

"One Belt and One Way" Strategy and the Internationalization Path of Local Colleges and Universities

Lizhen Guo

School of Finance and Economics, Yangtze Normal University, Fuling 408100, Chongqing China

Guolizhen72@126.com

Abstract. Public colleges and universities are the main force of higher education in China. The country's vigorous promotion of the "Belt and Road" strategy has brought challenges for the internationalization of public universities. With this strategy, companies need more talents who are not only having solid academic background but also are good at foreign languages, analytical skills, inter-cultural communication and other skills. Universities aim at supplying the market with talents serving the local economy; therefore, they must enable themselves to cultivate exceptional graduates. However, many Chinese universities face a number of difficulties possibly eroding the quality of teaching and administrative management such as insufficient teaching force with cross-cultural aspects and insufficient fund. By all means, Domestic colleges and universities should accelerate the internationalization by refreshing the concept of development, improving the management system, using opportunities to broaden the scope of international cooperation, and taking unique measures and so forth.

Keywords: Belt and Road; domestic colleges; internationalization.

1. Introduction

The "One Belt, One Road" strategy is a major strategy for the country to improve the level of opening up to the outside world. In order to cultivate the "One Belt, One Road" urgently needed talents, in July 2016, the Ministry of Education issued the "Educational Action for Promoting the Construction of the Belt and Road", requiring all types of colleges and universities to actively participate. The "One Belt, One Road" education initiative calls for the domestic colleges and universities "to exert regional advantages and domestic characteristics, make full use of the advantages of domestic resources, and actively build cross-country platforms to promote complementary, close and mutual cooperation between universities and enterprises. We will take a variety of measures to support and carry out extensive international cooperation between the domestic education system and countries along the "Belt and Road" to create a highland for educational communication.

Domestic public colleges and universities refer to full-time regular higher educational institutions that are mainly financed by domestic governmental appropriations and under provincial jurisdiction and serve the domestic economy and social development. The number of public universities and the number of students in those universities account for more than 90% of the total number of universities in China. It is the crucial force of higher education in China. Speeding up the internationalization of domestic universities is of great significance for promoting the strategy of "One Belt, One Road ". But for a long time, the internationalization of most domestic universities has been developing slowly and at a low level. Therefore, this paper explores the path of accelerating the internationalization of domestic colleges and universities.

2. Opportunities Brought by the Construction of the "Belt and Road" to the International Development of Domestic Colleges and Universities

The in-depth promotion of the "Belt and Road" strategy has created new development opportunities and platforms for domestic universities to accelerate their international development.

First, in order to promote the construction of the "Belt and Road", China has employed a series of preferential policies and measures in terms of actively attracting high-level personnel from overseas, assistance in international student enrollment and encouraging domestic students to go abroad. It is

conducive to accelerate the pace of internationalization in domestic colleges and universities, such as the implementation of the "Silk Road" plan for studying abroad and the joint training program of cultivating talents cross different countries.

Second, the "One Belt, One Road" strategy is a long-term, comprehensive and forward-looking policy proposed by President Xi, which emphasizes on building intimate global community with shared values and future throughout world-wide cooperation. When putting the "One Belt, One Road" strategy into effect, it triggers the demand of high-level international all-round specialists. Soon, the government realizes that knowledgeably skilled human resource is the most vital factor to promoting the "One Belt, One Road" strategy. No matter the construction of a large number of infrastructures or the "going out" of many enterprises, international talents are always needed. In order to adapt to the "One Belt, One Road" strategy, higher educational institutions have to pace up the cultivation of excellent graduates who are armed with global view, intercultural communication skills, very solid background with certain field, and most importantly practical skills. All in all, domestic universities will gain more opportunities to enhancing their capacity of match with world-level need of talents.

Third, it is beneficial to build an international platform to facilitate with cooperation. The ancients said that there must be a teacher among any three travelers, simply the person nearby can be used as a learning object. Similarly, country nearby also can be the learning object of China. To build the international platform is to help China learn from other countries' culture, wisdom, excellence and their policies. Besides, it is much clearer than before that that eastern cities develop better than middle or western cities in China. The "One Belt, One Road" strategy is also aims at reducing the gap between the rich and the poor, narrow the gap between the east, the middle and the western area of China. Meanwhile, the strategy will push the domestic universities learn world-widely.

3. The Exploration of the Internationalization in Domestic Universities

Many domestic colleges and universities have made certain achievements in promoting international development. Taking Henan as an example, based on the advantages of historical and cultural resources, a number of universities have actively explored ways to promote international development with their own characteristics so as to expand the scope of cooperation, enrich the content and diversify the objects of cooperation. The main achievements they have made are as follows:

First, we will continue to expand cooperation areas based on two-way international exchanges. The international exchange of personnel is an important part of the internationalization of education, including the international exchange of students and the international exchange of teachers. Taking Henan as an example, a group of domestic schools have actively expanded the scope of foreign exchanges in recent years, such as establishing friendly and cooperative relations with universities in Ireland, Malaysia, Belarus, Italy, and so forth, and using the resources of friendly schools to realize the international exchange of personnel from one direction to two-way. First of all, the international exchange of students from "the output to the output" to "output to input" two-ways; Second, international teaching communication changes by not just "employing foreign language teachers" but to sending "Chinese teachers to go abroad. In other words, it changes from one way "bring in" to two ways "in and out". In order to broaden the international vision of governing a school and cultivate more international teachers, most domestic colleges and universities continue to encourage the training of young and middle-aged teachers abroad. Some domestic colleges and universities also implement international training programs for young and middle-aged teachers, and motivate teachers to apply for study abroad. The National Fund Committee also has program which allows teachers to study abroad to gain a degree or having international training program abroad. At the same time, the "Overseas Introduction Project" was implemented, and the introduction of overseas students and the recruitment of foreign language teachers were continuously increased.

Secondly, local universities make breakthroughs in key projects and realizing in-depth cooperation between industry, university and research institutes. In order to speed up the pace of international development, a number of local colleges and universities find that it is necessary to solve problems

in the real world otherwise what researchers deeply focus on will be useless and waste time. Working with companies, industries and other researching institutes is beneficial to move forward regarding to educating the practical graduates and adapting to the local economy and community.

Lastly, more and more universities find that learning from foreign universities can gain useful experience in how to cultivate global citizens who specialized in certain fields as well as how to manage schools and the staff. Taking Sino-foreign cooperation program as the starting point becomes the choice of many local universities. Local colleges and universities actively expand Sino-foreign cooperative educational projects, and jointly organize general education courses and core curriculum with universities from Europe and the United States. From that, local universities bring in foreign textbooks, studying material and new teaching methods. Furthermore, the Sino-foreign education program makes teachers, administrative staff, and the superiors to think deeply in the design of curriculums, the role that the school plays in teachers' growing, and the more developed concept on what the higher education really is and the role that higher education plays in students' growing. So, universities move to a new stage with mature thinking and management by positively joining and running in the Sino-foreign project.

4. The Challenges that Universities Faces

Although many colleges and universities have achieved lots of progress, most domestic universities still face a series of challenges.

Traditional positioning of higher education would limit the prosperity of it. For a long time, the public presumes that universities have to serve the local community and local economy. This is not wrong but this concept results in a relatively narrow view that probably limit the potential of universities could reach. With this view, universities make rules by following the conventional thinking. They tend not to emphasize on running a school in an international level or cultivating students in an international level. Gradually, the educational institution develops a mechanism with low expectation or ability hard to suit the globalization. Definitely, it is a great challenge for local colleges and universities to cultivate high-quality application-oriented talents with international view.

Besides, the preparation for cultivating international talents is weak. Public colleges and universities are usually financed by provincial governments. Many universities are severely short of financial supply, which only maintain monthly salary or bonus of foreign experts at a low level. Besides, modern teaching infrastructure or good living conditions of foreign experts become unrealistic without sufficient fund. For example, many universities only have blackboard or projector while some high schools already have had the touching screen in classroom. Many computer laboratories are in shortage of computers and many classrooms do not have air conditioners. Thinking of lacking of sufficient fund, it is hard to implement the international education program in a higher level or improve the quality of it.

Moreover, it is frequent to see a phenomenon that some famous universities release very attractive recruiting advertisement with high salary, researching fee or good living condition to find outperformed teachers, which shows that the quality, structure and level of the teaching staff are the key factors to ensure the quality of higher education so as to cultivating the international talents. If teachers do not have solid academic background, students would not be able to constantly update their knowledge. In other words, more universities pay much attention to recruiting excellent teachers to foster the quality of education. The cultivation of international talents needs to have a group of well qualified teachers with international view. Whereas, local universities generally have a low level of foreign experts or Chinese teachers studied abroad.

Furthermore, the institutional mechanism of running local universities does not match with international standards. Many domestic colleges and universities lack an international operational code that is coping with professional administrative work of students, teachers, infrastructure, or faculties as a whole, which left a number of problems such as inappropriate designing of an academic curriculum, inappropriate designing the syllabus, and inappropriate managing the student status,

academic records or length of semester. These problems restrict to develop the administrative work in the international level, therefore, it limit the development of universities as a whole.

5. To Accelerate the Development of Local Universities to in Alliance with International Standards

Although there are many reasons why the development of local university is so slow, universities and colleges have to consider reasons from themselves. The author proposed five thoughts on how domestic colleges and universities can overcome difficulties and accelerate international development.

Primarily, local universities have to release themselves from the traditional positioning and target at growing up as globally known university. It is necessary to change the conceptual framework as it is fundamental to development. To releasing the traditional positioning, the primary task of domestic colleges and universities is to accelerating the internationalization, jump out of comfort zone and remove the conventional thinking for cultivating talents for local economy and local society. By integrating the concept of "internationalization" with the process of conducting the administration work and the process of educating students, the international outlook and perspectives will be gradually formed. Then, administrative staffs, teachers, and other working staff would take international standards as compulsory norms to follow. Naturally, universities and colleges would build up an international organizational culture. Thus, it would be easier to form an international mechanism with which universities would regards schools and disciplines as the main body, and calls for actively involvement of teachers and students in every aspect of revolution.

Secondly, it is necessary to deepen reforms and improve management systems and mechanisms. Universities have their own situations, develops in variant ways. However, they always move towards more advanced level. In order to follow the right path, colleges and universities should have some guidance. It is suggested that universities in developed countries such the University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, Harvard University, the Yale University would have more mature experience in regards to governing schools and administrating the staff, teachers and students. From this perspective, local universities would better to learn from those developed universities on how to conduct administration works including financial work, human resource management, research development, teaching assistance and so forth. In addition, many universities have to actively make attempt to build a governance system and management system that is compatible with international development of teaching, personnel distribution, scientific research, accounting work, and international students to accelerate internationalization. As a result, the governance system and management system would exert an important role in guaranteeing the regular implementation of internalization.

Thirdly, the university usually resides at a certain city. The "Reform and Open-up" strategy motivates local governments and local enterprises to seek for international investment and opportunities, which automatically enlarge the number of either international or companies. Additionally, it will also enlarge the scale of manufacturing and companies will offer more jobs to the market. In order to benefit from the "Reform and Open-up", local universities and colleges should cooperate closely with local government, companies, non-for-profit professional institutes, hospitals or other schools to gain more prosperity. Domestic colleges and universalities should take advantage of domestic open opportunities to enhance interaction with domestic economy and social development and broaden the scope for international development. Domestic universities should base themselves on "domesticity", strengthening interaction with domestic economy and social development, innovating international cooperation models such as "schools-to-schools" and "schools and enterprises". By doing that, it is also in alliance with national advocates by achieving internationalization through domestic service and domestic cooperation. It is reported in news that "Educational Action" proposes government to play the leading role in cooperation among universities, the industry, non-for-profit organizations, hospitals and other public research institutions. By encouraging cooperation among universities, the industry, non-for-profit organizations, hospitals and other public research institutions, both universities and industries would gain benefit from that. This

could also become a vital means from universities and local colleges to realizing the real internationalization in all aspects.

Last but not least, many universities and colleges are in well awareness of moving towards to internationalization, which is an evitable trend to follow. The problem is they do not how to follow. Soon, some of them would copy how other universities do to transform the outdated managements system to modern systems. This phenomenon is quite common in higher education, whereas, the author suspicious of it. The author has criticized copying each other by proposing that if a university wants to be efficient, comprehensive and unique university, then it should explores a way which suits themselves not just copying and following others. It strongly recommended that universities confront with different circumstances and difficulties in different cities. They should firstly ask why they have those problems; the reasons will automatically tell the ways of how to overcome it. Then, a university has to go through deeper by planning of how to make use of cultural, financial, political, demographical advantages to gain characteristic development.

Unique characteristics are the soul of the survival and development of schools, and also the key point of accelerating the internationalization of local colleges and universities. Local colleges and universities should promote the development of internationalization with characteristic development and transformation. Culture is an important force in the construction of "one belt and one road". Local universities have abundant advantages of regional culture. By developing cultural brand, the cultural identity and identity of tens of millions of Chinese and overseas Chinese across the Taiwan Straits will be enhanced, thus it will further promote the internationalization of local colleges and universities.

In addition, the international exchange of teachers has changed from one-way employment of foreign language teachers to two-way exchange of teachers 'visits. in order to broaden the international horizon of running schools and train more international teachers, most local colleges and universities continue to intensify the training of young and middle-aged backbone teachers abroad. Some local colleges and universities also implement the internationalization training project for young and middle-aged backbone teachers, and encourage teachers to apply for the overseas study projects appointed by the National Overseas Studies Fund, as well as to study in famous foreign schools or exchange international cooperation. At the same time, helping teachers join in "Overseas Intelligence Introduction Project" and continuously increase efforts to introduce overseas students and recruit foreign language teachers.

Combining with years of practice and exploration, it is realized that universities with industry characteristics have their advantages in promoting internationalization strategy, but universities still need to further unify thinking and build consensus. From the inside of the school, universities should strengthen the coordination and support of policies and funds. Besides, universities should also strengthen the overall coordination between the ministries, departments and colleges, and strive to form a "big foreign affairs" working pattern. We should further integrate the resources of all parties, raise funds through various channels, increase investment in funds and actively encourage the implementation of key projects. Colleges should also increase special funds for foreign affairs. Externally speaking, universities should actively strive for the support of the state and local parties, and actively strive for the support of enterprises through industry-university-research cooperation, so as to jointly promote the development of foreign exchanges and cooperation between industries and universities. To actively play the role of thinking out of box, universities can invite experts and scholars from well-known overseas universities and research institutes through the establishment of international advisory committees and other forms to consult for the implementation of the internationalization strategy. We should strengthen contacts with alumni and encourage them to contribute to the internationalization of the school.

In addition, we need to explore the formation of an international development model in line with the characteristics of the industry. Universities with industry characteristics should carefully study and predict the trend of internationalization of industry in the future, as well as the goals and tasks of internationalization of schools, seizing the key points in the combination. Local universities should explore and form an internationalized "distinctive, high-level and sustainable" development.

Acknowledgments

Henan Provincial College Innovative Talents Support Program in 2016; Chongqing Municipal Education Commission Key Project "Xi Jinping's High-Quality Development Concept and Practical Research in Chongqing" (18SKCS012).

References

- [1]. Ministry of Education issued the notice to promote the construction of the "one belt and one way" education action, [EB/OL]. [http:// www. moe. edu. cn/ srcsite /A20 /s7068 /201608 / t20160811_274679. html](http://www.moe.edu.cn/srcsite/A20/s7068/201608/t20160811_274679.html).
- [2]. Liu Yan "red". International exchanges and cooperation in Universities under the background of "one belt and one road" [J]. Harbin: Heilongjiang higher education research, 2016 (3): 10-14.
- [3]. Zheng Gang, Liu Jinsheng. Difficulties and Countermeasures of educational exchange and cooperation in the "one belt and one way" strategy [J]. Beijing: comparative education research, 2016 (2): 20-26.
- [4]. Yang Shu. Strategic thinking on promoting educational cooperation in the construction of "one belt and one road" [J]. Beijing: comparative education research, 2015 (6): 5-6.
- [5]. Cohen. Background of "one belt and one road" to study education and foreign exchange and cooperation: [J]. Beijing: comparative education research, 2015 (6): 12-13.