

Discussion and Analysis on the International Education in Shanghai and Jiangsu Province

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ABSTRACT

Education is highly emphasized by people in the modern society. With the growing international communication, studying abroad has become a choice for many prospective students. With this need, receiving international education in high schools is highly suggested. In this paper, types of high school international education curriculum and educational institutions, and challenges will be discussed in details. By checking the information on the materials released by the Local Education Department, the statistics results are listed in this paper. In the end, the author has made a conclusion that although the high school international education has been developed for a few decades, solutions must be set to face different types of challenges.

Keywords: *International Education, Senior High Schools, Shanghai, Jiangsu City, Challenges*

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization is an inevitable development trend of the human society in the modern day. With its coming, prospects and challenges faced by the whole world always locate in the center of the discussion. As to the education, it is emphasized and paid attention to by all the world. With the effect of the globalization, more and more countries encourage their students to receive international education. Data from UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) show that about 5.3 million students around the world study abroad in 2017 [1].

Mainland China (except Hong Kong S.A.R, Macau S.A.R, and Taiwan Province) is known as the biggest sending country of international students today, with around 662,100 students study abroad to receive undergraduate education in 2018 [2].

The impulse for the increase in the number of international students does not merely come from the improvement of the economic condition but other reasons such as the change of minds and the "younger-age education". Besides its reasons, more words are given to the discussion and challenges of high school international education. To get the specific information in paper, the author has got a lot of help from interviews with parents and school counselors.

In the present-day China, with the passage of "one-child" policy and the improving education, parents (especially those living in big cities) have begun to pay more attention to their daughters' education. At the same time, parents nowadays are

more willing to send their children to study abroad. Besides, about 30 years ago, most Chinese students study abroad to get graduate education. But started in the early 2000s, the number of undergraduate and high school students studying abroad began to increase.

In the paper, the author discusses and analyzes the high school international education in China in the topics of its types of curriculums and institutions, and challenges.

2. MAIN BODY

Generally, the discussion and analysis on high school international education in certain regions can be explained in several aspects: curriculum, types of education institutions, and challenges which will be discussed in more specific details.

2.1. Types of International Curriculum

Most students who receive high school international education expect to study abroad. Besides traditional standardized and language proficiency test, a group of international curriculum has started to receive more attention from those expected students.

2.1.1. Advanced Placement (AP)

Advanced Placement (AP will be given to this term in processive context) was first established by College

Board (CB) in 1955 and provided programs and examinations for senior high school students in US and other countries since then. For its competence of transforming available credits for college study, many students choose to work for this program started in the last two years of studying in their senior high schools. Currently, 38 AP courses are offered by College Board and they range from Mathematics, Humanities, World Language and Science [3]. Started its introduction in Mainland China in early 2000s, AP has gained favor from students who expect to receive undergraduate education in English-speaking countries---mainly U.S. Among all the courses, high school students in Mainland China typically favor courses related to Mathematics and Natural Science since their degree of difficulty is relatively smaller. At the same time, due to the halt on examinations of some certain courses, students may not choose to take such exams despite they previously wish. For the examination part, AP Exams are administrated at 2 types of agencies: closed test centers and open test centers. Closed test centers are international schools authorized to give AP Exams to their own students, who are generally composed of citizens of countries other than China and permanent residents of Hong Kong S.A.R, Macau S.A.R and Taiwan Province. Later in the discussion of current challenges faced by High School International Education, more discussion will be given to the conflicts due to the separation of these 2 types of test centers.

2.1.2. GCE Advanced Level (A-Level)

GCE Advanced Level (A-Level will be given to this term in processive context), unlike AP in the previous discussion, was first established as part of high school leaving qualification in 1951 and has started to provide programs and examinations for high school students in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and other countries since then. Nowadays, this curriculum is implemented in members of British Commonwealth and gradually spreads to other countries or regions especially in Asia. The whole curriculum is divided into two major parts: AS and A-Level. Currently, more than 100 courses are offered globally and they range from Mathematics, Humanities, World Language, Natural and Social Science [4]. Unlike AP, A-Level is not run by a single Examination Board; at the same time, compared with AP, A-Level seems to be more like a requirement in College Application, while AP is usually not required to submit or used simply as a kind of supplement.

2.1.3. International Baccalaureate (IB)

International Baccalaureate (IB will be given to this term in processive context) was first established by John Goormaghtigh in 1968; and the initial purpose of

the foundation was to provide K12 education for children of diplomatic workers. Later, the program has gradually extended to more groups of people, and most of them expect to attend international diplomas in the college level.

The IB consists of several parts for different groups of age: the IB Diploma Programme and the IB career-related Programme for students aged 15 to 19, the IB Middle Years Programme for students aged 11 to 16, and the IB Primary Years Programme for children aged 3 to 12 [5]. In present-day Mainland China, especially for those educational institutions located in places like Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, most students who take the IB are in the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP will be given to this term in processive context) for their ages and needs to receive high education abroad.

The arrangement of courses and examination within the IBDP system is more complicated: the whole courses are arranged into 6 groups, which are "Studies in Language and Literature, Language Acquisition, Individuals and Societies, Sciences, Mathematics and the Arts" [6].

Unlike AP or A-Level, one must be a student under the authorized IB schools to get the qualification of participating the IBDP examination in May each year. Currently, within the boarder of Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, there are a total of 40 schools who offer IBDP programs for high school students. For the examination part, the IBDP credit is largely receipted by High Education institutions throughout the world. Compared to the previous two ones, it is of the most difficult Programme for high school students.

2.1.4. International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)

International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE will be given to this term in processive context) has started to provide programs and examinations for Year 10 and 11 students in UK and other countries since its foundation [7]. Unlike the previous ones, it is better known as a transitional programme before taking either of these three previous programs.

2.2. Types of Educational Institution

In present-day Mainland China, high school international education is afforded by different types of educational institutions. Besides the simple difference between private schools and public ones, charter schools which are largely founded by public schools and international education corporations also play a large role. For most of the following context, different types of institutions based on the background of students and the administration systems will be discussed. Later in this chapter, a list of programs will

be added to demonstrate the characteristics of some well-known educational institutions within the border of Shanghai and Jiangsu Province.

2.2.1. Foreign Nationals Schools (Private)

Foreign nationals schools mainly recruit students who hold passports other than China's. Besides them, students who have permanent residencies of Hong Kong S.A.R, Macau S.A.R, and Taiwan Province also belong to the target group of admission. Additionally, the admission process is not as rigid as it states: Many of the registered students there are Chinese citizens who typically hold permanent residency of foreign countries; students who hope to receive education in these schools usually need to pass certain examinations designed by the schools themselves.

Within the border of Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, about 21 Foreign Nationals Schools recruit and provide international programs for students. Among them, most of them offer IB programs rather than the others.

For the foreign nationals schools on the list, they are directly regulated by the Education Department of the Provinces; at the same time, the students registered in this school don't have to take certain courses within the Chinese Normal Senior High School Curriculum.

2.2.2. Bilingual Schools (Private)

Bilingual Schools in Shanghai and Jiangsu Province are usually private, and led by a committee set by the corporations. Compared with foreign nationals schools and public schools (they will be specifically discussed in later context), bilingual schools do not have a strict requirement on nationalities or regional residencies of prospective students. Same as foreign nationals schools, they provide their own entrance examinations for prospective students; but for some schools, the results of Chinese Junior High Schools Leaving Examinations are still required [8].

Within the border of Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, more than 50 bilingual schools recruit and provide international programs for students. Among them, most of them offer AP and A-Level programs rather than the others.

The bilingual schools on the list are usually together regulated by the Education Department of the local city and the founded corporations' committees. At the same time, students in bilingual schools are typically divided into two different groups: Those who take the Chinese normal senior high school curriculum and Gaokao and those who take highschool international education curriculum such as AP, A-Level, IB and IGCSE and hope to receive the undergraduate study abroad (usually in English-speaking countries like US, UK, Canada and Australia [8]). In this context, registered students within the same bilingual school

usually take two different "Education Paths", so the administration towards them are usually different.

2.2.3. Public High Schools International Division (Charter Schools)

Public high schools international division in Shanghai and Jiangsu Province are usually set by public high schools and corporations which provide international high school education (AP and A-Level are of the major curriculum provided). The division of labor is clear: The public high schools provide the teaching facilities and regular administration, while the educational corporations provide faculty and staff (include teachers and counselors). Since they are set and administrated by public high schools and educational companies together, they are called charter schools as well.

For the admission part, public high schools international division do not have a strict requirement on nationalities or regional residencies of prospective students. Same as foreign nationals schools and bilingual schools, they provide their own entrance examinations for prospective students; but for some schools, the results of Chinese junior high schools leaving examinations are still required.

Within the border of Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, a vary of public high schools international division recruit and provide international programs for students. Among them, most of them offer AP and A-Level programs rather than the others.

For the public high schools international division on the list, they are usually together regulated by the Education Department of the local city and the founded corporations' committees; at the same time, students in public high schools international divisions typically international education curriculum such as AP or A-Level and hope to receive Undergraduate Study abroad. In this context, registered students within the same public high schools international division do not need to take the Chinese College Entrance Exam; but for some schools, the registered students need to take Precollege Entrance Exam (nicknamed as "GAOKAO Junior").

2.3. Current problems within the high school International education

2.3.1. Tuition Levels

Students who hoped to receive high school international education usually need their family's support due to the relative high price level of receiving such programs. Currently, within the border of Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, Tuition Levels vary due to the differences in kinds of educational

institutions: the tuition in public high schools international divisions (Charter Schools) are usually the lowest---typically from 50,000 RMB to 15,000 RMB per year; for tuition of bilingual schools (private) and foreign nationals schools, they usually charge above 100,000 RMB per year.

For many educational institutions, the salaries of staffs are usually provided by the students' tuition. In this way, the time span of paying tuition is not usually long enough and would cause disputes between parents and schools easily. Early in this year, due to the Covid-19, many educational institutions provide remote-teaching for students using the meeting devices such as Zoom; at the same time, many parents feel disappointed about their children's remote learning and have disputes on tuition with the schools. For example, a parent sued the school which her child attended for the inability to provide fair education online.

Besides the tuition, families need to have supplied paychecks for other kinds of expenses. After-Schools activities, expenses of competitions and projects, Language Proficiency Tests (mostly TOEFL-ibt and IELTS), and Standardized Tests also cost a lot. Additionally, since no open test center of ACT or SAT is set up in Mainland China, many students have to travel far to Hong Kong S.A.R, Taiwan Province and even countries in Southeastern Asia to have their tests. According to a paycheck bill by a parent whose daughter studies in SDSZ International Department, 1,150,000 RMB is spent within three years in Senior High School. From the evidences above, it proves that large expenses and family's support is highly necessary for students who wish to receive High School International Education and study abroad for their Undergraduate or even Graduate study.

2.3.2. *Diploma Recognition*

Diploma recognition is also a problem faced by students who are registered in international education institutions. For high school students who take International Education Systems like AP, A-Level, or IB, the lack of Diploma Recognition by Chinese Education Department prevents many students from getting permission in taking proficiency examinations in different fields such as tourism (Currently, registration in Tourism Examination require Chinese Senior High Schools Diploma). Admittedly, not all institutions provided high school international education face such problems. But the lack of diploma recognition is necessary to be fixed for its urgency in the present society: for instance, a student who receives High Schools International Education only has junior high schools diploma recognized until he or she gets the undergraduate degree abroad (and the college or university must be recognized by Chinese Education Department).

2.3.3. *Educational Level*

Educational level is a major constituent of high school international education, and it guarantees and paves the path for the College Admission results and the future study.

Presently, there is not a uniform admission requirement for institutions which provide high school international education courses nationwide, so it is inevitable that the gap academically between students is large, as well as other parts of their abilities on sports and after-school activities.

Additionally, as most International education courses in the market are exam-oriented, so the teaching goals for all institutions are to help students pass the exams each year. In this way, the teaching method and performance cannot be guaranteed without the exams; but admittedly, the exam-oriented education caused by the reality also leads to problems.

For different kinds of institutions which provide High School International Education, many of them fail to integrate the Chinese education with International courses successfully; at the same time, with the fact that most students start to receive International Education in the final 3 or 4 years of high school, so it is challenging for both schools and students to adapt to a new form of study.

2.3.4. *Teaching Qualification*

Nowadays, Institutions which offer international education compose of a large number of teachers with foreign passports. Without a uniform standard for each of them, problems arise a lot. For most current institutions that offer international curriculum in Mainland China, many of them are actually better called at "internationalized schools" rather than "international schools" according to Adam Poole. As he suggests, this type of school usually face the struggles of complex school systems and faculty recruitment [9].

Foreign teachers who work in those international schools are also called the International Education Teacher(s) (IET). Different from predictions of many people, IET don't have to be western expatriates from the major English-speaking countries; instead, teachers in internationalized schools can be categorized from several parts---not necessarily be their origins of countries but their experiences and teaching qualifications. Teachers worked in these schools are typically qualified in their own countries instead of in a global context; for example, a lot of IET(s) choose to get qualifications like Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in the UK or a teaching certificate in the US (since the teaching qualifications in the US vary from states).

Without a uniform standard provided, IET(s) who worked in international schools usually face problems like cultural dissonance, financial insecurity, and the

marginalization of professional identities which are less common in schools within the national education system.

3. CONCLUSION

To conclude, current high schools International education in Shanghai and Jiangsu Province can hardly meet the needs regarded by a perfect model of such institutions. The challenges mainly manifest in four aspects, including tuition and other expenses, diploma recognition, educational level, and teaching qualification. To cultivate qualified local talents for attending colleges for degrees overseas, there is a pressing demand for set regulations on Diploma Recognition, Schools Administration, and application-oriented method. Holistic competences for students could be achieved by regular activities held by schools. Professional training programs should be provided for educators as well. More importantly, the policy support to international education is necessary. Admittedly, this study has limitations in research part, with interviews lacking necessary objective viewpoints. Future research could be conducted with larger sample size and sources of data, in order to provide a broader picture of high school international education in Shanghai and Jiangsu Province.

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