Strategies of Improving the Internationalization of Local Universities Based on ISEC Project

Xiaoran Lin, Yachao Wang[(✉)], Jianke Li, and Jifang Wang

School of Information Technology, Hebei University of Economics and Business, Shijiazhuang, China
wangyachao@cqu.edu.cn

Abstract. ISEC project has broken the original teaching mode and brought great impact to Chinese education. This paper analyzes the problems faced by local universities in the process of internationalization and the internationalization elements of ISEC project, and puts forward the internationalization strategy of local universities based on ISEC project. However, ISEC project is an emerging project, which is in the early stage of development and lacks experience for reference. Problems and challenges remain. In the process of carrying out the project, it needs to be further improved and supplemented to promote the supporting role of the project in the internationalization of universities to a higher level.

Keywords: ISEC · local universities · internationalization

1 Introduction

The development of globalization has accelerated the internationalization of higher education [1, 2]. UNESCO (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization) has listed "internationalization" as one of the main directions of the development of higher education in the world [3, 4]. In China, relevant documents clearly point out that universities should strengthen exchanges and cooperation with international universities through various ways and forms. With the introduction of national policies, Chinese domestic universities have begun to make adjustments to their development objectives and talent training programs, and build an international school running system [5]. However, due to the differences in the original culture, tradition and system among schools, different universities are subject to many restrictions in curriculum, resource development and teacher training, especially local universities. Because local universities are more limited by subjective and objective factors, it is difficult to promote the internationalization of education.

ISEC (International Scholarly Exchange Curriculum) is an international cooperation project for domestic universities launched by China Scholarship Council in 2012 [6, 7]. ISEC has been implemented for more than nine years. At present, more than thirty colleges and universities in China have introduced ISEC, and most of them are local universities. There are many majors involved, including mathematics, computer

science, physics, applied chemistry, biological science, journalism, social work, accounting, finance, education, musicology, environmental design, electronic engineering, civil engineering, etc. The number of teachers and students involved reached more than one hundred thousand people.

ISEC is mainly to carry out a new teaching model in some universities in China by learning from the international prevailing educational ideas. This attempt is of great significance to promote the internationalization of Chinese educational system and the diversification of educational models [8]. It is of great significance to solve some disadvantages of traditional education [9]. At present, most of the existing studies on ISEC focus on the introduction of ISEC project and the teaching level of ISEC courses. There are few studies on the strategies of improving the internationalization of local universities based on ISEC project. This paper first analyzes the problems faced by the internationalization of local universities, then expounds the internationalization elements of ISEC, and finally puts forward the promotion strategy of the internationalization of local universities based on ISEC.

2 Problems Faced by the Internationalization of Local Universities

Due to the limitations of resources, reputation and region, local colleges and universities cannot compete with powerful subordinate universities, resulting in serious obstacles to their internationalization process. Local universities urgently need to build a resource platform for the development of educational internationalization. The slow process of internationalization of local colleges and universities is mainly caused by the relatively weak concept of internationalization, the lack of management system, the lack of internationalization of teachers and the outdated talent training scheme.

2.1 Weak Internationalization Concept

There are both objective and subjective reasons for the weak internationalization concept of local university teachers. Objectively speaking, due to the influence of political, economic, geographical and other factors, local talents mainly flock to the provinces and cities with developed higher education in the Middle East. At the same time, the return rate of high-level talents is low and the talent supply speed is slow, which makes the level of local higher education relatively lag behind the key universities in the developed regions. Therefore, the degree of internationalization is relatively low. From a subjective point of view, teachers' own internationalization concept is weak, their foreign language ability is poor, their sensitivity to internationalization preface is low, and it is difficult for scientific research achievements to spread to the international academic stage.

2.2 Lack of Management System

Perfect management system is the cornerstone of the internationalization construction of universities. Building a long-term mechanism and innovating management ideas can not only effectively promote the internationalization of universities, but also further

accelerate the comprehensive realization of the three functions of talent training, scientific research and social service. The effective management of the internationalization construction of universities has become an urgent problem to be solved. Nowadays, in the process of internationalization construction of many local universities, because it is difficult to break through the discipline barriers and administrative barriers, there are still many deficiencies in discipline management, teacher construction, talent training and international cooperation, which restricts the internationalization construction and development of local universities to a great extent.

2.3 Lack of Internationalization of Teachers

There are many factors that play a leading role in the internationalization of colleges and universities, and "teaching staff" is one of the most significant and key factors. Influenced by its geographical factors, as well as the characteristics of regional resources, government investment, teacher sources, international cooperation and exchange, local universities lead to the low international level of their teaching staff, which greatly restricts the international development of local higher education.

2.4 Outdated Talent Training Scheme

In order to further improve the internationalization level of local universities, it is necessary to take the cultivation of international talents as the basic task, innovate talent training methods, and promote the internationalization of international talents and universities. However, at present, many local universities have a tendency to tilt resources to academic research and gradually weaken the function of talent training. Because the school relies too much on the assessment and evaluation of scientific research achievements, college teachers focus most of their energy on scientific research and ignore the basic teaching work. Many local universities still follow the traditional indoctrination teaching method, only pay attention to the indoctrination teaching of basic knowledge and skills, and ignore the development of students' subjectivity and ability. Due to the lack of foreign exchange, the international teaching resources available to students are few. The opportunities for overseas exchange are limited, and there are few ways to improve foreign language level, so it is difficult to cultivate talents with international vision, innovative spirit and practical ability.

3   Internationalization Elements of ISEC

3.1   Talent Training Mode of ISEC

ISEC adopts the innovative talent training mode, and the total length of schooling at the undergraduate stage is generally four years. The following two training modes are generally adopted. Students can choose their own training mode during their study.

- The 2 + 2 school system model includes 2 years at home and 2 years abroad. In the first year and the second year, students carry out intensive English learning in domestic

universities, and complete basic general courses and some mutual recognition courses. After two years of study, qualified students can go to cooperative colleges in the United States, Britain, Canada and other countries to complete the follow-up courses of ISEC in the third and fourth years.

- Students can study in domestic universities for four years, and the courses they learn fully comply with ISEC curriculum system. If students do not want to study abroad, they can always study in China. This can greatly reduce their pressure to participate in the ISEC project.

3.2   Credit Management of ISEC

ISEC project adopts the management method of two-way credit mutual recognition, that is, the credits obtained by students in China will be recognized by foreign cooperative universities, and the credits obtained abroad will also be recognized by domestic universities. After completing their studies abroad, students can obtain a bachelor's degree certificate from a foreign university, and can also apply for a bachelor's degree certificate and a bachelor's degree certificate from a domestic cooperative university. Students who do not study abroad will continue to study in domestic universities, and their courses will still adopt international curriculum standards. After completing their studies, students will be issued with undergraduate graduation certificates and degree certificates from domestic universities.

3.3   Curriculum System of ISEC

The curriculum system of ISEC project is based on the international undergraduate curriculum system in North America. The curriculum adopts the principle of combining general courses with professional courses. The first two years are dominated by general courses and the second two years are dominated by professional courses. The curriculum syllabus is based on internationally accepted educational concepts and is developed in strict accordance with international teaching standards. Teachers of each course can carry out personalized teaching design according to the syllabus. Basic general courses require students to complete oral English communication, academic English writing, second foreign language, critical thinking, Microsoft office software application and other related courses. The basic general education course requires students to understand the values and thinking modes of other countries, and cultivate students' basic skills in academic research.

3.4   Teaching Model of ISEC

ISEC project introduces international advanced teaching concepts and methods, and gradually carries out curriculum reform on the premise that it can be well connected with the current domestic higher education curriculum system, so as to promote teaching reform. At the same time, on the basis of international teacher training, supporting original English textbooks, adopting interactive bilingual teaching, and paying full attention to the integration and complementarity of curriculum system and teaching ideas at

home and abroad. In teaching, we also pay attention to the integration of general education and professional education, the integration of interdisciplinary and liberal arts infiltration courses, the integration of science education and humanistic education, and the integration of basic knowledge education and students' ability training. Among them, the teaching of general education course is guided by the open, interactive and critical teaching concept, aims to cultivate students' discerning thinking, and encourages students to dare to ask questions, innovate and challenge authority.

3.5 Quality Standards of ISEC

The teaching quality standards of ISEC project refer to some American standards, mainly including: professional certification institutions and regional certification institutions at the undergraduate level of higher education in the United States. The formulation of quality standards is mainly based on Chinese policies and national conditions, including the relevant standard framework of undergraduate teaching evaluation system issued by the Ministry of education, economic and social development level, and the development status of higher education. The teaching quality standard also considers other situations, including the overall situation of the project institutions and the long-term development needs of ISEC. Obviously, the teaching quality standard must also follow the objective law of educational development and the concept of international educational management. The quality standard of ISEC project involves school running norms, team management, curriculum, teacher qualification, classroom teaching, learning evaluation and quality monitoring.

4   Strategies of Improving the Internationalization Level of Local Universities Based on ISEC

4.1 Establish the Concept of Internationalization and Improve the Management System

Local universities first need to understand the current situation of their own universities and establish the concept of internationalization. As everyone knows that ideas determine action. Through the school think tank, relevant experts and scholars to conduct research on teachers and students, understand the ideological status of teachers and students, and conceptually prepare teachers and students to strive to adapt to internationalization and improve cross-cultural ability.

ISEC project teachers need to receive pre job training before taking up their posts, and can take up their posts with certificates only when they meet the requirements of the project office. Local universities can improve teachers' international awareness with the help of training courses. International development should establish a correct concept of internationalization. Local universities should fully understand the importance and urgency of international development, and see that international development plays an important and unique role in the growth of teachers and students and the development of schools. At the same time, local universities should see that internationalization does not mean overall westernization. Local universities should pay attention to strengthening localization and nationality in the process of internationalization.

Optimize the top-level design and strengthen the construction of international system. First, strengthen the linkage mechanism, fully tap the own advantageous resources of local governments, schools, secondary colleges and teachers, and form a "Government School Secondary Colleges Teachers" linkage mechanism; Second, design and arrange the process of teachers studying abroad or participating in international affairs to form an optimized pattern of teachers studying abroad; Third, at the school management level, simplify the approval procedures for going abroad, and strengthen the implementation and management of workload accounting after dispatch.

4.2 Build a Diversified Campus Culture and Correct Principle of Cultural Inheritance

With the introduction of ISEC, many universities will form the coexistence of ISEC specialty and ordinary specialty. It can be used to build a diversified and inclusive campus culture. In the construction of diverse campus culture, local universities also need to pay attention to the correct principle of cultural inheritance.

Campus culture is a distinctive cultural form with colleges and universities as the carrier and university teachers, students and employees as the main body. Campus culture is the sum of spiritual culture, material culture, institutional culture and environmental culture accumulated, inherited and created by universities on the basis of long-term school running practice. The internationalization of university culture focuses on internalizing "global consciousness, beyond the local development direction and scope" into the spiritual temperament of the university. In the case of few international resources in most local universities, give full play to the advantages of ISEC courses, design international activities in line with the characteristics of teachers and students, try to launch campus culture with distinctive international characteristics, carry out a series of campus cultural activities and high-quality cross-cultural discussion activities.

As we all know, the national is the world. In the construction of international campus culture, local universities need to adhere to the correct principle of cultural inheritance. First, local universities should conform to socialist cultural values. Local universities should take undertaking, carrying forward and innovating the mainstream advanced culture of society as the direction of realizing the internationalization of university culture. Secondly, local universities should adhere to the methodology of dialectical unity. The realization and internationalization of university cultural inheritance function cannot be separated from the correct methodological guidance. Local universities should take the scientific outlook on development as the fundamental guidance, take the socialist core values as the basic follow.

4.3 Build a Diversified Campus Culture and Correct Principle of Cultural Inheritance

International curriculum is an important way to ensure the acquisition of global thinking ability. It should be open to all students. It should not be regarded as a scattered curriculum or a specific number of credits. It should be a curriculum system.

The purpose of ISEC project is to build an education internationalization implementation platform integrating international courses, international teachers and international

education resources for some domestic universities. In other words, the introduction of ISEC project can improve the international cooperation level of universities, establish their own international curriculum system, cultivate a number of international standard teachers and share high-quality international teaching resources, so as to effectively promote the undergraduate teaching reform of universities.

In view of the huge differences in the level of internationalization and cross-cultural curriculum construction in local universities, universities should make classified measures to create a curriculum system in line with their own characteristics on the basis of analyzing their own shortcomings. When the number of international teachers is insufficient, local universities can make full use of the language advantages of their foreign language teachers to create cross-cultural international courses open to all students. Through situational simulation dialogue, group cooperation research and cross-cultural interaction, students can perceive the communication and collision of language, culture and thought in the real context.

4.4   Explore Online International Education and Promote Local International Training

The global popularity of COVID-19 in 2021, the change of Sino-US relations and the thinking of counter globalization have great influence on the process of internationalization of higher education, especially international exchanges. Considering the limitations of ISEC project and local universities' funds, local and online internationalization is a convenient way.

Generally speaking, the internationalization of universities abroad requires the overseas movement of personnel's body, while the local and online internationalization are not. All internationalization related teaching, scientific research, courses, cross-cultural activities and learning life on the university campus belong to the scope of local internationalization. Local universities should focus on the local and international cultivation of students, cultivate students' cross-cultural ability and help students form global thinking.

Local universities can conduct online learning and academic exchanges for international students through the network platform to expand the breadth and depth of the opening of higher education. Local colleges and universities should make full use of the convenience of current information technology, create a new highland of education opening to the outside world, and develop online international education with their own characteristics, such as cross-cultural ability training and quality development platform. The construction of the platform needs to fully consider the University's international talent training system and international university culture, and can launch international courses, cross-cultural courses, various academic competitions, cultural and sports activities, social practice, etc. Use the online platform to improve students' cross-cultural adaptability, expand the radiation of online international education, and promote cross-cultural exchanges. In addition, local universities can mobilize more bilingual teachers, such as wechat official account, wechat group and bilingual poster, to enable more teachers and students to participate in international activities and promote the development of campus culture in a deeper direction.

5   Conclusion

Although ISEC program colleges and universities have been growing in the implementation process in recent years and have learned rich experience, the implementation of bilingual teaching in local universities is still in its infancy. In the process of Sino foreign cooperation, local higher education still faces great challenges, such as some problems in education and teaching, career planning, market effect and so on. However, ISEC project has broken the original teaching mode and brought great impact to Chinese education. The effective implementation of the project is beneficial to the internationalization of local colleges and universities. At the same time, problems and challenges remain. In the process of carrying out the project, it needs to be further improved and supplemented to promote the supporting role of the project in the internationalization of universities to a higher level.

References

1. R. M. Ayoubi and H. K. Massoud, "The strategy of internationalization in universities: A quantitative evaluation of the intent and implementation in UK universities"*, The International Journal of Educational Management, 21(4-5), 2007, pp. 329-349.
2. W. Chan and C. Dimmock, "The Internationalization of Universities: Globalist, Internationalist and Translocalist Models"*, Journal of Research in International Education, 7(2), 2008, pp. 184-204.
3. F. He and N. Du, "The Internationalization of Higher Education in Beijing from the Cross cultural Perspective"*, Higher Education Development and Evaluation, 37(6), 2021, pp. 34-41.
4. S. Yue, "Research on the Inheritance Function of University Culturein the Process of lnternationalization of Higher Education"*, Jiangsu Higher Education, 11, 2021, pp. 77-80.
5. Q. Yang and W. Ma, "Distance Internationalization: an investigation of the third type of internationalization of Higher Education"*, Higher Education Exploration, 11, 2021, pp. 8-11.
6. B. Liu, "Teaching Reform of the Undergraduate Course of Intemational Academic Exchange"*, Theory Research, 33, 2015, pp. 3-6.
7. W. Jingru, "Teaching reform and practice of strategic management course based on ISEC"*, Youth Times, 1, 2019, pp. 197-198.
8. J. Xu, "Research on the Reform of EMI Teaching Mode in Colleges and Universities under ISEC Program"*, Journal of Chifeng University, 41(5), 2020, pp. 123-124.
9. X. Zhang, et al., "Opportunities and Challenges of ISEC Project"*, Yinshan Academic Journal, 31(4), 2017, pp. 93-95.