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THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESSES IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FROM 1993 TO 2008

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Based on the analysis of regulatory documents and statistical data on the process of internationalization of higher education in China in 1993–2008, it was found that the main changes during this period occurred in the following areas: the opening of cross-border branches, provision of bilingual education and academic exchanges.

Keywords: internationalization, higher education, development of higher education, internationalization process, China higher education.

Introduction

The process of internationalization of higher education involves a range of activities that enable students, faculty, and institutions to engage in international collaboration, build global networks, and expand educational opportunities.

Internationalization of higher education is a general term that refers to a range of activities and strategies that higher education institutions use to enhance their international activities. The essence of internationalization is the creation of a global learning environment that enables students to acquire multicultural knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and competencies that will prepare them for future professional and productive work in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. Internationalization of higher education is a process occurring at the national, regional, and institutional levels, in which the goals, functions and mechanisms for providing educational services acquire an international character [1, p. 80].

The development of internationalization of higher education in China began in 1978 after the adoption of the reform and opening-up policy. Our historical and pedagogical study allows us to identify four stages in the development of our research subject. The first stage is from 1978 to 1992, the second stage is from 1993 to 2008, the third stage is from 2009 to 2015, then the modern stage - from 2016 to the present. This article presents the characteristics of the second stage (1993-2008).

This study is based on the analysis of regulatory documents that governed the activities of the higher education system in the PRC. Quotes from the presented regulatory documents were translated into English by the author of this article.

Main Body

According to the regulations adopted by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, at this stage the main focus is in the development of internationalization of higher education in the following areas: the opening of cross-border branches, teaching foreign languages and academic exchanges. Let us dwell on the characteristics of each aspect in more details.

1. Cross-border branches of education have become a new part of the internationalization of higher education in China. This means that foreign universities and institutes have opened branches in mainland China.

The document "China Education Reform and Development Outline" issued by the State Council in 1993 proposed that China should concentrate on "running about 100 key universities and a number of key disciplines and majors, and on striving to reach the world's highest level by the beginning of the next century" [2]. This action further expanded the opening of education to the outside world and strengthened national educational exchanges and cooperation. In 1993, the State Education Commission published the document "Temporary Regulations on Sino-Foreign

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Cooperation in Running Schools” [3], which provided policy basis for guiding and regulating cross-border school-running activities. By the end of 2002, higher education institutions in 28 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government had opened 712 Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions and projects. Compared to the beginning of 1995, the total number of such institutions had increased nine-fold [4, p. 349].

In 2003, the State Council published the document “Regulations on Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education” [5] and its implementation measures, which clarified the management scope, attributes, and guiding principles of Sino-foreign cooperative education. At that time, a number of Sino-foreign cooperative universities with independent legal status were gradually established in cooperation with foreign universities. For example, the University of Nottingham-Ningbo was established in 2004, and the Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University Joint International College was established in 2005.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education officially published the document “Temporary Measures for the Management of Foreign Institutions of Higher Education” [6], and the internationalization of China’s higher education entered the stage of legislative formulation. By 2008, the Ministry of Education had only registered four activities related to the management of foreign schools. However, after the publication of the “Measures”, it gave instructions to both Chinese and foreign institutions to implement a wide range of activities. Gradually, the internationalization of China’s higher education began to develop under two models: “in”, which meant that foreign institutions opened branches in mainland China, and “out”, which provided Chinese students with education abroad.

2. The reform of foreign language teaching has become a breakthrough point for the intensification of internationalization processes, especially in the field of gifted youth education.

In the early days of reform and opening up, the main content of the internationalization of higher education was the international flow of resources. By the beginning of the 21st century, internationalization began to occupy a prominent place in the process of teaching gifted children in colleges and universities. This was realized through bilingual education (including English) and the improvement of curricula.

In 2001, the Ministry of Education’s regulatory document “Some Considerations on Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching in Colleges and Universities to Improve Teaching Quality” proposed relevant content on the internationalization of undergraduate education and teaching, which claimed that “undergraduate education must create conditions for the use of English and other foreign languages to teach public and professional courses. For disciplines and majors that were developing rapidly and were highly relevant, such as computer science and life sciences, the advanced original textbooks that reflected the forefront of subject development could be directly introduced [7].” Since then, “bilingual teaching” had also become one of the important indicators for evaluating the level of undergraduate teaching work.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education and the General Administration of Press and Publication issued the document “Notification on Effective Strengthening the Publication and Use Management of Imported Textbooks” [8] with the aim of standardizing the development of international textbooks. The policies during this period laid the foundation for the internationalization of training in colleges and universities through “English teaching”, “introducing new majors” and “introducing textbooks”.

The document “Some Considerations on Further Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching in Colleges and Universities”, issued by the Ministry of Education in 2005, clarified the goal of qualitative development of “College English Teaching”, and it was proposed to “take the reform of College English teaching as a breakthrough to improve the international communication and cooperation abilities of college students” [9]. It is necessary to improve the quality of bilingual teaching courses and further expand their scale.

The document “Some Considerations of the Ministry of Education on Further Deepening the Reform of Undergraduate Teaching and Comprehensive Improving Teaching Quality”, published in 2007, pointed out the direction for the international reform of college English teaching in terms of developing teacher and work innovation. The document clearly stated that “strengthening college English teacher training will create a group of key teachers for the reform of college English

teaching, encourage bilingual teaching, and support students who have returned from studying abroad to teach professional courses in English” [10]. In addition, the education authorities also strengthened their supervision of international textbooks.

3. Academic exchange became an important part of international policy agreements.

The internationalization of higher education in scientific field was mainly promoted through the international mobility of talents, creation of exchange platforms, stimulating research, and other measures.

1) International mobility of talents.

The document “Education Revitalization Action Plan for the 21st Century”, published by the National Education Commission in 1998, proposed the “High-level Creative Talent Project” [11] to strengthen the academic exchange work of colleges and universities by promoting the international flow of talents.

In 2002, China enrolled 85,000 foreign students from 175 countries. These students were studying in 353 colleges and universities, and other educational institutions in 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government of the PRC. Table 1 shows that more than 200 students from 29 countries out of 175 were studying in China in 2002.

Table 1 – Enrollment of Foreign Students to China in 2002

Serial Number	Country	The Number of International Students
1	South Korea	36093
2	Japan	16084
3	United States	7359
4	Indonesia	2583
5	Vietnam	2336
6	Thailand	1737
7	Russia	1492
8	France	1341
9	Germany	1226
10	United Kingdom	1061
11	Australia	1001
12	Mongolia	968
13	Canada	875
14	Malaysia	840
15	Nepal	813
16	North Korea	671
17	Philippines	638
18	Singapore	583
19	Italy	492
20	Pakistan	439
21	Laos	333
22	Austria	281
23	Yemen	266
24	Myanmar	232
25	Mexico	230
26	Switzerland	220
27	Sweden	212
28	Belgium	209
29	Kazakhstan	200

2) Creation of international academic exchange platforms.

In 1999, the “Research Funding Project for Foreign Scholars of National Research Bases of Chinese Universities” was launched to attract foreign scholars and outstanding researchers with PhD to conduct joint research in China. These activities contributed to expanding the international influence of key national laboratories, supporting, and promoting international cooperation and communication in science and education [12, p. 169].

In 2000, the Ministry of Education published the document “Notification on Some Issues Concerning Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Higher Education Institutions and Foreign Companies in the Field of Education” [13], which provided policy guarantees for scientific and technological cooperation between higher education institutions and foreign companies.

In 2005, the Ministry of Education and the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs issued the document “Notification on the ‘Eleventh Five-Year Plan’ for the Subject Innovation and Talent Introduction Plan of Colleges and Universities”. The internationalization plan clarified the specific goal to present and gather more than 1,000 talents from the leading discipline teams of the world’s top 100 universities and research institutions “based on national key disciplines, using national, provincial and ministerial key academic exchange bases as a platform. Foreign academic talents will be provided with a group of domestic outstanding scientific consultants to form a high-level research team and create about 100 world-class subject innovation bases” [14].

In 2007, the Ministry of Education published the document “Some Considerations on Accelerating the Development of Research-based Universities and Independent Innovation Empowerment of Higher Education Institutions”. It was proposed that “research-based universities should be supported in hiring internationally renowned experts and scholars to serve on campus and conduct collaborative research. So that we can support young scholars in research-based universities to visit world-class universities for further study, and select outstanding students to study for doctoral degrees at world-class universities” [15].

Conclusion

We analyzed the regulatory documents from 1993 to 2008, which significantly influenced the development of the internationalization of higher education in the PRC. The focus during this period was on cross-border institutions, whose activities gradually acquired the forms of legislative laws and rules. The emphasis on bilingual education allowed various talented young people to be included in the process of academic exchange, which positively influenced the development of science and education in the PRC.

Thus, during the period under consideration, the internationalization processes of higher education in the People’s Republic of China entered a new stage of advanced key development. As China continues to invest in improving the internationalization of higher education, it can be said that the processes we observed from 1993 to 2008 have provided a solid foundation for future progress.

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