

# On Internationalization of Higher Education

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**Abstract**—Under the background of globalization, once the knowledge and information technology was formed, they will quickly be transmitted around the world. Therefore, in order to gain improvement in educational standards, universities have to march toward internationalization with brand new ideas as well as new self-positioning. Nowadays, internationalization has become a central element for university planning, administration, train objective and also the school curriculum. Internationalization is now a trend for higher education and received widespread attention from educational scholars both at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, to a large extent, it has become a common view worldwide.

**Keywords**—*intangible cultural heritage; folk fine arts; local colleges and universities; protective inheritance; countermeasures*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The higher education in China has entered into a period of rapid development since 1990s. Especially since 1994, it has made a series of research findings. During this period, researches in China on internationalization of higher education mainly includes: meaning and features of internationalization of higher education, its historical process, trend of development, impetus of development given by China's politics, economy as well as culture, experience that we can learn from the developed countries, etc. After China's entry into WTO, the focus of research on internationalization of higher education was shifted mainly on the opportunities, the challenges as well as solutions China is facing. They are: the construction of research university, the cultivation of applied talents, Sino - foreign cooperative education, cultivation of foreign students and transnational education, ways to set up world class universities etc.

## II. THE ORIGIN OF HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION

### A. Historical origin

Internationalization of education has a long history. It had undergone several stages of development and change. They are: (1) during the ancient Greece period and Warring States Period of China, cross-national preaching and learning through travels prevailed among countries. The pursuit of universal knowledge made the higher education born with internationality. (2) In the Middle Ages of Europe,

universities, in seeking such universality, enrolled students from different regions, races and nationalities, which laid a foundation for internationalization of higher education. For example, De Ridder-Symoens pointed out in his works that Latin, as a unified language for academic exchange, its influence far outweighed that estimated to be exerted by the travelers.<sup>2</sup> (3) During the first half of the 16th century, due to the Reformation of Christianity, the universality of knowledge was seriously hindered by religion. (4) The rise of Science, the Great Discoveries of Geography, development of trade and the expansion of missionary activities made educational exchanges hard to get extensive development in the early modern Europe. (5) From the 18th century to 1931 (the beginning of WWII), international academic exchanges get more and more frequently due to the Colonial expansion. The education patterns during that period mainly takes the form of suzerain-to-colony transmission. For example, the education patterns of the British colonies in Asia, Africa, and South America as well as along the Caribbean Sea all followed the example of Britain's. Likewise, the French colonies imitated France. So did America, Canada and Australia. Before WWII, America and Britain have established special institutions to strengthen international exchanges and cooperation. In 1919, the Center for International Education Research was set up in US while the International Education Institute of England was set up in London. Therefore, it can be said that the real internalization of higher education started in 19th century and developed in 20th century. (6) After WWII, the countries came to attach great importance to the cultivation of technology, knowledge and talents with the advent of economic globalization and internationalization. As a result, universities need to compete in the talent market as well as the capital market, which has aroused the demand for education overseas. Such trend got more evident after WWII. Hence, in order to adapt to keep abreast of the times. China started to change the traditional concept of higher education in China. The core concept of education has turned to "global education" and "cross-national education"<sup>3</sup>, which has become a global trend.

### B. The internalization of higher education was proposed

In 1974, the Japanese government proposed the topic of "education in the internalized era" in its consulting report on the Central Council for Education. And in several consulting

<sup>2</sup> Hans de Wit. *Strategies for Internationalisation of Higher Education*. Amsterdam: European Association for International Education, 1995:7.

<sup>3</sup> De Wit, H. (2002). *Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe: A Historical, Comparative, and Conceptual Analysis*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

<sup>1</sup> Wang Yongquan. *Dictionary of Education*. Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, 1991.

reports of its temporary Education Council from 1984 to 1998, it also focused on internationalization of education. Since the 1990s, initiated by the developed countries and regions like North America, Western Europe, Australia as well as Japan, and joined by the developing nations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, an unprecedented tide of internationalization of higher education prevailed the globe. In 1992, universities like Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in America held a seminar concerning “the challenges from the international community facing higher education in America”. MIT’s president, honorary president of Stanford Richard W. Lyman pointed clearly in the seminar that “internationalization has already been the key issues for the development of higher education” and that “Global University” should be the goal of our future development”. In November of 1993 and 1995 respectively, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) held two seminars concerning internationalization of higher education. It concluded that the nationalization of higher education has become a central factor for the school management, planning, and goal of education as well as curriculum arrangement. In August of 2008, Chinese-Foreign University President Forum was held in China by the Ministry of Education in which internationalization of higher education was an important topic. According to the president of Columbia University Lee C. Bollinger<sup>4</sup>, “the globalization is changing the world, so the universities should take immediately some fundamental changes”<sup>5</sup>.

### III. CONNOTATION OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The topic of the higher education internationalization is now a hotspot issues around the world. Education, especially the higher education, is the cradle of knowledge innovation and talent training. Therefore, one country’s international competition ability lies partially in its level of higher education (owning the world class universities). Therefore, as the biggest developing country in the world, China should set priority to talent training in its cause of education. Since internationalization of education encompasses a wide range of aspects, different scholars have their divergent understandings. Hence, there is not yet a unified definition concerning it. But Jane Knight’s definition of internationalization is widely used by the academia in the documentation. That is, internationalization of higher education is the process of integrating an international /intellectual dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution.<sup>6</sup> Professor Kitamura of the Institute of Education at Hiroshima University has raised three standards for university internationalization, they are: (1) Versatility. The higher education in a country could get universality in the international community only when the national culture, college education, research ability as well as

the educational system are recognized and evaluated by other countries; (2) Communication, scholars with different nationalities need to make exchanges and communications constantly; (3) Openness, a country should treat exotic individuals and organizations as it treats its own people with different cultural backgrounds<sup>7</sup>. IAU of UNESCO gave a definition to internationalization of higher education: “Internationalization of higher education means integrating an international dimension into teaching/learning, research and service functions of higher education. And still others see it as an international profile or brand in order to be competitive both domestically and globally. the internationalization of higher education is a hotbed of activity and a source of potential innovation leading to the development of new policies, programs and practices at institutional, national and international levels<sup>8</sup>”.

As to the connotations of higher education internationalization, Chinese scholars conclude mainly three aspects, they are first, the background for internationalization should be the global society; second, the main purpose of achieving internationalization of higher education is to universalize and learn from the advanced teaching methods and principles; third, the main forms of internationalization of higher education are cross-national talent training, cooperative research as well as international academic exchanges of teachers and students, etc. In the Dictionary of Education compiled by Wang Yongquan, internationalization of higher education is defined as “a development trend of higher education in all countries to embrace the world”<sup>9</sup>. Shu Dingzhi (1998), considering the nature of higher education, divided internationalization into three levels as recognition to faith, structure to function, regulation to practice; Scholars like Wei Layun (2002), from the perspective of knowledge universality, pointed it out that the fundamental purpose of the occurrence and development of higher education is to meet the needs of truth seeking as well as knowledge gaining, which is the primary cause of its internationalization; Tang zhong (2007) thought that we can understand internationalization of higher education from two aspects, one is the consequence of higher education development, the other is the process and trend of higher education development. Generally speaking, in spite of some divergence, the domestic views on the connotation of internationalization of higher education mainly include three aspects:

#### A. Internationalization of subjects of education

This element is the most active in higher education internationalization. It includes international exchange of students such as enrollment of foreign students, sending students overseas for long-term or short-term study so as to cultivate the students’ linguistic ability and experience of

4 GuangMing Daily, 2004.8.10.

5 Chen Xuefei. On Internationalization of Higher Education, The Theory and Policy of Higher Education Internationalization, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2007.

6 Jane Knight (2006). Internationalization: Concepts, Complexities and Challenges. In Philip Altbach & James Forest (Eds.). Internationalization handbook of Higher Education. Springer.

7 Kitamura. University Internationalization, Institute of Education at Hiroshima University, 1986. 15; Ouyang yu. History, Meaning and Trend of Higher Education Internationalization[J], Higher education research of mechanical industry 2001 (1).

8 Tang zhong. On Internationalization of University and Its Influence, Theory and practice of Internationalization of University, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2007.

9 Chen Xuefei. Internationalization of Higher Education——from history to theory and strategy, Shanghai Higher Education Research, 1997 (11).

cross-national communications. Besides, it also involves exchange of teachers with the forms of visiting scholars, foreign teacher as well as honorary professor enrollment. All those university teachers, after gaining the international background and experience, will facilitate the development of internationalization of higher education.

#### *B. Internationalization of information*

The first is internationalization of educational philosophy which functions as a guideline for school arrangements. The reform of the educational system should be carried out from global perspectives. The second is internationalization of educational targets. Universities should cultivate the students' international consciousness with which the students can better communicate their ideas through cross-cultural exchanges. Besides, universities should also improve the students' competitiveness in the global market. They can draw on the experience of Japan and America in their talent training methods. The two countries both give priority to the cultivation of capable international students in terms of higher education.

#### *C. Internationalization of educational structure.*

The arrangement of curriculum should take the developing trend of science and technology and the social demand as the premise. Besides, universities should timely adjust the discipline structure according to their own advantages. It is feasible for the universities to set courses concerning the foreign countries as well as international issues; They can also add some international topics to the existing courses. There are also many other measures feasible to be taken such as hiring famous scholars, using advanced international teaching materials and arranging bilingual or full English courses; The education of foreign students forms an significant part of international exchange and cooperation in higher education. It can strengthen the communication among universities from different countries so as to broaden the students' horizon and improve their ability for cross-cultural communication.

### IV. INTERNATIONALIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Internationalization and globalization are closely interrelated. They are both processes of dynamic changing. However, they two have differences. The concept of globalization occurred primarily in the economic field. It refers to the increasing economic interdependence of national economies across the world through a rapid increase in cross-border movement of goods, service, technology and capital. It is not only a process of economic development but also a complicated social process. Internationalization refers to the strategies and measures adopted by governments, institutions, groups as well as individuals to face globalization. It's an inside-out process while globalization is out-inside. Internationalization values equal cooperation, two-way communication and mutual benefits. On the contrary, globalization values competition in economic fields as well as the market rule of "survival of the fittest". Internationalization consists of domestic internalization and

cross-border internationalization. It emphasizes that all nations and their governmental and folk institutions should reply actively to the globalization by taking effective measures. Under the background of Globalization, institutions of higher education has a large autonomy to decide whether and in which way they will take part in the global academic system.

The positive effects brought by globalization on education can be clearly embodied by the increasing number of educatees and the advancement of information technology for educational purposes. There is an increasing demand for higher education with the rapid development of the industrial society. The number of students receiving higher education in the world has risen substantially with its proportion to all the students going up from 12.2% in 1980 to 16.2% in 1995. Moreover, the new information technologies provide a powerful support to the openness of political culture in the higher education. On the other hand, education, especially the higher education, functions as an important foundation of social development and accelerates the process of globalization, which is determined by the characteristic of education and the knowledge universality. It can be said that the internationality an ordinary university has may far excels that in an international company. According to the statistics in UNESCO, the number of foreign students in countries all over the world is increasing constantly. Countries like German, British, Japan and Australia all receives 10% more foreign students among which the number of Chinese students who study abroad increases the fastest. For a long time, the foreign students are deemed as just the supplement to academic and cultural diversity. In general, internationalization of higher education requires the universities to make full use of the modern technologies and equipment so as to improve the teaching level continuously. Professor Huang Futao (2003) pointed it out that: "Globalization lies in establishing a unified standard which is super-state and unlimited by any political and cultural difference among countries and regions; on the contrary, internationalization lies in the exchange of different cultures from different countries on the basis of common existence of sovereignty countries as well as culture diversity."<sup>10</sup>

### V. CONCLUSION

Globalization is an inexorable trend which brings the economic development, social progress as well as educational internationalization among the countries all over the world. However, it has also brought negative effects to the world. For example, it will to some extent, undermine the sovereignty of nations and regions over their economic and fiscal affairs. So far, it's too early to take internationalization as equal to globalization in spite of the fact that it will eventually lead to globalization of education.<sup>11</sup> As to the developing countries, globalization has provided them with both opportunities and challenges. The higher education has no turned from the affiliated factors to the decisive factor for

<sup>10</sup> Huang Futao. Internationalization of Higher Education——from the perspective of history and contrast, International Higher Education Research, 2003 (1)

<sup>11</sup> Xu Haining. Analysis on Internationalization of Higher Education from multiple perspectives, 2007.

a country's social, cultural and economic development. Internationalization of higher education is an important transitional process which can help push the arrival of educational globalization. The process of globalization of education, in turn, will facilitate the development of its internationalization.