

Impact of internationalization on Mongolian Higher education

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Abstract

As a response to an expression of globalization of education, convergence and divergence in internationalization strategies and policies present significant issues for comparative study.

This paper focuses on comparative analysis of strategies and approaches to internationalization of Higher education in Mongolia and some Asian countries.

The framework of the comparative analysis is based on analysis of Government policies on higher education internationalization, documents and data from HEIs, reports of international organizations and relevant literature. In this paper author has introduced some findings of case studies on internationalization of Mongolian HE in the last two decades.

Keywords— Internationalization, competitiveness of Higher education, cross-regional network, international standards, joint projects, student's mobility.

INTRODUCTION

In developing countries internationalization of higher education has come to be considered one of the key trends of development. In these countries internationalization has been mapped onto the various national priorities including workforce development for knowledge intensive economy, technology innovation, and cooperation at global markets.

In Asian countries, macro-regional strategies on Higher education internationalization have a common goal to impact national competitiveness through close cooperation and corporate partnerships between HEIs.

Internationalization of higher education covers political, socio-cultural, economic and academic levels. There are some differences in government approaches linked to economic growth, the shortage of skilled workers and aging demographics.

For developed countries, policy objectives are market-centered with focusing on economic advantage and human capital. Developing countries mostly emphasize global competition, sustainable inclusive economy, need to prepare students by increasing their skills and experience, to enhance their employability,

reinforcing national research capacity and innovation.

Most important functional dimensions at academic level are teaching and research, service, human resource development and attracting talents, HE competitiveness and multiculturalism.

Financial significance of HE, technology and knowledge transfer, concept of world class universities and one-world science system present important rationales of Higher education internationalization.

Common trends in internationalization of HE in Asian countries

The Governments of Asian countries emphasize internationalization of higher education through international cooperation and exchange. Construction of regional framework in HE serves as a factor of economic and socio-cultural integration.

The level of importance of political, economic, academic and socio-cultural rationales in Government policy is different in developed and developing countries of the Asian region.

In developing countries of Asia, the Government agencies have focused similar

policies with specific characteristics of priorities and strategies.

Government policy on internationalization is based on a mixture of various rationales. In the framework of policy rationale is important to analyze motivations for internationalization of HE.

Fabrice Hénard, Leslie Diamond, and Deborah Roseveare (2012) claimed “Internationalization has the potential to challenge central authority, institutional autonomy and extends non-governmental networks, sharing international norms and values. Internationalization as market-driven process develops soft diplomacy and balanced partnerships to choose between competitive and collaborative strategies” (p. 120-136). Most common models of internationalization are student and faculty exchange, program mobility, joint research projects and publications, quality assurance, internationalization and unification of curriculum.

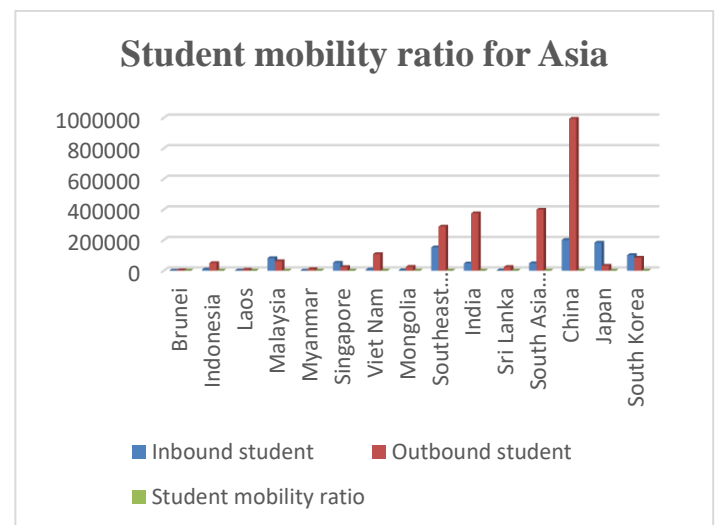
According to the UNESCO report, internationalization of Higher education in Asia has become a pivotal part of National policy to attract international investment in post graduate education and research. (UNESCO, 2020, Instituto Internacional para la Education Superior an America Latina y el Caribe. The internationalization of higher education: Until when do we leave measurements?)

Table 1: Student mobility ratio for Asia

Country	Inbound student	Outbound student	Student mobility ratio
Brunei	377	2,680	0.14
Indonesia	7,677	49,900	0.15
Laos	468	6,558	0.07
Malaysia	81,953	61,904	1.32
Myanmar	459	10,277	0.04
Singapore	51,756	23,752	2.18
Viet Nam	7,250	108,527	0.07
Mongolia	2,275	25,000	0.09
Southeast Asia (SA)	152,215	288,598	0.46
India	47,424	375,055	0.13
Sri Lanka	1,529	24,118	0.06
South	48,953	399,173	0.08

Asia (SA)			
China	201,177	993,367	0.2
Japan	182,748	31,903	5.73
South Korea	101,774	84,749	1.2
East Asia (EA)	485,699	1,110,019	0.44
Asia-Pacific (SEA+SA +EA)	686,867	1,797,790	0.38

Source: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>. Computations by the authors.



Pic 1. Student mobility ratio for Asia

Source: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>. Computations by the authors

In Asia, the countries such as China, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Philippines and Vietnam have more sustainable balanced policy in HE internationalization. Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea present most effective models of outward internationalization. These countries support knowledge transfer and research innovation, academic exchange through various platforms and regional or global networks, offshore campus investments and international hubs.

Ka-Ho Mok and Kar Ming Yu (2014) concluded that “Leading Asian Universities have established “Common space of higher education to encourage cross border student mobility and academic integration” across Southeast Asia. International experiences as “collaborative professional skills development

summer school” established with involvement of Universities of UK, Singapore and Hong Kong present interest as an effective model for internationalization of professional education. Academic integration of international students stimulates social integration of young generation in more globalized world” (p. 264). In the era of IR.4.0, internationalization has become an important factor of competitiveness of national Higher education system in Mongolia. The Mongolian government has gone so far as to purposefully align their Higher education policy with national economic competitiveness.

The Mongolian government in its policy document “Long-term vision 2050” has approved the strategy to develop its national higher education oriented to international standards and develop world class research Universities, to integrate research and innovation into academic programs. (Long-term development policy of Mongolia. Vision-2050) According to this policy the Parliament has the agenda to approve legal reform of education focusing on increasing competitiveness of Mongolian Higher education and research capacity of Universities.

Government strategy on higher education development reflects global challenges and emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and technical assistance at the Government and institutional levels.

Synergy between Government and Institutional policies is an important factor of HE internationalization. In the Mongolian Government policy, strengthening competitiveness of Mongolian HE and Internationalization is closely aligned within the framework of National policy. Mongolian HEIs have promoted Internationalization strategy oriented in outbound direction to the needs of the supply and demand sides of labour market and in inbound direction to the needs of extra – funding.

Pic 2: Number of international students as a share of total higher education population



Source: National committee on statistics, Mongolia

Development of the mining and energy industry in Mongolia and increase in export of agricultural products lead to competition for highly skilled talent and reinforcing innovation through international cooperation.

Integration of Mongolian Higher education in global educational space has caused quality changes and increased competitiveness of Mongolian Higher education on the world arena. There are differences referred to national education strategies and funding models (Balgan.A, 2019, p. 19-34).

Macro-regional strategies of the developed countries of Asia have impact on internationalization of higher education in Mongolia. Macro-regional strategies are designed at the highest sphere of political decision making and align with multilevel governance theory.

Mongolian HEIs are becoming more involved in intensive networking between institutions, scholars and students in regional and global frameworks. This cooperation may include participating in international conferences, exchanging best practice, joint programmers and socio-cultural initiatives.

The Ministry of Science and Education works in close cooperation with the ADB and other international organizations to reinforce national education reform in accordance with the global trends. The Projects supported by the Asian Development Bank and cooperation within the framework of Tempus and Erasmus programs have promoted internationalization of Mongolian Higher education.

The areas of internationalization in Mongolian HE are presented in expansion of regional and cross-regional networks, academic exchange projects and joint research. Development of highly effective assessment methods is being called for Mongolian HE in curriculum unification and program accreditation.

Supporting science and technological research at HEIs, a total of MNT 8.2 bln has been spent on the establishment of 24 laboratories, 10 of which will function as shared research laboratories. (Ka-Ho Mok, Kar Ming Yu, 2014, p.264; Balgan.A, 2019, p. (8)3).

In the framework of TACTIC projects some Mongolian Universities have developed joint activities oriented at faculty development and exchange of graduate students.

The bilateral agreements between Mongolian and overseas HEIs have introduced the international standards and dimension in educational and research activities.

In Mongolia, approach to the relationship between the quality of University education and economic competitiveness is changing with a focus on research quality.

Cooperation with world class Universities as MIT (USA), University of British Columbia presents the importance to strengthen research capacity of Mongolian Universities. Research output of the Mongolian scientists and researchers as measured by international peer reviewed journals grow about 40 percents over the last ten years.

Impact of internationalization on Mongolian HE is reflected in diversification of joint cross border programs and projects, activation of student mobility, on transferability of graduating students and increase of innovativeness of Mongolian Higher education. Mongolian Universities have used these models in cooperation with overseas HEIs, particularly in Japan, Korea, China, USA, Russia, and Germany.

STEAM-related jobs serve as serious motivation for Mongolian youth to study abroad. Related to this, ADB and some developed countries of Asia as Japan, China, Russia and Korea offer assistance to host Mongolian students offering scholarships. The

number of the Mongolian outbound students is higher than estimated; most of them are going to the Asian powerhouses.

In Mongolia, Japan has opened its technical colleges as kosen. Russia expresses its intention to open joint University. Some Mongolian HEIs have imported joint graduate programs from Singapore and offer joint, double degree undergraduate programs in cooperation with Universities from Korea and China.

Mongolia presents a case for the import of HE service, and most important destinations for Mongolian youth are Japan, USA, Korea, China, USA and Russia.

Student mobility refers to credit transfer system at regional and cross-regional levels. Harmonization of credit system in Mongolia has been put into practice and credit transfer collaboration with Asian countries have been provided for the last 20 years. But at institutional level, some differences in grading scales limit the interest of students to join double degree programs.

In recent years virtual learning environment, blended learning and flipped classrooms have become a part of teaching in Mongolian Higher education and have influenced internationalization of higher education by offering open access to online learning resources and peer-reviewed scholar research.

In Mongolia ICT impacted HEIs fostering internationalization offering wide access to foreign educational programmers. In that way young people have a choice to go through face-to face learning experience and do online courses. Technological development has given scope for establishing online Universities and open online courses.

Mongolian universities are involved in quality assessment service delivered by the International accreditation agency for business schools. Some Mongolian Universities have become a member of APQN (Asian-Pacific quality network).

Mongolian HEIs have developed close cooperation with APQR (Asia Pacific Quality Register) and CDIO to implement international quality standards in their academic and research activities. Leading Mongolian public and

private Universities have implemented them in different fields of science, humanities and social studies.

Some HEIs from Korea and Singapore have their campuses in Mongolia. Online education services provided by overseas Universities have extended chances to join Higher education in developed countries. There is a new opportunity to organize joint virtual campus of foreign Universities in Mongolia.

University as multinational corporation, academic joint ventures and research hubs presents new opportunity for development of HE in developing countries. Due to it, intensive knowledge transfer, joint ventures on research and innovation, international education also present matter of interest for HEIs in Mongolia. Franchising or structural coupling models taking place in some Asian countries present significance for Mongolian HE.

One of the most interesting initiatives in this area has been recent focus on the concept of educational clusters. In this way Mongolian HEIs have developed the long-term cooperation establishing joint knowledge hubs and research incubators.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Government policies for internationalization of higher education in Asian countries have consisted of three stages: major focus on inbound mobility, controlled outbound mobility and intraregional and cross regional cooperation in the framework of SDG.
- Important issues for internationalization of HE are openness of HE system, access and sustainability, quality assurance and degree recognition. For the most countries of Asia, quality assessment is a part of policy to enhance competitiveness of national HE.
- Process of integrating an international, intercultural global dimensions into the functions of HE has long term effect on national education system. Differences

between countries in program and institutional mobility are significant

- Internationalization has introduced high standards in academic, educational functions of HEIs and international constituent in research and innovation. The presence of the provider of branch campuses, twining and franchising arrangements between Universities present new opportunities for young generations in developing countries.
- Internationalization of Mongolian HE offers for the youth an access to high quality education and increased possibility in finding a job in mother country, capacity of adapting to different cultural contexts, international practical experience and research skills.

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