

International Recruitment Service Guidelines for Enhancing Student Enrollment in Thailand at Guangxi University of Finance and Economics

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Abstract

The research objectives were 1) to investigate the influencing factors of international recruitment services for Chinese students' pursuit of further studies in Thailand at Guangxi University of Finance and Economics, and 2) to develop international recruitment service guidelines for Guangxi University of Finance and Economics based on the identified influencing factors of Chinese students' pursuit of further studies in Thailand. The samples were 361 final-year undergraduate students, 334 parents, 134 faculty and administrative staff, and 45 recruitment leaders, totaling 874 respondents, selected using stratified random sampling based on Krejcie and Morgan's formula. The instruments included a structured questionnaire and focus group meetings. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, with IOC values of 0.99, 1.00, 1.00, and 0.99 for the four groups, respectively, while the reliability coefficients were 0.96, 0.99, 0.99, and 0.98. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis.

The findings revealed that 1) the influencing factors were at a high level ($\bar{X}$ = 4.21, SD = 0.62), including educational quality and academic opportunities ($\bar{X}$ = 4.35, SD = 0.58), economic considerations ($\bar{X}$ = 4.18, SD = 0.64), and cultural and geographical proximity ($\bar{X}$ = 4.10, SD = 0.67). Educational quality ranked highest because respondents perceived Thai universities as providing qualified faculty members, strong academic opportunities, and acceptable academic standards. In addition, cultural and geographical proximity reflected the importance of regional accessibility and cultural familiarity within the ASEAN-China educational context; and 2) the international recruitment service guideline developed for Guangxi University of Finance and Economics consisted of educational quality and academic opportunities enhancement, economic transparency and financial support system, cultural adaptation and student support system, and institutional implementation and continuous evaluation mechanism.

Keywords: International Recruitment Service; Chinese Students; Further Studies in Thailand; Influencing Factors; Recruitment Service Guidelines

Introduction

In recent years, international student mobility has become an increasingly significant phenomenon in global higher education. China remains one of the largest sources of international students, with many students seeking overseas education to enhance academic qualifications and career competitiveness. While traditional destinations such as the United States and the United Kingdom continue to dominate, emerging regional destinations in Southeast Asia have gained increasing attention. Among these, Thailand has been identified as a promising yet relatively underexplored market for international student recruitment (Armstrong & Laksana, 2016). Its growing international competitiveness, supported by policy initiatives and institutional internationalization efforts, has strengthened its position as an attractive study destination (Zhong, 2025; Pimpa, 2003). In particular, Thai universities have expanded their efforts to recruit Chinese students through targeted programs and support services (ICEF Monitor, 2019), further enhancing Thailand's role in regional education mobility.

The decision of Chinese students to pursue postgraduate education abroad is shaped by multiple interrelated factors, including academic quality, economic considerations, and socio-cultural influences. Previous studies have shown that students' choices are influenced by institutional reputation, program quality, tuition costs, and living expenses, as well as cultural proximity and geographic accessibility (Chemsripong, 2019; Yin et al., 2015). The push-pull framework has been widely applied to explain these dynamics, emphasizing both individual motivations and the attractiveness of destination countries (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Nikou & Economides, 2024). At the same time, research on international student mobility highlights the importance of student experiences and institutional environments in shaping study decisions (Snodin, 2019; Armstrong & Laksana, 2016). However, although existing studies have identified key influencing factors and mobility patterns, limited research has translated these insights into systematic recruitment service strategies. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influencing factors of Chinese students' pursuit of postgraduate education in Thailand and to develop an international recruitment service guideline for Guangxi University of Finance and Economics, thereby contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical application in international higher education.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the influencing factors of international recruitment services for Chinese students' pursuit of further studies in Thailand at Guangxi University of Finance and Economics.



2. To develop an international recruitment service guidelines for Guangxi University of Finance and Economics based on the identified influencing factors of Chinese students' pursuit of further studies in Thailand.

Literature review

1. Factors Influencing Chinese Students' Overseas Study Decisions

In recent years, the decision of Chinese students to pursue postgraduate education abroad has been widely examined through multidimensional frameworks. Studies consistently identify educational quality and academic opportunities as primary determinants, as students prioritize institutional reputation, academic resources, and future career prospects (Chen, 2022; Pimpa, 2003). These academic considerations are closely linked to long-term employability and global competence development.

Economic considerations also play a critical role in shaping students' choices. Tuition fees, living expenses, and financial support significantly influence the affordability of overseas study, particularly for middle-income families (Yin et al., 2015; Chemsripong, 2019). Destinations that offer a balance between cost and quality, such as Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries, have therefore become increasingly attractive.

In addition, cultural and geographical proximity has been identified as an important factor affecting student mobility. Cultural familiarity, language accessibility, and geographical closeness help reduce adaptation difficulties and increase students' sense of security (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Nikou & Economides, 2024). These factors explain why Thailand has gained growing attention among Chinese students.

2. International Recruitment and Institutional Strategies

Beyond student motivations, recent research has emphasized the role of institutional strategies in international student recruitment. Universities are required to adopt systematic approaches that align with student expectations and market competition. Promotion strategies, including digital platforms and international partnerships, have been shown to enhance institutional visibility and attract prospective students (Armstrong & Laksana, 2016; ICEF Monitor, 2019).

Transparent and efficient admission processes are also essential for improving application outcomes. Clear requirements, timely communication, and accessible information can enhance trust and increase students' willingness to apply (Snodin, 2019; Nikou & Economides, 2024). Furthermore,



comprehensive student support services, including academic guidance and cultural integration, are critical for improving student satisfaction and retention.

These findings highlight that international recruitment extends beyond attracting students and requires continuous support throughout the student lifecycle. A well-designed recruitment framework should therefore integrate promotion, admission, and student support into a coherent system (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

3. Research Gap and Contribution

Although existing studies provide valuable insights into international student mobility, several limitations remain. First, much of the literature focuses on traditional Western destinations, while emerging destinations such as Thailand have received comparatively less attention (Armstrong & Laksana, 2016; Zhong, 2025). Second, previous studies often identify influencing factors without translating them into practical institutional strategies (Zhong, 2025; Snodin, 2019).

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by examining the influencing factors of Chinese students' pursuit of postgraduate education in Thailand and developing a structured international recruitment service guideline for Guangxi University of Finance and Economics. By integrating theoretical analysis with empirical findings, this study contributes to both academic research and practical applications in international higher education.

Research Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework identifies three key factors influencing Chinese students' pursuit of postgraduate education in Thailand: educational quality and academic opportunities, economic considerations, and cultural and geographical proximity. These factors are widely recognized as major determinants of international student mobility and destination choice (Chemsripong, 2019; Yin et al., 2015; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). In addition, Thailand's growing competitiveness, supported by cost advantages and internationalization strategies, further enhances its attractiveness to Chinese students (Armstrong & Laksana, 2016; Zhong, 2025). Based on these dimensions, this study employs questionnaires, IOC validation, and focus group discussions as research tools to develop an international recruitment service guideline, providing practical strategies to enhance promotion, streamline admission.



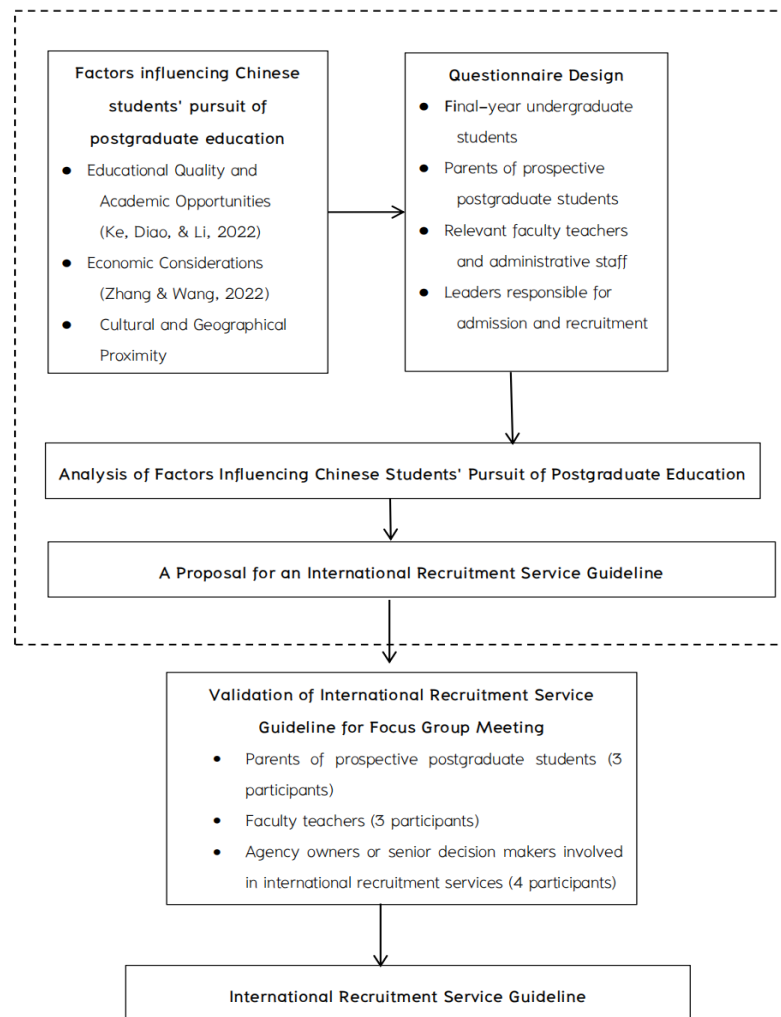


Figure 1 Conceptual framework for research

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method research approach to investigate the influencing factors of Chinese students' pursuit of postgraduate education in Thailand and to develop an international recruitment service guideline. The research integrates document analysis, field investigation, and expert consultation to construct and validate the research framework.

The research procedures are as follows:

1) Document Analysis

Academic books, journal articles, policy reports, and related documents were reviewed to establish the theoretical foundation and initial framework of influencing factors and recruitment strategies. The document analysis focused on the following aspects:

- (1) Trends in international student mobility and higher education globalization.
- (2) Factors influencing Chinese students' decisions to study abroad.



(3) International recruitment strategies and service models in higher education institutions.

2) Field Study and Expert Consultation Process

Field-oriented investigation and expert consultation were conducted to refine influencing factors and develop practical recruitment strategies. The procedures included:

(1) Selecting participants and experts through purposive sampling based on their relevance to international education and recruitment services.

(2) Collecting data through interviews and focus group discussions to gather perspectives from students, faculty, and recruitment stakeholders.

(3) Conducting in-depth analysis of influencing factors and recruitment practices based on real experiences and institutional contexts.

(4) Integrating findings from document analysis and field data to develop a structured framework.

(5) Analyzing relationships among key factors through systematic comparison.

(6) Formulating research conclusions and practical guidelines for improving international recruitment services.

3) Key Informants

A total of 10 key informants were purposively selected, including 3 parents of prospective postgraduate students, 3 faculty teachers, and 4 agency owners or senior decision makers involved in international recruitment services. The selection was based on the following criteria:

(1) Individuals involved in international education, student recruitment, or higher education management.

(2) At least five years of relevant professional experience.

(3) Active participation in academic or practical activities related to international student mobility or recruitment services.

4) Research Tools

The main research tools included:

(1) focus group meeting guidelines for collecting qualitative data.

(2) Questionnaires designed to assess influencing factors and student perceptions.

5) Data Collection

Data were collected through surveys, and focus group discussions. Respondents evaluated the importance of influencing factors and shared their experiences related to international study decisions.



6) Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of:

- (1) Descriptive analysis to summarize respondent characteristics and key variables.
- (2) Comparative analysis was conducted to compare the perceptions of final-year undergraduate students, parents, faculty teachers and administrative staff, and recruitment leaders regarding the influencing factors of postgraduate study in Thailand.
- (3) Content analysis to interpret qualitative data and identify core themes.

7) Presentation of Research Results

The research results were presented in the form of statistical tables, thematic summaries, and a structured recruitment service guideline. The findings provide practical recommendations for improving international student recruitment strategies.

Research Results

The influencing factors of international recruitment services for Chinese students' pursuit of further studies in Thailand at Guangxi University of Finance and Economics.

The findings indicate that the decision of Chinese students to pursue postgraduate education in Thailand is influenced by multiple factors related to international recruitment services. The analysis reveals three key dimensions, namely educational quality and academic opportunities, economic considerations, and cultural and geographical proximity. Among these, educational quality is the most significant factor, followed by cost-related considerations such as tuition and living expenses. In addition, cultural familiarity and geographical closeness reduce adaptation difficulties and increase students' willingness to study in Thailand. These results suggest that universities should adopt a comprehensive recruitment strategy that integrates academic quality, affordability, and cultural support to effectively attract Chinese students.

Table 1 Influencing Factors of International Recruitment Services for Chinese Students' Pursuit of Further Studies in Thailand for Final-Year Undergraduate Students

Part	Questions (Top 3)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Rank
Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities	You think the teaching staff in Thai universities are qualified and experienced.	4.04	0.69	1
	You are confident that Thai postgraduate programs provide strong academic opportunities.	4.03	0.70	2
	You believe Thai universities provide sufficient academic resources such as libraries and research facilities.	4.03	0.71	3
	Total	3.93	0.71	



Part	Questions (Top 3)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Rank
Economic Considerations	You think the tuition fees in Thai universities are affordable compared to other countries.	4.05	0.72	1
	You believe the overall cost of living in Thailand is reasonable.	4.04	0.71	2
	You think scholarships or financial aid opportunities in Thailand are helpful.	4.02	0.70	3
	Total	3.84	0.73	
Cultural and Geographical Proximity	You believe the geographical proximity of Thailand to China makes it a convenient study destination.	4.07	0.68	1
	You feel comfortable with the cultural similarities between China and Thailand.	4.06	0.69	2
	You think the close relations between China and Thailand encourage your decision to study there.	4.06	0.69	3
	Total	3.95	0.70	
Overall		3.93	0.71	

As shown in Table 1, all dimensions were rated at a high level, indicating generally positive perceptions of studying in Thailand. Cultural and Geographical Proximity ranked highest ($\bar{x} = 3.95$, S.D. = 0.70), with “geographical proximity convenient” receiving the highest score ($\bar{x} = 4.07$), highlighting the role of proximity and cultural familiarity. Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities ranked second ($\bar{x} = 3.93$, S.D. = 0.71), reflecting the importance of academic value. Economic Considerations ranked slightly lower ($\bar{x} = 3.84$, S.D. = 0.73), though still at a high level. Overall, the findings suggest that students’ decisions are primarily shaped by convenience and cultural alignment, followed by academic quality, with economic factors playing a supporting role. This finding reflects the advantages of Thailand within the ASEAN–China educational context, where geographical accessibility and cultural familiarity help reduce adjustment concerns for Chinese students. The result is also consistent with Yin et al. (2015), who found that cultural familiarity and regional accessibility significantly influenced Chinese students’ decisions to study in Thailand.

Table 2 Influencing Factors of International Recruitment Services for Chinese Students’ Pursuit of Further Studies in Thailand for Parents of prospective postgraduate students

Part	Questions (Top 3)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Rank
Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities	You think the academic resources (such as libraries, research facilities, and faculty expertise) in Thailand are attractive for your child’s postgraduate studies.	4.12	0.64	1
	You feel that studying in Thailand can provide more international exposure and broaden your child’s future opportunities.	4.10	0.63	2



Part	Questions (Top 3)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Rank
	You believe the overall teaching quality in Thai universities can provide your child with sufficient academic growth.	4.08	0.66	3
	Total	3.88	0.52	—
Economic Considerations	You believe that compared with other destinations, Thailand offers a better balance between cost and quality.	4.18	0.63	1
	You think the overall cost of studying in Thailand is affordable for your family.	4.15	0.65	2
	You believe the shorter duration of study in Thailand can help reduce costs.	4.06	0.66	3
	Total	3.81	0.55	—
Cultural and Geographical Proximity	You think Thailand's geographical proximity to China makes it convenient for your child to study abroad.	4.09	0.62	1
	You believe that the cultural similarities between China and Thailand can help your child adapt more easily.	4.04	0.64	2
	You believe Thailand's cultural environment will positively contribute to your child's personal growth.	3.92	0.65	3
	Total	3.80	0.54	—
Overall	—	3.83	0.47	—

As shown in Table 2, all dimensions were rated at a high level, indicating generally positive parental perceptions of studying in Thailand. Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities ranked highest ($\bar{x} = 3.88$, S.D. = 0.52), reflecting parents' strong emphasis on academic resources and development opportunities. Economic Considerations ranked second ($\bar{x} = 3.81$, S.D. = 0.55), with cost-quality balance rated highest ($\bar{x} = 4.18$). Cultural and Geographical Proximity ranked slightly lower ($\bar{x} = 3.80$, S.D. = 0.54), though still at a high level. Overall, the findings suggest that parents place greater importance on academic quality and long-term value than on other factors. This finding reflects parents' emphasis on academic quality and long-term educational value, as postgraduate education is closely associated with future career development and employment competitiveness. The finding is also consistent with Pimpa (2003), who highlighted the important influence of families on international education decisions.



Table 3 Influencing Factors of International Recruitment Services for Chinese Students' Pursuit of Further Studies in Thailand for Relevant Faculty Teachers and Administrative Staff

Part	Questions (Top 3)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Rank
Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities	You think faculty guidance plays an important role in helping students prepare for postgraduate study abroad.	4.05	0.68	1
	You believe that Thai universities provide sufficient academic resources to support students' postgraduate study.	4.03	0.69	2
	You believe the cooperation between Guangxi University of Finance and Economics and Thai universities can enhance students' academic opportunities.	4.02	0.70	3
	Total	3.84	0.70	—
Economic Considerations	You think the cost-effectiveness of Thai postgraduate programs makes them more attractive to students.	4.06	0.72	1
	You believe the overall cost of studying in Thailand is a key factor influencing students' decisions.	4.05	0.73	2
	You believe that financial support options, such as scholarships, increase students' willingness to study in Thailand.	4.04	0.70	3
	Total	3.85	0.71	—
Cultural and Geographical Proximity	You believe that Thailand's geographical proximity to China encourages students to consider it as a study destination.	4.06	0.68	1
	You think cultural and geographical proximity makes Thailand more competitive compared with distant destinations.	4.06	0.70	2
	You think cultural similarities between China and Thailand help students adapt more easily to studying abroad.	4.05	0.70	3
	Total	3.86	0.70	—
Overall	—	3.85	0.70	—



As shown in Table 3, all dimensions were rated at a high level, indicating generally positive perceptions toward postgraduate study in Thailand. Among them, Cultural and Geographical Proximity ranked highest ($\bar{x} = 3.86$, S.D. = 0.70), suggesting that geographical closeness and cultural familiarity are key advantages. Economic Considerations ranked second ($\bar{x} = 3.85$, S.D. = 0.71), with cost-effectiveness receiving the highest item score ($\bar{x} = 4.06$), highlighting the importance of affordability. Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities ranked slightly lower ($\bar{x} = 3.84$, S.D. = 0.70), though still at a high level. Overall, the results indicate that accessibility, affordability, and academic support jointly shape students' willingness to study in Thailand. This finding reflects that faculty teachers and administrative staff consider accessibility, affordability, and academic support as practical factors influencing students' decisions to pursue postgraduate education in Thailand. The result is also consistent with Snodin (2019), who emphasized the importance of institutional support and student experiences in Thai higher education.

Table 4 Influencing Factors of International Recruitment Services for Chinese Students' Pursuit of Further Studies in Thailand for Leaders responsible for admission and recruitment

Part	Questions(Top 3)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Rank
Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities	You believe that high-quality teaching and faculty expertise in Thailand strengthen student confidence in studying abroad.	4.05	0.71	1
	You believe that strong academic cooperation helps attract more students to study in Thailand.	4.04	0.69	2
	You believe that collaboration between Guangxi University of Finance and Economics and Thai universities improves the quality of international recruitment services.	4.03	0.70	3
	Total	3.94	0.71	—
Economic Considerations	You think that Thailand's cost-effectiveness compared to Western countries makes it an attractive destination for students.	4.06	0.72	1
	You believe that the overall cost of studying in Thailand is an important factor in recruitment strategies.	4.05	0.73	2
	You believe that scholarship opportunities should be promoted to reduce families' financial concerns.	4.04	0.70	3
	Total	3.85	0.72	—



Part	Questions(Top 3)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Rank
Cultural and Geographical Proximity	You believe that Thailand's close geographical location to China makes it a convenient recruitment destination.	4.06	0.68	1
	You think that Thailand's cultural and geographical advantages make it more competitive than distant destinations.	4.06	0.70	2
	You think that cultural similarities between China and Thailand make it easier to promote study-abroad programs.	4.05	0.70	3
	Total	3.86	0.70	—
Overall	—	3.88	0.71	—

As shown in Table 4, all dimensions were rated at a high level, reflecting generally positive perceptions of international recruitment for postgraduate study in Thailand. Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities ranked highest ($\bar{x} = 3.94$, S.D. = 0.71), indicating that academic strength and institutional collaboration are the primary factors shaping recruitment effectiveness. Cultural and Geographical Proximity ranked second ($\bar{x} = 3.86$, S.D. = 0.70), while Economic Considerations ranked slightly lower ($\bar{x} = 3.85$, S.D. = 0.72), though both remain at a high level. Overall, the findings suggest that recruitment is mainly driven by academic quality, supported by geographical proximity and economic attractiveness. This finding reflects the importance of institutional reputation, academic cooperation, and teaching quality in strengthening international recruitment competitiveness. The finding is also consistent with Armstrong and Laksana (2016), who noted that Thai universities increasingly rely on internationalization and academic collaboration to attract international students.

International recruitment service guideline for Guangxi University of Finance and Economics based on the identified influencing factors of Chinese students' pursuit of further studies in Thailand.

1. Focus Group Findings

A focus group was conducted to review and refine the preliminary guideline derived from Objective 1. Ten participants were purposively selected, including parents, faculty members, and agency representatives. The discussion indicates that the overall structure of the guideline is appropriate and consistent with the influencing factors identified in the previous stage. At the same time, several aspects require further refinement, particularly financial transparency, procedural clarity, cultural adaptation support, and the presentation of employment outcomes. Participants also emphasized the need for



clearer implementation arrangements and a continuous evaluation mechanism. These findings suggest that the guideline is generally sound but requires adjustment to improve clarity and practical usability.

2. Development of the International Recruitment Service Guideline

Based on the focus group input, the guideline was revised into four main components:

Guideline 1: Educational Quality and Academic Opportunities Enhancement

This guideline focuses on strengthening academic transparency, including clearer information on curriculum structure, faculty qualifications, supervisor – student matching, and graduate outcomes. The aim is to provide more concrete academic evidence to support decision-making and enhance confidence.

Guideline 2: Economic Transparency and Financial Support System

This guideline addresses the need for clearer financial information. It includes detailed cost disclosure, phased payment arrangements, and more transparent scholarship policies. Financial uncertainties are also considered to support more informed planning.

Guideline 3: Cultural Adaptation and Student Support System

This guideline emphasizes support for student adjustment, including pre-departure preparation, language support, and on-site services. Safety support and communication with families are included to reduce uncertainty.

Guideline 4: Institutional Implementation and Continuous Evaluation Mechanism

This guideline focuses on implementation and sustainability through the establishment of a responsible unit, standard procedures, and a data-based evaluation approach. Continuous review is included to support ongoing improvement.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that all stakeholder groups demonstrate a high level of agreement regarding the influencing factors of international recruitment services for Chinese students pursuing postgraduate study in Thailand. Final-year undergraduate students place the greatest emphasis on cultural and geographical proximity, highlighting convenience and cultural familiarity, whereas parents prioritize educational quality and economic considerations, focusing on academic credibility and cost – quality balance. Faculty and administrative staff present a more balanced perspective, while recruitment leaders emphasize educational quality as the primary strategic advantage, supported by cost-effectiveness and regional accessibility. Based on these findings, the focus group validation confirms that the proposed international recruitment service guideline is both empirically grounded and practically



feasible. The finalized guideline integrates multi-stakeholder perspectives by strengthening academic transparency, financial clarity, cultural adaptation support, and institutional implementation mechanisms, thereby providing a comprehensive framework for enhancing postgraduate enrollment in Thailand at Guangxi University of Finance and Economics.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the research focused only on Guangxi University of Finance and Economics, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study mainly relied on descriptive statistics and self-reported perceptions because the research objectives focused on guideline development rather than causal relationship analysis. Third, the data were collected within a specific period and may not fully reflect changes in international student mobility trends over time. Therefore, future studies may include multiple universities, larger samples, and inferential statistical analysis to provide broader insights.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for the utilization of research findings

The findings can be applied to improve international recruitment practice at Guangxi University of Finance and Economics. Greater attention should be given to presenting clear academic information, including program structure, faculty background, and graduate outcomes, so that students and parents can make more informed judgments. Financial information should also be communicated more clearly through transparent explanations of costs and scholarships. In addition, support for student adjustment should be strengthened through preparation before departure and support after arrival.

2. Future Research Directions

Future research may examine similar issues in other universities or national contexts to compare whether the influencing factors remain consistent. Future studies may also use broader samples and inferential statistical analysis to strengthen the findings. In addition, future research may further explore the role of online platforms, social media, and employment opportunities in shaping students' decisions.

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