

SWOT Analysis and Strategic Choices for Pursuing a PhD in the Philippines

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Abstract: This paper aims to conduct an in-depth exploration of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Chinese students pursuing a PhD in the Philippines through the SWOT analysis method. Based on this, corresponding strategic choices are proposed. By modeling and analyzing SWOT, a comprehensive theoretical reference is provided for students intending to pursue a PhD in the Philippines, and decision-making support is also offered to relevant education management departments and overseas study agencies.

Keywords: Studying in the Philippines; Pursuing a PhD; SWOT Analysis; Strategic Choices

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

With the advancement of globalization and the internationalization of higher education, an increasing number of Chinese students are choosing to pursue PhDs overseas. Southeast Asia, with its unique geographical, cultural, and educational advantages, has gradually become one of the popular destinations for Chinese students to study abroad, among which the Philippines has certain characteristics and attractions in doctoral education.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to comprehensively analyze the internal and external factors for Chinese students pursuing a PhD in the Philippines, providing a scientific basis for students' decisions on studying abroad and the formulation of relevant educational policies.

1.3 Research Significance

1.3.1 Theoretical Significance

It enriches and expands the research field on Chinese students' overseas study choices, especially studies on doctoral studies in Southeast Asia.

1.3.2 Practical Significance

It provides clearer guidance for Chinese students in planning their study abroad and also contributes to optimizing and developing educational exchanges and cooperation between China and the Philippines.

2 Overview of PhD Education in the Philippines

2.1 Higher Education System in the Philippines

2.1.1 Composition of Higher Education Institutions

They are divided into public and private institutions. Among the current 1,975 higher education institutions in the Philippines, there are 1,729 private institutions and 265 public institutions.

Public Institutions

National Universities: Public institutions established and maintained by the national government that, in addition to offering a minimum number of required bachelor's degree programs, also need to provide graduate programs.

Local Universities: Public institutions established and maintained by local government units.

Other Government Universities: Specialized higher education institutions that provide training related to public services, such as the Philippine National Police University.

Private Institutions

Including religious affiliated institutions (mainly Catholic) and non-religious institutions (such as branch campuses of foreign universities). Most institutions offer the same types of educational programs as public institutions.

2.1.2 Higher Education Quality Assurance System Structure

The assessment system for higher education quality assurance is implemented through classified certification, with distinct positioning of higher education assurance institutions and clear rights and responsibilities.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) of the Philippines, established in 1994, is primarily responsible for overseeing all public and private higher education institutions and degree programs in the Philippines, as well as for developing and formulating policies aimed at enhancing the quality of national higher education.



The Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP), founded in 1977, focuses on accreditation. It works with

the government to accredit educational institutions and programs, and to formulate and implement policies, programs, standards, and procedures for accreditation.

The National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in the Philippines (NNQAA), established in 2004, is responsible for accrediting public higher education institutions in the Philippines to ensure their quality. Recognized by CHED, the network guarantees the authority of its accreditations for public educational institutions.

Certification Authorities in the Philippines are mainly responsible for formulating project certification standards. These authorities assess higher education institutions based on these standards to provide certification results or assist institutions in improving and enhancing their quality.

The Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) is an organization established in the Philippines to ensure the establishment of a continuous development system for professionals. Its mission is to formulate, promulgate, and implement professional development standards to ensure the quality of professional development.

2.1.3 Accreditation Agencies for Public and Private Education

Public and private institutions undergo assessment and accreditation through different quality assurance agencies to guide, regulate, and promote university development.

Agencies responsible for private education accreditation:

Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU)

Philippine Accrediting Commission for Universities and Colleges (PACU-COA)

Accrediting Agency of the Association of Christian Schools, Colleges, and Universities (ACSCU-AAI)

Agencies responsible for public education accreditation:

Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP)

Accrediting Agency of Local Colleges and Universities (ALCUCOA)

2.1.4 Prominent Features of Higher Education Quality Assurance

It is initiated by private institutions and complemented by government regulation and quality assurance by professional bodies, forming a relatively complete quality assurance system.

It focuses on professional accreditation and uses government legislation to regulate and encourage institutions to voluntarily accept accreditation, with institutional and accreditation assessments serving as important ways for institutional quality assurance.

2.2 Types of PhD Degrees, Curriculum, Research Requirements, Graduation Standards, and Cultivation Modes in the Philippines

There are generally two types of PhD degrees in the Philippines: Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) and professional doctorates.

2.2.1 Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)

The PhD is a graduate program leading to the award of a doctorate in philosophy, focusing mainly on research and cultivating students' ability to engage in academic research in specific disciplinary areas. PhD candidates must demonstrate the ability to make original contributions to the frontiers of knowledge in their chosen fields through their dissertations and exhibit the capacity for independent research and work as students.

PhD programs have two branches: academic and research-oriented programs.

The academic PhD program consists of at least 24 course units and at least 12 dissertation course units. The dissertation should be publicly defended. The hosting institution announces the defense schedule on its website/social media or sends emails to its academic community. Additionally, students must pass comprehensive examinations. As the final learning output, students must also have a published work, specifically proof of acceptance in international or domestic professional journals, indexed journals, or peer-reviewed creative works platforms.

The research-oriented PhD program has at least 75% of its units dedicated to research and dissertation. The remaining units are allocated to research methodology courses and advanced courses that contribute to the development and writing of the dissertation. The dissertation should be publicly defended. The hosting institution announces the defense schedule on its website/social media or sends emails to its academic community. The total number of units is determined by the hosting institution. The hosting institution must ensure that students have at least three years of full-time enrollment. Additionally, students must pass comprehensive examinations. As the final learning output, students must also have a published work, specifically proof of acceptance in international or domestic professional journals, indexed journals, or peer-reviewed creative works platforms.

2.2.2 Professional Doctorates

A professional doctorate represents mastery of the subjects and techniques of a professional field, achieving a level of competence corresponding to the requirements for a PhD. While the work of a professional doctorate may expand the knowledge base of the field, it primarily targets different practical work. The admission requirement for this program is that applicants must possess relevant professional experience. Therefore, applicants must demonstrate substantial practical professional experience. The minimum number of years of professional experience required for each discipline is determined by the CHED panel or higher education institution. The professional doctorate program consists of at least 24 course units and 12 practice-based dissertation units. Students must pass comprehensive examinations. As the final output, students must also complete a practice-based research project. The dissertation should be publicly defended. The hosting institution announces the defense schedule on its website/social media or sends emails to its academic community. Practice-based research is an original investigation aimed at acquiring new knowledge through practice and its results. For doctoral dissertations, originality and contribution to acquiring new knowledge can be demonstrated through creative outputs such as designs, music, digital media, performances, and exhibitions.

2.2.3 Other Types of PhD Degrees

Simultaneous Master's and Doctoral (SMD) Program: In the SMD program, master's and doctoral degrees can be obtained together. These two programs share no more than 20% of the same coursework. Higher education institutions (HEIs) must have strict admission and retention policies. Students must be full-time and not withdraw from the program. Students will be automatically disqualified upon failing any one course/subject. Students will also be disqualified from the program if they fail to complete it within the maximum period approved by the committee. For disqualified students, the institution should determine an appropriate exit

plan. Students must pass comprehensive examinations related to both degrees. Students pursuing a PhD must complete a dissertation and defend it publicly, with at least one published paper, specifically proof of acceptance in international or domestic professional journals, indexed journals, or peer-reviewed creative works platforms. Students pursuing a professional doctorate must complete a practice-based research project and a dissertation, which must be publicly defended.

Dual Doctoral Degree (DDD) Program: The DDD program provides students with the opportunity to pursue doctoral degrees in two fields of study and meet the requirements for both degrees simultaneously. The same coursework can be used for both doctoral degrees, but only up to 20% of the required common coursework can be credited. HEIs must have strict admission and retention policies. Students must be full-time and not withdraw from the program. Students will be automatically disqualified upon failing any one course/subject, but they can continue pursuing the regular program for one of the doctoral degrees. For disqualified students, the institution should determine an appropriate exit plan. The maximum number of years to complete the program should be determined by the hosting institution, subject to approval by CHED. If students cannot complete the program within the specified time, they can only continue pursuing the regular program for one of the two doctoral degrees. Students opting for dual PhD degrees must pass comprehensive examinations and complete a doctoral dissertation covering the content of both programs. The dissertation must be publicly defended. The final learning output should be at least one published paper, specifically proof of acceptance in international or domestic professional journals, indexed journals, or peer-reviewed creative works platforms. Students opting for dual professional doctorates must pass comprehensive examinations and complete practice-based research and dissertations for each professional topic.

The curriculum for master's and doctoral programs generally consists of writing a dissertation and completing the required 12 core courses for master's and 16 core courses for doctoral degrees.

Master's dissertations generally require around 20,000 words, while doctoral dissertations typically require more than 40,000 words. Both master's and doctoral students must undergo a series of steps, including comprehensive examinations, thesis proposal, data collection, ethical review, final defense, thesis revision, and binding.

2.3 Rankings and Reputation of Philippine Universities Internationally

2.3.1 QS World Rankings of Top Philippine Universities in 2025:

In the 2025 QS World University Rankings, the University of the Philippines ranked 336th, an improvement of 68 places from the previous year; Ateneo de Manila University ranked 516th, up 47 places from the previous year; De La Salle University was ranked in the 641-650 bracket, showing a decline compared to the previous year; University of Santo Tomas was placed in the 851-900 bracket, also experiencing a drop; and University of San Carlos is ranked 1401+, likewise demonstrating a decline. All five universities were listed in the 2025 Times Higher Education World University Rankings.



2.3.2 International Reputation and Influence

Higher education institutions in the Philippines are gradually gaining international recognition. The University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University have shown significant improvements in both QS and Times Higher Education rankings, indicating progress in academics and research. The remarkable rise of Ateneo de Manila University, from the 651-700 range to 563rd place, entering the top 600 globally, is particularly noteworthy. It is worth mentioning that the University of San Carlos, as an emerging institution, has consistently ranked among the top five universities in the Philippines for three consecutive years in the QS World University Rankings.

3 SWOT Analysis of Chinese Students Pursuing Doctoral Degrees in the Philippines

3.1 Strengths

3.1.1 Education System Aligned with International Standards:

The English-speaking environment in the Philippines facilitates students' integration into the international community. As English is the official language, it enhances students' English proficiency and academic communication skills.

American-Style Education: The Philippines, having been under American colonial rule for a long time, has inherited the American education system and teaching methods. This system emphasizes autonomous learning, participation, and interaction, fostering innovative thinking and practical abilities among students. It exposes them to advanced educational concepts and teaching methodologies.

High International Recognition: Some universities and programs in the Philippines enjoy international recognition, with their degrees widely accepted globally. For instance, the University of the Philippines has a certain influence internationally, providing students with broader development opportunities.

3.1.2 Relatively Relaxed Admission Requirements:

Flexible Language Requirements: For students with weaker English foundations, pursuing a doctoral degree in the Philippines is attractive. Many schools do not require standardized language test scores such as IELTS or TOEFL for admission. Instead, they offer English courses to help students improve their language skills.

Lenient Academic Background Requirements: Some Philippine universities have relatively relaxed requirements for applicants' academic backgrounds. Candidates with a master's degree (even if it's a single certificate and verifiable on the China Higher Education Student Information Network) may have the opportunity to apply for a doctoral program, and part-time master's degrees are also acceptable. This provides opportunities for many individuals seeking to upgrade their academic qualifications.

3.1.3 Lower Cost of Study:

Affordable Tuition Fees: Compared to the high costs of studying in developed countries such as Europe and the United States, doctoral tuition fees in the Philippines are relatively low. Many schools offer doctoral programs at affordable prices, reducing the financial burden on students and their families. For students with limited budgets, the low tuition and living costs in the Philippines make it a cost-effective choice.

Moderate Living Expenses: The price level in the Philippines is relatively low, and living expenses are also affordable. Students can complete their studies at a relatively low cost, making the overall cost of studying in the Philippines highly cost-effective. Additionally, the proximity of the Philippines to China facilitates convenient and inexpensive travel.

3.1.4 Shorter Academic Duration:

The doctoral program in the Philippines typically lasts 2-3 years, compared to the 4-5 years or even longer period in China. This saves students' time costs and allows them to obtain a doctoral

degree faster, entering the workplace or continuing their studies. For some newly upgraded private universities or even some public universities, sending teachers to the Philippines to upgrade their academic qualifications and broaden their international horizons is also an excellent choice.

3.1.5 Diverse Cultural Environment:

The Philippines is a multicultural country with rich cultural resources and a unique cultural atmosphere. Studying in the Philippines exposes students to different cultures and customs, enhancing their cross-cultural communication skills and cultural inclusiveness, which is significant for personal comprehensive quality improvement.

3.1.6 Unique Academic Advantages

In certain specific fields such as nursing, education, and management, universities in the Philippines possess strong teaching and research capabilities. In terms of the setup of doctoral training programs, admission requirements, faculty staffing, graduation requirements, and research paper standards, the doctoral graduates from the Philippines maintain a relatively high level of quality. Many of these doctoral graduates surpass or are on a par with those from China in terms of the depth and breadth of knowledge, and some can even be compared to doctoral graduates from Europe and the United States.

Overview of Competitive Majors at Top Universities in the Philippines:

University Name	2024 QS Global Ranking	Year Established	Popular Majors	Advantages
University of the Philippines (UP)	404th	1908	Medicine, Engineering, Business, Agriculture	UP is a top public university in the Philippines with strong faculty and high teaching quality.
Ateneo de Manila University	563rd	1859	Business, Education, Hotel Management, Nursing	One of the oldest private universities in the Philippines, renowned for its Business and Education programs. (AdMU)
De La Salle University	681-690th	1911	Engineering, Architecture, Arts, Information Technology	A famous private university in the Philippines, well-known for its Engineering, Architecture, and Arts programs. (DLSU)
University of Santo Tomas	801-850th	1611	Medicine, Law, Philosophy, Nursing	An ancient Catholic university in the Philippines, renowned for its Medicine, Law, and Philosophy programs. (UST)
University of San Carlos (USC)	1201-1400th	1565	Anthropology, Management, Philosophy, Accounting	The oldest private university in the Philippines and Asia, a Catholic university renowned for its Anthropology, Management, Philosophy, Accounting, and other programs.

3.1.7 Cultural Proximity

The Philippines has a large population of Chinese immigrants and overseas Chinese, and there are certain similarities between Filipino cultural customs and values and Chinese cultural habits, which reduces cultural shock and the difficulty of adaptation. In fact, many Chinese students quickly adapt to local life after arriving in the Philippines, rapidly integrating into various levels of local society and even influencing many Filipino citizens.

3.2 Weaknesses

3.2.1 Uneven Quality of Schools and Programs:

Overall Low Rankings: Although there are some good universities in the Philippines, they generally rank relatively low

in world university rankings. Except for a few top universities, the academic level and teaching quality of most schools lag behind those of universities in developed countries such as Europe and the United States.

Unreasonable Program Settings: Some schools may have inadequate program settings, with outdated course content and teaching methods that fail to meet students' learning needs and career development requirements.

Inferior Campus Infrastructure and Library Resources: Due to a lack of government financial investment, universities in the Philippines are generally small in size and in poor condition. Many schools are dilapidated and have not been repaired for years, falling short of even some domestic primary and secondary schools in

China. Some so-called universities are actually just one or two office and teaching buildings.

3.2.2 Academic Reputation Affected by “Watered-Down PhD” Phenomenon:

Questions About “Quick PhDs”: In the past, some PhD programs in the Philippines were “quick” in nature, and the PhD training process in some schools may not have been rigorous, leading some people to question the academic value of PhDs from the Philippines. For example, cases of working professionals obtaining PhDs through short-term study abroad have sparked controversy over the quality of PhDs from the Philippines.

Academic Fraud Issues: There are some unscrupulous agents and institutions in the overseas study market that may help students commit academic fraud or provide false information for profit, damaging the academic reputation of studying in the Philippines.

3.2.3 Limited Educational Resources:

Weak Faculty Strength: Some universities in the Philippines may have an unreasonable faculty structure and uneven levels of expertise. Some teachers may lack international academic backgrounds and cutting-edge research experience, potentially leading to inadequacies in guiding students in academic research.

Outdated Research Facilities: Compared with universities in developed regions such as Europe and the United States, research facilities and laboratory equipment at universities in the Philippines are relatively backward. This affects the research progress and quality of research outcomes for disciplines that require experimental research.

3.2.4 Relatively Weak Employment Competitiveness:

Limited Recognition in the International Job Market: On the international job market, PhDs from the Philippines may have lower recognition than graduates from Europe, the United States, and other regions. Some multinational corporations or international organizations may prefer to hire PhD graduates from Europe, the United States, and other regions when recruiting.

Bias Among Domestic Employers: In China, many employers also have biases against the academic qualifications of PhDs from the Philippines, believing that their academic level and abilities are inferior to those of graduates from China or Europe and the United States. This may affect the employment competitiveness of PhD graduates from the Philippines in China.

3.2.5 Concerns About Social Security:

There are certain social security issues that may affect students’ learning and living safety. Many domestic students and parents are concerned about the security situation in the Philippines, and in fact, there are indeed many security issues in the country: drug abuse, robbery, kidnapping, and murder incidents occur frequently and are often reported by the media.

3.3 Opportunities

3.3.1 Strengthening Educational Exchange and Cooperation Between China and the Philippines:

With the continuous development of relations between China and the Philippines, exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in the field of education have also been increasingly strengthened. The Chinese government and the Philippine government have signed relevant higher education cooperation

agreements, providing more policy support and guarantees for Chinese students studying in the Philippines and creating better conditions for Filipino PhD graduates to return to China for employment and development. Higher education cooperation between China and the Philippines began in 2009, and since then, cooperation between the two countries in higher education has developed rapidly, mainly manifested in a large number of Chinese students going to the Philippines for further study. This cooperation has been overwhelmingly one-sided, with few Filipino students studying in China.

3.3.2 Opportunities Brought About by Economic Development in the Philippines:

In recent years, the Philippine economy has grown rapidly, and the country’s investment in education has also increased. This provides a better economic foundation and development opportunities for the development of universities in the Philippines and also helps improve the quality and level of PhD education in the country.

3.3.3 Development of Emerging Disciplines and Programs:

Some universities in the Philippines are gradually making a name for themselves in emerging disciplines and programs, such as information technology, artificial intelligence, and environmental science. Students choosing to study these emerging programs will have the opportunity to access cutting-edge academic research and practical opportunities, laying a solid foundation for their future career development.

3.3.4 Increasing Educational Cooperation Projects with Other Countries:

Some universities in the Philippines have carried out various forms of educational cooperation projects with universities in other countries, such as dual degree programs and exchange student programs. Students can study and exchange at universities in other countries through these projects, broadening their international horizons and enriching their learning experiences. Universities in the Philippines have extensive cooperation with academic institutions worldwide, and during their PhD studies in the Philippines, students can have the opportunity to participate in international research projects, expanding their academic networks and cooperation opportunities.

3.3.5 Growing Demand for PhD Talent in China:

With the development of the economy and the implementation of the innovation-driven strategy, the demand for high-level PhD talent in China has continued to increase. Rapidly increasing the proportion of PhDs has become a rigid demand for many universities, especially private universities. Many universities are unable to apply for master’s and PhD programs or offer popular majors due to a lack of PhDs.

3.4 Threats

3.4.1 Political and Social Instability:

The political and social environment in the Philippines may have certain unstable factors, such as political turmoil and social security issues. These factors may have an impact on students’ learning and living, and even threaten their personal safety.

3.4.2 Changes in Study-Abroad Policies:

The study-abroad policies of the Philippines may be affected

by international situations and domestic politics, and changes in the Philippine government's study-abroad policies may affect students' enrollment, residence, and employment. For example, adjustments to visa policies and academic qualification certification policies may bring uncertainty to students' study abroad plans.

3.4.3 Intensifying International Education Competition:

With the continuous development of global education, competition in the international education market is increasingly fierce. Competition from other countries and regions as study destinations may reduce the number of students going to the Philippines for study. Universities in other countries are also continuously improving their education quality and attractiveness to compete for international student resources. PhD education in the Philippines faces competitive pressure from other countries and needs to continuously improve its competitiveness.

3.4.4 Impact of International Relations and Geopolitics:

Changes in Sino-Philippine relations and the global political and economic landscape may indirectly affect studying abroad. In recent years, Sino-Philippine relations have developed like a roller coaster, especially after the current president, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., came to power and adopted a policy of leaning towards the United States, continuously stirring up trouble on the South China Sea issue, resulting in a significant deterioration in Sino-Philippine relations. Many parents and students are worried about studying in the Philippines, and even students already studying there have been affected. Many students have been refused visas for their first trip to the Philippines, and many students currently studying there have encountered unnecessary difficulties when renewing their student visas. Procedures that could originally be completed in 20 days, such as transferring student visas or renewing visas, now take three or four months, and many Chinese students are complaining.

3.4.5 Frequent Occurrence of Irresistible Forces and Public Emergencies Such as Typhoons and Epidemics:

In recent years, typhoons and earthquakes have occurred frequently in the Philippines, and irresistible forces such as the three-year epidemic have disrupted many students' study abroad plans, affecting their learning progress and living arrangements. Due to being unable to attend school normally, subsequent academic certification by the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange has been severely affected. Because they cannot obtain normal certification from the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange, students are lamenting on platforms such as "Xiaohongshu" and "Douyin."

4 Strategic Choices

4.1 SO Growth Strategy

Leveraging the advantages of low economic costs and strong cultural adaptability, seize the opportunities arising from deepening China-Philippines educational cooperation and increasing domestic demand for overseas returnees. Choose majors that are closely integrated with domestic needs, actively participate in academic exchange activities, and accumulate connections and resources. Utilize the advantages of low educational costs and an English-speaking environment to intensify enrollment promotion, attracting more students with academic pursuits but limited financial conditions. Capitalize on the opportunity of China-Philippines

educational cooperation to expand cooperation projects, such as increasing programs for high school graduates to pursue undergraduate studies in the Philippines, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of studying there.

4.2 WO Turnaround Strategy

Strive to enhance academic capabilities to offset the disadvantages of differences in educational systems and inadequate infrastructure. By participating in training and academic projects, strengthen competitiveness in emerging professional fields and improve the lack of a strong academic atmosphere. Strengthen cooperation with domestic universities and enterprises to increase the domestic recognition of Philippine doctorates. Currently, some universities in European and American countries have strengthened cooperation with Chinese universities, such as establishing campuses in China where students can complete their studies entirely within China and obtain foreign university diplomas without going abroad. Invest in improving university infrastructure and enhancing education quality to address issues of uneven educational quality.

4.3 ST Diversification Strategy

While enjoying advantages such as rich tourism resources, pay attention to policy changes and social security issues, and plan study abroad paths ahead of time. Leverage the opportunity of abundant online learning resources to broaden academic horizons and cope with employment competition pressure. Develop master's and doctoral programs in unique disciplines to meet the demand of domestic employers for talent in specific fields. Closely monitor changes in study abroad policies and international relations, and promptly adjust enrollment strategies and service content. Shift from master's and doctoral program courses to fully completing course studies and thesis research processes overseas. Recently, the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange has strengthened the certification review of master's and doctoral program classes, making it impossible or difficult for previous part-time Philippine study abroad programs to obtain certification from the center.

4.4 WT Defensive Strategy

Carefully select schools and majors to mitigate risks arising from policy changes and challenges to academic degree recognition. Strengthen the cultivation of comprehensive qualities to improve the ability to cope with employment competition and social security issues. Optimize study abroad services, strengthen safety guarantees and psychological support for students, and reduce the impact of threats such as social security. Reduce enrollment recommendations for regions and universities with more unstable factors to lower risks.

5 Conclusions and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusions

Chinese students pursuing doctoral degrees in the Philippines face both opportunities and challenges. Through SWOT analysis, we have identified their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and proposed corresponding strategic choices.

In summary, pursuing a doctoral degree in the Philippines has its unique strengths and weaknesses, suitable for students with different needs. For working professionals pursuing short-term,

efficient, and low-cost study abroad, the Philippines is a viable option; whereas for students seeking international recognition, considering doctoral degrees from other countries is recommended.

5.2 Suggestions

5.2.1 Student Level

Before making a study abroad decision, fully understand the situation of Philippine universities and choose appropriate majors and schools based on one's own career planning and academic interests. For working professionals who need a doctoral degree to enhance their career competitiveness, a Philippine doctorate can be a transitional choice, helping them obtain the required academic degree certification within a short period.

5.2.2 University Level

Strengthen international exchange and cooperation, enhance educational quality and international reputation, and provide better study and living environments for international students. For students seeking international recognition, consider doctoral degrees from European and American countries. Although the

academic system is longer and more challenging, the international recognition is higher. Universities are the bases for cultivating talents. Therefore, more incentives should be given to in-service teachers to select reputable institutions and majors suitable for their universities' development to pursue higher academic degrees and encourage them to achieve success in their careers while working.

5.2.3 Government Management Department Level

Establish and improve the study abroad service system, strengthen supervision and guidance of the overseas study abroad market, and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of overseas students. Due to misleading information or media, recently, relevant domestic departments have adopted a one-size-fits-all approach to academic degree certification, damaging the enthusiasm of overseas students and failing to reflect the basic principle of educational equity. This also misleads the policy of encouraging students to study abroad advocated by the country. As educational administrators, we should acknowledge the positive impact that Southeast Asian doctoral graduates have on domestic universities, rather than treating those who have returned from studying in a particular region with prejudice or negativity.

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