
OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the opportunities for Canadian educational exporters in the Asia Pacific region. The paper focusses on 10 target markets in which Canada has well-defined and growing interests: South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. The study also takes into account the international education policies and practices of four of Canada's major competitors in the region: Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

For the purposes of this work, a Canadian "education export" is defined as: a) an international student¹ coming to Canada to study, or: b) a Canadian educational service or product being sold internationally. Exports include those services and products provided through public and private educational systems at the primary, secondary, college, or university level, on a full-or part-time basis, ranging from intensive second language programs to postgraduate degree programs.

Context

Canada's links with Asia Pacific have become increasingly important over the past two decades. Asia Pacific's share of Canada's non-U.S. exports has grown from less than 25 percent in 1975 to over 40 percent in 1992. Ten of Canada's top 25 trading partners are Asia Pacific economies, representing over \$15 billion in merchandise trade.

Economic growth in the region continues at record-breaking rates, with some Asian economies experiencing growth at rates close to 10 percent. Apart from large domestic and regional markets, the growing economic might of Asia Pacific rests on an increasingly educated population. Education in Asian societies, nurtured in Confucian thought, is revered. Recent studies have shown that high-school students in Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan outscore their Canadian and U.S. counterparts on tests of Science and Mathematics. While teaching methods and length of academic programs differ between Canada and the Asia Pacific economies, these indicators of economic and academic success suggest we have much to learn from each other.

Interest in international education is escalating throughout the world. Globally, the international post-secondary student population exceeded 1.5 million individuals in 1991 and is expected to continue to expand. Major recipient countries for international students, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, have adopted aggressive promotional campaigns and have undertaken innovative marketing strategies to enhance their ability to capture more of this educational market. Their efforts are succeeding.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, "international student" refers to a student from the Asia Pacific region.