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**Title**

Why and how international students choose Mainland China as a higher education study abroad destination / M. A. Jiani

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**Abstract**

In terms of international student mobility, although Mainland China is commonly perceived as a major “sending” nation of international students, it is often overlooked as an important “receiving” nation of international students. Despite its tremendous leap to the third top destination choice of international students, existing research on the motivation and decision-making process of international students who choose to study in Mainland China is minimal. In order to address this gap in the literature, this study seeks to explain why and how 42 international students chose Mainland China as their study abroad destination. A synthesis model consisting of a three-stage process—motivation to study abroad/in China, the city/institution search and selection, the evaluation of the programme—is proposed to explain their decision-making process. Findings reveal that China’s future development prospects distinctively attract students to choose China as their study abroad destination. This research also discusses the growing number of descendants of Chinese

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migrants who wish to return to their place of origin, China, for higher education in search of their cultural identity. Implications highlight the need for Mainland China government to ensure high-quality education to continue attracting an increasing number of talented students from around the world. Suggestions for future research are also provided.(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Jiani, M. A., E-Mail: maj@bnu.edu.cn