

## ABSTRACT

The expansion of the Hospitality and Tourism Management higher education in China and abroad has increased choices for Chinese students, but also brought along the fierce competitions to HTM institutions. To increase the share of recruitment market and achieve sustainable competitive advantages in the global educational market, the HTM institutions need to be clearer about the students they are trying to reach. However, understanding institution choice process is challenging. To date there has been limited research on the study motives and choice criteria used by Chinese HTM undergraduates, which indicates an important departure point to conduct this study.

The purpose of this study was to identify the Chinese students' motives of studying an HTM program in their tertiary education, the choice criteria used by Chinese students in their HTM institution selection. Specifically, the study determined how demographic and motivational factors can be used to understand the choice criteria. An additional purpose of the study was to explore the Chinese students' intention of studying abroad, their preferred countries, and the influential factors affecting the intention. In the end, managerial implications were provided to the HTM institutions.

Descriptive research is the research methods of the study. Structured questionnaire was used as the research instruments to survey 390 freshly enrolled Chinese HTM undergraduates in Fujian Normal University, Minjiang University, and Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the study motives, choice criteria, and the demographic factors; and some

of the inferential statistics such as T-test, ANOVA and Pearson r were the data analysis techniques applied in this study to test the hypotheses. As a whole, the results from the hypotheses testing suggest that there are significant differences in Chinese undergraduates' motives for studying HTM in terms of gender classification, annual family income; there is no significant difference in Chinese undergraduates' motives for studying HTM in terms of their parents' education level or their secondary schools; regarding to choice criteria employed by Chinese HTM undergraduates in their institution selection, there is no statistically significant gender or parents' education level difference, but significant differences were found in terms of annual family income and secondary schools; and there is significant correlation between the motives and the choice criteria.

Finally, recommendations were provided to HTM institutions and the future research.

