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Master's Thesis

*Tug-of-war between Character and Competitiveness:  
The Decision of Taiwanese Businesspeople in China  
over Their Children's Study Plan*

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## Abstract

Character and competitiveness are common concerns of parents everywhere when making arrangement for their children's educational and living environment. But if these parents cannot pick up both, what would they do? Which values concern them most? That is exactly the case of today's Taiwanese businesspeople in China (*Taishang*): with China's emerging role and challenging curriculums on one hand but Taiwan's much better moral and personality education on the other hand. What would these parents choose for their children? Would they let their kids continue their education in Taiwan or move to China and stay with them? Such decision may provide rich clues for us to explore the deep concern behind all educational choices. Based on my field research conducted in 2009 and 2010, I find that the primary concern of these Taiwanese parents is still their children character. Most of them tend to leave their kids in Taiwan, protecting them with an education system they could really trust. Otherwise, they have to bring their children with them and they would normally send the kids to some Taiwanese or international schools, which can safeguard their children from character and personality degradation.

Keywords: China, Taiwan, education, competitiveness, Taishang

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## **Chapter1. Introduction**

Parents always want to give the best for their children. Same for the Taiwanese businesspeople in China, when it comes to their children's education, they try to make the best choice. In the 1990s, most Taiwanese businessmen preferred their children to be educated in Taiwan instead of China because they did not trust the education system. They worried that different family values and thoughts would be created. Since children's character could be molded by education greatly, parents are concerned their children's mind cultivation and always wish to foster their children's good concept and personality. Because of the living standard and quality in China was not as good as Taiwan in the 1990s, most Taiwanese businessmen chose to let their children be educated in Taiwan.

However China is rising in the recent years, for the constant economy growth, China also makes any endeavor to develop education. The key primary and high schools have outstanding school achievements and the Mainland Chinese teachers have strived to teach students well. At the same time, under the financial recession in Taiwan, more and more people have viewed China as the future working base. Combined with the education improvement in China and future job market, studying in China is a way to build the abilities and local networks for children's future career plan. Here this paper will delve into the Taiwanese businessmen's difficult decision of their children's study plan over character and competitiveness.

### ***1.1 Background***

On March 21, 2008, Taiwan held its twelfth presidential election, KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou was elected with 58.45 percent of the vote.<sup>1</sup> Ma's China policy principles are "no reunification, no independence, and no use of force", which means that he will not negotiate reunification with China during his presidential term, nor will he declare Taiwan's independence. He is also against the use of force by either side. In his inaugural address, he argued for the principle of "face reality, pioneer a new future, shelve controversies and pursue a win-win solution", as the response to President Hu's call in

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<sup>1</sup> Central Election Commission, Mar. 22, 2008, available at: <http://210.69.23.140/Excel/chart54.xls>

2007 for “building mutual trust, shelving controversies, finding commonalities despite differences, and creating together a win-win solution”.<sup>2</sup> China and Taiwan have gradually realized the maintaining peace and stability is a common interest.

Under the improvement of mutual consensus of keeping peace and stability, economic opportunities matter for most people in financial tsunami. Working in China is a trend among the younger generation. According to a survey conducted by the biggest job hunting website in Taiwan, more than 60 percent of respondents said that they would consider working in China. The survey concludes that “do you want to work in China or not?” is no longer a pertinent question; rather the issue is “where are my opportunities in China and what can I do there?” The top three reasons young people consider working in China are: 1) China has huge potential. Work experience in China will be helpful for long-term career goals; 2) It is better to get a spot before the job competition gets too intense; 3) China is more international than Taiwan.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the tendency of many Taiwanese people viewing China as a working base comes with the consideration---their children’s education. There are some points that are worthy of our future studies and discussion.

## **1.2 Motivation**

Many Taiwanese businessmen who go to China for investing and working want to look after both sides of family and career so that bring their children with. The ensuing problem is their children’s education. Ensuring competitiveness in the future fierce job market in the world is vital to the tens of thousand of parents. When I read one article published in *Business Weekly*, the chief editor points out one example, that is, some parents send their children to study in the affiliated school of Tsinghua university in Beijing rather as before to send children to the U.S. They detain the note in China, not in

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<sup>2</sup> President Ma’s inauguration speech on May 20, 2008, available at: <http://www.president.gov.tw/php-bin/prez/shownews.php?Rid=14000>, President Hu’s report on the 17<sup>th</sup> National People’s Congress on Oct. 24, 2007, available at: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content\\_6938749.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm).

<sup>3</sup> “Taiwan Minzhong Qipan Liangan Zhihang,” (Taiwanese Look forward to the Three Links), 104 Job Bank, Feb. 29, 2008, available at: <http://www.104.com.tw/cfdocs/2000/pressroom/104news970229.htm>.

the U.S.<sup>4</sup> Facing increased pressure to ensure their children to be capable for the future global village, parents' decision of bringing their children to China or not, competitiveness crucially takes into highly account.

On the other hand, education in China started to bloom in the 1990s but the comprehensive quality enhancement still is a long road to go. In the primary schools, because of the existence of one-sided pursuit of entering a higher-school proportion, the result is the overloaded schoolwork and the fragile character education. Compared with Taiwan's education executive blueprint, Taiwan puts a lot of emphasis on character education and carries out enthusiastically in school education.<sup>5</sup> Except for the visible textbooks, the influence and change imperceptibly transform the personality and character of children of Taiwanese businessman in the social atmosphere in China. Will this concealed worry make Taiwanese businessman step backward to bring their children with to China?

### ***1.3 Research Questions and Hypothesis***

The general interest of this paper, under the scope of education, is to assess the influence of character and competitiveness to decide whether Taiwanese businessmen bring their children with to China and try to predict the future trend of education relocation for Taiwanese businessmen in China.

Here, the paper will take a closer look at Taiwanese businessmen's consideration of bringing their children with or not. That is why the study wants to empirically examine Taiwanese businessmen's decisions to achieve, character or competitiveness, what they most care about. I am intentionally omitting children's moral and personality always come to the first in parents' minds. Then, what affects do character and competitiveness have on their final decision? What implications will the condition of bringing their children to China have on our next generation?

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<sup>4</sup> "Siao Liou Syue Sheng Zai Beijing," (Studying Abroad in Beijing), *Business Weekly*, vol. 1113(Mar. 23, 2009):16.

<sup>5</sup> Sun-chi Liu, "Educational Reform in China from 1978 to 2006," *Bulletin of the National Institute of Education Resources and Research*, 32 (December 2006): 61-88.

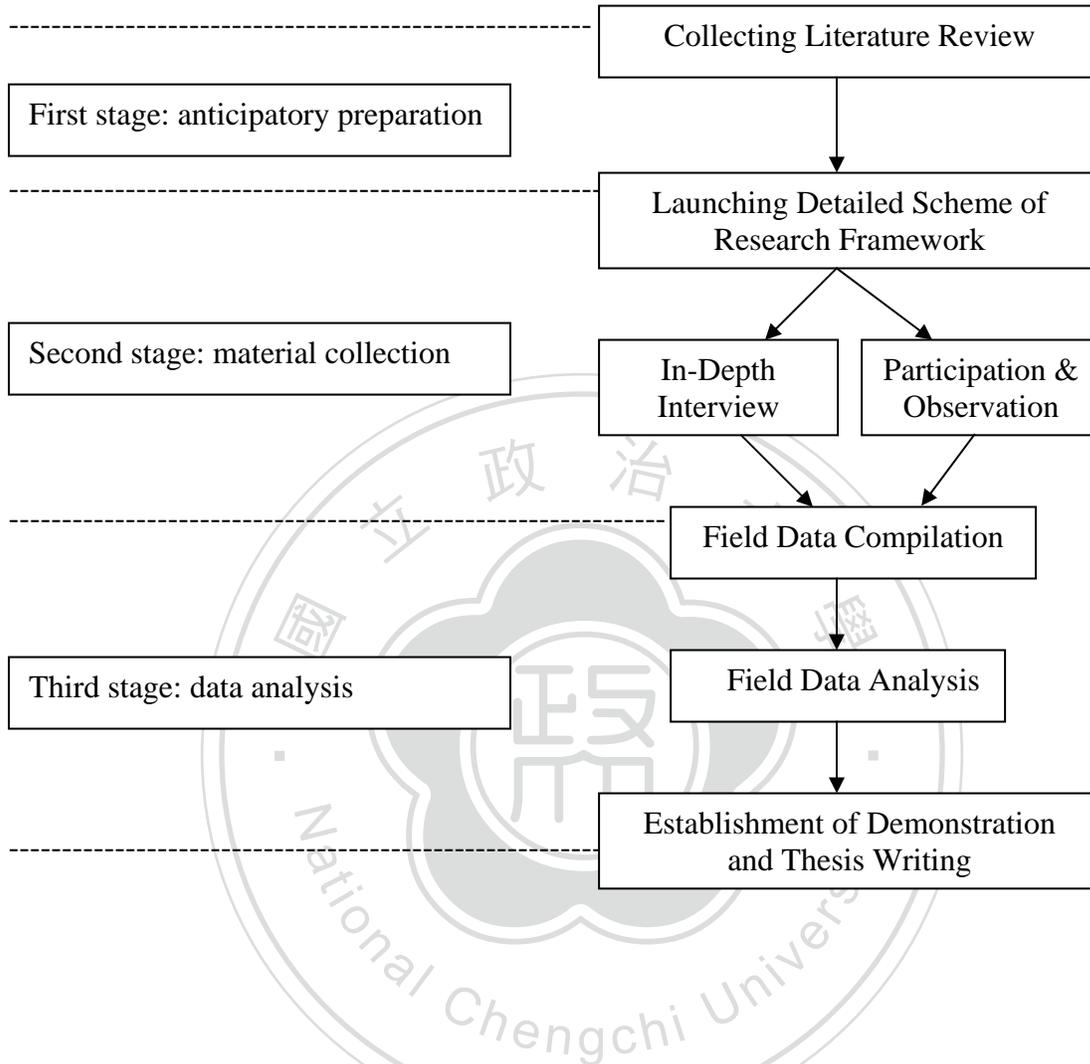
#### ***1.4 Methodology***

This study's objective is to examine the factors of Taiwanese businessmen's decision of bringing their children with to China from the perspective of character and competitiveness under the scope of children's education. This study will execute with three stages — anticipatory preparation, material collection and interview analysis.

This paper is in the use of in-depth interview. I am going to interview with parents who have children and people who have comments on this issue. I plan to interview 20 Taiwanese businessmen and related people such as *Taima*, children both in Taiwan and China. In order to meet the theoretical saturation, the field work will be conducted in the area of Shanghai and Taiwan over a eight-month period from July 2009 to March 2010.

Firstly, anticipatory preparation focuses on the followings: collecting the relative literature review, having dialogue with associated theories; launching the detailed scheme of the research framework, emphasizing on conceptual operation; carrying on the implementation of interview design. The second stage, material collection, is consisted of in-depth interview, participation and observation. The third stage, data analysis, includes field data compilation; field data analysis; establishment of demonstration and thesis writing.

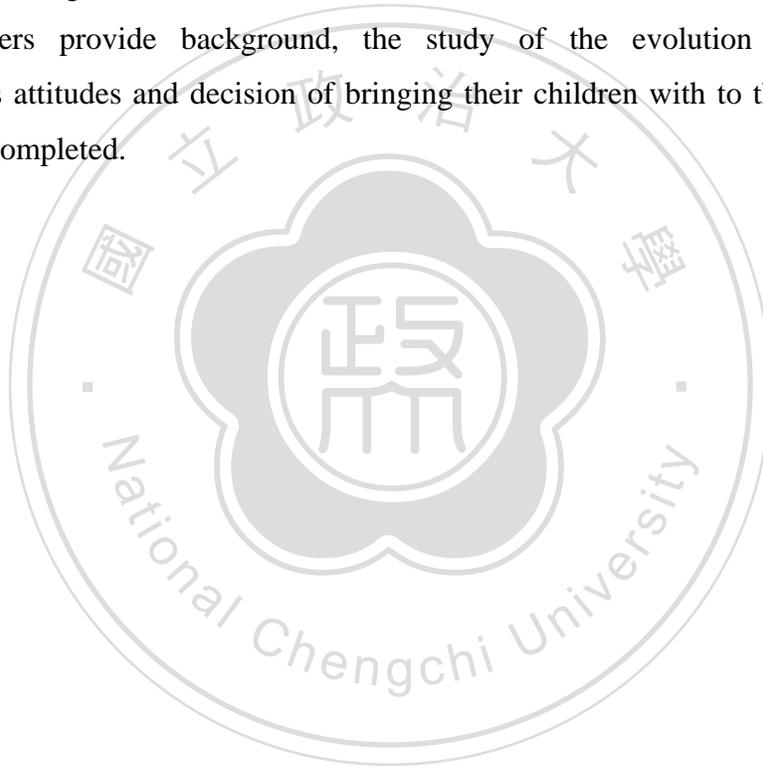
**Figure1: Research flow chart**



**Figure2: Chart of Research Progress**

Duty Stage	Anticipatory Preparation	Field Work	Data Analysis
Work Course	Sep 2008~Jun 2009	Jul 2009~Feb 2010	Mar 2010~Jun 2010

The study will be conducted through qualitative approaches. Qualitative research will be based on field work conducted in the area of Shanghai and Taipei. Bringing children with to China or not, the decision making is personal and subjective, and also influenced by social networking and other specific characteristics. Therefore, the research is based upon the qualitative approach, in the use of semi-structured questionnaire to collect and analyze qualitative data. It is helpful to understand the Taiwanese businessmen's personal intention and social networks. In the qualitative approach, this research will be assisted with in-depth interview to better understand the decision making. What's more, through the collection and review of second-hand academic journals, books, and newspapers provide background, the study of the evolution of Taiwanese businessmen's attitudes and decision of bringing their children with to the rising China will be more completed.



## Chapter2. Literature Review

The thinking, concept and culture related to character exist in every move of one's life. Culture and identity are to behave and think at one's will. It is very exclusive depending on one's personal decision and also influenced gradually by the environment and atmosphere. On the contrary with the inner will, competitiveness is affected by the outside world really. The competitiveness relates career opportunity and profit making. Though rich in soul is quite important, it won't exist without well-living in daily life. People seek for better living standard and well-being undoubtedly.

### 2.1 Migration and Education

Education has been identified in sociological research as a catalyst of social, economic and ideational change. The relationship between education and migration is not new in theory or research. It is however, a complex relationship both from the theoretical and empirical pointview that is not thoroughly understood. Some studies have indeed found strong positive effects of educational attainment on the propensity to migrate.<sup>6</sup> However, other studies have found negative effects of educational attainment on migration in certain settings,<sup>7</sup> and still others have found no significant effects at all.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John C. Caldwell, *African Rural-Urban Migration: The Movement to Ghana's Towns*, New York: Columbia University Press, (1969); Oded Stark & J. Edward Taylor, "Migration Incentives, Migration Types: The Role of Relative Deprivation," *The Economic Journal*, 101(1991): 1163-1178; and Katharine M Donato, "Current Trends and Patterns of Female Migration: Evidence from Mexico," *International Migration Review*, 27:4 (1993): 748-771.

<sup>7</sup> Robert E.B.Lucas, "Migration amongst the Batswana," *The Economic Journal*, 95(1985): 358-382; Douglas S. Massey, Rafael Alarcon, Jorge Durand, and Humberto Gonzalez, *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Berkeley & LA: University of California Press, (1987); Douglas S. Massey & Kristin E. Espinosa, "What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 102:4(1997): 939-999; Michael A. Quinn & Stephen Rubb, "The Importance of Education-Occupation Matching in Migration Decisions," *Demography*, 42: 1(2005): 153-167.

<sup>8</sup> Robert D. Emerson, "Migratory Labour and Agriculture," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 71:3(1989): 617-629.; R. H. Adams, "The Economic and Demographic Determinants of International Migration in Rural Egypt," *Journal of Development Studies* 30:1 (1993):146-167. ; Sara R Curran & Estela Rivero-Fuentes, "Engendering Migrant Networks: The Case of Mexican Migration," *Demography* 40:2 (2003):289-307.

In general, the literature appears to favor the prospect that educational attainment does increase the likelihood of migration.<sup>9</sup>

The link between education and migration is often viewed as problematic in public discourse. Of recent, however, a more positive view of this context is taken, which emphasizes multicultural migrants, their educational aspirations and their multiple cultural orientations increasingly as an important individual resource and societal potential. However, both these views have their basis in a view of culture that does not emphasize the individual actions of the persons concerned but instead entails a stereotypical and sometimes racist scheme of perception or description. These allegations present hurdles for processes and communication and education. Within these surface historically and culturally conditioned mechanisms of discrimination. They are thus important aspects of the relationship between migration and education.<sup>10</sup>

Economic theories of the relationship between education and out-migration are some of the oldest in the field. Both of the neo-classical and new economics of migration theories conceptualize educational attainment as a form of human capital that leads an individual to expect better outcomes from migration.<sup>11</sup> The knowledge and skills gained from school may also increase the ability of an individual to complete a journey and cope with in a new place, thereby decreasing the costs and risks of migration.<sup>12</sup> Through these mechanisms, economic theories generally predict that educational attainment is positively related to migration. However, the process of migration forces a student to quit their current schooling; it can interrupt their studies, and in many cases precludes them from re-enrolling. There may also be opportunity costs for parents who have already invested in their children's education. Thus, the neo-classical and new economic theories of migration would lead us to predict that the enrolment in school would decrease the likelihood of migration, independent of the effects of educational attainment.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Williams Nathalie, "Education, Gender and Migration," Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Population Association of America, Los Angeles, California (March, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> International Conference: Migration, Education and Social Change, Institute for Regional and Migration research (IRM), Trier, Germany (July, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> John R., Harris & Michael P. Todaro, "Migration, Unemployment, and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis," *American Economic Review*, (1970):126-142.

<sup>12</sup> O. Stark & D. E. Bloom, "The New Economics of Labor Migration," *American Economic Review* 75:2 (1985):173-178.

<sup>13</sup> See note 9 above.

Other theories linking education to out-migration through social mechanisms do not have the historical legacy of economic theories, but have received strong support in the past decades. Social networks theory<sup>14</sup> adapts Bourdieu's concept of social capital to migration, arguing that social contacts with individuals who have migrated, or are currently resident at a destination, provide information and assistance to the new migrant, thereby decreasing the costs and risks of migration. Thus social networks may increase the probability of out-migration. Empirical research has consistently found social contacts to be a strong determinant of out-migration.<sup>15</sup>

Education enters this causal relationship through expanding social networks. Participation in formal education increases the number of non-family social relationships of an individual, regardless of whether they have gained any knowledge, skills, or credentials from school. Additionally, social networks may in fact relate synergistically with economic theory. Not only does formal schooling provide an individual with wider social networks are selectively comprised of educated individuals who may be more likely to migrate themselves. Thus, we would expect educational attainment, or more years spent in formal schooling, to increase an individual's social network and thereby increase the likelihood that they will migrate.<sup>16</sup>

## **2.2 Character and Education**

Character education is "broad in scope and difficult to define"<sup>17</sup> and character education is as old as education itself. The two broad purposes of education in virtually every society are to "help people become smart, and help them become good."<sup>18</sup>

From the earliest days of Western civilization, character education took the form of stories and mentorship. Plato learned from Socrates not only through their engaging

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<sup>14</sup> Douglas S. Massey, "The Ethno-Survey in Theory and Practice," *International Migration Review* 21(1987):1498-1522.

<sup>15</sup> K. M. Donato, "Current Trends and Patterns in Female Migration: Evidence from Mexico," *International Migration Review* 27:4(1993):748-771. ; H. Zlotnik, "The South-to-North Migration of Women," *International Migration Review* 29:1(1995):229-254.

<sup>16</sup> See note 9 above.

<sup>17</sup> Evelyn, Holt Otten, "Character Education," September 2000, available at: <http://www.indiana.edu/~ssdc/chardig.htm>

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Lickona, "The Return of Character Education," *Educational Leadership*. ASCD 11(1993):6-11.

conversations, but also by traveling and living with Socrates and embracing the qualities he observed in his teacher. Previously, stories have formed the bases of transmitting culture and history (for example, Aesop’s fables, and a variety of fairy tales). Today, while stories are still powerful vehicles for character education, the process is intensified in schools, where the majority of children spend the greater part of their days.<sup>19</sup>

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both Dewey and Whitehead argued for the education of the “whole person”,<sup>20</sup> and for education to be useful.<sup>21</sup> Thorndike, a behaviorist, presented the classic Stimulus-Response framework. He noted that learning results from the associations formed between stimuli and responses. In 1926, Thorndike conducted a five-year character education inquiry to evaluate moral education and construct an inventory of useful values.

Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget is most notable for posing cognitive, intellectual, and moral development in stages. Moreover, he believed that “schema” was necessary for cognitive development, and that those structures changed over time through the processes of assimilation (i.e. interpreting events in light of existing schema) and accommodation (constructing new schema to make sense of the environment).<sup>22</sup> Kohlberg’s theory of moral development also posed stages through which children must pass in order to move to a “higher stage” of development. He also popularized the use of “moral dilemmas” as one method for fostering increasingly higher levels of moral development.<sup>23</sup>

Current theory and recent research has led to new understandings about moral development, knowledge, and learning, and their relation to the teaching of values/character education. Stage theories of development have yielded to theories that acknowledge the multifaceted nature of human development and learning. Howard Gardner and Robert Sternberg have gained notoriety with their notions of multiple intelligences and the nature of the mind respectively. Gardner’s work identifies several distinct forms of intelligence, including ‘inter-personal” (social skills) and “intra-personal” (insight, meta-cognition) intelligence, both of which are central aspects

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<sup>19</sup> Kathleen Shea, *Making the Case for Value/Character Education*, (2003)

<sup>20</sup> Dewey J, *Democracy and Education*, New York: Macmillan, (1916)

<sup>21</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and other Essays*. New York: Macmillan,(1929)

<sup>22</sup> Jean Piaget, *The Moral Development of the Child*, New York: Collier, (1932/1965)

<sup>23</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row (1969/1984)

of values/character education.<sup>24</sup> Sternberg's work brings to light several information processing sub-processes which interact to determine behavior, particularly the ability to adapt to and shape the present environment, an important consideration for creating a values-based atmosphere in society.<sup>25</sup> Vigotsky highlighted the importance of social interaction in learning. According to Vigotsky<sup>26</sup>, every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later, on the individual level. His notion of the "zone of proximal learning" is another of his contributions, explaining the importance of a certain time span during which learning can occur. The social skills children need to function effectively are often developed and refined within the context of a character education program.

### **2.3 Competitiveness and Education**

As the World Economic Forum underlined in its Global Competitiveness Report, "Education and training have emerged as key drivers of competitiveness, ensuring that the labor force has access to new knowledge and is trained in new processes and the latest technologies.....A country's ability to absorb new technologies, to produce goods and services that can reach standards of quality and performance acceptable in international markets, to engage with the rest of the world in ways that are value-creating, is intimately linked to the quality of its schools, to the priority given to training in mathematics and science, and to the existence and accessibility of specialized research and training centers."<sup>27</sup>

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a system of international assessments that focus on 15-year-olds' capabilities in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy. PISA also includes measures of general or cross-curricular competencies such as learning strategies. PISA emphasizes functional skills that students have acquired as they near the end of mandatory schooling. PISA is

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<sup>24</sup> H. Gardner, *Frames of Mind: the Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, New York: Basic Books, 10th. Ed, (1993)

<sup>25</sup> R. Sternberg, *The Triarchic Mind: A New Theory of Human Intelligence*, New York: Viking Press, (1988)

<sup>26</sup> L. Vigotsky, *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, (1978)

<sup>27</sup> World Economic Forum, *Global Competitiveness Report*, (2006-7)

organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries. Begun in 2000, PISA is administered every 3 years. Each administration includes assessments of all three subjects, but assesses one of the subjects in depth. The most recent administration was in 2006 and focused on science literacy. PISA 2009 data collection will take place from September to November 2009 and will focus on reading literacy. The PISA 2009 National Report will be released in December 2010.<sup>28</sup> In the PISA 2009 data collection, Shanghai-China will be included. As we read the data of year 2006, we find out the good performance in mathematical of Taipei, but we still can predict the brilliant outcome of Shanghai-China in many aspects of observation.

#### ***2.4 Prospects for the Future of China and Taiwan***

China's high rates of growth over the past quarter of a century and over the past decade in particular were the result of a rapid expansion of the key ingredients of economic growth everywhere in the world. These ingredients included a rapid increase in the capital stock particularly in the modern industrial and service sectors together with an equally if not more impressive expansion in human capital through the growth of student enrollment particularly at the secondary and university levels. Primary level enrollment was effectively universal by the 1990s so expansion there was much less rapid.

Increased inputs of physical capital and human capital, however, were not the main story of growth during the reform period that began in 1978. There were also major productivity spurts caused by the steady dismantling of many barriers to independent enterprise followed in the 1990s by the gradual creation of some of the institutional structures needed particularly by foreign investors.<sup>29</sup>

International competitiveness in global economy is evaluated by two international organizations: the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the International Institute for Management Development (IMD). WEF defines national competitiveness as the

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<sup>28</sup> PISA, *Science Competencies for Tomorrow's World Executive Summary*, (2006)

<sup>29</sup> Dwight H. Perkins, "China's Recent Economic Performance and Future Prospects," *Asian Economic Policy Review*, Tokyo, (2006):16-41.

capability of maintaining high economic growth rate of a nation for the coming five to ten years.

Geography and history determine the economy and politics, and politics and economics are closely interwoven. Examples are trade frictions, tariff negotiations, regulations on inward and outward foreign investments, or even the gunboat diplomacy of yesteryears. For the future of the Taiwanese economy, however, the most urgent problem it faces today is, unfortunately, the basic problem of nation-building, which other countries already experienced a long time ago, and the ensuing military threat from China for “unification.” We have seen the tremendous growth of Taiwan’s trade and outward investment in China in the 1990s. Taiwanese firms are the second largest foreign investors in China, next to Hong Kong, in the early 1990s, and are probably the largest investors throughout the 1990s if Taiwanese indirect investment through Hong Kong is considered. The growth and magnitude up to now probably indicate complementarities of economic relations between the two countries. As the world competitiveness indice have shown, while the future prospects of Taiwan in the global economy have been excellent and bright, they hinge greatly, if not crucially, on Taiwan’s political relations with China. Any discussions of Taiwan in the global economy in the future cannot, and should not, avoid its problem with China. The basic problem is China’s territorial claim on Taiwan and the threat of the use of military forces. But China’s territorial claim is tenuous at best, and that both countries would be benefited by a peaceful resolution of the dispute in a civilized manner.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Frank S.T. Hsiao & Mei-Chu W., Hsiao, “*Taiwan in the Global Economy: Past, Present and Future*”, in Chow, Peter C.Y. (edited) “*Taiwan in the Global Economy: From an Agrarian Economy to and Exporter of High-Tech Products*”, Pranger Publisher(2002)

### **Chapter3. Analysis of Competitiveness Concern**

This and next chapters will observe the two main factors---competitiveness and character, from the perspectives of family, school, society, higher education and job opportunities, to examine how competitiveness and character affects Taiwanese parents in China to decide up their children's study plan.

Since reform and opening up, not only a large number of Taiwanese businesspeople have invested or worked in China but also many of them are intended footing locally. Therefore, the condition of bringing their children with to China becomes normally seen. As far as the Taiwanese parents concerned, their children's education is the most significant as education is a considerable course to shape children's competitiveness and moral personality. However, the education system has many differences between China and Taiwan, along with Taiwanese parents' concerns, there comes with the following choices. If their children might go back to Taiwan to continue their education in the near future, the parents would choose Taiwanese Businessmen's school that is determined to put an end to the problem of schooling of the children of Taiwanese businessmen, and in turn promotes familial union and harmony so that Taiwanese businessmen at hand without looking back. Or some parents who think over their children's local networking and even to continue higher education in China, they would select local schools for their kids to attend. Also there are some parents consider letting their kids study abroad, they might send their children to international schools so as to do helping for applying for colleges in the foreign countries. Others leave their children in Taiwan to continue education.

Here the fieldwork for this research is primarily conducted in Taipei and Shanghai, the in-depth interview with 20 Taiwanese businesspeople, parents and people who on the spot have understanding about cross-Strait education conditions. Through depth-interview with the above-mentioned people, this research will make out and explain how family, school education, social impact, advancement to a higher school and future job to have influence on the Taiwanese parents in China to decide up their children's study plan.

This and the fourth chapter will generalize the elements mainly influence the children's competitiveness and character. Based on the qualitative information collected by in-depth interviews, this paper will further analyze the parents' deep concern behind all educational choices.

### ***3.1 School Education***

Parents select the school type for their children therefore the curriculum, teacher quality, peer group and school culture are selected outcomes for their kids' study. The choice reflects the educational aspects that parents put more emphasis. As a result this paper will observe if the children are influenced by their parents' school choice in daily life. This section by means of school education is to discuss how parents draw the outline of children's competitiveness through school selection. This helps us to understand the decisive factors of children's study plan by parents. Here The section will divide four parts to examine the effect on children's competitiveness---curriculum, teacher quality, peer group, and school culture :

#### ***3.1.1 Curriculum***

After the enrolment in China, many parents apparently feel the learning materials are much more challenging than Taiwan. However their viewpoints toward the phenomenon are mostly positive that they consider their kids would learn more :

*My little daughter studies in China and I find her not only the basic traditional Chinese culture is better but her math and English are better. She can be trained up with more abilities here. (interview2009072903)*

*Actually the foundation of learning is different across the Strait that we Taiwanese do not read enough books. On the contrary, the English textbooks are harder and harder in China. (interview2009072901)*

*Here in China the curriculum is substantial in content. Though there are many reciting materials, I feel that's okay. When I was in my childhood, I was asked to memorize the ancient poetry but it helps my literature attainment today actually. (interview2009072801)*

*I feel my son's groundwork is better in China than in Taiwan. The local learning foundation is firm and I find Taiwanese curriculum is too easy. Even the textbooks are simplified and curriculum contents in Taiwan are too simple to enhance children's abilities. (interview2009072902)*

*When we arrived in China, my little son was asked to take an exam to know his level. He had to write English compositions in his 1<sup>st</sup> year in junior high school. The ancient writings and math are more difficult and deeper. In China, ancient writings have specific weight that the kids are asked to write the ancient writings from memory. The ancient writings culture is preserved totally. (interview2009073102)*

One student recalled that in her fourth grade in elementary school, she transferred from Taiwan to Ningbo in China, she was astonished to find the difficulty of the local math textbooks :

*At that time when I transferred, in Taiwan the math course was about two digits multiply two digits. However in Ningbo, I found it was the four fundamental operations of arithmetical decimal fractions. I was so astonished that I couldn't believe. I was good at math in Taiwan actually but I knew nothing about decimal fractions then. (interview2008072905)*

On the contrary to most people's opinion toward China, they mainly feel the learning materials and courses are more plentiful. There are still parts of interviewees presenting different viewpoints :

*The schoolwork in the international branch is not heavy but I feel the courses of the international branch are not well-organized, in great confusion. The curriculum is quite scattered. Comparatively, education system in Taiwan is more organized and extensive. (interview2009072904)*

*English in China is not at an advantageous position. The students are afraid of speaking English. They are learning deaf-mute English and their listening and speaking in English is bad. (2009072905)*

*Here English is deaf-mute English. They teach in English by writing or playing the cassette. The teachers don't speak English in class. (interview2009072906)*

From the above, parents mainly consider the children's fundamental abilities such as ancient writings and math are established more stably in China than in Taiwan and apparently find the challenging materials affect the children's ability to some extent. However in the aspect of English, parents find the listening and speaking abilities are not as good as in Taiwan. Next this paper will observe the quality of teachers in school education to examine whether the parents identify the teachers' quality. Through understanding the parents' identification of teachers' quality, we can discuss the children's competitiveness cultivation.

### *3.1.2 Teacher quality*

Many parents can feel that teachers in China are not inferior to teachers in Taiwan after letting their children attend school locally. Even the parents approve of those teachers' emphasis on their children's learning and giving them possibilities to achieve success :

*The teachers are good, conscientious and responsible. I have participated in the parents' forum, in the meeting, the teachers say if parents need any*

*help, feel free to talk to them. The homeroom teacher leaves each subject teacher's phone number for parents. (interview2009072801)*

*I feel the process of my little son's learning in China is very smoothly going. I also find the teachers are concerned with my son's studies, life style and lessons. The teachers don't use physical punishment, they are caring. (interview2009072902)*

*My child studies in the local school. The teachers he meets are all nice. His teacher gave him recommendation letter for Olympics math competition when he studied in the elementary school. Later on I found it was not easy to get this recommendation letter. Though my child is a Taiwanese, the teacher still approves of him and gives him the chances to perform. (interview2009073101)*

From this point of view, basically the Taiwanese parents in China trust and approve of the local teachers. Especially one *Taima* mentioned good opportunities are occupied by few people in Taiwan but in China once the kids have potential then they possibly have stages to perform :

*Formerly in Taiwan, good chances were taken away by school teachers' children. For instance, the teachers' children are sent to participate in all kinds of competition. My son was indifferent in Taiwan but when he came to China, the teacher found every single student's personality to give him/her a stage to perform. Like my little son, he is assigned to be a group leader. He also determines to study harder when he get the progress honor. (interview2009072804)*

Another example is about the inspiration of foreign teachers. Some kids study in schools with affiliated international branch. Since the children can see foreign teachers in the campus, they are encouraged to learn English somehow :

*Like my daughter's' school, there is an international branch, when my daughter sees her classmates to talk with foreign teachers and my daughter thinks that she also wants to be so, to be able to talk in English. Previously in Taiwan, I don't find her to have this motivation. My daughter would prefer playing rather to studying so as she has less competitiveness then. (interview2009072903)*

From this section, we can observe that the courses and teachers can influence not only the kids' learning motivation but also the parents' positive affirmation. Besides, the potential curriculum including peer group and school culture influence also plays an important role in building up the children's competitiveness. Therefore, next section we will observe the invisible factors to examine if these factors push the kids to pursue advancement, even in order to win over the local students, they would make more efforts to achieve success. In addition, since the kids have the experience of living in Taiwan, under the above mentioned factors and cross-strait comparison, to understand more if those will affect the children to strive for themselves, to step up competitiveness. We will discuss more in the next section.

### *3.1.3 Peer group and school culture*

With regard to Taiwanese students' attending school in China, as the children leave their own comfortable environment in Taiwan but to a unfamiliar place, they become more mature to face challenges they haven't encountered before. Chairman Wang has a point toward this argument, he mentions :

*As far as I know, these Taiwanese students who attend school in China might be discriminated or treated unfairly locally so they have to become early-maturing. They will decide which major they will take in the college carefully. They deliberately consider the decision. (interview2009072702)*

Chairman Wang remembered once he chatted with a Taiwanese high school student,

and he found in Taiwan most students rarely think over the relationship of future job and majors they take in college. They seem to be muddled. On the contrary, since Taiwanese students in China have to face the adaptation in daily life and they discover the strive upward atmosphere locally, they are more aware of competitiveness cultivation. Furthermore, Chairman Wang presented the following viewpoints :

*For Taiwanese students, it is relaxing to grow up in Taiwan. When they have to grow up in China, to study locally, I don't dare it's always the best for the kids but I am sure the kids ponder on their future more seriously. (interview2009072702)*

On the other hand, local students in China, their talking topics focus a lot on knowledge issues. For Taiwanese students, in order to integrate with peer group's topics, they start to absorb related knowledge contents :

*I find students in China pay attention to the global current issues but in Taiwan most students just watch cartoon, soap opera or entertainment programs. The children in China care about knowledge or current events, for instance, the annular total eclipse happened in Shanghai, all the local news reported annular total eclipse so that people were forced to understand. My daughters had to understand to have conversation topics with her classmates. Therefore I find there is a big difference for my daughter here and Taiwan, she would naturally get in touch with profound information to have talking topics with her peer group. From the aspect of competitiveness, I find this condition is beneficial. (interview2009072903)*

Moreover, because China is populous, the local students in order to lift their heads, they strive to seize all the chances to show. This condition is also a new stimulus to Taiwanese students :

*The children in China are good at showing themselves. For example, they desperately raise their hand to express their opinions. Because of the one-child policy, the local children try their best to learn and they do learn more than Taiwanese kids. (interview2009072903)*

*It is a good point that China is so populous that the local children intensively fight for their rights/speaking rights. They raise their hands and shout “me, me, me” to strive for expression chances. Unlike Taiwanese kids lower their head silently. (interview2009072901)*

Besides, the local students except for lift their heads at school, they also have to attend courses after school. The peer group learning fashions reflect on the children's studying situations :

*Among my daughter's classmates, they all learn how to play the piano at least since they are all well-off. They go study in tour in summer time. When my daughter's classmates return back from the study in tour, their English would advance by leaps and bounds. My daughter would ask for going studying in tour. (interview2009072903)*

Because of the one-child policy, many Chinese parents have the concepts that learning is the noblest thing of human pursuits. This idea reveals in the details of daily life. One Taiwanese student who studies in the local high school mentioned :

*The thinking pattern here in China is that all kids' mission is nothing but studying. For example, my classmate never folds his blanket but their parents or aunts do the chores. Once in summer vacation my classmate went to help in his mother's store but was scolded angrily. His mother said: why don't you use the summer vacation time to do what you are supposed to do---nothing but studying!(interview2009072905)*

Local parents in China have great expectation on their children. They spare no efforts for upbringing their one child. Moreover, the whole school culture also manifests the examination-oriented aroma :

*In learning aspect, I feel my child learn more in China than in Taiwan. In China my child is more hard-working because they keep on writing test papers. Especially in her third year in junior high school, she took exams everyday. (interview2009072906)*

*The school is very pushy. In the beginning of the semester, the school calls parents' meeting; after midterm holds meeting and after the final exam has meeting again. In the meeting, the school will divide parents into groups according to their kids' grades. (interview2009072901)*

*In China the education system encourages students to present their opinions, to express very actively, to train children's power of expression. (interview2009072804)*

Before the senior high school entrance examination, all the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade junior high school students can't never be slack to prepare for the exam. The whole school builds the supportive environment for students to prepare for the exam wholeheartedly. One Taiwanese student recalled her days of preparing for senior high school entrance exam :

*We didn't have class in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of junior high school. The teacher came in the classroom with a load of test papers then sent out to us. The students kept on writing the test papers. Then the next teacher came in, he still gave us many examination papers. We just wrote all the papers desperately. (interview2009072905)*

*At that time when we prepared for the senior high school entrance exam, the construction of number 9 subway was surrounded our school, then it*

*was regulated to pulse the construction work to avoid the disturbance of students' preparation for exam. Before the entrance exam, it is regulated that no construction around the school was allowed because the entrance exam determines one's future fate. If you enter a very bad senior high school, the game is over to you. The competitiveness in China is very serious. Everyone strives for winning. (interview2009072905)*

In Taiwan, when it is reported that 18 points can enter a college, many people think over what's wrong with the education system. At this time, education in China progresses gradually. One educator said with sigh :

*Cross the Strait, the students are very diligent in learning. The condition shocks us. The willpower of their young people to strive for turning upward is similar to the situation happened in Taiwan 20 years ago. Their young people have strong enthusiasm. (interview2009080302)*

Furthermore, when the educator visited China to see the great number of disciples, he felt that we in Taiwan need a lot of reflection on education :

*In China, young people's upward attitude, parents' emphasis on education, educators' practicable ways of running school and a more comprehensive development in education, for sure they have great pressure but the quality and structure of education worth of our pondering. (interview2009080302)*

*On the whole education in China, in basis, they emphasize the promotion of students' quality, the advancement of teaching quality. Moreover, the development of administrative affairs of school, there are three domains---firstly, walk out, walk to the international; secondly, walk to the space, astronomy science and the third, walk to the future. Every single target impresses us. They are looking for the promotion of quality and their*

*students have great competitiveness definitely. But their three main shafts of education are worthy of our respect. (interview2009080302)*

In April 2009, *Education Parenting Family Lifestyle* magazine, one column focused on discussing the competition of the cross-strait education. From the angle of teachers' quality, it was reported : in one basket of plans of the 8-percent protection policy, President Wen Jia-bao particularly emphasizes to construct the education system facing to the future, face to the world and face to the modernization which is a long-range program in China. In the education long-range development from now to 2020, to strengthen the teachers' quality is viewed as the key point. Wen Jia-bao announced that the central government will invest 120 hundred millions RMB to enhance the teachers' treatment, to practice incentive payment system, to promote teachers training and flow. The promotion of teachers' quality at the meanwhile will promote the curriculum design, teaching methods, class management to create a better studying fashions even the school culture.<sup>31</sup> However in Taiwan, globalization, low-birth rate and the crash of knowledge renew the old ones, the teachers in Taiwan are in condition of utter helplessness. We can't help worrying the crash on Taiwan's winning at the starting line but left behind gradually.

*Especially I run a school in China now. I observe their progress is so fast that makes me astonished and respect. When I turn my head back to my birthplace, Taiwan, I am a little sorrowful. I really miss my hometown, the place I feel as my root. However in the comparison of China's progress and Taiwan's unstableness, what Taiwanese educators fight for is nothing but the adults' rights and interests on the contrary what China cares about is the kids' development and future. That's total different in the cross-strait. (interview2009080302)*

Education environment and children's competitiveness is closely related. From the

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<sup>31</sup> "Liang An Jiao Yu Jing Jhu, Tsung Jiao Shih Su Jhih Kai Shih," (Cross Strait Education Competition Starts from Teachers' Quality), *Education Parenting Family Lifestyle* magazine, no.5 (April, 2009): 72-84

above, the contents show the competitiveness advantages in China, for sure, there are many drawbacks in character education locally that this paper will discuss next chapter. Next section will from the basis of society to probe into parents' consideration of their children's competitiveness in China.

### **3.2 Social Impact**

Taiwanese parents in China consider except for family, school influence, social impact is also a main concern. Taiwanese business people's children in China are affected by social folkways, living environment and mass media to cultivate their abilities of competitiveness. Therefore, this section will observe the differences between social networking in China and in Taiwan, to understand how they get touched in various society to form the pull or push forces for their parents.

#### **3.2.1 Social Convention and Living Conditions**

For Taiwanese students who transfer their study to China, they have left their comfortable circle to an unfamiliar environment. Because of the difference of formerly surroundings, the children can practice and experience more to come to maturity :

*In China, Taiwanese students become more mature it is because they stand on others' turf. They formerly stay in Taiwan easy and comfortable.  
(interview2009073102)*

*Children are still in the process of growth and adaptation. In China the parents can let kids get used to the new environment, find good schools for kids (that's why support fee exists), find good teachers for kids (like East China Normal University students). (interview2009072902)*

As a mother, she can pay more attention to their kids in China. Because in China the price of commodities is lower compared with Taiwan, so as parents can hire aunts to help household duties, parents can accompany with their kids more :

*Here in China we can hire people to do the cleaning chores. For example my colleague in Xiamen, he hires 5 aunts to do the household duties. One is to systematize kids' work and rest time. One is to take care of kids. One is to cook. One is to clean the house. The wife just needs to give orders. (interview2009072702)*

*From the aspect of consumption level, in 1994, to work in China is double pay than in Taiwan. The income increases suddenly and the expenditure is lower than in Taiwan. So as parents can accumulate more fortunes for kids to have a good starting. (interview2009072702)*

*In Taiwan I let my kids attend all kinds of courses but the expenditure is more expensive than in China. Here in Shanghai I still let my kid learn computer class, comics and animation, English and etc but they cost me fair price. (interview2009073101)*

*My kid has carefree personality so is will to participate in many learning groups such as gobang, karate class. The mixed-the-age courses can help my kid to resist compression. Take gobang class for instance, it is free. In China I have more time to spend with my kid and the class price is fair for me to have multiple choices. (interview2009073101)*

Some parents find the progress of Chinese society, diversification and globalization in China that makes them to approve of letting their children study in China :

*Around Hongqiao area in Shanghai, there are many financial organizations such as Korean firms or in Gu Bei district, there are many Taiwanese, Japanese and Korean businesspeople. In this big city we have diversification of lifestyles and the people we contact are more international. We have chances to get in touch with Russian, Japanese and*

*other foreigners. Compared with the hometown in Taichung, we can't be able to get touch with different things. Moreover Shanghai is not only competitive but with many financial opportunities here.*

*(interview2009073102)*

*In Shanghai, the facilities are more international, and easy to contact with foreigners. Like World Expo, we all need to use English and the whole Shanghai emphasizes on English and internationalization.*

*(interview2009073102)*

Mrs. Wu, her husband is working in traditional industry in China and there are many family members migrate to Shanghai continually, Mrs. Wu furthermore says :

*I had heard of various life experiences to kids is good but only when you can get involved in. In Shanghai, my kids can see more, know more and widen their knowledge, like Shanghai World Expo, Beijing Olympics, these international activities. (interview2009073001)*

*It's good to come to feel China, to put an end of prejudice, to see various experiences with an open mind, to blend the eyeshot, to be more competitive and active thinking. (interview2009073001)*

And then many Taiwanese businesspeople feel the emergence of Chinese economics to give them reflections of planning for their children's study :

*When everyone has no opportunity, it is imperative to go to Shanghai. For instance, the world is affected by financial tsunami but China still has 8 percent economic growth rate. (interview2009073001)*

In 1997, Mrs. Kao built up electrical machinery industry factory in Shenzhen. At first he had a LED industry company in Taiwan but he considered the interest of

supply chain so he decided to go to Shenzhen. In 2002 the whole family moved together to Shenzhen. Mr. Kao mentioned :

*The progress is very fast and the large market in China is very attractive. I am sure that in the near future, many Taiwanese need to find a position in China, especially the ones who major in electrical machinery. Since many factories including foreign company set up bases in China, many electrical machinery talents have to flow to China. But medical treatment, bio-technology, environmental protection and green technology are still potential in Taiwan. But the growth in China is with leaps and especially China has great capital and think tank, easily they will chase up with ours quickly. (interview2010012801)*

Mrs. Yang opens an artist's studio in Shanghai, after she brought her child to study in China, she found the progress of China and considers that joining in the advancement process is a way to cultivate the child's prospect :

*We adults bring kids with us to China where it is not developed as well as Taiwan, we have to give kids the prospects to look forward. Because China has the potential and we can witness and learn the procedure. It is a good thing for kids. If we want to go forward, there is much space to improve; if we have to go backward, we can still go back to Taiwan. China has progressed with leaps and bounds. (interview2009072901)*

Though China looks for new and quick as a whole atmosphere in social culture and living environment, there is some opposite points argued by a student who studies in international branch of Shanghai High School :

*I want to go back to Taiwan. Though I find the progress in China, I am afraid I will become stiff if I study university here. Moreover I want to study design field, comparatively Taiwan is much better than China in this*

*field. The thought and originality in Taiwan are more creative but in China it is stiff. (interview2009072904)*

From the above we could understand that it seems that study locally can sense the feeling of looking forward and striving upward from the aspect of the emergence of China, it is just like Taiwan twenty years ago. However, in some other aspects, as the interviewee mentioned law, creativity and art still await for progress in China. Generally speaking the society in China offers much advantages for children's competitiveness cultivation. Next section will explore the social mass media to know more if the media networking influences parents' decision over their children's study plan.

### 3.2.2 Mass media

Mass media has influence on children's growth to some extent. On one hand, the news reports are always topics of peer group; on the other hand, many students watch TV in their leisure time :

*Actually when you stay in China for a while, you find local students have quite good groundwork, like they can express their opinion well. The local TV programs present many quizzes even an adult doesn't know. The children's groundwork in China is better than Taiwan. (interview2009072901)*

*In Taiwan, my daughter often watches entertainment programs, like cartoon or soap dramas. But in China, when you turn on the TV, you can see many programs related to knowledge. I find the local children can talk about current events. My daughter wants to have topic with the local students hence she forces herself to understand more knowledgeable issues. From the aspect of competitiveness, I find it is better. (interview2009072903)*

Some parents have observed that news in China is more international, covers the

current issues globally. To compare with Taiwan's news, there is a big difference. Furthermore, the situation reflects on children's contact with international news :

*Taiwan is an island country and the news rarely includes global news. However in China, the news channels like CCTV9 or ICS, they broadcast global news in English and Chinese all day. There is more foreign news. As a mother, I find this is good for kids since the condition provides children broaden horizons. (interview2009073102)*

From the angle of children's social networks, Taiwanese parents mostly approve of their children's learning drive positively. They consider their children would become more international and competitive. However when they take future higher education or job market into consideration, what attitude will these Taiwanese parents hold is the point of next section.

### **3.3 Higher education and job obtainment**

When the market in China is bigger and bigger, one chairman of an advertisement company points out that for children's job market, local networking is meant to take into account :

*Take Master Kong for instance, in a very short time, the market share increases sharply. Take children's education or adaptation ability into account, good educational environment surely consists of networking. Let kids study in China, once they have one classmate to become a president of State Council in China and that will be more helpful than in Taiwan. Children's prospects need to be thought over. (interview2009072702)*

To combine the cross strait experiences of family, school and society, Taiwanese parents' plan of letting children study further or seek jobs in China weighs high. Mrs. Chen's husband was dispatched to work in Shanghai, she personally indicated :

*My husband and I both take a liking in big market and job opportunities in China. If my child studies here to have better networking and he understand local consumption style and living types, he will have beneficial assets for his future career. (interview2009072804)*

Mother Wu said that she just bought a house in Shanghai recently and it seemed to have no road back. They have family business in Shanghai and their family members have migrated to China. When she mentioned about her kids' study plan :

*We have stayed in China for 9 years and we plan to stay here in the future. (interview2009073001)*

Having real estate is the key reason to transfer children's study to China. Except for real estate, future career prospects also take into consideration. Mrs. Hsu's husband works as an travel study consultant in Shanghai. Mrs. Hsu presented her opinion toward her kids' study plan :

*The kids' father's working prospect is in China so do the kids'. We have bought a house in Chang-Ning district in Shanghai and plan to stay here. We will let our kids grow up and be educated in China. (interview2009073101)*

Mrs. Sun's two sons enter local colleges smoothly in China. One son majors in electrical machinery in Tong Ji University. Another one majors in oral surgery medical in Wu-Han University. Mrs. Sun's idea is as followed :

*There is no much room for progress in Taiwan but there is a wide space in China. Mr. Reboot said Taiwan is superior to China but last no more than one year. I find it is a pity for Taiwan. I will let my children know market*

*locates in China and if they have the ability, just keep on studying.*  
(interview2009073102)

Another real concern is military service problem. When Taiwanese parents' kids have the condition for military service, go back to Taiwan or not will become a no turn round decision :

*I have asked my child whether he wants to go back to Taiwan or stay in China to continue his college education. In the end we decide to stay in China. My child has local friends and if he stays in China he can do nothing but do his best. Since the military service problem, when he is 19 years old, he can't go back to Taiwan anymore. (interview2009073102)*

*My child is going to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> year student in senior high school. I haven't considered something far away but my child has the military service problem. If he goes abroad to study, I wish he can complete college in China, in order to make sure he has learnt more firmly.*  
(interview2009072801)

As the above two cases, for Taiwanese parents in China, they have the choice to let their children study abroad, except for studying in China or Taiwan. The decision mixes the concerns of dislike to stay in China or advantage to study abroad, that is the mixture of emotion and reality concerns :

*I wish to let my two daughters study in China, not to give up the Hong Kong-Macao-Taiwan examination. I hope she can complete her college education in China. After that I hope she can study abroad.*  
(interview2009072903)

*I plan to let my daughter study college in China. There are many colleges having cooperative relation with foreign colleges. Even the branches of*

*those international colleges have built up in China. There is one new system called 2-2 system, that is, you can study in China for two years and study abroad for two years. I find that is good. (interview2009072901)*

*I will try to let my son study senior high school courses locally and then let a foreign teacher to teach him the 3<sup>rd</sup> year curriculum in senior high school. I wish he can study college in foreign countries since I hope he can have a colorful university life. And we husband and wife plan to move back to Taiwan after finishing our work. (interview20090072902)*

However for Chairman Kao who has an electrical machinery company in Shenzhen, his idea of their children's future plan, he and his wife hold an open attitude, just depends on their kids' development :

*We feel us as nomadic people. We came to Shenzhen just for work. In the future, if our children have chances to study abroad, we will sell 60% of shares to go to foreign countries with our kids. If our children want to study college in Taiwan, we will move back to Taiwan altogether. If they study college in China, we will keep staying in China till our kids are able to be independent. (interview2010012801)*

As for these Taiwanese parents in China, what course to follow depends on the advantageous position of their children. Parents emotionally want to give their kids the best but have the various mixed rational concerns. For them, except for going back to Taiwan, let their kids study abroad is also a choice. What if their kids don't reject the environment in China, they will let their kids study locally. Therefore, from the aspect of children's study plan, we have found every parent has different inclination. In general, they mostly are willing to stay in China.

### **3.4 Family Influence**

Most Taiwanese businesspeople have to work in China all the year round and they wish to have family reunion so that bring their kids to China. As a result, the Taiwanese parents let their kids study in China and anticipate that their local personal network as social assets can enhance their kids' competitiveness :

*The reason that my son can attend the key elementary school is because of my husband's local relationship. He has relation with a high school principal that the principal helps my son to enter this key elementary school. (interview2009072902)*

*My husband's company has cooperative relationship with Shanghai Jiao Tong University affiliated elementary school so we let our kids come to China. (interview2009073001)*

*At that time the teacher knew that our kid could enter the key school on account of relationship so the teacher especially paid attention to my son. The head-teacher of the class asked the homeroom teacher and other teachers to reinforce my kid's study. In the class break time and lunch break, the teachers would ask my kid to the office to tutor in the materials he had left behind. (interview2009072902)*

From this section we can observe that under some conditions, children are brought with to China. Since their parents have networks locally that provides the kids a favorable studying environment. Though children stay in Taiwan or go to China mainly depends on parents' comprehensive arrangement, parents still try their best to select a better studying surroundings for the children, no matter in Taiwan or China. They arrange the educational environment seeking to secure a good future for their children, also intend ensuring their children's good competitiveness.

### *3.5 Brief summary*

Children's school life in China, obviously we find the challenging textbooks and reading materials and the fierce competition among local students. They all strive for outstanding. When educational reforms in Taiwan try to release students' pressure, to lessen the course materials, to advocate entrance higher education without exams, more and more people find the downward quality of Taiwanese college students even they worry about the actual strength of our ridgepole and beams in the future. Since China is in the phase of developing economics, the government also pays much attention to quality of teachers to enhance the education quality. Many excellent teachers are trained in a planned way and are supported by peer group in school. They are afforded with mental and material supports that more and more people are devoted to education. This situation provides all the students a good learning environment that among students, they all make efforts to become somebody. When the Taiwanese parents retrospect twenty or thirty years ago, there was this kind of aroma in Taiwan that everyone worked very hard. This phenomenon replay in China today, the parents can't help participating in this process and looking forward their children's development in China.

Influenced by peer group in China, the children become more enthusiastic than in Taiwan. Since the Taiwanese students in China want to catch up with local students in China, they think they can do as others do. The motivation of winning over the local students make Taiwanese students catch up with soon though in the very beginning they need to conquer the adaptation of simplified Chinese characters or mathematical groundwork. The emotion of unwilling to lose makes these Taiwanese students in China enhance their competitiveness unconsciously.

As far as higher education and job obtainment, according to Taiwanese parents' rational concern, there comes up different decision, such as staying in China with actual strength, studying abroad to improve English and etc. Mostly they follow their children's development smoothly and try to give their kids the best stage to show. If their children want to go back to Taiwan, they will approve of the decision. Mainly because the parents of this generation are aware of giving their children some reminds and suggestions, the final decision depends on their kids' interests and potential. Affected by rational and

emotional concerns, the parents have various ideas over their children's study plan. However basically they still encourage their children to stay in China or study abroad.

Overall, reunion of family, perfecting school education, social progress and future job market all create a supportive atmosphere for parents in China, to give them confidence to let their children have good competitiveness and study locally. When China is going to play an important role globally, Taiwanese parents in China will strengthen their trust for their kids studying locally. Next chapter we will take a close look at how character cultivation influences these parents' decision over their children's study plan. From the perspectives as the above mentioned, we will compare how character affects the parents' final decision.



#### **Chapter4. Analysis of Character Concern**

To compare with last chapter, this chapter examines the influence of family and social impact on Taiwanese parents' concern over their children's study plan. From the category of upbringing and good personality cultivation, we are conscious of parents' decision is deeply affected by how their kids' be molded. There is no second time for kids' growth and all parents wish their children to have good character. As a result, studying locally and interacting with local people in China, or even influenced gradually by social environment is not supportive for cultivating children's good moral personality. Parents have to seek some solutions to overcome the non-controllable circumstances. For instance, to center on family education or to select suitable schools are ways to nurture kids with correct values under the lower social quality surroundings. The ways parents choose to control are to anticipate their kids to have good moral values. That is, in the children's growth track, parents wish to leave them with good character influence. Here this paper views character education from two perspectives. One is inner-personal, that is ethics, morality and humanities cultivated manner; the other is intra-personal, that is culture standing and average standard. Ethics, morality and humanities cultivated manner is deep inside with perception. Culture standing is manifested in surface in everyday manners. Both are central aspects of character education. How the parents' intention of safeguarding their kids' good character cultivation to decide up their children's study plan will be the key point of this chapter.

Therefore, the interviewees are parents whose children have studied in China for more than one year. Moreover the Taiwanese businesspeople have comments on this issue or educators are interviewed to comprehend our understanding. The difference of character cultivation influences Taiwanese parents' consideration over their kids' study plan. Here under the perspectives of family and social impact, this chapter will analyze the findings with a brief summary.

#### **4.1 Family influence**

Many Taiwanese businesspeople in China leave their children in Taiwan because of the concern of the imperfect morality in China. Therefore mother and children stay in Taiwan and father works in China alone. Take Mr. Chu for instance, he has set up a lighter factory in Wenzhou and his wife runs a gift company in Taiwan :

*We have considered sending our children to study in Wenzhou but Wenzhou is just a second-class city. We also think about letting them study in Taiwanese Businessmen's School in Shanghai but they still need to get accommodation in school, only come home in the weekends, that's no big difference to stay kids in Taiwan. Moreover the father is really against the essential education in China, he thinks that Taiwan has better intellectual refinement. We emphasize greatly on kids' character and morality education. (interview2010012501)*

We can realize from the above example, many children are left in Taiwan to continue their education because of the concern of lower culture level in China. And the one-child policy makes many Chinese parents spoil their child that many Taiwanese parents worry that this situation could ruin their kids' correct moral values :

*I have visited relatives in China for many times. Because of the one-child policy, every child has bad habits, like they don't give precedence out of courtesy and they rush to pick up veggies without permission. The behavior makes me to ponder not to let my kids study in local schools for fear of learning those bad habits. I told my husband that cultivating our children with refinement is the priority to other knowledge, kids can still learn knowledge when they grow up but character and morality have to be learnt when they are little. (interview2010012801)*

Mr. Kao set up an electrical machinery factory in 1997. The whole family moved to Shenzhen altogether in 2002. Because Mrs. Kao concerned of their kids' character cultivation, they pick up the Taiwanese Businessmen's Dongguang School in the hope of letting their children contact with Taiwanese students.

*Taiwanese Businessmen's Dongguang School is an accommodation school. It takes two hours drive from our house in Shenzhen to school. My children accommodate in school and have contact with Taiwanese children that their cultural levels are similar. I am sure my kids will have better moral influence. (interview2010012801)*

And Taiwanese Businessmen's Dongguang School is praised itself with good development on character education, more details will be left to discuss more in the next school education section :

*We undertake the education by life education and character education. These two types of education are the main themes in our school. (interview2009080302)*

A great amount of parents in order to ensure their children's character cultivation, they let their kids study in Taiwanese Businessmen's School or international schools. There are parts of parents let their children study in local schools, therefore, undoubtedly family education means a lot. Many Taiwanese parents in China indicate that they need to make more efforts to tell their kids correct moral values in the hope of the children learning the good personality, not being influenced by the surroundings :

*We have to pay attention to our kids' character cultivation through family education. I reason things out for my children and spend more time and care more about my kids. (interview2009072804)*

*The public spirit in China is low and as parent we have to set a good example with our own conduct. I tell my kids to know what to do and what not to do to possess basic public spirits. (interview2009073001)*

*In China, the cultural level is not as good as in Taiwan. We don't just criticize the local environment but try to teach our kids what's correct and give them good concepts. (interview2009073101)*

*Labors are poor or spilt on the road, we tell our kids to be considerate. It is because these labors have no opportunity to accept education so that construct their habits that way. I let my kids understand how important education is. (interview2009073101)*

*The advantage of Taiwan is the living quality. Few years ago there were phlegm everywhere on the roads and we had to jump to avoid walking on. My sons was angry at this the badness of Chinese local people sometimes but I told them that they have to get used to the surroundings, not to ask the surroundings to adapt you. (interview2009073102)*

The condition that parents can take care of kids nearby strengthens the function of family education and upbringing children. Moreover, the family reunion creates the condensation feeling that the stable feeling could help children's good personality cultivation. The positive and warm family aroma provides a strong shield to safeguard for kids' good personality fostering :

*In China it is nuclear family style. This provides me more space to give consideration to two things--- to praise and to blame. Previously in Taiwan, my mother-in-law soothes my kids but I have to scold them. In China the relationship among my sons and me has improved and the tension released. I can have chances to let my husband know how to express our love to kids.*

*Though my husband is still busy at work, we as a whole family can stay together that we can sense a stable feeling. (interview2009072804)*

*At that time we chose to accompany with our children with family warmth. Our family seems as a life community that our children become more sensible. (interview2009073102)*

Exactly as said, the family stable feeling makes parents to sense their children to become better and better. The condensation as a whole family makes the kids more sensible. When I interviewed Mrs. Liu, her daughter accompanied with her, from time to time, they showed the intimate relationship in the process of conversation :

*I had to work in Taiwan and my kids were raised by their grandparents. Now in Shanghai I do not need to work so I can concentrate my attention to my kids. (interview2009072801)*

*I am a full time mother in Shanghai. The whole family members get together. I don't particularly discipline my children. They personally can obey the regulations and be well mannered mainly because we accompany beside kids. (interview2009072801)*

The stable feeling as a family and parents' setting good example with their own conduct play important roles in upbringing children. Many Taiwanese parents in China realize the immature of cultural quality in local society. As a whole, under the non-controllable circumstances, Taiwanese parents emphasize more on family education. They set good example with their own conduct to lead their kids to correct direction, to ensure their children's good character molding.

## 4.2 Social Impact

Taiwanese businessmen parents concern the influence of family and also society to ponder over their kids' study plan. It is obvious the Taiwanese children's character, morality cultivation is effected by local social culture and surroundings. Therefore, this section will observe the social networks in China to pull or push parents to bring their children with to study in China.

Many parents do not recognize humanity quality in China though this unapproved condition doesn't reject the possibility to let their kid study locally. But more or less the condition influences parents' concern over their children's study plan. In order to lessen the weakness of moral and personality degradation, the parents make more efforts to nurture their kids with correct values. The following interviewees all express there negative standpoint of local humanity quality :

*The local motorcyclists don't make their way for passerby. In Taiwan, it is always the pedestrians first. (interview2009072601)*

*Local people throw trash or spit randomly out of the window when taking public buses. I heard of someone was spit by others' phlegm on road. And I saw kids taking a number one and adults taking a number two along the roadside. (interview2009072801)*

*In China, the government wants to carry out the norm of walking left and standing right but it's very difficult to carry it out here. (interview2009072906)*

*I saw local people wear night-robess to go to department stores and I couldn't accept this and was astonished then. However for local people, they feel that their night-robess are their best clothes so they wear them to department stores. (interview2009072906)*

*I don't identify the local culture in China. When I came to Shanghai, I saw people sit on row to take a shower along the roadside. They spit at will and have no public spirit. (interview2009072804)*

*Take spitting for instance, the government has given orders that people are not allowed to spit. But after the period of the Olympic game, people do the same as before. Sometimes I feel strange that how can they have so much phlegm to spit. Hence I have to look down on the road to be careful from stepping on. (interview2009072804)*

Parents' impression on social environment will absolutely affect their children's reaction toward the surroundings, further more, to influence the tug-of-war of satisfaction between Taiwan and China. Under the strikes of correct values and character cultivation, children will especially miss the humanity environment in Taiwan :

*Every time my son goes back to Taiwan, he doesn't want to come back to China because of the attraction of culture and thoughts in Taiwan. The public spirit is quite good in Taiwan. (interview2009072902)*

*My kid said that it was comfortable to walk on the street in Taiwan when he went back to Taiwan last summer vacation. The mean quality in Taiwan is so nice. In China, the more bustling spots are, the more labor workers are. (interview2009072804)*

Mrs. Chen finds her son is fond of the humanity surroundings in Taiwan so she makes it as an incentive to encourage her son to pass entrance exam to Taiwan University, then he can go back to Taiwan. When the environmental quality is not that satisfying in China, many Taiwanese parents realize only when they personally can accept the local life, their kids can be able to accept as well. As far as some parents concerned, they teach their children to be tolerant the surroundings and to approve of the gradual local progress. Mrs. Huang thinks that it is in the process of building up humanity quality in China that it

needs time to promote. Such concepts can direct be passed on the children through family upbringing procedure :

*I find that Shanghai has progressed fast. Like World Expo and the Olympics events, the local government keeps on popularizing quality development and keeps on advertising. It is unalterable principle for us not to throw trash randomly but they need to be educated continuously. However if we retrospect Taiwan ten years ago, Taiwan is just the same as today's China. (interview2009072903)*

It needs time to enhance the living quality in China. Once the time is spanned, the improvement is possible. Mother Wu shows understanding for the condition :

*From the perspective of living standard, China-Taiwan-Japan is similar to a ladder, with higher quality than the preceding one. Actually it is like a tuft of salt tosses into a bottle of water (Taiwan) or a vat of water (China), the thickness definitely varies. China doesn't reach the level yet but if the time is lengthened, it will gain advancement. (interview2009073101)*

Taima even uses what they see and hear as the best authentic materials to build up children's character and values. More important of all, authentic materials are to mold the children's values but have unexpected outcomes.

*In 2003 in Shanghai, half foreign labors and half local labors slept on road because they had no air conditioners then. When my son and I saw the condition, I told him to have gratitude of what he had got. (interview2009073102)*

*Labors are poor and spit at will, as the situation, I educate my children to be considerate that they have the habits because of the environment. I also teach my kids the importance of education. (interview2009073101)*

*When we looked for a house then, we went to the cluster of labor area. I brought my kid to the area to let him see the labors' children to study by the street lights. I taught my son to cherish what he had and knew that people can rise from poverty to affluence. (interview2009073101)*

Though some parents hold positive attitudes toward future quality of China so they are will to bring their children to study locally. But there are still parents concerning the imperceptible influence on children's moral values. Mr. and Mrs. Chu decide up to let their kids stay in Taiwan, a more releasing education system they trust.

*The economic development is too fast to create upstarts that those people have bad sanitation habits and worse morality. We worry about our children being influenced so we let our kids continue education in Taiwan's trustful education system. (interview2010012501)*

Overall, almost every parent doubts the social environment in China to nurture their kids with good morality. In order to lessen the negative effect, they extraordinarily strengthen the family function to meet the expectation of children's possessing good character and moral values.

## 5. School Selection

The school children attend, that is composed of curriculum, teachers' quality, peer group and school culture, is selected by parents. The choice reflects parents' concern over their children's study plan. Therefore we can peek what these parents care for their kids' character or competitiveness from the perspective of picking up schools. This section will observe the sequence of ideas from school education to analyze the factors of school selection---stay in Taiwan or move to China. Generally, Taiwanese parents prefer staying their kids in Taiwan since they trust in Taiwanese education system. But what if they have to bring their kids with to China, they will assess each schools with the tendency to put their kids in average-quality Taiwanese Businessmen's School, international schools or private schools. This decision is to ensure their children's character and moral standard meet the parents' identification. Besides, the multiple school choices in China are niches for parents, like Taiwanese Businessmen's School, International School or local schools, their kids all have chance to enter. Compared with Taiwanese fixed pattern to enter studying-area school or private schools, in Taiwan they seem to have restricted choices.

### 5.1 Leave Children in Taiwan

Many Taiwanese Businesspeople leave their kids in Taiwan. On one hand, they are more familiar and trustful with Taiwanese education system. On the other hand they consider the nurture of children's moral values and character. Since some Taiwanese parents think that there is a big moral values gap between Taiwan and China, they would not take the risk to let their kids study in China. Mr. Chu has set up a lighter factory and sold into local market but when it comes to children's education, he doesn't want to bring his kids with to China. The main concern lays on spirit manners and character education :

*I have stayed in China for a long time but I am against Chinese fundamental education. I think that in Taiwan, spirit manners and quality is better. We parent care a lot about kids' character and moral personality*

*and we think that moral value cultivation is the most important before kids' high- school years. (interview2010012501)*

Furthermore, Mr. Chu mentioned as the economic development is so fast that many basic values still await to build up. I am worried that my kids learn those habits and customs. Otherwise the school he studies in Taipei is a very good school that sets my mood in ease. Mr. Chu also feels easy in mind when the kids are accompanied by his wife in Taiwan :

*Our school district is a star school district. We don't need to worry about the school's quality. In his extracurricular time, I feel okay to let him go out with his classmates. The teachers are all good. (interview2010012501)*

Besides Chairman Lin has run an advertisement company in Shanghai for 15 years, he also leaves his kids in Taiwan. Take his daughter's study plan for example, he chose good tradition girls' elementary and high schools. And her daughter now studies in a good national university in Taipei. In the process of their children's studying, parents try best to select good tradition school and the mother takes care of the kids in Taiwan. Up to now, Chairman Lin's daughter takes internship in his advertisement company in Shanghai every winter and summer vacation to keep track with the emerging China. Another example is that Jenny's parent have worked in China since 2002. Their two daughters are left in Taiwan. The parents selected good tradition girls' accommodation schools that their kids both were boarders only on the weekends the kids came home in Taichung city. They were looked after by their aunts, their mother's sisters, who lived nearby. Now the two daughters have attended in Taiwanese famous colleges and go to get together with their parents in Shanghai in winter and summer vacation.

From the above cases, in general, if Taiwanese parents leave their kids in Taiwan, they will still pay close attention to the school selection to ensure the school culture can mold kids good personality. Take Jenny's parent for instance, since the parent both are in China, they especially choose good culture lodging schools to safeguard their

daughters' moral cultivation.

In the fieldwork procedure, we have observed one example. Mr. Chao worked in ceramic tile industry in 1996 in Shanghai. From 1996 to 2004, his two elder sons studied in Taiwan only the little son was brought with to China in 2004. Mrs. Chao and their little son moved to Shanghai to stay with Mr. Chao. Mrs. Chao has profound feeling to compare the cross strait different learning environments :

*The thought and culture is more attractive in Taiwan, especially in Taipei city. Every time my son goes back to Taiwan for one month during his summer break, he doesn't want to come back to Shanghai and even wants to transfer school back to Taipei. (interview2009072902)*

Mrs. Chao didn't bring their elder sons to study in China because they performed well in Taiwan, no matter in the aspects of character quality or learning. The two elder sons are the best portraiture of creative and flexible thoughts to study in Taiwan. In 2004, when Mrs. Chao brought the little son with to China, in order to safeguard his moral personality, she chose a key primary school to expect the average quality of classmates :

*We let our little study in this key primary school. We could enter because my husband had relationship with a junior high school principal who made my son enter this key primary school. (interview2009072902)*

From the case we are going to continue next section that is to bring children with to China. As the above mentioned, most Taiwanese parents in China stay their kids in Taiwan because they feel easy in mind about Taiwanese education and culture, to avoid their children learning to cut in a line or spit. Besides if they really need to bring their kids with to China, how will they deal with the non-controllable circumstances to safeguard their kids' moral personality? Next section will analyze the concern of Taiwanese parents in China over their children's study plan.

## 5.2 Bring Children to China

From the cases we have collected, Taiwanese parents' arrangement for their children's study is deliberately considered and compared. Most Taiwanese parents once decide up to bring kids to China, they analyze which schools suits their kids cautiously. Take the great quantity page view website, *taimaclub.com*, for example, the Shanghai attending school discussion bulletin could send some messages to us to understand that every *Taima* anxiously wants to know how to pick up school. From the data conducted from the fieldwork, these interviewees' children are sent to four categories of schools---Taiwan Businessmen's schools, private school, international and key schools. The following content is to separate the four kinds of schools to investigate the behind factors of the parents' choices.

Firstly, the Taiwan Businessmen's School is the first choice. Take Taiwan Businessmen's Dongguan School for instance, it first opened its doors in 2000 to provide quality kindergarten, primary and secondary education to children of Taiwan businessmen's families in Dongguan, Guangzhou. It is determined to put an end to the problem of schooling of the children of Taiwan businessmen, and in turns promotes familial union and harmony so that Taiwan businessmen can focus on their businesses at hand without looking back. Since the Taiwan businessmen's school provides courses similar to Taiwan's and the peer group is Taiwan businessmen's children that make them have good adaptation.<sup>32</sup> The dedicated teaching staff nurtures student growth by establishing high and achievable goals in a caring learning environment. Mrs. Kao affirms Taiwan businessmen's school well :

*My kids can contact with Taiwanese students in Taiwan businessmen's school. It is good that the peer group and my kids have fairly quality. I am sure my kids can be nurtured well. (interview2010012801)*

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<sup>32</sup> Taiwan Businessmen's Dongguan School Website, available at: <http://www.td-school.org.cn/english/about2.htm>

When Mrs. Kao whose kids studies in Taiwan businessmen's school was asked her reflections of this decision, she replied :

*I feel that to let my kids study in Taiwan Businessmen's school is a right decision. Since there is much interaction of teachers and parents, the school cares about enrichment, life and character education. Moreover, parents of their classmates are easy-going, with the same level. (interview2010012801)*

In Taiwan, a great number of disciples in the metropolitan areas, they go forward to cram schools and buy dinner by themselves after school. When these kids leave school and gather around, it is unclear to know what friends they could meet and the popularity of mobile phones and Internet perplex the kids' social intercourse circle. Under such circumstances, parents have to accompany with and understand attentively. However the borders of Taiwan Businessmen's Donguan School, they live with regular work and rest schedule and have simple networks. From the perspectives, these conditions are niches from educators' and parents point of view :

*Except for establishing caring learning environment, the accommodation life provides students to participate in a team that brings them together and produce a revolutionary feeling. Besides, the school culture helps molding children's regular work and rest time. For example, they have classes till 5 p.m., after class the students gather together to play the basketball, rather surfing on the Internet. The school invests in providing rewarding extracurricular activities. Like my daughter has learnt to play the piano for 8 years. It seems impossible in Taiwan since only picking up demands much attention. (interview2010012801))*

*Taiwan Businessmen's School is a quite good learning environment. The high quality campus and beautiful surroundings is a place to nurture children to grow up blissfully. The students have strong bonds with each*

*other. They participate in a team and they can be brought more closely together. In education, students are to receive character and life education given the proper guidance and support. (interview2009080302)*

Though Taiwan Businessmen's School receives highly recommends by educators and some parents, there is also opposite voice. Chairman Wang expresses his opinion toward to the unsatisfying evaluation of Taiwan Businessmen's School :

*The condition is that the determination of this school is good but because all students are Taiwan businessmen's kids who are spoiled by parents. So that it seems as a group of young masters gather together that no teacher can discipline or blame them. (interview2009072702)*

The parents move back their steps because of the negative comments of Taiwan Businessmen's School. They are afraid if the "young master" atmosphere might have negative effect on their kids' character cultivation. Some parents also wish to stay their children with them, not to accommodate in school. Mixed the complicated reasons of questioning and distance, there extends another education arrangement, that is private school. The reason why Taiwanese parents choose private school is the concern of adaptation. They worry if their kids receive different treatment in local schools. Though the fee of private school is higher than local school, it is still affordable than Taiwan Businessmen's school.

To rush about on business and compare various schools, Taiwanese parents' final decision locates on private school mainly because of the average of quality. As far as these parents concerned, the students who can be able to enter a private school, their parents are mostly returned overseas Chinese with good quality. The principal and teachers in private school are polite and respect our kids. The Chen's family moved to Shanghai in 2002 and Mrs. Chen holds a positive attitude toward private prime school :

*The elementary school we chose for our son is a private school. He gets used to this school very well. He gets along with other classmates*

*harmoniously. I have joined in the story telling mothers group at school. We tell inspirational stories to kids to teach them how to behave well. Besides I personally have learnt a lot from the experience. (interview2009072804)*

Mrs. Huang, whose husband works in foodstuff industry, has expressed that she is satisfied with the Xiehe private school she chose for her daughters :

*My daughter transferred to Shanghai Xiehe preparation class. She is the 9<sup>th</sup> grade now. This is a private school run by Taiwanese. In my daughter's class, there are half of her classmates are Taiwanese people so she feels okay about adaptation. Their classmates' economic conditions are quite good that they are able to enter this school. (interview2009072903)*

As the above cases, there is one thing in common, that is their peer group's economic status is close. From this perspective, economic position relates with habits and culture and also closely linked with Taiwanese parents' identification of local people's humanity quality. For most Taiwanese parents, to choose economic and educational level close to theirs do set their mind at ease. Mr. Hsu migrated to Shanghai with the whole family in 2003, his wife picked up a public-owned but operated by private sector school, the reason to choose this one is nothing but close economic and social status :

*The school I selected for my kid is an Institute of Education Sciences affiliated elementary school. The classmates' family financial situations are all good. The labor workers' children have sifted out from this school. (interview2009073101)*

The choices of Taiwan Businessmen's School and private schools are based on the concerns of fair quality and friendly adaptation. We can observe from the tendency that these parents are weaving a protection net to filter worrying culture and habits, to isolate the low economic status local people, to avoid unacceptable normal orders. Take Mrs.

Yang for example, she has run an artist's studio in Shanghai, when their family migrated to Shanghai, she chose SMIC Private School :

*In my daughter's 7<sup>th</sup> grade, she transferred to Shanghai. She attended in SMIC Private School, Chinese Track elementary school. Most Taiwanese students attend this SMIC private school in Shanghai. This private school is run by Taiwanese people. It is established for SMIC engineers' children in Shanghai. (interview2009072901)*

SMIC Private School has public praise that it at first was founded for SMIC engineers who came to Shanghai with the consideration of their kids' education. Initially the purpose of the school was to provide a quality education for the children of foreign and domestic employees of SMIC, so the registered student body was limited to the children of company employees. In 2004 the school opened its doors to non-SMIC children, making its high-quality educational resources available to the society at large and receiving a warm welcome and positive appraisal from the wider community.<sup>33</sup> Taiwanese parents rest their mind at ease to let their kids study in the school. Since the background of their kids' classmates is quite good, some are returned overseas Chinese and the parents find the good quality of them. The selection of private school guarantees a higher, politeness and courtesy of surroundings. It is a way to eliminate negative impression of local people in Taiwanese parents' mind.

In 1998, Mr. Chou decided to go to China to seek for real estate market. As a result, whole family migrated together to Shanghai. Mr. Chou has one son and three daughters and the father has various study plans for each of them. The senior son has entered Shanghai University of Engineering Science. The senior daughter studies in Shanghai High School International Division and gets application of Penn State University recently. Another daughter studies in Dalian Maple Leaf Foreign Nationals School. The other daughter studies in Shanghai Pinghe Bilingual School. Mrs. Chou pays a lot attention to select the most appropriate school for each child. Similar to most Taiwanese parents in

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<sup>33</sup> SMIC Private School Website, available at: <http://www.smic-school.cn/>

China, Mrs. Chou doesn't identify local cultural standing and quality of life, therefore, to select private, international or international track schools are necessary. In the children's extracurricular time, they are easily attracted by things with Taiwan images and the kids are very into Taiwanese stuff.

Some Taiwanese parents choose local schools and pick up key schools particularly. Great majority of parents would like to let their kids enter so called key schools and be able to enter owing to some kind of relationship. Mrs. Chao's husband is engaged in ceramic tile industry for 12 years and when Mrs. Chao migrated to China with their little son in 2004, the son didn't perform well in the entrance exam :

*Our son could enter this key elementary school due to relationship. My husband acquainted with one junior high school principal and the principal helped us to find this key elementary school. The teachers are dedicated to teaching and caring my kids. (interview2009072902)*

The key schools indirectly guarantee dedicated teachers, good quality peer group and supportive school atmosphere. Owing to the trend that elite family trains up elite children in China. Mrs. Yang's daughter studies in a key senior high school in Shanghai. When Mrs. Yang recalled her memory of participating in parents' meeting, she found the high economic level background of each local student :

*You can imagine such a key school in Shanghai, every student who can enter is piled with strong economic background. Those students have tutors and are picked by drivers so you can imagine how wealthy they are. (interview2009072901)*

To echo the previous narration, most Taiwan businessmen parents recognize the high economic level local people, to view them with good habits and merits. On the contrary to the common impression of local people's lower living standard, once the local people have good social and financial level, Taiwanese parents can identify their quality. Therefore, to select key schools is to check on their children's moral character as well.

However, under fierce competition environment in China, some Taiwanese parents find a big drop of values. The definition of success in China is too narrow to lack of soft humanity part. Generally in China, success equals fame and wealth only. But for Taiwanese parents, life education, empathy and tolerance is essential to define success. The following interviewee observes the fashion of learning is the noblest of human pursuits in China and her peer group needs to care about nothing but studying. Compared with Taiwan education, in Taiwan we care much about life education comprehensively.

*The thinking pattern in China is that the only child's only mission is to study but does nothing else. For example, my classmate never does the housework at home, even to fold his own blanket. One summer vacation, he went to his mother's store to help but got serious scolds from his mother. (interview2009072905)*

Most Taiwanese parents hold a misgiving attitude to let their kids study in China, especially concerning character education. They try to ease off the negative moral effect by picking up suitable schools. Some parents are so concerned the Chinese education environment that they have to leave their children in Taiwan. Once they do bring their kids with to China, they think over many factors to decide up the school could cultivate their kids with good moral personality. Those schools are as mentioned Taiwan businessmen's school, private school, international school and key school. The decision helps them to isolate their kids from low quality local people, to meet close background groups and to check on education environment. It is seamless between school education atmosphere and children's character cultivation. From the above content, it reveals that character and moral education is not as advantageous as competitiveness in China. Many weaknesses such as living habits, snobbishness, lack of tolerance and empathy will make Taiwanese parents move back to let their kids accept education in China. Or Taiwanese parents in order to safeguard their kids' moral personality, they will carefully select schools.

## Chapter6. Conclusions

The tendency for Taiwanese businesspeople to let their children to study in China has been one of the most significant issues in journalism in recent years. The main contribution of this study is to explore the two factors---competitiveness and character, affecting perceptions of Taiwanese parents in China over their children's study plan. We approached actual Taiwanese businesspeople, parents, educators, who provided valuable information about competitiveness and character which influenced their perception and decision.

Firstly, when manpower and capital flows are landed in China. The decision of bringing kids to China is not only the concern of family reunion but also the investment of children's future. Going to China, the children will face more competitive learning environment and more international surroundings such as mass media, teachers and peer groups. It is speculated that the tendency of letting children study in China has been rising under the aroma of China's emergence. On nearly all of the indicators that we adopted, parents in China are approved of the competitiveness cultivation for their children. Secondly, from educators' point of view, more and more educators are aware of the education progress of China. Many principals-to-be go to China as a visiting mission to understand the cross strait education present situation. When they visit some local key schools, they are impressed by the Chinese students' expression ability and hard studying. The students who study in key schools have quite strong competitiveness to compare with our students. Thirdly, the Taiwanese businesspeople have found the important niche for children to study in China locally is the networks. When the world fixes its eyes upon China, the interaction with the locals is necessary for people from all walks of life to learn. Only when they know how to get together with, they can be able to have opportunities to run a business or invest locally. Especially China has distinctive national feature, particularly networks. Once you have good networking, things will go your way more smoothly. Last but not the least, according to the fieldwork conducted in Shanghai, many Taiwanese students study locally in China have an imperceptible feeling that they don't want to be left behind. So these students could pay more attention to study when stand on others' turf. They unconsciously know they have to work harder to stand firmly

in China. Unlike they study in Taiwan, they are in a comfortable area and do not strive up to go through the simplified character or challenging curriculum problems. Overall, internationalization, competitive studying environment, training up expression ability, building networks and mental influence to work at one's utmost locally construct these Taiwanese students' competitiveness that makes parents incline to let children study in China.

Notwithstanding such competitiveness approval of China, parents still concern local living and education environment to have unsupportive influence on their kids' character and moral personality development. Many Taiwanese businesspeople leave their kids in Taiwan just because of the concern of character cultivation. For most Taiwanese parents, they care more about children's character and moral personality and present a point that is since there is only one time for kids' growth, they should put children's moral personality and character in the first place. In China, the living environment is not satisfying because of the comprehensive quality still needs time to improve. Many behaviors and manners are not that proper from our views since Taiwanese people have gone through the enhancement of civilization. Though there is an advancement gradually but the level still is not as the same as ours. Except for the visual behavior or manners, many Taiwanese parents concern the intuitive ability to know right or wrong. Since China has opened up in 1990s, there is still a lot immature. We share different values in many aspects such as wealth and fame means almost everything to Chinese but not to Taiwanese. Even the scholar Liu Sun-chi, who has devoted to researching Chinese education for more than twenty years, when he is asked if he will send his children to study college in China, he ponders for a while and says no. He says that there is still mist for him to understand local education in China.<sup>34</sup> From the fieldwork conducted in Shanghai and Taipei, this paper finds that the parents care more about their children's character and moral personality cultivation. Our study finds that character is highly correlated with the parents' decision over their kids' study plan. Otherwise the parents have to bring their children to China; they will select schools very carefully to safeguard their kids' character and moral personality degradation.

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<sup>34</sup> Gai Bu Gai Dao Zhong Guo Nian Da Syue," (Shall We Study College in China?), Business Weekly, vol.1170(April. 26, 2010):124.

As a result, Taiwanese parents in China compromise between competitiveness and character. Combined with the trend of studying in China, the study plan for kids is cautiously arranged. That is, Taiwanese parents bring their kids to study in China but they definitely select schools for their children very carefully, not to let their children blend into local society completely. The study finds the parents would normally choose Taiwanese businessmen's school, international or private schools. The above mentioned schools guarantee the average economic level classmate that represent the students behave more adequately from Taiwanese people's point views. Since the elite family creates elite students, the classmates have better backgrounds. As for Taiwanese parents, they rest ease at the condition and are will to let children get in touch with these local students, implying for future networks. Still Taiwanese parents focus greatly on children's values cultivation by family education in order to ensure their kids moral personality. All in all, Taiwanese parents will pay attention to family education and also school selection to safeguard their children from character and personality degradation.

Education has been identified in sociological research as a catalyst of social, economic and ideational change.<sup>35</sup> What implications will the Taiwanese children study in China have on our next generation? From the fieldwork research, this paper find the hedge between Taiwan and China has vanished gradually particularly under the influence of soft medium---education. Taiwanese students to study in China are no more viewed as unusual or minority group. They have the local living experiences to enhance the mutual understanding of Taiwan and China. This experience becomes more prevalent when the group becomes larger. The hedge disappears gradually hence the discrimination towards China lowers slowly. Nowadays when we go into a Starbucks or restaurant in Taipei, we can hear people next to us talk about Shanghai experience; also when we are in Shanghai, we can meet many Taiwanese people who live, work or study locally. The boundary seems to dissolve. Character or competitiveness, the struggle among Taiwanese businessmen's concerns over their children study plan exists presently. However when the time is spanned, the struggle is not simply a problem for Taiwanese businesspeople over their children's study plan, but for much of the rest of the Taiwanese society such as economic development and politics condition as well.

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<sup>35</sup> See note 6.

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## Appendix I: Interview Outline

### Tug-of-war between Character and Competitiveness: *The Decision of Taiwanese Businessmen in China over Their Children's Study Plan*

Background of Interviewee: Name/Age/Education/Language

Job/Career of Interviewee: Industry/Position/Location/Working Experience

- The reason to work in China/how long has he/she stayed in China: Is it because of having no choice or at will to work in China? How long have you stayed in China? How often do you go back to Taiwan? Do you have real estate in China?
- The members who stay in China: Do you have any relatives stay with you in China? Do you have family members stay in Taiwan? Have you ever considered bringing your relatives together with to China?
- Economy Globalization: Does three-links and convenient traffic influence your decision of migration? Does Cross-Strait relationship influence the possibility of migrating to China? Do you think your job opportunity located in Taiwan, China or other countries? Does the transformation of globalization influence your decision of choosing where to settle down?
- The relationship with the local: Do you constantly keep in touch with the Mainlanders? Do you already have relatives migrate or locate in China? Does the migration of your relatives influence your decision of settling down in China? Do you have mainly Taiwanese businessmen community in China?

#### Children's Education :

- ➡The condition of children's study : Study in Taiwan/China? Do your children study in public or private school in Taiwan? Do your children study in local, international or Taiwan Businessmen's school in China?
- ➡The reason of the choice: What's the consideration to let your children study in Taiwan or China? Language/Culture/Recognition/Education System/Easy to Take Care/Future Competitiveness/Better Character Cultivation Environment

➡The prediction of Cross-Strait near future: Do you expect the job opportunity of your children will be in Taiwan, China or other countries? Do you predict you yourself have better job opportunity? What's your prediction of future developing trends of Taiwan and China?

**Children's Competitiveness :**

➡Education: In your opinion, the comparison of Taiwan and China education (system, curriculum, teacher, environment, advance to a higher school, learning resources), which is better? Does the comparison take into your consideration over your children's study plan?

➡Family: Do you think that children have different learning performance under different family structure compared with parent and grandparent rearing? Does this take into consideration over your children's study plan in Taiwan or China?

➡Society: In your opinion, do your children get adapted well to Taiwanese or Chinese society?

➡Same generation relationship: Do you think it is easier for your children to make good friends in Taiwan or China? Do your children often have interaction with the same Chinese generation in class or extracurricular activities?

➡Economic status: Are you children able to have better economic environment in Taiwan or China? Is it helpful for your children's taking class after school, learning resources and multi-media learning aids?

Character Concern: Do you find your children have better personality cultivation environment in Taiwan, Mainland China or others? When your children are recognized as the same behavior of Mainlanders, do you feel uncomfortable? Do you think your children can accept better cultural learning environment or not? Does the character of your children influence your decision over the children's study plan?

Career Plan: Do you consider settling down in the local, to view China as your lifelong working place? Do you consider investing real estate in China? What's your plan for your retirement, going back to Taiwan or migrate abroad?

## Appendix II: Interviewee Outline

<b>order</b>	<b>case number</b>	<b>anonymous</b>	<b>interview date</b>	<b>interview location</b>
01	2009072601	Mrs. Lee	2009.07.26	Shanghai
02	2009072701	Chairman Lin	2009.07.27	Shanghai
03	2009072702	Chairman Wang	2009.07.27	Shanghai
04	2009072801	Mrs. Liu	2009.07.28	Shanghai
05	2009072804	Mrs. Chen	2009.07.28	Shanghai
06	2009072901	Mrs. Yang	2009.07.29	Shanghai
07	2009072902	Mrs. Chao	2009.07.29	Shanghai
08	2009072903	Mrs. Huang	2009.07.29	Shanghai
09	2009072904	Vivian	2009.07.29	Shanghai
10	2009072905	Serene	2009.07.29	Shanghai
11	2009072906	Mrs. Chou	2009.07.29	Shanghai
12	2009073001	Mrs. Wu	2009.07.30	Shanghai
13	2009073002	Jenny	2009.07.30	Shanghai
14	2009073101	Mrs. Hsu	2009.07.31	Shanghai
15	2009073102	Mrs. Sun	2009.07.31	Shanghai
16	2009080302	Principal Hu	2009.08.03	Taipei
17	2010012501	Mrs. Chu	2010.01.25	Taipei
18	2010012801	Mr. and Mrs. Kao	2010.01.28	Taipei