

Is It Worthwhile Studying Abroad

-- The Experiences of Self-Funded Students from a Non-Double First-Class University in the Less-Developed Region of China

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Access and Geopolitics: Next Steps in Tackling the Equity Crisis in Global Higher Education by WAHEN, CGHE, and SKOPE, June, 3, 2025

Outline

- Background
- Problem statement
- Research aim, theoretical framework, RQ
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- Findings
- Conclusions
- Implications

Background: China HE Development



| China Rank | Rank 2025 | Rank 2024 | University |
|------------|-----------|-----------|---|
| 1 | 12 | 12 | Tsinghua University |
| 2 | 13 | 14 | Peking University |
| 3 | =36 | 44 | Fudan University |
| 4 | =47 | =55 | Zhejiang University |
| 5 | 52 | 43 | Shanghai Jiao Tong University |
| 6 | =53 | 57 | University of Science and Technology of China |
| 7 | 65 | 73 | Nanjing University |

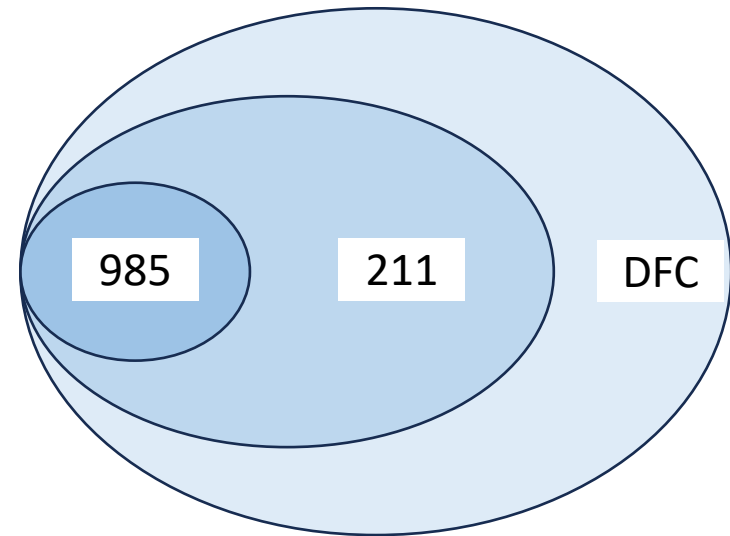
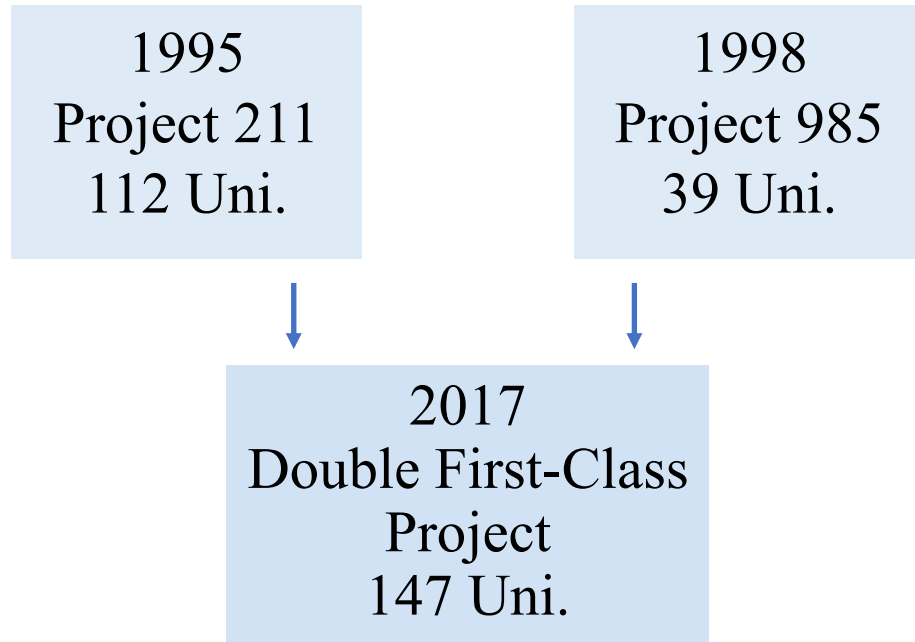
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-china>



| China RANK | 2025 RANK | 2024 RANK | Institution Name |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 14 | 17 | Peking University |
| 2 | 20 | 25 | Tsinghua University |
| 3 | 39 | 50 | Fudan University |
| 4 | 45 | 51 | Shanghai Jiao Tong University |
| 5 | 47 | 44 | Zhejiang University |

<https://www.topuniversities.com/world-university-rankings?region=Asia&countries=cn,hk>

Background: Top Universities



Source:

1. http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/xw_zt/moe_357/s3580/moe_1980/moe_1985/tnull_9084.html
2. <https://yz.chsi.com.cn/kyzx/other/201709/20170925/1630781143.html>
3. http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/cccc2/c30834/202411/t20241106_440613.html

Background: Top University and SA Funding

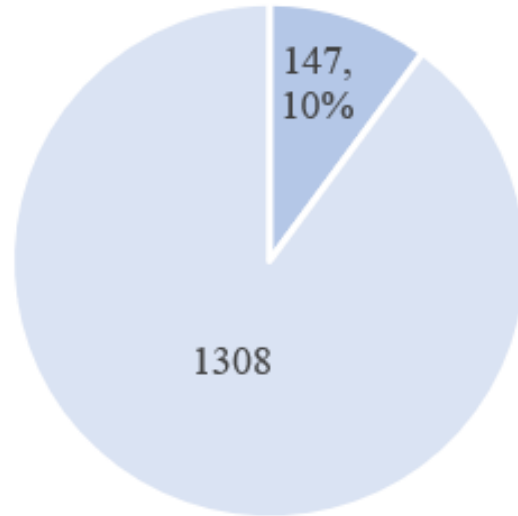
| Selection Criteria (2017) | Objectives (2022) |
|--|--|
| Clause 7: Achieved remarkable results in student exchanges , mutual recognition of credits and joint training with world-class universities | Clause 18: explore new mechanisms for supporting study abroad through two-way exchanges with high-level universities in the world |
| Good records of student SA | Further support for student SA |

Source

1. http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A22/moe_843/201701/t20170125_295701.html
2. http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A22/s7065/202202/t20220211_598706.html

Problem Statement: Non-Double First-Class

- Higher education institution: 1308 (June, 2024)



http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xxgk/s5743/s5744/A03/202406/t20240621_1136990.html

Research Questions

Research aim

- Is it worthwhile for students in a non-double first-class university to self-fund their studying abroad?



- RQ1: Why were you willing to pay for your studying abroad?
- RQ2: What did you obtain from this study abroad experience?

Theoretical framework

- Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020)

$$\text{Task Value} = \begin{cases} \text{Intrinsic Value} \\ \text{Attainment Value} \\ \text{Utility Value} \end{cases} - \text{Cost}$$

- $\text{Worth} = \text{Expected Value} - \text{Achieved Value}$



Method

Qualitative method

- In-depth interviews (Nov, 2024)

| Interviewee | Gender | Grade |
|-------------|--------|----------------------|
| Sally | F | 2 nd Year |
| Sandy | F | 2 nd Year |
| Alice | F | 3 rd Year |
| Pauline | F | 3 rd Year |
| Hellen | F | 1 st Year |

Interviewees

- A non-double first-class university
- Less-developed region of China
- School size (4000+ undergraduates)
- All participants recruited
- SA (1M, Canada, 2016)

Findings: RQ1 Why willing to pay for SA

| | Expected Value |
|------------|--|
| Intrinsic | |
| Attainment | |
| Utility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Benefit future job-hunting-Prepare future master abroad-Switch major-Improve English-Experience other culture |
| Cost | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Family financial support (+)-Safety in foreign country(+)-English insufficiency(+) |

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{High} \\ \text{Expected} \\ \text{Value} \end{array} = \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{Intrinsic Value} \\ \text{Attainment Value} \\ \text{Utility Value} \end{array} \right] - \text{Cost}$$

Findings: RQ2 What obtained

| | Achieved Value |
|------------|--|
| Intrinsic | -Enjoyment (courses, activities, people) |
| Attainment | -Personal growth (independence, confidence, courage) personal views (world, life and value) |
| Utility | -Add-value to employment -English language proficiency -Intercultural competence -Capability of independent overseas travelling |

High
Achieved =
Value

[Intrinsic Value
Attainment Value
Utility Value

Discussion: Expected vs Achieved

| | Expected Gains | Achieved Gains | Unexpected values |
|------------|---|---|--------------------|
| Intrinsic | | -Enjoyment (courses, activities, people) | Long-term benefits |
| Attainment | | -Personal growth (independence, confidence, personal views (world, life and value)) | |
| Utility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Future job-hunting -Improving English -Experience other culture -Future master abroad -Switching major | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Add-value to employment -Language competence -Intercultural competence -Capability of independent overseas travel | Most achieved |
| Cost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Family financial support (+) -Safety in foreign country -Insufficient English proficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Covid 19 -Family insufficient finance (-) | |

Family economic condition

Conclusion

- Worthwhile to SA even by self-financing
 - Achieved most expected value
 - More unexpected value
 - Long-term benefits
- Key: family economic condition
 - Afford short-term SA
 - Can't afford longer SA as pursuing degree

Implication:

- Students in a non-double first-class university can be as successful if they have access to SA
- Financing determines the access



- Official fundings (government & university) to support students in non-double first-class universities to benefit from IHE

Thanks for your attention!

Q & A

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