Global Development of Study Abroad – China and the USA

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Overview
This poster describes the history of Study Abroad, specifically the views and comparisons from China and the USA and what opportunities are offered to their respective students. From this history we can explore the theory that Study Abroad makes students either more globally-accepting or nationalistic, as well as what factors affect both nations' students and how they decide to study abroad. From this we can infer whether globalization and Study Abroad influence one another.

Views on Travel
By its very nature, Study Abroad requires a certain amount of travel. In America, it is not uncommon to travel hundreds of miles to attend a college or university; in China, many students never have the opportunity or inclination to travel in such a manner. This is one of the most basic differences between Chinese and American Study Abroad students: how they define studying abroad, and how distances affect their desire to participate.

Factors Affecting Study Abroad Students
(1) Knowledge and awareness of the institution, its reputation, and general knowledge of the destination country.
(2) Positive attitude toward supporting international education in the destination country.
(3) Recommendations and the influence of relatives, parents, and friends.
(4) Tuition fees, living expenses, travel cost and social cost.
(5) Environmental considerations including climate, lifestyle, crime, safety and racial discrimination.
(6) Geographical proximity to mainland China.
(7) Social or educational links to family or friends living in the destination country, or family or friends studying there.
(8) Perceived higher standards of education and employment prospects.
(9) Immigration prospects after graduation.
(10) Availability of scholarships for study.

The Shaping of an International Relationship
In spite of earlier advances in culture and technology, the combined devastation of China's civil war and the negative cultural reforms that followed brought the world's most populous nation into the modern era well behind the other nations. America in particular has benefited greatly from its place near the forefront of advancement. In recent years, however, China has regained its footing and once again risen to join other "first-world" nations. There has naturally been some friction between China and America during this time; China harbors some resentment over America's worldly political weight while America has natural concern for China's growing economic dominance.

Conversely, both nations have worked together in numerous ways, most notably in America being the greatest trade partner of China in the modern era. This tense but cooperative relationship is important to understand as it is instilled by some amount into each citizen; those students choosing Study Abroad are influenced by their understanding of the relationship between these nations, which in turn influences whether the program makes the participant more global or national.

Where did Study Abroad Start?
The earliest examples of Study Abroad are found in early nobles' sons being sent to monasteries, where they had the most-educated people to learn from. Doing this increased those sons' skill sets and therefore elevated their status in society; it also maintained their existing social status to keep the status quo. Even when political, social, and economical factors changed the organization of social classes, the desire to gain new skills and trades from others only grew stronger as people sought to expand their horizons.

Globalism and Study Abroad
Globalism can be defined as the expansion of one's social, economic, and political views through the interconnection of nations around the world. Even in the beginning when Study Abroad's primary reasoning was finding a more educated teacher, the effects of globalization were an inherent side-effect of the process. Today globalization is often the primary reason itself; many students involved in Study Abroad choose the opportunity precisely because they wish to expose themselves to other cultures. For some this becomes an identity crisis, causing them to question their role in the world and in their nation. For others this strengthens both their world citizenship and their nationalism. The vast majority of participants in a Study Abroad program, however, fall somewhere between the lines. Whatever the outcome for the individual, it is clear the Study Abroad program has an effect on globalistic and nationalist trends in participants.

Timeline of Chinese History

Timeline of American History

Sources

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