

Research Article

Factors Affecting Chinese Short-Term International Students' Cross-Cultural Adaptation in Psychology, Learning, and Life

Haiyan Zhang ¹ and Mingsheng Li²

¹Department of College English Teaching, School of Languages and Communication Studies, Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing, China

²Department of Communication, Journalism and Marketing, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Correspondence should be addressed to Haiyan Zhang; zhanghaiyan@bjtu.edu.cn

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Although Chinese international students' cross-cultural adaptation has achieved intense research, factors in developing Chinese SISs' cross-cultural adaptation remain underresearched. This study examined the factors through a survey of Chinese SISs' transitional adaptation in psychology, life, and learning. Mixed-method research was conducted: a survey of 155 SISs from a top Chinese university undertaking study across 16 countries and in-depth interviews with 15 SISs. Results indicate that knowledge of the host country and university, language proficiency, sense of participation, and engagement are the crucial factors in developing Chinese SISs' cross-cultural adaptation. These factors reveal significant correlations with the students' adaptive performances in psychology, life, and learning. However, the factor of duration indicates no significant correlation with students' cross-cultural adaptation, which demonstrates an inconsistency with the previous studies. The findings of this study highlight the need for developing Chinese SISs' sense of engagement, enhancing the language training, and building up the knowledge of the host cultures previous to the study abroad.

1. Introduction

Higher Education Internationalization has received increasing attention from nations in the world. It plays significant role in promoting cross-cultural communication between nations, cultivating internationalized talents, and facilitating national development. China has been ranked first as the largest international students' resource nation since 2015, and the number of Chinese students studying overseas has reached 703,500, according to the data issued by the Ministry of Education of China on December 14, 2020, increasing by 6.25% compared with the one of the previous year. Noticeably, the number of short-term students, particularly the short-term Exchange Programs students between Chinese and foreign universities, indicates a sharp increase due to lower financial costs, less time consumption, and easier application.

International students are expected to cultivate both global learning abilities and cross-cultural competence. As Assadourian [1] put it in the EarthEd, students should be helped to develop their cross-cultural competence and interlinguistic proficiency, which are regarded as the Life Skills for sustainable life (p.4). It is recognized that cross-cultural adaptability is one of the key facets to cross-cultural competence development. Understanding and addressing the adjustment issues not only helps the university administrators facilitate international education management, but also assists students in developing their cross-cultural and global learning competencies [2]. It is essential to explore the adaptation issues, such as the adaptive factors, for the SISs. A study of the Chinese SISs' cross-cultural adaptation in dimensions of psychology, life, and learning can provide a reflective vision for the global SISs to improve their learning efficiency. Additionally, it offers a referential lens

for the university administrators of the joint programs to efficiently prepare, guide, and serve this group of students to successfully complete their overseas studies.

2. Previous Research

2.1. Short-Term International Education and Cross-Cultural Adaptation. As to the domain of short-term international education, research mainly focuses on the aspects of teaching and administration, social effects, suggestions, and strategies, etc. Teaching and administration in short-term international education are conducted, to a large extent, in an interdisciplinary sense by examining the programs' operation model, outcomes, learning and assessment, and motivation and goals (e.g. [3–5]). Moreover, recent studies from the perspectives of communication, social-economics, and sociology reveal that short-term international education has generated quite positive social effects. Not only does it greatly assist students in cultivating their “soft techniques,” including character development, global awareness, international citizenship, and the like, but also the “hard technique” like employment competitiveness and internationalization disposition. Besides, short-term international education, which is thought to be the key factor in promoting long-term global education, can also help students figure out the complex global issues such as aging society, gender inequality, and environmental protection. [6–9]. Additionally, based on the current short-term overseas educational development and issues, it is suggested that both sides of the universities, in collaboration, should offer students adequate support. Strategies including the pre-/in/postinterference and guidance in the learning process are regarded as quite necessary activities [3, 10–12]. These suggestions and strategies can greatly facilitate international students' cross-cultural transition and adaptation.

As to cross-cultural adaptation, overseas short-term learning is beneficial but problematic. On the one hand, short-term overseas study can sharpen students' cross-cultural sensitivity, cultivate their cross-cultural awareness, improve their adaptation competence, and enlighten their self-reflection on home culture and cultural identity (e.g., [13–18]). On the other hand, a recent study on short-term international education shows that although short-term international education can benefit students in overcoming logistical and financial barriers [19], SISs actually experience higher levels of sociocultural adjustment difficulties, psychological distress, and social pressure. (e.g., [20–23]). However, the aspects and levels of adjustment difficulties need to be empirically explored in the research of SISs' cross-cultural adaptation.

2.2. Cross-Cultural Adaptation: Factors in Theoretical and Empirical Studies. Cross-cultural adaptation is an inevitable issue for strangers, including international students, sojourners, and migrants from their home culture to the host culture. In a new cultural and social environment, student sojourners will have to adapt themselves to the new environment through psychological and behavioral adjustments.

Cross-cultural adaptation has been highly studied by cross-cultural researchers in theory and practice.

Kim and Ruben [24] argued that strangers would experience huge adaptation depression since the internal balance was broken totally after entering the strange cultural environment. Lysgaard [25] and Oberg [26] constructed a cross-cultural adaptation model with four phases of honeymoon, rejection, regression, and recovery to explore the adaptation stages over time. Gudykunst and Hammer [27] examined the negative effects of cross-cultural uncertainty and anxiety. Gudykunst et al. [28], Hammer et al. [29], and Chen [30] emphasized that psychological adjustment and depression should be measured as the key predictor for cross-cultural competence. These theories demonstrate that the study of students' psychological adaptation is essential to addressing cross-cultural adaptation issues. Besides, adaptability to the host social life, and cultural and learning environments is an equally important predictor of examining international students' cross-cultural competence. As Abe and Wiseman [31] found in their research on the Japanese international students studying in the US that students' adjustment to the new cultural environment and to the different social system was the basic factor to the sojourners' cultural adaptation. In addition, in her theory of cross-cultural adaptation, Kim [32] argued that the development of cross-cultural adaptation was dynamic, and the key factors to cross-cultural competence included familiarity with the social environment and functional fitness. Therefore, it is equally vital to investigate students' adaptation by examining the social and living environments.

Empirically, studies of the international students' psychological, social-cultural, life, or academic adaptations suggest that in academic studies, international students unavoidably encounter acculturative stress and difficulties in these dimensions [33, 34], such as the assessment models, academic writing ability, teacher-student relationships that can influence students' academic adaptation [35–37]. In the mean time, use of social sources, satisfaction with the host university, and challenge-coping greatly account for the students' levels of psychological adaptation [38–40]. These factors, including initial across-cultural transition, learning strategies, leisure engagement, course-participation, bilingual competence, etc., are proved to be significant contributors to the international students' general adaptability including social-cultural, well-being, and academic adaptation as well [41–44]. These studies demonstrate that cross-cultural adaptation is a quite complex and dynamic process, and factors in developing students' acculturative competencies could vary in terms of cultural distances, contexts, situations, and student groups.

2.3. Chinese International Students' Cross-Cultural Adaptation. As the largest international student group in the world, the cross-cultural experiences of Chinese international students have been subject to intensive research. Studies indicate that cross-cultural adaptation becomes the primary issue that Chinese international students encounter, and students' social-cultural and learning adaptation is associated with

communication, interaction, engagement, and social support from the host cultures. (e.g., [45–49]). Noticeably, these studies focus primarily on long-term Chinese international students. However, whether Chinese SISs will experience similar barriers in their cross-cultural adaptation or not is underresearched.

3. Research Objective and Hypothesis

As to the solution to SISs' cross-cultural in-adaptation, many researchers share the view that instructions and training for SISs in advance is an essential measure. However, what specific instructions and training for what sort of in-adaptation needs to be further scrutinized, which highly involves the case analysis with empirical research. Consequently, this paper intends to study the Chinese SISs' cross-cultural adaptation to psychology, social life, and learning during their participation in the overseas short-term programs between*** University and its foreign counterparts in other parts of the world.

It is hypothesized that (1) The preprogram training for understanding the cultural environment of the host country and university is particularly essential for the SISs to facilitate their cross-cultural adaptation in psychology, life, and learning, and (2) a senses of openness and participation will facilitate students' overseas learning, cross-cultural adaptation, and sustainable development.

4. Method

4.1. Cross-Cultural Adaptation Assessment. As to the cross-cultural adaptation assessment, there are comparatively fewer scales made by researchers. Scales such as the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) proposed by Searle and Ward and the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) proposed by Kelley and Meyers are the frequently used scales by researchers to test the cross-cultural communicators' adaptability [50]. However, these adaptation scales made by non-Asian researchers are not quite applicable to assessing Chinese international students' adaptation. Taking CCAI for instance, it is not appropriate to be adopted as an assessment tool to evaluate Chinese international students. For one thing, CCAI is proved to be partially credible and effective [51]. For the other, this scale puts more stress on the communicators' individual predisposition. As it is, cross-cultural adaptation is quite complex and dynamic, involving individual, social, and contextual factors. Additionally, factors in evaluating cross-cultural competence are neither necessarily the same among cultures, nor are distributed consistently in that different cultures may include different factors to investigate students' cross-cultural competence [52]. Therefore, the evaluation of international students' adaptability is supposed to be made through multifaceted and comprehensive scales and so is the study of Chinese SISs' adaptation. This paper will adopt the revised scales based on Zung Self-appraisal Depression Rating Scale and Zhu's Three-Dimension Adaptation Scales (2011) in psychology, life, and academic environment to evaluate Chinese SISs' cross-cultural adaptation.

4.2. Data Collection and Theoretical Frame. This research was carried out through qualitative and quantitative methods in the fall semester of 2019. Among the 319 undergraduates from*** University participating in the overseas short-term programs (12 to 18 months) all over the world, 158 subjects were randomly selected to respond to the questionnaire. Besides, 15 students with different major backgrounds were chosen to attend the in-depth interviews. 158 Questionnaires were sent to the subjects through emails, with 155 effective questionnaires collected, and in-depth interviews were conducted through social media of We-chat. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Apart from the basic information on the subjects, the questionnaire is composed of three sections to examine the students' psychological adaptation (20 items), social life (4 factors, 17 items), and learning (7 factors, 23 items), respectively. The design of the questionnaire is underpinned by the previous theories and research outcomes from the American psychologists Lazarus et al. [53], Bochner et al. [54], and Zhu [55]. The "Stress, Appraisal and Coping" model proposed by Lazarus examined the relationship between life and psychological adaptation among international students. Bochner et al. found that interpersonal social networking was an important predictor of life adaptation for international students. Zhu initiated Three-Dimension cross-cultural adaptation: the scale of psychology, social culture, and academy, pointing out that these three aspects were closely related to each other. Zhang and Dai [56] applied Zhu's Three-Dimension cross-cultural adaptation scale to examine the adaptation competence of international students in China. The psychological adaptation scale is based on Zung Self-appraisal Depression Rating Scale, and the other two scales of "social cultural adaptation" and "academic adaptation" were made by Zhu himself. Zhu's Three-Dimension adaptation scale was adopted to examine the international students who are learning the Chinese language and culture or studying for degrees in China. Similar three-dimension adaptation research was undertaken to study the international students in the U.S. For instance, the effects of the international students' initial cross-cultural transition from home to the host culture were examined through the lens of the international students' psychological well-being and social and academic adaptation [41]. This paper uses the Three-Dimension adaptation scales to understand the acculturative issues that Chinese SISs studying overseas are facing. Besides, the Three-Dimension questionnaire is revised to make it more appropriate to investigate the Chinese SISs. The revised questionnaire is acceptable with higher reliability ($\alpha = 0.79$).

4.3. Questionnaire Design. The basic information includes the respondents' age, gender, major, names of the currently attending university and living country, duration/time spent abroad, language proficiency test results, and their knowledge about the country and the university before the

overseas study. These items are factors influencing the subjects' adaptation to psychology, life, and learning.

The Self-rating Depression Scale (SDS) initiated by Zung in 1965, was adopted with a slight modification to examine the subjects' psychological status, whether or not they felt anxious during their life and learning abroad. It is frequently adopted in the study of cross-cultural adaptation and indicated higher reliability [57]. There are 20 items, 10 positive and 10 negative items, respectively, with a 4-point rating testing the respondents' emotion, sleep status, appetite, sex desire, thinking ability, interests, etc. The 4-point rating is from Seldom, Sometimes, Often, and Pretty often, and the subjects score 1, 2, 3, and 4 correspondingly in the positive items, and vice versa in the negative items. Those who score lower than 53 are evaluated as normal in psychology, suffering no anxiety in their life and studying abroad, indicating a healthy adaptation in psychology. Those who score between 53 and 60 are claimed as patients with slight/medium depression, and those who score higher than 60 are claimed as patients with serious depression. Subjects with medium and serious depression indicate they are suffering a medium to serious anxiety in their life and study and their poor adaptation to psychology.

The questionnaire on the subjects' adaptation in their life was designed in the form of self-rating with a 5-point scale based on four factors, including interpersonal relationships, communicative language proficiency, daily life, and their understanding of the local culture such as customs, social politics, etc. There are 17 descriptive items in total. The 5-point scale self-rating is from Totally Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree, to Totally Agree. Subjects were to score 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 correspondingly, and their scores indicated their overseas life adaptation.

The questionnaire on the subjects' adaptation in their learning was examined through seven factors with 23 subdescriptions examining students' academic adaptation in terms of language proficiency, course structure, learning content, learning approaches, host university's academic evaluation, and communication with the faculties and classmates about their learning. The survey on students' learning adaptation was designed in self-rating with a 5-point scale and scoring. Points scored by the subjects served as indicators of their adaptation to the learning environment abroad.

Fifteen students with different majors and durations abroad attending the short-term overseas study programs were selected for the in-depth and structured interviews to further explore how the subjects adapted themselves in psychology, life, and learning abroad. The qualitative research method is adopted to evaluate the students' cross-cultural adaptation in a more comprehensive way.

4.4. Research Questions. This survey is conducted with the intention of addressing the following questions:

Q1: Whether or not there exists a correlation between the time SISs spend overseas and their psychological anxiety?

Q2: Whether or not the degree of the respondents' knowledge about the host universities and countries before their study abroad has a significant correlation with their adaptation to psychology, life, and learning abroad?

Q3: What is the correlation, either positive or negative, among the subjects' adaptation to psychology, life, and learning?

5. Results

5.1. Data Interpretation of the Subjects' Basic Information.

A total of 155 subjects, 82 girls and 73 boys with an average age of 20.5, effectively responded to the questionnaires. The majority of the subjects major in science and Engineering (61%), the rest in arts (17%) and finance and accounting (22%). These subjects were studying at 75 universities in 16 countries, including 57 respondents studying in the US, 37 in the European countries, 28 in Canada, 18 in Australia, etc. (see Figure 1). Most of the participants achieved higher points according to the language proficiency test results, 50 subjects scored IELTS above 7.0, and 41 subjects scored in TOFEL more than 90. Generally, those with medium and above language proficiency account for 58.7% of the total. Despite the 16 different countries the subjects visited, they experienced similar learning culture environments such as English-mediated instruction, assessment criteria, western education system, etc. Besides, out of the 155 subjects, 114 subjects were attending universities in which English is Spoken. Therefore, the learning environment for all the subjects to adapt to can be regarded as almost the same.

As to the length of their stay overseas, among these surveyed students, 41 respondents reported having studied abroad 1 to 3 months, 24 respondents, 4 to 6 months, 19 respondents, 7 to 12 months, and 71 respondents, more than 12 months, accounting about for 26%, 16%, 12%, and 46%, respectively (see Figure 2). As to the item of degree the respondents knew about the country before the study abroad, 60.7% of the subjects stated that they "know a little" and "know nothing" about the culture of the host country, and only 3.9% "know well" about the country. Similarly, 63.9% of the subjects thought that they "know a little" and "know nothing" about the host universities before taking part in the program, and 9.0% admitted that they "know well" about the university (see Table 1).

Generally, the in-depth interviews indicated the students attending the short-term programs qualified themselves with good language proficiency in that they were selected among the top students with good performance both in the major study and language proficiency. Besides, all the interviewees thought they did not attend any lectures on the introduction to the culture of the host universities and countries and were not given any instructions to facilitate their transition from home to abroad. They, however, received some instructions on the visa application. Before their departure for the visiting universities, they were kept busy with all kinds of application documentation. Generally, the results based on the interviews and questionnaires revealed that the subjects had poor preparation to know about the host countries and universities in advance.

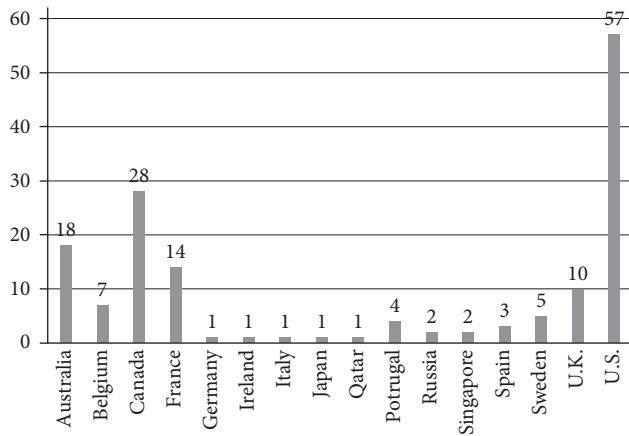


FIGURE 1: The distribution of the subjects in 16 countries.

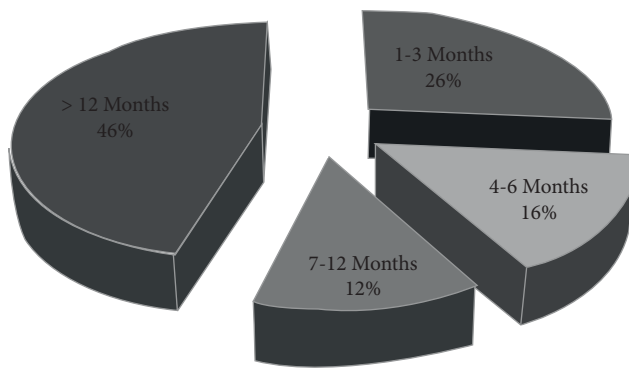


FIGURE 2: The subjects' duration abroad.

TABLE 1: Extents the SISs know about the host country and university.

	Frequency		Percentage	
	Country	University	Country (%)	University (%)
Know nothing	19	19	12.3	12.3
Know a little	75	80	48.4	51.6
Know much	55	42	35.5	27.1
Know well	6	14	3.9	9.0
In sum	155	155	100.0	100.0

5.2. Data Analysis of the Three-Dimension Adaptation. As to the survey about the students' psychological adaptation, based on the SDS results and the evaluation criteria of "the higher scoring, the more severe depression." 129 respondents scored lower than 53, indicating they suffered no anxiety and depression in their studies and daily life. 17 respondents were regarded as patients with mild depression, suffering certain levels of anxiety since they scored between 53 and 60, and 9 respondents suffered severe depression in that they scored more than 60 (see Table 2). Generally, the respondents indicated their poor performance in psychology in the negative items of "Depression severe in the mornings and mild in the nights," "difficulty in decision-making," and "decreasing ability in dealing with difficulty," scoring in the

TABLE 2: The surveyed students' SDS marks and depression levels.

SDS marks	Depression levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-53	Normal	129	83
53-60	Mild depression	17	11
>60	Severe depression	9	6
In sum	—	155	100.0

top three among all the items with marks of 446, 397, and 337 points. The SDS results illustrate that most of the surveyed students (about 83%) fulfilled their short-term study abroad and were adapting well without anxiety. Those suffering from mild depression accounted for 11%, and those suffering from severe depression accounted for about 6%.

Students' adaptation in their social life abroad varies dramatically from aspects to items in terms of scoring. The surveyed students indicated their best adaptation with the average points of 626 in total in the aspect of "daily life" including shopping for necessities, transportation, communications, food, climate, and weather, and their worst adaptation with the average points of 536 in the aspect of "interpersonal relationship" including the language communication ability, the extent to which the students engaged in local life such as taking part in the campus and community activities. Throughout the 17 items, the surveyed students scored poorly particularly in the three items—Joining in the associations or clubs on campus, engaging in the activities held by the community, and willingness to communicate with the local people. These results implied that Chinese SISs had a weak sense of participation and engagement in the foreign culture during their overseas study.

Learning adaptation was examined from 7 aspects with 23 descriptive items. The top three scoring items understood the multiple evaluations of the students' performances, knowing about the punishment for academic cheating, piracy, copying, and assignment-fulfilling, with total points of 681, 653, and 643, respectively. This could probably be ascribed to the fact that Chinese students had grown a strong sense of academic integrity on the one hand, and that they had grasped the discipline knowledge and conventions on the other hand. This finding greatly helps to change the "stereotyped and stigmatized image of the Chinese international students as one without caring about Academic Integrity" in foreign countries such as New Zealand [58]. Nevertheless, the last three scoring items had much to do with the students' language ability during their overseas studies. The results revealed that the surveyed students had difficulty in understanding teachers, teaching content, and expressing ideas in classes, with total points of 446, 456, and 468, respectively. Moreover, supposing analysis of variance $\alpha = 0.10$, according to the Sig. value ($p > 0.05$) in Table 3, it indicates the equal variances. Consequently, based on the $T&P$ values under the condition of equal variances, students scoring higher than the average point of 16 in their language proficiency in the dimension of academic adaptation demonstrated a dramatic difference in the Three-Dimension adaptation from those scoring lower than 16 at the 0.01 level

TABLE 3: Levene's test & *T*-test for the equality of means.

		Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for equality of means					
		<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error value	95% confidence interval for difference
									Lower-bound Upper-bound
Psychology	Equal variances			-3.023	153	0.003	-4.465	1.477	-7.383 -1.547
	Unequal variances	0.045	0.832	-2.983	130.961	0.003	-4.465	1.497	-7.426 -1.504
Life	Equal variances			5.226	153	0.000	4.814	0.921	2.994 6.633
	Unequal variances	3.858	0.051	4.998	113.681	0.000	4.814	0.963	2.906 6.722
Learning	Equal variances			6.046	153	0.000	9.195	1.521	6.190 12.199
	Unequal variances	0.159	0.691	6.005	134.540	0.000	9.195	1.531	6.166 12.223

($T_{\text{psy.}} = -3.023$, $P_{\text{psy.}} = 0.003$; $T_{\text{lif.}} = 5.226$, $P_{\text{lif.}} = 0.000$; $T_{\text{lea.}} = 6.046$, $P_{\text{lea.}} = 0.000$), and those with better language ability show a healthier psychological status, and better life and academic adaptation (see Tables 3 and 4). Brown [59] found in his research exploring the incidence of the stress of the international students that the academic cultural differences and language ability greatly accounted for the students' academic stress. For Chinese SISs, the academic evaluation in the foreign cultures, especially the western cultures, puts more stress on the students' critical evaluation and participation in class, which was closely related to the students' language ability.

5.3. Key Factors to Short-Term Adaptation. Based on SPSS (V.20) data analysis, there is no significant correlation between the time of the students' staying abroad and their adaptation in psychology, life and learning (see Table 5). It does not necessarily mean that the longer the students stay abroad, the better adaptation they can achieve. Those staying abroad for less-than-3-month period do not necessarily suffer less psychology depression, and have poorer performances in life and learning than those staying abroad for more than 12 months. Moreover, it reveals a quite positive correlation between the extent the students know about the host country and their adaptation to life and the learning environment ($p = 0.000$, $r = 0.330$; $p = 0.000$, $r = 0.383$), a negative correlation between the extent students' knowledge about the host country and their anxiety ($p = 0.000$, $r = -0.424$) (see Table 5). Similarly, there is a positive correlation between the extent students' knowledge about the host university and their adaptation to life and the learning environment ($p = 0.000$, $r = 0.280$; $p = 0.000$, $r = 0.498$), and a negative correlation between the extent students' knowledge about the host university and their psychological anxiety ($p = 0.001$, $r = -0.257$) (see Table 5). The data suggest that the better that the students know about the host country and university, the better adaptation they could achieve. Also, students' adaptations in psychology, life, and

learning correlate with each other. There is a negative correlation between psychology and life, and psychology and learning—the less depressed the students feel during their stay abroad, the more easily they can adapt themselves to the life and study ($p = 0.000$, $r = -0.438$; $p = 0.000$, $r = -0.365$).

In terms of gender variables, there is no significant difference between male and female students in their adaptation in psychology, life, and learning ($T = 1.437$, $p = 0.153$; $T = -0.726$, $p = 0.469$; $T = -0.009$, $p = 0.993$). As to majors, students majoring in arts present the significant differences than those majoring in finance and accounting in the psychological adaptation at $p < 0.05$ level ($T = -2.076$, $p = 0.042$). Arts students majoring in communication, law, and languages, have a better psychological adaptation than finance and accounting students. However, as far as the time staying abroad is concerned, there is a significant difference between the period of 1–3 months and that of more than 12 months in their adaptation in life ($T = -2.408$, $p = 0.018$) at the $p < 0.05$ level, but no significant difference in the psychological adaptation and learning adaptation. The findings show that students' language ability presents a positive correlation with their adaptation to the curriculum and course structure ($p = 0.000$, $r = .281$), which highlights the importance of language preparation before taking part in short-term programs.

6. Discussion

6.1. Staying Time and Psychological Adaptation Status. Culture-shock Theory initiated by Oberg [26] argued that people living abroad for a certain time tended to suffer difficulties in life and the negative emotion in cross-cultural practices. In spite of the hard times, sojourners tended to be enjoyable and feel excited at the beginning stage of living abroad, which is named by Oberg as the "honeymoon" stage. Lysgaard [25] explored the correlation between the time people spent abroad and their psychological adaptation, arguing that those staying from 6 to 18 months in the U.S. experienced poorer psychological situations. Moreover,

TABLE 4: Set of statistics of the adaptation in psychology, life, and learning.

	Language proficiency	N	Mean	SD	Standard error of the mean
Psychology	≥16	65	40.45	9.508	1.179
	<16	90	44.91	8.747	0.922
Social life	≥16	65	50.37	6.535	0.811
	<16	90	45.56	4.934	0.520
Academic adaptation	≥16	65	92.26	9.571	1.187
	<16	90	83.07	9.176	0.967

TABLE 5: The correlations between duration, extents SISs' knowing about the host country and university, language performance, and SISs' adaptation to psychology, life, and learning, respectively.

		Psychology	Life	Learning
Duration	Pearson correlation	-0.070	0.151	0.088
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.385	0.060	0.274
	N	155	155	155
Psychology	Pearson correlation	1	-0.438**	-0.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	155	155	155
Know about the host country	Pearson correlation	-0.424**	0.330**	0.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	155	155	155
Know about the host university	Pearson correlation	-0.257**	0.280**	0.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000	0.000
	N	155	155	155
Language performance	Pearson correlation	-0.377**	0.527**	0.647**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	155	155	155

Ward et al. [57] pointed out that people at the beginning of living abroad suffered from depression to the largest extent. Obviously, the previous theories and research findings demonstrate that there exists a correlation between staying time and psychological adaptation status.

Findings in this particular research on Chinese SISs, however, contradict the findings made in the previous study, demonstrating no significant correlation between these two variables ($r = -0.070$, $p = 0.385$). Besides, the results also demonstrate no significant difference in the psychological anxiety between the surveyed students staying abroad for less than 3 months and for more than 12 months ($T = 1.338$, $p = 0.184$). In consequence, students staying more than 12 months abroad do not necessarily suffer less from psychological anxiety than those at the beginning stage, particularly 1–3 months. The findings fail to support the earlier theory of Culture Shock, U-Curve, and the important argument by Ward et al. [57] that people tend to encounter a higher level of depression, especially at the beginning stage of living abroad. So these results highlight the significance to study this unique group so as to make the appropriate and feasible measures to develop their adaptation ability in psychology for the future research focus.

6.2. Knowledge of the Host Country and University. SISs are unable to choose their overseas study destinations. They are enrolled in the programs established between the

universities at home and abroad. Consequently, unlike the other students intending to study for a degree can choose their host countries and universities, the SISs do not bother to search or explore more information about the target country and university they head for. Good knowledge of the target country and host university can undoubtedly facilitate the SISs' adaptation in a new culture within a short stay. All the interviewees reported that they should have fully prepared themselves before their leaving for overseas study. Findings demonstrate the significant correlation between knowledge of the host country and university and the adaptation in the three dimensions. Specifically, there is a significant negative correlation between the SISs' anxiety and how much they know about the country and the university, respectively (country: $r = -0.424$, $p = 0.000$; university: $r = 2.257$, $p = 0.001$), and a significant positive correlation between the life and learning adaptation and the degree they know about the country and university, respectively (country: $r = 0.330$, $p = 0.000$; $r = 0.383$, $p = 0.000$; university: $r = 0.280$, $p = 0.000$; $r = .498$, $p = 0.000$). The findings back up the argument made by the previous study that preintercultural development assessments or predeparture training should be given to students ready to study abroad [11, 13, 59]. Due to inadequate preparation, the surveyed Chinese SISs were less interculturally competent. What specific content should be instructed to students in the pretraining calls for further research.

Additionally, adequate knowledge to the host countries and universities helps a lot of the SISs' figure out what cultural contexts they will encounter with. However, merely knowing the target learning cultural environment is not so helpful in easing the intercultural shock or inadaptability without SISs' reflection on the intercultural differentiation between Chinese culture and the visiting cultures in terms of learning. Chinese culture should be taken into consideration including Chinese learning, social networking, communication between teachers and students, etc. Not only can reflection be of help for SISs to bear a comparative mind between cultures at home and overseas, but it can assist the subjects in raising their awareness to adjust their behaviors in the new environment.

6.3. Correlation of Psychological Adaptation with the Adaptation in Life and Learning. Lazarus et al. [53] proposed the model of "stress, appraisal and coping" from the perspective of psychological adaptation, which provides the theoretical basis for the study of international students' psychological change due to the pressure from life changes. Zhu [55] proposed the Three-Dimension adaptation in psychology, social culture, and academic environment and argued that the three dimensions were interrelated. Many researchers, Zhang and Dai [56], for instance, have adopted the Three-Dimension analysis model to study the cross-cultural adaptation of international students. This paper, however, examined not only how the SISs performed in their adaptations in the three dimensions but also to what extent the three adaptations were correlated each other. Findings reveal a significantly negative correlation of psychological adaptation with the adaptation in life and learning ($r = -0.438$, $p = 0.000$; $r = -0.365$, $p = 0.000$): the less psychological anxiety, the better adaptation performance in life and learning. The life and learning adaptations, nevertheless, present a significantly positive correlation ($r = 0.581$, $p = 0.000$). It should be noted that although most of the surveyed SISs demonstrate no suffering from psychological pressure, it deserves adequate attention since it can impose negative influences upon the student's life and learning adaptation. Effective measures for easing the SISs' anxiety or depression should be investigated in future study.

7. Conclusions

This empirical research focused on the study of the factors in developing the Chinese SISs' cross-cultural adaptation in psychology, life, and learning when they attended the overseas short-term programs established by ***University and its counterparts all over the world. The following conclusions are drawn from this study: (1) Those surveyed SISs generally have a normal psychological adaptation, and a few need psychological interference and necessary therapy; (2) On the whole, Chinese SISs should be trained to become aware of the importance of participation and engagement as the key factors for Chinese SISs to adapt themselves to the life and learning abroad; (3) necessary and adequate pre-program training and preparation should be carried out

among the students in two aspects: increasing the language proficiency, especially speaking and listening comprehension, and building up a large body of knowledge about the countries and universities where they are going to study. According to Ting-Toomy [60], cultural and social knowledge is the most important component and it enhances cultural self-awareness and other-awareness. For SISs, necessary knowledge of the host country and university is essential for their shorter time abroad.

Additionally, the data and findings from this research cannot support some previous theories and research outcomes such as Culture Shock and its Honey Moon stage, the correlation between staying time abroad and cross-cultural adaptation. Therefore, the cross-cultural adaptation study of the SISs deserves more qualitative and quantitative analysis to summarize the nature of cross-cultural adaptation. Also, the research on the Chinese SISs should be undertaken with a sense of heterogeneity, and the research methodology and perspectives call for a localized and particular view of heterogeneity for the study of Chinese international students.

Data Availability

All the data acquired in this research are collected by the authors and their research team through interviews, questionnaires, etc. Data collection lasted 2 to 3 months.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Factors affecting Chinese short-term international students' cross-cultural adaptation in psychology, learning, and life

Zhang H

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