of its roles, which are variously found, is to mediate and indirectly influence among two different environments or human behaviors (Julee, 2008). Therefore, it is expected that emotional intelligence, intercultural communication, and self-esteem affect the adjustment of international students at PSU. Furthermore, it is expected that the better academic influences the better Well-being, while international student are studying at PSU.

3. Well-being

It is commonly acceptable that cultural differences between home and host countries cause the problems, for instance, verbal and/or body language, food, climate, academic environment, manners, different academic system, or religious environment. Otlu (2010) noted that 'culture shock' is almost one unavoidable obstacle to any across-culture person.

Also, Zapf (1991, p.107) noted that 'this experience: to be a negative experience, an emotional 'down', a decreased sense of well-being', has been labeled as 'culture shock' in the literature since the early 1960s when anthropologist Kalervo Oberg (1960) introduced the expression. Oberg argued that 'culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse' (1960, p. 142.)

Zapf (1991) tried to find the relationship between culture shock and adaptation or adjustment by citing Asking and Kealey's study (1977): 'culture shock

focuses on the manner which persons experience in, and cope with the cyclic psychological, physiological, and vocational fluctuations associated with the adjustment in the first months in a new environment (p. 91)'. Moreover, the separation from home causes depression, anxiety, withdrawn behavior, hardship to adjust in new environment (Thurber, & Walton, 2012).

Therefore, according to the previous studies, it is anticipated that studying abroad influences international students' psychological aspect. In various variables in psychological aspect, the research adopted Well-being as the last dependent variable due to the definition of it by Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sanders (2012).

It is eventually not an easy task to define the term, well-being. According to Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sander's new attempt to define the well-being (2012), it is the balance point between individual's resource pool and the challenges faced, psychologically, physically, and socially. See Figure 4.



Figure 4: The Definition of Well-being: source from Dodge, R., Daly, A., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(3), 222-235

According to the definition, Well-being is not only a passive factor affected by culture shock, homesickness or stress in host countries, but also an active factor overcoming challenges in new environment to international students. Thus, it is

worth measuring their well-being levels not only to examine their psychological status, but also to see their possibilities of making their balances between the challenges and the resources.

The results of Rujiprak and Limprasert's study (2016) affirmed that the socio-cultural adjustment had a positive and moderate correlation with psychological well-being, and levels of academic adjustment, physical and mental health adjustment, and living environment affected socio-cultural adjustment.

To sum up, based on the previous studies related to international students' adjustment, this research was designed as follows; The total research framework displays at figure 5: 1) the research hypothesizes that demographic factors (gender, age, group of nationalities, religion, length of stay, and English proficiency) affect academic adaptation outcomes, 2) antecedent factors (emotional intelligence, intercultural communication skill and self-esteem) influence academic adaptation outcomes, in turn, academic adaptation directly affects well-being aspect.

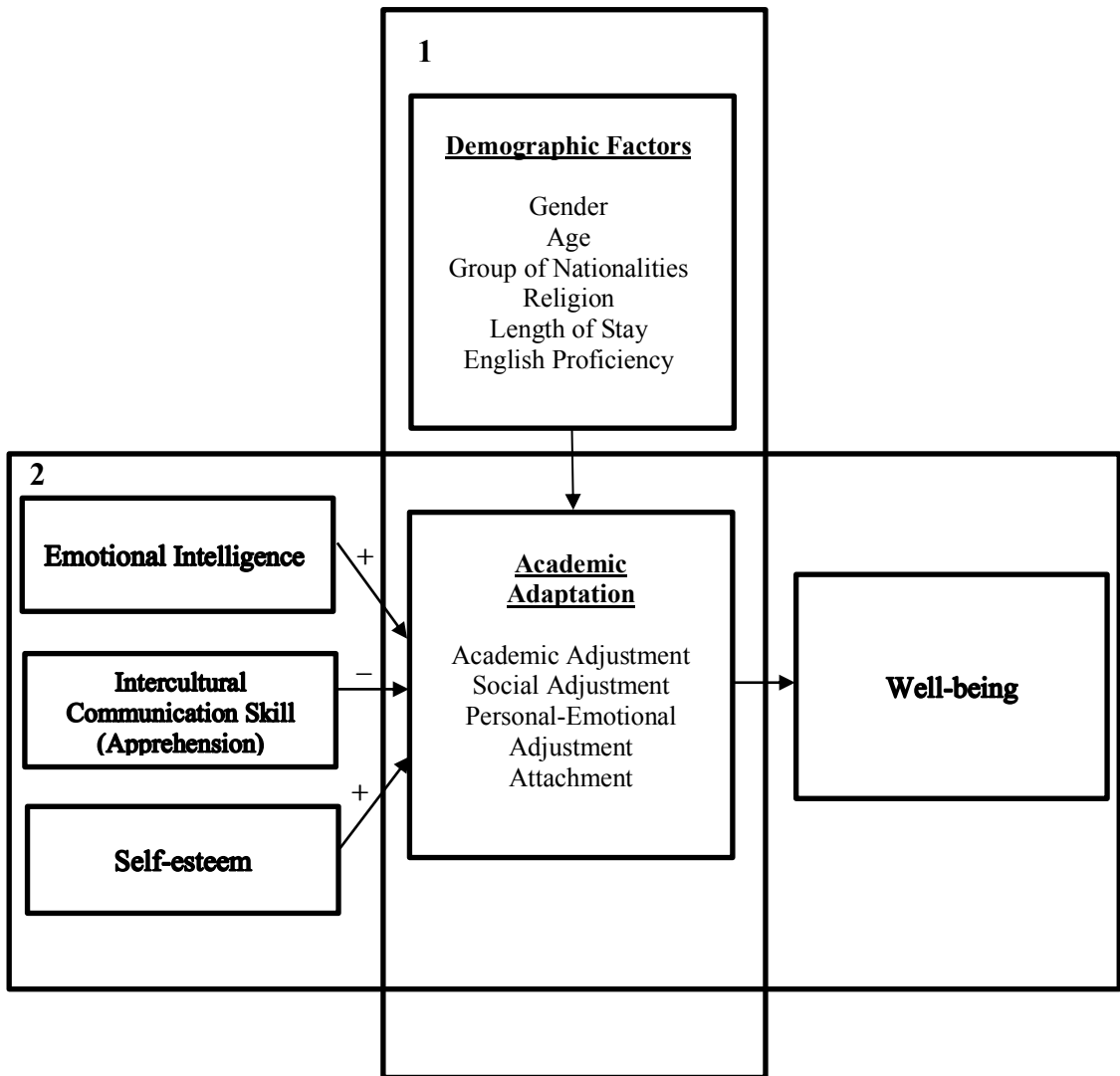


Figure 5: Total Hypothesized Framework of the Research: the vertical box with the number 1 is the first research objective and the horizontal box with the number 2 the second.

Methodology

Research Design

This research adopted mixed methods to achieve its purposes and to respond to all the research objectives. According to Tashakkoi and Teddlie's definition of the mixed methods research (2003, p. 212); 'A mixed methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially'. The research adopted the quantitative data as the primary resource by questionnaires and qualitative data were used to support the findings (Tashkkori & Teddie, 2003). Figure 6 displays the sequential process of the study reaching to findings.

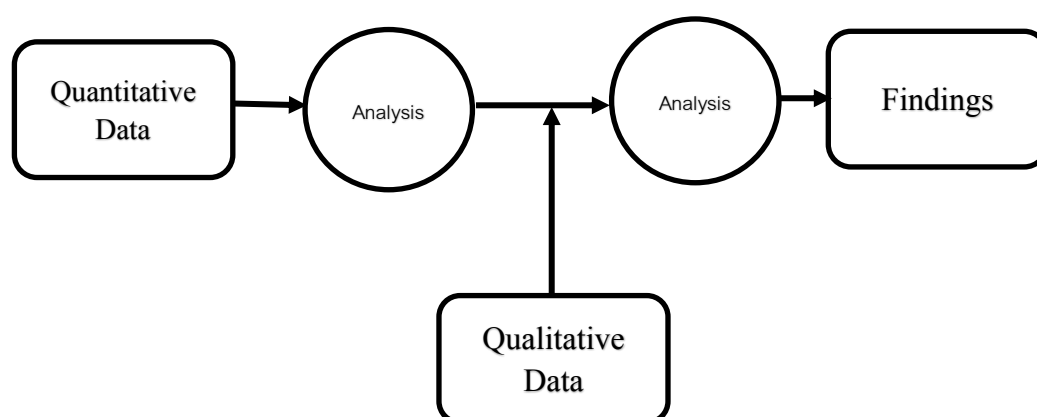


Figure 6: The Process of the Data Analysis Reaching to Findings

Participants and Sampling

The research was performed at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, in Thailand (PSU), and the participants were limited among the first or the second year of international students in Master's programs and the first, the second or the third year of international students in Ph. D. programs, who had enrolled the first academic semester in 2017. As seen at Table 1 above (p. 3), 242 international students were the whole population of the research. The accidental sampling was used for collecting quantitative data and the purposive sampling for qualitative data.

In total, 156 international students responded to the questionnaire, however, 1 respondent by online did not answer all the sections; the participant filled only two sections (demographic and well-being sections), and 4 respondents were out of the research scope; 1 was in Bachelor of Art program, 1 in other campus, and 2 in the 4th or 5th year of Ph.D. program.

Therefore, 151 international students participated in the research; they were consisted of 43 international students responded by online and 108 participants responded by paper-based questionnaires (115 paper-based questionnaires were distributed, 7 questionnaires were not returned).

The demographic factors' analysis of participants is demonstrated in Table 2. The 151 respondents were made up of 89 males (58.9%) and 62 females (41.1%).

In Age factor, the 21-25 years old group was the major population as 67 (44.4%), followed by 45 (29.8%) in the range of 26-35 years old. The two groups contributed to 74.2 % of the total sample population. Interestingly, the population of 40 years old was high relatively as 11 (7.3%) compared to previous studies (Mustaffa & Ilias, 2013; Rujiprak, 2016; Rujipak & Limprasert, 2016).

The Group of nationalities were divided into three group following the cultural distance from the host country: ASEAN group, Asia (none ASEAN) namely; Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Taiwan, Yemen, and Others such as UK, USA, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe. 104 (68.9%) students from ASEAN participated in the research, followed by 33 (21.9%) and 14 (9.3%) Asia (none ASEAN) and Others respectively.

Looking at the Religion factor, Buddhist were 56 which contributed 37.1 % to the total population. 51 Muslim (33.8%) international students responded. As seen, the contribution of the two religions reached to 70.9% in the research. While 15.9%, 2.0% and 11.3% were Christian, Hindu and others, respectively.

In the Length of stay factor, the contribution was evenly distributed compared to other factors in the research as in the range from 22.5% to 26.5%, excluding two groups, 3-5 months and over 23 months, marked as 10.6% and 15.9% respectively.

The levels of English Proficiency were recorded by the respondents: there were three levels, such as Poor, Moderate, and Excellent. Majority of the respondents were in the Moderate group at 68.2% followed by Excellent group and Poor group, at 23.8 % and 7.9 %, respectively.

Table 2: Description of the Participants' Demographic Factors (n=151)

| Demographic factors | | Frequency | Percent (%) | Cumulative Percent (%) |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------|
| Gender | Male | 89 | 58.9 | 58.9 |
| | Female | 62 | 41.1 | 100 |
| Age | 21-25 | 67 | 44.4 | 44.4 |
| | 26-30 | 45 | 29.8 | 74.2 |
| | 31-35 | 19 | 12.6 | 86.8 |
| | 35-40 | 9 | 6.0 | 92.7 |
| | Over 40 | 11 | 7.3 | 100.0 |
| Group of Nationalities | ASEAN | 104 | 68.9 | 68.9 |
| | Asia (none ASEAN) | 33 | 21.9 | 90.7 |
| | Others | 14 | 9.3 | 100.0 |
| Religion | Buddhist | 56 | 37.1 | 37.1 |
| | Muslim | 51 | 33.8 | 70.9 |
| | Christian | 24 | 15.9 | 86.8 |
| | Hindu | 3 | 2.0 | 88.7 |
| | Others | 17 | 11.3 | 100.0 |
| Length of Stay | 1-2 months | 34 | 22.5 | 22.5 |
| | 3-5 months | 16 | 10.6 | 33.1 |
| | 6-11 months | 37 | 24.5 | 57.6 |
| | 12-23 months | 40 | 26.5 | 84.1 |
| | Over 23 months | 24 | 15.9 | 100.0 |
| English Proficiency | Poor | 12 | 7.9 | 7.9 |
| | Moderate | 103 | 68.2 | 76.2 |
| | Excellent | 35 | 23.8 | 100.0 |

Lastly, 13 interviewees participated the semi-structured interviews after signing their own signatures on the Human Informed Consent forms prepared by the researcher. All interviews were conducted by following the prepared questionnaire after obtaining their permissions for recording the interviews. All the interviews were scripted as verbatim transcription.

Instruments

1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire has six sections: 1) a demographic background questionnaire created by the researcher, 2) Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1999), 3) the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT; Schutte et al., 1998), 4) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965), 5) Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA; Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997), and 6) WHO (Five) Well-Being Index (1998 version) for each of variables. All of them were written in English for international students at PSU.

Demographic Factors: the researcher prepared the demographic background questionnaire: including gender, age, group of nationalities, religion, length of reside, and English proficiency.

Academic Adaptation to PSU: Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) was adopted after the researcher's affirmation. SACQ was devised by a measurement tool for conceptualizing the adjustment with four subscales (Baker & Sirky, 1994) : 1) academic adjustment (24 items, divided into 4 clusters: motivation, application, performance, academic environment), 2) socio-cultural adjustment (20 items, divided into 4 clusters: general, other people, nostalgia, and social environment), 3) personal-emotional adjustment (15 items, into 2 clusters: psychological and physical), and 4) attachment(15 items, into 2 clusters: general and this college) with 9-point Likert scale. Cronbach alpha of the Full Scale of SACQ is .92 to .95 (Baker & Sirky, 1994) and its Cronbach alpha score in this research is .94.

Emotional Intelligence: it was measured by the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT; Schutte et al., 1998). It has 33 items using 5-point

Likert scale: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) neither disagree nor agree, 4) agree, and 5) strongly agree. The Cronbach alpha of SSEIT in this research is .87.

Self-Esteem: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) was used for the measurement of the level of self-esteem of ASEAN students at PSU. It consists of 10 items, positive or negative feeling toward self by using 4-point Likert scale format: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. One of the positive items is No. 1 item, *'on the whole, I am satisfied with myself'*. The other one is No. 5, *'I feel I do not have much to be proud of'*. The Cronbach alpha of RSES in this research is .81.

Intercultural Communication Apprehension: Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA; Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997) was used. It has 14 items with two categories: positive and negative results. For instance, item No. 1, *'Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people different cultures'*, is positive, and item No. 4, *'Engaging in a group discussion with people from different cultures makes me nervous'*, is negative. The important thing is that PRICA is used to measure the fear of meeting other people in intercultural settings, so higher scores indicate more fear to meet others, low scores means more skill in intercultural communication. The Cronbach alpha of PRICA in this research is .54.

Well-being: WHO (Five) Well-Being Index (1998 version) was used. It has 5 items, such as, 1) *I have felt cheerful and in good spirits*, 2) *I have felt calm and relaxed*, 3) *I have felt active and vigorous*, 4) *I woke up feeling fresh and rested*, and 5) *my daily life has been filled with things that interest me*. The respondent answered with 5-point Likert scale, from 5 points (all the time) to 0 point (at no time). The Cronbach of the Well-being Index in the research is .83.

2. In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were performed to understand the deeper level of adjustment and the potential reasons of the results. The key informants were chosen by the researcher considering his or her levels of Academic Adaptation. The research divided into three groups of the scores of SACQ, and the research sent one invitation letter to the representatives of the low, middle and high scored groups by

emails. After they replied the invitation, interviews were arranged by the researcher and interviewees. Each of interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one and a half hours.

The research ethics was approved by the Centre for Social and Behavioural Sciences Institutional Review Board, Prince of Songkla University.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and Analysis was performed for 8 weeks from on 30th of October in 2017 to on 23rd of December. There were four phases for data collection for the research.

The 1st Phase

The quantitative data was collected by online and paper-based questionnaires. Graduate Office sent two emails with the invitation letter of the research to international students, and face-to-face data collection was conducted purposively by the researcher and two other data collecting helpers who had been instructed on the research, ethics and the guidelines of data collecting.

The first Phase was collecting the quantitative data for three weeks from the very beginning day to on 18th of November.

The 2nd Phase

In the second Phase, analysing the quantitative data and preparing for the qualitative data collecting were performed for 3 weeks until on 9th of December. The questions for the semi-structured were made, and possible key informants were chosen and contacted. Finally, the data and venues for the interviews were informed to the key informants.

The 3rd Phase

In the third Phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted for 2 weeks until on 23rd of December in 2017. And all the interviews were scripted for the thematic analysis based on the quantitative findings.

The 4th Phase

The total analysis was performed to fulfil the research objectives after on 23rd of December in 2017. Based on the quantitative findings, qualitative findings were synthesized for understanding the adjustment of international students at PSU, Hat Yai, Campus.

Analysis plan

First of all, to fulfill the first research purpose, t-test and One-way ANOVA was conducted: t-test for Gender and One-way ANOVA for other demographic factors, Age, Group of Nationalities, Religion, Length of Stay, and English Proficiency. Based on the results of t-test and One-way ANOVA, it is shown that which demographic factors significantly differ in the academic adaptation of international students at PSU.

Secondly, comparing means of academic adaptation in four dimensions by demographic factors of the research was performed. The means of those were computed in the range of 9-point scales, as difficult and complication might occur due to the different ranges of each of four dimensions.

Thirdly, path analysis was conducted to fulfill the second research purpose. The original research model was tested by path analysis to understand the relationships among the variables. Total effects, direct effects and indirect effects among the variables were tested for understanding the effects in the original model.

Continuously and finally, the revised model to describe and understand the relationships among personal resources, academic adaptation, and well-being combined all the findings on the second research purpose was tested by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

As seen in Hox and Bechger's statement (1999) on SEM; 'a powerful technique that can combine complex path models with latent variables (factors)' and 'provides a very general and convenient framework for statistical analyses', it was anticipated that SEM may be useful to describe the relationships among all the variables.

The model fit was tested. The standards of indicating a model fit are presented at Table 3; Chi-square test (χ^2) and absolute fit indices, such as Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual

(SRMR), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), were hired as indices of Goodness of Model Fit (Kelloway, 1998; Arbuckle, 2014).

Table 3: The Indices of Goodness of Model Fit

| Types of Model fit | Indices of MGI | Good Fit |
|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| Chi-square Test | χ^2/df | Below 2 |
| | RMSEA | Below 0.05 |
| Absolute Fit Indices | SRMR | Below 0.1 |
| | GFI /df | Over 0.8 |
| | AGFI | Over 0.8 |

Note: *MGI* = Model Goodness Fit, χ^2/df = Normed Chi-square Test of Model fit, *RMSEA* = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, *SRMR* = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, *GFI* = Goodness of Fit Index, *AGFI* = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index.

A test of standardized parameters estimates for the revised model from personal resources to academic adaptation, and from academic adaptation to well-being were conducted to understand the relationships. Additionally, a mediation test on academic adaptation between personal resources to well-being was conducted to understand its role.

The qualitative data were mostly analysed to explain or understand the quantitative results, at first. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was adopted to suggest implications for a better academic adaptation and well-being of international students at PSU and in Thailand. Braun and Clarke (2006) provided six phases of conducting thematic analysis: 1) familiarising yourself with your data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the report, and the research attempted to follow the six phases. The key thematic results synthesized with the quantitative results are presented in this research and are used to suggest implications in the last chapter rather than describing all the findings step by step.

Computer programs were used for analysing the quantitative data after purchasing the licenses of usages.

Findings

To foster clear understanding the results of the findings, it should be informed that the research adopted two ways of comparing the mean scores of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ).

The first one is to use the total scores of the full scale in Academic Adaptation for analyzing T-test and One-way ANOVA; the range of the scores was from 203 to 566. The other is to use a 9-points scale to prevent confusions due to the respectively different ranges in each of conditions. For instance, while the range of mean is from 61 to 207 in Academic Adjustment, it is 39 to 134 in Attachment (Baker & Siryk, 1999). Thus, the results of comparing the mean of Academic Adaptation in full scale and four dimensions are demonstrated by the unified scale, 9-point scale, the same of SACQ scale.

Demographic Factors

Levene's Homogeneity of Variances Test was conducted to see the homogeneity of variances in the research. The results are presented in Table 4: the result was found that there was no violation of Homogeneity of variances, since all levels of p-value were indicated more than the significant level, .05.

Table 4: The Results of Homogeneity Test of Variances in Academic Adaptation

| | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|------------------------|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Gender | 2.482 | 1 | 149 | .832 |
| Age | 1.086 | 4 | 146 | .366 |
| Group of Nationalities | 1.722 | 2 | 148 | .182 |
| Religion | .318 | 4 | 146 | .866 |
| Length of Stay | .367 | 4 | 146 | .832 |
| English Proficiency | .789 | 2 | 148 | .456 |

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean of Academic Adaptation in male and female. The results illustrated in Table 5, it indicated that there was no significant difference in the levels of Academic Adaptation for male ($M=402.19$, $SD=53.8$) and female ($M=398.48$, $SD=62.8$) in conditions; $t(149)=.389$, $p = 0.698$. The results suggested that gender does not differ on Academic Adaptation.

Table 5: The Result of t-test in Gender

($203 \leq MEAN \leq 566$)

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | t | df | P value | |
|----------|--------|------|--------|------|------|---------|------|
| Gender | Male | 89 | 402.19 | 53.8 | .389 | 149 | .698 |
| | Female | 62 | 398.48 | 62.8 | | | |

Note: *Significance at p value $< .05$, SD = Standard Deviation, the scores of Mean were shown in full scales of SACQ.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of a demographic factor, Age on academic adaptation among the respondents (see Table 6). There was no significant difference at $p < .05$ level for the Academic Adaptation in five conditions, $F(4, 146) = 0.231$, $p = .920$.

The same analysis was performed to explore the differences of four other demographic factors: Group of Nationalities, Religion, and English Proficiency and Length of Stay.

The results on three demographic factors indicated that there were statistically no significant differences at $p < .05$ in the Academic Adaptation level for Group of nationalities, $F(2, 148) = 2.757$, $p = .067$, Religion, $F(4, 146) = 1.222$, $p = .304$ and English proficiency, $F(2, 148) = 0.634$, $p = .532$.

On the other hand, according to the same analysis looking at the difference of Length of Stay, there was statistically significant difference at $p < .05$ level for the five conditions, $F(4, 146) = 2.854$, $p = 0.026$. The result implies that length of stay is one significant factor that influences the academic adaptation of international students.

Table 6: The Results of ANOVA in Levels of Age, Group of Nationalities, Religion, Length of Stay, and English Proficiency

| Dimensions | SS | df | MS | F | Sig |
|------------------------|------------|-----|----------|-------|-------|
| Age | | | | .231 | .920 |
| Between Groups | 3121.884 | 4 | 780.471 | | |
| Within Groups | 492619.560 | 146 | 3374.107 | | |
| Group of Nationalities | | | | 2.757 | .067 |
| Between Groups | 17807.013 | 2 | 8903.507 | | |
| Within Groups | 477934.431 | 148 | 3229.287 | | |
| Religion | | | | 1.222 | .304 |
| Between Groups | 16063.125 | 4 | 4015.781 | | |
| Within Groups | 479678.319 | 146 | 3285.468 | | |
| Length of Stay | | | | 2.854 | .026* |
| Between Groups | 35947.591 | 4 | 8986.898 | | |
| Within Groups | 459793.852 | 146 | 3149.273 | | |
| English Proficiency | | | | .634 | .532 |
| Between Groups | 4208.265 | 2 | 2104.132 | | |
| Within Groups | 491533.179 | 148 | 3321.170 | | |

Note: *Significance at p value < .05.

Table 7 demonstrates the results of the Post Hoc Tukey Honestly Significant Difference test (Tukey HSD) on Length of Stay. Generally, it is recommended to conduct Tukey's HSD in equal sample sizes per group, but it is also adapted to unequal sample sizes (Stevens, 1999). The Tukey HSD test showed that 6-11 months and 12-23 months differed significantly at $p < .05$; there were no significant differences among other groups at $p < .05$. The results of the differences between two groups are presented at Table 8 (p. 35), and all possible reasons of the findings are also explained by analysing the qualitative data afterward.

Table 7: The Results of the Post Hoc Tukey HSD Test on Length of Stay

| | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------|-------------------------|----------------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1-2 months | 3-5 months | -4.743 | 17.013 | 0.999 | -51.74 | 42.25 |
| | 6-11 months | 26.409 | 13.332 | 0.280 | -10.42 | 63.23 |
| | 12-23 months | -11.968 | 13.090 | 0.891 | -48.13 | 24.19 |
| | Over 23 months | -13.118 | 14.961 | 0.905 | -54.44 | 28.21 |
| 3-5 months | 1-2 months | 4.743 | 17.013 | 0.999 | -42.25 | 51.74 |
| | 6-11 months | 31.152 | 16.791 | 0.346 | -15.23 | 77.53 |
| | 12-23 months | -7.225 | 16.600 | 0.992 | -53.08 | 38.63 |
| | Over 24 months | -8.375 | 18.112 | 0.991 | -58.40 | 41.65 |
| 6-11 months | 1-2 months | -26.409 | 13.332 | 0.280 | -63.23 | 10.42 |
| | 3-5 months | -31.152 | 16.791 | 0.346 | -77.53 | 15.23 |
| | 12-23 months | -38.377* | 12.800 | 0.026 | -73.73 | -3.02 |
| | Over 23 months | -39.527 | 14.708 | 0.061 | -80.15 | 1.10 |
| 12-23 months | 1-2 months | 11.968 | 13.090 | 0.891 | -24.19 | 48.13 |
| | 3-5 months | 7.225 | 16.600 | 0.992 | -38.63 | 53.08 |
| | 6-11 months | 38.377* | 12.800 | 0.026 | 3.02 | 73.73 |
| | Over 23 months | -1.150 | 14.490 | 1.000 | -41.17 | 38.87 |
| Over 23 months | 1-2 months | 13.118 | 14.961 | 0.905 | -28.21 | 54.44 |
| | 3-5 months | 8.375 | 18.112 | 0.991 | -41.65 | 58.40 |
| | 6-11 months | 39.527 | 14.708 | 0.061 | -1.10 | 80.15 |
| | 12-23 months | 1.150 | 14.490 | 1.000 | -38.87 | 41.17 |

Note: HSD = Honestly Significant Difference.

The qualitative data supported the findings; some of key informants stated the importance of Length of Stay while studying at PSU:

“Length of time (is important for the adjustment). If I got a lot of exposure to interaction with Thai people, I could understand them better. so I think (that) it deals with the time of my stay here. The longer I stay, the more we can adjust.”

(Interviewee 2, 11/DEC/2017)

“I think Length of stay (is important). It takes time for us to understand them (Thai). So the most important thing is the length of time”

(Interviewee 4, 11/DEC/2017)

As shown by two statements above, key informants expected to have a better adjustment or understanding Thai people, when they have longer residence in Thailand.

On the other hand, there were several statements reflecting other opinions. Interviewee 6 suggested a collective idea on demographic factors and academic adaptation:

“Everything is important. Most of them came here are young. I think the younger, the more adjustment. Age is very important toward that..... Language is important also.”

(Interviewee 6, 11/DEC/2017)

It is very clear that the key informant stated the importance of all six demographic factors. On the other hand, the statement seemingly focused or emphasized two factors in the research, age and language. Other key informants also proposed the importance of English or Thai language for a better adaptation at PSU.

“I think language is important also. Both Thai and English are important. I need to work and talk with scientists

(fellows in the lab), how to operate instruments, when I can use them.”

(Interviewee 1, 11/DEC/2017)

“We need to read paper(s) in English or co-work with others. And we need to ask questions for the study (in English).

(Interviewee 7, 12/DEC/2017)

Table 8 displays the levels of Academic Adaptation in four dimensions by demographic factors. The results of means in each of dimensions are presented by a 9-point scale, since the scores of means are different in conditions respectively; 203 to 566 in Academic Adaptation, 60 to 207 in Academic Adjustment, 47 to 157 in Social Adjustment, 35 to 133 in Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and 39 to 134 in Attachment (Baker & Siryk, 1999). Thus, it was standardized to prevent from misunderstanding or confusion by 9-point scales.

Table 8: The Results of MEANs of Academic Adaptation in Four Dimensions

$(1 \leq \text{MEAN} \leq 9)$

| Variables | | Academic Adaptation | | Academic Adjustment | | Social Adjustment | | Personal-Emotional Adjustment | | Attachment | |
|-----------|------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|------------|------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| | | Gender | Male(n=89) | 6.07 | .84 | 6.33 | .91 | 5.88 | .91 | 5.69 | 1.24 |
| | Female(n=62) | 5.99 | .94 | 6.12 | 1.03 | 5.81 | 1.02 | 5.70 | 1.24 | 6.27 | 1.17 |
| | 21-25(n=67) | 5.97 | .97 | 6.15 | 1.00 | 5.94 | 1.12 | 5.47 | 1.25 | 6.26 | 1.20 |
| | 26-30(n=45) | 6.04 | .88 | 6.31 | 1.00 | 5.79 | .83 | 5.73 | 1.25 | 6.26 | 1.08 |
| Age | 31-35(n=19) | 6.04 | .77 | 6.19 | .86 | 5.86 | .76 | 5.85 | .99 | 6.20 | .88 |
| | 36-40(n=9) | 6.17 | .86 | 6.40 | .87 | 5.94 | .93 | 5.80 | 1.64 | 6.14 | 1.12 |
| | Over 40(n=11) | 6.30 | .63 | 6.54 | .90 | 5.51 | .58 | 6.63 | .68 | 6.36 | .81 |
| Group of | ASEAN(n=104) | 5.96 | .89 | 6.12 | .94 | 5.87 | .95 | 5.59 | 1.23 | 6.21 | 1.05 |
| | Asia(none ASEAN)(n=33) | 6.03 | .91 | 6.30 | .96 | 5.90 | 1.04 | 5.59 | 1.09 | 6.22 | 1.24 |

| Variables | | Academic Adaptation | | Academic Adjustment | | Social Adjustment | | Personal-Emotional Adjustment | | Attachment | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|------------|------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| | | Nationalities | Others(n=14) | 6.62 | .61 | 7.04 | .82 | 5.60 | .76 | 6.85 | 1.07 |
| Religion | Buddhist(n=56) | 5.90 | .86 | 6.14 | .89 | 5.81 | .88 | 5.40 | 1.16 | 6.20 | 1.03 |
| | Muslim(n=51) | 6.06 | .94 | 6.21 | 1.00 | 5.99 | 1.08 | 5.74 | 1.24 | 6.23 | 1.16 |
| | Christian(n=24) | 6.28 | .76 | 6.51 | 1.03 | 5.63 | .86 | 6.39 | 1.06 | 6.48 | .92 |
| | Hindu(n=3) | 6.74 | .68 | 7.11 | .24 | 6.72 | .94 | 6.22 | .96 | 7.00 | 1.38 |
| | Others(n=17) | 5.92 | .95 | 6.16 | 1.00 | 5.73 | .85 | 5.47 | 1.40 | 6.18 | 1.23 |
| Length of Stay | 1-2 months(n=34) | 6.02 | .90 | 6.10 | .96 | 6.01 | .94 | 5.62 | 1.18 | 6.42 | 1.14 |
| | 3-5 months(n=16) | 6.11 | .87 | 6.33 | .94 | 6.06 | .92 | 5.53 | 1.08 | 6.42 | 1.24 |
| | 6-11 months(n=37) | 5.65 | .93 | 5.92 | .96 | 5.51 | 1.04 | 5.19 | 1.44 | 5.82 | 1.14 |
| | 12-23 months(n=40) | 6.23 | .83 | 6.46 | .95 | 5.94 | .94 | 6.03 | 1.09 | 6.41 | .90 |
| | Over 23 months (n=24) | 6.27 | .76 | 6.53 | .90 | 5.87 | .80 | 6.16 | 1.06 | 6.41 | 1.01 |
| English Proficiency | Poor(n=12) | 5.93 | .68 | 5.96 | .77 | 5.83 | .70 | 5.86 | .99 | 6.16 | .87 |
| | Moderate(n=103) | 5.98 | .90 | 6.20 | .93 | 5.89 | .98 | 5.52 | 1.22 | 6.26 | 1.09 |
| | Excellent(n=36) | 6.22 | .87 | 6.46 | 1.09 | 5.76 | .95 | 6.14 | 1.26 | 6.35 | 1.14 |

Note: *SD* = Standard Deviation, *M* = Mean, the scores of Mean were shown by a 9-point scale due to the respectively different ranges in five conditions.

Gender. Academic Adjustment and Attachment had the highest scores both male (Academic Adjustment: $M = 6.33$, $SD = .91$, Attachment: $M = 6.27$, $SD = 1.03$) and female (Academic adjustment: $M = 6.12$, $SD = 1.03$, Attachment: $M = 6.27$, $SD = 1.17$). Whereas, both, male ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.24$) and female ($M = 5.70$, $SD = 1.24$), had lowest scores in Personal-Emotional Adjustment.

Looking at the qualitative data, while several female key informants experienced some emotional problems, such as loneliness, depression, stress, even culture shock (the statements are now shown due to anonymity of the key informants), but male students emphasized how to overcome the problems or showed an attitude

ignoring the problems. All of key informants stressed out the satisfaction of academic aspects at PSU. The statement of interviewee 4 was clear on the result:

“What makes me satisfy are the way of studying and the quality of the professors. They are really knowledgeable. They are really helpful.”

(Interviewee4, 11/DEC/2017)

Age. Considering Age with the Academic Adaptation and four dimensions (see Table 8), interesting results were found: the results indicate that respondents over 40 years old had the highest scores of the total Academic Adaptation (M=6.30, SD=.63). On the contrary, the scores of the youngest group (21-25 years old) were the lowest (M = 5.97, SD = .97) in the five conditions.

Additionally, there was one other contrast between the youngest and the oldest in Personal-Emotional Adjustment dimension; while the group (21-25) had the lowest scores (M = 5.47, SD = 1.25) comparing three other dimensions, the group (Over 40) the highest (M = 6.63, SD = .68) in the same conditions. However, the group (Over 40) struggled harder (M = 5.51, SD = .58) than other groups in Social Adjustment.

Group of Nationality. Another interesting findings were found in Group of Nationalities (see Table 8), the levels of participants from other countries such as UK, USA, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe adjusted much easily (M = 6.62, SD = .61) were higher than two other groups: ASEAN (M = 5.96, SD = .86) and Asia(none ASEAN), (M = 6.03, SD = .91). It might be implied that Cultural Distance did not impact the academic adaptation among the respondents.

Moreover, the scores demonstrate that those who from other countries (M = 7.04, SD = .82) adjusted more successfully than Asia (none ASEAN) group (M = 6.12, SD = .94) and ASEAN group (M = 6.30, SD = .96) in Academic Adjustment dimension. Two other groups, whereas, did so in Social Adjustment: Asia (none ASEAN) group (M = 5.90, SD = 1.02), ASEAN (M = 5.87, SD = .95), and Others (M = 5.60, SD = .76).

The first surprising result might be explained by the qualitative resources;

“I think that academic level in Thailand is higher. And the problem is their(our) English level as well.”

(Interviewee 7, 12/DEC/2017)

“(I think) English is also (is a problem). Actually I think ISI(International Scientific Indexing) is too high for me.”

(Interviewee 13, 13/DEC/2017)

As seen in two statements, international students from ASEAN faced difficulties due to the poor confidence of English proficiency and the difference of academic environment.

Religion. Looking at Religion (see Table 8), the results indicate that the Hindu's scores were highest ($M = 6.74$, $SD = .68$) in the new educational environment, followed by Christian ($M = 6.28$, $SD = .76$) and Muslim ($M = 6.06$, $SD = .94$). As seen, Buddhist ($M = 6.20$, $SD = 1.03$) and Muslim ($M = 6.23$, $SD = 1.16$) had the highest scores in Attachment and the lowest scores (Buddhist: $M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.16$, Muslim: $M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.24$) in Personal-Emotional Adjustment. The same pattern was found in Hindu (Attachment: $M = 7.00$, $SD = 1.38$, Personal-Emotional Adjustment: $M = 6.22$, $SD = .96$) and Others (Attachment: $M = 6.18$, $SD = 1.28$, Personal-Emotional Adjustment: $M = 5.47$, $SD = 1.40$).

The qualitative data might explain the reasons why the religion factor did not affect the academic adaptation of respondents in Thailand, a well-known Buddhism country:

“Generally, I don't have any problem with Buddhist, Muslim, etc.”

(Interviewee 6, 11/DEC/2017)

“(While buying Muslim foods) So I don’t feel like (being) aboard. It(atmosphere) makes me familiar and help(s) me to adjust here.”

(Interviewee 3, 11/DEC/2017)

Length of Stay. In terms of Length of Stay (see Table 8), while those who stayed more than 23 months in Thailand had the highest scores ($M = 6.27$, $SD = .76$), those who resided 6-12 months the lowest scores ($M = 5.65$, $SD = .96$). The results indicate the gradual increasing on the total scores of Academic Adaptation among the groups followed the Length of Stay (1-2 months ($M = 6.02$, $SD = .90$), 3-5 months ($M = 6.11$, $SD = .87$), 12-23 months ($M = 6.23$, $SD = .83$), and more than 23 months ($M = 6.27$, $SD = .76$)), excluding 6-11 months group demonstrated the lowest scores ($M = 5.65$, $SD = .96$).

Interestingly, the pattern of Academic Adaptation according to Length of Stay was similar to the U-curve shape (see Figure 7). From 1 – 5 months can be at honeymoon stage, from 6 – 11 months at culture shock state, 12 – 23 months at adjustment stage, and more than 23 months at mastery stage.

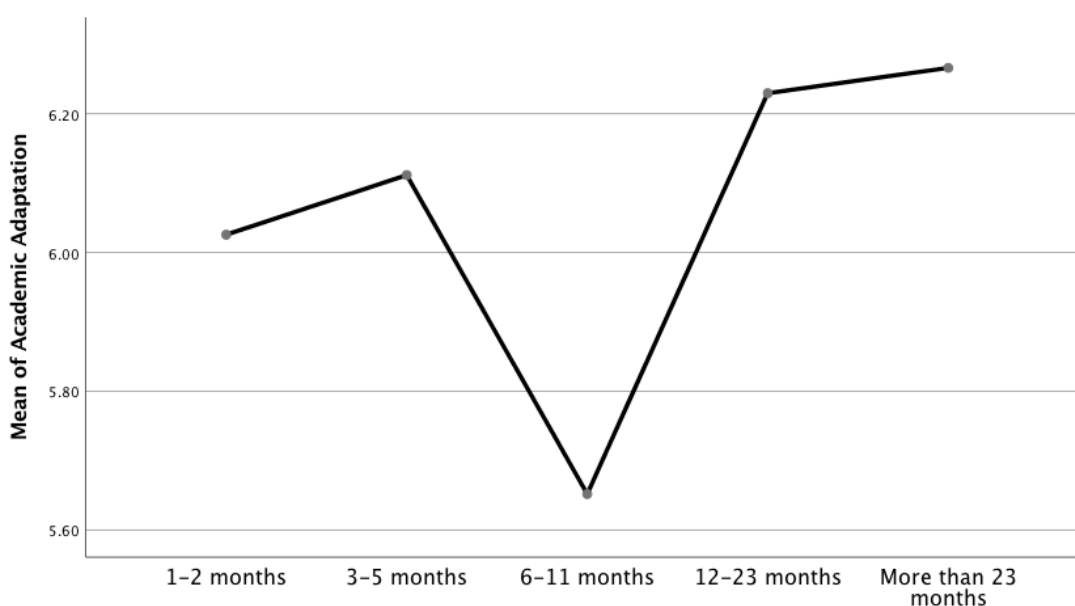


Figure 7: The Graph of Means of Academic Adaptation in Length of Stay.

Examining the differences in four dimensions between more than 23 months years group and 6 – 11 months group, the highest scores were found in Academic Adjustment: more than 23 months ($M = 6.53$, $SD = .90$) and 6 -11 months ($M = 5.92$, $SD = .96$). However, more than 23 months group ($M = 5.87$, $SD = .80$) had the lowest scores in Social Adjustment, 6 – 11 months group ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.44$) in Personal-Emotional Adjustment.

The results of the qualitative data might help to imply that the potential reasons of the lowest scores of the group (6 – 11 months):

“It’s (been) almost 11 months. Actually, I talked my seniors. We face the same problems. When we talked about this we feel stressed. All of us (those who were granted scholarship) have to submit something new and a very good experiment.”

(Interviewee 13, 13/DEC/2017)

As seen in the statement, it was the time when international students should start considering ways to produce some academic results for the achievement in the programs from entrance or for the requirement of scholarship.

In addition, the reasons why the group (1-2 months) indicated the slightly low score of Academic Adaptation could be explained by the statement below than 3-5 months group:

“The first week of our (my) arrival here, the first week of our study, I found many difficulties adjusting with some culture of Thai. Like it’s totally different, the things we didn’t have in my home country are here.”

(Interviewee 4, 11/DEC/2017)

According to the statement and the quantitative results, it might be suggested that although international students are at the honeymoon stage, they can face many difficulties or stress after their arrivals.

English Proficiency. Looking at the English Proficiency (see Table 8), the Excellent group had the highest scores in Academic Adaptation at $M = 6.22$, $SD = .89$, whereas, the group had the lowest scores in Social Adjustment at $M = 5.76$, $SD = .95$. The Moderate group ($M = 5.98$, $SD = .90$) adjusted quite similarly to the Poor of English Proficiency group ($M = 5.94$, $SD = .68$) at PSU. The significance of English proficiency was referred by several key informants: one of the strong statements followed:

“Two things (are obstacles to the adjustment)! One is language. The other is food, Language is a problem. Not only in PSU, but also outside of PSU.”

(Interviewee 12, 13/DEC/2017)

Lastly, an interesting contrast was found, searching for highest or lowest scores of each and all conditions in four dimensions: Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and Attachment (see Table 8). The highest scores in the same demographic factors were found in only two dimensions related to academic aspect: Academic Adjustment and Attachment. The only exceptional group was Over 40 which had the highest score in Personal-Emotional Adjustment ($M = 6.63$, $SD = .68$).

The 11 groups' highest scores were in Academic Adjustment: Male ($M = 6.33$, $SD = .91$), 26-30 years old group ($M = 6.31$, $SD = 1.00$), 36-40 years old group ($M = 6.40$, $SD = .87$), Asia(none ASEAN) ($M = 6.30$, $SD = .96$), Others in Group of nationalities ($M = 7.04$, $SD = .82$), Christian($M = 6.51$, $SD = 1.03$), Hindu($M = 7.11$, $SD = .24$), 6-11 months ($M = 5.92$, $SD = .96$), 12 – 23 months ($M = 6.46$, $SD = .95$), More than 23 months ($M = 6.53$, $SD = .90$), and Excellent of English Proficiency ($M = 6.46$, $SD = 1.09$), 11 groups in Attachment.

On the contrary, the lowest scores were marked in Personal-Emotional Adjustment and Social Adjustment in the same conditions of demographic factors: 16 groups in Personal-Emotional Adjustment, such as Male ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.24$), Female ($M = 5.70$, $SD = 1.24$), 21-25 ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 1.25$), 26-30 ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 1.25$), 31-35 ($M = 5.85$, $SD = .99$), 36-40 ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.64$), ASEAN ($M = 5.59$,

SD = 1.23), Asia(none ASEAN) (M = 5.59, SD = 1.09), Buddhist (M = 5.40, SD = 1.16), Muslim(M = 5.74, SD = 1.24), Hindu (M = 6.22, SD = .96), Others in Religion (M = 5.47, SD = 1.40), 1-2 months (M = 5.62, SD = 1.18), 3-5 months (M = 5.53, SD = 1.08), 6-11 months (M = 5.19, SD = 1.44), and Moderate of English Proficiency(M = 5.53, SD = 1.22) and the others in Social Adjustment.

Their satisfaction of academic aspects at PSU were stated by several key informants:

“On academic life. I should say that each course that I have been taking so far in the semester is consisted of so many important materials. The three coursed that I ‘ve been taking so far are very closely related to the things that I have been expecting.”

(Interviewee 4, 11/DEC/2017)

“I’m quite satisfied with my academic situation now and I also have many friends here. That helps me adjust and live here. And I don’t have a big problem here, (it’s) quite good.”

(Interviewee 3, 11/DEC/2017)

The interviewee 4 emphasized the quality of courses and materials in one semester: all the courses were well-matched with the expectation. Interviewee 7 referred the satisfaction and professors’ English proficiency.

“Academic (adjustment) is OK. I can speak in English and all the Ajarns (professours) speak in Engilsh very well when they advise me”

(Interviewee 7, 11/DEC/2017)

As seen in the statement above, it might be conjectured that English is the common language between international students and

professors, especially academic advisors. However, it seemed that communication with staffs or Thai students in English was troublesome. Interviewees answered to the question asking the most difficulty while adjusting at PSU:

“Like administration and communication. In area of communication, that’s number one. I am studying in English program. So, I communicate in English. But among staffs. It is not easy to communicate with them.”

(Interviewee 6, 11/DEC/2017)

“My life has been in up and down. Because at first, I found that I have difficulties speak to Thai people in my classroom. I am taking international program, so the official language is English. But when they gather together, they start talking in Thai. It sometimes gives (makes) me annoyed.”

(Interviewee 2, 11/DEC/2017)

To Sum up, while one demographic factor, Length of Stay, had a significant relationship with Academic Adaptation, the other five factors, such as Gender, Age, Group of Nationality, Religion, and English Proficiency, did not. The U-curve pattern was found in academic adaptation by Length of Stay. Finally, Academic Adjustment and Attachment dimensions were relatively easier for international students at PSU to adjust, Personal-Emotional and Social Adjustment, however, were more challenging for them.

Personal Resources, Academic Adaptation and Well-being

Fulfilling the second objective of the research, two sets of analysis were conducted. First, the correlations among variables were compared by using Pearson correlation coefficient. Secondly, path analysis was used to test the adjustment of international student model. Thirdly, a new structural model was suggested based on the path analysis. Finally, mediation test in the new model was conducted.

Firstly, as can be seen in the Table 9, international students at PSU reported that they had 61 indicating the moderate level of Well-being, and the moderate levels of Academic Adaptation in four dimensions; the highest score was shown in Academic Adjustment at 54 % and the lowest score in Social Adjustment at 27 %. For levels of personal resources among international students at PSU, it was found that they had the high levels of the two personal resources: Emotional Intelligence at 76% (high level) and Self-esteem at 74 %. The Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension) was shown at the low level, at 31 %. The percentile scores were computed by the manual of SACQ (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

Table 9: Mean and Standard Deviation of Well-being, Academic Adaptation, and Personal Resources

| Variables | Mean | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis | Level |
|---|--------|-------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Well-being | 15.20 | 4.32 | -.565 | -.167 | 61% (Moderate) |
| Academic Adaptation | 400.67 | 57.30 | -.059 | .165 | 31% (Moderate) |
| Academic Adjustment | 149.61 | 22.90 | .052 | -.185 | 54% (Moderate) |
| Social Adjustment | 113.99 | 18.55 | .016 | -.101 | 27% (Moderate) |
| Personal-Emotional Adjustment | 85.42 | 18.54 | -.098 | -.282 | 31% (Moderate) |
| Attachment | 91.17 | 15.42 | -.264 | .524 | 34 % (Moderate) |
| Emotional Intelligence | 125.52 | 10.96 | .490 | 1.879 | 76 % (High) |
| Intercultural Communication Skill(Apprehension) | 31.33 | 8.54 | -.312 | -.549 | 31 % (Low) |
| Self-esteem | 29.74 | 4.37 | -.151 | 1.878 | 74 % (High) |

Note: *SD* = Standard Deviation, *PRICA* = Personal Report or Intercultural Communication Apprehension, *ICS* = Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension).

Looking at the results of Pearson correlation coefficient (see Table 10), which is not presented by demographic factors; but by the whole respondents, there was a positive correlation between Self-esteem and Academic Adaptation, $r = 0.66$, $n = 151$, $p = .001$, and Academic Adaptation and Well-being had a positive relationship ($r = .50$, $p < .001$).

In the personal resources, there was a moderate correlation between Self-esteem and Emotional Intelligence ($r = .47$, $p < .01$), and the moderate positive correlation between Self-esteem and Intercultural Communication Skill ($r = -.47$, $p < .01$), as the measurement of Intercultural Communication Skill (PRICA) indicated the fear of meeting people in cross-cultural environment. Additionally, there was a positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Intercultural Communication Skill ($r = -.52$, $p < .01$), due to the reverse scores in Intercultural Communication Skill.

Overall, there were two strong, positive correlations, 1) between Self-esteem and Academic Adaptation, 2) between Academic Adaptation and Well-being. In addition, strong or moderate positive correlations among three personal resources were found; Intercultural Communication Skill and Emotional Intelligence had positive, others moderate.

Table 10: Correlation Matrix for Constructs in the Research Model (n=151)

| | Well-being | Academic Adaptation | Emotional Intelligence | ICS | Self-esteem |
|--|------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------|-------------|
| Well-being | 1 | | | | |
| Academic Adaptation | .50** | 1 | | | |
| Emotional Intelligence | .18* | .42** | 1 | | |
| Intercultural Communication Skill(PRICA) | -.29** | -.40** | -.52** | 1 | |
| Self-esteem | .29** | .66** | .47** | -.47** | 1 |

Note: ** $p < .01$ level (2-tailed), * $p < .05$ level (2-tailed), ICS = Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension).

To examine the influence among variables and to test the model, path analysis was conducted for 151 respondents who had completed data.

Looking at Fit indices for this model (see Table 11), it included a normed chi-square (χ^2/df) to degrees of freedom ratio of 1.963, a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .080 a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of .0271, a good of fit index (GFI) of .990, an adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) of .923. indicating a reasonably good fit of the model (Carmines & McIver, 1981; March & Hocevar, 1985; Arbuckle, 2014). see Table 3.

Table 11: Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Research Model

| Model | χ^2 | df | χ^2/df | p | RMSEA | SRMR | GFI | AGFI |
|----------------|----------|----|-------------|------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Original Model | 3.926 | 2 | 1.963 | .140 | .080 | .0271 | .990 | .923 |

Note: df = Degree of freedom, χ^2/df = Normed Chi-square; *p* = p-value; *RMSEA* = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; *SRMR* = Standardized Root Mean-square Residual; *GFI* = goodness of fit index; *AGFI* = adjusted goodness of fit index.

The results of total effects, direct effects, and indirect effects in the model were demonstrated in Table 12. Figure 8 illustrates the path graphic of path analysis of the original model.

Table 12: Maximum-likelihood Estimates Path Coefficients Mediating Effects of Academic Adaptation in Path Model

| Variables | Total effects (Direct effects, Indirect effects) | | | | SMC |
|---------------------|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------|------|
| | Emotional Intelligence | Intercultural Communication Skill (PRICA) | Self-esteem | Academic Adaptation | |
| Academic Adaptation | .119 (.119 .000) | -.072 (-.072 .000) | .572*** (.572*** .000) | | .458 |

| Total effects | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------|------------------------|------|
| (Direct effects, Indirect effects) | | | | | |
| Variables | Emotional Intelligence | Intercultural Communication Skill (PRICA) | Self-esteem | Academic Adaptation | SMC |
| Well-being | .064 (.000 .064) | -.039 (.000 -.039) | .245 (-.064 .309) | .541*** (.541 .000) | .251 |

Note: Total Effects(Direct Effects, Indirect Effects), significant levels are displayed with asterisks, *** $p < .001$ level, *SMC* = Squared multiple correlations.

As seen at the results (see Table 12 and Figure 8), Self-esteem directly and significantly affected to Academic Adaptation ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$), and Academic Adaptation did so to Well-being ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$). However, Self-esteem did not predict Well-being directly neither significantly; $\beta = -.06$, ($p = .495$). The level of explanation on Academic Adaptation with three personal resources was 45.8% and the level of explanation on Well-being with other 4 variables was 25.1%.

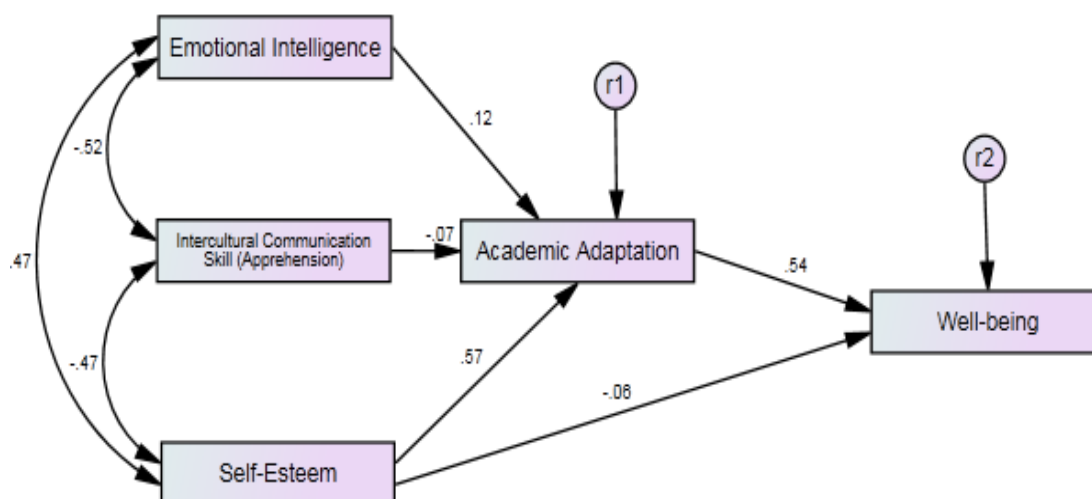


Figure 8: Path Model for the Research Model: Standardized Regression Estimates

Moreover, although there was no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence or Intercultural Communication and Academic Adaption, all

three personal resources had significant relationship with one another; Emotional Intelligence and Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension: PRICA, $\beta = -.517$, $p < .001$), Emotional Intelligence and Self-esteem ($\beta = .469$, $p < .001$), and Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension) and Self-esteem ($\beta = -.471$, $p < .001$).

Thus, the multicollinearity test on among three personal resources were performed. As seen in Table 13, there were no multicollinearity problem among three personal resources in the original model; the results indicated that very low levels of multicollinearity were present (VIF = 1.36 for Self-esteem, 1.29 for Emotional Intelligence, and 1.28 for Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension)). Therefore, it may be possible to assume that personal resources interact in individuals and affect Academic Adaptation collectively.

Table 13: The Results of Multicollinearity Test on Three Personal Resources

| Dependent Variables | Self-esteem | | Dependent Variables | EI | | Dependent Variables | ICS | |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|---------------------|------|-------|---------------------|------|-------|
| | CT | VIF | | CT | VIF | | CT | VIF |
| EI | .733 | 1.364 | ICS | .778 | 1.285 | Self-esteem | .780 | 1.282 |
| ICS | .733 | 1.364 | Self-esteem | .778 | 1.285 | EI | .780 | 1.282 |

Note: *CT* = Collinearity Tolerance, *VIF* = Variance Inflation Factor, *EI* = Emotional Intelligence, *ICS* = Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension).

Therefore, the new model of international students was suggested and measured to describe relationships among personal resources, academic adaptation, and well-being of international students at PSU, based on the findings with the previous results: three independent variables were combined as one variable, personal resources. The re-specified model was re-run and found that the re-specified model fit was a reasonably good fit, $\chi^2(49) = 106.557$, $\chi^2/df = 2.175$ $p = .000$, GIF = .894, AGFI = .831, SRMR = .062, and RMSEA = .088 (.066; .111) (Carmines & McIver, 1981; March & Hocevar, 1985; Brown & Cudeck, 1993; Arbuckle, 2014).

Looking at the Standardized parameters estimates for the structural paths; the amount of explained variance in each of endogenous variables was recorded

in the revised model (Figure 9). The model accounted for 68 % and 30 % of the variance in Academic Adaptation and Well-being, respectively.

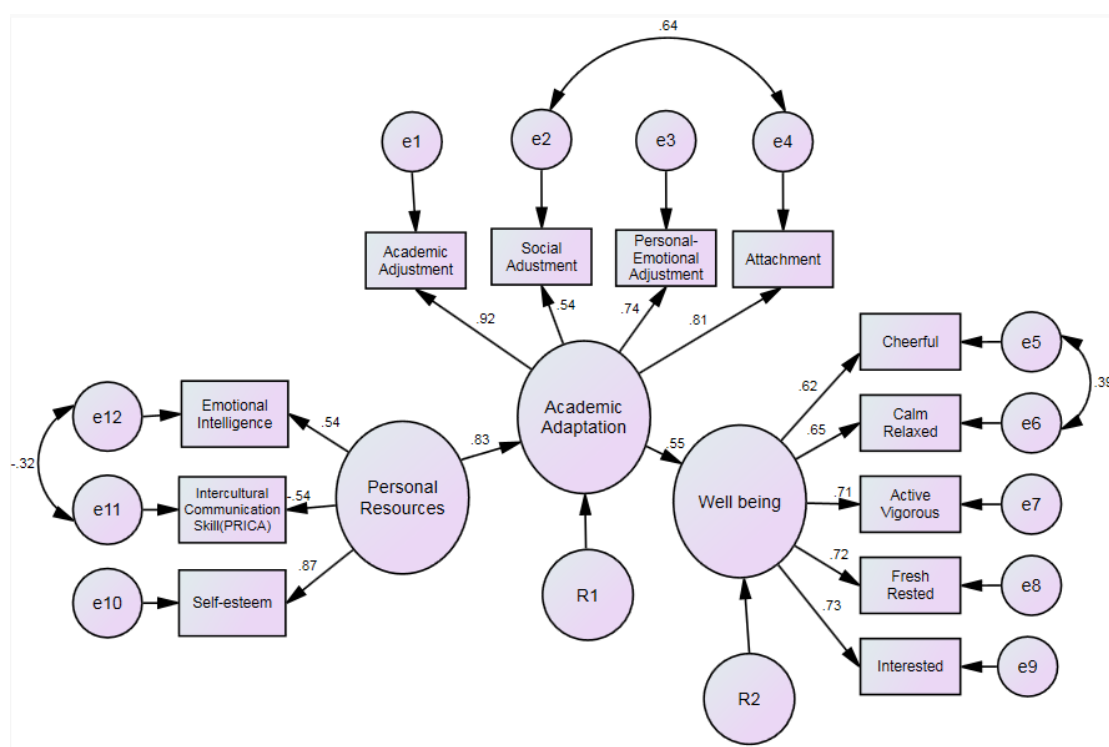


Figure 9: Standardized Parameters Estimates for the Revised Model

The structural path of the model demonstrated two significant relationships. Personal Resources significantly predicted Academic Adaptation ($\beta = .83$, $p < .001$) which, in turn, positively predicted Well-being ($\beta = .55$, $p < .001$). The results suggested that international students who reported more personal resources would perform better Academic Adaptation at PSU and have a higher Well-being.

Lastly, the mediation test in the revised structure was conducted to understand whether Academic Adaptation had a mediation role between Personal Resources and Well-being. Table 14 displays the results of the direct effects from Personal Resources to Well-being before inserting a mediation; Personal Resources significantly predicted Well-being before mediator variable entered the model ($\beta = .428$, $p = .001$).

Table 14: Standardized Regression Weights without Mediation from
Personal Resources to Well-being

| | | β | S.E. | C.R. | P-value | Result |
|------------|----------------------|---------|------|-------|---------|-------------|
| Well-being | ← Personal Resources | .428 | .029 | 3.215 | .001 | Significant |

Note : β = Beta Estimate.

Table 15 shows the results of standardized regression weights after entering the mediator, Academic Adaptation, into the previous model. Comparing the previous test, the direct effects from Personal Resources to Well-being reduced and p-value indicated not significant ($\beta = -.26$, $p = .253$). Moreover, indirect effects between Personal Resources and Well-being via Academic showed positive and significant; Personal Resources to Academic Adaptation ($\beta = .829$, $p < .001$) and Academic Adaptation to Well-being ($\beta = .781$, $p = .001$). Therefore, it was concluded that Academic Adaptation was the full mediator in the revised model.

Table 15: Standardized Regression Weights after Mediator Variable enter the Model

| | | β | S.E. | C.R. | P-value | Result |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------|------|--------|---------|-----------------|
| Well-being | ← Personal Resources | -.264 | .041 | -1.142 | .253 | Not Significant |
| Academic Adaptation | ← Personal Resources | .829 | .595 | 7.600 | *** | Significant |
| Well-being | ← Academic Adaptation | .781 | .008 | 3.261 | .001 | Significant |

Note : β = Beta Estimate, *** = $p < .001$.

To sum up the finding on the second objective, only one variable, Self-esteem, among personal resources was strongly and significantly associated with Academic Adaptation and Academic Adaptation predicted Well-being positively and significantly. In addition, there were significant correlations found among three Personal Resources, such as Emotional Intelligence, Intercultural Communication Skill, and Self-esteem without multicollinearity problems.

Based on the findings, the new structure model with regarding Emotional Intelligence, Intercultural Communication Skill, and Self-esteem as one latent variable, Personal Resources was suggested to understand the adjustment of international students at PSU. In the new structure, the research found that Personal Resources predicted positively and significantly Academic Adaptation, and Academic Adaptation influenced Well-being significantly. Finally, Academic Adaptation was the full mediator between Personal Resources and Well-being.

The qualitative findings supported the change from the original mode to the revised model. First of all, key informants stressed out each of the three personal resources. Although there were no significant influences from Emotional Intelligence and Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension) to Academic Adaptation in the research, some key informants expressed how significant both are:

“It (Emotional Intelligence) ’s really important. If the Ajarn(professor) ’s mood is not so good, she will give me lots of works. I think we (need to) know the mood of Ajarns and friends as well.”

(Interviewee 1, 11/DEC/2017)

“(If) It (emotional intelligence) is lower. Sometimes communication is not good. Especially talking with females. I don ’t know why, even with my advisor, I feel like that. We need to have good communication to work and study together.”

(Interviewee 13, 13/DEC/2017)

“If we keep avoiding interacting with people, how could we get to know each other, how could you get to know your professors more? How could we know what your professors want, what the classmates want? If you keep avoiding them, you will be alone and you will fell loneliness.”

(Interviewee 4, 11/DEC/2017)

As seen in three statements above, it seemed that key informants explained the correlation both emotional intelligence and intercultural communication. In addition, the correlations among three personal resources were stated by other key informants:

“Of course, (all of personal resources are) closely related to one another. I think it (personal resources)’s related to the adjustment. Because if we cannot interact with other people, how can we adjust to this environment.”

(Interviewee 3, 11/DEC/2017)

“If we have high sense of self-confidence, we will also have high sense of self-esteem, and we will also have good sense of intercultural communication skill. If you keep avoiding interacting with people, how could we get to know each other, how could we get to know professors more, what your professors want, and what the classmates to want.”

(Interviewee 4, 11/DEC/2017)

According to the statements of the key informants, it would be anticipated that there are strong and positive relationships among personal resources related to adjustment while studying.

To sum all the findings of this research synthesized with a thematic analysis, themes were overarchingly identified in the research of across all the key informants, suggesting the key concepts that contribute to understand the academic adaptation and well-being of international students at PSU are ‘Successful Academic Achievement’, ‘Importance of Languages’, and ‘Empowering Personal Resources’.

The first theme, ‘Successful Academic Achievement’ was defined by the satisfaction or challenges of international students in academic environment at PSU to understand their academic adaptation and well-being. Most of key informants were

highly motivated to achieve their goals as international students; the statements by interviewee 2 expressed it clearly:

“Well, even though I have some obstacles in the process of adjusting at (PSU). At the end of the day, I am still able to manage it. Because I’m trying to get back to ‘why am I here?’. And I’m trying to redefine my goals again.”

(Interviewee 2, 11/DEC/2017)

Most of them also expressed their satisfaction on the quality of education and academic environment of PSU. As it was referred previously, the satisfaction with the professors at PSU was highlighted by most of key informants and it was revealed that the financial supports from PSU made them stable, happy and concentrate on studying with reducing stress of finance; it was seen in the statements of interviewee 10:

“I have no problem. Thai are very kind. And I have no finance problem while I am studying as I have been granted the scholarship from PSU”

(Interviewee 10, 13/DEC/2017)

Based on the data from Graduate School of PSU, 90 international students among those who enrolled in the first year of Master program or Ph. D. program at Hat Yai campus of PSU, were granted Thailand Education Hub-ASEAN countries which pays their full tuitions for two or three years and monthly allowance (Graduate Office, 2017).

However, some challenges were expressed by key informants: stress on fulfilling the requirements of scholarships and academic English were expressed by the same key informant who referred the stresses, *‘We face the same problems. When we talked about this, we feel stressed. All of us (those who were granted scholarship) have to submit something new and a very good experiment’*.

“I have one suggestion they (Graduate Office) should check and revise their policy. Because most of us (grantees of the scholarship) have that problem. The problem of the scholarship is if you can't publish (a paper), you don't get the degree (graduate from their own courses).”

(Interviewee 13, 13/DEC/2017)

Secondly, the theme, ‘Importance of Languages’, was emphasized by all of key informants asked the question on the most difficult or important thing for adjusting at PSU. All of key informants expressed the importance of language; some of them named ‘language’ itself and gave its reasons or appealed their own challenges: this theme somehow was linked in the first theme. As seen previously, poor spoken language skills in English of staffs and students at PSU were troublesome to international students who could not speak in Thai and were not provided any Thai language course or training at the basic level. Interviewee 8 and 10 referred their challenges from Thai student:

“I think it is pretty much okay for me. Thai Ajarns (professors), they can speak in English very well. But most of students cannot speak in English. Really bad.”

(Interviewee 8, 13/DEC/2017)

“They (Thai students in the same lab) speak in Thai mostly. So sometimes it is annoying. They talk in Thai and (I feel) they talk about me in Thai behind me.”

(Interviewee 10, 13/DEC/2017)

Based on the findings, it was clear that language problems were linked not only in academic adjustment, but also in social and personal-emotional adjustment.

Finally, ‘Empowering Personal Resources’ was the last theme concluded by the quantitative data and qualitative data. It was definitely shown that

most of key informants had active attitude and functional personal resources to adjust at PSU as much as interviewee 4:

“As time goes by, I have befriended many Thai students inside the classrooms. I’ve been trying to understand how they interact with others, how we should interact inside the classroom and how the professors treat the students inside the classroom. I am getting a lot better now.”

(Interviewee 4, 11/DEC/2017)

As seen in the previous section on the relationship between Personal Resources and Academic Adaptation, most key informants appealed strongly the importance of Emotional Intelligence, Intercultural Communication Skills and Self-esteem to adjust at PSU. Interestingly, there was a tendency that Emotional Intelligence and Intercultural Communication Skill (Apprehension) were regarded as a set enhancing the quality of interaction with Thai people academically and socially in the statements (see the statements at page 52).

Precisely speaking, although most of statements on Personal Resources by all of interviewees expressed its roles or importance while adjusting in Thailand in academic and/or social circumstance, the term of ‘empowering’ was chosen and inserted into the third theme to describe the connection between the findings of this research and implications in the next chapter instead of importance or roles.

Additionally, most of key informant appealed intensively the necessity of interactions with Thai people while they were responding to the question about Personal Resources in adjusting at PSU and presented Emotional Intelligence as one of catalysts for fostering functional interaction with Thai including professors, staffs, fellows, students.

However, it seemed that their poor Thai language reduced their confidence of contacting with Thai, misled them into psychological stress, anxiety or even isolation by non-smooth communications with Thai and misinterpretations on what Thai meant, and acted as a hinderance to functional interaction between international students and Thai people academically and socially.

Discussion and Conclusion

International students contribute to the diversity of academic, public activities and ethno-culture, to academic prestige and financial advantage, and to international relations in host countries (Baklshova & Kazakov, 2016). Especially, in higher educational institutions, internationalization provides higher levels of the academic environment by having international students who have different perspective and academic capability, and who are human resource capable of fostering relationships between host and home countries (Jaroensubphayanont, 2014).

Enhancing international students' positive roles is inevitable to support their easy-and-smooth adjustment in host countries (Pare & Tsay, 2013; Ahmadi, 2016). The research was motivated to add more knowledge on the issue by examining which demographic factors, such as gender, age, group of nationalities, length of stay, religion, and English proficiency, affect the academic adaptation, and the relationships among personal resources, academic adaptation, and well-being.

Firstly, in terms of demographic factors, based on t-test and ANOVA, length of stay is the only factor differing academic adaptation among the six demographic factors in this research. The finding is contrary to the previous studies; as gender, age, nationalities, religion, and English proficiency significantly predict adjustment.

For instance, Mohamed (2012) found that females showed lower emotional adjustment than males. Sadrossadat (1995) noted that gender and age had positive and significant relationships among international students in Australia. Ahmadi (2016) studied the relationships between adjustment and background characteristics among international students in the United States and found statistically significant relationships between age, country of origin, and English language skills with overall adaptation to college.

Thus, further studies which search for the relationships between demographic factors of international students influencing or differing academic adaptation should be conducted continually in various higher educational institutions

in Thailand; such as marital status, type of residence, previous experiences, Thai language proficiency, previous experience aboard, positive or negative experience in Thailand.

Nevertheless, the research presented significant and interesting findings. Length of Stay in Thailand differed in Academic Adaptation, especially, while those who resided in Thailand more than 23 months performed a better adjustment, those who stayed from 6 to 11 months seemed to struggle harder than other groups while studying in PSU.

Its possible reasons were arguably explained by the key informants: the period of 6 to 11 months is the time that international students to embark on preparation for academic achievements or their own academic products for the fulfillment of their scholarships and/or graduations. In addition, looking at Length of Stay factor, the U-pattern was found according to each of scores in five conditions.

Based on the findings, the research highly recommends that further research on the relationships between groups of nationalities which can influence cultural distance and language proficiency of English and Thai with academic adaptation should be conducted, since the results contrasted with previous studies. Mustaffa and Ilias' study (2013) indicated that there were significant differences both English and Malay language proficiency in the cross-cultural adjustment. Galchencho and Vijver (2007) stated that the greater distance from the host country would influence the sociocultural adjustment in Russia.

Moreover, both this research and the previous research by Rujipak and Limprasert (2016) found the interesting contradiction to previous studies on cultural distance. International students from Western countries or Africa which have larger cultural distances from Thailand had better academic adaptation than those who from ASEAN or Asia. Although the more interactions with host nationals (Rujipak & Limprasert, 2016) and the higher quality of education in Thailand and English proficiency were suggested the possible reasons of the contrast by this research, the reasons should be studied to explain the contrast.

Secondly, regarding personal resources, the results of the research affirmed that only self-esteem among the three personal resources significantly influenced academic adaptation, and academic adaptation strongly affected well-being. Two personal resources (emotional intelligence and intercultural communication skill (apprehension)) did not significantly affect academic adaptation, although qualitative data referred to its importance (Di Fabio & Palazzeshi, 2008; Bakić-Mirić, 2012) In addition, there were significant relationships found among the three personal resources without multicollinearity problems and most of key informants expressed the relationships among personal resources, especially emotional intelligence and intercultural skills.

Therefore, the research suggested a new structure to understand the relationships among personal resources, academic adaptation, and well-being, although the original path model was reasonably good. Based on the revised model shown a reasonably good fit with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the research found that personal resources significantly affected academic adaptation, in turn, academic adaptation strongly affected well-being. Furthermore, the research found that Academic Adaptation played a full mediation role between personal resources and well-being in the model.

Thirdly, according to the findings, international students at PSU performed better adaptation in academic aspects. The key informants affirmed the quantitative findings; the interviewee 3 stated, *'I'm quite satisfied with my academic situation now'*, and the interviewee 7 also stressed it out, *'Academic is OK, as it is seen, we can learn high-knowledge at PSU'*. Most of key informants demonstrated their satisfaction on academic environment or the quality of education at PSU.

As a result of it, it was shown that all the interviewees had positive attitude while studying at PSU. For instance, interviewee 9 and 10 stressed that international students should make efforts to adjust to new culture with similar voices; *'sometimes difficulties come. But I think that it was a good decision that I made in my life to study (at) PSU'*. Moreover, their goal-and-success centered attitude as sojourners was demonstrated by the statements of some key informants (Church, 1982); interviewee 8 stressed it, *'I am happy if I am studying PSU. It is good. Every clans and*

every place have some good side. And then also, some odd sides, needed some adjustment. But Generally, if I am not happy, I would go back', and interviewee 5 also mentioned similarly, *'I have obstacles too. But I don't think that it's not really a big problem. I can handle it well'*.

However, the research found that international students at PSU faced challenges in social and personal-emotional aspects, as the lowest scores were found in these two dimensions. According to the statements of key informants, the reasons would be explained; *'Loneliness is inevitable, but it's only how you deal with it'* by interviewee 2, *'Two things, language and food. Language is a problem. Not only in PSU, but also outside of PSU. They don't speak in English'* by interviewee 12, and several key informants stressed out the difficulties with Thai people due to their inability of communicating or understanding Thai language by international students.

Lastly, the research proposed three themes which might integrate all the findings of the research for emphasizing key points to understand adjustment and well-being of international students and to provide fundamental data to the stakeholders in Thailand by a thematic analysis. 'Successful Academic Achievement', 'Importance of Languages', and 'Empowering Personal Resources' were the three themes, all the three themes were somehow linked one another rather than sharply separated.

As seen in the study by Alemu and Cordier (2017), it is anticipated that satisfaction in academic and education quality acts one of significant factors when international students choose host countries to study, and effects positively and strongly on their satisfaction while they study in new institutions. The similar results were found in the research; international students at PSU were satisfied with the quality of academic environment at PSU and motivated to achieve their goals as students. On the other hand, it means that developing projects, activities or policies improving the quality of educational environment will enhance the adjustment of international students, reducing their stress and fulfilling their needs while they study.

Continually, the roles of English language in achieving academic tasks and Thai language in interacting or socializing with Thai people were emphasized by key informants. Moreover, emotional intelligence, intercultural communication skills

and self-esteem were regarded crucial resources fostering the adjustment in achieving their academic goals and interacting with Thai professors, staffs, academic colleagues and Thai people.

Despite the beneficial findings of this research, it should be noted that the research was conducted in one campus of one university with 151 international students in Southern Thailand. Therefore, much research should be conducted at the beginning stage of academic efforts on adjustment of international students in Thailand. Especially, research on the evaluation on projects, policies for international students in higher educational institutions in Thailand and the difficulties, challenges, and hardships of international students while studying in Thailand should be conducted.

Implications

Stakeholders of international students in high educational institutes of Thailand may develop activities or projects for enhancing personal resources in cross-culture and new academic environment. While Pare and Tsay's study (2013) suggested their implications in these dimensions: cultural and social integration, variety of food restaurants, Chinese classes, and Course content and methods, this research suggests implications in three categories based on three key themes: Successful Academic Achievement, Importance of Languages, and Empowering Personal Resources.

Successful Academic Achievement. Activities trainings or courses related to academic life, such time management skills, academic planning skills, academic writing, searching a right journal, presentation skills etc., should be prepared for international students.

To prepare appropriate activities and to determine priority, the survey on their felt-needs and preference should be preceded. For instance, Wang (2003) stated that length of stay is one of predictors differing in adjustment of international students and the problems would be different by the length of stay and this research found that those who stayed in Thailand for from 6 to 11 months faced more challenges than other groups.

Importance of Languages. Based on the finding, it is the urgent request that academic writing training or activities for enhancing their academic

adaptation, and basic Thai courses for reducing their difficulties or hardships in social and personal-emotional adjustment should be provided. It is anticipated that a short-term Thai language course would be beneficial for international students to learn Thai culture and to communicate with Thai.

Empowering Personal Resources. Lopez and Bui (2014) found that there was no significant relationship between length of stay and self-esteem, but English language confidence was suggested a strong predictor of self-esteem to international students in the United States of America. Therefore, the previous suggestions of language courses or trainings could act catalysts to strengthen self-esteem by developing their communication skills or academic writings, completing the courses in cross-cultural environment.

Even if emotional intelligence and intercultural communications skill (apprehension) did not predict academic adaptation, the significant and positive relationships among the three personal resources and the collective effects on academic adaptation were found. In addition, academic adaptation was a full mediation between personal resources to well-being. Therefore, enhancing the levels of self-esteem or one of other personal resources might affect the quality of academic adaptation and well-being sequentially. It is one of crucial reasons why the research emphasizes the urgent necessity of English and Thai language trainings or courses for international students at PSU.

Finally, open channel or space, where international students express their difficulties and functional suggestions, will be helpful for a better adjustment and a higher well-being, while they are studying at PSU and in Thailand.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 2

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)*

The 67 statements on this form describe college experiences. Read each one and decide how well it applies to you at the present time (within the past few days). For each statement, select the asterisk at the point in the continuum that best represents how closely the statement applies to you. Select only one asterisk for each statement.

| No. | Statement | Don't apply to me at all Applies very closely to me | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 1 | I feel that I fit in well as part of the college environment. | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | I have been feeling tense or nervous lately. | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | I have been keeping up to date on my academic work. | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at college. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | I know why I'm in college and what I want out of it. | | | | | | | | | |

The manual and the questionnaire sheet for 200 people were purchased by the researcher.

WP, the copyright holder, monitored the research by email, and only 5 items are presented for examples in appendix 2 by following the instructions of WPS on SACQ.

APPENDIX 3

WHO (Five) Well-Being Index (1998 version)

Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks. Notice that higher numbers mean better well-being.

Example: If you have felt cheerful and in good spirits more than half of the time during the last two weeks, put a tick in the box with the number 3 in the upper right corner.

| No. | Statement <i>(Over the last two weeks)</i> | Level of agreement | | | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| | | All of the time | Most of the time | More than half of the time | Less than half of the time | Some of the time | At no Time |
| 1 | I have felt cheerful and in good spirits. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | I have felt calm and relaxed. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 3 | I have felt active and vigorous. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | I woke up feeling fresh and rested. ⁵ | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 5 | My daily life has been filled with things that interest me. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

Scoring:

The raw score is calculated by totalling the figures of the five answers. The raw score ranges from 0 to 25, 0 representing worst possible and 25 representing best possible quality of life.

To obtain a percentage score ranging from 0 to 100, the raw score is multiplied by 4. A percentage score of 0 represents worst possible, whereas a score of 100 represents best possible quality of life.

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Interpretation:

It is recommended to administer the Major Depression (ICD-10) Inventory if the raw score is below 13 or if the patient has answered 0 to 1 to any of the five items. A score below 13 indicates poor wellbeing and is an indication for testing for depression under ICD-10.

Monitoring change:

In order to monitor possible changes in wellbeing, the percentage score is used. A 10% difference indicates a significant change (ref. John Ware, 1995).

APPENDIX 4

The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

Instructions: Indicate the extent to which each item applies to you using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither disagree nor agree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

| No. | Statement | Level of agreement | | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------|-------------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither nor agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | I know when to speak about my personal problems to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | I expect that I will do well on most things I try. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | Other people find it easy to confide in me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | When my mood changes, I see new possibilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | I am aware of my emotions as I experience them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | I expect good things to happen. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | I like to share my emotions with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | I arrange events others enjoy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | I seek out activities that make me happy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | I know why my emotions change. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| No. | Statement | Level of agreement | | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|----------|-------------------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither nor agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 21 | I have control over my emotions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23 | I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | I compliment others when they have done something well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25 | I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26 | When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27 | When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28 | When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail.* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29 | I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30 | I help other people feel better when they are down. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31 | I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32 | I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33 | It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX 5

Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA)

Directions: The 14 statements below are comments frequently made by people with regard to communication with people from other cultures. Please indicate how much you agree with these statements by marking a number representing your response to each statement using the following choices: Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5

| No. | Statement | Level of agreement | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different cultures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | I am tense and nervous while interacting with people from different cultures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | I like to get involved in group discussion with others who are from different cultures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | Engaging in a group discussion with people from different cultures makes me nervous. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | I am calm and relaxed with interacting with a group of people who are from different cultures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | While participating in a conversation with a person from a different culture, I get nervous. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | I have no fear of speaking up in a conversation with a person from a different culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in a conversation with person from a different culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations with a person from a different culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | While conversing with a person from a different culture, I feel very relaxed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | I am afraid to speak up in conversations with a person from a different culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | I face the prospect of interacting with people from different cultures with confidence. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | My thoughts become confused and jumbled when interacting with people from different cultures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | Communicating with people from different cultures makes me feel uncomfortable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Scoring: To compute the PRICA score, complete the following steps:

Step 1. Add the scores for the following items: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 12

Step 2. Add the scores for the following items: 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, and 14

Step 3. Complete the following formula: PRICA score = 42 - Total from Step 1 + Total from Step 2.

Scores can range from 14 to 70. Scores below 32 indicate low intercultural CA. Scores above 52 indicate high intercultural CA. Scores ranging between 32 and 52 indicate a moderate level of intercultural CA.

Source: Neuliep, J. W., & McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The development of intercultural and interethnic communication apprehension scales. *Communication Research Reports*, 14, 385-398.

APPENDIX 6

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

The scale is a ten item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 High School Juniors and Seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State.

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, circle SA. If you agree with the statement, circle A. If you disagree, circle D. If you strongly disagree, circle SD.

| No. | Statement | Level of agreement | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 2 | At times, I think I am no good at all. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 3 | I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 4 | I am able to do things as well as most other people. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 5 | I feel I do not have much to be proud of. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 6 | I certainly feel useless at times. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 7 | I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 8 | I wish I could have more respect for myself. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 9 | All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 10 | I take a positive attitude toward myself. | SD | D | A | SA |

Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem. The scale may be used without explicit permission.

APPENDIX 7

Invitation Letter to International Students at PSU for Recruitment for the Sample

Dear, Student,

This is YeJin Kim who is studying at Human and Social Development, M.A. program at PSU.

I would like to invite YOU to take part in the first research as a respondent for studying the adjustment of international students at PSU. There are 2 questionnaires which you can provide your own information to contribute the research. It will take only around 30 minutes.

- **Research Title**
Factors Affecting the Adjustment and Well-being of International Students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand
- **What is it?**
 - ✓ It is a part of an ongoing M.A. research project at Human and Social Development Department. This research is designed to examine the level of adjustment of international students at PSU, Hat Yai Campus, and to identify the relationships between personal resources; intercultural communication, self-esteem and emotional intelligence, academic adaptation and well-being. Dr. Wanchai Dhammasaccakarn has been supervising the research.
- **Why to participate?**
 - ✓ To contribute some knowledge in the area has been ignored till so far as an academic student. This research will be the first research to examine the adjustment of international students with the authentic Students Adaptation to College Questionnaire(SACQ) in Thailand.
 - ✓ To create fundamental data of adjustment of international students at PSU; the data will be useful for framework for enhance adjustment of international students at PSU.
- **How to participate?**
 1. You can click on the link below to record your answers and click the send button at the last page.
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSekCn9KMI9C59sRQ_uaKF1OnD1Mh756i-PjwP7D-8eNHK915Q/viewform?usp=sf_link
 2. You can fill out the questionnaire form which is provided by the researcher and send it to the researcher.
- **How to use your personal information.**
 - ✓ Your personal information will NOT be presented individually in public. But, it will be presented collectively as the findings.
- **Whom to contact?** YeJin Kim : okngood@gmail.com , 080 547 4500

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Toward a Better Adjustment of International Students in Thailand: A Case Study at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the levels of adjustments of international students and tried to understand their satisfactions and difficulties experienced in the adjustment. The aim is to enhance a better adjustment of international students in three dimensions: academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments. The research was performed at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand as a case study. Mixed method was adopted. 153 participants and 17 key informants responded to the research. It was found that academic adjustment had the highest score and satisfaction. English language was a difficult barrier academically and Thai language socially. Key points of their satisfactions and difficulties in the three dimensions were presented. Then, some implications were suggested, based on the findings

Keywords: Adjustment, Thailand, SACQ, Satisfaction, Difficulties

INTRODUCTION

There is a rapid growth in the number of international students across the world. According to ICEF (2017), the number of international students has been on the increase from 1990 to 2010. Put in estimate, nearly five million higher education students left their own borders to study in other countries now (ICEF, 2017). In Thailand, as one of ASEAN members, according to the data from the annual survey by The Office of Higher Education Commission, 16,999 international students enrolled at 107 higher educational institutes in Thailand in 2012 (OHEC, 2015).

After Prince of Songkla University (PSU) joined as a member of AUN (ASEAN University Network) in 2012, the numbers of internationals who enrolled at PSU increased rapidly from 11 in 2013, to 160 in 2017 (Graduate Office, 2017). In the first semester of 2017, approximately over 243 international graduate students from more than 25 countries registered to study at PSU, Hat Yai Campus, which is one of five campuses.

International students, undoubtedly, encounter problems or difficulties after their arrivals in host countries (Mustaffa and Ilias, 2013). Homesickness, prejudice and discrimination, language proficiency, culture shock, fear and financial challenges are predicted as the sources of acculturative and academic stress (Akhtar, 2012). Academic system, accommodation, food, religious environment, and social norms and values might trigger difficulties for international students in new and foreign countries (Zapf, 1991; Mustaffa and Ilias, 2013; Rujipak and Limprasert, 2016). Although it is very natural that students meet difficulties and even national students have more stress than international students in some parts (Akhtar, 2012), the necessity to understand international students' problems and difficulties for adjustment cannot be ignored.

Considering the unique environment of international students, it is anticipated that their problems or difficulties might be rooted in three categories: different academic environment, cross-cultural circumstance, and personal-emotional challenges (Berry, 1997). Rujiprak (2016) stressed that many difficulties such as academic and social difficulties could have negative effects on psychological well-being by citing Poyralzi and Lopez's study (2007) and Townsend and Poh's (2008).

In addition, international students in Thailand mainly meet a bilingual circumstance. The main academic language is English and the social language

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is Thai; which is in the 4th category of difficult language rankings (FSIL, 2018). Thus, international students in Thailand should overcome more complicating situation while studying.

It is very necessary to support or empower international students to overcome their own difficulties. The progress will be named as ‘adjustment’ (Rajab, Wahab, Shaari, Pannatik and Nor, 2014). Mustaffa and Ilias (2013) stressed the importance of understanding the process of adjustment of international students.

Unfortunately, the studies on the adjustment of international students in Thailand are at the beginning stage, as little research have been conducted (Jareonsubphayanont, 2014; Rujipak, 2016; Rujipak and Limprasert, 2016). Additionally, the purposes of the previous studies in Thailand were based on identifying factors affecting adjustment or examining the relationships between demographic factors or personal resources and cross-cultural adjustment or stress or well-being. Hardly, it is found research on understanding of the adjustment by listening to international students’ voices in Thailand.

The research was designed to examine the levels of international students’ adjustment and to contain their opinions and experiences for enhancing a better adjustment in the future. It is anticipated that their satisfaction and difficulties may be signs or catalysts to guide for a better adjustment of international students and stakeholders in Thailand.

The research was conducted at Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Hat Yai Campus, Thailand. As a case study, the participants were limited to graduate students.

Research Objectives

In order to contribute to the fundamental data on understanding the adjustment of international students in Thailand, the research had two objectives:

1) To examine adjustment levels of international students following demographic factors (gender, age, group of nationalities and English proficiency) in three dimensions (Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, and Personal-Emotional Adjustment).

2) To understand satisfaction and difficulties that international students experienced in adjusting at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand

LITERATURE REVIEW

International students contribute to academic and ethno-cultural diversity in host countries (Khan, Hamdan, Ahmad and Mustaffa, 2015; Baklashova and Kazakov, 2016; Alemu and Cordier, 2017). Providing international academic atmosphere is helpful to national students to experience in various perspectives and approaches of studying (Rujiprak, 2016). On the other hand, studying abroad as higher education students gives great benefits (Mesidor and Sly, 2016; Alsaḥafi and Shin, 2017; Rujiprak, 2016). However, it is anticipated that studying in cross-cultural environments makes students feel difficulties and need to adjust in new circumstances (Mesidor and Sly, 2016).

In additions, international students have to accept the sudden and spontaneous changes of their social status to marginal people, on arriving to the host countries. As the meaning of marginal people is 'a usually smaller group within a larger society' (Nugent, 2013), international students could encounter many difficulties caused by disharmony between previous experiences, knowledge or social skills and new environments (Thurber and Walton, 2012). They need to adjust in the new environment to achieve their own goals (Church, 1982; Mesidor and Sly, 2016).

On the other hand, the stakeholders need to provide functional conditions to them for their easy-and-smooth adjustments. It is strongly believed that the mutual interaction causes a better adjustment of international students in host countries (Rajab, Wahab, Shaari, Pantatik and Nor, 2014).

Academic Adjustment

First of all, international students should understand the new and different academic system in host countries (Pare and Tsay, 2013). It is inevitable that new and different curriculums, academic periods, administrative systems, teaching styles, instructors, classmates, facilities and regulations make international student at least confused directly in indirectly.

Language is one of the most significant and fundamental issues throughout all the problems (Huang and Chang, 2011; Eze and Inegbedion, 2015; Alsaḥafi and Shin, 2017;). As Wang and Hannes (2014) noted the difficulties in understanding professional English terms of Asian international students in Belgium, non-English-native students face hardship to produce academic achievement in English. Lack of confidence in the language is linked to the frustrations of international students (Alsaḥafi and Shin, 2017). Wang and Hannes (2014) found that Asian international students in Belgium

had four main challenges in Academic Adjustment; academic activities, academic resources, language, and time management.

Social Adjustment

On their arrivals, it might be true that international students experience cultural problems or difficulties, although the levels are different. Even if the challenges has not reached the level of 'culture shock' (Oberg, 1960), it is undeniable that international students should adjust socially in host countries while studying. In the Alshafi and Shin (2017)'s research, international students face more difficulties in social adjustment than academic adjustment.

In social adjustment dimension, the significant and direct relationship between language proficiency and the reduction of sociocultural problems was stressed by Akhtar (2012). Intercultural skills' effectiveness including non-verbal communication was studied by Hashim, Baker, Mamat and Razali (2016) in multicultural society; and, it was suggested that providing intercultural trainings or education can decrease the negative effects in host country.

Personal-Emotional Adjustment

Thureber and Walton (2012) stated that homesickness is nearly a universal experience to those who left their home. It was found as the top most reported source of acculturative stress in Akhtar (2012)'s study in Germany. Alshafi and Shin (2017) added one personal-emotional difficulty, loneliness after studying Saudi Arabia students in Australia. Rujipak and Limprasert (2016) found the relationship between personal-emotion and adjustment; according to their study in Thailand, adjusting to new academic and social environment caused stress and affected psychological well-being.

When international students arrive in host countries, they need to adjust psychologically and physically in new environment. Stress on cross-culture and academic achievement might affect their personal and emotional dimension, and disturb their smooth adjustment in new educational environment. Anxiety, depression and loneliness caused by homesickness influence individuals (Thurber and Walton, 2012). In addition, the sudden changes as minority or marginal people in host countries trigger their psychological and physical problems due to the unfair treatments, and discrimination etc.

METHOD

The research was mainly based on the sequential mixed method design; qualitative methods were conducted to explain the quantitative results (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) was adopted as a main tool for obtaining the quantitative data; Cronbach alpha of the Full Scale of SACQ is .92 to .95 (Baker and Siryk, 1999).

It is consisted of 67 items with a 9-point scale to assess the levels of adjustment: applied very closely to me to does not apply to me at all. While 34 items were negatively keyed, 33 items were positively keyed. Its subscales were divided into four: academic adjustment (24 items), social adjustment (20 items), personal-emotional adjustment (15 items) and attachment (7 items). As the research focused on three dimensions, the last subscale was tested, but not presented.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted as the qualitative tool for explaining the findings from quantitative data. Each of interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one and a half hours. All the interviews were scripted for thematic analysis.

The research ethics was approved by the Centre for Social and Behavioural Sciences Institutional Review Board, Prince of Songkla University.

Sampling and Participants

The research was performed at Price of Songkla University (PSU), Hat Yai Campus, in Thailand, and the participants were limited to the graduate students, who had enrolled the first academic semester in 2017. While the participants were 158; 44 participants by online and 114 by paper-based questionnaires, the effective sample size was 153. 43 by online due to one unfaithful response and 110 by paper-based questionnaire as 3 questionnaires were not returned out of 114 distributed. The purposive sampling was used for achieving the research objectives.

The demographic factors analysis of participants is demonstrated in Table 1. The 153 respondents were consisted of 90 males (58.8%) and 63 females (41.2%). In Age factor, the 21-25 years old group was the major population as 67 (43.8%), followed by 45 (29.4%) in the range of 26-35 years old. The two groups contributed to 73.2 % of the total sample population. Interestingly, the population of over 40 years old was high relatively as 11

(7.2%) compared to previous studies (Mustaffa and Iliars, 2013; Rujiprak, 2016; Rujiprak and Limprasert, 2016).

The groups of nationalities were divided into three group following the cultural distance from the host country: ASEAN group, Asia (none ASEAN) namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Taiwan, Yemen, and Others such as UK, USA, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe. 106 (69.3%) students from ASEAN participated in the research, followed by 33 (21.6%) and 14 (9.2%) Asia (none ASEAN countries) and Others respectively.

Looking at the self-reported English proficiency factor, Moderate group were 105 contributed 68.6% to the total population, 35 for Excellent and 12 for Poor, 23.5 % and 7.8% respectively.

Lastly, 13 key informants participated in the semi-structured interviews after signing their own signatures on the Human Information Consent forms prepared by the researcher. All interviews were conducted by following the prepared questionnaire after obtaining permissions of recording the interviews, and were scripted.

Table 1. Description of the participants' demographic factors (n=153)

| Demographic factors | | Frequency | Percent (%) | Cumulative Percent (%) |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------------|
| Gender | Male | 90 | 58.8 | 58.8 |
| | Female | 63 | 41.2 | 100 |
| Age | 21-25 | 67 | 43.8 | 43.8 |
| | 26-30 | 45 | 29.4 | 73.2 |
| | 31-35 | 21 | 13.7 | 86.9 |
| | 35-40 | 9 | 5.9 | 92.8 |
| | Over 40 | 11 | 7.2 | 100.0 |
| Group of Nationalities | ASEAN | 106 | 69.3 | 69.3 |
| | Asia(none ASEAN) | 33 | 21.6 | 90.8 |
| | Others | 14 | 9.2 | 100.0 |

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| | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|-----|------|-------|
| English Proficiency | Poor | 12 | 7.8 | 7.8 |
| | Moderate | 105 | 68.6 | 76.5 |
| | Excellent | 36 | 23.5 | 100.0 |

Data Collection and Analysis

The quantitative data was collected by online and paper-based questionnaires. Graduate Office sent two mails with the invitation letter for the research to international students, and face-to-face data collection was conducted purposively by the researcher and two data collecting helpers who had been instructed on the research, ethics and the guidelines of data collecting.

The data collection was performed for 8 weeks from on 30th of October in 2017 to on 23rd of December with three phases. The first Phase was collecting the quantitative data for three weeks from the very beginning day to on 18th of November. The second Phase was analyzing the quantitative data and preparing the qualitative data collecting for 3 weeks until on 9th of December. The third Phase was conducting semi-structured interviews for 2 weeks until on 23rd of December in 2017.

A computer program, the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Macbook Version 25, was used for analyzing the quantitative data, and thematic analysis on qualitative data was conducted.

Findings

The mean score of the Student Adaptation to the College Questionnaire (SACQ) of the participants was at 405.05, and percentage of SACQ was 34 % in full scale (see the Table 2). Similar result was found in Alshafi and Shin's study (2017). However, generally, the satisfaction of the key informants was high, as most of them gave a score from 6 to 9 on a scale 1 to 10 of asking their satisfaction on adjustment at PSU.

Some of the statement by three different interviewees affirmed it; "on a scale 1-5, I would say 4..... It is not perfect, but I am okay with it. So, I won't give it out of 5..... On a scale of 1-10, I will give it 9 or 8", "(I would like to give 8 out of 10)". "Well, even though I have some obstacle(s) in the process of adjusting myself, at the end of the day, I am still able to manage it because I'm trying to get back to "Why am I here", and "I think I going to go

with 8 (out of 10)". "Because I'm quite satisfied with my academic situation now and I also have many friends here that help me adjust and live here".

This research observed different percentage of the total score in the three dimensions. Looking at the three dimensions; Academic Adjustment had highest scores, at 54 %. Social adjustment and Personal-Emotional Adjustment were lower than Academic Adjustment, and at 34 % and 31 % respectively (see the Table 2). A study on international undergraduates' adjustment in Malaysia found that the overall mean in Social Adjustment had the highest score (Rajab, Wahab, Shaari, Panatik and Nor, 2014).

Table 2. The Results of MEAN of international students' Adjustment

| | Adjustment (Full Scale) | Academic Adjustment | Social Adjustment | Personal- Emotional Adjustment |
|----------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mean | 405.05 | 105.12 | 117.40 | 85.66 |
| % | 34 | 54 | 34 | 31 |
| N | 153 | 153 | 153 | 153 |
| SD | 59.191 | 23.100 | 19.113 | 18.494 |
| SEM | 4.785 | 1.868 | 1.545 | 1.495 |
| Range | 334 | 117 | 104 | 97 |
| Kurtosis | .106 | -.224 | -.079 | -.259 |
| Skewness | -0.71 | .025 | -.024 | 1.110 |

Note. SD = Standard Deviation, %=Percentage, SEM= Std. Error of Mean

The key informants confirmed the quantitative findings. First of all, most of them showed their satisfaction of the academic environment or the academic quality at PSU. Some statements indicated the satisfactions on the quality of curriculums, academic materials and professors' high knowledge and advising skills:

On academic life, I would say that each course, that we have been taking so far in this semester, (is) consisted of so many important materials..... the three courses that I've been taking are closely related to the thing(s) that we have been expecting.

Ajarns (professors) speak (in) English very well. I have no problem with my Ajarn (supervisor).

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Academic (satisfaction) is ok..... (it is) seen at high knowledge. I am feeling that the quality of the advising in academic standard at PSU is quite high.

However, some suggestions or dissatisfaction on Academic Adjustment were made by key informants:

The members of staff in my faculty have difficulty in communicating in English. For instance, when there is important information like deadline on assignments, they have to write it down on paper because they cannot say it in English:

In area of communication, that is number one (difficulty), I (am) studying English program, so I communicate in English, but among staffs (it did not work well)

For me I have a special case. I got a scholarship from Thailand while I was still in my country and I agreed with the requirement of the scholarship. But when I got to PSU I was given another scholarship contract to sign and the requirement of the new contract is more difficult for me. I did not have much choice; I either sign it or I go back to my country. This makes me a little unhappy.

Working in a lab, there are many Thai students. I have found that it is a big problem. Because, most of the subjects are in Thai language, few in English. And we need to speak in English, but most of the time we don't understand each other.

Thai Ajarms (professors), they can speak in, really, good English. For the students, some of them can speak in English, though at a poor level, and most of them cannot speak in English at all.

The statements could be categorized into three main aspects: 1) lack of administrative staffs' English, 2) heavy requirement of scholarships, and 3) Thai language in classes.

Unfortunately, it was noticed that Thai students' speaking in Thai language affected the Social and Personal-Emotional adjustment of international students by considering key informants' statements:

They (Thai students) speak in Thai mostly. So sometimes it is annoying.

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There are only 5 international students and 8 Thai students..... When (we) gather, they start talking in Thai..... I cannot mingle with them..... it sometimes makes me annoyed because I can't understand them. Ever if you(they) are not talking about me.

Examining Social Adjustment and Personal-Emotional Adjustment, the levels of participants' adjustment were lower than Academic Adjustment by 20% and 23% (see Table 2). Interviewees indicated several difficulties:

The first week of our arrival here, the first week of our study, I found many difficulties adjusting with some cultures of Thai. Like it's totally different, the things we didn't have in (my own country), it was here.

Actually, at first, maybe, what is different is the weather, because it is really hot and the language..... we can't even read.... So it's like (being) blind.

Loneliness is inevitable, but it's only how you deal with it.

Members of staff cannot speak English. I had an experience one day; I went to book the badminton court for me and my friends. And because the staff in the office could not speak English, she wrote the things to do for me in Thai Language on a paper. I then took this around to other offices as pointed. To my surprise, the staff kept directing me back and forth because they did not understand each other and I could not communicate directly with them.

Two things, language and food. Language is a problem. Not only in PSU, but also outside of PSU. They don't speak in English"

They (staffs of graduate office) are trying to welcome us. But, for examples, there are new buildings at PSU now, but there is no sign in English.

In dorm(itory), they always announce information in Thai, sometimes we are sleeping and they have a Thai student to announce the information in Thai, we don't understand.

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Based on those statements, five difficulties which international students faced at PSU were found: 1) cultural difference, 2) language, 3) loneliness or homesick, 4) weather and food, 5) unconcerned administration for international students.

Looking at the levels of adjustment by clusters in three dimensions (see Table 3); while motivation in Academic Adjustment was the highest score at 6.7, physical cluster in Personal-Emotional Adjustment was the lowest at 5.6. Social Adjustment stands at 5.7 and psychological at 5.8.

Table 3. The Results of MEANs of Adjustment by Cluster ($1 \leq \text{MEAN} \leq 9$)

| Academic Adjustment | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Cluster | Motivation | Application | Performance | Academic Environment |
| Mean | 6.7157 | 6.4869 | 5.7923 | 6.3490 |
| N | 153 | 153 | 153 | 153 |
| SD | 1.12891 | 1.1672 | 1.23588 | 1.32874 |
| Range | 4.83 | 5.50 | 6.00 | 7.20 |
| Minimum | 4.17 | 3.50 | 3.00 | 1.80 |
| Maximum | 9.00 | 9.00 | 9.00 | 9.00 |
| Social Adjustment | | | | |
| Cluster | General | Other People | Nostalgia | Social Environment |
| Mean | 5.7274 | 6.0028 | 5.8562 | 5.9063 |
| N | 153 | 153 | 153 | 153 |
| SD | 1.21698 | 1.07574 | 1.65291 | 1.45772 |
| Range | 6.43 | 6.43 | 7.67 | 8.00 |
| Minimum | 2.14 | 2.14 | 1.33 | 1.00 |
| Maximum | 8.57 | 8.57 | 9.00 | 9.00 |
| Personal-Emotional Adjustment | | | | |
| Cluster | Psychological | | Physical | |
| Mean | 5.7603 | | 5.6362 | |
| N | 153 | | 153 | |
| SD | 1.39613 | | 1.25982 | |
| Range | 6.78 | | 7.00 | |
| Minimum | 2.22 | | 2.00 | |
| Maximum | 9.00 | | 9.00 | |

Note. SD = Standard Deviation

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As seen in Table 4, a similar pattern was found in gender. Men (n=90) adjusted better than woman (n=63) in full scale (38% and 31%, respectively) and two dimensions excluded in Personal-Emotional adjustment due to even score at 31%. While the over 40 years old group (n=11) had the highest scores in the full scale (42%) and Academic and Personal-Emotional adjustments (62% and 54%, respectively), Social Adjustment was the lowest score (21%). In the same conditions, the 21-25 years old group (n=67) showed their difficulties in full scale at 31 %, especially Personal-Emotional Adjustment at 24 %.

Strangely, in the contrast with previous studies in other countries (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Pare and Tsay, 2013; Alemu and Cordier, 2017), others group in group of nationality (n=14) had a highest score at 58 % than other two groups in closer distances from Thailand. While a study in Thailand by Rujipak and Limprasert (2016) had a similar finding that Western international students adjusted better than Asian international students, a recent research (Alemu and Cordier, 2017) in Korea found that East Asian international student in Korea adjusted better than others from the countries with more cultural dissimilarity.

Lastly, those who have excellent English (n=36) showed the better adjustment at 38 % than poor (n=12) and moderate groups (n=105) which had the same percentage, 31 %. Remarkably, the excellent English group (n=36) had 66 % in Academic Adjustment.

The key points of the satisfaction and difficulties which key informants referred in three dimensions were illustrated on the Table 5. Language was the major issue covering through academic and social adjustments like Mustaffa and Ilias' study in Malaysia (2013); while most of professors' English proficiency was satisfactory, staffs and students' English proficiency was a difficulty.

Amazingly, it was also indicated that speaking in Indonesia or Malaysian at PSU and in South Thailand fostered the adjustment of students from Indonesia and Malaysia. The easiness of finding Halal food for Muslim students also helps in social adjustment. Some of the interviewees say; "When I buy some food, they (staffs in a shop) can speak Melayu (one of dialects of Malay language), so it help(s) me a lot. I don't feel like abroad..... It helps me to adjust here", and "there are many Halal restaurants at PSU and outside of PSU as well".

Table 4. The Results of MEANs of International Students' Adjustment by demographic factors

| Demographic Factors | Adjustment(Full Scale) | | | Academic Adjustment | | | Social Adjustment | | | Personal-Emotional Adjustment | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|--------|--------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|----|
| | M | SD | % | M | SD | % | M | SD | % | M | SD | % | |
| Gender | Male (n=90) | 407.33 | 56.666 | 38 | 152.13 | 22.035 | 58 | 117.87 | 18.223 | 34 | 85.63 | 18.589 | 31 |
| | Female(n=63) | 401.78 | 62.941 | 31 | 147.24 | 24.431 | 50 | 116.73 | 20.449 | 31 | 85.70 | 18.506 | 31 |
| Age | 21-25(n=67) | 399.72 | 64.715 | 31 | 147.54 | 24.029 | 50 | 118.87 | 22.364 | 34 | 82.01 | 18.691 | 24 |
| | 26-30(n=45) | 404.67 | 58.634 | 34 | 151.53 | 23.921 | 58 | 115.73 | 16.666 | 31 | 85.98 | 18.757 | 31 |
| | 31-35(n=21) | 411.00 | 52.477 | 34 | 150.33 | 20.797 | 54 | 119.43 | 16.024 | 34 | 88.81 | 14.760 | 38 |
| | 36-40(n=9) | 412.89 | 57.194 | 38 | 156.91 | 21.594 | 62 | 119.00 | 18.815 | 34 | 87.00 | 24.602 | 34 |
| | Over 40(n=11) | 421.27 | 41.840 | 42 | 156.91 | 21.594 | 62 | 110.09 | 11.683 | 21 | 99.45 | 10.192 | 54 |
| Group of Nationalities | ASEAN(n=106) | 400.37 | 59.452 | 31 | 147.32 | 22.507 | 50 | 117.86 | 19.095 | 34 | 84.11 | 18.394 | 27 |
| | Asia | 404.24 | 60.826 | 31 | 151.12 | 23.046 | 58 | 118.15 | 20.753 | 34 | 83.36 | 16.347 | 27 |
| | Others(n=14) | 442.36 | 40.376 | 58 | 168.93 | 19.820 | 82 | 112.14 | 15276 | 24 | 102.79 | 16.116 | 66 |
| English Proficiency | Poor(n=12) | 397.75 | 45.737 | 31 | 143.00 | 18.523 | 42 | 116.83 | 14.115 | 34 | 87.82 | 14.860 | 38 |
| | Moderate(n=105) | 402.04 | 60.605 | 31 | 149.21 | 22.325 | 54 | 118.22 | 19.728 | 34 | 83.18 | 18.320 | 27 |
| | Excellent(n=36) | 416.25 | 58.902 | 38 | 155.14 | 26.131 | 66 | 115.19 | 18.981 | 31 | 92.14 | 18.852 | 42 |

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, % = Percentage in SACQ. Asia = Asia (None ASEAN Countries)

In Personal-Emotional Adjustment, loneliness, stress to mingle with Thai people (Pare and Tsay, 2013) and feeling or experiencing in marginality were troublesome, whereas, support from professors and staffs, connectivity by information technology and sufficient facilities supported to dissolve these difficulties psychologically and/or physically: Mesidor and Sly's study (2016) supported the findings.

Lastly, international students at PSU had strong-bonding in the same ethnic group in general school lives and enjoyed some international activities by Graduate School and International Students Association (ISA). In addition, they strongly desired to learn Thai language and to have more activities with Thai students.

Table 5. The Key Points of Satisfaction and Difficulties of international students at PSU

| | Academic Adjustment | Social Adjustment | Personal-Emotional Adjustment |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| Satisfaction | Academic quality (e.g. professors, advising skills) Welcoming atmosphere Scholarships Events for international students | Kindness of Thai Facilities Events for international students Speaking in Malay Easiness of finding Halal food International students | Supports from professors and staffs Fast internet (to access to people in home countries) Facilities (e.g sports complex) Same Ethnic groups |
| Difficulties | Difference of academic system Lack of English speakers among staffs and students Requirements of scholarships Thai language in class and instructions | Thai Language / Lack of English Cultural difference Rough communication Weather and food Lack of meeting Thai people Unconsidered administration | Loneliness Stress to mingle with Thai people Unconsidered administration Feeling of minority or marginality |

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Adjustment of international students is a complex, multi-faced and dynamic process (Mustaffa and Ilias, 2013; Brown and Holloway, 2008). The research focused on levels of adjustment, satisfaction and difficulties in three

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dimensions: Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, and Personal-Emotional Adjustment.

The research found that international students at PSU adjusted better in Academic Adjustment than in Social and Personal-Emotional adjustment, it was confirmed by key informants' academic satisfaction. However, they encountered difficulties due to the requirements of scholarships, and poor communications with administrative staffs or Thai students. Church (1982) stated that effective cross-cultural communications and understanding is a key to sojourners' adjustment by citing Brein and David's study (1971).

Socially, while the kindness and willingness of Thai, activities of international students facilitated by stakeholders, Muslims-friendly-environment, and Malay language acted as catalysts into better adjustment of international student, they faced difficulties of Thai language, lack of English speakers in Thailand and opportunities of meeting Thai people, weather, food, and cultural difference.

Personal-emotionally, loneliness, stress of mingle with Thai, and feeling and experiencing of marginality should be overcome with supports from professors and staffs, fast internet environment, sufficient facilities, their own ethnic groups and considered administration for international students. Rajiprak (2016) found the significance of social support from family, friend or significant order influences cross-cultural adjustment in Thailand.

As the research was conducted at a campus of one university, further research with wider scales should be performed for understanding adjustment of international students in Thailand and further research with different perspectives on adjustment of international students should be conducted: such as understand the challenges of stakeholders with international students, evaluation of current activities, effectiveness of trainings for international students, staffs or Thai students.

Additionally, deeper research on their difficulties with their demographic factors is needed to prepare more effective activities, projects or policies for targeted groups.

Lastly, research on various factors affecting adjustments of international students in Thailand should be conducted for providing adequate policies, activities, or projects in the context: such as cultural distances from Thailand did not act in a same way like other countries (Rujipak and Limprasert, 2016). Nevertheless, it would be worth suggesting some implications based on the research.

Implications

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According to the findings, a number of implications should be suggested for a better adjustment as multicultural student body in the future (Simmala, 2008). The implication is divided into three part namely; for international students, for administrative staff and students, and for other stakeholders. This is similar to Pare and Tsay (2013) that suggested their implication in these dimensions: cultural and social integration, variety of food restaurants, Chinese classes, and Course content and methods.

For international students, academic English courses for academic achievement and Thai Language courses for daily life should be provided; although those could be official or unofficial in curriculum, regular based activities or courses are more effective for enhancing the levels of international students' adjustment.

For administrative staffs and Thai students, it is highly expected that English course for basic communication and orientation on international environment will decrease misunderstanding with international students and superfluous feelings or experience.

Lastly, for other stakeholders, open channel or space, where international students express their difficulties and functional suggestions, will be helpful for a better adjustment. Although stakeholders at PSU hold one-week orientation for preparation, meetings with international students to obtain their opinions (e.g. a meeting with scholarship grantees), new projects such as a peer program: which had a positive result (Talbot and Geelhoed, 1998) could be considered for enhancing the adjustment of international students in Thailand.

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Academic Adaptation of International Students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the academic adaptation of international students by identifying the relationship between demographic factors and academic adaptation and examining the levels of differences in accordance with demographic factors in four dimensions of academic adaptation. The research was conducted at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand and the research methodology were the mixed methods; the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaires(SACQ) for the quantitative data and semi-structured for qualitative data. Participants were 151 of international students.

While the factor, length of Stay, influenced significantly to academic adaptation, no significant differences in other four factors(gender, age, group of nationalities, and religion) were found. While ASEAN had the lowest scores of Academic Adaptation in group of nationalities, Others the highest scores. In age, while 21-25 years old group struggled with adapting in new academic environment mostly, over 40 years old group performed the highest quality of adaptation. The lowest scores of those who stayed in Thailand less than 1 year showed their more difficulties than others.

Lastly, Academic Adjustment or Attachment in SACQ had the highest scores in all conditions of demographic factors, on the contrary, Personal-Emotional Adjustment or Social Adjustment the lowest scores.

Keywords: *international students, academic adaptation, demographic factors, SACQ*

1. Introduction

International students encounter difficulties due to new culture in host countries. Homesick[5], acculturative stress[2], depression, language problem, misunderstandings, discrimination, financial stress are some companions in cross-cultural environment. It will be started from the first day of their arrival from home to host countries[6] because of a simple reason, cross-culture.

It is commonly acceptable that cultural differences between home and host countries cause the problems, for instance, verbal and/or body language, food, climate, academic environment, manners, different academic system, or religious environment. Furthermore, while coming from different countries with their own unique personal resources[2], international students need to adjust in new culture for achieving their own goals. Although the cross-cultural educational environment might not impact to international students reaching to the culture shock level, it is obvious that they need to adjust in host countries for creating positive outcomes[3].

As seen that the meaning of 'adjustment' is 'a behavioral process by which humans.....maintain an equilibrium..... between their needs and the obstacles of their environment[17]', adjusting will be one of the keys to catalyze the achievement of international students' lives in host countries. The more understanding on it, the more successful performance of the international students will be possible. In addition, the number of international students is astoundingly growing all over the world[1]. According to the data of an annual survey by The Office of Higher Education Commission, 16,999 international students enrolled at 107 higher educational institutes in Thailand in 2012[18]. However, relatively less research on the adjustment of international students in Thailand have been conducted in comparison with countries in America and Europe continents: Rujipak[14] and Rujipak and Limprasert[15] studied international students' adjustment in Thailand recently.

Therefore, it is anticipated that the research would contribute on the supplement of accumulation of the academic achievement in academic adaptation of international students in Thailand, on the support for stakeholders to develop their frameworks to foster international students' adaptation in new educational environment, and to understand the levels of international students' academic adaptation at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand by a reliable measurement.

Research Objectives

In order to contribute the fundamental data to understand on adaptation of international students, this research was designed. There were two objectives of the research: 1) to identify how demographic factors, such as Gender, Age, Group of nationalities, Religion, and Length of stay, affect the levels of adaptation at a higher educational institute, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus in Thailand, 2) to examine the differences of adaptation's levels among demographic factors in four dimensions: Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and Attachment.

Conceptual Framework

Arguably, two terms, adaptation and adjustment, in higher educational institutes were used with equivalence. In the research, the usage of two terms was adopted Baker and Siryk's concept[11], adaptation indicated the whole human behavior in new educational system, adjustment was regarded as subscales or dimensions of adaptation.

The research had a simple framework to complete the research objectives(see figure 1). Demographic factors were regarded as key-and-basic-factors for measuring international students' adaptation. To reach to the findings, the quantitative approach was performed. Sequentially, semi-structured interviews were performed to reach to potential explanation for the findings from the previous quantitative approach.

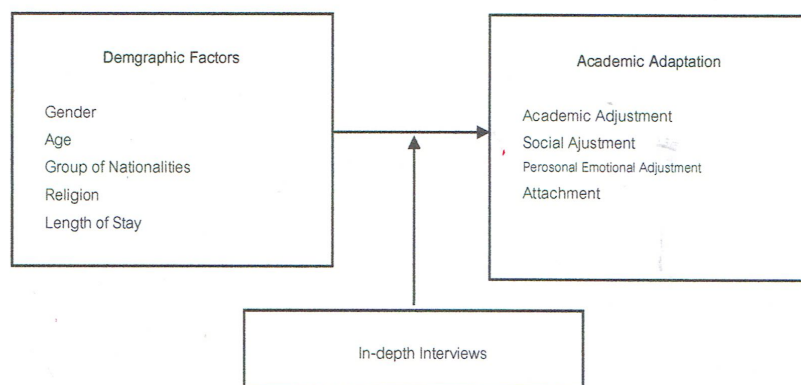


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

2. Literature Review

To fulfill the felt-needs of international students in cross-culture, researchers have studied on the issue since 1950's[15]. After Lysegaard's study[12], various academic attempts for understanding adaptation considered a complicating multi-faceted human behavior have been conducted. Seemingly, all the researches might be categorized into three themes; 1) understanding the progress of adaptation diachronically, 2) developing frameworks, policies or models to enhance the adaptation of international students 3) identifying predictors associating adaptation or measuring the levels of adaptation in various dimensions.

Lysgaard[12] designed 'the U-curve theory' to demonstrate the process of the cross-cultural adjustment with four stages: honeymoon stage, culture shock stage, adjustment state, and mastery stage. According to the theory, the process of adjustment would be understood with an U-curve pattern from the arrival to the appropriate adjustment in host culture. However, The U-curve has the weakness due to the poor data and little empirical support[3], simplicity is, whereas, its strength. Therefore, Gullahorn and Gullahorn[7] extended it into the W-curve pattern, a double U-curve: 1) honeymoon, 2) culture shock, 3) initial adjustment, 4) mental isolation, and 5) acceptance and integration[16]. By the W-curve explanation on cross-cultural adjustment, it has been widely accepted that the more comprehensive understanding was presented.

With conceptualizing the process of cross-cultural adaptation, considerable research was performed to invent frameworks, activities, projects, and models to foster the adaptation of international students in host countries. For instance, Abe, Talbot and Geelhoed[8] studied the effectiveness of International Peer Program(IPP) in Michigan University with the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire(SACQ) and found that IPP had positive results on average between IPP participants and non-participants.

In addition, many researchers exerted to identify predictors associating with adaptation of international students, to invent proper measurement tools of it, or to examine the levels of it with the originated tools. As results of these, measurement tools with various dimensions of adaptation have been invented. One of them is the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire(SACQ) by Baker and Siryk[11]. The purpose of SACQ is to examine the levels of adaptation in four dimensions. While Baklashova and Kazakov[13] indicated that international students faced transitional difficulties in academic and social barriers in Russia after their own arrivals, Baker and Siryk[11] divided the multi-faceted human behavior, adaptation in new culture, into four dimensions: 1) Academic Adjustment, 2) Social Adjustment, 3) Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and 4) Attachment.

As two main features of environment where international students live are 'cross-culture' and 'academic'[9], it was inevitable to value academic and social dimensions on previous studies. Rujipak and Limprasert[15] stated

that the adaptation 'to a new academic and social environment can be a stressful process'. Mesidor and Sly[9] noted that it is indispensable that international students adjust to new educational circumstances for their academic achievement. On the other hand, the significance of adaptation socially in host countries was stressed by Baklashova and Kazakov[13]; they emphasized the necessity of international students' adaptation not only in academic environment, but also in society. Baker and Siryk[11] notes that the less association with a host society, the less adaptation is found.

Additionally, Mustafa and Ilias[6] stated international students face personal-emotional difficulties: it can be caused from their own problems or from the interactions in new culture. Stress, homesickness, anxiety, depression, discrimination, etc. are the obstacles that international students should overcome in new academic environment. Akhtar[10] found that homesickness was the most top resource of acculturative stress for the international students in Germany

Lastly, many researchers examined the relationships between demographic factors and international students' adaptation, namely, gender, age, origin of countries, length of residence, English Proficiency etc. In the study in Malaysia[6] found that while there was no significant difference in genders, the statistical significant differences were found in three demographic factors such as traveling experience, levels of education, English Proficiency and Malay language on academic adaptation. In the study conducted in Thailand by Rujipak and Limparsert[15], gender and living status(with others or alone) were not the significant factors affecting the socio-cultural adjustment.

3. Methodology

The research was mainly based on the sequential mixed method design; qualitative methods were conducted to explain the quantitative results[4].

The research adopted the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire(SACQ) as a main tool for obtaining the quantitative data; Cronbach alpha of the Full Scale of SACQ is .92 to .95[11]. It is consisted of 67 items with a 9-point scale to assess the levels of adaptation in four dimensions: applied very closely to me to doesn't apply to me at all. 24 items are to measure academic adjustment, 20, 15, and 15 in social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment and attachment, respectively. While 34 items are negatively keyed, 33 items positively.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted as the qualitative tool for explaining the findings from quantitative data. Each of interviews was spent from 30 minutes to one and a half hours.

The research ethics was been approved by the Center for Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, Prince of Songkla University.

Sampling and Participants

The research was performed at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, in Thailand(PSU), and the participants were limited among the first or the second year international students of Master Program and the first, the second or the third year of Ph. D, who had enrolled the first academic semester in 2017. The total population was 243, and the participants were 151: 43 international students responded by online(1 participant was unfaithfully answered) and 108 participants responded paper-based questionnaires(115 questionnaires were distributed, 3 questionnaires were not returned, and 4 international students were out of the sampling range due to their program or year of programs). The purposive sampling was used for achieving the research objectives.

The demographic factors' analysis of participants is demonstrated in Table 1. The 151 respondents were consisted of 89 males(58.9%) and 62 females(41.1%). In Age factor, the 21-25 years old group was the major population as 67(44.4%), followed by 45(29.8%) in the range of 26-35 years old. Two groups contributed to 74.2% of the total sample population. Interestingly, the population of 40 years old was high relatively as 11(7.3%) comparing previous studies[6, 14, 15].

The groups of nationalities were divided into three group following the cultural distance from the host country: ASEAN group, Asia(none ASEAN) namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Taiwan, Yemen, Others such as UK, USA, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe. 104(68.9%) students from ASEAN participated in the research, followed by 33(21.9) and 14(9.3%) were respectively Asia(none ASEAN) and Others.

Looking at the religion factor, Buddhist were 56 contributed 37.1 % to the total population, 51 Muslim(33.8%) international students responded. As seen, the contribution of two religions reached to 70.9% in the research. While Christian were 15.9%, 2.0% and 11.3% were Hindu and others, respectively.

In the length of stay factor, the contribution was evenly distributed comparing other factors in the research as in the range from 22.5% to 26.5%, excluding two groups, less than 6 months and over 2 years, marked as 10.6% and 15.9%.

Lastly, 13 interviewees participated the semi-structured interviews after signing their own signatures on the Human Informed Consent forms prepared by the researcher. All interviews were conducted with following the prepared questionnaire after their permissions of taping the interviews, All the interviews were scripted.

Table 1: Description of the participants' demographic factors (n=151)

| Demographic factors | | Frequency | Percent(%) | Cumulative Percent(%) |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| Gender | Male | 89 | 58.9 | 58.9 |
| | Female | 62 | 41.1 | 100 |
| Age | 21-25 | 67 | 44.4 | 44.4 |
| | 26-30 | 45 | 29.8 | 74.2 |
| | 31-35 | 19 | 12.6 | 86.8 |
| | 35-40 | 9 | 6.0 | 92.7 |
| | Over 40 | 11 | 7.3 | 100.0 |
| Group of Nationalities | ASEAN | 104 | 68.9 | 68.9 |
| | Asia(none ASEAN) | 33 | 21.9 | 90.7 |
| | Others | 14 | 9.3 | 100.0 |
| Religion | Buddhist | 56 | 37.1 | 37.1 |
| | Muslim | 51 | 33.8 | 70.9 |
| | Christian | 24 | 15.9 | 86.8 |
| | Hindu | 3 | 2.0 | 88.7 |
| | Others | 17 | 11.3 | 100.0 |
| Length of Stay | Less than 3 months | 34 | 22.5 | 22.5 |
| | Less than 6 months | 16 | 10.6 | 33.1 |
| | Less than 1 year | 37 | 24.5 | 57.6 |
| | Less than 2 years | 40 | 26.5 | 84.1 |
| | Over 2 years | 24 | 15.9 | 100.0 |

Data Collection and Analysis

The quantitative data was collected by online and paper-based questionnaires. Graduate Office sent two emails with the invitation letter for the research to international students, and face-to-face data collection was conducted

purposely by the researcher and two data collecting helpers who had been instructed on the research, ethics and the guidelines of data collecting.

The data collection was performed for 8 weeks from on 30th of October in 2017 to on 23rd of December with three phases. The first Phase was collecting the quantitative data for three weeks from the very beginning day to on 18th of November. The second Phase was analysing the quantitative data and preparing the qualitative data collecting for 3 weeks until on 9th of December. The third Phase was conducting semi-structured interviews for 2 weeks until on 23rd of December in 2017.

A computer program, the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences(SPSS) for MacBook Version 25, was used for analysing the quantitative data, and thematic analysis on qualitative data was conducted.

4. Results

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the academic adaptation in male and female. The results illustrated in Table 2 indicate that there was no significant difference in the levels of adaptation for male(M=402.19, SD=53.8) and female(M=398.48, SD=62.8) in conditions; $t(149)=.389$, $p = 0.698$. The results suggest that gender does not affect on academic adaptation.

Table 2 : The Result of T-test in Gender

| Variable | | N | Mean | SD | t | df | P value |
|----------|--------|----|--------|------|------|-----|---------|
| Gender | Male | 89 | 402.19 | 53.8 | .389 | 149 | .698 |
| | Female | 62 | 398.48 | 62.8 | | | |

*Significance at p value <0.05

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of a demographic factor, age on academic adaptation among the respondents(see the table 3). There was no significant difference at $p<.05$ level for in the academic adaptation in five conditions, $F(4, 146)=0.231$, $p=0.920$. The same analysis was performed to explore at the differences of three other demographic factors: group of nationalities, religion and length of stay. The results on two demographic factors indicated that there were statistically no significant differences at $p<.05$ in the academic adaptation level for group of nationalities, $F(2, 148)=2.757$, $p=0.067$, and religion, $F(4, 146)=1.222$, $p=0.304$.

On the other hand, according to the same analysis looking at the difference of length of stay, there was statistically significant difference at $p<.05$ level for the five conditions, $F(4, 146)=2.854$, $p=0.026$. The result implies that length of stay is one significant factor to influence the academic adaptation of international students.

The qualitative data supported the findings:

“Length of time(is important for the adjustment). Because if I got a lot of exposure from interaction with Thai people, so I think (that) it deals with the time of my stay here. The longer I stay, the more we can adjust.”

(Interviewee 2, 11/DEC/2017)

“I think Length of stay (is important).....It takes time for us to understand them(Thai). So, the most important thing is the length of time”

(Interviewee 4, 11/DEC/2017)

The more collective opinion on the importance of demographic factors influencing academic adaptation was found:

“Everything is important. Most of them came here are young. I think the younger, the more adjustment. Age is very important toward that... .. Language is important also. ”

(Interviewee 6, 11/DEC/2017)

Although language proficiency was not included as demographic factor in the research, it might be, undoubtedly, one of key factors in academic adaptation. Mustaffa and Ilias' study(2013) indicated that there were significant differences both English and Malay language proficiency in the cross-cultural adjustment.

Table 3: The Result of ANOVA in Levels of Age, Group of Nationalities, Religion, and Length of Stay

| Dimensions | SS | df | MS | F | Sig |
|------------------------|------------|-----|----------|-------|-------|
| Age | | | | .231 | .920 |
| Between Groups | 3121.884 | 4 | 780.471 | | |
| Within Groups | 492619.560 | 146 | 3374.107 | | |
| Group of Nationalities | | | | 2.757 | .067 |
| Between Groups | 17807.013 | 2 | 8903.507 | | |
| Within Groups | 477934.431 | 148 | 3229.287 | | |
| Religion | | | | 1.222 | .304 |
| Between Groups | 16063.125 | 4 | 4015.781 | | |
| Within Groups | 479678.319 | 146 | 3285.468 | | |
| Length of Stay | | | | 2.854 | .026* |
| Between Groups | 35947.591 | 4 | 8986.898 | | |
| Within Groups | 459793.852 | 146 | 3149.273 | | |

*Significance at p value <0.05

In terms of the total the academic adaptation of respondents(see the table 4), Academic Adjustment and Attachment had highest scores both male(Academic adjustment: M=6.33, SD=.91, Attachment: M=6.27, SD=1.03) and female(Academic adjustment: M=6.13, SD=1.03, Attachment: M=6.27, SD=1.17). Whereas, both, male(M=5.69, SD=1.24) and female(M=5.70, SD=1.24), had lowest scores in Personal-Emotional Adjustment.

The interviewees suggested the reasons to understand the findings:

“Academic (adjustment) is OK. I can speak in English and all the Ajarns(professours) speak in English too when they advise me”

(Interviewee 7, 11/DEC/2017)

“Academic (adjustment) is very good. Social (adjustment) is good among Thai, and international students, when it comes to international students and Thai, is not so good and that is the cost of communication.”

(Interviewee 6, 11/DEC/2017)

“On academic life. I should say that each course that I have been taking so far in the semester is consisted of so many important materials..... The three courses that I’ve been taking so far are very closely related to the things that I have been expecting.”

(Interviewee 4, 11/DEC/2017)

“Academic (adjustment) is very good. Social (adjustment) is good among Thai, and international students, when it comes to international students and Thai, is not so good and that is the cost of communication.”

(Interviewee 6, 11/DEC/2017)

“Two things (are obstacles to the adjustment)! One is language. The other is food. Language is a problem. Not only in PSU, but also outside of PSU. People are around PSU, they don’t speak in English. So, we cannot understand each other.”

(Interviewee 12, 13/DEC/2017)

“If you go to US, you need to adjust there too. But if PSU wants to have international atmosphere, there should be the diversity of food as well. Not only the food, others as well.”

(Interviewee 8, 13/DEC/2017)

“Loneliness is inevitable, but it’s only how you deal with it. I mean it’s like for me, because most of the time I am alone, then I will do some productive things. Like, for example, maybe the first three hours I will be scrolling down my social media in the room. And after that, if it’s already like 4 pm or 5 pm. And will go down and do some sports like running or badminton..... I think that’s how we deal with loneliness.

(Interviewee 2, 11/DEC/2017)

Considering Age, interestingly, the results indicate that respondents over 40 years old had the highest scores of the total academic adaptation ($M=6.30$, $SD=.63$). On the contrary, the scores of the youngest group (21-25 years old) were the lowest ($M=5.97$, $SD=.97$) in the five conditions. Additionally, there was one other contrast between the youngest and the oldest in Personal-Emotional Adjustment dimension; while the group (21-25) had the lowest scores ($M=5.47$, $SD=1.25$) comparing three other dimensions, the group (Over 40) the highest ($M=6.63$, $SD=.68$) in the same conditions. However, the group (Over 40) struggled harder ($M=5.51$, $SD=.58$) than other groups in Social Adjustment.

Another interesting findings were found in Group of Nationalities, the levels of participants from other countries such as UK, USA, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe adjusted much easily ($M=6.62$, $SD=.61$) were higher than two other groups: ASEAN ($M=5.96$, $SD=.86$) and Asia (none ASEAN, $M=6.03$, $SD=.91$). It might be implied that Cultural Distance did not impact the academic adaptation among the respondents. Moreover, the scores demonstrate that they ($M=7.04$, $SD=.82$) adjusted more successfully than Asia (none ASEAN) group ($M=6.12$, $SD=.94$) and ASEAN group ($M=6.30$, $SD=.96$) in Academic Adjustment dimension. Two other groups, whereas, did so in Social Adjustment: Asia (none ASEAN) group ($M=5.90$, $SD=1.02$), ASEAN ($M=5.87$, $SD=.95$), and Others ($M=5.60$, $SD=.76$).

The surprising results might be explained by the qualitative resources:

“I think that academic level in Thailand is higher. And the problem is their(our) English level as well..... Yeah, we need to read papers in English or (to) co-work with others. And they(we) need questions in English for the study.”

(Interviewee 7, 12/DEC/2017)

“(I think) English also (is a problem). Actually, I think ISI(International Scientific Indexing) is too high for me.”

(Interviewee 13, 13/DEC/2017)

Looking at Religion, the results indicate that the Hindu's scores were highest($M=6.74$, $SD=.68$) in the new educational environment, followed by Christian($M=6.28$, $SD=.76$) and Muslim($M=6.06$, $SD=.94$). As seen, Buddhists($M=6.20$, $SD=1.03$) and Muslim($M=6.23$, $SD=1.16$) had the highest scores in Attachment and the lowest scores(Buddhist: $M=5.40$, $SD=1.16$, Muslim: $M=5.74$, $SD=1.24$) in Personal-Emotional Adjustment. The same pattern was found in Hindu(Attachment: $M=7.00$, $SD=1.38$, Personal-Emotional Adjustment: $M=6.22$, $SD=.96$) and Others(Attachment: $M=6.18$, $SD=1.28$, Personal-Emotional Adjustment: $M=5.47$, $SD=1.40$).

The qualitative data might explain the reasons why the religion factor did not affect the academic adaptation of respondents in Thailand, a well-known Buddhism country:

“Generally, I don't have any problem with Buddhist, Muslim, etc.”

(Interviewee 6, 11/DEC/2017)

“(While buying Muslim foods) So I don't feel like aboard. It(atmosphere) makes me familiar and help(s) me to adjust here.”

(Interviewee 3, 11/DEC/2017)

In terms of Length of Stay, while those who resided over 2 years in Thailand had the highest scores($M=6.27$, $SD=.76$), those who stayed less than 1 year the lowest scores($M=5.65$, $SD=.96$). The results indicate the gradual increasing on the total scores of academic adaptations among the groups followed the length of stay(Less than 3 months($M=6.02$, $SD=.90$), Less than 6 months($M=6.11$, $SD=.87$), Less than 2 years($M=6.23$, $SD=.83$), and Over 2 years($M=6.27$, $SD=.76$)), excluding the Less than 1 year group demonstrated the lowest scores($M=5.65$, $SD=.96$).

Examining the differences in four dimensions between Over 2 years group and Less than 1 year group, the highest scores were found in Academic Adjustment: Over 2 years($M=6.53$, $SD=.90$) and Less than 1 year($M=5.92$, $SD=.96$). However, Over 2 years group($M=5.87$, $SD=.80$) had the lowest scores in Social Adjustment, Less than 1 year group($M=5.19$, $SD=1.44$) in Personal-Emotional Adjustment. The results of the qualitative data might help to imply the potential reasons of the lowest scores of the group(Less than 1 year). It is the time when international students should start considering of the ways how to manufacture some academic products for the achievement of the programs from entrance or for the requirement of scholarship.

“It's (been) almost 11 months. Actually I talked my senior..... We face the same problems. When we talked about this we feel stressed..... All of us(those who were granted have to submit something new and a very good experiment.”

(Interviewee 13, 13/DEC/2017)

Lastly, an interesting contrast was found, searching for highest or lowest scores of each and all conditions in four dimensions: Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and Attachment. The highest scores in the same demographic factors were found in only two dimensions related to academic aspect: Academic Adjustment and Attachment, excluding the highest scores of Over 40 year old group in Age in Social Adjustment.

10 groups' highest scores(Male(M=6.33, SD=.91), 26-30 years old group(M=6.31, SD=1.00), 36-40 years old group(M=6.40, SD=.87), Asia(none ASEAN)(M=6.30, SD=.96), Others in Group of nationalities(M=7.04, SD=.82), Christian(M=6.51, SD=1.03), Hindu(M=7.11, SD=.24), Less than 1 year(M=5.92, SD=.96), Less than 2 years(M=6.46, SD=.95), and Over 2 years(M=6.53, SD=.90) were in Academic Adjustment, 9 groups in Attachment, and 1 in Social Adjustment.

On the contrary, the lowest scores were marked in Personal-Emotional Adjustment(10 groups: Male(M=5.69, SD=1.24), Female(M=5.70, SD=1.24), 21-25(M=5.47, SD=1.25), 26-30(M=5.73, SD=1.25), 31-35(M=5.85, SD=.99), 36-40(M=5.80, SD=1.64), ASEAN(M=5.59, SD=1.23), Asia(none ASEAN)(M=5.59, SD=1.09), Buddhist(M=5.40, SD=1.16), Muslim(M=5.74, SD=1.24), Hindu(M=6.22, SD=.96), Others in Religion(M=5.47, SD=1.40), Less than 3 months(M=5.62, SD=1.18), Less than 6 months(M=5.53, SD=1.08), Less than 1 year(M=5.19, SD=1.44)) and the others in Social Adjustment.

Table 4: The Results of MEANS of Academic Adaptation in four dimensions($1 \leq \text{MEAN} \leq 9$)

| Variables | Academic Adaptation | | Academic Adjustment | | Social Adjustment | | Personal-Emotional Adjustment | | Attachment | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|------------|------|------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | |
| Gender | Male (n=89) | 6.07 | .84 | 6.33 | .91 | 5.88 | .91 | 5.69 | 1.24 | 6.27 | 1.03 |
| | Female(n=62) | 5.99 | .94 | 6.12 | 1.03 | 5.81 | 1.02 | 5.70 | 1.24 | 6.27 | 1.17 |
| Age | 21-25(n=67) | 5.97 | .97 | 6.15 | 1.00 | 5.94 | 1.12 | 5.47 | 1.25 | 6.26 | 1.20 |
| | 26-30(n=45) | 6.04 | .88 | 6.31 | 1.00 | 5.79 | .83 | 5.73 | 1.25 | 6.26 | 1.08 |
| | 31-35(n=19) | 6.04 | .77 | 6.19 | .86 | 5.86 | .76 | 5.85 | .99 | 6.20 | .88 |
| | 36-40(n=9) | 6.17 | .86 | 6.40 | .87 | 5.94 | .93 | 5.80 | 1.64 | 6.14 | 1.12 |
| | Over 40(n=11) | 6.30 | .63 | 6.54 | .90 | 5.51 | .58 | 6.63 | .68 | 6.36 | .81 |
| Group of Nationalities | ASEAN(n=104) | 5.96 | .89 | 6.12 | .94 | 5.87 | .95 | 5.59 | 1.23 | 6.21 | 1.05 |
| | Asia(none ASEAN)(n=33) | 6.03 | .91 | 6.30 | .96 | 5.90 | 1.04 | 5.59 | 1.09 | 6.22 | 1.24 |
| | Others(n=14) | 6.62 | .61 | 7.04 | .82 | 5.60 | .76 | 6.85 | 1.07 | 6.70 | .87 |
| Religion | Buddhist(n=56) | 5.90 | .86 | 6.14 | .89 | 5.81 | .88 | 5.40 | 1.16 | 6.20 | 1.03 |
| | Muslim(n=51) | 6.06 | .94 | 6.21 | 1.00 | 5.99 | 1.08 | 5.74 | 1.24 | 6.23 | 1.16 |
| | Christian(n=24) | 6.28 | .76 | 6.51 | 1.03 | 5.63 | .86 | 6.39 | 1.06 | 6.48 | .92 |
| | Hindu(n=3) | 6.74 | .68 | 7.11 | .24 | 6.72 | .94 | 6.22 | .96 | 7.00 | 1.38 |
| | Others(n=17) | 5.92 | .95 | 6.16 | 1.00 | 5.73 | .85 | 5.47 | 1.40 | 6.18 | 1.23 |
| Length of Stay | Less than 3 months(n=34) | 6.02 | .90 | 6.10 | .96 | 6.01 | .94 | 5.62 | 1.18 | 6.42 | 1.14 |
| | Less than 6 months(n=16) | 6.11 | .87 | 6.33 | .94 | 6.06 | .92 | 5.53 | 1.08 | 6.42 | 1.24 |
| | Less than 1 year(n=37) | 5.65 | .93 | 5.92 | .96 | 5.51 | 1.04 | 5.19 | 1.44 | 5.82 | 1.14 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|------|
| Less than 2 years(n=40) | 6.23 | .83 | 6.46 | .95 | 5.94 | .94 | 6.03 | 1.09 | 6.41 | .90 |
| Over 2 years(n=24) | 6.27 | .76 | 6.53 | .90 | 5.87 | .80 | 6.16 | 1.06 | 6.41 | 1.01 |

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Based on t-test and ANOVA, length of stay is the only factor influencing academic adaptation among the demographic factors in the research: gender, age, group of nationalities, and religion. The levels of academic adaptation's quality among the five different conditions in length of stay, are been gradually increased by the duration of stay, excluding the less than 1 year group. Although stayed for over 6 months to 1 year, they have been struggling with adapting in new academic environment harder than others due to academic requirements and/or English proficiency for their graduation, especially in Academic Adjustment and Personal-Emotional Adjustment. It is a contrast finding, as other groups in demographic factors do have higher scores in Academic Adjustment generally.

Gender, age, group of nationalities, and religion in the research do not act as a catalyst. Surprisingly, ASEAN group who has the shortest cultural distance has lower levels of adaptation than Others group from Africa, the North America or Europe. As seen in qualitative findings, English proficiency and the difference of educational quality levels between home and host countries may affect the results. On the other hand, the results of age are interesting: the youngest among the five conditions had the lowest score, while the oldest the highest. It is a contrast of common assumption, like interviewee 6. Additionally, the scores of the total academic adaptation are increasing from the bottom ($M=5.97$, $SD=.97$) to the peak ($M=6.30$, $SD=.63$) by age. It should be studied in the future.

All the interviewees had positive attitude to adjust to the host academic environment. For example, interviewee 9 and 10 stressed that international should make efforts to adjust in new culture with similar voices, '*sometimes difficulties come. But I think that it was a good decision that I made in my life to study PSU*'. And their unique social status, students in higher educational institute, seemed to influence their goal-and-success centered attitude as sojourners[3]; interviewee 8 stressed it by words, '*... I am happy if I am studying PSU. It is good. Every clans and every place have some good side. And then also, some odd sides, needed some adjustment. But Generally, if I am not happy, I would have gone back*', and interviewee 5 also mentioned similarly, '*I have obstacles too. But I don't think that it's not really a big problem. I can handle it well...*'.

Nevertheless, the further study should be followed on the academic adaptation in Thailand; as the research was limited in only one University and the population was not included undergraduate students. Furthermore, any Post-Hoc test was not presented in the research among conditions in the demographic factors, the reasonable findings on the contrast results with previous studied on age, group of nationalities, and length of stay, should be studied in the future.

International students provide the diversity of academic activities and ethno-culture in host educational institutes[13]. It is, also, undeniable that they should overcome obstacles or problems due to academic, social or cultural differences between home and host countries. To understand their felt-needs for the better adaptation in cross-cultural environments, to support and encourage them, and to prepare frameworks, projects or policies, the research has been conducted. It is anticipated that the findings of the initial research with a well-known measurement, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), in Thailand would contribute on understanding the social phenomenon, on providing fundamental sources to stakeholders, or on enhancing the better academic adaptation of international students in Thailand.

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