

# On International Education and Career Development: A Study of the Chinese Students Undertaking UK Higher Education

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**Abstract:** The globalization of education has become an important educational phenomenon that is currently occurring. Although attitudes towards the globalization of education are mixed, its existence does have positive implications. Because the globalization of education can not only meet the desire and pursuit of advanced knowledge of individuals in the increasingly competitive society, but also meet the survival and development needs of countries in the world environment, which means educational globalization has realized the value form of meeting the dual needs of individuals and countries. As a result, more and more international students are emerging with the globalization of education. This dissertation discusses the vigorous development of international education in China in the context of economic globalization and the internationalization of higher education. This dissertation focuses on Chinese students studying in the UK, and explores the expectations and cognition of Chinese students before studying abroad, the challenges and problems encountered in the UK after graduation and after returning to China, the challenges and problems encountered after graduation in the UK and after returning to China, etc. Finally, the practical exploration of the value of studying abroad education is put forward in combination with the advantages and disadvantages of international education, career development, study abroad background, and interview answers of international students.

**Keywords:** Globalization ; Educational globalization ; Career development ; International education ; Study abroad ; Higher Education

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## Introduction

### 1. On International Education and Career Development : A Study of the Chinese Students Undertaking UK Higher Education

In the era of globalization, higher education plays an increasingly important role in developing competitive skills, cultivating creativity, and ensuring that the best jobs are obtained and retained. Education helps to form new “cultural capital” and produce new “habitation”(Bourdieu, 1997).<sup>[3]</sup>“ Cultural capital ” is one of the important theoretical concepts proposed by Bourdieu in 1997. It is embodied in three forms: implicit, materialized and institutionalized forms of capital. In this article, “ cultural capital ” specifically refers to the English proficiency, English communication skills, cultural and technological knowledge, and scientific research capabilities of Chinese international students. Especially the relevant cultural capital of the diploma obtained after completing the international education. “ Habitus ” is the main theoretical concept proposed by Bourdieu in 1977. It refers to systematic, lasting habits and character.

Moreover, education has a close relationship with employment rate. Arkes(1999)<sup>[2]</sup>found that employers pay higher salaries to those with higher education. Because the diploma they have shows some unobservable qualities. For example, the fighting ability, perseverance, and other high levels of performance and productivity. In addition, people also believe that education brings great benefits to the educated, such as getting a good job, career development, and improving living standards(Dodds, 2008).<sup>[6]</sup> In the same vein, Gargano(2009)<sup>[7]</sup> noted that education contributes to career development and personal achievement, well-educated people are more respected by society, and it also has a good impact on future generations.

Therefore, the education, life and social experience of students studying abroad has aroused great interest of many researchers. Furthermore, it is of great practical significance to explore the relationship between international education and the professional development and career success of education recipients. Hence, this article focuses on the relationship between Chinese students studying in Universities from the UK, and their career development, and provides the expectations and perceptions of Chinese students studying in the UK.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview of the experiences of Chinese students studying abroad**

Due to the difference between Chinese culture and British culture, daily life, academic and other aspects will bring great expectations and ideas to Chinese students.

First of all, Chinese students have expectations and ideas for British cuisine. Chinese students studying in the UK can taste rich and authentic cuisines, such as traditional English breakfast, the British way of drinking tea(Berry, 2005).<sup>[4]</sup> Secondly, Clark and Gieve(2006)<sup>[5]</sup> argued that Chinese students have expectations and ideas about the natural scenery in the UK. The natural scenery in the UK is completely inconsistent with that of China. Thus, most students who choose to study in the UK are because of the exotic architecture and scenery in the UK. The living environment is natural and comfortable, and public security is stable. Thirdly, this view is supported by Li (2002) <sup>[8]</sup> who writes that Chinese students have expectations and ideas for improving their English. Britain is one of the birthplaces of European civilization and the birthplace of orthodox English. Its rigorous style and gentleman's demeanor are praised and studied by the world. Hence, Chinese students hope to improve their English ability through studying abroad in the UK. Fourthly, some students who study in the UK hope to stay in the UK after graduation to find a job. Although these students choose to return to China after graduation, they have worked in the UK for a few years before returning to China and have some overseas work experience, so they can find a better job when they return to China(Nield, 2004).<sup>[9]</sup> Thus, Chinese students can find their own and favorite majors in British universities. At the same time, students can also get a high degree of gold content diploma.

### **2.2 The effects of international education for career development in the context of China.**

Globalization began in developed countries. It can also be called "Americanization", "Europeanization", and "Westernization". From the structural point of view, it presents a "center-periphery" world system. It is the world system of "center-quasi-edge-edge-extension" proposed by Wallerstein. It is manifested in the process of knowledge innovation and application, with Western countries as the central axis, and dependent developing countries as marginal regions. The direction and order of development is from the center to the edge, and this direction presents a typical form of globalization(Pan, 2010).<sup>[10]</sup>

It can be argued that the flow, and exchange of cultural capital of cultural elites is the axis of the value chain in the entire process of globalization. It can be converted into other forms of capital in the process of flowing from the center to the edge. The process of capital transformation of Chinese students is: they flock to the center to receive international education, and then return from the center of Western culture to the marginal local culture. In the process of participating in globalization, they receive international education and accumulate new cultural capital, which in turn promotes their career development. This phenomenon can be expressed as the upward social mobility of Chinese students.

### **2.3 Problems encountered by Chinese students return home.**

Firstly, with the upsurge of Chinese students studying abroad, the job competitiveness of international students after returning to China is much greater than before(Gill, 2010).<sup>[11]</sup> There are more and more students with a background of studying abroad. Therefore, the competitiveness of the same job has increased. According to the survey of intent to return to China in 2022, nearly half (49.34%) of the returnees expect to find career development opportunities in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, China. However, this year's data has dropped by 15% compared to last year. One of the reasons is because the pressure of job competition is too great.

Additionally, for working families, every parent hopes to give their children the best education. Therefore, even in the face of high cost of studying abroad, such parents will provide their children with it. However, after the children return to China, they cannot earn back the expenses through work in the short term (5-10 years). Thus, the children of this family will also face financial pressure from the family.

## **3. Methodology and method**

This dissertation conducts in-depth interviews with each respondent by interviewing 8 Chinese students with experience studying in the UK. Each interview takes about an hour. The process was recorded, transcribed and analyzed after the interview. According to

this research topic, this dissertation decides that the research object is the 8 other students that the author through classmates when studying in the UK. These 8 students have also studied in the UK. In addition, they have completed their British graduate students in different eras and universities, and have started work in China. They work in the same city in China, but they have different occupations. Researchers hope to interview them to understand what Chinese students expectations and perceptions before going to the UK, what problems they have encountered after studying abroad and returning to China, and whether their state after returning to China meets their original expectations.

#### 4. Conclusion

According to the results of the interview, as for recommendations in this dissertation. Interviews are not only the real beneficiaries of International education, but also the actual supporters of International education. They publish English articles in foreign-language journals and actively participate in international exchanges and scientific research cooperation. They said these are great and meaningful experiences for them in the UK and helpful for their career development. Thus, they agreed that Chinese young people should go abroad for International education, enrich their knowledge, increase their knowledge and accumulate experience if they have the opportunity. Even if, in the process of studying abroad will encounter “cultural shock”, language barriers, social problems and so on. Finally, the author hopes this dissertation will be helpful for Chinese students to study in the UK.

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