Challenges of Implementing Internationalization of Higher Education in China

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To achieve the Internationalisation of Higher Education in China, two forms of collaborations were approved by the Ministry of Education in China: the joint university and the joint program. With the apparent success of these joint ventures, more and more universities have joined the team to be ready to operate similar joint ventures in China. Although there are a number of perceived benefits of collaborative universities and programmes in China, several specific challenges exist in transnational education concerning government policy and management, the escalated competition, and education shock faced with running a partnership of collaborative/joint university or program in China in relation to host country and source countries.

Keywords: Internationalization of Higher Education; Transnational Education; Challenges

1. Introduction

Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) integrates an international, intercultural, or global dimension to cope with the academic environment internationally. The establishment of the formation of international collaborative/joint program in China is defined as Zhongwai-Hezuo-Banxue (中外合作办学in Chinese). The term refers to "activities of the cooperation between foreign educational institutions and Chinese educational institutions in establishing educational institutions within the territory of China to provide education services mainly to Chinese citizens" (MOE, 2003, p. 1). Previous research (Li, 2019) has interpreted the strategies of IHE in China. In this article, the transnational education (TNE) programs development in China, and the challenges in the process of IHE in China will be discussed.

2. Transnational Education Programs in China

According to Knight (2016), the definition of Transnational Education is "the mobility of an education program or higher education institution/provider between countries" (p. 35), which contains "all types of higher education study programs or set of courses of study, or educational services… in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based" (UNESCO/Council of Europe, 2002, p. 2). The prime operation of TNE is "cross-border supply" and "commercial presence" as stated in the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Service (Gu, 2009). TNE, more commonly adopted by the providing party, allows higher education institutions to expand themselves in the market and satisfy the demand of the local higher education sector. Not only can it increase the international enrolment by offering their degree qualifications and accreditation in third countries, but can also encourage global participation in higher education (Healey, 2015; McNamara & Knight 2014). In general, the phenomenon of TNE is deemed as the most state-of-the-art stage in the IHE (Doorbar & Bateman 2008; Healey, 2008; Mazzarol et al 2003).

TNE takes various forms, and new forms of TNE are still in the development (Knight, 2016; Burgess & Berquist, 2012); for example, are two styles that will be introduced in the article. International collaborative programs can be various modes, such as international joint/double/multiple degree programs, co-founded or codeveloped institution, locally supported distance education, and twinning program (Knight & Lee, 2012; Knight, 2016). Also, the growth of IBCs is at the leading edge of internationalization by recruiting foreign students and providing education to whom remain in their own home country campuses (Altbach, 2004; Bennell & Pearce, 2003; De Wit, 2002). Collaborative programs and collaborative universities/international branch campuses (IBCs), are the most two popular forms of TNE gaining extraordinary increasing rate development in terms of TNE (Knight, 2016), especially in the process of IHE in China.

In 2003, new regulations of Sino-foreign collaborative/joint schools officially gave the permission of running collaborative programmes and joint universities in China (MOE, 2013). Two forms of collaborations were approved by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in China, the joint universities and the joint programs. The initiation of the collaborations developed relatively slowly at first, surrounded with uncertainties of legislation and regulation (Ennew & Fujia, 2009). However, with the apparent success of these joint ventures and after the joint universities of University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) and Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU) were fully evaluated, more and more universities have joined the team to be ready to operate similar joint ventures in China. Although there are many perceived benefits, concerns and critical aspects of TNE Programs are, however, also explicit from the international community, with the contributors drawing attention to the challenges that foreign providers face operating IHE in China (Helms, 2008).

Shattock (2007) describes the TNE of IHE in China as a tremendous "high-risk experiment". Philip Altbach (2000) even claims a relatively critical opinion on transnational education that

it does not really contribute to the IHE worldwide. Knowledge products are being sold across borders, but with little mutual exchange of ideas, long term scientific collaboration, exchange of students or faculty (Altbach, 2000). There may have cross-cultural influence on teaching and learning in transnational education but one of the pedagogical concerns is "your culture, my classroom, whose pedagogy?" (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004). Other challenges such as degree or certificate accreditation and students' dual identity are worthwhile exploring as well. However, specific challenges regarding government policy and management, competition escalation, and education shock faced with running a partnership of joint universities or programs in China will be discussed below.

3. Challenges

3.1 Government Policy and Management

Since the educational reform needs freedom policies in promoting innovation and creativity, one of the possible problems is that the policy relies dominantly on the host government direction and the host party governance (Paradise, 2012). "The fundamental paradox inherent in this model is that the current reform, which aims to break through excessive administrative control and free up market forces, relies too much on the very political power and authoritarianism that lie behind that administrative control" (Qiang, 2011, page number?). In the partnership, for instance, the operation and the main representative body of the joint program or collaborative university in China should be Chinese. This shows that China is taking its cues and have a relative tendency for keeping up the global education trends by playing a leading role in the partnership of managing collaborative programs or universities. For foreign universities who desire to establish the partnership of TNE programs need to have an agreement on the co-operation or partnership at the level of administering, because the partnership business could encounter the bureaucratically challenging by the governance bodies (Cuiming et al., 2012). Furthermore, managing a joint university in an educational

hub, such as UNNC or XJTLU, needs to liaise closely with the relevant governmental regulatory authorities (Farrugia and Lane 2013) as they operate in a host country in a different cultural context and different ways of running the joint venture. Favourably, China is attempting to decentralize and deduce the bureaucracy in educational matters by offering more power to the provinces and municipality in order to enable higher education institutions to make heavy-handed decisions regarding the educational administration (Jiang, 2011).

3.2 Competition Escalation
Chinese MOE has introduced "Project 211 University" (the 100 leading universities in China) and "Project 985 University" (top universities with the research excellence) to promote the "innovation society" plan in education. Prospective universities are assessed and evaluated by objective and quantifiable criteria on various perspectives, such as buildings, libraries, laboratories, staffing, funds, and research projects. In order to be nominated in the lists, one of the plausible methods is by merging with other universities to expand and promote their academic profile and facilities (Christiansen, 1996; Rosen, 1997). The old Shanghai University, for example, after being merged with other local colleges to come in the new form of Shanghai University, has been successfully selected and nominated as "211 Project University". Despite of maintaining the internal competition among "Project 211" universities and "Project 985" universities, China is now pursuing the "Double First-Class" initiative to develop its own competitive institutions and disciplines and bring the educational subjects to greater heights in higher education worldwide.

If the "Project 211University" and "Project 985 University" schemes are the internal competition for universities in China, the collaborative universities and programs can be assumed as the external competitors. It is obvious that the IHE in China is experiencing the process of "marketization" (Yin and White, 1994, p. 217) which means that, since the educational suppliers and services are becoming more diversified, the education market will

become more competitive and more intensive with the great increase of consumers' payment ability. The introduction of branch campus from foreign countries may have tremendous impact on local university admissions.

3.3 Education Shock

Similar to culture shock, education shock can be interpreted as the feeling of being confused or anxious when learners or educators have a different educational experience from the one they used to. One of the advantages of TNE programs in China is that students who study in their home countries can earn the qualification awarded by an overseas provider and/or local partner. In the study of Moufahim and Lim (2015), students pointed out that there is a disparity between their expectations of the program and what they experience in the foreign education process. A key issue aroused among Chinese students is that they are seemingly not aware of the educational and cultural diversity of transnational education by equating it to "western education" or "Anglo-Saxon Education". When foreign institutions extend their brand to China, by implementing internationalization of the curriculum and committing to the "internationalization agenda" in TNE programs, the "non-Western cultural issues and topics within courses" (Bennett and Kane, 2009, p. 365) remain rare and "opportunities for truly collaborative and culturally appropriate course design are muted" (Smith, 2010, p. 803). Therefore, it will not be a surprise that students think that they are receiving "Anglo-Saxon" Education by addressing theories, issues, and case studies inside of the western countries. In the TNE programs, the issue of being an international educated person is complicated by the status of acculturation to western education (Chapman and Pyvis, 2006) and there are paradoxes inherent in such experiences (Waters and Leung, 2013).

China in previous years, to some extent, has experienced a certain period of "semi-colonial country" (Huang, 2003, p. 225). This may lead to a distorted view and value that the quality of education from the former colonizer would be more in "superiority" even after the period

of colony. This phenomenon in the process of IHE can also be drawn from the post-colonialism sentiments such as "colonial mentality", a "psychological construct" held by a people that account for past or present the assumptions, values and beliefs in relation to the colonial power of the postcolonial experiences of colonized peoples (David & Okazaki, 2006, p. 2). The purpose of education turns to the "colonization of the mind", colonial administration with western forms of knowledge including skills, dispositions and attitudes (Tikly, 2004), or "servitude of the mind" (Altbach, 1977). The education colonialism has also been stated as a form of neo-colonialism in the context of education (Wickens and Sandlin, 2007). The education shock raised by education colonialism, the education post-colonialism or the education neo-colonialism, to some extent, provides a crucial supplement to the analysis of the challenges.

One of the characteristics of running a TNE program in China is that the collaborative programs should be partially delivered by the partnering institutions in China. In that circumstance, a teacher from a Chinese institution may have to refrain from using their own cultural pedagogy and will rather adapt to the western pedagogy as is required by the foreign partner, and presumably the western pedagogy model is more sophisticated and innovative than their own model. The joint universities functioning as international branches, students from oversea countries can also benefit from Chinese culture and pedagogy, not merely Chinese students. To reduce of the shock effect, UNNC, for example, has integrated courses relating to Chinese culture to the curriculum for better understanding of the differences and reaching the consensus on the importance of both Chinese and western cultural and the educational communication in between.

4. Conclusion and Implications
In summary, this article has briefly introduced the context of Internationalisation of Higher Education and the working mechanisms of the transnational education programs in China.

Although it seems to be a risky experiment for China to implement IHE, the TNE programs provide more opportunities, not only greater chances for students to access educational resources worldwide, but also for better and faster development for the country in various aspects. This article also pointed out the challenges of running joint ventures in China, respectively, government policy and management, competition escalation, and education shock. While this challenges ahead are unavoidable, China is still finding its way to resolve these issues, such as decentralizing and deducing the bureaucracy in educational administration, promoting and constructing "Double First-Class" universities worldwide, integrating Chinese cultural and educational elements into TNE programs etc. Further research could be focused on the effectiveness of the TNE program as well as the future development and action plans of the IHE process in China.

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