

Research on the Promoting Effect of Sino-foreign Cooperative Education on University Internationalization

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ABSTRACT

Sino-foreign cooperative education, as a key pathway for the internationalization of higher education, promotes the internationalization of teaching and research and innovation in talent cultivation through the integration of cross-cultural educational resources, the establishment of institutional cooperation platforms, and participation in global governance. However, its development faces practical challenges such as lagging management mechanisms, uneven resource integration, and cross-cultural conflicts, which manifest as insufficient policy coordination, a tendency towards 'Westernization' of educational resources, and a lack of international quality assurance. The article proposes several optimization strategies: first, to improve the policy system and collaborative governance mechanisms by establishing a legal framework and a third-party evaluation system; second, to establish a 'local-foreign' dual-cycle quality assurance system that integrates local needs with international standards, strengthens faculty development, and innovates ideological and political education in courses; third, to deepen cross-cultural interactions by building an 'Belt and Road' education platform, promoting digital cooperation models, and enhancing the voice of Chinese universities in global educational governance. Through multidimensional reforms, Sino-foreign cooperative education can overcome existing bottlenecks, transition from 'scale expansion' to 'connotative development,' and provide sustainable institutional support and cultural backing for the internationalization of higher education.

KEYWORDS

Internationalization of colleges and universities; Sino-foreign cooperative education; Cooperation and exchange

1 The core characteristics of promoting the internationalization of universities through sino-foreign cooperative education

1.1 Synergistic innovation of diversified cooperation mode and internationalization path

Sino-foreign cooperative education programs innovate through diverse collaboration models, establishing a comprehensive and internationalized development path for higher education ^[1]. In terms of joint training projects, Chinese and foreign universities deeply integrate talent development plans through 'dual degrees' and 'joint laboratories.' For example, Chinese universities introduce core modules of the foreign curriculum system, while foreign universities recognize the credit value of practical courses from Chinese universities, promoting mutual academic exchanges. The development of cross-border course modules breaks free from the constraints of a single national education framework, promoting the transition of the curriculum system from 'localization' to 'global localization' through the joint construction of international course clusters and mutual recognition of credit standards. Through school-enterprise cooperation and the involvement of international organizations, the industry-university-research integration model is realized as the primary vehicle for cultivating practical skills. By jointly building international training bases and developing international standard courses, students can hone their cross-cultural collaboration skills in real-world international settings. Universities continuously refine their talent cultivation strategies based on industry demand feedback mechanisms. Multi-dimensional collaborative innovation expands the global allocation of educational resources, reshaping the connotation and pathways of internationalized higher education development from a systemic perspective ^[2].

1.2 Integration of cross-cultural education resources and internationalization of teachers

Sino-foreign cooperative education programs, by integrating cross-cultural educational resources and building an international faculty, serve as a core driving force for the internationalization of higher education ^[3]. In terms of faculty, the introduction of foreign teachers and the overseas master lecturer program have initially formed an international academic community. Foreign scholars not only directly participate in teaching and research activities but also align with international knowledge production paradigms through mentorship and joint research projects. The introduction of

English original textbooks and bilingual course construction has overcome language barriers, promoting mutual recognition of teaching standards between China and foreign countries through the restructuring of the curriculum system. For example, the adoption of OBE (Outcomes-Based Education) outcome-oriented education concepts to align with international certification standards ensures that course content is rooted in local culture while also reflecting global academic frontiers. The mechanisms for teachers and students to participate in overseas research programs and international academic conferences have created a 'input-output' two-way cycle of academic capital accumulation. Teachers enhance their research influence through international cooperation, while students expand their academic networks through cross-border practices. This multi-dimensional interactive mechanism ultimately contributes to the continuous optimization of the university's internationalization ecosystem.

1.3 Institutional cooperation platforms and the building of global governance capacity

Sino-foreign cooperative education programs, by focusing on the construction of institutional cooperation platforms, serve as a crucial fulcrum for enhancing global governance capabilities in higher education. These institutions, such as Confucius Institutes and overseas branches, not only serve as physical carriers of international education hubs but also play a key role in educational output. They achieve deep integration of the Sino-foreign educational ecosystem through the integration of resources from both sides. Operating under the framework of 'local internationalization,' these institutions transcend physical boundaries and establish regular mechanisms for cross-border policy dialogue within the governance structures of joint management committees and academic committees. This promotes the implementation of mutual recognition of academic qualifications and credit transfer rules domestically. By participating in international accreditation systems such as AACSB and EQUIS, these institutions internalize global educational quality standards into their 'reverse pressure mechanism' for educational quality, encouraging universities to align with international frontiers in faculty structure, research evaluation, and social services. Institutional participation not only enhances educational openness but also gradually strengthens Chinese universities' influence and voice in setting the rules of the international education order through rule-making in the global education governance arena.

2 The practical difficulties of promoting the internationalization of universities through sino-foreign cooperative education

2.1 Lagging management mechanism and insufficient policy coordination

In the process of promoting university internationalization, Sino-foreign cooperative education programs face core challenges such as outdated management mechanisms and a lack of policy coordination. The unclear division of responsibilities between Chinese and foreign parties leads to fragmented governance structures and lengthy decision-making processes, significantly reducing the efficiency of project implementation. There is a structural conflict between localized management policies and international education rules. In terms of admission standards and degree recognition, the domestic administrative approval process is difficult to align with international practices, hindering the standardization of educational service trade. The cross-border education quality supervision system is not yet fully developed, and the localization of evaluation standards is lagging, which increases the risk of academic credential inflation and undermines the credibility of Sino-foreign cooperative education programs in society.

2.2 Uneven integration of educational resources and the problem of localization adaptation

Sino-foreign cooperative education programs aim to promote the internationalization of higher education institutions, but they face significant challenges, including uneven distribution of educational resources and the need for localization. High-quality foreign educational resources are primarily concentrated in top universities in the eastern regions, while universities in central and western China struggle to secure such programs due to geographical disadvantages and insufficient policy support, exacerbating regional disparities in higher education ^[4]. The design of course systems often falls into the trap of 'Westernization,' heavily relying on foreign standards, which can lead to a disconnection from local cultural heritage. For example, the content of general education courses on traditional Chinese culture is often insufficient, and there is no balance between an 'international perspective' and 'cultural awareness.' The high turnover of international faculty and short-term hiring practices result in weak teaching continuity. Additionally, the lack of systematic training for local teachers makes it difficult to form a cohesive academic team that aligns with international standards, leading to a structural gap in faculty that hinders the sustainable development of cooperative education programs.

2.3 Cross-cultural conflicts and bottlenecks in the connotative development of internationalization

Sino-foreign cooperative education programs face challenges of cross-cultural conflicts and the bottleneck of connotative development in promoting the internationalization of higher education institutions. Due to cultural differences, language barriers, and academic norms, teachers and students often find cross-border courses in a formalistic state. The quantitative assessment of internationalization indicators leads to a tendency to prioritize quantity over quality, such as sacrificing educational quality for QS rankings. A deeper issue is the low participation of Chinese universities in global governance and the loss of international discourse power, which hinders the transition from passive following to leading roles, ultimately limiting the deep-seated effectiveness of Sino-foreign cooperative education in promoting the internationalization of higher education institutions.

3 The optimization path of enabling the internationalization of universities through sino-foreign cooperative education

3.1 Improve the policy system and collaborative governance mechanism

The policy optimization for empowering the internationalization of higher education through Sino-foreign cooperative education requires efforts in both institutional supply and governance innovation. First, a legal framework should be established, including the detailed implementation rules of the 'Regulations on Sino-foreign Cooperative Education,' to clarify cross-border education quality standards. This includes aligning international certifications, such as WES academic certification, with local evaluation systems, forming a comprehensive regulatory rule cycle from entry to operation and exit. Second, a provincial-ministerial coordination mechanism should be established, leveraging special guidance from central government funds and support from eastern universities to break the agglomeration effect of high-quality resources. For example, by setting up special zones for cooperative education in the western regions and with 'Belt and Road' countries to reduce regional development disparities. Third, independent third-party evaluation institutions should be cultivated, and the ISO29993 international education service standard should be introduced. A quantitative evaluation model should be developed, including dimensions such as faculty and student satisfaction and cross-cultural effectiveness, with a dynamic adjustment mechanism to initiate the circuit breaker exit procedure for institutions that fail to meet standards continuously. This will create a positive governance ecosystem of 'evaluation promoting construction,' providing a sustainable institutional guarantee for the internationalization of higher education.

3.2 Establish a "local-international" dual circulation quality assurance system

To enhance the internationalization quality of higher education institutions through Sino-foreign cooperative education, it is essential to establish a dual circulation mechanism that promotes mutual benefits between 'local and international.' The talent development program should move beyond the limitations of 'one-way internationalization' by reconstructing the curriculum system based on the OBE (Outcomes-Based Education) philosophy. This involves deeply integrating international certification standards with local industry needs, aiming to develop a modular course series that combines 'international general knowledge with Chinese characteristics,' and effectively converting knowledge through industry-university-research collaboration platforms. The faculty team needs to be built through a comprehensive mechanism that includes 'recruitment, cultivation, utilization, and retention,' and a center for the internationalization of local teachers should be established. This can help overcome the imbalance in recruitment and cultivation by integrating joint research and dual-teacher training. In the context of ideological and political education in courses, innovative global competence development strategies are required, including teaching methods such as 'Chinese practices entering the classroom' and 'international comparative studies.' These methods aim to strengthen cultural subjectivity under cross-cultural dialogue, achieving a dual breakthrough in cultivating international talents with 'value leadership' and 'capacity building.'

3.3 Deepening cross-cultural interaction and building a global education community

To empower the international and cross-cultural upgrading of universities through Sino-foreign cooperative education, it is essential to establish the global education community as a strategic pivot. By establishing the 'Belt and Road' education cooperation platform and regional education alliances, we can promote the joint development of disciplines and the alignment of credit recognition rules among countries along the Belt and Road, thereby building a

transnational education cooperation network. By innovating the two-way mobility mechanism between teachers and students and leveraging digital platforms such as virtual teaching and research rooms and transnational MOOC alliances, we can create a hybrid international cooperation model that combines online and offline approaches. For instance, Tsinghua University's 'Global Integrated Classroom' program has already achieved real-time teaching across time zones. Chinese universities should actively engage in international education governance, using the UNESCO platform to advance the setting of global agendas and gain a voice in international certification bodies. This will help them gradually shift from being rule followers to standard setters, thereby enhancing the influence of global education governance in China ^[5].

4 Conclusion

Sino-foreign cooperative education, as a core pathway for the internationalization of higher education, promotes the international transformation of talent cultivation and scientific research through innovative cooperation models, institutional platform construction, and participation in global governance. However, its development faces practical challenges such as lagging management mechanisms, uneven resource integration, and cross-cultural conflicts, which manifest as insufficient policy coordination, a tendency towards 'Westernization' of educational resources, and a lack of quality supervision. To overcome these bottlenecks, it is necessary to improve policy coordination and quality assurance systems, establish a 'local-international' dual circulation mechanism, deepen cross-cultural interactions, and build a global education community. Through multidimensional reforms, Sino-foreign cooperative education can transition from 'scale expansion' to 'substantive development,' enhancing Chinese universities' influence in global education governance, and ultimately forming a new international pattern that integrates educational openness with cultural confidence.

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