

Mainland China Student Study in Taiwan: Motivation, Impression, Potential Political Reform Agent

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Abstract

Since 2011, the number of Chinese students going to Taiwan has started to grow, yet the tension between the cross-strait keeps rising. As the tension rises, the discourse of Mainland China students who came to Taiwan has raised many questions about the risks of sensitive topics like political views. This is an exploratory study to learn more about three topics in depth. First, Chinese students' motivation for studying in Taiwan is low. Second, the student's impressions before and after they came to Taiwan are captured. Third, regardless of being a political or not political student, will the impressions have an impact on future cross-strait exchange or even as a political reform agent? Using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, this research found that the majority of Mainland China's motivation for coming to Taiwan wasn't related to political conditions and the avoidance of political topics. Some of the political-major students do explicitly state their desire to know about politics. However, according to the findings of this study, the majority of students stay informed about Taiwanese political issues. Another significant finding is the interest that mainland Chinese students have in Taiwanese culture and Identity. When they arrived in Taiwan, they realized the cultural differences between Taiwan and China. Taiwanese students are also viewed as siblings rather than adversaries by the students. In the end, students state they have a positive impression after studying in Taiwan.

Keywords: cross-strait relations, education policy, motivations, impressions, China-Taiwan relation, political view

1. Introduction

On April 2019, Taiwan Today, a Taiwan media, write about the case of Li Jiabao (李家寶), a 21 year old Chinese student that criticizing Xi Jinping via Twitter on March. Li faces an uncertain future after what he did, such as unable to contact with his parents, his phone numbers in China has been cancelled and his access to financing has been cut off. Kuan An Lu (管安露), spokesman for Taipei based

Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF) state that this is the first case since the program is opened in 2011.

Li is seeking for asylum and refugee status, but Taiwan currently has no refugee law for Chinese nationals. Qiu Chengzheng (邱垂正), Mainland Affairs Department spokesman, stated that mainland students are seeking political asylum and are the first in Taiwan (BBC Chinese, 2019). Qiu Yizhen (邱伊翎), secretary general of the Taiwan Rights Promotion Association, on her own observation say that cross strait exchange program is likely to increase people from Mainland to come to Taiwan search for political asylum (BBC Chinese, 2019).

Looking what happened to Li Jiabao, the question gets further: Is his thought developed before he came to Taiwan? Or life experience in Taiwan made him more eye-opened until dare to do such things? In the future, if a Chinese student go to Taiwan study, will it have an ideological shift? Wang (2018) frankly note:

"Staying in Taiwan could enable Chinese students to discover another China through the eyes of the Taiwanese people, which might affect their existing cognitions and cause cognitive dissonance. (p.35)"

Tracing back the cases of brain drain of the Chinese student, at Deng (1992) found after several years, many of Chinese students didn't fit with China after being abroad. He clearly notes the students have hope of returning, but there is fear of already feeling strange at the home's situation. One of the real experience, at 1988 one of Chinese student got back to China after study abroad, but what he found about China's political climate made him disappointed and left China 10 days ahead of the schedule. Deng clearly described about the student's experience:

"The political climate in China was also very different from what he(the student) had "originally imagined before visiting home." He found that "fellow citizens were far more estranged from the country" than he was, and he "could see the strange feeling on their faces" when they heard him speak about his hopes to contribute to China's democracy and prosperity. (p.23.)"

Remembering that Taiwan (ROC) and China (PRC) have sensitive issue regarding politic, Chinese student that goes to Taiwan study may have a special perspective than if they go to another country to study. Behind their personal motivation, their home country and Taiwan have may have another interest. According to MAC (Mainland Affairs Council) data, since opened in 2011, the number of Chinese students that go to Taiwan for degree or exchange keep rising until reach its peak at 2016 (total 41.927). The number starts decreasing in the next year, 2017, with total students 35.278. Currently, on 2018 there are 29,603 Chinese student in Taiwan.

This paper is an exploratory research to seek 3 objectives; 1.) Chinese's student motivation studying in Taiwan, 2.) How is the impression from the Chinese student about Taiwan before and after they came? 3.) Regardless political or not political student, will the impressions give an impact for future cross-strait exchange or even as a political reform agent?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Push and Pull factor of Mainland China students study abroad

Peter Bodycott (2014) on his research write about push and pull factor that influence Chinese student to study abroad. Using criteria of push-pull factor, and scale 'important- most important', he found empirical results from 100 Chinese students. Pull factor are factors that make another country attractive to student. Boycott (2014, p.354) note 10 common pull factors;

- 1.) Knowledge of the institution, its reputation, and a general understanding of the destination country are required,
- 2.) Positive attitude about the destination country's support of foreign students studying,
- 3.) Recommendations and the impact of family, parents, and friends are important factors to consider,
- 4.) Tuition fees, living expenses, transport costs, and social costs are all factors to consider,
- 5.) Climate, lifestyle, crime, safety, and racial prejudice are all factors to consider in the environment,
- 6.) Close geographical proximity to the mainland China,
- 7.) Relatives or friends who live in the destination country, or family or friends who are studying there, provide social or educational connections.
- 8.) Prospects for immigration after graduation,
- 9.) Employment prospects,
- 10.) Availability of scholarships for study.

Beside pull factor, Boycott (2014, p.359) stated there is 7 push factor key:

- 1.) An inadequate supply of university in Mainland China,
- 2.) Improved employment opportunities,
- 3.) Immigration prospects,
- 4.) Higher quality education,
- 5.) Strong economic growth,
- 6.) Understanding Western culture,
- 7.) International/intercultural experiences. Empirical result of the study found that the students chose 'international/intercultural experiences' is the most important push factor influence them to study abroad.

2.2 Motivation and Impression about Taiwan

Yan, Li, and Liu (2017) found that Mainland China's student's motivation Lu Sheng's motivation to study in Taiwan are: 1.) expanding their vision, 2.) academic environment, 3.) cultural similarity, 4.) historical influence, 5.) geographical location and lastly, 6.) low-cost. Yan, Li, and Liu (2017) describe that learning satisfaction were gave Mainland China's student positive impressions. There are school resources, campus experience, and learning adaptation. On the secondary level, there are cultural learning, how the teachers teach, the administrative services, and social support. These are factors that correlated with

learning satisfaction that can lead to positive impressions after their study ends. On this research, Yan, Li and Liu found positive learning satisfaction of Mainland China's students. Even, the Mainland China students wants to know more about Taiwan culture and Hokkian language. Yan, Li and Liu also suggest the Taiwan's government to provide more facilitating policy for the Mainland China's students (p.113).

2.3 Political Efficacy of Chinese Student Study in Taiwan

Chia Chou Wang (2018) studied about the changes of Chinese student political attitudes because they study in Taiwan. He stated that the Chinese students' political attitudes tend to deviate from official Chinese policies after studying in Taiwan. On behalf of this, there is an expectation that this student can become a source of power for political reforms.

Wang (2018) stated that political efficacy is a core concept of contemporary political participation and democratic political theories, pertained to the beliefs that an individual has that his/her political actions are effective in the political process (p. 35). Internal and external political efficacy depend on cognitive dissonance. Aforementioned that Chinese student staying in Taiwan may affect their cognitive dissonance. One China Policy is one of the topics to test cognitive dissonance among Chinese student. Chinese student considers the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the "great motherland," of which Taiwan is a part (Festinger, as cited in Wang, p. 37), but after studying in Taiwan, Chinese Student discovered that most Taiwanese people not only refuted this but also held negative views regarding the PRC (Sobel, as cited in Wang, p. 37).

Wang empirical result that involving 270 Chinese students after 4 months of study, found that:

1. Chinese students studying in Taiwan found that the political performance of the Chinese government was lower than they expected, which prompted them to doubt the responsiveness of the Chinese government to people's needs (p.50),
2. Along with a decrease in external political efficacy, the connection between Chinese students and the CPC was loosened (p.53),
3. These students became less supportive of the policies of the Chinese government (p.53)

From founding number (3), Wang predict it could affect PRC's legitimacy and critical civil action that may lead advocates of democratic reform.

2.4 Political Socialization among Chinese Student in Taiwan

Chia Chou Wang (2016) on his study about political socialization and change in political trust among Chinese student, using 5 independent variables: cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, identificational assimilation, social identity, and political discussions. Below are his few of his empirical results:

1. Chinese students who interact with their Taiwanese friends develop a mutual understanding and trust with these true acquaintances. They tend to identify with their friends' negative evaluations of the Chinese government, and subsequently lose their trust in the Chinese government (p.540).
2. Visits night markets can decrease their political trust. Choosing to visit a night market indicates that Chinese students can accept Taiwan's local specialties and can easily assimilate into Taiwanese society, which exposes them to substantial amount of information and viewpoints pertaining to Taiwan (p. 540).
3. Regarding identificational assimilation, Chinese students still view the Taiwanese government as a local government of China.

2.5 Political reform agents, patriotism of Mainland China Students

The ideological shift is one of the most serious issues in cross-strait educational exchanges. Several experts put into discourse who will benefit more because of cross-strait educational exchange. Is it China or Taiwan? Research by Wang (2018) found that negative impressions towards Taiwan grew after several discriminations faced by Mainland China students in Taiwan, who grew more patriotic towards their homeland. Instead of deepening understanding of both sides in a positive way, the Mainland China students, on the other hand, experience discrimination and other bad experiences.

2.6 History of China's challenges on sending students abroad

Huang (2003, p.236) state that the issue of reducing the outflow of Chinese scholars and students overseas through sound and reasonable policy and measures has become more and more serious for the government. For example, during period 1978 to 2001, only about 130,000 overseas Chinese scholars and students had returned. Shen (as cited in Huang, 2003) stated, "about 250,000 of Chinese students remained abroad, including those sent and financed by the government and other public sectors" (p.236). Zhiduan Deng (1992) state that the number of returnees from overseas education has fallen short than government's expectation. At that period, the Tiananmen incident can be the reason, because the fear of persecution (p.7).

Guo Zheng Jiao note that in 1987, Deng Xiaoping criticize Chinese student that going to US and called upon students return: *"We hope that all people who have gone overseas to study will come back. It doesn't matter what their previous political attitude was, they can all come back, and after they return things will be well arranged. This policy cannot be changed"* (as cited in Zweig, p.68)

According to Zhiduan Deng (1992, p.18), environmental factors also contribute Chinese brain drain; 1.) low social morale, 2.) weakening national pride, and 3.) trend toward westernization. Western and social values give a big impact to Chinese young. The impact also to the parents, they start to have positive view to the west. The foreign influence from the host country is inevitable.

Zhiduan Deng (1992) state:

"Second, over the last several years some PRC students, rejected by Beijing, have gone to Taiwanese officials for new passports. In the months following Tiananmen, Taipei openly granted them to PRC students. In Tokyo alone, some 2,000 students from the PRC obtained applications; 350 submitted formal requests for Taiwanese passports. Taipei was also willing to provide financial aid for PRC students whose scholarships were cut off by Beijing." (p.26-27)

The so called "brain drain" matter, make Beijing made 2 approach, 1.) providing incentives for student to return, 2.) making it more difficult for the students to go abroad in the first place (Deng, p.10).

Zweig (2006) stated the top reason why Chinese student didn't go back is political instability. China's political has been relatively stable after Deng Xiaoping pass to Jiang Zemin, and then to Hu Jintao (p.81). Zweig state, *"Concerns about working conditions have lessened, and many returnees now see China as an excellent place to develop their talent"*(p.81). The top reason the number of returnees increased around 2002-2004, is not political stability, but China's rapid growth economy.

3. Research Methodology

This paper uses the qualitative method, interview (semi- structured) and questionnaire (open and closed-ended) with 15 Chinese students who study in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. The exchange students are in the spring semester 2019 (February-June 2019), and the degree students are undergraduate students that haven't graduated in 2019.

At that time, the author had informed the Chinese students (exchange) who were in a political class at a university in Kaohsiung that he wanted to conduct this research. The number of Chinese students (exchange) in the class at that time was less than 20. After that, the author also made a survey in an online Google form. Questions written in the questionnaire are using the push and pull factors stated on literature review before.

The author also printed and photocopied the questionnaire sheet, afraid that if the online questionnaire is not enough, The author left the questionnaire sheets at the university dormitory in Kaohsiung. In the questionnaire distributed, the Chinese students do not have to fill in their complete personal data, but only their initial name and major. The questionnaire was distributed more than 40 copies but only returned 11, which means that not all students were willing to fill it out, even though it was already in paper form. After that, with the help of a Taiwanese friend, the author looked for Chinese students who were willing to do in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted in Mandarin. Even though the author can speak Mandarin, adding a Taiwanese companion helped the author understand more deeply the meaning stated by the Chinese students.

The author also contacted another friend at another university in Kaohsiung city, who had a friend from China currently pursuing a degree in Taiwan and was available for an interview. Interviews were also conducted in Mandarin, accompanied by Indonesian-Chinese friends who have been in Taiwan for a long

time and worked in Taiwan and who have very good Mandarin language skills to accompany the interview session.

4. Result & Discussion

One of the important things to be concerned about in this research is the willingness of the respondents to be Mainland China students. Before the author decides to start conducting an interview, the first interviewer asks what the question is. Is it a sensible question? The author catches that there is a sense of 'afraid' feelings and the barrier between them to talking freely.

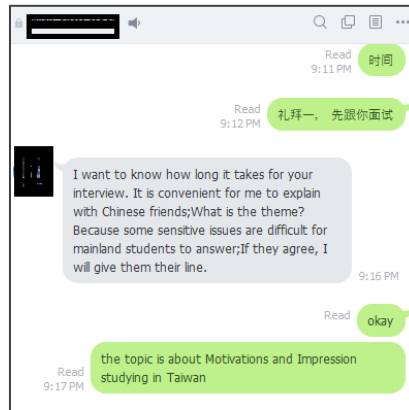


Figure 1: Chinese student's anxiety of the interview's topic

Authors carefully explain to the Chinese students, if they feel my questions are a sensitive topic, feel free to not answer them. I can finally begin interviewing her after gaining her trust. Nevertheless, this is something that the author anticipated. That's why in this research, an open questionnaire was also provided to become another source besides the interview. The questionnaire itself, for many of the students, is better distributed in a manual with papers than using Google Forms.

- **Demographic of the 15 respondent**

In this paper, five of 15 respondents were willing to do interviews after filling in a questionnaire. These five students consist of two master exchange students that study politics, and three bachelor students that study economy and architecture, who have lived in Taiwan for 2-4 years.

	Type of residence in Taiwan	Major of study in China	Study or courses taken in Taiwan
A	Exchange, 6 months	Public management	Politic
B	Exchange, 6 months	International politic	Politic

C	Undergraduate, 4 years	-	Finance management
D	Undergraduate, 4 years	-	Architecture
E	Undergraduate, 4 years	-	Architecture
F	Exchange, 6 months	Public management	Management
G	Exchange, 6 months	Public management	Management
H	Exchange, 6 months	<i>(state university name, but not major)</i>	Specialization class
I	Exchange, 6 months	International trade	Econometric, international trade, resources economy
J	Exchange, 6 months	Politic	Politic, Physical education
K	Exchange, 6 months	Economy	Economy
L	Exchange, 6 months	<i>(state university name)</i>	Tourism management
M	Exchange, 6 months	<i>(state university name)</i>	Sociology
N	Exchange, 6 months	Psychology	Psychological consultation practice, gestalt treatment, data analysis
O	Exchange, 6 months	<i>(state university name, but not specific major)</i>	Local governance political public relations

Table 1 : Respondent's Background

The majority of the students (80%) of the exchange students knew information about studying in Taiwan from their university in China because they had a MoU or agreement with the destination university in Taiwan. For the three students that start their studies in Taiwan at undergraduate level, they search for information about Taiwan universities on the Internet and apply directly to the university online. They didn't have any consultation with their senior high school in China about their plan to study undergraduate in Taiwan.

All of the students already have their parents' permission to go to Taiwan to study. None of the students' parents opposed their wish to go to Taiwan for study, and all the parents gave approval and supported their children's wants. One noteworthy analysis is that the first party that recommends the students go to Taiwan is never their parents, but the student itself (for undergraduate students) and the school (for exchange students).

• **Pull and Push Factor that Motivate Students go to Taiwan Study.**

From all of the 15 respondents, their pull factors go to the Taiwan study shown in Figure 2 and 3 below:

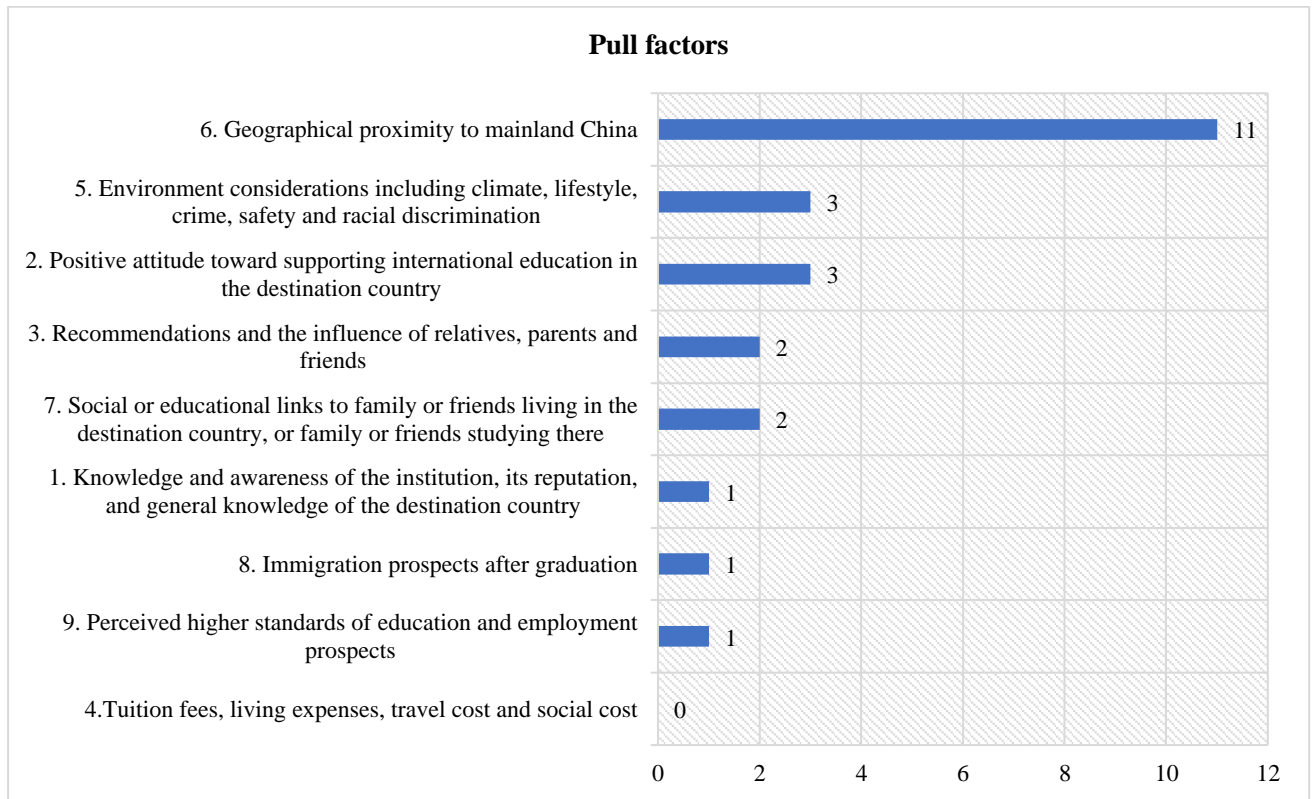


Figure 2: Pull Factors that Motivate 15 Mainland China Students go to Taiwan

The survey papers show that the highest pull factors the respondents go to Taiwan study is reason 6, *Geographical proximity to Mainland China*. This factor is not related to politics, and more related to the convenience of living.

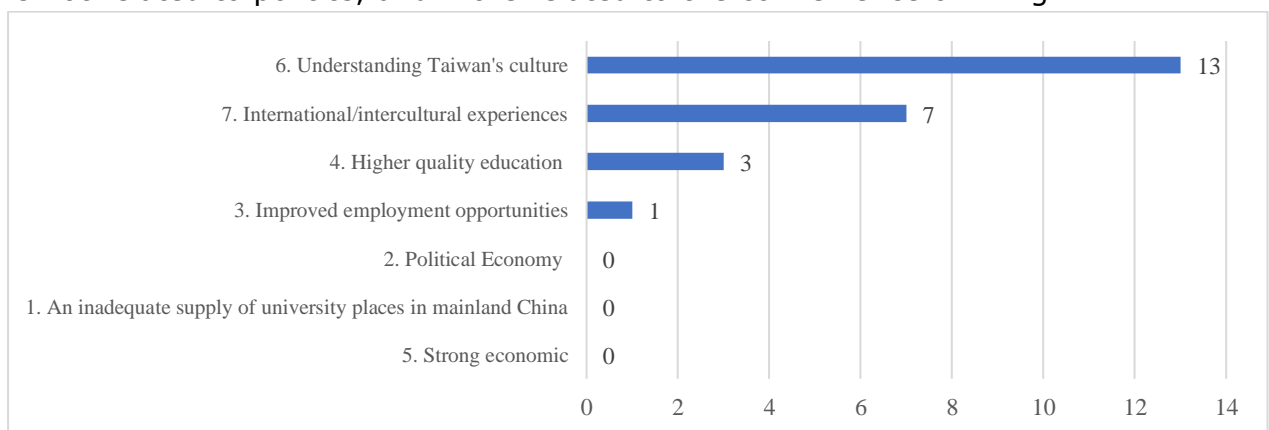


Figure 3 : Push Factor Chinese student go to Taiwan study

At a glance, this fact also strengthens the study that was conducted by Sun and Chan (2014). Sun and Chan (2014) found that the mainland China students who came to Taiwan weren't because of what Taiwanese scholars claimed, for example, the democratic political environment (p.387). Sun and Chan (2014)

found the "real push factor" for mainland China students studying in Taiwan is the imagination of harmonious culture in Taiwan (p.387). At a glance, this research data also shows that no respondents chose the political economy factor. However, when interviewed deeply about issues related to their daily activities, the respondents of this research seemed to know about Taiwan's politics, as will be discussed in the section Students' Political View. The respondents read Taiwan newspapers and followed the current domestic Taiwan political issues by regularly watching Taiwan TV news and online media. This means they do have an interest in Taiwan politics, but on the survey papers, Mainland China students will never straightly state they have an interest in political topics. In conclusion, there is a probability that Mainland China students came to Taiwan because they have an interest in Taiwan's politics (especially in political-related major students), but because politics is a highly sensitive and risky subject to speak, they will never state it as an aim to come to Taiwan. Because of this, surely any survey papers that state things about politics given to them will always be filled with zero and any frank interview about politics will be answered as "no".

- ***Student's impressions of Taiwan before they came***

Interviewee A is a Mainland Chinese Muslim that is currently on an exchange program in Taiwan. At her university in China, she takes public management as a major. What she knew from Taiwan before she came is that Taiwan is politically active, its people are very warm, and it has a lot of good food. She had no bad thoughts about Taiwan before she came here. After she came to Taiwan, she just knew that Taiwan had 14 aboriginal ethnic groups.

Interviewee B is from the north of China and is currently studying for a master's degree. She is already in her third year of study. Before coming to Taiwan, she felt that she "didn't understand" Taiwan. Deeping what aspect she wants to be understood, she frankly said it's about study politics.

Interviewees C, D, and E are undergraduate students, and all three of them have already stayed in Taiwan for years. Interviewee C has already stayed in Taiwan for 2 years, Interviewee D for 4 years, and Interviewee E for 2 years.

Interviewee C study finance. He said one of the attractive things to go to Taiwan is Taiwan's democracy. Remembering that he chose Taiwan for study right after he finished senior high school, this can be important. When I ask what he mean by democracy, interviewee C said it means more rights in regular life or in economy aspect.

Interviewee D and E said before go to Taiwan, they think that Taiwan has many beautiful places and good food. Interviewee D, who has hometown in Fujian province, before came to Taiwan thinks that Taiwan has many good nature places. When he arrived in Taiwan, he feels like his home in Fujian, when he saw Taiwan's temple, because there is the same deity in the temple.

- ***Living and Interactions with Society***

The second biggest push factor in going to Taiwan to study after "wants to learn about Taiwan's culture" is "international/intercultural" experience. Dorms,

or places of living, have an important role in giving students intercultural experience. Wang (2016, p.532) stated, "In Taiwan, Chinese students all live in dormitories and experience the same cognitive dissonance." Mainland China students live in a "special dorm" that consists of only other Mainland students, not of students from another country. This differs from the lives of other international students who can have the experience of living with other international students from other countries. Correlating that one of the international/intercultural experiences is living together with students from another country, it means that their "special dorm" will limit their international experience. In contrast to what they say in the push factor, when being asked if the "special dorm" limits their international experience, 80% of the respondents answer "No". This fact can also address how far they are willing to study international culture.

Moving from the respondent's willingness to have international experience, the next question is the respondent's openness towards Taiwan's local society. Almost all of the students, 93%, say they want to meet Taiwanese people. However, when being asked with whom they travel to Taiwan, almost all of the interviewees said only with their Mainland China peer group friends.

Figure 4 below shows how Chinese students see Taiwanese. Despite political tension between Taiwan and the PRC, surprisingly, how these respondents see Taiwanese is more special than regular friends: they see Taiwanese as their brothers and sisters. It indicates they feel a sense of closeness when they see Taiwanese. Also, no one regards the Taiwanese as enemies.

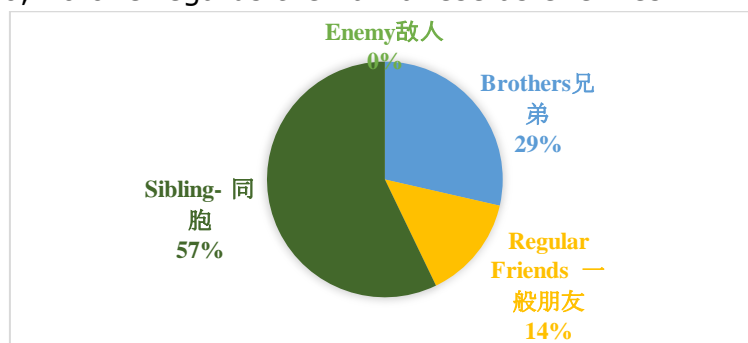


Figure 4: How do you see Taiwanese Friends?

One particularly noteworthy statement came from Respondent A. She said that she may have another friend, such as European or Japanese, but she has different feelings about Taiwanese friends: they always feel closer than any other race of friend.

- **Knowledge about Taiwanese Political Identity**

Another matter that is still related to politics without directly jumping into political aspects is the culture in Taiwan. Taiwan's identity, which started to develop in the democratization period, aims to make a difference between China and Taiwan. Taiwan's identity, such as Taiwan's history before Chiang Kai Shek came to Taiwan, Malayo-Polynesian aborigines, and the Taiwan language (台语), could be addressed as one of the special topics to be learned in Taiwan. When our

respondents choose to "understand Taiwan's culture" as their biggest push factor, are they really willing to learn about Taiwan's culture?

When being asked what Taiwanese culture they knew, the students' answers were: Hakka, 眷村(military dependents' village), 迎船王(Burning King Ship Ceremony), and the aborigines. They have difficulty identifying examples of Taiwan's culture. Furthermore, their knowledge regarding Taiwan's aborigines can be seen in the table below.

Questions	Answers	
Do you know about Malayo-polynesian aborigines of Taiwan?	Yes, before I go to Taiwan	62%
	Yes, when I arrived in Taiwan	23%
	I don't know	15%
Do you think Taiwanese is descendants from Huang Emperor?	Yes	85%
	I don't know	15%

Table 2: Taiwanese Culture interest among Mainland China students

The table above also reveals the respondent's willingness to study Taiwan, although they haven't arrived in Taiwan yet. About 62% of the respondents stated they knew about the aborigines of Taiwan before they came. When they arrived in Taiwan, 23% of the respondents just knew the aborigines of Taiwan.

Related to Taiwan's aborigines, Curious, do the respondents have a perception about theories of northern origins (the origin of the aborigines is from Mainland China) or southern origins (from South-east Asia) by Stainton? This study found that 85% of Chinese student respondents still believe in the theory of northern origins, not southern origins. Although they knew there were Taiwan aborigines, they still believed that Taiwanese were from Mainland China.

This research also asked the respondents whether they could differentiate between Mainland China's culture and Taiwan's culture. Chao and Yen (2018) stated that Taiwan and China have a homogenous macroculture but a heterogenous microculture (p.71). Because of past historical factors, Mainland China and Taiwan have been separated for decades and have developed different political ideologies, causing a difference in cultural values between the two sides (Chao and Yen, 2018). When being asked about China and Taiwan's culture, this research surprisingly found that 38% of the respondents answered that Taiwan's culture and China's culture are not the same. This indicates they have been able to distinguish between Chinese and Taiwanese cultures. Further, they may develop thinking from the viewpoint of Taiwan rather than from the viewpoint of their homeland. However, 54% of respondents still think that Taiwan's culture is similar to China's.

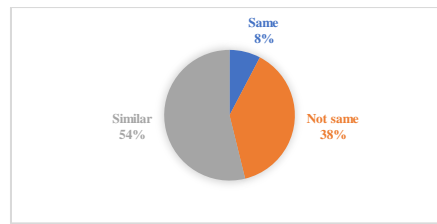


Figure 5: Do you think Taiwan's Culture and China's Culture is same?

Nevertheless, remembering that all of the respondents' knowledge of Taiwan's culture is self-taught, like by travelling or reading books, and none of them intentionally take courses about Taiwan in university, it's becoming an open possibility that if they learn Taiwan's culture in a formal way, the number of 54% will be reduced, and even change to the orange part of the chart. This finding also contrasts with the opinion of those conservatives who believe that cross-strait educational exchanges pose huge risks to Taiwan (Li Yunzhong, 2017). In fact, the findings found a positive possibility towards Taiwan, and in other ways, there can be a risk for China.

- ***Student's Political View***

At the beginning, author sensed Chinese students' anxiety about the sensitive topic and the possibility that Chinese students weren't free to talk about their political interests when studying. This research found that they do follow Taiwan's politics by reading Taiwan newspapers and TV. Wang (2018) stated, "Chinese students studying in Taiwan naturally compare the results of governance on both sides."

When author first met with interviewee B, she was holding a Taiwanese newspaper, the *Chaiwan Ben Post*. Interviewee A also admitted that she reads Taiwanese newspapers at least twice a week. Both are majoring in politics. But do the other respondents from another major also follow Taiwan's news?

By this point we can see, although interviewee C, D, E not taking political major, they do have attention in Taiwan's political condition. When they didn't want to comment, this indicates that they already think Taiwan is not part of them, and it's no good to interfere with Taiwan's affairs, even it's just personal comments.

Interviewees C, D, and E, in the interview, said that they do follow Taiwan news, but online news, not in a printed newspaper. They also state that they watch TV, but only by chance, for example, when they eat. They didn't take watching Taiwan TV as a daily routine. When being asked if they follow political news, the three smile and laugh. One of the interviewees said Han Guo Yu, Kaohsiung mayor, is acting funny. When I asked if they wanted to put comments on Han Guo Yu, they all shook their heads. Why? One of the interviewees said, because it's Taiwan's matters, not their matters, "那是高雄自己的事情".

By this point, we can see that although interviewees C, D, and E are not taking political majors, they do pay attention to Taiwan's political condition. When they didn't want to comment, this indicates that they already think Taiwan is not

part of them, and it's not good to interfere with Taiwan's affairs, even if it's just personal comments

Of the rest of the respondents, besides the interviewee above, only 3 students stated they read Taiwan's newspapers, 2 students read 1-2 times a week, and 1 student didn't write specifically. Another 3 students would like to watch Taiwan TV news (3 hours/week, 5 hours/week, and unspecified time).

Furthermore, the respondents were asked frankly, in the questionnaire, whether their country's ideology affects their daily life. The results in Figure 6 show that 23,1% of respondents feel it affects their daily life, but not much. The majority of the respondents didn't feel the two countries' ideologies gave them any difference in daily life.

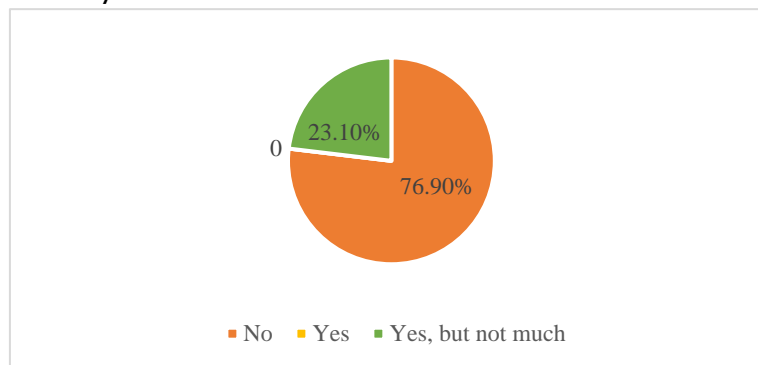


Figure 6: You home country and Taiwan have different ideology: communist and democracy. Is this affect your daily life?

Interviewee B is one of the respondents who believes ideology "doesn't make a difference" in her daily life. When I mentioned the freedom to access social media, Interviewee B said she still uses a VPN to connect to social media that is banned in China, so it didn't bother her. answer came from interviewee C. He stated he just owned Facebook and Instagram when he stayed in Taiwan, and it was an inconvenience and bother him if he used VPN. That's why he didn't own Facebook and Instagram accounts when he was in China.

Do the Chinese students discuss politics with their Taiwanese teacher or their Taiwanese friends? 77% of the respondents stated they don't like discussing politics with Taiwanese classmates. The rest, or 23%, stated they like to discuss politics with Taiwan classmates. When asked their feelings when discussing politics with their Taiwan classmates, they said "Let me know your new perspective" and "it's okay if you disagree with an opinion."

Interviewee B, who study politics, said she did talk about both country political disputes with Taiwanese classmates. With a relaxing tone, she answered:

"Its useless conversation because since the start, we both have different perspective, and at the end it will result nowhere. So, its better to talk another topic, like daily life topic."

Wang (2018) also puts note about a Chinese student bad image toward Taiwan because their Taiwanese friends said something bad about China. This result in Chinese student's patriotism toward their homeland rise. Wang gives advice to Taiwanese teacher:

"Avoid discussion of cross-Strait disputes. Political discussion in which both parties insist on their own views is not only ineffective toward persuading one another, but also provokes the patriotism of the other party and creates antagonism between both parties (p.54). "

This is in line with interviewee A's feelings about 'political discussion' in the classroom:

"I really appreciate Taiwan teachers here didn't insist me to answer sensitive question. They seems already know and careful when talking about this topic."

At the end, Interviewee A feels that one of her purposes, to understand Taiwan, has been answered, and she feels she has got enough understanding. Interviewee B, who stated she wanted to study Taiwan politics at the beginning, also said her understanding of Taiwan has increased.

It is not effective to straightly talk about both countries' disputes towards Chinese students, even if they are political students. The Chinese may already have a sense of curiosity, but they didn't feel comfortable bringing it into class discussion. So, it will be effective for a Taiwanese teacher to deliver the cross-strait topics in a soft way without asking questions that may lead to debates. continues to provide them with "an answer" despite the fact that they did not explicitly "ask" for it.

- **Final Impressions**

On the scale 1-10, the average value of all of the respondent's feelings about Taiwan is 7,2. This means all of the Chinese student respondent happy enough and positive enough towards their experience in Taiwan. Even, 7 from 13 exchange students stated that 6 month period in Taiwan is not enough.

For interviewee A, Taiwanese people have more tolerance than China. As a Muslim, she observed that in Taiwan, when people see someone wearing a hijab, no one gives a cynical look like in China. According to her, Taiwanese people have a positive view towards women who wear hijab. In Taiwan, facilities such as prayer rooms can be found more easily in Taiwan than in China, like in an MRT station. But, for halal food, it is not as much as in China.

Other keywords that appeared several times among the respondents were "friendly." One of the good things about Taiwan, according to the respondents, is the Taiwanese friendliness towards them. No one of the respondents faces discrimination in Taiwan. The other words that appear is 自由 or 'freedom'. The respondents most likely to say "In Taiwan there is more freedom', but didn't define specifically what aspect of the freedom. The students also didn't feel any fear, or political fear. 7 respondents, in the future they want to work in China company that have cooperated with Taiwan company.

Lastly, 100% of the respondent to say they will recommend go to Taiwan study for their friends in China, or go to Taiwan travels for their own parents and friends. In conclusion, they can be one of the agents of the rising number of Chinese students go to Taiwan in the future.

5. Conclusion:

From the research, author can draw several points of the Chinese student respondents that go to Taiwan:

1. Motivation to go to Taiwan now didn't related to political condition of both countries, not like the period of the Tianamen Square incident. Although didn't related to political condition, the respondents do have attention to Taiwan's politics.
2. Although these students didn't explicitly say they learn about politics, they explicitly say they want to learn about Taiwan's culture.
3. The Chinese student sees a Taiwanese friend is special, regarding Taiwanese as siblings, brother, not only as regular friends.
4. Overall, the impression of the study respondents in Taiwan is positive, and they would recommend this to their friends back in China. The number of mainland china students may increase.

We also can see one of future prospect to make the Chinese student became a source of political reform agent, is not by directly teach politic towards Chinese students, but culture. Their mind is open for "Taiwan Culture" idea. If Wang (2016) found that identificational assimilation didn't success because Chinese students still thinking view the Taiwanese government as a local government of China, this research show Chinese student already found that Taiwan's culture is different than Chinese culture (Figure 8 above). Therefore, starting indetificational assimilation from culture is an effective step to start what so called 'political-reform'.

If Chinese students learn about Taiwanization and democratization materials, such as Taiwan's history from Taiwan's viewpoint, their cognitive dissonance may grow to see Taiwan's political condition from the viewpoint of Taiwan. They may not seem to learn about Taiwan formally, yet they visited museums, watched Taiwan TV news, and had interaction with Taiwanese society. Looking at how open the Chinese student was towards their Taiwanese friend was in conclusion (3), it is possible to do more cultural assimilation, such as putting the Chinese student in a study group with a Taiwanese classmate.

This study has inherent limitations. This research, with a survey and an in-depth interview, only involved 15 Chinese students in Kaohsiung, and hasn't covered all the populations of Chinese students in Taiwan. However, the author has confidence that the qualitative method used here has helped to find data that had not previously been found in research on the same topic. When this paper was written in the summer of 2019, it was noted that previous research on the same topic carried out by another researcher didn't use in-depth interviews as the author did. In addition, the author only in-depth interviewed 5 students, but these 5 Chinese students were either prominent students before being sent to Taiwan or had lived in Taiwan annually as degree students. What the author really wants to highlight from this research is the richness of the data found in the form of

unique stories that have finally been told after deep interview sessions, and this kind of data will not be found if using survey methods and numbers.

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