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Research Article

Relationship between Internationalization of Higher Education and the Further Study Trend of Overseas Students

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Abstract

Along with the economic globalization, international competition is becoming more and more intense and internationalization of higher education has become an irresistible trend. Cultivation of international talents has become the only way for the development of a country. Internationalization of higher education in China is speeding up with the proposal of policy of “the Belt and Road” and “Double First-Class University Plan”. This study explores the relationship between internationalization of higher education and the further study trend of overseas students, and analyzes it with the case of university. The ways to promote internationalization of higher education are given. The results show that the total number of overseas students and the number of students studying in China have increased rapidly in recent years, and the number of Confucius Institutes established abroad has exceeded 550. China has made great efforts to improve the guarantee system for internationalization of higher education, the management system of overseas students and international academic exchanges, and has put forward many ways to solve the existing problems. This study will provide a theoretical basis for the realization of internationalization of higher education in China.

Keywords

Economic Globalization • Internationalization of Higher Education • Overseas Students • Confucius Institute

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Along with the development of economic globalization and internationalization, higher education in the world has gradually depended on the degree of its own openness. Internationalization has become an important factor affecting the development of higher education (Lumby & Foskett, 2015). Internationalization of higher education requires not only the outflow of a certain population, but also the ability to attract more foreign students. China has gradually adapted to the trend of internationalization, actively studied the world's advanced educational ideas, introduced educational resources, and transported talents (Clifford & Montgomery, 2015). Internationalization of higher education is an important condition for cultivating high-quality talents, and an important force for actively coping with opportunities and challenges of globalization (Lau & Lin, 2016; Yemini, 2017). At present, the domestic research on internationalization of higher education mainly focuses on two points. One is to learn the experiences and lessons of internationalization of foreign higher education. The other one is the problems we should pay attention to and measures to be taken for internationalization of higher education in China (Qureshi, Janjua, Zaman, Lodhi & Tariq, 2016).

At different stages of development, the forms of internationalization of higher education are different. Nowadays, internationalization of higher education is the main trend of the development of higher education. Internationalization of education includes internationalization of students (overseas students), internationalization of teachers, internationalization of scientific research projects and internationalization of guarantee (Currie *et al.*, 2014). Politics and culture are the main driving factors of internationalization of higher education, but there are also many risks, including economic resource risk, brain drain risk and ideology risk (Alshamy, 2011). The further study trend of overseas students is closely related to the policy of internationalization of higher education. The door to education is open, and the two-way mobility of teachers and students increases, which promotes education to a higher level and a wider range (Chang, 2015). This study explores the relationship between internationalization of higher education and further study trend of overseas students, and gives the sway to promote internationalization of higher education in combination with the case of colleges and universities.

Analysis of the Status Quo of internationalization of Higher Education in China

Internationalization of higher education is the major trend of educational development. "Bringing in" and "going out" have become the guiding ideology for talent exchange of higher education. Every year, the central government will implement a plan for the introduction of overseas high-level talents to develop China's high-tech industries. Talent training and discipline building have played an active role (Kaša & Mhamed, 2013). Multiple types, multiple projects and high quality have become the development characteristics of government-sponsored overseas education in China in the new century (Jang & Eun-Young, 2017). By the end of 2017, China had more than 600 self-funded service agencies of studying abroad certified by the Ministry of Education. Figure 1 shows the number of Chinese students studying abroad and foreign students studying in China. In the past decade, the total number of Chinese students studying abroad has quadrupled. Students who study abroad and foreign students studying in China at their own expense are also increasing year by year.

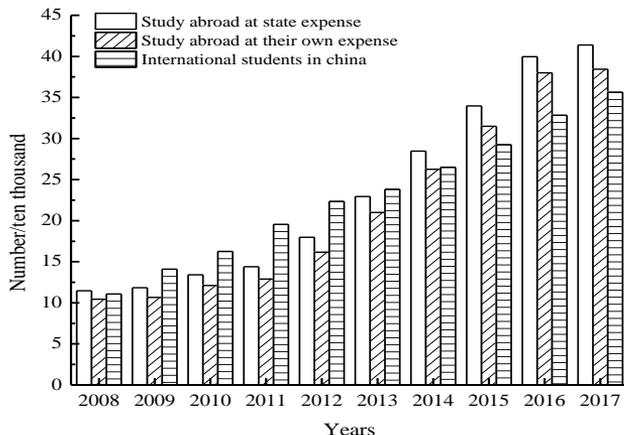


Figure 1. Statistics on the number of Chinese students studying abroad and studying in China.

Table 1
2017 National Students Studying in China

Continents	Total number	Percentage	Compared with last year	Percentage
Asia	240265	60.34%	14775	6.15%
Europe	66857	16.79%	-740	-1.11%
Africa	49903	12.53%	8226	16.48%
America	35045	8.8%	-1317	-3.76%
Oceania	6120	1.54%	-374	-6.11%

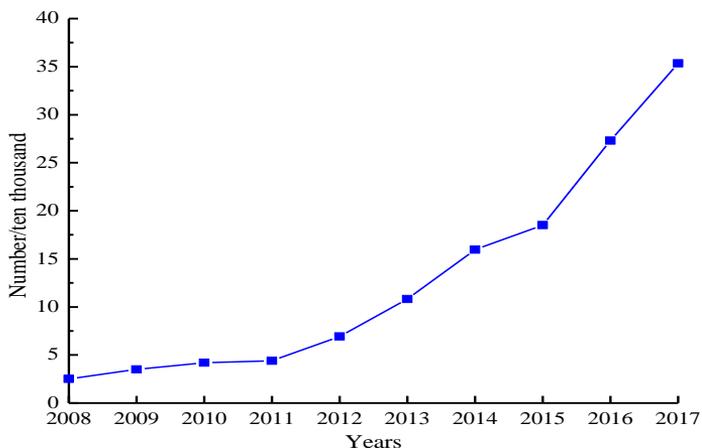


Figure 2. Statistics on the total number of returned overseas students.

Table 1 shows the data of students studying in China in 2017. It can be seen that more than 60% of the students studying in China come from Asia, followed by Europe, Africa, America and Oceania. Figure 2 is the number of returned students studying abroad, showing that the number of returned students increased nearly by 13 times in ten years, and the number of returned students increased in a straight line from 2015 to 2017. The promotion of Chinese culture is an important embodiment of internationalization of education. Table 2 shows

the establishment of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in five continents in 2017. China has set up more than 550 Confucius Institutes and over 1,000 Confucius Classrooms in more than 140 countries. With the development of Confucius Institutes, more and more countries in the world understand Chinese and China. Students studying abroad and students studying in China will show an increasing trend year by year.

Table 2
2017 Confucius Institute and Confucius Classrooms on the Five Continents

Continents	Confucius institute	Confucius classroom
Asia	111	91
Europe	170	258
Africa	47	24
America	158	545
Oceania	19	87

Influence and Case Analysis of Internationalization of Higher Education in China

Influence of internationalization of higher education in China

With the development of informatization, higher education promotes the progress of educational idea, and the informatization of higher education is the important content of internationalization of higher education. Educational idea, boundary, resources and quality are the important embodiment of internationalization of higher education, emphasizing the openness, sharing and social recognition of internationalization. The informatization mode of higher education has greatly lowered the threshold of higher education, making more ordinary families and students become the beneficiary group of internationalization of higher education. An important embodiment of internationalization of higher education is that there is no need for face-to-face communication between people, and the emergence of distance teaching and virtual simulation makes students' roles more diverse.

The informatization resources of higher education are shareable and unconditional, and internationalization of educational mode makes it more convenient for university teachers to carry out teaching methods. Taking the student as the center, they enhance the students' study ability comprehensively. The informatization of higher education brings new opportunities to the reform and development of higher education, breaks the living boundary and learning boundary, and students can use effective information to serve themselves anytime and anywhere.

Taking a university in Beijing as an example to carry out study

Many colleges and universities have already connected internationalization thought with the development strategy. Deepening the education reform and enhancing scientific research ability has been the important development strategy for internationalization construction. This section takes a university in Beijing as an example. Table 3 shows the number and proportion of foreign teachers in the university. The proportion of foreign teachers is relatively low among the full-time teachers in the university, and there is obvious non-

uniform distribution in the teachers of different disciplines. Internationalization level of teachers determines internationalization level of colleges and universities. Internationalized teachers can promote internationalization of education, thus promoting internationalization of students. Table 4 is the number and proportion of college teachers to exchange abroad. It can be seen that in the last three years, the proportion of college teachers to exchange abroad reached nearly 30%. Figure 3 is a line chart of the number of college teachers studying abroad in recent years. With the increase of years, the number of exchanges abroad is increasing. The number of overseas students is an important embodiment of internationalization level of colleges and universities. Studying abroad or joint training is an important way for universities to carry out internationalization of education. The scale of Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools and sending foreign students to each other has increased rapidly.

Table 3
Number and Proportion of Foreign Teachers at the University

Years	2015	2016	2017
Number	194	198	213
Proportion	6.9%	5.7%	5.8%

Table 4
University Teachers' Overseas Exchanges and the Number of People

Years	2015	2016	2017
Number	283	402	267
Proportion	10.07%	11.57%	7.27%

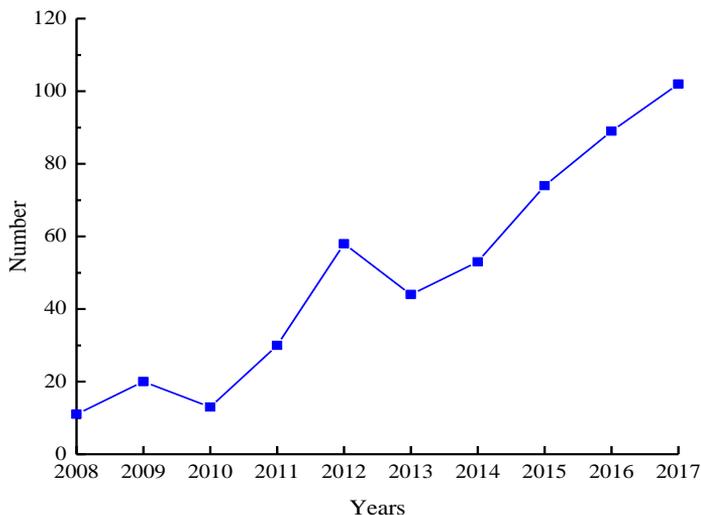


Figure 3. The number of university teachers studying abroad varies with the year.

Achievements and Problems in the Process of Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education

Main achievements in the process of internationalization of higher education

At present, the Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools, the exchange of academic and scientific research without borders and the exchange of overseas students all show a rising trend year by year, accelerating the level of internationalization of higher education. However, most colleges and universities are in the initial stage of promoting internationalization of education, but at the same time, they are also in the accelerating stage and have made certain achievements. In the process of internationalization of education, we should pay more attention to improving the guarantee system. Colleges and universities should make a comprehensive arrangement on the guiding ideology and the overall goal of guiding internationalization process, and also support them from the perspective of management and budget so as to strengthen the standardized management and improve the quality of training. In the process of internationalization of education, we should combine closely with “the Belt and Road” strategy. Since the proposal of “the Belt and Road” initiative is implemented for five years, the level of opening to the outside world has been continuously improved, and the cultivation of talents has been increased. According to incomplete statistics, more than two thirds of foreign students come from countries along “the Belt and Road”, and the promotion of schools and Confucius Institutes between China and the countries along “the Belt and Road” has been increased. In the process of internationalization of education, the construction of overseas virtual research institute has provided a communication platform for academic leaders in various fields, as well as more opportunities for students to study abroad.

Main problems in the process of internationalization of higher Education

Great progress and achievements have been made in the process of internationalization of higher education, but many problems have been exposed. The management system of international exchange work in many colleges and universities is not perfect, including insufficient number of international exchange staff and poor inter-departmental cooperation. Moreover, the concept of internationalization of teachers and students is weak and internationalization of education depends on language exchange. A considerable number of teachers and researchers in China lack foreign language competence and do not have the basic conditions for international exchanges. Moreover, there is a big gap between the academic level and the international level in some fields, so it is difficult to carry out international research and cooperation. The enrollment scale and level of overseas students need to be adjusted. Most of students in China go to developed countries such as Europe, America and Japan, while most of the students who come to study in China come from developing countries such as Asia and Africa. In comparison with the first-class universities in the world, there is still a big gap.

What’s more, after foreign students enter China, they have big barrier in language exchange. The overseas student management system is not perfect. When foreign students come to China or Chinese students go abroad for exchanges, most of them live in the student apartments provided by the school. The departments carry on

centralized management, which is disadvantageous to the cultivation, of campus culture so that the exchange between the foreign students and the home country students is few and they can't feel the real campus life. International academic exchanges and cooperation are not in-depth. The scientific research cooperation platform with famous foreign schools is an important way to conduct academic exchanges and an important platform for introducing excellent educational resources. However, the cooperation level of some Chinese and foreign colleges and universities is limited and ends at the surface. The overall strength of the school needs to be improved, and the international exchanges and cooperation are of equal importance. Only when we strive to enhance our own popularity can we cooperate with the famous schools in the world, which requires the joint efforts of the state, college administrators, teachers and students.

Study on the way to promote internationalization of higher education

In the process of internationalization of higher education in the world, internationalization of higher education in China starts late and the overall level is still relatively low, but the momentum of development is strong. In the process, we need:

I: To formulate a clear internationalized development strategy. A long-term development strategy for the internationalized development of schools can be used to point out the direction, clear responsibilities and objectives.

II: To improve internationalized management system. The development of the double-first-class construction makes all colleges and universities strive towards internationalization. The promotion of internationalized management system has accelerated the development of internationalization of talent team, internationalization of discipline construction and internationalization of student exchange.

III: To construct internationalized curriculum system. Teaching reform is an important trend of the global development of education. Strengthening the bilingual teaching model can accelerate the language application ability of Chinese students. Furthermore, we should build a first-class international discipline and adopt international standards to carry out high-level scientific research.

IV: To expand the enrollment scale of overseas students and improve the management system. We should expand publicity, attract excellent resources from Europe and the United States to exchange visits or study in China, expand the scale of cooperation in running schools and improve the quality of cooperation in running schools.

Conclusion

This study explores the relationship between internationalization of higher education and the further study trend of overseas students, and gives the ways to promote internationalization of higher education based on the analysis of the case of a university. The concrete conclusions are as follows:

(1) In the past decade, the total number of Chinese students studying abroad has quadrupled, and the number of students studying abroad and studying in China at their own expense has also increased year by year, but more than 60% of the students studying abroad in China come from Asia. The number of returned students to China has increased by nearly 13 times in the past ten years. The process of education internationalization in China is fast and large in scale.

(2) The informatization of higher education promotes the process of internationalization of higher education. In this process, attention should be paid to perfecting the guarantee system, strengthening the standardized management and improving the training quality. The policies and strategic plans of the country provide more opportunities for students to study abroad and attract students from countries along the Belt and Road to study in China.

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