Cultivating Thai Business Chinese Teachers' Intercultural Teaching Competence through Mozi's Tripartite Benchmark Approach*



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Abstract

This study aimed (1) to examine the current level and priority needs of commercial culture teaching competence among Business Chinese teachers in Thailand, (2) to investigate the effects of cultural source interpretation, evidence-based case analysis, and teaching application on overall commercial culture teaching competence, and (3) to develop and evaluate a Mozi-inspired competence development model for Thai Business Chinese teachers. The research employed a quantitative design. Data were collected from 50 Business Chinese teachers working at 20 higher education institutions in Thailand through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire. The instrument consisted of 27 items covering cultural source interpretation, evidence-based case analysis, and teaching application. Five experts evaluated the questionnaire and the proposed model. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, the Modified Priority Needs Index, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and expert evaluation.

The research results were found as follows: (1) The overall level of commercial culture teaching competence was moderate. Cultural source interpretation represented the highest priority need, followed by evidence-based case analysis and teaching application. (2) Cultural source interpretation, evidence-based case analysis, and teaching application significantly predicted overall commercial culture teaching competence. Teaching application had the strongest effect, followed by evidence-based case analysis and cultural source interpretation. (3) The Mozi-Inspired Three-Stage and Five-Dimension Competence Model, or MTC Model, was developed by integrating Ben Zhi Zhe, Yuan Zhi Zhe, and Yong Zhi Zhe. Expert evaluation confirmed that the model demonstrated high levels of propriety, accuracy, feasibility, and utility.

The study provides a systematic framework for connecting cultural foundations, comparative business evidence, classroom application, and reflective evaluation. It offers practical guidance for teacher education, curriculum development, and localized Business Chinese instruction in Thailand.

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Introduction

Economic cooperation between China and Thailand has increased the demand for professionals who can use Chinese effectively in business negotiation, service communication, marketing, organizational cooperation, and cross-border trade. Consequently, Business Chinese education should extend beyond vocabulary, grammar, and occupational terminology to include the values, communication conventions, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making patterns found in Chinese and Thai business environments.

Business Chinese teachers are therefore expected to explain cultural similarities and differences, identify possible misunderstandings, and guide students in responding appropriately to intercultural business situations. However, commercial culture remains insufficiently integrated into some Business Chinese courses in Thailand. Teaching often concentrates on textbook dialogues, language forms, and examination content, while cultural knowledge is presented as isolated facts rather than as an interconnected system of values, practices, and behaviors.

Some teachers may possess adequate Chinese-language proficiency but have limited preparation in Chinese philosophy, comparative business culture, local case development, intercultural simulation, or performance-based assessment. Gong et al. (2022) found that preservice Chinese-language teachers recognized the importance of intercultural communicative competence but differed in their ability to translate cultural understanding into instructional practice. Romijn et al. (2021) similarly emphasized that teachers' intercultural competence requires systematic preparation and continuing professional development. Huang (2021) further showed that structured intercultural learning can improve learners' ability to interpret and respond to cultural differences.

Teacher cognition, identity, and professional experience also influence classroom decisions. Gu et al. (2021) demonstrated that the motivations of native and non-native Chinese-language teachers may differ according to linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Han and Ji (2021) showed that teacher identity is reconstructed through intercultural professional experience, while Sun et al. (2022) found that Chinese-language teachers' identities develop through professional positioning and contextual affordances. Wu (2023) also emphasized the value of inquiry-based learning in developing preservice teachers' global competence. These findings indicate that intercultural teaching competence develops through the interaction of knowledge, experience, instructional decisions, identity, and professional reflection.

Studies have also emphasized the importance of integrating cultural content with classroom activities. Liu (2022) reported that intercultural activities can help students connect cultural knowledge with communicative behavior. Mu and Yu (2023) found that contextualized

and innovative instruction improved intercultural competence among business-language students. Huang et al. (2023) further demonstrated that systematic cross-cultural exposure can strengthen teachers' intercultural competence. Zhou et al. (2024) similarly concluded that cross-cultural communicative competence requires the integration of cultural knowledge, communicative strategies, attitudes, and contextual practice.

Despite these contributions, existing competence frameworks often list knowledge, skills, and attitudes as separate components. They provide less explanation of how teachers should examine the origin of cultural knowledge, verify it through evidence, and transform it into effective classroom practice. This limitation is particularly important in Thai Business Chinese education, where teachers need to compare Chinese and Thai business contexts rather than present either culture as fixed or uniform.

Mozi's Tripartite Benchmark Approach provides a possible framework for addressing this problem. The approach evaluates knowledge through three interrelated standards: its source, supporting evidence, and practical application. In this study, Ben Zhi Zhe refers to examining the cultural, historical, philosophical, and linguistic foundations of business behavior. Yuan Zhi Zhe refers to verifying cultural explanations through Chinese, Thai, and Thai-Chinese business cases. Yong Zhi Zhe refers to transforming cultural understanding into instructional activities, student assessment, and improved learning outcomes.

Rather than treating Mohist thought solely as historical philosophy, this study reinterprets the Tripartite Benchmark Approach as an operational process for teacher competence development. It examines teachers' current competence and priority needs, analyzes the relationships among the three competence dimensions, and develops a context-sensitive model for Business Chinese teacher development in Thailand.

Objectives of the Research

1. To examine the current level and priority needs of commercial culture teaching competence among Business Chinese teachers in Thailand.

2. To investigate the effects of cultural source interpretation, evidence-based case analysis, and teaching application on overall commercial culture teaching competence.

3. To develop and evaluate a Mozi-inspired competence development model for Business Chinese teachers in Thailand.

Research Methodology

The 1st Step: Literature Review

Relevant literature on intercultural communicative competence, Chinese-language teacher cognition, teacher identity, professional development, and intercultural classroom practice was reviewed.

Gong et al. (2022) examined preservice Chinese-language teachers' understanding of intercultural communicative competence. Gu et al. (2021) and Han and Ji (2021) discussed the motivation and identity construction of Chinese-language teachers in intercultural settings. Romijn et al. (2021) demonstrated that intercultural competence can be improved through teacher-preparation programs and professional development.

Liu (2022), Mu and Yu (2023), and Wang (2024) emphasized the need to integrate cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and communicative behavior into language instruction. Huang et al. (2023) showed that systematic intercultural exposure contributed to teacher competence development. These studies supported the selection of three principal dimensions: cultural source interpretation, evidence-based case analysis, and teaching application.

Based on Mozi's Tripartite Benchmark Approach, the three dimensions were organized into a source–evidence–application sequence. Cultural source interpretation corresponded to Ben Zhi Zhe, evidence-based case analysis corresponded to Yuan Zhi Zhe, and teaching application corresponded to Yong Zhi Zhe.

The 2nd Step: Population and Sample

The target population consisted of Thai and Chinese teachers who taught Business Chinese or professionally oriented Chinese courses in higher education institutions in Thailand.

Purposive and network sampling were employed because Business Chinese teaching represents a specialized professional field. A total of 54 questionnaires were distributed to teachers at 20 institutions. Four questionnaires were excluded because of incomplete responses or identical answers across all items. Therefore, 50 valid questionnaires were retained, resulting in a valid response rate of 92.59%.

The respondents included 34 women and 16 men. Twenty-eight were Thai nationals, 18 were Chinese nationals, and four were from other national backgrounds. Twenty-nine respondents had more than five years of Chinese-language teaching experience.

The 3rd Step: Research Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected demographic information. The second section contained 27 items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree.

Cultural source interpretation was measured using nine items covering knowledge of Chinese business philosophy, interpretation of classical principles, explanation of cultural symbols, and understanding of the historical foundations of business behavior.

Evidence-based case analysis was measured using nine items covering the selection of Chinese and Thai cases, identification of cultural differences and conflicts, verification of cultural explanations, and transformation of authentic cases into learning materials.

Teaching application was measured using nine items covering intercultural simulations, task design, student-performance assessment, feedback, and instructional adjustment.

Five experts in international Chinese education, intercultural communication, and educational measurement assessed the item-objective congruence. The IOC values ranged from 0.80 to 1.00, with an average of 0.93. A pilot test involving 30 teachers who were not included in the final sample produced an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94.

The 4th Step: Data Collection

The questionnaires were distributed online from January to March. Participants were informed of the research purpose, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of responses, and academic use of the data.

No personally identifiable information was collected. After screening the responses, 50 questionnaires were retained for statistical analysis.

The 5th Step: Data Analysis

Frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha were used to describe the sample and evaluate reliability.

The Modified Priority Needs Index was calculated using the following formula:

$$\mathrm{PNI}_{\mathrm{Modified}} = \frac{\mathrm{I} - \mathrm{D}}{\mathrm{D}}$$

where D represented the current state and I represented the expected state.

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine relationships among the variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to identify the effects of cultural source interpretation, evidence-based case analysis, and teaching application on overall competence.

The proposed model was evaluated by five experts using four criteria: propriety, accuracy, feasibility, and utility.

Research Results

1. The 1st objective was to examine the current level and priority needs of commercial culture teaching competence among Business Chinese teachers in Thailand. From the research result, it was found that:

The questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency. The reliability and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability and Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	Items	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	S.D.	Level
Cultural source interpretation	9	0.89	3.08	0.62	Moderate
Evidence-based case analysis	9	0.91	3.14	0.66	Moderate
Teaching application	9	0.90	3.25	0.59	Moderate
Overall competence	27	0.94	3.16	0.57	Moderate

As shown in Table 1, the overall level of commercial culture teaching competence was moderate, with a mean score of 3.16. Teaching application had the highest mean score at 3.25, followed by evidence-based case analysis at 3.14 and cultural source interpretation at 3.08.

The findings indicated that teachers were relatively more confident in organizing classroom activities than in explaining the philosophical, historical, and cultural foundations of Chinese commercial behavior.

At the item level, teachers demonstrated relatively strong competence in explaining general business etiquette, comparing direct and indirect communication, and encouraging students to discuss cultural differences. Lower scores were found in interpreting Mohist ideas in contemporary business contexts, relating classical thought to organizational ethics, and developing cases from Thai or Thai-Chinese companies.

The priority needs are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Priority Needs of Commercial Culture Teaching Competence

Dimension	Current state D	S.D.	Expected state I	S.D.	PNI Modified	Rank
Cultural source interpretation	3.08	0.62	4.29	0.48	0.393	1
Evidence-based case analysis	3.14	0.66	4.31	0.46	0.373	2
Teaching application	3.25	0.59	4.34	0.45	0.335	3
Total	**3.16**	**0.57**	**4.31**	**0.42**	**0.364**	**—**

Table 2 shows that all three dimensions had substantial gaps between their current and expected states. Cultural source interpretation had the highest priority need, with a $\mathbf{PNI}_{\text{Modified}}$ value of 0.393. Evidence-based case analysis ranked second at 0.373, followed by teaching application at 0.335.

The high priority assigned to cultural source interpretation was associated with teachers' limited familiarity with the philosophical and historical foundations of business culture. Although many respondents understood modern concepts such as trust, cooperation, mutual benefit, and relationship maintenance, fewer were able to explain their relationship with broader intellectual traditions or translate them into language accessible to Thai students.

Evidence-based case analysis represented the second priority need. Existing textbooks generally contained Chinese examples but provided limited Thai or Thai-Chinese cases. Some cases were outdated, lacked contextual detail, or presented national cultures as fixed characteristics. Teachers also experienced difficulty obtaining authentic cases from Chinese-invested companies, chambers of commerce, graduates, and bilingual business professionals.

Teaching application had a slightly higher current mean, but the gap between its current and expected states remained substantial. Teachers commonly used role-playing, presentations, and group discussions. However, fewer employed systematic criteria to assess

intercultural decision-making, interpretation of cultural cues, strategy selection, and management of conflicting expectations.

These findings indicate that the principal problem was not teachers' willingness to teach commercial culture. Rather, it was the absence of an integrated process for tracing, verifying, localizing, teaching, and assessing cultural knowledge.

2. The 2nd objective was to investigate the effects of cultural source interpretation, evidence-based case analysis, and teaching application on overall commercial culture teaching competence. From the research result, it was found that:

Pearson correlation analysis showed that all three dimensions were positively associated with overall commercial culture teaching competence. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlations among the Main Research Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Cultural source interpretation	1.00			
2. Evidence-based case analysis	0.58**	1.00		
3. Teaching application	0.49**	0.63**	1.00	
4. Overall competence	0.68**	0.74**	0.78**	1.00

Note: $p < 0.01$.

Cultural source interpretation was positively correlated with overall competence at $r = 0.68$. Evidence-based case analysis was positively correlated with overall competence at $r = 0.74$, while teaching application had the strongest correlation at $r = 0.78$.

These findings indicate that cultural knowledge becomes professionally meaningful when teachers can verify it through cases and transform it into classroom practice. Evidence-based case analysis also showed a strong relationship with overall competence, demonstrating the importance of selecting, comparing, and explaining authentic business situations.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive effects of the three dimensions. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis of Commercial Culture Teaching Competence

Predictor	B	S.E.	Beta	t	p
Constant	0.42	0.25	—	1.68	0.100
Cultural source interpretation	0.24	0.08	0.26	3.00	0.004
Evidence-based case analysis	0.31	0.09	0.35	3.44	0.001
Teaching application	0.38	0.09	0.41	4.22	<0.001

Model statistics: $R = 0.845$, $R^2 = 0.714$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.695$, $F(3,46) = 38.27$, $p < 0.001$.

The regression model was statistically significant and explained 71.4% of the variance in overall competence.

Teaching application had the strongest standardized effect, with $\beta = 0.41$, followed by evidence-based case analysis with $\beta = 0.35$. Cultural source interpretation also had a significant positive effect, with $\beta = 0.26$.

The findings do not indicate that cultural source knowledge is unimportant. Instead, they show that such knowledge needs to be interpreted through comparative evidence and adapted pedagogically before it can be expressed as teaching competence.

A teacher may understand Chinese philosophical concepts but still experience difficulty selecting suitable Thai comparisons, designing instructional activities, or evaluating student performance. Conversely, classroom simulations may remain superficial when they are not supported by adequate cultural explanation and authentic evidence. Therefore, the three dimensions should be treated as an interconnected sequence rather than as independent skills.

3. The 3rd objective was to develop and evaluate a Mozi-inspired competence development model for Business Chinese teachers in Thailand. From the research result, it was found that:

Based on the priority-needs analysis and regression results, the Mozi-Inspired Three-Stage and Five-Dimension Competence Model was developed. The model is referred to as the MTC Model.

The first stage, Ben Zhi Zhe, concerns the origin and foundation of cultural explanations. It contains one dimension: cultural foundation literacy. This dimension requires teachers to trace business concepts to their philosophical, historical, linguistic, and social foundations. Teachers should distinguish classical ideas from later interpretations, popular stereotypes, and contemporary practices.

The second stage, Yuan Zhi Zhe, concerns whether cultural explanations are supported by observable evidence. It contains two dimensions: comparative case analysis and cultural conflict diagnosis.

Comparative case analysis requires teachers to collect, compare, and interpret cases from Chinese, Thai, and Thai-Chinese business settings. Cultural conflict diagnosis requires them to identify differences involving hierarchy, relationship development, face management, decision-making, time orientation, negotiation, and communication styles.

The third stage, Yong Zhi Zhe, concerns whether cultural knowledge produces useful instructional and learning outcomes. It contains two dimensions: instructional transformation and reflective evaluation.

Instructional transformation involves converting cultural knowledge and cases into activities such as negotiation simulations, meetings, customer-service tasks, business correspondence, presentations, and problem-solving exercises. Reflective evaluation involves

assessing students' intercultural choices and adjusting instruction according to evidence from classroom performance.

Five experts evaluated the model using a five-point scale. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Expert Evaluation of the MTC Model

Evaluation criterion	Mean	S.D.	Level
Propriety	4.56	0.39	Very high
Accuracy	4.48	0.45	High
Feasibility	4.32	0.52	High
Utility	4.60	0.36	Very high
Total	**4.49**	**0.39**	**High**

The overall expert-evaluation score was 4.49, indicating a high level of quality. Utility received the highest score at 4.60, followed by propriety at 4.56, accuracy at 4.48, and feasibility at 4.32.

The experts considered the model valuable because it established a clear sequence from cultural understanding to evidence verification, instructional application, and reflective evaluation. It was also regarded as capable of reducing fragmented cultural teaching by requiring each topic to be connected with cultural sources, comparative cases, classroom activities, and assessment evidence.

The slightly lower feasibility score reflected several practical constraints. Some teachers may have insufficient time, language resources, or professional networks to collect authentic business cases. Experts therefore recommended the development of a shared bilingual case database, sample lesson plans, and gradual implementation of the model.

Based on the expert recommendations, the terminology was simplified, the number of initial indicators was reduced, and greater emphasis was placed on developing localized Thai and Thai-Chinese cases.

The New Body of Knowledge

The new body of knowledge developed by this study is the Mozi-Inspired Three-Stage and Five-Dimension Competence Model, or MTC Model. Its principal contribution is to connect three questions that are frequently treated separately: What is the origin of cultural knowledge? What evidence supports its interpretation? How can it be transformed into effective classroom practice and student learning outcomes? The model conceptualizes teacher competence as a continuous process moving from cultural foundations to comparative evidence and then to pedagogical application, rather than as a simple list of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It also places Chinese, Thai, and Thai-Chinese business cases within the same analytical framework, thereby reducing one-sided cultural interpretation. The

five operational dimensions are cultural foundation literacy, comparative case analysis, cultural conflict diagnosis, instructional transformation, and reflective evaluation (Figure 1).

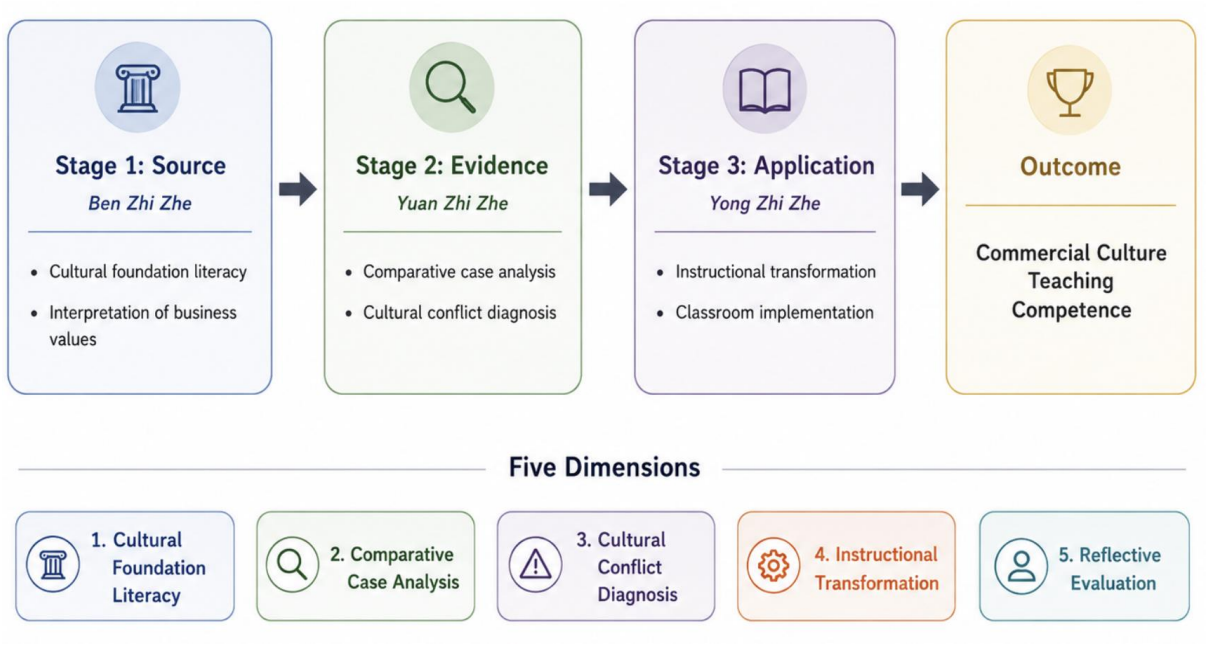


Figure 1: MTC MODEL: Mozi-Inspired Three-Stage and Five-DimensionCommercial Culture Teaching Competence Development Model

Discussion of Research Results

From the research result of the 1st objective, it was found that the overall level of commercial culture teaching competence was moderate, and cultural source interpretation represented the highest priority need. This may be because teacher-preparation programs often place greater emphasis on Chinese-language proficiency and general pedagogy than on the philosophical and historical foundations of business culture. Many teachers can explain observable differences in etiquette or communication style but may find it difficult to identify the historical values and conceptual systems underlying those differences. Consequently, cultural explanations may remain descriptive rather than analytical. This finding is consistent with Gong et al. (2022), who found that preservice Chinese-language teachers recognized the importance of intercultural competence but varied in their ability to transform cultural understanding into organized instruction. This also supports Wang (2024), who emphasized that cultural awareness and sensitivity should be explicitly developed in Chinese-language education. The present study extends these findings by showing that cultural awareness should include the ability to examine the origin, context, and validity of cultural explanations. Teachers need to distinguish authentic cultural principles from stereotypes, simplified textbook statements, and personal assumptions.

From the research result of the 2nd objective, it was found that teaching application had the strongest effect on overall competence, followed by evidence-based case analysis

and cultural source interpretation. This may be because teaching competence is ultimately demonstrated through instructional decisions, classroom activities, assessment practices, and responses to students rather than through cultural knowledge alone. This finding is consistent with Liu (2022), who stated that intercultural activities enable students to connect cultural understanding with communicative behavior. It also supports Mu and Yu (2023), who found that contextualized and innovative teaching contributed to the development of intercultural competence among business-language students. However, the strong influence of teaching application should not be interpreted as evidence that cultural foundations are less important. The three dimensions form an interdependent sequence. Classroom activities are more effective when they are supported by clear cultural explanations and authentic comparative cases. Similarly, cultural knowledge produces limited educational value when it is not transformed into tasks, feedback, and assessment.

From the research result of the 3rd objective, it was found that the MTC Model received high expert-evaluation scores for propriety, accuracy, feasibility, and utility. This may be because the model has a clear three-stage structure and is directly connected with teachers' daily professional responsibilities. Romijn et al. (2021) argued that intercultural teacher development is more effective when competence is integrated into preservice education and continuing professional development rather than treated as an isolated workshop topic. Huang et al. (2023) similarly concluded that sustained multicultural exposure can strengthen teachers' intercultural competence. The MTC Model supports these conclusions but differs from general competence models by using Mozi's Tripartite Benchmark Approach as an operational process. It also requires teachers to examine both Chinese and Thai business contexts, reducing the risk of treating Chinese culture as the only standard or Thai culture merely as a contrast.

Conclusion

This study examined commercial culture teaching competence among 50 Business Chinese teachers from 20 higher education institutions in Thailand. The overall competence level was moderate. Cultural source interpretation represented the highest priority need, followed by evidence-based case analysis and teaching application.

All three dimensions significantly predicted overall commercial culture teaching competence. Teaching application had the strongest effect, but its effectiveness depended on adequate cultural interpretation and comparative evidence. Therefore, the dimensions should be understood as a connected sequence rather than as separate abilities.

Based on these findings, the MTC Model was developed. Ben Zhi Zhe supports cultural foundation literacy; Yuan Zhi Zhe supports comparative case analysis and cultural conflict diagnosis; and Yong Zhi Zhe supports instructional transformation and reflective evaluation.

Expert evaluation confirmed that the model demonstrated high levels of propriety, accuracy, feasibility, and utility. The model provides a systematic approach to reducing fragmented cultural instruction, improving the localization of Business Chinese teaching, and strengthening intercultural teacher development in Thailand.

Suggestions

1. The suggestions from the research

From the research result of the 1st objective, it was found that cultural source interpretation represented the highest priority need. Therefore, universities and teacher-education institutions should provide professional-development courses on Chinese commercial philosophy, Thai business ethics, intercultural communication, and contemporary interpretations of traditional ideas. Such courses should combine theoretical explanation with guided analysis of authentic business situations.

From the research result of the 2nd objective, it was found that teaching application and evidence-based case analysis made substantial contributions to overall competence. Therefore, Business Chinese programs should develop bilingual case libraries containing Chinese, Thai, and Thai-Chinese business situations. Teachers should collaborate with enterprises, chambers of commerce, graduates, internship organizations, and bilingual professionals to collect cases involving negotiation, customer service, organizational hierarchy, conflict management, and business communication.

From the research result of the 3rd objective, it was found that the MTC Model had high utility but required institutional support for effective implementation. Therefore, institutions should adopt the model gradually through structured professional development. Teachers may begin with one cultural issue, examine its source, compare Chinese and Thai cases, design a lesson, assess student responses, and revise the activity. This cyclical process can reduce teachers' workload and support sustainable adoption.

2. The suggestions for future research

2.1 Future studies should increase the sample size and include teachers from public universities, private universities, vocational colleges, and language centers in different regions of Thailand. Probability or stratified sampling would improve the generalizability of the findings.

2.2 Longitudinal or quasi-experimental studies should compare teachers who receive MTC-based training with those who receive conventional training. Pre-tests, post-tests, classroom observations, teaching portfolios, and student-performance measures could provide stronger evidence of the model's effectiveness.

2.3 Subsequent research should also examine students' perspectives and employment expectations. Structural equation modeling may be used to test whether evidence-based case analysis and instructional transformation mediate the relationship

between cultural foundation literacy and students' intercultural business communication performance.

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