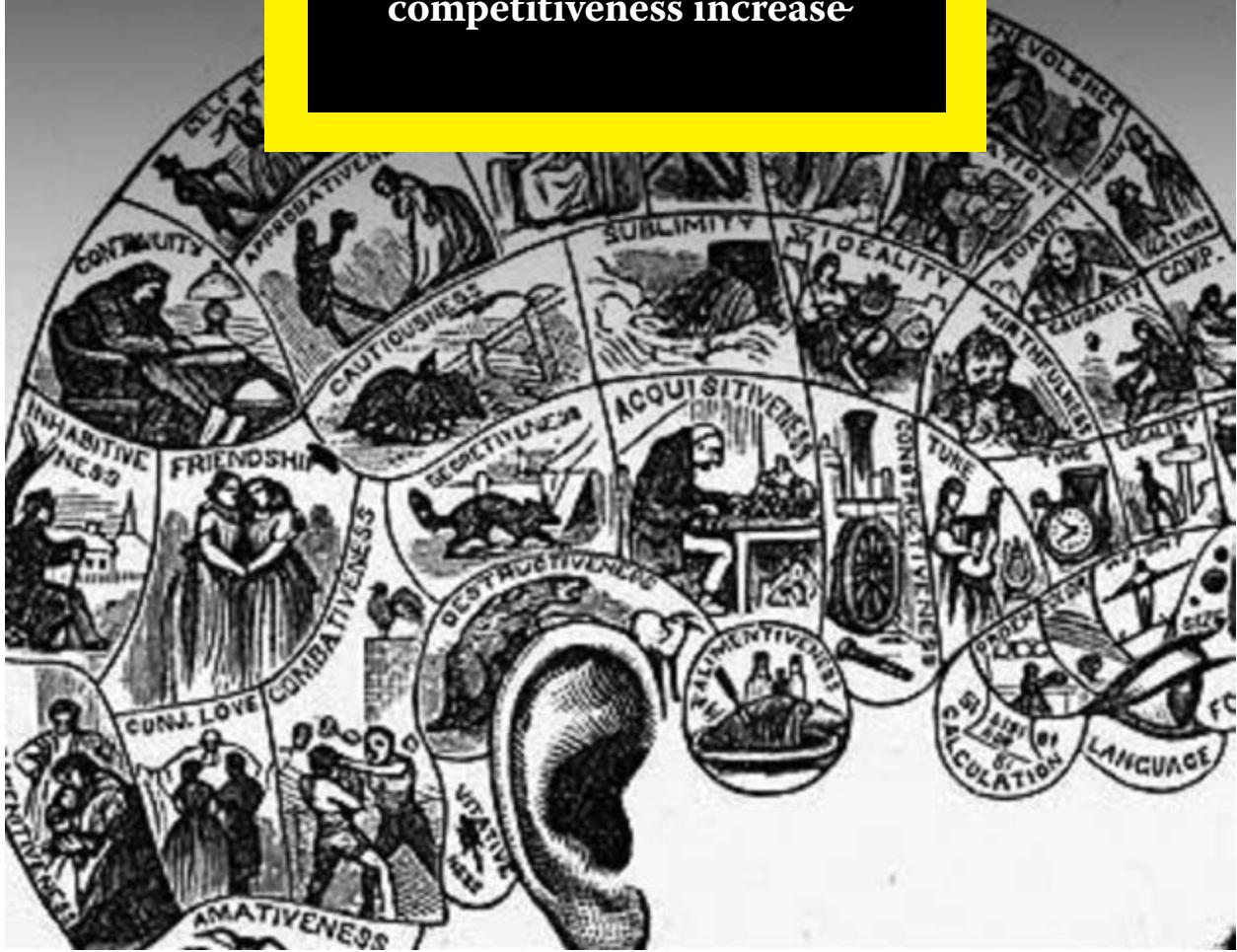


Internationalization of higher education of China as the factor of university competitiveness increase



INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF CHINA AS THE FACTOR OF UNIVERSITY COMPETITIVENESS INCREASE

LA INTERNACIONALIZACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR DE CHINA COMO FACTOR DE AUMENTO DE LA COMPETITIVIDAD UNIVERSITARIA.

ABSTRACT

In the modern world, the internationalization of higher education is a general trend of education and science development covering almost all countries of the world. The PRC is not an exception. Education is one of the most important priorities of China state policy. The Chinese government believes that the preparation of students abroad, especially in high-ranking universities of the world, is the means of education quality provision and improvement. After the performance of higher education reforms, its position has significantly strengthened on the international educational market. For a decade and a half, the number of Chinese students studying at foreign universities increased by 9.5 times, and the number of foreign students studying at Chinese universities increased by 27.3 times. The main tools for the internationalization of higher education in China are the following ones: the improvement of educational service quality, an active policy of Chinese university promotion at the world market, the change of the approach to teacher hiring and promotion, the transition to foreign textbooks, and the opening of joint educational programs.

KEYWORDS: internationalization, higher education of China, academic mobility

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RESUMEN

En el mundo moderno, la internacionalización de la educación superior es una tendencia general del desarrollo de la educación y la ciencia que abarca a casi todos los países del mundo. El PRC no es una excepción. La educación es una de las prioridades más importantes de la política estatal de China. El gobierno chino cree que la preparación de los estudiantes en el extranjero, especialmente en las universidades de alto rango del mundo, es el medio para mejorar la calidad de la educación. Despues del desempeño de las reformas de la educación superior, su posición se ha fortalecido significativamente en el mercado educativo internacional. Durante una década y media, el número de estudiantes chinos que estudian en universidades extranjeras aumentó en 9.5 veces, y el número de estudiantes extranjeros que estudian en universidades chinas aumentó en 27.3 veces. Las principales herramientas para la internacionalización de la educación superior en China son las siguientes: la mejora de la calidad del servicio educativo, una política activa de promoción universitaria china en el mercado mundial, el cambio de enfoque en la contratación y promoción de docentes, la transición a extranjeros libros de texto, y la apertura de programas educativos conjuntos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: internacionalización, educación superior de China, movilidad académica.

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- the integration of the international dimension and educational standards into the curricula;

- the institutional partnership: the creation of strategic educational associations [1].

Now they speak about globalization and internationalization practically in all branches of human activity. These trends have not bypassed the sphere of higher education in China, where, due to the specifics of the system itself, internationalization has acquired its own characteristics and features. The study of China higher education internationalization peculiarities as the factor of university competitiveness increase is the goal of this work.

RESULTS

The retrospective analysis of the system of higher education in China. The traditional university form of higher education appeared in China not a long time ago. The first universities on the European model appeared at the end of the XIXth century and at the beginning of the 20th century. The system of higher education in China has passed several stages in its development, characteristic for the history of the country in the twentieth century.

At the first stage - during the first half of the 20th century - higher education in China was modeled after European universities [2].

At the second stage - the 50-ies - 80-ies of the 20th century - China higher education system was modeled after the Soviet Union higher education system, which involved the training of domain experts for major line ministries. The education system was built using the Soviet experts: during the period of 1949-1959 more than 760 Soviet teachers worked in the educational institutions of China, 337 departments and laboratories were created with their participation, over 4,000 post-graduate students and 7,000 pedagogical workers were trained [3].

A new stage in the development of higher education of China falls on the 90-ies of the twentieth century. During this period, the reform of higher education system begins on the basis of four key principles:

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of their development universities have always been viewed as a social and a cultural phenomenon, the purpose of which was the dissemination of knowledge. In the 19th and the 20th centuries, most higher education institutions performed their traditional functions of professional group and local elite development, as well as the development of science and technology in national environment. Since the second half of the twentieth century, there has been a powerful mass spread of higher education, which they began to consider as the guarantee of the state competitiveness in the new global economy. At present, a qualitative higher education is needed for the successful development of any economic system, which is export-oriented, i.e. focused on the international market of educational services. No national market, even in a large and a developed state, can consume everything that is created within national borders. That is, the thing is about the internationalization of higher education, which is not an end in itself, but serves as the means of education quality provision and improvement. In the context of our study, the internationalization of education is the process in which the goals, the functions and the organization of educational service provision acquires an international dimension.

Internationalization of higher education includes the following forms of international cooperation:

- academic mobility of students or faculty for educational purposes;
- the mobility of educational programs and institutional mobility;
- the development of new international standards for educational programs;

- joint development - the development and the implementation of university projects jointly with authorities and business to meet the latter demands in staff;

- The restructuring of universities ensured the implementation of a unified educational policy. Before the reform, many Chinese universities were subordinate to various ministries;

- Enlargement - a large university has great opportunities in training, a better management system;

- Cooperation - universities should interact with each other, share experiences, conduct joint research [4].

An important factor that influenced the development of China higher education system was the creation of leadership universities within the framework of "21-1" and "98-5" projects. The project "21-1" was launched in 1995.

It foresaw the achievement of indicators in engineering, technological, physical and biological sciences comparable with the best universities in the world in priority areas of development by one hundred best universities of the country during the first decade of the 21st century. The result of this program was the selection of 112 universities which received state support [5].

A new program for the development of higher education in the country was started in 1998 - the project "98-5" was launched.

In the course of the project, 9 higher educational institutions were selected from the project "21-1", then several dozens of universities joined them (the total number of universities made 49), which received billion-dollar funding.

The projects "21-1" and "98-5" allowed the participating universities to create the infrastructure for research, to reorient academic disciplines to international standards, to improve the quality of teaching, to attract leading scientists and teachers, which was the basis of China competitive economy development in the present time.

Internationalization of higher education in China. The result of higher education reforms in China are the significant structural changes: during the period of 1999-2012 the number of higher education institutions increased by 2.5 times, the number of scientific and pedagogical workers increased by 3.5 times, the proportion of students in the corresponding age category increased by 2.4 times [4]. Besides, the system of higher education in China has significantly strengthened its position in the international educational market (table 17).

Table 17. Distribution of BRICS universities in QS ranking during 2016 [6]

Country	Top 10	Top 50	Top 100	Top 200	Top 250
China	7	23	44	72	86
Russia	1	8	19	49	55
Brazil	1	7	13	37	54
India	1	8	17	31	44
South Africa	-	4	7	11	11

Among the BRICS countries, China universities are the strongest in terms of competitiveness within the QS rating.

The implementation of measures reforming the higher education system allowed China to switch from educational service import to their exports (table 18).

Table 18. Dynamics of higher education internationalization in China [4]

Indicator	1997	2002	2007	2012
The number of Chinese students in foreign universities, thousand people.	35	125,1	144	334
The number of foreign students in Chinese universities, thousand people.	12	43	195,5	328,3
Growth rate, % (by 1997)				
The number of Chinese students in foreign universities, thousand people.	100	357,4	411,4	954,3
The number of foreign students in Chinese universities, thousand people.	100	358,3	1629,2	2735,8

The most famous form of higher education internationalization is the mobility of students - the departure of a certain number of students to study abroad.

For a decade and a half, the number of Chinese students, studying in foreign universities, increased by 9.5 times, and the number of foreign students studying in Chinese universities increased by 27.3 times. In 2015, 397.6 thousand foreign students were studying in Chinese universities.

The internationalization of Chinese higher education includes the following forms [7]:

1) the sending of Chinese students and teachers to foreign universities;

2) the attraction of foreign teachers and researchers;

3) the attraction of foreign students, both at their own expense, and using an extensive system of grants;

4) the development of joint educational programs with foreign universities;

5) the use of double diploma system;

6) the introduction of foreign textbooks in the educational process;

7) the opening of foreign educational centers.

The main flow of students leaving China are the students traveling abroad at their own expense. The proportion of students studying at state expense is small: during the period of 1978-2011 2.24 million students went to study from China, including 12,956 people according to the state line. The increase in the flow of those who went to study abroad fell on the 2000-ies. This was facilitated by the factors related to the liberalization of the departure procedure and the growing prosperity of Chinese society. In the early 2000-ies, the Chinese authorities simplified the procedure of foreign passport issue, which increased the flow of people leaving for abroad. At the same time, a mass middle class was formed in China, which could afford to find funds to train their children abroad [4].

The main stream of Chinese students is sent to the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France, Germany and South Korea. The most popular among Chinese students are the specialties related to management, economics, jurisprudence, information technology and technical specialties (Figure 11) [7].

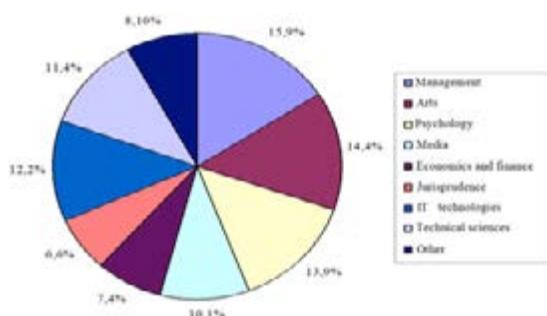


Figure 11. Distribution of Chinese students studying abroad in training areas during 2013

Recently, there has been the trend of Chinese student return who have gone abroad for study. If in 1997 only 25% of the students

returned, then more than 50% returned in 2014. Researchers attribute this trend to the increase of opportunities for professional implementation within China.

Now China conducts an active policy of foreign student attraction. Foreign citizens in China study only on full-time basis. Recently, there has been the increase of people number enrolled in tertiary level programs (bachelor, master, postgraduate) (table 19).

Table 19. The dynamics of foreign student number studying in the universities of China according to the fields of expertise [8]

Indicator	2006	2015	Growth	
			Men	%
Bachelor's program	46216	13127	85011	83,94
Master's Courses	59665	39205	33239	457,14
Doctoral studies	26777	13367	10690	299,33
Total for tertiary level programs	54859	184799	129940	136,86
Internships, language courses	107250	212836	105586	1,55
Total	162695	397635	234940	44,41

During the period of 2006-2015 the number of students enrolled in tertiary level programs increased by 129940 people (1.36 times), also under the bachelor's programs for 85011 people (83.94%), magistracy - 33239 (4.5 times) and doctoral studies for 10690 people (2.9 times).

The increase of foreign student number in Chinese universities is conditioned by the improvement of provided educational service quality and an active policy of Chinese university promotion in the world market, also through state scholarships. So for the period of 2006-2015 the number of issued state scholarships for the training of foreign students increased five-fold (from 8.5 thousand up to 40.6 thousand).

Foreign students come to study in China from Asia, Europe, Africa, America and Oceania (Figure 12). Foreign students in Chinese

universities study mainly humanitarian disciplines, primarily Chinese.

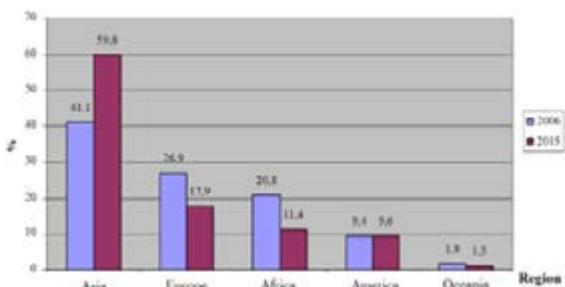


Figure 12. The composition of foreign students in Chinese universities by regions of origin in 2015-2016, % [8]

Recently there has been the student number increase in other areas, in particular for engineering and technical sciences (Figure 13).

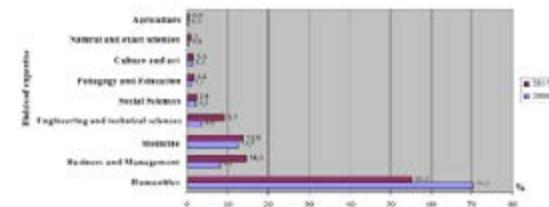


Figure 13. Distribution of foreign students studying in Chinese universities according to the fields of expertise in 2015-2016

Although the mobility of the teaching staff is not as well explored as the mobility of students, it can be considered the second most important form of higher education internationalization.

The growth of Chinese university popularity is facilitated by a number of measures, including an invitation to change the approach to teacher hiring and promotion, switching to foreign textbooks, the opening of joint educational programs.

In the course of the education reform, the personnel management procedure in the universities of China was changed. The procedure for teacher accept became open and competitive. The recruitment, dismissal, promotion, remuneration of a teacher was made dependent on his academic rating, based on such criteria as publication activity, intellectual property rights (patents, product certificates, etc.), monographs, methodical materials and the participation in research projects [9].

During recruitment, the preference was given, first of all, to the teachers with a de-

gree. For example, there were 1,800 teachers at the Jiaotong University in 1998, of whom 25% had a degree. After the implementation of a number of personnel selection and promotion programs, the Jiaotong University had 700 professors among 2900 teachers and 1200 associate professors in 10 years, 65% had a PhD degree [4].

Another measure to improve the quality of education was the transition to English-language textbooks. In 2002 the leading universities in China purchased English-language textbooks, mostly the textbooks of US universities, and introduced them into the educational process [10].

The programs of student and teacher mobility were developed with the aim to stimulate the internationalization of curricula, i.e. the implementation of changes in the curricula of cooperating universities and faculties.

Joint educational programs are an important tool for the internationalization of education. The forms of these programs include joint programs, double diploma programs, foreign program franchises, on-line training and distance education programs. "2 + 2", "3 + 1", "1 + 3" schemes, which involve the training of Chinese students during one - three years in China and one - three years abroad, are common ones. The bulk of joint programs fall on bachelor's and postgraduate studies. China has concluded the agreement with a number of countries (Pacific countries, Germany, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, etc.) on the recognition of Chinese university diplomas.

One of the key trends of China education internationalization is the opening of a network of Confucius institutions. Currently, 353 Confucius Institute and 473 Confucius classes are opened abroad. The project is aimed to enable foreigners to learn Chinese language and culture.

Thus, the internationalization of higher education is an important trend of Chinese university competitiveness increase.

The projects implemented over the past twenty years, have allowed China to become one of the largest importers of educational services in the world. The experience of Chi-

nese universities can be useful for the universities in other countries.

SUMMARY

In modern conditions, many educational institutions naturally seek to use the possibilities of internationalization in order to improve their competitiveness. The PRC is not an exception. In the early 1990-ies, in order to increase the competitiveness of its education, the Chinese government implemented a number of projects, including international ones (the development of international ratings, the transition to the Western model of education, the expansion of scholarship programs for foreign students, the opening of a network of Confucius institutes, etc.). This allowed to turn from an importer of educational services to a corresponding exporter. The process of higher education internationalization of the People's Republic of China takes new features in the 21st century and undergoes changes, which include the systematicity and consistency. This ensured the effectiveness of measures to increase the competitiveness of the country universities.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the conducted study of internationalization process specifics in China allows us to conclude that its changes are dynamic in line with the current market trends, related primarily with the competition intensification on the international market of educational services. It is the internationalization of higher education system, the relevance and the adaptability to contemporary international trends that make up its competitiveness, and at the same time the effectiveness of its implementation positively affects all national economy sectors. 

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