A Study on the Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Expatriates in Chinese Enterprises: A Case Study of Thailand

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Abstract

With the globalization of China's economy, Chinese-funded enterprises have increasingly expanded their presence in overseas markets. This study aims to analyze the current situation of cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates from Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand and its influencing factors, to cope with the challenges faced by Chinese-funded enterprises in the expansion of international markets under the background of globalization. The study used a questionnaire survey method to collect data on expatriates from a number of Chinese-funded companies in Thailand, and obtained a total of 214 valid samples. Data analysis was performed using SPSS software to verify hypotheses and explore key influencing factors. Research has found that expatriates have the most difficulty adjusting to work. Language ability, cultural attitudes, organizational support and family support significantly affect the cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates to varying degrees. The findings show that improving language skills and cultivating an open cultural attitude can significantly improve employee adaptability. Based on these findings, this article puts forward corresponding practical suggestions, including strengthening the selection and training of expatriates, providing more systematic organizational support, and paying attention to the family needs of expatriates to improve their level of cross-cultural adaptation. The research results of this article not only provide theoretical references for Chinese-funded enterprises on cross-cultural management strategies but also provide corresponding suggestions for improving the adaptability of expatriates.

Keywords: *Chinese Companies, Expatriates, Cross-Cultural Adaptation*

1. Introduction

With the deepening of global economic integration, the investment and development of enterprises in Europe and the United States in China has been transformed into a large number of overseas investments by Chinese enterprises. As a key force in overseas markets, a large number of Chinese employees are sent to various countries to promote the international business of enterprises. How to help expatriates successfully adapt to cross-cultural situations has become one of the important challenges in the "going out" strategy of Chinese enterprises, and research in this area is particularly important.

Thailand has a location advantage in Southeast Asia, with a stable society, transparent policies, a high degree of trade liberalization, and an open and inclusive business environment, which has attracted more and more Chinese enterprises to invest. As of 2024, China is the largest source of investment in Thailand. According to data from the Thailand Board of Investment (BOI), in the first nine months of 2023, China's foreign direct investment (FDI) application amount increased by 133% year-on-year, becoming the country with the largest increase, involving 264 projects with a total investment of 97.4 billion baht. This reflects the high recognition of the Thai market by Chinese enterprises and their full understanding of regional opportunities.

In recent years, China-Thailand economic and trade relations have achieved all-round development. The two sides have established a multi-level and wide-coverage cooperation model, and cooperation is expected to deepen in the future. 2025 will mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, and the economic and trade cooperation between the two sides will usher in a new period of opportunities. However, despite the broad prospects, the cultural differences faced by expatriates working in Thailand are still the key to their efficiency. How to effectively solve these cross-cultural adaptation problems is the core challenge to ensure the successful business of Chinese companies in Thailand. The manuscript should be carefully checked to ensure that the concept of "cross-cultural adaptation" was first proposed in the United States in the early 20th century. Since then, this field has been the focus of academic attention. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) have expanded their research scope to include international business people and expatriates. Canadian scholar Berry (1980) proposed a two-dimensional model to distinguish four cultural adaptation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Dutch scholar Hofstede (1980) proposed the

cultural dimension theory, which aims to study the impact of differences between different cultures on organizational behavior and cross-cultural communication. Black and Stephens (1989) summarized the cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates into three dimensions: work adaptation, interpersonal adaptation, and general adaptation. Ward and Searle (1991) can divide the dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation into two aspects: psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation. Takeuchi, Wang, and Marinova (2005) proposed an analytical framework based on five influencing factors, including relationships with spouses, family, parent companies, interactions with expatriates, cooperation with host employees, and connections with overseas subsidiaries. American scholars Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, and Luk (2005) constructed a model of factors affecting cross-cultural adaptation, clearly pointing out five key dimensions, namely pre-departure factors, individual characteristics, organizational support, work environment, and non-work life situations, which work together in the cross-cultural adaptation process.

In the last century, the biggest breakthrough in this theoretical field was the construction and development of the cross-cultural adaptation scale by Black and Stephens (1989), which was verified and optimized in subsequent research practices. At present, this three-dimensional structure has been widely used in exploring the cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates, and related scales have also been widely adopted. At present, there are many empirical studies on the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation in academia, and many studies have introduced different moderating variables, enriching the research perspective in this field. However, most of them are still summarizing the results of previous empirical studies.

This study focuses on analyzing the cross-cultural adaptation challenges faced by expatriates of Chinese companies doing business in Thailand. Based on a literature review, the theoretical framework and model of cross-cultural adaptation are deeply explored. Under the guidance of this theory, it aims to analyze and resolve the key factors affecting the cross-cultural adaptation of overseas employees of Chinese investment companies in Thailand. This move aims to lay a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent research work. This study will use the method of questionnaire survey to explore the current situation and performance of Chinese expatriates in Thailand in cross-cultural communication and adaptation in multiple dimensions, find the main factors affecting their cross-cultural adaptation, and provide targeted suggestions and strategies.

2. Objectives

1) What is the current status of cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese expatriates in Thailand?
2) What are the main factors affecting the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese expatriates in Thailand?
3) What measures should companies take to help solve the cross-cultural adaptation problems of expatriates?

3. Materials and Methods

Based on existing academic achievements, this paper uses the cross-cultural influencing factor model to derive two major influencing factors: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include language ability and cultural attitudes; external factors include organizational support and family support. This paper refers to the multi-structural model of cross-cultural adaptation of Black & Stephens (1989), and combines the actual situation of the research object (expatriates in Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand) to divide the dependent variable cross-cultural adaptation into three dimensions: interpersonal adaptation, work adaptation, and general adaptation.

This study reviewed the relevant literature and proposed a theoretical framework and research hypotheses based on Black's multi-structural model of intercultural adaptation and the model of factors affecting intercultural adaptation.

H1: Language ability is positively correlated with each dimension of cross-cultural adaptation.
H2: Cultural attitude is positively correlated with each dimension of cross-cultural adaptation.
H3: Organizational support is positively correlated with each dimension of cross-cultural adaptation.
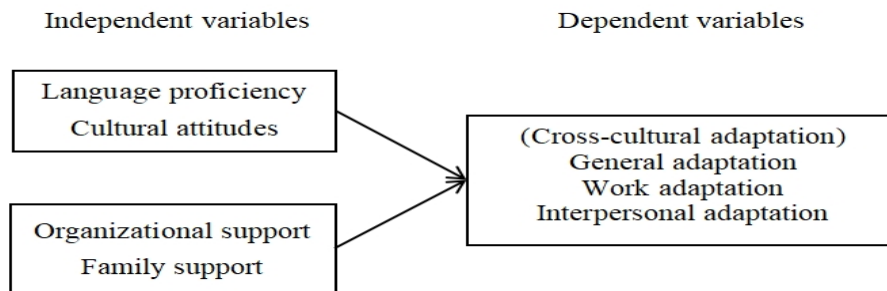H4: Family support is positively correlated with each dimension of cross-cultural adaptation.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

In Figure 1, the conceptual framework describes the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. This study adopts a quantitative research method and collects data information through questionnaire surveys. Data collection was conducted through online and in-person questionnaires, targeting participants with varied tenures in Thailand. Since most of the human resources departments of Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand cannot disclose information about expatriates without personal authorization, this study cannot obtain the list of expatriates from the human resources departments of various Chinese-funded enterprises.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS for descriptive statistics, reliability checks, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and regression analysis to examine correlations between adaptation levels and influencing factors.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Results

This questionnaire will be issued from June 30, 2024 to July 29. This survey obtained a certain amount of data on expatriates who met the requirements, totaling 280 people, 223 questionnaires were collected, 214 valid questionnaires, and the efficiency was 95.96%. Among them, there are 146 male expatriates, accounting for 68.22%; there are 68 female expatriates, accounting for 31.78%. This section illustrates the questionnaire data and descriptive statistical analysis, difference analysis, correlation analysis, and hierarchical regression analysis to verify the research hypotheses proposed in this article.

Table 1 Descriptive statistical analysis table of demographic variables

Variable	Category	Quantity	Percentage%	Cumulative Percentage%
Gender	Male	146	68.22	68.22
	Female	68	31.78	100.00
age	25 years and below	28	13.08	13.08
	26-35 years	114	53.27	66.36
	36-45 years	42	19.63	85.98
	46 years and above	30	14.02	100.00
marital status	Unmarried	81	37.85	37.85
	married	133	62.15	100.00
education level	College degree or below	42	19.63	19.63
	Bachelor's degree	114	53.27	72.90
	Master's degree	48	22.43	95.33
	PhD or above	10	4.67	100.00
foreign language proficiency	Cannot speak Thai or English	29	13.55	13.55
	Cannot speak Thai, but can speak English	103	48.13	61.68
	Cannot speak English, but can speak Thai	25	11.68	73.36

Table 1 Descriptive statistical analysis table of demographic variables (Continued)

Variable	Category	Quantity	Percentage%	Cumulative Percentage%
	Can speak Thai and English	57	26.64	100.00
whether accompanied by family members	Yes	88	41.12	41.12
	No	126	58.88	100.00
whether participated in the company's cross-cultural adaptation training	Yes	127	59.35	59.35
	No	87	40.65	100.00
	Within 3 months	30	14.02	14.02
	3-6 months	35	16.36	30.37
duration of assignment	6 months-1 year	35	16.36	46.73
	1-3 years	71	33.18	79.91
	More than 3 years	43	20.09	100.00
	Total	214	100	100.00

According to valid data statistics, among the expatriates of Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand, the proportion of males is 68.22%, slightly higher than the proportion of females at 31.78%. The age of the samples is mostly distributed between 26 and 35 years old, accounting for 53.27%. The proportion of married people is 62.15%, higher than the proportion of unmarried people at 37.85%. The education level of the samples is mostly at the undergraduate level, accounting for 53.27%. The foreign language level is mostly distributed in English. 58.88% of the respondents were not accompanied by their families during their expatriation, and the remaining 41.12% of the respondents were accompanied by their families during their expatriation. 59.35% of the respondents have participated in relevant training activities. The proportion of expatriates for 1-3 years is the highest, accounting for 33.18%, followed by long-term expatriates for more than 3 years, accounting for 20.09%.

Overall, these data reflect that the expatriates are mainly young and middle-aged men, with a high level of education, and most of them have certain English skills and cross-cultural adaptation training experience.

Table 2 Descriptive statistical analysis of variables and reliability test table

Variable	Average value	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
General adaptation	3.087	11	146
Work adaptation	3.023	7	68
Interpersonal adaptation	3.148	7	28
Language ability	3.267	5	114
Cultural attitude	3.081	6	42
Organizational support	3.362	4	30
Family support	3.318	3	81

This study involves a total of 7 core research variables. The two left columns of the table present the independent variables: language ability, cultural attitude, organizational support, and family support, and the dependent variables, the scores of general adaptation, work adaptation, and interpersonal adaptation (1-5 points).

The right two columns of the table are reliability tests. Generally, the Cronbach coefficient value is greater than 0.7, which means that the reliability of the data is good. From the table analysis, we know that the Cronbach coefficients of general adaptation, work adaptation, interpersonal adaptation, language ability, cultural attitude, organizational support, and family support are all greater than 0.7. It can be considered that the internal consistency of the scale data of the questionnaire is good, which further indicates that the reliability of the scale data is good.

Table 3 Analysis of differences in general adaptation in demographic characteristics (significant)

Variable	t/F	P (Significance)
foreign language proficiency	4.047	0.008
whether participated in the company's cross-cultural adaptation training	1.985	0.048*
duration of assignment	9.666	0.000

The independent sample t-test method was used to conduct a difference analysis on gender, marital status, whether the employee was accompanied by family members, and whether the employee had participated in the company's cross-cultural adaptation training. A single-factor ANOVA test was used for age, education level, foreign language level, and duration of assignment. Note: The table only retains the test results that have an impact, and the same applies to the subsequent results. The data results show that foreign language level (t=4.047, p=0.008), whether the employee had participated in cross-cultural adaptation training (t=1.985, p=0.048), and duration of assignment (t=9.666, p<0.001) have a certain impact on general adaptation.

Table 4 Difference analysis table of job adaptation in demographic characteristics (significant)

Variable	t/F	P (Significance)
foreign language proficiency	6.618	0.000
duration of assignment	5.168	0.001

Work adaptation: The data show that foreign language proficiency (t=6.618, p<0.001) and duration of assignment (t=5.168, p=0.001) have a significant impact on work adaptation.

Table 5 Difference analysis table of interpersonal adaptation in demographic characteristics (significant)

Variable	t/F	P (Significance)
foreign language proficiency	3.099	0.028
duration of assignment	4.675	0.001

Interpersonal adaptation: The data show that foreign language proficiency (t=3.099, p=0. 028) and duration of assignment (t=4.675, p=0.001) have a significant impact on interpersonal adaptation.

Table 6 Correlation analysis table

		General adaptation	Work adaptation	Interpersonal adaptation	Language ability	Cultural attitude	Organizational support	Family support
General adaptation	Pearson correlation	1						
Work adaptation	Pearson correlation	0.537**	1					
Interpersonal adaptation	Pearson correlation	0.572**	0.520**	1				
Language ability	Pearson correlation	0.520**	0.563**	0.611**	1			
Cultural attitude	Pearson correlation	0.583**	0.557**	0.571**	0.591**	1		
Organizational support	Pearson correlation	0.478**	0.544**	0.488**	0.477**	0.514**	1	
Family support	Pearson correlation	0.483**	0.465**	0.431**	0.448**	0.489**	0.445**	1

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

In this study, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyze the correlation between the variables to quantify the strength of these relationships. According to the above table, it can be found that the correlation coefficients between general adaptation, work adaptation and interpersonal adaptation and language ability,

cultural attitude, organizational support and family support are all positive and reach a significant level. This shows that all aspects of cross-cultural adaptation are positively correlated with language ability, cultural attitude, organizational support and family support.

Table 7 Hierarchical regression analysis table of language ability

Dependent variable	Interpersonal adaptation		General adaptation		Work adaptation Cumulative Percentage%	
independent variable	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	Layer 2
Gender	-0.103	-0.039	-0.096	-0.043	-0.062	-0.002
age	-0.186**	-0.131**	-0.048	-0.002	-0.067	-0.015
marital status	0.070	0.068	0.010	0.009	0.086	0.084
duration of assignment	-0.130*	-0.059	-0.064	-0.006	0.000	0.066
education level	0.175**	0.081	0.195**	0.117*	0.252***	0.163**
foreign language proficiency	0.029	-0.018	-0.070	-0.109	0.050	0.005
whether accompanied by family members	0.070	0.068	0.010	0.009	0.086	0.084
whether participated in the company's cross-cultural adaptation training	0.031	0.010	-0.075	-0.092	-0.024	-0.043
duration of assignment	0.256***	0.158**	0.343***	0.262***	0.235***	0.142**
Language ability		0.539**		0.445**		0.510**
R^2	0.173	0.429	0.216	0.390	0.150	0.379
Adjusted R^2	0.141	0.403	0.185	0.363	0.116	0.351
F	5.361***	16.996***	7.057***	14.492***	4.509***	13.808***
ΔR^2	0.173	0.256	0.216	0.174	0.150	0.229
ΔF	5.361***	91.211***	7.057***	58.218***	4.509***	75.153***

According to the hierarchical regression analysis table of language ability, when the dependent variable is interpersonal adaptation, compared with layer 1, after adding language ability as an independent variable, the analysis of this layer further enhances the explanatory power of the model (adjusted R^2 increased from 0.141 to 0.403). At the same time, the incremental explanatory power ($\Delta R^2=0.256$) and improved statistical significance ($\Delta F=91.211$, $p<0.001$) brought by the new variable indicate that language ability positively affects interpersonal adaptation ($\beta=0.539$, $p<0.001$), that is, language ability is positively correlated with interpersonal adaptation, and hypothesis H1.1 is established.

Similarly, when the dependent variable is a general adaptation, after adding language ability as an independent variable, language ability positively affects general adaptation ($\beta=0.445$, $p<0.001$); that is, language ability is positively correlated with general adaptation and hypothesis H1.2 is established. When the dependent variable is job adaptation, after adding language ability as an independent variable, language ability has a positive impact on job adaptation ($\beta=0.510$, $p<0.001$), that is, language ability is positively correlated with job adaptation, and hypothesis H1.3 is established.

In summary, language ability positively correlates with each dimension of cross-cultural adaptation, and hypothesis H1 is established.

Table 8 Hierarchical regression analysis table of cultural attitudes

Dependent variable	Interpersonal adaptation		General adaptation		Work adaptation Cumulative Percentage%	
independent variable	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	Layer 2
Gender	-0.103	-0.086	-0.096	-0.078	-0.062	-0.046
age	-0.186**	-0.137**	-0.048	0.003	-0.067	-0.018
marital status	0.070	0.085	0.010	0.026	0.086	0.101
duration of assignment	-0.130*	-0.071	-0.064	-0.003	0.000	0.058
education level	0.175**	0.052	0.195**	0.067	0.252***	0.129*
foreign language proficiency	0.029	0.009	-0.070	-0.091	0.050	0.030

Table 8 Hierarchical regression analysis table of cultural attitudes (Continued)

Dependent variable	Interpersonal adaptation		General adaptation		Work adaptation Cumulative Percentage%	
independent variable	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	independent variable	Layer 1	Layer 2
whether accompanied by family members	0.031	-0.007	-0.075	-0.114*	-0.024	-0.061
whether participated in the company's cross-cultural adaptation training	0.256***	0.175**	0.343***	0.259***	0.235***	0.154**
duration of assignment	-0.103	-0.086	-0.096	-0.078	-0.062	-0.046
cultural attitudes		0.503***		0.520***		0.502***
R^2	0.173	0.396	0.216	0.454	0.150	0.371
Adjusted R^2	0.141	0.369	0.185	0.430	0.116	0.344
F	5.361***	14.833***	7.057***	18.856***	4.509***	13.384***
ΔR^2	0.173	0.223	0.216	0.238	0.150	0.222
ΔF	5.361***	75.107***	7.057***	89.009***	4.509***	71.912***

According to the stratified regression analysis table of cultural attitude, when the dependent variable is interpersonal adaptation, after adding cultural attitude as an independent variable, the analysis of stratification 2 further enhances the explanatory power of the model (adjusted R^2 increased from 0.141 to 0.369), and the data show that cultural attitude has a positive impact on interpersonal adaptation ($\beta=0.503$, $p<0.001$), that is, cultural attitude is positively correlated with interpersonal adaptation, and hypothesis H2.1 is established.

When the dependent variable is general adaptation, the explanatory power of the model in stratification 2 is enhanced (adjusted R^2 increased from 0.185 to 0.430), and the data show that cultural attitude has a positive impact on general adaptation ($\beta=0.343$, $p<0.001$), that is, cultural attitude is positively correlated with general adaptation, and hypothesis H2.2 is established.

When the dependent variable is job adaptation, stratum 2 is stronger than stratum 1 (adjusted R^2 increased from 0.116 to 0.351), and cultural attitudes positively affect job adaptation ($\beta=0.235$, $p<0.001$), that is, cultural attitudes are positively correlated with job adaptation, and hypothesis H2.3 is established. This further proves that cultural attitudes are positively correlated with each dimension of cross-cultural adaptation, and hypothesis H2 is established.

Table 9 Hierarchical regression analysis table of organizational support

Dependent variable	Interpersonal adaptation		General adaptation		Work adaptation Cumulative Percentage%	
independent variable	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	Layer 2
Gender	-0.103	-0.054	-0.096	-0.046	-0.062	-0.005
age	-0.186**	-0.141*	-0.048	-0.002	-0.067	-0.014
marital status	0.070	0.048	0.010	-0.011	0.086	0.061
education level	-0.130*	-0.104	-0.064	-0.038	0.000	0.030
foreign language proficiency	0.175**	0.093	0.195**	0.112	0.252***	0.155**
whether accompanied by family members	0.029	0.016	-0.070	-0.083	0.050	0.035
whether participated in the company's cross-cultural adaptation training	0.031	0.019	-0.075	-0.087	-0.024	-0.038
duration of assignment	0.256***	0.220***	0.343***	0.308***	0.235***	0.193***
organizational support		0.414***		0.415***		0.487***
R^2	0.173	0.330	0.216	0.374	0.150	0.367
Adjusted R^2	0.141	0.301	0.185	0.346	0.116	0.339
F	5.361***	11.172***	7.057***	13.524***	4.509***	13.139***
ΔR^2	0.173	0.157	0.216	0.158	0.150	0.217
ΔF	5.361***	47.860***	7.057***	51.388***	4.509***	70.032***

When the independent variable is organizational support, the dependent variables are interpersonal adaptation, general adaptation and work adaptation. Compared with layer 1, layer 2 has enhanced explanatory

power for the model. At the same time, the results show that organizational support positively affects interpersonal adaptation ($\beta=0.414$, p<0.001), general adaptation ($\beta=0.415$, p<0.001) and work adaptation ($\beta=0.487$, p<0.001), that is, organizational support is positively correlated with each dependent variable. Hypotheses H3.1, H3.2 and H3.3 are all established, which further proves that organizational support is positively correlated with each dimension of cross-cultural adaptation, and hypothesis H3 is established.

Table 10 Hierarchical regression analysis table of family support

Dependent variable	Interpersonal adaptation		General adaptation		Work adaptation Cumulative Percentage%	
independent variable	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 1	Layer 2
Gender	-0.103	-0.110	-0.096	-0.104	-0.062	-0.070
age	-0.186	-0.118	-0.048	0.034	-0.067	0.010
marital status	0.070	0.058	0.010	-0.004	0.086	0.073
duration of assignment	-0.130*	-0.125*	-0.064	-0.059	0.000	0.005
education level	0.175**	0.077	0.195**	0.079	0.252***	0.142*
foreign language proficiency	0.029	0.012	-0.070	-0.091	0.050	0.030
whether accompanied by family members	-0.103	-0.110	-0.096	-0.104	-0.062	-0.070
whether participated in the company's cross-cultural adaptation training	0.031	0.026	-0.075	-0.081	-0.024	-0.028
duration of assignment	0.256***	0.184**	0.343***	0.258***	0.235***	0.155*
family support		0.343***		0.406***		0.385***
R^2	0.173	0.269	0.216	0.351	0.150	0.271
Adjusted R^2	0.141	0.237	0.185	0.322	0.116	0.238
F	5.361***	8.343***	7.057***	12.248***	4.509***	8.409***
ΔR^2	0.173	0.096	0.216	0.135	0.150	0.121
ΔF	5.361***	26.802***	7.057***	42.384***	4.509***	33.836***

When the independent variable is family support, family support positively affects interpersonal adaptation ($\beta=0.343$, p<0.001), family support positively affects general adaptation ($\beta=0.406$, p<0.001), and family support positively affects work adaptation ($\beta=0.385$, p<0.001). That is, family support is positively correlated with each dimension of cross-cultural adaptation. Therefore, hypotheses H4, H 4.1, H 4.2, and H 4.3 are all established. In summary, all hypotheses were established through hierarchical regression analysis.

4.2 Discussion

The results of the above data analysis show that:

1) Analysis of the current status of cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese expatriates in Thailand

According to the results of the variable descriptive statistical analysis, for Chinese expatriates in Thailand, work adaptation is the most difficult, followed by general adaptation, and interpersonal adaptation is the best. This result suggests that Chinese expatriates in Thailand are a special group of people who are more likely to have work adaptation problems, and companies should pay more attention to them. This result suggests that companies should focus on the work adaptation problems of Chinese expatriates. This is consistent with the research results of Zhao, Li, and Rauch (2012). For Chinese multinational companies, their cross-cultural adaptation strategies tend to be one-way integration of the host country's cultural environment. Chinese employees may be more inclined to maintain their traditional values and behaviors, and are less willing to accept and integrate into the host country's culture. He and Wang (2013) believed that this unilateral adaptation may lead to communication and cooperation barriers between employees and host country employees, affecting team collaboration and efficiency.

2) The main factors affecting the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese expatriates in Thailand

Through correlation analysis, it was found that (Cheng, 2007) general adaptation, work adaptation, interpersonal adaptation and language ability, cultural attitude, organizational support, family support and other variables all reached a significant level, and there was a positive correlation.

Further stratified regression analysis of variables revealed that compared with the demographic variables of stratum 1, the explanatory power of each model was improved after adding language ability, cultural attitude,

organizational support, and family support as independent variables. At the same time, the standardized coefficient values of language ability, cultural attitude, organizational support, and family support as independent variables were all greater than zero, and the corresponding P values were all less than 0.001, further proving that the independent variables were positively correlated with the various dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation (Zu, 2016) .

Through the analysis results, all hypotheses were established. At the same time, it was concluded that language ability, cultural attitude, organizational support, and family support were the main factors affecting the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese expatriates in Thailand. This is similar to Liu (2008) who summarized the core factors affecting cross-cultural adaptation based on existing research.

3) Analysis of the current status of cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese expatriates in Thailand

In the past few decades, empirical research on the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation has increased significantly and has entered a more innovative perspective. For example, Du and Wang (2001) proposed that only when employees can adapt to and understand the local cultural background can they better integrate into the team and contribute to the realization of corporate goals. Zhou and Zhang (2009) proposed that the development and success of multinational companies can be promoted only through effective cross-cultural adaptation. Maertz, Hassan, and Magnusson (2009) incorporated cognitive dissonance theory into the research framework of cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates, revealing the deep psychological mechanism behind the adaptation behavior, and proposed and explored the strategies that expatriates take to reduce cognitive dissonance when facing cultural differences.

Wang and Niu (2018) conducted a large number of empirical studies and deeply explored the root causes of personnel expatriate failure from the perspective of cultural differences, and revealed the importance of multinational companies putting cultural adaptability above business ability as the primary consideration when selecting expatriates. From the organization's perspective, Zhang and Gao (2006) state that multinational companies should implement targeted cross-cultural training programs to help expatriates integrate and adapt to the overseas work environment more effectively.

In addition, Ma, Zhang, and Liu (2005) and Song (2019) focused on the role of organizational support in promoting cross-cultural adaptation. Although there is no unified standard for the dimensional structure and evaluation tools of organizational support in the expatriate environment, the general consensus clearly points out a direct and positive correlation between organizational support and cross-cultural adaptation (Huang, 2005). Specifically, Ao and Yu (2015) proposed that work-level support significantly improved work adaptation. Chen, Zhao, and Li (2024) proposed that life-level support positively impacts general and interpersonal adaptation.

Through analysis, combined with the special scenario of this study, the following recommended measures are proposed for Chinese companies in Thailand.

5. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn through a survey of expatriates in Chinese companies in Thailand. First, the results revealed that among expatriates in Chinese companies in Thailand, adapting to the work environment is the most challenging, followed by general adaptability, while interpersonal adaptation is relatively outstanding; in addition, there is a clear correlation between the variables; the study shows that there is indeed a certain influence relationship between the independent variables (such as language ability, cultural attitude, organizational support, and family support) and the dependent variables (such as general adaptation, work adaptation, and interpersonal adaptation). It was further verified in the hierarchical regression analysis.

Based on this analysis and the purpose of this study, in order to improve the cross-cultural adaptability of Chinese expatriates in Thailand, this study believes that Chinese companies can work from three aspects, namely, selecting expatriates, providing cross-cultural adaptation training for expatriates, and organizational support during the expatriation period.

Specific implementation measures include:

1) Strengthen the selection of expatriates

Improve language proficiency standards: Improve the selection standards, not only focus on business capabilities and English proficiency, but also recommend adding Thai language proficiency tests so that they can communicate in non-English situations.

Increase cultural adaptation tests: Introduce personality assessments and give priority to people with openness, tolerance and positive cultural attitudes to reduce cross-cultural shocks.

Psychological quality enhancement points: Focus on stress resistance, emotional balance, etc., to improve the psychological quality of expatriates in the face of cross-cultural challenges.

Differentiated selection strategies: Balance strict standards and flexibility in selection to ensure that the results not only meet order requirements, but also adapt to the cultural environment of Thailand.

2) Strengthen cross-cultural adaptation training

Online and offline boutique training: Online training popularizes basic cross-cultural knowledge, and offline training focuses on interaction and practical operations to strengthen the cultural adaptability of expatriates.

Combining practice with theory: Improve employees' ability to cope with cross-cultural shocks through scenario simulation, language training and psychological construction.

Establish an expatriate support plan: Provide continuous support after dispatch, establish a local support team and mentors to help expatriates solve practical problems.

3) Organizational support during expatriation

Consultation and assistance support: Provide channels for solving life problems and psychological counseling services to relieve employee stress.

Spiritual and material support: Including center accommodation, direct family visit policy, expatriate employee committee activities, etc., to enhance employees' sense of belonging and adaptability.

Execution incentive mechanism: Incentivize outstanding employees through cross-cultural adaptation enhancement mechanism and promote their positive local culture.

In summary, by implementing the above suggestions proposed in this article, Chinese companies in Thailand can effectively improve the cross-cultural adaptability of expatriates, aiming to comprehensively improve the work and life adaptability of expatriates in Thailand from multiple aspects such as selection, training, and organizational support. These measures will not only help improve the international operation efficiency of enterprises, but also enhance the satisfaction and work performance of expatriates, and provide strong guarantees for the sustainable development of enterprises in the Thai market and promote the sustainable development of enterprises in the Thai market.

In this study, a defined quantity such as (work performance) was not set to reflect the comprehensive cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates, so the research conclusions are inevitably one-sided. Therefore, it is recommended that future scholars can increase the diversity and breadth of samples and feedback variables as much as possible, and participate in the implementation of the suggestions after analysis and suggestions to further verify their feasibility and effectiveness, so as to make further improvements and promote the results of the suggestions that have been incorporated into the practice verification to more Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand.

6. Limitations and future research directions

6.1 Limitations

Although this study reveals the cross-cultural problems of Chinese expatriates in Thailand, it still has certain limitations:

1) Sample limitation: The sample size of this study is 214 valid questionnaires. Although it meets the basic requirements in statistical analysis, the sample size is relatively small and mainly focuses on Chinese expatriates in specific areas of Thailand. In addition, the sample fails to fully cover different enterprise sizes, industry types and employee systems (such as senior executives and grassroots employees), which may affect the comprehensiveness of the results.

2) Data collection method: The data mainly comes from questionnaire surveys, which may have social expectation bias, that is, respondents may tend to choose "socially recognized" answers rather than completely true feelings. In addition, the lack of qualitative data (such as in-depth interviews or open-ended questions) may not allow for a deep understanding of the experience and psychological process of expatriates.

3) Limited range of variables: The independent variables of this study include language ability, cultural attitudes, organizational support and family support, and other potential influencing factors are not included. For example, cultural distance, personality traits of expatriates, and cultural acceptance of the host country may play an important role in cross-cultural adaptation.

4) Single cultural background: This study focuses on the adaptation of Chinese expatriates in Thailand. Its conclusions may be derived from the specific cultural environment of Thailand, and these cross-cultural adaptation solutions may not be directly applicable to Chinese companies in other countries.

6.2 Future research directions

In order to overcome the above limitations and further advance cross-cultural adaptation research, future research can be improved and expanded in the following aspects:

1) Expanding the sample size and diversity: Future research should try to expand the sample range to cover expatriates from different countries or regions, especially countries with significant cultural differences (such as Western countries and African countries). In addition, attention should be paid to the adaptation differences of different enterprise sizes (such as SMEs and multinational companies), industries (such as manufacturing and service industries), and employee systems (such as executives, technicians, and ordinary employees).

2) Method research: On the basis of quantitative research, combined with qualitative research methods (such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, or case studies), in-depth exploration. This method helps to make up for the single data and enrich the research depth and applicability.

3) Explore more influencing factors: Future research can include cultural distance, cross-cultural quality, personality (such as cultural training IQ, openness, tolerance), host country acceptance, colleague support, etc., into the analytical framework to more comprehensively reveal the complex influencing mechanism of cross-cultural adaptation.

4) The relationship between cross-cultural adaptation and performance: Future research should further explore the impact of cross-cultural adaptation on work performance, organizational performance and turnover rate. For example, by indirectly studying and analyzing the relationship between adaptation status and performance indicators (such as productivity and employee innovation), provide specific quantitative references for corporate management decisions.

5) Comparative study of cultural background: It is recommended to conduct comparative studies in multicultural backgrounds to explore the commonalities and differences in the adaptation of Chinese expatriates in different cultural environments. For example, it can be compared with the adaptation characteristics of Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, or the adaptation differences between employees of Chinese-funded enterprises and employees of foreign-funded enterprises in the same country can be compared.

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