

# **Cultural Adaptation Challenges of International Muslim Students in Southern Thailand: A Focus on Language Acquisition, Social Integration, and Cultural Practices**

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## **Abstract**

**Objective:** This study explores the cultural adaptation challenges faced by international Muslim students in Thailand's southern border provinces, focusing on three key areas: language acquisition, social integration, and cultural practices.

**Methodology:** A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected through a survey of 100 international Muslim students enrolled at Prince of Songkla University (PSU) and Fateni University (FTU). In addition, 10 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into students' adaptation experiences.

**Research Findings:** The findings revealed that language acquisition is the most significant barrier to adaptation, with many students struggling to understand academic Thai and daily communication. Social integration was generally positive, supported by peer networks and the local Muslim community, though occasional cultural misunderstandings were reported. Cultural practices posed fewer challenges, with students expressing high satisfaction regarding their ability to maintain religious and cultural identity, particularly through access to halal food and prayer facilities.

**Contributions:** The study contributes to the body of knowledge on cross-cultural adaptation of Muslim international students in Southeast Asia and provides practical recommendations for educational institutions to enhance language support, promote inclusive social engagement, and strengthen institutional responsiveness to cultural needs.

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