

# Research on the Predicament and Development Path of China's Higher Education under the Background of "One Belt and One Road"

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**Abstract:** The Belt and Road Initiative aims to create a community of interests, a community of responsibilities, and a community of destiny. With the vigorous implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative and the deepening of education and teaching reform, China's higher education development is facing new opportunities. The "One Belt, One Road" proposal has pointed out the direction for improving the internationalization level of China's higher education under the open pattern and given it a new connotation. Under this background, the global transformation and development of China's higher education should clarify the development direction and development ideas, introduce high-quality educational resources, give full play to the subjective initiative of the main body of the university, innovate the teaching methods of higher education, actively seek new paths for transformation, and vigorously enhance the innovation of universities. , deeply promote the internationalization of university education, and actively carry out people-to-people and cultural exchanges with higher education in countries along the "Belt and Road" to realize the leap-forward development of Chinese higher education in the new era.

**Keywords:** One Belt One Road, Chinese higher education, Development.

## 1. Introduction

The "Belt and Road" is a great initiative and a public product of international cooperation proposed by China. It aims to inject into the development of countries along the route and the world economy through the "five links" (i.e., policy communication, facility connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds). New motivation. All countries should adhere to the "One Belt, One Road" concept of openness, inclusiveness, and win-win, promote the rational flow of educational resources, strengthen high-level international cooperation, maintain the diversity of world civilizations, form a diversified, open, and coordinated higher education system, and actively promote Build a community with a shared future for humankind and make positive contributions to the realization of a happy and beautiful future for humankind. China's higher education should actively and deeply promote the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, which is of positive significance for China's higher education to get out of the current predicament and realize the leap-forward development of China's higher education[1].

## 2. The background of China's higher education internationalization transformation

The "Belt and Road" initiative is China's first vital move to promote global governance reform as a significant country, and it is also an innovative practice by China to build a community with a shared future for humankind. The "Belt and Road" initiative emphasizes the interconnection between countries. Its connotation is to realize economic cooperation and shared prosperity of countries along the route through road connectivity, unimpeded trade, and currency circulation. A friendly relationship is based on mutual trust between

countries and people. The "Belt and Road" initiative intends to build an international economic and trade cooperation platform for historical and cultural inheritance, exchange, and mutual learning and to create a future-oriented, world-oriented, open, and inclusive cooperation model with high development feasibility. In the new historical period, to seize the "Belt and Road" opportunity to deepen higher education reform further and cultivate international-oriented professionals, it is necessary to think deeply about the transformation of China's higher education internationalization[2]. see Figure 1.



Figure 1. China's Higher Education "One Belt, One Road"

Presently, the internationalization of China's higher education has achieved remarkable results and is entering a new stage of development that is wide-ranging, multi-level, and focuses on quality improvement. In the process of deepening the reform of higher education, the international development of China's higher education still has practical problems such as unbalanced regional development, insufficient follow-up development momentum, derailment

of the university management system from the international system, and a single development model. The proposal of the "Belt and Road" initiative has provided reform impetus and new external opportunities for promoting the internationalization of China's higher education. The international influence and international competitiveness of higher education institutions have been improved. This is conducive to accelerating the pace of China's opening to the outside world and provides practical educational resources for realizing China's high-level opening up, thus forming a benign interactive mechanism of "promoting the internationalization of education with high-level opening and promoting high-level opening with international education." Therefore, China should further exert soft power supporting the role of higher education in the new development stage, optimize the opening layout of regional higher education, and make higher education serve the country's economic construction and trade development from a higher starting point. The transformation and development of the internationalization of higher education will become an important way for China to enhance its soft power and national image, ensure the sustainable and high-quality development of higher education internationalization, and seek common concepts, value positioning, and path support for the development of higher education. It is the only way to practice the internationalization of higher education[3].

### 3. The Development of Higher Education in China Is of Great Significance to The Promotion of the "Belt and Road" Initiative

In the "Belt and Road" cooperation process, China has to shoulder its mission and promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Cooperation between the two sides should be based on realistic higher education cooperation channels, rely on cooperation mechanisms, promote peace and stability, and actively develop economic, trade, and cultural cooperation with countries along the route[4]. The international cooperation mechanism of higher education in developing countries will inevitably refer to the international cooperation mechanism of higher education in Western countries in economic globalization. The proposal of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative can shorten the gap between higher education in the "One Belt One Road" region and western developed countries and improve the development level of higher education in China and the regions along the route. Cooperation in the field of higher education in China has cultivated a large number of outstanding young talents and promoted the opening up of cooperation. In a word, the continuous in-depth promotion of the initiative has promoted the cooperation of higher education along the route to a deeper and different level and promoted the influence of higher education in China. From this perspective, international cooperation in higher education has a far-reaching impact on promoting the Belt and Road Initiative. Cooperation between higher education affects other fields, involving politics, economy, culture, etc[5]. see Figure 2.

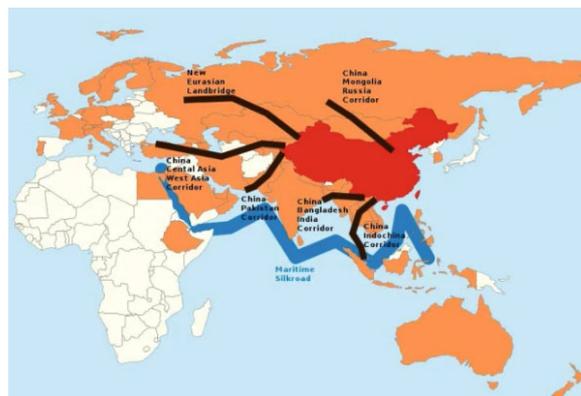


Figure 2. The development trend of China's higher education internationalization along the Belt and Road

The policy recommendations for the Belt and Road Initiative cover many areas. It can promote coordination and cooperation within the region. This initiative meets not only the interests of our country but also the interests of the people along the route and even the interests of people worldwide. This initiative explores new methods of governance along the route from a new perspective, is committed to world peace, and expresses the people's pursuit of ideals. It is proposed to deeply explore the cooperation potential of the regions along the route and pay attention to the exchanges and exchanges in the Silk Road region. The regions along the route have also promoted investment and economic cooperation, achieved sustainable development and progress in the country, promoted people's employment, relieved pressure, and created wealth. The frequent exchanges make countries respect each other and promote the understanding of the cultures of both sides. It will not pose a threat to other countries. It has a big picture and national solid cohesion. In the context of world integration, China is also inextricably linked with the world economy. Only a few countries are still in a closed state, and most believe opening up can enhance national strength. Opening up promotes the development of cooperation. Although there are some challenges in the cooperation, it will bring a win-win for both parties[6].

## 4. Analysis of the Predicament of The International Development of Chinese Higher Education

### 4.1. The Pressure of International Competition Has Surged, And the Problem of The Deficit of Studying Abroad Is Serious

For a long time, European and American countries have been essential exporters of international education. They have long formed monopolistic international education groups and have a robust international voice in teaching systems, scientific research activities, and talent exchanges. The advantages of historical accumulation have made developed countries in Europe and the United States concentrate a large number of practical educational resources, which has led to the relative solidification of the national educational resource distribution system in the past century. European and American countries have always been on the supply side of educational resources, while China and other emerging economies have always been on the demand side of educational resources. Driven by the "Belt and Road" initiative, the number of international students and foreign

educational institutions in China has surged, and international education has become an important development direction of higher education. The level of internationalization of China's higher education is generally on the rise. However, the number of international students studying in China is still far lower than that of overseas Chinese students, and the problem of studying abroad is still severe. From the perspective of the flow distribution of Chinese students, developed countries such as Europe and the United States such as the United States and the United Kingdom are still the first choice, and Australia and Canada have also become essential options for Chinese students. The deficit of Chinese students studying abroad will restrict the international development of China's higher education, which is not conducive to improving China's influence and voice in the field of international education. Accelerating the inflow of international students from countries along the "Belt and Road" has become an essential solution to the problem of the deficit of international students...

## **4.2. Difficulties in Talent Training**

When countries and institutions initially set up relevant majors and disciplines. There is a lack of overall planning, poor market adaptability and timeliness, and insufficient investment in vocational education urgently needed by the Belt and Road Initiative. E.g., The "Silk Road" Chinese government scholarship does not benefit higher vocational education at the junior college level. The funding groups are still undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students, and the enthusiasm of international students along the route is low. In addition, the homogenization of talents and the shortage of vocational and technical talents have led to the embarrassing situation of "difficulty in employment and labor shortage." The "One Belt, One Road" strategy urgently needs six types of talents: innovative and entrepreneurial talents, international organization talents, overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese talents, non-common language talents, urgently needed professional talents, and overseas high-end talents. Relevant majors and disciplines in China have made some progress. However, due to the short time and the uneven distribution of educational resources, non-key universities and universities in underdeveloped areas cannot carry out relevant construction due to geographical, policy, funding, and teacher constraints. The "Belt and Road" professional training modes are similar. The degree of internationalization is low, and the degree of multidisciplinary integration is insufficient. Employers have not fully participated in reforming talent training programs and models, resulting in poor workplace adaptability and employment difficulties for graduates.

## **4.3. Dilemmas Faced by International Cooperation**

First, the environment for international cooperation is complex: due to different languages, religious beliefs, and ethnic customs, communication problems frequently arise. Political instability in some countries. It adds much uncertainty to the internationalization of higher education. Second, the system design still needs to be improved, and international cooperation cannot be planned according to local conditions, and it cannot exert its maximum effect. Third, the ability to independently develop international courses needs to be strengthened. Many colleges and universities introduce foreign courses, lack "localized" processing, and

rarely have self-developed courses aligned with international standards. This is not conducive to teaching students according to local conditions and will hinder the internationalization of China's higher education in the long run and reduce the competitiveness of China's international talents. Fourth, The number of international students studying in China has increased, and the structure and quality need to be improved. According to statistics, in 2016, the number of international students who received an academic education in China accounted for less than half of the total number of international students in China. The number of master's and doctoral students is only about 30% of the total number of international students receiving academic education. Compared with China's strong support and investment in countries and regions along the route, the number of students studying in China from countries and regions along the route is lower than expected, which cannot meet the demand for talents in the "Belt and Road" initiative. It is not conducive to comprehensive, in-depth, and sustainable exchanges between China and countries and regions along the route. Fifth, the frequency of academic exchanges is low, and academic support is insufficient. The quality and innovation of higher education teaching and research in China have steadily improved, but there is still a big gap with developed countries.

## **4.4. The Difficulties Faced by The Study Abroad System**

The education of international students in China has developed steadily. Nevertheless, there are still many challenges. First, there are differences between the country of origin and China in terms of ethnicity, religion, history, and culture. In addition, those with ulterior motives maliciously vilify China. This has caused students from some countries and regions along the route to exclude students from studying in China. Also, Traditional famous study abroad destinations like the United States strongly compete for international students. It affects the quantity and quality of international students studying in China. Second, The distribution of international students in China is uneven; most are concentrated in megacities and large cities. The cost of expanding the scale of international students is high. The education level is concentrated in undergraduates, while the proportion of students with higher vocational colleges, postgraduates, and above is low, which is not conducive to the diversified development of international students. Third, the quality of education and teaching for international students in China lacks international competitiveness. The optional majors are limited, the degree of internationalization of the courses is low, the curriculum system and teaching methods are outdated, the employment competitiveness of international students is not strong, and it cannot continue to attract international students. Fourth, the management of international students in China is not in place, and there is a lack of perfect scientific and systematic services. For example, international students need to improve job search consultation and guidance urgently. Fifth, the channels for students studying in China to do internships and employment in China are not smooth. Enterprises prefer international students whose native language is English, and students from countries along the route are left out.

## 5. Reflections on the Development Path of Chinese Higher Education Under the Belt and Road Initiative

### 5.1. Create A New Learner-Centered Education Ecosystem That Is Compatible with High-quality Development

With the in-depth implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative, there is an urgent need for high-quality, export-oriented, and scarce talents in transportation, energy, international trade, and finance. At the same time, the way of education is deeply influenced by new technologies, including artificial intelligence and big data. As the central position to speed up the training of international talents, universities should adapt to the new situation, change from focusing on teaching to focusing on learning, take students' learning as the main line, highlight the vital position of students' learning and development, and promote education and teaching reform through informatization. Break down the barriers of disciplines, majors, and departments, and comprehensively improve the teaching level and innovation ability.

### 5.2. Build A High-level Teaching Team That Is Compatible with High-quality Development

Economic globalization has promoted the optimal allocation of production factors and resources on a global scale, especially with the advancement of the "Belt and Road"

construction, the connections and interactions among countries along the route in the fields of politics, economy, culture, education, science, and technology have become more and more. It is necessary that the talents cultivated by colleges and universities not only meet the requirements of domestic economic development but also meet the needs of world economic, political and cultural development. Cultivating high-quality talents with a global vision has become an essential task of talent cultivation in higher education today, among which the construction of high-level teaching staff has become the critical task. The university's teaching staff is the main body to realize the three functions of talent training, scientific research, and social service. This main body's development level determines the school's development level and position. To this end, universities must establish a "professional, institutionalized, and normalized" teacher development system that focuses on improving teaching ability and academic level and commits to creating a group of high-quality professional teachers. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the international exchange of teachers, further strengthen the cooperation with internationally renowned universities and scientific research institutions, and take the opportunity of Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools, international courses, and joint scientific research to invite high-level experts to carry out teaching and scientific research cooperation, to enhance the internationalization of teachers. Course teaching, academic frontier exploration, and collaborative research capabilities to improve the school's academic influence. see Figure 3.

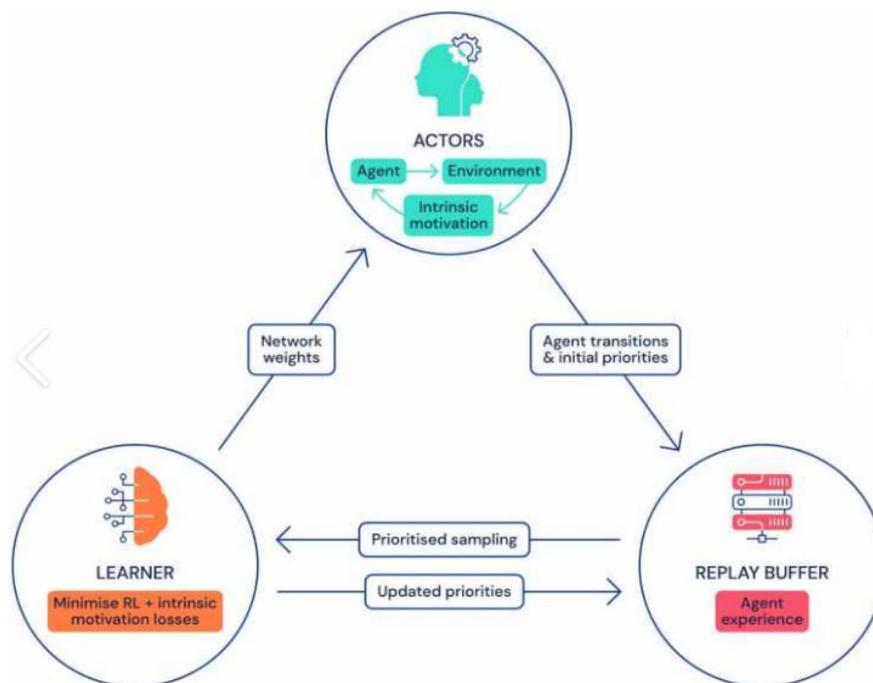


Figure 3. High Quality Framework for Higher Education in China

### 5.3. Create an Information Exchange Platform Compatible with High-quality Development

Information is a universal connection, and people promote the advancement and development of affairs through exchanging information. A smooth information exchange network can maximize the effectiveness of the information

sharing mechanism and promote the connection of projects, talents, and funds. It is undoubtedly a great boon for the development of higher education in the context of the "Belt and Road" that the main body of information exchange can exert the maximum synergy of the joint research team through establishing a multilateral cooperation mechanism. The high-quality development of higher education cannot stop at theories and slogans but should be practically practiced in the

subject and object of education. The cooperation and complementary advantages between domestic universities and countries along the "Belt and Road" is practical and feasible, and both regional and disciplinary advantages can be strengthened, thereby promoting the benign interactive development of information exchange platforms. For example, colleges and universities in the Northeast region can cooperate with North Korea, South Korea, Japan, and the Russian Far East, give full play to their respective advantages, actively promote the development and opening up of the Tumen River region, and open up a new channel to the North. Through the establishment of a substantive cooperation mechanism with close ties, division of labor, and efficient cooperation, cluster advantages will be formed, and international influence will be enhanced;

## 6. Conclusion

With the continuous advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative, there have been frequent reports of good news in China's higher education sector. In 2018, the gross enrollment rate of China's higher education reached 48.1%, far exceeding the world average, indicating that China is about to enter the stage of universalization of higher education. Provide more solid support in talents, technology, culture, and other aspects for China and the countries and regions along the route. Thoroughly implement the concept of innovative, entrepreneurial, and international compound talents. Coordinate the resources of various majors and disciplines required for constructing the "Belt and Road" and promote the internationalization of higher education in a focused, planned, three-dimensional and comprehensive manner. With the continuous advancement of the internationalization of higher education, the globalization of talent training, and the institutionalization of studying in China, Chinese higher education will break the absolute discourse power of the West over higher education and actively promote the formation of higher education in countries and regions along the route. Based on the principle of extensive consultation, joint

contribution, and shared benefits, we will create a new pattern of internationalized higher education that highlights the style of the times and the national spirit. Let more countries and regions enjoy the dividends brought by the new pattern of higher education, contribute Chinese wisdom in the reform and development of international higher education, and coordinate the development of domestic higher education with the growth of the higher education community. Coordinate the "Belt and Road" construction with the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind, and create a new situation for the leap-forward development of higher education.

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