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ACADEMIC RELATED FACTORS OF GRADUATE SCHOOL FOREIGN CHINESE STUDENTS IN PHILIPPINE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: This study described academic-related factors in terms of individual-related factors, family-related factors, study habits, and school-related factors, the challenges and the coping strategies used by the 50 foreign Chinese students who were studying in the Philippines for their master's and doctorate degrees.

The findings revealed that most of the Foreign respondents had a positive view regarding the importance of aspiration in their studies. Regarding their outlook on their academic life, data collected revealed that foreign students regarded studying in a more positive and appreciative view. Moreover, data revealed that parents are motivated to persuade their children to undertake and continue their studies with excellence. However, most of the Foreign students agreed that they encountered challenges and issues in their lives in terms of their livelihood, personal life, and barriers in studying since they lived in a foreign country to study.

In terms of time management, some of the foreign students were able to properly manage their time in the different activities in school, but some also had a hard time organizing their activities. Moreover, they agreed that their classroom had a sufficient and organized, and friendly atmosphere that might have contributed to their good achievement in class. The data also revealed that some of the students agreed that they were sufficiently prepared to take a test in school since they have a process and sufficient review materials to use before the test. Furthermore, it was revealed that they have moderate skills in notetaking, basic skills related to subject areas, and most of the students felt that they belonged to the school community.

In addition, all participants revealed that they had trouble balancing work in their home country and studies abroad. Furthermore, they were pressured to write reports, presentations, assignments, and research. Foreign students use a variety of strategies to cope with the challenges of studying in a foreign country. Most of the students revealed that they call/chat with family/friends when they feel homesick, and they get together with other international students. Through this, it is recommended that more research activities may be encouraged to determine the different factors that may positively and negatively affect the academic success of foreign students.

Keywords: *challenges, foreign students*

I. INTRODUCTION

Considering the current trend towards internationalization and globalization, one can observe the continuation of cross-border student mobility across the globe. Foreign student inflows worldwide have increased dramatically. From 2015 to 2019, there have been a five percent (5%) rise in the worldwide number of foreign students (Open Doors Report, 2019). The largest group of foreign students usually come from Asia, including those coming from China, India, South Korea, and Taiwan. Furthermore, the latest evidence from Open Doors Studies in 2019 indicates that enrollment of foreign students continues to grow. International students attend tens of thousands of universities and colleges worldwide. They contribute to the diversity of their schools, universities, and neighborhoods, and to internationalization of these institutions. These students, for instance, bring a range of views into the classroom, enhancing shared understanding and awareness of global differences. As such, along with their achievements that have greatly impacted the school population in various ways, it is important to welcome international students to different universities. Their impact is most visible in the areas of popularity in academia, cultural diversity, and financial profits.

International students are especially vital to any higher education for both educational reputation in the international educational arena and financial gains of their respective institutions. Students also discovered that if they attend a university with large numbers of international students, they will also enjoy certain benefits. International students, for instance, improve the international ranking of the universities and colleges they attend because they are academically well-endowed. In their native countries, many foreign students excel academically, but they still must fulfill certain educational and language requirements. These students contribute to delivering new and differing ways of thinking on the table and help facilitate intellectual competitiveness. Secondly, on university campuses, foreign students represent an increasingly meaningful and crucial source of diversity. Bringing with their home cultures and racial backgrounds, they add to the multicultural diversity in universities. Foreign students also help faculty and students improve cultural awareness and expertise in dealing with people from diverse backgrounds. For teachers, students, and the community, foreign students could provide an opportunity to explore various languages, ideologies, and customs.

However, there are a lot of factors which affect foreign students' educational outcomes. One of these is the home environment and family-related influences. The influence of the home atmosphere or family structure on a student's academic performance is well-studied. According to Ajila and Olutola (2018), the nature of one's home environment has a huge effect on the individual because family is the first source of social support in one's life. They motivate them to succeed in academically. This is because a student's family history and meaning influence how he reacts to life circumstances and how well he performs. Moreover, individual factors such as identity, aspiration, and outlook in studies are most likely very influential affective psychological characteristics. These encourage a positive disposition, a feeling of being captivated, engrossed, reenergized, and excited to intellectually communicate ideas much faster and more efficiently (Kpolovie, 2012). Researchers also discovered that belonging to a school has an important and positive impact on many motivational factors, including the expectation of achievement, schoolwork value, and self-reported commitment in educational environments (Goodenow, 2013).

Furthermore, foreign students have a hard time adapting to their new surroundings and lifestyles. Shih and Brown (2020) observed that foreign students face more difficulties with adjustment than studying in their home country. Students identified the top five adaptation issues which are lack of English proficiency, insufficient financial capital, social adaptation or integration issues, everyday life problems, and isolation or homesickness (Brown and Shih, 2020).

In terms of academic growth, the Philippines is a popular source of knowledge and skills. Several students from various nations have expressed interest in pursuing higher education in the Philippines because its universities and other educational institutions offer excellent quality of higher education. However, numerous international students had dropped out of school or switched universities throughout their education because they could not satisfy the university's academic requirements. They failed several courses at one institution yet succeed at a different university upon transferring. Some international students are often forced to return home without a diploma. For international students who are representing their countries, their academic successes and failures are extremely important. Success entails better jobs, bigger salaries, and a higher level of respect. Individuals who already have succeeded have more ability and skills, and expertise than those who have failed. The disadvantaged students are frequently viewed as inadequate individuals who cannot meet the demands of their institutions and countries.

As a foreign student in the Philippines, the researcher was motivated to undertake this study to fully understand the viewpoints of other foreign students and, eventually, to support them in addressing the issues they experience while studying in a foreign nation. The focus of this research was to look at the academic achievement and issues faced by Chinese students at higher education institutions in the Philippines and investigate how they were able to overcome these issues and challenges.

II. METHODS

A descriptive research design was utilized in this study, it aims to describe a population, situation or phenomenon accurately, and systematically. It can answer what, where, when and how questions, but not why questions. A descriptive research design can use a wide variety of research methods to investigate one or more variables (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2013).

The study was conducted in Guilin Medical University where many foreign Chinese students are studying in Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Region 3 and nationwide.

The study was carried out with the participation of 50 foreign Chinese students in their second semester or more who were studying in the Philippines for their master's and Doctorate Degree, they were selected using purposive sampling.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Academic Related Factors of Graduate School Foreign Chinese Students

1.1. Individual Related Factors

1.1.1. Aspiration in Studies

Table 1 presents the indicators, weighted mean, and findings regarding the aspiration in studies among Foreign students.

Table 1a
Aspiration in Studies among Foreign Students

Aspiration in Studies	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
I like to excel in my studies so I could achieve something in my career and get promoted	4.96	Strongly Agree
I want to finish my degree to improve my standing in my competitive field and a challenging job market	4.96	Strongly Agree
I like to improve my English and writing skills so that I can speak and write well in my reports and presentations in my studies	4.94	Strongly Agree
I want to do my best in whatever I do in my studies for personal development.	4.92	Strongly Agree
I wish to succeed in my studies for me to earn more money	4.90	Strongly Agree
I would like to come up with a good dissertation/research for my degree so that it can be used in our school/ University	4.78	Strongly Agree
I like to excel in my studies to have a mastery in my field and share my success with other people.	4.60	Strongly Agree
I would like to have high grades so that our school/University were proud of me.	4.42	Strongly Agree
I would like to finish my degree to gain recognition and credibility and to be a well-known authority in my field.	4.40	Strongly Agree
I wish to excel over my classmate in all subjects to gain respect and credibility.	4.34	Strongly Agree
GRAND MEAN	4.72	Strongly Agree

Gleaning from the table that all statements had an adjective description of “strongly agree”. Table 1 shows that among the foreign students’ Aspiration in Studies, both the statements that they like to excel in my studies to achieve something in their career and get promoted and to finish the degree to improve their standing in their competitive field and a challenging job market got the highest mean of 4.96. On the other hand, the aspiration to excel over their classmate to gain respect and credibility got the lowest mean of 4.34 with a verbal description of “Strongly Agree” .

To elaborate further, the foreign students also revealed that they would like to have high grades so that their school/university will be proud of them this got a mean of 4.42. They also like to come up with a good dissertation/research to be used in their school/ University (4.78). Moreover, they like to improve their English and writing skills so that they can speak and write well in my reports and presentations (4.94). They wish to succeed in their studies to earn more money (4.90). Moreover, they aspire to have a mastery in their field and share my success with other people (4.60); for personal development (4.92); and to gain recognition and credibility and to be a well-known authority in my field (4.40).

Overall, the extent of the aspiration in studies as perceived by the foreign students gained a 4.72 grand mean with the verbal interpretation “Strongly Agree” . The data revealed that majority of the foreign respondents had a positive point of view regarding the importance of aspiration in studies. Given that the foreign students in this study have their own academic aspirations, therefore there is a higher probability for them to have a higher learning performance.

1.1.2.Outlook in studies

Table 2 presents the indicators, weighted mean, and findings regarding the outlook in studies among Foreign students.

Table 2
Outlook in Studies among the Foreign Students

Outlook in Studies	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
I enjoy studying because it nurtures my skills to think logically and reason out appropriately.	4.40	Strongly Agree
I enjoy seeing my progress on my studies, reports and dissertation/research.	4.40	Strongly Agree
Studying challenges, me and I want it better than doing other things.	4.36	Strongly Agree
I place much importance in studying.	4.30	Strongly Agree
I never get tired studying with topics connected to my field.	4.18	Moderately Agree
I think studying is enjoyable and I always like to do it.	4.10	Moderately Agree
I enjoy the challenge experienced and presented by studying.	4.06	Moderately Agree
I would like to create and have more time in school and in studying.	4.06	Moderately Agree
GRAND MEAN	4.23	Strongly Agree

Table 2 shows that among the research participants Outlook in Studies, the statements that they enjoy studying because it nurtures their skills to think logically and reason out appropriately and they enjoy seeing their progress on their studies, reports and dissertation/research got the highest mean of 4.40 verbal description of “Strongly Agree”. On the other hand, the outlook which is to enjoy the challenge experienced and presented by studying and to create and have more time in school and in studying got the lowest mean of 4.06 with a verbal description of “Moderately Agree”.

To elaborate further, the outlook that they place much importance in studying got a mean of 4.30 and studying challenges them got a mean 4.36, both with a verbal description of “Strongly Agree”. Moreover, the statement that they never get tired studying with topics connected to my field got a mean of 4.18 while the outlook that they think studying is enjoyable and they always like to do it got a mean of 4.10 both with a verbal description of “Moderately Agree”.

Overall, the extent of the outlook in studies as perceived by the foreign students gained a 4.23 grand mean with the verbal interpretation “Strongly Agree”. The data revealed that foreign students regarded studying in a more positive and appreciative view.

Evidently, the foreign Chinese students outlook on their studies is more of having a positive attitude wherein they see that their studies in the Philippines nurtures their skills to think logically and reason out appropriately. Similarly, they also notice and that of their colleagues that they progress on their studies especially in doing their reports and dissertation/research which are vital requirements in studying to Philippine university/ college. That is why this outlook in their studies motivated them more to study well and finish the degree.

1.2. Family related factors

1.2.1. Parent Encouragement

Table 3 presents the indicators, weighted mean, and findings regarding the parent encouragement among Foreign students.

Table 3
Parent Encouragement among the Foreign Students

Parent Encouragement	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
My family members try to help me with my studies.	3.68	Moderately Agree
My family members show considerable interest and support in anything I do with my studies.	4.34	Strongly Agree
My family members really encourage me to study and told me not to give up until I earned my degree.	4.34	Strongly Agree
My family members encourage me to devote more time to my studies so that I will excel.	4.24	Strongly Agree
My family members have stressed the value of studying and earning a professional degree.	4.22	Strongly Agree
My family members urge me to seek help from my professor if I am having problems with my studies.	4.06	Moderately Agree
GRAND MEAN	4.15	Moderately Agree

Table 3 shows that among the enlisted Parent Encouragement among the Foreign Students, the statements that their family members encourage them to study and not to give up until they earn the degree, and their family members show considerable interest and support in anything they do with their studies got the highest mean of 4.34 with a verbal description of “Strongly Agree”. On the other hand, the statement that their family members try to help them with their studies got the lowest mean of 3.68 with a verbal description of “Moderately Agree”.

To elaborate further, the statement that their family members have stressed the value of studying and earning a professional degree got a mean of 4.22 and their family members encourage the, to devote more time to their studies got a mean of 4.24 both with a verbal description “Strongly Agree”. Lastly, the statement that their family members urge the, to seek help from their professor got a mean of 4.06 with a verbal description of “Moderately Agree”.

Overall, the extent of the parent encouragement as perceived by the foreign students gained a 4.15 grand mean with the verbal interpretation “Moderately Agree”. The data revealed that parents are motivated to persuade their children to do and continue their children’ studies with excellence.

1.2.2 Family Issues and Barriers

Table 4 presents the indicators, weighted mean and findings regarding the family issues and barriers among Foreign students.

Table 4
Family Issues and Barriers among the Foreign students

Family Issues and Barriers	Weighted Mean	Adjective Description
My family is concerned about my safety in going to the University because of health and safety reasons.	4.36	Strongly Agree
My family does not want me to study abroad because of the distance and of the pandemic.	4.36	Strongly Agree
There is insufficient financial support from my family to continue my studies.	4.28	Strongly Agree
My family does not support my academic endeavors	3.00	Undecided
GRAND MEAN	4.00	Moderately Agree

Table 4 shows that among the enlisted Family Issues and Barriers among the Foreign Students, the statements that the family is concerned about their safety in going to the University because of health and safety reasons and their family does not want them to study abroad because of the distance and of the pandemic got the highest mean of 4.36 with a verbal description of “Strongly Agree”. It can be noted that Foreign students have the concern about getting to the school safely. It is very evident that schools near Foreign communities is not that conducive since their country are maybe too far for them to reach or they need to pass by different circumstances in their way.

To elaborate further, the statement that their family does not support their academic endeavors got a mean of 3.00 with a verbal description of “Undecided” while the challenge on insufficient financial support from family gained a mean of 4.28 described verbally as “Strongly Agree”.

Overall, the extent of the Family Issues and Barriers among the Foreign students as perceived by the foreign students gained a 4.00 grand mean with the verbal interpretation “Moderately Agree”. The data revealed that most of the foreign students agreed that they had challenges and issues in their lives in terms of their livelihood, personal life and barriers in studying since they lived in a country away from their homes.

2.Challenges Encountered by Foreign Students while Studying in the Philippines

Based on the results, these were the reflected problems of the foreign Chinese students regarding their individual, family related factor, study habits and school related factors to their academic success.

The foreign students experienced challenges while Studying in the Philippines. All 50 participants or 100% revealed that they have difficulty balancing work in home country and studies abroad and are pressured doing reports, presentations, assignments, and research. Moreover, 48 or 96% stated that they are experiencing language Difficulties, execution of English and using proper sentence become a hindrance in their studies. This was followed by social barrier like not being familiar in the culture and traditions, as responded by 46 or 92% of the participants. Furthermore, 45 or 90% foreign students said some people ignore because they do not understand their English and they also have difficulty in dealing with their studies abroad and family duties and responsibilities at home. It was also revealed that 43 or 86% participants experienced homesickness, while 42 or 84% had a difficulty understanding the lectures because teaching style is different from China, 39 or 78% experienced cultural shock.

In addition, 38 or 76% participants experienced financial challenges. 36 or 72% also said that there are times that the weather is very hot, and they cannot endure it. This was followed by difficulty in understanding the accent and pronunciation of professors as stated by 32 or 64% participants. Furthermore, since most professors do not adjust in their methodologies, 24 or 48% respondents said they find their teachers' style a problem. While 19 or 38% said they cannot do their daily routine, 16 or 32% cannot buy Chinese products, 14 or 28% cannot eat some foods they love to eat and feel weak because of the foods and drinks they take. While 13 or 26% participants cannot cook foods, they want to eat because of no available ingredients/ materials. There were 12 or 24% of them who feel sick because of adjustment to the weather, foods, and drinks.

Moreover, 9 or 18% participants found it hard to mingle with Filipino students because their interpreters narrowed down their access to conversation, 8 or 16% faced racial discrimination and 5 or 10% participants stated that most of the professors do not have enough knowledge and skills related to the culture and practices in China which they could integrate to the lessons.

3.Coping Strategies of Foreign Students

Based on the results, the foreign students used variety of coping strategies to cope with the challenges they experienced while studying in the Philippines. All participants or 50 of them (100%) stated that they call/chat with family/friends when they feel homesickness, 49 or 98% participants Get together with other international students, 45 or 90% adapted and intermingled with other students in our school, 41 or 82% share meals with friends, 39 or 78% provide time for social activities with classmates and/or friends.

Moreover, 39 or 78% foreign students revealed that they seek help of their professors and classmates, 35 or 70% participants do their assignments and reports ahead of time, 35 or 70% looks for Chinese people and Chinese products, 35 or 70% go the market and explore foods available to buy and eat or cook, they also find ways to relax and do physical exercises. Moreover, 34 or 68% focus their time and attention on academic activities, 33 or 66% learn English by reading more books and have a tutorial, they also watch English and Filipino movies & music. While 32 or 64% exerted efforts learning the culture of the Filipinos by attending to their celebrations and visiting different places, they also go outing with international and local students. In addition, 30 or 60% devoted their life by praying and 22 or 44% tries to learn the Filipino language.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions were arrived at:

- 1.Foreign students in terms of individual related factors such as aspiration in studies, outlook in studies and aspects of identity.
 - 1.1.For the aspiration in studies among foreign students, majority of them answered that despite some failures and difficulties, they still wished to succeed. Majority of them answered that they wished they had a home where peace and love abide.
 - 1.2.For the outlook in studies among foreign students, majority of them answered that they never got tired working with things related to their studies. Few of them, believed that studying developed their ability to think logically and reason out correctly.
- 2.Foreign students in terms of family related factors such as parent encouragement and family issues and barriers.
 - 2.1.For the parent encouragement among foreign students, majority of their parents tried to help them in their studies. Some of their parents stressed the importance of studying.
 - 2.2.For the family issues and barriers among foreign students, majority of them had transportation related challenges. They were also concerned about getting to school safely.
- 3.Foreign students in terms of study habits such as time management, study environment, test taking/ preparation skills, note taking and basic skills.
 - 3.1.For the time management skills among foreign students, majority of them disagreed that they made their master schedule for their studies but majority of them regularly attended their classes.
 - 3.2.For the study environment among foreign students, majority of them regularly studied at the same time.
 - 3.3.For the test taking/preparation skills among foreign students, majority of them sought extra help from their professors.
 - 3.4.For the note taking skills among foreign students, most of them could not effectively able to take down notes in class and could not understand the concepts at the same time. Some of them commonly reviewed their notes after each class.
 - 3.5. For the basic skills among foreign students, majority of them enjoyed and participated in class and asked questions when they did not understand a concept.
- 4.For the sense of belongingness among foreign students, majority of them wanted to be valued and accepted by others. Most of them wanted to be a part of the things going around them.
- 5.For the classroom learning environment among foreign students, majority of them agreed that they have a friendly class environment.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following were recommended:

- 1.The University authorities and personnel may plan and design tools and programs to monitor the background, progress, and achievement of the foreign students so that people that influence them get to understand their ways and actions.
- 2.The University should conduct group counselling and consultation programs for foreign students. They must facilitate program with activities regarding culture, individuality, and career development.
- 3.The University administrators could design measures, action plans and programs that will help students attain and improve their academic achievement.

4. Professors and families of foreign students should help the students by providing the basic needs of the foreign students physically, mentally, socially and emotionally for them to be fully equipped when they are studying.

5. The University administrators and teachers could have a continuous implementation of the different enhancement program to improve the academic achievement of the foreign students.

6. More research activities may be encouraged to determine the different factors that may positively and negatively affect the academic success of foreign students.

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