

# Chinese International Students in the U.S. Higher Education: Underserved & Marginalized

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## Abstract

Chinese international students have consistently constituted the largest international student body in the United States (U.S.) higher education for decades. Due to their prominence in U.S. higher education institutions, it is imperative to closely examine their lived experiences. Existing empirical research demonstrates that plenty of Chinese international students are underserved, coping with issues such as culture shock, linguistic barriers, educational disparities, racial discrimination, and mental health concerns. This systematic literature review aims to: 1) Explore whether Chinese international students face challenges in the U.S. higher education; 2) Categorize the challenges (if present) encountered by Chinese international students in the U.S. higher education; 3) Provide recommendations to key stakeholders in international education, empowering them to refine current administrative policies and teaching pedagogies to better support the well-being of Chinese international students in the U.S. higher education.

**Keywords:** Chinese international students, United States, higher education

## 1. Introduction

Chinese international students play a crucial role in the U.S. higher education. According to the 2023 Open Doors Report: Academic Level & Places of Origin, released by the Institute of International Education (IIE), 814,629 degree-seeking international students were enrolled in the U.S. higher education institutions during the 2022-2023 academic year. Of these, 100,349 undergraduate students and 126,028 graduate students were from China. Despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese students continue to be the largest international student group in the U.S., accounting for 27.8% of the total international student population.

Chinese international students are financially and academically vital to the U.S. higher education. The National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) reported that international students in the U.S. colleges and universities contributed \$40.1 billion and supported 368,333 jobs during the 2022-2023 academic year. Chinese students, in particular, play a significant role in boosting the U.S. economy with their substantial financial input. Additionally, many Chinese international students enhance the academic landscape by working as graduate, teaching, and research assistants, promoting cross-cultural collaboration and funds of knowledge within universities. Overall, Chinese international students make significant contributions to the U.S. higher education, both financially and academically.

Chinese international students represent a substantial portion of the U.S. academic community, yet research shows they often encounter various challenges in the U.S. higher education institutions, primarily due to a lack of adequate support. According to WholeRen Education (2023), a U.S.-based educational agency, 12,087 Chinese international students sought their services between 2013 and 2023 after being dismissed from their institutions. This staggering figure highlights the strikingly high dismissal rate among Chinese students in the U.S. Specifically, 1,120 Chinese international students sought help from WholeRen due to dismissal between March 2022 and March 2023. Among the students, a random sample of 1,000 dismissed students was analyzed, revealing that 2.6% were dismissed at the high school level, 69.4% during their undergraduate level, 26% at the graduate level, and 2.0% at the doctoral level.

WholeRen Education's analysis also identified the primary reasons for dismissal, with academic dishonesty accounting for 47.9% of cases, followed closely by poor academic performance at 46.3%. Chinese students often

have different perspectives on academic dishonesty and plagiarism compared to their American counterparts, stemming from cultural and educational variances. Lipson (2008) noted that international students aspiring to study in the U.S. and Canada might encounter two significant challenges impacting their academic success in North American institutions: understanding the freedom to express their viewpoints in class and grasping the principles of academic integrity unique to their host universities.

These issues underscore the critical need for enhanced support mechanisms tailored to the unique needs of Chinese international students in U.S. higher education, particularly in mitigating issues related to academic integrity and poor performance. Such measures are essential for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment where Chinese international students can survive and thrive academically.

Unfortunately, the U.S. media has often depicted Chinese international students in disparaging terms, labeling them as academically deficient, mere cash cow, and culturally alien (Abelmann & Kang, 2014; Suspitsyna & Shalka, 2019). Furthermore, research has documented instances of segregation within the Chinese international student community itself (Ji, 2022). The challenges faced by Chinese international students are quite complex and multifaceted.

Although financial instability and international student visa restrictions can indirectly influence the academic transition of Chinese international students, a thorough review of existing research reveals that Chinese international students primarily struggle with culture shock, language barriers, educational disparity, racial discrimination, and mental health issues. These factors negatively impact Chinese international students in multiple ways, often jeopardizing their academic performance and leading to probation, suspension, or dismissal.

## **2. Methodology**

The scholarly papers are sourced from the ERIC EBSCOhost database using the keywords “Chinese international students + United States + higher education,” with limiters set to full-text, peer-reviewed articles published in English between January 1, 2013, and December 31, 2023. Forty-one articles were selected following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Research that did not focus on Chinese international students, did not pertain to Chinese international students in U.S. higher education, or was solely a literature review was excluded. All the selected articles in this systematic review are based on empirical research using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches.

Although the keywords (“Chinese international students + United States + higher education”) are neutral, existing literature reveals that Chinese international students predominantly encounter challenges such as culture shock, linguistic barriers, educational discrepancies, racial discrimination, and mental health concerns. Despite the neutral connotation of the keywords, these challenges are consistently highlighted throughout the scholarly research.

## **3. Results from the Systematic Literature Review**

### *3.1 Challenges Faced by Chinese International Students*

A review of the current literature reveals that numerous Chinese international students encounter issues such as culture shock, language barriers, educational differences, racial discrimination, and mental health concerns. These challenges affect Chinese international students and will be discussed in detail in the following section.

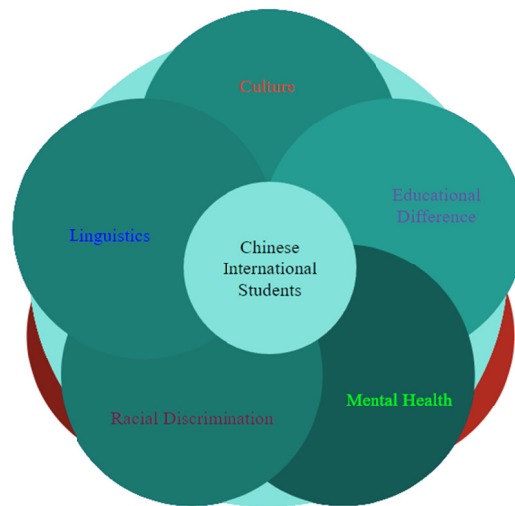


Figure 1. Main factors affecting Chinese international students

### 3.1.1 Cultural Challenges Encountered by Chinese International Students

Chinese and American cultures diverge significantly across various dimensions. China and the U.S. have been identified as having maximum cultural distance (Samovar & Porter, 1991). According to Hofstede's cultural dimension theory (2001), "people carry mental programs developed in early childhood and reinforced in schools and organizations. These mental programs contain a component of national culture which is embedded in the different values that are found among people from different countries and groups. It is believed that these cultural values tied with individuals' country of origin strongly impact their behaviors." Traditional Chinese culture prioritizes interpersonal relationships, collectivism, obedience to authority, and emotional restraint, whereas mainstream American culture values individualism, resistance to authority, and open emotional expression (Tsai et al., 2000). Consequently, it is natural for Chinese international students to undergo culture shock when confronted with the stark differences in American culture.

In recent decades, researchers have thoroughly explored how cultural differences affect Chinese international students in U.S. higher education. Previous studies have examined their experiences through the lens of culture shock, cultural differences, cultural adjustment, cultural adaptation, and cultural assimilation. Chinese students often face difficulties in assimilating and adjusting to their new surroundings (Sue & Zane, 1985; Sun & Chen, 1997), mainly due to culture shock. This shock can lead to uncertainty about how to respond to or behave in various situations within U.S. higher education institutions, resulting in feelings of inadequacy, misunderstanding, and dejection (Zhang & Xu, 2007b).

Research on culture's singular influence on Chinese international students' academic performance has waned in the past decade. Between 2013 and 2023, only one study specifically investigated how culture affected Chinese international students academically. In 2015, Valdez conducted a qualitative study to explore the classroom experiences of Chinese international students within the U.S. higher education institutions. Valdez (2015) found that cultural disparities directly hindered the academic progress of Chinese international students. The study underscored the need for culturally responsive teaching (CRT) within the U.S. higher education, as participants reported dissatisfaction with culturally insensitive classroom practices. The shift from the collectivist values of traditional Chinese culture to the individualistic nature of American culture posed considerable academic challenges for Chinese international students.

While research on the influence of cultural differences on Chinese international students has been scarce over the past decade, substantial attention was devoted to this topic before 2010. The decline in recent studies does not lessen the ongoing impact of cultural differences on Chinese international students. The literature indicates that cultural disparities often intersect with linguistic barriers, prompting researchers to explore their combined influence on Chinese international students. The combination of culture and linguistics will be further examined in the section on multidimensional challenges.

### 3.1.2 Linguistic Barriers Encountered by Chinese International Students

A significant number of Chinese international students struggle with language barriers in addition to culture shock. Many studies have highlighted the difficulties these students face with English proficiency (Liu, 2006; Wan, 2001). Empirical research consistently shows that insufficient English language skills greatly hinder Chinese international students in U.S. higher education institutions (Perkins, 1977; Sun & Chen, 1997; Wan, 2001).

Over the past decade, numerous researchers have examined how diverse linguistic backgrounds impact Chinese international students. Xue (2013) used a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of Chinese international graduate students in U.S. higher education. Data collected through semi-structured interviews revealed that nearly all participants felt their limited English speaking and listening skills hindered their ability to engage in group work in U.S. classrooms. Will (2016) conducted a qualitative study on Chinese international students' experiences at U.S. institutions, involving participants from three different institutions, thus broadening the research scope. Will's findings indicated that participants faced challenges with English language barriers both inside and outside the classroom, complementing Xue's research by adding additional research sites.

Su and Harrison (2016) carried out a phenomenological study to investigate Chinese international students' experiences across one American, five British, two Australian, and one Canadian university. This study, involving participants from multiple English-speaking countries, found that Chinese international students struggled particularly with English academic writing. Unlike previous qualitative studies, He and Hutson (2018) and Fu et al. (2018) employed mixed methods to examine Chinese international students' experiences in U.S. higher education, confirming the persistence of English language barriers and enhancing research validity. Heng (2019) also conducted a qualitative study on Chinese international students in U.S. institutions, finding consistent results with previous research by He and Hutson (2018), Fu et al. (2018), Su and Harrison (2016), Will (2016), and Xue (2013) regarding difficulties due to low English proficiency. The most recent study by Liang and Turner (2021) corroborated these findings, particularly highlighting challenges with English academic writing.

Research conducted between 2013 and 2021 conformably underscores the challenges Chinese international students face with English language proficiency. These language barriers have obstructed their academic progress in U.S. higher education institutions. The persistent trend over the past decade highlights the crucial importance and urgent need for linguistically responsive teaching (LRT) in U.S. higher education.

### 3.1.3 Educational Differences Encountered by Chinese International Students

While many researchers have thoroughly investigated how cultural differences and language barriers affect Chinese international students, few have explored the significant impact of educational differences between China and the U.S. The notable differences in educational systems between the two countries warrant closer examination. These disparities include: 1) Educational systems (centralization versus decentralization): China's education system is centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education, which sets curriculum standards, textbooks, and exams. In contrast, the U.S. education system is decentralized, with each state determining its own standards, curriculum, and assessments; 2) Pedagogical focus: Chinese education traditionally emphasizes rote memorization, discipline, and respect for authority, while the U.S. system prioritizes critical thinking, creativity, and individualism; 3) Instructional methods: Chinese classrooms generally use teacher-centered approaches, focusing on content delivery and student compliance. U.S. classrooms, on the other hand, favor student-centered learning, promoting teamwork and interactive teaching methods; 4) Grading standards: In China, students pass courses with a score of 60 out of 100 (equivalent to a 2.4/4.0 GPA) across all higher education (undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral) levels. In the U.S., undergraduate students must maintain at least a 2.0/4.0 GPA, while graduate and doctoral students typically need a 3.0/4.0 GPA; 5) Admission processes: Chinese students gain admission to undergraduate programs through the National College Entrance Examination, while graduate and doctoral admissions are based on the Graduate Record Examination and an interview, with no emphasis on transcripts or GPAs. In contrast, U.S. higher education admissions rely heavily on GPAs.

Although educational differences are often conflated with cultural disparities, it is important to understand that educational disparities involve more than just philosophical orientations. Aspects such as institutional structure, grading standards, and teaching methods are not solely shaped by culture. These differences should be analyzed separately as educational disparities, rather than being viewed merely as cultural variations.

Zhou (2014) employed a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to examine the persistent motivations of Chinese international doctoral students in U.S. higher education. Zhou recruited six participants from various programs at an American university and collected data through semi-structured and open-ended interviews conducted from November 2009 to April 2010. The findings showed that while participants were initially attracted to the U.S. by their keen interest in research and high expectations for doctoral education and career prospects, they became

dissatisfied as their programs progressed. This dissatisfaction stemmed from unmet expectations, such as insufficient research support from advisors, academic and mental unpreparedness, and feelings of loneliness. Participants had anticipated a less demanding academic experience and were unprepared for the rigorous nature of the programs and research. Due to their unfamiliarity with the U.S. education system and lack of awareness about the educational differences between China and the U.S., these doctoral students were unhappy with their academic experiences.

In a similar study, Lucas (2019) investigated how international graduate students, especially those from China, perceive critical thinking and its related challenges. Unlike Zhou (2014), who analyzed educational differences through the lens of academic expectations, Lucas (2019) approached these differences from a cognitive perspective. Lucas recruited four Chinese international graduate students from a large mid-western research university and collected data through semi-structured interviews of 15-30 minutes each. The study revealed detailed views on critical thinking among participants, focusing on innovative and independent thought. Despite facing various difficulties, participants attributed their challenges primarily to differences between Chinese and U.S. educational systems and a lack of background knowledge. Similarly, Jiang and Sun (2021) explored how educational differences affect critical thinking among Chinese international students. Their study revealed that the absence of formal critical thinking training in China, where education is often teacher-centered and discourages active student participation, contributed to a lack of critical thinking skills. Jiang and Sun's findings supported Lucas's research, highlighting that educational disparities lead to deficiencies in critical thinking skills among Chinese international students.

Additionally, Gu and Usinger (2021) carried out a qualitative study to investigate how Chinese international graduate students adapt to U.S. higher education institutions. Using criterion sampling, they selected 15 participants from a medium-sized public university and gathered data through detailed interviews. The study uncovered a significant disparity between the students' initial expectations and the actual experiences they faced upon arrival, emphasizing the substantial educational differences between China and the U.S.

#### 3.1.4 Racial Discrimination Faced by Chinese International Students

There is a scarcity of documented research on racial discrimination against Chinese students, though some scholars have explored this topic. Zhang and Jung (2017) conducted a quantitative study on the acculturative stress faced by Chinese international students, using an online questionnaire. The results indicated that many respondents perceived themselves as targets of discrimination. In contrast, Zhang and Sustarsic (2022) employed a qualitative method to investigate the experiences of Chinese international doctoral students in the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study revealed that most participants not only sensed racial discrimination but also encountered hate speech against Chinese people on social media. While Zhang and Jung (2017) focused on perceived discrimination, Zhang and Sustarsic (2022) documented evident instances of hate speech. Additionally, Nam et al. (2023) conducted a phenomenological study examining the experiences of Chinese international undergraduate students in the U.S. during the pandemic. The 16 participants, from various U.S. universities, reported facing racial discrimination, social prejudice, stereotyping, exclusion, and verbal assaults due to their Chinese ethnicity. Before COVID-19, racial discrimination against Chinese students was covert, but it became overt during the pandemic.

#### 3.1.5 Mental Health Issues Faced by Chinese International Students

Lian and Wallace (2020) conducted a quantitative study to examine the mental health of Chinese international students. They recruited hundreds of participants through social media and 222 of them completed an online survey. The researchers performed a cross-sectional data analysis, revealing that over 70% of the participants confronted either depression or anxiety in the past year. The levels of depression or anxiety among these students were found to be exceptionally high.

Fu, Hu, and Liu (2022) employed an in-depth phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of Chinese international doctoral students during the COVID-19 pandemic. They interviewed 20 participants (10 female and 10 male) at various stages of their PhD studies. The findings revealed that participants across different years of doctoral study reported poor psychological well-being.

Li et al. (2013), Choy and Alon (2019), Chen, Akpanudo, and Hasler (2020), Lian and Wallace (2020), and Fu, Hu, and Liu (2022) all found that Chinese international students across undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels struggled with poor mental health. Lian and Wallace (2020) specifically reported that over 70% of their participants experienced depression or anxiety symptoms in the past year, underscoring the severity of mental health issues among this group. However, Li et al. (2013) determined that there was no significant link between ethnic identity and psychological well-being, a finding that contrasts with the conclusions of the other researchers.

### 3.1.6 Multifaceted Challenges Faced by Chinese International Students

The challenges encountered by Chinese international students are multifaceted and complex. Cultural and linguistic barriers frequently intersect, compounding their impact. Similarly, educational disparities often coincide with cultural and linguistic challenges, further complicating the student experience.

#### 1) Combined Cultural and Linguistic Challenges

Language is an integral aspect of culture, just as culture is intertwined within language; they are so intricately connected that one cannot disentangle them without diminishing the essence of either (Brown, 1994). Researchers have examined the educational experiences of Chinese international students in U.S. higher education through the lenses of culture and language. Lowinger et al. (2014) investigated whether acculturation and language proficiency contributed to academic procrastination among these students, discovering gender differences in the factors influencing this behavior. Female participants cited English proficiency and culture shock/stress as the main causes of their academic procrastination, while male participants identified discrimination and homesickness as key predictors. This study highlighted that culture shock and language barriers had a more significant impact on female students than on their male counterparts, revealing a gender disparity.

Liu and Vogel (2016) conducted a phenomenological study to explore the lived experiences of Chinese international students in U.S. higher education, finding that these students struggled with culture shock and language barriers, both of which negatively affected their academic performance. Heng (2017, 2018) further contributed to this discussion by exploring the experiences of both Chinese doctoral and undergraduate students, revealing that cultural and linguistic challenges are pervasive at all levels of study. Unlike the qualitative methods used by Liu and Vogel (2016) and Heng (2017, 2018), Jackson and Chen (2018), along with He and Hutson (2018), employed a convergent mixed-method approach to examine the experiences of Chinese international students in U.S. higher education. Their findings supported previous research, emphasizing the detrimental effects of language barriers and cultural adjustments on the academic performance of Chinese international students.

#### 2) Combined Cultural and Educational Differences Challenges

Chinese international students face challenges that extend beyond just culture shock or educational disparities; they often encounter both simultaneously. As they transition into U.S. classrooms, they must navigate differences rooted in both cultural and educational contexts, as noted by Karuppan and Barari (2011). Huang and Garrett (2015) conducted a comparative study of psychology-related curricula between Peking University (PKU) and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (UMHB), revealing significant differences at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The disparities they identified include UMHB's requirement for religious courses versus PKU's emphasis on political subjects, differing focuses on learning theories and comprehensive abilities, PKU's major-specific elective courses compared to UMHB's more holistic educational approach, and contrasting evaluation methods, with China favoring written exams and the U.S. emphasizing licensure exams.

Huang and Garrett's (2015) comparisons underscore the necessity for Chinese students to prepare thoroughly before embarking on studies abroad, particularly at the graduate level. While PKU offers a glimpse into Chinese higher education, it may not encapsulate the entirety of the educational landscape. Nevertheless, their comparison underscores the significant disparities between Chinese and U.S. higher education systems, stressing the need for Chinese students to be ready for these cultural and educational contrasts.

#### 3) Combined Linguistics and Educational Differences Challenges

The challenges faced by Chinese international students are complex, arising from a combination of language barriers and differences in educational systems. Yan and Berliner (2009) conducted a qualitative study to examine the most significant academic stressors for Chinese students in U.S. higher education. Through semi-structured interviews, they found that participants struggled most with English language difficulties, followed closely by differing educational norms between China and the U.S. Similarly, Gu (2016) explored Chinese students' perceptions of their intercultural adaptability in U.S. higher education, revealing that they faced a dual challenge of adapting to different academic expectations and overcoming language barriers. The interplay of these educational and linguistic challenges creates a multifaceted obstacle for Chinese international students, highlighting the complexity of their academic experiences.

#### 4) Combined Culture, Linguistics, and Educational Differences Challenges

Although not many researchers have studied the holistically cultural, linguistic, and educational impacts on Chinese international students, a few have investigated these areas in a holistic manner. Zhang (2016) conducted a phenomenological study using focus-group interviews to gather data. The analysis revealed that participants primarily struggled with mastering English, adapting to American culture, and adjusting to the American academic

environment, which differed significantly from the Chinese system. Jackson and Chen (2018) undertook a comprehensive mixed-method study to examine the academic experiences of Chinese international exchange students in various English-speaking countries, including the U.S. Through pre- and post-study questionnaires and in-depth interviews with 109 participants, they found that the main challenges these students faced were class participation and unpredictable situations, especially in discussion-based settings. Additionally, culture shock and language barriers were significant hurdles. In their broader study involving approximately 900 international exchange students from Greater China, class participation consistently emerged as the most challenging aspect to adapt to in English-speaking host countries, highlighting the widespread nature of this issue among Chinese international exchange students.

The literature review indicates a significant shift in the factors impacting Chinese international students, transitioning from cultural to educational differences. Prior to 2010, research on Chinese international students predominantly centered on cultural disparities, encompassing aspects such as culture shock, cultural assimilation, cultural adjustment, and cultural acculturation. However, scholarly attention has shifted towards linguistic barriers and educational disparities in the past ten years.

A study by Jackson and Chen (2018) underscored this shift, revealing that participants primarily struggled with class participation and unpredictable situation navigation, particularly in discussion-based pedagogical settings. Culture shock/adjustment and language barriers emerged as secondary concerns. Importantly, their main study encompassing approximately 900 international exchange students from Greater China unanimously identified class participation as the most formidable challenge in the English-speaking host countries. While this trend is not widely documented in existing research, it highlights the growing impact of educational disparities over culture and linguistics.

## **4. Discussion**

### *4.1 Research Methodology*

This systematic review identifies and summarizes forty-one scholarly studies from the ERIC EBSCOhost database using the keywords “Chinese international students + United States + higher education.” The findings indicate that Chinese international students mainly face challenges such as culture shock, language barriers, educational differences, racial discrimination, and mental health issues, facing multifaceted and complex challenges during their higher education journey.

Most existing research studies employ qualitative research methods to examine the challenges faced by Chinese international students (Chen & Wen, 2021; Choy & Alon, 2019; Gu & Usinger, 2021; Jackson & Chen, 2018; Ji, 2022; Heng, 2017, 2018, 2019; Liang & Turner, 2021; Liu & Vogel, 2016; Lucas, 2019; Su & Harrison, 2016; Tang & Flint, 2022; Valdez, 2015; Will, 2016; Xu et al., 2021; Xue, 2013; Zhang, 2016). Meanwhile, a majority of studies selected undergraduate Chinese international students as research participants, with only a few involving Chinese international doctoral students. Researchers need to group their interviewees in different levels of education to gain more accurate findings as students of different academic levels face quite different challenges.

Another methodological limitation is that most researchers conducted interviews with Chinese international students in English, which may lead to language barriers and result in the reduction or misrepresentation of their challenges during interviews. Therefore, future researchers should provide bilingual opportunities to Chinese international participating students to ensure more accurate feedback and address their findings accordingly.

### *4.2 Future Research Directions*

While numerous studies have highlighted the struggles of Chinese international students with linguistic barriers and racial discrimination (Fu et al., 2018; Heng, 2018; Jackson & Chen, 2018; Ji, 2022; Suspitsyna & Shalka, 2019; Xue, 2013), there remains a considerable need for further exploration into their challenges and experiences. Current literature reviews indicate that the majority of studies have employed qualitative research methods; therefore, future research should incorporate more quantitative methods. Researchers must be aware of the rapidly increasing population of Chinese international students and the multifaceted challenges they face.

Future research should also explore the interrelationships between different factors affecting the challenges faced by Chinese international students. Additionally, there is a need to broaden the geographic scope of studies, as many have concentrated on Chinese international students at only one American university. This narrow focus may limit demographic diversity and affect the generalizability of the findings. To address this, future studies should include a larger sample by incorporating multiple universities across the U.S.

## 5. Conclusion

This systematic literature review, comprising forty-one peer-reviewed articles sourced from the ERIC EBSCOhost database, highlights the myriad challenges encountered by Chinese international students.

The challenges encountered by Chinese international students are multifaceted and complex rather than straightforward or singular. Each student's experience is shaped by a variety of interacting factors, necessitating a detailed understanding of their diverse needs and experiences.

Given the significant presence of Chinese international students in U.S. higher education, it is essential to address and alleviate their specific concerns and challenges. This effort is vital not only for the well-being and success of these students but also for enhancing the overall quality of U.S. higher education. To better support Chinese international students, U.S. institutions should consider the following measures: (a) offer comprehensive cultural orientation programs to help students understand American academic culture, campus resources, social norms, and legal regulations, (b) provide academic support services tailored to the unique needs and challenges faced by these students in the U.S. education system, (c) establish partnerships with Chinese universities and educational organizations to ease the transition for Chinese international students, and (d) fund student organizations, clubs, or cultural exchange programs that connect Chinese international students with domestic students. Institutions should implement these measures while acknowledging the diversity within the Chinese international student population, as individual experiences and needs may vary. Regular evaluation and feedback from these students can help institutions assess the effectiveness of these measures and make necessary adjustments.

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**Informed consent**

Obtained.

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No additional data are available.

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