

# Chinese in Norway

## *Motivations of Transnational Chinese Students to Study abroad in Norway*

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Yujing Yu

## Abstract

The purpose of the thesis is to examine how and why Chinese students decide to study in Norway. By exploring the decision making process of Chinese students, it sheds light on which aspects of Norway's educational institutions attract international students and which parts deter them. It also examines the levels of self-determination of transnational Chinese students' (TCS) motivations, and the relationship between this level and TCS's academic performance.

I have information from two groups. Using snow ball sampling I found 40 participants who accepted both my interview and completed two self-regulation questionnaires, separately characterising their motivation to study abroad and academic performance. And through analysis of the website (*kina.cc*), I found another 239 subjects who I regard as potential TCS of Norway.

Push-pull theory is applied in this study to understand the motivation leading TCS to study in Norway. Self-determination theory is applied to understand the relationship between motivations and academic performance. The study also uses a gender approach to understand gender differences in motivation to study in Norway.

The research findings indicate that there are four distinct stages in the decision making process of TCS. Some gender differences in motivations were found. And also that high level self-determined motivation leads to better academic performance in Norwegian institutions.

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## Introduction

There is a long history of Chinese citizens going abroad to study. In modern China, the number of transnational Chinese students (TCS) has been rapidly increasing since the well-known reforms and opening up of China in 1976. Nowadays the total number of TCS is tremendous. Reports indicate that TCS accounted for 14% of the global total of transnational students, ranking first in the world in 2012 (People's Daily Online, 2012). As the largest and most widely distributed overseas study group, TCS are undoubtedly an interesting and worthwhile topic to study; and there is a large amount of literature dedicated to global transnational Chinese students. Most of the studies are from a perspective of socio-cultural adaptation. These researchers investigate how TCS adapt to a host country. He and Tang (2001) believe that obtaining specific training both in a foreign language and in cross cultural competence may reduce the culture shock of TCS; Zheng (2003) focuses on the relationship between acculturation and transnational students' sense of happiness; Sun et al. (2009) propose that mobile students from Europe and America are more adaptable than students from Southeast Asia and East Asia. Some other researchers focus on China's "brain drain" phenomenon. For example, Orleans (1988) and Cai (2001) suggest that Chinese people were reluctant to return home because of the domestic problems faced by returnees. They argue that the developed world has more opportunities for personal development while China has limited positions for advanced researchers. Zweig & Chen (1995) mainly attribute China's "brain drain" to the government's open door policy in education. Also a lot of studies explore the history of modern Chinese citizens who have gone abroad since the Reform and Opening up (Zhou, 1996; Li, 2004; Li, 2005).

The focus of this thesis however is on none of the above. It focuses on 'motivation'. As a Chinese student in Norway, I had my specific reasons and experiences to leave my homeland and come to Norway. I cannot help but be curious about other Chinese students' reasons and their experiences. Thus I produce this research to find the answer for myself. The purpose of the thesis is to examine how and why Chinese students decide to study in Norway. It is important because it will shed light on which aspects of Norway's educational institutions attract international students and which parts deter them. It will also help readers to better understand transnational Chinese students. Also it can be a reference document for those Chinese who are interested in studying in Norway.

The whole study is guided by an overall research question:

*Which motivations lead Chinese citizens to study in Norway?*

The study mainly pays attention to the self-financed undergraduate and graduate transnational Chinese students in Norwegian higher educational institutions. It analyses the decision making process under the framework of a push-pull model similar to many other researches. But there are three special and interesting points which distinguish my study from other studies. First of all, it fills a gap in the study of Norway's TCS, since there is no other literature on this topic. Secondly I utilise a website (*kina.cc*) for analysis and collection of data. I found various interesting opinions during the process by scanning a huge number of posts. And thirdly, the most interesting part, is that I apply self-determination theory (SDT) to evaluate the self-determination level of TCS' motivations to study in Norway. By utilising SDT, I compared Chinese students' RAI (Relative Autonomy Index) of Norway, Belgium and Canada based on a series study of Chirkov et al. (2007, 2008) on the two other countries. Thereby through a comparative study, I answer two sub-questions:

*What are the specific factors of Norway that attract TCS compared to the others?*

*What kinds of TCS are prone to choose Norway as a destination?*

Many researchers, for example Zweig & Chen (1995), Kim (2010) and, Fong (2011), suggested there were gender differences in the motivation to study abroad. While some others, for example Chirkov et al. (2007), determined there were no gender differences at all. During my study, I did find obvious differences between female and male motivations in some aspects. Therefore I will also discuss gender differences in the study. So there will be one more sub-question:

*Are there any gender differences in the motivation to study in Norway?*

Regarding method, I adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods. With the exception of the website analysis I mentioned previously, I also utilised open-ended interviews and questionnaires. I found 239 potential TCS in Norway from *kina.cc*. I used 40 participants, 20 female and 20 male, who had moved to Norway who both participated in my interview and answered my questionnaire. The open-ended questions of the interview were based on the push-pull model. I modified an original questionnaire (Self-Regulation Questionnaire—Study Abroad) of Chirkov et al.'s study (2007).

There are several disadvantages of the study. Firstly, I cannot interview the subjects in *kina.cc*

to obtain further information. I do not know if they finally applied to a Norwegian institution or, if they did, whether their applications were successful. And these subjects came to *kina.cc* to get information about Norway. They talked about “Why Norway” a lot, but “Why leave China” very little. Secondly, the number of my interviewees is limited. It may not be enough to reflect a comprehensive understanding of TCS in Norway. The third disadvantage is that the utilised statistics of Belgium and Canada is secondary data. And there is a time difference between these studies and my study.

This thesis is divided into 7 Chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 1 introduces the research methodology. I define important notions and talk about my research strategy and methods. Chapter 2 presents a review of previous literature about the motivations of TCS in different developed countries. Chapter 3 discusses China as a source and Norway as a host. Theoretical framework is located in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents the results of my analysis of the interviews and also the website analysis. And Chapter 6 is about statistics data analyses. It analyses the levels of Chinese students’ motivations and the relationship between the level of self-determination and academic performance in Norway. Finally, Chapter 7 is the overall conclusion.

## **Chapter 1 Research Methodology**

According to Bryman (2004, p.4), research methods are closely tied to different visions of how social reality should be studied. They are linked with the ways in which social scientists envision the connection between different viewpoints on the nature of social reality and how it should be examined. The chief aim of this chapter is to show that a variety of considerations enter into the process of doing this research. It contains the essential concept of this study, research strategy, and research method. I adopted both qualitative and quantitative strategies and four methods: Snowball sampling, Semi-structured interview, Website analysis, and two Self-Regulation Questionnaires (quantitative).

### **1.1 Concepts of several important items of this study**

#### **1.1.1 Definition of transnational education**

According to the *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* offered by the council of Europe (UNESCO, 2001), transnational education includes:

*'All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.'*

#### **1.1.2 Transnational Chinese students (TCS)**

In this thesis, transnational Chinese students (TCS) refer in particular to nongovernment-sponsored undergraduate and graduate Chinese students who are, or were, studying in Norwegian universities/colleges. NSSDS statistics showed a 40/60 distribution of foreign students between universities and colleges in 2005. Most of these students were at the University of Oslo (Brekke, 2006, p. 44).

*Why nongovernment-sponsored students?*

I exclude government-sponsored students because they have less individual rationales to study abroad. First of all, they cannot freely select the destination country, the university, or subject to

study of their own volition. They can only choose from the projects provided by the government. For example, in 2013, only one project is specifically to go to study in Norway. And this project has very limited places (10 in total), limited positions (visiting scholars and PHD students) and limited duration of study (10 months maximum) (Chinese overseas study website, 2013). Secondly, in order to get funding, they need to sign a contract with the government. According to the contract; government-sponsored students cannot unilaterally terminate the agreement, go back to China without permission, go to study in other countries, change their nationality, overstay and so on. Thirdly, the number of government-sponsored students is much less than the number of self-financed students.

#### *Why undergraduate and graduate students?*

High school students and PHD students are excluded. Although there are a large number of TCS in high schools in some countries, for example the number was 200,000 in America in 2012 (U.S. department of homeland security, 2012). There are relatively few transnational students in Norwegian high schools. It is not easy to study in a Norwegian high school for students from non EA/EEU countries, because Norwegian residence permits are usually not granted for attending upper secondary schools (UDI, 2013). As for PHD students, due to the limited Norwegian PHD positions, they are relatively few. And among the few PHD TCS, some of them are holding a high-level salary and they have a working visa; which makes them more like employees rather than students.

## **1.2 Research strategy**

There are two dominant research strategies in social research: quantitative research and qualitative research.

The term quantitative research refers to approaches of empirical inquiry that collect, analyse, and display data in numerical rather than narrative form (Bryman, 2004, p. 62). In contrast, qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2004, p.20).

Quantitative research and qualitative research differ from each other in several ways. However the qualitative–quantitative distinction is not a completely clean one. For example, many quantitative researchers are interested in, and study, the qualitative aspects of phenomena, and qualitative researchers can never totally avoid forms of quantification (whenever they use terms

of quantification, such as *sometimes*, *often*, *seldom* or *never*) (Given, 2008, p.713). Bryman (2004) also suggested a multi-strategy research that combines quantitative and qualitative research.

In this study, I will utilise both the qualitative and quantitative method. As I mentioned in the introduction, the thesis is going to study the decision process of TCS who study in Norway. The qualitative method can help to examine the evolvement of the whole process: how it began, how it continued, and how it ended. What's more, the qualitative method allowed me to talk with participants face to face, thus I can better ascertain their emotions through their body language, which is helpful in examining which factors are more important and which are less. The quantitative method will be utilised in the study of Norway too. I did a comparative study between my quantitative data of Norway and the data of Belgium and Canada from the study of Chirkov et al. (2007) to find out the specific attractions of Norway.

## **1.3 Research method**

### **1.3.1 Snowball sampling**

Sampling is the process of choosing actual data sources from a larger set of possibilities. Snowball sampling, in sociology and statistics research, is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. It uses a small pool of initial informants to nominate other participants who meet the eligibility criteria for a study (Given, 2008, p.815).

I believe this method perfectly fits with my study. First of all, this thesis applies qualitative research. According to Bryman (2004), snowball sampling is normally not used within a quantitative research strategy, but within a qualitative one. In qualitative research, the orientation to sampling is more likely to be guided by a preference for theoretical sampling. Secondly, snowball sampling is a useful way to pursue the goals of purposive sampling in many situations where there are no lists or other obvious sources for locating members of the population of interest (Given, 2008, p.815). It is a method typically used with unknown or rare populations. Members of these populations have not all been previously identified and are more difficult to locate or contact than known populations (Goodman, 1961; Spreen, 1992). My research subjects, Chinese students, as I had mentioned earlier, in the whole of Norway, number only in the hundreds every year, which means the number in each Norwegian higher education

institution is not very large. Snowball sampling is undoubtedly a useful recruitment method to find them. Thirdly, as a Chinese student in Norway, I also have some Chinese friends who qualify as participants. They can serve as informants about not only the research topic but also to locate other potential participants, which all helps make the method feasible.

A typical process of snowball sampling begins with interviewing an initial set of research participants. The number is ten. They are all my friends or acquaintances. Each of them recruits around three other qualified participants for me. I required participants to fit the following characteristics:

1. Chinese from mainland China;
2. Studying or studied in Norwegian colleges/universities as undergraduate or graduate students or both;
3. Self-financed students.
4. Specified number of each gender.

As I showed in Appendix A, I finally found 40 qualified participants who agreed to be interviewed and also completed two qualitative questionnaires. They are 20 male and 20 females. 36 studied in public universities, three in private university, and one in both. Five bachelor's students, 34 master's students, and one both. Seven exchange students, 32 free-movers, and one both. Some of them were still studying and some of them had graduated/quit.

### **1.3.2 Semi-structured interview**

I use the interview as my primary data collection method. According to Bryman (2004, p. 392), "The interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research" and it "comprises a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analyzed". There are normally two main types of interview research: the unstructured interview and semi-structured interview (Bryman, 2004, p.319). I chose the semi-structured interview, as one has more control over the topics of the interview. According to Given (2008, p.810-811), the semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks the informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions. Before interviewing, I developed a list of open-ended and flexible questions as an interview guide (Appendix B). The questions leave the interviewee with a great deal of leeway in how to reply.

I interviewed all the participants who were in Oslo face to face. Each time I invited one to two of them to come to my home for dinner. After dinner I asked them the questions. The average duration of an interview was about half an hour per person. The interviewing process was flexible. All conversations were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. I recorded our conversations with a sound recorder and wrote down the content in Chinese once the interviewee(s) had left. During the interview, I always observed the participants' expression and voice and made a note of this.

I interviewed the other participants through network video. We set a time to talk through Skype (An Internet calling software). I recorded our conversations (in Mandarin Chinese) by computer directly and wrote down the content (in Chinese) once the call ended. I started my interviewing at the beginning of May 2013 and finished it in the middle of June 2013. The whole process took one and a half months. I promised anonymity to all the interviewees.

### **1.3.3 Website analysis**

Besides the interviews, I also use a specific website, <http://www.kina.cc>, as a tool for collecting data. The full name of this website is *Kina Chinese Community*. In this Chapter, it will be simplified as *Kina*, which means *Chinese* in Nordic languages. I made this choice after careful consideration. *Kina* is a Chinese overseas study website launched in 2001. Although its full name is Chinese Community in Europe, the website is actually focused on the Nordic countries and most of its members are registered in the Nordic countries. *Kina* is the most famous website among Chinese transnational students in Norway. There are more than 10,000 posts on the page of Norway. Themes mainly concentrate on people's experience and questions on studying, working and immigration. Almost all the authors and respondents are/were students and employees, or potential students and employees in Norway. More than half of my participants said they relied on *Kina* during their application. Two years ago when I was applying for Norwegian universities *Kina* helped me a lot. According to the information on the front page of Norway ([kina.cc/no](http://kina.cc/no), 2013), the total register of the website was 222,000 people and 4000 of them were already in Norway.

The Norwegian page of *Kina* was divided into many sub-pages, including "Go to Norway", "Life in Norway", "Making friends & Finding people", "Advertisement", "Studying Norwegian", "Schoolmates", and "Cities". The part on cities was divided into five sub-pages: Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim, and others. The sub-page of "Go to Norway", which is the place where Chinese citizens discuss how to study or work in Norway, provided me with my



primary material about TCS's motivation to study in Norway. There were more than 8,000 posts in this part.

My research goes back to 2010, because from that year Sweden cancelled the free tuition fee for international students from non-EEA and non-EU countries. Some of my subjects mentioned that Sweden's new policy made them transfer to Norway. What's more, UDI (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration) also mentioned from 2010 to 2011 there was a 50 percent increase in the number of people (mainly Chinese, Russian, and American) who wanted to come to Norway to study, probably because Sweden introduced a tuition fee (UDI, 2012a). From 2011, Finland gradually began to implement the same policy as Sweden. It made Norway the only Nordic country that still provided Chinese with free higher education. From then on, the Chinese called Norway "the last free lunch"<sup>1</sup>. Many posts in *Kina* from 2010 to 2011 talked about this. For example,

*"Denmark, Sweden and Finland had begun to charge tuition. Iceland was probably non-mainstream. Norway is the only choice now. I can see a large amount of applicants will fight for the limited positions!"*<sup>2</sup>

*"Swedish universities are no longer free! All people are going crazy for Norway!"*<sup>3</sup>

To filter the motivation related posts from Jan 2010 to Sept 2013, I set all the posts to be displayed in chronological order. I checked every post that could relate to my study, then copied and numbered all the useful content. Finally I got 311 posts from 239 different people which were closely related to the motivations and barriers TCS faced when studying in Norway, by scanning more than 70 pages and 3500 posts. All these posters represented an obvious interest in studying in Norway. They either definitely said: "*I want to study in Norway*", "*I am interested in studying in Norway*", "*How can I study in Norway?*"; or contained the question: "*Norway and the Netherlands, which one should I choose?*"

Thus I can regard them as 239 potential or actual TCS of Norway.

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<sup>1</sup> 最后的免费午餐

<sup>2</sup> 丹麦、瑞典、芬兰都开始收费了。冰岛貌似一直都不是主流。就剩下挪威了，肯定会抢破头的。

<sup>3</sup> 瑞典也收费了！大家要开始哄抢挪威了！

### **1.3.4 Two Self-Regulation Questionnaires (SRQ-SA and SRQ-A)**

Each participant finished two Self-Regulation Questionnaires after our interview. One (SRQ-SA) is modified by an original questionnaire published by Chirkov et al. (2007) to measure the motivation of Chinese students who decided to study abroad; while the other one (SRQ-A) is designed by Ryan and Connell to measure the level of academic motivation. Questions in both questionnaires contain four subscales: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. The purpose is to calculate the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) and quantitatively describe relative autonomy, and compare with results from researches in other countries and try to explain the influence factors.

## **1.4 Conclusion**

In this thesis, transnational Chinese students (TCS) refer to nongovernment-sponsored undergraduate and graduate Chinese students who are, or were, studying in Norwegian universities/colleges. Both qualitative method and quantitative method will be utilised. Using snow ball sampling I found 40 participants. They accepted both my interview and completed two self-regulation questionnaires (SRQ-SA and SRQ-A). Through website analysis (*kina.cc*), I got another 239 objects. I regard them as potential TCS of Norway.

## **Chapter 2 Chinese students abroad – a review of existing literature**

There is no specific research on Chinese students in Norway so far. However, there is a large amount of literature carried out on global transnational Chinese students. This chapter presents a review of existing literature about the motivations of Chinese students to study abroad and gender specific motivations.

### **2.1 Motivations to study abroad**

There is a long history of researching students' motivation to study abroad using a set of relatively consistent factors that both "push" people out of their homeland and "pull" them into the developed world. Existing researches about the motivations of TCS often utilise the push-pull factors model. Most of researches reveal that at first the student must decide to study internationally rather than locally, which could be influenced by "push" factors within their home country. Then in selecting a host country and institution, "pull" factors of the host country become important. Rao's words (1979) in Zweig & Chen's (1995, p.10) study explains push-pull factors as the "comparison of the potential migrant's situation in his country of origin with the situation of his peers in the country of destination that is critical to the decision of potential migrant". Zweig & Chen summarise that it is the low level of economic and political development in the developing world pushing academics and other professionals out, with the developed world pulling people in with higher salaries, greater logistical support, political stability and opportunities for mobility. In the case of China, Zweig & Chen use Taiwan's experience to understand China. They assume that many of the factors affecting Taiwan's scholars also affect mainland scholars, because Taiwan shares many cultural and societal similarities with China from a comparative perspective. In a twentieth century survey, Taiwanese (maybe also Chinese) were pulled to the United States by the following factors: better facilities, higher salaries, a more intellectual atmosphere, more political freedom, and more academic freedom; and they were pushed by low salaries, a lack of political and economic freedom, and the poor intellectual atmosphere of their homeland (p. 13).

However more recent researches show that these factors are less important in today's China. Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) and Yang (2007) both suggest a great number of mainland Chinese

students who leave the country for their higher education were influenced by “push and pull” factors. The “push” factors relate to the economic, social and political forces within the source country and the “pull” factors are associated with the characteristics of the host country that the student selects as a final study destination (Yang, 2007). Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) and Yang (2007) both regard the following factors as significant “push” factors: a) economic growth of a home country; b) going abroad to study has become a trend in Chinese society; c) source countries’ government policy; d) an inadequate supply of university places in higher education at home, e) parental influence.

Yang (2007) utilises the six “pull” factors borrowed from Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) as a framework for understanding the influences that motivate a student's selection of a host country. The six factors include: a) knowledge and awareness of the host country; b) personal recommendations from parents, relatives, friends and other “gatekeepers”; c) cost issues, including the cost of fees, living expenses, travel costs and social costs, such as crime, safety and racial discrimination; d) environment, including social climate, physical climate and lifestyle of destination country; f) geographic proximity, which is related to the geographic (and time) proximity of the potential destination country to the student's country; g) social links, related to whether a student has family or friends living in the destination country and whether family and friends have studied there previously.

The study of Bodycott (2013) is the latest research that mentions how push-pull factors influence TCS. On the basis of the six pull factors of Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) and Yang (2007), Bodycott added four other pull factors which mainland Chinese parents and students rate as important: a) positive attitude toward supporting international education in the destination country; b) immigration prospects after graduation; c) perceived higher standards of education and employment prospects; d) availability of scholarships for study.

By summarising all the relevant research, the following Table 2.1 shows the overall push-pull factors influencing the decision of mainland Chinese to study abroad and their selection of host countries and institutions.

**Table 2.1** Push-pull factors influencing the motivations of mainland Chinese to study abroad

Push factors of China	Pull factors of host country
1. Economic growth of home country 2. Government policy 3. Going abroad to study is a trend 4. Social values and culture	1. Knowledge and awareness of the host country 2. Recommendations from others 3. Cost issue 4. Environment 5. Geographic proximity 6. Social links 7. Positive attitude toward institutions of host country 8. Immigration prospects after graduation 9. Availability of scholarships for study 10. Higher standards of education and employment

1) *Economic growth* since 1979 in China, has increased household income and more and more families can afford to send their children to other countries to be educated (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Yang, 2007; Fong 2011; Bodycott, 2013). At the same time, with the increase in housing prices, parents can afford the financial burden of their children studying abroad by selling their house (Fong, 2011, p. 78).

2) *Government policy* in China has had a strong influence on the flow of Chinese students to study abroad. Three policies were mentioned with high frequency: *studying abroad policy*, *one-child policy*, and *educational policy*. First of all is the *studying abroad policy*. In the twentieth century, studying abroad policy changes were the main reasons which led to Chinese citizens going to America (Orlean, 1988; Zweig & Chen, 1995). By the 2000s, the Chinese government had removed most of the bureaucratic obstacles that had made it hard for Chinese citizens to go abroad, and sometimes provided funds for top students to study abroad (Fong, 2011, p.74). Recently Chinese government policy has shifted to an even more positive attitude towards supporting international education, and has been paying more attention to self-funded students (Yang, 2007, p. 3). The second is the *one-child policy*. Yang (2007) believes China's one-child policy allows more Chinese to go abroad. With only one child in most Chinese families, parents are able to make every effort to endure any financial burden to provide a good education for their children's future. In 2001, a survey conducted by China's National Statistics Bureau showed that more than 60% of Chinese families invest one-third of their income in their children's education (Yang, 2007, p.3). Fong (2011) considers the one-child policy partially created conditions and the desire of singletons to study abroad. She also mentions the policy has led to singletons receiving more investment in their education, since they are the only child

their parents can rely on. Besides, Fong finds the policy has produced a heavy financial burden for the single child; for supporting parents, grandparents, and parents in law, themselves, and their children, creating the need for developed-world-level incomes to cover the costs. Bodycott (2013) discusses as a result of the 'one child' policy in mainland China, that there is a considerable social if not highly 'familial' push to achieve the very best for that child by way of gaining a place in a higher education institution. To do so would ensure future 'economic' security as a result of improved employment opportunities and with this the possibility of immigration. The third is *Chinese educational policy*. According to Yang (2007) and Fong (2011), there is an inadequate supply of university places in China's higher education establishments. In China, the only way for a student to gain a university place is to pass the fierce competition that is the national college entrance examination. On average only 8% of Chinese high school graduates would be able to gain a place in local universities (Yang, 2007, p.3). Thus sending children overseas would be an optional choice for parents. Furthermore Fong (2011) and Huang (2006) also believe China's compulsory English teaching program has played an increasingly important role in the internationalisation of curricula in higher education institutions. Last but not least, to enhance its international competitiveness in a globalised world, China allows overseas universities, in collaboration with local institutions, to jointly develop academic programs in China to help Chinese institutions quickly build up their own capacity, status and innovative abilities (Yang, 2008, p. 272).

3) *Going abroad to study has been a trend* in China. Chinese parents perceive an overseas education as having several advantages for their children; such as getting direct exposure to foreign languages and culture, accessing a better education, and building better skills for future competition in the job market after graduation. They treat an overseas education as a long-term investment (Yang, 2007). In Fong's study (2011), all Chinese citizens of all ages agreed that developed world citizenship was desirable (p.40). The singleton generation yearns for the lifestyle and opportunities available abroad, while the parents have a dream that their child can become part of the developed world. Fong also suggested that Chinese citizens, dissatisfied with domestic life, believe they can solve all their problems abroad. Last but not least, many researchers mentioned "limited access to higher education" leads TCS to study abroad. Fong (2011, p. 73) also suggested that there is a trend in China to study abroad as an alternative path when a student failed the Gaokao (the national college entrance exam of China).

4) *Social value and culture* here was largely used to explain parental influence on Chinese

students. Many studies show how parents are one of the key factors influencing mainland Chinese students' motivations (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Zheng & Dai, 2006; Yang, 2007; Fong 2011; Bodycott, 2013). Bodycott (2013) particularly emphasised this point. He studies parental influence by examining mainland China's deep rooted Confucian ideals and values. He believes the parent-child relationship characterised by *filial piety* has the potential to significantly affect the students' decision making process. Its moral obligations are standards related to how a child must honour and respect their parents and their wishes. For example "a Chinese child may exhibit an unquestioned compliance with the views of parents and as such choose to study abroad, the destination, or a career in order to please his/her parents, even though the choice does not fulfil his/her own wishes" (Bodycott, 2013, p. 351). Fong (2011, p.63-64) also suggested that nowadays Chinese conceived *filial devotion* as a tenet of basic human decency. When discussing their motivations for working hard and academic achievement, many young Chinese citizens in Fong's study talked about filial devotion. In addition, Fong (2011, p.94) points out a special social phenomenon in China. Chinese youth were "raised with higher aspirations based on comparisons to friends, classmates, and relatives". They were reluctant to accept their 'failure' to reach higher education and career goals to which they and their families aspired and saw studying abroad as a way around that 'failure'.

*Pull factors* vary with the host country. For example, according to Yang (2007), future migration is the most significant factor in choosing Australia, with lower tuition fees and the cost of living as the second most significant factor. Fong (2011), however, made the most comprehensive survey. Fong discussed in detail the reasons for Chinese students' selection of the most popular developed countries. The reasons Chinese students choose Japan include the close economic and cultural relationship with China, a higher reputation of education, more low-skilled work opportunities for Chinese than any other developed country, and a work visa that required less language and special skills. Japan was considered the most convenient, lowest cost, and easiest option. Fong also mentions that people from different regions of China may have a special preference in choosing their destination countries. For example Dalian citizens greatly prefer to study in Japan because Dalian was historically, geographically, and economically close to Japan. Ireland was also a popular destination. Chinese students found that Ireland had the least restrictive visa policies and the most low-skilled job opportunities for Chinese citizens of all the Anglophone developed countries. What's more, Ireland granted student visas to Chinese citizens who knew very little English. Britain was also a desirable

place to study. It was English speaking, it was one of the economically strongest and educationally and culturally most prestigious countries. Besides, in contrast to America, Canada, or Australia, it was easier to get a visa to enter Britain. As for Australia, its natural beauty, warm weather, respectable education system, lenient immigration policies for TCS and less competition for jobs, make it the top country Chinese students want to immigrate to. The United States was the top-choice destination of Chinese citizens and the most difficult country for Chinese citizens to enter. It was English speaking and considered the most educationally, economically, and geopolitically powerful country in the world. However it had stricter visa requirements than any other developed country. Canada was perceived as similar to the United States but with more lenient immigration policies for TCS. Singapore also had lenient immigration policies and a respectable education system, besides both Mandarin Chinese and English are its official languages. New Zealand granted permanent residency rights easily, and it could be considered as a stepping-stone to its neighbouring Australia. Fong suggests that some Western European countries, such as France and Germany, were seen as desirable destinations because of tuition-free university education, culture, economies, and residency rights in any European Union (EU) country also allows the same rights in all the other EU countries.

Different researches obtain different results on which factors are more important and which are less important, because of the differences of period, area, destination countries and so on. Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) think the host governments can predict students' destination choice by examining the "push-pull" factors. And the quality of reputation of a host institution was extremely important. Zheng & Dai (2006) says the most common motives are to gain a degree with international recognition, improve English skills, experience western culture, immigrate and fulfil their parents' wish. Yang (2007) believes the main reason for choosing accounting and information technology programs among interviewed students was based on future migration opportunities. Yang (2008) emphasises the important of English teaching joint programs.

From all the researches, Vanessa L. Fong's (2011) book, *Paradise Redefined*, offers me the most important sources for understanding China's singleton generation and their motivation to study abroad. With a long-term and large participant based investigation, Fong in detail paints the whole process of the overall contemporary Chinese singleton generation's road to the developed world. Some of her subjects failed to study abroad, others succeeded. The successful went to various developed countries, such as Australia, Europe, Japan, New Zealand, North



America, and Singapore. According to Fong's survey, most of the Chinese students were looking for whichever developed country could grant them a visa without any further defined goals. Unlike many other researches where it is assumed that people make migration decisions for rational predictable reasons, Fong thinks it is subjective responses to unpredictable causal events that lead TCS to study abroad.

Other literature presents that Chinese students' motivation to study abroad is associated with their well-being overseas. Chirkov et al. (2007; 2008) did research on Chinese students in Belgium and Canada. They assume the level of self-determination and the goals to study abroad had an independent effect on the cultural adaptation of the students. It concluded that the self-determined motivation to study abroad would be more beneficial for Chinese students than a non-self-determined motivation. And among the two factors of the goals to study abroad, the 'Preservation factor', which reflects the goals of avoiding disadvantageous conditions in a home country, were negatively related with cultural adaptation indicators; and a 'Self-development factor', which reflects the goal of pursuing a good education and better career opportunities abroad, were positively related with cultural adaptation indicators.

## **2.2 Gender specific motivation**

Researches about transnational Chinese students often suggest gender differences in the motivations to study abroad. According to Zweig & Chen (1995), more women than men came to the United States to be with their spouse. A higher ratio of women to men originally intended not to return when they left China, because women had less confidence in government policy, less career opportunities, and a complicated mixture of human relations to cope with in China. Women treated migration partly as a way to escape the gender inequality prevalent in their homeland.

Kim (2010) mentions that although China's one-child policy has enabled women to grow up with more parental investment in their education, and the enrolment rate for women in higher educational institutions has been rising rapidly, educated women are still discriminated against in hiring. Having just a BA degree is not sufficient for a woman to get a good job in the competitive market of China. An overseas MA degree with English is preferred. Chinese call it the golden certificate. There emerges a desire for a golden certificate to access a 'global career' and the life of an international woman. Kim also suggests that the culture of the media is a

powerful pull factor in stimulating the mobility of educated Chinese women.

The survey Fong (2011) shows more women than men wanted to live abroad someday, women scored higher than men in the same foreign-language tests, and more women than men had a foreign-language related major in college. What's more, dating and marrying foreigners was more likely and desirable for women than men. However, more men than women actually went abroad. Fong says it may be because parents perceived study abroad as riskier for women. At the same time, some Chinese parents treated their daughters in the same way they would have treated a son due to the one-child policy. These daughters possessed similar aspirations and opportunities to study abroad. Unlike some other researchers, such as Zweig & Chen (1995), Fong does not think Chinese women want to study abroad to escape from gender inequality.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

One of the most popular models in analysing motivations to study overseas are the large number of studies about the push-pull model. Previous studies on Chinese students indicated there are four main push factors in China, and ten kinds of pull factors for developed countries. Different countries demonstrated different attractions to TCS. But sometimes TCS at first did not have a clear goal, they were looking for whichever developed country could grant them a visa. TCS's motivations to study abroad were varied. Some researchers suggested (e.g. Chirkov et al., 2007) different motivations lead to a different performance in the host country. A higher level of self-determination leads to a better academic performance, etc. Also some researchers found gender differences in the motivations.

## **Chapter 3 China as a source and Norway as a host**

In this chapter, I will present related information for both China and Norway as a background to my study. Regarding China, I will talk about the historical and present overseas study policy, the trend to study abroad, and today's gender issues. About Norway, Norwegian higher educational institutions, enrolment policies for Non-EU/EEA students, tuition fees and scholarships, living conditions, and immigration policies will be discussed.

### **3.1 Chinese as a source**

#### **3.1.1 Past and present overseas study policy in China**

Despite the modern history of Chinese people studying abroad, it can be traced back to the late Qing Dynasty (Xie, 2006), although since then it was rare for Chinese to travel abroad, even until the 1970s. Most Chinese citizens born before 1970 considered going abroad as not only difficult and unpractical, but also undesirable (Fong, 2011, p. 69). Between 1949 and 1978 the autarkic policies of the Maoist government made it difficult for Chinese citizens to go abroad. Even the teaching of foreign languages was forbidden in most schools. In 1978 the well-known 'reform and open-door' policy was launched. From 1978 to the present day, the so-called "new era" of the Chinese and Chinese government, the Chinese government's policy towards overseas study has shown a dramatic change. According to Chen (2007, p.30-34), the Chinese government implemented a series of related policies between 1978 and 1986. These provisions formally allowed Chinese citizens to study abroad as self-financed students and established the framework of the overseas study policy. From 1986 to 1991, government policy showed more consideration to their citizens' freedom of choice. The right for Chinese citizens to study abroad and to return to their homeland at will was formally recognised.

The period from the early 2000s until today is recognised as the boom period of studying abroad (Su et al., 2011, p. 148). The number of TCS increased rapidly, by the early 2000s the Chinese government had removed most of the bureaucratic obstacles that previously made going abroad difficult (Fong, 2011). Since 2000, only a few related national policy text files were released. The studying abroad policy has remained generally stable. In 2002, China became a member of the WTO, which led to procedures to study abroad becoming greatly simplified for students with more than a college education. Far less time and documents are

now required in the application process. Besides, today's Chinese government shows a supportive attitude to self-financed students in numerous ways. Many Subsidy Schemes are established. For example, in 2013 self-financed international students (PHD only) in 29 countries, including Norway, could apply for a Chinese government award for outstanding self-financed students abroad with a maximum amount of 10,000 USD (National overseas study website, 2013).

Although bureaucratic obstacles have been removed, Chinese students still face other obstacles in studying abroad. Two government policies were suggested to help mitigate economic and language barriers.

The first is the *English teaching policy*. Fong (2011) believes that the education policy of promoting foreign language teaching is significant. Studying a foreign language is obligatory under the current education system. In 1977, the college entrance examination was revived. From this point on, foreign language teaching, especially English teaching (97 percent of students in Fong's study had studied English) was becoming more and more important in Chinese high school education (Fong, 2011, p.46). Foreign language skills enable Chinese students with the basic skills to study abroad. As Fong (2011, p.44-45) says, 'Most graduate programs and four-year college programs in China required that students demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language'.

*The one-child policy* was believed to be another reason (Fong, 2011). This policy implemented in the 1970s, stipulates that every couple living in a city should only have one child. Having only one child encouraged parents to concentrate all their resources on providing that child with the best that money could buy, in for instance, education. Fong says that due to this policy, in nowadays China, even children of factory workers go abroad, although often they had to use their parents' entire life savings, proceeds from sales of their family homes, in addition to loans from aunts, uncles and friends just to pay for the start-up costs of studying abroad. Sometimes parents rented or sold their centrally located housing and moved into more remote housing to realise the profit.

### **3.1.2 The trend to study abroad**

Policy changes make it practical for Chinese citizens to study abroad. More and more Chinese have left the country to experience life overseas as a student in the last decade. According to statistics, the number of Chinese people who went abroad to study is 390,600 in 2012 while it

was only 117,300 in 2003. The annual-growth rate of this number is up more than 20% from 2008 to today, and the growth is expected to continue. In addition, during 2012 over 90% of the 390,600 are self-financed students (Ministry of Education of the P.R. China, 2013), which shows that self-financed students have apparently become the norm in today's China. Statistics show that studying abroad is becoming more popular every year.

Fong (2011) in explaining the trend cites Chinese parents' attitude of sending their children abroad as a long-term worthwhile investment. Chinese parents believe there is a better life in the developed countries and hope their children will become part of the developed world. Besides this, their children themselves are also the reason. Chinese citizens born in the 1980s believe 'it would be natural and reasonable for them to study abroad' (p.69). They blame China's backwardness in many aspects, such as poverty, corruption, laziness, jealousy, meanness, low standards, and the need to use and be used by social connections to get anything done (p.72). Meantime 'those born into an era of global neoliberalism, grew up admiring the images of developed countries, which sometimes looked like paradise in the media' (p. 73). They desire for a respectable and luxurious lifestyle, high-level income, and medical care in a developed country. The third reason is the influence from their peers and friends who went abroad and experienced such advantages.

Overall, the current generation has their parents' encouragement to study abroad. They strongly desire a developed world lifestyle. And once their friends go abroad, they are often motivated by the precedent and try to follow (p. 91). Thus there is an increasing trend to study abroad in today's Chinese society.

### **3.1.3 Gender issues today**

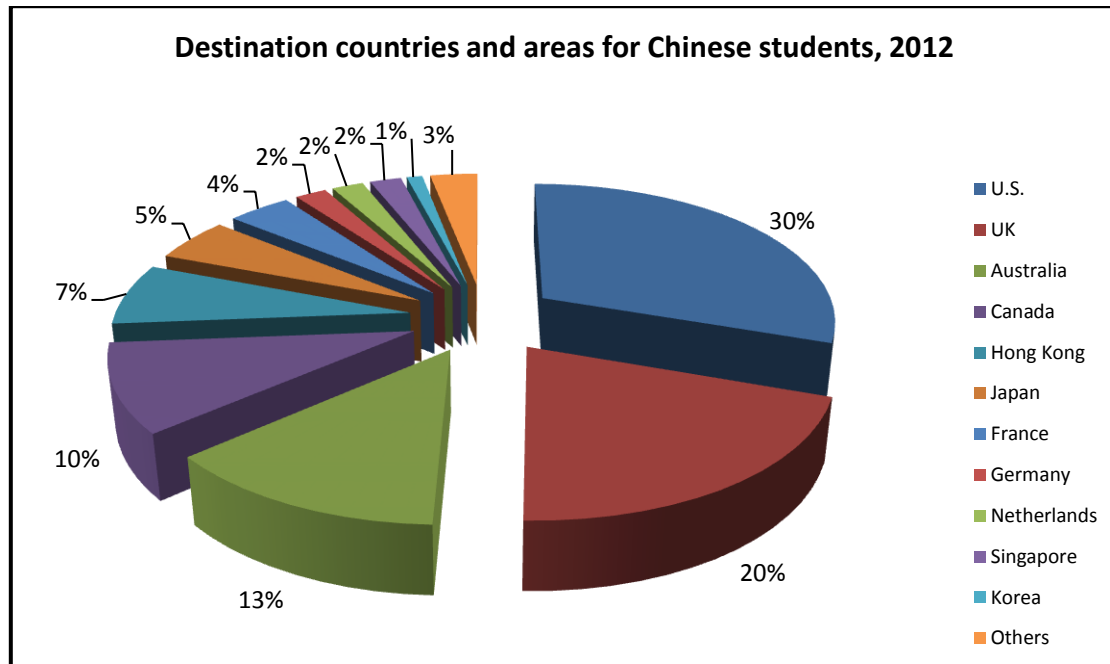
Today's Chinese women have a high status in contrast to the past. Partly because the preference for sons has been seriously challenged since the one-child policy, the strictest fertility policy ever adopted, launched in 1979 (Li & Cooney, 1993, p. 218). Also women attained equal rights with men in law. The desire of Chinese women today to participate in the labour market is certainly on the rise, and educated women's choices in life appear to have become more varied (Kim, 2010, p.3). But gender inequality is still a universal phenomenon. With the development of education, the enrolment rate of women in higher educational institutions has been increasing rapidly. However, the rise of unemployment in the urban labour market has put great pressure on China. Women are often removed from the workforce

to control surplus labour problems and educated women are discriminated against during hiring (Kim, 2010, p. 41).

Furthermore although women have attained equal rights with men in marriage, and arranged marriages have been prohibited with marriage laws in 1950 and 1980 (Bauer & Wang, 1992, p.333), Chinese women are still facing serious pressure to marry. Today there is the new notion of leftover women (*Shengn ü*). In the broad sense, it refers to Chinese women over 28 years old and unmarried. In a narrow sense, it refers to higher educated and high income unmarried Chinese women. People used to blame *Shengn ü* and attribute them not being married to the fact that they are too picky (Tang, 2010). Single women are under intense pressure from parents and society. Parents fear that their daughters will end up childless and lonely, as economically vulnerable spinsters. Government agencies, academics and even some businesses are treating *Shengn ü* as the source of potentially serious social problems, such as bigger population imbalances and a rise in extramarital affairs (Times-Dispatch, 2013).

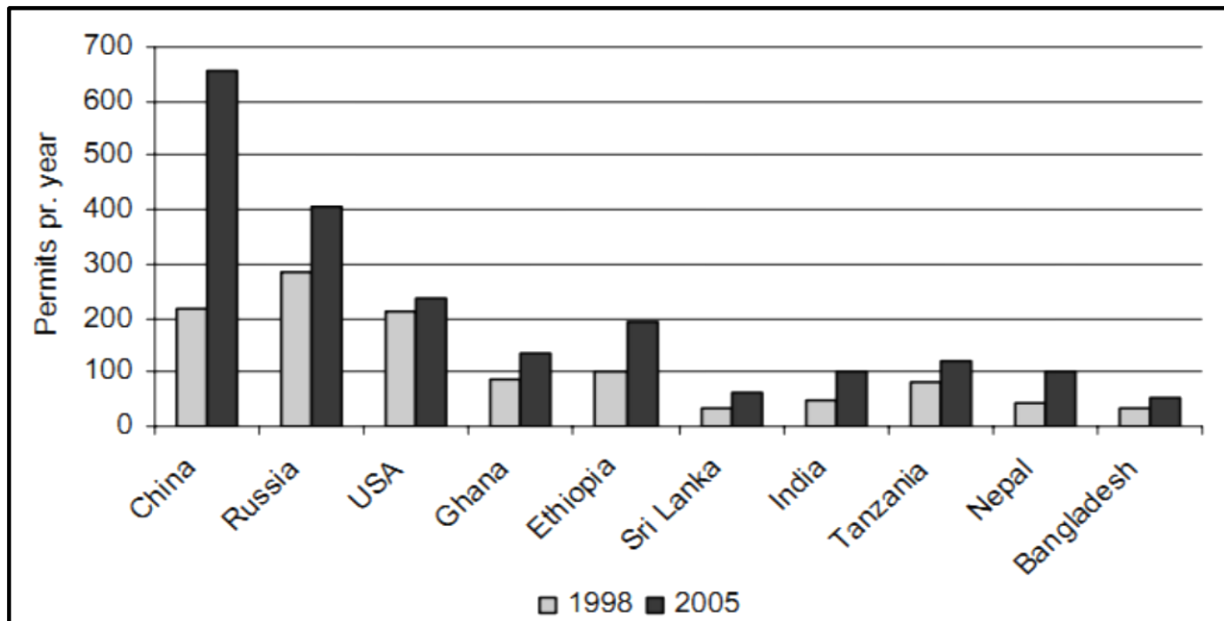
### **3.2 Norway as a host**

Nowadays TCS have a large number of destination countries from which to choose. According to a survey, most Chinese have picked the following countries as their preference in recent years: the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, France, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, the Netherlands, Germany and so on (China's education online, 2013). In 2012, as presented in Figure 3.1, the top four countries account for more than 70% of TCS. In contrast with these countries, Norway is far from the most popular destination country among transnational Chinese students (TCS). Relatively few Chinese people know this country and its education system well. It is just a very small part of the last item 'other'. More specifically, 390,600 Chinese people went abroad to study in 2012. According to UDI statistics (2012b), only 430 students (not including post-doc, Norwegian course students and so on) came to Norway, which is 0.11 per cent of the total.



**Figure 3.1** Destination countries and areas, 2012 (China's education online, 2013)

This seemingly extremely small number, however, occupies the largest proportion of total transnational students in Norway that year. Not only in 2012 have UDI statistics indicated that China has continuously contributed the most to the number of permits issued to Non-EEA students. Brekke's (2006) study indicates the same results. As the following table shows, China also had the strongest growth in student permits. Compared to the past, more and more Chinese people came to study in Norway. I believe that Norway has a huge attraction for a specific part of the Chinese population and expect to understand what exactly attracts them.



**Figure 3.2** Permits top 10 Non-EEA nationalities 1998 and 2005. All kinds of permits (Brekke, 2006, p.40)

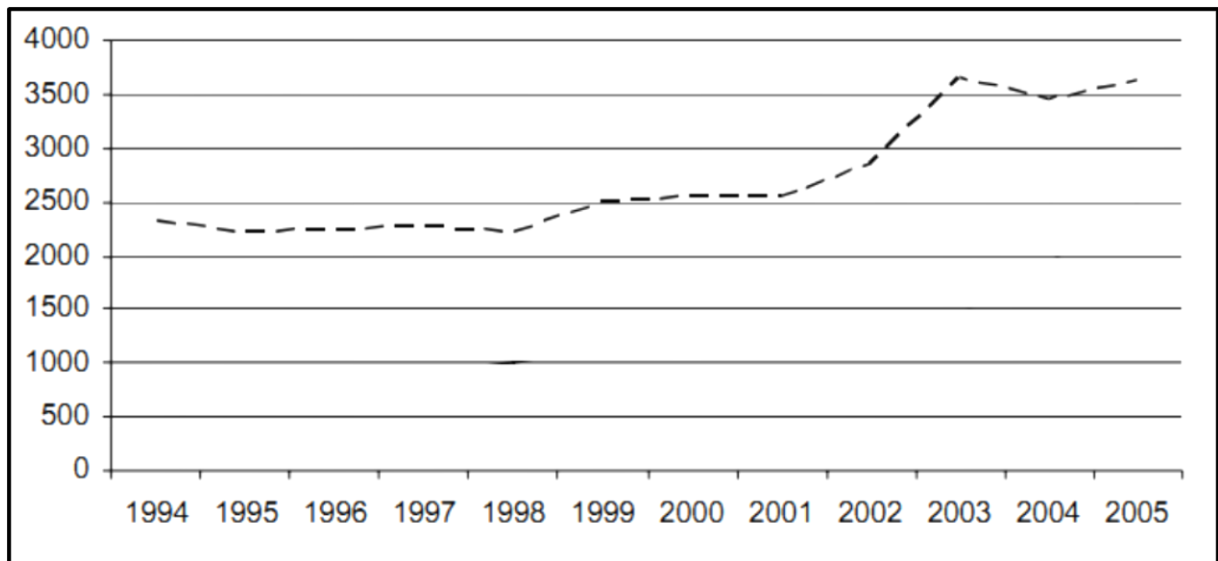
### 3.2.1 Norwegian higher educational institutions and enrolment policies for Non-EU/EEA students

Norway has a good reputation for high educational standards. Although small, Norway has some high-ranking and world-class universities. According to QS World University Rankings (2013), University of Oslo is ranked 89 and University of Bergen is ranked 151, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology ranked 251.

Although Norway is not an Anglophone country, according to an investigation, Norway has an extremely high proficiency in English. More specifically, it ranked the second in the world (English Proficiency Index, 2013), which means it has a very good English environment for a non-native English speaking country. Besides, almost every Norwegian higher educational institution has established master's programs given in English and undergraduate programs containing one year Norwegian courses. Each year the higher educational institutions of Norway offer thousands of study permits to foreign students from all over the world.

Over the last fifteen years, the Norwegian government has promoted Norway as a destination country for international students. Some fellowship programs were established. With the evolution of policy, the number of Non-EEA international students has increased considerably.





**Figure 3.3** the trend in the number of Non-EEA student permits, 1994-2005 (Brekke, 2006, p.41)

Since Norwegian higher educational enrolment policies have similar policies, I will present UiO's requirement for non-EU/EEA students of master's and bachelor's programs as examples.

Bachelor's programs required an English proficiency which is at least 60 of TOEFL (IBT) and 5.0 of IELTS. Because bachelor's programs are taught in Norwegian, all applicants to bachelor's degree programs must satisfy Norwegian language requirements. Except for special requirements for specific programs (for example the program of informatics required Math), Chinese applicants still have to have one year of full time studies in academic subjects at university level and provide CDGDC verification of the *Gaokao* (UiO, 2012).

Master's programs have higher requirements than bachelor's programs in English proficiency, which are at least 80 of TOEFL (IBT) or 6.0 of IELTS. English teaching master's programs do not require Norwegian language. All applicants should have graduated and with a Baccalaureate Diploma. Chinese students also have to provide CDGDC verification of graduation certificate, degree diploma, and a transcript of records (or official copies of documents in the original language to be **sent directly to the International Education Office by the issuing institution**) (UiO, 2013).

The CDGDC verification is a special requirement only for Chinese citizens. CDGDC stands for China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Centre. CDGDC is authorised by the Chinese government. It is engaged in qualifications verification work. From 2011, many Norwegian universities/colleges (such as UiO and NTNU) started to require Chinese students (and only Chinese students) to provide CDGDC verification documents of graduation

certificate, degree diplomas and transcripts.

### **3.2.2 Tuition fee and scholarship**

The majority of Norwegian institutions of higher education are publicly funded. Thus, there are normally no tuition fees at state universities and university colleges in Norway. This also applies to foreign students, no matter which country the students come from. They will only have to pay a semester fee of NOK 550 (€ 70) each semester in order to take an exam. Foreign students do not pay higher tuition fees than Norwegian students, no matter whether they are EEA or Non-EEA students.

As for scholarships, there are mainly three kinds that can be applied for by Non-EEA students before and after moving to Norway. They are the *Quota Scheme*, the *Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund* and the *Erasmus Mundus program*. All three kinds have very strict criteria.

#### **Quota Scheme**

The Quota Scholarship Scheme was established in 1994 by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. The Norwegian government provides scholarships for students from developing countries and countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia through the Quota Scheme. The objective of the scheme is to promote the internationalisation of higher education. Currently, the scheme provides full scholarships for a total of 1100 students, of which 800 are from developing countries and 300 from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Each year universities and university colleges in Norway are allocated a certain number of quota students. The scheme normally includes courses taught in English at Masters and Ph.D. level, in addition to certain professional degrees (Ministry of Education and Research of the Kingdom of Norway, 2001). Only students from partner institutions of partner countries (including China) can apply. The scholarship is given as a loan, and part of the loan is written off once the student has completed the degree/program. The remainder of the loan will be written off only when the student takes up residence in his/her home country.

In 2001, the Ministry of Church, Education and Research (KUF) made an evaluation, and the working group concluded that the Quota Scheme had an important effect on the internationalisation of higher education in Norway and suggested an expansion. Rules and routines for the handling of applications from international students were to be simplified

(Brekke, 2006, p.22)

### **The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund**

The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund ("Lånkassen") was established in 1947. It is primarily directed towards Norwegian citizens. However, some foreign citizens may be eligible for support. For foreign students, they have to have completed at least three years of education in Norway prior to the academic year. In this period they may not have received support for their education from Lånkassen, or public educational support schemes in other countries (Lånkassen, 2012). Support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund consists of a loan and a grant that will cover the costs of studying in Norway. Students will only have to repay the loan. If students have children with a residence permit who live together with them in Norway, they may be eligible for further support. If they work while they are a student, the support may be reduced.

### **Erasmus Mundus program**

Erasmus Mundus Master's Courses are high-quality study programmes at master's level offered by a consortium of at least three European higher education institutions. They last between one and two years and lead to the award of recognised double, joint or multiple degrees. Students have to study in at least two institutions. Erasmus Mundus scholarships are available for students who have been admitted to an Erasmus Mundus Master's Course. Part of this program aims at promoting institutional cooperation and mobility activities between Europe and developing world Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This action is built on the previous EU program External Cooperation Window (2006-2008) with a wider geographical coverage, a larger scope and differentiated objectives. Moreover, China is the most active developing world partner country of the Erasmus Mundus program.

### **3.2.3 Living in Norway: Visa, part-time work permit, salary level, and health insurance**

Foreign citizens can easily get a visa for Norway once they receive study permits. There is a high pass rate on processing students' visas. According to UDI statistics, 99% of Chinese applicants were granted visas in 2011. As a Schengen Visa member, a Norwegian visa holder can travel to all member countries. And once Chinese citizens are granted their first residence permit as a student at a Norwegian higher education institution, they are also automatically granted a part-time work permit. This permit allows them to work up to 20 hours per week, and

to hold full-time employment during ordinary holidays. By the way, Norway has high wage levels and relatively more part-time opportunities as an economically developed country; not only compared to China, but worldwide.

Being a modern welfare state, if the duration of a foreigners stay in Norway as a registered student is more than one year, they will automatically be covered by the National Insurance Scheme. Even if the duration is between 3 and 12 months, they can still be covered under the National Insurance Scheme by filling in a special form.

### **3.2.4 Immigration policies**

In 1975, the immigration policies of Norway had strong limitations. Brekke (2006) mentions:

*“Norway introduced a general immigration stop. Since then immigration policies have had a restrictive function. Foreign nationals from outside the EEA area have entered the country primarily through family unification schemes and the asylum system. Strong limitations were applied to labor immigration.”*

As seen from above, strong limitations were applied to labour immigration, and only in the last couple of years has the Norwegian government begun to revise this strict line on labour immigrants. Over the last ten years, a growing demand in the inland labour market has triggered a more positive attitude towards labour immigration (Brekke, 2006, p. 20). However it is still not easy for Non-EEA citizens to immigrate to Norway. Only if they match the following requirements are they eligible to apply for permanent residence permits: 1. they must have stayed in Norway for a continuous three-year period; 2. during these three years, they must have held residence permits that form a basis for permanent residence. Student permits do not form a basis for a permanent residence permit (UDI, 2012c).

According to information on UDI (2013), the following residence permits can form a basis for a permanent residence permit:

1. Work.
  - Permit as a skilled worker or specialist.

To be a skilled worker, a concrete offer of employment from an employer in Norway must have been received. The job must be full-time. It must require qualifications of a skilled worker and with a collective agreement/pay not lower than normal (NOK 396,900 per year for a position requiring a master's degree,

NOK 368,000 for a bachelor's degree). Skilled workers who have at least NOK 50,000 annual salary are eligible to apply for specialist permits.

- Permit as a self-employed person.

The application will be assessed pursuant to the provisions concerning skilled workers.

- Permit as a permanent employee of a Norwegian shipping company.

## 2. Family

- Permits regarding family immigration to be with a Norwegian citizen, a citizen of one of the Nordic countries, a foreign citizen with a permanent residence permit, or a foreign citizen who has a permit which forms a basis for a permanent residence permit.
- A permit because at least one of your parents was a Norwegian citizen when you were born.

## 3. Refugee (Since there are so few Chinese citizens who applied for refugee status, I will not discuss this).

In conclusion, it is not easy to immigrate to Norway in contrast to other countries such as Canada. A Chinese citizen can normally immigrate to Norway by resorting to qualified employment or marriage.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

Nowadays China has removed most of the bureaucratic obstacles that used to make going abroad hard for Chinese citizens. And some other policies, for example the English teaching policy and one-child policy, were implemented. Policy changes make it more practical for Chinese citizens to now study abroad. More and more Chinese have left their country to experience life overseas as a student in the last decade. There is a trend to study abroad in today's Chinese society. Gender inequality is still believed to exist. Although today's Chinese women have a higher status in contrast to the past, they are discriminated against in the job market and still face serious pressure to marry.

As for Norway, it is not a popular destination country for TCS, yet Chinese students occupied the largest proportion of total transnational students in Norway during recent years. Norway

offers TCS free education, three kinds of scholarship, easy to obtain visas, part-time work permits, high salary levels, and health insurance. TCS and other non-EU students were treated equally, except TCS had to provide CDGDC verification during application. For non-EU students, for example TCS, Norway's immigration policy is strict.

## **Chapter 4 Theoretical framework**

Motivation refers to those reasons that underlie behaviour that is characterised by willingness and volition. To be motivated means to be moved to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 54). This chapter outlines the theoretical framework for the analysis of motivations. I examined the process of decision making of TCS by adapting the most widely used immigration theory, push-pull theory. Also self-determination theory (SDT) is used to analyse TCS's level of self-determination. Gender specific motivations are also discussed.

### **4.1 Push-pull model**

As I have discussed in the chapter reviewing the respective literature, the “push” factors relate to the economic, social and political forces within the source country and the “pull” factors are associated with the characteristics of the host country that the student selects as a final study destination (Yang, 2007, p.3). The push-pull model suggests there are at least three distinct stages in the decision making process of international students. In stage one; influence from a series of ‘push’ factors within the source country, the student has to decide to study internationally, rather than locally. Once the decision to study abroad has been made the next decision is the selection of a host country. In this second stage, ‘pull’ factors become important, making one host country relatively more attractive than another. In stage three, the student selects an institution. A variety of additional ‘pull’ factors make a particular institution more attractive than its competitors. Such factors include an institution’s reputation for quality, market profile, range of courses, alliances or coalitions, offshore teaching programs, staff expertise, degree of innovation, use of information technology, resources, size of the alumni base and promotion and marketing efforts (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2001, p.4). In this study, I adopted a model of Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) as a framework. I investigate if there are any other special stages in TCS’s decision making process.

### **4.2 The self-determination theory**

The model of push-pull is used to understand the decision making process of TCS to study in Norway. And the self-determination theory (SDT) is used to analyse these motivations. SDT is

a macro theory of human motivation and personality, concerning people's inherent growth tendencies and their innate psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2002). SDT suggests people have not only different amounts, but also different kinds of motivation. That is, they vary not only in their *level* of motivation (i.e. how much motivation), but also in the *orientation* of that motivation (i.e. what type of motivation) (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). 'SDT differentiates the content of goals or outcomes and the regulatory processes through which the outcomes are pursued, making predictions for different contents and for different processes'. Therefore there are two aspects of motivation that need to be studied: *the level of self-determination* of people's behaviour and the specific *content of the goals*. (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p.227)

The Level of self-determination:

Many researches guided by SDT have studied the relationship between people's behaviours and their level of self-determination. Connell and Wellborn (1991) show that more extrinsic autonomous traits (autonomous support from a teacher) leads to more engagement (of students). Miserandino (1996) finds people have better performance with the higher level of autonomous behaviour. Ryan & Deci (2000b) mention the advantages of greater internalisation appear including more behavioural effectiveness, greater volitional persistence, enhanced subject well-being, and a better assimilation within the social group. Deci & Ryan (2000, p.240) suggests the students whose motivation is controlled are likely to be doing less well in their performance and well-being. Deci & Ryan (2002, p. 19) mentions "varied advantage to being autonomously motivated, relative to controlled, including more volitional persistence, better relationships in one's social groups, more effective performance, and greater health and well being". The series of studies of Chirkov et al. (2007; 2008) believe the translational students' motivation differs in degrees of level of self-determination, and a more self-determined motivation to study abroad is associated with positive academic, cultural and social adaptation.

Within this framework, I hypothesis that TCS' motivations to study in Norway differ in the degree of self-determination, and a more self-determined motivation brings them more advantages, in terms of the quality of performance.

The level of self-determination could be assessed by the level of autonomous behaviour. I utilise one of the mini-theories of SDT, the organismic integration theory (OIT), to examine the level of self-determination. According to Deci & Ryan (2002, p.9-10), "OIT concerns internalization and integration of values and regulations, and was formulated to explain the



development and dynamics of extrinsic motivation; the degree to which individuals' experience autonomy while engaging in extrinsically motivated behaviours; and the processes through which people take on the values and mores of their groups and cultures". It is based on the assumption that people are naturally inclined to integrate their ongoing experiences, assuming they have the necessary nutrients to do so (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 15).

Basically, SDT divides motivation into two types: *intrinsic motivation* and *extrinsic motivation*. Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable. Extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 54-55). Early discussions characterised intrinsic motivation as being autonomous while extrinsic motivation as being non-autonomous, because research shows extrinsic motivation is generally non-autonomous for it tends to undermine intrinsic motivation. OIT, however, suggests it is possible to be autonomously extrinsically motivated.

Table 4.1 is the self-determination continuum within OIT, with types and motivation and types of regulation. The table shows the level of self-determination visually. It enhances the level from left to right. The left end is non-self-determined and the right end is completely self-determined motivation.

**Table 4.1** the self-determination continuum, showing the motivational, self-regulatory, and perceived locus of causality bases of behaviours that vary in the degree to which they are self-determined. (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 237)

Behaviour		Non self-determined				Self-determined
Type of Motivation	<b>Amotivation</b>	<b>Extrinsic Motivation</b>				<b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>
Type of Regulation	Non-regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal

At the left end is *amotivation*, the state of lacking the intention to act. When people are amotivated, they go through the motions with no sense of intending to do what they are doing (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p.17). For example, if a Chinese student went to Norway to study only because of a family immigration decision of his parents, rather than his own wishes, the motive is amotivated.

The other five points on the continuum refer to classifications of motivated behaviour. The *autonomous* level increases from the left to right. At the right end of the continuum is intrinsic

motivation. It is the prototype of autonomous or self-determined behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p.17). *Intrinsic motivation* is the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn (Deci & Ryan, 2000b, p. 72). When intrinsically motivated, people engage in the activity for its own sake and because of the interest and enjoyment, not because of the expectation of reward. In addition, people can be autonomously motivated if the behaviour they are involved in is relevant to their values, and personally important to them (Chirkov et al., 2007, p.203).

Extrinsically motivated behaviours, which are characterised by four types of regulation, fall along the self-determination continuum between amotivation and intrinsic motivation. The term extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome and which refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself. SDT suggests that extrinsic motivation can vary greatly in its relative autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000b, p. 71).

*External regulation* is "the least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation and includes the classic instance of being motivated to obtain rewards or avoid punishments." Generally external regulation happens when the motive is to satisfy an external demand or a socially constructed contingency. *Introjected regulation* "involves an external regulation having been internalized but not, in a much deeper sense, truly accepted by one's own". It is a type of extrinsic motivation that, having been partially internalised, but the activity engagement is still experienced as coerced and alien to one's self (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p.17). It appears in behaviours preferring to avoid guilt or anxiety or to gain social approval, and to attain ego enhancements such as pride (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p 72). *Identified regulation* "is a more self-determined form of extrinsic motivation, for it involves a conscious valuing of a behavioural goal or regulation, and acceptance of the behaviour as personally important". Regulation through identification represents an important aspect of the process of turning external regulation into true self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p.17). In this case, people are engaging in the activity to attain outcomes that are external to the activity itself, but these initially external outcomes have been internalised making them personally relevant goals. So these behaviours are autonomous (Chirkov et al., 2006, p.203). *Integrated regulation* is the most autonomous extrinsically motivated behaviour. It occurs when identified regulations are fully assimilated to the self, which means they have been evaluated and brought into congruence with one's other values and needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p.73). According to Deci & Ryan (2002, p.17), "it results when identifications have been evaluated and brought into

congruence with the personally endorsed values, goals, and needs that are already part of the self”. Integrated regulation shares many qualities with intrinsic motivation, but it is still extrinsic motivation because this kind of motion is done to attain personally important outcomes rather than inherent interest and enjoyment. Since the qualities and levels of autonomy of integrated regulation and intrinsic motivation are similar, in this thesis they will be discussed as the same thing with the term “intrinsic motivation”.

To sum up, there are four types of behavioural regulations involved in assessing the level of self-determination: intrinsic, external, introjected, and identified. To make them more easily understood I present an example of each of them in Table 4.2, which is related to the decision making process of TCS to study in Norway.

**Table 4.2** Examples of four types of regulations

<b>Types of regulation</b>	<b>Example</b>
Intrinsic regulation	TCS move to Norway because they find this move to be challenging and exciting, they are said to be intrinsically motivated.
External regulation	TCS have decided to study in Norway because their parents insisted on it and promised rewards.
Introjected regulation	TCS have not experienced direct pressure from other people regarding their decision to go to Norway, but feel that they ‘should’ or ‘ought’ to do this because this is what others expect of them.
Identified regulation	TCS decide to study in Norway because this move is relevant to their personally important career and life goals.

With the understanding of the four regulations, I can calculate a Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) and quantitatively describe the relative autonomy and compare it with results from researches in other countries and try to explain the influence factors. I hypothesise that different destination countries have different RAI. A comparative study of RAI can help to examine the special situation of Norway. Why these TCS were attracted to one specific country rather than another.

The score for each subscale is the arithmetic average, and the total RAI is calculated from the formula below.

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Relative Autonomy Index (RAI)} \\ &= 2 * \text{Intrinsic} + \text{Identified} - \text{Introjected} - 2 * \text{External} \end{aligned}$$

The higher RAI reflected more self-determined (autonomous) motivation, and the lower index

indicates that the participant was ‘controlled’ by external factors or so called non-self-determined motivation. In order to make scores comparable, every single question has five options from 1 (Not at all because of this reason) to 5 (Completely because of this reason). Therefore, the range of value of RAI is [-12, 12].

### **4.3 Gender in mobility motivation**

Chinese women are considered to receive more social pressure in two aspects: *Marriage* and *Employment*. These pressures could be gendered push factors in the motivations for immigration.

*Marriage* is regarded an important gendered mobility motivation. According to Fan & Huang (1998, p. 229), in most societies, women are subject to a more demanding set of gender expectations and responsibilities associated with marriage, and their roles as wives and mothers. These expectations include that women will move upon marrying to live with their husbands, and women will migrate to follow their spouses to support the latter’s development. Fan & Huang (1998, p.229) also mention studies based on developing countries, especially considering women as passive, tied movers within a marriage, viewing migration as a result of, but not the motive for, marriage. In other words, women have high chances to go abroad if they have spouses abroad. Fan & Huang (1998, p. 229) highlight marriage as a strategy by which Chinese women can achieve migration to move to places where they may improve their well-being. Which means marriage could be a motivation for Chinese women to achieve migration and improve their well-being. Fong (2011, p. 83) also suggests “dating and marrying a foreigner was more likely and desirable for Chinese women than for Chinese men because of foreign and Chinese expectations of female hypergamy and Western and Chinese associations of Asian cultures with femininity and Western cultures with masculinity”. But she also mentions that no one in her study believed to date or marry foreigners was important as a motivation to study abroad. Most of them did not know any foreigners well enough before going abroad.

*Employment* is considered another important gendered motivation. Kim (2012, p. 35) explains this motivation by push-pull factors. She suggests in contemporary China, Chinese women were pushed by traditional gender dynamics within the Chinese work environment limiting women's employment, while they were pulled by opportunities in western higher education

institutions that will allow them access to international jobs outside of the Chinese labour system. Even if a Chinese woman does not want to immigrate, she may go abroad to study, motivated by employment reasons; because it is hard to find a job when she has only graduated from a domestic university; an overseas degree with English and work experience is preferred (Kim, 2012, p. 41).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

I adopted a model of Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) as a framework to understand why TCS leave China and why they choose Norway. This model suggested there are at least three distinct stages in the decision making process and I will discover how many there are in the case of TCS. By using SDT, I will examine the self-determination level of TCS's motivation and examine if there are connections between it and TCS's performance in Norway. I also focus on different motivations according to gender. Chinese women are considered to receive more social pressure in two aspects: *Marriage* and *Employment*. I hypothesise whether it happened among the TCS in Norway.

## Chapter 5 Motivation analysis

In this chapter I discuss both the push factors of China and the pull factors of Norway in the eyes of *Kina* subjects and interviewees. In addition I will talk about the barriers during the process.

### 5.1 Push factors operating within China

#### 5.1.1 China's push factors for *Kina* objects

Only a limited amount of related posts were found from 3500 posts. The main reason is because they came to *Kina* to ask for advice in the application process. They did not discuss their reasons for leaving China here in any great volume. Of course, some posters shared some of their experiences. From these posts were revealed a few push factors.

##### 1) Parental influence. (3 posts involved this factor)

Only three posters mentioned parental influence, however it was presented as a powerful push factor when it happened. All three posts largely attribute their reason to study abroad to their parents' recommendation and support. One poster even said: "*If my parents have decided, I have no objections*"<sup>4</sup>.

*"My father said: In this small city, you can never achieve great success in your whole life. You are not shaming our ancestors if you immigrate to a better country someday. Our families were born as poor people. It will be definitely a good thing if a turning point occurs in your generation. "* <sup>5</sup>

*"My father said: do not hesitate to immigrate abroad if someday you get an opportunity to do so."*<sup>6</sup>

##### 2) Dissatisfied with domestic employment and lifestyle. (18 posts)

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<sup>4</sup> 如果父母已经做了决定，我没有任何意见。

<sup>5</sup> 父亲说：“咱们这小地方以后再怎么样也是在池塘里 翻不出个跟头，如果以后有可能 移民到更好的国家去了 也不算对不起祖辈，咱们家是贫苦老百姓出生，到某一代能出现家族的转折点 彻底颠覆之前的族谱绝对是件好事。”

<sup>6</sup> 父亲说：“如果能留下来就争取留下来吧，大方向还是尽量出国了，就在国外扎根。”

This is the most important push factor. It was most frequently mentioned. And the people who posted did so displaying very strong emotions.

*“I think my career has **no future** in my domestic setting.”<sup>7</sup>*

*“I’ve been working for a year now, and feel that every day is exactly the same, **very boring**. All along, I dream to go abroad. I am already 30 this year. And I wanted to grab the tail of youth and realise my dream.”<sup>8</sup>*

*“My job is not too hard. But the ‘offspring of officials’ are too much, I **feel depressed** with no background.”<sup>9</sup>*

### 3) Avoiding Gaokao (the college entrance examination of China). (2 posts)

Two posters wished to avoid Gaokao by going to Norway. This is the weakest factor because it will not happen. These two posters are unlikely to become real applicants due to their motivation. According to Norway’s policies, Chinese students have to finish at least one year of studies in a domestic university/college to be qualified applicants for Norway’s bachelor’s programs. In other words, Chinese citizens who wish to enter a Norwegian university/college have to take Gaokao anyway.

*“I am going to take Gaokao this year. I really think it’s totally a waste of time. I hope I can go abroad.”<sup>10</sup>*

*“Can I directly go to a Norwegian university after high school? I do not want to take Gaokao at all.”<sup>11</sup>*

### 4) Financial. (7 posts)

Many posts hinted that they have the economic capacity to study in Norway. For example, *“I want to study in Norway totally because of the no tuition fee. Although living there is expensive,*

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<sup>7</sup> 我的职业在国内**没有未来**。

<sup>8</sup> 现在我工作有一年了，觉得每天的日子都差不多，**很乏味**。一直以来，都很想出国，今年我 30 了，我很想抓住青春的尾巴，实现自己的理想也罢梦想也好。

<sup>9</sup> 工作也不算太辛苦，就是“官二代”太多，没有背景的我比较**压抑**。

<sup>10</sup> 我今年要参加高考了。我觉得这纯粹就是浪费时间，要是能出国就好了。

<sup>11</sup> 高中毕业后我能直接去挪威留学吗？我一点都不想参加高考。

*I can tolerate this*<sup>12</sup>. But only seven posters directly mentioned they had the financial capabilities to study in Norway.

*“My family condition is very general. Parents can give me 100, 000 every year.”*<sup>13</sup>

*“I have studied in England for six years. ....My home is in a small city in Sichuan. After the reform and opening up, my family has become a little famous as businessmen in our small city because of my parents’ efforts.”*<sup>14</sup>

### 5.1.2 China’s push factors for interviewees

The interview in this part is guided by the questions: 1) When did you first think about going abroad? 2) Why did you decide to go abroad?

#### 1) Mass media.

All participants agreed that the mass media was the most important factor influencing how they look at the developed world. My eldest participant is only 35 years old. All of them, as Fong (2011) described, were born into an era of global neoliberalism and grew up admiring images of the developed countries, which sometimes looked like paradise in the media, and advertisements. All of this made them yearn to go to the developed world. My study totally supports this view. Even participants who never thought about going abroad until they really did go; they admitted that their view of the developed world life was of a place more desirable and better than China, a view formed throughout their life by the media.

Participants 2: *“My mother loved to watch foreign romantic movies when I was a little girl. So I watched a lot too. Those cities and people’s life looked so amazing. Even the sunshine was more beautiful abroad in my eyes.”*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> 我想去挪威留学完全是因为不要学费。虽然生活费很高昂但还可以承受。

<sup>13</sup> 我的家庭条件很普通。父母一年能提供我十万块。

<sup>14</sup> 我来英国留学已经 6 年了……家里在四川的一个小市，在改革开放之后经过父母的努力，家里成为了小市里小有名气的商人。”

<sup>15</sup> 我很小的时候起妈妈就喜欢看国外的爱情电影。所以我也跟着看了不少。电影里那些城市和城市人的生活方式看上去实在是太让人向往了。就连阳光都是国外看起来比较灿烂。



## 2) Studying abroad is a trend.

Interviews showed that TCS perceived “studying abroad is a trend” mainly in two different periods: *childhood* and *senior middle school*. During my research I found there is one thing that both periods have in common. The trend of studying abroad was influenced not only by photographs and information circulated by TCS who had returned from studying abroad (Fong, 2011, p. 73), but also their relatives (especially parents). TCS’s relatives often bragged in an exaggerated manner about how successful their graduated TCS are (at home or abroad). These stories gradually spread far and wide, making people closely link overseas study with a high-salary, good job, and future success. In my study, most of the participants had heard about different TCS’s success stories from relatives, friends and peers.

Participants 22: “*Many years ago, my distant relative’s daughter went to study in America and finally got a job there. She was a famous trouble-maker in our hometown. But several years later, everyone in my family heard about her high salary and beautiful house in America dozens of time.*”<sup>16</sup>

Some participants talked about *childhood*. They told me they first thought of studying abroad during this period because studying abroad was a trend. This period is generally around the 1990s-2000s. In 1993, the Chinese government formally proposed to “support studies abroad, encourage returnees, and increase free movement”. At that time, the quota of state-financed students was few, and self-financed overseas studying had just entered a period of stability. The number of TCS abroad was increasing but far less so than today. There is a sentence in Chinese “the more scarce the more valuable”. Few families could afford the costs of overseas studies, while more and more people began to regard studying abroad as an alternative path to the developed world. As one of my participants said, “*At that time, studying abroad was an enviable thing, everyone wanted to be the object of envy*”<sup>17</sup>.

Also participants took up the idea to study abroad during *senior middle school*. Chinese students need to take Gaokao after three years in senior high school. Many researchers suggested that the “limited access to higher education” is one of most important factors that push TCS out of China. Because every year, there are so many Chinese students that fail

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<sup>16</sup> 很多年前我远亲的女儿去了美国，还在那里找到了工作。她在我们家乡是出了名的问题学生。不过几年时间，家族里的每一个人都无数次听说了她在美国的高薪和漂亮别墅。

<sup>17</sup> 那个时候出国是一件让人羡慕嫉妒的事儿。人人都想成为被人羡慕的对象。

*Gaokao*. According to Fong (2011, p.74), “some were unable to get into any Chinese college at all; others had been accepted to Chinese three-year college programs (*zhuanke*) but failed to get into Chinese four-year college programs (*benke*)”. There was a trend in China to study abroad if a student failed *Gaokao*. To comfort their children, as one of my participants told me, Chinese parents often promise “*you still have an alternative path even you fail Gaokao, we can still send you abroad at the worst. So don't be nervous*”<sup>18</sup>. Regarding my participants who are TCS in Norway, and Norway's admissions policy, they all got through *Gaokao* of course. But during senior middle school, due to the fear of failing *Gaokao*, also the trend of studying abroad, and parents' promises, made people start to think increasingly about studying abroad.

### 3) Parental influence.

Most of my participants declared their parents' attitude was supportive, a few of them expressed extremely strong parental support. These extremely strongly supportive parents believed studying abroad is honourable. It is the way to change their children's personal destiny. These parents did not have the chance to go to the developed world themselves. So they were looking forward to their children realising this dream. These participants grew up with their parent's expectation. Participant 18 showed a look of helplessness on his face when he told me “*my parents had been dreaming that I can study abroad and immigrate to the developed world someday in their lifetime*”<sup>19</sup>. Some participants said they felt it was a kind of obligation to study abroad. When discussing their motivations for studying abroad, participants in my study often talked about their dream of making their parents proud.

### 4) Financial ability.

My survey showed that most of participants' parents are middle-class. Although several parents were peasants, all the students basically had financial backing. More than half of the students could be totally financed by their parents, and the rest relied on bank loans, loans from relations, or a deposit account of their own (four students financed themselves. They had worked for several years before going aboard and had enough funds). Financial capability was not regarded

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<sup>18</sup> 就算高考失败了也还有其它选择，最差爸妈还可以送你出国。所以不要太紧张了。

<sup>19</sup> 我爸妈一辈子都在做梦我哪天能出国留学然后移民过去。

as a strong push factor, but a necessary condition.

Participant 10: *“I could not have thought of going aboard if my family cannot afford it.”*<sup>20</sup>

Participant 38: *“My parents had divorced when I was a child. I moved out of my father’s home and lived on my own from 18 years old. I could not rely on either my mother or father. I did many kinds of jobs, saved 200,000 RMB. Then I came to Norway finally.”*<sup>21</sup>

5) Dissatisfied with domestic life: China’s backwardness, unsatisfactory employment, limited access to domestic master programs, lifestyle, and marriage pressure.

According to Fong (2011, p.71), Chinese citizens dissatisfied with domestic life trust they can resolve all their problems abroad. Participants of my study also presented how they were keen to escape the domestic situation through going abroad; and regarded studying aboard as a solution to their problems. Just like Fong’s (2011, p.72) study, participants often attribute their dissatisfaction to “Chinese backwardness”. They generally complained of the poverty, corruption, health hazards, unpleasant social relationships, and how everything depends on who your relatives are (*guanxi*).

*Unsatisfied with employment:* mainly male participants wanted to go abroad because of dissatisfaction with their previous jobs. They talked about a lack of democracy, low income, poor environment, complicated relationships, limited advancement, and so on. They often said how men bear more pressure than women in Chinese society. Men assume the responsibility to support their families. And their jobs determine their income and social status. Men seemed more concerned with the lack of democracy than women.

Participant 22 used to work as an editor for a small website. His salary was only 1,500 RMB per month. He described how *“I needed to eat grass to survive”*<sup>22</sup>. Participant 7 used to work in Petro China with a high level salary. He became very excited when I posed the question of why he quit his job, he said: *“I hated it that I got that job only because of my parents’ guanxi. ....I*

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<sup>20</sup> 如果我的家庭不能负担，我想都不会想留学的事。

<sup>21</sup> 我父母在我小时候就离婚了。18岁那年我搬出了我家开始独自生活。爸妈每一个能靠得上的。我做了很多种工作，最后自己存足20万，终于出来挪威读书了。

<sup>22</sup> 我只能吃草求生了。

*had no future if I continued to work at that place in which everything relies on guanxi*”<sup>23</sup>.

Participant 39 came from Beijing, the city with the highest house prices. He told me “*if I do not eat and drink, save up all my salary every month. I can buy an 80 square metre apartment within Ring 3 twenty years later.*”<sup>24</sup>

Both genders said how they believed that a BA degree is not sufficient to get a good job in the competitive market. Thus a MA degree is preferred.

*Limited access to domestic master programs:* dissatisfaction with domestic education is also a common reason. As I have mentioned, most of my participants are master’s students. Therefore I got many complaints about the limited access to China’s master’s programs rather than bachelor’s programs. Participants often complained how intense the domestic competition is. Some of them gave up taking domestic exams at the first attempt; some took it once but failed; some were enrolled by institutions they were unsatisfied with. Participant 23 came to Norway because “*I missed my dreamed about university and was enrolled by one I disliked*”<sup>25</sup>. Some others mentioned they wanted to study abroad because the national entrance examination for postgraduate positions in China is difficult. There are limited spaces and too much competition. Applying for foreign universities is much easier since there is no entrance exam. In conclusion, poor employment opportunities push people to pursue higher education. Limited access to domestic higher education pushes them to leave China.

*Lifestyle:* Several participants were just tired of domestic life and wanted the fresh stimulus of being abroad: “*I was looking for a new life abroad. I desired a totally different lifestyle*”<sup>26</sup>.

*Marriage pressure:* Single female participants often talked about marriage pressure when discussing the push factors of China. Once graduated from domestic universities, they felt marriage pressure from parents, relatives and society. They were marked or were afraid of being marked as leftover women (*Shengn i*). Fives females from my study clearly told me they felt they had been pushed out by marriage pressure. Four of them were around 30 years old, and one was around 25 years old and single. Participant 23 told me she wanted to study abroad to escape from countless blind dates (*Xiangqin*) and her parents’ insistence on marriage. “*But my parents*

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<sup>23</sup> 我很讨厌通过父母的关系取得那份工作。……要是继续在那种什么都讲关系的地方工作，我的未来就完蛋了。

<sup>24</sup> 如果我不吃不喝把每个月的工资全部存起来，要 20 年才能买得起三环以内一间 80 平米的公寓。

<sup>25</sup> 我错失了梦想中的院校，被个一点都不喜欢的录取了。

<sup>26</sup> 我期待国外的新生活和完全不一样的生活方式。

*still frequently ask on the telephone if I have found myself a boyfriend now*”<sup>27</sup>, she said with a sad voice.

Both *Kina* objects and interviewees suggested dissatisfaction with domestic life as the strongest push factor. Through my interviews I found some Chinese students who initially had no intention to study abroad, and then became motivated when an opportunity to do so came up. I also found the pressure to marry, for women of a certain age in China, created a strong push factor.

## 5) Availability of programs

Five people decided to study abroad because of a unique chance to become an exchange student or accidentally they discovered an overseas study program provided by a domestic university. All of the five participants decided to go abroad because of the availability of programs from domestic institutions.

Participant 10: *“I never thought of studying abroad until I knew of the project.”*<sup>28</sup>

## 5.2 Pull factors of Norway

### 5.2.1 Norway’s pull factors for *Kina* objects

As I have mentioned previously, the reason people came to *Kina* was to ask for advice in the application process. To get valuable feedback, many of them left a detailed presentation about themselves to receive information about their options for choosing a country/program/institution based on the experience of others. Thus I got plenty of pull factors through the website analysis.

#### 1) Knowledge and awareness of Norway. (9 posts)

*“Books that I used to read make Norway a dreamland to me.”*<sup>29</sup>

*“I travelled to Norway once. That journey made me fall in love with this country.”*<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> 但是我爸妈还是经常在电话里问我现在找到了男朋友没有。

<sup>28</sup> 在我知道这个项目之前从来没有考虑过要出国。

<sup>29</sup> 以前看过的关于挪威的书让我觉得挪威像仙境一样。

- 2) Cost issue: tuition fee (47 posts), living expense (30 posts), and part-time job opportunities (34 posts).

*“The only reason I chose Norway is the free education.”<sup>31</sup>*

*“I think the living costs are acceptable since there is no tuition fee.”<sup>32</sup>*

*“My parents can only give me 30, 000 to 40,000. If I go, I have to find a part-time job as soon as possible to support myself. I heard Norway has more part-time job opportunities than in other Nordic countries.”<sup>33</sup>*

- 3) Availability of scholarships for study. (21 posts)

*“I found the information on a website. An Erasmus mundus scholarship does not seem difficult at all. I would like to apply for it in 2011.”<sup>34</sup>*

*“I have had an offer from a top university in the U.S., but my family cannot afford the expense. So I am thinking of Gjøvik University College which would like to offer me ‘Quota’.”<sup>35</sup>*

- 4) Environment: natural and physical climate and lifestyle. (8 posts)

*“I searched for information about Norway on the Internet. Basically it’s a beautiful country with less competition and lower pressure than China. High tax and welfare, work seems not too hard. Because the population is small, I guess competition between people would not be cruel as in China.”<sup>36</sup>*

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<sup>30</sup> 我去挪威旅游过一次，然后就对那里一见钟情了。

<sup>31</sup> 我选择挪威的唯一理由就是不要学费。

<sup>32</sup> 因为没有学费，生活费还是可以接受的。

<sup>33</sup> 我的父母只能一下子给我 3 到 4 万。如果要说的话我必须尽快找到工作。我听说挪威的工作机会比北欧其它国家多多了。

<sup>34</sup> 我看了一下网站 Erasmus mundus 奖学金的难度不大，想 11 年申请。

<sup>35</sup> 我已经有了美国顶尖大学的 offer，但我的家庭不足以支付留学费用。我在考虑愿意给我 Quota 的 Gjøvik 大学院。

<sup>36</sup> 我查了挪威的情况，算是一个山清水秀，没有太大竞争压力的社会。高税收高福利，工作好像也不是很累。因为人口稀少，估计人与人之间的竞争也没有国内这么残酷。

*“Living in China, I really envy fresh air and the clean cities abroad.”<sup>37</sup>*

5) Immigration and employment prospects after graduation. (58 posts)

*“I want to find a job and immigrate to Norway after graduation.”<sup>38</sup>*

*“Employment is my primary consideration.”<sup>39</sup>*

6) Recommendation from others. (2 posts)

*“I have a relative in Norway, he recommended me Norway.”*

*“One of my husband’s friends went to Norway. ....He told us the place is amazing.”*

7) Partner is in/ going to Norway. (11 posts)

11 posters declared they want to study in Norway to be with their partners. 10 of them are female. Only one is male.

*“I was studying at Beijing Jiaotong University, currently specialising in e-commerce. I hope that next year I will be able to go directly to the Norwegian university. It is best to go to UiO. I'm really serious, my boyfriend is in Norway. I expect to be with him.”<sup>40</sup>*

*“(my girlfriend) she is a junior student in a Norwegian university. .... My initial intention is to apply for Norway’s PHD program next year to be with her.”<sup>41</sup>*

8) Petroleum industry (27 posts) and shipping industry (14 posts).

The developed petroleum and shipping industry of Norway attracted lots of TCS with specific majors: geology, petroleum geology, oil and gas, marine, shipbuilding and so on. They believed

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<sup>37</sup> 在国内真羡慕国外的清新空气和干净的城市。

<sup>38</sup> 我希望毕业后能找到工作移民挪威。

<sup>39</sup> 找工作是我的首要考虑。

<sup>40</sup> 我是就读于北京交通大学的学生，目前专业为电子商务。我希望明年就能直接去挪威上大学。最好是 uio。我真的很认真，我的男友在挪威，我很想和他在一起。

<sup>41</sup> 我女朋友是挪威大学的大三学生。我目前的打算是明年申请挪威的 PHD 过去和她在一起。

in the good employment prospects of Norway.

*“I think oil related majors will provide more job opportunities and a high level income.”*

9) No requirement of GRE (Graduate Record Examinations). (3 posts)

*“Many countries require GRE. I was so happy to know that Norway asks for only IELTS or TOFEL.”*<sup>42</sup>

The cost issue, immigration and employment prospects are the most important factors. Most posts mentioned them. *What’s more*, many posts described these factors with words like *“the only reason”*, *“totally because”*, and *“the very first consideration”*.

### 5.2.2 Norway’s pull factors for interviewee

1) Knowledge and awareness of Norway

I was surprised that a lot of my participants described the process of awareness of “Norway is a good place to study” with “accidentally”. Then they started to find information of this country.

Participant 1 told me *“One day, I was reading my parents’ newspaper on the toilet, accidentally I read some news about English teaching programs and the tuition free Nordic countries. I suddenly felt, this is what I want”*.<sup>43</sup>

Participant 10 said: *“about three years ago, one of my friends wanted to study in Canada. So I accompanied him to the intermediary consulting. I was very bored and picked up a stack of leaflets to read. Then I saw an introduction to Norway’s higher education and recruitment policy by accident. It looked like a good place to go”*.<sup>44</sup>

Another frequently mentioned situation is that they had read books or watched TV programs about Norway planting the seed, this is a good place, a long time ago. Then it became a strong pull factor once they got an opportunity to go or had the idea to go somewhere abroad. Then

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<sup>42</sup> 很多国家都要求 GRE。听说挪威不需要的时候我实在是太开心了。

<sup>43</sup> 有天我坐在马桶上看爸妈的报纸，偶然看到一条关于北欧国家的免学费的英语授课项目。突然就觉得这是我想到的。

<sup>44</sup> 差不多三年前我有个朋友想去加拿大，于是我陪他去中介做咨询。坐在那儿无聊就拿了叠传单翻看，然后就看到了挪威高校的招生政策。好像是个不错的选择。



they started to collect related information mainly through the Internet (more than 30 participants knew about Kina.cc, more than half indicated *Kina* as very important during their application) and some other mediums.

Participant 2: *“I liked to watch a BBC series..... Norway impressed me deeply. All along, Norway is like a wonderland to me. I thought of it immediately when I was considering going abroad.”*<sup>45</sup>

## 2) Reputation of higher education

All the participants in my study considered Norway to have a good quality higher education system. Since Norway was not a popular destination, they generally had no idea about the reputation of Norway’s education before. When they got interested, the first thing they did was to search for key words on the Internet (usually Google and Baidu), for example: 挪威留学 (studying in Norway), 挪威高等教育国际知名度(international reputation of Norway’s higher education) and 挪威教育质量 (quality of education in Norway). They usually got extremely positive feedback. Therefore I tried to search “挪威教育质量” (quality of education in Norway) through Google. On the first page I saw titles like “挪威教育质量世界认可还免学费留学” (Norway: quality of education recognised around the world and tuition free) and “教育质量非常高教育医疗免费” (High quality of education and free medical cover). Besides the high world ranking of UiO was regarded as another proof of “quality”.

Almost everyone told me: *“Information from the Internet made me believe in the high quality of education in Norway”*.<sup>46</sup>

Participant 12: *“a country that has one good university could have many other good universities”*.<sup>47</sup>

## 3) Cost issues: tuition fee, part-time job opportunities, and availability of scholarships for study.

Cost issues were regarded as extremely essential pull factors, especially the tuition fee. In most

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<sup>45</sup> 我喜欢看 BBC 系列节目……挪威给我留下了很深刻的印象。一直以来对我来说就像仙境一样。当我考虑留学的时候一下子就想到了它。

<sup>46</sup> 网络信息让我相信挪威教育质量不错。

<sup>47</sup> 一个国家能有一个好大学，就能有好多个好大学。

participants' eyes, the four Nordic countries are similar: Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden. The four countries have a similar natural and social environment. And they all at one time had free tuition. But from 2011, Norway was the only Nordic country providing free education to non-EU and non-EEA international students. It totally distinguished Norway from the others. More than half of them described the free tuition factor with the following words: “*very important*”, “*primary reason*”, and “*that’s why I started becoming interested in Norway*”.

Due to the high-level living expenses, part-time job opportunities and the availability of scholarships for study are important. Most TCS pronounced they were willing to have a part-time job. Norway allows international students to work 20 hours a week. A normal salary can cover living expenses. Participant 28 told me, in the first year he came to Norway, all his money was borrowed from relatives and friends to get a visa. Once he arrived in Norway, he had to return the money back to China as soon as possible, which meant he had to find a job as soon as possible. Fortunately, he did it.

Availability of scholarships for study was not seemingly important, because strict scholarship policies actually exclude most TCS.

#### 4) Developed petroleum industry and marine industry.

A developed petroleum industry and marine industry are salient and special features of Norway. Participating in my study were four oil-related major students and three marine-related major students. For students specialised in these majors, the attraction of Norway is absolute.

Participants 7: “*Tuition free, oil-rich country. Norway was an obvious choice.*”<sup>48</sup>

#### 5) Environment: natural and physical climate and lifestyle

All participants thought Norway had fresh air, a beautiful natural environment and a desirable lifestyle. They described Norway as ‘clean’, ‘quiet’, ‘peaceful’, ‘wealthy’, ‘developed’ and so on. A developed world level income, low unemployment rate, and high welfare, life in Norway is peaceful, less competitive, slow and deliberate.

Also people said: “*Everything is perfect, just a little bit boring.*”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> 不要学费，又是石油国。明显就只能选挪威了。

#### 6) Immigration and employment prospects.

As I had discussed in the above chapter, Norway has a strict immigration policy. It usually is not known as a destination for immigrants. But if a TCS can find a qualified job after graduation and work for three years, he will be granted permanent residence. Most TCS believed it is not easy to find a job in Norway. However, only six participants planned to go back to China immediately after graduation, the rest of them believe they have opportunities to find a job in Norway. Even a student of Ibsen, a field in which foreign students usually consider it very difficult to find a job, believes she might have a chance if she studies Norwegian well. Ten of them believed that several years' work experience in Norway will be of benefit to them for future employment in China. Three of them wanted to get a job in order to spend more time in Norway, and then they will decide whether to stay or go home. 21 of them planned to immigrate to Norway through working. 12 of them said they would consider applying for a PHD if they cannot find a job.

#### 7) Partners.

Five students came to Norway to be their partners. Four of them are female and one is male. Limited by the number of participants, I cannot say if there is any gender difference. But most of my female participants indicated that they would be happy to immigrate to any place to follow their partners or future partners, only a few males would like to. Male participants always said "*it depends*" while females said "*yes*" or "*of course*". And female participants were more willing to have Norwegian partners than male.

Participant 17 is a very typical example. She made a lot of effort to be with her Norwegian boyfriend. She quit a domestic university and applied for bachelor's programs in Norwegian universities. In the first year she failed to gain a place in a Norwegian institution. To be closer to her boyfriend she went to a Hungarian university. She kept applying for a placement in Norway during this period and eventually got an offer from UIS. But UIS is located in Stavanger, not the city where her boyfriend lived. Two years later she transferred to HIT.

#### 8) Relatively low educational requirements (for example: no need for GRE)

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<sup>49</sup> 什么都很完美，就是无聊了点。

During the interviews, few interviewees told me directly “this is an important reason” or even mentioned it; maybe because quite a long time had passed since the application period.

However, when I mentioned it as a factor, many of them commented that this was one of the important considerations during their application. They were pulled by the lower requirement of Norway’s master’s programs while pushed by China’s difficult and highly competitive exams to enter master’s programs.

The universities of Norway normally do not require a GRE-like exam. The requirement for English skills is not high. Besides, influenced by *Kina*, some of them believed they could be enrolled in a Norwegian institution even if they had not performed well in a domestic university. On *Kina*, there is one public post for applicants to share the offers they receive; to provide a reference point for later applicants, successful students usually write the names of their previous universities, IELTS or TOFEL scores, Grade Point Average (GPA), and detailed information on the offers. Many applicants with modest GPA (average of 70/100) and a barely qualifying English score (IELTS: 6.0) are successful. This led to the participants of my study perceiving that Norway’s institutions have relatively low academic requirements.

Participant 28: “*My overall condition was average. But I thought, even that guy succeeded, why can’t I?*”<sup>50</sup>

### **5.3 Pull factors of bachelor’s and master’s programs (*Kina* subjects only)**

I only found any hesitation between choosing a bachelor’s program or master’s program within the *Kina* subjects. That’s possibly because I had a limited number of interviewees, and most of them are master’s students with work experience. They did not mention hesitating at all in choosing their programs.

However, for some *Kina* subjects, after deciding on Norway, the next thing they had to consider was the selection of a *bachelor’s program* or *master’s program*, rather than their selection of a specific institution. Even Norway’s bachelor’s program asks TCS for at least one year of study in a domestic university, which means that all the applicants were recruited via domestic universities. There are actually three choices for them: 1) Dropping out of domestic university and taking a bachelor’s program in Norway. 2) Finishing their domestic bachelor’s degree and

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<sup>50</sup> 我的综合条件很一般。但是我想，就连那个谁都成功了，为什么我不行。

taking another bachelor's program in Norway. 3) Finishing a domestic bachelor's degree and taking a master's program in Norway.

*Pull factors of Bachelor's programs* are all associated with future employment and immigration considerations. 1) The first is *Norwegian teaching*. Eight posts featured the opinion that they want to take bachelor's programs because language is a key factor for working and living in Norway in the future, and bachelor's programs provide a one year Norwegian class and the programs are taught in Norwegian. For example, "I do not consider applying for a Master's. Starting as an undergraduate, I can take a one year Norwegian course, ha-ha. This is more conducive for me in finding a job in Norway." 2) The second is *major and employment prospects*. Four posts mentioned this factor. According to them, it is not easy to find a job in Norway if they continue to study their previous majors. And Norway's master's programs only accept applicants with a related academic background. Thus starting as an undergraduate is the only way they can get access to the majors which they believe make it easier to find a job. For example, "I want to restudy an undergraduate course, .....I hope I can be accepted for an oil and gas related major."

*Pull factors of master's programs* include 1) *English teaching* (4 posts), 2) *time-saving* (11 posts) and 3) *higher degree* (1 post). TCS, as I have discussed before, usually have been taught English in China. Most of the Norwegian universities/colleges provide international students with an English teaching master's program, while there is almost no English teaching bachelor's program. So TCS who do not want to take a Norwegian course have no choice but to apply for master's programs. There are four posts I found that involved the English teaching factor.

For example, "*I was so happy to hear that Norway has English teaching master's programs.*"<sup>51</sup>

What's more, the length of a master's program is two years while a bachelor's program (plus Norwegian course) is four years. The former is obviously time-saving and with a higher degree.

"*Should I choose a master's program or bachelor's program? ....I think the advantages of a master's program is: time is short, degree is higher.*"<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> 听说挪威有英语授课的硕士项目的时候我开心死了。

<sup>52</sup> 我应该选硕士还是本科? .....硕士时间短, 而且学历高。

## 5.4 Pull factors of institutions

### 5.4.1 Institutional pull factors for Kina.cc objects

#### 1) Less Competition. (3 posts)

*“Has anybody heard about this University? I want to apply to a non-popular one which probably has less competition and increases my success chances.”<sup>53</sup>*

#### 2) International reputation. (9 posts)

*“I am trying to apply for Norwegian Universities. Petroleum geology of UIS is my primary choice, because UIS is a relatively well-known University. NTNU seems to have a very high reputation in Norway, but its international reputation seemingly less?”<sup>54</sup>*

#### 3) Location. (7 posts)

Related posts showed posters’ concerns about location were actually out of concerns of cost issues and employment prospects.

*“If you intend to find a part-time job, never go to a University located in a small city/town.”<sup>55</sup>*

*“I finally chose UIS. Stavanger has many oil companies.”<sup>56</sup>*

*“From an economic consideration NTNU is a better choice than UiO. Trondheim (the place NTNU located in) is a relatively small city with lower consumption levels.”<sup>57</sup>*

#### 4) Availability of specific programs. (12 posts)

*“I want to apply for a master’s in plant science at UMB (The Norwegian University of*

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<sup>53</sup> 有人听说过这个学校吗？我想申请个冷门的，这样竞争少点成功率高点。

<sup>54</sup> 我在申请挪威的大学。UIS 的时候地质专业是首选，因为这个学校比较出名。NTNU 好像在挪威声望很高，但国际声望好像要低些？

<sup>55</sup> 如果想要找兼职，千万别去小地方。

<sup>56</sup> 我最后还是选了 UIS。斯塔万格有很多石油企业。

<sup>57</sup> 从经济考虑，NTNU 比 UiO 要好。特隆赫姆地方小，消费也比较低。

*Life Sciences).*”<sup>58</sup>

*“Both BI (Norwegian Business School) and NHH (Norwegian School of Economics) are a good choice to study business administration.”*<sup>59</sup>

#### 5) Accepting applications from senior students before graduation (Master’s program). (22 posts)

For senior students who wanted to apply for master’s programs, this is the most important pull factor. If they cannot be enrolled on a master’s thesis before graduation, they will have to wait for another year or give up on Norway.

*“I heard NTNU is the only university that accepted applications from senior students.”*<sup>60</sup>

*“I am a junior student, and will graduate in 2014. I hope I can go to Norway directly after graduation. But I heard a lot of Norwegian universities asked for a diploma at the application process. I don’t want to wait for another year! Youth is precious! I need a university that would like to accept a senior student.”*<sup>61</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Institutional pull factors for interviewees

Many interviewees thought “world ranking” is important due to the fact that most of my interviewees are students of UiO, which is one of the highest world ranking universities in Norway.

Except “Less Competition” and “world ranking”, institutional pull factors for interviewees and *Kina* objects showed a consistency in other factors. Accepting applications from senior students before graduation was considered very important. They strongly hoped that higher educational institutions will change the rules. Many people wanted to apply for UiO before graduation from a domestic university, but they cannot.

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<sup>58</sup> 我想申请 UMB 的植物科学。

<sup>59</sup> BI 和 NHH 都是不错的商科院校。

<sup>60</sup> 我听说只有 NTNU 接受大四在校生。

<sup>61</sup> 我是 2014 年毕业的大三在校生。我希望毕业后能直接去挪威，但是听说挪威申请要求学位证毕业证。我不想多等一年！青春可贵啊！我需要个学校接受大四在读生的。

*“I wouldn't be in UiO now if I had been enrolled by any other universities that year. But I failed to get into any others. I am now here because I had to work and wait for one more year in China.”*<sup>62</sup>

## 5.5 Barriers of application

Barriers during the evaluation process are categorised into three groups: financial barriers, cultural barriers, and institutional barriers.

### Financial barriers

In some researches, financial barriers were regarded as one of main barriers. But in this study both *Kina* subjects and interviewees were able to overcome the barrier. A lot of original posters did indeed mention that their families are modest, parents are working class (Gong Xin Jie Ceng) or middle class, and they had limited capital for studying abroad. But their words showed that in general they were able to overcome these financial barriers. Actually, I believe one of the reasons they chose Norway is because they can afford Norway. None of them presented an opinion like *“I am too poor to go to Norway to study”*, but *“my family is not rich .....I hope I can find a part-time job to release my family's burden”* and *“I think it is possible that I can cover my living expenses with a scholarship and a part-time job”*. What's more, although few posts directly presented posters' economic ability, many posts hinted that these posters had enough money to study in Norway.

### Academic barriers

Only five *Kina* posters worried about the academic level of Norwegian higher educational institutions and regarded it as barrier. They were not sure if they had enough ability to gain a degree, because of a doubt in their ability and an unfamiliarity with Norway's educational system.

*“My academic foundation was poor. Even if I am enrolled, I am worried about*

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<sup>62</sup> 如果我当初收到其它录取现在就不会在 UiO 了。我现在在这里是因为当初不得不在国内工作，多等一年。



*whether I can successfully finish the master's degree.”*<sup>63</sup>

*“Norway's undergraduate courses are taught in Norwegian. I doubt if I can understand, even after one year of studying Norwegian.”*<sup>64</sup>

## Cultural barriers

### 1) Age.

As Fong (2011) suggested, young Chinese citizens who had not yet finished their education, established a career, or started a family, are most likely to study abroad. On the website, six posters over the age of 30 presented their anxieties about studying abroad. Four males worried about future employment prospects in Norway and China. They were afraid that if they cannot find a job in Norway; then they would have to go back to China where there exists serious age discrimination in the employment process (Sun, 2004; Zhang & Tang, 2010). Two females over the age of 30 mentioned marriage however.

Female poster: *“I am already 30. I have to either go quickly while still not married, or totally give up the idea of studying abroad and have a stable rest of my life in China.”*<sup>65</sup>

Male poster: *“Please help! Is 32-years old to study abroad too late? .....I don't know if I can get job after graduating.”*<sup>66</sup>

Female interviewees also showed some anxiety about their age, but not the male. Single female TCS admitted they were worried about becoming *Shengn ü* after graduation. They described this anxiety with a similar sentence pattern:

*“I am already.....years old. I will be ..... years old after graduation. At that time, if I can stay in Norway, everything will be fine. If I have to return China, things will be awful.”*<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> 我的学术基础很糟糕，就算被录取了也不一定能毕业。

<sup>64</sup> 挪威的本科课程是挪威语教学的。就算学了一年挪威语我也不一定能听懂。

<sup>65</sup> 我已经三十岁了。要么趁着没结婚赶快出去，要不就彻底放弃出国在国内安稳的生活。

<sup>66</sup> 求助！32岁出国留学太晚了吗？……我不确定毕业后容不容易找到工作。

<sup>67</sup> 我已经……岁了。等我毕业就……岁了。如果那时能留在挪威还好，如果必须回国的话就太可怕了。

*“Chinese society has no place for single women.”*<sup>68</sup>

## 2) *Language.*

No one mentioned English as a big problem. 14 website posts and most of the interviewees worried about their Norwegian. Although they can manage with English in Norway, learning Norwegian is the key factor for all TCS to integrate into the society, find a job, and immigrate. Learning Norwegian is an even a bigger pressure for those TCS who will take a bachelor's program since they have to go back to China if they cannot pass a Norwegian test after one year of study.

*“If I go, I have to study Norwegian from the very beginning. I do not know whether it is a painful process.”*<sup>69</sup>

*“I do not have the talent for language learning, but I know Norwegian is necessary if I want to live in Norway in the future.”*<sup>70</sup>

*“I am afraid the language differences will cause me to be lonely.”*<sup>71</sup>

## Institutional barriers

### 1) *Selection policies of Norway.*

Norway's selection policies are the most frequently mentioned barriers. Norway's policies make all Chinese high school students non-applicable; and people who cannot access a domestic university/college also non-applicable. For senior students who wish to be enrolled in master's programs, there are three possibilities. If senior student's preferential institutions and majors do not accept them, they may give up their preferences to be applicants. Otherwise they may become potential applicants or non-applicants.

*Bachelor's program:* Do not accept high school students. TCS have to finish at least one year of

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<sup>68</sup> 中国社会不能包容单身女性。

<sup>69</sup> 如果去了我必须从头学挪威语。不知道这个过程会不会很难熬。

<sup>70</sup> 我没有语言学习天赋，但我知道如果将来想在挪威生活挪威语是必须的。

<sup>71</sup> 我担心语言差异会导致孤独。

study in a domestic university/college to be qualified applicants.

For example: “Does anyone know if there are any possibilities that a high school graduate can go to Norway to study? I've graduated from high school, but Norwegian universities require a Gaokao score and one year's study at a domestic university. I really don't have these.”<sup>72</sup>

*Master's program:* Most of the institutions do not accept senior students without a diploma. TCS have to apply for master's programs after graduating and wait for at least one more year to start their studies.

For example: “Will the University of Tromsø accept applications from senior students before graduation? I studied geology. I want to apply for a master's program.”<sup>73</sup>

“I think I have no choice but NTNU now.”<sup>74</sup>

## 2) CDGDC verification.

Many posts expressed dissatisfaction with CDGDC including; it is expensive, inconvenient, and time-consuming. CDGDC was believed unfair towards Chinese. They felt it to be discriminatory.

“I am afraid that I do not have enough time to do this.”<sup>75</sup>

“The new requirement, which can be rated as the strictest requirement, did trouble the future Chinese applicants a lot.” (originally in English)

## 5.6 Conclusion

My research subjects are divided into two groups: 239 posters of *Kina* and 40 TCS in Norway. I collected and analysed the former's posts which related to their motivations and barriers to

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<sup>72</sup> 有没有人知道高中毕业有任何可能去挪威留学吗？我已经高中毕业了，但挪威大学要求高考成绩和一年国内大学学习，我真的没有。

<sup>73</sup> UIT 会接受大四在校生的申请吗？我是学地质的，想申请硕士。

<sup>74</sup> 我觉得我只有 NTNU 一个选择了。

<sup>75</sup> 我担心没有足够的时间来做这个。

study in Norway; and interviewed all of the latter. The two groups presented both similarities and differences with each other. I found four stages of posters' and three stages of interviewees' decision making process. There is no sign that interviewees struggled in the selection of bachelor's and master's programs, but the posters did; most of my interviewees are master's students. Both posters and interviewees presented "dissatisfied with domestic employment and lifestyle" as the most important push factor of China. Interviewees also highlighted the importance of the lower academic requirements of the Norwegian institutions. And the free education policy of Norway was generally believed to be the most important pull factor. I did find an obvious difference between genders in their motivation. Female and male participants experience different social pressure in China. And females presented a greater willingness to follow their partner or have a Norwegian partner.

I believe there are three main barriers that TCS face during their application, which are academic, cultural and institutional.

## Chapter 6 Statistical Data Analyses

This chapter is an analysis of quantitative data collected from SRQ—SA and SRQ—A. 80 questionnaires, each one is qualified, and returned by the participants. Detailed data analysis methods are in Appendix D. An analysis of this chapter will be connected to the previous study. To understand the specific attractions of Norway, a cross-country comparative analysis between Norway, Canada, and Belgium will be done. The goal of this chapter is to investigate the psychological motivation of TCS. What's more, I will examine the relationship between the self-determination level of studying in Norway and the self-determination level of academic motivation. According to Chirkov et al. (2007, p. 208), the level of academic motivation is positively related to student's academic performance. Therefore, what I will examine is the relationship between the self-determination level of studying in Norway and TCS's academic performance.

### 6.1 RAI-SA Analyses

#### 6.1.1 Subscale Analysis

This part shows the self-determined level of TCS's motivations. The average RAI is 5.427 (Appendix D). The specific scores for each subscale are given in Table 6.1

**Table 6.1** Mean and standard deviation of each subscale of RAI-SA, N=40

	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Intrinsic</b>	3.663	0.858	1.75	5
<b>Identified</b>	4.019	0.68	2.25	5
<b>Introjected</b>	2.697	0.716	1.429	4.286
<b>External</b>	1.61	0.444	1	2.6

Summary of the four subscales shows that external regulation has the lowest score and centrally distributed, while identified regulation has the highest and intrinsic motivation spread most widely. *External regulation* reflects which students were motivated to study abroad by external pressure: parents'/relatives' expectations or life circumstances. This low score of external regulation indicated that although participants often talk about parents' influence and dissatisfaction with domestic life when discussing motivations, these push factors did not

determine if TCS go abroad to study in Norway or not. Among five external regulation questions, 16 of 40 participants (40%) gave a high score to question NO. 6: I moved to Norway because of limited access to domestic higher education (ten of them gave 4 and the other six gave 5 points). This proved that limited access to domestic education is a strong push factor.

When it comes to the seven questions in the *introjected regulation* part, question NO. 4 (low tuition fee) gained the highest attention. Only six participants gave 1 or 2 points, while the other 85% of participants marked equal or higher than average points and 22 of them gave 5 points to this question. Apparently the free education policy attracts Chinese students very much.

Website analysis, interview, and questionnaire data all indicate free education as one of the strongest pull factors of Norway.

Two self-determined items got high scores. *Identified regulation*, the item with the highest score, represented TCS's motivation to study in Norway based on their personal commitment to study abroad and the importance of their move to them personally. Four participants gave full marks (5 points for each question). On average, 26 participants (65%) have 4 points or higher in this section. Although I did not find obvious evidence during interviews, the scores of *intrinsic regulation* indicated most participants' motivation is based on perceiving the opportunity to study in Norway as an interesting, exciting, inherently satisfying, and challenging experience.

Data of my study shows that *intrinsic regulation* has some connection with the *identified regulation*. Individual correlation shows that the correlation factor is 0.5 and significant at the 0.01 level, while the two non-self-determined motivation subscales do not show any obvious correlations. While research of motivations of Chinese students who studied in Belgium, completed by Chirkov et al. (2007), shows the correlation factor was high (0.62,  $p < 0.01$ ) between the two non-self-determined motivation subscales. One possible reason is that they had a bigger sample size (N=122). However, it still may not be enough to explain the huge difference. A rational reason could be related to the financial thinking of Chinese students in Norway. As mentioned earlier, 85% of participants treated the free education policy in Norway as an attractive factor. This will certainly increase the introjected regulation score (non-self-determined) and broaden the gap to external regulation.

*Gender differences:* Generally speaking, I did not find any obvious gender differences.

Although the hypothesis test shows no significant differences in male and female in either overall index or each subscale, I believed male and female participants have some varieties in

some specific questions due to the results of the interviews. Both male and female participants marked pretty high scores in question NO.1 (avoidance of social pressure). However, their definitions are obviously not equal. As I have discussed in Chapter 5, males mentioned more frequently the poor democratic and economic pressure as well as limited career development opportunities, while females treated the increased expectation to marry more seriously.

### 6.1.2 Cross Country Analysis

Chirkov et al. (2007) published statistic data of RAI-SA of Chinese students in Belgium and Canada. Differences in policies of government and institutions between Norway and these two countries can explain the significant variance of student motivations.

The RAI-SA result of the 40-participant-sample in this study shows a normal distribution tendency. Thus, the assumption that the general population also conform to normal distribution is reasonable. Mean value in a country should not be far from the studies' findings. Although for large samples, Z test is also available, but strictly speaking, t test is more accurate in mathematics. Calculation is not a burden anymore with the assistance of software, therefore a one-sided t test is always applied (Table 6.2).

**Table 6.2** Results of a one sided t test of RAI-SA between Norway and Belgium and Canada

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value	Critical value ( $\alpha=0.05$ )	Hypothesis Test
Norway	5.43	2.73			
Belgium	6.57	2.75	-2.647	-1.685	$H_1 > H_0$
Canada	4.62	2.61	1.87	1.685	$H_1 < H_0$

Chinese students in Belgium show more self-determined (autonomous) motivations. This phenomenon can be explained by a lower financial burden and less application requirements than universities in Norway. Chinese students who obtained a high score in identified regulation and intrinsic motivation may also have high points in the other two subscales, and a drop in the final index.

Take the two biggest universities in Norway and Belgium, University of Oslo and the Catholic University of Louvain for example, a simple contrast for the requirements for degree students shows their differences (Table 6.3).

**Table 6.3** Comparison of language policies and tuition fees of University of Oslo and Catholic University of Louvain

	University of Oslo	Catholic University of Louvain (French)	Catholic University of Louvain (Dutch)
Bachelor's programs taught in English	0	0	4
Master's programs taught in English	51	11	75
English language requirements for non-English speakers	IELTS 5.0- 6.0 or TOFEL iBT 60-80	IELTS 6.5-7.5 or TOFEL iBT 89-100	IELTS 6.5-7.5 or TOFEL iBT 89-100
Local language study fees	0	€389 (whole course)	€70 (per level)
Tuition fees (per year)	0	€ 3,095- € 9,295	€1,400 - €8,000
Living costs (per year)	Approx. € 12,000	€ 9,300	€ 9,300
Registration fee (per semester)	Approx. € 70	€ 837	€610.6
Enrolled for an examination	0	Included in tuition fee	€50
Application fees	0	€150	€150

The table shows that applying for the Catholic University of Louvain is harder than applying for the University of Oslo. Consider that every university mentioned above represents the normal situation in each country, if a Chinese student wants to study in Belgium, he or she must leap over more barriers than in choosing Norway. Thus the RAIs of Chinese students in Belgium are higher than in Norway.

On the other hand, Although Belgium and Canada are charging high tuition fees for international students (approx. €4129 per year on average in Canada, according to Statistics Canada, 2013), Chinese students in Norway are more self-determined than those who went to Canada. This could be explained by two factors. First, Canada is much larger than Norway and it is a much more popular and familiar destination country for Chinese students and their parents. As I presented in Figure 3.1, 10% of TCS went to Canada in 2012. Those students whose sole purpose is an international degree may prefer an average university in a more popular large country, instead of a top university in a small country such as Norway.

The second possible reason is that Canada is a country of immigrants. According to data from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, in Canada in 2012, 32,990 Chinese citizens obtained permanent residency, and China became the largest source of immigrants to Canada. More than 1.3 million Chinese Canadians make Chinese the largest ethnic minority in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). It should not be denied that some Chinese students choose Canada to



study as the first step in their, or their families', immigration plans. This will definitely decrease the self-determined level and makes the index of Chinese students in Norway higher. In Chirkov's research, all 98 participants in Canada were chosen from the Prairie Canadian University, which is not as famous as Norway's public universities. The choice of university may increase the differences.

## 6.2 RAI-A analyses

This analysis is used to examine the academic wellbeing of participants in Norway. By examining this I can test if there is any relationship between the self-determined level of TCS's motivations and their academic performance. Similarly with section 6.1.1, specific scores for each subscale of RAI-A are given in Table 6.4

**Table 6.4** Mean and standard deviation of each subscale of RAI-A, N=40

	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Intrinsic</b>	3.539	0.657	2.143	4.857
<b>Identified</b>	3.861	0.475	2.857	4.714
<b>Introjected</b>	3.075	0.727	1.556	4.667
<b>External</b>	2.308	0.591	1.333	3.667

Compared to RAI-SA, differences in the academic index is not only about the lower final score, but also characterised by a more moderate distribution of each subscale. After the average, neither the lowest 1 point nor the highest 5 point appeared in each subscale of every participant. The cause could be related to the numbers of questions. In SRQ-SA, only five questions separately related to identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. But in SRQ-A, 7 or 9 questions supported one subscale. The increase of questions reduced the chance that participants gave extreme answers in all questions. Generally, participants show an average attitude in their treatment of academic tasks. Like RAI-SA, the academic index did not show any significant differences between male and female.

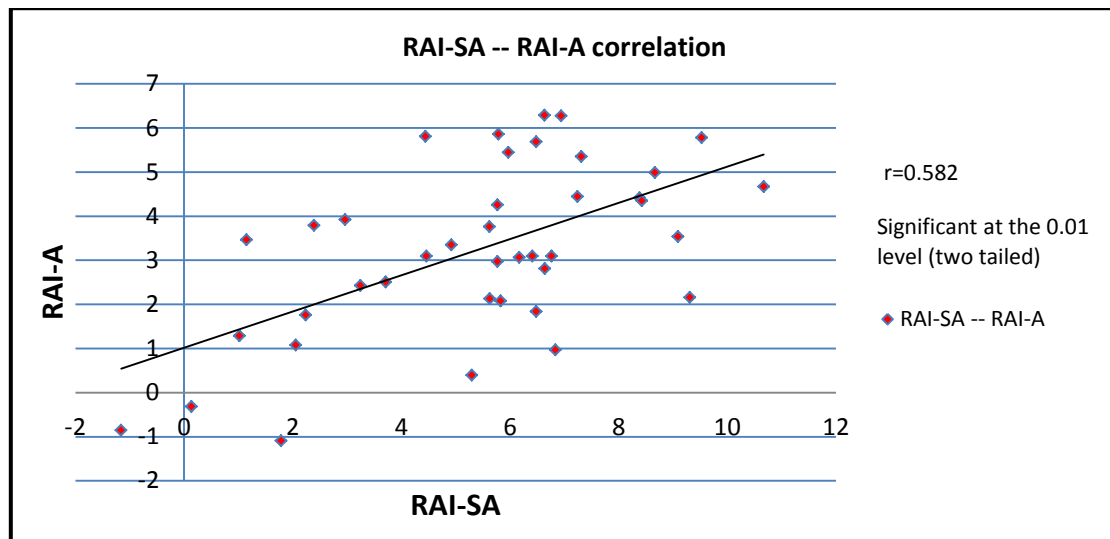
An interesting phenomenon happens between the *natural science students* and *social science and literature students* from China. The former showed an obviously higher level of self-determination. In the answers of section C of SRQ-A 'why do I try to answer the hard questions in class', five natural science students gave 5 points to 'I want the other students to think I'm smart' (*introjected*) and three gave 5 points to 'I enjoy answering hard questions'

(*intrinsic*). Further interviews gained the following answer: they normally tackled ‘hard’ questions related to quick mathematic calculations or other basic physics or chemistry concepts in lectures, and due to intensive training in China, they easily have the answer while other students may still be typing on the calculator. They treat answering as a ‘show time’ and expect a reward, such as making a good impression on the professors and classmates.

Students in social science and literature majors gave high scores to ‘find out if I’m right or wrong’ (*identified*), ‘feel ashamed when I don’t try’ (*introjected*) and ‘I’m supposed to’ (*external*). Interviews show some Chinese students felt it difficult to express their opinions clearly during class discussion. Although all of them passed English level tests (TOEFL or IELTS) before their application processes, spoken English is still a barrier preventing them from showing their points of view, thus some of them treat answering hard questions as a way to practice English. Besides English levels, a lack of presentation skills is also reported by some participants. Their eagerness to practice could be the source of ‘ashamed’ and ‘supposed to do’. Research from Chirkov et al. (2007) also included the academic index in Belgium and Canada. The average RAI-A of Chinese students in Belgium is 4.91 and standard deviation is 2.35, while the average index in Canada is 3.3 and standard deviation is 2.84. However, these numbers may not be comparable, have enough comparability with the results from Norway, and not indicate any reliable statistical conclusion such as students in Norway lack self-determined motivations; because their SRQ-A consists of 13 items while the original SRQ-A, which is used in this study, made by Ryan and Connell, has 32 questions. As discussed earlier in this section, fewer questions will increase the probabilities for participants to give extreme scores and increase the standard deviation.

### **6.3 Correlations between RAI-SA and RAI-A**

Analyses show there are some levels of relationships between the study abroad motivations and academic motivations. Roughly speaking, they have a weak positive correlation; students with higher self-determined motivations to study abroad perform higher in self-determined motivations at an academic level (Figure 6.1).



**Figure 6.1** Correlation coefficient and trend line graph of RAI-SA and RAI-A.

For each component of two RAIs, weak positive or negative correlations appeared (Table 6.5). Intrinsic motivation to study abroad has the highest correlation to two autonomous academic motivations, while the external regulation to study abroad affected the autonomous academic motivations with negative correlations. The other factors, however, have very low coefficients with the academic index and can be treated as no correlation relationships.

It is easy to understand that students with a high intrinsic motivation to go abroad show higher self-determined academic motivation and the external regulation has the negative correlation. However, an external regulation motivation to study abroad does not increase the probabilities for non-self-determined academic motivation. The other negative value component of RAI-SA, the introjected regulation, does not have any distinctive relationships with any academic motivation. The conclusion can be briefly described as, for Chinese students in Norway, non-self-determined motivations to study abroad will not increase the level of negative academic autonomy index components, but self-determined motivations to study abroad have a positive contribution to the positive academic autonomy index.

**Table 6.5** Correlations between each component of RAI-SA and RAI-A. High significant correlations are marked by bold letters (Inm=Intrinsic motivation, Id=Identified regulation, Inr=Introjected regulation, E= External regulation).

Correlations					
		Inm_A	Id_A	Inr_A	E_A
Inm_SA	Pearson Correlation	<b>0.538**</b>	<b>0.423**</b>	-0.196	0.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>0.0002</b>	<b>0.006</b>	0.225	0.811
	N	40	40	40	40
Id_SA	Pearson Correlation	0.313*	0.263	-0.088	0.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.049	0.101	0.590	0.422
	N	40	40	40	40
Inr_SA	Pearson Correlation	-0.088	0.0002	0.162	0.202
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.589	0.999	0.319	0.212
	N	40	40	40	40
E_SA	Pearson Correlation	<b>-0.466**</b>	<b>-0.421**</b>	0.052	-0.058
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>0.002</b>	<b>0.007</b>	0.748	0.724
	N	40	40	40	40
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

## 6.4 Conclusion

TCS in Norway generally believed free tuition is the key factor that makes Norway attractive. Norway's relatively low application requirements are also important. These both belong to non-self-determined motivations. Students with high autonomous motivations also gave high points to them and that decreased their final RAI scores. By comparing this result to the previous study of Chinese students in Belgium and Canada given by Chirkov et al. in 2007, Chinese students in Norway show a lower RAI than those in Belgium, but higher than those in Canada. These differences are significant in statistics and could be explained by the tuition fee and immigration policy.

There are some connections between the levels of self-determination of TCS's motivations to study in Norway and their performance in institutions after they have arrived in Norway. A weak positive correlation factor (0.582) has been confirmed between RAI-SA and RAI-A. Generally speaking, the more self-determination students show to study in Norway, the better they do in institutions. By correlating four subscales for each RAI, more detailed analyses came out. Data show that self-determinate factors to study abroad have positive effects on academic

performance. However, non-self-determinate factors to study abroad will only decrease the level of positive academic performance. This study did not show any significant relationship between external and introjected regulation of motivation to study abroad for Chinese students and the probabilities of negative academic performance.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

This study discussed the motivations which lead Chinese citizens to study in Norway. It examined their decision making process and answered how and why Chinese students decide to study in Norway. Two groups of subjects were picked to answer my question: 239 posters on *Kina* and 40 TCS who had studied in Norway. Both groups had advantages and disadvantages. The former was a large number and contained both bachelor's and master's applicants, but they talked less about why they wanted to leave China, and they cannot give me further feedback. The latter could talk with me face to face so that I was able to answer deeper questions and observe them. But most of them are master's students and the number is limited. By combining the survey results from both groups I discover the overall decision making process of Chinese students. There are four distinct stages from the beginning where they are interested in studying abroad, to the end when they make a final decision: 1) decide to leave China, 2) selection of Norway, 3) selection of bachelor's or master's program, 4) selection of institution.

In stage one, the student decides to leave China and study abroad. As many researches have suggested (e.g. Fong, 2011), my study indicated filial devotion was often involved in TCS's considerations. Chinese parents often held a supportive attitude to studying abroad. Some parents ardently hoped that their children could be part of the developed world through overseas study. TCS generally took parents' opinions seriously. Some of them treated studying abroad as an obligation to make their parents happy. My study also proved how the development of China, and the increasing financial ability of Chinese families, enhanced Chinese citizens' ability to study abroad. In addition there is a trend to study abroad in Chinese society. This trend sometimes shaped the thoughts of TCS to study abroad. Sometimes TCS decided to leave China simply because there was an easy opportunity, for example the availability of a place in an overseas study program of a domestic university. But most of the time, TCS were pushed by various dissatisfactions with domestic life, for example China's backwardness, employment opportunities, limited access to higher education, and marriage pressure. They believed they could resolve all their problems abroad. I found an obvious gender difference. Male TCS often perceived more economic and employment pressure, while female TCS experienced serious marriage pressure.

In stage two, the 'pull' factors of Norway made Norway more attractive than other countries. It seems that TCS usually gained their knowledge and awareness of Norway by causal events. Then they started to search for related information: the Internet shows a positive image of

Norway and Norway's educational system. Most people indicated they were attracted by the free education, the pristine nature and positive social environment. The former is one of the key pull factors of Norway, almost everyone valued it. Low academic requirements and part-time working opportunities also made Norway preferable. Besides, I found students of oil and marine related majors have a special preference for Norway, since Norway has highly developed petroleum and marine industries. The survey showed that Norway's strict immigration policy is not a strong pull factor. However, participants often expressed a willingness to immigrate to Norway. I also found gender differences, where females were more prone to immigrate to be with their partners and also showed more willingness to find a Norwegian partner.

In stage three, TCS have to choose between a bachelor's and master's program. Chinese people believed that a bachelor's program was of more benefit for future employment. They can study and practice Norwegian since the programs are in Norwegian. Besides, a bachelor's program allows students to get access to majors which they believed will make it easier to find a job. At the same time, an English teaching master's program was regarded as time-saving and has a higher degree at the end.

The selection of institution occurred in the final stage. People often valued an institutions reputation, both internationally and locally. Most of my participants are students of UiO. They told me that they considered world ranking important during their choice of institution. An institution's location is also important in two aspects: cost issues and employment prospects. Some applicants, with little confidence in themselves, may choose a non-popular institution due to less competition. Sometimes applicants chose an institution only because they had no choice. Some specific programs were only provided in specific institutions. Senior students who wanted to apply for master's programs had a limited choice, because only a few Norwegian institutions accept applications from senior students.

I also found barriers towards TCS's applications. All the subjects in this study were able to overcome the economic barrier. A few people presented their anxiety about the high academic levels of Norwegian higher education, which I indicate as an academic barrier. Cultural barriers, which include age and language, were more common. Both male and female TCS worried about their age. But males often worried about future employment in Norway and in China, while females worried about becoming *Shengnū* after graduation. Language is also a common worry since Norway is not an Anglophone country. Institutional barriers troubled TCS the

most during the application process. Norway's recruitment policies prevent all Chinese high school students from applying for bachelor's programs, and prevent senior students applying for most master's programs. Besides, the requirement of CDGDC verification, which is only for Chinese, was believed time-consuming, expensive, and inconvenient. TCS felt discriminated against.

Multiple quantitative statistics analyses based on SDT have been applied in Chapter 6. Results were given in mathematical tables and sociological explanation. Two columns of RAIs include study abroad and academic motivation, and their individual components were analysed.

For motivations to study abroad, a free education policy and the low admission requirements of institutions are attractive to Chinese students. These two factors belong to non-self-determined motivations, all students (even with a high level of self-determined motivations) also gave high points to them, and that decreased their final RAI scores. By comparing the results to a previous study of Chinese students in Belgium and Canada by Chirkov et al. in 2007, Chinese students in Norway show a lower RAI than those in Belgium, but higher than those in Canada. These differences are significant in statistics and could be explained by the tuition fee and immigration policy.

With regards to the academic motivations traditionally used to evaluate students' performances in institutions, participants in this study show neither too strong nor too weak academic self-determined motivations. Scores in this investigation are not comparable with Chirkov's results because the questionnaires are different. Students in natural science and social science show some variations in some questions. Further researches are needed to find out if these differences are universal among Chinese students and the interior reasons behind them.

There are some connections between the motivations to study abroad of Chinese students and their performance in the institutions after they have arrived in Norway. A weak positive correlation factor (0.582) has been confirmed between RAI-SA and RAI-A. Generally speaking, the more self-determination that students show to study in Norway, the better they do in institutions. By correlating four subscales for each RAI, more detailed analyses came out. Data shows that self-determinate factors to study abroad have positive effects on academic performance. However, non-self-determinate factors to study abroad only decrease the level of positive academic performance. This study did not show any significant relationship between external and introjected regulation of motivation to study abroad of Chinese students, and the probabilities of negative academic performances.



As for gender, although the hypothesis tests shows no significant differences in male and female in either overall index or each subscale, I believe male and female participants have some variances, based on the results of some questions in Chapter 5.

In conclusion, as the answer to my research questions, Norway's free education policy was the most attractive factor for TCS. Most of my participants came from middle-class families. I believe that middle-class students influenced by causal events or on discovering an easy opportunity to go to Norway; are prone to choose Norway as a destination. While in most aspects there is no difference between men and women in motivations, gender differences appeared in several specific places. I also believe that more self-determined motivations lead to a better academic performance.

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## Appendix A

Part of information of 40 interviewees

The right side item ‘type’ has three options: “mobile students graduated abroad”, “mobile students graduated domestically”, and both. “free-mover” and “exchange students”, which borrowed from Jannecke (2008), is used for simplification. Since a student could be an exchange student first and then become a free-mover, thus there is a ‘both’. Degree level only matters with host country’s institutions. It has also three options: ‘Master’s’, ‘Bachelor’s’, and ‘Both’ (only if a student have got a bachelor’s degree in Norway and is getting/have got a master’s degree in Norway).

Student	Age	Gender	University	Program	Degree level	Type
1	29	Male	UIO	Chemistry	Master	Free-mover
2	24	Female	UIO	Economics	Master	Exchange Student
3	29	Female	NTNU, UIO, BI	Education, marketing	Master	Both
4	25	Female	UIO	Chinese politics and society	Master	Free-mover
5	23	Male	NTNU	Marine technology	Master	Free-mover
6	25	Female	UIO	Ibsen studies	Master	Free-mover
7	25	Male	UIO	Geosciences	Master	Free-mover
8	18	Female	UIO	Computer Science	Bachelor	Exchange Student
9	25	Male	UIO	Chinese civilization	Master	Free-mover
10	24	Female	HIN	Integrated Building Technology	Master	Free-mover
11	26	Female	UIO	Education	Master	Free-mover
12	26	Male	UIO	Computer Science	Master	Exchange Student
13	34	Female	UIO	Health economics	Master	Free-mover
14	20	Male	BI	Business Administration	Bachelor	Free-mover
15	24	Female	UIO	Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Master	Exchange Student
16	27	Female	UIO	Education, Chinese politics	Master	Free-mover
17	22	Female	UIS, HIT	English, Gas and energy technology	Bachelor	Free-mover
18	33	Male	UIO	Energy material and nanotechnology	Master	Free-mover
19	25	Female	UIO	Mathematics	Master	Free-mover
20	28	Male	UIO	Petrol geology	Master	Free-mover
21	21	Male	BI	Marketing	Bachelor	Exchange Student
22	28	Male	UIS	Computer Science	Master	Exchange Student
23	29	Female	UIO	Material Science	Master	Free-mover
24	22	Female	UIO	Economics	Bachelor	Exchange Student
25	31	Male	UIS	Offshore Technology	Master	Free-mover
26	25	Male	UIO	Petrol geology	Master	Free-mover
27	25	Male	NTNU	RAMS	Master	Free-mover
28	25	Female	UIS	Offshore Technology	Master	Free-mover
29	27	Male	NTNU	Marine technology	Master	Free-mover
30	22	Male	UIO	Law	Master	Free-mover
31	23	Male	UIO	Petrol geology	Master	Free-mover
32	27	Female	UIO	Media Study	Master	Free-mover
33	35	Female	UIO	Comparative education	Master	Free-mover
34	24	Female	UIS	International Hotle and Tourism	Master	Free-mover
35	23	Female	BI	Business	Both	Both
36	24	Female	UIO	Comparative education	Master	Free-mover
37	29	Male	UIS	Petrol geoscience	Master	Free-mover
38	26	Male	NTNU	Globalization	Master	Free-mover
39	23	Male	UIO	Chemistry	Master	Free-mover
40	25	Male	UIO	Material Science	Master	Free-mover

Figure a.1 Information of 40 interviewees

## Appendix B

### Open-ended questionnaires

Name:

Age:

Degree:

Major:

University/College:

1. When did you first think of studying abroad? Why?
2. Why did you finally decide to study abroad?
3. Have you ever been abroad before? If yes, which places?
4. Which people or events influenced your decision in studying abroad?
5. What's your friends' and relatives' attitude towards your studying abroad? How about your parents?
6. Could you please describe your family background?
7. How did you know about Norway?
8. Why did you choose Norway/ this program/ this institution?
9. What barriers did you face during application?
10. Do you have scholarship? If yes, which kind?
11. Do you have an intention to find a job after graduation? How about immigration?

## Appendix C

### Self-Regulation Questionnaire—Study Abroad (SRQ—SA)

There might have been different reasons why you were motivated to move to Norway to study. Please indicate to what extent each of the following reasons to move to Norway applied to you.

Use the following scale:

Not at all because of this reason 1	Somewhat because of this reason 3	Completely because of this reason 5
2	4	

1. I moved to Norway because social pressure was pushing me to do so.
2. I moved to Norway because other people (parents, relatives and friends, etc.) expected me to do this.
3. I moved to Norway because I could be awarded a scholarship.
4. I moved to Norway because the tuition fee is low.
5. I moved to Norway because I had a positive attitude towards Norway and its institutions.
6. I moved to Norway because of limited access to higher education in China.
7. I moved to Norway because others (parents, friends, etc.) were pushing me to do this.
8. I moved to Norway because I thought it would be fun and interesting.
9. I moved to Norway because I wanted to avoid the shame of being "unsuccessful".
10. I moved to Norway because I expected to get into the developed world and live a better life.
11. I moved to Norway because I like the environment of Norway.
12. I moved to Norway because it was an opportunity that I highly valued.
13. I moved to Norway because I thought I would enjoy it.
14. I moved to Norway because I would have gotten into trouble if I did not.
15. I moved to Norway because this is what I really want to do with my life
16. I moved to Norway because I thought I would enjoy it.
17. I moved to Norway because I was highly interested in doing so.
18. I moved to Norway because I could be rewarded with a permanent residence, develop a world level salary, and a respectable life after graduation.
19. I moved to Norway because there was an available program.
20. I moved to Norway because I was keen to be with my spouse.

External regulation: items 1, 6, 7, 14, 20

Introjected regulation: items 2, 9, 10, 18, 3, 4, 19

Identified regulation: items 5, 11, 12, 15

Intrinsic motivation: items 8, 13, 16, 17

Relative Autonomy Index (RAI)

$$= 2 * \text{Intrinsic} + \text{Identified} - \text{Introjected} - 2 * \text{External}$$

## Appendix D

The main source of the following statistic concepts and equations are from the textbook *All of Statistics* written by Wasserman (2004).

### Mean

Arithmetic mean is defined as the sum of a collection of numbers divided by the number of numbers in the collection, or can be written as:

$$\mu = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^n X_i$$

Another symbol  $\bar{X}$  is usually used to denote a sample mean and shares the same formula.

There are some other kinds of means such as geometric mean and harmonic mean. However the arithmetic mean is the most commonly used for central tendency and always used for further calculation, thus the word 'mean' is commonly used to represent arithmetic mean if no particular note.

Arithmetic mean is easy to calculate, but has some limitations to describe properties of data. For example, mean is sensitive to extreme values and easy to bias the central position. Moreover, mean cannot be used to infer how much the collection of numbers deviate from each other. To give a more detail description of numbers, variance and standard deviation should be applied.

### Variance and Standard Deviation

For each member of the array, deviation refers to the distance that it departs from the average. However, it is easy to verify that if we simply sum all deviations up, the result is 0. Therefore, sum of square is a solution, to ensure it is always positive. The sum of the square of deviations of numbers divided by the number of numbers in the collection is called Variance. The formula is:

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu)^2$$

Similarly, another symbol  $S^2$  is usually used to denote a sample mean and share the same formula.

Standard deviation (SD) is the square root of variance.

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu)^2}$$

The direct meaning of variance and standard deviation is how far a group of numbers is spread out. Like arithmetic mean, variance and standard deviation are often used in statistics calculations and analyses. Table c.1 is the summary of RAI results include mean and standard deviation

**Table c.1** Summary of RAI Results

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
RAI-SA	40	5.427	2.73	-1.157	10.671
RAI-A	40	3.248	1.924	-1.095	6.285

### Normal Distribution and t-distribution

Normal distribution is a function which gives possibilities that an observed number will fall in to a specific interval. Generally speaking, most of social and psychological behaviours obey, or nearly obey the normal distribution and show the ‘bell shape’ figures. Normal distribution is also very useful to process the hypothesis tests.

The function of normal distribution is written as:

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

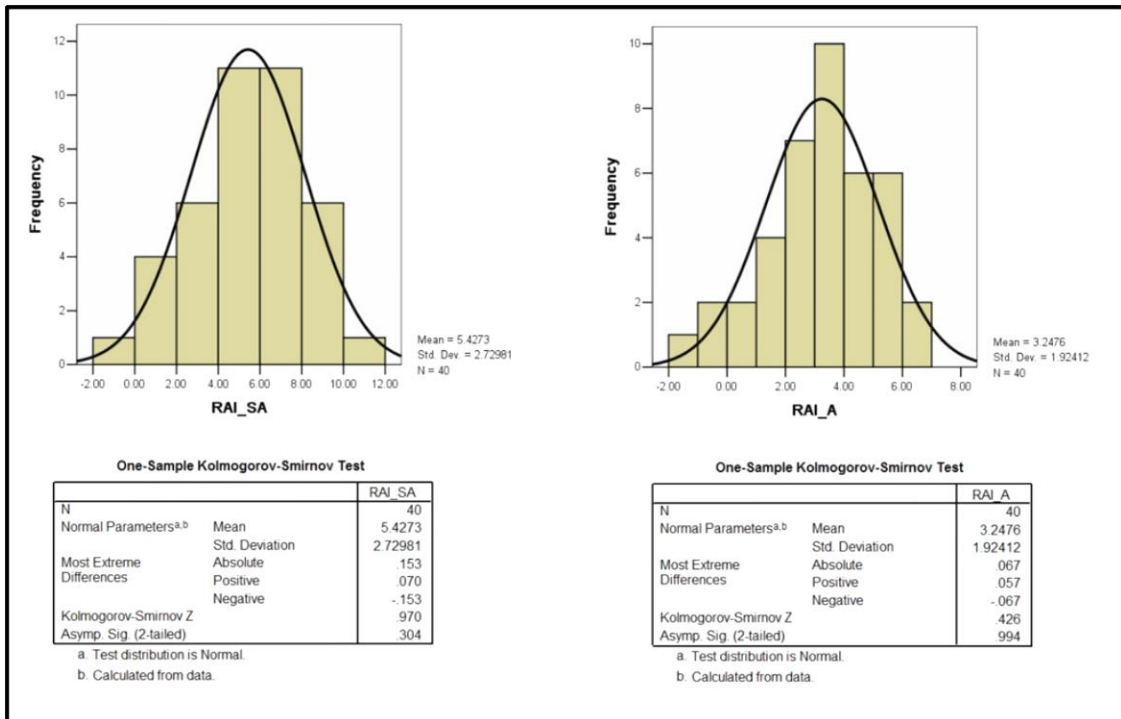
If  $\mu=0$  and  $\sigma=1$ , the distribution is called the standard normal distribution. Every normal distribution function can be converted into the standard form only if using the parameter Z, where  $Z = \frac{x-\mu}{\sigma}$ . The converted function is

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}z^2}$$

Z is called the standard score. Besides converting all normal distribution functions into the standard form, it is important in the hypothesis tests.

Before processing data, estimation of data distribution pattern should be made. Limited by time and manpower, the number of participant is small. Histograms show that both RAI-SA and RAI-A show bell shapes. Further Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed that both indexes obey normal distribution (Following figure). This allows the following *hypothesis tests* and

correlation calculations.



**Figure c.1** Histograms and K-S test of RAI-SA and RAI-A.  $p=0.304$  and  $0.994$ , larger than  $0.05$ , thus it is acceptable to treat the data as normal distribution.

In the real studies, samples are never infinite, thus errors of standard deviation between the sample and the entire population (standard error, SE) always exist. Mathematicians have already proved that *t-distribution* is able to describe and estimate sample data more accuracy than normal distribution.

The probability density function of t-distribution is complicated, but the parameter t is easy to calculate, given by the equation below:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{\frac{S}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

Statistic t obeys t-distribution with the degrees of freedom  $df = n - 1$ .

### Hypothesis Tests

After the researcher obtained samples and results, judgments must be made to explain the differences. Hypothesis tests are the methods that can verify or reject the researcher's opinion.

Logically, hypotheses should be mutually exclusive events. The test results will lead the



researcher to choose only one hypothesis and reject the others. Normally, two opposite hypothesis, known as 'null hypothesis' ( $H_0$ ) and 'alternative hypothesis' ( $H_1$ ) are given, then according to test results, one is chosen and the other one should be given up.

Two concepts are important in hypothesis tests: significance level and rejection region. Significance level is the top limit of small probability set by researcher, denoted by letter  $\alpha$ . Rejection region ( $R$ ) is defined by the significance level and  $H_0$  probability distribution model. The top limit of rejection region is called critical value. Let  $X$  be the variable, if  $X \in R$ , we reject  $H_0$  and accept  $H_1$ , vice versa.