

Aspects of Globalization in Higher Education: Why Chinese Students Choose to Study in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of technology and ICT, globalization has gathered speed. To help people adapt to globalization and thrive in it, education has become a very important channel, especially higher education, all the more when it involves studying overseas. Studying abroad is a good experience to help students become globalized citizen. Chinese students are amongst the biggest group of students in higher education studying outside their home country. In this paper, the researcher uses the Push and Pull Model attempts to determine the main factors influencing Chinese students' choice of studying in Thailand in higher learning institutions. It was found that Chinese students who come to Thailand are most concerned with the international environment and use of English as a medium of instruction. The results also show that an international studying environment is becoming more and more important to Chinese students.

Keywords: globalization, higher education, Chinese students, Thai higher education institutions.

บทคัดย่อ

ด้วยการพัฒนาของเทคโนโลยีอย่างรวดเร็วโลกาภิวัตน์จึงรวมตัวอย่างรวดเร็ว เพื่อช่วยเหลือประชาชนในการปรับตัวเข้าถึงโลกาภิวัตน์ การศึกษากลายเป็นช่องทางที่มีความสำคัญอย่างยิ่ง โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งกับการศึกษาระดับสูงเมื่อเกี่ยวเนื่องกับการศึกษาต่อต่างประเทศ การศึกษาต่อต่างประเทศเป็นประสบการณ์ที่ดีและช่วยให้นักเรียนกลายเป็นประชาชนของยุคโลกาภิวัตน์ นักศึกษาชาวจีนเป็นนักเรียนกลุ่มใหญ่ของการศึกษาระดับสูงที่ศึกษาอยู่ต่างถิ่นจากประเทศบ้านของตนเอง บทความชิ้นนี้ผู้วิจัยใช้ทั้งรูปแบบกระตุ้นและรับในการระบอบองค์ประกอบหลักที่มีอิทธิพลต่อทางเลือกในการศึกษาของนักศึกษาชาวจีนในสถาบันการศึกษาระดับสูงของประเทศไทย การวิจัยพบว่านักศึกษาชาวจีนที่เข้ามาศึกษาในประเทศไทยมีความวิตกกังวลกับการเรียนในสภาพแวดล้อมนานาชาติและการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นสื่อหลักในการสื่อสาร ผลการวิจัยยังแสดงให้เห็นสภาพแวดล้อมในการศึกษานานาชาติซึ่งเริ่มมีความสำคัญมากยิ่งขึ้นกับนักศึกษาชาวจีน

คำสำคัญ: โลกาภิวัตน์, การศึกษาระดับสูง, นักศึกษาชาวจีน, สถาบันการศึกษาระดับสูงของไทย

Introduction

It is a widely held view that we are living in a globalized world today. Evidence of globalization can be found in examples of everyday life. However, globalization is an uneven process, people living in different countries, have different feelings to globalization. Social structures and cultural zones could affect people's perception to globalization. Scholars also hold different meanings of globalization. Scholars also disagree with some other's view to globalization. Despite strong and different opinions by scholars, the essential components of globalization include: the creation of new and multiplication of exiting social networks; the expansion and the stretching of social relations; the intensification and acceleration of social exchange and activities etc. Hence, in this research, globalization could be defined as: A multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch, and intensify worldwide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connection between the local and the distant. Cultural is one important part during the process to become globalization all over the world. Cultural globalization made possible for people in different countries to have the opportunities to enjoy different forms of cultural expressions.

China, a country with the largest population in the world is increasingly playing a leading role in globalization for different reasons.

The OECD defined international students as those who travel to another country with the purpose of tertiary education. In 2007, there were 3 million international students in the world, of whom 2.5 million are studying in OECD countries. From the year 2000, international students all over the world increased by 59%, with an annual increase of 7%.

Since 1975, the number of international students enrolled abroad rose sharply.

The Chinese international students in the world and Thailand

From a survey done by OECD, we learned that students from Asia and Europe accounted for the majority of students studying away from their home country as international students. Students from France, Germany, Japan and Korea represent the largest groups of international students enrolled in OECD countries, at 2.2%, 3.2%, 2.3% and 4.4% of the total, respectively. This was followed by students from Canada and the United States at 1.8% and 2.0%, respectively

Among international students originating from OECD partner countries, students from China represent by far the largest group, with 16.3% of all international students enrolled in the OECD countries (not including an additional 1.4% from Hong Kong, China) (Appendix). Their destination of choice is the United States. This was followed closely by Japan, with 21.6% and 17.5%, respectively. Of all international Chinese students studying abroad, students from China are followed by those from India (6.2%), Malaysia (1.8%), Morocco (1.7%) and the Russian Federation (1.4%). A significant number of Asian students studying abroad also come from Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

From the research done by OECD, we can see that the first destination country for higher education of Chinese students in the year of 2007 is Korea (72.3%), followed by Japan (63.7%) and New Zealand (41.0%). The tradition for higher education chosen by Chinese students such as the U.S., UK and Australia are just 16.6%, 14.1% and 23.8%. The same report also stated that some other European countries, such as Finland and Germany were also fast becoming favorite destinations for Chinese students studying abroad for higher degrees.

For Chinese students studying overseas, one of reasons is the language studying environment. From the OECD analysis, there is a high portion of Chinese students enrolled in English speaking countries, for example in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. One exception is Japan. Japan is a country close to China, there is no distance problem to the Chinese students. Secondly, the traditional Chinese culture were kept and protected well in Japan. Thirdly, the trading between China and Japan was increasing heavily during the past few years. Chinese students can find a job in Japan or China easily. Some other reasons like the technology, the living standard and the degree being recognized by China are some other considerations of the Chinese students.

The data from the Royal Thai Consulate—General in Kunming stated, there are exceeding 9000 Chinese students studying in Thailand. Chinese students comprise indeed the largest group of international students in Thailand. The report also pointed out that the top five countries of origin of international students are from China, Myanmar, Vietnam, North America and Laos. The international students are studying Business Administration, Marketing Management and Thai language and Education in 44 universities all over Thailand. In 2008, the office of the Higher Education Commission conducted a survey on the enrolment of foreign students in Thai higher education institutions. The results of the survey showed that 16,361 international students enrolled in 96 Thai higher education institutions. The top five institutions that had the highest enrollment of foreign students are Assumption University (2,558 students), Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (1,329 students), Mahidol University (1,069 students), Burapha University (591 students), and Rangsit University (487 students). The popular fields of study among foreign students are Thai language, Business Administration, English language, and International Business and Marketing. (HEI, Thailand, 2008)

Development of student numbers in China higher education

Before 1999, only the very fortunate ones had a chance to be admitted to a higher education institution. By 2005, the total number of students who were enrolled in higher education institute exceeded 23 million (Bie, 2007; Zhou, 2006). Despite this increase in enrollment figures, access to higher education in China remains a very competitive endeavor. (Finnish National Board of Education, 2007). In 2007, the Ministry of Education of China reported that about 10.1 million people applied for the National College Entrance Exam, but only 5.67 million were accepted by university or college. (Approx, 56%)

Students and scholars were first sent to study abroad about 100 years ago (Hui, 2005; Wang, 2002). In those days, they were all supported by Chinese government foundations. In return, they were to pay back through their service to their home country in nation building from whatever they had learned. From 1978, under the reform policies and the vision of Deng Xiaoping, China expanded the scope of Chinese students studying abroad. The number of students studying abroad increased from 860, in 1987, to the present 700,200 students and scholars in 108 countries all over the world (Ministry of Education, The P.R.C., (MOE) 2006; Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Marginson, 2001; Mazzrol & Sontar, 2002).

The present study

Students studying in 3 universities in Bangkok have been chosen to represent the target population in the present study. The research will only focus on the full time university students which include bachelor, master and doctoral students, mostly in the business discipline.

Chinese students under the influence of globalization have become the biggest group of international students in recent years. Under the same influence of globalization, higher education institutions all over the world are facing tougher and tougher competition to recruit students in operating their establishment. Therefore, the education market is like any other market with their services to sell, and the international students are their customers. The Chinese students have many countries they can go to continue their studies.

The research attempts to understand the key factors which affect the students in making a decision in which country to pursue their higher education from the push factors, such as to improve quality of life, limited university choice in China, etc. and from the pull factors such as the cost of living in the host country, tuition fees, etc.

In China today, different families depending on their background and the number of children in the family, have different choices available to them. The rich family may send their children to the U.S., or the UK, but the average family can only afford universities which give good value to their money. More and more students come to Thailand each year. With the multiple purposes of studying abroad today, the reasons for studying may be quite different.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the following research questions:

1. Why do the Chinese students want to study in Thailand and what is the perception of Chinese students of Thailand?
2. What are the main factors which drive them study in Thailand?
3. Do they feel they have made a good decision?

Literature Review

The origin of international education comes from Europe. Among the earliest testimony of the participation of "foreign" students in Greek higher learning is a comment from Socrates, noting (in the fifth-century BCE) the arrival in Athens of the Sophists (sophists, or "teacher of wisdom"). Later, One significant scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam (1465-1536), a philosopher and theologian, lived and worked through Europe. Linked to him, the Europe Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University students (ERASMUS) was founded in 1987, to help in the mobility of students and teaching staff in Europe. Colonialism is also an important factor leading to international education. The practical model of a European university was introduced to Asia, South America and Africa, in a trend which has its beginning from the 18th century and continues to the present day. (de Wit & Knight, 1999)

North American international education had its beginning with the United States International. John Hopkins University founded in 1876, which was influenced by the English colleges of Oxford and Cambridge and the German research university (de Wit, 2002). Prior to World War I, universities in North America were founded by churches or church related organizations (Bu, 2003). After World War I, the Institute of International Education (IIE) was founded with a mission of promoting peace and understanding. During the early years of The IIE, exchange students from universities in Europe formed international relations clubs in American university campuses. Another important project of international education in the United States is the Fulbright Program established by the Congress, in 1946. After World War II, many countries owed money to the United States., prominently China, Myanmar and some Europe countries. The program aims to exchange American students with these countries, since the launch of the project, more than 1000 international students have been to the United States as Fulbright scholars, and only 20-30 American students went to these countries in return.

The research on international education is mostly concerned with three clusters: socio-political, economic and academic (Sanda Meiras, 2004). Socio-Political of research dominated in the early years of international research. The economic research on international education mostly happened after the 1990s. In recent years international education has been more concerned about the negative effect of international security. The 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York twin towers hold students visas in 2001. Most recently, there is very tight competition in the international education market. More and more countries tend to frame higher education as a commodity. For example, research (Pimpa, N. 2003) on how Thai students make decisions about international education; Tim Mazzzrol, Geoffrey Soutar, and Michael Sim Yaw Seng (2003) analyzed the emergence of higher education as a market; Nicoline Frolich (2006) examined the economic justification for internationalization in Norwegian universities; and Philip Albach (2004) charted the post-2001 decline in the number of international students studying in the United States because of the restriction on visas, as well as the increase beginning of mobility, and employment. Simmon Marginson and Mark Considine (2000) and Robert Rhoades and Carlos Torres (2006) analyzed the shift of higher education from a "public" national good to a private consumer good when decreased public support created a situation in which universities were compelled to try to attract more full-fee paying international students to make up for growing budget deficits (Duckett, 2004; Marginson, 2004).

The next research trajectories in international higher education focused on the academic issues. Researchers pay more attention to the international students' experience. For example Jo Morrión and colleagues (Marrison, Merrick, Higgs, & LeMatais, 2005) who studied the performance of international students in the United Kingdom; Anna Smolentseva (2004) and Veena Bhalla (2005) gave an over view of international students in Russia and India. Takae Ichimoto (2004) examined the experience of Japanese women in Australian universities. There are many researches on the academic performance of international students in the United States (Akande & Slawson, 2000; Douglas & Jones-Rikkens, 2001; Freed, 1995; Allen & Herron, 2003; Bacon, 2002; Jurasak, Lamson, & O'Maley, 1996; Shannon, 1995; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995; Whalen, 1996). Research on international curriculum was also growing: such as Anthony Welch, Rui Yang, and Chartse Wolhuter's (2004) studied the progress of internationalization at a rural, historical black South African university; Simon Marginson and Erinawati Sawir's (2006) comparative analysis of universities Indonesia and the Australian National University. There was also a comparative analysis of universities in China, Japan and the Netherland (Fu T. H., 2006).

Choice and decision making in higher education is an area of growing research interest, primarily because higher education has been transformed from a domesticated, centrally funded, non marketized entity to a highly marketized and competitive environment (Soutar and Turner, 2002). On a global scale, this transformation has been driven by world economies which have tended to embrace the idea of market forces (Mazzarol, 1999). At country or national levels, expansion, diversification and growing competition have been identified as the "overarching forces" driving the marketization of higher education (Smith et al., 1995).

In expanded systems of higher education, in which institutions are increasingly being required to shed off the "spending model" and in turn to develop a business model which demonstrates "balanced corporate books" (Clarke, 2003). here there is a huge diversity of higher education products developed to cater for an increasingly diverse higher education market.

Students now have a wide range of options from which to choose to undertake complex decisions in order to make the right choices. Choice is an iterative concept (Foskett, 1999) which is clearly a complex and multi factorial process involving a wide range of

influences that bear upon a decision. Early structural models (Gambetta, 1996; Roberts, 1984 and Ryrje 1981) explain choice in the context of institutional, economic and cultural constraints imposed upon choosers whose decisions can be predicted along socio-economic, cultural and ethnic lines. Such models have been used to predict and explain participation and progression of students into higher education institutions. The central argument here is that choice is not a rational process.

Economic models of choice such as those developed by Becker (1975) have been developed to counter this argument and are based on assumptions that students make rational choices based on precise or imprecise calculations of the relative rates of returns associated with participating in higher education. A third group of models are based on the importance of personality and subjective judgment in the decision-making process. Hodkinson et al. (1996), for example, have argued that "choice is a rational process that is constrained by a realistic perception of opportunities and shaped by individual personality" (Payne, 2003, p. 13). Hemsley-Brown (1999) has endorsed this view in her study in which she concluded that while pupils often give utilitarian reasons for making choices, these were usually filtered through layers of preconceptions emanating from influences in family background, culture and life history. Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (2001) have developed an integrated model which brings together elements of these three models in which they argue that while choice is never a completely rational action, it is nonetheless not irrational or random and involves three broad elements of the context of choice. The key choice influencers and the choosers themselves from a complex dynamic in which decision making becomes a reflexive process.

In this research, choice will be defined as an expression of preferences that exists at a particular moment of the decision-making cycle of the student. Decision making is broadly seen as a problem solving process undertaken by applicants in the process of making choices. Models of decision making have been developed around what is commonly called the purchase behavior of consumers. Purchase behavior is generally seen as encompassing a series of stages including need arousal, information search and evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and the post purchase feeling (Kotler, 2003). Chapman (1986) was amongst the first to apply buying behavior theory to education suggesting that in selecting an institution or subject of study, students and their parents will pass through a number of uniquely definable stages.

- The "Push- Pull" Model

The role of higher education in the increasing globalization of trade in goods and services is getting more and more important. Altbach (2002) pointed out that more than 1.6 million students study outside their home countries. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of international students increased by 41%. The numbers were predicted to grow to 7.2 million by 2025(international development program (IDP), 2006B; Boehm, Davis, Mearns, & Pearce, 2002). Chinese students studying abroad have in recent years become a very big proportion of the world-wide international students in higher learning institutions. At the end of the twentieth century, higher education expansion developed faster in most advanced countries and some developing countries. China is also following one of these trends. More and more Chinese students are studying abroad. Why do Chinese students want to study abroad? Many responses claim that primarily the existing education system cannot meet the quality expectations of the Chinese students in a very rapidly developing environment. The Chinese students expect more and more advanced knowledge and want to learn from the experiences of the developed countries. Huge numbers of students are studying abroad. In this background, what role does the Thai higher education play for Chinese foreign students? Why do Chinese students come to study in Thailand? De Wit (2002) identified that more and more universities and academic

institutions all over the world are working hard to receive more and more international students and building relationship with these countries, an especially global image. For example, the Hong Kong University of science and technology, China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) in Shanghai, China, European Institute for Business Administration (INSEAD) in Singapore.

The change of Chinese students' studies abroad in these years can be stated under these few points: (Li, M. & Bragon, M. 2007)

- Government with less control sending and receiving oversea Chinese students.
- Government does more work on regulation and fascinators.
- Market forces play an important role in matching demand and supply
- Students have more channel options to go abroad to study; they do not just have to rely on government and institutional sponsorship.

This research intends to understand broadly the globalization of higher education and specially the Chinese oversea students in Thailand. The reasons why Chinese university students choose to study in Thailand are assessed as well; the factors that lead them in making the decision are explained. Many Chinese students leave their home country to study abroad influenced by the "push and pull" factors (Mazzarol, 2002). This research adapted and modified the classic decision making framework, and used it to study the Chinese students who have chosen to study in Thailand University.

Research Methodology

This research uses a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative and quantitative methods both have inherent advantage and disadvantage. Many researchers have spent lots of effort to make the combination work. According to Villar and Marcelo (1992), progress in social research is based on applying various methods, and not adapting questions to the possibility of a specific methodological approach. The authors refer to the suggestions of Greene, Caracelli & Graham (1989) who had conducted their research within the framework of a "mixed-method" design.

In the present study, the author will also follow the former investigations by Held and Marvakis (1992). A two step process will be used in the research design, firstly studying the contact with some of the representative upon the completion of their questionnaire survey; and secondly, continuing on with the qualitative interview. The target population of this research is the international students from China in universities in Thailand. According to a survey done by the Thai Higher Education Commission in 2009, 19,052 international students have studied in 103 Thai higher education institutions. On a basis the number of Chinese students who are studying in Thailand is no bigger than 19,000. A theoretical, sample size with a 95 percent level of certainty should be 382 (Anderson, 1998).

Statistical Instrument of Data

ANOVA stands for variance, which tests for significant mean difference in variables among multiple groups. (Jennings, 1995) the ANOVA is based on the same logic of T-test, but ANOVA is applied in more complex design.

Pearson's correlation coefficient is known as Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient. Pearson's correlation coefficient is the method of measuring the correlation. This method was developed by Karl Pearson and is therefore named Pearson's correlation coefficient. Pearson's correlation coefficient is known as the best method of measuring the correlation, because it is based on the method of covariance. Pearson's correlation coefficient gives information about

the degree of correlation as well as the direction of the correlation. In this research, the researcher would conduct qualitative study by means of personal observation and personal interview with some selected Chinese students. The qualitative part would give additional information and explanation to the finding of the qualitative part. The interview questions can be found in the Appendix.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quality of life	384	1	5	3.77	1.061
Limited resources	384	1	5	3.89	1.023
Following	384	1	5	3.53	1.103
Find job	384	1	5	3.52	1.093
Recruiting agent	384	1	5	3.79	1.077
Knowledge skill	384	1	5	3.77	1.015
Valid N (listwise)	384				

From Table 1 the push factors that are considered as important by Chinese students to choose Thailand as an oversea study destination are: "I would probably be able to have a better quality of life if I were to graduate from a Thai university than a Chinese university (m=3.77)." There are very few universities that offer an international program in China universities (m=3.89)."I simply follow what others are doing when it comes to the choice of studying abroad in Thai universities (m= 3.53)." It would probably be easier for me to find a job anywhere (especially in China) if I were to graduate from a Thai university (m= 3.52)." "My choice of program in Thai University was great influenced by recruiting agent." (m= 3.79)." "Studying for a degree in a Thai university provides me with knowledge and skills that I cannot receive from studying at a university in China (m= 3.77)."

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Land of Smiles	384	1	5	4.04	1.026
Country information	384	1	5	3.88	.990
Friendly to China	384	1	5	4.02	.922
Personal safety	384	1	5	3.86	.817
Teacher's ability	384	1	5	4.04	.981
Afford to pay	384	1	5	3.93	.914
University reputation	384	1	5	4.08	.875
Meet requirement	384	1	5	3.75	.893
Degree recognition	384	1	5	3.91	.920
International environment	384	1	5	4.05	.875
Valid N (listwise)	384				

From Table 2, the pull factors that are considered as important by Chinese students to choose Thailand as an oversea study destination

are: "The land of Smiles" gives me a positive image of Thailand and the Thai people (m=4.04)." "Thai people, Thai culture and their friendly smiles are major reasons that many foreign (Chinese) students enjoy studying in Thailand (m= 3.88)." "Thailand's unstable political situation gives me enough reason not to recommend to my friends to study in a Thai university (m=4.02)." "I value very highly my personal safety and the security of my belonging in Thailand in deciding whether to study in Thailand (m=3.86)." "Teacher's ability to help me in learning new knowledge and skills is very important in my choice of university in Thailand (m=4.04)." "I can afford to pay Thailand's university's tuition fees and living expenses (m=3.93)." "I pay attention to the reputation of my university in its overall ranking in Thailand (m=4.08)." "Entrance requirements in Thai universities are quite easy to meet (m=3.75)." "Thai degrees being fully recognized by the Chinese government is one very important reason why I am studying in Thailand (m=3.91)." "The opportunity to be able to study in an international environment in a Thai university excited me (m=4.05)."

Summary of demographic characteristics

Table 3: Summary of respondents' demographic characteristics

Respondents Demographic	Findings
Districts	North Eastern China (3.4%), Northern China (7.8%), Central China (6.0%), South Western China (40.1%), South Eastern China (36.2%), others (6.5%).
Gender	Male (41.7%), Female (58.3%).
Age	Under 20(15.9%), 20-25 (81.5%), Over 25(2.6%).
Education level	Undergraduate (84.9%), Graduate (15.1%).

Discussion and implication

The mean scores for the push factors on the perception of Chinese students choosing Thailand as their overseas study destination. 3.77 for probably being able to have a better quality of life if he or she was to graduate from a Thai university than graduating from a university in China. 3.89 for very few Chinese universities that offer an international program. 3.53 for the reason of following what others are doing when it comes to a choice of studying abroad in Thai universities. 3.52 for it being easier to find a job anywhere (especially in China) if graduated from a Thai university. 3.79 for the reason that choosing a program in a Thai university was greatly influenced by a recruiting agent. 3.77 for studying a degree in a Thai university which provides knowledge and skills not able to be received from studying in a university in China.

From the analysis above, we can say that the first important item of push factors is very few international programs are offered in China. Second is the role of recruiting agent. And third is the skill and knowledge learned in Thai universities.

The mean for pull factors on the perception of Chinese students choosing Thailand as their overseas study destination. 4.04 for The "Land of Smiles" giving a positive image of Thailand and the Thai people. 3.88 for the importance of having information about the chosen country for future studies. 4.02 for the choice of Thailand for future studies because it is a country that has friendly ties with China. 3.86 for the very high value given to personal safety and security belongings in deciding whether to study in Thailand. 4.04 for teachers' ability to help me learn new knowledge and skills being very important in my choice of university in Thailand. 3.93 for being able

to afford paying Thai university's tuition fees and living expenses. 4.08 for paying attention to the reputation of my university in its overall ranking in Thailand. 3.75 for being able to meet all the entrance requirement of a Thai university easily. 3.91 for Thai academic degrees being fully recognized by the Chinese government. 4.05 for the exciting opportunity to study in the Thai international environment.

From these data, the researcher finds that the most important pull factor on Chinese students is the reputation of the Thai university. The second is the international environment exciting the students. The third is the teacher's ability and the positive image of Thailand.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The importance of international programs: from the quantitative survey research, the researcher found the important issue that China does not have enough international education resources for choice by Chinese students. With the globalization trend, and the development of China, international communication becomes more and more important. Through the internet, students are confronted by different cultures every day. They want to be a part of the international or globalization trend, so seek an international education environment. Because of the limitations of the Chinese government and the social ideology system, total English environment learning is not likely in today's China. This reality creates a good opportunity for the Thai higher education institutions to attract more Chinese students to Thailand.

The cost: from my interview, I found that most of the Chinese students worry about the cost issue, Even if their family can afford the tuition fees. Maybe this is a Chinese characteristic or the result of China's one child policy, or again perhaps because of the high competition amongst Chinese workers, they don't want to "waste" the money from their parents' hard work. As well, because of the competition of job finding in China, some of the students who return from the United States still cannot find a job. The Chinese students when choosing a destination change tend to be more rational, they start to think about the word "value". Thai higher education institutions, give the students high value for money compared to some other countries. This is one of the reasons Chinese students choose to study in Thailand. Some negative news in the Chinese media has said that some Chinese families spend thousands of dollars to send their children to study in western countries, but when they return to China, some of them still cannot speak English well. These kinds of negative reports also push the Chinese parents to think carefully before making education choices for their children.

Knowledge: from the research, most Chinese students worry about how much knowledge or skill they will get from their oversea study experience. Some of the parents and students don't worry so much about the financial issue, homesickness or the distance issue. Both the parents and students want to use the new knowledge to empower themselves. So, Thai higher education should concern itself with the quality control of their school education system and teacher's qualification. University as a service supplier should satisfy the "customers". From a consumer behavior view point, the word of mouth is a much more important advertising medium. In China, so huge a country, target population strategies don't always work. The economic development levels and family incomes and so forth can be totally different. Students who get knowledge and who are satisfied with the university's services are the best advertisement to the university.

The reputation of the university: China has a lot of universities. The students, who come to Thailand, can easily gain entry into a Chinese university. Compared to Chinese second or third level universities, Thai universities rank higher in the world. Students are concerned to study in a university with a better reputation. This

reputation will stay with the students' all life long, so Thai universities should place stronger emphasis on their universities' reputations. In a globalization context, university reputation is not just a concern of Thai student; it is also a concern of the international students.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research was undertaken to test the push and pull factors on the perception of Chinese students choosing a Thai higher education destination. In this research, 16 factors of push and pull theory were chosen. Generally, push and pull should have more factors. Therefore, it is recommended in the future, that researchers test more factors, such as the family income of the Chinese students, the occupation of their parents, the monthly spending of the Chinese students to obtain an even more accurate understanding of the Chinese students and their background. Such research will help Thai higher education institutions to form better strategies.

Another recommended research would be about the purchase behavior of Chinese students. For example, what is the difference between the purchase behavior of Thai and Chinese students? Finally, with more and more Indian students coming to Thailand to study, a comparison of the push and pull factors between Chinese and Indian students would also be a valuable topic to research.

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