



All kinds of clever

**Factors contributing to obtaining employment in China:
Australian Chinese Graduates experiences**

Dr Jasvir Kaur Nachatar Singh

Lecturer

Department of Management, Sport and Tourism

THANK YOU

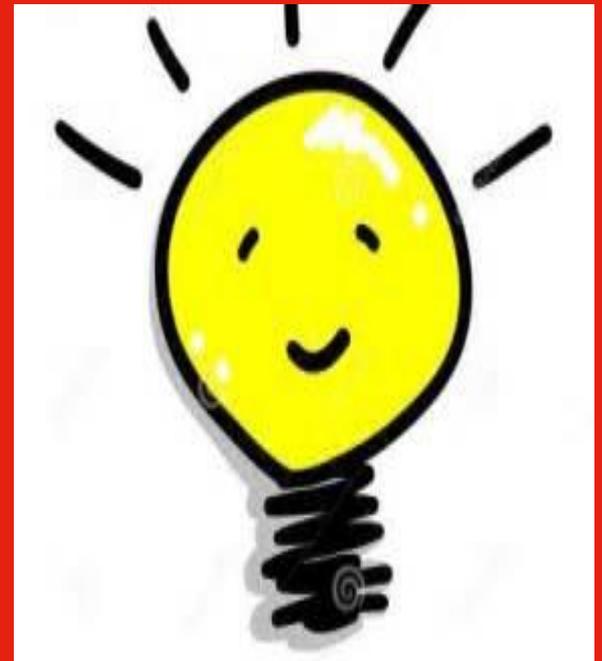


LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

Agenda

- How this research came about?
- Introduction/Research background/Literature Review
- Research Methodologies
- Findings
 - How did they obtain their first and subsequent jobs in China?
 - Practical recommendations to current La Trobe Chinese students.
- Conclusion

How this research came about ?



Introduction

- International students from China seek international education in Australia primarily to add value and improve their employment opportunities in China's competitive labour market (Gribble, 2008).
- In 2018, international students in Australia around 693,750 at all levels of education, of which around 399,078 international students were enrolled at Australian higher education institution. Majority of international students come from China (Department of Education and Training, 2019).
- The recent trend shows that nearly 80 per cent of Chinese international students studying in Australia are returning to their home country to seek employment opportunities (Needham, 2017).

Introduction

- Hao, Wen and Welch (2016) argued that **limited** empirical research is conducted on employment experiences and career development of Chinese international students who return to China upon finishing their studies in Australia.
- Therefore, this presentation **aims** to explore alumni employment experiences with a particular focus on **1) what are the influential factors in attaining jobs when they return home to China and 2) practical suggestions to current students on how to increase their employability skills.**

Research Background

- In a planned economy state, it was the responsibility of the Chinese government to provide jobs to its citizens.
- However, post-1979, China adopted market driven economy principles and developed rapidly (Cao, 2017; Su & Zhang, 2015).
- It is believed that post-2002, problems of graduate employment started to occur as number of local and overseas graduates were on the rise (Cao, 2017).
- China implemented a large expansion of university enrolment due to the massification of Chinese higher education system (Cao, 2017).



Research Background

- Previously, international students stay back in the host countries because of better career opportunities and quality of living (Alberts & Hazen, 2005; Gribble & Blackmore, 2012).
- But, in recent years the trend has changed where there are evidences of increasing rate of Chinese graduates returning to China (Lin-Stephens, Uesi & Doherty, 2015).
- Many international graduates are returning to China because of China's economic prosperity that will lead to better career and professional opportunities as well as family and friends ties are valued in China (Singh, 2019).

Research Background

- In 2013, nearly seven million new graduates entered the job market in China (Mok, Wen & Dale, 2016). However, only one-third of them have secured positions in various companies (Mok, Wen & Dale, 2016).
- Since the competition is great, how are these international graduates obtaining jobs in China?
- At present, attaining overseas tertiary qualification is not perceived as an added advantage in China anymore (Needham, 2017).
- Local graduates are preferred by employers as they are more up to date with local knowledge and guanxi (Hao & Welch, 2012).



Research Background

- Ren, Zhu & Warner (2017) stated that guanxi is consistently reported as being highly influential to obtain employment in Chinese labour market by international graduates.
- Recent studies by Cao (2017) and Huang (2013) argue that very little is known on OTHER influencing factors contributing to Chinese graduates in obtaining employment in China based on the graduates' perspectives themselves.
- Therefore, this study closes the gap by forming the research question of ***“What are the influencing factors in obtaining employment in China for Australian Chinese graduates?”***.

Research Methodologies

- Since this is an exploratory study, a qualitative approach was adopted for the following reasons. Firstly, little is known on the experiences of Chinese alumni with regards to their employability experiences (Creswell, 2013). Secondly, since the the nature of qualitative research is naturalistic and interpretive (Creswell, 2013), the research was conducted in “natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).
- In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in China (Beijing and Shanghai) last September 2017 with 19 Chinese alumni (8 males, 11 females) previously studied at La Trobe University.

Research Methodologies

- 16 graduates came back immediately upon completion of studies; 2 students stayed back as PR and Citizenship holders; 1 student had tutoring opportunity at La Trobe
- 15 graduated as Bachelor degree holders with 7 graduated with Bachelor of Accounting and 7 did Masters mainly in Masters of Professional Accounting (2) and MBA (2).
- 18 Chinese Alumni had jobs except for 1 who is waiting to be accepted as a PhD student in one of the Chinese Universities.
- They hold various management roles at banks, Delloitte, law firm, international kindergarten, software company, Box Hill TAFE, real estate company, hotels and some are entrepreneurs.
- Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Participant Code	Gender	Graduation	Employment Status	Area of Qualification	Company
A1	Female	2014	Employed right after graduation	Accounting	IT
A2	Female	2013	Employed right after graduation	Accounting	Law
A3	Male	2000	Employed right after graduation	Business	Manufacturing
A4	Male	2010	Employed right after graduation	Accounting	State-owned Bank
A5	Female	2010	Employed right after graduation	Accounting	Investment Bank
A6	Male	2014	Employed right after graduation	Business/marketing	International University
A7	Female	2008	Employed right after graduation	Tourism & Hospitality	International University
A8	Female	2015	Unemployed	International Relations	Want to do PhD
A9	Female	2014	Employed right after graduation	Tourism & Hospitality	International Logistic
A10	Female	2013	Employed right after graduation	Human Resource	China Human Resource Recruitment
A11	Female	2012	Employed right after graduation	Accounting	Big Four
A12	Female	2006	Self-employed	Business	Entrepreneur
A13	Female	2012	Employed right after graduation	International Business	International Kindergarten
A14	Male	2003	Self-employed	Business	Entrepreneur
A15	Female	2013	Self-employed	Accounting	Entrepreneur
A16	Male	2014	Employed right after graduation	Accounting	State-owned Bank
A17	Male	2011	Employed right after graduation	Computer Science	International Computing/IT
A18	Male	2014	Employed right after graduation	Finance/Accounting	China Real Estate
A19	Male	2014	Employed right after graduation	Finance	China Trust Company

Research Findings

How did they obtain their first and subsequent jobs in China?

Research Findings 2: Factors

- Influential factors in securing a job in China include:
 - a) English language skills** – ability to communicate with overseas clients, foreign born supervisors and colleagues; ability to write and reply emails in English
 - b) Previous work related experiences** – previous work experiences in China and/or related internship jobs in Australia and/or China

Research Findings 2: Factors

- Influential factors in securing a job in China include:
 - c) Personality** – loyalty, open minded, positive – most of these personality traits are acquired during their studies in Australia
 - d) Relationship (Guanzi)** – jobs secured through connections
 - e) Overseas degree** – Master's degree is valuable over undergraduate degree and Chartered certification such as ACCA, CPA & CFA

Practical employability recommendations to current La Trobe Chinese students

Research Findings 4: Recommendations

- Clearer job roles - degree
- Plan your career while studying
- Lower your expectations
- Networking – Guanxi; LinkedIn; Alumni events
- Internships in China and/or Australia
- Acquire knowledge and soft skills

Research Findings 4: Recommendations

- International Mentoring Program
- Resume & Mock interview
- Chinese job websites

Conclusion

- The findings of this research have contributed to the literature on Chinese international graduates from Australia based on new nuances as Guanxi was not the only factor mentioned by these graduates.
- The findings provided a web of factors that contributed in gaining positive employment outcomes in China.
- With these factors, Australian Chinese graduates are employed by foreign direct investment companies, state owned companies, banks and universities.

Conclusion

- This study also provides meaningful implications to enhance employability of Chinese international graduates.
- Firstly, host institutions can create more opportunities for placements either in the host country or home country or other countries. Only having overseas degree is not sufficient, international graduates need to have competitive advantage not only over local graduates but also other overseas graduates who are returning home.
- In order to gain competitive advantage, host country institutions have to provide work experiences to international students or create awareness to students to gain some kind of prior work experiences before graduation. International graduates have to be guided and have to have the mindset of being a career ready global graduate.

Conclusion

- Secondly, international Chinese students must also reciprocate with the opportunities provided to them by their institutions. For example, seek work experiences as volunteers in non-profit organisations, taking leadership roles in the Student Clubs/Unions at their respective university, part-time or casual employment in organisations, taking advantage of the university career services – resume writing, interview skills, and other related activities which are connected in developing their employability skills.

Thank

You



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY



Reference List

- Cooke, F. L., Yao, X., Jiang, Y., & Li, A. S. (2017). Space, agency and overseas employment for Chinese university graduates in a transient global labour market. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1-34.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Vol. 3rd). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Department of Education and Training. (2018). *International student data: Monthly summary*. Retrieved from <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/International-Student-Data/Documents/MONTHLY%20SUMMARIES/2017/Nov%202017%20MonthlyInfographic.pdf> viewed on 26th February 2018.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research* (Vol. 4th edition). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Reference List

- Gribble, C. (2008). Policy options for managing international student migration: the sending country's perspective. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 30(1), 25-39.
- Hao, J., & Welch, A. (2012). A tale of sea turtles: Job-seeking experiences of Hai Gui (High-Skilled Returnees) in China. *Higher Education Policy*, 25, 243-260.
- Hao, J., Wen, W., & Welch, A. (2016). When sojourners return: Employment opportunities and challenges facing high-skilled Chinese returnees. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 25(1), 22-40.
- Needham, K. (2017). *Chinese students question Australian education sending chills through industry*. Retrieved from <https://www.smh.com.au/world/chinese-students-question-australian-education-sending-chills-through-industry-20170919-gykfqi.html> viewed on 16th March 2018.