

# International Student Mobility(ISM) in China in the New Phase of Internationalization of Higher Education(IHE): Trends and Patterns

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this paper was to trace trends and patterns of international student mobility in the new phase of internationalization of higher education in China, specifically from 1990 to 2015. Two basic questions framed the study: what is the trends and patterns of international student mobility in China from 1990s to 2015? What reform measures were used in the steering the development of international student mobility in China from 1990s to 2015? Exploratory study method was used in which both primary and secondary data were collected, organized and thematically interpreted. Primary sources of data were government legislations, higher education laws and other related documents while secondary data sources were, books, reports, Chinese government scholarship and Ministry of education websites. Major findings are trend of international student mobility in China is growing steadily fast from few thousands in 1990s to hundreds of thousands in 2015, from more than 200 countries of the world. The trend is analyzed in three thematic time-frame and interpreted as: from 1991-2000, the decade of policy blueprint/roadmap; from 2001-1010, the decade of recognition and understanding; from 2011-2015, the year of new role and influx.

**Keywords:** International Students Mobility, inbound, trends/patterns, influx, IHE, New phase of IHE

## 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to trace the trends and patterns of International Student Mobility (ISM) in China in the new phase of Internationalization of Higher Education(IHE), specifically from 1990s to 2015. And to identify reform measures used to steer the development of ISM. Besides to understand how ISM influences the development of internationalization of higher education in China, within the global student mobility and contextual policy framework of IHE.

International student' mobility is part of global phenomenon of people movement across national boundaries due economic opportunity, political and academic concerns. Among the various categories of migrants, international students are the ones who have experienced the most rapid increase in relative terms. The movement across boarder in search of knowledge can be traced back to the Middle-Ages in Europe and in Asia, where a long tradition has put scholars on the road in search of the best universities or places of knowledge production. Scholars in early stage of internationalization of higher education, Bois (1956) in (Banjong, & Olson 2016) sees movement across boarder as human nature:

*The pursuit of learning beyond the boundaries of one's own community, nation, or culture is as old as learning itself...and reflects the ability of human beings to communicate with each other at varying levels and with varying sophistication across the barriers of social particularities.*

The early connection between countries in the area of higher education lies on cooperation for research, knowledge transfer and capacity building. Through time however, its form and intensity changed from academic purposes to economic purposes. Intense competition for potential international students, international academic staff and resources, became distinctive features of IHE since 1990s. Meanwhile, the international student mobility is one of the most prominent phenomena of contemporary higher education(Kehm,2005). The number of international students travelled across border in the last quarter century is exponentially increasing that pushes the horizon of internationalization of higher education. The number of international student which was 1.3million in 1990, grew to 5 million in 2015. It has been accelerated over the recent period with a rise of 70%, between 2001 and 2015. (Brookfield Global Relocation Trends, 2015). All reports on ISM consistently shows that China and USA are major contributors for the development in the last two to three decades as a major origin and major destination respectively. China has been top one major origin of international students since mid-1980s followed by India and South Korea, while USA is top one major destination of international student since the beginning of organized international student mobility mostly followed by UK and Australia. Recently, however there is new development in both countries that China is steadily growing and appeared to be one of the top five destinations, while USA though remains the top destination, its share is declining since recently. (Choudaha, Rahul; Chang, Li; Kono, 2013; Brookfield Global Relocation Trends, 2015).

Several studies have been conducted on ISM across wide spectrum and made valuable contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon of international student mobility. Some of the major areas addressed were-

factors in decision making (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002a;Kahanec & Králiková, 2011;Mpinganjira, 2009;Wadhwa,2016;Gargano, 2009; Phang, 2013), determinants of ISM and factors associated to attraction (Kritz, 2013; Wei, 2013; Beine, Noël and Ragot, 2014), uneven flow of international students and variations, (Perkins and Neumayer, 2014), challenges and prospects of student mobility in African higher education landscape,(Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck, 2015),patterns and trends (WES, 2007; Chan, 2012; Choudaha, Chang and Kono, 2013; Shields, 2013) trends and tribulations (Knight, 2012a) the flow of students and social networks across national borders(Gargano, 2009) Patterns and trends of recruitment strategies and motivational factors (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007; Chan, 2012) were some of the contribution accessed in this paper. This article therefore, would like to understand IHE by analyzing trends and patterns of international student mobility, and how it influenced the development of IHE in China from 1990s to 2015.

## 2. Conceptual framework

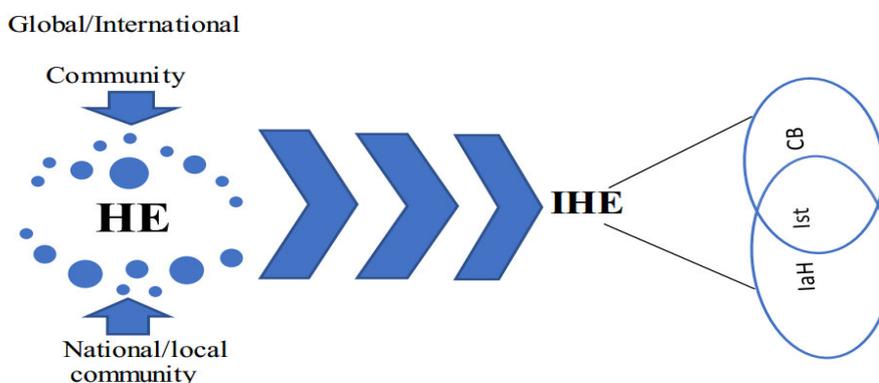
The conceptual base for this paper lies in the idea that IHE is the process and strategic effort as a response to the impact of globalization (Huang, 2003; Qiang et al., 1995;Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009) and to the need and demand of national/local community. As the main objective of this study was to understand IHE through analyzing trends and patters of ISM, which is visible in the framework of IHE (Teichler, 2009) it is imperative to explore its relationship with IHE and globalization as well, as the concept will not stand alone(Tamene, 2016).

The higher education’s inherent global nature is emphasized by prominent scholars of the area in one way or another. On one end wherever they are in the globe, universities have always had some international dimension, either in the concept of universal knowledge and related research, or in the movement of students and scholars (Wit *et al.*, 2015), in line with this idea, Altbach (1998) described university is the institution that has always been global and that’s why today, global knowledge and technology, interconnected network and global awareness are increasingly viewed as major asset sought. Heylin 2006 in (Mitchell and Nielsen, 2012) described global nature of higher education vividly:

*The institution of higher education has always been international in scope with the exchange of ideas, scholars and students, but modern technology, the internet, communication technologies, the increasing flow of students and highly educated scientists from all over the world...*

On the other end, higher education institutions are national. National states have always sought to have universities which serve local needs in political, social and economic terms (Knight, 2004; Maringe, Felix & Foskett, 2010). For higher education institutions are national state products, remain embedded within the framework of national higher education systems. Hence, internationalization of higher education is supposed to be a policy for the strengthening of local and global research networks and knowledge exchanges, and the improvement of academic quality and providing equitable educational opportunities to students to accomplish their needs and interests. With this regard, internationalization appears to be as a crucial factor in ensuring economic productivity and competitiveness (Rizvi, 2010) of given country.

This shows that higher education Institutions have both international and national dimensions and act between two societies, global/international society and national/local community (Knight, 2012a). On the other hand (Mitchell and Nielsen, 2012) defined internationalization and globalization in higher education context as two different things: internationalization is something higher education institutions do by themselves while globalization is something that is happening to them. These global and national features are brought together schematically in figure 1 derived from extensive reading of the literature on IHE and ISM.



**Figure 1. Position of Higher Education and IHE**

Key: HE-higher education, IHE- internationalization of higher education, IaH-Internationalization at home, Ist-international students, CB-cross boarder internationalization

Description of the above figure.

Figure 1 tries to show the position of higher education between global/international society and national/local community. Global community enforce elements of its dimension in the higher education functions through globalization. National community enforce elements of economic, cultural and historical issues into higher education functions through policies and regulations. The dots surrounding, HE is to indicate multiple actors having different role in higher education activities, though not as strong as the global and nation ones. As these facts are unavoidable reality, selectively incorporating issues from both communities, is, responding to both that define institutional strategies of internationalization of higher education.

### 2.1. *New phase of Internationalization of Higher Education(IHE)*

Internationalization of higher education is a phenomenon that has emerged over the last quarter century though its roots lie in the previous centuries, (Wit *et al.*, 2015). However, it has changed dramatically over the last three decades into the forms, dimensions and approaches that we see today. Though the popularity of internationalization as a policy priority has soared since the early 1980s (Knight, 2003) the 1990s mark “an important phase in the evolution of the internationalization of higher education”(Knight, 2008:27).

Broadly covers from 1990s and onwards, known to be the competitive stage, a new phase of internationalization of higher education has emerged(Knight, 2006,2014; R. Wadhwa, 2016). This phase characterized by intense competition for profit, manifested in competition for potential international students, potential staff and resources. (Chan, 2012:221) portrayed cooperation for completions quoting Knight, (2008:218), ‘the network at national (and international) levels are good example of a cooperative strategy for competitive purpose’. It turned to have two phases-practically completion while formally cooperation. The alarming concern is the move for profit in higher education shadow the ultimate purpose of higher education, academic and social transformation (Knight, 2012b).

Internationalization of higher beyond transforming higher education institutions, recently transformed itself into two pillars: Internationalization at home, and internationalization abroad. (Altbach, 2007; Deardorff, D.K.; Wit, H.D.;Heyl, J.D. & Adams, 2012; Wit *et al.*, 2015). The global movement of international students across borders considered important element of in the internationalization of higher education in an increasingly globalized world.(Knight, 2012, Altbach, 2005; Altbach & Knight, 2007).

### 2.2. *International Student Mobility (ISM)*

Mobility is a fundamental element of human freedom, entails the freedom to seek opportunities to improve living standards (UNDP, 2010). Among the various categories of migrants, international students are the ones who have experienced the most rapid increase. The reason for the dramatic growth is the multi-dimensional benefits that follow international student mobility in the context of HE, International student mobility is seen as strong indicator of internationalization of higher education (Kehm, 2005). In this article international students defined as, those travelled across national boarder for academic purposes (UNESCO, 2013).

It is believed that ISM benefits main stakeholders/actors-the students, host country/institutions and sending country. International student benefit from cross-cultural proficiency, global competencies to personal and professional portfolio and expands intellectual and cognitive frames of reference to refine composite skills such as problem solving and engagement in critical debate (Berdan, Goodman, & Taylor, 2013; Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016). Institution will able to usher in genuine and meaningful international ethos in education, improve recognition and brand stature, revitalize connections within the international knowledge and professional networks, and achieve sustainable institutional growth. Many institutions in some of the host countries rely heavily on the income brought by the cross-border education students (Varghese, 2008). From host country point of view, international student mobility is sources of revenue generation, and also represents a potential source of educated labor force (OECD Observer, 2005; Internaciona and Indicators, 2013). Sending countries expect trained manpower for their economic and social development, though there is a danger of brain drain(Knight, 2012b). Because wherever better conditions are available, international students are likely to stay and work once they have completed their studies (Rosenzweig, 2007).

However, though international students may profit from labor markets the degree to which studying abroad provides individuals with economically valuable human capital may well vary, depending on the ‘quality’ of higher education institutions. (King, Findlay and Ahrens, 2010; Ilieva, Beck and Waterstone, 2014).

#### 2.2.1. *Factors influencing choice of destination*

Push/Pull model is the most important and perhaps the dominating approach to the body of analysis of international mobility literature (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). These factors are those related to opportunity and choice of interest to study at home institutions or to study abroad. Students are attracted by the favorable conditions offered by the host countries (Liu, 2016) while pushed by unfavorable condition at home institutions. Although the experience of studying abroad and its associated benefits, is important for most students, one of the reasons for deciding to study abroad is the limited opportunity to study in home country.

Even when domestic supply conditions are favorable students may seek studies abroad for other personal

benefits, which may include learning or practicing foreign languages; learning about new cultures; need to broaden personal experience or be independent; enhanced career prospects implied in studying abroad (Berdan, Goodman, & Taylor, 2013; Banjong, & Olson, 2016). Of all pull factors, one of the most frequently mentioned drivers promoting international student mobility is the opportunity it provides to enhance international competitiveness in an era of the knowledge economy (Teferra and Knight, 2008). Some of the pull factors in the decision-making process for student seeking an overseas destination include employment and residency opportunities, the quality of the student life experience, including accommodation and social activities, and the costs associated with an international education. In line with this point, Choudaha and De Wit, (2014) suggest that quality of education, better living condition and stronger labor market demand are main motivations of ISM. Similarly, factors that encourage students to pursue higher education in certain destinations than others include opportunity to enhance second language; the higher education institution's reputation; teaching personnel's credential, qualification and availability of courses and programs; availability of technology-based higher education programs and the institution's effective recruitment and marketing campaigns (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Phang, 2013).

### 3. Methods

Exploratory study method is employed to get detail understanding of trends and patterns of ISM in China. Documents on ISM that can provide background information as well as historical insight were thoroughly analyzed. These include collection of both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources of data were government legislations, higher education laws (1998) while secondary data sources were, books, reports, Chinese government scholarship and Ministry of education websites. The data analysis procedure started by gathering and selecting the most relevant documents and literature on the international student mobility in general and in China in particular. Hence China Scholarship Council annual report from 1999 to 2010, China Higher Education Law 1998, Brief Statistics of Foreign Students studying in China, 2013, world education news and reviews and literature on ISM and others none of which were produced for this research, were selected and carefully examined. The analysis includes an analysis of the available literature, by cross checking the data across the sources as the way to maintain the trustworthiness of the study.

The numeric data obtained from these documents are presented in tables and figures to illuminate the trend of international student mobility over time. The data and findings are organized in two parts following the leading questions. Finally, the findings are discussed into three-time frames: from 1990 to 2000, from 2001 to 2010 from 2011 to 2015 and thematically interpreted.

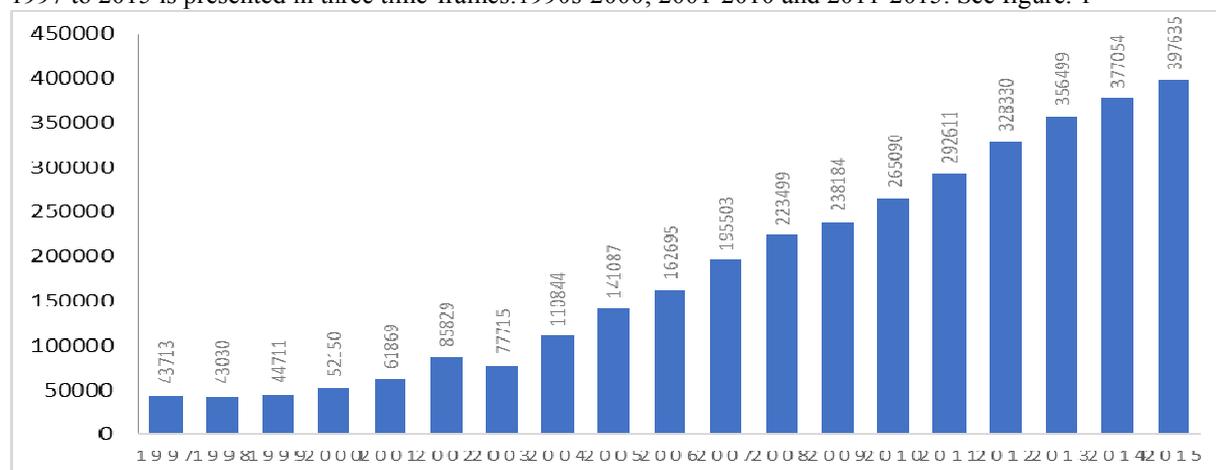
### 4. Data and Findings

Inconsistency of the data on ISM from one source to another is acknowledged that data from Ministry of education of Peoples Republic of China, China Scholarship Council and UNESCO (UIS), were consistently utilized and presented as follows.

#### 4.1. Trends and Patterns of ISM in China from 1990s to 2015

##### 4.1.1. Trends of ISM in China in real figure from 1997 to 2015

The data on ISM in the early 1990s is rather scanty and fragmented that, the consistently available data from 1997 to 2015 is presented in three time-frames: 1990s-2000; 2001-2010 and 2011-2015. See figure. 1



**Figure 2. Trends of International students in China from 1997 to 2015**

Sources: CSC 2016; UNESCO, 2013; compiled by authors

As table 1 reveals number of international student from 1997 to 2015 increased dramatically with steady

and fast growth. Looking closely, the number of International students from 1997 to 2000, shows relatively small increment with fluctuation. In real figure the increase from 1997 to 2000, is only 8437 international students, which is less than the increase in one year, 9719, from 2000 to 2001. As it is seen in table 1 the number and its rate of increase of international students in 1990s was relatively negligible. From 2001 to 2010 the rise is relatively very fast particularly after 2004/05 growth was exponential. In 2001, it was 61869, while at the end of this phase, 2010, it rose up to 265090 more than four times. The increase from 2011 onward is very high as well, the increase rate is 29.97% on average. According to MoE, (2016) 36 educational and research institutes began accepting international students, that bring the total number of institutes in 2015 to 811 from 775 in 2014. Although there has been a slowdown in numbers since 2014, the number of foreign students in China has been growing on average 10% year-on-year since 2006.

In summary, in 1997, China received 43713 students while by the end of 2015, the total number of international students reached 397635 from more than 202 countries of the globe, studying in 811 higher education institutions. In general term the population of international students continue to grow particularly from 2004/2005 steadily rising pattern with no fluctuation.

#### 4.2. Trend by countries of origin

Table 1 shows top five sending countries from 2005 to 2015. Accordingly, South Korea and United states maintain first and second position as the largest sending countries while the third largest sending country position is taken by Thailand in 2013 up to date surpassing Japan. Top three sending countries accounting for 16%,5.5% and 5.0% of international students respectively MoE, (2016).

**Table 1. Top five countries origin of International students in China from 2005 to 2015**

Year	Total No of Stu	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
2015	397635	SK 66675	US 21975	TL 19976	In 16694	Ru 16197
2014	377054	SK 62923	US 24203	TL 21296	Ru 17202	Ja 15057
2013	356499	SK 63029	US 25312	TL 20106	Ja 17226	Ru 15918
2012	328330	SK 63368	US 24625	Ja 21013	TL 16745	Ru 15103
2011	292611	SK 62442	US 23292	Ja 17916	TL 14145	Vie13549
2010	265090	SK 62975	US 19668	Ja 16808	TL 13177	Vie 13018
2009	238184	SK 64232	US 18650	Ja 15409	Vie 12247	TL 11379
2008	223499	SK 66806	US 19914	Ja16733	Vie 10396	Ru 8939
2007	195503	SK 69481	Ja 18640	US 14758	Vie 9702	TL 7306
2006	162 695	SK 35,353	Ja 12,765	US 3,693	Vie 3,478	Indo 2,563
2005	141087	SK 54036	Ja 18906	US 10299	Vie 5785	Indo 4656

Key: SK=south Korea; US-United States; TL=Thailand; In=India; Ru=Russia; Ja-Japan; Vie-Vietnam; Indo-Indonesia;

Source: CSC 2015; organized by researchers

Another important finding in table 1, except United States, all top five sending countries are Asian countries, for the more than a decade. This might be due to regional proximity and other social factors. Other interesting finding is the number of students from South Korea is declining from 2007 to 2014 with slight increase in 2015. The number of students from US also declining from 2013. Others from Thailand and Russia constantly increasing except decrease from Thailand in 2015.

#### 4.3. Trend by regions of origin

International students studying in China varying based on region of origin. Asian students are the large, majority of international students in China. MoE, (2016), International students from Asia top the list, totally 461,605 and accounting for (67.8%) see table 3. Students from Europe number 35,876, accounting for (15.1%) per cent; 25,557 from America account for (10.7%) 12,436 from Africa account for (5.2%); and 2,710 from Oceania account for (1.1%). According to this report, Asia and Africa witnessed a 6.5 percent and a 19.47 respective percent rise in student numbers.

#### 4.4. Trend by academic level

Table 2 shows from 2011-2015 the number of international students traveling to China for academic degree is increasing. Conversely the number of international students traveling to china for non-degree training is relatively declining.

**Table 2. International students by academic level from 2011-2015**

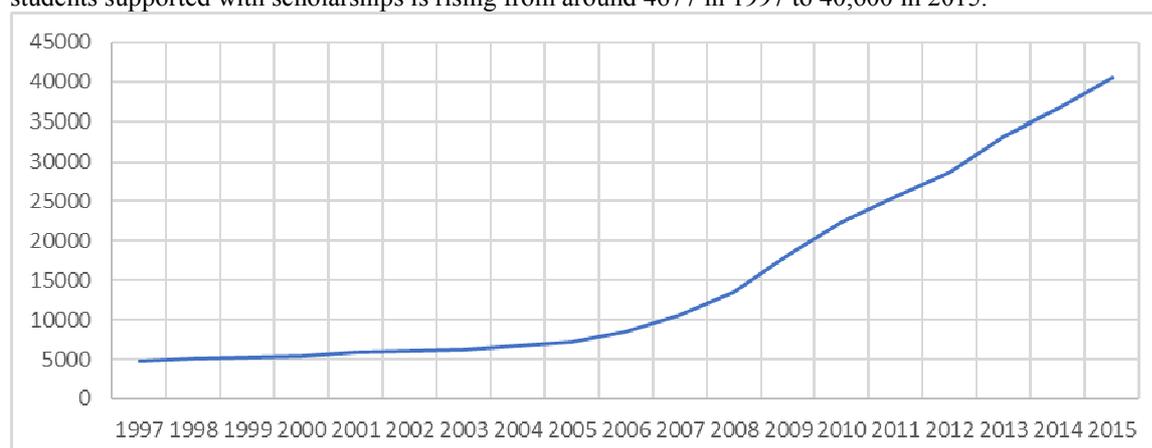
Year	Total inbound international student	Academic training						Non-academic	
		Total degree seeking students	%	UG		PG		Nondegree	
				No	%	No	%	No	%
2011	292611	118837	40.61	88461	74.44	30376	25.56	173774	59.39
2012	328330	135509	41.2	99449	22.49	36060	18.71	194821	58.8
2013	356499	147890	41.48	116406	30.1	31484	11.7	208609	58.52
2014	377054	164394	43.6	164394	30.9	43342	12.7	212660	56.4
2015	397635	184799	46.47	131227	33.0	53372	13.47	212836	53.53

Source: MoE, 2016 compiled by researchers

The number of international student seeking degree (both undergraduate and post graduate) programs were 118837(40.61%) in 2011. This number reached 184799 (46.47%) in 2015 with the average increase about 43.0%. In 2011, there were 173774 (59.39%) international students in non-degree courses, while declined to (53.53%) 2015. This shows, China attracts a much larger proportion of non-degree award students than degree awarding programs, though its share is declining at 1.47% on average, as the international students in degree program increases at 42.63% on average.

#### 4.5. Trends by Sources of Funding

Chinese government scholarships (CSC) is one of the key means to attract foreign students. The number of students supported with scholarships is rising from around 4677 in 1997 to 40,600 in 2015.



**Figure 2. Number of international student offered China government scholarship(CSC) from 1997-2015**

Sources: (CSC, 2010; MoE, 2014,2015) compiled by authors

Figure 2 shows the number of interinstitutional student awarded by Chinese government scholarship council grew steadily growing practically from 2004/2005. According to MoE, (2015) report the number of international students receiving a scholarship increased by 9.9% from 2014. The general trend international student under scholarship scheme follows the international student mobility trend shown in figure 1. Recent report from ministry of education and others (MoE, 2015; Michael, Niu and Osman, 2017 in press), on scholarship confirms that the Asian students, accounts 50.01% of total; followed by African students, accounts 25.5% of the total; and the third is 14.66% for European students. Among them, 10,902 postgraduate students, amounting for 48.7% of the whole. Higher than the proportions of degree-oriented students and postgraduate students in the self-funded international students in China, which are 36.6% and 5.75% respectively. According to this document the number of scholarships for Africa has grown rapidly since 2006.

#### 4.2. Reform measures used in the steering the development of international student mobility in China from 1990s to 2015

##### 4.2.1. Reforms measures used in steering the development of ISM in China

Internationalization of higher education in china supported with strong policy direction and frequent reform following the national and global development in the area. Few but fundamental policies and directives which have direct influence on internationalization of higher education are presented in table 2.

**Table 3. Policies and regulations that steer IHE and ISM in China**

Year	Policy	Issue	Impact sought
1993	Outline for Reform and Development of Education in China	Delineate the role of central govt as supervisory rather than direct control	Fundamental reference for education reform and development in China (Xu & Mei,2009); encourage competition (Cai, 2013, Mok, 2011);
1995	Project '211' & '985'	Support some universities to world class status, capacity, building	Quality, visibility, reputation, increase competitiveness in the global marketplace (Cai, 2013); Realize modernization of the country
1996/7	China Scholarship Council	China scholarship council established	Facilitate inbound and outbound international students through govt scholarship
1998	Higher Education Law of People Republic of China	The first comprehensive legal document regulating higher education (Education, 2010)	Standardization and direction for Chinese higher education reform and development in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century
2001	WTO	Member of WTO/GATS	Access to world education market
2002	Private education promotion law of the PRC	Foreign institutions offer programs with Chinese Higher educations	Access to the world and world to China
2004	CCI	Chinese language and culture	Visibility, mutual understanding
2010	National Outline on Mid- and Long-Term (2010-2020)	Quality improvement	Transition a huge education to a strong education system; improved research and service; world-class universities.

## 5. Discussion

The forgoing data shows that the 1990s China received relatively small number of international students but basic policy formulations and reforms that highly influence the development of IHE in general and ISM were taken place. This time is described as, the time Chinese higher education began to move from planned force to market forces (Cai, 2013). In terms of national policy, the internationalization of Chinese higher education began in open door policy in general terms but practical translated in to higher education and implemented since 1990s. From this, it is possible to deduce that this decade is the *road map/policy breakthrough*, that paved way to the dramatic development for internationalization of higher education in China, accompanied by rise of the number of international student in the following decades.

From the year 2001 to 2010 China government took another breakthrough, that China practically faced the world being member of WTO, in 2001. Followed by signing agreements with countries of the world and with famous universities around the world. Though the effort dated back a decade, China's entry into the WTO in 2001 boosted the speed of internationalization in higher education by creating more understanding about China. Another important measure that increase Chinese visibility is the establishment of Centre of Confucius Institute outside mainland China. In 2004, the first Confucius Institute opened in South Korea, which by 2014, reached 475, in 126 countries worldwide (Chen and Huang, 2013; Neubauer and Zhang, 2015). The major objectives of this institute are to make known Chinese culture language and history of China to the world and to learn from the world as well. Centre for Confucius Institute served as a bridge to internationalization and as a contribution to the enhancement of mutual understanding and friendship among people, though recently served as a source of negative critique, viewed as the possible hegemonic character.

These important achievements stand out visible in this decade that directly influencing internationalization of higher education and international student mobility in China. These bridges Chinese to understand the world in better way and others to understand Chinese as well. As international students' decision of choosing destination, is partially based on information about the host country, the improve the understanding about China, as a result at the end or 2010 the number of international student reached 265090 from 194 countries of the world fig.1. Therefore, this decade can be said decade of recognition and understanding. The decade in which the world started to learn about China widely than ever. China well understood the importance collaboration and

mutual understanding others/western/ and recognized the role of China.

By 2011, more than 292 thousand international students from 194 countries were studying in 620 higher education institutions in China. In 2015, the number of international students reached 397635, from 202 countries study in 811 higher education institutions in 31 provinces of the china. All these higher education institution, are practicing new role as the place of diversity, provide courses in English as medium of instruction. This shows that China is moving to the role of major destination as it has been in major origin of international students for decades. Some of the pull factors are academic quality, language of instruction, cost of living/study and general condition including security. The role of university rankings and the achievement of china on the global higher education market are the reflection of recognitions and are the platform for understanding. Though other factors contribute, policy and direction of the country play pivotal role in boosting the number of international students exponentially.

Policies and regulations adopted in 1990s are fundamental that serve as a blue print for the following decades, focusing on correcting internal education ground for the next century. While in 2000s the main concerns were improvement and acceleration of development focusing on the external education environment. The reforms in 1990s to 2010 which directly influence the development of IHE and ISM in china, mainly address issues: transformation of governance in higher education, restructuring of higher education institutions, 'massification' of higher education, building world class universities, and quality assurance(Cai, 2013). In summary, the debate in the internationalization of higher education in market policy for profit, attract international students for revenue generation or for cultural and social purpose building global citizen remain active, however, this data, shows that Chinese government giving due attention for social and cultural rational as well.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study is conducted to identify patterns and trends of international student mobility in China. Specifically, to detect patterns and trends in ISM from 1990s to 2015 and to identify reform measures steered ISM in China. Hence, the trend is discussed in three phases and interpreted as: 1990s, the phase of policy blueprint; 2000s the phase of recognition and understanding and from 2010s as a phase of influx and new role.

The trend of ISM was not only increasing steadily fast but also shows the pattern of no fluctuation particularly since 2004/5. It is also concluded that Asian countries international students are leading, in both number and opportunity of government scholarship as well. This on one hand show the emphasis given to regionalization and Chinese growing role in the region. Considering regional trend, Asia is leading while Africa is growing fast, in sending number of students and scholarship opportunity. International students coming China for academic degree is growing fast while students for non-degree is decreasing. This follows the policy emphasis on quality education and provision of international courses in many universities.

With the support of strong policy directions, and nationally improving higher education environment as to attract global attention, China changed its global position from top sending country to one of the top five destination of international country in less than quarter century. It can be concluded that, although economic rationale is the fundamental reason for internationalization of higher education in this new phase of IHE, there is a strong indication that China is concerned about the other generic rationales- cultural and social and diplomatic at least currently. This is confirmed by the data from trends by the sources of funding and the plan to increase scholarship the number of students offered government scholarship from national outline on mid-and long-term 2020.

This study delimits the disparities among structures of higher education, and its implications for further development of the ISM and IHE in China. The comparison of differences and similarities among the central government sponsored higher education institutions, provincial and other general colleges gradually receiving international students is compelling. Hence the study that identify the impact of their organizational character may have on the ISM and IHE it would reveal clearer picture of ISM and IHE in the China

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