

FOLLOW UP SURVEY OF 2015-2017 MASTER'S GRADUATES OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ZHEJIANG NORMAL UNIVERSITY, P.R. CHINA

Abstract

The researcher conducted a survey study of 28 international graduate students of Comparative Education (Master students) who were enrolled in the program from September 2015 to July 2017 in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU). With the application and admission procedures in ZJNU, 25% rated the application procedure as **A-Excellent** and majority of them (45%) rated as **B-Very good**, followed by another 25% who rated it as **C-Good**. 5% rated the application procedure to Join ZJNU as **D-Not good**. Their concerns are very well narrated in this paper.

One of the key findings from the survey is that graduates appreciated universities' contribution to them and the great role played by intelligent supervisors in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), the friendly environment which were always there between supervisors and students, which made these international students feel like they were not in the foreign countries. Most of the supervisors played extra ordinary roles as they acted like their biological parents by taking their students into various places where they learnt a lot of things they couldn't have learnt. However, few students expressed the challenges faced on the first days after their arrival. With the challenge of language and unfamiliarity of the environment, these students were stuck in their rooms without knowing where they could exchange their money and buy food. However even when they found the place to exchange money, language was still a problem to them.

Concerning the impacts of the program, out of 20 graduate students who responded to the questionnaire, 85% are employed and the remaining 15% are not yet employed. Among those who are already employed, 82.4% are in full time job while only 17.6% are working as part time. 60% of these employed graduates got their employment before attending the program of Comparative education at Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), while 35% got their current employment after attending the program and only 5% got the employment offer while attending the program at ZJNU.

Key words: *Follow-up Survey, Graduates, Comparative Education, Relevance.*

Introduction

Survey research is the most popular research design in social science, which is flexible and can appear in a variety of forms characterized by collection of data using standard questionnaire forms administered by telephone or face to face, by postal pencil-and-paper questionnaire or increasingly by using web based and e-mail forms (Muijs 2004). It is the study which looks at individual, groups, institutions, method and materials in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyze and interpret the entities that constitutes various fields of inquiry (Cohen et. al 2007). Survey can be exploratory in which no assumptions which are being postulated or measured, and in which relationship and patterns are explored, it can also be confirmatory as well, in which models or hypothesis as well as causal relationship are tested. It can be analytic (operates with hypothesized explanatory variables that are tested for their influence on the dependent variables) or descriptive (describe data on variables of interest).

Survey research design is a procedure in quantitative research in which a researcher collect and administer data to a sample or sometimes to the entire population of people so as to be able to describe the attitudes, behavior and characteristics of such a population. An administrator can use questionnaires or interview (mailed or face to face) to collect data and statistically analyze to describe the trend about responses to questions as well as to test the hypothesis or test the research questions articulated by a particular researcher (Creswell 2012). Survey is used to describe trends such as community interest in school issues or state trends about policy, program or strategy issues such as whether students like to attend to some schools or citizens concur with a certain policy formulated. Survey helps to identify attitudes and beliefs of people such as college students' belief about the quality of the course they attended or the administration policy of the college they attended. It provides useful information to evaluate the program course in school or university, process and any event which may be completed or on the process.

Student follow-up survey outcomes or results provide one of the forms of outcomes measurement that can strategically be used to address issues of school, college or university accountability, program review, community relations, and marketing. It is very essential for the college to conduct survey research to assess the impact of the program or course delivery. Follow up studies have been contributing a lot toward institutional assessment and program review although follow-up results are said to be an ideal measure for demonstrating accountability, and

for that perspectives they are underutilized. How satisfied are students with the educational services they receive, especially after they have some time in which to reflect? What value do former students think their education has had to further subsequent career experiences? Follow-up studies provide a bottom line for institutions of higher education (Japely et al 2004).

Surveys are also widely known as systems for collecting information from and about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs and behavior concerning a certain phenomenon. They are used to collect data on a broad range of subjects of interest in diversity of fields such as education, sociology, demography, health, psychology, economics, business, as well as law (Arlene 2003). With the intention of understanding 2015-2017 Comparative Education graduates' perspectives and knowledge about the course which was and still arranged by Zhejiang Normal University, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the course delivery, Survey study is the most suitable design for the information gathering.

The program of Comparative Education which officially started in 2015 with the intention of helping developing countries comprised of 30 international students who were under different range of scholarships namely Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) scholarship, Chinese Scholarship Council (SCS), Provincial Government scholarship and some however few were under private sponsorship. For this class of students were the first international students intake in the course of Comparative Education (English taught), it is very important to reflect from them as the university is planning to do some kinds of course improvement. Survey study is the best for data gathering. The results of the survey will be used in deciding how to improve the university's programs and services, and in determining how well the college serves both its students and their respective communities or countries.

However, if follow-up studies are to have an impact within the institution, their results must be integrated with the institution's planning, review, and budgeting processes as well as commitment to improve. Otherwise, follow-up reports are likely to gather zero impacts, rather than inform critical decisions affecting the future of programs. Defining the purposes of student follow-up surveys from the outset allows an institution to establish an appropriate role for follow-up results within its decision-making process (Japely et al 2004).

Background of the study

The origin of comparative education as a clearly defined scholarly activity and also as a field of study is traced back from 19th Century in France specifically when Marc-Antoine Jullien wrote a work in entitled “*Esquisse et Vues Préliminaires d’un Ouvrage sur l’Éducation Comparée*” (Sketch and Preliminary Views of a Book on Comparative Education) in 1817. With his work on the field of Comparative education and with the fact that he was the first person to write descriptively about the discipline, he has been considered as the ‘Father of Comparative Education’ (Eckstein 1993). The famous speech by Sir Michael Sadler of 1900 in the United Kingdom (UK), promoted more comparative education as a scholarly activity. From then, the field is then considered to have spread to other parts of Europe and up to the United States of America (USA).

Comparative education was firstly taught at the university level as a course in 1899 at Teachers College, Columbia, USA (Wojniak 2018). While Sadler used more examples from both Western Europe and North America, another Japanese scholar called Nakajima (1916) focused more on Germany, France, UK and USA. Nakajima’s book was written in Japan, though it did not include focus on Japan and Yu’s (1917) translation and adaptation added some material on China’s context. (Bray 2003)

In Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), Comparative Education program started from 2015 (spring semester) when the university initiated a two-year Master’s course on Comparative Education Program. The program was approved by the Ministry of Education in the People’s Republic of China and it is financially supported by the Chinese government. Its mission is to provide academic and professional training in comparative education, to pursue academic excellence as well as the practical application of education policy and innovative education research to its students. The program is designed specifically for participants or students from Africa, Asia and other developing countries, vitally important for sustainable national development. From this program, students are expected to accumulate basic knowledge about international education development, comparative education research, education policy analysis and African education research. They are also expected to get skills and develop problem identifying and problem solving capacity, master the elementary method and procedure of scientific research.

In 2015, a total of 30 international students were enrolled in the program of Comparative Education in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU). These students were from various developing countries like Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Cambodia, Ghana, Benin, Kazakhstan, and other countries. Most of these students were under the scholarship of Ministry of Commerce, Chinese Scholarship Council, and University scholarship while very few were under private sponsorship. The program comprised of classroom coursework, Internship, academic trip within China, Conference attendance, and thesis/research writing. After the graduation in 2017, these students were expected to demonstrate the knowledge they got from Comparative Education program in their professional work. Promotions and other potential appointments as well as societies' challenges solving in the particular graduate's countries were the projected outcomes. Relevance of Comparative education program to the graduates' jobs and societies is among other factors that necessitate reaching these goals. The number of master students getting admitted in the program of Comparative Education in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU) has been increasing year by year. In 2016, 2017 and 2018 the university admitted enough number of master students who graduated in June 2018 and expecting to graduate in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Statement of the problem

Since 2015, when the comparative education was initiated by Zhejiang Normal University as a master program to 2017 when the first master students of Comparative Education graduated, even after the second intake of students graduated in 2018, there has been no single follow-up survey to assess how effective and successive comparative education program had been. Lack of information on whether comparative education program has been relevant to graduates' careers and their respective societies as well as whether the program delivery was satisfactory to graduate themselves makes it difficult for Zhejiang Normal University to self reflect, adjust and improve the program as a result of graduates' perspectives. Lack of follow-up survey result, leads to lack of one important element that can be taken as a tool of program review which constitutes the best sources of evidence on program effectiveness

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in this study bases on the statements made by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the roles of higher education

institutions toward the future of their students as well as their respective societies. The statements clarify the responsibility of institutions or teachers as well as students to insure the knowledge they get is relevant to their societies. UNESCO has the following guidelines to ensure the relevance of knowledge universities provide;

- ❖ Universities are expected to shape the qualified man, enabling him to become the master of his fate, ethically responsible and committed both to himself and to the future of society. The role of universities has been internationally accepted as serving three aims: teaching, research and serving the community -UNESCO 1991
- ❖ The social function of Higher Education in the world is essentially guided by the pursuit of excellence in teaching, training, research, institutional performance and the relevance of services offered by these higher education institutions to the priority needs of their respective societies- UNESCO, GEM Report 2016
- ❖ Education is a shared responsibility between us all– governments, schools, teachers, parents, students and private actors and the accountability for these responsibilities defines the way teachers teach, students learn, and governments act -UNESCO-GEM Report 2017/2018.
- ❖ In many countries there is a growing sense that education is the key for future, and that the challenges and jobs of tomorrow will greatly require better quality education than what is received today by most of the students. Education systems as it is widely felt, are not performing effectively, not doing what they should be doing to ensure that the young people who pass through them learn well what they planned and what are supposed to learn. They are not well prepared to prepare young people with the future adult roles and responsibilities in their family, their workplace, and their wider community and society. To cut it short, educational quality and relevance are defined by reference to graduates' learning outcomes (UNESCO 1998).

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness and satisfaction rate of Comparative education program which was delivered by ZJNU to international masters students of 2015/2017 intake. Since the roles of higher education institutions are to provide training to students which is relevant to their present and future lives as well as the training and knowledge which will be relevant to their current and future societies' challenges, this study aimed to make

evaluation of whether these roles were effectively done by Zhejiang Normal University to its 2015/2017 graduates. The study aimed to assess the program delivery processes and its impacts to its graduates and their respective societies after the graduation; it also aimed at determining the degree to which students secure program-related jobs and the degree to which students are getting promoted as the result of the program. Program review and improvement as well as publication of these follow-up results which document the successes of former ZJNU Comparative Education graduate students aim at promoting and marketing Zhejiang Normal University

Importance of follow-up survey studies in general and few examples from other universities in the world

Making sure that students, especially graduate students receive teaching programs and other extra curriculum services (activities) that will prepare them for future life and independent living as well as add value to their profession is one of the ongoing challenges facing education institutions today. To meet these challenges, schools and colleges conduct programs' follow-up studies of their graduates to evaluate how well the program meets students expectations and community needs. It is essential to monitor the quality of teacher preparation programs (Ayers, 1989). International organizations like International Labor Organization (ILO 2013) and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2018) strongly emphasize the need for conducting teacher follow-up studies. Graduate follow-up studies help the college to make internal evaluation on the way the program was delivered and assessed. With the result of follow-up study, the University or any education provider will be able to change, adjust or add more effort to various parts that would have seen to be problematic or interesting respectively depending on the results of the graduates' feedback. With these strong reasons, various institutions as well as states conduct follow-up studies and the results have been tremendously benefiting the college, prospective students as well as their communities.

Graduate follow-up survey is very useful for the hosting college for it is used to effectively plan and deliver quality graduate education for both local and international students. The information is needed on the relationship between the graduate education program of studies for these

students and their current job responsibilities so that the university can assess and evaluate the delivery effectiveness and decide whether they should change course planning system of just keep with the current one (Henderson 2000). When follow-up results are used in concert with other information, a good picture of program effectiveness can be painted. Other information can include student demand data, program cost, retention rates, facilities costs, employment outlook, discipline and course enrollment, and student completion rate. Decisions regarding changes in program format or curriculum can be influenced by such information (Japely et al 2014).

Assessment has become over many years as an important key toward the improvement of the quality of education. It is one of the most reliable ways of identification of problems in the education process. These problems can be in the system level, school level or even when the problems are concerned with individual student (UNESCO 2001). Survey is also conducted to check if there is any change of the program has taken in terms of effectiveness from the previous years, or sometimes to determine if there is any change need to take place for betterment of the program (Picciano &Seaman 2009).

Universities' programs delivery and college life experiences in few cited universities

One of the follow-up survey study done by American Chemical Society (ACS) based on The United States shows 78% of doctoral students and 70% of master's students reported that they were “*very*” or “*generally*” satisfied with their overall graduate studentship experience. Also approximately 20% of doctoral students reported that their funding was inadequate to meet their cost of living. As the society aims to support scientific inquiry in the field of Chemistry, the management responded appropriately especially with the issue of making life of students comfortable for better academic performance (ACS 2014). 9 of 10 (89%) graduate business students when asked by Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) rated the value of their degree as good, excellent, or outstanding. They are thus likely to recommend their program to others (GMAC 2015).

At Ohio State University (OSU), in the United States of America, graduates were asked to rate the usefulness of specific categories of courses in their current job responsibilities. The courses rated the most useful were those dealing with teacher educator preparation, data collection, research methodology, design, and analysis, as well as program planning. 83% of the graduates who took coursework in teacher education were able to rate these courses as very useful in their

current job responsibilities. Coursework in relation to technical agriculture and computers received lowest mean scores of relevance. When asked why they had chosen The Ohio State University. The most frequently mentioned courses that the students wished they had taken during their graduate program included statistics, extension administration, computer education, research design, and program planning (Henderson 2000)

At the University Of Washington (UW), annual graduate survey report of 2016, shows majority of graduates were satisfied with their graduate experience at the College of Education. Satisfaction rate in 2016 was higher than previous years. In class and peer discussion, practical experience, as well as faculty advisor contributed most to students' educational progress (UW 2016). At the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad-Pakistan a follow-up study of Agricultural Education graduates was conducted. Among all the responses, only 13.3% of the students indicated that the program was *very good*, with 26.7% indicating that it was *good*. A large proportion of the respondents (47.6%) thought the program was *average*, and 12.4% rated it as poor or *very poor*. On the classroom instruction effectiveness, Over 50% of the respondents rated it as good or *very good*. Another 37% rated it as *average* while only a little over 12% rated as poor or *very poor*. With the guidance and supervision they received during the program, over 49% of the respondents indicated that guidance and supervision was *good* or *very good*, 24.1% thought it was *average*, and 26.8% felt it was *poor* or *very poor* (Shafiq 1986).

At the University of Nova Scotia (College of Education) when students were asked to give an overall rating for their teacher preparation program (including courses and practicum placements) 3/10 graduate students rated their program as excellent (29%). About half of the respondents thought it was *good* (47%), and almost one 1/4 (24%) rated the program as *fair* (19%) or *poor* (5%) (NSU2011). At the Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) with the follow-up survey of graduate class of 2013/2014 (n=40), majority (73%) of graduates were “*very much*” satisfied with the quality of their academic program delivery, 64% were “*very much*” satisfied with the quality of student services and 95% responded that PVCC helped them further their academic and/or professional goals, the report which showed relative advancement from the previous survey (93% in 2012-2013) (PVCC 2015).

Outcomes/relevance of the education programs' knowledge to the real and professional life

While some graduate students who are getting enrolled to colleges already have job, some of them however few expect to get employment after graduation. Different students have different expectation from the education they pursue. Graduates intend to be promoted, shift their institution's department, get their first employment, and gain more knowledge which will help in their jobs after graduation in serving the community. Graduate Students in Canadian Departments of Anatomy and Cell Biology were asked to give an overall rating to their graduate programs. 78.6% said that their program was better than satisfactory for research training, while 53.7% said that the training was better than relevant and satisfactory for teaching. Furthermore, when students were asked whether they were getting relevant research training in their supervisors' laboratory, 83.5% said yes while other 16.5% said no (Slonecker 1991). When the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) decided to conduct a survey of 2014 class early during their college exit to measure their satisfaction, 76% of them reported that their theoretical knowledge in their field significantly improved. More than half of all graduates believed that their practical jobs skills, oral presentation and writing skills also significantly improved. However, fewer than 50% said that skills related to planning, numeracy and statistics as well as information technology and computers significantly.

Another survey was done to Astronomy graduate students in 1979 and the department chairman didn't think there was a real problem with the job market and that no graduating student had failed to get at least one job. With this statement, the relevance of programs is high in the colleges (Giampapa 1979). From the Australian government report, in 2017 28.2% of undergraduates employed in full-time indicated that they were working in a job that did not allow them to fully use their skills obtained from the education program, down from 29.1% in 2016 report. Among postgraduate coursework graduates employed full-time in 2017, similarly 28.1% reported that they were not fully using their skills or education in their current position with that proportion falling to 25.2% among postgraduate research graduates. However, among all Canadian employed graduates, 41.1% of undergraduates 30.9% of postgraduate coursework graduates and 29.9% of postgraduate research graduates in Canada reported that they were not fully using their skills from their education program in their current position. Overall satisfaction of the program among undergraduates in Canada remained high in 2017 at 79.4%, dropping from 80.6% in 2016. Generic skills among graduates in Canada also dropped from

82.1% in 2016 to 81.5% in 2017. However, satisfaction of these graduate students with the quality of teaching remained unchanged at 63.0% (Whiteley 2018).

Methodology and Trustworthiness

The researcher used questionnaires to collect information from the respondents. A questionnaire is a form used in a survey design that participants in a study complete and return to the researcher (Krueger, 1994). The researcher designed a questionnaire which had six (6) sections depended on the objective of the study. It included Demographic section where a respondent would supply his or her gender, nationality and Age. The information is important when this and other studies would wish to describe the correlation between gender or age and other factors. The questionnaire also required the respondent to supply information on ZJNU Admission process, Experience during the study, relevance of the program to their professional/social life as well as recommendation on the program development. The participant filled their own answers and in some cases, they chose from the given alternatives for questions and also supplied basic personal or demographic information. Also the researcher chose questionnaire as a tool for data collection because it seemed to be fast and cheap.

Telephone interview was also applied in this surveys, the researcher recorded the participants' comments to questions on instruments over the telephone. The researcher developed an instrument, obtained the telephone numbers of participants in the population and conducted the interview (though in a very layer cases). These three methods of data collection was very important and vital to the study because in spite of minimizing the cost as the program had large and widely spread graduate geographically; it also gave respondents adequate time to give well thought out answers. Respondents, who were not easily approachable and reachable, were also reached conveniently. With online questionnaire and group discussions, the population was able to make use of and thus the results have made more dependable and reliable.

The study the population comprised of 28 graduate international students who graduated with the Master of Comparative Education in 2017. Because of the small population and accessibility to all these graduates, the researcher decided to study the whole population. It was possible to distribute online questionnaires (with a link) to every graduate of 2015-2017 Comparative Education program. Although the return rate was just 71%, but at least it was possible to reach

the whole population and give them questionnaires, discuss with them as well as interview them. With the access of the whole population, the results of the study are more reliable and sound.

Results of the Study

Out of 28 graduate students whom the researcher sent an online questionnaire form, a total of 20 valid responses were received. 20 graduate students are equal to 71% of the total 2015-2017 Comparative Education Graduates (28). 7 (35%) of these respondents were female and 13 (65%) were male from fourteen different countries namely Kenya (3), Ethiopia (4), Tanzania (3), Malawi (2), Benin (2), Ghana (1), Zimbabwe (1), Zambia (1), Mauritius (1), Cambodia (1), Uzbekistan (1) whose age ranged from 26 to 51 years. The questions (closed and open ended questions) ranged from biographical information, admission application procedures, Experiences in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), further education and work experience after graduation, as well as comments and suggestion for further improvement of the program.

The following table describes clearly the number of graduate students who were admitted in 2015 for the program of Comparative Education in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU). The table also shows the distribution of these graduates from different developing countries as stated earlier, the program was designed specifically for participants or students from Africa, Asia and other developing countries, vitally important for sustainable national development. The program aimed to provide participants with academic and professional training in comparative education, to pursue academic excellence as well as the practical application of education policy and innovative education research skills

Table 1: Graduates' Countries representation in the program & Economic data

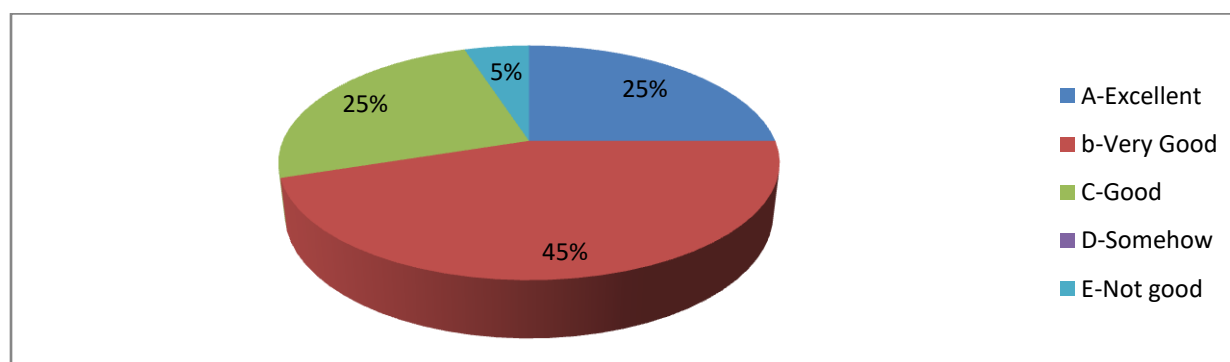
| Country | GDP –Nominal (2018). Billions of \$ | Rank out of 193 Countries in GDP | Number of students graduated | Number of students responded the questionnaire | Reply rate in percentage (%) |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Kenya | 88.271 | 67 | 4 | 3 | 75% |
| Ethiopia | 86.664 | 68 | 4 | 4 | 100% |
| Kazakhstan | 179.250 | 57 | 3 | - | 0% |
| Uzbekistan | 40.259 | 96 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| Malawi | 6.746 | 149 | 4 | 2 | 50% |
| Tanzania | 56.664 | 81 | 3 | 3 | 100% |
| Zimbabwe | 19.395 | 115 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| Mauritius | 13.297 | 130 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| Benin | 11.039 | 138 | 2 | 2 | 100% |
| Ghana | 51.619 | 85 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| Cambodia | 24.360 | 109 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| Zambia | 26.228 | 107 | 3 | 1 | 33.3% |
| Total 13 | | | Total 30 | Total 20 | Total 79.9% |

Source: *The World Bank (W.B 2018)*

Admission processes and University experiences from 2015 to 2017

When the question regarding to the source of information about the program of Comparative education in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU) was asked, majority (33.3%) of the students who responded to the questionnaire, marked Chinese Embassy as a source of the information. 27% got the information from their employers and another 27% of the got the information through the university website, while 11.2% got the information through Confucius institutes and other sources. Respondents were asked to rate the application procedures to joining Zhejiang Normal University by using the scales of *A-Excellent*, *B-Very good*, *C-Good*, *D-Somehow* and *E-Not good*. See the chart below shows

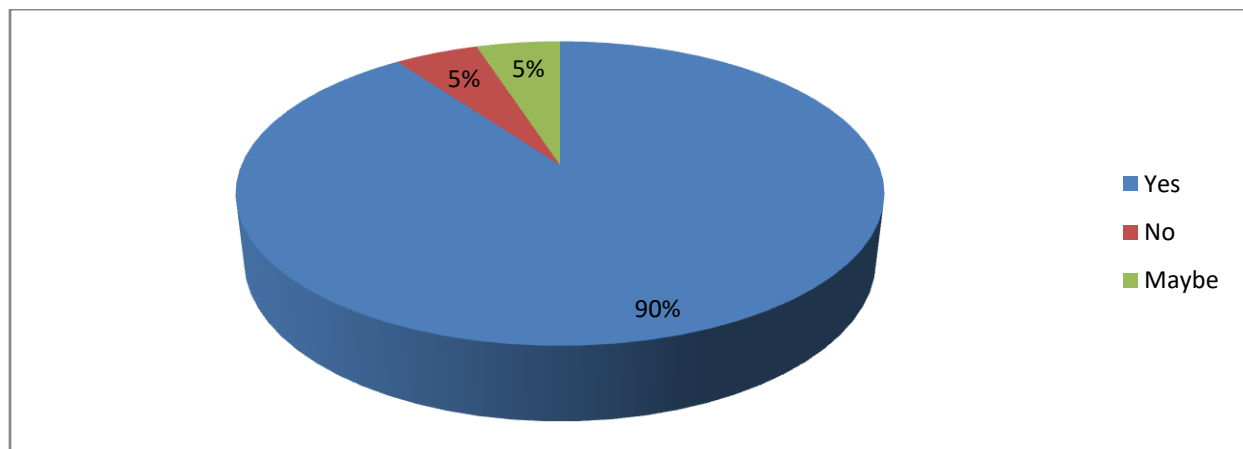
Graph 1: Graduates' rates of the admission application procedure of the program at ZJNU



50% percent of the respondent had a bachelor degree and another 50% had master degree as their highest education level before pursuing Master of Comparative Education at Zhejiang Normal University. Comparative Education major was the first priority for 85% of graduate students who responded to the question and it was not the first priority for the other 15% of them. Respondents were also asked to rate the arrangement of Zhejiang Normal University upon their arrival for the first time by using the scaling words from **A-Excellent** to **E-Not good**. 10% rated it as **A-Excellent**, 45% rated **B- Very good**, 20% rated **C- Good** and 25% rated **D-Somehow**. No student rated **E-Not good** (their regards are in the comments and suggestions section). When these graduates were asked whether they faced some challenges in the first weeks of their arrival, 45% said ‘YES’ they faced challenges and 35% said “NO” they did not face any challenge during the first weeks. 20% of the respondents were not sure if they faced any challenge during their first few weeks in China, specifically in Zhejiang Normal University.

Graduates were asked to show their satisfaction by rating the quality of the academic programs at Zhejiang Normal University. 15% rated it with **A-Excellent**, 45% rated it as **B-Very good**, 30% rated **C-Good** and 10% rated **D-Somehow**. No graduate student rated the quality of the academic programs with **E-Not good**.

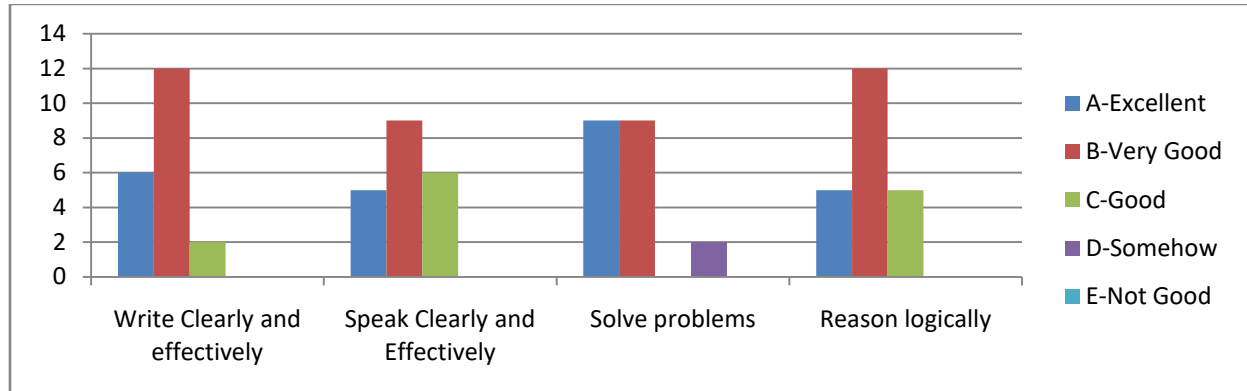
Graph 2: The contribution of Comparative Education program to further the graduates’ academic goals



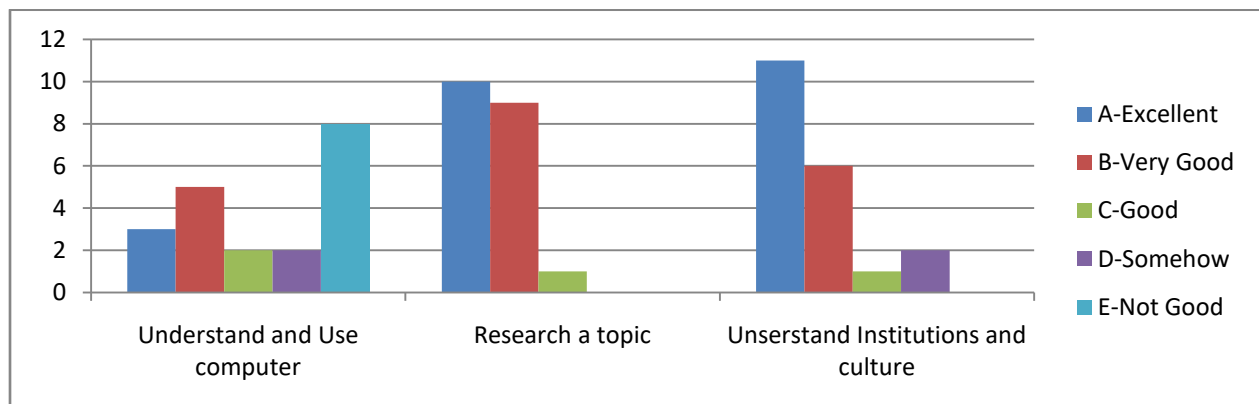
The researcher was also curious to know the extent to which Comparative Education program at Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU) helped them in different specific angles such as to write clearly and effectively, to speak clearly and effectively, to solve problems, to reason logically, to understand and use computer, research knowledge, make informed personal decisions,

understand social institutions & culture and setting personal goals. *The following graphs show their responses*

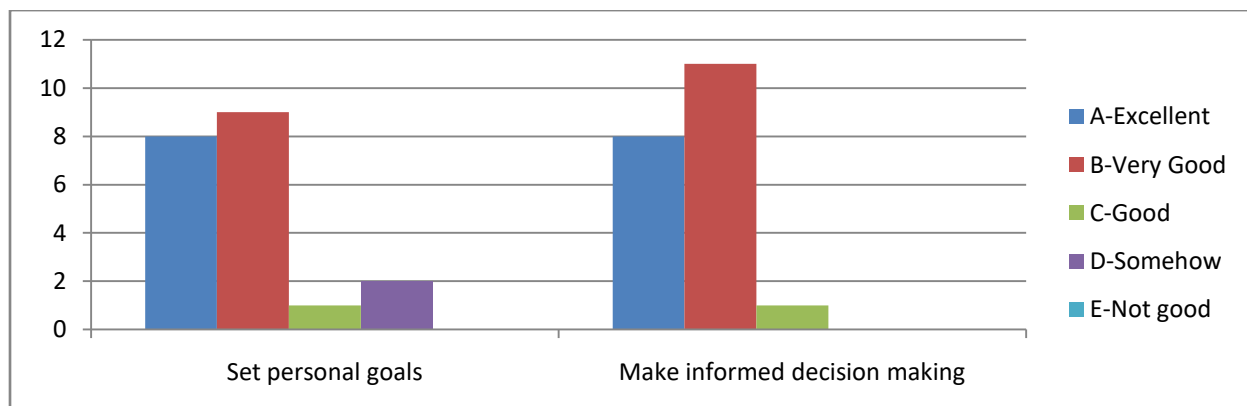
Graph 3(a):The extent to which the program helped graduates in the above mentioned abilities



Graph 3(b): The extend to which Comparative Education program helped to foster the graduates' above mentioned abilities



Graph 3(c)The extend to which the program helped to foster the graduates' ability to set personal goals and make personal decisions

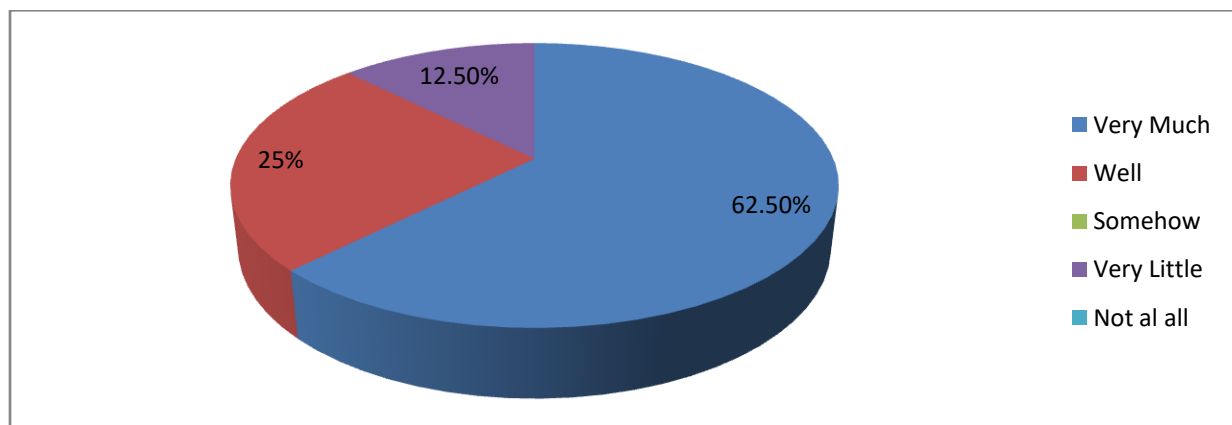


Further education after ZJNU and the extent to which the Comparative Education program helped graduates for the current programs

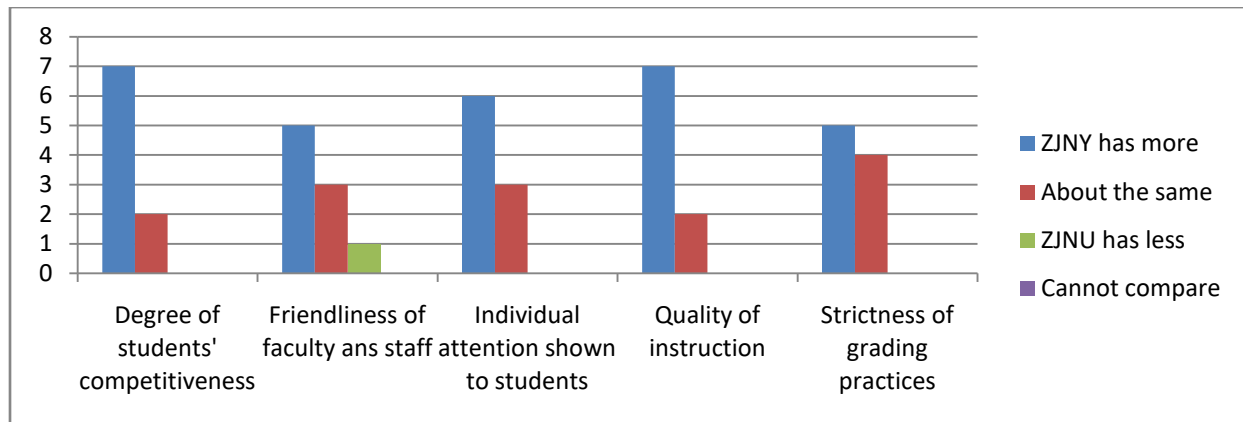
Among the total of 20 respondents for this paper, 27.8% of them are currently enrolled for further education in different universities. 62.5% of them are enrolled as full time students and 37.5% as part time students. Majority of the graduate who are continuing with further education (83.3%) are still in the field of education and the purposes of pursuing further education differ from one graduate to another. Most of them pursue further education for personal interest (33.3%), for professional development (33.3%), for satisfying work requirement (16.7) and another 16.7% of the graduate, have other purposes. Only 16.7% of comparative education graduates who are continuing with further education have shifted to computer science.

These students who continue with further education were asked to rate the extent to which their current study programs relate to Zhejiang Normal University's program. Students were asked to rate by using very much relating, somehow relating, very little relating, not relating at all or Not yet seen the relationship. Majority of them (57.1%) said there is very much relationship between the programs they are currently pursuing to the program of Comparative Education pursued in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), 14.3% said there is somehow relationship and 28.6% said there is no relation at all. The same measuring scales were also used by these ZJNU graduates who continue with further education to identify the extent to which Comparative education program in ZJNU prepared them academically for the current program. *The chart below shows clearly their responses*

Graph 4: The extent to which the program in ZJNU prepared graduates academically for the current program



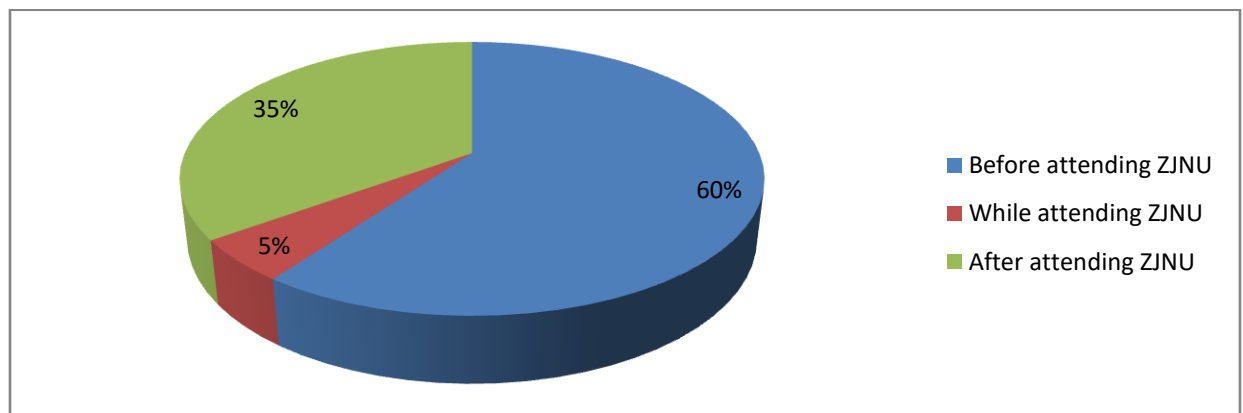
Graph 5: Comparison between ZJNU and its graduates' current universities in different academic aspects



Employment and the impacts of Comparative Education program after graduation

Out of 20 graduate students who responded to the questionnaire, 85% are employed and the remaining 15% are not yet employed. Among those who are already employed, 82.4% are in full time job while only 17.6% are working as part time.

Graph 6: Employment rate of comparative education graduates after graduation in ZJNU



Majority of the graduates of the program (36.9%) are employed as lower and high schools teachers, while 31.7% are higher education administrators and ministry of education officials. 87.8% have employed by their respective government and only 15.9% of the graduates are employed by private companies and institutions

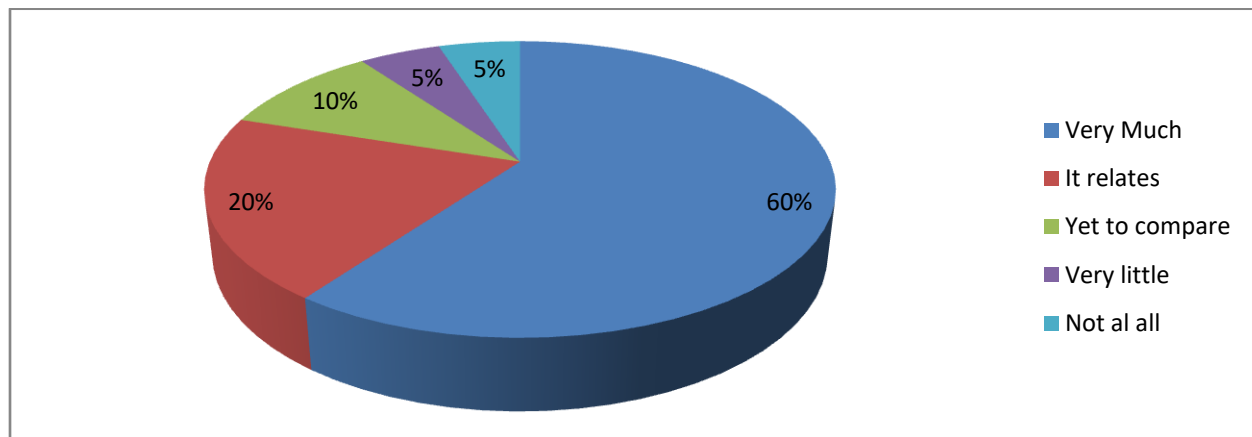
Table 2: Comparative education graduates' current job titles and their percentage

| Graduates' job title | Percentage (X/20(100%)) |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Teachers (lower & upper secondary schools) | 36.9% |
| Tutors and Assistant lectures at the Universities & Colleges | 15.5% |
| Higher education & Ministry of Education Administrators and officials | 31.7% |
| Education inspectors | 5.3% |
| Education experts | 5.3% |
| Chinese-French interpreter | 5.3% |

Relevance of Comparative Education Program to the current graduates' job occupation

57.9% of the graduates feel they are better prepared in their job occupation compared to other employees who just begin their career and have not pursued the master of comparative education. 36.8% felt they are prepared and 5.3% of the graduate who are currently employed to either private or public institutions said it is yet to say their level of preparedness compared to new employees who just begin their career. No respondent felt little prepared or not prepared at all. Comparative Education program graduates 2015-2017 were asked to say the extent to which the knowledge or content of the program relate to their current job occupation. *The chart below shows their response clearly*

Graph 7: The extent to which comparative education program/knowledge relates to the graduates' current job occupation



Comparative Education graduates' current Job satisfaction and promotions

The researcher wanted also to know the degree of satisfaction of these graduates with their current job occupations. The respondents were asked to rate their current job occupation by using the scales of *Very satisfying, Satisfying, Not very satisfying, Unsatisfying and Not satisfying at all*. Only 21.1% said their current job is very satisfying, while 57.9% said their job is satisfying. 15% said it is not very satisfying and another 5.3% said their job is unsatisfying. No respondent said his or her current job is not satisfying at all. 75% of the employed graduates' salary is less than \$5,000 and 25% of them, their monthly salary are between \$5000 and \$14,000. No any graduate whose salary is over \$15,000.

45% of the respondents said the program of comparative education helped them to get promotion in their professions and 55% were not yet promoted. 83.3% of those graduates who are yet to be promoted think the program will help them get promoted in future and 16.7% were not sure if they will be promoted (maybe they will be promoted in future). To be very specific, few of the respondents were willing to discuss their current job description and promotion as follows.

Comments and suggestions for further improvement of the program in Zhejiang Normal University

About the admission process, graduates advised the international students (admission) office to consider the applicants' inquiry effectively. In one case, a student applied for scholarship but the university only provided the admission without scholarship. Their emphasis was for the university to provide admission and scholarship to students who qualify to get these and avoid providing only admission to students who applied for scholarship. Students advised about the scholarship application form to be added the section of asking a student whether he/she will be able to finance him or herself when the university has not provided him/her a scholarship so that the university cannot issue the admission letter to students who are unable to finance themselves. The university should let the applicant know their application results as soon as possible for preparation (at least 3 to 4 months) for others needs to process the leaving request to their employers and this takes a couple of time. Some of the students fail to join the university because they fail to process the leave permission on time.

With the program delivery, graduate appreciated the efforts and dedication shown by teachers at Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU) from 2015-2017. However they advised the College to

emphasize the preparation of course outline for every course, which will be used as a guideline to students to know exactly what they expect to learn in the particular course. With the course outline, especially when it comes to optional courses, students will be able to choose some and leave some courses depending on the listed content items expected to be learnt and not basing to just name off the course. With course outline, it does not mean a teacher will teach each and every item listed, but will choose some important elements in relation to the time available and students will do the rest. Course outline will be used as checklist of what has taught in the class and what has not, so that students can use their personal efforts to cover the rest by using library materials and other sources.

With the research and defense process, graduates also appreciated the great role played by intelligent supervisors in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU) and the friendly environment which were always there between a supervisor and students. The friendly environment, which made these international students feel like they were not in the foreign countries. Most of the supervisors played extra ordinary roles as they acted like they are real parents as they took their students into carious placed where they learnt things they couldn't have learn. Comparative education graduates were also able to compare supervisors in Zhejiang Normal University with other supervisors they ever met or been under their supervision in the developing countries and said they learnt a lot of lessons from ZJNU' supervisors.

Academic certificates especially transcripts are in lower quality. The graduates expressed their concern about the academic certificated that they are not in the good quality especially the transcripts. The university tried its best to design the certificate especially with having the Chinese one and its English translated version with very good cover for each of the certificated. However transcripts are the most important documents in most of the graduates' countries as the company will employ a person basing on the academic qualification which is shown in the transcript so transcripts should also be given the priority to design and decorate well.

Consolidation of Alumni is more advised for further integration between graduates and university. The graduate also advised to create a website of just a sub- site in the university website which will be concerned with graduates' career development and cooperation between the university and the graduates as well as between the graduates. This will enable both university and graduates especially when the university needs to collect data from some

education institutions in Africa, these graduates will be used as agents. The website will also be used for further research on its graduate career development in the coming years. With this website, the university will be creating a world linkage and connections.

Researcher's recommendations to the college

The researcher would like to concur with other graduates on the preparation of course outline (syllabus) for every course the college has planned deliver. The idea has come out due to the experience the graduates and the researcher had from other universities. Preparation of course outline is very important to the course instructor as well as students. Course outline will describe the content of the course students expect to learn and their prescribed outcomes. The description will help students especially for optional courses as students will choose the course basing on the content described and the expected outcomes of the course. Currently students have been choosing courses basing on the name of the course without having any idea on the content of the course itself. Course outline will help students to study and search the topics' content by themselves in the library, in case the instructor has not finished all the topics for one reason or another. It will also help students to go hand in hand with the instructor, by following effectively the continuation of the course. A course instructor will be able to tell the students, which topics will be taught directly in the class and which topics the students will need to study by their own, basing on the time available.

Because graduate students submit their contact information at the college once they arrive at the university, it is better for the college to collect the contact information from the graduates once they finish their studies too. Most of the graduates' contacts information submitted to the college is temporal. Example, students do change their Gmail account to yahoo or any one which is not owned by Google but when they leave the university, they go back to their Gmail account so this makes difficult to reach them for data collection. The process will be simplified if graduates will be asked to supply contact information they think they will be using in their home countries including phone numbers, email account and other means of communication

The college can prepare questionnaire forms which will be filled by graduates once they leave the school regarding their views and perspectives on program delivery and college management. This will help to get every graduate's views documented. Some of the challenges can be solved for a very short time. Example, graduates have stated in the open ended questions that they were

not satisfied with some of the supervisors but they felt they could offend them by reporting so they just kept quiet and continued with their research. Information regarding supervisors needs quick response for improvement of the current program

These survey studies can also be done on the mid of the program for quick improvement in delivery. Students Satisfaction is a very important thing though it is impossible for the college to make every students get satisfied in every aspect but at least for the students' common interest. Students also responded to the open ended questions that it was better for every lecturer of the course to prepare the course outline but they felt it would be offending to change teachers' style of course delivery which has been used for long time. They applied the phrase "*When you are in Rome, live as Romans*" but they think it was so simple to fill questionnaires which would not mention their names.

More seminars on research methodologies and techniques can be conducted, for the course of research methodology itself can not cover everything about research. It should be remembered that research writing takes the whole semester and that means a lot for course designers. The current hours for the course of research methodology is not enough to come up with publishable research papers. Because of time limit, teachers themselves tend to choose the most important aspects in research and that is what they mostly emphasize and pay attention during teaching. Because of the importance of research, the college can decide to split the course of Research methodology into two independent courses namely *Introduction to Qualitative research* and *Introduction to Quantitative research*. The college can also add more seminars by inviting more guests to talk about various research techniques and methodologies.

The picture and outlook of the program is good but the program itself can be modified more. Example, the program does not show the time data are collected for research writing. Two years of four semesters are divided into course work (two semesters), Internship (one semester) and research writing (one semester). The content of these semesters are very important and there is no way anything can be removed from any of these semesters. The researcher suggests the college first; to write an introduction letter to the institution the graduate is going to do internship. Second, in the introduction letter the college can show clearly the roles (data collection) that graduate student needs to perform during the time of internship, apart from internship itself. This

will help the students to be assigned less responsibilities in that institution, knowing that the particular students will need to collect data for his research paper too.

Supervisors are doing very great job in the supervision of students during research writing. Some of the graduates complained to get discouragement from their supervisors to do comparison between their countries and China because these graduates could not be able to collect data in China. Language challenge is the main reason for this discouragement but the researcher advises the supervisors to assist their students in collection of data when their titles need them to collect data in China. Example if a student needs to do a comparative study of teachers' promotion between China and Nigeria, a supervisor can give assistance to collect data especially document analysis which are in Chinese. A supervisor can also assign one Chinese assistant to an international student during data collection in China for translation.

Conclusion

It is shortly concluded from the results narrated earlier in the previous chapters of this paper that the graduates of master in comparative education 2015-2017 realize the importance of several areas of competencies in the program, and they consider them in general as very important moment they have had in their life and that the program have prepared them properly for the time they spent in Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU). Because many courses in the program focused on theoretical knowledge, the graduates consider that the program has prepared them very well in most of the basic knowledge competencies and the internship semester as well as academic trips they had during the program, complimented to the theories they learnt in the classes. Graduates have succeeded in acquiring enough skills inside and outside the classes, and they have stated in the open-ended questions that the most prominent difficulty which faced them during the life in the university was the language gap between English and Chinese and that without that language deficit, they could have learn more than what they had. At the same time, the majority of the graduates have responded that they are prepared to face those current social and academic challenges. That is due to the fact that the program concentrated both on theoretical knowledge (in the classes) and the performance skills (internship and academic trips).

These results are consistent with the findings of several studies done in different universities and their specific departments. The results have been revealed that few skills are considered as weak points from the graduates' point of view; and thus the college needs to put more emphasis on

some academic angles such as course outline modification, teaching methodology, and dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds. To improve the program, the graduates were more concerned with strengthening the practical side of the program through increasing field training and academic trips as well as classroom observation in China. Intensive field practical or direct practice of the skills which they have learned should also go with the slogan that every course should have practical activities paying special attention to specific courses such as Educational administration and management, classroom assessment and evaluation. Moreover, every student–teacher should be trained in all categories of classroom management and institutional management as well as quantitative & qualitative research design.

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