

# ***Research on the Market Pattern and Development of Chinese Overseas Student***

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**Abstract:** Trend of overseas study emerged as more students compete for a better education and seek more opportunities in foreign countries like the US and UK. As a fast-developing country, China shows an apparent trend of overseas study. There is an increased trend of Chinese overseas students throughout time. Through many investigations and interviews conducted by other research, it is assumed that most Chinese students are motivated by access to diverse cultures, increased opportunities, and international engagement. This study aims to get a deeper understanding of the number of Chinese overseas students, its trend in the future, the destinations the students aim to go to, the reason for going to specific foreign countries, as well as the major that Chinese overseas students seek to focus on and how did foreign education provides a better development for the major the student choose. In conclusion, the number of Chinese overseas students rose from 1872, when the first Chinese overseas students were launched by the government, to 2019, which fell in 2020 because of the strike and rose quickly until 2023. Even though the major's students focus on vary, most focus on three aspects: STEM, Business, and computer science. The cost of going overseas also caused a great challenge for many families. In prediction, the trade war between the US and China, the inflation, and the decline in domestic employment may cause a gradual decline in overseas students.

**Keywords:** overseas, education, China

## **1. Introduction**

Competition between individuals and companies increased through rapid changes in time and the progressive growth of industry and commerce. The competitions among Chinese students are the best example. They compete for academic programs, extra circulars, and contests and are now pursuing overseas studies. The factors that motivate Chinese students to take this path begin with China's economic and political change throughout time and the increased opportunities and access to diverse cultures they could get from foreign countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Another possible reason is that the Chinese educational system is too competitive, and students have no choice but to go abroad. In 1872, China's first batch of government-sponsored overseas students set out from Shanghai and arrived in New England to begin their studies abroad. Through collected surveys, the number of Chinese students going abroad increased predictably until 2020, when COVID-19 struck China and halved the number of Chinese overseas students. Until 2023, the number still increased, and more Chinese students are taking advantage of their opportunities in foreign

countries. Exposure to new education, ideas, and educational systems is crucial in motivating Chinese students to go abroad and encouraging more international engagement. Through the wide range of programs and opportunities offered, more parents are attracted and convinced to send their children abroad even though tuition and living standards are expensive.

For over a decade, thousands of Chinese students have gone abroad and studied in foreign countries such as the U.K. It is important to have an understating of their journey, overall experience, the reason that motivated them to go abroad, and their perceptions of the impacts of learning from studying overseas. The author of this study conducted in-depth qualitative investigations and observations of 10 postgraduate Chinese students' lives and experiences at British University and analyzed how they coped with difficulties in academic learning and their solutions to adapt to the new environment in a foreign country. It is then concluded that studying overseas helps students promote their awareness of diverse cultures and transform a new way of learning and thinking with a newly constructed identity [1]. Zhu conducted two rounds of in-depth interviews and data analysis to dig into the details of the self-development of Chinese overseas students in Europe. The interviews were conducted in two stages: the first stage in 2012, with 21 students interviewed, and the second stage in 2014, with 30 students interviewed. The interview consisted of 3 parts, the first of which involved basic information, the second of recalling motivation before departure about self, and the last with open questions connected with self-development. After the result was categorized, the researcher discovered that the students developed the three forms above of self under different travel circumstances [2]. Anan conducted an online questionnaire survey on Chinese overseas students during Covid-19. A total of 268 questionnaires were collected. The students filled out the questionnaires based on their situation in a foreign country. This Research aimed to understand the mental state, situation, and life of overseas students in the U.K. and the U.S. in response to isolation and stress during COVID-19. The survey shows that most Chinese overseas students face mild depression [3]. Zhu started a semi-structured qualitative interview to find the factor that motivates Chinese students to undertake postgraduate study overseas. The data in his study were collected from 15 students at the point of postgraduate education. The finding suggested that the factors varied from time, cost, climate, admissions, academic background, and reputation [4]. A survey questionnaire distributed to Chinese students in two large university campuses in America was developed to determine their motives and reasons for leaving their home country and studying in the U.S. The respondent indicated that Chinese education lacks innovation and they don't have the opportunity to try new things, unlike U.S. colleges that encourage them to innovate and broaden their view. Other than that, more reasons were given according to the Research [5]. Li interviewed 31 graduates from the chemistry department of an elite university in China in 2018 to investigate why students leave Chinese elite universities for doctoral studies abroad. According to the respondents, the perceived value of foreign degrees, new cultural experiences, and institutional habits are the main reasons for going abroad, especially for students who want to achieve a Ph.D. [6]. It conducted a systematic literature review approach and a thematic analysis to explore the new directions toward internalizing higher education in China during COVID-19. The finding shows that the number of Chinese overseas students may decline, and preferred destinations may change. This means some student flows from East to West will turn into East Asian flows, and some changes will become permanent [7]. Gitnux created a statistic on the number of Chinese students studying abroad from 2010 to 2021 and found a growing trend. As more Chinese students are taking advantage of going abroad for international education, the number of Chinese overseas students might reach 1.9 million in 2050, based on the predictable trend of the statistics [8]. Will interview selected Chinese and American students to examine the experiences of Chinese international students in foreign countries and inquire about U.S. domestic students' views of Chinese overseas students. According to the findings, the first and foremost reason for overseas study is higher education in the U.S. compared to China, as the U.S.

provides better academic programs with more freedom and opportunities. Also, they could get a deeper understanding of life and diverse cultures. While the American student also responded to the benefit of having international students as it added to the diversity and promoted competition [9]. Javed used a qualitative approach based on the interpretivism paradigm and thematic analysis to analyze the subjective data. Fourteen students participated in this Research. The Research aims to identify the determinant of IMS from 2 student groups. One who is in the enrollment process and one who is motivated to go abroad. The finding served as the guideline for a higher education system and the change in the podium to prevent brain drain [10].

This study aims to research the number of Chinese overseas students as well as the trend that has taken place in the past to today, the destination students preferred throughout time, the cost accompanying studying abroad, and the distribution and field many Chinese students chose. In the last part, this research predicts the future development of the rate of Chinese overseas students, where it increases, decreases, or remains the same as the trade war between the US and China, reduced employment in China, and inflation in every place involved in this affair.

## 2. Trend of Chinese Overseas Students in Recent Years

### 2.1. Number of Chinese Overseas Students

The trend of Chinese students going abroad to the U.S., England, Canada, and Australia is increasing yearly, even though the pandemic caused an interruption. In recent years, Chinese students aged 15-21 have shown an increasing trend of studying abroad; many study overseas when they are only 14. This means more Chinese parents can provide more plans for their children's education and the student's self-development. Through many investigations and observations, 2 group of people below 14 years old and between 15 and 17 shows a gradually growing trend of overseas education from 2019 to 2023, while the age group of 18-21 shows a constant number and 22-24 and above 25 a comparatively declining trend. In general, when looking at the family background of the family who tends to send their children away, the proportion of parents with overseas education backgrounds has reached 16.5 %, increased by 3.1% compared to 2022. Before the strike of Covid-19 in 2019, Chinese overseas students got the highest point of 703,500 people, which declined in 2020 when it reached 450,900 people but increased to 537,000 people in 2021, 662,100 people in 2022, and finally 700,000 people in 2023, as shown in Figure 1.

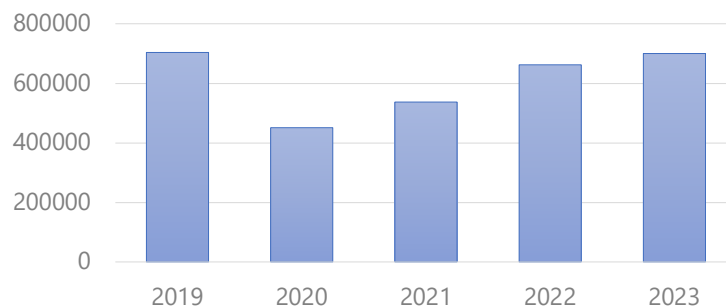


Figure 1: Number of Chinese overseas students.

### 2.2. Oversea Destination

According to much Research, England and America are still the most popular choice for Chinese students. However, at the same time, most Chinese overseas students choose Australia, France, and Canada as their first choice. First of all, Australia, with its beautiful climate and diverse animals and

a place for Chinese students to escape from “curling,” is a perfect place to choose. The popularity of the eight Australian universities has been high because of their scientific teaching method and the opportunities given to students of abundant and diverse internship programs. In addition, the Australian government offers extra benefits like infinite time during doctoral study and a 4-6-year work permit. Other than Australia, European universities offer a perfect heaven for overseas students in science and engineering. Germany, for example, requires a lower overseas study expense and offers many working opportunities and permanent residence. Similarly, Canada needs a comparatively lower tuition cost and living standard than America and provides many scholarship opportunities. Canadian Universities, like Toronto, consistently rank among the best in the world and offer well-known courses. Plus, it gives an edge beyond education. Other places like Japan, France, and Singapore attracted many Chinese students. With its highest expense for overseas study, America occupies most of the applications from China. According to HESA data, from 2020-2023, 53% of Chinese overseas students chose America, 24% Australia, 18% England, and 5% others. U.S. and U.K. are still the top choices as they offer international students various dedicated services, from practical and academic advice and guidance to health and wellbeing support, from pre-departure to graduation and beyond, as shown in Figure 2.

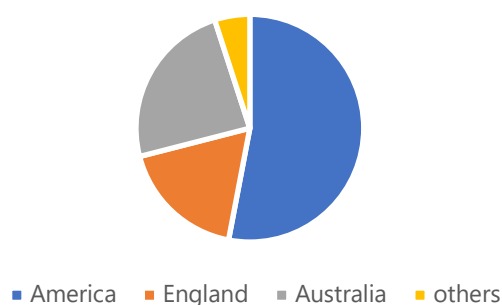


Figure 2: Destination of Chinese Overseas Students in 2023.

### 2.3. Related Cost

Moreover, it is essential to note that Chinese parents try to improve their children’s grades and opportunities to get into a better university in this competitive overseas study. Parents spent thousands of RMB on remediation like improving their SAT, Tuofu, IELTS, etc. In addition, flying from China to the Western world requires much expense. Most importantly, study expense is the most considerable burden for the Chinese overseas student. For example, in 2023, Columbia University in America require \$65,500; in addition to living cost and incidental expenses, the price every year exceed 600,000 RMB, which is at least double what it was a decade ago. State schools like UC Berkeley’s total cost is \$69300 per year, double what it was a decade ago. Moving on to England, a decade ago, most British universities’ undergraduates were 120,000 to 180,000 RMB per year. According to extra expenses on living costs, the cost of staying in the U.K. can reach 500,000 RMB at most. Compared with a decade ago, the annual cost increased by 150,000 to 380,000 RMB. However, in Australia, the tuition cost stayed the same. Overall, looking at the cost budget, the money spent studying overseas for Chinese is growing due to the rising cost of mainstream countries like the U.K. and the U.S.

### 2.4. Major Distribution

In 2023, the top 3 majors are business, engineering, and computer science. According to immigration department data, 40% of Chinese overseas students in America choose STEM. In addition, according

to Georgetown University education department's data for 2023, for people aged 21-24, the wage is in the middle, with the highest salaries in engineering (\$50k) followed by computer science (\$50k) and statistics and mathematics (\$43k). Students majoring in finance, economics, marketing, etc., are the people who choose to return to China, and 14.8% of Chinese returned students are inclined to develop in business, followed by the internet industry. Moreover, take the 2017 data as an example. The most popular major is business, which takes 13%, followed by engineering (11.8%) and computer science (9.7%). In 2018, it was the same as in 2017. In 2019, business was top 1, followed by computer science and engineering. The pattern could be observed from these data that engineering will continue to rise, and finance will still dominate most Chinese overseas students' majors due to its valuable opportunities and the work permit given by the U.S. (not always). Overall, it's essential to know that mainstream isn't always suitable for everyone; follow your path and choose the major you are interested in. You have to pave the future yourself.

### **3. Future Judgement**

#### **3.1. Trade War on the Restriction of Majors**

Due to the trade war between China and the United States, the number of Chinese overseas students has been significantly affected, especially as the U.S. government enforced many restrictions on Chinese, like entry restrictions and visa problems. In the next few years, the forecast is that the number of Chinese overseas students in the U.S. is expected to decline under the influence of these policies. For instance, in recent years, the U.S. government's restriction on visas and entry has been going tighter, making Chinese students going abroad even more difficult. In 2018, the U.S. government restricted and enforced the visa for China-America, raising the threshold for studying abroad and causing more Chinese students to give up studying abroad. According to statistics, as the restrictions got tightened even more, more Chinese overseas students will turn their destination to a place like Canada, Australia, England, etc. Moreover, as the trade war started between China and the U.S., some "sensitive majors" like Aerospace, high-tech manufacturing, robotics applications, chemistry, bioengineering, etc., have been affected by government policies of having longer and slower Visas. However, it is essential to know that majors like business, liberal arts, science, and art will not be affected by the war between China and the US. Overall, the number of Chinese overseas students going to the US will decrease but increase for those going to other places.

#### **3.2. Decline in Domestic Employment**

There are several reasons for the decline in domestic employment in China. As high-tech emerges and product improves, many traditional product and job decrease while innovation and new market and high-tech job require more labor forces and cause an imbalance in the market in China. In addition, many firms choose to reduce the staff or decrease the workers' wages to diminish the input cost or when facing an economic decline. This also causes a lot of middle-aged people to lose jobs and the employment rate to fall. This decline in domestic employment has a considerable impact on Chinese overseas students. Many parents cannot pay their children's expensive expenses for studying abroad. Overseas study accompanies a significant cost. They must pay for the costly tuition and living fees and face many cultural and social problems. Even though overseas research gives students a broader view and space for development, it is not for everyone. Some Chinese overseas students even find out that they don't meet the expectations they want after paying this high cost. The above is from the perspective of the adult employment rate. The changes in the income of adults reduce the opportunities for sending their children away to foreign countries.

### 3.3. Foreign Inflation

Nowadays, many countries face inflation. According to investigations and interviews, 24% of overseas students faced the pressure of living. 33% of working-class families stated why they must save nonet and live frugally. 27% said they have to work to sustain their survival, and 45 % asked for help from their family. In addition, according to Canada, their inflation increased to 8.1%, which broke the record in 1983. This caused many Chinese overseas students to face the pressure of living. Many students who aim to go to the U.S. face the biggest challenge of the living cost and inability to study while maintaining a basic living standard.

### 4. Conclusion

According to previous research involving investigations and interviews, it's believed that the primary drivers for Chinese students include the attraction of diverse cultures, expanded opportunities, and active participation on the global stage. These factors collectively fuel their desire to engage internationally and seek broader horizons. In conclusion, this study examines four key aspects: Chinese international student numbers, popular destinations, financial considerations, and academic disciplines. Firstly, it notes a consistent rise in Chinese students studying abroad from the initial cohort to 2023. Secondly, prominent destinations include the U.S., UK, Australia, and Canada. Thirdly, the substantial expenses involved pose a challenge for many families. Lastly, the dominant fields of study are computer science, business, and STEM, displaying consistency across 2017, 2018, and 2019. In addition, the trend of Chinese overseas students can also be predicted to decline because of the intervention of the China-US trade war, higher living costs, and decreased domestic employment. It is important to note that even though overseas study started to become mainstream, it wasn't good for everyone; only finding the best interest and path an individual desires is the priority.

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