Unveiling the Invisible Cocoon:
Learning Experiences of Chinese International Students in a UK University

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Abstract

This research explored the impact of Chinese international students' cultural values on their study in the UK. It was designed to reveal patterns in the challenges and experiences encountered by Chinese international students as they adapted to the English-speaking academic environment in the UK over time; and look into the relationships between these experiences and their Chinese cultural values. This longitudinal study was an academic-year-long investigation of academic experiences of Chinese international students studying postgraduate taught programs across three different Schools in a UK university, from January 2022 to August 2022. Both qualitative and quantitative researches were conducted during two data collection periods, including two rounds of semi-structured questionnaires with Likert scales and open-ended questions; and in-depth semi-structured interviews of selected survey participants. The findings highlighted distinctive features of the academic experiences of Chinese international students in the UK. Discussions and analyses revealed the influence of Chinese cultural values on their thinking processes and group dynamics. These influences, often unnoticed by both UK educators and Chinese students, were described as an "invisible cocoon," leading to mutual misunderstandings. The research aimed to raise awareness among both international students and their educators to enhance the overall quality of teaching and learning experiences in the UK.

Keywords: Cultural Values, International Students, Academic Experiences in the UK

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Purpose

I was initially interested to find out how Chinese international students' cultural value could impact their study in the UK, especially when they used English as a tool to learn in higher education institutions. Therefore, this longitudinal research was designed with a dual purpose. Firstly, it aimed to reveal how Chinese international students' study experiences changed as they adapted to the English-speaking academic environment in the UK. Secondly, through this exploration of transformation, I identified patterns in the challenges and experiences encountered by Chinese international students over time, while also looking into the relationships between these experiences and their Chinese cultural values.

1.2 Research Methodology

For this research, I employed purposive sampling to select Chinese international students enrolled in a full-time postgraduate taught program across three distinct schools: Social Sciences, Architecture, and Journalism and Media, all within a particular university in the UK.

Both qualitative and quantitative research were conducted during two data collection periods: first, after three months of the international students' arrival in the UK and following nine months of their study in the UK. To gather quantitative data, semi-structured questionnaires with Likert scales and open-ended questions were employed. Furthermore, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with select survey participants at both data collection periods, maintaining consistency within the sample groups.

In total, 81 valid questionnaires were collected at Time 1, while 45 were gathered at Time 2. During Time 1, 14 interviews were conducted, each lasting a minimum of 45 minutes. In Time 2, another 13 follow-up interviews were carried out, with durations ranging from 15 to 30 minutes. All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and subsequently transcribed for detailed analysis. Ethical considerations played a crucial role in this research, and to ensure compliance with data protection policies, the identities of all questionnaire and interview participants were protected for anonymity, and their responses were treated with utmost confidentiality.

The quantitative data obtained from the survey underwent descriptive analysis and bivariate analysis. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews was coded, and a constant comparative analysis method was employed to discern the patterns within the participants' experiences. Codes were compared within a single interview, between interview participants within the same School and from different Schools, to develop categories. The last comparison step was to compare codes and categories formed from data collected at two different data collection periods.

2. Research Findings: The Challenges and Experiences of Chinese International Students in the UK During the Academic Year of 2021–2022

In line with the research questions, this mixed-method longitudinal study compiled and analysed research findings to reflect the experiences of Chinese students. The results are presented across several sections, covering overall experiences, the most challenging learning

activities, a comparison of online and offline study experiences, a comparison between group and independent study experiences, and finally, the relationship between educators and students.

2.1 The Most Difficult Learning Activities

2.1.1 Reading as the Most Difficult Learning Activity

Differing from the previously published literature that emphasised the challenges Chinese students faced in English communication and academic writing when studying in UK universities, my research findings revealed that the foremost challenge was related to reading, specifically concerning the comprehension of academic papers and academic referencing in English. Notably, this struggle with reading did not appear to be directly tied to their English proficiency, suggesting that other factors may contribute to this difficulty.

Based on the results of the longitudinal surveys, it was evident that reading and academic referencing remained the most challenging aspects of learning for Chinese international students throughout their study in the UK.

In addition, the qualitative data revealed significant challenges related to academic referencing. Some participants viewed referencing as a redundant and inflexible practice. It became evident that the lack of understanding among Chinese international students about the necessity of references led them to perceive it as an unnecessary and burdensome requirement, inhibiting their creativity.

Also, it was noteworthy that participants with previous academic experience in the UK found it considerably easier to comprehend academic materials in English compared to their counterparts. This finding suggested that the challenges in reading and academic referencing for Chinese international students were not primarily related to limited language skills (Poyrazli, 2003), as indicated by previous researchers. As some interview participants pointed out, they still struggled to understand the material even if it was translated into Chinese.

2.1.2 Challenges in English Academic Writing

Another finding of this research was that the challenges associated with English academic writing for Chinese international students extended beyond mere clear and precise expression in English; they also encompassed understanding assignment requirements and application of academic thinking when composing essays.

The survey results revealed that Chinese international students regarded academic writing in English as the second most challenging learning activity during their studies in the UK, with the level of difficulty being influenced by their language proficiency. During their initial three months of studying in the UK, writing academic essays in English posed the biggest challenge, with over 30% of interview participants expressing difficulties in articulating their ideas clearly and precisely in their English academic writing. They faced issues related to sentence structure and vocabulary usage for conveying thoughts effectively in English.

a) Lack of Academic Reasoning and Critical Thinking in Writing

The findings from this longitudinal study also revealed that, in the context of academic writing in English, Chinese students underwent a noteworthy shift over time. They gradually transitioned from concentrating on the mechanics of expression to giving more consideration to the thought process and content inclusion in their writing. After nine months of immersion in the UK, writing academic essays no longer posed the most formidable challenge for the participants. This shift in focus suggested that as participants refined their English writing skills, they encountered more pronounced obstacles related to critical analysis and analytical reasoning in their academic writing.

b) Difficulties in Comprehending the Questions and Requirements of Writing Tasks

The quantitative findings obtained from the questionnaires not only highlighted the challenges participants faced in writing assignments in English but also revealed their difficulties in comprehending the questions and requirements of their writing tasks. Moreover, participants of the research unanimously expressed their struggles in understanding the English feedback provided by markers on their written work.

First, the results pointed out that Chinese international students encountered challenges not only in grasping the vocabulary and literal meaning of the assignment questions in English. Interview participants revealed that some topics contained cultural and social nuances that were difficult for them to grasp.

Furthermore, throughout their study in the UK, participants admitted that it was challenging for them to have a clear understanding of the expectations for their assignments and dissertations, or what a high-mark essay should entail. One of the interview participants who had failed her modules attributed her academic struggles primarily to a lack of understanding of the academic expectations.

Data collected from the surveys also indicated that within the first three months, most participants felt their papers were undermarked, which was not affected by their majors. Some participants struggled to understand their tutor's feedback, thinking they had expressed ideas clearly, yet received feedback that it was "not clear enough."

2.2 Comparison Between Online and Offline Learning

Among all the learning activities experienced by Chinese international students, online lectures ranked as the third most challenging aspect after reading and writing in English, throughout their 12 months of study in the UK. The primary difficulty they encountered was disrupting the lecturer to raise questions during online lectures. It was noteworthy that, regardless of English proficiency or previous experience studying in the UK, they perceived the same level of difficulty in interrupting to ask questions in English during online lectures.

However, after nine months of immersed study, Chinese international students showed improvement in their skills and ability to understand online lectures, with the most significant progress observed in online courses compared to academic writing and reading in English.

Additionally, I also noticed that when participants compared offline and online lectures, some advantages and disadvantages of the virtual classroom were mentioned, and both were linked

to the apprehension of revealing their low English proficiency, causing embarrassment. Also, one participant admitted her discomfort with online communication, preferring offline interactions due to a fear that tutors and lecturers might dislike her during online communications. In this context, it could be inferred that the Chinese international students' specific preferences for certain learning and teaching methods were not solely influenced by their English proficiency or previous study experience but rather by their cultural values.

2.3 Comparison Between Group Learning and Independent Study

Another fascinating discovery in this longitudinal research pertained to the inclination of Chinese students towards group study versus independent learning during their study in the UK. Apart from exploring Chinese students' preference for teacher assistance, this research also discovered their tendency to refrain from active participation in class due to a lack of understanding of non-Chinese students' perspectives and ideas.

For one thing, in the initial three months, Chinese students gravitated towards group learning and encountered fewer difficulties when working collaboratively. Most participants favoured group work for the benefits and support it offered. However, after six months, some participants expressed a growing comfort with independent learning. The primary reason for Chinese students preferring individual work was the challenge of reaching a consensus and aligning opinions.

Meanwhile, notably, the research finding also highlighted that language ability did contribute to a preference for collaborating with fellow Chinese classmates over classmates from other nations. Additionally, this research discovered that cultural values played an even more significant role in shaping this preference.

a) Language Barriers Hindered Effective Collaboration and Caused Isolation

Research findings of this research also indicated that over 60% of interview participants expressed a preference for collaborating with fellow Chinese classmates, attributing this choice primarily to language barriers with non-Chinese peers. This difficulty impeded their participation in group work and discussions with peers from different countries, and gradually contributed to a sense of isolation among the Chinese students.

During the initial interviews, nearly half of the participants acknowledged that communication difficulties arising from language barriers hindered effective collaboration with local British students. In the second interview, some participants reported increased confidence in collaborating on group projects with non-Chinese peers. However, others observed a widening gap between Chinese students and peers from other nationalities, primarily due to language proficiency, resulting in a sense of separation. Concerns were raised about non-Chinese students' more active participation in group discussions with English-speaking lectures, along with the restriction of opportunities for progress and development for Chinese counterparts as non-Chinese group members frequently assuming leadership roles due to their advanced language skills.

Another illustrative finding of the language gap between Chinese students and their non-Chinese peers was that over half of the participants noted a noticeable disparity when making presentations in English. They highlighted a clear gap between themselves and their

non-Chinese counterparts, attributing this difference to language proficiency and acknowledging that English was a second language for Chinese students.

b) Compromise for Group Success

As previously mentioned, some participants conveyed a reluctance to engage in group learning, attributing it to challenges in reaching a consensus and aligning opinions. Another significant factor influencing the preference of Chinese international students to work with their fellow Chinese peers was their readiness to compromise during group work. Overall, participants perceived their non-Chinese peers as more independent, indicating a diminished inclination to compromise in group work.

Interview participants disclosed that, although their British peers could bring diverse perspectives to group projects and discussions, they still preferred working with Chinese peers. This preference was not only due to the ease of communication but also because Chinese peers were more willing to compromise for overall achievement during group work. Participants shared experiences where Chinese group members actively contributed to achieving group success and engaged in close collaboration with each other. For example, they collaborated closely to complete projects, motivated other group members to maintain the group pace, and formed groups based on personal relationships.

c) The Role of the Spokesperson in Group

Another interesting discovery in the context of Chinese students engaging in group learning was their tendency to designate a "spokesperson," typically someone with stronger English skills, rather than those with better academic skills, to represent the group when communicating with group members from other nations or working on assignments. For instance, during group discussions, Chinese students would select a peer with better language skills to articulate the group's thoughts to members from other nations. Some participants explained that this practice arose from a lack of confidence in their own English language abilities and a desire to avoid exposing their shortcomings in front of other group members, especially those from China.

2.4 The Distinct Teacher-Student Relationship

The results of this longitudinal study also confirmed that, throughout their studies in the UK, Chinese international students preferred receiving clear guidance and feedback from tutors and lecturers, including explicit "right or wrong" feedback. Furthermore, they expressed surprise at the equitable and unbiased communication with tutors and lecturers in the UK.

a) Lack of Clear Instruction and "Right or Wrong" Feedback

Without clear course guidance and assessment instructions, interview participants found it challenging to grasp the focal points of the lectures. They indicated that lectures tended to overwhelm students with excessive information and inspiration, lacking clear instructional guidance and substantial knowledge points during the sessions.

At the same time, some participants expressed dissatisfaction and confusion when they did not receive detailed and explicitly "right or wrong" feedback from their tutors and supervisors. For example, a participant lamented that her dissertation supervisor did not provide explicit

feedback to determine the correctness of her work. Additionally, some participants studying Architecture faced confusion due to differing feedback and suggestions from various tutors for their design projects.

b) Equality in Communication With Lecturers and Tutors

On the other hand, in contrast to the hierarchical teacher-student relationship prevalent in China, almost all the interview participants stressed equality in their communication with lecturers and tutors in the UK. They described it as akin to "talking with friends" and devoid of any sense of distance or pressure. Several participants expressed feeling comfortable engaging directly with their lecturers and tutors during tutorials, highlighting the absence of reservations or concerns during these interactions.

Additionally, a few participants noted that lecturers and tutors in the UK tended to deliver feedback in a more impartial manner, devoid of personal emotions. For instance, they would not consider students' personal attitudes when providing feedback, a departure from the approach taken by teachers in China.

3. Analysing Research Findings: Unveiling "The Invisible Cocoon"

Based on the identified patterns in the experiences of Chinese international students in the UK, I further categorised their experiences into three groups according to the nature of each statement: *English language application*, *Understanding academic reasoning*, and their *Role in the group*. This classification helped to offer valuable insights into the cultural factors influencing their UK study experiences.

English language application
- **Slow reading speed**
- **Use English to express clearly and precisely**
- **Feel non-Chinese peers more skilled in presentations**

Understanding academic reasoning
- **Critical thinking and analytical reasoning:**
  Experience confusion in academic writing (thinking)
  Lack clear/explicit instructions
  Understand English literature
- **Evidence-based academic research:**
  Experience confusion in academic writing (elements and assessment requirements)
  Academic referencing

Role in the group
- **Equitable and unbiased communication with tutors and lecturers**
- **Compromise for group success**
- **Expose weakness in public**

Figure 1: Nature of the challenges/different experiences during Chinese international students' study in the UK

As listed in above Figure 1, the first category, *English language application*, included challenges tied to language proficiency such as slow reading in English literature and struggles in effective expression, and a gap in English presentation skills compared to their non-Chinese peers was attributed to lower proficiency, as noted by the participants. The second category, *Understanding academic reasoning*, had two main sections. The first involved challenges with critical thinking and analytical reasoning, confusing academic writing and difficulties in grasping logic when reading English literature. This subsection also included the preference for clear instructions, indicating a lack of confidence in independent thinking. The second section focused on struggles with evidence-based research, particularly in academic referencing for meeting assessment criteria. The third category, *Role in the group*, highlighted challenges in personal positions within group settings, including communication with lecturers, tutors, group members, and the entire class. This aspect led to surprises in equitable communication, compromises for group success, and a fear of exposing weaknesses in public.

I referred to the impact of Chinese cultural values on Chinese international students' study in the UK as "the invisible cocoon," a concept often overlooked by educators in the UK and the students themselves. The following sections conclude and analyse the presence of this "cocoon" in their learning process, divided into two parts for discussion: the ways of thinking and the position within groups during learning activities.

3.1 Impact of Cultural Values On Thinking Processes During Learning Activities

According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development, individuals, to foster advanced cognitive abilities, are equipped with tools of intellectual adaptation nurtured from their own culture. Therefore, different cultural values lead to distinct thinking patterns for Chinese international students compared to students nurtured under Western cultural values.

3.1.1 Analytical Thinking Versus Synthetic Thinking

Based on this longitudinal study, Chinese students did not exhibit strong analytical thinking habits in educational settings. Instead, they demonstrated synthetic thinking skills nurtured by Chinese cultural values, leading to the fact that they did not fully comprehend the concept of evidence-based research and the analytical reasoning behind it.

The Chinese education system emphasises trust in the unquestionable authority of teachers rather than encouraging truth-seeking endeavours for students from a young age. Consequently, the Chinese international students, influenced by these cultural values, were equipped with different tools of intellectual adaptation compared to those in the UK. They tended to adopt a synthetic thinking approach, particularly in educational settings, preferring to collect and combine different ideas into a more complex whole, rather than breaking down information and examining each component. However, in British educational settings, where students are equipped with tools of intellectual adaptation to pursue truth and explore curiosity, enabling them to develop analytical thinking since childhood. This difference posed challenges for the Chinese students studying in the UK, as it demanded a certain level of understanding in evidence-based research (a process to obtain truth and knowledge from empirical evidence) and application of analytical thinking (the ability to demonstrate truth and step by step from the evidence gathered) in academic assessments.

3.1.2 Lack of Critical Thinking

As discussed earlier, influenced by hierarchical values, Chinese students tend to establish an unequal relationship with their MKOs (More Knowledge Others), viewing them as unquestionable authorities. Additionally, Chinese cultural values, which prioritize virtues over the pursuit of knowledge, also place teachers in authoritative roles within education settings. This authoritative stance guides students' thoughts and behaviour, emphasizing obedience over collaborative knowledge-seeking efforts. Consequently, for the Chinese international students, the tools of intellectual adaptation they received from Chinese culture hindered the cultivation of critical thinking in their learning process.

Compared to China, egalitarian societies like the UK encourage individuals to explore their ideas, recognizing each other as moral equals and fostering a pursuit of individual interest (Hofstede, 1991; Schwartz, 2006). Therefore, in such cultural context, British students are provided with tools of intellectual adaptation that promote critical thinking because they are encouraged to challenge these MKOs as they grow up.

Therefore, when Chinese students came to study in UK universities, where advanced cognitive abilities, especially critical thinking, were cultivated and expected at a higher level, they faced challenges in meeting these academic expectations. The primary difficulty was integrating critical thinking into their academic writing. Due to their previous study experiences, they were nurtured to perceive MKOs as unquestionable authorities, making it challenging for them to employ critical thinking skills in their cognitive processes, not to mention incorporate this approach into their academic writing.

3.1.3 Lack of Independent Thinking

Influenced by hierarchical cultural values, these students shape their learning skills predominantly through strong scaffolding with MKOs, primarily teachers, rather than fostering intersubjectivity. Consequently, during their learning within the ZPD, there is a gradual erosion of their ability to think independently. This process is illustrated vividly in Figure 2: Due to the unequal teacher-student relationship in China, knowledge is primarily transmitted through scaffolding. The hierarchical cultural value in China allows limited space for intersubjectivity, which allows both teachers and students to stand at the same level and generate knowledge through equal communication and discussion, gradually hindering the development of independent thinking in Chinese students. Compared to China, Western cultural values enable students to stand on an equal level with their MKOs, fostering learning within the ZPD through both scaffolding and intersubjectivity, thereby promoting the development of independent thinking in students.
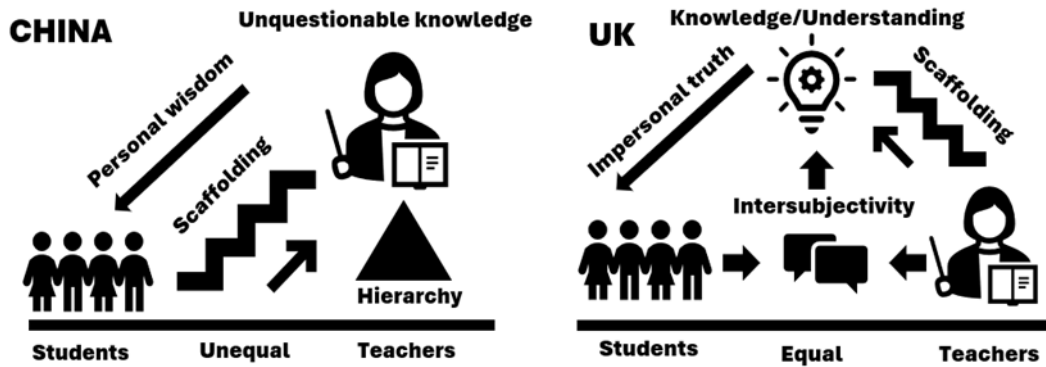
Figure 2: Learning process within the ZPD in educational settings in China and the UK

In addition, growing up in a culture emphasizing hierarchical values and fulfilling obligations, Chinese students prioritized fulfilling expectations from higher positions (teachers in this case). They perceived feedback more as a directive than guidance, impeding the cultivation of independent learning.

Another research finding indirectly demonstrated that Chinese students lacked independent learning skills, as they tended to prefer group learning over individual study upon their initial arrival to study abroad.

3.1.4 Lack of Reflective Thinking

The final thinking pattern potentially lacking among Chinese students was reflective thinking during their learning process. Previous studies note that Chinese students often lack training in reflective thinking and independent interpretation, a consequence of their prior experiences with rote learning in China (Turner, 2006). I attributed this deficiency in reflective thinking skills to their synthetic thinking pattern in learning and their tendency to prioritize outcomes over the learning process. Reflective thinking demands critical analysis and evaluation of one's thoughts, which is a challenging cognitive process for individuals with a synthetic thinking pattern. Consequently, in this research, the impact of Chinese values on their thinking patterns during academic experiences in the UK became "invisible." For example, one participant, who failed a design module due to a lack of references in a research project stating literature as the methodology, consistently believed her failure stemmed from a lack of logical reasoning rather than understanding the process to obtain empirical evidence.

3.2 Impact of Cultural Values on Individual's Position Within Groups in Educational Settings

The third category of Chinese students' experiences was titled *Role in the Group* because the statements under this category were indeed all related to Chinese students' positioning in group work during their studies in the UK and were less related to their academic and English language proficiency.

As Schwartz (2012) defines culture as an external force on each individual, shaped by their position in society, with cultural values characterizing groups and elucidating the motivational foundations of attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, the positioning of Chinese

students in groups during their studies in the UK was primarily influenced by their cultural values, particularly the hierarchical and collective cultural values.

3.2.1 Position Within Group Learning Activities

Based on the research findings, Chinese students, influenced by their collectivist cultural values, demonstrated two distinct phenomena in their engagement within group learning activities in UK universities: Firstly, they exhibited a preference for group learning with fellow Chinese classmates, prioritizing the success of the group over individual achievements. Secondly, there was a noticeable apprehension about revealing weaknesses in front of fellow peers.

Influenced by hierarchical cultural values, Chinese students initially lacked independent thinking skills when studying in the UK, leading to a preference for group learning. The collective cultural values in China, which view individuals as part of a collective framework (Schwartz, 1994), further contributed to this preference by emphasizing skills for group membership (Hofstede, 1991). Compared to China, British values prioritize individualism, reflecting in the educational approaches of the two countries, with the UK emphasizing individual problem-solving skills and adaptability, while China focuses more on fostering group cohesion and conformity. Individuals from collectivist societies prioritize in-group interdependence and goals, while those from individualist societies, like the UK, lean towards independence and individual goals (Hofstede, 1991). Moreover, as indicated by Lockett (1988) and Shi (2000), the Chinese cultural perspective on success leans towards a group orientation, valuing success as a collective endeavour rather than an individual accomplishment.

Hence, upon their initial arrival in the UK for study, due to the language and cultural difference, Chinese students tended to form groups with fellow Chinese classmates over students from other nations, seeking expected assistance and preferential treatment within the group. This inclination was not only due to smoother communication within the group but also from the greater willingness of Chinese peers to compromise for overall achievement compared to their non-Chinese counterparts. According to the research findings, Chinese students were willing to compromise for overall achievement during these group work, while their non-Chinese peers were more independent and prefer to work on their individual tasks. In addition, during group works, Chinese students, often unconsciously, exerted pressure on themselves and group members to accommodate opinions for group cohesion, reflecting their emphasis on collective goals over individual ones, in line with their collective cultural values.

In addition, research findings of this research also substantiated that Chinese students were afraid of exposing their weakness in a group setting, particularly low English proficiency rather than academic concerns. According to my interpretation, Chinese students' reluctance to reveal weaknesses stems from collectivist cultural values in China, where preserving face and maintaining social harmony are paramount. This reluctance was particularly evident among fellow Chinese peers in the UK, as exposing vulnerabilities may lead to a sense of humiliation and loss of face. Meanwhile, their fear of losing face often raised from revealing inadequacies in English proficiency rather than any shortcomings in academic abilities.

It was worth noting that, akin to the unaware thinking patterns ingrained in their learning process, the behaviours exhibited by Chinese international students in group learning activities were also carried out without intentional effort. Although research participants

observed distinctions in behaviour and preferences between themselves and their non-Chinese counterparts, they were not fully aware that their actions were guided by collective cultural values. As some participants articulated, Chinese students "naturally" formed groups with individuals of the same race, "naturally" collaborated for group success, "naturally" applied pressure on themselves and their group members for cohesion, and "naturally" sought to uphold their reputation in the presence of fellow Chinese individuals.

From my perspective, this phenomenon could also be considered as the "invisible cocoon," which constrained their freedom and autonomous expression within the group. More importantly, this "cocoon" was often imperceptible to peers from other nations, leading to mutual misunderstandings between the two groups. This, in turn, contributed to additional challenges when engaging in group work with international peers.

3.2.2 Position in Teacher-Student Communication

Data collected from this research implies that they highly appreciated an equal relationship with their teachers in one-on-one tutorials, perceiving that teachers deliver feedback in a more impartial manner without the impact of personal emotions.

Referring back to the earlier statement, Chinese students, influenced by hierarchical cultural values, expected an unequal position with tutors and lecturers due to the authoritative perception of teachers in China. However, during their UK study, all interview participants appreciated the unexpected equality in personal tutorials, describing them as friendly, direct, and pressure-free. This shift in communication dynamics deviated from their initial expectations, underscoring the impact of cultural values on their perception of teacher-student interactions.

Meanwhile, Chinese international students also observed impartial feedback and assessment from lecturers, contrasting their experiences in China where grades often depended on a teacher's personal preferences. This further underscored their familiarity with the unequal distribution of resources and rights in the Chinese educational system under the hierarchical cultural values.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this longitudinal research, it was evident that Chinese international students' experiences were significantly influenced by their Chinese cultural values. These cultural values shaped their thinking processes during learning and affected their interpersonal dynamics throughout their studies in the UK. This exploration provided a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons behind the challenges faced by Chinese students, which often went unnoticed by both the students and educators in higher education institutions. Recognizing these cultural influences helped develop more effective support systems and teaching strategies tailored to the unique needs of Chinese international students.

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