

The Impacts of Higher Education Globalization on Chinese Universities

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Abstract

Globalization has increased the competitions of knowledge and economy between countries, and these competitions in turn made higher education become an important tool of enhancing the competitiveness of every country. However, today, the core thought pattern of global higher education is dominated by the western developed countries, which has affected the development of higher education in the developing countries seriously, and many developing countries just accept the higher education mode of the developed countries passively, but cannot affect the world due to their limited science & technology and economy level. Therefore, the development of higher education in many developing countries is confused and disoriented. In this paper, we will discuss the impacts as well as the plights and confusions that globalization of higher education brought to Chinese universities, and at the same time, discuss the measures that Chinese government and universities did in these years to adapt to the globalization. Finally, we will give some suggestions to improve the quality and efficiency of Chinese universities.

Key words: Impacts of globalization; Higher education; Plights and confusions; Reform measures

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INTRODUCTION

With the development of globalized economy and trade, globalized trend of education, especially higher education is more and more evident. The impact of globalization on higher education is profound and complex, mainly reflected through three levels-economic level, political level and cultural level. On the economic level, economic globalization puts forward higher requires on universities. Universities have to consider how to educate students to meet the individual needs, national requirements, and at the same time consistent with global economy market needs. Students are no longer just learners, but also are the producers in the future. University should help students to adapt to more complex work environment and higher level of technology requirements by re-setting educational goals and curriculums. On the political level, with the increase in global economic activity, global conflicts, crimes, terrorisms and environmental problems are increasing, but there are not enough institutions to resolve these issues. So education should play an important role in reducing these negative issues. Universities should not only educate students with knowledge and techniques, but also educate them to become the citizens of the world with higher ethical and moral standards. Reducing conflicts, crimes, pollutions and destructions of nature environment are basic social responsibilities of everyone who lives on the earth. At last, on the cultural level, on the one hand, globalization requires universities to educate students to learn different cultures of different nations, teaching them how to live in harmony with people who have different political, cultural and religious backgrounds; globalized education leads a multicultural world. But on the other hand, globalization may erode local culture, let people learn the new world's cultures while ignoring or losing

their native cultures. So universities should protect the native unique culture, at the same time respect other cultures. In summary, globalization of high education presents more serious challenges on universities, every university and person should understand the meaning of globalization correctly. The core idea of globalized education should be to educate students to become global citizens with knowledge about different cultures, techniques and information concerned. Let them protect the whole “earth village” and concern about the development of human-being.

We know that the world’s higher education system is composed loosely by multi-ethnic higher education (QI & WANG, 2007), but western higher education holds the core position (Duderstadt, 2010). The higher education of the third world countries depends greatly on the higher education of developed countries. The teaching mode, curriculum and targets of educating students of western higher education are all standards followed by developing countries. In some academic fields, developed countries are in the center, but the third world countries are all in the edges throughout. For China, as the biggest developing nation, its higher education is affected by western countries seriously. The original pattern of higher education has been broken, and a part of original culture has been discarded. In the wave of globalization, China is just like a lost child unwittingly followed the footsteps of others.

There are five sections in this paper. We will describe the impact of globalized education on China in section two, and talk about what the Chinese government and universities did in these years to adapt to the globalization in the third section. Further suggestions for Chinese universities in the fourth and conclusion will be given in the final section.

THE IMPACTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION GLOBALIZATION (HEG) ON CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

China has more than 5000 years of history, with many inventions which have been significant for the development of human history, such as the early four inventions (paper making, gun power, printing and compass), seismograph and weaving techniques. *Arithmetic with Nine Chapters*, which was originated in Han dynasty and completed in 1st century AD, includes fractional numbers, negative numbers, addition and division rules, determinant thought etc., which were all the earliest introduction in the world. This knowledge of natural sciences, together with ancient outstanding poems, essays, Confucianism and traditional social etiquettes are all a part of contents of education in China. Those civilized manners in ancient influence generation after generation. But the advent of globalization breaks the traditional pattern of education in China. It makes

Chinese people aware that a long tradition of culture cannot necessary increase the productivity; science and technology are the true treasures. So China began to learn all advanced things from abroad, including the technological know-hows along with western cultures, and at the same time, the universities also shifted the focus of education from the traditional Chinese cultures to advanced science and techniques. Unfortunately, the pendulum swung too far and it brought about the negligence of its native unique cultures. Many Chinese universities, without well thinking, have been involved in the wave of globalized higher education in a hurry.

The Positive Impacts of HEG on Chinese Universities

On the impact of HEG, it does have its positive side; it creates more opportunities and space for everyone and university.

Firstly, it has created more opportunities for Chinese students and teachers to study in a different culture. We can see that globalization of higher education has shortened the distance between any two nations, two universities and two persons (Hershock, 2010). Now, more and more students can go to other nations to accept higher education, culture and living style. In China, the number of students studying abroad is growing rapidly year by year, at the same time, USA, UK and other nations have provided more opportunities and places for Chinese students to apply. Some US universities even came to China to recruit students face to face. For instance, California State University came to China in April in 2011 to recruit students in some high schools. In order to escape from the pressure of the nation-wide university entrance exams, some high middle school students would like to choose to apply for foreign university. The number of college students to apply for postgraduate education in other nations is also increasing. For the diligent Chinese students, it is not difficult for them to pass the language tests (such as GRE, IETLES and TOEFL) when they apply for foreign universities. Hence, now it is very common to see more and more Chinese students studying for Master and doctoral degree in other nations. Almost all undergraduates and Masters pay full-price tuition by themselves. From the data of the Ministry of Education (ME), there were 0.2293 million students going abroad in 2009, of which 0.2101 million (91.6%) students pay their own tuitions. The total tuition is about 3,151.5 million RMB in this year. These students paying tuitions by themselves can freely choose to stay abroad or return to China when they finish their studies. Not only students, more and more teachers would like to study abroad or walk into other nations to disseminate knowledge. Some professors go abroad by taking advantage of exchanging programs and visiting scholar opportunities, of course, some of them never come back (JIANG, 2007). Some professors cooperate with foreign professors and depend

on each other. Some professors stay much longer in other nations than in China. In short, in such an open information age, with the growth of communication between nations, students and teachers all have more choices to decide where to study and where to work.

Secondly, Globalization gives Chinese universities more opportunities to learn from their peers in other nations. Now many Chinese universities are carrying on cooperation with foreign universities in some research fields. They improve the quality of students and teachers by exchanging them for 1 or 2 years, and these students and teachers can win two nationally recognized qualifications at the same time. Some universities in China have changed the bureaucratic management approaches, teaching methods, curriculums and targets of training students through learning from their peers in USA, UK, Australia, Canada and other nations. Thus, the globalization does benefit every student, teacher and university.

Thirdly, HEG creates a more open learning environment for everyone in China. The students, who cannot study abroad, also can learn more than in their native universities by using the internet, reading papers of foreign writers, online teaching etc.. Professors, even if not go abroad, of course can update knowledge timely by learning the latest knowledge in his field and improve teaching methods by learning worldwide through the internet or listening to reports. The government and universities also can access to the world's education by invite foreign scholars and organizations. Even the ordinary people, also can know about the cultures, etiquettes, habits and customs of other nations through internet, newspaper, and TV media. In short, globalization has situated people in an open world; people can learn more and know more than before.

The Negative Impacts of HEG on Chinese Universities

Nevertheless, any coin has two sides; HEG also has brought forth negative impacts on Chinese universities.

Firstly, a part of valuable national culture is disappearing. Now the protagonists on the global arena are basically those countries or group of organizations which have advanced economic and technology level. By using the superiority of capital, technology and information, they sell materials, cultural and educational products even instill the concepts of value to any corners in the world which they can touch (SONG, 2004). The developing countries cannot have chance to show their cultures comprehensively and profoundly due to their limited economic and scientific level, and they are basically in passive position to accept all the ideas of developed countries. In order to catch up with the developed countries, Chinese people pay more attention to the advanced techniques and world cultures, but neglect the domestic development of civilization. Some cultural rituals in ancient China have been replaced by modern

knowledge; some traditional social etiquette has been replaced by international etiquettes. Traditional Chinese cultures require that younger generation should respect their parents and grandparents, without their consent, youngsters should not sit, eat, and leave. But now almost all parents do what their children require them to. Most college students, even some PhD students cannot read ancient books, articles and poems with ancient font; they do not know well about Confucius, Mencius and other outstanding ancient writers and thinkers. In these years, some literary experts have awakened to this kind of cultural crisis and started to call on people to pick up those civilized manners. Some primary schools have begun to educate children from the first grade to learn "Three-character Classic", "Disciplines of Children" which all educate people with good manners and respects. But most children do not know the meaning and neither do their young parents.

Secondly, universities and teachers cannot keep a clear head in the globalization process. In these years, economic globalization makes the market economy of China develop rapidly. People began to have higher living demands, some universities and professors are hard to keep a clear head to walk in the right way, such that some universities look like governments or enterprises or small societies. Universities look like governments for everybody pays great attention to his or her official position, which can bring him or her more benefits. Executives are classified by positions and professors are classified by titles, while the research abilities of professors have been underestimated. Universities look like enterprises because many teachers try their best to earn money not only from their universities, but also from outsides. Some excellent teachers, such as those from school of law, management science, engineering and so on, can gain more than salary by teaching courses outside or cooperate with enterprises and organizations. Some professors spend too much time on earning money to have not enough energy and time for research works. University looks like a small social, because it has nearly all parts of society. The relationship between different colleges, departments or persons is competitive yet collaborative. Department managers compete for fund and opportunities, professors compete for students, courses and higher titles. Students compete for studentships or recommended opportunity for postgraduate. Everyone feel the pressures from others, but at the same time, has to work with others together. Therefore, some people, for their own interests, use improper means to get more development opportunities. Intrigues are popular in the university now.

Thirdly, the traditional management style of Chinese universities is not suitable for the globally changing environment. In China, more than 71 percent of universities and higher education institutes are public (Ministry of Higher Education website, 2011), and managed by the government. The government controls

most affairs such as appointing president, allocation of materials and human resources, etc. Universities must report their plans to the government if they want to execute some important decisions. But globalized education situated higher education in a rapidly changing information environment, in order to survive; universities must grasp every opportunity to develop themselves in a timely manner. Chinese universities, having no rights to execute some important decisions freely, cannot grasp every opportunity in time, of course cannot be on the alert of competition from other universities. Government's control often let them lose competitive edges.

The situation of private universities is even worse. Although Confucius' home school was the earliest private school, the private higher education began to revive again truly after 1980. Until 2009, there are only 656 private colleges and universities in China, but the educational quality of most private universities is lower, they cannot contend with public universities of China, and of course cannot compete with private universities of other nations. The global competitive education environment makes their survival even more difficultly than before.

Fourthly, Chinese universities are facing serious crisis of survival. Almost all Chinese universities are facing the dilemma of losing outstanding students and professors every year. In these years, many excellent students, although they can gain the admission of prestigious domestic universities, would like to choose to study abroad. The decisions of these students were made out of their consideration of a higher quality of education, opportunities to learn other languages and cultures, experience of living abroad and more job choices. In considering where to study, the key choice factors for mobile students are, in order, country (54%), course (18%), universities (17%) and city (10%) (Simon, 2006). Especially for Chinese students, they choose their ideal university according to their favorite nations, subjects and the reputation of universities. However, even the most famous universities Tsinghua University and Peking University of China are all nearly 100 in the world rankings. So many outstanding students would like to study in other nations such as USA, UK, Australia and Canada etc. According to the data from ME, from 1978 to 2010, the total number of Chinese student studying abroad is 1.9054 million, 86.3% of them choose to go to USA (32.7%), UK (17.24%), Australia (15.3%), Korea (8.2%), Japan (7.8%), Canada (7.6%)--(Ministry of Higher Education website, 2011). Among these students, 1.2732 million (66.83%) choose to work or go on studying in foreign countries when they finish their studies and only 0.6322 million (33.17%) students came back. Organization for Economic cooperation (OECD) data also shows that the majority of doctoral students from emerging nations have 'firm plans' to stay in the USA after finishing their courses. Of the 1996 PhD graduates in Science and Engineering, 96% of those from China and

86% of those from India were still in the USA in 2001 (OECD, 2004). And those who came back also had good job choices due to their overseas experience. So in China, many parents, especially the economically rich ones, would like to send their children to study abroad.

Not only students, more teachers, especially those famous Chinese professors are trying their best to work and live abroad by using learning opportunities. In US universities, you can often meet Chinese professors, with excellent academic ability and good teaching style, are respected by students. Therefore, loss of talents has become a practical problem in China. But on the other hand, we find that the number of school age students is decreasing due to the decline in birth rate in these ten years, such that some infirm colleges have been closed or merged into other universities for lacking of students. And some famous universities have been aware of a serious decline in quality of students. Hence, the brain drain has been a serious problem that China must face and solve.

MEASURES OF ADAPTING TO THE GLOBALIZATION OF EDUCATION

China has noted these impacts from globalization. In order to strengthen the quality of Chinese universities, in 1992, Ministry of Education (ME) began to carry out "211 Project", i.e. facing 21 century, to build up 100 important universities and 100 important academic subjects to promote the technological development and strengthen the competitive edge of Chinese education. In 1995, 15 important universities including Tsinghua and Peking are among the first chosen to be improved in the following five years. In 1998, ME granted 1.8 billion RMB to Tsinghua and Peking to construct the world-class universities in three years. At the same time, Renmin University of China, Shanghai Jiao Tong, Fudan, Tongji, and etc., also collaborate with ME to promote the educational quality and competitive ability. Moreover, in these ten years, the central government and some provinces begin to unite infirm colleges into prominent universities. These measures are important for the government to enlarge the universities scale, improve the teaching efficiency, and use resources rationally. But these measures still cannot make Chinese universities more competitive. This kind of coalition is helpful for those colleges that are on the verge of bankruptcy, but adds more burdens on the prominent ones, which have to manage more students and teachers. In addition, the teachers and students from those infirm colleges are not competitive; they cannot promote the development of university. So coalition is not a real efficient way for Chinese universities to become much stronger. Hence, in recent years, in order to adapt to the globalization of higher education further, China began to take new measures to reduce the negative effects of globalization.

Firstly, the government expanded the proportion of foreign student's enrollment. While more Chinese students go to study abroad, the government has also begun to enroll more international students by broadening policies and offering more scholarships. Now 11 kinds of scholarships, given by Chinese government, are available for international students from all over 172 countries to apply. According to the data from the Ministry of Education, 10-thousand international students went to China in 2007, with 13.516 thousands in 2008, 18.245 thousands in 2009, and nearly 25 thousands in 2010. It is evident that the number is increasing greatly year by year.

Secondly, China expanded the opportunities for cooperation and communication with other nations. In these years, China has signed cooperation agreements with many famous universities and research institutions in more than 70 nations. From 2007 to 2010, the average number of cooperation projects each year is 25. In addition, the government, as well as universities, actively participated in international forums, such as international higher education forum, the NAFSA annual conference of USA, Asia Pacific international education conference and so on. Through these conferences, Chinese government and universities have obtained more access to educational resources of other nations.

Thirdly, the government and universities subsidize a large number of teachers to study abroad. These teachers can learn the most advanced scientific methods, at the same time, establish cooperation relationship with foreign famous professors. When they come back, they will go on cooperating with their foreign partners which helps them to stand in the forefront of academic. In addition, universities encourage those returning teachers to exchange ideas with others and let them teach in English. In several prominent universities, almost more than two-thirds faculties have been sent to study abroad at least one time.

Fourthly, universities have taken various active measures to recruit students back from overseas. Those PHDs who study abroad, have different thinking ways and thought patterns, they can inject fresh blood into our universities if they come back to teach in our universities. Hence, many Chinese universities try their best to attract those overseas PHDs. For instance, Tsinghua University, Peking University, Renmin University of China and Sun Yat-sen University etc. all provide research funding, living allowance, and even apartments for those outstanding returnees. Some universities even promise to grant the title of associate professor to those PHDs graduated from foreign famous universities. So in these three years, more PHDs began to consider coming back to China. The last one, universities began to adjust the subjects and courses according to the world economy and the demands of job markets timely. Universities encourage teachers to open new courses which are more practical and helpful to students. They also concerned about the changes in the course of foreign famous universities and learn from their

good curriculums. Although it often needs some time to report their plans to the government for approval, these universities still catch up with the pace of world education.

These above measures have partially alleviated the plight of Chinese universities. But we must recognize that there still are some problems we have to face, such as complex higher education system, rigid governmental management mode, low efficiency of student's management, underestimating the roles of professors, etc.. All of these have affected the development of Chinese universities greatly. In order to improve the prestige and status of Chinese universities, we must solve these problems essentially.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORM

First of all, Reform the governmental management mode and simplify the higher education system. Now, there are two yokes limit the development of Chinese universities (ZHANG, 2004). Within the university, the university administration team led by the president is supervised by the local university party led by the party secretary on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As admitted in the 1985 educational reform plan, university party secretary has more administrative powers than president. Outside of university, the president with his administrative team is managed by the government (Wubg-Wah, 1995). The government controls the right of appointing chief executives and other important positions, establishing branch campus, departments, subjects and professional directions, funds, allocation of materials and human resources of university. Even the student's curriculum, extracurricular activities and educational languages are also set by government. In Mainland China, it is obligatory for students to take courses such as Scientific Socialism, Political Economy, and the History of the CCP. The local Communist Youth Leagues of CCP assisted school parties in coordinating political activities by imposing ideas and thoughts of CCP to students from primary school and in recruiting students into CCP in university (Wubg-Wah, 1995).

The government should give the university enough powers to develop freely. Remove the supervision of the CCP and just give the necessary financial support when need. Let the university board elect or employ president and other important positions openly in an autonomous manner. And the university board should have the power to dismiss an incompetent president. The university board also should have the right to decide the projects, subjects and professional directions, allocation of materials, human resources, curriculum, and extracurricular activities. Especially, university should have the right of choosing courses for students according to the current global economy situation and the actual situation of China, as occasion requires, they can delete some outdated courses such as the history of the CCP, Mao Zedong Thought etc..

Secondly, university should carry on multicultural education to students, at the same time, protect Chinese mainstream culture. Facing the globalization, on the one hand, Chinese university should be ready to take the international road, to establish new educational philosophy, educational goals, new ways of scientific research and new curriculums, and to educate students to adapt to the world economic environment. The higher education of China concerned more about individual needs and development in the past; help every student to adapt to his own community. But globalization has extended the meaning of community and the community has gone beyond the family, region and nation today, it is diverse, complex and constantly changing (QI & HE, 2007). Hence, the educational goals of university should be more flexible and adaptable. University should help students to respond to the rapidly changing needs and opportunities, help them to get along well with those people of different cultural, political and religious backgrounds. On the other hand, university should protect the Chinese splendid cultural heritages and open ancient culture courses for all undergraduates. These ancient cultures are good for every student; help them to think, to act and to speak in civilized manners. Because the educated students have the largest influence on the society, their identity of the classic culture forms the mainstream of social trend. If they cannot receive the basic ancient cultures in the universities, the society cannot form national cultural context. As a result, the authority and seriousness of cultural education will be affected. If we cannot promote cultural consciousness of the whole nation, the fate of national culture will be terrible and tragic. Even students go abroad to study or live one day; they can bring our domestic civilization to foreigners. In fact, many foreign students are eager to learn the ancient cultures of China. Hence, protecting Chinese culture heritages of more than five thousand years is beneficial to the whole world.

Thirdly, university should have the sense of crisis. Globalized higher education has situated every university in the world in a competitive environment. Every university faces more pressures on competing for outstanding professors and students. Some universities in other nations have been unable to recruit enough students in these years and have expanded the size of enrollment in other nations. e.g. there are more than five thousands universities in US, and most universities cannot recruit enough students due to its limit population. Hence, many universities, especially private universities are expanding the enrollment ratio in other nations, and international students have become the main source of income of these private universities. Hence, with more universities of other nations opening doors to Chinese students, more and more outstanding Chinese students chose to study abroad; China has become the largest students-exporting country in the world nowadays. However, many Chinese universities do not worry about recruiting students due

to the huge population in China. But we must recognize that more and more Chinese students begin to choose university in the whole world, not just in China. Chinese universities cannot retain excellent students if they cannot improve their quality and reputation. Hence, Chinese universities must have the sense of crisis. They should take the appropriate measures, with the help of the government, to attract outstanding students and professors back, or else, they only can recruit inferior students and no way to improve their prestige and status.

Fourthly, pay more attention to the needs of professors and students. Whether a university can develop successfully, the key factors are professors and students. Good professors can improve the quality of teaching and university's reputation, hence attract more excellent students. While outstanding students can in turn increase the visibility of university. But now many universities do not attach the importance to professors and students, on the contrary, they impose tight controls over them. The professors are in the lowest level in the education system and are led by upper level leaders (dean or academic committee) on job promotion, teaching tasks, research tasks etc. If professors give proposals on academic discipline, they must submit reports to upper level, or more upper level, and this process usually need many days, even many months, when the reports returning back, professors often have lost interest or the best time has been missed. Moreover, many professors have heavy pressures on teaching, research works and title promotion. All faculties are required to write books, papers and undertake research projects if they want to apply for higher titles. For the young teachers, the situation is even worse. Many young professors with low salary, low title and few research funding, forced by living pressures, such as bringing up children, supporting parents, buying houses, paying for diseases, have to walk out of campus to earn money. It costs them too much time and energy which should be spent on research works and teaching. Hence, more and more professors complain too much pressure on their works. The case of students is not also optimistic. No students are permitted to participate in university decision-makings, the campus demonstrations are not permitted in China and they have no way to express their proposals or discontents in the campus. So in these years, some professors and students who desire for free and democratic campus environment would rather to go to other nations.

We know that many professors are experts in their own fields; university should let them play important roles and give them a democratic decision environment. They should participate in deciding research projects, subjects, professional directions, opening new courses and new creative ways of cultivating students. Universities should create more chances for the teachers to study and communicate with others, especially those famous professors in the world. For the students, university

should create democracy campus environment for all students, give students a channel to reflect their discontents. Students can have their own organizations whose representatives can be on behalf of students to talk with university about issues that are relevant to them. In addition, the students should have the right to accuse the irresponsible teachers and staff.

CONCLUSIONS

Globalization of higher education has really affected the higher education in China. The original pattern of education has been broken; some valuable traditional cultures have been replaced by world culture which is a sad thing to all Chinese people. More and more outstanding talents flow into other nations, at the same time, the birth-rate is decreasing year by year. Hence, Chinese universities are facing a brain drain crisis, and this brain drain has brought some infirm colleges, private universities to the edge of bankruptcy. Moreover, in the near future, the competition between countries mainly embodies as the competition of talents, the ability of talents can decide the status of their nation in the world. But China has lost too many talents due to its underdeveloped higher education system year after year. Without talents, how could China survive in the world in the future? It is time for Chinese government and universities to consider how to improve the higher education system. In these years, Chinese government and universities tried various methods to adapt to globalization and some achievements have been made. But there are still some problems they have to face and need to solve. So Chinese government and universities should maintain a cool head in the wave of HEG, analyze the international situation and national characteristics, do not always blindly imitate the mode of the developed countries. The government should reform the unreasonable management and give universities a liberal and independent environment to develop. In summary, there are still a lot of works that the Chinese universities and government should do to improve the higher education system of China. Chinese universities should not get lost

in the globalization, but should face the current situation calmly, and develop higher education programs in line with the actual situation of China. It might be a long way for China to change the status of its higher educational system, but as long as China keeps moving ahead, it will finally reach there.

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