

*Adaptation of International Students:
A Case Study of Ubon Ratchathani University*

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Abstract

The number of international students studying at tertiary level in Thailand is increasing. Ubon Ratchathani University (UBU) is a university where there is the increasing number of international students enrolling in different programmes. This empirical case study aims to explore problems the students face during their study at UBU and to identify ways how they adapted themselves.

The participants of this qualitative study were international students from ASEAN countries, including Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, the Philippines and Vietnam. An interpretative approach was adopted for data analysis and interpretation. In addition, this study drew upon individual interviews as a primary source of data. The other data sources were supplementary for triangulation and validation of the emerging themes. The results from this study revealed problems, difficulties or challenges that the international students encountered. Adaptation strategies they adopted to overcome their problems were also highlighted.

Keywords: international students, adaptation, difficulties, issues, problems, challenges

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Introduction

The mission of Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand, on the promotion of internationalisation in higher education (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2016), has predominantly influenced directions on strategic plans of Thai private and public universities to strengthen their international collaborations. In so doing, they seek opportunities to collaborate with educational institutions outside Thailand as well as establish international or English programmes, purposing to increase a number of foreign students, particularly those who are from ASEAN countries.

At present, among 156 Thai higher education institutes, 27 public universities and 17 private universities offer different international programmes in which English is used as a medium of instructions (see **Table 1**).

Table 1: Number of international programmes offered by higher education institutions in Thailand

Institution	International Programmes			
	Graduate Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
Public Higher Education Institutions	6	136	232	177
Private Higher Education Institutions	-	51	26	9

Source: Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2015

In addition to the enrollment in above mentioned programmes, some enroll in educational programmes in which Thai is a medium of instructions. To facilitate students, especially those with low proficiency in Thai, Thai language training courses are usually offered for international students before their enrollment in the programmes.

Statistics of international students enrolling at Thai universities in the academic year 2008-2012 indicate that there is the significantly-increasing number of international students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Although students enroll various fields of study, business, Thai language, marketing and English are considered popular majors whilst the top five international students are largely from People's Republic of China (41,032), Lao People's Democratic Republic (6,043), Myanmar (6,193), Cambodia (3,292) and Vietnam (1,875) respectively (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2012).

Located in Ubon Ratchathani, the province in the northeastern part of Thailand, Ubon Ratchathani University (UBU) is a public university offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In comparison to other universities in Thailand (for more information, see <http://inter.mua.go.th/>), a number of international students at UBU are probably small. There have been 117 international students enrolling in different programmes—that is, 91 students in master's degree programmes, 18 in bachelors' degree programmes and 8 in doctoral degree programmes—since 2005.

Table 2: Number of international students at UBU in academic year 2005-2016

Country	Educational Level			Total
	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	11	73	4	88
Cambodia	2	12	-	14
Vietnam	1	2	2	5
People's Republic of China	1	2	-	2
The Philippines	-	2	-	2
United States of America	1	-	1	1
Cameroon	-	-	1	1
Mozambique	-	1	-	1
United Kingdom	-	1	-	1

Source: Office of International Relations, Ubon Ratchathani University, 2016

Shown in **Table 2**, a majority of these students are from Lao People's Democratic Republic (88); others are from Cambodia (14), Vietnam (5), People's Republic of China (2), the Philippines (2), USA (1), Cameroon (1), Mozambique (1) and United Kingdom. The main reason why Lao and Cambodian students preferably study at UBU is probably due to its location, Ubon Ratchathani situated in the bordering area of three countries, i.e. Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand.

In terms of enrollment, the students enroll in different academic fields; however, most of them are in master's degree programmes (91), bachelors' degree programmes (18) and doctoral programmes (8), respectively. Faculty of Agriculture, Liberal Arts, Science, Management Science and Engineering are the top five faculties for international students.

Table 3: Number of international students in academic year 2005-2016

Faculty/Campus	Educational Level			Total
	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctoral Degree	
Agriculture	-	25 (Cambodian, Lao, Mozambican)	2 (Lao)	27
Management Science	4 (American, Lao)	13 (Lao, Cambodian, Vietnamese)	2 (American, Lao)	19
Science	7 (Lao)	12 (Lao)	1 (Cameroonian)	20
Engineering	2 (Cambodian)	11 (Lao)	3 (Lao, Vietnamese)	15
Liberal Arts	-	23 (Lao, Chinese, English, Filipino, Vietnamese)	-	23
Applied Arts and Design	-	5 (Lao, Cambodian)	-	5
Pharmaceutical Science	1 (Chinese)	2 (Lao)	-	3
Mukdahan Campus	4 (Lao)	-	-	4

Source: Office of International Relations, Ubon Ratchathani University, 2016

In the academic year of 2015, there are 15, 574 students at UBU (Office of Registra, 2016), and among these are 26 international students enrolling in degree programmes at Faculty of Agriculture (9), Faculty of Engineering (6), Faculty of Management Science (4), Faculty of Liberal Arts (3), Faculty of Science (1) and Faculty of Law (1). Some of these students are self-funding, and some get sponsorship from the university, especially students in ASEAN countries like Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia.

To help them settle, UBU offers academic and social support services for international students. Under the operation of Office of International Relations (OIR)—a sector responsible for international cooperation, international liaison and special services and international education, the services, e.g. application process, selection process, visa processing, and assistance on accommodation, academic extracurricular activities, and so on are provided.

Although there have been international students enrolling in programs at UBU since 2005, it seems that the support programmes for the international students is not probably efficient. One reason might be due to the fact that OIR has insufficient information on international students like their problems or difficulties they encounter or strategies they use to adjust themselves while studying at UBU. This information is necessary for OIR to improve their services.

Although there was the investigation on international students at UBU (Boon-arch, 2014), further study needs to be conducted to gain more understanding of international students at UBU as this study mainly focuses on intercultural adaptation of the students from Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic. However, the statistics of international students of UBU indicate that students come from different countries. Accordingly, this study of this empirical research can fill the gap by providing more understanding on international students' problems or ways to adapt themselves.

The aims of this research study are twofold: (1) exploring problems that international students encounter while they study at UBU and (2) examining how they adapt themselves. Two research questions to be investigated are:

1. What were problems that international students faced during their study at UBU?
2. How did they adapt themselves to overcome those problems?

In this research study, the term, "an international student" refers to a person who enrolls in an educational programme at UBU in the academic year 2015 whereas "a problem" is a difficult circumstance that these students might encounter during their study at UBU.

Findings from this small-scale research study cannot be generalized to a wider context. In contrast, the results from this study may provide insightful information for people in charge, i.e. OIR at UBU to improve their support services or programmes for international students. Moreover, it is hoped that the findings are invaluable for prospect international students planning to study at UBU or abroad, educators, policy makers as well as international relations staff.

Literature Review

This section is divided into two main parts. The first part introduces and discusses the concept of adaptation. The second part presents previous research on international students.

(1) What is adaptation?

The term "adaptation" is defined differently (Federova, 2008; Jochim, 1983). For instance, Jochim (1981) explains that there is the interconnection between changes and adaptation. In this view, adaptation might occur if there are changes of surrounding environments. In this circumstance, adaptation helps human beings survive, be familiar with or find out ways to live in new or different conditions. In addition, active interaction between human beings and their surrounding environments plays a significant role in supporting individuals for professional and social self-development. In this paper, the terms, "adaptation" and "adjustment" are used interchangeably.

According to my review of literature, there are different types of adaptation, such as sociocultural adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990), psychological adaptation (Kenney & Ward, 1992), or intercultural adaptation (Boon-arch, 2014; Ward & Kennedy, 1993).

(2) Research on international students

The review of literature suggests that there is a body of research on international students investigated in different contexts (e.g. Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005; Ward & Masgoret, 2004; Zhai, 2004). On the one hand, previous research on international students has investigated attitudes of international students towards their satisfactions on the education programmes they enrolled (Chen, Ruengkanjanases & Sngsathaporn, 2014; Ward & Masgoret, 2004, Sam, 2001; Zhangcheng, 2013). On the other hand, there is literature on the exploration of factors influencing international students' decisions on choosing universities (e.g. Jianvittayakit, 2012).

For example, in the quantitative study of Chen, Ruengkanjanases and Sangsathaporn (2014), they designed a questionnaire to investigate the satisfactions' levels of 215 Chinese students studying at higher education institutions in Thailand. The results indicated that quality of education, safety, image and university reputation as well as orientation and preparation programmes are the four main factors. In a similar vein, Ward and Masgoret (2004) explored experiences of international students in New Zealand. Their large-scale research study aimed to specifically examine the academic performance and difficulties the students experienced. In this study, variations of difficulties possibly depended on levels of study, tasks assigned and their nationalities. In addition, they highlighted the positive evaluation of international students on the quality of lecturers and assessment procedures.

A body of research to explore international students' adjustment problems (e.g. Kennedy & Ward, 2001; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005) and strategies the students used to overcome those problems (e.g. Boon-arch, 2014; Dorozhkin & Matiova, 2008; Lee & Pistole) is also conducted. Among these studies, different adaptation problems are discussed. For instance, Mehdizadeh and Scott (2005) identified psycho-social and cultural adjustment problems of Iranian international students enrolling in university programmes in Scotland. Recommendations for agencies, e.g. pre-arrival information, accommodation as well as financial and employment support were also highlighted. Another example was conducted by Zhai (2004). Zhai's qualitative study explored difficulties of international students at a tertiary level in the United States. Data obtained from interviews indicated various adjustment problems that the students encountered, for example, academic issues, cultural problems and language proficiency. Among these problems, the students found academic adjustment was the most serious issue.

Although there is a body on research on adaptation of international student, little research has been investigated with the group of international students studying in ASEAN countries. In contrast, most research examines adjustment experiences of the students enrolling in the universities where English is used as a medium of instructions (e.g. Champbell & Li, 2008; Zhai, 2004). In Thailand, the context of this study, there is a body of research examining cross border education experiences or adaptation experiences of international students (e.g. Choolirat & Rattanalertthada, 2009; Lek, 2014; Jones, 2006; Smith, 2012).

Since there are many Chinese students in Thailand, (Lek, 2014), many researchers conducted their studies with this group of students (e.g. Chen, Ruengkanjanases &

Sangsathaporn, 2014; Kingminghae & Lin, 2013; Smith, 2012; Zhongcheng, 2013). For instance, Smith (2012) examined academic and sociocultural issues towards Chinese undergraduate students' adjustments at Mahasarakham University. In her study, different methods were adopted for triangulation like in-depth interviews, reflective journals and a questionnaire. Smith revealed socio-cultural and academic adjustments as a major problem. For example, Thailand and China have different academic cultures, and these differences like lecturers' punctuality, freedom or flexibility and teaching approaches influentially affected the adaptation of the students. Kingminghae and Lin (2013) also pointed out the effects of different types on social support on reducing the feeling of loneliness among Chinese undergraduate students studying in Thailand. As a survey research, a questionnaire was distributed to collect data for analysis.

In conclusion, most studies reviewed in this literature were conducted quantitatively. Accordingly, it is expected that the results from this qualitative study may add literature to the research, especially providing insightful information on how students from ASEAN countries adjust themselves when they become a student or study at a university in Thailand.

Nature of research

The nature of research is qualitative, aiming to construct meanings from different sources of data (Creswell, 2005). The research stance also influences the ontological assumption of this study, i.e. a relativist view of interpretation and construction of meanings inherent in this specific context (see e.g. Gray, 2005; Johnson, 1992). For instance, problems that international students face or their strategies to adapt themselves are interpreted from raw data collected. Since it is a qualitative research study, biases or subjectivity of the researchers has an influential role in shaping interpretation.

Participants

Volunteer sampling (Cohen, Manion & Marrison, 2008) is adopted for participant selection. In this study, 7 international students from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Vietnam, enrolling in programmes in 2015 volunteered to take part in this study. To access a target group of participants, three gatekeepers, that is Office of Registra, Office of International Relations, International Relations officer, were contacted. Moreover, an informed consent form was prepared to request permission for data collection and publications. Pseudonyms are also used to protect the participants' confidentiality.

Research methods

An individual semi-structured interview (Grix, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) is the major research method for gathering verbatim data. Furthermore, an interview guide, consisting of questions (Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003) was prepared to answer the research question. The modification and rearrangement of question sequences were allowed for gathering insightful information during the interview (see Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Thai could be used if the participants were not confident to speak English. Under this circumstance, the accuracy of English translation was checked for its correctness. Additionally, a supplementary data source, i.e. documents, was collected to increase the research rigour.

Data analysis

An analytical technique to generate common themes is adopted from an "interpretative approach" (Corbin & Strauss, 1998), the technique putting the emphasis on interpretation of meanings from raw data collected. The analytical framework of this study is divided into three steps: (1) Coding Step, (2) Categorising Step, and (3) Theming Step. Additionally, overarching themes might emerge from codes identified deductively from prepared questions in the interview guide.

Findings and discussions

This section presents emergent themes relevant to the research questions. It is divided into three parts. In the first part, the participants' reasons to study at UBU are presented. The second part discusses problems that the participants face, and the last part gives detail of how they deal with the problems and adjust themselves.

(1) Reasons to study at UBU

The participants enrolled in different academic programmes—2 bachelor’s degrees, 4 master’s degrees and 1 doctoral degree and their reasons to study at UBU varied as shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Reasons to study at UBU

Reasons	Participants
University education standards and its facilities	Wan, Wieng, Boon, Li, Mind
Location of UBU	Ni, Wan, Boon, Li, Wieng
Intrinsic interests	Tom, Ni, Mind, Wan
Scholarships	Ni, Wieng, Mind
Connection after graduation	Boon, Li, Wan
Recommendation from other people	Tom, Wan
Opportunity to learn Thai	Wan

As shown in **Table 4**, university education stands and its facilities, university’s location, and the participants’ intrinsic motivations are there major reasons.

Previous studies pointed out the university’s reputation and qualification as the major reason to choose university (Jianvittayakit, 2012; Jones, 2006; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). The findings on university standards shared similarities to these studies. In this study, the participants commented that quality of education in Thailand, more specifically at UBU, was better their home countries (e.g. Boon and Li). They pointed out teachers’ qualifications and university’s facilities to influence their decisions as shown in bits of Wan’s interview:

“...I found out that there are many qualified PhD teachers, who are highly experienced and have expertise in different fields. I really want to gain new knowledge from them.” (Wan, 1 April 2016, Translation)

This finding also echoed the study of Ward and Masgoret (2004) on the quality of lecturers at tertiary level.

The location of the university predominantly influences a decision of the students from Lao People’s Democratic Republic as well as Cambodia (e.g. Boon, Ni, Wieng) to study at UBU.

In addition, intrinsic interests of the participants, for example, their favorable attitudes towards Thailand (e.g. Ni, Wan) and their motivation to gain experience outside their home countries (e.g. Tom) play a significant role. For example, Tom, a former teacher, decided to pursue his master’s degree at UBU, believing in valuable experience gaining from studying abroad:

“...Before coming to UBU, I told myself that I would like to get experiences not only in my country but also teaching experiences from other countries...I might develop and improve my teaching skill.” (Tom, 16 March, 2016)

In the following section, the emergent themes relevant to the research questions are discussed.

(2) Problems international students face during their study at UBU

The emerging themes reveal different problems the participants encounter as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Problems international students faced

Problems	Participants
Cultural and social adjustment problems	Tom, Ni, Mind, Wan, Boon
Learning problems	Ni, Mind, Wan, Boon, Li
Support and accommodation services	Ni, Wan, Wieng
Psychological problems	Li, Wieng

Dunn (2006) stated that international students might encounter many adaptation problems if there is a wide gap of differences between the two countries. Echoing this claim, the findings indicated that academic and socio-cultural differences made the international students at UBU experienced these problems.

A body of research points out cultural and social adjustment of international students as a key problem (see e.g. Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005), and the analysis of the collected data also found similar results. For instance, different life styles like food or language used for communication are a major problem for Tom, Boon, Ni, Mind or Wan:

“I was a little bit culture shock. It is not about teaching, but it is about the practice of people like food or language.” (Tom, 16 March, 2016)

And:

“...Language because I don't [know] anything about Thai, so it was difficult to communicate...I felt a little bit frustrated in the first year.” (Tom, 16 March 2016)

Similar to previously published studies on the international students' problems of adaptation (e.g. Zhai, 2004), the findings from this research study adds the literature about the problem of language difficulty.

Furthermore, Ni, Mind and Wan expressed their opinions, regarding their difficulty in using Thai or Isan (a northeastern dialect) to communicate with local people, because of their low proficiency:

“...The most difficult thing for me is to learn Thai” (Mind, 24 March, 2016, Translation)

And:

“I had studied the language [Thai] for only six months when I was the first year student. It was very difficult for me. I think my knowledge of Thai is limited.” (Wan, 1 April, 2016, Translation)

Apart from the language problem, the participants mentioned about different university etiquette like giving respects to senior people, dealing with professors or greeting. For instance, Wan said:

“Vietnamese people might not care much about age. But here, in Thailand, you need to pay respects to senior people. If you are a freshman, you have to “wai” [a way to pay respects] senior students. If you don’t, they will stare at your face.” (Wan, 1 April 2016, Translation).

Wan also shared her problem when she met her professors. She stated:

“I feel very excited every time I plan to see my professors. Everything is very difficult. It seems I know nothing about Thai manners like meeting senior people. My professors complain a lot if I don’t make any appointments but go to meet them.” (Wan, 1 March 2016, Translation)

In addition, different types and tastes of food as well as ways of eating were other factors, making them encounter adaptation problems. For instance, Mind and Ni expressed their opinions on Thai food, especially its spicy levels and tastes which were different from their own food. Moreover, clothing was another issue emerging from the analysis.

The second emergent theme is related to learning problems. The analysis of the data indicated that the participants encountered two major problems—i.e. low proficiency of Thai language and difficult content of subjects in the programmes they enrolled.

Most programmes at UBU use Thai as a medium of instructions. Accordingly, it is essential for international students to have sufficient knowledge of Thai in order to understand lectures as well as complete assigned tasks. However, the participants mentioned their inadequate knowledge of Thai as a main factor that has a direct impact on their learning (see e.g. Boon, Mind, Ni). For instance, Mind stated:

“...Before applying for admission to the programme, I used to ask [someone] whether it was a Thai or international programme. Someone told me that it was an international programme. But, it is actually not since Thai is used as a medium...” (Mind, 24 March 2016, Translation)

Moreover, their low proficiency of Thai directly influenced their understanding of lectures, especially if a teacher spoke [Thai] very fast in class.

Difficult content of the subjects was the second learning problem for this group of students. For instance, Ni shared his poor learning performance:

“...Studying IT [information technology] is very difficult because I have to study various computer languages. But, I obtained a bachelor’s degree in a different field... I don’t have any background knowledge about IT. It is very difficult for me...” (Ni, 24 March, 2016, Translation)

This verbatim data suggests that prior knowledge in fields of study also plays a significant role to support a student’s learning.

In a similar vein, Wan and Boon expressed their learning problem, regarding difficult course content:

“...I have to resubmit my assignments several times...major subjects are difficult, especially for international students...” (Wan, 1 March 2016, Translation)

And:

“...Studying here is totally different from my home country... To be honest, studying here is more difficult...I don’t know how to improve myself...” (Boon, 3 April 2016, Translation)

Providing efficient services and facilities effectively supports international students’ learning (see e.g. Ward & Masgoret, 2004). As previously mentioned, OIR is an office in charge of international education at UBU, the data analysis showed that support services at UBU may have not efficiently assisted the international students. These services included the problem on document processing like visa application support services, assistance on tuition fees and scholarship and academic support as Wan stated:

“...there are many documents you need for your visa application, but it takes a lot of time to process your visa...” (Wan, 1 March 2016, Translation)

The prominent factor affecting poor support services at UBU is due to understaffing at OIR, for example:

“...Although there are persons responsible for international students, but I think there are not enough officers... I think there should be a person whose duties are to specifically work with international students...” (Wan, 1 March 2016, Translation)

In addition to the understaffing problem, Wan claimed that there were no experienced service officers working with international students at OIR:

“I asked them what documents I should have used for visa application, but instead of answering my questions directly, they asked me what documents I needed...When I asked, they did not know and later, they asked for help from somebody else...I think we need to have a service officer to take care of international students.” (Wan, 1 March 2016, Translation)

In terms of accommodation services, the participants complained about the problems on expensive accommodation rates, poor room conditions, facilities provided, and disturbance from other students as evidenced in bits of Wieng’s interview:

“...As a postgraduate student, I have to concentrate and need more time for my study. But I am not able to focus on my study because I am living in a dormitory where there are many undergraduate students who always make loud noise at night...in comparison to other universities, the accommodation rates are too expensive for us, a scholarship student. The room is not in a good condition as well like having fungi on your bed...” (Wieng, 23 April 2016, Translation)

Living far away from home and studying hard are possible causes of psychological adaptation problems such as anxiety or loneliness (see e.g. Berno & Ward, 2003; Kingminghae & Lin, 2013; Smith, 2012; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). The finding from this shares a similar result as Li (Interview, 2 April, 2016) and Wieng (Interview, 23 April 2016) experienced anxiety over their study and homesickness.

In the next section, the emergent themes related to answer the second research question on strategies the students adopted to adjust themselves are discussed.

Strategies students used to adapt themselves

As shown in **Table 6**, the analysis of the data found three emergent themes: (1) cultural and social adaptation, (2) academic adaptation, and (3) accommodation adaptation.

Table 6: Adaptation of international students

Types of Adaptation	Participants
Cultural and social adaptation	Tom, Ni, Mind, Wan, Boon, Li, Wieng
Academic adaptation	Ni, Mind
Accommodation adaptation	Wieng

As mentioned in the previous section, the participants encountered social and cultural adjustment problems. However, the results from the data analysis in this section revealed ways they adopted to overcome those problems. In terms of cultural and social adaptation like different lifestyles, such as food or language, Ni and Mind discussed about their ways to help them adapt themselves, e.g. trying to eat Thai food or cooking their own dishes:

“...About food, I try to eat more Thai food...If I cannot eat Thai food, I will go to a market and buy ingredients to cook for myself...I am allowed to cook at my dormitory.” (Ni, 24 March 2016, Translation)

Thai language is considered difficult; accordingly, the participants tried to improve themselves by learning from different sources. For example, Tom practiced his Thai by reading articles and tried to learn basic Thai (Tom). Furthermore, some participants (Ni and Wan) considered their friends as an effective source to learn Thai. For instance, Ni stated:

“...My friends help me. If I don’t understand, I will ask my friends to translate...” (Ni, 24 March 2016, Translation)

The above results suggested that friends play a significant role in helping the participant learn a language. Previous research indicates the helpfulness of friends (Smith, 2012; Ward & Masgoret, 2004) on adjustments. This study also adds to literature on the role of friends in supporting international students’ language learning. In addition, the analysis of the data suggested that talking and sharing with friends also help them overcome their problems and adjust themselves as Li mentioned about her sharing with friends.

It is said that when in Rome, do as the Romans do. The findings from this study supported this saying. For example, the participants tried to adapt themselves by paying respects to senior students and wearing a university uniform (e.g. Wan). Some said they had spent over a year to observe and adjust themselves (Tom and Wieng).

As mentioned earlier, most participants faced a learning problem, more specifically understanding content subject and lectures, according to their low proficiency of Thai. In terms of academic adaptation, they used different strategies to support their learning, i.e. speaking Thai in class, taking notes, and reading English slides, as evidenced in Ni’s and Mind’s interviews:

“...My Thai classmates don’t speak English. They prefer Thai, so I have to adjust myself by trying to speak Thai with them.” (Ni, 24 March 2016, Translation)

And:

“I take notes in English, not in Thai. When teacher give lectures or explain in Thai, I look at slides [on the screen] that English was used.” (Mind, 24 March 2016, Translation)

In terms of accommodation services, the participants claimed that they spent their own money to buy furniture used in the dormitory, e.g. mattress, pillows or blankets.

Conclusion

The purposes of this research aimed at exploring adjustment problems and strategies international students adopted for supporting their adaption. Findings that emerged from the data analysis indicated that the international students encountered different problems on cultural, social and psychological adjustments, learning as well as support and accommodation services. These findings additionally suggest some practical implications for international relations at universities to offer special

programmes for international students, such as language training programmes, mentoring and supervision services, academic and social support services, or a buddy programme. In addition, international relations officers should gain opportunities to increase their professional, for example, attending training about international education, etc. Since there are a small number of participants, the findings from this study are specific to this group; however, it would be wise if further research should be undertaken, in a larger scale in order to verify generalisability.

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