



# The Survey on the Willingness of International Chinese Education Majors to Undertake Internships Abroad

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## Abstract

With the gradual development of globalization, China, as the largest developing country, has increasingly close exchanges with other countries. With the in-depth implementation of the “Belt and Road” initiative and the increasing international dissemination of Chinese culture, my country has ushered in a wave of Chinese fever, and countries are increasingly interested in learning Chinese. More and more volunteers are sent to teach Chinese and spread Chinese culture around the world. This paper takes students majoring in international Chinese education as the research object, and uses questionnaire surveys, interviews, and case analysis to explore whether students majoring in international Chinese education accept internships abroad. It also analyzes the motivations that affect the willingness to go abroad from personal, family, and social factors, which is of great significance to the future career planning and practical experience of students majoring in international Chinese education.

## Subject Areas

International Chinese Education

## Keywords

International Chinese Education, Volunteer, Chinese, Internship Abroad, Willingness

## 1. Introduction

With the deepening development of globalization, international Chinese education has received increasing attention, and more and more students choose to study abroad to expand their international horizons, enhance their language skills, and

improve their personal competitiveness. As an important form of practice during study abroad, internships abroad can not only allow students to have a deeper understanding of local culture and improve their language application ability, but also lay a solid foundation for their future career development. Therefore, it is of great practical significance and theoretical value to investigate and analyze the willingness of international Chinese education students to undertake internships abroad.

## **2. Overview of Overseas Internships for International Chinese Education Majors**

This part summarizes the content and form of internship programs, the selection and planning of internship locations, and the status and role of overseas internships in international Chinese education.

### **2.1. Content and Types of Overseas Internships**

Most international Chinese education majors go abroad for internships as international Chinese education volunteers. The two most common ways to do overseas internships are to participate in the international Chinese volunteer program at the Center for Language Education and Cooperation or the Confucius Institutes at major universities. Regardless of the method, all will need to pass an interview and selection process. Overseas Confucius Institutes even have three interviews. The international Chinese volunteer program at the Center for Language Education and Cooperation is relatively simpler. Since there are many people needed, there are also many applicants. The Confucius Institute has a small number of students and is more strict in selecting students. The content of the two works is slightly different. Volunteers at the Center for Language Education and Cooperation are mostly sent to teach in primary and secondary schools, usually local public schools or private schools. Of course, there are also a small number of people who teach college students and at vocational schools. Their main work is generally daily teaching, coaching students in competitions, organizing class activities, and participating in local activities. Confucius Institute volunteers are generally sent to Confucius Institutes in various countries, and their teaching targets are generally college students or adults. Of course, there are also a small number of people who teach primary school students. In addition to daily Chinese teaching tasks, they also assist Confucius Institutes in daily administrative management and organizing competitions, activities, exams, etc. [1]

Whether you choose to volunteer at the Center for Language Education and Cooperation or the Confucius Institute, the first thing to consider is the regional security and allowance. The allowances vary slightly from place to place. Developed countries have higher allowances and relatively higher consumption levels. Poor areas have hardship subsidies, which basically range from 6400 to 8000 RMB.

The choice of overseas internship countries involves many factors. For volunteers at the Center for Language Education and Cooperation, Southeast Asian countries plan to enroll more students than other developed countries. Countries

with more enrollment plans have relatively less competition and more applicants, but there are no restrictions. For developed countries such as the United Kingdom, the number of applicants is as high as 600+, but only 40 people are accepted in the end. Restrictions include priority for English majors with a TEM 8, fluent communication in English, and priority for international Chinese education majors. Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Laos, Nepal, Cambodia, etc. do not have specific requirements for positions. Students of this major should choose positions based on their second language skills and ideas, considering security and competitiveness. The number of students admitted to the Confucius Institute may be in the single digits, not hundreds like in Thailand and Cambodia. The selection is difficult, and the competition is more intense. Moreover, they are in universities all over the country, but the treatment conditions may be relatively good.

Volunteers of the Center for Language Education and Cooperation need stronger cross-cultural communication skills and psychological qualities. Volunteers of the Confucius Institute will face other matters and need stronger stress resistance and higher work efficiency to adapt to the transformation of different roles. Everyone has different needs and strengths. Faced with so many positions, they must make rational and comprehensive considerations before making a good choice.

## **2.2. The Status and Role of Internship Abroad in International Chinese Education**

For students majoring in International Chinese Language Education, the best internship candidates are foreigners whose native language is not Chinese. In the professional courses, they have learned a lot of theoretical knowledge, such as phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening, writing, and other comprehensive courses. The study of these theoretical knowledge makes them input knowledge continuously, so they need to find a suitable opportunity to apply the knowledge they have learned to the actual teaching classroom. In a real Chinese teaching classroom, they can accumulate some teaching experience, find teaching problems, and solve practical problems.

In short, internships abroad are also an important way for students to combine theoretical knowledge with practical operations. During the internship, students will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge they learned in the classroom to actual work, test and consolidate the knowledge they learned through practice, and further improve their professional quality and practical ability.

For students majoring in International Chinese Language Education, internships abroad are an excellent opportunity to improve their practical ability.

First of all, internships abroad can allow students of this major to be in a real language environment, and deeply contact and understand the culture and language habits of the target country, improve teaching management and teaching organization capabilities, and adjust teaching methods according to students' own characteristics. This immersive learning experience can greatly improve students' language proficiency, help them better understand and use Chinese, and also help

them better adapt to and integrate into an international education environment.

Secondly, during the internship, students will have the opportunity to communicate with people from different backgrounds and cultures, which can not only broaden their horizons, but also enhance their cross-cultural communication skills. This ability is crucial for students majoring in International Chinese Language Education, because their future work may involve communicating and exchanging with people from different cultural backgrounds. [2]

Otherwise, internships abroad will promote the growth of comprehensive abilities and train independent living skills, the ability to deal with emergencies, stress resistance, and psychological resilience.

In addition, internships abroad can also enhance employment competitiveness, lay a great foundation for future employment and further studies, and help students build an international network of contacts. During the internship, students will have the opportunity to meet peers and industry experts from all over the world, establish connections with them, and exchange experiences. These network resources are of great significance to students' future career development and academic research.

In summary, internships abroad are of great significance to students majoring in International Chinese Language Education, which can help them improve their practical ability, broaden their horizons, enhance their cross-cultural communication skills, and lay a solid foundation for their future career development.

### **3. Survey on the Willingness of Students Majoring in International Chinese Language Education to Undertake Internships Abroad**

The survey on willingness to undertake internships abroad was conducted with students from Xi'an universities who needed internships before graduation as the research subjects. Questionnaires (See **Appendix**) are distributed, and the survey results are analyzed based on the data.

#### **3.1. Research Objects**

This survey takes students majoring in International Chinese Language Education in some universities in Xi'an as the survey objects, distributes questionnaires to investigate whether they are willing to undertake internships abroad, and this survey is designed with 15 questions.

#### **3.2. Research Methods**

Questionnaire survey method. This survey is based on online distribution, and a total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, with an effective response rate of 94.75%. Then, the data from this survey research was classified and sorted.

#### **3.3. Analysis of Survey Results**

The overall situation of students' willingness to undertake internships abroad is that

85% of students are willing to undertake internships abroad. 13% of students are unwilling to undertake internships abroad. Among them, 90% are first-year graduate students, and the others are seniors or second-year graduate students, and there are third-year graduate students. 70% of students believe that internships abroad are very helpful for personal growth, and 20% believe that it is relatively helpful. Most students choose to undertake internships abroad in order to improve their teaching ability, expand their international vision, and learn about foreign culture. 50% of students believe that the opportunities provided by the school to go abroad are sufficient. 97% of students are very worried about the safety of going abroad. 60% of students want to go to Southeast Asian countries, and 20% want to go to Europe and the United States. 96% of students hope that the school can provide more guidance and training for overseas internships. 80% of students are willing to share their overseas experience with their juniors.

#### **4. Factors that Influence the Willingness of International Chinese Language Education to Undertake Internships Abroad**

This survey and research analyzed the factors that affect the willingness of International Chinese Language Education students to do internships abroad. There are many reasons, including personal factors, family factors, and social factors. The following is a detailed analysis of the factors.

##### **4.1. Personal Factors**

###### **1) Academic interests and career planning**

Every year, a large number of students from this major sign up to volunteer. Some students will pass the selection interview, and some will fail. First of all, they have a great interest in this major, have the professional qualities of international Chinese teachers, and want to enrich their resumes and exercise their growth. Surveys and studies show that students who have a strong interest in this major and hope to achieve success in this field in the future are more likely to participate in internship programs abroad to accumulate practical experience and improve their professional abilities. At the same time, if students have a clear career plan, internships abroad may add to their resumes and are an important step in achieving their career goals. They are also more inclined to actively seek and seize opportunities to do internships abroad.

###### **2) Language skills and cross-cultural adaptability**

A good language foundation is an essential professional quality for an international Chinese teacher. Language is a bridge of communication. If students have a good level of Chinese and are proficient in the language of the destination country, they will be more capable of this task and increase their confidence in participating in internships abroad. [3] They should also be better able to understand the cultural and language differences between the destination country and the native country, have stronger background knowledge and psychological expectations,

and reduce culture shock. Living and working in a foreign country requires volunteers to be able to quickly adapt to the new living environment, be competent in teaching work, adapt to local culture quickly, and communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. If students realize that their language ability and cross-cultural adaptability are not enough for this job, they may choose to intern in China. [4]

## 4.2. Family Factors

### 1) The background and support of the family

Family factors play a vital role in the decision-making process of students going abroad for internships. Family background includes the family's economic situation, social status, education level, and other aspects. Families with better economic conditions may be more capable of providing students with the financial support needed for internships in developed countries, making it easier for students to realize their desire to go abroad. Families with higher social status and education may pay more attention to the comprehensive development of students and the cultivation of an international vision, and thus are more inclined to encourage their children to go abroad to broaden their horizons and increase their knowledge.

Secondly, the degree of family support has a direct impact on students' willingness to go abroad for internships. This support is not only reflected in material, but also in spiritual aspects. Parents' understanding, encouragement, and support can increase students' self-confidence and make them more determined to choose to go abroad for internships. On the contrary, if parents are overly concerned about safety issues, put their children's safety first, and do not dare to let their children fly out of the nest of love to contact the outside world, it will affect their willingness to go abroad for internships.

### 2) Influence of family expectations and concepts

Family expectations for children often affect students' career planning and life goals. If the family expects students to go abroad for internships to improve their abilities and competitiveness and lay a solid foundation for their future career, then students are more likely to actively seek opportunities for internships abroad. At the same time, family concepts will also affect students' understanding and attitude towards internships abroad. If parents believe that internships abroad are a beneficial way to learn and grow, and can help students better integrate into the trend of the era of globalization, then students are more likely to have a positive attitude and actively seek opportunities for internships abroad.

It can be seen that family factors are one of the important factors influencing the choice to intern abroad. It is necessary to communicate with parents in a timely manner and change the past conservative ideas. Although safety issues are a crucial constraint, it is necessary to communicate with parents in a timely manner and alleviate their concerns through past effective cases. The opportunity to go abroad is limited to ten months rather than being permanent. I believe that

parents will support their children's important decisions.

### 4.3. Social Factors

#### 1) Security policy and welfare benefits

The state and society should strengthen the security of volunteers going abroad and eliminate the concerns of students and parents. For a student majoring in International Chinese Language Education, internships abroad mean that they will be in a completely new environment and face different cultures, social backgrounds, and security risks. Therefore, the national security policy is closely related to whether International Chinese Language Education students choose to go abroad for internships. Some countries are experiencing wars, facing insecurity, telecommunications fraud, trafficking, and other factors that discourage many interns from joining.

A sound security policy can provide students with comprehensive protection, including personal safety, property safety, and emergency rescue measures. Such a policy can make students and parents feel at ease, reduce worries and concerns, and thus be more willing to choose to go abroad for internships.

In addition, welfare benefits are also an important factor affecting students' willingness to go abroad for internships. Welfare benefits include accommodation conditions, living allowances, medical insurance, etc., during the internship. Good welfare benefits can reduce the financial burden of students, improve their quality of life during the internship, and enable them to focus more on internship tasks and learning.

If the welfare benefits of the internship site are poor, students may hesitate to choose to go abroad for internships because of concerns about living costs and health protection. Therefore, providing attractive welfare benefits is an important means to attract International Chinese Language Education students to go abroad for internships.

#### 2) Professional identity and employment issues after returning home

For International Chinese Language Education students, going abroad for internships is not only to increase knowledge and improve skills, but also to gain better development in their future careers. Therefore, professional identity after returning home is a factor that cannot be ignored when considering going abroad for internships. [5]

Career identity after returning home means that students can find their own position in society after returning home, and be recognized and respected by the industry. This requires students to accumulate rich experience and skills during internships, and also have clear career planning and development directions. [6]

If students are exposed to advanced Chinese education concepts and teaching methods during internships and establish good cooperative relationships with their foreign counterparts, they are more likely to have better career opportunities and development space after returning home. Such experience can enhance their professional competitiveness and enhance professional self-confidence,

thereby further strengthening their determination to go abroad for internships. [7]

However, if the career prospects after returning home are unclear, or the industry does not value overseas internship experience, students may doubt the value of internships abroad, which will affect their willingness to go abroad for internships. Therefore, the government and schools should strengthen their ties with the International Chinese Language Education industry and provide students with more career development opportunities and platforms to enhance their confidence and expectations for internships abroad.

## 5. Conclusions

A survey of the willingness of International Chinese Language Education students in some universities in Xi'an to do internships abroad found that most students held a positive attitude and believed that internships abroad are of great significance to professional growth and career planning. At the same time, personal factors, family factors, social factors, and other factors jointly affect students' willingness to do internships abroad. Schools should actively respond to students' needs for internships abroad and help students improve their competitiveness in these internships by providing guidance and support. At the same time, strengthening contacts and cooperation with the International Chinese Language Education industry will help promote the healthy development of International Chinese Language Education.

In summary, internships abroad are of great significance to students majoring in International Chinese Language Education, and all parties need to work together to provide students with more internship opportunities and resources to promote their professional growth and career planning.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire for the willingness to do internships abroad for International Chinese Language Education majors

#### I. Basic information

1. What grade are you currently in as an International Chinese Language Education major?
  - A. Senior year
  - B. First year of graduate school
  - C. Second year of graduate school
  - D. Third year of graduate school
2. What is your gender?
  - A. Male
  - B. Female

#### II. Willingness to do internships abroad

3. Are you willing to participate in the International Chinese Language Education internship abroad program?
  - A. Very willing
  - B. Willing
  - C. Average
  - D. Not very willing
  - E. Not willing at all
4. How much do you think internships abroad will help your professional growth?
  - A. Very much
  - B. Large
  - C. Average
  - D. Small
  - E. Not helpful
5. What is the purpose of your internship abroad? (Multiple choice)
  - A. Improve teaching ability
  - B. Expand international vision
  - C. Learn foreign culture
  - D. Establish international connections
  - E. Others

#### III. Influencing factors

6. What factors do you think will affect your willingness to do internships abroad? (Multiple choice)
  - A. Financial ability
  - B. Language ability
  - C. Cultural background of the internship country
  - D. Treatment during the internship
  - E. Degree of support from the school
7. Do you think the internship opportunities provided by the school are sufficient?
  - A. Very sufficient
  - B. Sufficient
  - C. General
  - D. Insufficient
  - E. Very insufficient
8. Are you worried about safety issues during the internship abroad?
  - A. Very worried
  - B. More worried
  - C. General
  - D. Not too worried
  - E. Not worried at all

#### IV. Internship expectations

9. Which country or region do you prefer to go to for internships? (Multiple choice)
  - A. Europe and America
  - B. Southeast Asia
  - C. Africa
  - D. Asia
  - E. Others
10. What do you hope will be the main work content during the internship?
  - A. Teaching Chinese courses
  - B. Organizing cultural exchange activities

- C. Participating in school administrative work      D. Others
- 11 What internship project do you expect?
- A. Confucius Institute Volunteer
- B. Language and Communication Volunteer      C. Domestic Internship

V. Suggestions and Feedback

12. What improvements do you think the school can make in promoting overseas internships for International Chinese Language Education majors?
13. Do you hope that the school will provide more guidance and training for overseas internships?
- A. Very much      B. Want      C. Neither      D. Not so      E. Not at all
14. Are you willing to share your overseas internship experience with younger students?
- A. Very much      B. Will      C. Neither      D. Not so      E. Not at all
15. What other suggestions and opinions do you have for overseas internships?