

# The Status Quo and Sustainable Development Approaches for Chinese Universities in Running Schools Overseas

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## Abstract

The “bring in” and “going out” development of China's higher education is unbalanced. By analyzing the current situation and characteristics of “going out” education which is also known as overseas education of Chinese colleges and universities, this paper puts forward the sustainable development approaches of overseas education for Chinese colleges and universities, which are named as following, strengthening the construction of international courses, improving the internal management system and operation mechanism and establishing information sharing platform.

**Keywords:** overseas education; Chinese universities; running schools overseas; sustainable development

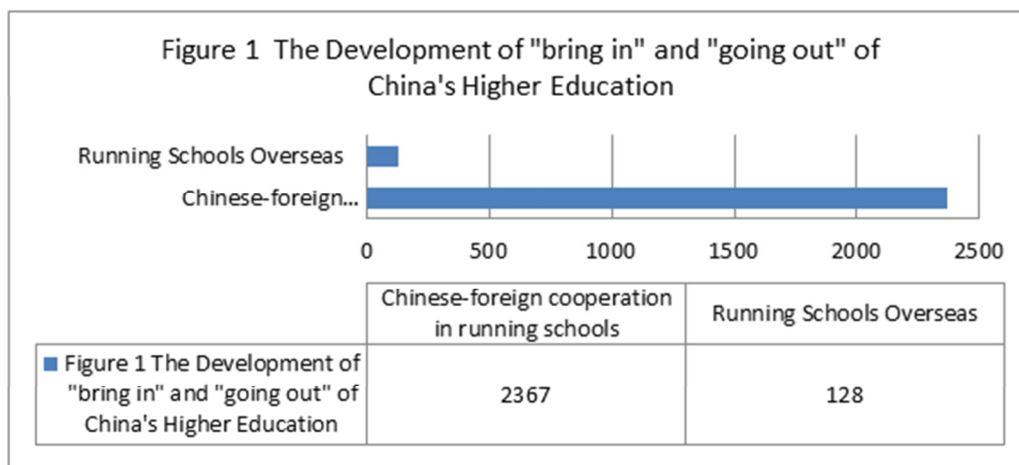
## INTRODUCTION

Running schools overseas of Chinese colleges and universities is a kind of educational activities that recruit overseas citizens as the main enrollment target or adopt other activity forms. It refers to Chinese higher education institutions cooperate with foreign educational institutions or social agents that with legal personality and recognized by the government of the host country (region).

Running schools overseas is to carry out education and teaching activities, which belong to the cooperative education activities of “going out” in Chinese higher education institutions. And the cooperative education activities of “bring in” in Chinese higher education means that the university introduces foreign educational resources and recruits Chinese citizens as the main enrollment target in the territory of China. The “bring in” educational activity of Chinese higher education is popularly known as Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools <sup>[1]</sup>. It is of great theoretical and practical significance to study the status quo and development approaches of China's institutions of running schools overseas.

## Analysis on the status quo of overseas education of Chinese higher education

Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools and running schools overseas are the inevitable requirements of education internationalization and an important part of China's higher education. The development of “bring in” and “going out” in China's higher education international cooperation has been unbalanced for a long time. The data shows that up to October 2018, China has settled 2,367 institutions and programs in the frame of Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools which stands for “bring in”, while there are only 128 overseas schools and programs of Chinese colleges or universities in 48 countries and regions in Asia, Europe, America and Oceania, which stands for “going out” <sup>[2]</sup>.



Overseas education of Chinese higher educational institutions is at the initial stage of exploration. Against the background of expanding the opening up of education, many Chinese universities have actively explored overseas education, and some have actively prepared for or entered the substantive operation stage (See figure 2 for details). On the whole, the quantity of overseas schools and programs of Chinese universities is relatively less,

the discipline and specialty setting is relatively unitary, the international faculty is relatively insufficient, and the quality assurance mechanism is in the process of improvement.

Figure 2 Overseas Educational Cooperation between China and Countries along “the Belt and Road” [3]

Founded Time	Cooperative Institutions or Program Names	Major	Education Level	Domestic Organizer	Overseas Organizer
2006	Dalian Maritime University(Sri Lanka Campus)	Navigation Science, Turbine Engineering	Undergraduate, Master	Dalian Maritime University	Colombo International Institute of Maritime Engineering, Sri Lanka
2010	Kungong Boren Chinese International College	Hotel management, International Trade	Undergraduate	Kunming University of Science and Technology	Boren University, Thailand
2010	4 Undergraduate Cooperative Programs	International Economy and Trade, Finance Management, Art Design, Electrical Engineering and Automation	Undergraduate	Red River College	Taiyuan University, Vietnam
2010	Royal University Of Phnom Penh Chinese Faculty	Chinese Language	Undergraduate	Dali College	Royal University Of Phnom Penh
2011	Soochow University at Laos	International Finance and etc.	Undergraduate, Master	Soochow University	Lao Government
2012	Master Of Education Management Program	Education Management	Master	Southwest University	Vietnam National College of Education and Management
2013	Bangkok Business College	Finance Management	Undergraduate	Yunnan University of Finance and Economics	Rangsit University, Thailand
2014	Xiamen University Malaysia	Finance, International Business, etc.	Undergraduate, Master, Doctor	Xiamen University(full capital)	none
2014	Master of Education Program	Preschool Education	Master	Zhejiang Normal University	Singapore Zhiyuan Education College
2015	Nanjing Xiaozhuang College-Indorusa University Department of Chinese Language	Chinese Language	Undergraduate	Nanjing Xiaozhuang College	University of Indorusa, Indonesia
2015	Taichung International Rubber College	Polymer Material and Engineering	Undergraduate, Master, Vocational Education	Qingdao University of Science and Technology	Songkla Prince University, Thailand; Rubber Valley Group
2016	Myanmar Yunhua Vocational College	Preschool Education(Normal Category)	Junior College	Yunnan Normal University	Myanmar Mandalay Enwa Education and Training Center

### The overseas education modes of Chinese colleges and universities

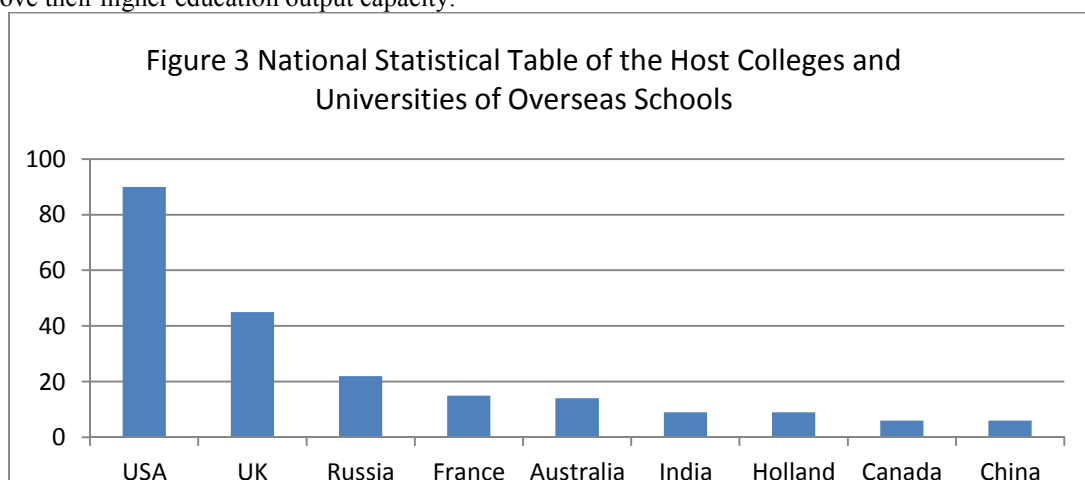
At present, there are mainly four modes of overseas education of Chinese universities:

1. Establishing an overseas branch campus. At present, there are five branch campuses established overseas by Chinese universities: Soochow University at Laos (2011), Tongji University Florence Campus (2014), Xiamen University Malaysia Branch (2016), Wenzhou University Italy Campus (Arezzo Campus) (2016) and Peking University HSBC Business School UK Campus (2018).
2. Establishing a cooperative institutions or colleges. This kind of mode is mostly intercollegiate cooperation between the Chinese and foreign universities. Currently, Chinese universities had set up overseas cooperative colleges account for about one third of their overseas educational schools and programs, and most of them are in Asia. Such as the Beijing Language and Culture University Institute of Bangkok jointly founded by Beijing Language and Culture University and Assumption University in Thailand, Thailand-China Railway Transportation College jointly founded by Liuzhou Railway Vocational Technical College and Rajamangala University of Technology in Thailand, Musanze International College jointly founded by Jinhua Polytechnic and Musanze Vocational and Technical College, Rwanda, Africa, and etc.
3. Carrying out program cooperation. This kind of cooperation mode covers the education of junior, undergraduate and graduate level, and mainly covers the undergraduate student level which accounts up for about 60% of the total number of overseas institutions and programs established by Chinese universities. Taking the overseas education of undergraduate education level as an example, the program students can finish their studies in the partner university overseas, or they can choose "1+3", "2+2" or "3+1" mode to continue their studies in Chinese university.
4. Other forms. In addition to the above three models, China also carry out overseas education by setting up training centers and teaching base, such as Wuxi institute of Commerce cooperate with Hodo Group to set up Cambodian Sihanoukville Special Economy Zone (SSEZ) Training Center in Cambodia where the teaching mode of "language + specialty" is adopted to train students' professional skills while teaching Chinese there.

At the present stage, how to serve "the Belt and Road" initiative and "Chinese Culture Going Global" has become a major mission of Chinese higher education. To strengthen the construction of the global governance talent team, China's higher education urgently needs to "go out" to run schools overseas. It is important for China to provide talents support and reserves for global governance through studying the bottlenecks and advantages of running schools overseas, exploring the implementation approaches for "bring in" and "going out" in higher education.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The output of higher education is the result of the strong comprehensive strength of education. Throughout the world, the countries more developed in education, the more their educational output. As for the C-BERT statistics in 2015, there are 259 universities overseas branches in operation in the world. There are 32 overseas universities exporting countries and 75 importing countries. The United States has the largest number of overseas schools (90), followed by the United Kingdom (45), Russia (22), France (15), Australia (14), India (9), Holland (9), Canada (6). In contrast, China has only 6<sup>[4]</sup>, indicating that Chinese universities still need to improve their higher education output capacity.



China is in the process of transition from an education importing country to an exporting one. Domestic media and scholars are mixed about this phenomenon: some scholars with an optimistic attitude, and regard this as a reflection of China's increased soft power in education and culture, indicating China's higher education's rising. Meanwhile, some other scholars expressed concerns that this may be just a wishful thinking of Chinese

colleges and universities, or even a loss of income.

On the whole, running schools overseas in Chinese universities is still in the initial stage of development. The final advantages and disadvantages of these educational activities remain to be seen <sup>[5]</sup>. Under the background of China's new round of education opening up and the construction of "the Belt and Road" initiative, Chinese colleges and universities will welcome new opportunities and challenges in running schools overseas. More than 10 countries along "the Belt and Road" had invited Chinese educational institutions to run schools or programs in their own country, such as Pakistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, Thailand, Armenia and etc. <sup>[6]</sup>. Some countries have already built school buildings, and some have already completed the detailed implementation plan for the overseas schools, hoping that China will provide education services for them as soon as possible.

This paper will analyze the difficulties faced by Chinese universities in the initial stage of running schools overseas and propose strategies to meet the development requirements.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to conduct this study, the main method of research employed was a comprehensive literature review. These data were based on the theoretical framework of existing scholarly work. The study proposes statements to determine the development strategies of Chinese universities by studying the current difficulties in running schools overseas. And analyzes and finds answers to these statements. According to the results, the work conducts discussion, mainly including how the following aspects limit the Chinese universities in running schools overseas: such as Chinese universities are facing the international competition in overseas education from both the other higher education exporting countries and the local educational institutions in the countries where overseas education runs. Although there are many strategies will promote Chinese universities in running schools overseas, this study is mainly involved the followings: to develop and build international courses, improve the internal management system and mechanism of Chinese universities and establish information sharing platform.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To examine the most competition that Chinese universities are facing in running schools overseas.

To examine if the international cooperation of Chinese universities is balanced in Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools and running schools overseas.

To examine the suitable strategies for Chinese universities in running schools overseas.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

In the increasingly fierce international competition of higher education, Chinese universities' overall competitive edge is not obvious, which has affected the advancement of their overseas education to some extent. As surveys indicate, the international competition faced by Chinese universities in overseas education is mainly in the following two aspects:

The first is the competition with other higher education exporting countries. The output of higher education is the result of a country's strong comprehensive strength. The more developed a country's comprehensive strength is, the smoother its educational output. Although Chinese higher education has made a great development, it has just started its overseas education and lacks experiences, which is obviously at a disadvantage in the competition of international education service.

The second is the competition with local educational institutions in the countries where overseas education runs. The overseas education service of Chinese colleges and universities has got popularity among lots of countries especially where education is underdeveloped, however the costs of educational service in such countries are often relatively low. Additionally, because of the difference in value of currency and the high costs of input into teacher force, Chinese universities don't have an advantage in studying costs of overseas education. This poses limits to the student sources of overseas schools and programs to a certain extent, which directly affects the sustainable development of Chinese colleges and universities' overseas education.

Looking at the history of the development of higher education, it's not difficult to find that, in the recent 20 years, the overseas education of some specific countries and areas has been in full swing and made a rapid progression. For instance, the United States launched the "*Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals*" in 1997, which promoted American universities to develop overseas education <sup>[7]</sup>. In 2015, Beijing Jiaotong University in China opened the history of Chinese universities going to Russia to run schools by jointly established the Sino-Russian Transportation College with the St. Petersburg Jiaotong University in Russia. It will become a new trend for Chinese colleges and universities to "go out" to run overseas schools and programs in the future with the development of colleges and universities and the expansion of its international influence <sup>[8]</sup>.

## DISCUSSION

In view of the above analysis of the current situation of overseas education of Chinese universities, combined with the reality of Chinese higher education development, and drawing on beneficial experiences from cross-border education, we explore the approaches of sustainable development for Chinese universities in running schools overseas.

### **Developing and Building International Courses**

Due to the contradiction between the quantity of high-quality resources in Chinese higher education and people's education needs and the relatively closed education management system, there are still inconsistencies in the discipline structure of Chinese universities and the requirements for socio-economic development. For example, the flexibility of curriculum setting is deficient, the teaching method is relatively single and the model of developing talents calls for a reform.

Therefore, in order to enable the sustainable development of Chinese universities in overseas education, it's necessary to deepen the curriculum and teaching reform, develop and build international courses, improve the quality and internalization of university courses. It's also necessary to continually improve the traditional teaching approach, renew teaching method, strengthen the training and development of university teachers, update teachers' education concept and increase teachers' foreign language teaching ability and level.

### **Improving the Internal Management System and Mechanism of Chinese Universities**

In order to make the sustainable development of overseas education of Chinese universities, we should devote to the reform of university's internal management system, and establish an operation mechanism that is consistent with the internationalization of higher education and international cooperative education. For example, to innovate the management system for Chinese teachers and foreign teachers in overseas schools and programs. In order to ensure the smooth implementation of overseas cooperation courses, personnel management system in universities calls for a reform, and setting up a new appointment, appraisal system and other management system to ensure that there is sufficient amount of high-quality teachers.

The overseas schools and programs of Chinese colleges and universities mainly focus on recruiting foreign students. Both China and foreign parties involved in the overseas educational cooperation have different divisions in the operation and management of curriculum and running schools. Compared with the domestic university in China, the overseas schools and programs show particularity in curriculum setting, organization and implementation of teaching activities, and financial management.

Therefore, Chinese colleges and universities should set up management systems for students, curriculum and teaching and financial affairs, aiming at the actual situation of overseas schools and programs. Besides, seek the best cooperation point and cooperation methods for both partners, establish a management system and operation mechanism that not only meets the needs of overseas education but also is consistent with the management system of overseas cooperative partners, to better guarantee the cooperation and exchanges, promote the development of overseas education<sup>[9]</sup>.

### **Establishing an Information Sharing Platform**

The implementation of "the Belt and Road" initiative is pressing for international talents. It has been proved by practice that Chinese colleges and universities can provide high-quality talents for the implementation of "the Belt and Road" initiative by carrying out overseas education.

According to incomplete statistics, by the end of 2016, Chinese enterprises have invested and built 56 overseas economic and trade cooperation zones which include over 1,200 enterprises in 20 countries along "the Belt and Road", with a total investment of over 18.5 billion US dollars<sup>[10]</sup>. The information sharing platform for colleges and universities to go abroad for running schools and programs is called to be established by the national level to collect the international demand of Chinese enterprises, universities overseas and the willingness of Chinese domestic universities to "go out". By classifying and guiding the colleges and universities to integrate resources and match the demand of overseas schools, it can effectively avoid the disorderly competition and rationally allocate China's higher education resources.

At the same time, a quality supervision information platform is also called to be established to evaluate the quality of overseas schools, so as to ensure that China's overseas education is accessible, sustainable and well-managed, build a higher education brand of China with high-quality education services, and improve the international image of China education.

## CONCLUSION

For a long time, the "bring in" and "going out" development of international cooperation of Chinese higher education have been unbalanced, which has affected the process of education opening up to some extent. From the above analysis of the difficulties and strategies of Chinese overseas education, we can draw the following two conclusions: The first is that the model of Chinese institutions setting up branches abroad only accounts for 3.90% of the total overseas schools and programs. According to the policy orientation of Chinese government about overseas education, the establishment of overseas branches of Chinese universities and colleges does not



belong to area of policy encouragement at present. For this kind of school-running pattern, it is necessary to further summarize the school-running experiences so that it can be duplicated and popularized and have an impact on the corresponding policies and measures reform and innovation. The second is to directly cooperation with local government or universities in the country (region) where the overseas school or program is run, setting up schools or holding programs is a model strongly encouraged and supported by the educational management department. The current policy guidance for overseas education of Chinese colleges and universities is objective and inseparable from the current situation that Chinese colleges and universities are in the initial exploration stage of overseas education.

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