

ПЕДАГАГІЧНЫЯ НАВУКІ

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INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHINA AT THE PRESENT STAGE

This article presents the results of a survey of higher education students and teachers in China, aimed at identifying the current state of internationalization processes in higher education; the degree of involvement of respondents in international cooperation, programs and projects organized by educational institutions have been revealed; possible ways of improving the processes under study have been identified.

Keywords: internationalization-at-home (IaH), internationalization of higher education in China; survey of students and teachers.

Introduction

Since 2000, China has become a member of the world higher education system and has achieved significant success in many areas, including the internationalization of higher education. Studying and understanding China's constructive experience is of great importance for determining the possibility of its use in the education systems of various countries around the world. In our opinion, the educational systems of China and the Republic of Belarus have much in common, especially in approaches to the organization of educational process, the selection of its content, following almost the same ideological ordering of values. Therefore, we believe that individual achievements of the higher education system of China can be used to improve the educational process in the Republic of Belarus and vice versa – the achievements of Belarusian scientists and practitioners can contribute to improving the quality of training highly qualified specialists in China.

Internationalization of higher education means that the educational practice of universities becomes more open through exchanges, cooperation and communication activities among higher education institutions around the world. Through extensive international cooperation, pedagogical theory and practice are enriched, and the effectiveness of research activities is enhanced. Cooperation brings together scholars, teachers and students from different countries and regions to improve mutual understanding through various forms of activities such as joint educational programs and projects, academic and scientific exchanges, conferences, etc. Chinese higher education has rich experience in this regard. In order to improve the quality and positive impact of internationalization processes, higher education systems in different countries need to constantly study and reflect on the accumulated experience in order to utilize the best examples, concepts, methods and technologies.

The purpose of this article is an empirical research of the state of the internationalization of higher education in China using a survey of teachers and students.

Research methods and methodology

This article presents the results of the survey of higher education students and teachers in China. A total of 30 teachers and 104 students took part in the survey, which was conducted via an online survey tool Wenjuanxing. The data have been obtained through research questionnaires specially designed by us.

The survey of students allows us to characterize the presence of pedagogical conditions created in higher education institutions that facilitate their inclusion in the processes of internationalization of higher education. The survey of teachers makes it possible to understand the extent to which the processes of internationalization of higher education contribute to the improvement of the quality of their educational and scientific activities. The questionnaire forms for both groups of respondents contain questions requiring both a detailed answer and a choice of alternatives.

When analyzing the results of the survey, we used various types of analysis, methods of quantitative and qualitative assessment, generalization and interpretation of the results.

Research results and discussion

The constructive experience accumulated by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party seems to be very valuable. In the long term, it can provide solutions to various problems that countries face in the era of globalization, and it can be attributed to innovative solutions created in the context of both positive and negative influence of globalization processes. This experience is undoubtedly reflected in the educational policy and strategic planning of the further development of the entire country. In the process of internationalization of higher education, cooperation is an effective way and mechanism for improving the quality of education of the younger generation and increasing the effectiveness of scientific activity. Thanks to cooperation, higher education institutions can use the experience of other countries and regions, as well as apply new, advanced achievements. However, when organizing international cooperation within the framework of ongoing internationalization, it is important to preserve and strengthen one's own national-specific features, preserve and pass on traditional values and cultural differences to the younger generation. Encountering or interacting with people from different cultures results in embracing one's own national culture and understanding its values. With the strengthening of this aspect, the patriotic education of youth is optimized.

In our previous papers [1; 2], through carrying out a historical and pedagogical analysis of the genesis of higher education internationalization in China, we have determined its current state alongside with identifying the main policy directions and activities within the framework of internationalization that have found application in Chinese higher education institutions. Continuing research on the issue, we have identified the conceptual foundations of the ongoing processes of internationalization of higher education, which can be formulated in four main provisions:

- 1) humanistic orientation as an axiological fundamental basis, with a person at the center of any activity;
- 2) recognition of multiculturalism as a valuable source of development;
- 3) selection of a reformist and innovative path to improve existing educational systems;
- 4) strengthening national self-awareness and patriotism through popularization of the achievements and values of Chinese culture.

Based on the results of the study of Belarusian teachers, we have identified the following indicators marking the implementation of strategic directions of higher education development through the processes of internal (internationalization-at-home) and external internationalization.

The internal internationalization process manifests itself in giving instruction in English, studying the disciplines organized across global themes, lectures and seminars held by foreign teachers also with the help of information and communication technologies.

External internationalization is achieved when meeting the following requirements: attendance of foreign citizens at an institution of higher education; opportunities for teachers of higher education institutions to undergo an internship abroad; academic mobility; implementation of joint educational programs and projects; implementation of cooperation agreements with foreign partners; educational and scientific events carried out within the framework of agreements; inclusion of events for the social integration of foreign students in the system of educational work of the university; provision of services to foreign citizens during the vacation period, etc. [3].

To provide a better understanding of internationalization processes in higher education, we interviewed Chinese college and university teachers and students. The survey of students we organized allowed us to determine to what extent students with different academic qualifications and from different regions participate in international activities, as well as how satisfied they are with the implementation of internationalization processes in their educational institutions. When interviewing university teachers, we discovered which forms of international activity are the most widespread and to what extent the teachers are satisfied with the quality of the activities carried out in this area.

The questionnaire for students contains 25 questions, including closed and open questions. The questionnaire for teachers contains 35 questions, including questions characterizing international activities and projects in which they participate. The questionnaire for students involved 104 participants, the questionnaire for teachers involved 30 respondents.

In this article, we will present only an analysis of the most significant and interesting answers to individual questions in the questionnaire.

For example, in the student version of the questionnaire, in response to the question "Do you have experience participating in events aimed at internationalizing higher education?", 45 participants replied that they did not participate in any foreign exchange and special events. For these students, the

questionnaire provided a logically related question "What do you think is the main reason preventing students from being widely included in internationalization processes?" with multiple choice of answers, i.e. the respondent could specify several reasons at once. More than half of the 45 students chose two reasons: too expensive (68.89 %) and language barrier (57.78 %). The results of the processing of this question are shown in figure 1.

| Options | Subtotal | Proportion |
|---|----------|------------|
| Not interested | 7 | 15.56% |
| Language barrier | 26 | 57.78% |
| Too expensive | 31 | 68.89% |
| Insufficient school places | 9 | 20% |
| Not encouraged by the faculty or instructor | 3 | 6.67% |
| Will going abroad affect your current studies or graduation? | 7 | 15.56% |
| Although I haven't gone abroad yet, I will put it on my agenda before graduation. | 2 | 4.44% |
| other | 1 | 2.22% |

Figure 1 – Distribution of students' answers to the question: "What do you think is the main reason preventing students from being widely included in internationalization processes?"

It is clear that an important factor hindering international communication is the language barrier, so we analyzed and compared other results based on this factor.

The next question in the questionnaire for students was designed to understand the differences in language proficiency between rural and urban students. To the question "Do you think your current level of foreign language proficiency is sufficient for normal communication with foreign friends?" the results of the questionnaire showed that the language proficiency of urban students is mainly located in the range of 39.73 % (able to carry out basic communication) and 31.51 % (able to use the language for organizing full-fledged communication in everyday life). Only 9.59 % of the surveyed urban students noted that they know a foreign language at an advanced level. 19.18 % of the urban students who took part in the questionnaire admitted experiencing difficulties in everyday communication in a foreign language.

The level of language proficiency of rural students is somewhat different. 41.94 % of the respondents noted their ability to carry out basic communication in a foreign language, 35.48 % of them pointed out some difficulties in everyday communication. A small number of rural students indicated that they had sufficient knowledge of a foreign language for everyday communication (19.35 %), and only 3.23 % of rural students noted that they had studied a foreign language in depth. The results of processing the answers to this question are presented in figure 2.

| XX | Difficult to engage in normal communications | Can engage in simple communication | Basically meets the requirements for normal communication | Can engage in in-depth communication | Subtotal |
|-------------|--|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Urban | 14(19.18%) | 29(39.73%) | 23(31.51%) | 7(9.59%) | 73 |
| Countryside | 11(35.48%) | 13(41.94%) | 6(19.35%) | 1(3.23%) | 31 |

Figure 2 – Distribution of students' answers to the question: "Do you think your current foreign language proficiency is sufficient for normal communication with foreign friends?"

The following questions of the questionnaire are designed to reveal the students' satisfaction with the implementation of higher education internationalization processes depending on their knowledge of a foreign language. The question "What is your overall evaluation of your university's international development level?" yielded the following results, which are shown in figure 3.

| XY | A Very dissatisfied | B Not satisfied | C Neutral | D Satisfied | E Very satisfied | Subtotal |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|------------------|----------|
| Difficult to engage in normal communications | 1(4%) | 6(24%) | 13(52%) | 5(20%) | 0(0.00%) | 25 |
| Can engage in simple communication | 3(7.14%) | 0(0.00%) | 12(28.57%) | 21(50%) | 6(14.29%) | 42 |
| Basically meets the requirements for normal communication | 2(6.90%) | 1(3.45%) | 7(24.14%) | 16(55.17%) | 3(10.34%) | 29 |
| Can engage in in-depth communication | 0(0.00%) | 0(0.00%) | 1(12.5%) | 5(62.5%) | 2(25%) | 8 |

Figure 3 – Distribution of students' answers to the question: "What is your overall evaluation of your university's international development level?"

As shown in the above figure, the evaluation of internationalization by students who have difficulty to engage in normal communication is mainly concentrated in the Neutral (52 %) and Dissatisfied (24 %), and no one is Very satisfied. The evaluation of internationalization by students who can engage in simple communication mainly falls to the group of Satisfied (50 %) and Neutral (28.57 %), and the evaluation of internationalization by students who basically meets the requirements for normal communication mainly goes to the Satisfied (55.17 %) and Neutral (24.14 %). The evaluation of internationalization by students who can engage in in-depth communication completely is mainly concentrated in the Satisfied (62.50 %) and Very satisfied (25 %), and there is no Dissatisfied or Very dissatisfied situation among such students.

The questionnaire for teachers is intended to identify the intensity and quality of implementation of international activities and projects in which universities participate. Question "What types of institutions or organizations are engaged in international cooperation with your university?" contained multiple-choice answers. Most respondents (63.33 %) indicate that they have professional links with foreign universities. Only 33.33% of the responses indicate that educational institutions are involved in international projects. The low number of respondents (13.33 %) showed that universities have representation in countries included in the "One Belt and Road" program. Only one of the universities surveyed has enterprises with foreign investment. The results of processing the answers to this question are presented in figure 4.

| Options | Subtotal | Proportion |
|---|----------|------------|
| Foreign universities | 19 | 63.33% |
| Chinese companies with international projects | 10 | 33.33% |
| Foreign-invested enterprises in the "Belt and Road" countries | 1 | 3.33% |
| Government agencies of the Belt and Road countries | 4 | 13.33% |
| NGOs in One Belt One Road countries | 2 | 6.67% |
| International Organizations | 5 | 16.67% |
| other | 4 | 13.33% |

Figure 4 – Distribution of teachers' answers to the question: "What types of institutions or organizations are engaged in international cooperation with your university?"

The next question in the teacher questionnaire was about the distribution of regions and countries with which their universities are actively collaborating. (Note that we interviewed teachers from different universities in China). To the question "In which of the listed regions are the countries your university has international cooperation with?" the following answers were received. Note that when answering this question, participants could choose more than one region and more than one country. 40 % of the respondents said their university had cooperation with South-East Asia. East Asia and Eastern Europe accounted for 23.33 % of the teachers' answers; Central and Western Europe and Central Asia – 13.33 %; North America – 10 %; Oceania – 3.33 %. Note also that according to the information received through the questionnaire, there are no universities that cooperate with the countries of the Middle East, Africa and South America. The results of processing the answers to this question are shown in figure 5.

| Options | Subtotal | Proportion |
|---|----------|------------|
| Africa (Nigeria, Egypt, etc.) | 0 | 0% |
| Southeast Asia (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, etc.) | 12 | 40% |
| Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, etc.) | 4 | 13.33% |
| East Asia (Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, etc.) | 7 | 23.33% |
| Middle East (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Türkiye, etc.) | 0 | 0% |
| Eastern Europe (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, etc.) | 7 | 23.33% |
| Central Europe (Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, etc.) | 4 | 13.33% |
| Western Europe (UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, etc.) | 4 | 13.33% |
| North America (United States, Canada, etc.) | 3 | 10% |
| South America (Brazil, Argentina, etc.) | 0 | 0% |
| Oceania (New Zealand, Australia, etc.) | 1 | 3.33% |
| None of the above | 5 | 16.67% |

Figure 5 – Distribution of teachers' answers to the question: "In which of the listed regions are the countries your university has international cooperation with?"

The question on the definition of the main areas of international cooperation carried out in Chinese universities is also interesting. To the question "What are the main professional fields of your university's international cooperation projects?", the respondents offered varying answers. They noted that the activities in this area are mainly related to the following areas: modern services (60 %), politics and finance – 23.33 %, high technologies – 20 % and energy – 16.67 %. The results of the processing of this question are shown in figure 6.

| Options | Subtotal | Proportion |
|---|----------|------------|
| High-tech fields (automation, high-speed rail, equipment manufacturing, agricultural technology, EMU maintenance, industrial robots, etc.) | 6 | 20% |
| Basic energy field (energy, mechanical power, materials, urban thermal energy applications, etc.) | 5 | 16.67% |
| Modern service sector (e-commerce, logistics technology, accounting information management, intelligent finance, tourism, catering, cloud computing, electronic information, automotive technical services and marketing, etc.) | 18 | 60% |
| Policy and financial fields (finance, insurance, investment, credit management, economics and finance, etc.) | 7 | 23.33% |
| None of the above | 9 | 30% |
| other | 2 | 6.67% |

Figure 6 – Distribution of teachers' answers to the question: "What are the main professional fields of your university's international cooperation projects?"

Conclusion

Thus, our survey and the data obtained earlier in our study [4] allowed us to determine the current state of internationalization of higher education in China and draw the following conclusions. The involvement of Chinese students in international cooperation programs and projects is closely related to their level of foreign language proficiency. The survey found that Chinese students from urban areas have

a better foreign language proficiency than rural students. Therefore, the education system should pay attention to overcoming this discrepancy and increase the popularization of foreign languages and investment in education in rural areas, since knowledge of a foreign language is an important component of the internationalization process, its driving force.

International cooperation is currently mainly concentrated in the field of modern services with foreign universities in Southeast Asia, East Asia and Eastern Europe. In order to bring internationalization to a higher level, we need to explore the possibilities of diversifying international programs and projects both in terms of geography and expanding the areas of professional interaction.

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Ван Мяо

ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛИЗАЦИЯ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В КИТАЕ НА СОВРЕМЕННОМ ЭТАПЕ

В данной статье представлены результаты проведенного анкетирования студентов и преподавателей учреждений высшего образования в Китае, которое направлено на выявление текущего состояния процессов интернационализации высшего образования; выявлена степень включенности респондентов в организуемое образовательными учреждениями международное сотрудничество, программы и проекты; определены возможные пути совершенствования изучаемых процессов.

Ключевые слова: внутренняя интернационализация, интернационализация высшего образования в Китае; анкетирование студентов и преподавателей.