

The Strategies Formulation for Promoting International Chinese Language Education for Secondary Schools in Thailand

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Abstract

This research aimed to formulate effective strategies for promoting international Chinese language education in Thai secondary schools. The objectives were threefold: (1) to examine the current situation, needs, and challenges of Chinese language education; (2) to formulate comprehensive strategies integrating vision, values, strategic objectives, and implementation plans; and (3) to validate and evaluate these strategies through expert review and pilot implementation. A sequential mixed-methods approach was used, involving 450 participants, including students, teachers, and administrators across 15 secondary schools in Bangkok and nearby provinces, as well as 15 experts. Data were collected using questionnaires (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$), semi-structured interviews, and expert evaluation forms and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. The results revealed systemic challenges: strategic ambiguity (83%), operational fragmentation (78%), and cultural relevance gaps (72%). The study produced the 4-6-3 Integrated Strategic Model, encompassing four implementation phases, six strategic dimensions, and three learning stages. Expert evaluation confirmed high validity (mean = 4.63, SD = 0.47), while pilot implementation improved teacher clarity (90%) and student motivation (85%). These findings provide evidence-based guidelines for enhancing international Chinese language education and intercultural competence in Thai secondary schools.

Keywords: Strategy Formulation; International Chinese Language Education; Thai Secondary Schools; Intercultural Competence; Educational Management

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, globalization has transformed language from a mere communication medium into a vehicle of intercultural understanding and national competitiveness. For Thailand, Chinese language proficiency represents a strategic resource within the ASEAN Economic Community framework (Pongsin et al., 2023). The rapid expansion of China–Thailand trade and tourism has generated unprecedented demand for Chinese language education, particularly in secondary schools where linguistic foundations are established. However, despite growing popularity, programs face persistent structural deficiencies including inconsistent curricula, teacher shortages, and weak institutional planning (Suryadinata, 2024). The post-pandemic era has intensified these challenges through digital transformation demands, with schools remaining unevenly prepared (Lee, Ho, & Chen, 2023).

Previous studies concentrated on micro-level instructional issues while neglecting systemic strategic formulation necessary for coherent development (Xie & De Dios, 2024). This research addresses critical gaps by formulating comprehensive strategies that integrate educational management theory, intercultural communicative competence, and sustainable education principles. The study focuses on Thai secondary schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Bangkok and surrounding provinces, where over 2,000 schools offer Chinese courses but lack systematic strategic planning frameworks. This research develops and validates strategies through sequential mixed-methods design across four phases to bridge macro-level policy with micro-level practice, offering actionable guidance for Thailand's secondary education system and potentially other ASEAN contexts facing similar challenges.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the current state, needs, and problems of international Chinese language education in Thai secondary schools.
2. To develop a comprehensive strategic model (4–6–3) incorporating vision, values, focus areas, strategic objectives, action plans, and KPIs.
3. To validate and evaluate the model's appropriateness, feasibility, and preliminary effectiveness through expert review and a pilot implementation.

Literature Review

Strategic Formulation in Educational Management

Strategic formulation in education involves defining institutional vision, mission, and long-term objectives while developing action plans guiding resource allocation toward desired outcomes (Bush, 2020; Fullan & Quinn, 2022). Contemporary planning emphasizes participatory, adaptive processes involving all stakeholders rather than technical blueprints. Recent systematic reviews indicate effective strategic planning requires continuous evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with sustainable development goals (Bantilan et al., 2023). In foreign language education, strategies must integrate pedagogical innovation with socio political awareness, as programs often intersect with cultural identity and international diplomacy.

Theoretical Foundations

This study draws on three major frameworks: First, Educational Management Theory conceptualizes schools as dynamic systems requiring coordination, distributed leadership, and feedback mechanisms (Bush, 2020). Fullan and Quinn's (2022) coherence framework emphasizes focused direction, collaborative cultures, deep learning, and accountability working in concert. Second, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) theory posits that effective language learning must transcend grammar acquisition to foster cultural interpretation and meaning negotiation across boundaries (Byram, 1997; Sarwari et al., 2024). Recent systematic reviews reveal ICC development requires intentional pedagogical design, authentic encounters, and reflective practice (Wu, Zhu, & Dai, 2023). Third, Sustainable Education Theory links education to social justice, cultural preservation, and long-term development (UNESCO, 2023). The 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report for Southeast Asia emphasizes technology integration must be appropriate, equitable, scalable, and evidence based.

Chinese Language Education in Southeast Asia

Since 2010, global Chinese language education has accelerated but the post-pandemic era brought major transformations through digitalization, localization, and multicultural integration (Suryadinata, 2024). Key trends include shifting from quantity to quality emphasizing critical intercultural awareness and sustainability over rote proficiency. In Thailand, over 2,000 schools offer Chinese courses with varying support levels. However, challenges persist including shortage of qualified Thai teachers, heavy reliance on short term Chinese volunteers, weak Thai Chinese institutional collaboration, limited professional development, and fragmented strategic vision (Lertpusit, Ge, & Ho, 2025; Pongsin et al., 2023). Recent research on ICC in teacher development

reveals many teachers struggle integrating intercultural objectives due to limited training (Van Maele, Vasquez, & Claes, 2020).

Empirical Studies and Gaps

Lee et al. (2023) demonstrated that integrating ICC in online classrooms significantly improves student engagement and proficiency. Xie and De Dios (2024) emphasized sustainable success requires localized adaptation rather than direct pedagogical transplantation. Pongsin et al. (2023) identified Thailand's need for multi-level strategic coordination as an education hub. However, literature reveals persistent gaps: few studies formulated integrated strategies linking policy, pedagogy, and evaluation in Thai secondary contexts; existing approaches overlook intercultural dimensions; programs operate in isolation; and most lack empirical validation (Bantilan et al., 2023). This study addresses these gaps through comprehensive strategy formulation and validation.

Conceptual Framework

This developmental research employs sequential mixed-methods design. The conceptual framework integrates Educational Management Theory (Bush, 2020; Fullan & Quinn, 2022), Intercultural Communicative Competence Theory (Byram, 1997; Sarwari et al., 2024), and Sustainable Education Theory (UNESCO, 2023), with empirical insights from recent Southeast Asian studies (Lee et al., 2023; Pongsin et al., 2023; Xie & De Dios, 2024).

Independent Variables:

Macro Level: Four Strategic Phases (Situation Analysis → Strategic Design → Implementation → Evaluation)

Meso Level: Six Strategic Dimensions (Vision → Values → Focus Areas → Strategic Objectives → Action Plans → KPIs)

Micro Level: Three Learning Stages (Pre-learning → During-learning → post-learning)

Process/Tools: Sequential mixed-methods, multi-stakeholder engagement, expert validation, pilot implementation

Target Audience: Students, teachers, administrators, policymakers, researchers

Dependent Variables: Strategic coherence, intercultural competence development, program sustainability, stakeholder satisfaction

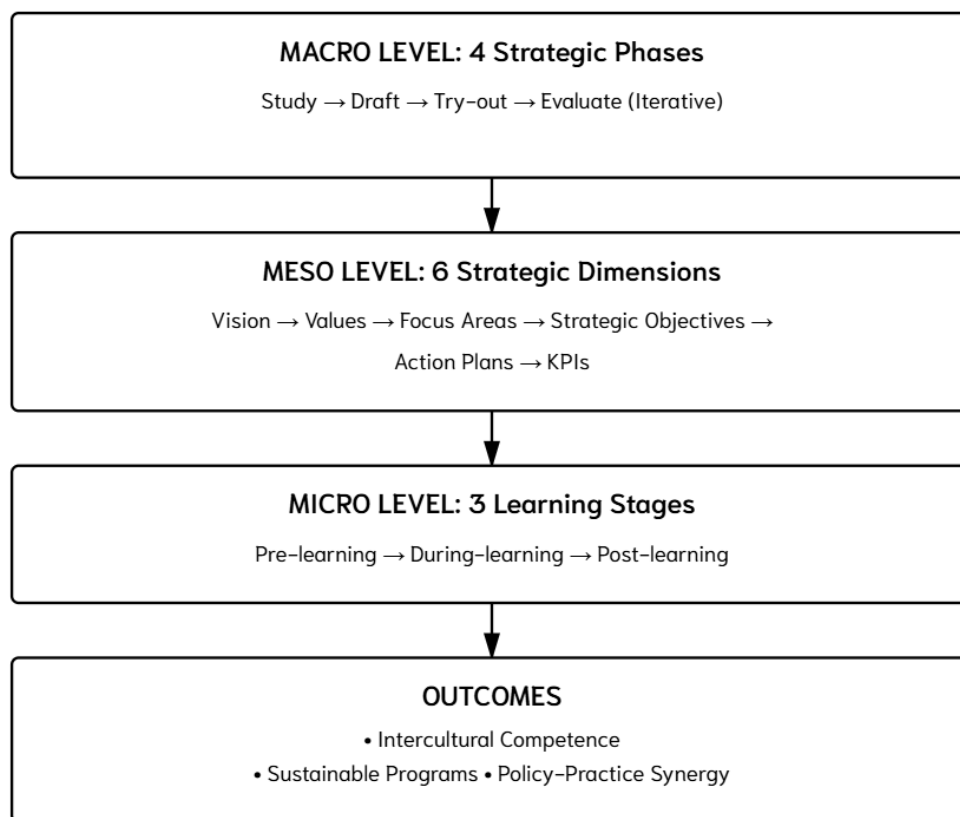


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework for Strategy Formulation

This framework synthesizes strategic management, intercultural competence, and sustainable education principles, connecting macro-policy vision with micro-pedagogical realities through meso-level institutional strategies.

Research Methodology

This study employed sequential mixed-methods design (quantitative → qualitative) through four phases: Study (situation analysis), Draft (strategy formulation), Try-out (pilot implementation), and Evaluate (validation and refinement).

Population and Sampling

Using stratified random sampling across urban, suburban, and rural contexts, the study selected:

Students: 300 (Grades 10–12)

Teachers: 100 (Chinese language teachers)

Administrators: 50 (principals and vice principals)

Expert Validators: 15 (university lecturers, curriculum specialists, experienced administrators)

Total: 465 participants ensuring representativeness across Thailand's educational spectrum.

Research Instruments

Three validated instruments were developed:

1. Questionnaires: measuring perceptions of challenges, needs, and readiness. Content validity established using Item–Objective Congruence (IOC) index (scores 0.80–1.00). Reliability confirmed through pilot testing (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$).

2. Semi-Structured Interview Guides: validated by three methodology experts, capturing in-depth insights on cultural integration, strategic barriers, and leadership practices. Interviews lasted 45–60 minutes.

3. Expert Evaluation Forms: using 5-point Likert scales assessing validity, feasibility, clarity, and appropriateness across six criteria: theoretical coherence, practical applicability, contextual relevance, sustainability, clarity, and policy alignment.

Data Collection Procedures

Phase 1 (Study): Quantitative surveys administered September–October 2024, followed by qualitative interviews October–November 2024.

Phase 2 (Draft): Strategies formulated through data analysis, literature synthesis, and expert consultation.

Phase 3 (Try-out): Pilot implementation in five schools (one urban, two suburban, two rural) November 2024–January 2025, including teacher workshops, strategic planning sessions, and intercultural activities.

Phase 4 (Evaluate): Expert validation February–March 2025 with follow-up reflection sessions in pilot schools.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analyzed using computer program with descriptive statistics (Mean, S.D., percentage). Interpretation criteria: 4.51–5.00 = very high, 3.51–4.50 = high, 2.51–3.50 = moderate, 1.51–2.50 = low, 1.00–1.50 = very low. Qualitative data analyzed through thematic content analysis following systematic coding, theme identification, and pattern recognition procedures.

Ethical Considerations

Research adhered to Research Ethics Committee standards. All participants provided informed consent. Confidentiality maintained through identification codes. Participation was voluntary with withdrawal rights.

Research Results

Demographic Information

Before analyzing the main results, demographic data of respondents were summarized. Among 450 respondents, 67% were students (n=300), 22% teachers (n=100), and 11% administrators (n=50). Female participants accounted for 62%, male 38%. The majority (58%) were aged 16–25, reflecting the secondary education demographic. Most teachers had 5–10 years of experience, while administrators had an average of 12 years in educational management.

Objective 1. Current Situation, Needs, and Problems

Results showed significant consensus on underdeveloped strategic status. Survey data revealed three critical challenges ("three absences"):

1. Strategic Ambiguity: 83% reported lack of systematic planning and vision alignment. Only 17% of schools possessed documented strategic plans extending beyond one year. Programs operate without clear long-term goals or integration with national education agendas.

2. Operational Fragmentation: 78% cited insufficient teacher preparation and professional development. Data revealed 62% reliance on short-term Chinese volunteers (average tenure 1.8 years), with only 34% of Thai teachers receiving regular intercultural pedagogy training.

3. Cultural Relevance Disconnect: 72% identified weak intercultural integration. Curriculum analysis showed 68% focus on grammar/vocabulary memorization, only 32% on cultural knowledge and intercultural skills.

Table 1 Stakeholder Perceptions of Current Challenges (N=450)

Challenge Category	Administrators (n=50) Mean (S.D.)	Teachers (n=100) Mean (S.D.)	Students (n=300) Mean (S.D.)	Overall Mean (S.D.)
Lack of strategic planning	4.65 (0.48)	4.58 (0.51)	–	4.62 (0.50)
Teacher preparation gaps	4.72 (0.45)	4.68 (0.47)	–	4.70 (0.46)
Weak intercultural integration	4.45 (0.58)	4.52 (0.54)	3.89 (0.71)	4.29 (0.61)
Limited digital resources	4.38 (0.62)	4.41 (0.59)	4.12 (0.68)	4.30 (0.63)
Insufficient policy support	4.68 (0.47)	4.72 (0.45)	–	4.70 (0.46)

Note: Scale 1–5 (5 = highest concern); (–) = not applicable

Students reported high learning enthusiasm (Mean = 4.28/5, S.D. = 0.65) but low confidence in long-term application (Mean = 3.21/5, S.D. = 0.89). Teachers expressed strong needs for clearer policy direction (Mean = 4.56/5), sustainable professional pathways (Mean = 4.48/5), and digital learning support (Mean = 4.35/5).

Objective 2. Comprehensive Strategy Formulation

Results showed successful formulation of comprehensive strategies structured across three hierarchical levels forming the *4–6–3 Integrated Strategic Model*:

Macro Level: Four Strategic Phases

1. Situation Analysis (Study): Comprehensive diagnostic using SWOT analysis, needs assessment, and stakeholder interviews
2. Strategic Design (Draft): Formulation of vision, mission, values, and objectives aligned with national policy and SDGs
3. Implementation (Try-out): Operationalization through curriculum integration, teacher development, digital platforms, and partnerships
4. Evaluation and Sustainability (Evaluate): Continuous monitoring using KPIs, reflection, and policy feedback loops

Meso Level: Six Strategic Dimensions

1. Vision: "Building globally competent Thai citizens through Chinese language education fostering intercultural understanding"
2. Values: Inclusivity, Intercultural Respect, Sustainable Learning
3. Focus Areas: Curriculum Innovation, Teacher Competency, Digital Integration, Partnership Development, Learner Motivation, Quality Assurance

4. Strategic Objectives: Measurable SMART goals for each focus area (e.g., increase certified Thai teachers from 34% to 70% within 3 years)

5. Action Plans: Concrete sequenced activities with timelines, responsibilities, resources, and risk mitigation

6. KPIs: Quantitative and qualitative measures including proficiency scores, ICC assessments, satisfaction surveys, retention rates

Micro Level: Three Learning Stages

1. Pre-Learning: Orientation, motivation-building, intercultural awareness, goal setting, diagnostic assessment

2. During-Learning: Communicative practice, intercultural simulations, collaborative projects, technology-enhanced learning, differentiated instruction

3. Post-Learning: Summative evaluation, reflection, authentic application, portfolio development, feedback

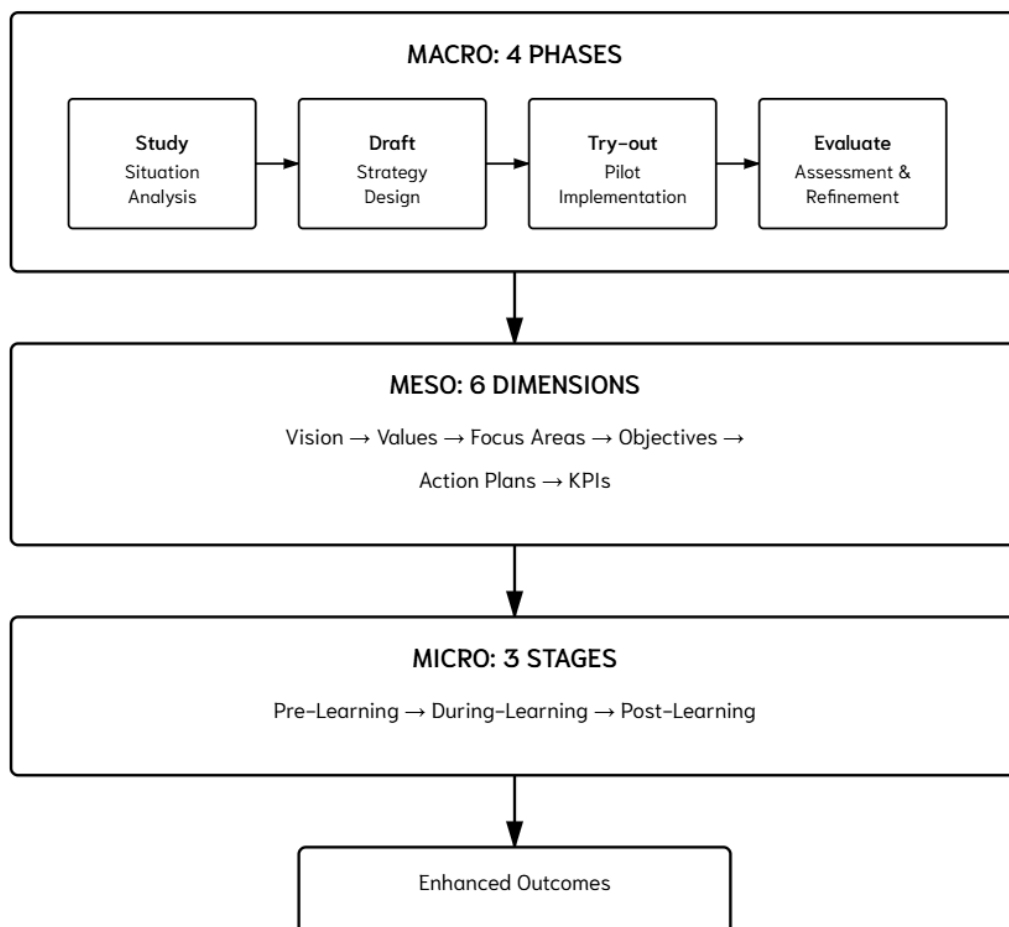


Figure 2 The Formulated Strategies Structure

Objective 3. Expert Validation and Pilot Results

Results showed very high appropriateness based on expert evaluation and successful pilot implementation.

Expert Validation (n=15)

Fifteen experts evaluated the formulated strategies achieving overall appropriateness Mean = 4.63, S.D. = 0.47 (very high).

Table 2 Expert Evaluation by Strategic Component (n=15)

Strategic Component	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Overall Strategies	4.63	0.47	Very High
Vision Statement	4.80	0.41	Very High
Core Values	4.69	0.48	Very High
Strategic Objectives	4.72	0.45	Very High
Focus Areas	4.58	0.50	Very High
Action Plans	4.55	0.51	Very High
KPIs	4.48	0.52	High
Evaluation Criteria			
Theoretical Coherence	4.73	0.46	Very High
Practical Applicability	4.60	0.51	Very High
Contextual Relevance	4.67	0.48	Very High
Sustainability	4.71	0.47	Very High

Experts commended theoretical integration, systemic coherence, and contextual appropriateness. Minor recommendations included more specific resource guidance and clearer KPI measurement procedures.

Pilot Implementation (5 Schools, 3 Months)

Implementation involved 45 teachers and 240 students across five diverse schools.

Teacher Outcomes: 90% reported increased instructional planning clarity. Pre/Post surveys showed improvements in strategic thinking capacity (Mean = 3.12 to Mean = 4.35, $p < .001$), intercultural teaching confidence (Mean = 3.28 to Mean = 4.18, $p < .001$), and collaborative planning (Mean = 2.95 to Mean = 4.22, $p < .001$).

Student Outcomes: 85% expressed greater motivation and cultural empathy. Engagement metrics showed increased intercultural activity participation (78% vs. 42% baseline), homework

completion (68% to 87%), and class attendance (81% to 93%). ICC assessments indicated significant improvements in cultural knowledge (Mean = 2.87 to Mean = 3.95, $p < .001$) and intercultural attitudes (Mean = 3.15 to Mean = 4.08, $p < .001$).

Administrator Outcomes: 100% reported improved Thai Chinese teacher collaboration. Implementation fidelity averaged 4.35/5.00. Challenges included time constraints (80% of schools), resource limitations in rural areas (60%), and initial resistance from veteran teachers (35%).

Discussions

The results of this research demonstrate clear alignment with previous studies while contributing novel insights into strategic coherence in language education.

Strategic Coherence and Integration

The study confirmed Thailand's Chinese language programs suffer from fragmentation (Suryadinata, 2024). The formulated 4–6–3 Model addresses this through vertical and horizontal alignment—connecting national policy, institutional operations, and classroom practice—consistent with Fullan and Quinn's (2022) coherence framework.

Intercultural Competence as Core

The integration of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) was essential. Similar to findings by Wu et al. (2023) and Sarwari et al. (2024), embedding intercultural learning significantly enhances motivation and engagement. Pilot schools revealed 85% improvement in cultural empathy, supporting Lee et al. (2023) who found intercultural inclusion improves cognitive and affective outcomes.

Leadership and Professional Development

Consistent with Bush (2020) and Bantilan et al. (2023), leadership empowerment proved vital. Schools practicing distributed leadership outperformed hierarchical ones. Continuous reflective professional development—built sustainability and strengthened collaboration.

Digital and Sustainable Dimensions

Rural resource disparities confirm UNESCO (2023) findings that equitable technology integration remains a challenge. The model's sustainability element emphasizes capacity building and contextual adaptation rather than dependency on external resources, resonating with Xie and De Dios (2024).

Policy–Practice Connection

The strategies foster synergy between policy formulation and classroom implementation. This aligns with Pongsin et al. (2023), demonstrating Thailand’s potential as a regional education hub when strategic coherence is achieved.

New Knowledge from Research

The research generates significant knowledge through comprehensive strategy formulation providing systematic, evidence–based approaches to promoting international Chinese language education.

Key Strategic Principles:

Strategic Coherence: Language programs require explicit alignment across policy, institutional, and classroom levels. Fragmented approaches undermine sustainability.

Intercultural Foundation: ICC must be embedded as core outcome, not peripheral enrichment, requiring intentional design and authentic encounters.

Participatory Leadership: Distributed leadership and stakeholder engagement enhance implementation and sustainability more than top–down mandates.

Sustainable Design: Long–term success depends on local capacity building, culturally responsive pedagogy, and institutional partnerships rather than external dependency.

Evidence–Based Improvement: Systematic KPI monitoring enables data–driven decision–making and continuous improvement.

Implementation Requirements: Effective strategy formulation requires comprehensive needs assessment, theoretical grounding, iterative design, expert validation, pilot testing, ongoing support, and change management.

Conclusion

This research successfully formulated and validated comprehensive strategies for advancing international Chinese language education in Thai secondary schools. The integrated 4–6–3 Strategic Model bridges policy and practice, ensuring sustainable, intercultural, and participatory education management. Expert validation ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 0.47$) and pilot outcomes (teacher clarity +90%, student motivation +85%) confirm the model’s effectiveness. The study contributes theoretical integration and practical guidance applicable across ASEAN contexts.

Suggestions

For Policy Implementation

1. The Ministry of Education should institutionalize the formulated strategies as official guideline for foreign language strategic planning, providing implementation toolkits and technical support through OBEC.
2. Establish National Framework for Chinese Language Teacher Professional Development emphasizing intercultural competence, digital literacy, and strategic planning, with clear career pathways and certification standards.
3. Develop standardized yet flexible KPIs for periodic quality audits enabling accountability while allowing contextual adaptation, with annual reporting informing policy refinement.
4. Create formal Thai Chinese partnership networks facilitating institutional collaborations through MOUs, joint research, teacher exchanges, and curriculum co-development.

For School-Level Practice

5. Adopt participatory leadership engaging teachers, students, and community in strategic planning through stakeholder consultation and shared decision-making.
6. Integrate authentic cultural exchanges as core activities including sister schools, student exchanges, online collaborative projects, and community intercultural events.
7. Invest in digital infrastructure and teacher training ensuring equitable technology access, particularly supporting rural schools through mobile solutions and offline resources.

For Research Development

8. Conduct longitudinal studies tracking 5–10-year impacts on student proficiency, intercultural competence, and career outcomes.
9. Expand research regionally to other Thai provinces and ASEAN nations examining strategy transferability and required adaptations.
10. Investigate strategy applicability to other foreign languages (English, Japanese, Korean) and explore emerging technology integration (AI, VR, learning analytics).

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