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Thai-Chinese Cultural Differences: An Empirical Study on How Cultural Intelligence and Gender May Affect the Subjective Well-Being of Chinese Students Enrolled at Thai Universities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of cultural intelligence and gender on the subjective well-being of Chinese students enrolled in Thai universities. It first focuses on the cultural dimensions that differentiate Thai from Chinese culture and then considers the dimensions of cultural intelligence (CQ), which includes metacognitive, motivational, behavioral, and cognitive CQ, and gender. The study uses a mixed methodology. Open interviews were conducted with 6 students with more than two years of cross-cultural experience. As part of the qualitative approach, 237 questionnaires were filled in by Chinese students from a private university in Thailand. It was found that 31.6 percent of the students surveyed frequently feel anxious, sad, or dissatisfied with the quality of their cross-cultural lives. Motivational CQ ($\beta = .174$, $p < .05$) and metacognitive CQ ($\beta = .217$, $p < .05$) were found to be positively related to subjective well-being. However, cognitive and behavioral CQ as well as gender were not significantly correlated with subjective well-being. This study could be used by educational institutions to set up programs designed to enhance student cultural intelligence.

Keywords: Cultural Dimensions, Subjective Well-Being, Cultural intelligence, International Chinese Students

1. Introduction

In the last decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of Chinese expatriates and students living abroad for long periods on the back of globalization (Center for China and Globalization, 2017). During the period 2000-2015, the number of Chinese students enrolled abroad has increased by 18.9 percent (Center for China and Globalization, 2016). It is estimated that approximately 49,000 Chinese young people are pursuing education in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, not only at college level but also at high school level (Center for China and Globalization, 2016). While English-speaking nations remain the host countries of choice for many Chinese students, a growing number of them are choosing to be educated at Thai institutions of higher learning. As reported by the Center for China and Globalization (2017), Thailand has become a 'hot' destination for Chinese students. According to Voice of America (2019), before the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily stifled student

exchanges, 8,455 Chinese students, young men and women alike, were enrolled at Thai universities, both in undergraduate and graduate programs.

One reason Chinese are flocking to Thai universities is the geographic proximity of the two countries. Another may be the generally lower tuition fees and cheaper cost of living and the legendary reputation of Thailand as the "land of smiles", which in many respect is well deserved and contribute to its attractiveness as a desirable place for education. While expenditures in highly sought tourist locations such as Bangkok, Phuket, and Ko Samui are relatively high as compared Beijing, living costs in other areas is relatively low for prospective Chinese students (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2020). In short, Thai universities are affordable study abroad options for Chinese students when compared to popular destinations such as Australia, the U.S. and Britain. Another factor yet may the cultural proximity of the two nations as both are part of the Asian cultural cluster under the cluster approach to cross-cultural management (Ronen & Oded, 1985).

However, while on the face of it, the two cultures are closer than Chinese culture as compared to, for example, the U.S. culture (or any Western country for that matter), there exists differences between the Sino and Thai cultures that make operating across these two cultures more complex than may seem at first sight. In other words, it may not be as easy as it may appear at first glance for Chinese students enrolled at Thai universities to adapt and feel happy and comfortable living in the land of smiles. This brings to the fore a number of questions: What are the cultural differences between the two cultures? What are the cultural adaptation issues Chinese students living in Thailand are likely to face? To what extent does their ability to deal with these differences affect their subjective well-being? Does gender have an impact?

As determined by Rujiprak (2016), successful cultural adaptation leads to higher life satisfaction and greater work performance. Living happily abroad nevertheless requires cultural intelligence. Broadly speaking, cultural intelligence represents a person's ability to adapt across cultures (Earley & Peterson, 2004). So much so that it is now quite common for multinational corporations (MNCs) to evaluate the cultural intelligence of prospective expatriates prior to assigning them abroad. Research indicates that cultural intelligence has a positive effect on expatriates' performance (Lee & Sukoco, 2010; Ramalu, Wei, & Rose, 2011; Ramalu, Rose, Kumar, & Uli, 2012). According to Jyoti and Kour (2017), cultural intelligence can significantly contribute to the good performance of employees. Because of its widely recognized merits, cultural intelligence has become a way of assessing expatriates' ability to effectively function abroad. However, while cultural intelligence is commonly used to explore the prospective behavior and efficiency of employees once they are assigned abroad, it is rarely used in international student research. Indeed, there is scant evidence of such practice among the student population. Yet, it is regarded as a reliable tool for predicting success living and working abroad. Because of its well-recognized reliability as a determinant of cross-cultural adaptation and life satisfaction, cultural intelligence will be at the core of this study.

As determined by Ang and Van Dyne (2008), cultural intelligence involves four dimensions, namely, metacognitive, motivational, cognitive, and behavioral cultural intelligence. These various dimensions of cultural intelligence are apt to affect the life satisfaction (and therefore the subjective well-being) of Chinese students enrolled at Thai universities. This is precisely the determination which this study seeks to make. Specifically, since, as emphasized by Fernández et al. (2020), life satisfaction is a significant predictor of subjective well-being, this

study aims to determine the extent to which extent the four dimensions of cultural intelligence may affect the subjective well-being of Chinese students enrolled at Thai universities. Subjective well-being in this study refers to students' overall emotional and cognitive evaluation of the quality of life, based on their individual feelings during their studies in Thailand (Diener, 2000). Naturally, discussing the subjective well-being of Chinese students and how cultural intelligence can impact it requires understanding the cultural differences they face when moving to Thailand to study. One way to explore the dissimilarities between the two cultures is to look at Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimensions. As we will see in the next several paragraphs, they include power distance (which can be high or low), individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance (high or low), and long- versus short-term orientation. Although these constructs highlight similarities between the two cultures, they also bring to light significant cultural differences, which require cultural intelligence to be overcome.

Hofstede's (2020) indexes will be especially helpful to identify the cultural differences students face. Next, attention will turn to the discussion of the various components of cultural intelligence and then gender as variables potentially affecting students' subjective well-being. Suggestions on how Chinese students' wellness may be improved will then be offered. Since few articles have focused on the four-dimension of cultural intelligence in the context of Chinese students in Thailand, this study may well prove helpful for the many stakeholders involved in international higher education.

2. Literature Review

- Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede's (1984) seminal research on cross-cultural management has helped identify important dimensions of national character (Moran, Harris, & Moran, 2011). They include (i) power distance, (ii) individualism, (iii) masculinity, and (iv) uncertainty avoidance. In a subsequent study, Franke, Hofstede, and Bond (1991) added a fifth cultural dimension, (v) long-term orientation. While there have been criticisms of Hofstede's dimensions, such as being overtly simplified, empirically driven, and based only on IBM employees (Sondergaard, 1994; Singelis et al., 1995; Schwartz, 2004), the dimensions make sense to analyze contrasts across cultures. Each dimension will be briefly described as they will be used in this study in the context of China and Thailand.

(i) Power Distance – indicates the extent to which a society accepts that power in organizations and institutions is distributed unequally. In other words, it measures the way cultures are accustomed to deal with inequalities among people (Seng & Lim, 2004). For instance, high power distance is related to employees' fear to express disagreement to their managers whereas low power distance is related to a consultative relationship between superiors and subordinates.

(ii) Individualism – refers to a social framework in which people are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate family. Its opposite is collectivism, which occurs when people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups (Hofstede, 1984). The in-group is expected to take care of all those belonging to it and in exchange for looking after them, they owe it absolute loyalty (Moran et al., 2011).

(iii) Masculinity – expresses the extent to which the dominant values in society are assertiveness, money and material things rather than caring for others, people, or one's quality of life (Moran et al., 2011). This gender dimension is learnt. Its opposite is femininity. Feminine characteristics include good working relationships, cooperation, and employment security. In feminine societies, gender roles are often merged or overlap for the sexes (Seng & Lim, 2004).

(iv) Uncertainty Avoidance – indicates the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain or ambiguous situations (Hofstede, 1984). It is a measure of how members of a particular culture are programmed "to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations" (Hofstede & Bond, 1988, p. 11). Countries with low uncertainty avoidance may choose strategies that offer high rewards and those with high uncertainty avoidance strategies that award low rewards but have high probability of success (Seng & Lim, 2004).

(v) Long-Term Orientation – relates to long-term versus short-term perseverance and persistent. It captures the extent to which a culture exhibits pragmatic planning for the future versus live-for-the-moment short perspective (Seng & Lim, 2004). Short-term orientation includes small savings, and social pressure to keep up with the Joneses (even though this may mean overspending) to name a few. Long-term orientation, on the other hand, include values such as thrift, large savings and the adaptation of tradition to modern context (Seng & Lim, 2004).

As constructs ascribed to national cultures, these five dimensions are especially helpful to investigate cultural differences between China and Thailand. Chart 1 shows the five dimensions as applied to China and Thailand as determined by Hofstede (2020). As can be seen in the Chart, there are similarities between the two countries as well as significant differences. Unsurprisingly, on the individualism-collectivism index, both countries score low and have the same score (20). The index for this dimension is based on three aspects: the amount of time available from the job for personal-family development; freedom to adopt individual approaches to the job; and challenge from the job contributing to a sense of personal accomplishment. Clearly, in both nations, the "we" group is the source of identity, protection, loyalty and dependent relationship. There is also high regard for social harmony and conflict is minimized (Moran et al., 2011).

The other index with almost similar scores is the power distance dimension (Thailand, 64; China, 80), which, as we just saw, describes the emotional distance that separates superiors from subordinates. There is high power distance in both countries. Both Thai and Chinese cultures stress stratification and hierarchy and parent-children unilateral obedience. However, the emphasis on "the superiors' autocratic style/paternalistic decision-making style and subordinates' preference for the superiors' autocratic style" is generally higher in China than in Thailand, whose culture display more feminine characteristics (Seng & Lim, 2004, p. 23). Indeed, with a score of 66 on the masculinity index (versus 34 for Thailand), it is clear that Chinese culture expects men to be assertive, ambitious, and tough and managers to be decisive and assertive unlike in Thailand where, as explained above, the dominant value is caring for others.

Meanwhile, as indicated by the scores on the long-term orientation index (Thailand, 32; China, 87), there is a significant difference between Chinese and Thai cultures with regard to long-term orientations. While both countries have long-term (as opposed to short-term) orientations, the willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose, concern with virtue, and

respect for tradition remain stronger in China. In other words, there is a stronger focus on long-term development and commitment in China than in Thailand, where people tend to prefer immediate compensation and feedback (Hofstede, 1991).

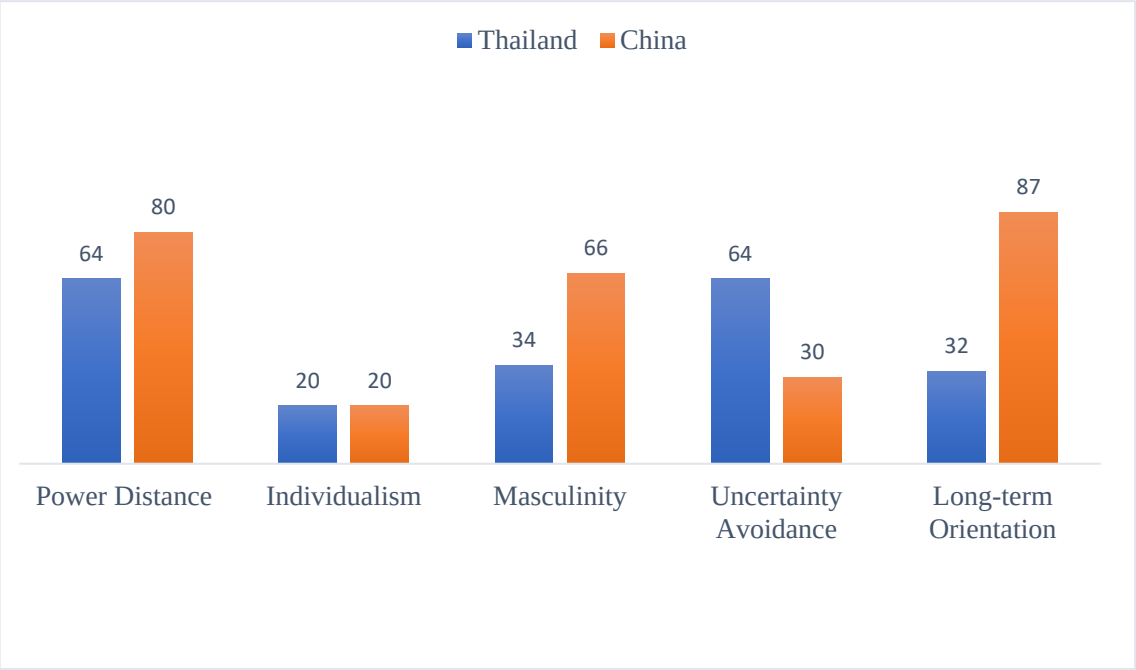

Chart 1: Hofstede's Dimensions for China and Thailand (Hofstede Insights, 2020)

There is also a marked cultural difference on the uncertainty avoidance index as the degree for tolerance of uncertainty varies greatly across the two cultures. The index, which shows three factors, job stress, strong rule orientation, and intended longevity, reflects Thailand's higher uncertainty avoidance as compared to China. While uncertainty and ambiguity are considered threatening in both countries, Thai culture feels more threatened by unknown or uncertain situations than Chines culture (Seng & Lim, 2004).

- Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

As noted in the introduction, cultural intelligence (CQ) represents a person's ability to adapt across cultures (Ang, Van Dyne, & Koh, 2006). Cultural intelligence may also be defined as one's understanding and adaptability for cross-culture (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Cultural intelligence has four main components: Behavioral CQ, Motivational CQ, Cognitive CQ, and Metacognitive CQ (Earley & Ang , 2003).

- *Behavioral CQ* – applies to situations where an individual is able to adopt specific behaviors as a result of strong verbal and non-verbal behavior ability (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). For example, Chinese students with high CQ behavioral ability can effectively use pure language (such as words, intonation) or non-verbal communication (such as gestures and facial expressions) to suit local cultural habits and achieve effective cross-cultural interaction (Earley & Peterson, 2004).

- *Motivational CQ* – pertains to an individual's ability to direct his/her attention or interests and energy toward facing a new culture (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Earley and Peterson (2004) found that individuals with strong motivational CQ have a great sense of their own efficacy and/or intelligence to recognize and modify their comportment to a new culture. They gave the example of Chinese students with higher motivational CQ who through steady efforts to enhance their cultural knowledge, develop much confidence in adapting to different cultural environments. Students who lack motivation, however, are easily discouraged by the challenges of grasping various and subtle cultural differences.

- *Cognitive CQ* – refers to an individual's ability to leverage his/her prior cultural knowledge when finding him/herself in a new environment. (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Ang et al. (2006) determined that expatriates with a high cognitive CQ can leverage their convergent learning style by implementing previous knowledge in the new environment in which they find themselves. They defined cognitive CQ as the ability to bring to bear personal experiences/knowledge and normative cultural knowledge when having to deal with a different cultural environment.

- *Metacognitive CQ* – is generally used in reference to a person who can easily integrate local cultural knowledge and draw from previous personal knowledge. Individuals with a high meta-cognitive CQ tend to effectively process and integrate information An individual with high metacognitive abilities can effectively integrate cultural knowledge when facing different personal situations to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008).

Thus in this study, student culturally intelligent will therefore refer to Chinese students with higher cognitive abilities and specific cultural knowledge based in part on their study of or life experience in Thailand. As such, they are well equipped to fit in a cross-cultural environment and generally find themselves at ease in it (Jyoti & Kour, 2015). According to Ramalu et al. (2012), individuals with higher cultural intelligence have all it takes to adapt better to a new cultural setting. They have determined that meta-cognitive CQ in particular positively relates to general and interaction adaptation. Rujiprak (2016) found that culturally-adjusted and culturally-linked individuals are generally more satisfied with their current lives situation as international students; hence the proposal in that higher cultural intelligence engenders higher levels of subjective wellness.

- Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

The concept of subjective well-being was first developed by Wilson (1967), who defined it as the state of those who score high levels of "happiness." According to Diener (2000), subjective well-being simply means leading a good life. Subjective well-being shows how people evaluate their lives (Michalos, 1985). A significant predictor of subjective well-being is life satisfaction. It is a subjective, long-term, and comprehensive personal feeling (Shen & Chen, 2017). Thus, in this study subjective well-being refers to Chinese students' overall emotional and cognitive evaluation of the quality of life, based on their individual feelings during their studies in Thailand (Diener, 2000).

Based on the variable discussed so far, the following hypothesis can be formulated;

H1: *Behavioral cultural intelligence positively affects the subjective well-being of international Chinese students' enrolled at Thai Universities.*

H2: *Motivational cultural intelligence positively affects the subjective well-being of international Chinese students' enrolled at Thai Universities.*

H3: *Metacognitive cultural intelligence positively affects the subjective well-being of international Chinese students' enrolled at Thai Universities.*

H4: *Cognitive cultural intelligence positively affects the subjective well-being of international Chinese students' enrolled at Thai Universities.*

- Gender

A number of papers focusing on mentally related gender issues have disclosed that there exists differences between men and women with regard to wellness and wellbeing that are gender-specific. These differences have been repeatedly investigated (e.g. Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009; Fujita et al., 1991). Although dissimilarities in levels of happiness between males and females vary from one period to another, gender can be an essential determinant of health and perception of wellbeing. According to Zuckerman, Li, and Diener (2017), men tend to experience lower levels of well-being than women. Personal wellness patterns across the world also indicate that women typically have higher scores on wellbeing than men (Graham & Chattopadhyay, 2012). In this study, gender refers to differences between males and females in terms of their psychological predisposition to well-being and happiness. Accordingly, the following hypotheses can be developed:

H5: *Gender affects international Chinese students' subjective well-being.*

Figure 1 shows the research framework developed for this study.

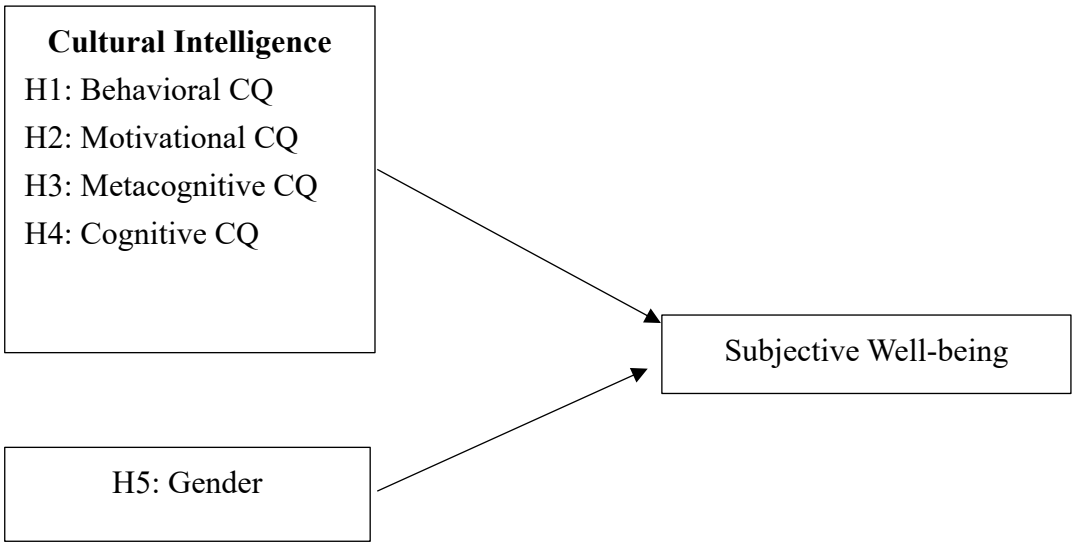

Figure 1: Research Framework (Created by Author for this Study)

3. Research Methodology

This study uses a mixed research methodology. The qualitative part involves interviews and the quantitative approach an online questionnaire distributed to 240 students.

- *Qualitative Approach*

Interviews were conducted using purposive sampling. Six students were interviewed. Five were Chinese students enrolled in a Bachelor's business program at a Thai university. One criteria for their qualification as interviewees was for them to have been living in Thailand for more than two years. The sixth student was a Thai student who has been enrolled in a Chinese program for more than two years. The other criteria for qualification was for the six students to be cognizant of Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimensions and have completed a course in cultural management. These unstructured interviews were based on an open-ended question asking interviewees to identify the most salient cultural dimension highlighting cultural differences between the Thai and Chinese culture.

- *Quantitative Approach*

Once the cultural dimensions differentiating Chinese culture from Thai culture had been identified by the 6 students, a survey questionnaire was used to collect data. 300 questionnaires were sent online to Chinese students enrolled in a Bachelor business program at a Bangkok-based Thai private university with a large community of Chinese students. 240 questionnaires were collected. 3 were rejected (incomplete data), which left 237 valid questionnaires and an effective rate of 79 percent. Students were asked to fill in an open questionnaire based on Hofstede's (1980) theory and dimensions and relate their own experiences and real feelings. Content analysis was applied.

The profile of the 237 Chinese students surveyed that emerged from the questionnaire is as follows: 61.20 percent of the participants were males (145) and 38.80 percent females (92). 43.50 percent of the students surveyed (103) were under 21 years old and 55.3 percent of them (131) between 21-24.9 years old. Three students (1.3%) were between 25 and 30 years old.

- *Variable Measurements*

Two scales are Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS). This study used the 20-question cultural intelligence scale developed by Ang et al. (2014). The scale measured the following four CQ variables thorough statements such as for example: (i) I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people; (ii) I know the legal and economic systems of the other culture; (iii) I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures; and (iv) I use pauses and silences differently in order to suit different cross-cultural situations, etc. An 8-item scale based on Diener and Suh (2000) was applied to measure the subjective well-being scale (SWBS). All constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

4. Results

- Qualitative Analysis

This study conducted a content analysis in order to codify students' answers as shown in Table 1. Five of the participants were Chinese and one was Thai. As a complement to the questionnaire used as part of the quantitative research, all of them were asked the following

question: “What is the most significant difference between Chinese and Thai cultures based on Hofstede's theory?” Table 1 summarizes their answers. Since one of the students thought that two dimensions were equally differentiating the two cultures, both dimensions are listed in the table. The answers make it clear that, given that no one single dimension is listed by all participants as the most striking difference, Chinese and Thai were thought to be different in several ways that are in keeping with Hofstede’s (2020), save for individualism, which according to Hofstede’s (2020) index is equally low in both countries (20/20). Regarding the latter dimension, it is only reported by one student, which can be interpreted as meaning that other students perceive Chinese and Thai people as overwhelmingly favoring the group over the individual or, to put it another way, they see the interests of the group taking precedence over the interests of the individual.

As is the case with Hofstede’s (2020) index on this dimension, Chinese students see Thais as predominantly feminine and therefore as having a markedly different set of priorities in their lives. For Thai people, getting along with others, including the boss, and nurturance are generally more important than emphasis work goals (e.g. earnings, advancement) and assertiveness. They also see major dissimilarities in terms of power distance. Such differences with regard to this dimension are consistent with the masculinity/femininity dimension in that, as noted by students, men enjoy more power than women.

Since power distance is higher in China, women generally refrain from expressing their disagreements both at home and in the workplace, which is less the case in the Thai society. As students’ comments attest, Chinese students see China more bent on competition than Thailand, and Chinese caring more about success and money. They also see major differences in term of orientations (long- versus short-term). This is consistent with Hofstede (2020); China score is 87 whereas that of Thailand is a low 32. It did not take much time for Chinese students to realize that the quality of life of Thai people is measured by the enjoyment of the moment.

Table 1: Content Analysis

Participant Profile	**Dimension Identified as the Most Different**	**Key Comments**
Male, 21 International business major Chinese	Masculinity & Femininity	China is a masculine society in which men play a dominant role whereas Thailand is a feminine society, where people pay attention to the quality of_ life, believe that work is for leading a good life. In male-dominated Chinese society, people focus on competition and success. Thai people on the other hand tend to pay more attention to the quality of life.

Male, 23 International business major Chinese	Masculinity& Femininity	Chinese is significantly male-dominated. Family income is mainly provided by men. Since they have a more specific economic function, they generally enjoy more advantages/privileges than women. Such gender roles not perceived in Thailand's feminine society.
Female, 20 Art design major Chinese	Long-term & Short-term Orientations Individualism/Collectivism	One big difference between long-term-oriented China and short-term-oriented Thailand is that most Thais focus on enjoying life and on saving money for the future. They live for the moment for the day is preferable for them. Competition can be fierce in both countries but Thais nevertheless focus on group relationships. This far from being the case in China, at least on such a scale. Thai's reliance on the group (the extended family) seems to be one of the reasons they live for the day. They seem to believe that somebody will be there for them no matter what. So there is less of a drive to really push when working.
Male, 22, International business major Chinese	Power Distance	Chinese parents dominate their children whereas it seems that Thai parents follow their children's interests and hobbies. In China, absolute obedience to parents (and supervisors at work) is seen as essential (higher power distance). This seems less true of Thai people, especially young ones as observed at university.

Male, 22 Finance and accounting major Chinese	Long-term & Short-term Orientations	Chinese emphasize learning and accumulation. Most Thais, however, enjoy their leisure time. Chinese people seems to care about money more than Thai people, who are less willing to sacrifice the present for future benefits. Thai pays more attention to the quality of life for the moment it occurs. They generally appear not to be willing to defer the pleasure of the present for future gains (this includes studies from what I observe around me).
Male, 21 International Business Thai	Power Distance	My understanding is that in China, the Communist Party runs the country and emphasize the importance of obedience. As a result, Chinese children listen to adults and juniors follow the arrangements made by the seniors. From what I can observe in Thailand, Thai people focus on both the individual and the group (collectivism) but seem to be they own master more than in China where parents dominate their children. While Thais still respect the social hierarchy and obey their peers, they seem to determine their own destiny more than Chinese do.

- Quantitative Analysis

This study used SPSS 19.0 to test the questionnaire's reliability and validity with Cronbach's Alpha and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values. The results show that each construct's factor loading value ranged from .567 to .854, therefore higher than the 0.40 cut-off. The CQ scale (N=6; Cronbach's Alpha=.834) and SWB scale (N=20; Cronbach's Alpha= .914) and the total items are within the .919 reliability, which exceeds Fornell & Larcker's (1981) recommended value (0.6). Meanwhile, the KMO value is .914 (p=.000, approx. Chi-Square =5015.2, df = 496). According to Kaiser (1974), if the KMO value is between 0.8 and 1, then the analysis can be carried out.

- Multilevel Confirmatory Factor (MCFA) Analysis

In assessing the convergent validity of the measurement items, this study applied a Multilevel Confirmatory Factor (MCFA) Analysis, Composite reliabilities (CR), and Composite reliabilities (CR). Table 2 summarizes the results. The table also indicates that in this study the Average

- *Descriptive Statistics and Correlation*

Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeded the recommended value of .5. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), when the AVE is under .5 and the composite reliability (CR) higher than .6, the structure's convergent validity is still sufficient. Since in this study, Motivational CQ's AVE is .45 and CR .851, there is therefore sufficient validity. Likewise, the factor load ranged from .567 to .854, which exceeded the Fornell & Larcker's (1981) recommended value of .5. Table 3 shows the scores which the independent variables in the regression analysis received. Motivational CQ (β=.174, $p < .05$) and metacognitive CQ (β =.217, $p < .05$) were positively related to subjective well-being. Thus, H2 (Motivational CQ positively affects international Chinese students' SWB at Thai universities) and H3 (Metacognitive CQ positively affects international Chinese students' SWB at Thai universities) were accepted. Meta-cognitive CQ has the strongest effects on subjective well-being, followed by motivational CQ.

However, cognitive CQ and behavioral CQ are not related to subjective well-being. Thus, H1 (Behavioral CQ positively affects international Chinese students' subjective well-being at Thai Universities) and H4 (Cognitive CQ positively affects international Chinese students' subjective well-being at Thai universities) were rejected.

The scores of the descriptive statistics of subjective well-being were considered next. Only 1.3 percent of the participants obtained scores ranging from 1 to 2 (from 5) on subjective well-being. Scores under 3 accounted for 31.6 percent of the total, which means that 31.6 percent of the students surveyed frequently feel anxiety and sadness over or dissatisfaction with the quality of their lives. The SWB's mean is 3.39. Overall, a majority of Chinese students (68.4%) subjectively feel positive about/happy with the quality of their lives in Thailand. Meanwhile, 10.5 percent of the participants strongly agreed to life satisfaction. The R square was relatively low but nevertheless reached a significant level at .001, which means that other factors affecting subjective well-being were excluded in this study. The CQ factors in this study significantly affect subjective well-being.

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor (MCFA) Analysis

Factor (Manifest Indicators)	**Question /item**	**Measurement**					**SMC**	**(1-SMC)**	**CR**	**AVE**
		1	2	3	4	5				
Subjective Well-Being (SWB)	SWB1			.661			.437	.563	.860	.509
	SWB 3			.760			.578	.422		
	SWB 4			.608			.370	.630		
	SWB 5			.764			.584	.416		

	SWB 6		.745		.555	.445		
	SWB 7		.726		.527	.473		
Meta-Cognition CQ (M-C)	M-C 1	.749			.561	.439	.852	.592
	M-C 2	.831			.691	.309		
	M-C 3	.780			.608	.392		
	M-C 4	.712			.507	.493		
Cognition CQ (C-C)	C-C1		.733		.537	.463	.836	.508
	C-C3		.579		.335	.665		
	C-C4		.799		.638	.362		
	C-C5		.773		.598	.402		
	C-C6		.658		.433	.567		
Motivational CQ (Mo)	Mo1			.726	.527	.473	.805	.455
	Mo2			.744	.554	.446		
	Mo3			.567	.321	.679		
	Mo4			.699	.489	.511		
	Mo5			.621	.386	.614		
Behavioral CQ (B)	B1	.664			.441	.559	.866	.566
	B2	.854			.729	.271		
	B3	.782			.612	.388		
	B4	.719			.517	.483		
	B5	.727			.529	.471		

Table 3: Regression Analysis of the Prediction of SWB

Dependents / Independents	Subjective Well-Being			
	β (Unstandardized)	β (Standardized)	T	Sig
(Constant)	2.002		12.523	.000
Behavioral CQ	.068	.112	1.525	.129
Motivational CQ	.101	**.174***	2.209	**.028**
Meta-cognitive CQ	.131	**.217****	2.966	**.003**
Cognitive CQ	.030	.054	.717	.474
R^2	.200			
Adj. R^2	.186			
F	14.511***			

Note. + p < 0.10; * p < .05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

- *Analysis of Variance: T-test and One-way ANOVA*

The t-test is a method to determine whether two populations are statistically different, such as, for example, in terms gender, whereas a One-Way ANOVA analysis of variances determines that two or more populations are statistically different. This study applied One-Way ANOVA to analyze age and found that P =.491>.05 and F=.715, thus indicating that different ages will not affect subjective well-being. Using an independent sample T-test to analyze gender revealed that two-tailed P=.62>.05, F=.165(P=.685>.05), t=-.497, df=130, a clear indication that there is no difference in subjective well-being between males and females. As a result, as Table 4 indicates, H5 (Gender affects international Chinese students' subjective well-being) is rejected.

Table 4: T-test (Gender and SWB)

	t	**df**	**Sig (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Result**
Gender → SWB	-.497	130	.620	-.06130	Rejected.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study first identified the main cultural intelligence factors affecting international Chinese students and in light of these constructs proceeded to find out what specific cultural differences Chinese students pursuing their studies in Thailand encounter. Three dimensions, as defined by Hofstede (1980), power distance, masculinity/femininity, and long- versus short-term orientations, were reported by the students interviewed to be the main differences between the Thai and Chinese culture. Chinese care more about success and money and tend to focus more on long-term goals whereas Thai people pay more attention to the quality of life, emphasize humility and equality, and focus on the present (have a "seize the day" attitude). This study suggests that in some ways, Chinese studying at Thai universities may first experience a 'cultural shock', hence the importance of cultural intelligence. Moreover, the survey indicated that most participants scored high on subjective wellbeing (68.4%).

However, it also revealed that 31.6 percent of them often have negative emotions studying in Thailand. Such emotions frequently cause them to feel disliked or unworthy and reduce their self-confidence, self-esteem, and overall life satisfaction. If recurring frequently, they also may end up adversely affecting the quality of their studies and lead to damaging misperceptions of Thai culture. Therefore, universities should clearly explain to Chinese students the main cultural differences and for those experiencing negative feeling, consider ways to reduce the level of such emotions.

Regarding cultural intelligence, this study has confirmed that metacognition CQ and motivational CQ are essential predictors of students' subjective wellness, which correlates with a number of previous studies on international students. For instance, Yang and Chang (2017), who focused on foreign students in Taiwan, determined that these two CQ sub-components were highly predictive of those students' subjective well-being. With 31.60 percent of the Chinese students surveyed feeling anxiety, melancholy, or dissatisfaction with their life qualities, both CQs could play a critical role toward these students' cultural adaptation hence the necessity to enhance the metacognition and motivational CQs power of adaptability.

In addition, this study determined that gender had no significant impact on subjective well-being. Male and female students do not experience significant life satisfaction differences in the course of their studies in Thailand. This finding is consistent with previous research (e.g. Kahneman & Krueger, 2006; Clemente & Sauer, 1976), which all pointed out that there is no significant gender difference with regard to life satisfaction. The inference is that the relationship between gender and subjective well-being by other factors. University Counseling

Centers should therefore strive to promote students' subjective well-being by considering various aspects of students' backgrounds, not including gender, which is neutral.

This study has clearly proved the correlation between subjective well-being with metacognition and motivational CQ. Since, as determined by Earley and Ang (2003), it is possible to cultivate the CQ a person, the following three suggestions can be made:

Firstly, since we now know that that higher metacognitive CQ enables an individual to use their cultural understanding to strategize his/her action (Yang & Chang, 2017), the metacognitive cultural intelligence of Chinese students enrolled at Thai institutions of higher learning needs to be enhanced. As Gregory and Osmonbekov (2019) argued, when companies empower their employees to be assigned abroad with metacognitive cultural intelligence, this mediates the relationship between living abroad and employees' mental health. Ott and Michailova (2018) determined that high metacognitive CQ will nurture better intercultural judgment and increase decision-making effectiveness. Thus, Thai university programs should offer a cultural course in the first year that is designed to develop students' ability to integrate local cultural knowledge and information while living and studying in Thailand and to interact with people from a different cultural background.

Secondly, to enhance motivational CQ among Chinese students, university teachers and department managers should regularly organize activities that contribute to developing foreign students' desire to understand Thai culture. Recall from above that motivational cultural intelligence refers to an individual's ability to direct his/her attention or interests and energy toward facing a new culture. Activities should be diverse and promote confidence in one's ability to adapt one's comportment to a new culture.

Lastly, Thai universities should set up an evaluation system to determine the level of cultural intelligence of students prior to their departure abroad. Depending on the score obtained, they should then arrange for students to take a course. They should also provide counseling and consistent support to students with the lowest CQ scores. Such steps will improve subjective adaption while abroad. They will also generate a higher interest in Thai culture, thereby enhancing those students' motivational and meta-cognition CQ, thus improving their well-being.

- *Study Limitations and Future Research*

First, this study is limited in terms of the geographic scope of the participants; Chinese students enrolled at one Bangkok-based Thai university. Further research could be extended to several universities in Bangkok and in the provinces in order to obtain a more comprehensive image of the extent of the issues discussed in this study. Second, this study, which casts light on the complexity of subjective well-being and international students' cultural intelligence, underscores the need for more empirical research in this area as there are currently few well-documented relationship between cultural intelligence and subjective well-being among Chinese students in Thailand. Third, if possible, future research should use multiple sources of data for measurements, such as for example, in-depth interviews.

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