

An Intercultural Management Perspective of Foreign Student's Adaptation in Chinese Universities: A Case Study of China Three Gorges University

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Abstract—Globalization, the desire to access quality education and better opportunities abroad as well as the need to develop one's capacities and many other factors have caused increased migration of international students and teachers into Chinese universities. China has recorded over a 67% increase in higher education enrolment between 2011 and 2017. This increased level of student migration in China has brought an unprecedented number of challenges especially in transitioning into the cultural settings in China. As a result, Chinese universities, in addition to their various obligations and roles in ensuring quality teaching and learning, have to engage in intercultural management to help foreigners' transition seamlessly into the cultural landscape of China. This study examines intercultural adaptation of sojourners from an intercultural management perspective. Using a mixed method approach, specifically an explanatory mixed method design, a sample of 140 respondents was investigated regarding their cultural adaptation to a Chinese university. The positive and negative aspects of intercultural management as it relates to the university used in the case study were also explored. Findings from the study were discussed in depth and recommendations for a holistic intercultural management system were made.

Keywords—intercultural management; intercultural adaptation

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization, the desire to access quality education and better opportunities abroad, and the need to develop one's capacities to earn a better life are among the factors that led to global increased migration [1-3]. This is often translated into a

higher number of students and workers migrating into nations with open access policies for migration and a friendly economic climate. In this context, students and workers living in countries other than their countries of citizenship are referred to as sojourners. The People's Republic of China is one of such nations with a booming and developing economy as well as growing opportunities for employment [4] which has attracted numerous sojourners. Three decades ago, authors in [4] reported that the number of student sojourners coming to mainland China was comparatively low, but today China is recording an increasing number of enrolments of foreign students in higher education institutions. In fact, student sojourners in Chinese universities had increased by over 67% between 2011 and 2017 and by 299% since 2004 [5]. This rapid increase in foreign student enrolment has placed China as Asia's top destination for international students and the fourth student destination in the world after the United States, the United Kingdom and France [6]. These sojourners are often faced with the realities and difficulties of living in a new environment with different cultural practices.

Several studies have reported the experiences of international students from varying perspectives, including institutional perspectives of the challenges these students face, educator's perspectives and perspectives of the local communities regarding these groups [2-4, 6]. However, it was shown in [6, 7] that intercultural adaptation and the challenges sojourners face have not been given much attention. Especially an examination of the management and intercultural adaptation of sojourners from their own voices and perspectives in Chinese institutions is absent. Some studies, however, have

examined the experiences of international students. For instance, authors in [8] report the experience of a group of American students on a two-week visit to China. Although it would be misleading to delimit the findings from this study to the challenges experienced by student sojourners in China, they, however, shed light into some minute perspectives of intercultural adaption on a temporary basis for a group of students. Similarly, authors in [9] studied the cross-cultural adaptations of foreign students in universities across Beijing using a sample of 88 foreign students. They found that foreign students found the cultural values in China to be in conflict with their previous experiences in their home countries and this impacted their adaptation to Chinese societies negatively. Furthermore, in [10] daily life experiences of student sojourners in six universities across China were studied using a mixed methodology and a sample of 200 respondents. They found that student sojourners in these Chinese universities experienced great difficulty in integrating into Chinese society, especially in the areas of making new friends, and variations in cultural values and social styles. Author in [10] further reports that the variations in cross-cultural adaptations were a result of factors such as gender, length of stay, and cultural background. Sojourners are thus required to develop coping strategies and adaptation skills in order to assimilate and be well integrated into these new cultural settings. But a critical question of interest at this point becomes what Chinese universities are doing to aid the adaptations of sojourners across China. Therefore, it is crucial to explore and understand the experiences of these sojourners within Chinese universities and their views on the positives and negatives of how they are being assisted in integrating and assimilating into Chinese society. Intercultural adaptation is traditionally seen as the responsibility of the sojourner [2, 11-13]. However, author in [14] argues that adaptations should constitute a two-way process where communication should be seen as involving mutual adaptation between sojourners and the host communities. The researcher believes that it is crucial to explore foreign student's perspectives of intercultural adaptation and how they are managed by Chinese universities, as well as the positives and negatives in intercultural management of foreign student's adaptations in a Chinese university.

China Three Gorges University (CTGU) was used as a case study. The university is a provincial sub-center university, which has grown from only a few sojourners in the year 2000 to over seven hundred sojourners at the moment. This increase in foreign student population has been attributed to the encouraging university support and policies that have been put in place. Therefore, it is only reasonable to examine if students feel the same way regarding intercultural management at the university. Hence, this study sought to ascertain the following:

- What are the experiences of sojourners regarding their intercultural adaptation at CTGU?
- What are the positives and negatives in intercultural management of sojourners at CTGU?

Culture as an essential determinant of intercultural adaptation, the concepts of intercultural adaptation,

intercultural management, and insights in the use of a pragmatic research approach in reporting the experiences of sojourners are discussed below. Also, the paper discusses the findings in line with the above questions and their implications for CTGU and other Chinese learning institutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Culture: A Determinant of Adaptation in Cross-Cultural Settings

The term culture was first defined in 1871 [15] as a complex comprising of knowledge, faith, arts, virtue, law, custom and all the abilities and practices an individual acquires in social life. Although this definition only reflects an ideological perspective, the conceptualization of culture has since influenced several scholars to espouse the concept of culture by including the concept of materials. Culture according to authors in [15] is a sort of traditional instrument, merchandise, technology, custom and value, including social organization. Furthermore, culture is as the way of life of a group of people as well as the sum of their learned behavior patterns, attitudes and material things. Author in [2] explains that culture is often regarded as the core concept in intercultural communication and adaptation. Author further emphasizes that culture provides people with a system of knowledge that enables them to communicate effectively with others and to interpret their behavior. Similarly, it was shown in [16] that the complex concept of culture is characterized by:

- Common knowledge and meaning shared with others.
- Something that people do.
- Is continually recreated and is constructed between people.
- It is not homogenous but must be seen as being divided into spaces, each of which is characterized by different values.
- Individuals can participate in several social categories and should therefore not be portrayed as a national category but in categories such as gender, education, social background, age etc.

Authors in [17] stated that culture is characterized by four features: it is holistic, it can be learned, it is dynamic and pervasive. People in multi-cultural societies tend to adapt and change their behaviors and practices with which they were socialized and had been accustomed to. Hence interpersonal relationships have to be renegotiated [2]. Previous ways of communication begin to become a challenge in newer settings, hence people also have to learn and develop new ways of communication. Differences in cultural dispositions do exist, and nowadays people have come to recognize that they exist and respect them, but the question emerges: how sojourners are supported in multi-cultural settings such as in Chinese universities to adapt seamlessly into society?

B. Understanding Intercultural Communication and Adaptation

According to [15], intercultural communication is regarded as the interaction between or among people of distinct cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, culture is described as

communication, implying that culture is the creation of meaning when we communicate and our behavioral practices affect each other. Author in [12] defines intercultural communication as the interaction of meanings being generated differently. Author explains that there are “conceptual filters” which people have to be aware of during cross-cultural interactions, and that these filters help people in understanding and predicting behaviors accurately. Without them, conflicts tend to occur and delayed intercultural adaptations. As a result of globalization, more and more people tend to go abroad for study or work purposes. When people experience an entirely different culture, they are engaged in a particular type of intercultural communication, i.e. intercultural adaptation. Hence, living in a different culture means an alteration of lifestyle, thinking pattern and almost every aspect of life, which will undoubtedly become a pressure to sojourners. Intercultural adaptation on the other hand as described in [2] is a long-term process, which varies with every individual. Author in [18] defines intercultural adaptation as a process of increasing the level of fitness of an individual or a group of individuals to fulfill the demands of a new cultural environment. Several researchers agree that cultural adaptation is similar to the transitional processes experienced in other facets of life such as a new job, living in a new place, studying in a new and big city etc. Several models have been propounded to explain intercultural adaptation. One of such models is the dialectical model of intercultural adaptation. The dialectical model of intercultural adaptation argues that the intercultural adaptation process is characterized by a cyclical and recursive process whereby people try to solve issues and overcome challenges embedded in interaction with the host culture. Hence, author in [2], concludes that how a person responds in the intercultural adaptation process, creates his or her own adjustment patterns. Therefore adapting to a new culture can often lead to fundamental changes which may feel like “rebirth” [2, 14]. Furthermore, intercultural adaptation is usually accompanied by culture shock [17]. Culture shock refers to a feeling of loss, confusion, exclusion, or even fear that occurs when a person is entering into a new cultural environment while losing familiar symbols and means of social communication. Furthermore, author in [19] explains that understanding and dealing with problems associated with sojourners intercultural adaptation in higher education is pertinent to the success of international education.

C. Understanding Intercultural Management

Author in [20] defines intercultural management as a process of effective management formed in global operations. In corporate settings, a parent organization, usually an international organization, adopts an inclusive and understanding approach in adapting and integrating the culture of the host country, where the sub-company is located. The purpose of intercultural management is to overcome the conflicts of cultural differences and to create a unique organizational culture in cross-cultural conditions. The aim of intercultural management is to design an executable organizational structure and management mechanism, to search organizational goals beyond cultural conflict, to maintain a standard code of conduct for employees, and finally to maximize control and utilize the potential and value of the

company or enterprise. Intercultural management, also known as cross-cultural management, is the type of management involving people, products, and matters of different cultural background [21]. The purpose of intercultural management is to minimize cultural differences, maximize efficiency and realize the common goal of the specific intercultural group.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted an explanatory mixed methodology. Explanatory mixed-method research design is one in which the researcher first collects quantitative data and then collects qualitative data to explain or elaborate the results of the quantitative phase [22]. The rationale behind this design in conducting research studies is that quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problems. Then, qualitative data is then collected to refine, extend or explain that picture. Data was collected by means of a structured questionnaire and a follow-up interview. The respondents of the study were international students and teachers at CTGU. A total of 140 questionnaires were retrieved in the quantitative phase of the study, while 27 sojourners consisting of 19 students and 8 teachers participated in the qualitative phase of the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire adapted from [23] reflecting students' experiences of the various aspects of intercultural management at CTGU. The adapted instrument contained 36 items and was pilot-tested using a distinct sample from those selected for the study. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.833 was obtained. Data for the qualitative phase of the study were collected using a researcher-made interview protocol soliciting foreign students' in-depth experiences of the various aspects of intercultural management at CTGU. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics via the statistical package for social sciences SPSS 22. Frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviations were used.

IV. RESULTS

A. Respondent's Demographics

Respondents for the quantitative phase of the study consisted of 140 international students of which 65% were male, and 35% were female. The countries represented in the sample of the study were India (25%), Indonesia (2.9%), Korea (0.7%), Maldives (2.9%), Nepal (63.6%), Sri Lanka (0.7) and USA (4.3%). Respondents ranged from freshman (1st year) to senior (4th year) undergraduate. Senior year students represented 42.9%, junior (3rd year) represented 10%, sophomore (2nd year) represented 25% while visiting students represented 5% of the total sample of the study. This indicates that more than 50% of foreign student at CTGU had been in the university for more than one year, indicating that they have experienced first-hand the intercultural adaptation process at CTGU and how sojourners are managed. Hence their experiences regarding the intercultural adaptation at CTGU are considered significant for this study.

B. Sojourners' Experiences Regarding their Intercultural Adaptation at CTGU

Section 2 of the questionnaire for this study sought sojourners' perspectives regarding various aspects of their

intercultural adaptation at CTGU and the areas they identified as challenging in terms of cultural adaptation in China. Furthermore, sojourners were also asked to rate the extent to which they were satisfied with the services provided by CTGU to help them to adapt seamlessly into China. A five-point Likert scale was used. The following sections report the results from the collected and analyzed data.

C. Sojourners' Perspectives of Support Programs Provided at CTGU

Part A in section 2 of the questionnaire specifically sought sojourners' perspectives regarding the support programs and services they received during the orientation period of their programs. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used. Table I shows the results. Regarding the support services sojourners received at CTGU, a significant portion agreed that they received support in terms of airport pick up service upon arrival to China and the necessary information pertaining to school timetable, classroom location and so on before classes begun. Similarly, a substantial proportion acknowledged that they participated in orientation programs organized by the university. Furthermore, a moderate proportion affirmed that they received necessary information regarding the Chinese examination and assessment system. Findings from Table I show that a significant proportion of respondents disagreed that they received a campus tour upon arrival at the university, neither were they offered guidance to organize their studies upon enrolment, nor did they receive guidance on course selection or the academic requirements of the courses. Finally, respondents disagreed that they received the necessary survival information to access food markets, shops, first aid etc. upon arrival at the university.

Summarily, these findings indicate that although CTGU had implemented some basic support programs and services to enable international students to settle into the country upon arrival, a lot is still needed to be done to address issues relating to students not receiving adequate information regarding how they could access basic facilities as well as guidance on how they could plan and organize their studies. The university management needs to ensure that students are guided to plan their studies adequately by supplying them with the needed information required for course selection and the requirements for the courses provided. It is also important that the university management organizes campus tours for these students in order to get them acquainted with the university environment and facilities. Part B in section 2 of the questionnaire sought sojourners' perspectives regarding their general evaluation of the support services they received. Specifically, they were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction for the support services and programs provided with a 5-point Likert ranging from of very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5). Table II shows the results. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Mean values ≥ 3 were marked as satisfied, while mean values ≤ 3 were marked as dissatisfied. Findings revealed that respondents were dissatisfied with the accommodation conditions provided at the institution (mean=2.76), the language ability of the management staff (mean=2.84), and the attitude of the management staff (mean=2.94). On the other hand, findings from the analysis

revealed that respondents were satisfied with the scholarship opportunities provided at CTGU (mean=3.00), the language ability of the teaching staff (mean=3.04), the tuition fee (mean=3.15), the attitude of the teaching faculty (mean=3.32), and the academic support received from professors and advisors. Findings indicate that sojourners were satisfied with a lot of the support services provided at the university, whereas they were dissatisfied with the conditions of accommodation services provided, the language ability of management staff as this impeded foreign student's ability to communicate effectively with the management regarding issues and concerns that they had and the work attitude of management staff.

TABLE I. FOREIGN STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES REGARDING SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS PROVIDED

Items	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
I received support upon my arrival at the university like airport pick-up service.	4.3	4.3	2.9	25.0	63.6
I received a campus tour upon my arrival at the university.	46.4	16.4	7.1	17.1	12.9
I participated in an orientation program organized by the university.	12.9	20.0	10.7	38.6	17.9
I was offered guidance on how to organize my future studies on my arrival.	29.3	31.4	14.3	21.4	3.6
I was given guidance on course selection and academic requirements for the courses.	30.7	36.4	5.0	21.4	6.4
I received the necessary information regarding the Chinese examination and assessment system.	13.6	26.4	7.1	37.9	15.0
I received necessary instructions regarding directions to the food market, shops, first aid, and so on, immediately on my arrival.	25.7	18.6	7.9	23.6	24.3
I received necessary information pertaining to school timetable, classroom location and so on before I started my classes.	5.0	9.3	8.6	31.4	45.7

TABLE II. FOREIGN STUDENTS' GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AT CTGU

Items	Mean	Std.	Remarks
Accommodation conditions	2.76	1.351	Dissatisfied
Language ability of the management staff	2.84	1.360	Dissatisfied
Work attitude of the management staff	2.94	1.216	Dissatisfied
Scholarship opportunity	3.00	1.275	Satisfied
Language ability of the teaching faculty	3.04	1.274	Satisfied
Tuition fee	3.15	1.156	Satisfied
Work attitude of the teaching faculty	3.32	1.195	Satisfied
Academic support from professors and advisors	3.46	0.940	Satisfied

Furthermore, respondents (sojourners) in the quantitative phase of the study were asked to rate the extent to which they experienced difficulty in adapting to various aspects of the university's cultural landscape and environment. Using a 5-point Likert scale of no difficulty (1) to extreme difficulty (5), respondents rated their perspectives of the most challenging aspects of their adaptation at the Chinese university. The results shown in Table III show that respondents experienced difficulty in their intercultural adaptation in two aspects only, namely difficulty in dormitory life and difficulty in understanding Chinese laws and university regulations. These may have been a result of the university not clearly communicating Chinese laws and regulations to sojourners. Sojourners may also have found it difficult to study these regulations themselves as a result of the language barrier. Similarly, the difficulty experienced in dormitory life may be caused by the fact that sojourners are often paired with other students, with whom they share little or no cultural similarity, thus making some of these students unable to clearly understand their roommates.

TABLE III. RESPONDENTS PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE DIFFICULTY IN ADAPTING TO CHINESE CULTURAL CLIMATE

Items	Mean	Std	Remarks
I have difficulty with dormitory life.	3.11	1.608	Difficulty
I have difficulty understanding Chinese laws and University regulations.	3.07	1.381	Difficulty
I have difficulty getting along with the management staff	2.98	1.629	No Difficulty
I have difficulty understanding the University management system.	2.94	1.174	No Difficulty
I have difficulty understanding Chinese University admission policies	2.86	1.273	No Difficulty
I have difficulty in finding medical services.	2.84	1.282	No Difficulty
I have difficulty with the campus food services.	2.79	1.491	No Difficulty
I have difficulty financing my education.	2.61	1.355	No Difficulty
I have difficulty participating in students' activities organized by the University.	2.54	1.266	No Difficulty
I have difficulty understanding the registration procedure.	2.42	1.113	No Difficulty
I have difficulty with the practice of my religion.	1.96	1.311	No Difficulty
I have difficulty with roommates.	1.54	1.153	No Difficulty

D. Positives and Negatives in the Intercultural Management at CTGU

This study also sought to determine specifically through in-depth interviews the positive and negative aspects of intercultural management as experienced by sojourners in the case study. Qualitative interviews were conducted with sojourners from CTGU, namely international students and teachers. Participants for the qualitative phase of the study were asked to share their experiences regarding the management system at CTGU, i.e. how the international relations office formerly known as the foreign affairs office (FAO) catered for

their needs. Findings from the interview revealed some positive and satisfactory feedback. However, some notable negatives were also recorded. The following discuss the positive and negative experiences reported regarding the management of their cultural adaptation in the host university.

1) The Positives

a) Satisfactory Airport Pickup System

A significant number of sojourners tested that the airport pick-up service provided a very keen first impression about the university, as students were satisfied with the quality of the provided service. Sojourners expressed that the prompt airport pick up service made them feel welcomed.

b) Friendly Academic Staff and Comprehensive Language Tutoring

Participants also reported that the academic staff at the university was friendly and interacted well with students on various matters. Similarly, a substantial number of sojourners expressed that the Chinese language classes held were among the most successful programs at the university.

2) The Negatives

a) The Use of a Hierarchical Management System

The university which constituted the case study for this research operates on a hierarchical cultural norm and although this system of management has its pros, participants from the qualitative phase of the study believed that this management system impeded the ability of departments and colleges to communicate effectively.

b) The Responsive but Inefficient Management System

Some participants also expressed that the management system at the university was one that could be described as responsive but not efficient. Some participants expressed that sometimes it was difficult for an issue that affected them within the university to be resolved. In some cases, identifying the unit responsible for resolving such an issue was particularly tricky as the FAO was not able to resolve the issue in a timely and efficient manner. A participant described the foreign affairs office as inefficient because the staff was sometimes not available even in office hours. Another participant reported that they are unhelpful and could not respond to an issue adequately. Another described the intercultural management staff of the FAO as incompetent in English and having unacceptable behavior.

c) Incomprehensive Orientation Programs/Guidebooks for New Students/Expatriate Teachers

Participants expressed that the orientation programs at the university are not self-sufficient as they do not entirely aid students in transitioning into the new cultural landscape they find themselves in. Some participants also expressed that in the absence of these orientation programs, the University could produce comprehensive guidebooks written in English that they could easily refer to when they need help. Sadly, participants expressed that such a guidebook does not exist. This, as a result limits the university's intercultural management.

d) Issues with the Dormitory Quality

Some participants expressed that the quality of the dormitory at the university was not up to the western standards. Also, it was reported by some participants that rooms in the dorm were not adequately prepared upon arrival. Participants also expressed that the charged fee was not on par with the actual condition of the dorms.

e) Recruitment of Non-Qualified Academic Staff

Participants also expressed that with respect to teaching and learning, they found some academics not suitable in terms of being qualified to teach at the university. Some participants also expressed that the selection of foreign teachers should be rigorously carried out in order to ensure that foreigners who could facilitate effective teaching and learning were recruited into the university.

Participants expressed that these issues were the negative aspects of their adaption experiences at the host university. It is essential that Chinese universities develop an effective intercultural management system to help sojourners adapt effectively into Chinese culture.

E. Recommendations for Effective Intercultural Adaptation and Management Improvement

Intercultural management is a particular type of intercultural communication. It involves the dialogue between the management of host culture and sojourners, including more people than in interpersonal communication. The success or failure of intercultural management determines the success or failure of communication within a culturally diverse institution. Therefore, for effective intercultural communication between people and units of diverse cultural backgrounds, a holistic intercultural management system is needed. This holistic intercultural management system should constitute a dynamic organism of assimilation. An 'organism' in this context refers to a body that is working altogether to realize the processes of an effective intercultural management system. Dynamism, on the other hand, refers to the vigorousness and activeness of the management system. Therefore, a holistic intercultural management system should be dynamic, and all its constituent parts should work harmonically to aid the intercultural adaptation of sojourners in host countries.

The first step to establish a holistic intercultural management system that is both organic and dynamic is to revamp existing management structures. Such a management system should foster unhinged communication and cooperation between subordinates and managers. As a result, every entity or element of the system is expected to fulfil its responsibility as stipulated and defined in the management structure. Furthermore, every entity within the system is expected to support an internationalized spirit of operation. Internationalization should not be a responsibility that is borne by only a few groups of people. Preferably, it is a process that is hinged on maximizing the involvement of entities within the international landscape of institutions. The second step is for international relations units within institutions to adopt an open-minded innovation mechanism where the goal is to consistently listen to various recommendations and suggestions

of the international community as well as give voice to the most pressing issues affecting sojourners welfare and wellbeing in the host country.

The management system within the university should also focus on minimizing and abolishing the hierarchical management model which delimits effective communication across various units of the institution as well as between sojourners and the management. Furthermore, there should be strict avoidance of uncertainty in responding to issues of foreign students' welfare and wellbeing. Spontaneity should be the core competency of the international relations office in assisting and serving the international community. Success in these leads to building good reputation for the university which in turn leads to attracting more international students and teachers. Using an updated management software system is of crucial importance in intercultural management. Findings from the study revealed that international students found the management system to be responsive but not efficient. A lack of efficiency could result in the university using an ad-hoc managerial software system which is not particularly tailored to the needs of the management team. The management system should be one that is democratic and characterized as one for the people, by the people and of the people. Therefore, consolidating sojourners' perspectives regarding issues could help improve intercultural management in the university.

The university should also recruit qualified teaching and management staff in the various areas of study and programs offered. Similarly, the university should also facilitate easy and open access to intercultural training provided for not only management staff and sojourners, but also for the Chinese faculty and students in order to establish intercultural consciousness in students and staff alike. The intercultural training for sojourners can comprise of basic Chinese language courses, a brief introduction to China and the Chinese culture, a specific introduction to the management structure of the university, and orientation programs. Also access to information such as campus geography, the education system, and evaluation methods should also be provided. The intercultural training on Chinese people may include the basic knowledge of English language (specific domain oriented if necessary), intercultural communication such as diplomatic etiquette, basic intercultural theories and practices, a brief introduction of different cultures and so on.

Furthermore, a comprehensive policy framework should be developed to address effective consultation between university management and sojourners as well as responsive information circulation. The policy framework should be established on a people-oriented basis, i.e. it should focus on the needs of the international students as well as the entire student body in the institution. Whenever the university produces policies and decisions, the concerned people, not only staff and teachers, but also students should be consulted. The policies or decisions should not only be beneficial for the university, but also should accommodate international students and teachers. A worthy point of note in intercultural adaptation is that sojourners ought to be aware of the challenges in transitioning to a culture that is different from theirs and as a result, ought to prepare themselves for the differences that may occur when they

migrate to other countries for study and employment purposes. Preparing oneself for future challenges allows one to be successful when such challenges arise. Authors in [17] proposed another approach to intercultural adaptation. They explained that sojourners could seek support and help from people with similar backgrounds in order to adapt effortlessly into the host country. Furthermore, participating in campus activities and social activities with people of similar and diverse backgrounds can also help foster intercultural adaptation [9]. There is a positive correlation between social support and intercultural adaptation. Social contact and communication between people from both diverse and similar backgrounds will encourage intercultural adaptation.

V. CONCLUSION

Through a mixed method approach, this study explored the experiences of sojourners regarding their cultural adaptation in a Chinese university. More specifically, the positives and negatives in the intercultural management of sojourners were examined. Using a sample of 140 respondents in the quantitative phase and 27 participants in the qualitative phase of the study, findings established that university had some notable successes that were held in high esteem by sojourners. However, there were more recorded negatives than positives. The use of a hierarchical and inefficient management system, incomprehensive orientation programs/guidebooks, issues with dormitory quality, and the recruitment of non-qualified academic and management staff were some of the issues expressed by participants. The researchers therefore recommend a holistic management system to be developed to facilitate effective and efficient intercultural management at the university. Some recommendations for fostering intercultural communication and adaptation have also been proposed.

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