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# From students to residents: Chinese international students' gendered migration intentions and employment experiences

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# Outline

- Policy initiatives
- A case study
- Study pathways
- Employment experiences
- Immigration intentions
- Gender issues

# Policy initiatives

- Linking student policy to residence from the late 1990s
- Additional points for skilled applicants who completed their qualifications in NZ
- Points for relevant job offer
- Term-time work rights for students undertaking a full-time course of study

# Policy initiatives

- Study-to-Work & Work-to-Residence policies from 2002
- Graduate Job Search Work Visa (12 month open work permit) for students successfully completing a course in NZ resulting in a qualification that gets points under the Skilled Migrant Category
- Once they have secured relevant employment they may then apply for a 2-year post-study work permit or proceed directly to the Skilled Migrant Category

# A case study

- 20 Chinese international students from PRC who had transitioned to work and/or residence in NZ
- They came to NZ between 1999 and 2006 and were first interviewed in 2007 in a project funded by the Ministry of Education
- Of the 80 students who were interviewed in 2007, 20 were re-contacted and interviewed in 2008 - 13 males & 7 females

# Study pathways

- The majority of participants (14) commenced study in New Zealand in a language school, three in a high school before entering universities and polytechnics.
- At the time of interview, all have obtained a bachelor degree, and two were doing post-graduate studies.
- Their fields of study include: Business/commerce (11); management (3); IT (2); engineering (2) and science (2).

# Study pathways

- Most reported being satisfied with the learning environment, in particular the quality of teaching and the approachability of teaching staff, together with a focus on independent learning and students being encouraged to ask questions.
- Many of the students under-estimated the time it took for them to acquire the appropriate level of English to pass IELTS; therefore they spent a much longer period of time in language schools than they had anticipated.

# Employment

- Most had held part-time jobs during the course of their studies – primarily low-skilled jobs (waitress, cleaner, cashier etc.) to earn money to support their studies
- After graduation, 2 were planning to return to China and 2 were doing postgraduate studies. Of the remaining, eight considered that they were working in jobs that match for their qualifications and skills (engineer; marketing; education; travel agent; business owner).

# Employment

- Main methods of finding jobs: through friends, personal contact, respond to advertisement online or student job search
- No one reported using employment agency or participating in CV writing / interview workshops
- Some reported difficulties in finding employment without a work permit.

# Immigration

- 7 already granted PR in NZ, 8 had lodged their applications, 3 were intending to apply/not sure and 2 would return to China.
- Many wanted to live and work in NZ because they had received their qualification in NZ and was accustomed to the NZ way of life. They would like to gain residence in this country and to make their contribution within the NZ workforce.
- Some have thought of raising a family in NZ.

# Immigration

- a relevant job offer is necessary for PR application. For some, this kind of job offer is difficult to get because they do not have the relevant connections in the labour market.
- Competition in the labour market and lack of connections are disincentive to return to China. But if they can't get suitable employment and PR, they would leave NZ.
- NZ may not be fully capitalising on the skills these Chinese graduates can offer.

# Views on gender

Are there gender differences

- in the reasons why Chinese students came to study in NZ?
- in the choice of courses/education to take overseas?
- in employment aspirations?
- Decision to apply for PR?

# Views on gender

No major gender differences to these questions.

- Regarding education, business/commerce is a popular option for both males and females
- Males more likely to specialise in engineering & IT
- Females in nursing, accounting and finance
- More research required