

Research on the Balanced Development of Education Diversification and Specialization under the Background of International Education

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Abstract. Internationalization of education has received widespread attention from various countries, and with the diversification of international education, necessitating a heightened emphasis on diversity and characteristic development amidst the proliferation of international educational models. The development of diversified and distinctive education has become increasingly important. In the face of an "internationally standardized education system", it is necessary to maintain educational distinctiveness and integrate diversity with distinctiveness to provide students with more effective educational paths. This article analyzes the balanced development of educational diversification and distinctiveness under the background of educational internationalization and delves into achieving a balanced development between diversity and characteristic education within the internationalization context, arguing that such equilibrium is imperative. Countries should drive educational reforms, offering quality and diverse educational opportunities to achieve sustainable development and global cooperation. It is necessary for countries to promote educational reform, provide high-quality and diversified education, and achieve the goals of sustainable development and global cooperation. Suggestions are put forward for Chinese students' new pursuit of diversified educational experiences under the changing international situation.

Keywords: Globalization, internationalization, diversification, specialization of education.

1. Introduction

Internationalization of education has become a mainstream concept in higher education worldwide with continuous development in different themes and regions. As the concept of internationalization in higher education gradually receives global attention, there are various interpretations of "internationalization". It is necessary to maintain educational distinctiveness, integrate the themes of diversity and distinctiveness and provide more effective educational paths for the present and future. This article will discuss the balanced development of education diversification and specialization under the background of internationalization of education and propose views on the integration path of this diversity development.

2. The Inevitability and Necessity of Educational Diversification in the Context of Internationalization Education

With the further development of globalization, the increasing commercialization of higher education, and the rise of a global knowledge society and economy, the higher education environment is rapidly changing. In the past, "internationalization" and "international education" were mainly phenomena in Western countries, and developing countries only passively participated. However, nowadays, the higher education sector in emerging economies and other regions is changing the internationalization pattern. In the context of the internationalization of education in the 21st century, diversification of education is the trend.

In the past few years, Asia has become a major region for the "internationalization of education", with countries such as Japan, South Korea, India, Thailand, and Singapore claiming to be the "centers" of international education. Universities in these regions have begun to reform their curriculum strategies to approach the goal of achieving a "diversified" comprehensive international

university. The concept of importing and exporting countries is being overturned. As global student mobility becomes increasingly easy and frequent, educational diversity is no longer just synonymous with Western education. With the increasing demand for studying abroad, globalized work practices and environments require employers to have higher expectations for graduates with cross-cultural competence, which is also reflected in employers' desire for employees to have international experience to meet their needs. Internationalization and employment skills are closely linked, and the necessity and necessity of diverse education has become increasingly important as these countries become key participants.

2.1. The Inevitability of Educational Diversification

Every year, millions of students choose to pursue higher education abroad, highlighting the inevitable trend of internationalization in education. According to statistics from UNESCO, the number of international students studying abroad reached over 5.3 million in 2017, an increase of 2.65 times compared to 2 million in 2000 [1]. Without the impact of COVID-19, it is expected that international student mobility will reach 7.6 million by 2025. Traditionally, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Australia have been major participants in the international higher education market, accounting for approximately half of the international student population. However, these traditional destinations are losing market share as more and more people tend to engage in educational exchanges within regions rather than across regions, and Asian countries have achieved remarkable success in becoming attractive learning destinations [1]. The most famous Asian cases include Japan, China, South Korea, India, and more recently Singapore and Malaysia [1].

These data and trends indicate that educational diversification is inevitable. Students are increasingly aware that in the era of globalization, having international education experience and cross-cultural communication skills are crucial for their career development and life path. Through exposure to knowledge from different countries and cultural backgrounds, students can cultivate a global perspective, and broaden their thinking and problem-solving abilities. Meanwhile, educational diversification has also promoted understanding and cooperation among countries, driving the development of transnational scientific research and innovation activities. In the context of global market competition, educational diversification also enables countries and regions to attract international students and talents, bringing positive impacts to economic and social development. By providing high-quality educational resources and creating an international learning environment, countries can cultivate globally competitive talents, and enhance their innovation capabilities and international reputation. Therefore, educational diversification has become an undeniable trend and inevitable choice. Internationalized higher education will continue to develop globally, providing students and countries with broader opportunities and challenges [2].

2.2. The Necessity of Diversified Education

UNESCO points out that education is a "key tool" for achieving sustainable development goals, as it can increase knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, critical thinking, abilities, systems thinking, and a sense of responsibility. Firstly, receiving diversified higher education can enhance students' skills and broaden their horizons, which is also crucial for finding high-paying jobs. According to UNESCO's observation, higher education enhances students' skills, entrepreneurial spirit, and ability to obtain decent work. Especially among students studying abroad. In addition, diversified higher education is crucial for achieving a sustainable society. In countries that are building higher education, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and some European countries, diverse lifestyles, respect for human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace, and the cultivation of global citizenship have become important goals argue that receiving diversified higher education is key to achieving these goals [1].

3. The Importance of Maintaining Uniqueness

In the past few decades, global higher education governance and university management have become increasingly complex in the context of unprecedented expansion and diversification. The dual pressures of external and internal factors are driving higher education reform in various countries: university management is shifting from a control mode to a supervision mode, and teaching modes are gradually becoming more diversified. However, Western theories and methods of higher education governance cannot be simply applied to societies with different historical and cultural traditions, such as China. Therefore, individuals and countries need to maintain the uniqueness of their own educational culture. The governance reform of higher education, such as university curriculum reform, essentially involves control and influence, with interpersonal interaction (teachers and students) as the core, and therefore closely relies on cultural background. Cultural characteristics play a crucial role in the reform and implementation of university education [3].

3.1. The Importance of Maintaining National Characteristics

As Chinese universities receive increasing funding from the Chinese government and climb in international rankings, the 2024 QS Global University Rankings: Peking University ranks 17th globally, Tsinghua University ranks 25th globally, the University of Hong Kong ranks 26th globally, Zhejiang University ranks 44th globally. Fudan University ranks 50th globally. Shanghai Jiao Tong University ranks 51st globally. China is also reshaping the epistemology of global higher education. The famous C9 Alliance, represented by China, has an annual growth rate of 12.8%, even surpassing Canada's elite U15 university group in 2014. Currently, the research output of Chinese universities ranks second in the world and may surpass the research influence of the United States in the mid-2020s [4]. The main influencing factor shaping China's social science knowledge production is the rapid economic growth of China's past forty years of reform and opening up. In an era where challenges and opportunities coexist, the importance of maintaining localized and distinctive education in China is self-evident. In March 2019, Wu Yan, Director General of the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education of China, proposed the concept of a "new mission, big picture, new humanities, and big foreign languages", emphasizing the important role of higher foreign language education in international exchange and cooperation, China's participation in global governance, and its significant responsibility in spreading China's voice and ideas to the world. It can be seen that foreign language education plays an important role in China's higher education system. However, the concept of "new liberal arts" and "big foreign language" in China is somewhat different from the boundaries and responsibilities of liberal arts or foreign language majors in Western universities. When learning the practicability of foreign language education, China also retains the characteristic education in terms of mission and responsibility, guides liberal arts and foreign language education with correct values, carries forward the fine educational tradition of the Chinese nation to establish morality and cultivates people, and gives play to the humanistic function of foreign language education to cultivate human nature [5].

3.2. The Importance of Personal Distinctiveness

Taking China as an example, historically, Chinese society has been guided by collectivism. However, in the past few decades, with the rapid and large-scale development of the social economy, Chinese culture and people's psychology have begun to change. One significant change is the rise of individualism. More and more values related to individualism, such as autonomy and self-confidence, have gained widespread recognition and welcome in China. Some studies have focused on the psychological changes reflected in cultural products such as books. These studies have found that, compared to the past few decades, the use of singular first-person pronouns (such as "I" and "my") has relatively increased, while the use of plural first-person pronouns (such as "we" and "our") and vocabulary related to individualistic values (such as autonomy and freedom) has also increased [6].

These changes reveal the psychological changes in Chinese society and the increasing emphasis on individualism in Chinese society.

At the same time, some traditional values have begun to decline in Chinese society, including obedience, loyalty, humility, the hierarchical system within the family, parental authority, and the rule of elders in the family. However, on the other hand, some traditional values still exist in Chinese society, such as family, friendship, and patriotism [6]. Some traditional values have even become more common, such as a sense of responsibility and filial piety [6]. The existence of this complexity may be partly due to the persistence and change of lifestyle which fully reflects that the current generation of Chinese people has begun to understand the importance of maintaining uniqueness, and taking the essence of traditional culture, such as kinship, friendship, patriotism, sense of responsibility, filial piety; Simultaneously keeping up with the trend of the times and fully developing individuality.

4. The Path of Integrated Development

Higher education has enormous global development potential and is the cornerstone for achieving sustainable development goals. The limited academic freedom and institutional autonomy of universities, while realizing their global development potential through cooperation with the government and private sector, also hinder the full realization of the potential of higher education. The mission of a university is not only national development but also global development. Therefore, higher education must be closely integrated with the modernization needs of the country, cultivating students' thirst for knowledge and curiosity through education, and stimulating students' thinking about the development goals of higher education. Universities should cultivate students' ability to think independently and have an innovative spirit, enabling them to contribute to the sustainable development of the country and the global society [7].

4.1. Government and National Guidelines and Policies

Taking China as an example, in the current Chinese society, school education practice is still mostly oriented towards the goal of "universal secular success". The slogan of 'good school determines a good job' is still being shouted, and the excessive pursuit of academic performance in exam-oriented education has led many people to fall into a long-term emptiness after entering prestigious universities and achieving their so-called goals in the eyes of their families. American pragmatist John Dewey and contemporary Chinese Confucian scholar Liang Shuming both believed that although living in different cultural traditions, "if we want to build a democratic and free society, we need to cultivate a person's personality". The Chinese government also recognized this and on July 24, 2021, China issued the Double Reduction Policy [8]. The 'double reduction policy' is a big step taken by the Chinese government from exam-oriented education to quality education. The first point is to limit the number of off-campus training institutions, build a good educational ecosystem, effectively alleviate parents' anxiety, and promote students' comprehensive development and healthy growth; The second point is to comprehensively reduce the total amount and duration of homework, and alleviate students' heavy homework burden. The "double reduction policy" is a firm step taken by the Chinese government to maintain characteristic education and build high-quality education. However, the reality is that due to the pressure of enrollment rates and limited quotas in key schools, these assignments have not been truly reduced but have been renamed as "exercises". Students still need to do "exercises" and be ranked and scored.

However, a 2015 BBC documentary titled 'Are We Really Strong?' conducted a teaching experiment in which five Chinese teachers taught British students a month-long Chinese-style education at a British high school, and then compared them with students in British education through exams. The result of the experiment is that students with Chinese education have much higher scores. It has been proven that in a society with a sound welfare system, the significance of exam-oriented education is not significant. However, for students with strong execution abilities and high learning talent, Chinese education can help them reach higher heights. For other students, schools should

promote the cultivation of the freedom to seek knowledge and curiosity through education, stimulate students to discover their interests, and then consider whether they need to receive further higher education.

Therefore, high-quality education remains a major livelihood issue in China. Under the framework of a large number of candidates, the Chinese government's "double reduction policy" should be tailored to local conditions and implemented effectively. The first point about limiting the number of off-campus training institutions is that the number of candidates varies in different provinces of China. For example, Shanghai has only 50000 candidates, while Henan has over 1 million candidates. For exam areas with large numbers of candidates such as Henan, blindly reducing the number of educational institutions will only intensify vicious competition among students. For example, transferring from institutional tutoring to teachers' home tutoring. For such exam areas, the primary task is to release more admission quotas and enhance the comprehensive strength and reputation of universities within the province to reduce vicious competition among candidates. For exam areas with relatively less competitive pressure, such as Shanghai, it is necessary to focus on reforming curriculum arrangements, reducing exam taking, and promoting students' development of their interests and expertise.

4.2. Efforts of Civil Organizations

The China and Globalization Think Tank (CCG) has released a report titled "Blue Book of China's Study Abroad Development Report (2023-2024)" [9]. According to the statistics of the report, in addition to the traditionally popular destinations for studying abroad, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada, European countries such as Germany, France, Russia, Italy, Ireland, and Sweden, as well as countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative such as Malaysia and Thailand, are also becoming the main destinations for Chinese students to study abroad. The reason for this change is the change in the international situation and the promotion of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

The changes in the international situation make the countries participating in the "Belt and Road Initiative" more and more popular with Chinese students. These countries have made positive progress in strengthening education cooperation with China and providing more scholarships and study-abroad opportunities. Meanwhile, the geographical location and cultural and linguistic characteristics of these countries are also reasons that attract Chinese students.

According to the Blue Book report, according to UNESCO data, in 2021, among the 150 countries that signed the "Belt and Road" cooperation document with China, China belongs to 24 of the top 10 source countries for international students in this country. The number of Chinese students studying in these 24 countries totaled 170000, an increase of 10800 over 2020, accounting for 15.8% of the total number of international students in these countries. In the future, with the deepening of economic and trade exchanges between China and the "Belt and Road" countries, the two-way flow of international students will become increasingly important.

In addition to changes in geographical selection, there are also new trends in the choice of majors for studying abroad. Chinese students still mainly choose traditional STEM majors for studying abroad, but the popularity of choosing business continues to decrease. Taking studying in the United States as an example, according to CCG's "2023 Open Door Report", the proportion of Chinese students choosing business has decreased from 24.3% in 2015 to 13.4% in 2022. At the same time, the number of international students choosing niche majors is also increasing. Taking France as an example, 40% of Chinese students studying in France are studying humanities, arts, and language majors [9].

According to the "Blue Book of China's Study Abroad Development Report (2023-2024)" released by China and Globalization Think Tank, the choices of Chinese overseas students are becoming more diversified. In addition to the traditional destinations for studying abroad, the United States, Britain, Australia, and Canada, European countries and countries participating in the "Belt and Road Initiative" have also become important choices for Chinese students to study abroad. This change is

affected by the changes in the international situation and the promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative. The changing international situation has made countries pay more attention to attracting Chinese students, providing scholarships and convenient conditions. At the same time, Chinese students are also interested in the advantages of countries such as Germany and France in scientific research and technology. Countries participating in the "Belt and Road" plan attract Chinese students by strengthening educational cooperation and providing scholarships. This indicates that Chinese students are pursuing diversified study-abroad experiences and broader employment opportunities.

5. Conclusion

Internationalization of education has become a mainstream concept in higher education worldwide, constantly evolving. With the diversification of international education, countries have different interpretations of "internationalization". The diversification of educational internationalization presents both challenges and opportunities. When facing an "internationally standardized education system," it is necessary to maintain educational distinctiveness and integrate diversity with distinctiveness to provide students with more effective educational paths. In the context of the internationalization of education, the diversified and distinctive development of education is inevitable. With the progress of globalization and commercialization of higher education, the rise of global knowledge society, and economic concepts, the higher education environment has undergone rapid changes. In the past, internationalization was mainly a phenomenon in Western countries, but now the higher education sector in emerging economies and other regions is also changing this pattern.

The trend of diversified education is no longer limited to Western education, and Asian countries have become the main regions for the internationalization of education. As global student mobility becomes easier, educational diversity is no longer synonymous with Western education. At the same time, countries participating in the "Belt and Road" program are also increasingly popular with Chinese students. These countries attract Chinese students by strengthening educational cooperation and providing scholarships. The necessity of diversified education is closely related to internationalization and employment skills, which helps to cultivate globally competitive talents and promote international cooperation and innovation. However, in the process of diversifying education, it is also important to maintain the educational characteristics of each country and region. Each country should formulate policies and innovative models based on its own culture and development needs to enhance the uniqueness of local education. The government and schools should actively cooperate to provide students with a comprehensive education and cultivate their creativity, independent thinking, and international perspective. Civil organizations also play an important role in promoting diversified development of education, providing a wider range of choices and opportunities.

In short, the balanced development of education diversification and specialization under the background of internationalization of education is necessary. By maintaining educational distinctiveness and integrating diverse educational paths, countries can better adapt to the challenges and opportunities of globalization, and provide students with higher quality and more diverse education. At the same time, governments, schools, and civil organizations of various countries should strengthen cooperation to jointly promote the internationalization of education and achieve the goals of sustainable development and global cooperation.

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