# 科技部補助專題研究計畫成果報告
# 期末報告

## 境外教育、跨國文化資本與弱勢處境：向上流動或持久邊緣化？(第2年)

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中 文 摘 要 ： 這項研究計畫的目的，在於透過探究馬來西亞華裔學生在中國、日本、新加坡與台灣四國取得的國際學術資歷在價值與交換上的差異性，以彰顯學術資歷賦值（valuation）與文化資本的跨區域差異。同時，這項研究也探討在國外取得的學歷與文化資本對如馬來西亞華裔之少數族群來說，在社會流動上所具有的影響力。這項研究從留學中國、日本、新加坡與台灣的返國者中，透過立意抽樣以蒐集共62 個樣本並進行深入訪談。此外，研究者亦經由參與觀察和實物蒐集以瞭解校友團體間與團體內（以族群，國籍與畢業學校為基礎）的網絡聯繫，和校友會在馬來西亞社會所扮演的角色。

這項研究具有重要的理論與實證意義。第一，研究發現將可擴展人力資本與文化資本在概念上的應用性，並能對國際遷移、國際教育、族群研究、社會階層化等研究領域做出重要貢獻。第二，研究成果將可對亞洲政府與大學在發展與評估招募國際學生和高等教育國際化的相關政策上，提供重要參考。

中 文 關 鍵 詞 ： 國際學生、人力資本、文化資本、族群、國際遷移、國際教育、社會階層化

英 文 摘 要 ： This two-year study aims at illuminating the nuances of academic credential valuation and geographies of cultural capital through examining the variability in the value and exchange of international academic credentials Malaysian Chinese students acquired from China, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan. In this study I examines to what extent overseas education and cultural capital acquired overseas are useful for members of an ethnic minority such as Malaysian Chinese to engage in social mobility at home. Forty-eight Chinese Malaysian alumni who returned from China, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan would be sampled for in-depth interviews, with twelve interviewees from each host country. In addition, participant observation and unobtrusive measures will be adopted to collect data on networking among intra-group and inter-group alumni (based on ethnicity, nationality, and Alma Mater) and the role of international alumni associations in the Malaysian society. Data will be analyzed to build a grounded theory on the gradation of credential valuation in international education as well as the portability and transferability of transnational cultural capital.

The study will have important theoretical and empirical implications. First, the findings will expand the conceptual application of the theories of human capital and cultural capital and will make significant contribution to the fields of international migration, international education, race and ethnicity, and social stratification. Second, the results will provide an importance reference to the governments and universities in Asia in designing and

assessing their international student recruitment policies as well as internationalization strategies.

英文關鍵詞：international students, human capital, cultural capital, ethnicity, international migration, international education, social stratification

# Overseas Education, Transnational Cultural Capital, and Minority Status:

# Upward Mobility or Perpetual Marginalization?

# 境外教育，跨國文化資本，與弱勢處境：向上流動或持久邊緣化？

科技部專題研究計畫（**NSC102-2410-H-004-106-MY2**）

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# 中文摘要

這項研究計畫的目的，在於透過探究馬來西亞華裔學生在中國、日本、新加坡與台灣四國取得的國際學術資歷在價值與交換上的差異性，以彰顯學術資歷賦值（valuation）與文化資本的跨區域差異。同時，這項研究也探討在國外取得的學歷與文化資本對如馬來西亞華裔之少數族群來說，在社會流動上所具有的影響力。這項研究從留學中國、日本、新加坡與台灣的返國者中，透過立意抽樣以蒐集共 62 個樣本並進行深入訪談。此外，研究者亦經由參與觀察和實物蒐集以瞭解校友團體間與團體內的網絡聯繫，和跨國校友會在馬來西亞社會所扮演的角色。

研究結果顯示，國際教育在學歷賦值的差異化與文化資本的跨國可攜性受到下列因素之形塑：官方與社會認可、知識的可應用性、科技落差、正統性、市場需求與預期回饋、與內含文化資本（embodied cultural capital）的功能性價值。此外，海外資歷、技術與知識的可攜性以及對社會流動的效用，也受到跨國社會網絡、跨國生產鏈與區域經濟的中介性影響。本研究的發現，大致支持有關教育與遷移有利於社會流動的主張。但是，對馬來西亞華人而言，海外教育本身不足以使他們，或說服他們，去跨越馬來西亞社會中的水平性（有時亦包括垂直性）區隔。

關鍵字：國際學生、人力資本、文化資本、族群、國際遷移、國際教育、社會階層化

# Abstract

This two-year study aims at illuminating the nuances of academic credential valuation and geographies of cultural capital through examining the variability in the value and exchange of international academic credentials Malaysian Chinese graduates acquired from China, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan. It examined to what extent overseas education and cultural capital acquired overseas are useful for members of an ethnic minority such as Malaysian Chinese to engage in social mobility at home. Sixty-two Chinese Malaysian alumni who had returned from China, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan were interviewed. In addition, participant observation and unobtrusive measures were adopted to collect data on networking among intra-group and inter-group alumni and the role of transnational alumni associations in the Malaysian society.

The gradation of credential valuation in international education and the transnational portability of cultural capital were found to be shaped by official and social recognition, knowledge applicability, technological gap, authenticity, market demand and expected return, and the functional values of embodied cultural values. The portability of overseas credentials, knowledge, and skills as well as their efficacy on social mobility were further mediated by transnational social networks as well as transnational production networks and regional economies. The findings of this study generally affirm the claim that education and migration facilitate social mobility. Nevertheless, for Malaysian Chinese as an ethnic minority, overseas education was itself insufficient for them or to convince them to cross the horizontal (and sometimes also vertical) divides in the stratified Malaysian society.

Keywords: international students, human capital, cultural capital, ethnicity, international migration, international education, social stratification.

## *Introduction*

More and more students are inspired to seek training abroad for diversified linguistic skills and cultural knowledge that are highly demanded in the age of globalization (OECD, 2001, 2004). Asia has long been the largest market for transnational educational enterprises (Altbach, 2004). This region not only sends the largest numbers of students worldwide for overseas education, the number and the share of Asian students in the total international student population are also rapidly growing from 52% in 2009 to 70% in 2010 (OECD, 2011, 2012). While many Asian students aim for North America as their destination for overseas study, they also compose the majority of the international student body in the Asian region (IOM, 2009). The high proportion of intra-regional student mobility not only shows the growing importance of regional mobility over global mobility but also signifies this region as an emerging contender in the global student market (OECD, 2011; Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). Indeed, in recent years, several East Asian countries, particularly Japan, Korea, Singapore, China, and Taiwan, have strived to recruit international students and to increase their global prominence as education hubs (Mok, 2006). The efforts of higher education institutions (HEIs) in these Asian countries also represent the possibility of alternative and competing forms and substance of knowledge in which international students may find increasing value. To the extent that such efforts are successful, a new space of expanding educational opportunities is created which is distinctive from the established education markets of North America, Europe and Australia.

According to human capital theory, just as financial capital seeks the highest return on investment, so too does each unit of human capital move to wherever the best return can be achieved (Schultz, 1962; Sjaastad, 1962; Stalker, 1994; Chen, 1995). Migration thus becomes a means of personal investment that will be made only if returns for the behavior are justified, and the decision to move is made often with the goal of enhanced opportunities for social mobility (Ma, 2000). Higher education also produces “positional goods” (Hirsch, 1976) that provide access to social prestige and greater economic resources, thus is an essential element in cultural capital. According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital has three subtypes: “institutionalized” cultural

capital based on academic qualification; “embodied” cultural capital based on the attributes and characteristics one actively acquires or passively inherits; and “objectified” cultural capital based on material artifacts. The active accumulation of cultural capital is the principal means utilized by upper- and middle-class for class reproduction (Bourdieu, 1996; Brown, 1995).

One important reason why people seek overseas education is the perceived higher value and quality that overseas education entails vis-à-vis its local equivalent or the lack of local opportunities for education (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2001; 2002). In this aspect, the attainment of overseas degrees may enhance the chance in upward social mobility (Barber et al., 1984; Li and Bray, 2007), for international credentials entail both valuable human capital and cultural capital that can be subsequently converted into economic capital and social status (Bourdieu, 1986; Waters and Brooks, 2010). With the growing competition in the domestic education system, middle-class families increasingly look to overseas education to expand their opportunities for the accumulation of valuable cultural capital and as an alternative means for securing class reproduction (Ong and Nonini, 1997; Waters, 2007). Factors such as recognition of foreign degrees, the academic reputation of particular institutions or programs, the limitations of tertiary education in the home country, restrictive university admission policies at home, and future employment and residency opportunities were found to play an important part in students’ decision to study abroad and their choices of country and institution (Brooks and Waters, 2010; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; OECD, 2011; Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). A closer look at these factors reveals underlying links between overseas higher education and the accumulation of positional goods as well as between utility maximization of human capital investment and positive outcomes of social mobility.

While much of current literature has pointed out the disparity in the value and exchange of academic credentials acquired between home and overseas, our understanding of the geographic variegation in the value and exchange of academic credentials should not be limited only on the local-foreign dichotomous scale. The flow of international students has been directed largely from the developing countries in the periphery to the Western industrialized countries at the center of the global

academic system (Altbach, 2006; Chen and Barnett, 2000). Furthermore, the direction and magnitude of international student mobility as well the practices of internationalization of HEIs worldwide often manifest the way cultural (such as Anglo-American academic systems and traditions as well as popular culture) and linguistic (such as English) hegemony operates on the international higher education market (Brock-Utne, 2007; Kerklaan, Moreira, and Boersma. 2008). At the macro level, the inequality of the international higher education is salient; the developed world dominates the production and dissemination of knowledge as well as provides leadership in research and teaching, while the developing countries attracted limited numbers of students and experience student outflows due to limited economic and academic capacities. At the micro level, these phenomena suggest the differential preferences for academic credentials and cultural capital obtained from different host countries. Such differential preferences may not be fully elucidated on the simple local-foreign dichotomous scale or even be in coherence with the hierarchical order of host countries in the world system. Indeed, some have contended that the success of the overseas graduates were uneven (e.g., Brooks et al., 2012); it does not guarantee a particular life trajectory but represents a "vital conjuncture" (Johnson-Hanks, 2002) through which further transformations and mobility are developed. Water (2006: 188) also pointed to a need for “a geographically sensitive account of cultural capital and the relative value of the overseas degree at different spatial scales.” As Asia rises in global influence and becomes increasingly competitive in the global market of higher education (Altbach and Balán, 2007), how the “credentials currency” earned from different destinations in this region are being valued and exchanged at home deserves special attention.

In response to this call, this study examined the variation in the value and portability of overseas education. For this purpose, Malaysian Chinese graduates who had obtained higher education from China, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan and returned to Malaysia were sampled and interviewed, supplemented by data collected from field observation. This study investigated the linkage between the choice of overseas education and post-graduation pathways, compared the values (including instrumental and symbolic) of international academic credentials endorsed by

different institutions and countries, and assessed the portability and transferability of transnational cultural capital (including degrees, language skills, cultural knowledge and traits) accumulated across geographies. Furthermore, the study included the element of ethnicity for important reasons. Ethnicity has long been a central theme in migration studies since the monumental work *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* by William Issac Thomas and Florian Znanieski (1918/1920), and yet it has largely been overlooked in the research on transnational student mobility. International students are mostly viewed and categorized based on the countries that they represent (either by origin or by destination). Those studies on international students with minority status (e.g., Hedberg and Kepsu, 2012; 王世英，蘇玉龍，許雅惠，2006; 方慧，1996；黃璉華，1996；洪淑倫，2009; 夏誠華，2006；張琦，2008；楊國煌，2003) often focused on these students' motivations to study abroad and experiences overseas but nothing beyond their journey abroad as international students. Since race has been found to carry a significant impact on the accumulation of cultural capital and social mobility (James, 2012), it is important to examine the meaning and value of overseas education for international students with minority status and the effect of transnational cultural capital on these students' experiences in social mobility when they return home. As an ethnic minority, the ethnic Chinese has strived to retain its language and culture in the Malaysian society. Although Malaysian Chinese is generally economically better off than the dominant Malays, they have experienced suppression and discrimination in political, social, and educational spheres. Therefore, this study also observed to what extent education and cultural capital acquired overseas are useful for members of an ethnic minority such as Malaysian Chinese to engage in social mobility at in their home country.

With reference to Malaysia as the base where students move out to pursue overseas education and return with overseas academic credentials and cultural knowledge, these four host countries - China, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan - were chosen with an aim to establish a typology of transnational cultural capital in illuminating the nuances of academic credential valuation and geographies of cultural capital in the Asian region. This typology were conceptualized with four dimensions: the comparative status of the host country in the world system; the compatibility of

the host country's higher education system with the global models of world-class universities, the cultural distance between the host country and the sending country, and the official stance of the sending country toward higher education degrees granted by institutions in the host country (see Table 1).

First, these four countries occupy different statuses in the world capitalist system. While Japan, Singapore and Taiwan are ahead of Malaysia in the global race of socio-economic development, China is a step behind Malaysia. For years, Japan was Asia's most powerful economy. Since mid- 1990s, however, Singapore surpassed Japan to take the lead in the region. According to International Monetary Fund (2016), in 2015 Singapore had the highest GDP per capita ($52,888) in Asia (and was 7th in the world ranking), Japan was ranked 3rd in the region (and was 25th in the world ranking) ($32,479), Taiwan was ranked 5th in the region (and was 36th in the world ranking) ($22,263), Malaysia was ranked 6th in the region (and was 64th in the world ranking) ($9,501), and China was ranked 7th in the region (and was 76th in the world ranking) ($8,141).

Second, these four countries vary in education systems and language environments. In this aspect, Singapore represents the Anglo-American prototype in Asia. Despite its multiethnic heritage and multilingual environment, Singapore is an English-speaking country with strong British and American influence on its culture and education system. On the other hand, Japan, Taiwan and China are generally monolingual (with Japanese or Mandarin Chinese as their respective dominant language) with more domestically oriented academic systems.

Third, the cultural distances between Malaysia and these societies are different. Singapore and Malaysia used to belong to the same country. Although Singapore is more cosmopolitan in comparison with Malaysia, they still share very similar cultural heritages and both adopt English as (at least one of) the official language(s). With Malaysian Chinese as the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia and the preservation of Chinese culture by Malaysian Chinese in the Malaysian society, China and Taiwan can be considered culturally proximate to Malaysia, especially to Malaysian Chinese (Ma, 2014). In view of the ethno-linguistic and cultural

similarities between Taiwan and the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, the migration pattern of Malaysian Chinese students to China and Taiwan may be considered as a cultural expression of the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia (Hedberg and Kepsu, 2012). Comparatively, Japan represents a greater cultural distance from the Malaysian society.

Fourth, the Malaysian government holds different stances toward the credentials granted by HEIs in these four countries. Singapore represents one end of the spectrum, on which degrees offered by all Singaporean HEIs are recognized by the Malaysian government. Next is Japan. The degrees offered by most Japanese HEIs are officially acknowledged in Malaysia.[1] In the 1980s, inspired by the Japan's economic miracle, the Malaysian government initiated programs to emulate from Japan's experience in development and started taking a more welcoming stance toward Japanese degrees and trainings (Ishikawa 2009, McConnell 2008). In 1981, the Malaysian government started implementing the "Look East Policy." The Prime Minister Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad attributed the remarkable development of Japan to not only its academic and technical knowledge but also to its work ethics and management capability. Therefore, he initiated this program as part of the nation-building project to send Malaysian students to Japan to learn not only knowledge and skills but also the work ethics and discipline styles.[2] Upon the return of these students, what they've learned in Japan will help them in contributing to the social and economic development of Malaysia (Embassy of Japan in Malaysia, n.d.).

China and Taiwan represent the third and fourth types on the spectrum. Before WWII, China was considered by many Malaysian Chinese as a destination for higher education. After WWII, however, the door from Malaya to China was closed by the colonial British government. Mainly for that reason, Nanyang University was established in southern Malaya (now Singapore) by Malaysian Chinese, led by a prominent business man Tan Lark Sye (陳六使). Those who wished to pursue higher

[1] In 2016, degrees offered by 164 Japanese HEIs were recognized and authenticated by Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA).

[2] For similar reasons, the "Look East Policy" also sends Malaysian students to Korea. (Embassy of Japan in Malaysia, n.d.).

education in Chinese could choose to study at Nanyang University or to study in Taiwan.[3] Malaysia and China resumed official interactions after the diplomatic tie was reestablished in 1974, and both signed a Memorandum of Understand on Cooperation in the Field of Education (〈教育交流諒解備忘錄〉) in 1997 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2015). Since then, the door to the HEIs in China was officially re-opened to Malaysian students, and the majority of Malaysian student population in China was Malaysian Chinese. Student mobility to China was further encouraged by another MOU signed by China and Malaysian on cooperation in education in 2009. However, the degrees granted by Chinese HEIs were not officially recognized by Malaysia until 2012, and the recognition was limited only in academic terms. Without the authentication by Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA), Chinese degrees were not recognized in the public sector.[4]

Malaysian student mobility to Taiwan started in the 1950s, and the trend continued despite the end of diplomatic relationship between Malaysia and Taiwan in 1974. Due to the long history of the overseas Chinese student recruitment policy implemented by the Taiwanese government as well as the operation of the Chinese independent school system in Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese students, especially those who study in Chinese independent schools (獨立中學), are familiar with the education system in Taiwan. Similarly to the case of China, the Malaysian government did not acknowledge the degrees and diplomas granted by Chinese HEIs (with the exception of degrees granted in medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy), and this long-held policy was finally abolished only recently in August of 2012 (中央廣播電台, 2012). Similarly to China, Taiwan's degrees are only recognized in academic terms and not authenticated by JPA. Therefore, Taiwanese degrees still cannot be accepted in the public sector in Malaysia.

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[3] From 1955 to 1980, Nanyang University (a.k.a. Nanta) stood the only Chinese university in the world outside of Chinese societies. It was forced to close in 1980 by the Singaporean government, and on the campus Nanyang Technological University was established (馬來亞南洋大學校友會，2002).

[4] The degrees granted by Chinese HEIs were recognized by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (Agensi, Kelayakan Malaysia, MQA) but were not authenticated by JPA. Therefore, those with Chinese degrees still could not work in the public sector in Malaysia.

Table 1: A Proposed Typology of Host Countries in Generating Transnational Cultural Capital

| | China | Japan | Singapore | Taiwan |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status in the world system | Periphery | Core | Core | Semi-Periphery |
| Compatibility of the domestic higher education system with the global HE models | No | No | Yes | No |
| Cultural distance between the host country and the sending country | Median-short (mainstream)<br><br>Short<br>(Malaysian Chinese) | Long | Short | Median-short<br>(Mainstream)<br><br>Short (Ethnic Chinese community) |
| Official stance of the sending country toward HE degrees granted by institutions in the host country | Negative (before 2012)<br><br>Negative-Neutral (after 2012) | Neutral-Negative | Positive | Negative<br>(before 2012)<br><br>Negative-Neutral (after 2012) |

***The Migration-Education Nexus in Asia***

With the advent of globalization, an increasing number of universities in Asia are undergoing rapid transformations, which are manifested in the changes of universities' structure, composition and objectives. One particular objective is internationalization, and often by means of recruiting greater numbers of international students. While the enrollment of international students in Asian universities is not a new phenomenon, the speed, scale and intensity at which this is taking place are.

Asia's top universities also face the challenges arising from global positioning and global branding. Education brands in Asia focused mostly on building and consolidating particular kinds of national identities. However, the branding of universities is not simply limited to official rhetoric but rather circulated through interpersonal networks among current, former and potential students, those industries associated with educational mobility, and employers (Collins, 2008; Waters, 2006).

Certainly, students and their families utilize such imaginaries in their choices of destination but they also reproduce them as means of enhancing the cultural capital associated with qualifications after graduation. The potential for a mismatch of expectations is ever-present if brand value does not translate into positive learning experiences and outcomes for students or beneficial human and cultural capitals for alumni. This suggests a need to examine how university and national brand aspirations are translated into meaningful experiences for their international students as well as valuable international academic credentials for overseas graduates.

Moreover, education and migration have long been regarded and used as familial and sociopolitical strategies of social mobility in many Asian societies. Today, overseas education continues to be regarded as a positioning strategy to improve individual and family prospects and to contribute to the competitive advantage of nation states (Yeoh, Huang and Lam, 2005). International education also carries various symbolic connotations. Mitchell (1997) argued that international education in East Asia symbolizes the possession of more than just a credential, representing a whole host of cultural and personified traits that are essential to professional success in a global economy. Ong (1999) also pointed out the significance of a "Western university degree" in an Asian context, describing it as the "ultimate symbolic capital necessary for global mobility" (ibid, 90). Ong's (2004) work on flexible citizenship suggests that international students studying in US universities aspire towards a transnationalized "flexible citizenship" that is characterized by hyper-mobility and the desire and potential for capital accumulation and power over others. Similarly, Waters' (2006) study used Sklair's (2001) definition of a transnational capitalist class (TCC) and Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital and *habitus* to argue that transnational education is used as a class strategy by elites to counter moves by governments to democratize access into higher education. More needs to be done to understand how transnational education is implicated in social mobility and elite formation and consolidation in Asia.

### *Ethnic Chinese in Malaysia*

Ethnic Chinese formed a significant minority group in Malaysia, constituting approximately 30 percent of the total population over the past decades (Suryadinata, 2004). Mass Chinese immigration to the Straits Settlements (Penang, Malacca, and Singapore) began in the nineteenth century as a result of both voluntary and forced migration. Since then the Chinese started to establish their own schools, business and cultural clubs, and dialect-based associations to safeguard their culture and commercial interests. By the 1920s, a Chinese community emerged in British Malaysia, and the source of its strength in maintaining Chineseness was the ties among the local ethnic Chinese, with other Chinese groups in Southeast Asia, and with those in Mainland China (Shamsul, 2004).

Wang (1970, 2001) suggested that the Chinese overseas can be divided into three groups (not including the fourth group of those who did not identify themselves as ethnic Chinese), and these three groups represented three stages of changing identities: *huaqiao* (overseas Chinese), *huaren* (ethnic Chinese), and *huayi* (Chinese descent). In the past, most Chinese overseas considered themselves *huaqiao*. They maintained links with the politics of China and identified with the destiny of China. Moreover, since both the Chinese and the British colonial government claimed Malaysian Chinese as their subjects, these Chinese often possessed dual citizenship (Shamsul, 2004). After World War II, the independent Malaysia and its subsequent nation-building challenged the local Chinese to choose their citizenship. The majority of the Malaysian Chinese took on the new Malaysian national identity, and faced the prospect of transforming their culture-based community into one that was required to pledge its loyalty to the new nation-state (Wang, 2004). Nevertheless, the drive to preserve a strong communal Chinese identity remained very strong. Consequently, the Chinese in post-war Malaysia were gradually transformed into *huaren* or *huayi* (Suryadinata, 2004). Post-war Chinese identity and Chineseness of Malaysia Chinese is in effect based on their ethic language and culture imparted mainly through education, and the Chinese schools are perceived as the custodian of Chinese language and culture in Malaysia (Shamsul, 2004; Tan, 1997). Although Malay is the

main teaching medium and that no access to higher learning was possible without it, students can choose to attend government-approved Chinese-language primary schools (Wang, 2001).

In addition to primary schools, there are sixty Chinese privately-funded "independent" high schools in Malaysia. The United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia (UCSCAM, better known as *Dong Jiao Zon*; 董教總) coordinates the curriculum adopted by these schools and organizes the annual Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) standardized test (UCSCAM, n.d). The diplomas of Chinese independent schools are acknowledged by domestic non-government sectors and foreign institutions, and yet they are not recognized by the Malaysian government.

Through institutional norms and systems, the Malaysian state has aimed at maintaining or even reinforcing the ethnic and cultural boundaries between the Chinese minority and the Malay majority (Freedman, 2001). It is noted that for the past forty years, Malaysia has been the only Asian country that officially discriminate against a division of its population in regards to higher education. As an act for affirmative action, a racial quota system for university admissions was set through the National Economic Policy and National Education Policy to assist the ethnic Malays (Hing, 2004). By allocating generous admission opportunities to ethnic Malay students, the policy has essentially been geared toward improving the social mobility of the country's majority Malays over their financially dominant Chinese counterparts, an imbalance created during the British colonial period. As a result, though Chinese Malaysians account for approximately 30 percent of the country's overall population, by some estimates they constitute less than 10 percent of the students at national universities (Cohen, 2001). Faced with deprived opportunities to enter into local universities and the expanding global market of higher education, many ethnic Chinese resort to overseas education.

For those who return, are they more likely to be recognized because of their overseas degrees, training, and languages and therefore can move upward on the ladders of socially stratified system? Or, would international credentials not sufficient

for these ethnic Chinese to overcome the institutional and social hurdles at home and the experiences overseas make them more alienated from the dominant Malay society? Would the credentials acquired from HEIs in different host countries vary in their transnational portability and transferability, thus affecting their "market" values in the home country after being brought back by these alumni? If so, what are the mechanisms behind the process of differentiation? These inquiries are both theoretical and empirical, and for which it is the aim of this study to find answers.

***Research Questions***

The objective of this study is to investigate the variation in the value and exchange of international academic credentials Malaysian Chinese students acquired from China, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan, and how the variegation in the portability of overseas education affects the social mobility of these ethnic Chinese in Malaysia. Specifically, the proposed study aims at investigating the following questions:

1. How are the international credentials (including degrees, training, language skills and cultural knowledge) earned through overseas education in these four countries different in their values in the Malaysian society?

2. Based on the aforementioned proposed typology of transnational cultural capital, four factors pertaining to the host country are considered in examining the value and exchange of international academic credentials: the comparative status of the host country in the world system; the compatibility of the host country's higher education system with the global models of world-class universities, the cultural distance between the host country and the sending country, and the official stance of the sending country toward higher education degrees granted by institutions in the host country. How do these four factors operate in shaping the values, as well as the portability and transferability of the values, of cultural capital accumulated through overseas education? Are there any other important factors involved?

3. For the ethnic Chinese as a minority in Malaysia, to what extent do international academic credentials affect their social mobility and class reproduction?

Can they rely on transnational cultural capital for upward social mobility, or are they subjected to perpetual marginalization even with overseas education?

### *Research Design and Methods*

Based on my past experiences in conducting research on student transnational mobility and the internationalization of higher education in several Asian countries, the Principal Investigator (PI) was fully aware of the impossibility to conduct a representative alumni survey for this study. First, the responsibility to manage public relations with alumni is very often not centralized compared to the recruitment and management of international students at the university level. In Taiwan, Japan and China, the databases for international alumni are usually scattered in different departments and colleges, and the university's alumni office usually has very limited information of international alumni. The universities in Singapore generally are more active in managing the relation with their alumni, including the international ones. However, since it is much more difficult for a university to maintain the contact information of alumni (not to mention international alumni) than of current students, the university's data of alumni may still be outdated to a certain extent. Second, even if universities have the contact information of their international alumni, they are not willing to disclose such information to outside researchers or to help contact alumni for research unrelated to their own university objectives for confidentiality issues. Therefore, qualitative research methods would be the most feasible option to study the topic. Moreover, the examination of the life histories of Chinese Malaysian alumni would divulge the factors affecting their overseas education experiences, post-graduation migration plans and decisions, their participation in the transnational student migrant network, and the ways their international academic credentials, overseas experiences, and minority status shape their chances in social mobility at home. To serve this purpose, qualitative methods would be the best choice.

This study utilized in-depth interviewing, participant observation, and unobtrusive measures for data collection. Fieldwork was conducted from January of 2014 to July of 2015. Fifty-nine interviews were conducted with sixty-two Malaysian

Chinese alumni of universities in China, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan as well as relevant organizational leaders (such as alumni associations) (see Table 2). Two universities were selected in China, Taiwan and Singapore respectively: Peking University and Xiamen University in China, National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, and National Taiwan University and National Chengchi University in Taiwan. These universities were selected mainly for their academic reputation in their respective countries as well as in Malaysia. In the case of China, Xiamen University was selected for other reasons as well. First, due to the geographical expanse, Xiamen University was strategically chosen as a reputable representative among the universities in southern China to pair with Peking University from the north. Second, it was in Fujian Province, a major sending region of overseas Chinese to Southeast Asia. To many Malaysian Chinese whose ancestors came from Fujian, it may be considered a cultural home and even a family root. Third, Xiamen University has a unique link with Malaysia. It was the first university established in China by overseas Chinese. The funder Tan Kah Kee (陳嘉庚) was a successful Malaysian Chinese tycoon who created his business success in Malaya (now Malaysia and Singapore). Moreover, it is the first Chinese university to have a campus abroad, and its overseas campus is located in Selangor, Malaysia.[5] In the case of Japan, due to the small number of Malaysian Chinese graduates from Japanese universities and the dispersion of Malaysian Chinese students among Japanese HEIs, it was not viable to identify two universities for sampling Japanese graduates. Therefore, Japanese graduates were not limited in their alma maters in the sampling process.

[5] The Malaysian campus of Xiamen University started operation in February of 2016.

Table 2: The Distribution of Sample Profile of Respondents in In-Depth Interviews

| Sources of Informants | | Fieldwork | | | | | | | | Total number of informants (interviews) | Note |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | I (January, 2014) | | II (June-July, 2014) | | III (January-February, 2015) | | IV (July, 2015) | | | |
| | | Interviews | Informants | Interviews | Informants | Interviews | Informants | Interviews | Informants | | |
| CA | XMU alumni and university alumni association representative | | | 5 | 5 | | | | | 5(5) | |
| | PKU alumni and university alumni association representative | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3*** | | | 7(7) | ***including one Chinese language student. For the purpose of this study, this case was excluded from analysis in this report. |
| TW | NTU alumni and university alumni association representative | 7 | 7* | | | | | | | 7(7) | |
| | NCCU alumni and university alumni association representative | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | 6(6) | |
| JP | University alumni | | | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | | | 13(13) | |
| | College alumni | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SG | NUS alumni and university alumni association representative | 4 | 4** | 4 | 4 | | | | | 8(8) | **including one SG stayer. |
| | NUS alumni and university alumni association representative | | | | | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4** | 7(7) | ** including one SG stayer. |
| | Nantah alumni and university alumni association representative | 1 | 3 | | | | | | | 3(1) | The informants went to study at Nantah at the time when Singapore was still part of Malaysia. These cases thus could not be considered as studying overseas. The data collected from this group was used as a reference and not included in the main analysis of this report. |
| Representative of a Taiwan graduates' association in Malaysia | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 1(1) | FAATUM |
| Representative of a China graduates' association in Malaysia | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 1(1) | AGUCCM |
| Representative of a Japan graduates' association in Malaysia | | 1 | 1* | | | | | | | 1* (1) | JAGAM<br>* The informant was also included in the other category. |
| Representative of other relative organizations | | 1 | 4 | | | | | | | 4(1) | Don Zong (United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia) |
| Total Number of Interviews and Informants | | 23 | 27 | 19 | 19 | 12 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 62 (informants)<br>59 (interviews) | |

For the purpose of this study, Kuala Lumpur (KL) metropolitan area was chosen as the main field site. KL is not only the capital city of Malaysia but also contains the largest population in comparison with other cities in Malaysia. Since international graduates tend to be more cosmopolitan (Janes, 2011), KL was the ideal research site for this study. It was also learned from the early stay of fieldwork that a large Malaysian Chinese population concentrated in a nearby city Klang, and it was common to commute between KL and Klang (approximately a 40-minute drive). Therefore, some interviews were conducted in Klang as well. It was further revealed from the fieldwork that, unlike Chinese, Japanese and Taiwanese alumni who mostly returned to Malaysia, most Singaporean alumni chose to stay in Singapore after their graduation. Two interviews were thus conducted in Singapore (one with an NUS alumnus and the other with an NTU alumnus) to learn about their reasons and experiences of staying in Singapore as a reference. When the sample was drawn, field of training, gender, age, and employment status at the time of interview were taken into account. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and later transcribed for analysis, and field notes were taken in and after interviews. Appendix 1 outlines the questions designed for in-depth interviews.

Among the sample of 62 respondents, 55 were returned graduates, 1 was a returned language learner, 2 were Singapore-trained graduates residing in Singapore, 1 was an organizational leader trained in an non-Asian country, 3 were Nanyang University graduates (see Table 2). There were a few interviewees who had received tertiary trainings from more than one of these four countries. These cases were categorized based on the country where their highest degrees were granted.

Other than in-depth interviews, participant observation and unobtrusive measures were employed to collect data on networking among intra-group and inter-group alumni (based on ethnicity, nationality, and alma mater) as well the role of international alumni associations in the Malaysian society. The PI visited the offices of the alumni associations and relevant organizations, attended official events organized by alumni associations and unofficial gatherings of alumni groups, and observed work settings of interviewees whenever possible. Relevant documents and

publications were collected onsite from organizations and individuals to enrich the understanding of the field data.

This study followed the guidelines of research ethics during the fieldwork to respect and protect the rights of all research participants. Grounded theory method was applied in data analysis.

### *Overseas Education and Market Positioning*

We tried with field data to answer the first research question raised in this study: How are the international credentials earned through overseas education in these four countries different in their market values in the Malaysian society? With the field data of fifty-five returned alumni, the linkage between overseas education and market positioning was investigated. Data coding and categorization were initially conducted individually by the PI and two research staff and later triangulated and synthesized through group discussions. All but one of these fifty-five alumni from these four countries were employed or self-employed at the time of fieldwork, and that only one case had voluntarily left the labor market to fulfill family responsibilities. We compared these returned overseas graduates from these four countries in their latest occupations and types of employers at the time of interviews in order to locate their respective positions in the Malaysian labor market. Three market segments emerged from field data: the mainstream market, the niche market, and the marginalized market. The mainstream market refers to the market that produces and provides products and services that appeal and are available to the general public. It consists of the primary economy comprised mainly of major corporations in which overseas graduates were employed, and small businesses of which overseas graduates were owners. The niche market refers to a focused and targetable segment of the market, in which specific products and services were provided to the targeted audience in order to fulfill the needs and requirements not met by the mainstream market. The marginalized market refers to the market segment that is subsidiary, and employment in this segment is often unstable and has a limited (if any) prospect for promotion.

Table 3 indicates the comparison of returned graduates from these four countries in the distribution of market segments:

Table 3: Returned Graduates in the Distribution of Market Segments

| | Mainstream Market | | Ethnically-oriented Niche Market | Marginalized Market |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Primary Economy | Small Business | | |
| China (12, 100%) | ●●●●●●☸● (8, 66.7%) | ● (1, 8.3%) | ●●☸ (3, 25%) | |
| Japan (14, 100%) | ●●●●●●●● (8, 64.3%) | ●●● (3, 21.4%) | ●● (2, 14.3%) | ☸ (1, 7.1%) |
| Singapore (13, 100%) | ●●●●●●●●●☸●● (12, 92.3%) | ● (1, 7.7%) | | |
| Taiwan (15, 100%) | ●☸☸●●●●● (8, 53.3%) | ●●●● (4, 26.7%) | ●●☸ (3, 20%) | |

Market segment/type:

●Ethnic Chinese corporation employer ●Chinese/Taiwanese oriented niche market

●Japanese corporation employer ● Japanese oriented niche market

●Singaporean corporation employer

Labor market sector:

○ Formal sector ☸Informal sector

Table 3 shows some important similarities and differences in the market segments in which overseas graduates from these four countries participated. In terms of similarities, the vast majority of these four groups worked in the mainstream market (from 75% to 92.3%) as well as in the formal sector (from 80% to 92.9%). Likewise, all four groups were shy away from the marginalized market. Furthermore, regardless of the country where they earned their degrees, these Asian-trained

overseas alumni generally were very unlikely to cross the cultural or ethnic boundary to work in a corporation that maintained cultural or economical ties, or was based in another Asian country that was not the country where they had studied. They tended to work in either international (multinational) or local businesses (or run their local businesses), or were employed by companies that had cultural and/or economic links with the countries where they had studied (for example, a Japan-trained alumnus worked at a Japanese firm). In cases which they worked in ethically-oriented niche markets, these markets either were local ones that were culturally similar to their study countries or targeted directly at their study countries. In addition, all organizations/corporations in the niche markets served as the role of a cultural, economic, or political "bridge" between Malaysia and these study countries.

The comparison also indicates different patterns of market positioning engaged by these four groups. First, the Singaporean alumni group demonstrated an overwhelmingly high concentration in the primary economy; all but one (92.3%) were employed in the primary economy, and the only exception worked in an ethnically-oriented niche market (a teacher in a Chinese high school). Second, comparing with other groups working in the mainstream market, Taiwanese alumni were least likely to work in the primary economy (53.3%) and yet most likely to run small businesses (26.7%). Third, comparing with the Japan- and Singapore-trained alumni, those returned from China and Taiwan were more likely to work in the ethnically-oriented niche market (25% and 20% respectively) that targeted specifically toward local ethnic Chinese. Fourth, among those who worked in the primary economy, Taiwanese alumni had a very high percentage (50%) working in the corporations run or owned by ethnic Chinese. The percentage of Japan-trained alumni working in the Japanese corporations were also very high; close to half (44.4%) of those who worked in the primary economy were employed by Japanese corporations. Fifth, among those who worked in ethnic or foreign organization/corporations in the mainstream market, the Japan- and Singapore-trained alumni tended to work in the organizations/corporations founded and financed by their respective study countries (e.g., founded or owned by Japanese or Singaporeans). On the other hand, the China and Taiwan-trained alumni tended to work in the organizations/corporations that were

locally owned and run by Malaysian Chinese. Sixth, although most of these four groups of Asian-trained overseas graduates worked in the formal sector, the Taiwanese alumni (20%) were far more likely than those returned from China (8.3%), Japan (7.1%) and Singapore (7.7%) to work in the informal sector.

### *Academic Training and Career Trajectory*

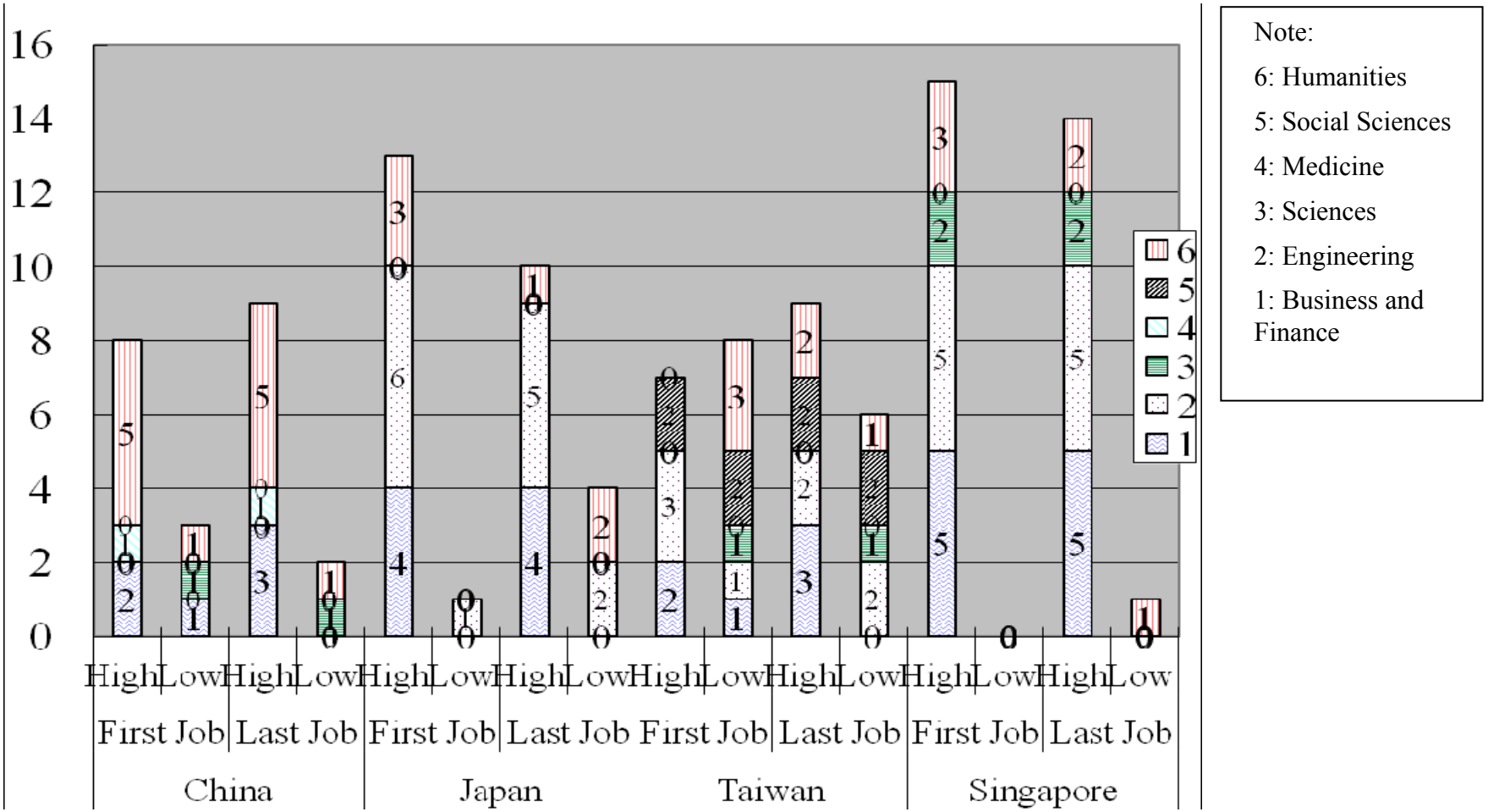
We investigated the linkage between educational trainings and career trajectories by examining the extent to which respondents' first and latest full-time employments correspond with their disciplines in training (for the highest received degree). Again, data coding and categorization were initially conducted individually by the PI and two research staff and later triangulated and synthesized through group discussions. Fifty-six alumni from these four countries were included in this analysis.

Figure 1 illuminated the comparisons among these four groups in silhouette, and some interesting findings are noted here. First, on the spectrum of relevance between academic training and employment, the Singapore-trained graduates were located on the right end of the spectrum illustrating the highest degree of relevance between education backgrounds and field of employment; all informants' first employments after graduation were in fields that were highly relevant to their academic trainings, and all but one informants stayed this way till their latest employments. The Japan-educated group came second, showing a similar pattern with a lesser degree of relevance between educational trainings and fields of employment. All but one informant's first jobs were highly relevant to their academic trainings. Although some informants later left behind their areas of academic trainings to work in other fields, more than half still stayed working in highly relevant fields. The China-trained group followed, nevertheless leaning somewhat toward the left end of the spectrum and illuminating a relatively low relevance between academic training and employment. Although two-third of China-trained informants initially worked in fields that were highly relevant to their academic trainings, one-third of informants' first jobs were not related to their tertiary trainings. However, unlike the Singapore-trained and Japan-trained groups experiencing the slightly decreasing relevance between

academic training the employment over their career trajectories, the China-trained group demonstrated a slight increase in relevance between academic training and employment over time; more informants worked in fields that were highly related to their academic trainings in their latest jobs than in their first jobs. The Taiwan-trained group showed a pattern similar to the China-trained group and yet with a lower relevance between academic training and employment, especially at the beginning of their career trajectories. Less than half initially worked in fields that were related to their academic trainings education backgrounds, and the relevance between academic training and employment increased slightly at the later stage of their career trajectories.

These four groups further demonstrated different patterns in academic fields (Figure 1). Both the Japan-educated and Singapore-educated groups were heavily concentrated in business, finance, and engineering. Half of those who had studied in China were in humanities. The Taiwan-educated group was relatively evenly distributed in various disciplines, including business and finance, engineering, sciences, social sciences, and humanities. A closer look at those who had studied in humanities in these four groups, the ones in the China-educated and Taiwan-educated groups were mainly in Chinese studies or history, the ones in the Japan-educated group were mainly in Japanese studies, and the ones in the Singapore-educated group were mainly in Chinese studies.

Figure 1: Degree of relevance between overseas graduates' educational training and employment, by study country



***Factors Affecting the Transferability of Overseas "Credentials Currency"***

The portability of overseas education hinges on the values ascribed to qualification and experiences earned overseas. The ascription of the values incurred from overseas education, or the exchange rate of overseas "credentials currency" at home, rest upon several factors. In this section, we will discuss how these factors affect the transferability of overseas "credentials currency".

Recognition

Whether or not overseas education and trainings can be recognized at home, and how easily and widely they are recognized, often strongly influence degree holders' employment opportunities and channels of employment. Recognition of overseas credentials involves *official recognition* by the home government and professional associations, and *social recognition* by employers and the general public at home. Recognition, especially social recognition, was not only built on the reputation of the HEI from which credentials were granted; it was also shaped by the cultural distance between home and study countries as well as the status of the study country in the strata of knowledge production in the capitalist world system.

For those who had graduated from NUS or NTU in Singapore, their degrees/diplomas were not only officially and socially recognized but considered prestigious at home. The prestige attached with their degrees was based on the perceptions that these institutions were highly competitive, and that Singapore was a more developed country. None of my interviewees encountered any difficulty in finding employment at home, though none were employed in the government sector. Many mentioned their experiences of earning special attention at job interviews, receiving recognition from colleagues and supervisors at work, and among friends and family. For example,

> 033:(NUS 學歷在找工作時)有很大幫助啦，而且如果你是 KL 找工作，NUS 的，我覺得 NUS 的文憑蠻值錢很好用，我那時候剛回.. ... 然後有些工作就是直接看到你是 NUS 文憑直接給你 offer... 在

面試的當中，就說：嗯這個是 NUS 的文憑。所以就感覺到 NUS 的文憑，還是蠻有價值的。

（An NUS alumnus）

001：上司他都會說：你新加坡國立大學回來的，會比較...就算我做一點點比較好的東西，他會覺得哦，因爲我是那裏回來的，所以我在這一方面比較好。因爲我，現在我的工作吧是要分析他們的financial report，然後以前我是從來沒有學過這個東西的，然後我回來這裡，我大概用了很快的時間，我就學會了，然後他就會說：哦，no wonder因爲你是新加坡回來的，你可以學得這麼快。.....(NUS)有個很響亮的名字，就是從那個大學畢業的話，就是說你是一個很smart的學生。.....

馬：在金融界當中，新大畢業的，就你的觀察，大家的一般的評價是怎樣？

001：是真的比較好。

（An NUS alumnus）

002：學歷其實有幫助啦我承認，因為我去的這三間剛好都是蠻名牌的大學。我老闆也看到了，很多人都看到了，他們都覺得說誒，你是名牌大學出來的。而且，在親戚間啊，我媽媽也有比較面子之類的。這都是有享受到它的那個qualification。

（An NUS alumnus）

048: .....You said you were graduate from NTU, no one will question your credential.

Ma: So it's like a guarantee, like...

048: It's like a guarantee, because they know. It's such a good university... I'm talking about engineering... I'm talking about business and companies. They know all the NTU graduates can do the work. If I see an NTU, which I don't see any, none of them is coming back to work, in my firm yet. If I see any NTU, I would grab him. I would've grabbed him. And among some of my clients, some of them are from NTU, I can see. (An NTU-Singapore alumnus)

Another interviewee who had gone to Taiwan for university education and later to NTU in Singapore for his Master's study attributed the different recognition these two degrees would receive in Malaysia to the disparity in social recognition in level of study, HEI, and study country:

055：應該這樣子說吧，我去 NTU 的話，我做著碩士，我學著做，我老師教我做研究的本領，這個一定的。第二個的話，至少我……ok 我還在馬來西亞現在，我告訴人家我是 XX 大學畢業的，他會覺得 XX 大學就是...尤其是 60 歲以上的， XX 大學這個，你那時候去 XX 大學肯定是很差勁的，才去 XX 大學。然後你只要跟他講碩士新加坡 NTU 畢業的，那麼怎麼說?他就會覺得你一定成績很好才去新加坡，對，因為怎樣講?因為你要在一個社會生存，你一定要怎麼說 prepare 能夠說，怎麼說能夠滿足那個社會生態的那個條件，然後 NTU 就是其中一個。

The experiences of the Japan-educated group demonstrated a somewhat different pattern of recognition received for their overseas credentials. Like the Singapore-educated group, none of the Japan-educated interviewee worked in the government-affiliated institutions in spite of the fact that their degrees were mostly officially recognized in Malaysia. However, most of the Japan-educated interviewees mentioned that the academic credentials and Japanese language ability they acquired from Japan, and in some cases the working experiences earned in Japan, helped them win impressions, recognition, and job opportunities especially from Japanese and in Japanese companies. An interviewee said:

Ma: When you think back, how did your degree you earned from XXX help you or did it help you in anyway?

025: I think it could have be any degree...

Ma: Not necessarily from XXX?

025: No, it could have been any degree, but I appreciated the fact that it was from Japan because I think, because I could speak Japanese, I came from a good university so I could get good opportunities in Panasonic and in Kao. I was given a lot of opportunities because of who I was, what I knew, what I could do, you know. So I was always given special, what do you call the...my boss always looked at me differently.

(A Japan-educated graduate)

Comparing with Singapore, Japan is more distant from Malaysia in terms of culture, language, and education system. Nevertheless, the transferability of the "credentials currency" acquired from Japan was high within the Japanese network because the appraisal system adopted was compatible with that in Japan. Therefore, as insiders, they could tell the "true value" of these credentials. For example, some interviewees stated that Japanese could appreciate more the degrees earned from prestigious universities in Japan:

Ma: Since both of you graduated from very prestigious universities, how do you think that your degree, did your degree help you in any way for example finding you employment, or...?

027a: Yes, especially when I came back to Malaysia, when I meet Japanese right? When they hear about my university, they were very impressed.

Ma: So it was the same with you?

027b: Yes. I think is still important.

Ma: How about for people who graduated from like not so prestigious universities but from Japan?

027a: Uhh, because in Japan system they do not see like for example, in Malaysia here they have this CGPA system where they have the point system, in Japan they do not see that, because they have no point system, it's just from which university you graduate.

Ma: So the university is like your nametag?

027b: Yes, correct.

(Japan-educated graduates)

Some Taiwan-educated graduates encountered the challenge on the job market for missing the official recognition at home. For a long time, the Malaysian government did not recognize the degrees and diplomas granted by Taiwanese higher education institutions with the exception of degrees granted by 18 programs in Taiwan in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine（星洲日報，2013）. The establishment of the Federation of Alumni Associations of Taiwan University, Malaysia (FAATUM) was mainly to advocate, as the official representative for all alumni association of Taiwan's universities in Malaysia, for official recognition for

degrees earned in Taiwan. After Malaysia joined Washington Accord in 2009 - two years after Taiwan in 2007, the Alumni Association of National Cheng Kung University of Malaysia and FAATUM took the initiative in gaining official recognition of engineering degrees granted by Taiwan's HEIs through the international accreditation system. In 2011, the Board of Engineers, Malaysia (BEM) acknowledged the recognition of engineering degrees accredited by Taiwan's engineering programs endorsed by the Institute of Engineering Education, Taiwan (IEET).[6]

Although the Malaysian government announced in July of 2012 that the degrees granted by Taiwanese HEIs would be recognized by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (Agensi, Kelayakan Malaysia, MQA), this recognition was only in academic terms. Except the degrees granted by the 18 programs in degrees in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine, Taiwanese degrees have yet to be authenticated by the Public Service Department of Malaysia (Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam Malaysia; JPA). Therefore, many of those with Taiwanese degrees still could not work in the government sector in Malaysia.

Partly due to the lack of official recognition, Taiwan was often not considered as a proper destination for overseas education. A few interviewees did mention the opposition from friends and family for their choice to study in Taiwan. For example, one interviewee explained her choice for studying in Taiwan:

> 007: .....衡量之下覺得，既然我出國學費比（在本地念私立大學）便宜，而且我人又可以見識外國的文化，那我還是出國好了，對啊。然後就是出國前其實還...怎麼說，就是跟家長在聊的時候，“喔，到台灣好像感覺不是很好。”不好的原因就是他們覺得馬來西亞政府不承認台灣的（學歷），在那個時候啦。這只是政府部門不承認而已，可是私人自己的都 OK，對所以就毅然去。
>
> 馬: 所以那時候家長有提醒你台灣學歷不承認的事情。
>
> 007:嗯，對！

[6] BEM recognized the engieeering degrees granted after 2004 by the engineering tertiary programs accredited by IEET.

馬: 可是對你來講並不會阻礙你去台灣唸書。

007:嗯！對！那時候覺得說我想要跟別人不一樣，呵呵呵，我覺得就是年少的時候，想法就覺得說：“如果我有機會可以出去的話，那為何不出去?”

（An NCCU alumnus）

Nevertheless, all of the Taiwan-educated interviewees stated that the lack of official recognition for their Taiwan-earned degrees was not a concern either in their choice to study in Taiwan or in their job search upon return home. They were not interested in working in the government sector, and with degrees earned from Taiwan they could still work in the private sector.

011:我覺得（台灣學歷有沒有被承認）沒有差別，因爲承不承認是政府的事情，就是因爲之前他們講什麼不承認，其實他們沒有講說是政府不承認叻，還是說私人界不承認。其實主要的原因是政府不承認，可是私人界承認。可是，大多數台灣回來的基本上我覺得啦，多半都不是想要在政府企業上班。(馬：所以他們也不在乎？）對，基本上都是在私人企業上班比較多。(馬：所以你那時候去台灣的時候，知道台灣學歷不被承認的事嗎？）哦，這我不懂。(馬：你不知道？）這我不懂。(馬：那你知道的時候，你有覺得怎麼樣嗎？）我也沒有怎樣。(馬：也不會覺得怎樣啊？）因爲我覺得那個是政府之間的事情，因爲私人企業是賺錢嘛，你厲害我管你，我不管你是從哪裏畢業的，你只要可以給我賺錢，我就收你，所以基本上不會影響到我。

（An NTU-Taiwan alumnus）

Although none of the Taiwan-educated interviewees worked or had wished to work in the government, many acknowledged that partly because of the lack of official recognition, the degrees they had acquired from Taiwan was not so widely recognizable and even was undervalued on the job market. One interviewee who had acquired undergraduate training in Taiwan and later received an MA degree from Harvard compared the values of these two degrees on the job market, in both Malaysia and in Singapore:

017: 還好有 Harvard（的學歷）講真的！如果我只是用台灣 degree 回來的話，我覺得在馬來西亞他們還是會歧視，因為台灣文憑他們不承認，馬來西亞普遍上找工作他們會把台灣（學歷）grade（得）比較低，新加坡也是一樣。…我是去那邊是申請 employment pass，就是 work permit，又不是申請 PR。（他們）只要看到我 Harvard 文憑，馬上就換（成申請 PR）表格了。……在教育教育界裡面，你的學歷還是很重要！

（An NCCU alumnus）

As a result, underemployment was not uncommon among Taiwan-educated graduates, especially in the early days (before the mid-1980s):

020：（回來之後）剛開始的話是…其實那個時候留臺畢業生…也不只是留臺畢業生，其實那時候整個經濟環境情況不是那麼好，所以很多大學畢業生的話回來的話找工作不容易，那其實找到工作的話薪水都很低啊，……那個時候留臺生的話還算是比較處境比較淒慘一點，因為學位不（被）承認。在那個時候來說的話，一些企業來說他們在面試啊或者在錄取聘請的時候，他們開的條件的話比一般其他大學來得低一點……在一些產業來說可能會。比如說我大哥他剛回來的時候，原來他想要說找一份在吉隆坡做到的工作，離家近。那他去面試的時候有一些大人物會說：「哦！你台灣畢業的。」他說，一般上本地大學或者英國畢業的是這個薪水，台灣畢業是這樣的一個薪水，就比較低，那我哥哥聽到之後覺得非常不合理，因為他覺得他工作經驗夠嘛，所以他就不接受了。那個時候因為整個周遭環境就是經濟不景，那個算經濟不景的時候，留臺畢業生回來，工程師畢業回來的時候，你要去找工程師的工作的話有一些公司借這個機會在打壓，他說：「哦，工程師的職位我們沒有了，一個好像說那種監工的那些，supervisor 的那些，你願不願意做？」所以那時候很多回來的話沒辦法，就去……工程師畢業，四年的工程師回來當一個supervisor的那些職位。……之後來說的話我倒覺得說也許今天，以今天來說的話這個就沒問題了，啊我們這個問題就不大。

(A Taiwanese alumni association leader)

Over the years, the social recognition of Taiwan-earned degrees seemed improved, but still limited among those who were familiar with Taiwan and its education system:

003：我去臺灣之前我已經知道臺灣文憑是馬來西亞政府不接受的，但是我的目標不是政府單位……不care，私人機構。哎呀，什麼接受不接受，工作能力最重要嘛！……私人企業他要聘請你，你是大學畢業生。然後你的文憑是臺灣，對啦！臺灣可能他覺得比較low class，然後美國比較high class，或者是歐洲、Australia比較high class。不然沒關係啊！

……

馬：那你覺得比如說你在這裡包括你自己找工作或你自己就業的經驗，你覺得臺大的學歷會在這裡被recognize的情況是怎樣？

003：非常高。基本上你都不用說你什麼科系。你哪裡畢業啊?哇臺大，哇！華人界……在Abc的，可能他們也okay，National Taiwan University他們都有聽過，所以爲什麼名字，我們講學校的名字……響亮很重要。

（An NTU-Taiwan alumnus)

The lack of recognition on overseas academic credentials not only affects an individual's first steps in his or her career trajectory but also shapes the propensity in self-employment. In the case of Taiwan-educated graduates, the relative lack of recognition of their overseas "credentials currency" at home can be an important factor encouraging them into entrepreneurship. To them, self-employment can be a good solution to pave an alternative path for upward social mobility from the one embedded in the corporative culture emphasizing impressive education backgrounds and the reputation of HEIs from which degrees were earned. This explains the high inclination of self-employment among Taiwan-educated graduates in both the mainstream and niche markets as shown earlier in Figure 1. This was well elaborated in the interview with a Taiwanese alumni association leader:

020：也因為留臺學位不受承認，變成說我覺得留臺人就因為這個被打壓那種感覺，反而說大家整個在工作方面來說的話會比較拼搏，就是說那種打拼精神的話比一般的話做得更好。……其實在私人界的話現在……我們發現，其實學位不受承認其實也造成另外一股好現象。

馬：怎麼說呢？

020：有很多就學位不受承認，有一些就，大機構你沒有去，那有一些像我這樣的話我就到一些中小型企業裡面去做，因為說我的工作我所負責的東西是很廣的，什麼都做，那以後我自己要出來創業的時候，我駕輕就熟，我什麼都可以做得了。

馬：就是什麼都會了。

020：對，所以你會發現到馬來西亞很多中小企業的老闆，很多留臺人。

馬：哦，是嗎？

020：很多！留臺人自己創業很多，留臺人自己創業的很多！那有一些其他的話如果說學位承認的有一些到大機構裡面的話，職位是很不錯，越做越高的話薪水應該也很舒適，可是在一個那麼舒適的環境之下的話，你可能就是不想動，意思是說做到退休。那留台人可能就是說，我覺得我能力還能夠表現，所以我覺得我所得到的那種待遇好像並不符合我的付出的話，你會覺得：好！我出來創業。結果很多出來創業的留臺人很多，而且很多做得很（好）。所以我們常說，你如果真的去問留臺人，大部份人說學位承認不承認對你也沒有什麼影響或者沒什麼感覺，他們應該說沒問題的。

(A Taiwanese alumni association leader)

Within the ethnic Chinese community, especially among those who are familiar with the education system and culture of Taiwan, the credentials accumulated in Taiwan are more easily recognizable. For example, one interviewee shared his positive experience in job application with his NTU degree earned from Taiwan:

018: 我覺得基本上找工作都蠻順利的，不過也沒有說找很多，不過確實出版社你進去就進去，就覺得臺大畢業的人好啊！他也是臺大的嘛，然後去星洲日報基本上，好快哦！大概幾天就得到回應了。…只要是華社這一塊應該就會覺得，臺大是臺灣第一學府啊，所以基本上還蠻有幫助的。

（An NTU-Taiwan alumnus）

China-educated graduates experienced a nuanced pattern of recognition. Like Taiwan, for a long time the degrees granted by Chinese HEIs had been mostly unrecognized officially in Malaysia. Since 2012, the degrees granted by Chinese HEIs

could be recognized by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (Agensi, Kelayakan Malaysia, MQA), and yet they were still not authenticated by JPA. Therefore, in most cases, those with Chinese degrees still could not work in the public sector in Malaysia. Exceptions exist, however. Degrees in Chinese literature, Chinese medicine, and medicine granted by nine programs in a total of nine Chinese HEIs were officially recognized by JPA. In one case, the choice of study program (Chinese literature at a certain university) and study country (China) was not only shaped by the concern for official recognition of academic credentials, but by the requirement to be fulfilled by the Malaysian government scholarship she was entitled to received :

> 036: 能夠上到北大去讀書，是因為我拿到馬大的獎學金，馬大的一個培養師資的一個獎學金。它可以提供你三個(學校的）選擇。我可以自己選擇，所以我其實申請了北大，然後申請了臺大，然後其實我還沒有申請，我本來要申請香港中文大學，還沒有申請我就收到了interviews的通知，然後我被臺大和北大錄取了……。但是為什麼沒有去臺大？因為馬來西亞的這個XXXX的獎學金它只承認一個中國。(馬：喔！所以就是要去中國。可是當時這樣你為什麼還要申請臺大呢？）呃，希望可以，就是它忽略之下，那我可能就到臺大了。因為我是文學進入學術的，我是寫詩的一個人，然後慢慢的走向學術的道路，所以你說如果喜歡現當代的話，你說要去哪裡啊？所以臺灣是一個夢想，以後還會去啊！
>
> (A PKU alumnus)

Without official recognition at home, some would experience stern barriers in entering certain professions to practice their trainings, especially in those fields that required certification. One interviewee had received a degree in medicine from a prominent university in China and yet needed to go through an excruciating process after returning home in order to be able to practice medicine in Malaysia:

> 046: 像我們是在中國念醫科，馬來西亞是不受承認的，所以當那些不受承認的大學，你讀了醫科回來你需要考一個醫學資格考試，所以就是需要去申請，申請後他就是幫你派到三間大學，有一個是馬來亞大學，有一個是馬來西亞理科大學，然後還有一個就是馬來西亞國民型大學，這三個大學去考那個資格考試。在這段期間

裡頭你是不可以到醫院實習，你也沒有什麼特別的課傳授給你，所以你只能夠等它的考試，我們相對比較沒什麼力氣。XX 年畢業以後回來提交申請了表格，全部東西弄到來是(第二年）年左右，按道理我們是（第二年）就有的考試，可是那一年它突然說三間大學裡面它們都沒有那個考試……，所以要我們等多一年，所以我們到 09 年的時候才能夠考試。……我們考過之後，就是實習，就是 house officer，做兩年以後，我們才能夠做住院。……最辛苦應該是這段時間吧，因為沒有收入，所以就那時候就自個兒去做一些，比如說開一些補習班吧。就幫一些高中的學生補習，補數理科之類的，來幫補父母親的費用。

Knowledge Applicability, Technological Gap, and Authenticity

The extent to which the value of overseas education can be realized and appreciated at home differs generally by disciplines: trainings in professional/skilled-based disciplines are often more portable. Field data showed that, as demonstrated in Figure 1, those who had received degrees in business, finance, and engineering were more likely to find employment related to their trainings than those who had been trained in humanities and social sciences.

A deep look inside the data revealed that, under the general umbrella of disciplines, three more specific elements were involved in shaping the value, as well as the portability of the value, of overseas "credentials currency." First is knowledge applicability. The more the knowledge and skills acquired through overseas education are applicable on the job market, the more likely these overseas credentials would be transferable and valued at home, which would in turn benefit upward social mobility. For example, one Taiwan-trained graduate in business and finance said:

007: 那工作(做了）一年半，對啦，學以致用，真的，還蠻學以致用。因為你是在那個科系出來，你比別人更快去學習很多東西，然後很快地上手，很快可以勝任，所以基本上我那一年半其實還蠻順利的，老闆短期內就（讓我）升職了，然後老闆也交託很多重要的一些工作給我。

The second element is technological gap between study country and home country. The wider the gap in technological advancement and industrial development between study country and home country, the more difficult and less likely the knowledge and skills acquired overseas could be transferred back home and be applied at work. Some interviewees graduating from Singapore, Japan and Taiwan shared their experiences about this:

056b: My current job (as a lecturer), there are some interesting things I like, for example teaching. ……So I actually enjoyed that the profession, because it allows me to interact with the younger minds. Teaching nowadays in Malaysia, and anywhere in the world is different, because technologies are involving. …… We also have practiced innovation; all our slides are updated, uploaded to a server, at a website people can download. ……If they have better lab facilities, I could jump start my research career faster, rather than applying for grants and using the grants to buy the equipments back, so that will take some time to jump start.

(An NTU-Singapore alumnus in engineering)

002: 因為我讀的是精算學，所以我希望在新加坡找一個精算的職位然後做工啊，然後做自己的工作，我出來大概找了半年，發現很難找到，因為精算在亞洲，新加坡馬來西亞只有保險公司會請。新加坡馬來西亞只有保險公司會請。而且新加坡是一個金融中心，已經有很多的精算師了，你要 gain into 這個 industry 是很難。我 try 找了半年也是沒有什麼 feedback, 過後我在 Malaysia 就在 KL 恰巧就有 application，就剛好拿到這個工作。

（An NUS alumnus in business and finance）

052b: 97 年回到這邊，我還是跑建設公司。因為日本的建設公司和這邊的完全不一樣。這邊的建設公司就是打工罷了，而且技術理念差不多落後三十年的環境。以往我回來這邊，很好笑的，好像在這邊一般高樓的地方，只是鑽機、鑽機、鑽機，泥土拿上來就下洋灰了。在日本行不通的，這方面，已經沒有這種技術的。已經，以前很久很久，1970 多年的東西了，回到這邊，好像還蠻落後。你知道，我回到，第一個感覺是什麼。我回到時是 97 年，我的感覺好像是 1980 多年罷了。

馬：為什麼呢？

052a：還停在那種時代。

052b：它停得很厲害啊。我去 copy machine 那邊哦，我看到…什麼！這是我在 1980 多年用的，在日本的時候我在大學用的東西咧！我已經出來已經差不多整十年了。我一去到它的公司，我看到，哇，這個 copy machine 還在啊？我有這種感覺。

(Japan-educated graduates in engineering)

For Taiwan-educated graduates whose degrees were denied official recognition back home, the knowledge and technological gap between Taiwan and Malaysian could further bring frustration when they wished to find employment on the job market and apply their trainings at work. This may well explain the relative low correlation between fields of trainings and employment among Taiwan-trained graduates as well as their inclination in self-employment, brokerage, and direct marketing. One interviewee, who had been trained in engineering at NTU (Taiwan) but left the industry a few years later and became a broker, shared his personal experience and observation:

016：因為我們以前認為，因為大家回來都是各自發展自己的專業嘛！但是發現其實馬來西亞沒有什麼所謂的，你在台灣學的東西，這裡是沒有機會發揮到。畢竟科技不發達，你的工程東西，這邊你沒有機會用到的，因為他們是很舊式的生產東西，你的高科技東西這裡完全沒有一個有，所以變成不需要你高科技人員啊！你不需要學的很厲害啊！因為當你出來你就是做一個重複式的工作而已，你沒有發揮到你的專長，變成你學了之後你覺得累了，無聊了，就會往外去闖嘛！不過加入這一行是因為看到這一行是賺錢的地方。台灣畢業為什麼都圍繞在這個圈子裡面，就馬來西亞比較賺錢的行業。都在這個圈子裡面。

馬：你剛講的比較賺錢的行業像是房產？

016：房產，保險跟直銷。

（An NTU-Taiwan alumnus in engineering）

The third element is authenticity: the extent to which study country, or the institution that offers trainings and degrees, are qualified as the center of knowledge production. The best examples are studies in language, literature, and history; those

who wished to study Chinese language, literature or history would usually consider China or Taiwan as the best destinations to pursue their trainings, and those who had studied Japanese language and/or Japanese literature in Japan never doubted their choice of study country. Consequently, those with these kinds of academic credentials are likely to utilize their trainings on the job market to be employed in the academia or work in the ethnically-oriented niche market. As one interviewee who had studied Chinese literature in China put it:

036：因為我們想像那個中國的歷史啊，中國的古代文學啊，都讓我們希望可以到一個原本就有這樣的文化的地方去學習，然後去感受。所以其實北大跟臺大才能夠體驗這樣的氛圍，不是美國，也不是日本，也不是其他的。

(An PKU alumnus)

Another Taiwan-trained alumnus who worked in the Chinese media industry in Malaysia also talked about the advantage he had on the job market with the overseas credentials he had accumulated in Taiwan:

馬：那我想請教你，在你的觀察當中，比如說去海外念書得到的資歷，一般來講，人家會說比較 valuable 嗎？會覺得說國外留學回來的，在找工作啦，在職業發展上，會因此比較吃香嗎？

006：我覺得對我的身份來說，有。因爲在媒體業，我就是在中文媒體業嘛，當我說我現在是臺灣畢業的，人家在聽我口音的時候，人家就會就覺得說嗯，你就是臺灣畢業的。那既然你是台灣畢業的，那 handle 我們中文區區一個頒獎典禮，應該沒問題吧！但是如果你今天是一個馬來西亞的，英文學院的媒體系畢業的，那我爲什麼要用你作爲我們的中文頒獎典禮的主持人呢？但是相對的，當有英文的時候，他就會覺得說哦，蛤，你臺灣的哦?! 英文是不是真的 OK? 他們就會質疑你這一點。所以它有好有壞，祇是剛好我覺得這份學歷對我來說在這一個行業，中文媒體行業來說，它是加分的。……我相信如果排除任何的外在因素，我們祇是擔心學歷（是否被官方承認），一個馬來西亞大學中文系，跟一個臺灣政治大學中文系一起去面試的話，我相信我被錄取的機率比較高。在私人界，排除政府（笑），OK！

(An NTU-Taiwan alumnus)

Market Demand and Expected Return

The exchange rate of “credentials currency” relies on the market demand for the individual's human capital as well as the expected return that the market may offer. As discussed earlier, employers are willing to pay more to whom with fervently demanded skills and credentials, and those with highly sought-after credentials and skills would often invest their human capital on the market in exchange for higher economic return and social status.

Labor market segments are different in their demands for skills as well as in their abilities and potentials to attract talents and offer returns. In this study, the Singapore-educated group was composed with NUS and NTU alumni with backgrounds mostly in business, finance, and engineering. These skills and knowledge in these disciplines are generally not only portable transnationally but also in high demand in industries and corporations back home. With their well received education credentials, skills, and English language ability, these Singapore-trained graduates were in good standing on the local job market, which resulted in a very high correlation between education credentials and employment as shown in Figure 1. This may well explain the low return rate among NUS and NTU alumni as mentioned by many NUS and NTU returnees participating in this study, some even called themselves "exceptions" (e.g., 051). The significant income gap between Singapore and Malaysia indicates a higher economic return from the former for the skills in demand. Meanwhile, the competition on the former's job market is also fiercer. For example, one interviewee described the income gap between these two countries in her profession:

001：工資上面的差距會很大。比如說那邊三千馬幣，不是，三千新幣，這裡、這裡可能我會拿到三千、五千馬幣這樣子，差很多。…新加坡的銀行競爭是很惡劣的，所以如果我要選擇銀行的話，我就回來馬來西亞。(An NUS alumnus)

With valuable credentials currency in hand, these Singapore-educated graduates usually moved smoothly upward on the corporate ladders. A significant number of interviewees were employed at the managerial levels in big corporations (either transnational or local) in the industries of business, finance, manufacturing, and information technology, and close to 40% assumed teaching positions at local universities.

040: 所以在 NUS 除了拿到那張 degree 之外，最重要的是那個 training，那個 training 可以讓你 excel 你的 future。

（An NUS alumnus）

054：如果你是個 engineer，它有個經濟地位嘛，所以...（馬：所以說你比較容易找工作或者工作比較穩定？）對。

（An NUS alumnus）

Comparatively, the Japanese education system is generally more foreign to Malaysia, and Japanese is not a commonly used language in the mainstream society. Nevertheless, many of the Japanese-educated graduates acquired their trainings in fields (business, finance, and engineering) in which skills and knowledge offered were highly portable and demanded in the local market. Moreover, with the existence of a strong Japanese business community in Malaysia, the Japanese-earned credentials and language ability were more appreciated within this network. In comparison with the mainstream society, the credentials earned in Japan usually received more recognition within the network composed of Japanese companies and employers, Japanese expatriates, and Japan-educated alumni. The cultural capital incurred while studying Japan, most notably the Japanese language ability, often is valued only within this network. Some alumni found employments or operated their own business mainly with their Japanese language ability. As a result, these Japan-educated alumni in our study were often attracted to work in Japanese companies in Malaysia, or companies that established business links with Japan. Mainly for this reason, the

majority of Japan-educated interviewees had been or were employed at Japanese companies, subsidiaries, and joint-ventures (JVs). For example, one interviewee had spent all his working years in Japanese companies, in Japan and in Malaysia:

> 013: 我從來沒有離開過日資公司，(馬：那您這些工作都是怎麼找到的？) 其實都是工作找我出來，沒有申請過一份工作。在(日本)富士通在當初也是他們在找一個會說中文的。

Some later left Japanese companies and subsidiaries to start their own businesses, which might not necessarily be related to their academic trainings. This was driven partly by the spirit of entrepreneurship eminent among Malaysian Chinese as claimed by several interviewees. The other reason, and possibly the more important one, was due to the glass ceiling faced by non-Japanese in the Japanese corporate culture. It was suggested that the Japanese are inclined to show favoritism in promotion towards Malaysian Chinese over *bumiputera* (Malays) for the proximity in cultural backgrounds (Bhopal and Rowley 2005, Smith 1994). Nevertheless, Japanese companies and subsidiaries in Malaysia also have a tendency to employ a far higher number of expatriates and leave the company leadership to Japanese than their British or American competitors (Imaoka, 1985). Talks about the feelings of being "second-class citizens" and the experience of meeting the glass ceiling in the Japanese companies often came up in the interviews:

> 013: 在日本公司的話，它也有一個特點，就是說基本上他們日本人還是不相信外國人…所以我也當初就下決心就離開了。
>
> (A Japan-educated graduate)

> 馬：你那時候大概是 19XX 年到 19XX 年，差不多將近四年的時間（在日本工作)。您那時候選擇回來，會覺得可惜嗎？
>
> 052a：感覺上，你在那邊做下去，你也是二等公民。
>
> 052b：二等公民（笑)。
>
> 馬：怎麼說呢？

052a：你也是外國人嘛。

馬：外國人不好嗎？

052a：你去哪一個國家，外國人會好的嗎？對不對？雖然日本很方便，什麼都有，but 到底，你的家人還是在本地嘛。然後你要結婚什麼呢，你要娶日本人嗎？你娶了日本人就不用回來了啊。

馬：有人這樣嗎？

052a：有啊，有啊！所以想說，還是回來比較好。然後，可能你，一直呆下去的話，可能你的語言全部沒有了。就剩下一個日本文。所以，世界再怎麼變，你也不知道的。感覺，好像現在日本的經濟不好了，你不知道的。So，它一不好，裁員的話，是不是第一個就裁你啊？So 到時候如果你過了十年後回來，你要找什麼？你沒有東西可以找。就想到，還是早一點回來比較好。適應這裡的環境。

（Japan-educated graduates）

Taiwan-educated and China-educated graduates were more likely to emphasize the importance of professional skills, work experiences, and sometimes networking ability, in their career development:

018: 報紙(業）的話，基本上臺灣畢業的人的學生，文筆當然怎樣都會比較好，是真的（馬：你說跟誰比？）跟這一邊的中文、這邊的新聞系或者中文系畢業的學生。一般上都會比較好，所以基本上寫專欄的人，多數都是主任級要不然就是，好些都是臺灣畢業的學生。可能思路方面也會比較廣吧！因為在台灣畢竟，它的整個環境從知識層面來看應該是比較成熟的。(An NTU-Taiwan alumnus)

028: 酒店業的基層呢，很少人會在乎你的學歷，人家在乎的是你的工作經驗。你到了中高層，特別是高層的時候，人家才會在就是在乎你的學歷。

（An XMU alumnus)

In most cases, "credentials currency" will be invested in the market which offers the best return, including economic rewards, social status and recognition, and self realization. We found that the better and wider these overseas credentials are recognized, the more skills and knowledge are needed on the job market, the more

opportunities there are for upward social mobility. For those overseas graduates who worked in the niche market, it was often because their overseas credentials were not widely demanded in the mainstream market and can be better recognized and rewarded in the niche labor market. In rare cases which overseas credentials skills were neither recognized nor demanded in either the mainstream or niche market, the individuals may be marginalized in the labor market.

Functional Values of Embodied Cultural Capital

Embodied cultural capital were articulated as geographically specific and significantly influenced the ways overseas education were recognized and valued in the mainstream and niche job markets, which in turn influence the opportunities for career development and social mobility. Embodied cultural capital consists of both the consciously acquired and the passively received properties of one's self through socialization over time (Bourdieu, 1986); such as attitudes, traits, and behavioral patterns. Linguistic capital, defined as the mastery of and relation to language (Bourdieu, 1990:114), can be understood as a form of embodied cultural capital for it represents a means of communication and self-presentation obtained from one's *habitus*. Studying overseas acquire not only academic skills and credentials, but also involved learning different ways of life and thinking styles. It was unanimous among interviewees that overseas education provided them with something beyond degree and formal knowledge: such as eye-opening experiences and a broadened world view, personal growth and independence, social skills, and multi-tasking skills. Three facets are discussed here for their close relevance to career development and social mobility: work ethics, ways of thinking and problem-solving strategies, and language. These abilities and traits cultivated through overseas education to some extent channel these returnees into different job market sectors and employment patterns, so that their embodied cultural capital can be best valued in their career development.

a. Work ethics

It was often mentioned in interviews that studying (and working) overseas enabled individuals to establish work-related attitudes resembling that in study country. Many returnees (especially those from Singapore, Japan, and Taiwan) were quite perceptive in the ways their work ethics and attitudes were different from the locals and similar with expatriates or returnees from the same study countries. Thus, they were more likely to be attracted to work in companies holding similar cultures and atmospheres. For example, an NTU (Taiwan) alumnus shared his experience of working at a local company run by Malaysian Chinese:

> 011:我不懂是馬來西亞的教育制度還是怎樣，就是大家沒有那個衝勁啊，不會有想要就是加快腳步的意思，就是大家還是會比較按部就班，就是慢慢來、慢慢來、慢慢來。所以 that's why 就是我們這間公司的老闆他會比較 prefer 去台灣。（馬：哦，是嗎？因爲他之前有用過留台生嗎？）對，他之前用過的留台生，基本上一待得長久，二就是比較積極，就是這兩點，而且我那間公司基本上有做到經理等級的基本上十個裏面就有五到六個是台灣。（馬：是嗎？）就台灣畢業的，就是這一點也是讓我很驚訝，就我來的時候。然後他們那時候他們就講台灣，老闆其實是很喜歡台灣畢業的學生，因爲他們都比較衝，像我那時候我第一個月我進去的時候，因爲第一個月一般來講是沒有什麼事情做嘛，可是我就是有點受不了我會沒有事情做，所以我一直想要去找事情做，所以我同事就會講說台灣的個性哦！台灣的那個認真，就是會一直想要找東西做這樣，就有強迫症，想要自己找東西來做這樣。就是在台灣其實你第一個月，你一進去，你就開始很多東西要做，很多東西要趕了，沒有時間可以給你休息。可是在這裡就不一樣，這裡你一進去你就是慢慢來、慢慢來，一步一步這樣上，就是可是之後就是真的受不了，就自己跑、自己自己衝這樣子。
>
> （An NTU-Taiwan alumnus）

The emphasis on work ethnics was especially pronounced among Japan-educated graduates. Many Japan-educated interviewees had had work experiences in Japanese companies either in Japan before their return or in Malaysia. Therefore, they could understood and adopted well the Japanese corporate culture. For example, one interviewee said:

024: 為了公司而犧牲自己的時間，這是日本人的習慣，也是我們留日同學所能夠理解的。

（An Japan-educated graduate）

b. Ways of thinking and problem-solving strategies

Studying overseas enables individuals to be exposed to a different society and culture. This not only broadens their horizons but also allows them to learn different ways of thinking and problem-solving strategies. These abilities often are useful later in life. As one interview observed:

003: 留臺的大致上每個回來的，大致上我們的思維都差不多都一樣。我們對做一件事情，我們都會要求把它做好，而不是在看很多其他的。……那本地人他們思維比較狹隘，視野比較短小。所以當我在幫一些顧客做顧問案，幫他處理的時候，他們也常會問，你們臺灣學校還有沒有學生畢業？

馬：真的假的？

003：幾乎所有臺灣畢業的學生都不用愁找不到工作。

馬：哦是嗎？你是指說在你這個領域還是in general？

003：In general。很多人都喜歡臺灣畢業的。尤其是我所認識的在華人界，因為臺灣基本上華語溝通都沒有問題。你跟老闆，我們那邊大部份都中小型企業，所以很多時候你都是direct老闆，或則是上一層經理再上去也就是老闆了。所以如果是華人老闆，他們都是屬於50年或是60年代的，他們都比較中文為主。他們比較喜歡請能夠以中文溝通的員工，那本地的員工是不能以中文溝通，如果他們小學有念中文應該還能夠一點點，那可能中文書信啊，打字啊什麼就比較差，或者是本地的是有一些是abc的華人，但完全不懂中文，所以他們要請這些員工，如果老闆是以中文base為主的話，他請的員工會有語言的障礙……

(An NTU-Taiwan alumnus)

c. Language

Malaysia is a multicultural society, and yet only Malay and English are official languages. In the business world, English is even more widely used. To those Singapore-educated returnees, their English had already been polished throughout

their years in Singapore. Therefore, English was hardly an issue, if not an advantage, at work.

Although Japanese is not a widely used language in Malaysia, it is welcomed or even demanded in Japanese companies and JVs in Malaysia, as well as businesses that target their markets in Japan. Outside these milieus, the Japanese language ability often had little value. This largely explains the high concentration of Japan-educated graduates in Japanese companies and JVs as well as in Japanese-related businesses. One interviewee stated:

馬：我想請教你，從你自己的經驗，你覺得留日回來的在馬來西亞怎麼樣？

043：其實我的發展是蠻好的。

馬：所以基本上留日回來的，在這邊工作啊……各方面的發展其實還是比較有機會？

043：除非你進日本公司。

馬：日本公司？

訪：因為畢竟日本話還是在馬來西亞不是很普通，不像台灣，台灣很普通啦，我們這邊真的是不是很普通，所以如果你留日回來的人，你要正式去日本公司工作，一般你的薪水會比一般的高。

馬：因為你有留日的背景？

訪：因為他們日本公司嘛！比如說一般那你只是做那種 ofiice，admin 而已，他們的公司工錢啊，如果一進去很普通、一般的那種，他是給兩千多三千馬幣。我從來不知道，你一進那 office，你就可以給到三千多、四千，你會比他們多一千，最少一千、兩千。

馬：那多不少耶！

訪：對啊。

馬：所以在留日的人在日資公司發展就會比較好？

訪：會比較好。

馬：可是如果在日資公司之外呢？

訪：變成你沒有去過，沒有優勢，因為我們這邊不需要日文。

馬：喔，就變成優勢就看不出來？

訪：完全沒有，像我現在去普通的一般的，不是日資，我只是去普通一般馬來西亞公司，我等於是零，跟他們一般。

馬：喔，因為看不出來你的競爭。

訪：因為沒有用到，沒有用到。

（A Japan-educated graduate）

To those educated in Taiwan and China, their Chinese language skills could be their advantage at work if they work in the niche market geared towards ethnic Chinese or their work requires rigorous Chinese language training. However, in most cases, years of learning in a non-English environment often results in weakening in their English and Malay language skills. Unlike Japan, neither China nor Taiwan has a relative strong influence in business and technology and established powerful TNCs in Malaysia. Chinese is neither an official language nor a highly valued medium of communication at work. Consequently, many studied in Taiwan or China expressed their frustration in language adjustment in the business world back home, especially at the beginning of their career development:

014：工作上面的，就是我剛才講到的英文那個gap，其實我不知道要怎麼，就是，比如說回覆email吧，！因爲工作上都是一直用email嘛，我不會回信耶！嗯，對。（馬：那現在呢？）現在OK了。（大概）一個月就OK了。就在這禮拜，有一個同事，他就很不給面子，他就說："Are you Chinese-educated？"就是我是受中文教育的嗎？我說爲什麼？他說你英文很差，請你加強好不好，我聽了很，很受傷，對。什麼，會有這樣的人？好吧！是啦，我英文沒有那麼好。

馬：所以你覺得這個在工作上很重要嗎？

014：是是是。

（An NTU-Taiwan alumnus）

馬：你覺得你的中國的經驗，包括你的學歷，在你工作上，求職上它扮演什麼角色，它是一個plus呢？還是minus？

030：在溝通上是一個 minus，在技術上是一個 plus。

（An XMU alumnus）

A Taiwan-educated returnee provided his analysis from the managerial perspective about the disadvantage in language often faced by Taiwan-educated returnees:

馬：就你的觀察比如說留學台灣一般來講回來這裡發展怎麼樣？

022：發展的話還是會被限制在一些行業，一些比較就是正式 corporations，台灣畢業生都沒辦法被錄取……

馬： 你所謂比較正式的 corporations 指的是 multinationals 嗎？

022：A multinational (corporation), even a Malaysian-own corporation. 他們(公司）除非就是 very typical 很傳統的中國人的那種模式就 okay，但是除了這個之外就很難。怎麼說呢？我就分享我自己的的經歷吧！我在 XX（一家台資公司）的時候，因為 XX 那時候已經是分公司了，然後我是那邊的 XX 在這裡的分的經理嘛！所以我們經常都有 interview 要請人嘛！……我會希望聘請留臺的，這是自然嘛！因為我們是留臺生，但是真的是，那麼多年我只聘請過一個，因為沒有辦法在，在英語方面，沒辦法，因為出去的話，你至少要有一個英語程度才可以去，所以就沒有辦法。

馬： 所以你覺得留臺生一般來講在語言上是比較 limited？

022：態度很好，不過態度如果說態度心態的話，我甚至覺得說他們會比那個留美的學生來的心態更好，我喜歡這樣的個性，只是在最基本的條件，他們沒有辦法達到。

馬： 所以你講的語言能力特別是指英文嗎？

022：我是在指英文。

馬： 你講到他們態度好又是什麼樣的態度呢？

022：就是一些工作的態度，包括他是不是積極啊，他對那個工作的那個觀念正不正確啊，然後是不是很努力啊，是不是謙虛來學習啊，他們都有具備這個個性。I will not say everybody，我是說，我會發現他們有這一方面的特徵，會一般上普遍上甚至比留美的學生還要好。只不過呢，就是在一個很基本的東西，就是去找任何客戶，基本上除了找台商啦，基本上你都是要用英文。你開會啊跟同事溝通都是要用英文交談，如果你沒有這個很基本的那個條件的話，就沒辦法。

馬： 所以聽起來英語像是最重要的語言囉？

022：那時候是。

馬： 所以馬來語反而沒有英語那麼重要是這樣嗎？

022：英語如果，對，如果在生意場所，在這個 00 業，因為 00 你不需要直接跟政府交往嘛！所以呢，英語還是最重要的。

（An NCCU alumnus）

In the cases of China- and Taiwan-educated returnees, the linguistic capital (Mandarin Chinese) acquired from studying overseas usually was not appreciated on the job market at home. Meanwhile, years abroad in a non-English environment weakened their English and Malay language abilities (especially the former) which are highly demanded in the labor market in Malaysia. This pattern of linguistic capital accumulation and shifting often creates detrimental effects on their career developments at home.

***Mediating Factors of the Transferability of Overseas "Credentials Currency"***

Two factors are at play in mediating the transferability of cultural capital acquired through overseas education and the efficacy of overseas "credentials currency" can be exchanged for economic capital and social status. Social networks provide a context in which cultural capital is appraised and valued. The portability and recognition of overseas credentials are often medicated by transnational social networks, which channel the valuation system across the geographical boundaries and facilitate the transferability of transnational credentials. It has been discussed earlier how Japan-earned credentials and language skills were more appreciated in Japanese companies and Japan-oriented labor market segment, and how Taiwan-earned degrees were more recognized among the ethnic Chinese community. Here we will discuss the case of Taiwan-educated graduates in more details to illuminate the way strong transnational social networks assist the recognition and portability of overseas credentials, which in turn facilitate upward social mobility.

1. Social networks

Among the four groups studied, the strength and breadth of social networks among Taiwan-educated graduates were striking. Alumni associations were not only established based on the alma maters in Malaysia (the Chinese independent high

schools attended before going abroad), in Taiwan (the HEIs studied in Taiwan), as well as the home regions in Malaysia, they were also organized under the leadership of FAATUM, the organization officially representing all Taiwan-educated graduates in Malaysia. Moreover, these alumni association kept close contacts with the privately-run Chinese education system in Malaysia, including Dong Zong (United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia), Jiao Zong (United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia), and over 60 independent high schools. On the Taiwan side, these alumni associations maintained close ties with the HEIs, relevant government agencies (such as the Ministry of Education as well as the Overseas Community Affairs Council), as well as the University Entrance Committee For Overseas Chinese Students (the organization in charge of overseas Chinese student recruitment to study in Taiwan). The social networks formed among these organizations and associations were transnational, extensive, dense, and multi-layered. Individuals could step in these networks since high-school years in Malaysia, throughout their years of study in Taiwan, keep embedded after graduation and many years beyond. These transnational social networks not only offer resourceful support and guidance before and during years of studying in Taiwan, but also provide great opportunities for networking after graduation, which were especially desirable for the self-employed. While Taiwan-earned credentials received limited appreciation in the Malaysian society, these transnational networks maintain the valuation mechanism which recognizes these credentials. Within these extensive and dense transnational networks, the depreciation of credentials and cultural capital acquired from Taiwan were in some ways able to be offset. One alumni association leader talked about the functions of the associations of Taiwan-educated graduates:

021：……也有很多人，做保險的啊，他就想說我來做理事，這樣子我就可以招人，因為我講說我是理事嘛，那我就找說，誒這個馬老師你也是我們政大校友啊，我是什麼人來拜訪你一下，我也是政大的校友啊，那你通常就會講好啊，那就來嘛，約個什麼時間，結果一坐下來就開始講保險，對不對？如果你還沒有買，你能力上可以，你可能就買一下，如果能力上，就覺得說我已經買了，你幹嘛還再找我買？所以這個我不置可否，不可以說完全否定，

但是也不能夠肯定說對創業有幫助，但是校友會對擴展人脈喔，還是有幫助的！……過去校友會的第一個宗旨是聯誼，，第二個就是希望說能夠推廣一些文教活動，文藝活動，比如說辦講座啦。……我們校友會現在正式進入轉型，所謂的進入轉型是什麼，我們不單只是服務過去的校友，……我們現在必須要把它擴大來看，那我們就等於說，不單只是校友，我們這個要在籍的和未來的，那我們都要做。

(A Taiwanese alumni association leader)

The value of networking within and through alumni associations was also affirmed in interviews with other Taiwan-educated returnees who were self-employed or planned for self-employment. For example:

014: 我要回來也是因爲我想說，因爲我以後要創業嘛，我要有自己的事業，所以我要累積那個人脈，這個很重要的。回來多認識人，先把那個橋搭好。

馬：所以你覺得人脈，對於你回來的考慮，是一個重要的考慮？

014: 嗯！

馬：就是說你要回來，先建立人脈，將來要創業比較方便？

014: 是是是！

馬：那比如說參加校友會對於建立人脈…

014：嗯，很大幫助！

馬：你覺得是有幫助嗎？

014：有，很大幫助。我面試的時候因爲老闆也認識這些留臺組織的啊，他就說欸你們的那誰誰誰，呃哦這個這個，我就我就把一些名字念出來，他說嗯是是是，就是變成是我跟老闆之間的，有多一個交集的地方，這也不錯哦！

（An NTU-Taiwan alumnus)

2. Transnational production networks and regional economies

The trans-local connections established through regional economic integration created new niche markets at home, which mediated the portability and transferability

of credentials and cultural capital acquired overseas. The cases of Japan and Taiwan will be used as examples here for discussion.

Malaysia has been one of the preferential destinations for foreign investment. According to the UNCTAD 2015 World Investment Report, Malaysia is the fifth largest recipient of FDI inflows in the world. It is also one of the top 15 countries most favored by TNCs in 2015-2017 (Export Enterprises SA 2016). Among the major investing countries, Japan has long been on the top of the list, even exceeding Singapore (Export Enterprises SA 2016, Kamalavacini 2015). In 2013, Japan was the largest foreign investing country in Malaysia, accounting for over one-fifth of the total FDI inflows (Export Enterprises SA 2016). Japanese companies, subsidiaries, and joint-ventures comprise a strong Japanese economic power base in Malaysia, establish a close cooperation with the Malaysian public sector, Malaysian government, and create abundant job opportunities. Outfitted with knowledge and skills learned from Japan as well as the fluency in Japanese, the Japan-educated graduates were especially welcomed within Japanese industries in Malaysia. To them, the Japan-earned credentials and language ability could be used as an important pass for them to get privileged access to this niche labor market. For example, one Japan-educated graduate commented on the values of Japan-earned credentials on the career development in Malaysia:

> 024: 利上加利，非常有幫助，因為我們政府有跟日本企業很多合作案，這樣你日本回來他一定歡迎…所以作為馬來人，他再加上日本的關係他就好像如虎添翼這樣。
>
> (A Japan-educated graduate)

Due to their mastery in both cultures of Japan and Malaysia, these Japan-trained graduates often could serve as a bridge between these two societies for technology transfer and economic development. As one interviewee said:

馬：您是在日本接受training的，你回來，這種日本的background，對於你在這裏發展？

031：很大的幫助。剛才我强調就是technology transfer嘛！因爲馬來西亞是在一個發展中的國家。就比如剛才，我講的這個smart grid，那馬來西亞現在還是這樣子，然後怎樣把它變成一個完整的……對，那我現在就有在跟好朋友一直都在有networking著，然後我們想到以後(笑)，可以innovate一些東西來幫(馬來西亞)。

(A Japan-educated graduate)

Largely due to the Japanese management culture, years of work experiences accumulated from working at Japanese companies could hardly earned these Japan-educated graduates pinnacle leaderships within the companies and subsidiaries in Malaysia, for top positions were mostly reserved for Japanese expatriates. Consequently, some left the Japanese companies after long years of service with rich experiences and management skills to be utilized in starting their own businesses. For example, one Japan-educated graduate shared his career trajectory in the interview. After working in a few Japanese TNCs for over 20 years and serving as the top manager in the company, he started his own company with his partner:

050: I work in IBM for almost about 17 years. …… I stay long in IBM because they give me a very good career, they was, I joined in as a system engineer, and then I get promoted a manager, system manager, then to manager, then to be assistant general manager, and I move to general manager, and move on to vice president to senior vice president. So 17 years is very good to recall. Then in the year 20XX, OOOOO Japan (a Japanese TNC) ……they head-hunted me… they asked me to be the president and CEO of OOOOO Malaysia. Actually in Malaysia most of the Japanese companies in Malaysia their presidents and CEO must be Japanese national.

Ma: That's what I heard.

050: Yeah, yeah. So, very few non-Japanese. In fact I was the first I think among all the Japanese companies in Malaysia...

……

Ma: From being in the multinational corporation to owning your own company, did you plan this career trajectory yourself?

050: I have in mind someday in the future I want to have my own company, yes. Right from the very beginning I already have the mind to learn as much things from these multinational companies, and hopefully someday in the future I can own a company.

(A Japan-educated graduate)

The case of Taiwan was somewhat similar. With Taiwan's rapid economic development and its earned status as a newly industrialized country and one of the "Asian Dragons" in the 1970s, Taiwan became a model to be followed by Malaysia, and the society's perception toward Taiwan started to change (李珊，2005). After the Malaysian government opened the gate to welcome foreign investment in 1986, Taiwanese investment in Malaysia soon surged, reaching its highest point in 1999 and made Taiwan the top one investor country in Malaysia in that year (經濟部, 2013). Taiwan not only became a prominent investor in Malaysia but effectively created more job opportunities for those with Taiwanese degrees, which enhanced the portability of their overseas education and the social recognition of their credentials. As one Taiwanese alumni association leader observed:

020: ……九十年代開始之後的話另外一個契機就是很多台商他們都跑到這邊來，所以變成說制造了很多就業機會給留臺畢業生。

馬：他們會比較喜歡雇留臺的嗎？

020：一般上他們會優先（錄取留台人），因為爲什麼？因為整個文化背景，然後教育背景，再加上整個管理的那種理念的話，跟台灣的來說很接近，而且台灣語言也沒有問題，那他們也知道台灣畢業的水平到哪裡。一般上在那個時候來說的話，很多台灣的工廠裡面的一些二線主管的話，很多都是台灣畢業生的。

(A Taiwanese alumni association leader)

***Discussion***

This study investigated whether and how academic credentials and cultural capital accumulated through overseas education may enhance social mobility at home. In the case of Malaysian Chinese, it further examined to what extent did overseas

education played a role in their career developments as an ethnic minority. A few findings are addressed here for discussion. First, the vast majority of research participants in this study experienced upward mobility after returning to Malaysia and established successful careers in either mainstream or niche markets, signifying the efficacy of education and migration on promoting social mobility.

Second, the transferability of overseas "credentials currency" is geographically uneven, demonstrating differential subjective "values" at home. This in turn reflects on overseas graduates' differential social mobility trajectories after their return. Three patterns of mobility emerge from the analysis: upward mobility into the mainstream labor market, entering into the niche market with the "secret code," and in rare cases, facing barriers and struggling in the marginalized market. The portability of overseas education is influenced by recognition, knowledge applicability, technological gap, authenticity, market demand and expected return, and embodied cultural capital.

In this study, the Singapore-educated group experienced the widest acceptance and recognition for their academic credentials on the job market, which enabled them to succeed in climbing the corporate ladders in multinational corporations. The privileges they received were based not only on the knowledge and skills they acquired through overseas education, but also on the status of Singapore as a developed country in close geographic and cultural proximity to Malaysia, as well as Singapore being an English-speaking country. The status of the study country in the world system as well as the cultural distance between the study country and the home country (or the cultural influence of the study country in the home country) shape the way and extent the credentials received from the study country would be recognized at home. In the Asian context, therefore, education offered by HEIs in Singapore resembles that offered by developed Western countries, carrying the credentials and cultural capital essential for professional success and containing the highest transnational portability. Although Japan is also a developed country, its cultural and social distance from Malaysia impede the recognition of the values of credentials and cultural capital accumulated in Japan, and only within the Japanese socio-economic enclave comprised mainly of Japanese companies and JVs could these credentials and

skills be truly appreciated and validated. Comparatively, graduates from Taiwan and China were more at a disadvantage for the limited official and social recognition of their degrees, due in part to the development statuses of these study countries in the world system as well as to relative lack of context in which these credentials could be exchanged for economic capital.

The transferability of overseas education is also shaped by knowledge applicability, technological gap, and authenticity. The more applicable the overseas-earned knowledge and skills are on the job market, the easier the technological gap could be overcome between study country and home country, the more portable the overseas education is. Likely, the authenticity of the study country as the representative of the knowledge, the more likely the value of overseas credentials could be transferable.

Different market segments demand different knowledge and skills and offer differential rewards. Those posses the widest recognized credentials (such as the case of Singapore graduates) are likely to be drawn to big corporations in the mainstream market. Those possess qualifications with limited recognition would either invest them in the niche segments where their credentials and skills could be more appreciated and valued, or resort to self employment to avoid the constraints entailed in the depreciation of overseas education. The transferability of overseas credentials also hinges on the functional value of embodied cultural capital. The acquisition of cultural skills and knowledge can promote individuals' chances in social mobility only if these cultural elements are appreciated and demanded. This explains the high concentration of Japan-educated graduates in Japanese companies and JVs as well as the inclination of Taiwan-educated graduates in companies owned by ethnic Chinese.

Third, the portability of overseas education and experiences are also embedded in geographical connections and disconnections, including social networks and relationships as well as transnational production networks established through regional economies. It also entrenches in particular historical and temporal development at both domestic and international scales. Transnational social networks and trans-local economic links help to penetrate the local milieu in which the

mainstream mechanism of credentials appraisal is at work, funnel in the valuation system from the study country, and create a more versatile and inclusive context in which the devaluation of certain overseas qualifications would somehow be offset.

Fourth, it should be noted that except the very few who were employed in the public HEIs as academics or researchers, the vast majority of these overseas-educated Malaysian Chinese participating in this study worked in the private sector. Fieldwork also strongly indicates that Malaysian Chinese always shy away from entering the public sector. For Malaysian Chinese as an ethnic minority, overseas education generally supports their upward social mobility and yet was itself insufficient for them, or to convince them, to cross the horizontal (and sometimes also vertical) divides in the stratified Malaysian society.

## Appendix 1: The Question Outline for Alumni Interviews

*** = anchor question; all other questions are ancillary**

### 1. Individual background:

*Could you tell me about the place you grew up?

What kind of education did you have before going to STUDY UNIVERSITY? Did you travel or live abroad when you were growing up? Did your parents, siblings or friends?

### 2. Family background:

*Tell me about your parents: where they grew up, their education and jobs, ages?

Do your parents have particular expectations of you and your siblings? What do they value most?

Tell me about your siblings: how many, what are their ages, what are they doing now?

### 2b. Interim

*After graduating from STUDY UNIVERSITY, what did you do and where did you go?

*Why did you choose to come to Kuala Lumpur?

### 3. Current activities:

* Could you tell me about what you are doing with your life right now (job, study, family)? Why are you living and working in Kuala Lumpur? Was this your first choice? What were the other choices you considered when you graduated? Was it easy to find a job?

### 4. Current perspective on education:

* What is your opinion of the degree program you completed at STUDY UNIVERSITY? Do you feel that your study experience matched the expectations you had before you enrolled? Why or why not?

How degree from STUDY UNIcmVERSITY has helped in opening doors at work and in other places.

**5. Value of overseas education:**

* How has your degree at STUDY UNIVERSITY contributed to your current activities? Was the degree valuable (for learning reasons, credential reasons, networks, etc.)? What is the reputation of STUDY UNIVERSITY in Malaysia? Is your degree properly recognized in your current job? Have there been cases where your degree wasn't recognized? Do you think that an overseas qualification in general is useful for career development?

*Now that you have worked for several years, is the value of your job training and experience more important than your degree?

**6. Alumni networks:**

* Tell me about the connections you have with other alumni from STUDY UNIVERSITY? Have these connections helped you in your current activities? What is the basis of the connections – nationality, program, dormitory, student club etc? Do you think it would have been useful to have more networking opportunities during your study program?

*What does being the alumni of STUDY UNIVERSITY mean to you?

Any activities you or other alumni do for STUDY UNIVERSITY?

Links with the Malaysian students association in STUDY UNIVERSITY or STUDY COUNTRY.

**7. University outreach:**

*What sort of contact have you had with STUDY UNIVERSITY since you graduated? Did STUDY UNIVERSITY help you in your current activities? Do you think that STUDY UNIVERSITY is concerned about its Alumni?

**8. Future plans and reflections:**

*What are your plans for the future?

*If you could make the choice again, would you still choose to study overseas? Would you still choose to study at STUDY UNIVERSITY or in STUDY COUNTRY? Would you do something different? How so?

Will you send your son or daughter to STUDY UNIVERSITY and/or STUDY COUNTRY? Why or why not?

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# 科技部補助專題研究計畫執行國際合作與移地研究

# 心得報告

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| 計畫編號 | MOST 102－2410－H－004－106－ MY2 | | |
| 計畫名稱 | 境外教育、跨國文化資本與弱勢處境：向上流動或持久邊緣化？ | | |
| 出國人員姓名 | 馬藹萱 | 服務機構及職稱 | 國立政治大學社會學系<br>副教授 |
| 出國時間 | 2015 年 1 月 20 日至<br>2015 年 2 月 3 日 | 出國地點 | 馬來西亞 吉隆坡地區 |
| 出國研究目的 | □實驗 ☑田野調查 □採集樣本 □國際合作研究 □使用國外研究設施 | | |

## 一、執行移地研究過程

這項研究計畫的目的，在於透過探究馬來西亞華裔校友在中國、日本、新加坡與台灣四國取得的國際學術資歷在價值與交換上的差異性，以彰顯學術資歷賦值（valuation）與文化資本的跨區域差異。此次的移地研究，延續第一及第二階段移地研究的資料蒐集工作。在此次的移地研究中，田野場域仍是馬來西亞吉隆坡地區。研究者依據研究的需要，訪談留學日本，中國與新加坡後回歸馬來西亞的留學人，並透過參與雪隆留台校友會在巴生（Klang）舉辦的歲末聚餐，以進行台灣校友會運作及留台人社會網絡的參與觀察。

受訪者選取方式與第一及第二階段田野工作相同，先透過立意抽樣後，再經由抽樣後的受訪者介紹的滾雪球抽樣法（限只滾一次）取得。訪談問題大致沿用之前田野工作所使用的訪談大綱，並針對受訪者前往留學目的國與留學學校的不同，在追問問題部分做了必要的調整。此階段田野工作共計進行兩星期，自 2015 年 1 月 20 日至 2 月 3 日。此次共訪談 12 人，包括 6 位馬來西亞留學日本各大學（包括一位取得專科文憑）的校友、3 位馬來西亞留學新加坡（皆為新加坡國立大學）的校友、3 位馬來西亞留學中國（3 位留學北京大學其中一位到北大學習漢語）的校友，皆為個別的深入訪談。訪談目的，在於瞭解其在不同留學國所累積之跨國文化資本(技能知識、語言能力、學經歷等)與社會資本(社會網絡關係)對其畢業後回國發展的影響，其學歷、外語能力、與留學經驗對當地社會與勞力市場的兌換價值及作用。此外，研究者也參與留學人在當地的相關活動進行參與觀察。例如，研究者參與雪隆留台校友會於 1/28（三）晚間在巴生舉辦的歲末聚餐，以進一步瞭解當地留台校友會的組織運作及留台人社會網絡的運作。

與第一及第二階段的田野經驗相似的是，留日校友大多仍須透過非正式管道介紹。其中的一位，是研究者參加雪隆校友會聚餐時在同桌用餐的留台校友，他後來去了日本留學。在研究者邀請下，他同意接受訪談，並介紹另一位留學日本的朋友一同接受訪談。不過與前兩次田野經驗不同的是，此次田野工作進行前，

研究者透過之前參與本研究的北大畢業受訪者引介，聯繫到目前北大校友會馬來西亞分會的會長賴貞煌。在賴會長熱心的支持與協助下，不僅他本人願意接受訪問，也介紹令兩位北大畢業的留學人接受訪談。南洋理工大學畢業生在之前兩次的田野工作中都難以尋得。此次在參與第一階段田野工作訪談的南大校友翁隆盛先生引介下，研究者聯繫到目前擔任南洋理工大學馬來西亞校友會的會長 Chris Choy。同樣地，他除了接受訪談外，也熱心引介一位 NTU 在吉隆坡地區的校友接受我的訪談。另一位 NTU 校友，則是在南洋理工大學台灣校友會會長的引介下取得聯繫，並成功地進行訪談。

## 二、研究成果

本階段田野訪談工作成果整理如下：

| **各國校友/校友會/非營利組織** | | **第三階段 (2015 年寒假期間)** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **訪談數(場)** | **訪談人數 (人)** |
| 中國 | **北京大學校友** | 3 | 3 |
| **日本高等學府校友** | | 6 | 6 |
| 新加坡 | **南洋理工大學校友** | 3 | 3 |
| 訪談數總數(場數或人數) | | 12 | 12 |

註：研究者另參加雪隆留台校友在巴生舉辦的歲末聚餐以進行參與觀察。

本研究計畫探究馬來西亞華裔校友在中國、台灣、日本以及新加坡四國取得國際學術資歷，在他們回到移出國後，其資歷在移出國的價值與交換上的差異，比較從不同大學以及國家獲取的資歷賦值的價值，檢視在不同地理位置所積累的

跨國文化資本的可攜性以及可轉移性(包括，學位、語言能力、文化知識以及特質)。並提出「資歷貨幣(credentials currency)」的概念，探討其如何在社會與勞力市場會如何被定價（valued）與交換（exchanged）。

截至目前文獻資料和訪談資料的蒐集結果，可進一步印證「資歷貨幣(credentials currency)」在跨界轉換性（transnational transferability）表現上的差異。以「語言」為例，在馬來西亞工作主要使用的語言是「英文」，所以留中的畢業校友回馬來西亞後，其處遇與研究者在第一階段田野工作接觸的留台校友類似：雖然他們有不錯的工作能力與優秀的中文能力，但除非工作環境或職位（如在當地大學中文系擔任教職）需要中文訓練背景與能力，否則一般來說，中文能力無法對其在當地勞動市場創造競爭優勢。對留中校友而言，在不是英語教育環境的中國學習，英文能力普遍較弱，因此在求職路上會遇到一些困難，就業市場也較狹窄。在留日校友中，可以看到大多數的留日校友，是在 1980 年代馬來西亞政府推動「向東學習政策」(Look East Policy)之後才有明顯的增長。就訪談資料得知，即使是在日商公司，英語也是主要的語言，日文所具備的優勢在外部勞力市場的競爭中不再顯著。不過，對於進入以日本文化為基礎的利基勞力市場（如日商公司）來說，留學日本以取得的資歷在辨識性與認可程度上就明顯提高，也因此其在日本積累的文化資本（如對日本文化的瞭解，具備日文能力，具有日本學歷等）在這樣的利基勞力市場中就具有相當程度的可攜性（portability）與可轉移性（transferability）。這也解釋了為何很多畢業校友中，除了幾位具博士學位者在大學任教外，許多校友在回馬來西亞後是在日商公司工作。新加坡的英語教育，有助於其畢業校友在回馬來西亞工作時，具有語言上的優勢，加上新加坡和馬來西亞地理位置接近，馬來西亞對新加坡熟悉度較高，新加坡的大學（包括國立新加坡大學與南洋理工大學）在亞洲及全球的聲譽獲得普遍認可，以及在新加坡求學的受訪者皆學習應用學科（商，工程）等因素，使得留新者在馬來西亞當地勞力市場，相對於留學其他亞洲地區的留學人而言，處於相對優勢的位置。在新加坡的留學經驗不僅有助於在馬來西亞的求職，也使留新者能夠在新加坡謀職。由

於留學新加坡者幾乎都有與新加坡政府簽訂契約，由新加坡政府負擔大部分的學費，而留學生必須在畢業後留在新加坡（或到新加坡在海外的公司）工作三年，因此留學新加坡的學生在畢業後幾乎全部都留在新加坡。大多留學新加坡取得高等學歷的留學人，在履行完在新加坡工作三年的義務後，仍選擇繼續留在新加坡工作的重要原因，是因為可以賺取較高的薪資，社會也相對安定。這也解釋了為何儘管新加坡與馬來西亞近在咫尺，但僅有少數留新者回馬來西亞發展。

初步可見，不同國家的畢業校友擁有不同程度的社會和文化資本，使其在海外積累的學經歷有不同的「資歷貨幣(credentials currency)」價值，如同在貨幣中也有「強勢貨幣」和「弱勢貨幣」的差別，「強勢貨幣」（英文，名校，經濟發達的留學目的國等）相較於「弱勢貨幣」(中文，名不見經傳的學校，留學目的國為發展中國家等)，更能幫助其建立社會流動的機會。不過，原本在外部勞力市場中具有相對競爭弱勢留學人所攜帶的「資歷貨幣」若是能進入對其「資歷貨幣」有特定需求，或對其「資歷貨幣」具有辨識及認可能力的利基勞力市場中，則其「資歷貨幣」的價值在此特定勞力市場中會增值，其資歷價值的可攜性（portability）轉換能力（transferability）也會被提升。

在這次移地研究的另一個重要收穫，是對於留台人社會網絡運作的觀察。研究者參加雪隆留台校友會的歲末聚餐並進行參與觀察，有幾點重要發現：

1. 除了主持人是兩位年輕的女性校友（從外觀判斷應在 30 歲以下）外，參加者大多在中年以上。從外觀來看，大多數年齡在 45-65 歲之間。這印證了受訪留台人指出留台校友會年齡偏長的說法（受訪留台人多在 45 歲以下）。由於聚會時間被安排在週間晚上，這樣的聚會時間不利於年輕的成員，特別是已有家庭而仍須負擔孩子照顧責任者。這也解釋了為何參與聚會者年紀偏長的原因。

2. 參與組織聚會者，應該有明顯比例是從商或是自由業，有固定上班時間的受固者比例應該不高。這可從兩方面的資料線索觀之。第一，聚會時間安排在週三晚上，而非週末。對一般上班族而言，這並非是個適當的聚會時間選擇。如果可以參與，工作時間應該相對來說是有彈性的，或者說週間時間較不受限制。

因此，自營商或自由業者較有可能會參加這樣的活動。同時。第二，活動中各桌都有同桌者一起持筷子翻攪麵食並高誦吉祥話的儀式，以及不時見到有人到各桌敬酒，同時各桌內同席次者也相互敬酒的敬酒儀式，這些儀式均有強烈的商業社交色彩。這也部分印證留台受訪者(以及部分留學其他國家的校友受訪者)所言，校友會等組織的的功能最主要是提供社交平台，對從商或自由業者，可以提供擴展人脈與增加商機（或業績）的機會。因此，對於沒有這些工具性需求的其他校友來說，參加校友會的吸引力似乎就不大了。

## 三、建議

截至目前為止，研究者已進行三階段的田野工作，分別在馬來西亞吉隆坡進行三次（各兩週）的田野訪查工作，以及一次在新加坡的短期田野訪查。不過，可惜的是，由於南洋理工大學校友實在難尋，因此這個群體在本研究的樣本不足，只有三個，這將造成之後在資料分析比較上的困難。如果有可能，希望能把這部分的資料補齊。

# 科技部補助專題研究計畫執行國際合作與移地研究

# 心得報告

日期：2015 年 8 月 8 日

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 計畫編號 | MOST 102－2410－H－004－106－ MY2 | | |
| 計畫名稱 | 境外教育、跨國文化資本與弱勢處境：向上流動或持久邊緣化？ | | |
| 出國人員姓名 | 馬藹萱 | 服務機構及職稱 | 國立政治大學社會學系<br>副教授 |
| 出國時間 | 2015 年 7 月 11 日至<br>2015 年 7 月 18 日 | 出國地點 | 新加坡<br>馬來西亞 吉隆坡地區 |
| 出國研究目的 | □實驗 ☑田野調查 □採集樣本 □國際合作研究 □使用國外研究設施 | | |

## 一、執行移地研究過程

這項研究計畫的目的，在於透過探究馬來西亞華裔校友在中國、日本、新加坡與台灣四國取得的國際學術資歷在價值與交換上的差異性，以彰顯學術資歷賦值（valuation）與文化資本的跨區域差異。在計畫當中，原預定進行三次移地田野調查。不過，在前三次的田野調查中，儘管研究者作為計畫主持人已竭力找尋適合的受訪對象進行訪談，但由於其中南洋理工大學（NTU）的校友在吉隆坡地區很少，特別難尋，且已受訪的南洋理工大學校友均稱畢業生幾乎都留在新加坡發展，因此在三次移地研究結束後，只完成三個訪談，仍需三位受訪者。就已完成的三個訪談來說，這樣的資料量實難進行有意義的組間（與其他畢業學校校友）比較。

本計畫原本僅編列三次移地研究的經費，就時間與經費的考量，難以進行第四次的移地研究。但研究者在今年受國立新加坡大學邀請，於七月份前往新加坡國立新加坡大學開會，且主辦單位提供來回機票與開會期間的住宿，因此藉此之便，在新加坡對留在當地發展的南洋理工大學校友一場訪談，以探究他們留在當地而不回馬來西亞的原因，並瞭解他們在當地發展的情形以及對未來的規劃。此外，由於新加坡緊鄰馬來西亞，台灣與新加坡的往返也可選擇中途在吉隆坡停留轉機，因此研究者規劃在新加坡會議結束返台前，利用在馬來西亞吉隆坡轉機的機會在當地停留一週，以完成未竟之訪談工作。這樣不僅可以使本計畫所需之研究資料更加完整，也可大大降低移地研究所需之成本。

此次田野工作在兩地進行。研究者在新加坡會議結束後多停留一天（7/11），並透過先前接受訪談的受訪者翁隆盛先生引介，在新加坡當地對一位南洋理工大學畢業的校友進行訪談。次日即飛往吉隆坡，並在先前的安排下，對南洋理工大學校友進行訪談工作。由於先前已知南洋理工大學校友難尋，因此在進行此次的田野訪談前，即透過各種管道找尋合適的受訪者，包括研究者自行透過網際網路搜尋在吉隆坡地區的南洋理工大學校友並以電郵聯繫。在各種努力下，終於在一

週當中完成對三位南洋理工大學畢業校友的深入訪談。

## 二、研究成果

本階段田野訪談工作成果整理如下：

| 各國校友/校友會/非營利組織 | | 第四階段<br>(2015 年暑假期間) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 訪談數(場) | 訪談人數<br>(人) |
| 新加坡 | 南洋理工大學校友<br>（新加坡） | 1 | 1 |
| | 南洋理工大學校友<br>（吉隆坡） | 3 | 3 |
| 訪談數總數(場數或人數) | | 4 | 4 |

本研究計畫探究馬來西亞華裔校友在中國、台灣、日本以及新加坡四國取得國際學術資歷，在他們回到移出國後，其資歷在移出國的價值與交換上的差異，比較從不同大學以及國家獲取的資歷賦值的價值，檢視在不同地理位置所積累的跨國文化資本的可攜性以及可轉移性(包括，學位、語言能力、文化知識以及特質)。並提出「資歷貨幣(credentials currency)」的概念，探討其如何在社會與勞力市場會如何被定價（valued）與交換（exchanged）。

截至目前文獻資料和訪談資料的蒐集結果，可進一步印證「資歷貨幣(credentials currency)」在跨界轉換性（transnational transferability）表現上的差異。此次的移地研究所訪談的對象，皆是南洋理工大學的畢業生，而他們所接受的科學與工程專業訓練，相較於其他領域的知識與能力而言，可以說是文化與社會鑲嵌性最低的，也因此這樣的資歷與能力的跨界可攜性（transnational portability）

高。再加上先前資料已顯示，新加坡相對較佳的社經發展與教育環境，以及南洋理工大學在馬來西亞普遍具有的高度認可（包括對學校的熟悉度以及對該校學歷的肯定），使得 NTU 校友在馬來西亞發展時，其 NTU 學歷對其發展有實際助益。

訪談資料也對許多 NTU 校友（也包括許多 NUS 校友）在畢業後留在新加坡以及僅有極少數回馬來西亞發展的情形，提供許多解釋上的線索。第一，新加坡相對較佳的社經發展水準，良好的治安，族群平等的社會制度等，對許多馬來西亞華人來說具有相當的吸引力。新加坡與馬來西亞相鄰，文化相近，新加坡甚至還曾是馬來亞聯邦的一部份，長期以來兩國往返密切。NUS 與 NTU 受訪者中，也有不少人有親友在新加坡工作或定居新加坡。多位 NTU 與 NUS 的受訪者表示，對 NTU 與 NUS 的畢業生來說，畢業後的計畫首選幾乎都是先在新加坡工作，一方面是因為與新加坡政府簽訂學貸契約需留在新加坡工作三年。在新加坡的公司工作三年，同樣可以履行該項契約的義務。但由於新加坡與馬來西亞在薪資上的巨大落差，因此絕大部分的人仍選擇在這三年留在新加坡工作，僅有非常少數的畢業生選擇回馬來西亞。另一方面是因為所學在新加坡較能找到理想的工作（包括在理想的工作環境及較有發展性的公司），以及較能學以致用。由於馬來西亞相對來說發展程度較為落後，所學在回國的就業環境中未必有用（這在留台生的訪談中也提到），因此選擇留在新加坡發展。不過，選擇回馬來西亞的留新人，大多是因為家庭因素（如有家庭照顧責任，與家庭關係緊密不捨家人）而選擇回馬。有部分回馬者，以及計畫在新加坡工作數年後回馬者，則是著眼於在馬來西亞市場中的自營商機。這一部份的人，認為馬來西亞缺乏完善的社會制度，正提供了許多做生意的發展機會（或漏洞？）。相對來說，新加坡已非常制度化，若要從商，發展的潛力反而是相對受限的。

這次的移地研究資料也有新的發現。第一，在新加坡就讀高等學歷者，有部分是在大學之前就在新加坡就讀。由於新加坡政府積極延攬海外菁英，其教育政策亦是如此。新加坡政府會到亞洲鄰近國家（如馬來西亞，中國）舉辦考試，選拔優秀的中小學學生，提供優厚的獎學金，以延攬他們到新加坡求學，目的是希

望他們日後留在新加坡發展。受訪者當中，即有這樣的例子。由於少小離家，在新加坡的時間較久，長期作為「異鄉人」之下，對祖國的認同與依附較弱，但也未必就深入地認同於新加坡。在新加坡延攬海外菁英的教育政策下，這樣的少年菁英並不孤單，他們容易在身邊找到同類，也因此容易形成內團體而提供彼此重要的社會支持，包括去地域性的身份認同（「not here, not there 的人」）。另外，如前述所言，新馬兩國相鄰，文化語言相通，，兩地人民往來頻繁，因此畢業後的發展也未必僅限於在新加坡或馬來西亞，很有可能也是在兩地區間來回流動。

另外，新的訪談資料也凸顯出不同地區的資歷貨幣所存在的「價差」，有可能透過「投資風險的分散」以強化個人累積資歷的總體價值。例如，有受訪者在台灣接受大學教育，在新加坡接受碩士教育，在香港接受博士教育。由於自台灣所獲得的資歷貨幣在馬來西亞勞力市場中的可轉換性較差，而新加坡與香港的英語環境與較高度的學歷認可，提供了個人增加所持資歷貨幣資本價值的機會。透過到新加坡和香港取得更高階的學歷與訓練，受訪者最終回到馬來西亞理想的工作。

# 科技部補助專題研究計畫出席國際學術會議心得報告

日期：105 年 10 月 13 日

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 計畫編號 | MOST 102－2410－H－004－106－ MY2 | | |
| 計畫名稱 | 境外教育、跨國文化資本與弱勢處境：向上流動或持久邊緣化？ | | |
| 出國人員姓名 | 馬藹萱 | 服務機構及職稱 | 國立政治大學社會學系副教授 |
| 會議時間 | 2016 年 6 月 19 日至 2016 年 6 月 25 日 | 會議地點 | 盧比安納，斯洛維尼亞（Ljubljana, Slovenia） |
| 會議名稱 | (中文)國際研究學會與中東歐國際研究學會聯合研討會<br>(英文) ISA-CEEISA Conference | | |
| 發表題目 | (中文)海外資歷貨幣在亞洲的可轉移性與對歸國者在原生國社會流動的效應：馬來西亞華裔的個案<br>(英文) Transferability of overseas credentials currency in Asia and its effects on returnees' social mobility at home: the case of Malaysian Chinese | | |

## 一、參加會議經過

本人於2013年八月起，負責執行一項兩年期的科技部專題研究計畫〈 )( -- ---）並擔任該計畫之主持人。最初規劃在計畫執行的第二年末，參與美國社會學會於2015年八月召開之年度研討會並在當中發表研究結果。但本人在2015年6月獲得執教學校國立政治大學薦選，於2015年8月至2016年7月至美國喬治城大學擔任訪問教授一年。當時由於出國手續及赴美簽證的申請耗費時日，截至七月底仍未獲得美國簽證，因此必須取消至美國社會學會發表論文之計畫。最後終於在八月份獲得美國簽證，並於八月21日飛抵美國，開始在美國喬治城大學為期一年的訪問工作。同時，本人也提出申請將本計畫延期一年（至2016年7月31日），已爭取更充裕的時間來完成。

本人後來選擇參與國際研究學會（International Studies Association, ISA)與中東歐國際研究學會（Central and Eastern European International Studies Association, CEEISA)於2016年六月23-25日在斯洛維尼亞(Slovenia)首都盧比安納(Ljubljana）合辦之ISA-CEEISA國際研討會，以發表本計畫的研究成果。ISA-CEEISA研討會的主辦單位包括國際關係中心（Centre of International Relations, CIR)、中東歐國際研究學會與國際研究學會共同舉辦，會議地點在盧比安納大學社科院(University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences)。選擇這個研討會發表論文的原因有幾個。第一，這項研究的研究樣本涉及亞洲的跨國比較（日本，台灣，新加坡，中國），且研究場域在馬來西亞，研究議題涉及少數族群的跨國流動與文化資本跨界轉移，與國際研究關係密切。國際研究學會（ISA）為國際事務研究領域的重要學術社群組織，參與這項會議發表論文不但切合研究論文主題，且有機會與相關領域學者交流並從中獲益。第二，全美社會學會年會每年均在近八月底舉辦，但由於我的訪問學者簽證有效期限為2016年7月31日，我將不及留在美國至八月底以參與2016年在美國舉辦全美社會學會年會。第三，這項會議的主題與發表論文除了囊括全球各項國際事務研究的議題外，也側重歐洲（特別是中東歐）的實證經驗探討。在學術生涯當中，我與中東歐的社會學者接觸機會相當有限，僅在2008年在匈牙利布達佩斯參與國際社會學研究院舉辦的全球大會（World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology)。由於這次可以由美國前往會議地點斯洛維尼亞，因此在行程上會較由台灣往返會議地點更加省時方便。希望這次能藉由參與

研討會的機會，與全球其他地區，特別是中東歐地區研究國際議題的學者建立交流機會。

ISA-CEEISA 研討會之與會學者共計約 450 人，來自全球 52 個國家。三天會議全程以英文進行，除了有 109 場論文發表場次外，並有數個大型演講，論壇與及會議相關活動。其中值得一提的，是在會議開始前，英國正進行公投以決定是否脫離歐盟，而在會議進行的第二天（6/24）上午，英國公布公投結果決定脫離歐盟。這個消息的宣布，對歐洲乃至於全球造成強烈震撼。該會議立即在當天籌組論壇，針對英國退出歐盟（Brexit）的原因以及可能造成的區域與全球影響進行討論，而這場論壇也是全球第一個針對英國退出歐盟的國際性學術論壇。這場圓桌論壇的主持人是任職於盧比安納大學社科院的 Bojinović Fenko 博士，與談人共四位，包括：

- Kai Oppermann, PhD, University of Sussex, Great Britain
- Maria Mälksoo, PhD, University of Tartu, Estonia
- James Morrow, PhD, University of Michigan, USA
- Viatcheslav Morozov, PhD, University of Tartu, Estonia

與會人士對於該論壇的參與相當踴躍，並在會議中對英國脫離歐盟的各項議題進行熱烈討論。會議中多位參與者（包括與談人及與會聽眾）強調，英國公投決定退出歐盟，顯示了民主制度在英國、歐洲、乃至於全球層次上運作的系統性缺失。公投做為民主制度的重要工具，證明並非能進行明達（informed)且負責的政治決策。英國人民公投的決定，其實是對英國國內政治的不滿，更甚於對於英國參與歐洲事務的反對。英國人民也透過公投，表達對個人在政治參與過程的邊陲化與疏離化的反抗。論壇中最後做出三個結論：

1. 從國家的層次來看，我們需要正視國族主義（nationalism）與民粹主義（populism）的興起所造成的影響。這些力量不僅造成英國公投退出歐盟，也廣泛存在於歐洲其他國家以及全球其他地區。

2. 從區域的層次來看，歐盟的合法性需要被修復（restored）。這可以透過強化超越單一國家的跨政府制度與機構與重建歐盟整合的正向果效，特別是福利國家的具體發展與消弭區域內部的不平等。

3. 從全球的層次來看，相關學者應盡更大的努力，對政策制訂的運作機制提出改

善的良方，以使民主制度在全球化的脈絡下也能適當地運作。這不僅可以讓全球公民能更適切地進行政治過程的參與，也能使國際體系的運作更加穩定。

我所發表的論文 "Transferability of overseas credentials currency in Asia and its effects on returnees' social mobility at home: the case of Malaysian Chinese" 被安排於6/24上午11:00-12:5的FB08場次發表，地點在盧比安納大學社科院編號第12號的發表場地（論文發表的投影資料請見附件一）。該場次的論文主題為「邊界與遷移（Borders and Migration）」，共有五篇論文，各篇論文與發表人分別是（「邊界與遷移」場次中所發表之論文列表與發表時程請見附件二）：

- Changing Civil Society—Toward A Humane and Coherent Coexistence in Europe
  Barbara Franz (Rider University)
- Schengen as the Inside/Outside Divide: Fostering the hybrid regime
  Artur Gruszczak (Jagiellonian University)
- Social Movements and Freedom of International Movement
  Yuchun Kuo (National Chung Cheng University)
- Refugee Integration and Competing Conceptions of Justice and Order
  Luke Bearup (Social Imaginati Consulting)
- Transferability of overseas credentials currency in Asia and its effects on returnees' social mobility at home: The case of Malaysian Chinese
  Ai-Hsuan Ma (National Chengchi University)

本人論文發表進行得相當順利，並透過論文發表與評論以及發表後的問答時間（Q＆A），與在場多位學者就研究論文內容與問題進行討論與交流，有很好的收穫。該場次主持人及與談人是盧比安納大學的Petra Roter教授。她不僅克盡其職地控制會議進行的流程與時間（這在有多達五篇論文發表的場次中非常重要），而且給予每篇發表論文中肯的意見。她對我所發表的論文給予高度肯定之餘，也提出一些有創見的想法，對於我論文進一步的發展很有幫助。在論文發表會後，主持人Roter教授邀請參與論文發表的學者共進午餐。Roter教授帶我們到校園中的一家餐廳用餐，並熱心協助我們點餐。在午餐當中，我有更多機會及更充裕的時間與來自其他國家的學者們進行交流，也在當中認識了同樣來自台灣，任教於國立中正大學政治系的郭祐韜老師。此外，我在與Roter教授交談時發現，她先生Zlatko Sabic教授（任教於盧比安納大學）也是國際關係研究的學者，他剛獲得一筆研究獎助金，將於今年九月赴台灣國立政治大學擔任訪問學者一學期，並在台北進行

一項研究，她也會隨行在九月底到台灣進行數天的拜訪。當Roter教授得知我在政大任教時十分興奮，與我約定到時在台灣見面。Roter教授與我保持聯繫，她於九月底來台後也約定與我見面，但後來因為梅姬颱風來襲而必須取消。不過，Roter教授預計今年12月份會再訪台北，我們已約好屆時會再見面。此外，我也與於政大進行訪問的Sabic教授保持聯繫，並提供生活與研究上的協助。我會持續經營與Roter教授和Sabic教授的聯繫與交流，並希望以後有機會能進一步發展合作的關係。

## 二、與會心得

本人此次參與 ISA-CEEISA 研討會並發表論文，收穫良多。一方面，本人透過此次論文發表，和與會各國學者相互切磋學習，並累積學術發表的經驗智識，另一方面也藉由參與這次的會議，接觸與台灣相距遙遠的中東歐學界，並結識多位中東歐（以及其他地區）的學者。希望能與這些學者保持聯繫，並以此為基礎拓展國內外的學術網絡，以建立往後的交流契機與合作關係。

## 三、發表論文摘要

**Abstract**

Asia has been the top sending region of international students worldwide, and the high proportion of intra-regional student mobility further signifies this region as an emerging contender in the global market of higher education. Since education and migration are regarded as important strategies of social mobility in many Asian societies, how the "credentials currency" earned from different destinations in this region by international students are being valued and exchanged deserves special attention. By investigating the variability in the value of academic credentials Malaysian Chinese students acquired from China, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan and how it affects social mobility at home, this paper aims at illuminating the nuances of credential valuation and geographies of cultural capital. In-depth interviews were conducted between 2014 and 2015 with fifty-two Malaysian Chinese returnees from these four countries. The findings show that there exists a distinct gradation of credential valuation in international education. Furthermore, the differential portability of transnational cultural capital is closely linked with the economic, political, and cultural dominance of the credential-granting countries in the world system and the international relations between sending and receiving countries, which in turn affects the returnees' subsequent social mobility experiences at home in profound ways.

Keywords: migration, higher education, social hierarchy, Asia

## 五、攜回資料名稱及內容

本人此次參與會議，攜回的資料包括ISA-CEEISA 2016研討會的完整議程，會議參與筆記，以及會議主辦單位發給的參與及發表證明書（請見附件三會議參與及論文發表證明書）。

附件一：出席ISA-CEEISA會議所發表論文"Transferability of overseas creden als currency in Asia and its e ects on returnees' social mobility at home: The case of Malaysian Chinese"之投影資料

# Transferability of Overseas Credentials Currency in Asia and Its Effects on Returnees' Social Mobility at Home: The Case of Malaysian Chinese

ISA-CEEISA Conference, Ljubljana 2016

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# International Student Mobility in Asia

- Asia is the top sending region of international students, accounting for over half (53% in 2013) of the international student population worldwide (OECD 2015).
- While many Asian students aim for major destinations for overseas study, Asian students also compose the majority of the international student body within the region (IOM 2009).
- The high proportion of intra-regional student mobility not only shows the growing importance of regional mobility but also signifies this region as an emerging contender in the global HE market (OECD 2011). This signifies the possibility of alternative education choices and forms of training and knowledge offered by Asian HEIs to international students.

# Overseas Study and Social Mobility

- Higher education produces "positional goods" (Hirsch 1976) that provide access to social prestige and greater economic resources. International credentials often entail both valuable human capital and cultural capital that can enhance upward social mobility of graduates (e.g., Waters and Brooks, 2010).
- Some pointed out that the overall success of the overseas graduates were uneven (e.g., Brooks, et al. 2012); it does not guarantee a particular life trajectory but represents a "vital conjuncture" (Johnson-Hanks 2002) through which further transformations and mobilities are developed.

# The Call

- Although overseas study is claimed to generate tangible outcomes in after-study lives, little has been done investigate the outcomes of overseas study for graduates.
- Since education and migration are regarded as important strategies of social mobility in many Asian societies, how the "credentials currency" earned from different destinations in this region by international students are being valued and affects their social mobility at home deserves special attention.

# Study Objectives

- Examine the variability in the value of international academic credentials Malaysian Chinese students acquired from Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, and China, and how this affects the social mobility of these graduates after they return to their home country.
  - How are the international credentials earned in these four Asian countries different in their values in the Malaysian society? What factors would affect the transferability of "credentials currency" earned abroad through overseas education?
  - For ethnic Chinese as a minority in Malaysia, to what extent do international academic credentials earned in Asia affect their social mobility and class reproduction at home?

# Method and Data

- Fifty-two in-depth interviews with Malaysian Chinese alumni of universities in China(12), Japan(12), Singapore(14), and Taiwan(14) respectively, including Malaysian alumni association leaders of these universities.
- Fieldwork conducted from 2014 to 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

# Overseas Education and Social Mobility

| | Mainstream Market | Niche Market | Marginalized Market |
|---|---|---|---|
| China | ** | ** | ** |
| Japan | * | **** | * |
| Singapore | ***** | * | |
| Taiwan | ** | ** | ** |

# Factors Affecting the Transferability of Overseas "Credentials Currency"

- Recognition by the home government, professional associations, and employers
  - The portability of overseas education hinges on the values ascribed to qualification and experiences earned overseas.
  - Singapore (SG) cases
  - Japan (JP) cases
  - China (CA) and Taiwan (TW) cases

- Disciplines/Industries
  - The portability of overseas education differs by disciplines/industries. Trainings in professional/skilled-based disciplines are generally more portable than those in humanities and social sciences.
  - Finance and business (SG, CA, TW)
  - Engineering (SG, JP, TW)
  - Science and medicine (CA, TW)
  - Social sciences (CA, TW, JP)
  - Humanities (CA, TW, JP)

- Market demand and expected return
  - The value of overseas "credentials currency" relies on the market demand and expected return that the market may offer.
  - Mainstream market
    - TNCs (**SG**)
    - Local (SG, CA, JP, TW)
  - Niche market
    - TNCs (**JP**, TW)
    - Local (**CA**, JP, **TW**)
  - Marginalized market
    - Local (**CA, TW**)

- Embodied cultural capital
  - Embodied cultural capital were articulated as geographically specific and significantly influenced the ways overseas education were recognized and valued in the mainstream and niche markets.
  - Work ethics
  - Language
  - Ways of thinking and problem-solving strategies

# Mediating Factors of the Transferability of Overseas "Credentials Currency"

- Social networks
  - The portability and recognition of overseas credentials are often medicated by transnational social networks (such as alumni associations). E.g., the TW cases.
- Transnational production networks and regional economies
  - The trans-local connections established through regional economic integration created new niche markets at home, which mediated the portability and transferability of overseas education. E.g., the JP case.

# Conclusion

- The transferability of overseas "credentials currency" is geographically uneven, demonstrating differential subjective "values" at home. This in turn reflects on overseas graduates' differential social mobility trajectories at home.
  - Upward mobility into the mainstream labor market
  - Enter into the niche market with the "secret code"
  - Face barriers and struggle in the marginalized market

- The transferability of overseas credentials hinge on the recognition and market demand at home, disciplines and industries, and embodied cultural capital possessed by overseas graduates.
- The portability of overseas education and experiences are also embedded in geographical connections and disconnections, including social networks and relationships as well as transnational production networks established through regional economies.

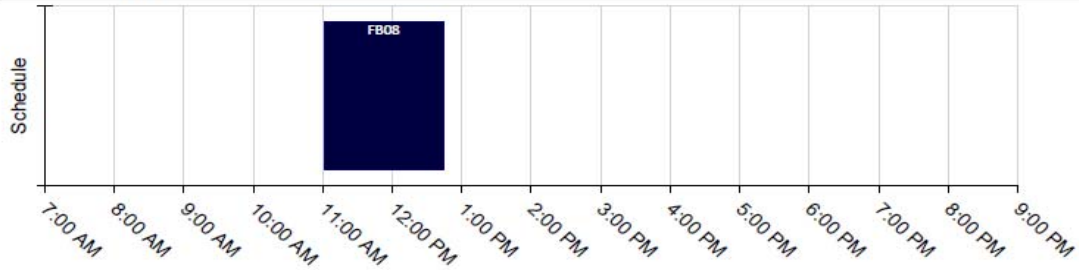
Thank you!

附件二： ISA- CEEISA國際研討會「邊界與遷移（Borders and Migration, FB08)」場次中所發表之論文列表與發表時程

# Friday, June 24

Ai-Hsuan Ma

*ISA-CEEISA Joint Conference, 2016, Ljubljana*




**Your Schedule**

**11:00 AM** **FB08: Borders and Migration**
**12:45 PM** *No. 12, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences*

## FB08: Borders and Migration

*Room: No. 12, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences* **11:00 AM - 12:45 PM**

### People

| | |
|---|---|
| Chair | Petra Roter (University of Ljubljana) |
| Disc. | Petra Roter (University of Ljubljana) |

**Sponsors**

*The Politics of International Relations (Theme)*

### Presentations

Changing Civil Society—Toward A Humane and Coherent Coexistence in Europe
**Barbara Franz (Rider University)**

Schengen as the Inside/Outside Divide: Fostering the hybrid regime
**Artur Gruszczak (Jagiellonian University)**

Social Movements and Freedom of International Movement
**Yuchun Kuo (National Chung Cheng University)**

Refugee Integration and Competing Conceptions of Justice and Order
**Luke Bearup (Social Imaginati Consulting)**

Transferability of overseas credentials currency in Asia and its effects on returnees' social mobility at home: the case of Malaysian Chinese
**Ai-Hsuan Ma (National Chengchi University)**

### Abstract and Keywords

Borders and Migration

Immigration (3); Migration (3); Refugees (3); Borders (2); European Union (2); Justice (2); Public Opinion (1); Civil Society (1); Europe (1); Security (1); Global Citizenship (1); Social Justice (1); Transitional Justice (1); Global Governance (1); Integration (1); Social Hierarchy (1); Asia (1); Higher Education (1);

**Your Notes**

附件三：ISA-CEEISA研討會主辦單位出具之會議參與及論文發表證明書

CEEISA \ CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

International Studies Association
337 Mansfield Road, Unit 1013, Storrs, CT 06269-1013, USA
Tel: (860) 486-5850
and

Central and East European International Studies Association (CEEISA)
University of Ljubljana, Kardeljeva pl. 5; 1000 - Ljubljana, Slovenia
secretariat@ceeisa.org

June 23, 2016

Dear Ai-Hsuan Ma,

Please accept this letter as verification of your attendance and participation in the joint conference of CEEISA & ISA: The Politics of International Relations. The conference took place June 23-25th, 2016, at the Faculty of the Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Thank you for participating on the items below and presenting your work. We look forward to your further participation in the years to come.

- Author on Paper: *Transferability of overseas credentials currency in Asia and its effects on returnees' social mobility at home: the case of Malaysian Chinese*
  Friday, June 24, 11:00 AM

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact us at isa@isanet.org or secretariat@ceeisa.org.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Stefano Guzzini
President
Central and East European
International Studies Association

Jennifer Fontanella
Director of Operations
International Studies Association

Stefano Guzzini  Jennifer Fontanella

# 科技部補助計畫衍生研發成果推廣資料表

日期:2016/10/14

| | |
|---|---|
| 科技部補助計畫 | 計畫名稱: 境外教育、跨國文化資本與弱勢處境：向上流動或持久邊緣化？ |
| | 計畫主持人: 馬藹萱 |
| | 計畫編號: 102-2410-H-004-106-MY2　　學門領域: 社會變遷與發展 |

無研發成果推廣資料

# 102年度專題研究計畫成果彙整表

| 計畫主持人：馬藹萱 | | | | | 計畫編號：102-2410-H-004-106-MY2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 計畫名稱：境外教育、跨國文化資本與弱勢處境：向上流動或持久邊緣化？ | | | | | | | |
| 成果項目 | | | | | 量化 | 單位 | 質化（說明：各成果項目請附佐證資料或細項說明，如期刊名稱、年份、卷期、起訖頁數、證號...等） |
| 國內 | 學術性論文 | 期刊論文 | | | 0 | 篇 | |
| | | 研討會論文 | | | 1 | | 馬藹萱，2014。〈境外教育與文化資本的跨國可轉換性：以馬來西亞留台校友為例〉，台灣社會學會年會，12月6-7日，新竹清華大學。 |
| | | 專書 | | | 0 | 本 | |
| | | 專書論文 | | | 0 | 章 | |
| | | 技術報告 | | | 0 | 篇 | |
| | | 其他 | | | 0 | 篇 | |
| | 智慧財產權及成果 | 專利權 | 發明專利 | 申請中 | 0 | 件 | |
| | | | | 已獲得 | 0 | | |
| | | | 新型/設計專利 | | 0 | | |
| | | 商標權 | | | 0 | | |
| | | 營業秘密 | | | 0 | | |
| | | 積體電路電路布局權 | | | 0 | | |
| | | 著作權 | | | 0 | | |
| | | 品種權 | | | 0 | | |
| | | 其他 | | | 0 | | |
| | 技術移轉 | 件數 | | | 0 | 件 | |
| | | 收入 | | | 0 | 千元 | |
| 國外 | 學術性論文 | 期刊論文 | | | 1 | 篇 | Collins, F., Ho, K. C., Ishikawa, M., Ma, A-H. S. 2016. “International student mobility and after-study lives: the portability and prospects of overseas education in Asia.” Population, Space and Place. (SSCI journal, Impact Factor: 1.781, 2014 ISI Journal Citation Reports Ranking: 5/25 in Demography, 15/76 in Geography) |
| | | 研討會論文 | | | 2 | | Ma, Ai-Hsuan Sandra. 2016. ""Transferability of overseas credentials currency in Asia and its effects on returnees’ social mobility at home: the case of Malaysian Chinese."" Paper |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | presented at the CEEISA-ISA Conference, June 23-25, Ljubljana, Slovenia.<br>Ma, Ai-hsuan Sandra. 2014. ""Social networks, cultural capital, and attachment to the host city: comparing overseas Chinese students and foreign students in Taipei."" Paper presented at the Nordic Sociological Association Conference, August 14-16, Lund, Sweden. |
| | | 專書 | | 0 | 本 | |
| | | 專書論文 | | 0 | 章 | |
| | | 技術報告 | | 0 | 篇 | |
| | | 其他 | | 0 | 篇 | |
| | 智慧財產權及成果 | 專利權 | 發明專利 申請中 | 0 | 件 | |
| | | | 發明專利 已獲得 | 0 | | |
| | | | 新型/設計專利 | 0 | | |
| | | 商標權 | | 0 | | |
| | | 營業秘密 | | 0 | | |
| | | 積體電路電路布局權 | | 0 | | |
| | | 著作權 | | 0 | | |
| | | 品種權 | | 0 | | |
| | | 其他 | | 0 | | |
| | 技術移轉 | 件數 | | 0 | 件 | |
| | | 收入 | | 0 | 千元 | |
| 參與計畫人力 | 本國籍 | 大專生 | | 1 | 人次 | 潘宣 |
| | | 碩士生 | | 2 | | 阮靖權，郭楨廷 |
| | | 博士生 | | 0 | | |
| | | 博士後研究員 | | 0 | | |
| | | 專任助理 | | 0 | | |
| | 非本國籍 | 大專生 | | 1 | | 馮垂華 |
| | | 碩士生 | | 1 | | 李國豪，陳艾欣 |
| | | 博士生 | | 0 | | |
| | | 博士後研究員 | | 0 | | |
| | | 專任助理 | | 0 | | |
| 其他成果<br>（無法以量化表達之成果如辦理學術活動、獲得獎項、重要國際合作、研究成果國際影響力及其他協助產業技術發展之具體效益事項等，請以文字敘述填列。） | | | | | | |

# 科技部補助專題研究計畫成果自評表

請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況、研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）、是否適合在學術期刊發表或申請專利、主要發現（簡要敘述成果是否具有政策應用參考價值及具影響公共利益之重大發現）或其他有關價值等，作一綜合評估。

1. 請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況作一綜合評估
■達成目標
□未達成目標（請說明，以100字為限）
　　□實驗失敗
　　□因故實驗中斷
　　□其他原因
說明：

2. 研究成果在學術期刊發表或申請專利等情形（請於其他欄註明專利及技轉之證號、合約、申請及洽談等詳細資訊）
論文：■已發表　□未發表之文稿　□撰寫中　□無
專利：□已獲得　□申請中　■無
技轉：□已技轉　□洽談中　■無
其他：（以200字為限）

3. 請依學術成就、技術創新、社會影響等方面，評估研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性，以500字為限）
本研究之發現，對於在亞洲地區取得的海外教育所具有的價值，以及在海外取得的資歷與文化資本亞洲勞力市場中的跨國可攜性，提供了重要的洞見。研究成果對於國際遷移，國際教育，族群研究，社會階層等相關學術領域的發展，可提供重要的貢獻。此外，本研究的研究成果也具有相當的政策意涵。對於政府而言，國際教育與境外生招募常被視為是國家「軟實力」的培育與展現，也是在國際高等教育市場擴展影響力的重要手段。對大學院校來說，其所提供的資歷與訓練在國際勞力市場中如何被評價，以及其境外學生在學業完成後如何藉其所得學歷在原生國或海外其他地區發展，對學校邁向國際化發展上是非常重要的政策參考。

4. 主要發現
本研究具有政策應用參考價值：□否　■是，建議提供機關教育部，勞動部，科技部，僑委會
（勾選「是」者，請列舉建議可提供施政參考之業務主管機關）
本研究具影響公共利益之重大發現：□否　■是
說明：（以150字為限）
本研究的發現，與高階人力的培育與跨界流動、海外教育與跨國勞力市場的連結，海外華人的社會流動經驗等議題有密切關連。研究結果可提供相關政府單

位參考。