

***THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 ON THE
MOBILITY OF CHINESE
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS***

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the spread of the COVID-19 across the country, the global population flow has undergone tremendous changes, and the mobility and development trends of international students have also undergone important changes. As China is the main provider of international students, millions of international students and those who are planning to study must delay or interrupt their study abroad plans. In previous studies, international education research on Chinese students as an example has very important reference value. Many articles and data have analyzed the trend of Chinese students' global flow. However, due to the impact of the epidemic, this trend will inevitably not develop in the expected direction, or even decline rapidly. At present, countries around the world have opened their border policies and resumed normal life, but the epidemic has not updated the trend and reasons for the flow of international students in time. What are the factors that will affect the mobility of international students after the end of the COVID-19? The purpose of Chinese students choosing to study abroad Did local preferences matter.

In this article, we will conduct quantitative research on those who intend to study abroad in mainland China to gain an extensive and in-depth understanding of the changing trends and factors of the flow of international students in mainland China in the post-epidemic era.

A push-pull model helps explain changing trends in international student mobility in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak has created new drivers, such as health and safety concerns, travel restrictions and economic recession. These factors have forced many international students to postpone or interrupt their study abroad plans.

Human capital theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of education in enhancing the skills and knowledge of individuals, thereby increasing their economic productivity, and earning potential. From this perspective, studying abroad can be seen as an investment in human capital that has the potential to bring long-term benefits to individuals and society.

In the study, we found that the COVID-19 epidemic has accelerated changes in the flow structure of international students and exacerbated educational inequality; secondly, during the COVID-19 epidemic, Chinese students have suffered certain discrimination overseas, and the selection factors in the destination country for studying abroad. In the end, due to the blockade policies adopted by countries in the coronavirus, a new online teaching model has emerged, and this model has also had a certain impact on the global education system after the COVID.

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COVID-19: Coronavirus, the pandemic, the lockdown

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the current state of international student mobility

At the end of 2019, a virus of unknown origin began to spread in China and was later identified as a new type of coronavirus, which became a global public safety emergency. The virus is transmitted through the air, and the movement of people has promoted the spread of the virus. Therefore, countries around the world have adopted physical distance restrictions such as isolation and blockades to prevent the spread of the virus, and this has directly affected the movement of humans. (Giovine and Uriarte 2020) Schools in many countries have closed their campuses and moved to online teaching. Some Chinese students choose to interrupt their overseas studies and return to China, and some students must stay in the host country because of travel restrictions. (Marinoni 2020) The main purpose of this article is to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the global flow of Chinese students, and the changing trend of Chinese students' choice of study destinations after the epidemic.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19, the speed of globalization has slowed down significantly. This century-long infectious virus disaster has also dealt a huge blow to the globalization of higher education. According to the latest QS questionnaire survey, 60% of international students' study abroad plans have been affected by the epidemic, while 8.7% of respondents said they would postpone their study abroad plans, and even 2.4% of students said they would not consider studying abroad again. According to the data provided by the Beijing Overseas Study Service Association (BOSSA), the number of Chinese students studying abroad is expected to decline in 2020, and some summer vacation programs will be most affected in the short term, but the overall trend of studying abroad will not change, because studying abroad is a long-term plan.

China is a major provider of international students. As of 2020, nearly 1 million international students are studying abroad. The COVID-19 has led to changes in the mobility and study methods of international students. According to the statistics of the 2021 Study Abroad White Paper released by New Oriental, 79% of international students are currently unable to study abroad due to the

epidemic. Take international students in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada as examples, the number of people taking online classes in China is more than 60%. Secondly, the number of people who intend to study abroad has also decreased significantly. The Chinese government's active anti-epidemic policy and attitude of paying a higher cost to protect people's safety have made China one of the most important safe havens for the epidemic in the world. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the data from the "2021 National Study Abroad Report" released by the 2021 International Education Summit Forum shows that about 91% of the students who originally planned to study abroad still choose to study abroad. The survey results show that from 2019 to 2021, "expanding international horizons" and "enriching life experience" are the main purposes of studying abroad, while the proportion of the number of people studying abroad with "better future employment prospects" as the purpose of studying abroad is decreasing year by year. It shows that the driving factors for studying abroad have become more diversified, and overseas students pay more and more attention to the value brought by studying abroad. This change is also reflected in the continuous updating of the concept of studying abroad. (Zhiya 2022)

1.2 Statement of research problem

This article will use the push-pull model and the human resources model to conduct a detailed analysis of the changes in mainland Chinese students' study abroad plans and the overall flow of Chinese students after the COVID-19 epidemic. The push-pull model argues that migration is driven by a combination of push factors that force people to leave their home country and pull factors that attract them to their destination country. Push factors may include economic difficulties, political instability, or social conflict, while pull factors may include better job opportunities, higher wages, or a more open political environment (Lee, 1966). Human resource models, on the other hand, focus on the role of individual human capital and skills in shaping immigration patterns. According to this model, individuals with higher levels of education, skills, and experience are more likely to migrate to countries with better economic opportunities and higher demand for skills (Stark & Bloom, 1985). In the context of this paper, the push-pull model and human resource model can be used to analyze the factors that influence Chinese students' decision to study abroad, as well as the elements of their choice of destination. By applying these models, we can infer the push factors that cause students

to leave China, and the pull factors that attract them to a particular country or university. In addition, human resource models can help us understand the role of students' educational background and skills in shaping their study abroad choices. These models have studied the macro-push and pull factors of the international student population, but it seems that there is a lack of analysis from the subjective factors of individual international students and the objective factors of the post-COVID-19 environment. This article will supplement this research gap. From the subjective and objective factors that affect the decision-making of international students to make up for the changes in the flow trend of Chinese international students after the epidemic. The sample of this study included 130 participants who were college students, recent graduates, and working adults in mainland China. Sample participants were recruited through social media platforms and personal networks. Participants were asked to have some knowledge or interest in studying abroad, and they were asked to complete an online questionnaire that included questions related to their study abroad plans and preferences, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on their study abroad plans. The following research questions are the subject of this paper:

How COVID-19 has affected Chinese students' attitudes and intentions to study abroad, and understanding general trends in international student mobility in China post-COVID-19.

Explore the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the attitudes of international students, the changes in the preferences and behavior of Chinese students, and the prospects for future market development. This research will provide valuable insights into the changes in Chinese students' study abroad plans and the overall flow of Chinese students after the COVID-19 pandemic. As China is a major provider of international students, understanding the impact of the pandemic on student mobility and learning methods in China is critical for policymakers and educational institutions around the world. The findings of this study can also help inform the development of international education strategies and policies in the post-COVID-19 world.

After the survey, it was found that among the choices of Chinese students studying abroad, studying abroad is still the main direction for Chinese students to choose higher education. Although the epidemic has brought a certain negative impact on choosing to study abroad, Chinese students' demand for international high-quality higher education has not changed fundamentally. It is speculated that there may be a "rebound" in the number of people studying abroad after the epidemic

is over. In addition, the destinations for studying abroad are showing a trend of diversification. To a certain extent, the continuous adjustment of relevant policies such as studying abroad, employment and immigration in the main destination countries for studying abroad has also affected the enthusiasm of those who are willing to study abroad to a certain extent. Most international students believe that the employment opportunities in the destination country are also one of the important factors for them to consider the destination country. Therefore, the employment opportunities and immigration policies provided by the host country have also become one of the factors that attract international students. Affected by the epidemic, in addition to teaching quality and employment opportunities, the risk of studying abroad has also become one of the factors considered by international students.

1.3 Structure of the study

This article is mainly divided into 8 chapters. The first chapter includes an overall overview of international student mobility and points out the research gap on the factors affecting the change of international student mobility in China after the epidemic. The main research questions and theoretical framework are also included in the introductory chapter, and why this question deserves research.

The second chapter is a literature review, including related definitions and theoretical research, so that readers can have a deeper understanding of the internationalization trend of higher education and the mobility of international students. This chapter explains the internal push and external pull factors that affect the decision-making of international students and explains the main reasons why Chinese students choose to study abroad.

The third chapter explains the main research questions and research purposes, highlights the importance of this study, and proposes 4 research goals.

The fourth chapter describes the research methods used in this paper, the theoretical basis for the selection of quantitative research methods, and how the research design investigates the

impact and factors on the trend of student mobility in China after the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this chapter also discusses the selection method of the sample and the main characteristics of the participants.

Chapter five analyzes the findings of the survey, the description of the questionnaire data and the analysis of the results. This includes the overall impact of the new COVID-19 epidemic on the trend of studying abroad and the changes in Chinese families' attitudes towards studying abroad. From the results, it also analyzes the main factors that affect students from the country's choice of study abroad destinations and answers the correlation with the research questions.

Chapter six discusses the purpose of this study, the impact of COVID-19 on international student mobility trends and the consequent changes in higher education. Combined with the findings of the previous chapter and literature review, we will discuss the new changes faced by international students in China after the epidemic. In this chapter, the current limitations and practicalities of this study are also discussed.

The final part of the summary combines the main findings and the connection of the research questions, presents a summary of the research objectives, and provides relevant comments for future research in Chapter eight.

2. Literature review

2.1 Internationalization Trend of Higher Education

With the rapid advancement of the wave of globalization, the geographical boundaries of countries in the world are becoming more and more blurred, gradually becoming a community of destiny, and various factors of production flow more frequently in this "flat world". As the most active factor and the most important resource for economic development, the spatial allocation, education, training, competition, and flow of talents are all showing an increasingly international trend. International talents with an international perspective, familiarity with

international rules, knowledge in cutting-edge fields, multi-cultural backgrounds and cross-cultural communication skills have become scarce resources and have attracted attention and competition from various countries. Studying abroad has become a necessary process for countries to cultivate international talents. (Harvey and Novicevic, 2006)

International students are learners of knowledge and carriers of information, and the flow of international students will inevitably drive the flow of global knowledge and information. (Park, 2004) Developing the workforce through dissemination of knowledge and education drives academic research and innovation. Since the 1970s, global development and mobility have led to a leapfrog growth in the globalization of higher education, and the number of people studying abroad has continued to rise steadily, quadrupling in the past 40 years. At the same time, the trend of globalization has also made international education cooperation and competition more intense.

According to a survey by the United Nations, it is estimated that by 2050 the young people in the world population will reach 1.2 billion, of which 90% of the population aged 15-24 are in developing countries. Population growth also affects the growth of educational needs, resulting in insufficient educational capacity in the country and thus increased student mobility. Countries with declining populations need to attract more international students as a supplement to the labor force. For example, Canada has adopted a relaxed visa policy to allow international students to study at a lower threshold and consider staying in the host country to work after graduation. The immigration policy trend of educating student resources will be implemented for a long time.

According to the definition of the "UNESCO Institute for Statistics" (referred to as "UIS"), "international students" refer to those students who study abroad and have not obtained the local "permanent residency". In 2000, UNESCO and the European Union jointly drafted and promulgated the "Implementation Regulations on the Provision of Transnational Education", which defined "transnational education" as: "In a country other than the country where the degree-granting institution is located, learners The tertiary study program, series of study

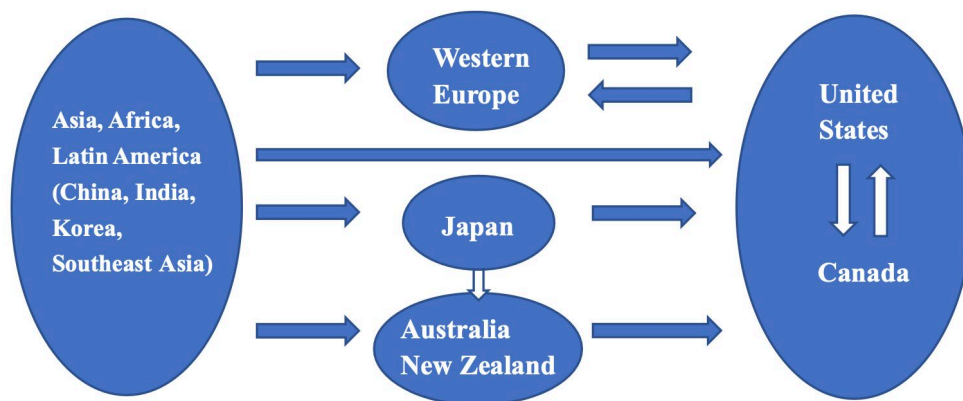
courses or educational services (including distance education) received". At present, transnational education is mainly concentrated in the field of higher education, and the research in this paper is limited to cross-border activities in the field of higher education, so it can also be called "transnational higher education".

In addition, according to the "International Standard Classification of Education" adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (referred to as UNESCO) at its 29th general meeting in November 1997, which is now commonly used ISCED1997, education is divided into six levels. They are: "0" preschool education, "1" primary education (the first stage of basic education), "2" lower secondary education (the second stage of basic education), "3" higher secondary education, "4" non-tertiary education after secondary education, "5" first stage of higher education (cannot directly obtain advanced research degree certificate), and "6" second stage of higher education (lead to advanced research degree certificate). The higher education involved in this research includes the two stages of "5" and "6". (Blackmur 2007)

2.2 Trends in International Student Mobility

The flow of international students around the world continues to grow rapidly, but there is an obvious spatial imbalance. First, there is a serious imbalance in the inflow and outflow of international students between countries with different development levels. Middle-income and upper-middle-income countries are the main sources of international students, and high-income countries are the main destination countries. Second, different regions According to the imbalance among countries, the net inflow countries are mainly concentrated in North America, Europe and Australia, and the net export countries are mainly concentrated in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the past 20 years of international education development, the United States has always been the number one destination for international students, almost twice as much as the second largest host country, the United Kingdom (Project Atlas, 2020), but with the diversification of study abroad destinations, The market share of the US declined by 8% between 2000 and 2020, followed by the UK and Canada. According to the data, the number of

destination countries for Chinese students to study abroad has increased from 42 in 2000 to 78 in 2017, and reached 87 in 2016. This shows that the paths and directions of studying abroad for Chinese students are becoming more and more diversified, and China has achieved great success in international education cooperation.



(Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of International Student Mobility)

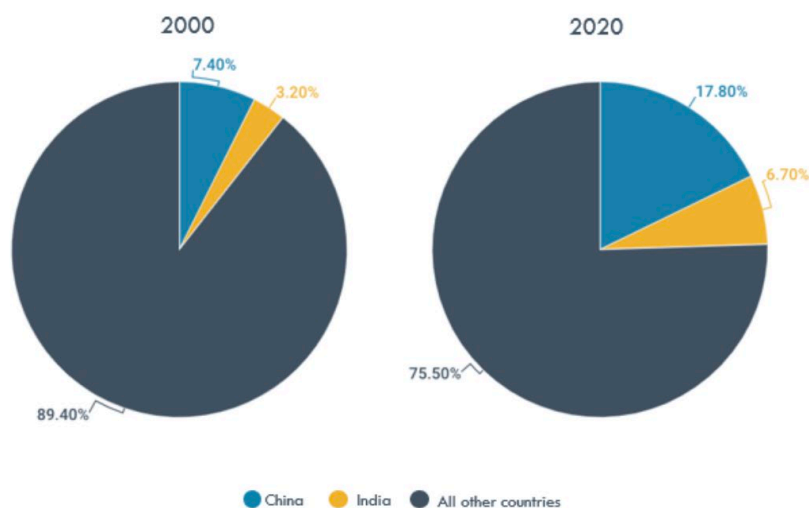
Source from: Li Mei. International Market of Higher Education: Global Flow of Chinese Students [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, 2008.69.

2.3 Main countries of origin of international students

China and India are currently the most populous countries in the world. Since the 1990s, China's economy has undergone earth-shaking changes, and its GDP has grown rapidly. At the same time, China is also vigorously promoting the development of higher education, increasing the enrollment rate of residents, and improving the quality of education for all. In order to cultivate more high-quality talents, China also encourages students to study abroad for innovation and scientific research. And China is the world's main provider of international students, 90% of Chinese students choose to study in the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada and Japan. As of 2020, nearly 1 million Chinese students are receiving education in overseas higher education institutions. (UNESCO, 2020)

In 2020, more than half of the international students in higher education institutions in the United States are from China and India, and the situation is similar in Canada, while more than 25% of students in the United Kingdom are from China and India. (Project Atlas, 2020). From

2000 to 2017, the average annual growth rate of Chinese international students reached 17.5%, with an average annual increase of 33,000, from 39,000 in 2000 to 608,000 in 2017. The total number of Chinese students studying abroad has also undergone tremendous changes, from 155,000 in 2000 to 928,000 in 2017, an increase of nearly six times. Even so, as can be seen from the chart below, these two countries only account for a quarter of the total number of international students in the world.(Table 1)



(Table 1: Percentage of international students in the world)

Source from: UNESCO, 2020

2.4 The Impact of COVID-19 on International Higher Education

The specific impact of the coronavirus on higher education and student mobility:

A. International politics:

The epidemic has accelerated the rise of nationalism and protectionism, resistance to international cooperation and the adoption of extreme national security policies. The epidemic prevention and control policies of many countries, the blockade of borders and visa application restrictions, and the cancellation of flights have all brought great obstacles to the plans of international students to go abroad. Xenophobia "Mask Discrimination" Health and safety protection has become the top priority, and the policy of the destination country for studying abroad has become an obstacle.

In July 2020, U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)'s Student and Exchange Visitor

Program (SEVP) issued a policy for non-immigrant students if they Those who are unable to travel to the United States to study will not be granted a visa to continue to stay in the country. This means that if Chinese students cannot participate in offline learning, they will face visa issues for legal residence. Although ICE rescinded this draconian policy amid lawsuits from many universities, the enrollment of international students going to the United States for the 2020-2021 academic year has also dropped significantly.

B. Economy

The impact of the global blockade on the world economy has caused a decline in GDP in many countries, so government resources for higher education have also decreased. (Woicolesco and Marcelino 2022) The epidemic has hit the global economy, accelerating the transformation of the economy from globalization to regionalization and localization; the fiscal revenue of the destination countries that rely on the tuition fees of international students has decreased, including student tuition fees, charitable donations, research funds and generated Expenditures in the budget, such as vacant student dormitories and compensation for dismissal of employees, have the greatest impact on schools in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. 33 universities in the United States have announced their permanent closure. Funding for Erasmus programs in Europe has also been severely cut, and more than half of Erasmus students cannot go to the destination country for exchange studies. (EAIE, 2021)

Similarly, the COVID-19 has also had a certain impact on students' economy. As discussed in the article by Daniel et al., some students could not afford to buy basic food supplies during the epidemic, and the host countries did not provide corresponding help in time. (Husain 2022)

C. Education

According to the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) 2021 International Student Survey, 65% of international students believe that their study abroad plans have been affected by the epidemic. Among them, 47% of the students chose to postpone studying abroad, and 16% decided to reapply for a new study abroad country. In other words, 63% of international students need to wait for a period for the recovery of the epidemic or re-apply before they can continue their

studies. Mobility has declined, the scale of mobility has shrunk, and factors affecting the choice of destination countries for studying abroad, health and safety occupy a more important position.

The British Council (2020) conducted interviews with more than 10,000 Chinese students studying abroad and found that one in five students planned to cancel studying abroad. In another survey of mainland Chinese students, 91% of the students gave a negative answer to the question of whether they would still consider studying abroad after the epidemic ended. (Cheng and Agyeiwaah 2022) According to QS research, 70% of international students have increased stress and anxiety, uncertainty about the future, and economic reasons for career planning during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than half of the students have sought health care from institutions. and well-being help. In the 2021 international student survey report released by QS, the interviewed international students generally believed that: when "the school fully resumes face-to-face teaching" (41%), "vaccine has been widely popularized" (37%), "there are only a very small number of infections in the country" (33%), they do not think there is a higher risk of studying abroad.

In other words, "face-to-face teaching arrangement", "vaccine popularity" and "infection number" are the top three indicators for international students to think whether it is safe to study abroad. The online education method also makes students who cannot go to the host country to study feel isolated and lonely. Health issues are the main reason why most international students and families change their plans when they plan to study abroad. (QS, 2021c) In the post-epidemic era, with the development of vaccines and borders, Chinese students' confidence in studying abroad has increased, and the choice of destination countries for studying abroad is more inclined to countries that have properly handled the health crisis. (Chew 2021)

In conclusion, the impact of the COVID epidemic on international education is huge in the short term, but it is too early to accurately predict the impact of the coronavirus on higher education. Philip G Altbach believes that the basic trend of internationalization will continue, and higher education is ubiquitous. Generally speaking, the development of global higher education remains stable.

According to Simon Marginson's research, the international student market will become very scarce in the next few years and become a buyer's market. The flow of international students may shift from high-income developed countries to developing countries with lower investment costs, and it will take at least 5 years to recover. Many colleges and universities are offering international students flexible options for admissions for fall 2021 until they can travel to campus in person. Higher education institutions from 61 different countries and regions maintain a positive attitude towards the recruitment of international students in 2021. (QS, 2021a). Adverse effects are inevitable, and there are still objective attitudes that will recover, such as the 2003 SARS virus and the 2008 financial crisis. The existing education system, comprehensive credit transfer system, and policies to stimulate student exchanges have laid a solid foundation.

2.5 *Factors Affecting Students Studying Abroad*

Whether this change is temporary or long-term is still controversial, and scholars predict that it will be difficult to return to the level of 2019 for at least the next five years. Other scholars argue that the need to study abroad is fundamentally unchanged. Douglas theory, when the economy is depressed, the demand for education increases, and when the unemployment rate increases or it is difficult to find a job, education will become another choice. It is too early to draw conclusions because the international structure of academic mobility is more complicated, some countries are decreasing and some countries are increasing, except for certain regularity, it is more susceptible to the influence of human factors.

The push-pull model is a theoretical framework for explaining the factors that influence an individual's decision to study abroad. The model suggests that the decision to study abroad is influenced by both internal (push) and external (pull) factors. Push factors refer to the reasons why students leave their home country, while pull factors refer to the reasons why they choose a particular destination country. Motivators are often related to an individual's personal circumstances, such as a desire for personal growth, academic or professional advancement,

dissatisfaction with current circumstances, or a desire for adventure. In contrast, pull factors are usually related to the destination country, such as the quality of education, cultural and language opportunities, and the country's social and political environment.

Many studies have applied push-pull models to investigate the factors that influence students' decision to study abroad. For example, a study by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) found that desire for personal growth and dissatisfaction with the family environment were the main push factors, while educational quality and cultural opportunities were the main pull factors. In addition, a study by Orahod and Kruze (2002) found that the availability of scholarships and funding was an important pull factor for many students. Tian (2006) explained the motivation of students to study abroad from two perspectives of "push" and "pull". Among them, the "push" factor mainly lies in the influencing factors of the importing country, among which the country's economic level and per capita income are the most important factors. The "pull" force is mainly explained from the perspective of the exporting country of overseas education, and its factors mainly include the language of the country, because if a country's language is easy to accept and master, it will increase the number of people studying in that country to a certain extent; Another aspect is the education quality of the country. If the teaching quality of a country is better than that of their own country, then the students of that country will be more willing to study abroad in a country with better teaching quality to increase their competitiveness in the domestic market.

Naidoo (2007) used the push-pull theory to study the reasons for the flow of students from various countries around the world, and proposed some of the most important reasons, including the investment ratio of higher education, tuition fees, and government support. The economies of developing countries continue to grow, and the birth rate is also growing rapidly. The demand for higher education is gradually unable to meet the growing population, which has become a driving force for seeking overseas higher education. On the contrary, developed countries have problems of declining birth rate and aging population, and there is an urgent need for young people with higher education to build a talent pool and contribute to local economic development. Friendly admissions policies and immigration conditions have become the key factors to attract more international students.

Taken together, the push-pull model provides a useful framework for understanding the complex factors that influence a student's decision to study abroad . By identifying the internal and external factors that motivate students to pursue an international education, researchers can develop more effective recruitment strategies and support services to facilitate a successful study abroad experience.

2.6 Drivers of mainland Chinese students studying abroad

In recent years, China's education reform has developed rapidly, and higher education has been popularized. Every year, tens of millions of students take the college entrance examination, the college entrance examination. Students face enormous academic pressure, and the proportion of students who can enter key universities is even more limited. The number of people taking postgraduate entrance examinations in China has doubled every year, degrees have depreciated in the job market, the employment threshold for fresh graduates has increased, the pressure of competition in the job market has increased, and the unemployment rate has risen. In addition, Chinese universities rank low in the world, and local higher education resources are scarce. Some students said that they want to study abroad because they want to go to elite universities ranked among the top 100 universities in the world. Improve academic qualifications and develop personal and career plans.

In China's job market, human resources have higher requirements for academic qualifications. Talents who have studied abroad and returned to China are more popular with companies and are more competitive. Most students hope to "golden" their resumes through their study abroad experience. (Cheng and Agyeiwaah 2022) Human resource theory is often applied to the factors that students consider studying abroad. American economist Schultz believes that human capital refers to elements such as knowledge, skills, experience, experience, and proficiency condensed in people. human knowledge.

Capital theory refers to the various forms of resources that individuals possess or can acquire

through their social networks and experiences. These resources facilitate individual success and development in all areas of life, including education, employment, and social mobility. The three main types of capital are human capital, social capital, and cultural capital. (Gillies 2015) Human capital refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities that individuals possess and can use to achieve their goals. This type of capital is usually acquired through education, training, and work experience. Human capital theory suggests that investing in education and training can increase an individual's potential income and overall economic success. (Welch 1975)

Social capital refers to the resources an individual can acquire through their social networks, such as friendships, family ties, and professional associations. Social capital theory suggests that the strength and diversity of an individual's social network affects their access to opportunities, resources, and support. (Liou and Chang 2008) Cultural capital refers to the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that individuals acquire through upbringing and exposure to cultural customs and traditions. This type of capital can include knowledge of literature, art, music, and other cultural products. Cultural capital theory suggests that individuals from privileged backgrounds are more likely to possess cultural capital, which affects their social and economic opportunities. (Lareau and Weininger 2003)

Schultz believes that human capital is a kind of condensation of education investment, accumulation of knowledge and experience, skills, investment, and management capabilities on laborers, which requires investment and long-term accumulation. He pointed out that human investment is the main reason for rapid economic growth and believed that "the economic value of human beings will continue to increase". According to Schultz's definition, human capital is useful skills and knowledge, which are obtained by people's purposeful investment, and it is also a form of capital. Its basic theories and viewpoints can be summarized as emphasizing investment in human capital, and investment in education is an important source of human capital. (Schultz 1961)

The flow of international students is also closely related to immigration. International students are available high-quality talents and can be seen as a form of skilled worker immigration.

Countries continue to realize the process of globalization by attracting high-quality talents and skilled workers, resulting in the brain drain of the home countries of the overseas students and the acquisition of valuable highly educated labor force by the host countries. In particular, they have become familiar with the local culture and customs through the experience of studying abroad, and some countries have issued policies that facilitate the integration of foreign students into the local labor market after graduation. (Beine and Ragot 2014)

However, according to the "National Study Abroad Report 2021" data released by the 2021 International Education Summit Forum, the strength of overseas study background to employment competitiveness has declined, but the huge group of overseas students still insist on the goal of studying abroad, which further highlights the value of studying abroad, "gilding" and "studying abroad" are no longer equated. The value of studying abroad lies not only in the acquisition of degree diplomas, but also in being able to communicate with students from all over the world in different cultural backgrounds, to improve personal abilities and expand horizons, and to improve self-awareness of the world. (Li, J., 2022)

2.7 Summary

In previous studies, there was a lack of other influential research on the motivation of international students to go abroad, and after the epidemic, these factors have become more and more obvious, driving changes in the decision-making of international students. This crisis has greatly changed overseas study and international student mobility and has also largely affected the decision-making of international students in choosing their destination countries. Health and safety has become an important consideration for some international students. The relevant support policies and friendliness of various countries for international students are gradually becoming the main reasons for students' decision-making.

Objective factors: Such as the school's cultural atmosphere, academic reputation, school type, course type, professional environment, and teacher quality.

When international students choose an overseas study destination, they are influenced by the reputation or profile of the destination country. The more they know about this country, the more likely they will choose them as the destination country for studying abroad, just as the reason why many international students choose the United States as their first choice comes from their general understanding of the United States. Since the COVID-19 epidemic, the flow of Chinese students has also shifted from the previous flow to developed countries such as the West to neighboring Asian countries. For example, the number of international students in Japan and Singapore has increased significantly after the COVID-19 epidemic ended. The convenience of geographical distance and commonality of culture have also gradually become an important factor.

Doorbar (1997) surveyed 3,958 international students from ten countries (regions) including mainland China, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Japan, and India. These international students mainly studied in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The results of the survey vary according to the destination of study abroad. Students who choose the United States and Canada mainly look at the teaching quality of the two countries, while students who choose the United Kingdom mainly look at the academic reputation of the country, such as the QS World University Rankings. This article puts forward for the first time the importance of a country's image for students' choice of studying abroad.

Subjective factors: Opinions of family members, friend choices and recommendations, etc.

In China, the decision to study abroad is usually made jointly by family members. For undergraduates or recent graduates, parents have a greater influence, because most students are not yet financially independent at this stage and need to rely on the support of their parents to complete overseas study. There are also some families who already have family members or friends studying in a certain country and get positive feedback from them, which will directly affect the decision-making of students or families. The closeness of psychological distance becomes another factor.

Under the background of the COVID-19, the policy of attracting international students to choose, according to the IIE survey, 84% of the respondents provided many favorable policies to ensure the admission of international students: for example, the admission time is postponed, the application materials can be applied online with electronic files, and the language is reduced. Exams require and allow online testing, etc. Reduce tuition fees, distribute scholarships, and expand enrollment. Singapore provides 2,000 places, flexible enrollment policies, and airport pick-up and drop-off services. The Ministry of Education of China has introduced Chinese-foreign cooperative schools to solve the problem of international mobility. Students can complete foreign degrees in domestic universities, and students can enjoy the same higher education without going abroad, which reduces the mobility of students. However, the choice of schools is limited and lacks culture. experience.

Under the lockdown, countries' entry policies for overseas students are very important. From the end of 2020 to the present, the global COVID-19 vaccination process has been accelerating, making the entry policies and study abroad policies of various countries adjusted at any time according to the actual situation. Although the overall internal opening and tightening coexist, the main destination countries for studying abroad have been opened or will soon Open entry.

The U.S. Department of State and the Department of Education issued a joint statement "A New American Commitment to International Education", announcing that it will vigorously promote the United States as a destination for international students and facilitate global academic exchanges; the United Kingdom officially recognizes the COVID-19 vaccine in mainland China, December 2021 The entry nucleic acid test will be changed from 72 hours to 48 hours from January 2022, and the entry test for vaccinators will be exempted from February 11, 2022; Canada requires students to hold a student visa and enter the country no earlier than 4 weeks before the start of the course, and the place of entry must be a designated place One of the 4 cities that recognizes Chinese vaccines in terms of vaccination, and can be exempted from quarantine for 14 days when fully vaccinated; Australia will reopen its borders on December 15, 2021, further increase support for the international education sector, and issue 485 work visas Three favorable policies, the Australian National University announced the

implementation of a new simplified application process; due to the good control of the epidemic situation in mainland China, Singapore allowed Chinese visitors to enter the country with visas very early. New Zealand's social policy has been gradually relaxed; New Zealand will reopen its borders on April 30, 2022, and the suspension of overseas visa processing will be extended to August 5, 2022. Graduate Diploma students will be issued a one-year PSW open work visa after graduation.

3. Research problem and aim of the research

Main research question: "What are the key factors driving the decision-making of Chinese international students studying abroad in the post-COVID-19 era?"

Research objective 1: To investigate the main drivers of Chinese students' decision to study abroad in the current context, considering the impact of the pandemic.

Research objective 2: To assess how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the mobility of international students from China and to identify the most significant impacts.

Research objective 3: To identify and analyze the main trends and factors leading to changes in the flow of international students from China in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Objective 4: To assess the impact of family-related factors, such as parental expectations, financial considerations, and cultural values, on decision-making among Chinese international students in the post-COVID-19 era.

4. Methodology

This paper will use quantitative research methods to detect the overall flow trends and changes of mainland Chinese students after the epidemic, as well as changes in attitudes and preferences

for studying abroad. This study targets current higher education students and fresh graduates in mainland China, as well as social personnel who want to go on to obtain a second degree overseas. The first is to address the changes in the attitudes of Chinese international students to study abroad after the COVID-19 epidemic and the factors that affect the choice of destination countries. Data analysis was conducted on the ratio of men to women, place of origin, age, degree, etc.

4.1 Theoretical construct

The push-pull theory has been the primary model for studying population migration and was later applied to the field of education. McMahon (1992) first applied push-pull theory to the field of education in 1992. This paper examines the reasons why international students from 18 developing countries study in the United States, including the push factors of the student-sending country and the pull factors of the student-incoming country. And think that in terms of thrust, that is, the lower the gross national product and the more backward the economy of the sending country, the thrust will be formed, prompting more domestic students to study abroad. In terms of pull, that is, the more developed the economy of the receiving country, the more students will be encouraged to study in that country. The more frequent trade and economic exchanges between the country and the student-sending country, the more students will be attracted to study in the country. Many past studies have applied this model to analyze the destination choice and mobility of international students. However, this model does not take into account the variability of the international situation and policies and lacks the continuity of tracking changes in the flow of international students.

Beine and Ragot put forward the human resource theory to explain the impact of students' international mobility. On the one hand, students seek higher education abroad and become permanent immigrants in the country receiving education, which leads to the reduction of the human capital stock in the country where the students are located, which is called the brain drain effect. On the other hand, if international students choose to return to their home country, and the level of education received abroad is higher than that of their original nationality, they

can make greater contributions when they return to their home country, which has a significant impact on the development of the motherland. This theory proposes that the factors for students to choose the destination country for studying abroad are mainly from the investment return on personal future development.

4.2 Research framework

In this study, the push-pull model and human resource model will be applied to construct the research framework. In the context of the push-pull theory, this paper analyzes the reasons why Chinese students choose to study abroad and the pull factors that attract them to study abroad, as well as the driving factors that make them unwilling to stay in their home country and choose to stay in the country where they study. As stated by the Institute of Human Resource Cost Theory, Chinese international students consider the competitiveness and rate of return in the labor market. Based on the above two models, combined with the latest survey data, the latest factors affecting the willingness to flow and destination choice of Chinese international students after the epidemic are analyzed, as well as the future international flow trends.

4.3 Surveys

Questionnaire surveys use random sampling to select samples. The main purpose of sampling surveys is to select some individuals from the population to predict the characteristics of the entire population. When quantitative research methods such as surveys are used, the results of sampling can represent the entire population.

The questions in the questionnaire will include the current situation of the respondents, their education background, age, etc., as well as the family background of the students. It will also address questions such as respondents' attitudes towards studying abroad, and the impact of the COVID-19 on study abroad plans. The study will use a simple random sampling method. Since the respondents are all Chinese, a questionnaire survey form will be sent through China's main social platform WeChat, and the respondents will fill it out online. The questionnaire collection began on April 7, 2023, and lasted for one week. The sample collection ended on April 12, and

a total of 122 valid questionnaires were collected.

Random sampling is the simplest, lowest-cost design that can provide interesting data, but the results of collected data may have accuracy issues and limitations. However, random sampling is still an effective tool for research questions because it can be used to test participants' thoughts about the problem.

4.4 Participants

The convenient sampling population for this study includes college students, fresh graduates and already working social people. According to the data of 122 samples randomly selected this time, most of the participants in the questionnaire survey were women, accounting for 64%, and the other 33.6% were men; Accounting for 45.9% and 46.72%; among them, 74.59% of the interviewees have a bachelor's degree, and nearly 14% of them have a postgraduate degree; 40% of them are still students, and the second is the graduates. , 38%, fresh graduates accounted for 17%, and a small number of personnel were in gap years, 4.1%; they involved a wide range of study fields, of which the largest proportion was business and management, 24.59%, followed by others fields and humanities and social sciences, 19.67% and 18.03%, 15.57% of the people came from the field of health and medical sciences, and 13.93% and 8.2% of the respondents came from the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) respectively and the field of art and design; more than half of the interviewees said they would consider studying abroad.

5. Findings

5.1 Descriptive statistics

In this questionnaire survey, a total of 122 valid questionnaires were obtained, the following are the main findings of this questionnaire survey, summarized as follows according to the type of questions:

1) Reasons to study abroad:

39.34% of the respondents believe that the employment prospect of studying abroad is better.

24.59% hope to experience a different cultural atmosphere.

16.39% wanted to seek better academic opportunities.

13.11% considered improving their language skills.

6.56% had other reasons.

2) Destination preference:

20.49% of the respondents believe that the UK is an ideal place to study abroad, followed by Japan, New Zealand, and Australia (tied for third), the United States, Canada, Europe and South Korea.

When choosing a destination for studying abroad, 71.31% of the respondents regard local employment opportunities as an important criterion.

86.07% of the respondents believe that the economic and political environment of the destination country is also an important factor in the choice.

3) Impact of COVID-19 on Study Abroad:

31.15% of the respondents postponed their plans to study abroad.

19.37% gave up the idea of studying abroad.

13.93% of the people changed their study destinations.

44.26% of the respondents changed their choice of study abroad destination due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proportion of choosing other countries is the highest at 18.85%, and New Zealand has become a new popular destination for studying abroad.

4) Attitude towards studying abroad and respondents' family background:

44.26% of the respondents have become more cautious and prudent due to the epidemic.

20.49% of the respondents were not affected.

19.67% are more determined to complete the study abroad program.

33.61% of the respondents have family members studying abroad.

Nearly half of the parents have high school education, undergraduate students accounted for 21.31%, graduate students accounted for only 1.64%, and those who had other choices accounted for 31.15%.

More than half of the respondents' funds for studying abroad come from their parents' sponsorship.

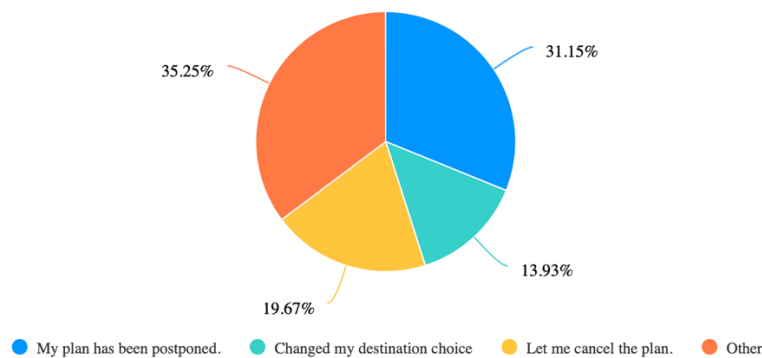
41.8% of respondents or their friends experienced discrimination or exclusion during the lockdown.

50.82% of those who experienced discrimination and negative experiences changed their attitude towards studying abroad.

80.35% of the respondents think that studying abroad is helpful to their careers, and 19.67% don't think so.

5.2 The covid-19 epidemic has not significantly affected the actual demand for studying abroad.

In this questionnaire survey, the proportion of people who think whether the epidemic will affect their decision to go abroad is the same. Half of the respondents felt that COVID-19 had affected their plans to study abroad, while the other half said it had not. Among them, 31.15% said that their study abroad plans were postponed due to the impact of the epidemic, 19.67% were forced to cancel their study abroad plans, and 13.93% of them changed their choice of destination country.



(Diagram 1: Impact of COVID-19 on study abroad programs)

According to IIE "Project Atlas" statistics, in 2019 China is still the largest source of foreign students from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Japan. The proportion did not change much. The continuous spread of the coronavirus around the world has brought some negative impacts on Chinese students choosing to study abroad, but Chinese students' demand for international high-quality higher education has not changed fundamentally, and studying abroad is still the first choice for Chinese students to choose higher education. The main direction of education will only be delayed during the spread of the global epidemic.

In addition, some data also show that the impact of the epidemic on Chinese students studying abroad is only temporary. In May 2020, the statistics in the report "How the COVID-19 Pandemic Affects International Students Around the World" released by QS showed that 96% of the interviewed Chinese international students said that the COVID-19 would not interrupt their study abroad plans. JYL Overseas Education, China's largest study abroad agency, surveyed 250 families across the country who are willing to study abroad, and speculated that there may be a "rebound" in the number of people studying abroad after the epidemic is over, which means that the number of people studying abroad will rise sharply. At the same time, China has also issued relevant policies to support studying abroad and stated that studying abroad is still an important channel for China to cultivate modern talents.

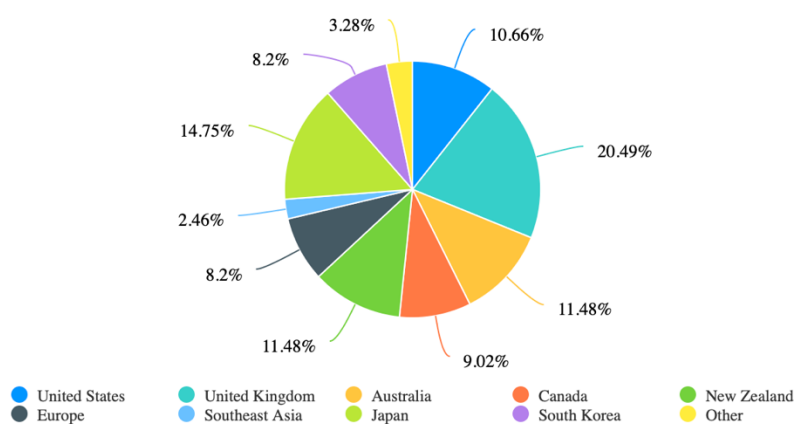
Combining the survey data in this article, we can find that the impact of the epidemic on the flow of Chinese students is only temporary. 19.6% of the students said that they would be more determined to complete their plans to study abroad, and half of the students said that the COVID-19 had no effect on their study abroad plans. It has caused an impact, which shows that although the demand of Chinese students for studying abroad has been affected by the epidemic in the short term, in the long run, the trend of internationalization of higher education is still the mainstream direction of Chinese student flow.

5.3 Destinations for studying abroad show a trend of diversification

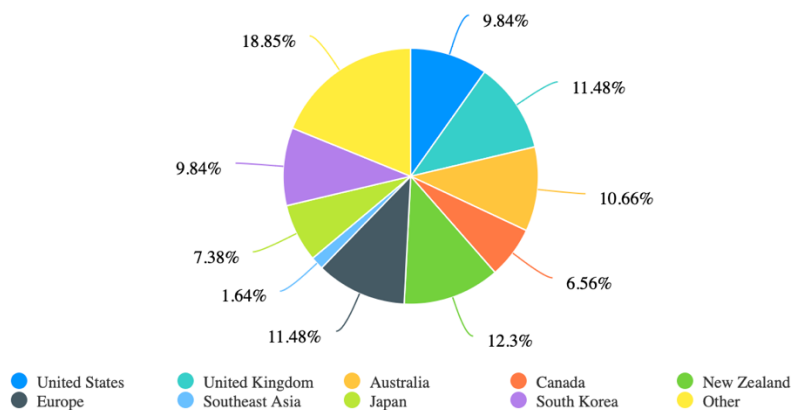
According to the questionnaire survey, before the outbreak of the epidemic in the destination

country, most international school students were more inclined to choose the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada as their destination countries for studying abroad. (Diagram 2)

After the outbreak, New Zealand became the most popular destination country, followed by the UK and Europe in the second place, Australia in the third place, and the favorability of international students for the United States has been greatly reduced, juxtaposed with South Korea, which has come from behind, showing the characteristics of diversified destinations for studying abroad. (Diagram 3)



(Diagram 2: Selection of Study Abroad Destinations Before the Epidemic)



(Diagram 3: Study abroad destination choice after the epidemic)

In 2018, according to data released by the Ministry of Education of China, the number of Chinese students studying abroad reached 703,500. The number of people going abroad increased by 6% year-on-year, but the growth rate dropped by 3% compared to the previous year. The decline in the growth rate reflects to a certain extent the diversification trend of Chinese students studying abroad. The continuous adjustment of relevant policies such as

studying abroad, employment and immigration in major destination countries also affects the study abroad of those who are willing to study abroad to a certain extent. positivity.

In November 2020, the average number of new confirmed cases in a single day in the United States exceeded 100,000, making it one of the countries with the worst outbreak of the epidemic. As of December 22, 2021, the number of deaths related to new coronary pneumonia in the United States has exceeded 830,000. The severe situation of the epidemic in the United States has made countless Chinese families reconsider whether to continue to send their children to the United States to study, or to switch to other countries and regions. According to the latest "2021 US Open Doors Report" released by the Institute of International Education (IIE), the number of mainland Chinese students studying in the US in the 2020-2021 school year will drop by 14.8%. (Artamonova 2023)

In addition, as Sino-US relations have become more tense, Chinese students studying in the United States often feel uneasy and unfriendly treatment, and this situation has intensified after the outbreak. In November 2021, the shooting at the University of Chicago dropped a blockbuster among international students, and it also made many Chinese families unable to calm down. In addition to racial issues, the issue of guns has also become a major concern for Chinese students studying in the United States. During the Trump administration, a series of policy restrictions on studying abroad in the United States were issued for Chinese students, and major adjustments were made in the majors of study. Under such circumstances, it is more difficult for students majoring in STEM natural sciences to obtain visas to study in the United States. (Allen and Ye 2021)

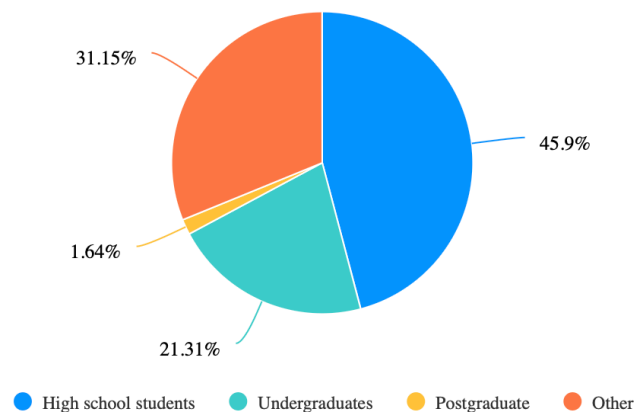
In contrast, the United Kingdom has won the favor of more Chinese applicants due to its relaxed policies and friendly and stable political environment. It has surpassed the United States for two consecutive years and ranked first among the target countries for Chinese students studying abroad. According to the "2021 National Study Abroad Report" released by the International Education Summit Forum, the report shows that in the 2019-2020 school year, the number of students from mainland China studying in the UK has reached 148,530, a year-on-year increase

of 15%, accounting for 25% of international students. (Xu 2020)

In this questionnaire survey, we also found that mainland Chinese students also have diversified choices of study destinations. In addition to the traditional major countries for study abroad: the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, etc., New Zealand and Japan are gradually becoming more and more Chinese. Destinations chosen by international students.

5.4 *Children from ordinary Chinese families have more opportunities to study abroad.*

Among the respondents who participated in this questionnaire survey, 33.61% had relatives or friends studying abroad, and their parents' educational background accounted for the largest proportion in high school, 45.9%; undergraduate students accounted for 21.31%, and their parents were graduate students accounted for only 1.64%. (Table 4) In the past 20 years, the penetration rate of higher education in China has not reached the level of developed countries, so parents have higher educational expectations for the next generation, and many parents hope that their children will get better education. The level of education, especially if the economic conditions permit, will choose to send their children to study abroad.

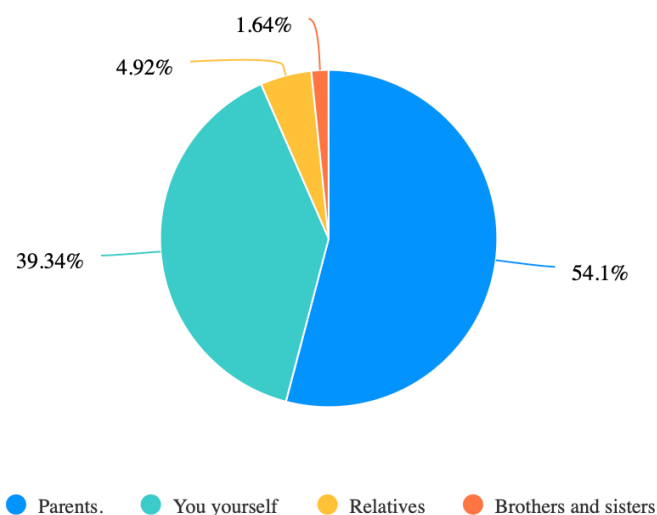


(Diagram 4: Education background of students' parents)

With the further opening of international education resources, the relatively loose and friendly study abroad policies, employment, and immigration policies of the main destination countries for studying abroad, Chinese students have more diversified options for studying abroad, and children from ordinary Chinese families have More opportunities to study abroad. With the

continuous increase of China's middle class, the total number of self-funded students studying abroad in 2018 reached 596,300, accounting for 90.06%. Self-funded students are still the most important group of Chinese students studying abroad. The second is the number of people studying abroad on government-sponsored and unit-sponsored education, with only 65,800 people. (Lin 2020)

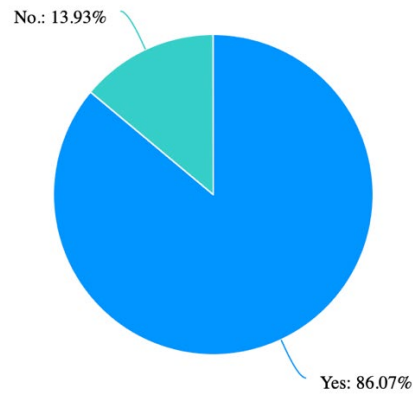
In the data analysis, we found that the main source of Chinese students' study abroad expenses is still the funding from their parents, relatives and friends. According to the data, 54.1% of the students indicated that their parents will be the sponsors of studying abroad. Among the people who participated in this research survey, 39.34% of them have already started working, and they said they would pay their own money to complete the plan to study abroad. 4.92% of the people will have relatives at home to support the cost of studying abroad, while 1.64% of the people will have their younger brothers and sisters fund their study abroad. (Table 5)



(Diagram 5: Sponsors of Study Abroad Expenses)

5.5 Main Factors Affecting International Students' Higher Education Choice Countries

According to the results of this questionnaire survey, 86.07% of the people said that they would consider the economic and political environment of the destination country.



(Diagram 6: The impact of the economic and political environment of the destination country on students' decision-making)

In the push-pull theory, the pull factors of the destination country for studying abroad, including the level of economic and trade development, are the primary factors that attract international students. American scholar Cummings believes that a country's level of economic development and dependence on foreign trade are related to the number and scale of sending and receiving international students. The facts of the international development of higher education prove that a country's economic and trade development level is one of the priority conditions for attracting many foreign students.

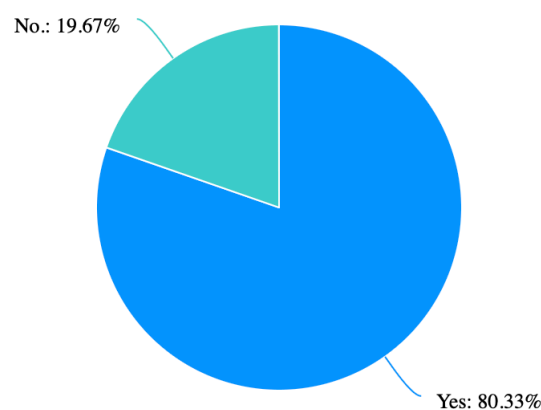
The table summarizes the push factors and pull forces influencing Chinese students to study abroad in this study:

Push factor	Pull factor
Desire for personal growth	Quality of education
Academic or Professional Development	Cultural and Language Opportunities
Dissatisfaction with current environment	Social and political environment in destination country
Thirst for adventure	Get scholarships and grants

(Figure 2: Push factor and Pull factor)

On the one hand, the higher the economic development level of a country is, the richer the region is, the higher the relative education investment, and the better the teaching quality. On the other hand, the quality of study and life in affluent areas is also relatively high. The level of economic and trade development often represents a country's history and prospects and affects the development of a country's comprehensive strength in all aspects. Therefore, economically developed regions will inevitably attract more international students. Secondly, the education level of the destination country for studying abroad is always the primary factor considered by families studying abroad when they choose. According to the 2020 edition of the "White Paper on Studying in China" released by New Oriental, since 2014, the education level of the destination country has been the primary factor considered by families studying abroad when choosing a country for studying abroad, and the proportion of respondents who choose this factor has reached 65%; The second and third factors were security concerns and future employment recognition.

In this questionnaire survey, 80.33% of people believe that studying abroad will have a positive effect on their future career.



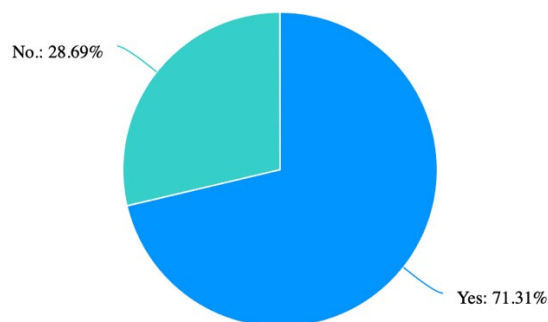
(Diagram 7: Whether studying abroad will have a positive effect on future career)

According to Barnick, although students are not particularly concerned about how their study

abroad or exchange experience will help them find their dream jobs in the "knowledge economy" era, students are very aware that they can make full use of the benefits of studying abroad. to enrich the resume (Barnick 2010:26). Barnick believes that some students usually put their experience of studying abroad in their resumes to improve their employment level, but many students have never thought about improving their employability by studying abroad, and they have no intention of finding an "internationalized job" work (Barnick 2010:26).

According to human resources theory, study abroad and student programs can promote personal development and improve intercultural communication skills and are generally considered to be of great significance to the improvement of the quality of the contemporary global workforce (Amit 2010). However, this view of linking characteristics such as personal development and intercultural communicative competence with employability has been criticized by academic circles (Franklin 2010). Even so, employability and intercultural competence are often linked, and employers often use intercultural "skills" such as the ability to interact with "people from different cultural backgrounds" as hiring criteria.

Secondly, in this survey, 71.31% of the respondents said that the employment opportunities in the destination country for studying abroad are also an important factor when considering the destination country for studying abroad.



(Diagram 8: Whether to consider employment opportunities in the destination country for studying abroad)

In the relationship of studying abroad, the host country attracts international students by providing employment opportunities and policies such as residence and immigration. The survey reflects the importance of immigration opportunities for overseas students. Students who choose to study abroad not only consider the academic reputation of the university, but also consider the opportunity cost of obtaining a permanent residence visa. Active immigration policies have promoted the development of international student education. (Zwart 2013) In addition, studies have also shown that visa programs and immigration procedures play an increasingly important role in the choice of host countries for international students. Therefore, in order to retain outstanding graduates, the United States, Canada and other countries have vigorously opened up their employment, residence and immigration policies to international students, encouraging them to stay in their home countries to continue their development after graduation, thus attracting a large number of overseas students. (Gopal 2016) This policy is very attractive to international students, especially students from Southeast Asia. In 2005, about one-third of Chinese students and two-thirds of Indian students became Australian permanent residents. (Cameron Farivar and Coffey 2019)

Affected by the epidemic, in addition to teaching quality and employment opportunities, the risk of studying abroad has been listed as one of the important considerations. Because of the discrimination and infection risks caused by the epidemic, most students who originally planned to apply for undergraduate schools abroad canceled their plans, while the number of people going abroad to study for masters increased significantly. Compared with the one-and-a-half or two-year schooling system in China, overseas one-year taught master's programs have obvious advantages, not only saving study costs, but also being more efficient. Coupled with the appropriate handling of the epidemic in some countries, students are more assured to go there. For example, the UK normalized the epidemic earlier, and schools basically resumed normal offline teaching. The school's handling measures also have a great impact on students' attitudes towards school choice. (Mok Xiong and Cheung 2021) Conversely, some schools that mandate the attendance of international students may be less popular. Because the demands of students are different under the epidemic, some students want to go abroad to gain a sense of studying abroad, and some students do not want to take the risk of infection and prefer online

teaching.

From this investigation and study, we found that the main factors that affect Chinese students' choice of study abroad destinations include the economic and political environment of the destination country, and countries with developed economies and stable politics are the first choice for Chinese students to study abroad. Secondly, the employment opportunities and immigration policies of the destination country have also become important factors affecting the decision-making of Chinese students. Finally, due to the impact of the epidemic, personal safety and risk have also become important metrics.

6. Discussion

6.1 *Study objective*

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mobility of international students in China. From the questionnaire survey, it is concluded that the trend of the flow of Chinese international students after the coronavirus and the driving and pulling factors that affect their decision to study abroad. In this study, it is found that the influence of pull factors on the decision-making of Chinese international students is more relevant. The focus of this study is to assess how these factors affect the trend of higher education internationalization to analyze the relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in international student mobility. Four research objectives were proposed to examine the associations among influencing factors.

6.2 *COVID-19 accelerates changes in the structure of international student mobility*

Before the epidemic, the main flow of international students was from developing countries to developed countries. The COVID-19 has temporarily reduced the scale of China's study abroad, and at the same time accelerated the cooling of the wave of Chinese students studying abroad in the past 20 years. Although it is foreseeable that China will remain the world's largest exporter of international students in the future, there may be a temporary sharp decline in the

scale of China's overseas study, and there may be a continuous slight decline. (Strielkowski 2022) In general, the wider global student mobility in recent years may continue after the epidemic is brought under control, but student flow routes to some countries may still be disrupted. International student mobility patterns may change after this crisis is over.

The destinations of current global student flows have shifted moderately from Europe, North America and Australia to Asia and the Middle East. The overall size of global student mobility will not increase rapidly but is likely to decline; the preferred destinations for students to study abroad may change, and the United States, which is increasingly unpopular with international students, may decline. The deterioration of Sino-US relations brought about by the epidemic has a certain impact on the flow of Chinese students studying in the United States. (Yu 2021) Before the outbreak of the epidemic, many middle- and upper-middle-class people in China wanted to go abroad to broaden their horizons, and they liked to send their children abroad to study. After the outbreak, Chinese people's views on studying in the United States are changing. In their minds, the West remains the pantheon of higher education, and likely will remain so for decades to come. However, in general, the number of Chinese students studying in the United States will continue to decline, which is closely related to the trend of Sino-US relations. Especially after the epidemic, the United States has introduced many policies restricting foreign students from coming to the United States. Whether it is psychological or political, they may slow down the flow of Chinese students to the United States. (Yang and Shen 2022)

Some surveys show that the trend of studying abroad in East Asian countries and regions is on the rise. After the epidemic, proximity is an important factor for students and parents to consider; the cultural similarities in the entire Asian region have also shortened the psychological distance of students. Secondly, in recent years, the ranking of Asian universities has also improved, such as the University of Singapore. Finally, because of the geographical relationship and the level of economic development, the consumption level in Southeast Asia is also a factor considered by most students, and the economic burden is lower than that of other big countries. (Mok Xiong and Cheung 2021) Compared with European and American countries, although a small number of people will choose it, because of the reputation of higher education institutions, it

will still become a consideration for the human capital investment of students' families.

6.3 *Negative impact of COVID-19 on international student mobility*

Scholars who oppose the internationalization of education claim that the development of international education will only increase the benefits of the social elite, while it is even more unfriendly to the bottom groups. The COVID-19 has also brought a huge impact on the global economy to a large extent, exacerbating the economic gap and inequality between social classes, developing countries may suffer greater losses, and the recovery time will be longer. The IIE report of the Institute of International Education (Martel 2020: 12) The Great Recession made it impossible for the growing middle class in developing countries to afford the cost of studying abroad, which led to the interruption of the plans of many students who planned to study abroad. The economic gap reflects the inequality in education and brings more uncertainties. As the world experiences its worst health crisis, countries in poorer regions are more vulnerable, and education systems are likely to be hit harder.

6.4 *COVID-19 accelerates technological change in higher education*

Leah Mason believes that in the current pandemic, we urgently need a new conception and transformation of the global education system, which is an opportunity for innovative technological and educational changes. He also believes that global mobility does not rely solely on cross-border travel to obtain education but can solve cross-space education through innovative technology. Although many schools have begun to carry out online courses due to travel restrictions due to the epidemic, studying abroad is fundamentally an experiential learning process, from which students can gain unique educational achievements and experience new experiences brought about by cultural differences. is not available in online courses. The lockdown has forced many colleges and universities to close their campuses, and many colleges and universities have switched from face-to-face teaching to remote online teaching. Many universities have successfully moved all or most of their courses online during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Rashid and Yadav 2020)

However, the quality of education and teaching, and whether students are satisfied with the new learning environment have yet to be tested. The quality of online education may be challenged as most teachers in the world are not trained in professional distance courses, do not have the various advanced technologies necessary for high-quality teaching and learning, and do not actively adapt traditional courses to online teaching. Of course, effective online learning and teaching is possible, but it requires an investment of time and support. (Simamora 2020)

In this context, rapid reform of online education often leads to low-quality problems; and when most students and families lack sufficient and appropriate online learning devices, the quality of education will further decline. Some scholars currently believe that degree program studies for international students may increasingly be conducted online. In fact, before the epidemic, some people predicted this situation, but in the end, online education only achieved certain success in continuing education. (Alam 2022) Possible reasons for this on-site are: Students prefer to study on-site, and many students wish to seek temporary or permanent employment overseas upon completion of their studies.

6.5 *"Local internationalization" has become a new direction for the internationalization of global higher education*

Affected by the epidemic and the international situation, the development of studying abroad will be hindered in the short term. At the same time, one can receive high-quality international higher education in one's own country without going abroad to study. This phenomenon is called "local internationalization". (Rauer et al. 2021)

"Local internationalization " in Chinese-foreign cooperatively run universities is becoming a new alternative. Especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, the physical institutions of Sino-foreign cooperative education and the Chinese institutions with good cooperative relations in Sino-foreign cooperative education projects are becoming important online and offline learning opportunities for Chinese students who should be studying in overseas cooperative institutions. carrier. In recent years, China's Sino-foreign cooperative education has developed rapidly. As of the end of 2019, there were more than 600 colleges and universities in China with Sino-foreign cooperative education and projects, and the number reached 2,238, covering a wide area. The objects of university cooperation in running schools involve more than 800 foreign

universities in more than 40 countries and regions. Under the guidance of national policies, China's Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools has flourished.

As China's college entrance examination admission rate increases year by year, the number of college entrance examination sources is gradually decreasing every year, and the number of Sino-foreign cooperatively run schools is increasing, the competition among Sino-foreign cooperatively run schools is also becoming increasingly fierce.

7. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily interrupted international student mobility and cross-border exchanges, but the importance and development trend of international education will not change. The epidemic has to a certain extent affected the willingness of Chinese students to study abroad and the change of their destinations. After the epidemic is over, they have gradually regained their confidence in studying abroad. Moreover, global higher education organizations have also found new paths during the epidemic, and online teaching and localized international education have gradually improved and received more and more support. The destinations for Chinese students to study abroad have become more diversified, and more middle-class families could send their children to study abroad.

The rapid spread of the coronavirus is a mirror image and a portrayal of the rapid development of globalization. This proliferation has brought fragmentation on a global scale for a short period of time. The stagnation of personnel cross-border exchanges caused by the epidemic will be temporary, and its impact on the internationalization of higher education will also be limited. (Obadire, Mashau and Misumi 2020) After the epidemic stabilizes, the importance and development trend of international education will not change, and educational exchanges between countries will not be weakened. At present, most of the top universities in the world are in Western countries. The education systems of many countries do have many advantages, especially in some European and American countries. They can provide high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate education and provide students with personalized development. Opportunity. (Clark 1986)

The epidemic is both an opportunity and a challenge for Chinese students studying abroad. To a certain extent, the epidemic has affected students' willingness to study abroad. Chinese students account for a relatively high proportion of international students in various countries around the world, and China's epidemic prevention and control policies are also the most stringent in the world. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the changes in international higher education caused by the epidemic, as well as the trend and impact of the flow of Chinese international students after the epidemic the elements of. Whether the epidemic has an impact on the willingness of Chinese students to study abroad, and what kind of impact, and what are the changes and flow trends of Chinese students in the destination countries after the epidemic, and what are the influencing factors, so the author conducts investigation and analysis on the flow trends of Chinese students in these aspects. Based on the analysis of domestic and foreign scholars on the trend of studying abroad in higher education, this study summarizes the reasons and flow trends of Chinese students' decision-making of studying abroad after the epidemic and explores the flow of Chinese international students during the COVID-19 epidemic. its influencing factors. The author takes college students and social figures who intend to study abroad in China as the research objects and conducts an effective analysis of 122 valid questionnaires. First, the basic situation of the survey objects is statistically analyzed. Compared with before the epidemic, students' willingness to study abroad has decreased. Secondly, in terms of factors that affect the decision-making of Chinese students' study abroad destinations, it is also found that factors such as economy, politics, state relations, and student families have analyzed the destination choices of Chinese students. That is, the analysis of objective factors and subjective factors of Chinese students' positive willingness to study abroad (Bodycott 2009). The study found that their willingness to study abroad is related to economic factors, political factors, students' subjective factors and objective factors. In view of these different factors, the author divides the objects of the questionnaire survey into three categories, college students, fresh graduates and working people, and designs a series of questions for investigation, to make this research more in-depth and to clarify these factors more clearly. Specific factors, and finally put forward suggestions on the changing trend of the flow direction of Chinese students after the epidemic.

8. Recommendation for further research

The study has some limitations that could affect the validity and reliability of the findings. Firstly, the data collection method only used online questionnaires, which may have led to biased results and limited the representativeness of the sample. Secondly, the sample size may not be large enough to accurately represent the number of Chinese international students. These limitations can be addressed by using multiple data collection methods and larger sample sizes to increase the representativeness of the sample and enhance the validity of the findings.

The future research can employ a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and different data collection methods such as online questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and focus groups. This approach will enable researchers to collect more diverse perspectives and experiences, and ensure the sample is representative of the population of Chinese students studying abroad.

Furthermore, the content of the questionnaire can be deepened to explore the underlying factors that affect the willingness of Chinese students to study abroad during the epidemic. Researchers can focus on specific issues and challenges faced by Chinese students studying abroad during the pandemic, such as visa issues, travel restrictions, and health and safety issues. By exploring these factors in more detail, researchers can provide more nuanced insights into the decision-making process of Chinese students studying abroad, and destination countries can learn from these elements to develop more effective measures to attract Chinese students.

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Appendix

1. What is your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Prefer not to disclose

2. What is your age group?

- a) Under 18
- b) 18-24
- c) 25-30
- d) 31-40
- e) 41-50
- f) Over 50

3. What is your current academic status?

- a) High school student
- b) Undergraduate student
- c) Graduate student
- d) Other

4. What is your field of study?

- a) Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
- b) Business and management
- c) Humanities and social sciences
- d) Fine arts and design
- e) Health and medical sciences
- f) Other

5. Have you recently or do you plan to consider studying abroad?

- a) Yes
- b) No

6. If you are considering studying abroad, what is your main reason for studying abroad?

- a) Better academic opportunities
- b) Exposure to new cultures
- c) Improving language skills
- d) Better employment prospects
- e) Other

7. Which study destination do you prefer if you are considering studying abroad?

- a) United States
- b) United Kingdom
- c) Australia
- d) Canada
- e) New Zealand
- f) Germany
- g) France
- h) Japan
- i) South Korea
- j) Other

8. Do you consider local employment opportunities when choosing a study destination?

- a) Yes
- b) No

9. Do you consider the local economic and political environment when choosing a study destination?

- a) Yes
- b) No

10. Do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has affected your study abroad plans?

- a) Yes
- b) No

11. If yes, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your study abroad plans?

- a) Postponed my plans
- b) Changed my destination choice
- c) Canceled my plans
- d) Other

12. Have you changed your study destination choice due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- a) Yes
- b) No

13. If yes, what is your new destination?

- a) United States
- b) United Kingdom
- c) Australia
- d) Canada
- e) New Zealand
- f) Germany
- g) France
- h) Japan
- i) South Korea
- j) Other

14. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your attitude towards studying abroad?

- a) More cautious about studying abroad plans
- b) No change
- c) More determined to study abroad
- d) Other

15. Does anyone in your family have experience studying abroad?

- a) Yes
- b) No

16. What is the educational background of your parents?

- a) High school graduate
- b) Bachelor's degree holder
- c) Master's degree holder
- d) Other

17. If you plan to study abroad, who will be your financial sponsor?

- a) Parents
- b) Yourself
- c) Relatives
- d) Siblings

18. Have you or your friends experienced discrimination or xenophobia due to the COVID-19 pandemic during your study abroad or while planning to study abroad?

- a) Yes
- b) No

19. If yes, did it affect your attitude towards studying abroad?

- a) Yes
- b) No

20. Do you believe studying abroad can help your future career?

- a) Yes
- b) No