Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research in Asia 28(1), Jan.-Apr. 2022, 73-91
Ma, X., Charoenarpornwattana, P., Leeniwa, J., & Varayonpinit, P.

73

ปัญหาอุปสรรคและเทคนิคการเอาชนะประสบการณ์ความสะเทือนใจทางวัฒนธรรม ของครูต่างชาติในโรงเรียนเอกชนแห่งหนึ่งในไทย
Problems Obstacles and Overcoming Techniques with Culture Shock Experiences of Foreign Teachers in One Thai Private School

Xueyun Ma[1], ปรัชนันท์ เจริญอาภรณ์วัฒนา[2]*, จินดาภา ลีนิวา[3] และ ภัฏฐกรณ์ วรายนต์พินิจ[4]
Xueyun Ma[1], Paratchanun Charoenarpornwattana[2]*, Jindapa Leeniwa[3] and Pattakorn Varayonpinit[4]
[1]Tongren Polytechnic College, [2]คณะศึกษาศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยบูรพา,
[3]คณะวิทยาการจัดการ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย,[4]นักวิชาการอิสระ
[1]Tongren Polytechnic College, [2]Faculty of Education, Burapha University,
[3]Faculty of Management Science, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, [4]Independent Researcher
*Corresponding Author, E-mail: paratchanun@go.buu.ac.th

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาปัญหาอุปสรรคและเสนอแนะเทคนิคการเอาชนะประสบการณ์ความสะเทือนใจทางวัฒนธรรมเมื่อ ทำงานในโรงเรียนเอกชนแห่งหนึ่งในประเทศไทย เพื่อทำความเข้าใจประสบการณ์ทางสังคมโดยใช้กระบวนทัศน์ ทางความรู้แบบสร้างสรรค์สังคมด้วยรูปแบบการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ เพื่อแก้ไขปัญหาทางการวิจัยในรูปแบบ ยุทธศาสตร์การวิจัยเชิงปรากฏการณ์วิทยา ผู้ให้ข้อมูลใช้วิธีการคัดเลือกตัวอย่างแบบมีเกณฑ์และแบบลูกโซ่ รวบรวมข้อมูลโดยการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างกับครูต่างชาติจำนวน 14 คน ที่ทำงานในโรงเรียนเอกชน แห่งหนึ่งของประเทศไทย วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลตามขั้นตอนปรากฏการณ์วิทยาของ Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ปัญหาและอุปสรรคจากประสบการณ์ความสะเทือนใจทางวัฒนธรรมของครูต่างชาติที่ทำงาน ในโรงเรียนเอกชนแห่งหนึ่งในประเทศไทยมี 4 ประเด็น ได้แก่ 1) ระบบอาวุโสในโรงเรียน 2) ความแตกต่าง ด้านพฤติกรรม 3) ความไม่ชัดเจนกับการบริหารและนโยบายของโรงเรียน และ 4) อุปสรรคทางภาษา ส่วนเทคนิค การเอาชนะเพื่อจัดการกับประสบการณ์ความสะเทือนใจทางวัฒนธรรม ประกอบด้วย 3 ประเด็น ได้แก่ 1) การยอมรับหรือเพิกเฉย 2) ได้รับการสนับสนุนจากครูต่างชาติคนอื่น ๆ และ 3) เทคนิคต่าง ๆ ที่ใช้ใน การแก้ปัญหาด้านอุปสรรคทางภาษา

คำสำคัญ: ครูต่างชาติ, ความสะเทือนใจทางวัฒนธรรม, ประสบการณ์ความสะเทือนใจทางวัฒนธรรม

Abstract

This study was to investigate problems with and obstacles to culture shock, and to suggest techniques to overcome such experiences while working in a Thai private school. Social constructivism paradigm in qualitative research was chosen as a research paradigm to understand such social experiences. Phenomenological strategy was selected to answer research questions. Snowball sampling was used to select participants. The data were collected, using semi-structured interview with 14 foreign teachers working in one Thai private school. Data analysis was carried out, employing the analysis of phenomenological data by Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen.Research findings reveal that the problems with and obstacles to culture shock by foreign teachers working in one Thai private school includes four issues; 1) seniority system at school, 2) behavioral differences, 3) vague school management and policy, and 4) language barriers. Techniques to overcome culture shock experiences appear in three areas; 1) acceptance of or ignorance of such experiences, 2) support from other foreign teachers, and 3) different techniques used to deal with language barriers.

Keywords: Culture Shock, Culture Shock Experience, Foreign Teacher

Introduction

Formal education has been divided into basic and higher education (Stabbackdr, Malems, & Georgescu, 2011). Thailand's education system includes a variety of public and private schools. Basic education is offered, which includes pre-primary, primary and secondary levels (OECD-UNESCO, 2016). Many education institutions offer primary and secondary education combined, and it is common to attend primary and lower secondary education (extended primary education) or lower and upper secondary education within a single school (Richard & Caroline, 2008). The total number of the Ministry of Education's personnel in the academic year 2016 classified by type of personnel and agency shows that the Office of the Private Education Commission recruited 3,857 foreign teachers (National Education Information System, 2016).

No one can escape from their culture. People are programmed like software to learn and act in the ways that are appropriate in their own society. The idea of culture itself is always a collective phenomenon because it is at least partly shared with those who live or lived within the same social environment where it was learned (Photiyarach, 2017). According to Chen, Lin, and Sawangpattanakul (2011), people are increasingly working in a diverse cultural environment where both organizations and individuals are facing the challenges of cultural diversity in a global world. Adapting to different cultures is one of the most challenging issues facing anyone who lives in a multicultural environment (Photiyarach, 2017).

Culture is an important value that expatriates should learn when working overseas. This will help them better understand and adjust to working in an international organization. When a person goes abroad and enters a new environment, cultural cues that have been taken for granted as simply part of the "fabric of life" no longer exist or are not assessed accurately. Life becomes unpredictable and people have problems coping with even the routine aspects of living, since every detail, large and small, in a new environment demands the full attention of an expatriate, mental fatigue soon occurs which further frustrates the coping mechanisms (Juffer, 1985).

This experience, as anyone realizes who has spent time in a foreign country or in a strongly divergent subculture in their own country, is known as culture shock, a term well understood by all those who have encountered it. Culture shock is a phenomenon experienced by those who enter a new culture, which could be: a nation unfamiliar to the individual, an ethnic group within one's own country, a socio-economic group, or the culture of a family very different from the one in which one grew up. It can even be experienced by people trying to operate in an environment strongly dominated by people of the opposite sex. This phenomenon may, and often does, occur during a transitional experience in life whether with a foreign culture or in one's sense of self (Harris & Moran, 1987).

Every year many foreigners are recruited for teaching positions in Thailand, but little culturalization training takes place after hiring these teachers, and in some cases, not even having an orientation meeting for them. Some foreign teachers find themselves in situations that are not at all what they expected. Culture shock can be a very serious condition. It affects

76 ปัญหาอุปสรรคและเทคนิคการเอาชนะประสบการณ์ความสะเทือนใจทางวัฒนธรรมของครูต่างชาติ ...

Xueyun Ma ปรัชนันท์ เจริญอาภรณ์วัฒนา จินดาภา ลีนิวา และ ภัฏฐกรณ์ วรายนต์พินิจ

one's health, behavior, and attitude (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). In a profession such as teaching and living, it is important to maintain good health, consistent behavior, and a positive attitude (Cushner, 1998). Culture shock is a condition that can seriously affect one's ability to perform at a high level on a consistent basis. It is, therefore, more important than ever before that we explore the causes, consequences, and measures that mitigate culture shock (Befus, 1988). A great deal has been written about culture shock. Common problems reported in the literature, at least for some, include cultural identity conflict, social withdrawal, depression, anxiety, and interpersonal difficulties (Zapf, 1991). In terms of intrapersonal challenges, culture shock can lead to a host of problems characterized by psychological and physiological symptoms (Ross & Krider, 1992).

The one Thai private school in this study was famous with a big number of students. There were more experiences to provide an education for the students. There were more foreign teachers working in this school. However, they faced a problem with culture shock experience working in this private school. Culture shock cannot be completely prevented, but it can be reduced through preparation and support (Hisam, 1997). Therefore, the problem exists and we must now identify a way to reduce its ill effects. There is a need for empirical evidence concerning foreign teachers to understand and explore culture shock and its effect on foreign teachers. Most newly-arrived or other foreign teachers who work in Thai private schools might encounter culture shock. However, there are few studies concerning foreign teachers who work in private schools in Thailand. This is the gap of knowledge that the researcher would like to investigate the problems and obstacles with culture shock of foreign teachers working in one Thai private school and provide the overcoming techniques to deal with culture shock when working in one Thai private school.

Research Objectives

1) To investigate the problems and obstacles with culture shock experiences of foreign teachers working in one Thai private school.

2) To suggest the overcoming techniques to deal with culture shock experiences of foreign teachers working in one Thai private school.

Literature Review

The literature related to culture, culture shock, Thai culture and Human Resource Development. The overview of this research is discussed in the following sections:

Definitions and Types of Culture

To understand more specifically what culture shock is, one first needs a clear definition of culture. Kluckhohn (1961) presented a widely accepted definition that integrates many of these perspectives: "culture consists of patterned ways of thinking feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, and including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values"

Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research in Asia 28(1), Jan.-Apr. 2022, 73-91
Ma, X., Charoenarpornwattana, P., Leeniwa, J., & Varayonpinit, P.

77

In fact, since the 1960s, many studies have provided more specific and thorough theories, concepts and frameworks in the field of culture shock and the research areas seem unlimited. Scholars focus on social value patterns, being versus doing culture, analytic versus holistic thinking, hierarchical versus equalitarian, individualism versus collectivism, conflict resolution, stress, intellectual and orientation modes with the study of time, space, verbal and nonverbal communication, proxemics, hepatics and so on (Gilton, 2005; Lane, 2002; Gardner, 1983; Longstreet, 1978; Hall, 1961). Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behavior and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behavior (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Culture is what makes you a stranger when you're away from home (Bock, 1970). The definitions of Hofstede (1999) view culture as a system of values and norms that are shared among a group of people and that when taken together constitute a design for living (Hill & Hult, 2016).

Thai Culture

The Kingdom of Thailand is situated in the center of So utheast Asia, bordering Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia. Thailand has a population of 69 million (2017), of which 75 percent are Thai. The official national language, spoken by a large majority of the population, is Thai. English, a mandatory subject in secondary schools, is widely used in commerce and government, particularly in Bangkok and other major cities.

According to Hofstede's analysis of Thai culture dimensions, Thailand has a low-level of individualism (and tends to be one of the highest in being collectivistic society). This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', is that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount and overrides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group (Hofstede, 1984). Thailand is a collectivist country, where "people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede, 2001).

Hofstede classified Thailand into a large power distance culture in which "superiors and subordinates consider each other as existentially unequal ... [and] subordinates are expected to be told what to do" (2001). According to Hofstede, Thai workers expect to accept 'commands' from the boss and tend not to refuse his/her boss. This is because the boss is at the top of the management hierarchy. This point applies in various settings such as educational institutions, business organizations, and the government (Pimpa, 2009).

Definitions of Culture Shock

Culture shock, and its causes and effects, has been the focus of much research attention in the past decades. The following section outlines selected research on culture shock drawn from the literature.

After the Second World War, scholars from various disciplines began to investigate the phenomena of cross-cultural contact and conflict. Since then, many researchers have approached

the concept of culture shock quite differently. The term "culture shock" was initially used by Cora Du Bois in 1951 to describe the experiences of anthropologists working in the field (Smythe, 2012), Beales and Humphrey introduced the term "culture shock" in 1957; Fontaine (1989) used the term "ecoshock" to explain the similar concept of culture shock; and Oberg popularized this term between 1958 and 1960 (Oumi, 1990).

Culture shock is a psychological condition characterized by symptoms such as anxiety, depression, sleeping problems, fatigue, irritability, loneliness, forgetfulness, nostalgia, and feelings of not fitting in (Pedersen, 2004). Peoples and Bailey (2009) broadly defined culture shock as "the feeling of uncertainty and anxiety an individual experience when placed in a strange cultural setting" Culture shock and reentry or reverse culture shock are common experiences in the process of intercultural reconciliation and understanding.

Culture shock is popularly understood as the stunning impact that culture differences have upon an individual. Often people will extend the term to any situation in which they are surprised to find themselves being misinterpreted and are unable to make themselves understood.

Kohls (1979) defined culture shock as "the term used for the pronounced reactions to the psychological disorientation that is experienced in varying degrees when spending an extended period of time in a new environment". Nagler (1977) through his examination of the research literature found that there is general agreement on the broad definition of culture shock as a reactive phenomenon occurring as a result of culture change and including both cognitive and affective components combining to produce extraordinary stress on the individual migrant. The locus of this stress is variously identified. It is alternately regarded as the source and the result of alienation on the new culture.

Symptoms of Culture Shock

Culture shock has some predictable symptoms. Many studies have reported symptoms of culture shock experienced by overseas international students, immigrants, and so forth (Naoki, 1991).

While prediction of culture shock generally has been elusive, a variety of symptoms have been observed (Owen, 2002). The symptoms of culture shock as described by Oberg (1960) are suggestive of obsessive-compulsive behavior, anxiety, and depression

The culture shock for the foreign teachers are a loss of familiar cues such as words, gestures, customs, and beliefs (Kron & Faber, 1973; David, 1971; Oberg, 1954), the enormous loss of "love objects" such as family, friends, language, music, and food (Garza-Guerrero, 1974), a lack of understanding of other cultures as well as a means to fully communicate within those cultures (Oberg, 1954), and ethnocentrism (Oberg, 1954; Sitton 1976) which Oberg (1954) defined as the "belief that not only the culture but the race and the nation are the center of the world"

The Stages and Curves of Culture Shock

A number of studies have attempted to describe the process of culture shock in terms of stages. Many writers seem to agree there are different phases to culture shock and they all suggested different models to understand it (Pedersen, 1995 ; Rhinesmith, 1985; Kohls, 1984; Adler, 1975; Oberg, 1954). Rhinesmith (1985) describes each stage as follows, 1) Honeymoon

2) Culture Shock 3) Initial Adjustment 4) Mental Isolation 5) Acceptance and Integration.

In summary, coping with culture shock requires a special effort. Traditionally, culture shock and the emotional adjustment phases have been described as a U or W-Curve and have been divided into distinct phases starting with the 'Honeymoon Phase' during which people are really happy and excited about their new cultural experience. By understanding them, you will be able to better manage your feelings and experiences.

Culture Shock Experience in School

Renan (2014) pointed out that students from different countries are exposed to new cultural, social and intellectual experiences in a second language learning environment. Their beliefs, values, and attitudes to knowledge can lead to culture shock. Foreign students manifested significantly higher degrees of stress. Bhatia (2015) found that foreign living in another country faced a problem on culture shock with communication, food, team work, emotional Intelligence, dress, individualism/collectivism, power Distance, time orientation, perception, and weather. Moreover, David (2015) summarized that the foreign students faced academic challenges included communication with professors, classmates, and staff. As well as, Farah and Sarah (2017) showed that the problems of culture shock of foreign students was the language barrier, unfamiliar social and academic conditions which affect to their adjustment to the new culture. However, Lakshmi and Ramchandran (2016) suggested that culture shock problems could be reduced by the appropriate preparation. It could be summarized that there was no research on culture shock experience of foreign teachers. This was a gap of knowledge for the researcher to study on this context.

Research Methodology

In this study, the researcher made their choice of social constructivism paradigm. Social constructivism is an interpretive framework whereby individuals seek to understand their world and develop their own particular meanings that correspond to their experience (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research was chosen as the research design to understand social experiences. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, the researcher used an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem and its contribution to the literature or a call for change. In summary, the researcher believes phenomenology was appropriate to this study, which was motivated by the desire to understand human experience (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological strategy could be best way to settle the researcher's problem. This study focused on understanding the culture shock experiences of foreign teachers working at a one Thai private school. Phenomenology is essentially the study of lived experience (Valle, Kong,

& Hauling, 1989), and describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, phenomenology study could be the best research strategy to investigate the problems and obstacles with culture shock experiences, and to suggest the overcoming techniques to deal with culture shock experiences when working in one Thai private school.

Setting and participant selection: The setting in this study is one Thai private school with the criteria that 1) It has pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels, and a Modern Language Program, 2) The school currently has approximately 4000 students, and 3) More than 600 teachers and staff and more than 50 foreign teachers. The participant was selected by criterion and snowball sampling with the criteria that 1) It was the first-time that participants had worked and lived in Thailand, and were non-Thai teachers; 2) had to be sufficiently fluent in English or Chinese to teach students. English was the native language or the second or third language spoken, and 3) must have worked 1 year or more at the one Thai private school, then they can finish the whole teaching process. In summary, the participant in this study is a total of 14 foreign teachers who were recruited, which typically is enough to reach saturation.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interview with 14 participants was use as a data collection method in this study. The researcher use interview guide when conducting semi-structured interview. According to Patton (1990), an interview guide should cover six types of questions: Behavior/Experience; Opinion/Value; Feeling; Sensational; Knowledge; and Demographic/Background. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stated that good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view. Good interviews produce rich data filled with words that reveal the respondents' perspectives. The interview may last from approximately 45 minutes to up to 2 hours, depending on the setting and the responsiveness of the participants Clerck, Marie-Lou, Roos, Christiane, and Jorgen (2011).

Data collection process: 1) 14 participants who met the selection criteria were recruit for the semi-structured interview by the combination of criterion and snowball sampling, 2) Inform consent was sign before start an interview, 3) Semi structured interview about 45 minutes to 2 hours for each interview with the voice recordings, 4) Voice recording were transcribe for every word.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done followed by the step of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data (Moustakas, 1994) to identify meaning units and themes. The researcher also uses ATLAS.ti software for data analysis. Data analysis were done by 1) to describe personal experiences with the phenomenon under study. The researcher begins with a full description of his or her own experience of the phenomenon. This is an attempt to set aside the researcher's personal experiences so that the focus can be directed to the participants in the study, 2) Develop a list of significant statements. The researcher then finds statements

Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research in Asia 28(1), Jan.-Apr. 2022, 73-91
Ma, X., Charoenarpornwattana, P., Leeniwa, J., & Varayonpinit, P.

81

(in the interviews or other data sources) about how individuals are experiencing the topic, lists 65 of these significant statements (horizontalization of the data) and treats each statement as having equal worth, and works to develop a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements, 3) Take the significant statements and then group them into larger units of information called "meaning units" or themes, 4) Write a description of "what" the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon. This is called "textural description" of the experience what happened and includes verbatim examples, 5) Write a description of "how" the experience happened. This is called "structural description," and the inquirer reflects on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced, and 6) Write a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions. This passage is the "essence" of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study. It is typically a long paragraph that tells the reader "what" the participants experienced with the phenomenon and "how" they experienced it (Creswell, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

This study complied with the highest ethical standards of social research and the University Institutional Review Board. Permission to conduct the study was sought from and granted by the one Thai private school. The researcher asked each participant to fill out an informed consent form before beginning the interview. The interviewer addressed any questions or concerns that the participants had at this point. Anonymity was guaranteed by the use of pseudonyms and further protection of the participants' identity was described and identified participants as using the P symbol to express their individual opinions. The researcher tried to create an environment where the participant felt comfortable so that the interview was a pleasant experience. The interviews took place in an empty classroom in a library or in a classroom at the private school. They had the right not to answer any questions that caused discomfort; to disclose or not to disclose personal information and to ask for clarification about any aspect that caused some uncertainty. In addition, some of the interviews were conducted in Chinese and in this case, any help the interviewer needed from a translator, meant that the translator also signed a pledge of confidentiality. Any information got from this research may be used in any way thought best for publication, education, or presentation at professional conferences.

Research Findings

Research question one: "What are the problems and obstacles with culture shock experiences of foreign teachers working in one Thai private school?"

It was found that there are 4 themes as: Theme 1: Seniority system at school, Theme 2: Behavior difference, Theme 3 Not clear with the school management and policy, and Theme 4 Language barriers.

Theme 1: Seniority System at School

The seniority system at school always happen both with the colleagues and students.

For the colleagues, it was found that they have a hierarchy at school. Every teacher has not equal chances to speak it out or involve in making decision. Foreign teachers must follow some older Thai teacher's principle. And for the student, foreign teachers were shock with Thai learning and studying style, by this, students are asked to respect and follow strict rules of professional etiquette, Students are required to kneel down and hand their homework in with two hands when they turn it in, and Thai teachers punish students in the traditional way, which is not used in other countries, some example of direct quotation as: *"The seniority on work is very high if their seniors or the older one in the school said this and we need to follow it even if they want to contradict that rule or law" (P1), " You know the superiority complex like when you work here longer or when you are older or like maybe you are Thai treat you some foreign teachers differently" (P3), " If you did something wrong, usually the leaders would not talk to you directly, they usually let some Thai colleagues ask what's the matter with you. Sometimes a few old teachers will bully newcomers, for example, they will order the young teachers to do this or to do that, and set some traps in teaching aspects" (P12).*

Theme 2: Behavior Difference

There is different behavior both with the colleagues and with the students. For the colleague's behavior difference, it was found that some Thai teachers lose their temper very easily and are very strict with their students. For the student's behavior difference, many students like to walk around in the classroom, bully other students, active, and very naughty. Especially when foreign teachers are teaching. As the following examples: *"Students are too boastful, naughty which is normal" (P1), "Here at work it feels like they have to be professional they have to be correct, so even if they can speak in English, they usually do not speak to us because they are afraid to make a mistake" (P2), "Thai are very hot-headed, easy to lose control" (P9), "I felt a little bit unfit at the very beginning because Thai students are very naughty. Kids are always very bad at following the rules during class" (P10).*

Theme 3: Not Clear with the School Management and Policy

The school's policies often change suddenly, especially when the school changes the management executives every time so that making the work of foreign teachers too late to complete. As well as, the visa renewal regulations have changed, but the school does not promptly notify foreign teachers. Schools often fail to provide the documents needed to renew their visas in a timely manner. Some foreign teachers often need to go to meet the immigration officer alone. And also, it is unfair how schools treat foreign teachers. Westerners have high wages, but they are not good for Asians. Below are supporting quotations from participants: *"Negative is the consistency, they really change things that are planned already" (P1), "When I started working here, I found that Westerners could get better treatment. For all foreign teachers, there should be unified regulations. Otherwise we will feel it is unfair so that we cannot keep a good atmosphere at work. In general, understand more of each other. I was curious that Thai teachers always helped Western English teachers from the very beginning to the end of a semester. But they just came to Chinese teachers' classes two or three times in*

Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research in Asia 28(1), Jan.-Apr. 2022, 73-91
Ma, X., Charoenarpornwattana, P., Leeniwa, J., & Varayonpinit, P.

83

a term. Sometimes, they could not help you about anything, I did them some favors" (P10), *"Like we make 1 decision today and they changed the decision tomorrow"* (P13).

Theme 4: Language Barriers

Foreign teachers always face the problems on language barrier with Thai teachers, with students, and also with human resource department. Many Thai teachers cannot communicate with foreign teachers in English. Especially when foreign teachers encounter work problems, foreign teachers can only wait for others to help solve the problem. As well as, students with speech difficulties often struggle to communicate in classroom settings. Some have trouble comprehending lessons and organizing their thoughts, and others rely on hand gestures rather than words. Moreover, the HR staff employed by the school is not very good at English and often communicate poorly due to language problems. Some examples of direct quotations included: *"I don't speak Thai very good and they don't speak English very good. So, we can't often communicate"* (P5), *"I know they want to talk with you but they stop themselves because they are thinking they cannot speak the language that they are using, sometimes the pronunciation is different because in the Philippines we are using American English here they are using British English"* (P7, *"Thai teachers don't speak English very well with foreign teachers"* (P8) , *"Especially when it comes to the human resources. They don't have qualified people that can work on our documents. They employed people that have to talk to us in English but they don't speak English or have bad English"* (P9), *"From the very beginning, when I wanted to teach students something, I always felt I could not express the ideas or views correctly"* (P10).

Research question two: "What are the overcoming techniques to deal with culture shock experiences when working in one Thai private school?"

It was found that there are 3 themes as: Theme 5: Acceptance or ignore it, Theme 6: Get support from other foreign teachers, and Theme 7: Different techniques used in language barrier

Theme 5: Acceptance or Ignore It

Many foreign teachers face the experience of cultural shocks and choose to accept it and recognize its existence. They also tried to understand the culture, language, and customs of Thailand. However, some foreign teachers ignore it, some foreign teachers try to pay attention to some other positive things about Thailand, ignoring the negative emotions and consequences brought about by cultural shock. As expressed by the participants in the following examples: *"You just have to not change the country where you are in, I come to Thailand so I have to forget about what we do in America don't change what is in here"* (P2), *"People need to realize that this is the Thai way of life. It's a different country with a different language, culture and way of life. You have to deal with that on a daily basis"* (P6), *"The best adjustment to deal with culture is again I think is acceptance"* (P9), *"I adjusted my mindset. I just let it go. I try to understand Thai culture by reading or studying relevant materials"* (P10). *"As an alien, I think sometimes I should ignore some uncomfortable things, stay in a good mood for my job and my life. But once I face the conflicts, and my motto is first things first, I just want to do*

my job well" (P10), "Just acceptance, take a step back, mediate and accept it that this is how they do it and don't try to change it accept you are in a changing position" (P14).

Theme 6: Get Support from Other Foreign Teachers

The support of other foreign teachers has a positive effect on solving the consequences of cultural shocks, especially those foreign teachers who have experienced the same issues will have a lot of experience for reference. Some examples of direct quotations included: *"Foreign teachers also give some advice about their experience on how they deal with culture shock. Sometimes we are talking with foreign teachers about their experience with this, and we give them our opinion about it" (P1), "They can give you tips and can learn from them and we can also learn from each other"(P6), "They help me especially the Filipinos they tried to explain to me that's the best help or idea that foreign teachers affected me or influenced me" (P7), "When I need help, it's better to talk to other Chinese teachers because we could understand each other and I don't feel lonely" (P10), "Chinese teachers will tell us relevant issues and regulations in advance. For example, about school culture, they will tell us we should do like this or like that, and some things should be forbidden, and so on" (P11).*

Theme 7: Different Techniques Used in Language Barrier

By doing this, when some foreign teachers encounter language barriers, most of them use various translation software to overcome them, and they also use body language. Some of foreign teachers' self-study language by their own. When other foreign teachers encounter language barriers, they will learn the local language to overcome them. This is also the most effective method. Some examples of direct quotations supporting the above themes included: *"when you work especially as a teacher if you can speak Thai and you can read so you can make your students keep quiet" (P3), "I have tried to use Google translation; I just point at the bike like a kid. Action and my face" (P5), "Through body language. It's like our universal language. Everyone knows that and thank goodness for the Google translate" (P6), "I can use Google or other translation software" (P10), "I can use some translation apps on my smartphone to let others understand me" (P12), "We can speak some Thai so that I think in the aspect of mutual communication, we did better than other foreign teachers" (P11).*

Discussion of The Research Findings

Theme 1: Seniority System at School

The seniority system at school always happen both with the colleagues and students. For the colleagues, it was found that they have a hierarchy at school. Every teacher has not equal chances to speak it out or involve in making decision. Foreign teachers must follow some older Thai teacher's principle. And for the student, foreign teachers were shock with Thai learning and studying style, by this, students are asked to respect and follow strict rules of professional etiquette, Students are required to kneel down and hand their homework in with two hands when they turn it in, and Thai teachers punish students in the traditional way, which is not used in other countries. In Thailand seniority, it is usually seen through younger people respecting

elders. As mentioned, hierarchy is important to social life in Thai society. Thais are taught appropriate behavior to deal with hierarchies (Komin, 1990). On the other hand, Mulder (1996) argued that while social hierarchy is invariably seen as something negative, in the relationship between bosses and their personnel "many eagerly look for such beneficent sources of dependence" (p.80). Based on Thai culture, teachers play an important role in educating young children as well as the family. This also has been supported by Peter (2012), as said: This positional hierarchy can lead to school climate issues and often goes undiagnosed. The hierarchy begins with the principal, then the teaching staff, school secretary, teachers' aides, cafeteria workers and ends with custodians. The positions held within the school system can have an adverse effect on the school climate because some students treat adults differently based on the position those adults hold. It was found that foreign teachers should understand the seniority system of Thailand to ensure the understanding of Thai culture which was mentioned by (Hofstede, 1984), suggested that Thai culture was focus on seniority as superior and subordinate was unequal right. If foreign teachers tried their best to adjust and understand this context. Their stress could be reduced.

Theme 2: Behavior Difference

There is different behavior both with the colleagues and with the students. For the colleague's behavior difference, it was found that some Thai teachers lose their temper very easily and are very strict with their students. For the student's behavior difference: Many students like to walk around in the classroom, bully other students, active, and very naughty. Especially when foreign teachers are teaching. It was congruent with Investopedia (2018) found that cultural shock can arise from a person's unfamiliarity with local customs language and acceptable behavior. Moreover, Xin (2018) also agreed that Thai student have less pressure on studying than Chinese students. Thai students look more relaxed and enjoy their lives. They live for happiness at the present which is different from Chinese students who focus on the future.

Theme 3: Not Clear With the School Management and Policy

The school's policies often change suddenly, especially when the school changes the management executives every time so that making the work of foreign teachers too late to complete. As well as, the visa renewal regulations have changed, but the school does not promptly notify foreign teachers. Schools often fail to provide the documents needed to renew their visas in a timely manner. Some foreign teachers often need to go to meet the immigration officer alone. And also, it is unfair how schools treat foreign teachers. Westerners have high wages, but they are not good for Asians. It was support by John (2017) said that foreign teachers did not get equal chances with Thai teacher. There is no support from school management, such as visa extension. And foreign teachers got a lower benefit than Thai teachers. As there is no other research indicating this field, this research indicates that cultural shock have a direct impact on the experience of foreign teachers in cultural shocks. To be fair for foreign teachers, the private school should discuss with the foreign teacher before start their teaching in the private school.

Theme 4: Language Barriers

Foreign teachers always face the problems on language barrier with Thai teachers, with students, and also with human resource department. Many Thai teachers cannot communicate with foreign teachers in English. Especially when foreign teachers encounter work problems, foreign teachers can only wait for others to help solve the problem. As well as, students with speech difficulties often struggle to communicate in classroom settings. Some have trouble comprehending lessons and organizing their thoughts, and others rely on hand gestures rather than words. Moreover, the HR staff employed by the school is not very good at English and often communicate poorly due to language problems. It was found that foreign teachers understanding of Thai is important to teach Thai students more effectively. Moreover, learning Thai language is useful in helping to make living their life on a day by day basis easier (Xin, 2018). The language issue will result in academic and intercultural failures and further lead to high stress and depression which are the exact symptoms of culture shock (Essays, 2018). Therefore, there are differences in language caused by culture difference in expatriates. Understanding of the relationship between language barriers and social identity patterns of an expatriate is important to determine the work performance (Javadpour & Samiei, 2017). It could be summarized that the problems of language barrier were one of the most important problem found when working in another countries as supported by (Garza-Guerrero, 1974) stated that the culture shock for the foreign teachers are a loss of familiar cues such as family, friends, language, music, and food.

Response to research question two: "What are the overcoming techniques to deal with culture shock experiences when working in one Thai private school?" It was found that there are 3 themes as: Theme 5: Acceptance or ignore it, Theme 6: Get support from other foreign teachers, and Theme 7: Different techniques used in language barrier

Theme 5: Acceptance or Ignore It

Many foreign teachers face the experience of cultural shocks and choose to accept it and recognize its existence. They also tried to understand the culture, language, and customs of Thailand. However, some foreign teachers ignore it, some foreign teachers try to pay attention to some other positive things about Thailand, ignoring the negative emotions and consequences brought about by cultural shock. According to Chen, Lin, and Sawangpattanakul (2011), people are increasingly working in a diverse cultural environment where both organizations and individuals are facing the challenges of cultural diversity in a global world. Rachawit (2014) concluded that the five stages of culture shock in Thailand for foreigners are the Honeymoon Stage, the Distress Stage, the Anger Stage, the Autonomy Stage and the Adjustment and Biculturalism Stage, based on his talk on ideas from intercultural scholar. From "Thai people are the kindest in the world," to "Why is every Thai trying to rip me off?!" most foreigners have lived through all of these stages during their time in Thailand. Adler said that culture shock is an emotional reaction to loss of one's own culture and misunderstanding of new experiences. He said that culture shock causes feelings of helplessness, irritability, being cheated, contaminated,

Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research in Asia 28(1), Jan.-Apr. 2022, 73-91
Ma, X., Charoenarpornwattana, P., Leeniwa, J., & Varayonpinit, P.

87

injured, or disregarded. As well as, to ignore it, Dreamreader (2015) confirmed that people tend to view these in an idealistic way and ignore or minimize problems.

Theme 6: Get Support from Other Foreign Teachers

The support of other foreign teachers has a positive effect on solving the consequences of cultural shocks, especially those foreign teachers who have experienced the same issues will have a lot of experience for reference. It was supported by Esl (2017) found that supporting from coworker is the one of the best support to encounter the culture shock experiences. To work in private school, supporting from other foreign teachers could be the most benefits and easiest ways to adopt and adjust to overcoming the culture shock experiences of the foreign teachers. Because of, the foreign teacher knew best about the situations they faced on. They had experienced these kind of problems before. They should have recommended the best things for the foreign teachers.

Theme 7: Different Techniques Used in Language Barrier

By doing this, when some foreign teachers encounter language barriers, most of them use various translation software to overcome them, and they also use body language. Some of foreign teachers' self-study language by their own. When other foreign teachers encounter language barriers, they will learn the local language to overcome them. This is also the most effective method. It was found that language translation devices were famous now to solve the problem of the language barrier (Sarah, 2017). As well as, learning the national language(s) spoken in the adopted country will help to communicate, and reduce the effects of culture shock and misunderstanding. Being able to communicate with the locals will minimize the stress (American Geriatrics Society, 2019).

Recommendations

To avoid these kind of problems and obstacles and understanding the overcoming techniques to deal with culture shock experiences of foreign teachers working in one Thai private school. The researcher recommended as follows:

Implications for human resources officers: the HR officer could change and improve the recruiting process, teacher training, and provide Pre-Employment Training programs to reduce the uncertainty associated with a new environment. This also lets new foreign teachers understand the new school's rules and regulations.

Implications for foreign teachers: Foreign teachers need to learn local languages and culture which is the fastest and the most effective manner to reduce the negative impact of cultural shocks. With the development of technology, some good applications could help foreign teachers learn local languages better and solve language communicative problems.

Implications for private schools: Private schools should consider comprehensive policies when they are enforcing school regulations. They should also formulate stable policies so that other relevant departments can implement them well. If there are policy adjustments, they hope to get early notice.

References

Adler, P.S. (1975). The transitional experience: An alternative view of culture shock. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 15*(4), 13-23. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/002216787501500403

American Geriatrics Society (AGS). (2019). *Adapting to a new culture*. Retrieved April 30, 2019, from https://www.agsmovers.com/news/adapting-to-a-new-culture/

Bhatia, K. (2015). Managing cultural shock due to globalization- Issues challenges and opportunities. *Proceedings of the third Asia-Pacific conference on global business, economics, finance and banking. (AP15 Singapore Conference)* (pp. 1-6). Singapore.

Befus, C.P. (1988). A multilevel treatment approach for culture shock experienced by sojourners. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 12*(4), 381-400. https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(88)90032-6

Bock, P.K. (1970). Culture shock. In Bock, P.K. (Ed.). *Culture shock: A reader in modem cultural anthropology* (pp. 9-12). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

Chen, A.S., Lin, Y., & Sawangpattanakul, A. (2011). The relationship between cultural intelligence and performance with the mediating effect of culture shock: A case from Philippine laborers in Taiwan. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 35*(2), 246-258.

Clerck, D., Marie-Lou, H., Roos, W., Christiane, T., & Jorgen, C. (2011). Instruments and guidelines for qualitative fieldwork. *EUMAGINE*, Project Paper 6B.

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cushner, K. (Ed.). (1998). *International perspectives on intercultural education*. New York: Routledge.

David, K. (1971). Culture shock and the development of self-awareness. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy, 4*(1), 44-48.

David, N. (2015). International student's challenge and adjustment to college. *Education Research International, 2015*, 1-9. http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2015/202753

Dreamreader. (2015). *Culture shock*. Retrieved May 6, 2019, from http://dreamreader.net/lesson/culture- shock/

Esl, S. (2017). *How to deal with culture shock when teaching English abroad*. Retrieved May 3, 2019, from https://www.eslstarter.com/community/articles/2017-12-07-how-to-deal-with-culture-shock- when-teaching-english-abroad

Essays, U.K. (2018). *Culture shock of studying abroad cultural studies essay*. Retrieved April 10, 2019, from https://www.ukessays.com/essays/cultural-studies/culture-shock-of-studying-abroad- cultural-studies-essay.php?vref=1

Farah, B., & Sarah, A. (2017). *Culture shock among international students: A case study at the university of Tlemcen.* Retrieved April 10, 2019, from http://dspace.univ- tlemcen.dz/bitstream/112/11008/1/belhadi-ayad.pdf

Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research in Asia 28(1), Jan.-Apr. 2022, 73-91
Ma, X., Charoenarpornwattana, P., Leeniwa, J., & Varayonpinit, P.

89

Fontaine, G. (1989). *Managing international assignments: The strategy for success*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Furnham, A., & Bochner, S. (1986). *Culture shock: Psychological reactions to unfamiliar environments.* New York: Routledge.

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Garza-Guerrero, A.C. (1974). Culture shock: Its mourning and vicissitudes of identity. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 22*(20), 408-429.

Gilton, D.L. (2005). *Culture shock in the library: Implications for information literacy instruction. Research Strategies, 20*(4), 424-432. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.resstr.2006.12.013

Hall, E.T. (1961). *The hidden dimension*. New York: Doubleday.

Harris, P.R., & Moran, R.T. (1987). Managing cultural differences. New York: Routledge.

Hill, C.W.L., & Hult, G.T.M. (2016). *Global business today* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Hisam, T.G. (1997). *The value of expatriate support programs in the susceptibility to culture shock for American expatriated employees' working in Germany*. United States: UMI Company.

Hofstede, G. (1984). National cultures revisited. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 2*, 22-28. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF01732507

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations.* California: Sage.

Investopedia. (2018). *Culture shock*. Retrieved April 11, 2019, from https://medcraveonline.com/SIJ/SIJ-02-00063.pdf

Javadpour, A., & Samiei, S. (2017). Motivation and barriers to participation in virtual knowledge-sharing communities of practice. *Management Science Letters, 7*(2), 81-86.

John, M. (2017). *To boost failing Thai education, give foreign teachers proper contracts*. Retrieved May 2, 2019, from https://www.nationmultimedia.com/detail/your_say/30333993

Juffer, K.A. (1985). *Researching culture shock: The Culture shock adaptation inventory.* Action Research & Associates, Inc.

Kohls, L.R. (1979). *Survival kit for overseas living.* Boston: Nicholas Brealey.

Kohls, L.R. (1984). *Survival kit for overseas living* (2nd ed.). Boston: Nicholas Brealey.

Komin, S. (1990). Culture and work-related values in Thai organizations. *International Journal of Psychology, 25*(3-6), 681-704.

Kluckhohn, C. (1961). Universal categories of culture. In Frank, W.M. (Ed.). *Readings in cross-cultural methodology* (pp. 89-105). Massachusetts: Harvard University.

Kron, K., & Faber, C. (1973). How does the teacher cope with the culture shock? *The Clearing House, 47*(8), 506-508.

Lakshmi, V.S., & Ramchandran, S. (2016). A phenomenological study about the international student's cultural shock in India. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, 10*(1), 631-635. https://ssrn.com/abstract=2791566

Lane, P. (2002). *A beginner's guide to crossing cultures: Making friends in a multicultural world*. Illinois: Intervarsity.

Longstreet, W. (1978). *Aspects of ethnicity.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. California: Sage.

Mulder, N. (1996). *Inside Thai society: Interpretation of everyday life*. Bangkok: Pepin Press.

National Education Information System. (2016). *The number of the Ministry of Education's Personnel in academic year 2016 classified by type of personnel and agency*, Retrieved February, 10, 2021, from http://www.mis.moe.go.th/index.php?option=com_content &view=article&id=557&Itemid=113

Nagler, M. (1977). Dread goddess endowed with speech. *Archaeological News, 6*, 77–85.

Naoki, O. (1991). *Inter cultural adjustment of Japanese high school exchange students in the United States on a one-year home-stay program.* University Microfilms International: A Bell & Howell Information Company.

OECD-UNESCO. (2016). *Education in Thailand: An OECD-UNESCO perspective: Reviews of national policies for education*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Oberg, K. (1954). *Culture shock*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril Series in Social Sciences.

Oberg, K. (1960). Cultural shock: Adjustment to new cultural environment. *Practical Anthropology, 4*, 177-182.

Oumi, M. (1990). Culture shock. In Kamakura, K. (Ed.), *Her Japanese girlfriend, Kamakura* (pp. 118-144). Tokyo: Hokuju Shuppan.

Owen, R.B. (2002). *The effects of hardiness on culture shock and cross-cultural adaptation in an overseas missionary population*. UMI: ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (2nd ed.). California: Sage.

Pedersen, P. (1995). *The five stages of culture shock: Critical incidents around the world.* Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Pedersen, P. (2004). *110 Experiences for multicultural learning*. Washington: American Psychological Association.

Peoples, J., & Bailey, G. (2009). *Humanity: An introduction to cultural anthropology*. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Peter, D. (2012). *Hierarchy in the public-school system.* Retrieved April 10, 2019, from https:// blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding_common_ground/2012/01/hierarchy_in_the_public_ sc hool_system.html

Pimpa, N. (2009). Learning problems in transnational business education and training: The case of MBA in Thailand. *International Journal of Training and Development, 13*(4), 262-279. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2419.2009.00331.x

Photiyarach, R. (2017). *Communication styles: A case study of the United States, Germany and Thailand.* Retrieved February, 10, 2021, from Intercultural communication styles: A case study of the United States, Germany and Thailand (linkedin.com)

Photiyarach, R. (2017). *15 cultural differences between Americans, Germans and Thais*. Retrieved November 5, 2017, from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/10-cultural-differences-between-thais- germans-rachawit-photiyarach

Renan, S. (2014). Culture shock an obstacle for EFL learners. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 114*, 533 – 537. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.742

Richard, A.E., & Caroline, H. (2008). *Seeing with young eyes: UNESCO Bangkok.* Retrieved February, 10, 2021, from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000179114

Rhinesmith, S.H. (1985). *Bring home the world: A management guide for community leaders of international exchange programs*. New York: Walker and Company.

Ross, P.G., & Krider, D.S. (1992). Off the plane and into the classroom: A phenomenological explication of international teaching assistants' experiences in the American classroom. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 16*(3), 277-293. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/0147-1767(92)90053-W

Sarah, I. (2017). *Bridge the language barrier with language translation technology*. Retrieved May 3, 2019, from https://www.useoftechnology.com/bridge-the-language-barrier-with-language-translation- technology/

Sitton, T. (1976). The pedagogy of culture shock. *The Social Studies, 67*(5), 206-212.

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2008). *Culturally speaking, culture, communication and politeness theory* (2nd ed.). London: Continuum.

Stabbackdr, P., Malems, B., & Georgescu, D. (2011). *What makes a good quality school curriculum?* Paris: UNESCO-IBE.

Symthe, J.L. (2012). *Culture shocked: The intercultural experiences and insights of returned peace corps volunteer educators.* Retrieved February, 10, 2021, from https://hdl.handle. net/11244/7584.

Valle, R., King, M., & Halling, S. (1989). *An introduction to existential- phenomenological thought in psychology.* In Valle, R., & Halling, S. (Eds.). Existential phenomenological perspective in psychology (pp. 3-16). New York: Plenum Press.

Xin, L. (2018). *Teaching experiences of Chinese teachers teaching the Chinese language in Thai public schools in Chonburi.* Thailand: Published by Burapha University.

Zapf, M.K. (1991). Cross-cultural transitions and wellness: Dealing with culture shock. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 14*(2), 105- 119.