

## Article

# International Students' Conceptions of the Sustainable Internationalization of Business Education in Taiwan

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**Abstract:** This qualitative study was conducted to investigate international students' conception of the internationalization of business education in Taiwan. Qualitative data was collected in the form of field notes and transcripts of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 32 international students from various business schools in Taiwan. The participants expressed four descriptive categories of conception, which were identified using a phenomenographic approach. These findings led to several implications, as well as some recommendations to improve the content and context of the sustainable international program in order to ensure more effective learning outcomes in this era of mandatory educational reform.

**Keywords:** business education; internationalization; international education; phenomenographic approach

## 1. Introduction

There is a growing interest in the internationalization of higher education [1–7]. According to statistics from the Taiwanese Ministry of Education (MOE), the number of international students in Taiwan has more than doubled in the past five years, from 30,000 in 2008 to 78,261 in 2013, and is estimated to reach 100,000 in 2016 [8–11]. Of the total 117,970 overseas students in Taiwan, 37,999 were from nations that are the focus of the government's New Southbound Policy in 2017. One of the goals of the MOE is to attract even more students from Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific and make Taiwan the regional hub of higher education. President Ma Ying-jeou announced that Taiwan would become a higher education center for Asia-Pacific students within the next few years [8] based on the government's plan to attract 150,000 international and mainland Chinese students, comprising more than 10% of the total higher education student population, by 2021. In fact, Taiwan invested more than US\$85.2 billion in most Southeast Asian countries from the late 1950s to 2015 [8–11], and this increasing investment triggered bilateral trade between it and its counterpart nations. President Tsai Ing-wen has observed that the New Southbound Policy (NSP) will encourage the exchange of talent and act as a driving force for long-term regional prosperity [11]. The Taiwanese government allocated a multibillion dollar budget for a project to advance the quality of higher education in recent years, and one of the most important components of this project is how to actively attract international students. International students are also welcome to utilize their language and their professional knowledge and skills to pursue employment in Taiwan based on a comprehensive scoring system implemented by the Workforce Development Agency under the Ministry of Labor to examine graduates' language skills, work experience, and level of education. This means that Taiwanese business schools will need to internationalize their teaching and learn to maintain a competitive advantage in this global marketplace.

Internationalization has thus become an essential component of Taiwanese business schools' future development and this has led to several of these schools making innovative moves toward sustainable internationalization in recent years [12]. Sustainable internationalization does not only depend on linguistic skills, but rather the ability to adapt to new circumstances based on different cultures in diverse countries, communities, institutions, and classrooms. While business schools in many countries offer degree courses for double qualifications to establish an international network with an overseas partner university, little is known about the internationalization of Taiwanese higher education or international students' conception of it [12–14]. Most of the previous research regarding sustainability in education focuses on two subjects: (1) *education about sustainability*, which often involves environmental sustainability [15–18] and (2) *sustainability of education*, which includes maintaining education environments and practices (e.g., teacher-student ratios, physical contexts, and teacher education) [19]. This study focuses on the second meaning and this leads to the rationale for this study to explore the conception of international students of the internationalization of business schools in Taiwan.

After a brief review of the related literature, Section 3 of this article contains a description of the methodology used to complete the research, including the research design, participants, and means of data analysis. The results of the study are presented in Section 4, while Section 5 consists of a discussion of those results and some conclusions drawn from them, followed by the limitations of the research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Globalization and Internalization of Higher Education

The internationalization and globalization of higher education institutions (HEIs) has become the subject of a burgeoning body of scholarship [20–23]. It is interesting to note that globalization is commonly defined as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas across borders. Although globalization and internationalization are often used interchangeably in HEIs, Knight [21,22] explains that the difference between these two terms is that internationalization is changing the world of education, while globalization is changing the world of internationalization. It is important to note that, although the traditional and widely-used definition of internationalization is “the process of integrating an international or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institutions,” Knight [21,22] proposes a new working definition; “internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.” Therefore, these two terms are not synonyms and may not be used interchangeably in HEIs. Hence, it is imperative to look carefully at the what, why, and how of internationalization in order to promote more exchange, more mobility, and more recruitment in HEIs [20].

### 2.2. Internationalization of Business Education

The internationalization of business schools has not only been influenced by the changing economic landscape [21,22], but also by the pressure imposed by accreditation and world ranking [12]. Academic accreditation plays a vital role in HEIs because both educational communities and governments use it to endorse and ensure quality to safeguard the public interest. Given the growing awareness of different institutional and public definitions of the assurance of learning, there is an urgent need to strengthen the quality of HEIs [12]. According to an international report from The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), business schools must inevitably internationalize their program to increase global awareness, understanding, and competence, based on the pace and direction of substantial changes in HEIs. Since most leading Taiwanese business schools are currently in a race to acquire AACSB accreditation [12], it is vital for them to adopt a mission-based

strategy to align their international program by means of engagement between business educators and students. Hence, business schools in Taiwan urgently need to promote accountability in order to demonstrate world-class quality and a superior performance.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

A phenomenographic approach—a qualitative research method that seeks to explore the “different ways of understanding” through which people experience various phenomena—was employed in this study. This method was developed in the late 1970s in Sweden for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive, and understand various aspects of a phenomenon. Descriptive categories, which support the meanings identified in various experiences, are the key feature of an analysis of phenomenographic data. A structure of the outcome space is developed based on the graphic means of understanding the relationship between those concepts and aspects [24–26].

Since the aim of this study was to understand a new phenomenon of interest, a large sample multivariate statistical study was not deemed to be appropriate to examine the research questions. A phenomenographic approach, which is a field of descriptive research, was considered to be much more suitable to identify the various ways in which different students experience and understand the same phenomenon [27–31]. Therefore, a series of semi-structured one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions were conducted, either face-to-face or via Skype. The focus group sessions, which lasted for approximately two hours, were moderated by the researcher and the questions were related to the research participants’ history of their subjective experience of the phenomenon being studied. The interviews were audio-taped with the participants’ permission and the results transcribed into textual data. The data in a phenomenographic study is generated using methods that allow for open and varied responses [32,33] and in this case, two open-ended questions were asked related to: (1) participants’ basic demographics and educational background and (2) their experience of the sustainable internationalization of business education in Taiwan. Follow-up questions were generated by the participants’ answers, including (1) When did you first think about coming to Taiwan, and what did you think it would be like? (2) Why did you decide to attend a business school in Taiwan? (3) What was your relationship with the school, faculty members, and international/domestic students, and how did it affect your learning? (4) How did it feel to be an international student? How has the business education changed your sense of who you are and what life is about? (5) What are you most proud of/happy with, and what do you most regret during your study in Taiwan? and (6) How has being an international student affected your career?

#### 3.2. Participants

Sandberg [34] suggests that 20 interviewees is an adequate number for a phenomenographic study; therefore, thirty-two international undergraduate and graduate students (17 males and 15 females; 18 from national universities and 14 from private universities) were recruited from 16 business schools in 15 different countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and North America, using purposive sampling. Their length of stay in Taiwan ranged from six months to eight years. Purposive sampling is commonly used to recruit the sample for phenomenographic studies, as well as being used with other qualitative research methods [26,27]. The participants were assured that their confidentiality and anonymity would be respected.

#### 3.3. Data Analysis

Qualitative data was collected in the form of field notes and interview transcripts from the in-depth interviews, which were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Then, phenomenographic techniques were employed to identify some descriptive categories [24,

27,30–32]. Two researchers coded each transcript into text-based categories and the data was compared and contrasted. The data for this phenomenographic study was analyzed using the following steps: (1) identify related data as ‘pools of meaning’; (2) sort data into ‘pools of meaning’ based on similarity and an exclusive reference to each participant; (3) contrast groups of similar data to find descriptive categories; and (4) verify the data and establish inter-judge reliability [24,27,30–34]. The sample transcripts and research results were dispatched to the administrator of the international office at one of the universities studied, as an external consultant, in order to ensure that the subsequent discussion would notably improve the understanding of the data. The categories were searched, coded, and labeled based on the participants’ experience in an effort to considerably enhance the sustainability of the current international business programs in Taiwan. A copy of the transcript was returned to the participants for them to verify the content and request their consent to analyze the data using two methods (i.e., manual and computer-aided). The interview transcripts were input to the qualitative analytical tool, NVivo 11 in order to identify various descriptive categories. The “qualitatively-different” categories of descriptions were compared with the underlined sentences and keywords derived from the transcripts, and content-specific similarities and differences between the participants’ viewpoints were explored and analyzed [24–27]. The analysis of the categories is shown in the Results section.

#### 4. Results

Four qualitatively different categories of description were found from the phenomenographic analysis.

##### 4.1. Conception A: The Sustainable Internationalization of Business Education as a “Human-Centered” Recruitment Strategy, Rather than Simply Being “Profit Driven”

The students in this category perceived that the business schools in Taiwan offer high-quality education at attractive prices in a friendly environment. Low-cost tuition (less than US\$4000 per year) and scholarships attract students from both developed and developing countries to attend local Taiwanese schools. In addition, foreign students may realize their dream by participating in several Taiwanese scholarship programs. Some extracts from the interviews are shown below.

Student 7: “Tuition fees and certain fees are waived under the Ministry of Education (MOE) Taiwan Scholarship. An undergraduate like me will receive a monthly stipend of NT\$15,000 (US\$500), and graduates will receive NT\$20,000 per month. I have heard that there are also scholarships for people to study short-term Mandarin Chinese courses in Taiwan.”

Student 13: “The Taiwanese Government Scholarship Program is considered to be the most prestigious scholarship, granted to the most suitable candidates after a final interview in New Delhi. Most international students who wish to study in Taiwan hope to be awarded this scholarship, since it offers the maximum stipend of any scholarships in Taiwan. Students are awarded NT\$25,000 (US\$828) every month to support their living costs, education and miscellaneous expenses when pursuing a degree course in Taiwan.”

However, a major challenge for Taiwan is its excessive number of universities and shortage of students. According to data from the National Development Council (NDC), Taiwan has 164 higher learning institutions in which around 1.46 million students are enrolled; however, despite the fact that almost all high school graduates are guaranteed to enter local colleges and universities, some of these educational institutes may still have insufficient students and may be forced to close down. This raises the issue of whether international students can compensate for the decreasing number of local students. Compared to the Taiwanese higher educational system, foreign students in the UK, United States, Canada, and Australia are generally required to pay full tuition fees without access to financial aid and may be charged up to two or three times more than domestic enrollees. In fact, the return on investment of offering such hefty international student programs in Taiwan is also being

questioned, considering that many of the students are on full scholarships, which tends to be double the amount paid by their Taiwanese classmates.

Student 27: “I did a part-time job while studying at university and was able to earn enough to pay my tuition fee, dormitory rent and food. The tuition and academic fees per semester for a Bachelor’s degree are around \$1500–1800, while a graduate degree costs around \$1600–2000. Meals cost \$180–270 per month, while accommodation on campus is \$30–200 per month or \$200–600 per month off-campus, not including utilities. My professor told me that more than 40% of foreign students receive a scholarship here. How do they get a scholarship? Is it fair? I personally believe it is fair when they choose the recipient.”

Student 28: “I have a tuition waiver and the cost of living is low here. I also have a part-time job so that I can sustain myself.”

#### *4.2. Conception B: The Sustainable Internationalization of Business Education as a Career-Oriented Educational System*

The students in the second category perceived that, when foreign students leave Taiwan, they take an understanding and appreciation of the country with them, which gives them an inestimable advantage in terms of seeking and securing a leading position in various organizations. Numerous stories of success inspire international students to come to Taiwan to study in the hope of finding a job that will help to establish their career, and since this government scholarship program appears to play a major role in the achievement of this ambition, these students may serve as unofficial ambassadors for Taiwan. Therefore, the value of these factors appears to be immeasurable in terms of soft diplomacy.

Student 14: “I received a BBA Degree in Technology Management from a private university in Taiwan and, after I graduated, I continued my Master’s education at a national university in Hsinchu, where I was awarded an Outstanding Student Scholarship for 2 years. After receiving an MBA, I attended career seminars, where I left my CV with some companies and was subsequently called for an interview. It was through these seminars that I got a job as a Sales Director at the India branch of a Taiwanese communication company, a subsidiary of a business group that designs, manufactures and tests memory chips in Taiwan. I stayed there for 3 years. I was chosen from 500 candidates for my current job with a semiconductor company.”

Student 16: “I feel truly blessed and I am very thankful to my professors and the Taiwanese government for giving me this opportunity and believing in me. I can now see my potential to succeed in the future”

Due to an aging population and the need to revitalize an economy that has become less vibrant in recent years, Taiwan is seeking talented international students from beyond its borders, who will not only choose to study there, but also elect to call it home after they graduate. Taiwan is targeting international students rather than engaging in a head-to-head competition with Singapore, Tokyo, or Hong Kong, but low salaries, high property costs, and the lack of strong brand appeal make it difficult to compete for highly skilled immigrants.

Student 1: “I think studying in China or Hong Kong is better for a post-school job search.”

Student 22: “I know some overseas compatriot students have been recruited by Taiwanese firms, but I believe I can have a better compensation package in Hong Kong.”

#### *4.3. Conception C: The Sustainable Internationalization of Business Education as Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Business Schools*

The students in the third category observed that many Taiwanese business schools possess advanced online/offline teaching technologies. They also try to hold certain accreditations and have

developed their own set of standards from one or two other respectable organizations, such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the Association of MBAs (AMBA), and the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS). Accreditation is usually provided for particular study programs for a specific time; for example, the AACSB accreditation is renewed every 5 years. Although most faculties are research-oriented, they still emphasize the use of new methods for delivering content and have evolved to use technology for teaching. Many local business schools have begun to link their curriculum more closely with the practical demands of industry by providing more experiential learning to enhance the collaboration between themselves and enterprises for their mutual benefit.

Student 26: “My school is accredited with both EQUIS and AACSB, which makes it easier for me to use my degree when I return to my home country.”

Student 14: “My teachers always use some innovative e-learning technology in class. It is a completely new experience for me. My school is accredited with AACSB. Many professors are trying to close the gap between education and industry, so there are many field trips and internship opportunities.”

Despite the continuing establishment and upgrading of mechanisms for quality assurance in Taiwanese business education by means of international accreditation processes, the National Taiwan University (NTU) ranks 72nd and is the only Taiwanese university to be listed among the world’s top 100 universities in the QS World University Rankings 2018 [35]. Taiwanese business education suffers from low global visibility and its primary challenge appears to be related to the question of whether Taiwanese business schools are sufficiently prestigious to compete with their Asian counterparts for talented international students.

Student 32: “I prefer AACSB-accredited institutions. Although foreign employers may not know how well they are ranked, they only have to google them to find out. I advise people not to blindly choose an institution just because of the accreditation. My school has a much lower ranking and accreditation standard. It will be easy for me to get an MBA in Taiwan because the professors evaluate international students differently from local students. They have lower expectations of them because some of them cannot speak English/Chinese fluently.”

Student 26: “Some professors spent time focusing on positive and negative sustainability and ethical leadership examples. They believe that is the core values of business education. We need to read articles, discuss stories, write papers, and complete group projects related to these issues.”

Student 24: “As for why I am considering Taiwan, I believe that it has higher standards than my other options. Maybe they are not good enough compared to Australia, the USA, and Canada, but I believe that they are way better than Malaysian unis, and I’ll have a chance to learn Chinese as well.”

#### *4.4. Conception D: The Sustainable Internationalization of Business Education as an Intercultural and Multicultural Environment*

Most of the students in the final category were comfortable with the security and political environment in Taiwan.

Student 9: “Taiwanese people are friendly, there is plenty of food, the commute is convenient and the cost of living is not too high; most importantly, it is safe, so personally I think Taiwan is a very good place to study and live.”



Student 20: “I felt blessed, honored and very excited about moving to Taiwan. I had done a little research about Taiwan and I found myself falling in love with the beauty and tradition of this Island paradise.”

A multicultural campus helps local students to expand their horizons, giving them a more international perspective, as well as the chance to practice their foreign language skills. This kind of environment enables Taiwanese students to become more competitive in the global arena.

Student 11: The increase in the regional economy has attracted a great number of people to Taiwan to learn Chinese. This particular advantage of studying in Taiwan seems to appeal to many international students. Most foreign students mingle both inside and outside class, and do activities together. All the courses are taught in English. I wish I could speak good Chinese and have more chances to take classes in Chinese. I want to know more Taiwanese cases.”

Student 25: “The school provides many social opportunities and extra-curricular activities both on and off campus that appeal to people of diverse ethnicities and religions. For instance, I am Muslim and we have our own prayer room.”

Other issues related to cultural differences frequently arise, since foreign and local students have diverse expectations of religion, living, eating, drinking, and smoking on campus. According to most of the participants, few international students graduate with any degree of fluency in the Chinese language, despite the provision of free language classes on most campuses. The offering of degree programs in English puts a tremendous strain on local professors and a limited number of courses are taught in English.

Student 31: “My Chinese is still not fluent because I always hang out with other international students and we communicate in English. Some students barely speak Chinese at all.”

Student 12: “Most of my friends are foreign students. Some local students are too shy to speak English so I don’t have much chance to interact with them on campus.”

Of the 32 students who participated in the study, 21, 15, 9, and 30 were classified as having adopted Conceptions A, B, C, and D, respectively. The students’ interview responses are illustrated in Table 1, divided into the aforementioned four categories of conception of the internationalization of business education in Taiwan. In addition, individual students’ conceptions may be classified into more than one category, as shown in Appendix A (Table A1). The relationship between the four categories of conceptions is shown in Figure 1.

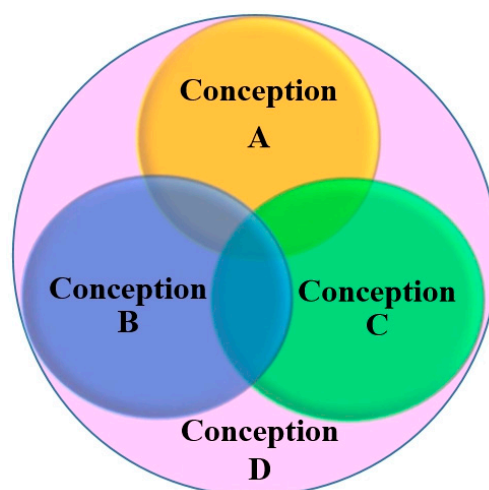


Figure 1. Relationships of categories.

**Table 1.** Students' conception of the sustainable internationalization of business education in Taiwan (N = 32).

Conception	N	%
A	21	65.6
B	15	46.9
C	9	28.1
D	30	93.8

## 5. Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### 5.1. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings enabled a detailed analysis to be made of international students' conception of the sustainable internationalization of business education in Taiwan, which revealed four categories of conceptions. Similar to Latief and Lefen's studies of China [36], the students interviewed in this study perceived that the Taiwanese government heavily invests in attracting the very best talented international students. Compared to the U.S., where the average annual tuition fee is more than US\$31,000, Taiwan is one of the top 10 cheapest places (i.e., along with Norway, Germany, France, Mexico, India, Argentina, Poland, Malaysia, and South Africa) to study at one of the world's best universities [37]. The government is also attempting to woo international students to stay and work in Taiwan after completing their study. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Tsai Ing-Wen announced the NSP last year to foster educational, cultural, tourism, and economic collaboration, not only with Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, but also New Zealand, Australia, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. The government has predictably demonstrated strong leadership with a well-defined focus and sustained energy in prioritizing the pursuit of the NSP [38].

Despite the NSP's broad scope, one of the primary components of Taiwan's new southbound efforts is talent cultivation. The Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced a three-year NT\$1290 million (US\$42.13 m) infrastructure of the New Southbound Talent Development Policy (NSTDP) in 2017 [9,11]. Universities can apply for funding and participate in these initiatives with the aforementioned 18 countries. The primary aim of this NSTDP is to deepen two-way cross-border communication and initiate a win-win situation by cooperating to cultivate talent to develop the regional economy. A total of 29,145 students from the New Southbound region studied in Taiwan in 2016 with Malaysians ranking as the largest group (13,838 students). Foreign students can not only apply for a scholarship, but also an internship with Taiwanese companies [9,11].

According to the participants in Conception A, Taiwan has made a substantial investment in building ties in regional higher education. Furthermore, the MOE has developed a scholarship program entitled "Elite study in Taiwan", which provides undergraduate/graduate students from Southeast Asian countries with grants and funding to participate in each project. These ambitious strategies are designed to deepen the internationalization effort and cultivate profound educational exchanges with South Asian countries. In addition, Southeast Asian languages will be included as elective courses in elementary and junior high school curriculum beginning from the 2018 academic year. In contrast, the results of a recent survey indicate that very few local students (i.e., 2.4 percent of surveyed middle school, college, and university students) are interested in learning Southeast Asian languages [39]. The participants in Conception D explained that, while Taiwanese students are very friendly, they scarcely interact with international students; therefore, it seems that domestic university students need to broaden their horizons.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs anticipates that the NSP will encourage foreign students to transfer the know-how and workforce training from their home country. Since the participants of this study described foreign students as future contributors to their society, tuition in Taiwan



is highly subsidized based on the recent push to internationalize the Taiwanese university system. However, a significant number of international students return to their home countries to work, thereby contributing to their home countries' economy, having received a business education at Taiwan's expense. This inevitably raises the question of whether this situation benefits domestic students, particularly since the participants in Conception D argued that they have few opportunities to interact with local students. These findings echo the experience of Latief and Lefen [36], who found that most international students face a communication barrier during their stay in China, which ultimately affects their learning. Apparently, academic and language-related challenges were widely shared by international students, regardless of their demographic background. These findings are aligned with research conducted by Wright and Schartner [40] concerning the interaction between host country and international students that occurs at a low level and positive results from the interactions are often hard to achieve.

The Taiwanese government has established a new point-based system based on academic and professional qualifications, as well as Mandarin-language levels, and students who earn more than 70 points based on these credentials are able to apply for a work visa when they have completed their education [9,11]. This new regulation may enable foreign students to be an important source of potential skilled workers, as emphasized by Conception B students. This result echoes Calikoglu's [41] findings that international students not only encounter social, academic, financial, and psychological challenges, but also have concerns about their future career and employability outcomes [42–44].

Based on the findings of this study, the students in Conception C perceived that they are sure to receive a high-quality education and top-class business and MBA degrees, since more and more universities are being accredited by international organizations and are thus required to meet certain standards. Taiwan also possesses advanced e-learning technology and has expanded all or part of the English curriculum in order to make the business educational system more attractive and accessible to international students. Although quality assurance mechanisms have been established in Taiwanese business education [12,45], many universities offer programs in cooperation with global universities; hence, many talented international students may initially be attracted to Taiwan based on these partnerships. It is imperative to note that the participants in Conception C suggested that there should be a proper balance in the curriculum design between local features and international perspectives, which is consistent with the studies of Ma and Trigo [46].

A focus on international students' conception of the internationalization of business education in Taiwan has many further implications. The findings of this study suggest that the international students interviewed believe that the business programs (e.g., course content and structure) and facilities in Taiwan are affordable and satisfactory. Unlike international students in US business schools, who are sometimes disappointed by hidden fees or sudden increases in the cost of tuition, the participants in this study are satisfied with daily life, the value of the program, the means of delivering the course, and the culture in Taiwan. On the other hand, they perceive the challenges to be the lack of college branding, the language barrier, inadequate interaction with local students, insufficient selection and recruitment processes, and a less well-defined mechanism to evaluate their academic performance. The conceptions of the participants from this study indicate there is a need to emphasize the notion of sustainability into the business curriculum in order to move towards the goal of "sustainable development—economic development, social development and environmental protection—at the local, national, regional and global levels" [47].

## 5.2. Policy Recommendations

There are some policy recommendations that need to be carefully considered: (1) how to make the criteria and selection process of international student scholarship recipients more transparent; (2) how to cultivate the Mandarin language skills of foreign students; (3) how to take advantage of the advanced technology of Taiwanese business schools by using a variety of online and offline learning environments (e.g., Interactive Response System), in which the interaction between local and

international students can be enhanced; (4) how universities can establish a well-designed assessment and evaluation system that is fair and equal for both international and domestic students; (5) how universities can build a strong brand that can attract and maintain the necessary quantity and quality of “talents” and alumni; and (6) how universities can attempt to nurture a deep understanding of foreign languages, cultures, and industries (especially Southeast Asian countries) in the university faculty and students. In summary, business schools must recognize that the success of any sustainable internationalization program not only involves the “physical” infrastructure of the institution, but also its “human” infrastructure.

The key shortcoming of this qualitative study is its lack of generalizability due to the limited size of the sample. Nonetheless, the overall concept of utilizing a phenomenographic approach to initially understand the experience of international students is a sound first step toward ultimately meeting the needs of a student population that is gradually becoming more and more diverse.

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## Appendix

Individual students’ conception toward the sustainable internationalization of business education.

**Table A1.** Individual students’ conception.

Students ID	Conception A	Conception B	Conception C	Conception D
1 *		✓		✓
2		✓		
3		✓		✓
4	✓	✓		✓
5		✓		✓
6		✓		✓
7	✓			✓
8				✓
9		✓		✓
10		✓	✓	
11	✓	✓		✓
12	✓		✓	✓
13	✓			✓
14	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	✓			✓
16	✓	✓		✓
17	✓			✓
18	✓			✓
19	✓			✓
20	✓			✓
21	✓			✓
22	✓	✓		✓
23	✓			✓
24			✓	✓
25		✓		✓
26	✓		✓	✓
27	✓		✓	✓
28	✓	✓		✓
29	✓	✓	✓	✓
30			✓	✓
31	✓			✓
32	✓		✓	✓

\* A sequential identifying number for each student. A tick symbol (✓) is used to indicate “yes” toward the category.

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