

Export of Higher Education Services in Mongolia

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions face numerous obstacles to attracting international students in today's globalized world. International trade in higher education services encourages economic growth and enhances the transfer of knowledge, potentially resulting in greater knowledge and expertise that can help countries remain competitive in a globalizing world. Higher education has become a major export for the economy; it generates a huge amount of money in both developing and developed countries. This article looks at recent advances in Mongolia's international higher education sector. It explains the reasons why foreign students come to study in the country, and we also try to examine the benefits and drawbacks of studying in Mongolia for foreign students. We conducted surveys with 200 foreign students from China, Russia, Inner Mongolia, Korea, and Japan. According to the results of the research, the main factors that contributed to the increase in the number of foreign students studying in Mongolia are the ease of obtaining a visa, the quality of the curriculum, the low requirements for admission to universities, the proximity to the home country, etc. In the future, policymakers and experts working in this field should focus on increasing scholarships, increasing the quality and accessibility of the educational environment in order to attract foreign students.

Keywords: Education export, Mongolia

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of knowledge-based economic development, the traditional concept of human education has changed dramatically, and Universities that create knowledge are facing completely new conditions and policies that have not occurred in the last half century. The process of acquiring scientific knowledge is becoming more and more extensive, which is one of the features of the global transformation of higher education. One form of this global change is the export of higher education, where the flow of education from America and Europe is shifting to Asia. The export of higher education is growing rapidly as a result of the globalization of education, not only in the field of education, but also as an important sector of the economy and foreign policy of countries around the world, and its contribution to the gross domestic product of countries continues to grow (Maringe & Foskett, 2010).

In the new situation of education reform, there is a need to bring Mongolia's higher education in line with international standards, and furthermore, to consider the role of universities in the country's development within the framework of higher education reform at the research level. Mongolia needs international students to study in its country in order to reform its economy and bring its universities to the international level. It also supports the reformation of country's economy (Wihlborg & Robson, 2018). The reason for writing this research paper is that Mongolian universities face the problem of scientifically considering the issue of higher education export development, which is an important indicator for improving their competitiveness in the global education market. The purpose of this study is to assess the current state of export of higher education in Mongolia within the framework of the theory of education export, to solve the problems and to give advice to it. The innovative aspect of this research work is that it considers the export of higher education in the context of education management on the example of Mongolian Universities. As a result of the research work, it has practical significance as a

methodological tool for the activities of improving the international competitiveness of universities by developing the export of higher education in Mongolia.

Main purpose of the current study is to clarify what should be more focused on how to make foreign students study in Mongolia. Furthermore, it studies and evaluates the fundamental rationale for recent advances in Mongolia's higher education market. Finally, the research attempts to evaluate the economic impact of exporting higher education services.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In general, higher education institution is "at the forefront of these changes in ways that can benefit not only nations and regions, but also individuals within them" (Ryan, 2013). Recognizing the challenges of globalization and the need to adapt to new realities rapidly rather than gradually, higher education institutions has moved to the international level as a response and a proactive way to meet these demands. This is a time when universities, regardless of their market position, attract the highest caliber students from around the world. Some universities have begun to understand the importance of developing curricula with local and international relevance to expose students to the global market and prepare them to live as global citizens (Yemini, 2017).

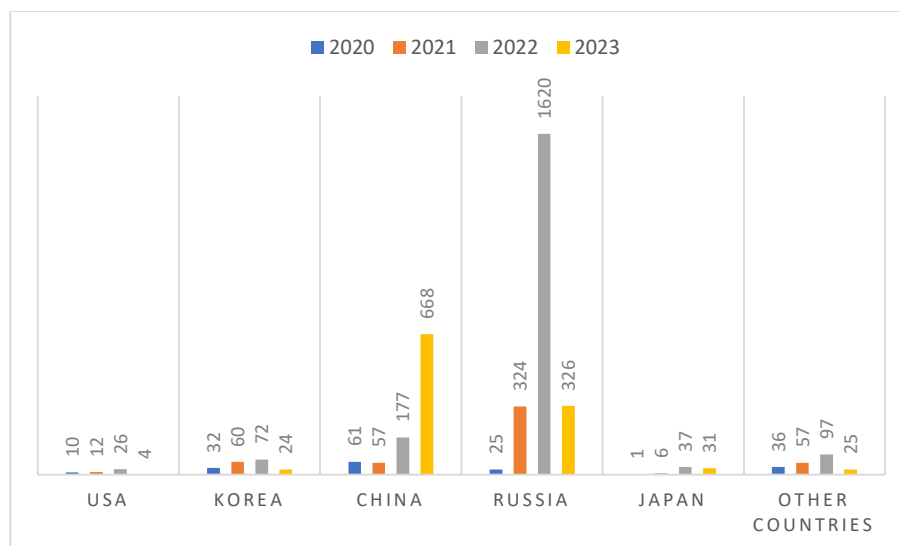
The World Trade Organization (WTO) established uniform multilateral regulations for international trade in services in 1995 (WTO, 2006). The General Agreement on trade in Services (GATS) governs international commerce in services, and it also classifies the various channels via which these services are delivered (Emile du Plessis 2010). In international markets, there are four types of service delivery. The first, "Cross Border Supply," may be defined in terms of offering higher education services via distance or correspondence education. The second is titled "Consumption Abroad" and refers to foreign students' worldwide mobility. The third type of supply is "commercial presence," which includes franchising deals and satellite campuses of educational institutions. The fourth method, known as the "Presence of Natural People," relates to professional academics who work temporarily overseas at other universities (Knight, 2002).

Although the United States, Britain, and Canada are still the main players in the international education market, recently Asian countries have been coming in forcefully, for example, countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, and China are working to increase the number of foreign students www.adb.com. The fact that the National University of Singapore is among the top 20 universities in the world also has a significant impact on increasing the number of international students interested in studying there. English has long been the most spoken language in the world, and the spread of English as a language of instruction has had a positive effect on attracting students and increasing the reputation of universities and countries. It is easier for developed countries to recruit international students than for developing countries. Globalization is also highly significant as it increases the number of students coming to study in developing countries as well. Over the past 10 years, foreign students from neighboring countries have begun to study in Mongolia. Developing countries like Mongolia make efforts to attract foreign students, pay attention to the language barrier of professors, and continue to pay attention to the provision of world-class knowledge with internationally graduated personnel (Wihlborg & Robson, 2018).

2.1 EXPORT OF HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES IN MONGOLIA

Mongolia exports education services, especially higher education and language training. According to the statistics, in the 2022-2023 academic year, there are 69 universities in Mongolia, of which 47.8 percent are universities, 50.7 percent are institutes, and 1.4 percent are colleges. Of all universities and colleges, 23.2 percent are public, and 75.5 percent are private universities. 92.8 percent of the total institutions are in capital city of Mongolia. 7.2 percent are conducting training activities in rural areas <https://www.meds.gov.mn/>. In the study of the current state of Mongolia's higher education exports, the number of foreign students in Mongolia was stable from 2008 to 2012. Most students do not receive scholarships and pay their own tuition fees and almost 90% of all students were students from Russia, China, and South Korea (Analysis of supply and demand of higher education, NUM, 2014). In the academic year 2012-2013, 57.6% of foreign students studied in public schools. Private schools, on the other hand, have 42% of all students, but these are mostly undergraduate students. 73.5% of master's students and 92% of doctoral students studied in public schools, and the rest studied in private schools. A total of 2,275 foreign students are studying in Mongolia in the 2018/2019 academic year, 82.5 percent of which are students from two neighboring countries. Specifically, 1.6 thousand (72.1 %) students are from China and 236 (10.4 %) are from Russia.

Figure 1. Number of foreign students studying in Mongolia, 2020-2023



Approximately 80% of all students were students from neighboring countries, Russia and China. Shown in figure.2, the percentage of foreign students studying in Mongolia, although there is a sharp decrease during the COVID-19 in 2020-2021, and there is also sharp increase in during 2022-2023 due to Russia and Ukraine war. Thus, there is no steady growth. It can be seen that these indicators define the direction of the measures to be taken to develop the export of education in Mongolia.

Figure 2. Percentage of foreign students studying in Mongolia, 2020-2023

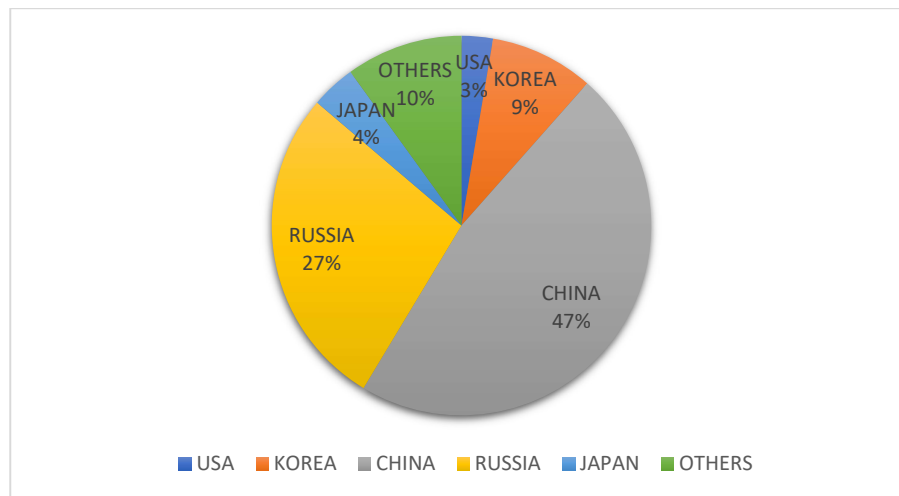
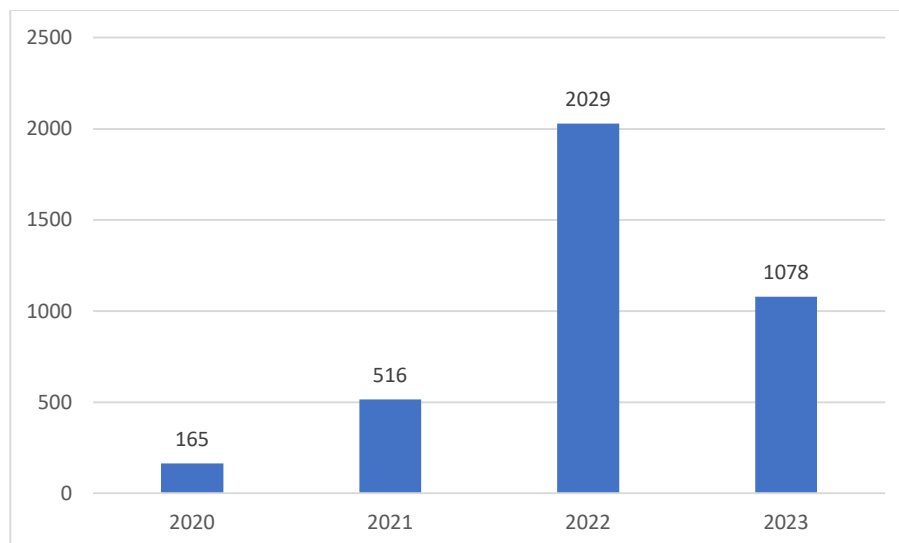


Figure 3. The growth of the number of foreign students, 2020-2023



III. METHODOLOGY

To get more detailed information about recent developments in Mongolia's international higher education sector, researchers surveyed 200 international students from several different countries. Several countries with the largest number of international students were selected for the study, including students from China, Inner Mongolia, Russia, and Korea etc.

This research is based on feedback from international students studying in Mongolian universities. As a result of this research, it is very important to create a progressive concept for the recruitment of future students without reducing the number of foreign students in the various faculties (LUAS 2016).

When asking questions to the respondents, the survey questionnaire was taken from the previous international research studies done in the field of higher education. Also, the questionnaires were prepared in both English and Mongolian, and the pretest was conducted before the survey. The pretest was taken from the university lecturers, appropriate revisions were made on it and the survey was finally started. Based on the survey of foreign students studying in Mongolia, we set the goal of identifying some of the problems facing the export of higher education and looking for opportunities to solve them. For this purpose, nine universities in Mongolia from foreign countries (Russia, China, Korea, Turkey, Poland, Vietnam, USA, Japan). Burns and Veeck (2019) suggest that all populations have an equal probability of being selected for the sample. The following formula was employed:

$$n = \frac{z_{\alpha/2}^2 \times N \times [\pi \times (1 - \pi)]}{\varepsilon^2 \times (N - 1) + z_{\alpha/2}^2 \times [\pi \times (1 - \pi)]} \quad (1)$$

Here, n denotes the sample size; $z_{\alpha/2}$ represents the critical value of the standard distribution =1.96 with 95% confidence; N indicates the population size, and $\pi = 0.5$ denotes the 10% sampling error. The optimal sample size determined for this approach is 163 people. Therefore, we got data from 200 international students who study in Mongolia. The effective rates of the collection were 100%. It indicates that the sample size qualified for all the statistical requirements. The questionnaire survey with a total of 37 questions was obtained through an online link using Google platform.

The following research questions cover the entire topic of this research paper. The main research question is, "Why is it important to improve the marketing plan for the international student recruitment process in Mongolia?" Research questions were prepared based on the above research questions to ensure relevant information. The study was based on the research question; International students studying in Mongolia were asked different questions on the same topic to understand their understanding. First, the goal is to know their opinions about Mongolia and the Mongolian education system. Secondly, in order to fulfill the following research questions, it is important to know why and how they chose to study in Mongolia through various questions.

Why do they want to study in Mongolia?

How did they hear about Mongolian universities?

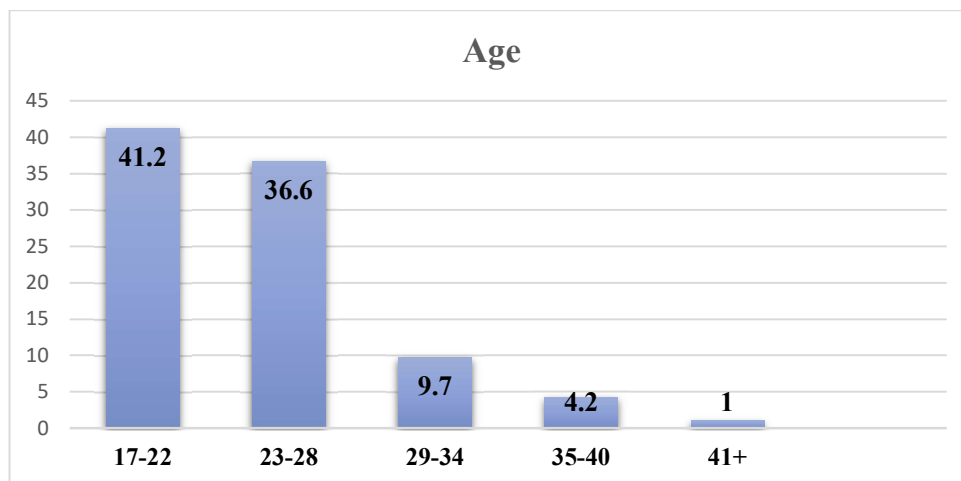
What factors influenced them to come to Mongolia?

These are key questions to understand for further research on the topic. Therefore, the research will provide practical information for making an effective marketing plan for recruiting international students in Mongolia. An important promotional plan will be explained at the end of this research study.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

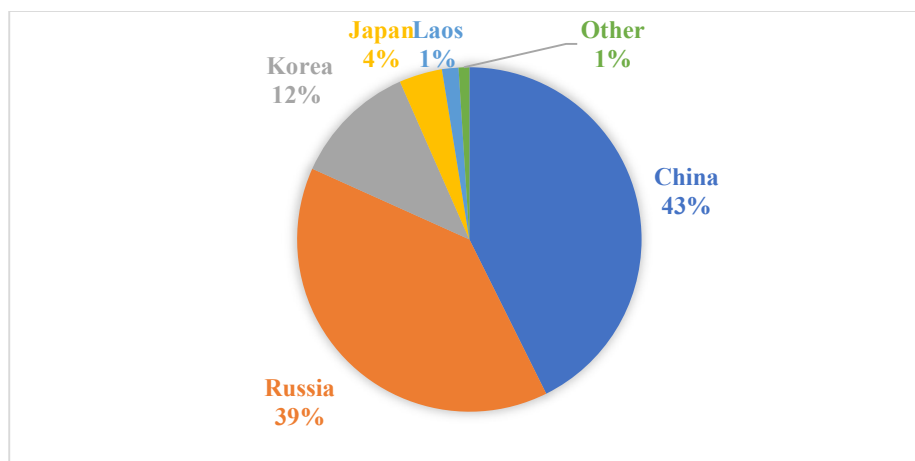
According to the demographic data of the respondents, 63% of the students were female, the remaining 47% were male. In terms of age group, 17-22-year-olds account for the most (41.2 percent), 23-28-year-olds account for 36.6% and over 41-year-olds account for the least (1percent). The average age of the respondents is 24.

Figure 4. Percentages of International student's age



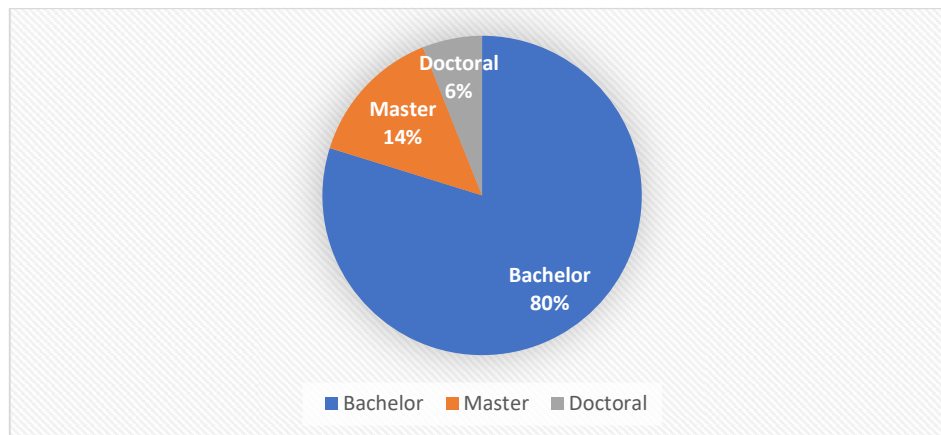
The percentage of students participating in the survey is the highest from neighboring countries: 43% from China and 39% from Russia shown in figure 6.n However, the largest percentage of students coming to study in our country from China, Russia, and South Korea, which are their main jurisdictions, are 42, 38.5, and 11.5 percent respectively, and the remaining 8 percent are students from Japan, Laos, Vietnam, and Turkey.

Figure 5. Percentages of International Students



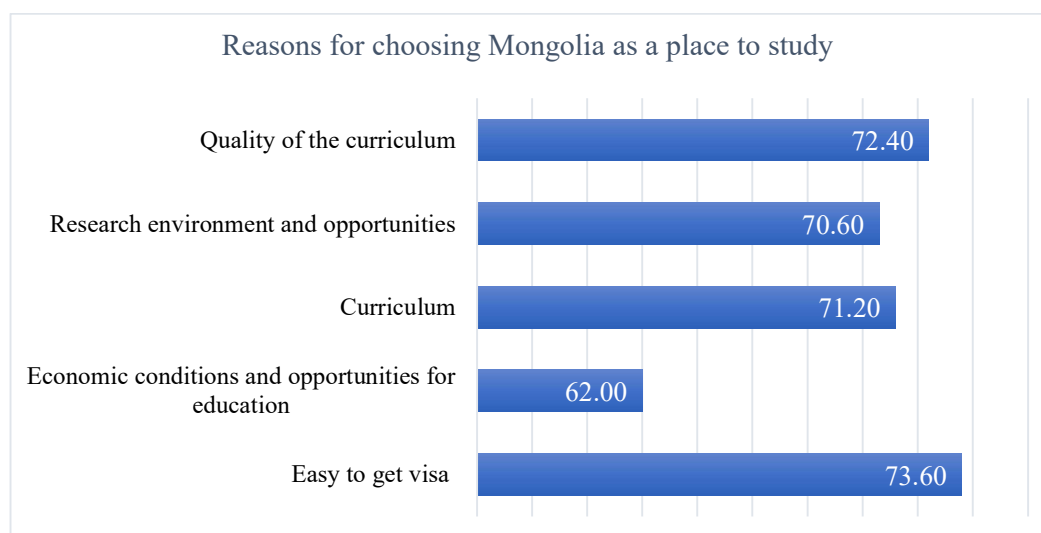
According to the enrollment of international students, 80 percent are studying at the bachelor's level, 14 percent at the master's level, and 6 percent at the doctoral level. The students who participated in this study were asked about their majors, and the majority of them (31.9%) were in the field of Humanities, 28.7% were in the field of Medicine, 18.5% were in the field of Management and Law, 7.9% were in the field of Business, and the remaining 4.2% were studying in the field of Education.

Figure.6 Enrollment of International Students



Students had to evaluate the reasons for choosing Mongolia as a country of study with up to 100 points, and the following points were obtained. First, the highest number of votes from the survey participants answered that it is easy to get a visa. After that, the quality of curriculum met international standards and received about 70 percent of votes. Research environment and opportunities received also about 70 percent of votes. Economic conditions and living for education received the lowest vote by the respondents. Since, Mongolia is a developing country, it is obvious that students from foreign countries who do not know the language well will get low scores in this aspect.

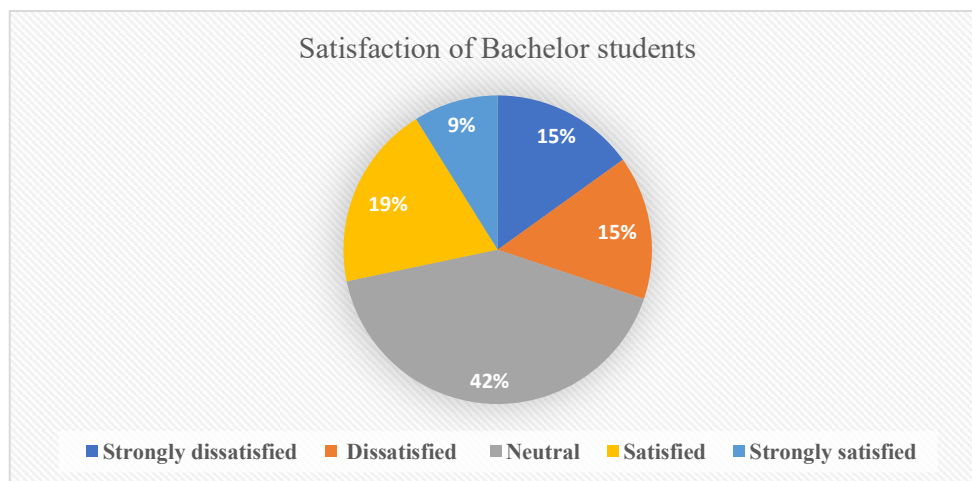
Figure.7 Reasons for choosing Mongolia as a place to study



For some students, another important factor in choosing Mongolia was the recognition of the Mongolian diploma in their home country. For example, Inner Mongolian, Chinese, etc.

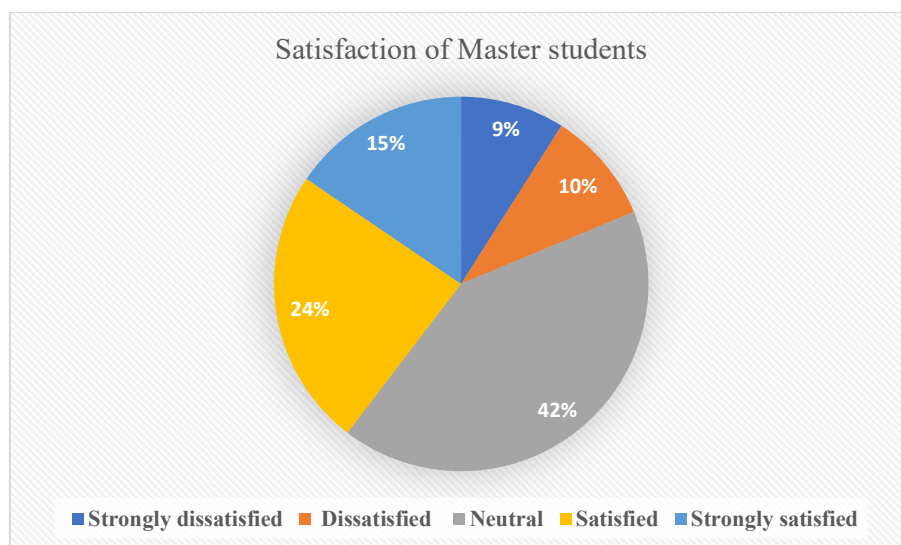
Total satisfaction of international student's questions used a five-point Likert scale, with 1 being strongly dissatisfied, 2 being dissatisfied, 3 being neutral, 4 being satisfied, and 5 strongly satisfied. The research model uses scales of ideas previously used in other studies. When considering the total satisfaction of foreign students to study in Mongolia at the 3 levels of study: bachelor's, master's, and doctorate. Among the all-bachelor participants, 42% of students gave a neutral answer, 15% were strongly dissatisfied, and 15% were not satisfied. Satisfied and completely satisfied students accounted for 28% of the total participants (see the figure 8).

Figure.8 Total satisfaction of Bachelor students



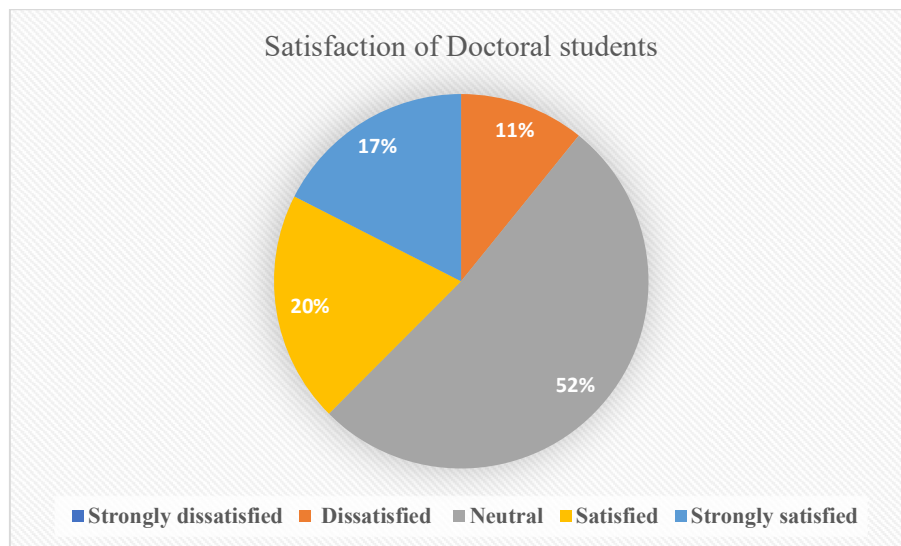
Among the master course students, 42% of students gave a neutral answer, 9% were strongly dissatisfied, and 10% were not satisfied. Satisfied and completely satisfied students accounted for almost 40% of the total participants (see the figure 9). Master's students were significantly more satisfied than undergraduate students.

Figure.9 Total satisfaction of Master students



Among the doctoral course students, 52% of students gave a neutral answer, 0% were strongly dissatisfied, and 11% were not satisfied. Satisfied and completely satisfied students accounted for 37% of the total participants (see the figure 10). It can be seen from the analysis that the satisfaction of doctoral students is almost similar to that of master's students.

Figure.10 Total satisfaction of Doctoral students



V. CONCLUSIONS

The number of foreign students studying in Mongolia has been increasing in recent years. Therefore, in order to prepare internationally competitive personnel, there is a need to teach a certain part of the curriculum of universities in English. Moreover, we need to improve Universities learning environment, work opportunities for foreign students, opportunities to receive scholarship, lecturers' language skills, and modernization of training facilities can be seen from the results of this study. According to the results of the study, the quality of the curriculum is in line with international standards and has received about 70 points. This is not a good enough score. Policymakers and university administrators should pay attention to improving it. Research environment and opportunities received also about 70 percent of votes. Since, Mongolia is a developing country, it is obvious that students from foreign countries who do not know the language well will get low scores in this aspect. Therefore, the development of the country has an important influence on whether foreign students will come to study in that country or not, so politicians should pay attention to this aspect. Since there are many students, mainly from Russia and China, it may be an advantage for lecturer to teach in Russian or Chinese. In addition, the satisfaction survey was conducted among undergraduate, master's, and doctoral course students. The results of the study were less than expected. Looking at the results of this survey, If we do not develop the right policy and implement strategies and tactics on how to improve the satisfaction of foreign students coming to study in Mongolia, the number of students will decrease year by year, which will have a bad effect on the dual economy. Finally, in the era of globalization of education, one of the important areas of higher education institutions in Mongolia is foreign

cooperation. It has become a common practice for Mongolian universities to include the following basic contents in the framework of foreign cooperation agreements. For instance, should cooperate with foreign universities, institutions, and international organizations working in Mongolia, increase opportunities for intellectual investment, implementation of training and joint academic programs and projects, lecturer and student exchange, implementation of joint programs and cooperating with international accreditation organizations.

5.1 FUTURE RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

This study has the same limitations as other research studies. First, this research was conducted by collecting and analyzing data only through quantitative research methods. In the future, it is more effective to conduct this type of research through qualitative research. Also, if quantitative and qualitative research are done together, the research results are more realistic. Moreover, it is believed that the language proficiency of international students during the survey was not good enough that may influence the results of the survey. Most importantly, this type of research was rarely conducted in Mongolia, which made it difficult to collect research-related data.

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