

# Research on Shaping of Chinese Corporate Image in Myanmar

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**Abstract**—Based on the corporate image theory and the basis of the Chinese Foreign Languages Bureau's Overseas Corporate Image Survey and Analysis Report (2014, 2015, 2016), this paper conducts on-the-spot investigation and in-depth study of Chinese companies in Myanmar. On the basis of in-depth analysis and summarization of Chinese companies' image in Myanmar, they have found out the factors affecting the image of Chinese enterprises in Myanmar, and put forward some constructive suggestions for Chinese enterprises to shape the image in Myanmar, which can be a strategy for Chinese enterprises to communicate with each other. The formulation and reference can provide theoretical supplements for Chinese enterprises' direct investment and risk management in Myanmar, and hope that the negative effects of enterprises in Myanmar will force Chinese enterprises to transform and upgrade, and enhance the recognition of Chinese enterprises and Chinese products in the international market. In order to shape the image of an excellent Chinese overseas company. As a supplement to the overseas image research of Chinese enterprises, the research on the image formation of Chinese corporate image in Myanmar has important theoretical and practical significance.

**Keywords:** *corporate image, overseas image, cross-culture, shaping*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Starting from 2013, the “Belt and Road” construction has begun to build a great practice of building a Community with Shared Future of Human. Myanmar is closely related to China's mountains and rivers, and its national identity is the same. As one of the key nodes connecting the “Belt and Road”, Myanmar is concerned with the smooth implementation of the entire strategy. China-Myanmar investment and trade have a long history and a large volume. However, despite this, it is impossible to avoid the many risks faced by enterprises “going out”. Religious culture, ethnic differences, customs, and value orientations reflect the pressure and challenge of integrating

enterprises into the local society of Myanmar and achieving mutual integration. In addition to realizing the economic benefits of the enterprises themselves, Chinese enterprises are more likely to be the actors who shoulder the national image. Whether or not to achieve good social benefits is crucial to the improvement of the soft power of enterprises. Especially after the closure of the Myitsone Hydropower Project, which was jointly established by China and Myanmar in 2011, Chinese companies invested in Myanmar are facing more and more complex public opinion risks. The negative tendencies of the image of Chinese companies in the hearts of the Burmese people are due to the rendering of the media, the misunderstanding of the people, or the misconduct of Chinese companies. The results are not yet known. The author uses the opportunity of working in Myanmar to conduct in-depth research, analyze the image of Chinese enterprises, find out the pain points of the problem, provide reasonable suggestions for the image shaping problem faced by Chinese enterprises in Myanmar, and use the research to the rebuilding of the image of Myanmar that mentioned a certain height and provided support for the study of overseas image of Chinese enterprises.

## II. THE STATUS QUO OF CHINESE ENTERPRISES IN MYANMAR

The image of Chinese companies in Myanmar has not been “suddenly turned down” in recent years. It is the negative perception of Chinese companies that has intensified in the reform of Myanmar's society and is reflected in a series of actions against Chinese investment projects. In the Burmese society during the period of reform and change, the negative perceptions about Chinese companies continued to ferment among the people. In addition to the problems in image communication, China's comprehensive national strength has been rising in recent years, especially the impact of economic external development on the various sectors of the Myanmar society, which has invisibly put pressure on the Burmese people. This kind of pressure creates a negative social

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environment for the positive perceptions of Chinese companies. Although China's national hard power continues to increase, the soft power of national image, international influence, and world discourse power is an obvious weakness. China is also known as a "scarred giant". Improving the image of Chinese companies in Myanmar and raising China's positive perception among the Burmese people have become an important mission of the Chinese government, enterprises, private institutions and even individuals. In order to acquire the status of Chinese corporate image, the author began to do research in Myanmar by questionnaire and interview.

**A. Attitudes towards Chinese products**

*1) Purchase and purchase experience*

The data shows that more than 86.15% of respondents have purchased products or services of Chinese companies, but only 18% have absolute affirmation to the products or services they have purchased, and more than 80% of respondents said their purchase experience for Chinese products or services is reserved. Only 18.46% of respondents have a satisfactory experience in purchasing Chinese products or services. More than 75% of respondents said that the experience of purchasing Chinese products or services is average, and 6.15% of respondents expressed their opinions about Chinese products about dissatisfaction with the service purchase experience. See Table below.

TABLE I. WHETHER SATISFIED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF PURCHASING CHINESE ENTERPRISE PRODUCTS?

Option	Ratio
Very satisfied	1.54%
Satisfied	16.92 %
General	75.38%
Not satisfied	6.15%
Very dissatisfied	0%

<sup>a</sup>. Source: Chinese Corporate Image Questionnaire in Myanmar

*2) Excellent product or service*

The data shows that the main reason for attracting respondents to purchase Chinese products or services is that they are powerful and inexpensive, accounting for 30.77% and 29.23% respectively, and 23.08% of the respondents purchased because the excellent design of Chinese products, and 18.46% interviewers purchase because Chinese products follow the fashion trend.

*3) Inadequacies in products or services*

The data shows that the main reason for hindering respondents to purchase Chinese products or services is that they believe that Chinese products are counterfeit and poor in quality, accounting for 49.23% and 36.92% respectively, and 21.54% of respondents believe that Chinese products have potential safety hazards, 9.23 % of respondents believe that Chinese product after-sales service is poor, and 6.15% of respondents believe that Chinese products have low technology content.

**B. Attitudes towards Chinese companies**

*1) Attitudes towards Chinese companies*

According to the data, 18.46% of the respondents indicate that their life become better or more convenient after entering

the Myanmar market. More than 80% of the respondents have reservations or even negative attitudes about whether Chinese companies bring convenience to Myanmar's democracy. See Table below.

TABLE II. DOES THE RESPONDENT THINK THAT CHINESE COMPANIES BECOME BETTER OR MORE CONVENIENT AFTER ENTERING MYANMAR INVESTMENT?

Option	Ratio
Yes	18.46%
General	75.38%
No	6.15%

Source: Chinese Corporate Image Questionnaire in Myanmar

The data shows that 38.46% of the respondents welcome Chinese enterprise enter Myanmar near their place of residence, 58.46% of the respondents said it does not matter, and 3.08% of the respondents said they do not welcome Chinese companies to enter the community.

*2) The impact of China's economic development on Myanmar's economic development*

The data shows that more than 55% of respondents believe that the development of China's economy will have a positive impact on Myanmar's economic development, and 45% of respondents said that China's economic development may have little impact on Myanmar's economic development. See Table below.

TABLE III. RESPONDENTS THINK HOW CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AFFECTS MYANMAR

Option	Ratio
Very favorable	2.5%
More favorable	52.5%
General	45%
Less favorable	0%
Very unfavorable	0%

Source: Chinese Corporate Image Questionnaire in Myanmar

*3) Attitudes towards Chinese companies entering the Myanmar market*

The data shows that 40% of respondents are positive about China's entry into the Myanmar market, 57.50% of respondents are indifferent to China's entry into the Myanmar market, and 2.50% are negative about China's entry into the Myanmar market. See Table below

TABLE IV. RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHINA'S ENTRY INTO THE MYANMAR MARKET

Option	Ratio
Very welcome	2.5%
More welcome	37.5%
General	57.5%
Less welcome	0%
Very unwelcome	2.5%

Source: Chinese Corporate Image Questionnaire in Myanmar

**III. ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF CHINESE ENTERPRISES IN MYANMAR**

**A. Internal factor**

Chinese companies have insufficient market share or popularity in the international market, lack of big brand effect,

and the Myanmar media has negatively influenced the public opinion drainage, and some enterprises have not fulfilled their social responsibility performance, resulting in the existence of misunderstanding of certain consumers in Myanmar towards Chinese products .

#### *1) Early investigation is not enough*

Some Chinese enterprises have not done a good job in investigating the investment in Myanmar. It is easy to produce the situation of investing in the first time, and they don't know much about the local investment and trade situation, laws and regulations, folk culture and interest relations in Myanmar. The lack of micro-response capability has made investment planning impossible to implement smoothly. Chinese enterprises have no clear strategic plan for entering the Myanmar market, blindly responding to the national strategy, regardless of whether the enterprise's own conditions meet the environment of the Myanmar market, expanding for expansion, and even some companies appear to use short-term market conditions for short-term profit-seeking. The business behavior lacks the strength and endurance to participate in international competition.

#### *2) Supply demand is not enough to match*

When Chinese companies enter the Myanmar market, the demand for the Myanmar market is not accurate enough. The investment structure of enterprises in Myanmar is not reasonable. There are few people's livelihood projects, mostly concentrated in infrastructure, energy and other industries. The construction period is long, and it is easy to cause damage to the local environment, leading to negative emotions and misunderstandings of local people. Take the Myitsone Power Station as an example. It is located at the source of the Irrawaddy River in the mother river of Myanmar. It has important historical and cultural significance in the hearts of the Burmese people and is a biodiversity-intensive area. The local residents bear the direct negative impact of the project development, but there are hardly intuitive livelihood benefits.

#### *3) Low cross-cultural integration*

The management mechanism of Chinese enterprises has not been internationalized with the "going out" of enterprises, and lacks the stamina of management and management; the matching of teams, talents and needs is not that accurate, and the importance of cross-cultural talents is insufficient and the treatment is not good. And some Chinese enterprises are self-sufficient, unable to effectively learn from the positive and negative experiences and lessons of other countries' investment in Myanmar, and realize the localization strategy in combination with reality.

#### *4) Insufficient foreign-related public relations ability*

Chinese companies have insufficient capacity to handle public relations, lack the consciousness of corporate external relations, lack the theory and experience to deal with crises, and have less communication with stakeholders (such as communities, media, social organizations, trade unions, etc.). With the awakening of democratic consciousness, the crisis incidents faced by Chinese enterprises in Myanmar are receiving more and more attention from public opinion and the public. These increasingly crises are greatly impacting the normal operation of enterprises. Therefore, even in the face of

the public relations crisis of image problems, Chinese companies' foreign speeches are more official and ungrounded, and they cannot be publicized or explained in a way that is more acceptable to the Burmese people.

#### *5) Failure of social responsibility*

Chinese enterprises are not fulfilling social responsibilities in Myanmar, lacking a deep understanding of local consumers' living habits, cultural level, and religious culture, resulting in insufficient attention to them and not being able to target them when they assume responsibility. If the fulfillment of responsibilities cannot be consistent with local needs, it will have a negative effect of half the effort. Simply pursuing commercial interests and ignoring the social influence of enterprises in Myanmar is a taboo for business management. Based on the principle that economic benefits and social benefits are equally important, Chinese enterprises do their best to participate in community activities and fulfill their social responsibilities in Myanmar, but their public welfare activities can never be achieved in the hearts of the Burmese people.

### *B. External factors*

#### *1) Local policy continuity is not strong*

Since 1988, Myanmar has entered a stage of political transformation, and the new regime has recognized political and economic changes and allowed a multiparty system to exist. In 1990, Myanmar adopted a new form of general election, and democratization began. However, the long-term ruling of the military government ignored the issue of people's livelihood, and the concentration of emotions accumulated by the Burmese nation for many years broke out. The awakening of democratic consciousness requires a gradual process, but due to lack of experience, most people's understanding of democracy is not deep enough, and their own opinions are difficult to integrate, and there is a tendency to pan-democratization. This pan-democratization extends to the market level, which has led to the fact that Burmese workers are easily incited by trade unions to participate in irrational demonstrations. According to statistics, more than 90% of Chinese companies are able to strictly abide by the Myanmar Labor Law to give workers legal benefits, but even so, there will be an average of four to five strikes per month.

#### *2) Local people are vulnerable to external influences*

The Burmese media has been under the control of the military government for many years. The channels are small and the content is small, which makes the Burmese people's perception of the outside world not objective and accurate. The experience of history has made the Burmese people more acceptable to English reports. When faced with Chinese media and US, UK and Japan media reports, the Chinese media information transmission may be ignored. Because the propaganda of Chinese companies through the media is always based on a macro-strategic perspective, it does not allow the Myanmar companies and the public to resonate emotionally. In Myanmar, where information has been diversified, a huge number of people have come in from all over the world, and the media audience has turned to the younger generation who uses the mobile Internet. The reception of mobile information is extremely vulnerable to the influence of the title party, and

the acquisition has been one-sided. The possibility of false information is misleading to the misrepresentation of Chinese corporate image.

#### IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE IMAGE OF CHINESE ENTERPRISES IN MYANMAR

##### *A. Relevant government departments actively guide*

Since the improvement of the overseas image of Chinese enterprises is a systematic project that requires huge expenditures, it is absolutely impossible to complete a single enterprise image shaping. Only the long-term, systematic support and coordination of the national level can make the overseas image of the entire processing possible. From the investigation, positioning, project implementation, maintenance and improvement of the image, formulate a solid strategic plan, allocate the main body, content and methods of the implementation of the strategy, formulate plans for unknown crisis events, and clarify the implementation rules. At the same time, a rigorous review of companies and products entering Myanmar will not be in line with the two countries and international standards.

In the shaping of the image of Chinese enterprises in Myanmar, the organic integration of modules between enterprises, with the assistance of the Chinese government and the Myanmar government, carry out their own image shaping projects, with local private institutions, local mature media operating agencies even the ordinary people involved in the project cooperated.

##### *B. Enterprises do a good job in preliminary market research*

Chinese companies do not meet the challenges of trade unions, NGOs, and community residents in their domestic production and operation. However, overseas investment may encounter challenges from the host country's trade unions and industry organizations, as well as local community residents. Cultural and religious barriers, or unfriendly hype of local NGOs and news media. You can hire local well-known and honest intermediaries and industry organizations in the host country to conduct preliminary research on investment targets and partners, including political environment, market capacity, market access, competitors, contingent liabilities, and freedom of foreign exchange remittance. Full consideration of various risks such as politics, natural disasters, economy, and society. The fullness of the previous research has directly affected the effectiveness of overseas investment and cooperation.

##### *C. Adjust the investment structure in combination with the actual situation*

Chinese enterprises invest mainly in oil and gas industry, power industry, production and processing industry, transportation and communication industry. They are the pillar industries of Myanmar's national economic development, and they involve sensitive issues such as national security. The Burmese people have more access to Chinese enterprises. Therefore, Chinese companies investing in Myanmar should fully consider the optimization of investment structure.

##### *D. Actively assume social responsibility*

Economic benefits often complement social benefits. Chinese-funded enterprises carry out investment and business activities in Myanmar. While pursuing economic benefits, they should assume the necessary social responsibilities and give back to the local society and people. In the event of natural disasters, Chinese-funded enterprises can actively donate money and materials and actively participate in disaster prevention and mitigation work. While implementing relevant projects, they can appropriately consider the implementation of the construction of schools, hospitals and road repairs for the project site.

##### *E. Strengthen cross-cultural talent training*

Another important factor for enterprises to go out is language. Burmese is a non-universal language. The size of talent is smaller than that of English. However, the smoothness of communication determines to a certain extent whether the company's projects can be smoothly carried out, whether it can communicate effectively with the government and enterprises, and whether the employees of China and Myanmar can get along well. Therefore, the establishment of a team of foreign talents needs to be cautious. Not only must have professional skills and language skills, but also have a compatible and innovative thinking style and cheerful and optimistic personality. Therefore, when selecting a talent, we should pay more attention to the overseas background of the staff and the attitude of work and life.

Give full play to the role of bridges between Chinese students and local Chinese. With their understanding of the thinking paradigms, styles and customs of China and Myanmar, we will focus on solving cross-cultural issues for enterprises, avoiding the government, enterprises and residents of Myanmar, Touching and complying with local laws and regulations.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Based on the investigation of the image of China's enterprises in the Asia-Pacific region, the "Belt and Road" region and the Central and Eastern Europe, the China Foreign Languages Bureau has designed a field research program for Myanmar, conducting questionnaire surveys and interviews. The scope of the survey involves consumers, staff and government officials of all ages. The survey found that the Burmese people have dissatisfaction with individual issues on the basis of the overall recognition of Chinese corporate image. With the increase in the degree of development in Myanmar in recent years, the public opinion environment has become increasingly complex, and the negative impact of the image of Chinese companies is easily amplified.

After an in-depth analysis of the factors affecting the image of Chinese companies, the conclusions of the internal and external levels are obtained. As far as internal factors are concerned, whether the preliminary research is sufficient, whether trade investment meets local needs, whether it is effective in promoting cross-cultural integration, whether it has foreign-related public relations capabilities, and whether active social responsibility is a key part of the company's image

shaping problem. In terms of factors, the stability and continuity of Myanmar policy, the public opinion attitude of Myanmar, media public opinion, and other behaviors against Myanmar investment countries will also have a side effect on the image of Chinese enterprises.

Finally, this paper puts forward suggestions for Chinese enterprises to shape the image of Myanmar. At the same time, it is necessary to give full play to the long-term and systematic support and coordination of the government. At the same time, do a good job in pre-market research, be familiar with local laws and regulations, customs and habits, and promote diversification of investment fields. Pay attention to people's livelihood projects, assume social responsibilities, establish an inter-cultural talent echelon, and promote cross-cultural integration.

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