

Internationalization of Higher Education in China and Its Development Direction

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Abstract

The internationalization of higher education plays an important role in education, but from the perspective of the whole society, there is a higher level of significance. Combining with foreign experience, this paper holds that internationalization of higher education in China should be established to promote international education by establishing administrative network, shaping the international reputation of higher education, merging policy with communication activities simultaneously to reverse the brain drain situation and to encourage the internationalization of higher education institutions.

Keywords: Higher Education, Internationalization, Higher education institutions

1. Internationalization of Higher Education and Its Connotation

Within the context of globalization, and the integration process of economy and politics, there have been increasing demands on cultural communication. Modern communication and the globalization essence of consumption market bring more and more global nature to education. In a word, the globalization of higher education is a reflection of the world teaching and scientific research. To cope with the continuous innovation of international society, the UNESCO prescribes that higher education should develop in the following three directions: relevance, quality and internationalization. The internationalization of higher education is namely the international cooperation and communication among different countries, including oversea studies, international exchange of students, international studies, regional studies and technical support. While "internationalization of education" includes all activities in higher education, the content of course, teaching methods, the ability to use foreign languages and to understand multiple-culture and the extent of internationalization of higher education institution.

Internationalization is the government's systematic and continuous endeavor to make higher education face the challenge brought by globalization. The tendency of internalization of globalization seems not to be avoided and in world level, there are five main tendencies. First, the number of students who study abroad increasingly grows, and the source of overseas students or the students' target counties are not evenly dispersed, among which the number of students from Asia increases rapidly and the number of students who study at USA, Britain, Australia, German and Japan also grows rapidly. Secondly, the teacher's mobility also increases rapidly. One of the reasons is that the mobility of graduates increases. As currencies, intelligence circulates around the world. Overseas scientists who may bring knowledge, professional technique and industry cooperation regularly return to their motherland. Thirdly, an increasing number of transnational education institutions appear. Many universities establish branches overseas, among which the transnational education from USA, Britain and Australia are mostly remarkable. As for countries who import education, they often offer similar higher education by adopting internet distance teaching modes etc. Fourthly, international teaching focuses on basic subjects, such as business and information technology. For subjects whose expenses are at the students, professional subjects attract more students than natural and humanistic subjects.

2. The Existence of the Higher Education Internationalization and Its Development Value

From the angle of education and objective function, higher education internationalization is defined as "For countries, educational departments and the school, internationalization can be defined as a process which enhance and merge international, trans-cultural and global education objectives and functions on post-middle school education." In other words, the internationalization of higher education refers to promotion of the education objectives, function and teaching course to the international and trans-cultural or global level. From the angle of teaching, researching and service of higher education institution, the internationalization of higher education is

imposing international, trans-cultural level on the process of teaching, researching and service. The internationalization of higher education plays an important role in education; however, it is of more significance in respect of the whole development of society.

In respect of economy, the internationalization of higher education can enhance the country's competitive force. Economic factor is the main motivation of higher education internationalization. With the globalization of economy, the country pays more and more attention to economy, science and technology. The internationalization of higher education can help to promote the country's competitive force. Investing on and developing knowledge, technique-oriented applicable research can effectively promote and maintain one country's competitive advantage, while these strategies are within the scope of higher education. Hence, the internationalization of higher education, competitive force, economy and the development of science are closely connected (Glen A. Jones, 2010). On the other hand, it can increase the financial revenue of the country and educational institutions. The internationalization of higher education can not only shape good international relationship, but also bring direct and future financial revenue for the country and educational institutions. In the level of country, they often consider the number of oversea students, trades of importing and exporting educational service as the specifications of higher education internationalization. According to Institute of International Education, from 2006 to 2007 the number of overseas students who study in the USA has reached 582,996. The tuition fees and living expenses paid by oversea students have brought the USA financial revenue of 12billion US dollars, which is USA's fifth largest export revenue (Su Guoying, 2010). While in Australia, higher education is the country's largest export service. In 2006, the tuition fee of international students has brought Australia 780million financial revenue, which makes international education an important export industry following the export of wool. Similarly, in the level of educational institutions, the motivation of economy and mercerization receive more and more attention, which enhances many higher education institutions consider exporting educational product and service as their essential income. Taking the higher educational institution in Australia as an example, the tuition fee of international students occupies 8% of the universities' average tuition fee. Some universities tuition fee even accounts for 1/3 of their average tuition fee. This is the main demand that leads higher education to globalization.

In respect of country image, education can be deemed as a kind of diplomatic policy, which can enhance one country's image. Meanwhile the international cooperation of education is also a kind of foreign policy investment, which will help to better international relationship. The communication of culture, science and technology and education can keep the connection and diplomatic communication with other countries. The internationalization of education particularly has special contribution to security and peace among countries. The internationalization of economy and the improvement of scientific communication will pose potential threat to a country's recognition and culture's survival. Culture assimilation often cause crisis for small countries. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance or strengthen country recognition.

As for the blend of multi-culture, social-cultural factors, foreign policies, and country recognition are closely related with each other. From the angel of social-culture, for countries who consider internationalization as a respect of diversity and a method to counteract the homogenized influence, protecting and enhancing country culture becomes their motivation, while acknowledging the culture differences among countries is considered as the main reason for the internationalization of national educational system. In addition, world peace and development requires that all nations understand each other, and the communication of culture is the basis of such understanding. Higher education institutions are supposed to produce, transmit and re-produce culture, which impels its internationalization. The cultural function of universities can not only combine research on humanity, but also enhance it to internationalization. At present, leveling the society and people's consciousness of mutual reliance must be one of the universities' basic functions. Higher education institution must ensure that the graduates and post-graduates acquire enough knowledge and skills through teaching and study plans, so as to facilitate their understanding of different countries. Hence, society-culture is one of the reasons that internalize higher education.

Speaking of academic development, it is also one of factors influencing higher education internalization. According to the Rankings of World Universities announced by Shanghai Jiaotong University, the standards of ranking are made according to the number of people who have won Nobel Prize, renowned experts, the number of articles they have published on natural and scientific journals, and the rate of citation of their papers and their research performance. In addition, according to U.S. News & World Report's the best college and university in the USA, academic reputation is the main assessment criterion (25%). Hence, the internationalization of higher education and its academic development are closely related to each other. The "academic" factor of higher education internationalization is directly related to the universities' history and development. The international exchange of

professors and students demonstrates the international development of academics, while the tendency of higher education internationalization requires teaching and research must acquire world academic standard. Nowadays, the requirements for knowledge have surpassed the realms of countries. As a result, one has to participate in international communication, so one can obtain world knowledge and innovation, and enrich and update the knowledge. Meanwhile, the universities need to learn from other countries to improve its reputation, which also leads higher education to internationalization.

3. The Progress of Higher Education Internationalization in China and Its Development Tendency

Xiaoping Deng has made a decision to expand the scale of sending students to study abroad in 1978. He said that, “I agree to expand the scale. It is one of the most effective methods to improve the standard in China. We should send tens and thousands of students to study abroad, instead of eight or ten.” In 1983, Xiaoping Deng has put forward “three orientations”, namely education must be oriented to modernization, the world and the future. The internationalization of higher education was also made one of the policies for education development. Since then, higher education in China embarked the road of internationalization. In 1993, the “Education Reform and Development Outline in China” has pointed out that we should further expand the scale of opening-up and reforming education, strengthen world communication and cooperation, and borrow management experience from other countries. China has joined WTO and become its member in 2001. According to “GATS”, education service is one of its main service trades, whose three policies are: no prejudice, market opening and fair competition rules that all joined countries have the right to take part in the competition of education service. Since China’s promise for education service is partial, higher education must be more open, which makes the internationalization of higher education develop more quickly (Li Mei, 2010).

In respect of higher education internationalization, China pays its attention to two aspects. One is sending students to study abroad. From 1985 until now, China remains the country which has the largest number of students studying abroad. In 1985, there were 53, 378 students studying abroad. And there are 394,669 students studying abroad now. It can be seen that China attaches great importance to the internationalization of higher education, especially the policy on overseas students. For boosting higher education internationalization, the other method is Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools. Through Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools, advanced patterns in running schools can be borrowed and we can also learn from their professional course settlement and update majors. This is the other way to enhance the internationalization of higher education in some schools, areas and even some countries. Besides, Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools can draw in foreign investment and education resources which can make up the inadequateness of education investment and improve the educational conditions. However, this is far from enough. In the consideration of foreign experiences, the author holds that the internationalization of higher education in China should develop in the following directions.

3.1 Establishing Administrative Network to Boost World Education

As for the development of higher education, the government should, on behalf of the higher education institutions, merge the publicity sources for higher education and conduct world negotiations, including the acknowledgement of higher education certificate, the enrollment of foreign students and establishment of agencies abroad. Since higher education institutions are unable to perform the above activities, the government should conduct negotiations with other countries to reach agreement. The organization the Australia government established for promoting international higher education is AEI which is responsible for signing education cooperation contract, promoting acknowledgement of world certificate, researching on education market. Though China has established The Ministry of Education International Education Office and assigns it to deal with affairs concerning overseas students and participate in world conference and organization. Compared with AEI, its functions are far from adequacy. It merely conducts the assigned activities and policies. From the above example, it can be seen that the Australia government originally focuses on the main sources of oversea students and then expand its world office net (Zhou Wendin, 2010). As a result, we can employ this method and research on the constitutions of oversea students and make strategic settings, such as establishing affiliations to industry and trade offices. The government can publicize and merge the higher education resources, which can help increase their exposure rate.

3.2 Shaping Higher Education Institution’s Reputation

There are many overall standards for higher education institutions’ reputation, such as the ranking of the best world universities announced by Shanghai Jiaotong University and the ranking of universities made by Times. China’s Ministry of Education has made investment to level the higher education institutions’ reputation, hoping to increase their ability of academic research and run world famous universities. However, the universities in China could not

compete with universities of the developed countries. As a result, whether endeavors for overall world reputation can be considered as the main method to attract international students still needs discussion. From other developed countries' experience, their success owes to English language training course. Hence English language is their advantage in attracting international students (Wang Xia, 2010). China has similar advantage. Though Chinese language cannot be considered as universal language, the number of Chinese people makes Chinese language an important language. Since the higher education institutions in China do not have high reputation, language training will be more effective to attract international students. This method is much more applicable, since the countries that regard Chinese as official language are few.

3.3 Combination of Policy and Communication

To increase the education quality of higher education institution in China, the government of China boosts the internationalization of higher education by making policies of promoting oversea students, academic communication and cooperation with other countries. The forms of internationalization include promoting oversea students, academic communication and cooperation and joint running of higher education institution with foreign parties. Through overseas student's policy, the government establishes funds sending teachers and administrators abroad to study. Apart from government investment, other countries offer many scholarships to the teachers and students. Therefore, the number of overseas students increasingly grows. These students become one of the essential factors for the reform of higher education. Academic communication, cooperation and joint running of higher education are the main ways to level the higher education quality. Through academic communication and cooperation, the teachers in China can have the opportunity to communicate with foreign experts and take part in international conference. The joint running of higher education policy allows overseas universities to establish branch in China.

3.4 Transforming Brain Drain

Brain drain, competitive challenge from world education market and inadequateness of funds pose difficulties for world communication and cooperation, which is China's main problem of the internationalization of higher education. Brain drain is one of the serious problems which trouble the developing countries. China is no exception. Many teachers study abroad at state expense, but they are unwilling to return. The reasons for brain drain are disparities of treatment, and also working condition. Since China has joined WTO, the education service in China has to open to the world. The low quality of higher education and inadequateness of funds make higher education in China passive in the competition with other countries. To solve this problem, some suggestions are given below. First, improve working condition and treatment to attract intellectuals. Since the reasons for brain drain are that the working environment in China cannot enable the overseas students to have good performance and the treatment abroad is better than that of the inland, the government must address these two problems. It should improve the teachers' treatment and better their working conditions, such as human resource management system, promotion system, leader right. Thus, overseas students can be attracted and return home. Secondly, increase the higher education institutions' competitive force. After joining WTO, the education service in China has to open to the world. The low quality of higher education and inadequateness of funds make higher education in China passive in the competition with other countries. As a result, while promoting the internationalization of higher education, the government should put forward some supporting measures, such as increasing investment, bettering infrastructure and teaching facilities, so as to improve their education quality and competitive force. Last but not the least, increase the investment for international communication and cooperation (Cheng Zhenqiang, 2010). The inadequateness of funds has been the biggest problem for China's higher education. It can be known from the above analysis that many problems were caused by lack of funds. International communication and cooperation is no exception. To address this problem, in addition to the universities, the government should also increase the funds for international communication and cooperation.

3.5 Encourage the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions

As for communication and cooperation among high education institutions, the internationalization of higher education includes not only international communication and cooperation, but also world consciousness, transcending development direction and scope. The university must establish an international atmosphere. The higher education institutions abroad are mature in international education, including holding exhibitions and other activities to publicize their research results and signing contracts with other institutions to provide counsel services, establishing special institutions to help the international students to solve problems concerning study and livelihood; establishing special system to reward and facilitate the exchange of students and staff; help, encourage and supervise the departments to cooperate with other world educational institutions. The administration of higher education

institution provides multiple resources. However, due to the environment of higher education in China, there are not many international students. Therefore, the administrative resources are limited. Hence, we can take advantage of the publicity opportunity to conduct activities at the places where the majority students come from, establish offices with other universities at key areas or sign contract with studying agencies abroad. The universities should make good use of opportunity to increase the exposure rate and let the administrative system provide more measures to help the international students to fit in their lives in the universities, such as language course and consultation. Concerning international communication, many things can be done, such as setting program allowance exchange students, short-term research abroad, holding international seminar. Since these methods are effective and explicit, the universities can make good use of such activities.

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