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JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION
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Philosophy for JCIHE

This is the official journal of the Comparative and International Education Society's (CIES) Higher Education Special Interest Group (HESIG), which was created in 2008. HESIG serves as a networking hub for promoting scholarship opportunities, critical dialogue, and linking professionals and academics to the international aspects of higher education. Accordingly, HESIG will serve as a professional forum supporting development, analysis, and dissemination of theory-, policy-, and practice-related issues that influence higher education.

Submission and Review

1) EMPIRICAL ARTICLES

Authors are encouraged to contextualize their argument, when possible, by citing from existing debates and discussions previously published in JCIHE and by sharing how the results of your manuscript contribute to previous published articles on related issues. These links build a sense of continuity and foster scholarly dialogue within the journal.

Empirical Articles: empirical research should demonstrate high rigor and quality. Original research collects and analyzes data in systematic ways to present important new research that adds to and advances the debates within the field of comparative and international higher education. Articles clearly and substantively contribute to current thought by expanding, correcting, broadening, posing questions in a new light, or strengthening current conceptual and/or methodological discussions in the field of comparative and international higher education. We especially welcome new topics and issues that have been under-emphasized in the field. Empirical Articles are 5,500 - 7,500 words excluding references and tables.

2) REVIEW/ESSAYS

Authors are encouraged to contextualize their argument, when possible, by citing from existing debates and discussions previously published in JCIHE and by sharing how the results of your manuscript contribute to previous published articles on related issues. These links build a sense of continuity and foster scholarly dialogue within the journal.

Review/Essays: scholarly research-based review/essays demonstrate rigor and quality. Original research that a) describes new developments in the state of knowledge, b) examines area studies and regional developments of social, cultural, political and economic contexts in specific regions worldwide, c) analyzes existing data sets applying new theoretical or methodological foci, d) synthesizes divergent bodies of literature, e) places the topic at hand into a platform for future dialogue or within broader debates in the field, f) explores research-to-practice, g) examines practical application in education systems worldwide, or h) provides future directions that are of broad significance to the field. Submissions must be situated within relevant literature and can be theoretical or methodological in focus. Review/Essays are 3,500 to 4,500 words excluding references and tables.

3) SPECIAL ISSUES. JCIHE offers two special issues annually that address current issues of comparative

and international higher education. Calls for submissions are included in the home-page.

4) EMERGING SCHOLARS RESEARCH SUMMARIES

Authors are encouraged to contextualize their argument, when possible, by citing from existing debates and discussions previously published in JCIHE and by sharing how the results of your manuscript contribute to previous published articles on related issues. These links build a sense of continuity and foster scholarly dialogue within the journal.

Emerging Scholars Research Summaries share thesis or dissertation work-in-progress or original empirical research. The intent of this special issue is to share cutting edge research that is of broad significance to the field of comparative and international higher education. Articles must include a literature review, theory focus, and strong methods sections. Articles are 1,000 - 1,500 words excluding references and tables.

NOTE: Submissions must include a Letter of Support from the student's Supervisor/chair indicating their approval for the publication.

The style and format of the *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education* follows the APA style (7th Edition). Footnotes/Endnotes are not allowed. USA spelling (e.g., center, color, organize) and punctuation are preferred (single quotations within double if needed), and requires a short paragraph of bibliographical details for all contributors. Please see Instructions to Authors for additional formatting information.

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JCIHE: Winter 2020: Special Issue Introduction and State of the Field 2021

Rosalind Latiner Raby
California State University, Northridge
Editor-In-Chief

Dear Readers -

I am pleased to share the *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* (JCIHE) 13(5) issue. This issue includes 10 articles in the Winter Special, *Global Higher Education Partnerships.* Issue 13(5) also includes three empirical articles, two essays, and a book review. For the past 13 years, JCIHE has supported the Higher Education SIG of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) in advancing a professional forum that promotes scholarship opportunities and critical dialogue with the purpose of engaging professionals and academics to the comparative and international aspects of higher education. At the end of this introduction is the 2021 State-of-the-Field Report.

SPECIAL ISSUE: GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

The JCIHE 2021 Winter special issue theme is *Global Higher Education Partnerships,* edited by Michael Lanford (University of Northern Georgia). The special issue is divided into two sections: *Critical Perspectives on Global Partnership Models* and *Strategies for Future Global Partnerships.* Global partnerships are heralded as a way to expand internationalization efforts. They remain popular in higher education because they seek to and eventually establish new academic networks, collaborative teaching, research, and innovative institutional designs. These global partnerships in modern higher education have existed for a century and are believed to motivate educational reform. Critiques of some global partnerships point to their unsustainability due to unpredictable meso, macro, and micro level changes that are often beyond the control of those involved in the partnerships. Researchers using critical internationalization logics raise concerns about equitable power dynamics between partners and critique neoliberalism strategies as having the potential to perpetuate marginalization and exploitation. Critiques also show that many of the global partnerships position Western knowledge, pedagogy, and curriculum as the norm, which reproduces neocolonial practices in Global South partner countries. The articles in this special issue expand the literature on global partnerships in higher education with a focus on global outreach programs, international branch campuses, research collaborations, transnational educational arrangements, and multinational consortia agreements.

Critical Perspectives on Global Partnership Models

Lauren Clarke (Sampoerna University, Indonesia). *"To Educate and Liberate?" Moving from Coloniality to Postcoloniality in the International Branch Campus Model*

This article examines the international branch campus as an exercise in intercultural managerial effectiveness, which overlooks its role in perpetuating colonial constructs, narratives, and practices. The article critiques the impact of IBCs on host cultures through postcolonial and decolonial theory and asserts that meaningful transnational collaborations are predicated on dismantling hegemonic belief systems, as well as on structural legacies of colonial relations.

Li (Lily) CAI (University of Nottingham Ningbo China), Ting (Ada) LIN (University of Nottingham), and Wenyan SHI (University of Nottingham Ningbo China). *Sexual harassment on cross-cultural campuses in China: Awareness, perception, and prevention.*

This article examines inter-personal interactions in multi-cultural contexts on international campuses in China. The focus of the article is on student community attitudes towards sexual harassment. Different attitudes and perceptions on gender, identity, sexuality, and multi-cultural friendship are revealed.

Sowmya Ghosh (University of Arizona), Jenny J. Lee (University of Arizona), and John P. Haupt (University of Arizona). *Understanding the Attraction of the Microcampus: A Quantitative Investigation of Students' Motivations to Enroll in Transnational Education*

This article examines the motivations of newly enrolled students who attend micro-campuses in China, Cambodia, Jordan, and Indonesia. Findings show that U.S. soft power, cost, and U.S culture influence student decision to enroll in these dual-degree programs transnational programs.

Zhenyang Xu (University of British Columbia, Canada/Michigan State University, United States). *Examining Neocolonialism in International Branch Campuses in China: A Case Study of Mimicry*

This article analyzes neocolonial practices at a British international branch campus (IBC) in China through the framework of mimicry and resistance. The research focuses on how the Chinese government, campus, and relevant stakeholders legitimatize IBCs as a supplementary form of Chinese higher education and, in so doing, risk reproduction and reinforcement of coloniality in local contexts, as well as Western privilege in global contexts.

Roy Y. Chan (Lee University, USA). *Understanding International Joint and Dual Degree Programs: Opportunities and Challenges during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic*

This article examines international joint and dual degree programs in the United States and in Mainland China. The focus is on transnational programs using Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI) and Sun Yat-set University (SYSU) as the case study. Findings suggest that IUPUI's most cited challenge with SYSU are aligning general education requirements. SYSU's challenges with IUPUI are language and cultural differences.

Strategies for Future Global Partnerships

Katherine Adams (University of North Georgia, USA) & Michael Lanford (University of North Georgia, USA). *Reimagining Global Partnerships in Higher Education through Open Systems Theory*

This article explores three issues arising from global higher education partnerships that negate their potential effectiveness. These include inequitable relationships between institutional partners, partner conflicts due to contradictory values and norms, and a lack of community and regional engagement. Finally, the article shows how boundaries can be either reinforced or traversed through deliberate buffering, bridging, and boundary spanning strategies.

Stephanie Simmons Zuilkowskia (Florida State University, United States) and Ismaila A. Tsigab (Bayero University Kano, Nigeria). *Partnership to Support Early Grade Reading in Nigeria: The Case of the Nigeria Centre for Reading Research and Development.*

This article presents a case study of the Nigeria Centre for Reading Research and Development at Bayero University Kano to show how an international educational development program that focuses on elementary education expands reading literacy for students and at the same time helps to establish graduate education program in reading instruction.

Shingo Hanada (Toyo University, Japan) *Higher Education Partnerships between the Global North and Global South: Mutuality, Rather than Aid*

This article presents a case study of a Norwegian and Ethiopian university partnership to identify key elements in the development of effective, mutually beneficial partnerships from policy and institutional perspectives. The case has three implications for mutual partnerships: fostering authorship among key actors; periodic evaluation to assess the progress of the partnerships; and promotion of knowledge and skill development among recipients evenly.

Ariunaa Enkhtur (Osaka University, Japan); Ming Li (Osaka University, Japan), and Xixi Zhang (Osaka University, Japan). *Case Studies of Japanese universities' collaborations with ASEAN, China, and Mongolia*

This article presents three cases of strategic collaboration between Japanese universities and higher education institutions in China, Mongolia, and the Southeast Asia. Analysis shows that partnerships were shaped by both top-down government policies as well as from bottom-up activities based on institutional visions and past relations. China, Mongolia, and Southeast Asia seek Japan's educational quality and reputation. Japan seeks to remain competitive with partnerships in Asia.

Jonah M. Otto (Universität Augsburg). *The Impact of Evolving Transatlantic Relations on International Partnerships in Higher Education*

This article examines the impact of macro-level transatlantic relations of United States and European Union higher education institutions (HEIs) as they leverage international partnerships as a way to achieve missions of teaching, research, and service. Finding show that progressive transatlantic relations result in improved performance outcomes through HEI international partnerships for U.S and EU HEIs, and that regressive transatlantic relations produce the opposite outcome. The study offers implications for policy makers and HEI administrators.

EMPIRICAL ARTICLES, ESSAYS, AND BOOK REVIEW

The JCIHE 13(5) issue includes three empirical articles, two essays, and a book review. These articles apply unique methodologies and theoretical constructs including photovoice method through a visual lens, systematic document analysis, and spanning systems model.

Empirical Articles

Tarynne Swarts (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium), Karin Hannes (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium) and Jose A Rodrigues-Quiles (University of Granada, Spain). *Sociocultural and Psychological acculturation strategies of South African international students in a Flemish University in Belgium: A Photovoice study*

This article examines the acculturation challenges of South African international students, with a case study of students studying in Flanders, Belgium in a non-Anglophonic context. Participants use a photovoice method to explore barriers and facilitators in their adjustment process through a visual lens.

Mathias Guiaké (Zhejiang Normal University, China), Dianbing Chen (Zhejiang Normal University, China), and Tianxue Zhang (Zhejiang Normal University, China). *Meteoric Rise of China as a Host Country for Studies: Exploring the Choice of International Students' Perspectives*

This article uses a systematic document analysis method to identify the primary reasons why international students choose China for their study destination. This study reveals that, apart from other non-negligible factors, China's HEI reputation and economic reason remain the major pulling factor of international students.

Paul Garton (University of South Carolina in the College of Pharmacy, USA), Adam Grimm (Michigan State University, USA), and Sehee Kim (Michigan State University, USA). *Spanning Systems and Ecological Fluidity: A Revised Ecological Development Model for International Students*

This article advances Urie Bronfenbrenner acknowledged ecological model and revises it to be more applicable to and explanatory of developmental experiences of international students in the United States. The authors call the resulting model, the Spanning Systems model, and apply it to identify spaces of potential contradictions or learning in a student's development.

Essays

Bowen Zhang (University of Manchester, United Kingdom). *A Comparison between Pedagogical Approaches in UK and China.*

This essay compares pedagogic practices of the United Kingdom and China by focusing on how cultural origins connect with pedagogical assumptions within a spectrum of teacher/ learner-centered pedagogy. The focus is on the perspective of Chinese international students who studied in the United Kingdom.

Teklu Abate Bekele (The American University in Cairo, Egypt). *COVID-19 and Prospect of Online Learning in Higher Education in Africa*

This essay reflects on current developments in HEI in Africa as linked to COVID-19. It highlights how African HEI respond to the pandemic, the prospect of online instruction, and the conditions that support the successful integration of technologies in teaching and learning, showing that African universities are more likely to significantly embrace digital technologies in the future than ever before.

Book Review

Dr Yusuf Ikbal Oldac (Hong Kong Research Grants Council Post-Doc Fellow, Lingnan University, Hong Kong).

Book Review of van der Wende, M., Kirby, W.C., Liu, N.C., & Marginson, S. (Eds.). China and Europe on the new Silk Road: Connecting universities across Eurasia. Oxford University Press, 2020. 448 pp. $115. ISBN 9780198853022.

JCIHE STATE OF THE FIELD: 2021

The *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* (JCIHE) is the flagship journal of the CIES Higher Education SIG. JCIHE is committed to publish comparative and international empirical articles, essays, and emerging scholar summaries that provide critical and insightful scholarship that helps to advance the field. Moreover, these manuscripts make a statement about current and future thinking in comparative and international higher education. Some of the research represented in JCIHE has practice implications as it represents the scholar-practitioner voice. Other research helps to advance understanding of new methods, theories, and applications that frame and re-frame the study of comparative and international higher education.

In meeting the JCIHE mission to bring in diverse perspectives, JCIHE is proud to share that it has notably increased the number of authors from around the world and specifically from countries located in the Global South (Majority World). The journal is read by scholars within the Comparative and International Education Society as well as by scholars and practitioners in related fields of international education and higher education. All submissions undergo double anonymous rigorous peer review process. In 2021, JCIHE added book reviews and will soon include abstracts of articles translated into Arabic and French. In 2022, JCIHE will add OnLine First publications of article abstracts.

Submissions

In 2021, the JCIHE Volume 13 published 48 Empirical Articles, 6 Essays, and 2 Book Reviews.

Empirical Article Topics

The empirical articles published in 2021 fall into four sub-headings: (1) *Global partnerships/transnational university experiences* of STEM student in Vietnamese, reading literacy outcomes in Nigeria; sexual harassment in China; student motivation to enroll in micro-campuses in China, Cambodia, Jordan, and Indonesia. (2) *Global partnership/transnational contexts* examining neocolonialism in British international branch campuses in China; moving from coloniality to post-coloniality in international branch campus model; partnerships between Global North/South (Norway/Ethiopia); Japanese university collaborations with ASEAN, China, and Mongolia; joint and dual degree programs during and after COVID-19; and reimagining global partnerships in higher education. (3) *Country-Specific Studies* of Chinese students; use of Global English in Bulgarian HEI; African strategic plans of university-society engagements; Japanese STEAM instruction; political ideology and academic autonomy in Ethiopia; psychoactive substance use in medical school students in Argentina; ecological fluidity in international education; Nepal academic performance of faculty; foreign sites as learning contexts; Ulungaanga faka-Tonga Tonu higher education; competitiveness in Brazil university ranking exercises; ethnomathematics as response to colonial education; decolonialization for sustainability; indigenous higher education; and US national higher education internationalization policy. (4) *International Student Studies*: resilience of international students in England; of Myanmar female student in China; of nursing students in Turkey; in Western Universities; of Nepalese students in Denmark; of Mexican postgraduate students in UK; re-entry experiences of Saudi international students; of international health science students; motivations of international students to study in Japanese research-intensive universities; photovoice study of sociocultural and psychological adjustment of Sub-Saharan African international students in Belgium; first-year international undergraduate and graduate student adjustment; 1st year South Asian student experience with Canadian healthcare system; ELS in higher education; transformation and tensions of international student adjustment; theoretical perspectives on international student identity; GradPath to CareerPath for international students; White US student perceptions of international students; China as host country; hiring practices of teachers who participate in international student teaching placements; Kansai Area of Japan mission statements supporting international students.

Essay Topics

The essays published in 2021 include the following topics: Chinese higher education and quest for autonomy; Neoliberalism in Kazakhstan higher education; Disparity of Minority women in leadership position in higher education in U.S and Peru; comparison between pedagogical approaches in UK and China; COVID-19 and online learning in higher education in Africa; international graduate students' positionality in U.S critical multicultural education course.

JCIHE Metrics, Impact, and Reach

The *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education* (JCIHE) is listed in Cabells Scholarly Analytics, CiteFactor, EBSCOhost, ERIC, and GoogleScholar. GoogleScholar rankings index examines articles published in the last 5 years. The calculation is based on the largest number of h such that h articles published in 2017-2021 have at least h citations each. The h5-median is the number of citations for the articles that make up its h5-index and measures the distribution of citations to the articles in the h-core. The h-core is a set of top cited h articles from the publication and are the articles that the h-index is based on.

I am pleased to share, as shown in Table 1, that the h-5 index went up this year.

Table 1

GoogleScholar H5-Index and H5-Median

GoogleScholar	2020	2021
H5-index	4	5
H5-median	7	7

According to Publish or Perish, which includes reports from ERIC, Crossreft, and GoogleScholar, articles that were published in JCIHE, from 2017-2021, had a combined total of 154 citations. Two articles have had 13 citations each. From 2017-2021, there were 35,018 Abstract and Article downloads as tracked by the OJED System. The six most downloaded articles from 2017-2021 (both abstracts and file views) are in Table 2.

Table 2

Six Most Downloaded Articles from 2017-2021

Name	Title	#Downloads
Ritter	Singapore's Search for National Identity: Building a Nation through Education	1708
Ballo et al.	Applying Student Development Theories: Enhancing International Student Academic Success and Integration	872
Ahmed	#RhodesMustFall: Decolonization, Praxis and Disruption	853
Sperduti	Internationalization as Westernization in Higher Education	769
Zhang	Internationalization Higher Education for What? An Analysis of National Strategies of Higher Education Internationalization in East Asia	576
Tavares	Theoretical Perspectives on International Student Identity	559

Article Statistics for 2021

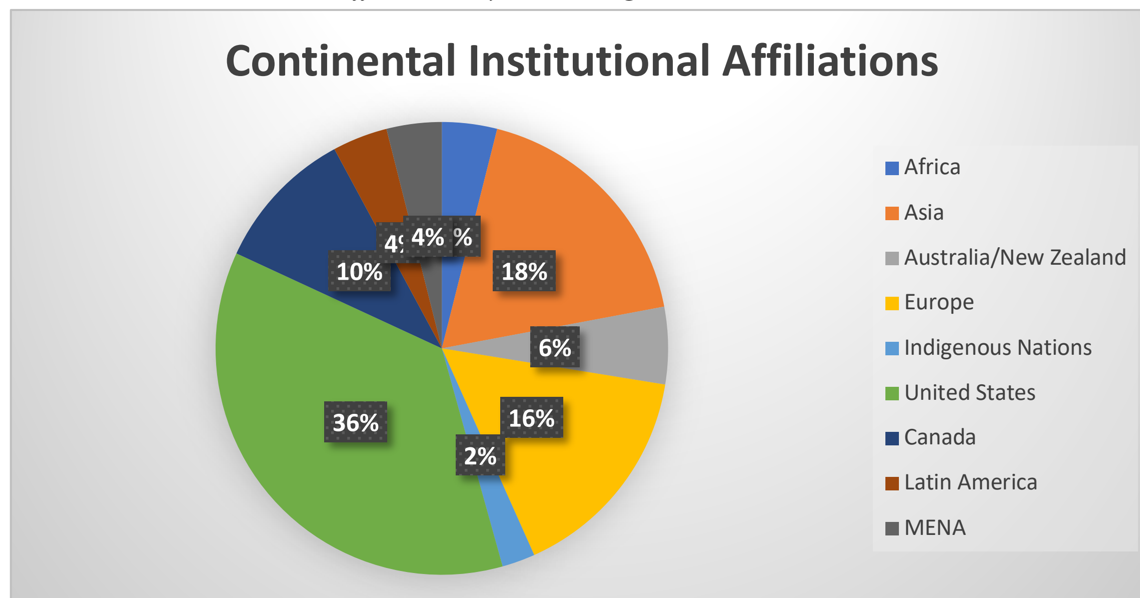
In 2021, JCIHE received 230 submissions, of which, 83 were rejected and 53 were accepted. The rest are pending. The acceptance rate for the year is 32% and rejection rate is 68%. Of those rejected, 52 were Desk Reject and 31 were declined after the peer review process. JCIHE strives to review and publish scholarship in a timely manner. While some decisions take longer for a variety of reasons, the average time from submission to acceptance is generally 187 days. During COVID, many of our volunteer reviewers were challenged and thus the review time took substantially longer. The average time from acceptance to publication is 120 days. JCIHE has put into place a fair, ethical, and transparent review process that respects the time and effort of manuscript authors and acknowledges the importance of the review process.

Author Institutional Affiliations and Gender

Being a journal that is international in scope and purpose, JCIHE is pleased to share that in 2021, institutional affiliations of authors are represented by 30 countries. In total JCIHE published 82 authors whose institutional affiliations comes from outside of the United States and 50 authors from institutional affiliations in the United States. Figure 1 shows the institutional affiliations divided among continents and regions. In 2021, JCIHE authors identified as 47 men and 51 women.

Figure 1

JCIHE Author Institutional Affiliations by World Regions



JCIHE Volunteers

Tremendous teamwork is required throughout the editorial and production pipeline. JCIHE wants to thank those involved in the peer-reviewing, copy-editing, and production processes. JCIHE recognizes our expert reviewers who give their time and expertise to review and sometime double review the articles. It is your work that maintains the high quality of our accepted manuscripts. Second, JCIHE recognizes our volunteer copyeditors who are essential in maintaining strong academic quality of the journals, and most importantly, to get articles published in a timely manner. Third, JCIHE thanks our Regional Editors who reach out to their colleagues around the world and lend their expertise to the peer-reviewing and copy-editing process. Finally, JICHE would like to sincerely than the Advisory Board which is comprised of 12 renowned scholars whose task is to provide instrumental recommendations to the editorial team. A list of peer reviewers, copyeditors, and Advisory Board is included at the end of this article.

CONCLUSION

The editorial staff of JCIHE is pleased to help support the CIES Higher Education SIG in advancing comparative and international higher education. JCIHE is a professional forum that supports development, analysis, and dissemination of theory-, policy-, and practice-related issues that influence higher education. JCIHE is proud to be part of the OJED and STAR networks.

I especially want to thank the JCIHE Executive Editors Pilar Mendoza and Anatoly Oleksiyenko who also serve as the co-chairs of the CIES HE-SIG. I want to extend sincere appreciation to our outgoing JCIHE Managing Editor Nian Ruan and JCIHE Production Editor, Jade Liu. I wish them both well in their new academic pursuits. I also want to welcome to the JCIHE Editorial Team, the new Managing Editor:

Prashanti Chennamsetti and the new Production Editor: Emily Marchese. The 2021 issues would not have been published in such a timely manner without these wonderful editors. Finally, I want to extend my sincerest thanks to the JCIHE Associate Editor, Hei-hang Hayes Tang who supports the journal in improving quality and focus.

Editor-in-Chief,
Rosalind Latiner Raby

JCIHE extends sincere thanks to our 2021 peer reviewers
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Critical Perspectives on Global Partnerships in Higher Education: Strategies for Inclusion, Social Impact, and Effectiveness

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THE IMPORT OF GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Today, it is axiomatic that the phenomenon of globalization has radically transformed the landscape of higher education. Regional universities that were once content to teach local students, offer a limited range of degrees, and serve regional labor demands now actively recruit international students, seek opportunities to develop transnational joint degree programs, and consult global ranking services to assess their status in a competitive institutional environment. Young researchers who might have been advised, only a few years ago, to exclusively cultivate local or national scholarly networks are now incentivized to seek job opportunities and funding for research in countries that are thousands of miles away from their home institutions. At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, when many predicted an abeyance of global activities in higher education, technology was strategically employed by institutions, faculty, and students to maintain transnational ties and implement methods of virtual teaching and learning across disciplines, cultures, and borders. As a result, institutional aspirations for global partnerships, once predicted to decline in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting travel restrictions, are likely to escalate in the coming decades. For example, Lane et al. (2021) have compellingly argued that international branch campuses may thrive due to increased local demand for globally recognized credentials combined with "tougher immigration restrictions, barriers to travel, unsteady post-study work visa arrangements, and unstable labor markets in the West" (para. 14). Additionally, the importance of reliable communication in securing accurate and timely scientific information has been underscored by the fog of uncertainty at the beginning of the pandemic. Teleconferencing software is no longer considered a last-choice option for meetings; it has been normalized as part of the daily culture in higher education institutions worldwide.

Global partnerships in higher education can assume many forms. In terms of size, they can range from relatively limited transnational research collaborations that involve a handful of scientists to ambitious international branch campuses that enroll thousands of students. They can be loosely-coupled collaborations where meetings occur intermittently to update progress on a specific task, or they can be robust institutional alliances where legal documents stipulate the conditions under which students, faculty, degree programs, and other organizational assets will be shared for multiple years. The attractions of such ventures are plentiful. As I have observed previously, global partnerships between colleges and universities "can

strengthen existing academic networks and business relationships, promote greater intercultural awareness, and open new opportunities for innovative research" (Lanford, 2020, p. 93). Global higher education partnerships can also act as a catalyst for deeper ties between countries. What unites these variegated types of global partnerships is the (1) involvement of individuals and/or institutions from more than one nation and (2) a commitment, either formal or informal, that the partners will contribute financial, intellectual, and/or physical resources to advance a specific set of goals.

Nevertheless, global higher education partnerships, to date, remain largely exclusive operations that, despite their obvious appeal, have remained cloistered from their local communities and therefore are arguably of limited significance for society. Hence, many partnerships have ultimately failed to live up to their initial promises, leaving partners dissatisfied and stakeholders questioning the investments required for implementation when so many in higher education are laboring in an environment of austerity.

THEMES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

This special issue focuses on three areas of concern related to global higher education partnerships: (1) a lack of inclusion; (2) a lack of social impact; and (3) a lack of institutional effectiveness.

Accordingly, this special issue has three primary objectives. The first objective is to critically challenge the exclusionary nature of global higher education partnerships, which are too often the domain of elite institutions and wealthy countries. To this end, this special issue emphasizes the power of action research, as well as the development of thoughtful and impactful partnerships between Global North and Global South countries, in enabling positive societal change. It also illustrates how neocolonial, postcolonial, and decolonial theory; comprehensive internationalization theory; and open systems theory each could critically analyze global higher education partnerships so they are re-envisioned as inclusive institutional activities that can recognize community needs, respond to problems, and contribute to artistic and scientific life beyond academe.

The second objective is to argue that global higher education partnerships are not, nor should they be, immune to social movements (such as the emergence of the #MeToo movement) or geopolitical events (such as demonstrations and protests to counter fascist leaders, police violence, and the exploitation of migrant workers). Rather, global partnerships should martial their significant intellectual and financial resources to enlarge public discourse, promote the public good, and support marginalized individuals. A reimagining of global higher education partnerships is particularly imperative in an historical moment when free speech is under attack throughout the world and neo-nationalist movements threaten to restrict scientific inquiry, public debate, the dissemination of public scholarship, and the development of deeper intercultural understanding through interaction and communication. In short, global higher education partnerships must meaningfully engage with their local and regional communities, lest they become socially irrelevant during a dangerous regressive period marked by authoritarian limits on public discourse and the ubiquitous surveillance of individuals who may express dissenting viewpoints and advocate for social and economic justice.

The third objective is to offer compelling evidence and strategies for how global higher education partnerships can be effective in different cultural environments, national systems of higher education, and institutional configurations. Several of this issue's articles present actionable data on promising educational initiatives that demonstrate how governmental support, strategic planning, communication, and an honest accounting for power dynamics are crucial for fruitful and durable partnerships. The collective goal of these papers is not to say that one approach is best; rather, the authors in this issue are careful to explain, with

great contextual detail, how the goals of a partnership must be informed by existing institutional values and individual areas of expertise. As such, the empirical and theoretical papers in this issue can helpfully inform the development of future partnerships, particularly between institutions from Global South and Global North countries.

First Half of the Issue: Critical Perspectives on Global Partnership Models

In service of these three objectives, the first five articles present theoretical and empirical research on global partnership models, such as international branch campuses, microcampuses. and international joint and dual degree programs. The issue begins with a brilliantly challenging theoretical argument by Lauren Clarke of Sampoerna University entitled "'To Educate and Liberate?': Moving from Coloniality to Postcoloniality in the International Branch Campus Model." Clarke effectively critiques the role of international branch campuses in perpetuating colonialism through their replication of Western norms. Afterwards, Clarke proposes a new perspective on international branch campuses grounded in postcolonial theory, honoring a host country's linguistic, curricular, and cultural heritage. A critical lens on international branch campuses continues through the second article, "Sexual Harassment on International Branch Campuses: An Institutional Case Study of Awareness, Perception. and Prevention," by Li Cai, Ting Lin, and Wenyan Shi from the University of Nottingham Ningbo. Their action-oriented research concerning sexual harassment on an international branch campus is not only quite relevant to contemporary sociological discussions due to global pushback against sexual abuse, but it also artfully presents powerful survey and interview data drawn from students attending an international branch campus. These data make a compelling case for the importance of similar investigations in multiculutural campuses where vulnerable populations may not know where to find support, as they are torn between the cultural norms and expectations of their pre-university experiences, the host country, and the institution. The overall tone of the article preserves a note of optimism, however, as Cai et al. emphasize the tremendous support for their advocacy and research from their study's international branch campus, even despite the topic's sensitivity.

The third article, "Understanding the Attraction of the Microcampus," by Sowmya Ghosh, Jenny Lee, and John Haupt from the University of Arizona provides valuable insights into an emerging structural model of global higher education partnerships. Student decisions to enroll in "microcampuses" are explained through quantitative online survey data and the conceptual framework of "soft power." The fourth article by Zhenyang Xu, a doctoral student at Michigan State University, follows Clarke's call for resistance to colonialism. "Examining Neocolonialism in International Branch Campuses in China" cleverly employs the concepts of mimicry and resistance to critically analyze the development, curricula, and policies of an international branch campus in China. The final article of this opening section, "Understanding International Joint and Dual Degree Programs: Opportunities and Challenges during and after the Covid-19 Pandemic" by Roy Y. Chan of Lee University, shifts the issue's opening emphasis on structural models from the activities of international campuses to transnational joint and dual degree programs. Chan's nuanced analysis of collaborative degree programs between Sun Yat-sen University (China) and Indiana University-Purdue University of Indianapolis (US) culminates in several recommendations for policy and practice that could apply to an array of global higher education partnerships, especially in times of crisis such as those occasioned by the recent pandemic.

Second Half of the Issue: Strategies for Future Global Partnerships

Articles from the second half of this special issue consider how global partnerships might look in the future by grounding their strategies and visions in existing partnerships and theoretical arguments. “Reimagining Global Partnerships in Higher Education through Open Systems Theory” by Katherine Adams and Michael Lanford from the University of North Georgia demonstrates how global higher education partnerships might have greater impact and durability by considering their activities through various concepts related to open systems theory, as well as a community engagement lens. These concepts include adaptive, maintenance, production, and managerial subsystems; organizational boundaries; and buffering, bridging, and boundary spanning strategies.

The next three articles present data from effective partnerships that thoughtfully consider equity and power dynamics between institutions and countries with varying degrees of human and financial resources. “Building a University Partnership to Support Early Grade Reading in Nigeria: The Case of the Nigeria Centre for Reading Research and Development” by Stephanie Simmons Zuilkowski (Florida State University) and Ismaila A. Tsiga (Bayero University) draws upon personal experiences to highlight a series of actionable recommendations for any partnership looking to develop a new university research center that is sustainable and has community and scholarly impact. The article also counsels patience in recognizing that many aspects of any transnational collaboration (e.g., governmental approval for degree programs) will inevitably be beyond the control of the partners. Shingo Hanada from Toyo University in Japan argues for a transition from “aid-focused partnerships” to “mutuality-focused partnerships” in the next article, “Higher Education Partnerships between the Global North and Global South: Mutuality, Rather than Aid.” His persuasive argument is grounded in a case study of the Norwegian Funding Programmes for Higher Education Partnerships, where the importance of shared authorship, ongoing evaluation, and skill development among each of the partnership’s stakeholders is accentuated. The next article, “Case Studies of Japanese Universities’ Collaborations with ASEAN, China, and Mongolia” by Ariunaa Enkhtur, Ming Li, and Xixi Zhang of Osaka University, considers the motivations behind global partnerships for universities in Japan through analyses of three case studies: The Osaka University ASEAN Campus Project; the Chinese Japanese Joint Institute at the Dalian University of Technology; and the Mongolian Engineering Higher Education Development Project. Key takeways include the desire for comprehensive partnerships beyond a handful of joint degrees or student/faculty exchange programs, the goal of regional integration in key economic growth areas (such as knowledge-based services), and policies in Japan that support internationalization in higher education as a counterbalance to demographic declines in the country’s college-age population.

The final paper of this special issue, by Jonah M. Otto from the University of Augsburg, draws on comprehensive internationalization theory to critically examine “The Impact of Evolving Transatlantic Relations on International Partnerships in Higher Education.” Otto’s paper is timely as it utilizes data from the past and present to project how transatlantic relations - and, of consequence, global higher education partnerships - will be impacted by contemporary geopolitical events relating to Brexit, the rise of neo-nationalism as exemplified by the political ambitions of Donald Trump, and restrictions on international travel and exchange due to the Covid-19 pandemic and regressive transatlantic policies.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this special issue hopes to catalyze discussion about global higher education partnerships and push subsequent scholarly investigations beyond examinations of their logistical

operations and institutional benefits. Each of this issue's papers make a concerted and compelling argument that successful global partnerships are not those which solely contribute to an institution's prestige, employ double standards concerning speech and the critical interrogation of accepted beliefs and values, focus on the educational development of students from wealthy backgrounds, or engage in scientific development that is immediately privatized and exploited for financial gain. Instead, the global higher education partnerships of the future should be reciprocally valuable operations that are transparent, inclusive, and socially impactful for meaningful cultural and intellectual exchange.

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"To Educate and Liberate?" Moving from Coloniality to Postcoloniality in the International Branch Campus Model

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ABSTRACT

The international branch campus is a model of transnational higher education that establishes institutional outposts abroad to expand student access, collaborative research, language proficiency, and recognized degree programs to participants. The growing body of literature on IBCs presents this phenomenon as an exercise in intercultural managerial effectiveness, which overlooks its role in the perpetuation of colonial constructs, narratives, and practices. This article critiques the impact of IBCs on host cultures through postcolonial and decolonial theory, asserting that meaningful transnational collaborations are predicated on dismantling hegemonic belief systems, as well as structural legacies of colonial relations.

Keywords: decolonial theory, globalization, hegemony, international branch campus, postcolonialism

> "Every empire, however, tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate."
> - Edward W. Said, *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 2003

Introduction

International Branch Campuses (IBCs) have emerged as a major phenomenon in global higher education over the past two decades, predominantly initiated by established institutions in developed of the North and West[1] and installed in less developed nations. A recent report from the Cross-Border Education Research Team identifies 306 IBCs operating in 37 countries, with the most prevalent exporters based in the U.S. (86), the United Kingdom (43), France (38), Russia (29), and Australia (20) (C-BERT, 2020).

[1] The descriptors "Western" and "Northern" are used interchangeably here, as the literature uses both to denote characteristics of Eurocentric or North American hegemony, linked to global capitalism and its instrumentalist attributes that are imposed on societies of the Global South through economic, political, and cultural domination. Conversely, the "South" and "East" denote formerly colonized countries that are in an earlier stage of economic development.

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There are myriad motivating factors behind this trend, emanating from the respective political and economic agendas of both sending and receiving countries. Yet, there is limited critical analysis of the cultural impact of IBCs in their host countries, particularly with regard to the hegemonic role they play in defining host national identities, dominating the higher education sector, and suppressing local knowledge production. While Transnational Education (TNE) has made many positive contributions to cross-cultural knowledge, it cannot be disentangled from the complex power relationships between participating countries and their institutions. Of the varied manifestations of TNE, IBCs occupy a unique position in the spectrum, as they physically insert foreign university branches into host cultures that often hold distinct cultural values and national priorities.

Garrett (2018) of the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (***OBHE***) defines the IBC as:

> An entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign education provider; operated in the name of the foreign education provider; and provides an entire academic program, substantially on site, leading to a degree awarded by the foreign education provider (p. 14).

This project focuses specifically on branch campuses that are established by Western institutions in non-Western host countries, to more effectively track the perpetuation of historical colonial ideologies into the present. As Stein (2021) asserts, "(w)ealthy Western nation-states continue to have the most political, economic, and epistemic power, largely owing to the ongoing legacies of colonialism… However, they are certainly not the only countries (re)framing their curricula toward the imperative of national advantage" (p. 7).

Motivations for Western institutions to establish IBCs include "push" factors, such as the pressure to increase tuition revenue, internationalize home campuses, enhance global reputation, and ensure control over facilities abroad for research and study abroad (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Guimon, 2016; Lanford & Tierney, 2016; Wilkins, 2020). Also present are "pull" factors that originate from the host country government or funder: the promotion of direct foreign investment through tax incentives or government subsidies, reduction of "brain drain," development of an internationally trained workforce, and external validation of national institutions that host or partner with IBCs, to name a few (Guimon, 2016; Hill & Thabet, 2018; Knight 2011; Lanford & Tierney, 2016; Mackie, 2019).

With the significant global decline of governmental support for higher education in both Western and non-Western countries, there has been a corresponding proliferation of private and transnational institutions that endeavor to generate displaced revenue and a shrinking student market (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Kent, 2020;). Further, with the classification of higher education as a traded "service" under the articles of the General Agreement on Trade and Services of the World Trade Organization, the activities comprising TNE are commonly framed through the lens of commerce (Altbach & Knight, 2007; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). As a result, the literature on IBCs reflects an instrumentalist perspective that is centered on business indicators, such as risk assessment, return on investment, market penetration, international branding, quality control, and transnational management strategies (Altbach, 2004; Bori, 2018; Holborow, 2007, 2018). This conceptual approach reduces the analysis of IBCs to transactional descriptions that assess the success or failure of a transnational service or foreign investment strategy (Guimon, 2016; Healey, 2018).

There is still limited research that explores the deeper cultural and societal impact of these ventures on host cultures: how IBCs contribute to or disrupt the local academic landscapes, and what competing

narratives are introduced that may undermine national identity or sovereign educational priorities. More importantly, there are few studies on whether IBCs contribute to the perpetuation of historical power imbalances between Western knowledge production and local epistemologies through the imposition of unfamiliar linguistic, curricular, and structural standards (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2007). Undeniably, there is a demand for Western education in the countries and regions hosting IBCs; yet postcolonial theorists argue that the perception of the superior value of Western academic degrees and "brands" is further evidence of hegemony (Bori, 2018; Holborow, 2017).

A critical analysis of IBCs reveals striking similarities with classical, colonial educational models of the 16th to 19th centuries, recognized as overt efforts to dominate underdeveloped societies for economic, geopolitical, or religious goals. The colonial education model is characterized by Teferra and Altbach (2004) with the following attributes:

- limited access by the indigenous population;
- exclusive use of European languages as primary mode of instruction;
- limited institutional authority, with control emanating from colonial centers; and
- limited curricula, featuring vocational and instrumental subjects.

This article first assesses the current characteristics of IBCs within this definitional framework to assert that the historic power imbalances of colonialism have been perpetuated in the globalization of education and, more specifically, through the branch campus model. Second, it applies key aspects of the postcolonial and decolonial theory to the practices and impact of IBCs to reveal a lack of local access and the perpetuation of elite networks, language primacy, suppression of traditional knowledge, and diminished institutional and national autonomy. Through the critical themes of identity, agency, and sovereignty, these works articulate the structural, epistemological, and psychic damage of the continued modernization project that coloniality supports. The conclusion suggests strategies for resistance to the structural framework of higher education that reinscribes the dominant neoliberal narrative.

The goal of this project is not to moralize about cultural hegemony nor to advocate for the dissolution of IBCs: both are likely here to stay. The legacy of colonialism is increasingly obscured by the desire for global recognition of national legitimacy and the promise of individual prosperity that are constitutive of the Western narrative. This message is reinforced at many levels: multilateral funding organizations, IBC host governments, Western home institutions, and public perception. By recognizing the embeddedness of the coloniality narrative, we may identify and reject perspectives and practices that reinscribe the narrative in order to forge new models that feature more equitable partnerships and reciprocal knowledge production.

The Perpetuation of Coloniality through the International Branch Campus

Colonialism and coloniality are causally related, yet manifest differently: Maldonado-Torres (2007) articulates the relationship between historical colonialism and ongoing coloniality:

> Coloniality… refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day (p. 243).

This relationship constitutes a self-replicating continuum: the imposition and valorization of Western, positivist educational practices, content, and knowledge production during the colonial period is perpetuated through the acceptance and internalization of this hierarchy by colonized peoples. For critics of modernity from and of the Global South, the evolution of postcolonial and decoloniality theory following the independence of colonial territories marked a shift in perspective. Rather than employing Western "logos" and "ethos" to critique modernization, decolonial theorists draw from indigenous cultural values to reframe epistemological and ontological questions and respond from their experiences. This reframing is particularly complex the further removed a culture is from formal colonization; even after generations of nominal independence, the absorption of Western values and acceptance of "cultural supremacy" is evident in the aspirations of individuals who seek to attend educational institutions that embody Western values rather than traditional local culture (Andreotti, 2007, p. 5; Bori, 2018; Kwek, 2003).

Limited Access

Returning to Teferra and Altbach's model, the first characteristic of classical colonial higher education - limited access by the indigenous population - is apparent in the student and faculty demographics of IBCs. At a surface level, "access" may be primarily controlled by the financial resources of prospective students. The tuition structure of IBCs is often adapted to local economies, as charging home institution tuition (e.g., from the U.S. or Europe) would be unrealistic; yet, in order to recover operating costs, the fees are significantly higher than those of local, national universities. (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012). Not coincidentally, the regions with the largest growth in IBCs are Asia and the Gulf States, two regions with burgeoning upper income quartiles (OECD, 2019). For local students, access is largely predicated on a prospective student's financial means and academic preparation to pursue transnational higher education. These criteria are, in turn, linked to socioeconomic status, class, gender, and, in some cases, the ethnicity of prospective students (Holborow, 2018; Le & Barnawi, 2015). IBCs may not overtly limit access based on these factors, in observance of the "equal opportunity" principles espoused by home campuses, but the reality in most developing countries is that the tuition charged and admissions standards are beyond the means of most citizens (Altbach, 1991; Dzulfikar, 2019; Ilie & Rose, 2016).

The restriction to access created by socioeconomic class is not merely limited to the ability to pay tuition. The admissions criteria of IBCs generally require specific prior preparation for a Western-style program: English language skills (or other non-native language), a familiarity with standardized entrance or placement tests, a knowledge of pedagogical approaches and expectations, as well as the aspiration to pursue a non-native model of higher education (Piller & Cho, 2013). These factors presuppose a level of prior privilege that is actualized over the years: students who have attended private or otherwise elite primary and secondary schools have a distinct advantage in meeting the criteria for admission and successful completion, reinscribing a cycle of privilege that benefits few of the broader population (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Kapoor, 2004). Therefore, the student population with sufficient resources and privilege to choose to attend an IBC is already a small minority of the host country population, challenging the rationale that this institutional model provides a broader benefit to national higher education. In addition, IBCs draw students who may be most academically competitive away from national institutions (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). Though many state-sponsored institutions cannot accommodate the vast number of eligible applicants, the selection criteria are divided between those who meet specific Western criteria and those who meet national standards. (Ghabra & Arnold 2007; Guimon, 2016; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007).

At a deeper level, the discrepancy between standards for IBCs and national norms creates a competing narrative that English-medium education, Western pedagogies, and assessment criteria are more desirable than those of the native institutions. This insinuates a hierarchy of knowledge that subordinates existing native standards and practices to those of the foreign institutions. The motivations for pursuing a degree from an IBC, such as greater employability, global mobility, and social capital (Hill & Thabet, 2018; Le & Barnawi, 2015; Wilkins et al., 2012), relegate the local educational pathway to a less desirable, less ambitious option. While many of the benefits of an international "brand" degree may be realized, the perception of inferiority of national knowledge production is inherently damaging.

Full recognition of local faculty by Western home institutions is also limited. IBCs often confer greater value on faculty educated and trained in the West, due to their presumed familiarity with Western pedagogies, curriculum, teaching methods, and standards. A common expectation of students and their families is that instructors at IBCs will be predominantly white and/or Western, indicating equivalent quality with the faculty at the home institution (Jaschik, 2013) and conferring higher status to the education received at the IBC (Hill & Thabet, 2018). However, the percentage of expat and Western-educated faculty is often limited due to additional human resources costs (for the institution) and the career disruption that a relocation and the short-term contract can cause (for the faculty member) (Altbach, 2010; Guimon, 2016; Sidhu, 2009). While these are pragmatic operational and professional considerations, these hiring practices send a clear message to host country nationals that they are considered to be "second tier" and in need of further training in Western pedagogies, theories, and epistemologies to meet home campus expectations. Their value to the IBC is often justified on the basis of cost effectiveness to the remote home institution, rather than through recognition of their cultural knowledge and familiarity with student needs, their understanding of the national academic network, or the stability they can offer their programs and institutions through longer-term employment (Gopal, 2011; Nguyen et al., 2009; Pyvis, 2011).

Language of Instruction

The second criterion for assessing the coloniality of IBCs is the language used as the primary medium of instruction. It is well documented that English is the most widely non-native language of instruction globally, and specifically among IBCs (Garrett et al., 2016; Mackie, 2019). Three of the predominant countries establishing IBCs in non-English speaking countries are the U.S., the U.K., and Australia (Healey, 2017; Garrett et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2020), and it is widely accepted that English language proficiency is considered a critical skill for economic mobility (Bori, 2018; Felix, 2019; Holborow, 2018; Le & Barnawi, 2015). Textbooks and learning resources are overwhelmingly available in English, in comparison to many less widely spoken languages, and the subject matter is often culturally more relevant for residents of the countries of IBC home institutions, particularly in the humanities and social sciences (Alatas, 2000; Bori 2018; Kwek, 2003).

These factors may produce cultural "disruption" at three levels: 1) the dismissal of a native language as a vehicle of learning and knowledge production; 2) the paucity of academic materials in the native language; and 3) a failure to achieve learning objectives due to second language interference. The literature on non-native language instruction and bilingual education suggests that the presentation and reception of content material is greatly enhanced by native language or hybrid delivery, rather than delivery that is solely in the target foreign language (Agbedol et al., 2012; Felix, 2019; Ramachandran, 2017; Smits et al., 2008). Assuming that the educational goals are comprehension and mastery of content, the language of instruction should facilitate these objectives. However, in the interest of maintaining consistent learning

materials, entry requirements, and accreditation eligibility between home campuses and IBCs, the language of instruction is generally that of the parent institution. Additionally, students who reside and study in predominantly non-English speaking communities face the challenge of constant code-switching between the classroom and their daily lives (Barnard & McLellan, 2013). The degree to which English is used in the host country at large impacts the consistency of student proficiency and fluency (Altbach, 2004; Ramachandran, 2017).

Host country faculty at IBCs are also impacted by the linguistic requirements of their teaching and research (Felix, 2019; Healey, 2017). Though many have Western credentials, they are expected to conduct their classes and use texts in English for students who are predominantly from their own country and language of origin. The medium of instruction necessarily impacts pedagogy, particularly through an instructor's depth of explanations, references to supporting materials, and, ultimately, student comprehension. Instructors may be proficient in the target language (usually English), but the effectiveness of their teaching may be compromised (Healey, 2018; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; Pyvis, 2011). More broadly, the mandated communication of ideas in a non-native language to a classroom of native speakers by a native speaker is an artificial contrivance that elevates IBC compliance with foreign home institution curricular "equivalency" over meaningful interlocution (Pyvis, 2011). The expectation that non-native speakers at the IBC would master material at a comparable level as students on the home institution campus, most of whom are native English speakers, implies either an unrealistic grasp of learning theory, a dismissal of local context, or both.

A third area where the primacy of a Western language serves to exacerbate institutional coloniality is in academic journals, textbooks, and research. The overwhelming use of English and other Western languages in major publications and instructional materials is well-documented and is beyond the scope of this article. However, it is noteworthy that host country faculty are limited in their opportunities to conduct and publish research that can enhance their status at the home institution or in their region (Alatas, 2000; Murphy & Zhu, 2012). Due to the implicit prestige attached to the major international journals and publishing houses that publish in English and various European languages, faculty are less likely to produce scholarly work in non-Western languages that will advance their careers outside of the local context (Healey, 2017; Murphy & Zhu, 2012). This serves to reinforce the dominance of English language research outlets.

Institutional Governance of IBCs

The governance and policy frameworks of IBCs may reflect a further power imbalance between home and host countries and institutions. Western-style IBCs are often controlled by principles and processes set by the home institution and conducted unilaterally, either from the home campus apparatus or from transplanted administrators who are temporarily assigned to the host campus (Hill & Thabet, 2018; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; Ziguras, 2008). This model is not uncommon for large, multi-campus state university systems within the U.S. context, yet it can be problematic for IBCs given the significant cultural and regulatory differences (Kent, 2020; Sidhu, 2009). As the literature shows, most IBCs are based in non-Western cultures with significantly different conceptions of leadership and authority. This may influence the degree to which they adopt governance processes and policies to local culture and comply with national guidelines set by ministries or educational licensing authorities (Healey, 2018; Lanford & Tierney, 2016; Tierney & Lanford 2015; Vora, 2015).

While the stated objective of Western home institutions to promote more participatory, democratic policy-making at offshore branch campuses is well-intentioned, this effort often ignores the governance conventions in the host country, many of which are regulated by a national ministry (Ziguras, 2008). This assumption also implies that Western university systems are demonstrably inclusive and "democratic" in their governance and policy-making practices, which may be overstated in reality (Vora, 2015). The adoption of Western home institution governance practices may in fact jeopardize the IBC's standing with local or national regulators, resulting in operational restrictions or a loss of local funding (Kent, 2020; Kwek, 2003; Sidhu, 2009).

The organizational structures of IBCs include a range of models which necessarily impact how governance is implemented and to what degree of autonomous management the branch is afforded. IBCs may be wholly owned by a home institution or by the local host government; they can be fully financed by a private or educational partner; or the facilities may be rented from a private party (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Garrett et al., 2016; Lane, 2013). The ownership structure may also determine the regulatory authority of the host country, varying from education ministries to commercial oversight agencies depending upon the designation of an IBC as an academic institution or as a foreign-owned enterprise (Wilkins and Huisman, 2012). Likely disparities between home institution and host country conventions often necessitate an explicit decision to accede to unfamiliar host guidelines and practices to achieve the legitimacy to operate. Healey (2018) describes cases of host country ministries that specify the length of degrees, mandatory course offerings, hiring practices, and research restrictions that may conflict with regulations governing home institutions. For example, China's Ministry of Education dictates four-year bachelor's degrees (despite the three-year format in Commonwealth countries), mandates courses in Physical Education and Political Economy, and blocks certain internet search engines commonly used for research at Western institutions (p. 2). Many host countries, such as Malaysia, have labor laws that dictate separate hiring practices for expatriate and local employees, creating regulatory distinctions between academic and support staff (p. 3). These academic and administrative discrepancies can diminish the qualitative replication of the home institution programs at its branches.

In cases of host countries that have instituted compelling "pull factors" to attract IBCs, governments frequently incentivize the investment by waiving licensing requirements, granting tax exemptions, and providing facilities and infrastructure, among other inducements (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Guimon, 2016; Hill & Thabet, 2018; Lanford & Tierney, 2016; Mackie, 2019; Wilkins, 2020.) According to Wilkins (2020), one-third of existing IBCs are significantly supported or assisted by host governments. As mentioned previously, the benefits to host countries in exchange for these inducements may include modernizing the national higher education system, promoting ties with prestigious Western institutions, and minimizing "brain drain" of talented students to the West (Clifford & Kinser, 2016). Yet behind most of these scenarios is the implicit acceptance of developmentalist remediation of national education standards, with a clear implication that a Western approach is better than the endogenous (Alatas, 2000; Bori, 2018; Kwek, 2003).

In the case of many IBCs, the standards that govern the home institution in the West are carried to the branch by extension, with little or no acknowledgment of host country regulatory guidelines. Kent (2020) explores cases of U.S.-based IBCs that were forced to close due to poor communication and/or a lack of compliance with host government criteria. For instance, the Community College of Qatar (originally a branch of the Community College of Houston) failed to obtain local accreditation and was taken over by

local authorities. In another instance, the New York Institute of Technology in Bahrain was poorly reviewed by host accreditors and consequently barred from enrolling new students, rendering it financially unviable (p. 14). These examples of failed IBCs can be largely attributed to the failure to recognize the necessity of careful coordination with the host country's authority.

Though institutional accreditation may not be a requirement by the host government, myriad inequities can emerge through the superimposition of a foreign model in a new context (Lane, 2011; Lanford, 2020; Tierney & Lanford, 2015; Ziguras, 2008). With regard to “imported” academic and administrative staff, salary and contract discrepancies between expatriate and local employees may bypass host country labor and immigration laws and create tensions among colleagues (Healey, 2018; Lanford, 2020). Policy decisions may be determined by the home institution without consultation of hosts on local conventions or input by host country faculty and staff. Entry requirements for students may adhere to home institution admissions criteria for the ostensible purpose of maintaining equity, but may not acknowledge local educational preparation, familiarity with subjects, standardized testing exposure, and language proficiency. Finally, conflicting interpretations of academic freedom in scholarly research and approved course offerings may pose restrictions on IBC content that challenge national norms and practices of the host country (Jaschik, 2013; Pyvis, 2011).

Regardless of which governance models and policies have greater weight or merit, the imbalance in power dynamics between the home and host countries often determines which norms prevail. One justification for replicating Western norms is the aspirational goal of equivalency between home campus policies and curricula and those of the IBC, yet there is little evidence in the literature that such equivalence is achieved (Altbach, 2010; Healey, 2017; Hill & Thabet, 2018). Western faculty and administrators seconded to the IBC may be in the host country on a short-term basis, however, and fail to gain sufficient knowledge of the cultural context. Conversely, when IBCs hire longer-term leadership – either local or expatriate – these officials may have no direct familiarity with the home campus culture. In either case, when disparities exist in management, staffing, admissions criteria, or curriculum, the reputation of both the IBC and the home institution can be damaged (Healey, 2017; Sidhu, 2009).

The guidelines for best practices in TNE established by UNESCO and OECD (2005) clearly hold the educational provider (i.e., the home institution) responsible for the quality and cultural relevance of programs and instruction delivered to another location (p. 14), but these agencies do not provide any regulatory mechanism or mandate approval by the host government (Ziguras, 2008). Multilateral funding organizations, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, may require host countries to demonstrate evidence of the adoption of neoliberal measures in higher education as a condition for foreign aid and loans, exerting pressure to accommodate Western standards of practice and governance (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; Tikly, 2004). Therefore, while clear mission statements and operational plans of the university/branch relationship are essential, it is unlikely that institutional agreements can overcome more deeply ingrained structural inequities.

Curriculum

The fourth criterion characterizing educational coloniality addresses the nature of IBC curricula and degree programs, which disproportionately favor vocational and instrumental skills-based knowledge. The distinction between academic offerings in the core and periphery nations is increasingly blurred, as Western institutions have intensified their focus on more technical subjects that lead to employability

(Craig, 2017). The liberal arts model, a hallmark of U.S. higher education, has declined in popularity over past decades, as institutions are pressured to adopt a consumerist interpretation of "return on investment" for higher education (Felix, 2019; Godwin, 2015). However, a countervailing trend is the global recognition that the "soft skills" fostered by the liberal arts – critical thinking, communication, problem-solving strategies – are also valued by employers (Lanford, 2016). An inherent tension within IBC curricular decisions is the urgency of providing pre-professional skills to host country nationals versus the desire to emulate "American" (or more generally, Western) programs, which often include a broad, general education foundation.

According to the latest OBHE report (Garrett et al., 2016), the most frequently offered degree programs at IBCs are business, engineering, and computer science. This is unsurprising, given the global trend of more vocational credentials that seemingly ensure gainful employment following graduation (Godwin, 2015). From the pragmatic perspective of Western home institutions, business and computer science are fields that require a minimal investment in physical facilities to establish, though engineering programs often suggest a more extensive commitment to building laboratories and providing advanced technologies. Notably, fields of study that promote critical analysis of social policy, political institutions, and creative arts in the social sciences and humanities are relatively rare (Ghabra & Arnold, 2007). This may reflect the preferences imposed by host governments, if consulted; investment choices by the home institutions; or merely market data among the prospective student "consumers."

Another factor in the choice of program offerings at IBCs is the challenge of recruiting Western faculty from the social sciences and humanities to relocate to a host campus. Because of a historic Eurocentric focus that has shaped many of these disciplines, such scholars may not be well suited to conduct research or perform community service in the host country. Furthermore, due to the propensity of Western scholars to conduct research that challenges social norms, a posting at a branch campus may not afford them the academic freedom to which they are accustomed (Altbach, 2001; Khoury & Khoury, 2013). One of the major concerns expressed by faculty at IBCs is the discrepancy between actual or perceived liberties in academic research, teaching content, textbook selection, and conference presentations that exist in Western and non-Western societies (Altbach, 2001; Healey, 2017; Jaschik, 2013).

One obstacle to adapting academic content and limiting scholarly inquiry to comply with local culture or government restrictions is that such actions create inequities between host and home programs. This contributes to the perception - or reality - that the respective credentials are separate and unequal. As a result, the home campus "brand" may be devalued, causing reputational damage abroad as well as lower demand by the IBC's target market (Healey, 2017; Hill & Thabet, 2018). However, actions by a host country's ministry to liberalize criteria for the accommodation of foreign curricula can also be problematic. A Western-centric curriculum may include content that is not widely relevant for students in a distant IBC, such as local state histories of public universities, pre-professional classes that are controlled by jurisdictionally specific licensing bodies, or national literatures requiring in-depth cultural familiarity. The adoption of Western curricula may also force branch campuses to forego national curricular requirements that are deemed important for the country's development goals or civic agenda. If the motivation to adopt identical home campus programs and courses is to comply with the equivalence provision of accreditation bodies, or to augment local admission of students seeking a strictly Western program, neither national nor student interests are served. The balance between curricular "equivalence" and "relevance" is under constant tension (Healey, 2017, p. 9).

Situating the International Branch Campus within Postcolonial Theory

The prior examples demonstrate ways in which IBCs may perpetuate the defining characteristics of colonial education despite the historical disruptions of independence movements and the nominal sovereignty of states in the Global South. Critical theory has long challenged the dominant metanarratives in society and articulated the processes by which power is exercised with or without the consent of the subjects (Gramsci et al., 1971, p. 56). A postcolonial theory emerged in the mid-twentieth century as a branch of critical theory, applying questions of identity, agency, and sovereignty to the lived experience of formerly colonized individuals, as well as to newly independent nations. An inherent paradox that emerged was between creating self-sufficient societies within the globalizing world order and preserving allegiance to cultural identity, including language, values, and social structures. Two or more generations after many national independence movements, these societies still grapple with this dilemma: the options for education and social mobility often require a choice between dominant Western influences or local institutions that are undervalued. The proliferation of IBCs brings this contrast into the local context of host institutions, exacerbating the competing cultural narratives of Western hegemony, nativist sovereignty, or complex hybridities. Central to the project of postcolonial theory and relevant to an examination of IBCs are the issues of identity, agency, and sovereignty. This discussion will link key concepts to the emergence of IBCs as a manifestation of the continued challenges of these issues.

Identity

The construction and subjugation of identity occurs at many levels: the individual, the community or cultural subgroup, and the national. The impact of colonialism on the individual psyche of the colonized subject is a major theme in the work of Franz Fanon (1952, 1961). His contributions explore how the social markers of race and dominant language are assigned value by the dominant culture in a colonial setting, instilling a profound sense of deficiency in the subaltern. The colonized subject equates the adoption of the dominant language and values as an acceptance of a "superior" culture and assumes that this concession is the only path to social ascension, though they may be dually stigmatized due to ethnic distinctions and the partial mastery of cultural markers (Hilton, 2011). In the context of the IBC, one of the primary motivations for host country nationals and their policymakers is the promise of economic and social mobility in exchange for the relinquishment of local language and culture in the institutional setting.

Yet there are multiple identities that must be negotiated in the presence of a dominant culture. Albert Memmi (1957) builds upon this theme, examining the complex relationships between and within each respective group in colonial societies. Memmi concurs with Fanon that the most damaging form of oppression is the internalization of subordinated identity. The acceptance of the caricature of native culture as primitive and in need of remediation effectively limits subjects' capability for resistance. He also asserts that "sympathetic colonizers" cannot truly assist in the liberation process despite good intentions, as their racial, ethnic, and economic status will always exempt them from the fallout of the struggle. These identities parallel those of the contemporary educational context: colonized subjects may well be self-colonized through their internalization of the characterization, and the role of "colonizers" may be either revenue-conscious administrators of a home institution or well-intentioned faculty imparting the accepted Western canon. Memmi's point is that the message of subordination is delivered through each of these perspectives.

At the time of many colonial independence movements, there were policy experiments in preserving native culture and language through national educational strategies. The early goals of postcolonial practitioners embraced nativist principles in an effort to redefine national identity, often in resistance to the emerging bipolar world system following World War II (Clarke, 2011). Though many leaders were educated in the West prior to leading these movements, they recognized the inherent damage of negating indigenous identity, values, language, and authority in favor of a foreign, dominant system. The works of M. K. Gandhi, Julius Nyerere, and Paulo Freire demonstrate how educational policies in their respective countries negotiated this tension, providing examples of different precedents in the decolonization effort. Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary views on education charted an early roadmap for the social transformation of India. Gandhi (1953) addresses many of the major themes of colonial resistance and nation-building through education, such as the use of indigenous languages in schools rather than English, which he viewed as a dominating instrument of Empire:

> Real freedom will come only when we free ourselves of the domination of Western education, Western culture, and Western way of living which have been engrained in us, because this culture has made our living expensive and artificial, both for men and for women. Emancipation from this culture would mean real freedom for us. (Gandhi, 1947, "Talk with Englishwomen," in Johnson, 2005)

Julius Nyerere similarly advocated a strong nativist platform in his "Education for Self-reliance" program for newly independent Tanzania (Nyerere, 1968). He outlined new policies for national schooling that included Kiswahili as an official language, instruction in practical agricultural skills, and a system centered around his economic plan of *Ujama* (collective farming, or "villagization"). Though inspired by both Gandhi's call to restore indigenous traditions and language, and his staunch rejection of foreign intervention, Nyerere's education program restricted citizens' early access to English in the primary and secondary grades, and thus their mobility to pursue fields of study that were dominated by English texts and resources or outside the scope of regional economic needs (Regmi, 2020).

A common thread throughout postcolonial theory is the role of language as an instrument of cultural identity. In his seminal work *Colonising the Mind*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) asserts the following:

> [A] specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality, but in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history… Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other… Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world... (pp. 15-16).

Ngugi characterizes the use of English in African education as a "cultural bomb" which is detonated by the "deliberate disassociation of the language of conceptualization, of thinking, of formal education, of mental development, from the language of daily interaction in the home and in the community" (p. 28). He directly links the use of colonial languages to native cultural erasure through its role in diminishing indigenous epistemologies and histories.

These examples of early postcolonial efforts to protect native culture through language, point to several key challenges in policy implementation, such as: the tension between valorizing indigenous tradition and preparing students to participate in a global economy; rejecting the language of the colonizer in favor of native languages and thus losing available educational resources; and initiating dramatic educational reforms without the financial support, and thus intervention, of foreign aid (Kwek, 2003). To

the present day, these tensions have continued to resonate in educational policy in the developing world and are clearly present in IBCs. One opportunity for IBCs to address this dilemma is to incorporate local languages and literatures into IBC curricula, enhancing learning material with bi- or multi-lingual skills that are valuable attributes in the global workforce. IBCs are well-positioned to prepare students to succeed in multiple cultural contexts, particularly where employers need to be educated, multicultural staff in non-Western markets. This strategy both provides a "competitive advantage" to graduates and surpasses the Western home campus curricular requirements while valorizing native languages and cultural traditions.

Agency

Though early efforts to enact nativist language policy were short-lived in most cases, a more transcendent form of resistance to colonialism emerged to identify native epistemologies and ontologies that could acknowledge and sustain local cultures. Paolo Freire's contribution to pedagogical models featured a dialogic dynamic of education that validated indigenous knowledge and facilitated a reciprocal exchange between teacher and learner. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Freire echoes the work of Fanon and Memmi in his analysis of the damage incurred by the oppression of both colonizers and subjects, concluding that each must liberate themselves. He denounces the Northern narrative of knowledge as a "regime of truth," describing the process of "banking education" in which prescribed knowledge is deposited in learners for subsequent withdrawal in the service of colonial power (Freire, 1972, in Clarke, 2011, p. 61). The acceptance of an exogenous model of instruction or mode of communication without reflection on its impact is a manifestation of oppression. Instead, Freire encourages the fusion of insight with action in his notion of "praxis."

Knowledge production and ideology are inherently complicated by the roles that the respective agents, beneficiaries, and subjects occupy. Cultural domination does not exist as a clear binary formation between colonizer and colonized, perpetrator and victim, subject and object. While most societies identify their citizens as belonging to an In-group with specific traits and goals distinct from those of other geopolitical groups, binaries serve to essentialize the diverse composition and aspirations of a people. Clearly, no citizenry is monolithic: the process of constructing a national or collective identity also serves to negate the contributions of marginalized subgroups (Spivak, 1988). Yet, since the central tension of a subaltern group is with Western domination, it may be necessary to strategically essentialize a culture for the purpose of liberatory social activism. The danger, Spivak cautions, is that this process can actually serve to reinscribe and perpetuate neo-colonial domination by its dependence upon Western texts and representations to articulate the struggle. Subgroups defined by class, ethnicity, race, or religion may be expected to suppress their agendas in the public sphere in the name of unity against external domination. Thus, within the target culture, the "heard" voices are those privileged with access to education, economic means, and government representation; in other words, a system of "class apartheid" is engendered in which the elite segments of society are more likely to accommodate institutions of Western power (Kapoor, 2004). This group is the targeted student market of most IBCs, which is not representative of national demographics in host countries. Thus, the group that has already benefitted materially from Western influences – the national elite – embraces and perpetuates the attendant values by choosing to attend institutions that replicate them, further exacerbating class differences within the host countries.

Bhabha (1984) also addresses the process of essentialization as an attack on nationhood through narrative representation that informs social structures. He takes issue with the binary oppositions between

"colonizer" and "colonized" that Fanon and Memmi discuss, arguing that this relationship is more ambivalent and discursive. Bhabha (1994) also examines cultural hybridity and mimesis as complicating factors of identity but suggests that each formulation of the subaltern identity creates space for resistance to colonial power. In both cases, the subject adopts elements of the dominant culture in order to survive a repressive regime or to advance within it by mimicking aspects of the colonizers. Hybridity describes a more involuntary process through which behaviors, language, and beliefs may be absorbed by the subaltern on the basis of their efficacy within a colonial context. Through exposure to a duality of cultures, elements of each are retained, so that neither culture exists unaffected by the other. Conversely, mimesis is an expression of agency by the subject who selectively assumes features of the dominant culture to thrive within it. There is an element of parody in mimesis, where the subaltern reconstructs his identity based on that of the colonizer, but simultaneously rejects it:

> (M)imicry represents an ironic compromise… the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite… Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other as it visualizes power (1984, p. 126).

Bhabha's explication of cultural appropriation goes beyond binary categorizations to show both the reciprocal "osmosis" that occurs between/among proximate cultures and the role of the subaltern subject in exercising agency to negotiate it. These processes are clearly in play within a bicultural educational setting: the imported culture of a Western university will necessarily transform the host institution, just as it will be altered from that of the original home campus. Host country nationals (including students, faculty, and administrators) at the branch campus must continuously define their place in the interstices between the two cultures. In order to more effectively balance the perception and practice of cultural agency at IBCs, institutions should provide opportunities for expatriate staff and faculty to learn local languages and customs in order to assimilate to the workplace and host culture (Gopal, 2011; Pyvis, 2011). The resulting message that cultural familiarity is reciprocal serves to equalize host and expat norms by challenging the comfort zone of Western staff and creating an authentic exchange of culture.

Sovereignty

For the purpose of this discussion, "sovereignty" here refers to the provenance of knowledge, values, and subjective histories of a people, rather than control of the geopolitical boundaries imposed by imperial powers. The erasure of indigenous sovereignty was a result of the imperialist quest to exert economic, political, religious, and military domination and exploitation over subject nations, yet it is the subjugation of beliefs and ideas that endures as coloniality. The cumulative erosion of national sovereignty is evident in the governmental, legal, and social structures of formerly colonized nations, such that both internal and external forces continue to reinforce Western values and logic. As Parmar (2015) describes:

> After gaining independence in the 1950s and 1960s, the leaders of new nations in the developing world were eager to gain Western knowledge, in the belief that understanding the ideas and the technology of the former colonial power would enable them to gain a greater degree of economic and political independence…Thus, access to Western knowledge became a new source of rivalry in many countries. More importantly, Western style learning also re-oriented the elites in developing countries toward the global centers of power and capital and away from their own national traditions (p. 4).

This foundation set the stage for new leaders to embrace the model established under colonialism in order to retain their privileged status and power. The concept of "Coloniality of Power" traces the historical role of imperialism, global capitalism, and labor relations in the suppression of indigenous cultures within the Americas that resulted in Europe's rise to dominance in the world order and subsequent formulations of control (Quijano, 2000). The legacy that endures is the emulation of Western institutional structures, values, and knowledge in the Global South. Walter Mignolo (2003) expands upon this theme with a definition of "the colonial difference," the perspectives from the Global South that resist the Eurocentric narrative of modernity. Yet even in acts of resistance, the representational tools available to the subaltern are formulated from Western positivism. He refers to the "Coloniality of Knowledge" and "Coloniality of Being" to locate the exercise of Western power within specific realms of human experience and to demonstrate its ubiquity. By situating resistance within its territorial origins and temporal histories of the South, there is potential to challenge Western epistemologies, languages, and logics.

> "Science" (knowledge and wisdom) cannot be detached from language; languages are not just "cultural" phenomena in which people find their "identity"; they are also the location where knowledge is inscribed. And, since languages are not something human beings have but rather something of what human beings are, coloniality of power and of knowledge engendered the coloniality of being (Mignolo, 2003, p. 669).

The next step in regaining intellectual sovereignty, according to Mignolo, is to decolonize the epistemologies and indigenous histories that inform the culture and shape the worldview. This process is complicated by the layers of coloniality; it is not simply a shift from a Western to a subaltern narrative, or a blanket rejection of Eurocentric knowledges. As de Sousa Santos (2018) explains, "(s)ince colonialism is a co-creation, however asymmetrical, decolonizing entails decolonizing both the knowledge of the colonized and the knowledge of the colonizer" (p. 107). To reclaim intellectual sovereignty, non-Western scholarship might generate a more reciprocal cultural exchange by identifying comparative aspects of local epistemologies, histories, and values to both valorize the local and to educate Western scholars on alternate approaches and perspectives. The challenge is to generate knowledge that is additive to - rather than imitative of - the hegemonic.

Concluding Thoughts

The internationalization of higher education through IBCs has effectively come to mean "Westernization," due to the aspiration to replicate U.S. and European academic institutions in the Global South and East. Access, curricular content, faculty qualifications, and governance of exported models are designed to mirror Western institutions rather than reflecting the local cultures and contexts of host countries. The advent of IBCs represents a recent manifestation of globalization, rooted in economic expansion to new markets and new sources of revenue for Western universities with declining funding, rising costs, and a shrinking domestic student population. As postcolonial theorists would argue, this dynamic has perpetuated colonialism by constructing standards and aspirational goals that serve to validate Western norms and reinscribe coloniality.

The cultural disconnects between IBCs and home institutions reveal the distinctive values, resources and needs of their respective societies, yet the core issue is the existence of historic structural inequities rather than a lack of sufficient cultural sensitivity. The project of constructing empire – either geopolitical or epistemological – necessitates the suppression of subject identity, agency, and sovereignty,

and IBCs have demonstrated intent and progress toward this end. The inevitable disparities between home institutions and branch campuses threaten the perceived legitimacy of both, yet each strives for homogeneity of content, instruction, and services that ignore or deny cultural context. Universal acceptance of education as a public good has been conflated with adaptation to Western standards and approaches. In addition, the myriad motivations of stakeholders in transnational higher education further complicate the dismantling of its inherent coloniality. As a result, resistance to the hegemonic features of TNE is difficult.

Therefore, any strategy to reverse the perpetuation of coloniality must address these drivers at their respective levels. While effective leadership and intercultural competence are crucial for any successful educational venture, they are insufficient to change the developmentalist narrative of the branch campus project. Efforts to preserve meaningful international collaboration will need to change fundamentally at the structural level, resulting in more equitable partnerships between institutions and comparable requirements to embrace and validate the cultural difference. This can be implemented through enforcement of regulatory requirements by host country ministries, requiring foreign institutions to comply with national educational standards and goals while operating within the country. Western universities can opt for local partners in target countries to provide more joint or dual degrees, ensuring that the respective institutional criteria are met. Regional and national accrediting authorities can negotiate reciprocal recognition of curricula and degree programs for more flexible mobility and portability. Students can be encouraged to foster dual sets of cultural and linguistic competencies, to provide both local and multinational employers a more versatile skills set. And faculty who opt to teach or conduct research abroad should be expected to invest in in-depth cultural training before accepting contracts or grants, rather than engaging in "academic tourism" that is represented as international expertise. More broadly, all stakeholders in transnational education must be vigilant that the forms and content of knowledge production meet the highest standards of educational quality within the context of practice, rather than merely accepting the narrative of "cultural supremacy" of the West.

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Sexual Harassment on International Branch Campuses: An Institutional Case Study of Awareness, Perception, and Prevention

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ABSTRACT

Concerned for student safety and intrigued by how research could impact institutional policy and practice, this paper describes findings from an action research project to raise questions and awareness about sexual harassment on an international branch campus in China. Due to the multicultural environment of the campus, it was felt that culturally grounded research that adds to our awareness and perceptions of sexual harassment would be imperative to facilitate prevention strategies in similar higher education environments. Through this case study, which received substantial institutional support, we also sought to learn more about students' experiences. Different attitudes and perceptions on gender, identity, sexuality, and multicultural relationships were revealed by survey responses and interview conversations. Furthermore, data revealed that students were confused about sexual harassment consequences and responsibilities, and social media was misleading. The findings from this study point to the need for more research, especially concerning cultural attitudes and perspectives about sexual harassment, and can contribute to institutional mechanisms in preventing sexual harassment amongst an increasingly internationalized higher education community.

Keywords: action research, cultural perceptions, international branch campus, prevention, sexual harassment

BACKGROUND

The internationalization of higher education and the performance of international branch campuses are both topics that continue to be discussed worldwide. According to the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, there are 306 international branch campuses in 37 countries around the world (data updated on 20 November 2020). The largest "exporter" is the United States and the largest "importer" China with 42 international campuses (Cross-Border Education Research Team). This trend has been examined by researchers from different perspectives, notably Li and Lowe's (2016) review of the "war for talent" and its implications for cross-border education. They point out that the worldwide talent market in newly emerging economies has been extended throughout the world, but especially in Asia, where high skills are

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sought at lower prices. China, with the largest market for education, nevertheless has a higher education capacity which lags behind student demand (OECD, 2016). Therefore, the country still has room for international branch campus development (Bothwell, 2019).

In China, joint-venture universities, also known as "Sino-foreign cooperative universities," have attracted students from home and abroad for various reasons. These reasons include the fact that the institutions are *de facto* international branch campuses. As a result, students study the same programs or earn the same degrees as from their home campuses; benefit from the lower cost of living, compared with students' home countries; and/or hope to compete in a less competitive job market in China after graduation (Farrugia & Lane, 2013; Wilkins, 2016). Currently, there are 84 joint programs in China (C-BERT, 2020), among which the most commonly recognized international branch campuses, by longevity and size, are the "major six":

Table 1

"Major Six" International Branch Campuses in China

International Branch Campus	Founded	Undergraduate Enrollment	Graduate Enrollment	Home Campus	Host City in China
University of Nottingham Ningbo China	2004	8000	1200	University of Nottingham UK	Ningbo
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University	2006	18000		University of Liverpool UK	Suzhou
Chinese University of Hong Kong Shenzhen	2012	6700		Chinese University of Hong Kong	Shenzhen
New York University Shanghai	2012	2000		New York University USA	Shanghai
Duke Kunshan University	2014	500 (estimated)		Duke University USA	Kunshan
Wenzhou-Kean University	2014	2800		Kean University USA	Wenzhou

A newly published article by Tenbrunsel et al. (2019) argues that cultural and demographic characteristics impact the reporting of sexual harassment incidents; for example, there are fewer reported rates of sexual harassment for Asians than for their "White counterparts." This finding encouraged us to further explore issues of cultural differences and multi-cultural interactions in relation to the topic of sexual harassment. According to Lampman et al. (2009), sociocultural expectations can affect the power dynamics that impact individual responses and emotional differences when harassment is perceived (also see Maass & Cadinu, 2006). For example, a history of oppression and role expectations may cause women and individuals from minoritized groups to form communities of support. Paludi et al. (2006) have also investigated the impact of cultural values on how sexual harassment is understood and defined. Although Paludi et al. (2006) focus on legal definitions and the incidence rates of sexual harassment across cultures, they emphasize the impact of sexual harassment on students' health and academic development. In short, a variety of sociocultural and legal norms complicate the issue of sexual harassment on all university

campuses; however, few locations have such a diverse array of perspectives as international branch campuses.

Regarded as a pioneering institution in China, the research site of the present case study is a "mature" international branch campus and considered an "inclusive and diverse international community" (Cai & Hall, 2015), with students and staff from more than 60 countries. International students make up approximately 10 percent of the student population on campus. Even though the university has been established for sixteen years, there has been little discussion, at the institutional level, about sexual harassment. Concerned for student safety and intrigued by how research could impact institutional policy and practice, we developed an action research project to raise questions and awareness about sexual harassment, as we will detail in the methodology. We also sought to learn more about students' experiences and suggest prevention strategies for international branch campuses worldwide, especially for similar multicultural student communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forbes-Mewett and McCulloch (2015) argue that international students are especially vulnerable due to several factors. These factors include living in a foreign environment, often without linguistic and cultural knowledge about the host country; distance from family and friends in home countries; and insufficient financial resources. The experience of living in an unfamiliar environment and, to a certain degree, the related political and sociocultural insecurity, may hinder the reporting of offensive incidents that would normally be reported to authorities in students' own countries.

Furthermore, in Western countries, surveys show that, in most cases, few students are aware of the available legal mechanisms to report sexual harassment incidents; most who did report, were unsatisfied with the outcome (see, for example, Clancy et al., 2014). Clancy et al. (2014) suggest that policies emphasizing safety and inclusivity have the potential to improve the experiences for a diverse community in higher education; nonetheless, a better awareness of institutional and legal mechanisms for the reporting of harassment is needed.

International branch campuses boast of their cultural diversity and their ability to prepare students to be responsible global citizens and leaders. Located in dozens of host countries, these campuses can serve as a platform for cross-cultural learning and practice (Lanford & Tierney, 2016). However, faculty from home campuses and students from all over the world are facing the fact that sexual harassment exits and needs to be better defined (Charlesworth, McDonald, & Cerise, 2011), understood (Charmaraman, Jones, Stein, & Espelage, 2013), and prevented (Cody et al., 2013).

Universities are supposed to ensure the safety of students, but how safe do students feel? A study by Allen, Cowie, and Fenaughty (2020) reveals that students' simultaneously feel "safe and unsafe." Our research was therefore motivated by a desire to understand their levels of awareness, their perception of sexual harassment, their awareness concerning activities involving sexual harassment, and their feelings about the safety of their campus.

The awareness of sexual harassment in China has certainly increased since the "#MeToo" campaign in 2017, and many alleged sexual harassment cases have been reported on social media (Lin & Yang, 2019; Ling & Liao, 2020; Zeng, 2020). Major debates lie in the areas of academic ethics, false accusations, and, in some cases, ambiguity in a shared understanding - or a definition - of sexual harassment. Definitional issues inevitably interweave with cultural perceptions. In different cultures, the motivations and consequences are often based on cultural values. Diehl et al. (2012) discuss the results of a sexual

harassment project in relation to motivational explanations for sexual harassment and anti-harassment interventions. They believe that a thorough understanding of the mental processes and motives is necessary to inform the development of effective prevention policies concerning sexual harassment. Therefore, culturally grounded research that adds to our awareness and perceptions of sexual harassment is imperative to facilitate prevention measures.

METHODOLOGY

Action Research

The three of us have been working on the international branch campus for five to eleven years. It is an English-speaking campus, where English is not only the language of instruction, but also the work language in administration and logistics. Concerned with improving students' wellbeing (Baik, Larcombe, & Brooker, 2019) and institutional support in a non-academic dimension of student life on campus, we successfully applied for internal funding for an empirical research project. We subsequently adopted an action research approach, which may be described as the intentional pursuit of action concurrently with and by informed research (Helskog, 2014). We then consulted high-level university administrators and compiled a booklet and a one-page leaflet explaining the understandings, concepts, policies, and reporting mechanisms for sexual harassment on the campus. The department in charge of legal affairs liaised with a law firm to provide a public lecture on sexual harassment, which was attended by a large number of students.

Research Questions

Our research questions and methodology were developed with the intention of: a) gathering information that could be fed back into the institutional setting (Helskog, 2014); and b) giving participants control over the procedures of the research, "intended as a counter to the implicit view that researchers are superior to those they study" (Babbie, 2007, p. 301), considering that participants are much younger undergraduate students. The research questions are the following:

1. To what extent are students on the multi-cultural campus aware of what sexual harassment means?
2. In which situations have students felt sexually harassed in their educational environment? By whom (e.g., any teacher, tutor, student, worker, guard, or others)?
3. What action would students take if they felt sexually harassed?

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

We used a mixed methods approach, consisting of an online survey with open-ended questions and individual in-depth interviews. The goal of the study is not to generalize but to explore participant experiences with context and detail. Importantly, for our empirical approach, we had wide-ranging institutional assistance for the project. First, the Research Ethics Committee (equivalent of an Institutional Review Board in other countries) helped with the design of the survey, which was then sent out by the university residential management team to all students (more than 8,000). In addition, the University Counselling and Wellbeing Service and two senior members of the University Management Board offered us guidance concerning policy-making and operational matters. The university library ordered all reading materials we requested.

In the survey, we tried to strike a balance between multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. After explaining the research goals, survey purposes, and the consent with confidentiality information, questions about awareness of sexual harassment appeared at the beginning of the survey.

Questions were presented in a logically deductive way (from general to specific) so the awareness probing was scaffolded. Most questions offered three options - Yes, Not Sure, and No - because we needed the survey to be respondent friendly (Gehlbach, 2015). In spite of the popularity of Likert scales, we considered the sensitivity of the topic and discussed the format with academics having expertise in survey design (they are also ethics officers). We agreed that a location on the continuum (a four- or five- level format) could place students in a forced and uncertain choice-making situation. We also sought advice from colleagues on two possibilities: "Not Sure" or "How Sure" (with a four- or five- level scale). Their feedback was unanimous in favour of "Not Sure": "It is more straightforward this way, for example, if you're not sure, you're not sure." Open-ended questions gave us more of the students' voice, and we did need to learn from their meaningful answers, genuine comments, opinions, and feelings to guide us in designing the interview questions.

Interviewees volunteered by emailing us in response to the final statement in the survey: "Please email us if you would like to be interviewed." Knowing the number of interviews was rather small, we prepared and conducted these conversations in great detail, enabling "thick description" (Geertz, 1973). We also tried to encourage interviewees to tell us their stories, and after we drafted our awareness and prevention booklets, we contacted them for "member checking" (Harper & Cole, 2012). Basically, this research opportunity made it possible for the institution and students to connect. Observations and discussions with both students and staff members on other occasions were also noted in our field memos.

Ethical considerations were taken into account with tremendous help from two ethics officers. Questions were carefully worded to minimize, as much as possible, students' emotional pain should they recollect unpleasant experiences. The first page of the online survey earnestly explained the purposes of the project and the anonymity policy, followed by an option of continuing or discontinuing the fourteen questions. Among 618 respondents, 615 chose to continue out of a student population of 8,000; thus, almost one out of eight students were interested and completed our survey to contribute to the research project. We started each of the interview conversation by thanking them for volunteering, and a common response was "You're welcome. It seemed interesting"; or "I was just curious."

While anonymity can be preserved for an online survey, with face-to-face interviews, we guaranteed confidentiality. We presented participants with two documents: *Information Sheet* and *Consent Form*, clearly stating their rights and where they could seek assistance if they felt disturbed after participating in the study. Given the English-language policies of this institution, we were able to generally carry out our project in English directly. Documents were all in English, but participants were made aware that, if they needed a translation, a Chinese version could be provided. Similarly, some interview conversations were in Chinese when participants wished to switch. After each interview, we filed the *Consent Form* with the interviewee's signature, and they kept the *Information Sheet* with the project description as well as contact details of the University Research Ethics Committee. Each form of data was treated with utmost discretion and confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Remaining faithful to data, inductive coding was adopted to acquire deep and comprehensive insights. Some codes emerged as surprising to researchers, who kept in mind existing themes from the literature review but meanwhile kept an open mind in exploring new themes and subthemes. Empirical material was highly valued, although traditionally inductive coding could be challenged by capturing too

many codes and losing focus (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019), the researchers were cognizant of trying to find a balance between exploring the complexity of data and limiting a practical number of codes.

Researchers' Reflexivity Statement

Inspired by the work of Galesie & Tourangeau (2007), we modified our survey questions meticulously, trying to present enquiries with a neutral tone without betraying our feminist perspective, as the framing of the survey and interview questions could affect respondents' answers. We are each female and concerned about social injustice, bullying, and discrimination. Being conscious of our own identities, we reflected on our practice and developed our reflected attitudes when relating to participants and exploring their perspectives (Nilson, 2017). We asked both female and male experts to help refine our questions.

We had experts support from the Research Ethics Committee and Counselling Service team, each of whom scrutinized our questions and the survey procedure.

FINDINGS

Awareness and Perceptions

The first question was about what sexual harassment means and more than 72 per cent of students believed that they knew exactly what it means. The second question asked what could be considered as sexual harassment. Although 19 individuals (2.12 percent) chose the option of "Other possibilities," we did not find any specified contents in the provided text box. Questions 3 and 4 were straightforward, and the two questions were closely related; therefore, their answers seemed to be consistent. Then, we asked about "friends." When it came to friends, the "Yes" count was more than double and "No" less than half. This was astonishing in the beginning but, later on, when we talked to students and colleagues, we often heard similar narratives: "Although it never happened to me, it's not been rare among my friends" (See Table 2). Later, during interviews and casual chats with colleagues, the reluctance of admittance could be sensed from speakers both verbally and non-verbally (e.g., avoiding eye contact). Only two female individuals clearly told a researcher that they had been sexually harassed – one said by a foreigner, and the other one preferred not to say by whom.

The following questions moved to the realm of cultural understandings. For Question 8, on "being more tolerant because of cultural differences," we offered an extra option because this discussion proved to be slightly more complicated.

Table 2

Survey Questions 1-8

Survey Questions 1 – 8	Yes	Not Sure	No
1. Do you think you understand what exactly sexual harassment means?	72.26%	25.91%	1.82%
2. Which one(s) of these do you consider to be sexual harassment (can be more than one answer)?			
Someone expresses sexual feelings in your presence	17.75%		
Someone makes unacceptable sexual gestures in your presence	27.46%		
Someone shows pornographic images to you	24.22%		

Someone touches your body and it makes you uncomfortable	28.46%		
Other possibilities please specify:	2.12%		
3. Based on your understanding of sexual harassment, have you ever felt that you were sexually harassed in a school / university environment?"	21.17%	12.41%	66.42%
4. Based on your understanding of sexual harassment, have you ever felt that you were sexually harassed outside campus by someone from your education circle (e.g. teacher, tutor, student, worker, guard, or others known from schools / universities)?	24.45%	10.22%	65.33%
5. Based on your understanding of sexual harassment, have you heard from friends who have ever felt that they were sexually harassed by someone from their education circle (e.g. teacher, tutor, student, worker, guard, or others known from schools / universities)?	55.68%	13.19%	31.14%
6. Do you think social / legal understandings of sexual harassment are different by culture?	69.34%	17.15%	13.50%
7. Being a student on a multi-cultural campus like XXXX (the name of the University), do you feel confused about the boundary between appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviors?	36.50%	24.09%	39.42%
8. If you feel sexually harassed by someone from a different culture, would you be more tolerant if you think that there are cultural differences around appropriate behavior?	4.03%	7.33%	28.21%
Extra option for Question 8: Depending on what happened: 60.44%			

During the interviews, one student smiled at this query and said: "I'm sure I'll be more careful if I was dating a foreign student, as that was what my parents told me before I came here." I pressed on asking what being "more careful" meant, and the answer was "I don't know" with a giggle. I sensed the increased sensitivity and moved on to "How about your friends?" With no exceptions, students were more relaxed talking about their friends, but understandably cautious about their teachers, especially when they were "Westerners."

The survey results showed that nearly 70 percent of the students believed that social and legal understandings of sexual harassment are different by culture; however, nearly 30 percent would "not at all" be more tolerant of inappropriate behaviors by someone from a different culture. This prompted us to subsequently ask interviewees whether they expected people from a different culture to adapt to and respect their own cultural understanding about sexual harassment. This question of who adapts to whose culture was also raised when discussing the topic with some academics on campus. The main strand of answers naturally led to a host-or-guest position. However, some argued there should not be a host-guest issue; instead, it should be an equal and neutral zone where everyone observes others' values, expectations, and habitual behaviors.

One individual commented on the phenomenon of wolf-whistling and said in Italy it would be a mere compliment, not an offence, while another said it would be a sexist gesture towards mainly females. Similarly, a non-Chinese student said that when she walked in the gym and a lot of young men were staring at her, it actually made her feel more confident; however, one of our Chinese female interviewees claimed that "I'm not happy with my body and often feel embarrassed being stared at." A Southeast-Asian student of Chinese descent told us that she would stare back if a man stared at her as the staring action is considered a rather rude behavior. A male Chinese student told us:

> None of my friends, girls, are happy with their body – none at all. They either believe they're overweight, or they think they're too thin. I know a girl who is perfectly well-shaped, but she always complains about her weight; she even takes medicine to lose weight. They're not confident, that's why. I heard people saying that feminist women are often fat and ugly, but at least they're confident.

Participants also talked about some feminist stereotypes in society. Students (both female and male) invariably advocated that there should be more charitable views on feminists (for example, "some employers label them as troublemakers"); and in the educational systems, there should not be any gender-biased policies (for example, some programs in universities only recruit male or female students). One female participant jokingly mentioned that she would only talk to females about feminism because "men usually see it as a negative thing."

Prevention

As one major part of the project, we produced two documents aimed at informing students about prevention measures and reporting mechanisms: one with meticulous technical details in fourteen pages and one succinct leaflet with the most important information on just one page (double-sided). Before designing these two documents we asked questions in the survey regarding reporting sexual harassment (See Table 3).

Table 3

Survey Question 9-10

Survey Questions 9 – 10	Yes	Not Sure	No
9. If you think you have been sexually harassed, would you report it to someone?	60.22%	34.31%	5.47%
10. If yes who would you report to? (Can be more than one answer)			
Family	16.48%		
Study mates	19.37%		
Personal tutor	10.85%		
Residential college tutor	10.30%		
Wellbeing service / university counsellor	9.20%		
Legal office in university	12.23%		
Equality and diversity committee (EDC)	2.34%		
Dignity network	1.51%		
Police	15.38%		
Other possibilities please specify:	2.34%		

Nearly 35 per cent of students were not sure whether or not to report, which to us was alarming. Then we asked who they would tell. Just under 20 percent chose their peers and around 15 percent answered that they would report to police. In the text box of "other possibilities please specify," six typed in "friends"

and one said, "Friends on campus, possibly someone who knows the perpetrator." Several answered "close friends or boyfriend / girlfriend," and some gave other different answers:

"Supervisor / mentor"

"Supervisor of the harasser"

"Well-being service"

Question 11 was for the near 40 percent who were not sure or not to report: "If you would not report to anyone, please explain why not:" Twenty-nine responses were entered, and the reasons for not reporting mainly lie in these feelings and assumptions:

"Embarrassed / shamed"

"Useless"

"Afraid of bullying"

"No evidence / proof"

Some elaborated that they would worry about their reputation being damaged as people might think that they had "given wrong hints." One response was "Maybe it's my fault." A few comments indicated that reporting would be "useless" as "they won't be punished anyway." One said, "No one cares." Some believed that the possible consequence of further bullying would be too frightening therefore they would choose not to report, and the last category was about providing evidence or proof. One of them said: "I will be very nervous when they ask me for evidence."

One comment stood out: "If he or she regretted about it and apologized sincerely, then this was not a serious sexual harassment. I can let it go, but we probably cannot be friends anymore, which is why, sometimes to keep the friendship, people will hesitate."

Based on these responses we compiled a fourteen-page booklet and a one-page flyer to explain relevant concepts, to advise preventative guidelines as well as to inform students about the main reporting mechanisms on campus. Thousands of copies were printed and distributed, as part of a bigger and long-term project focusing on prevention.

The last question of the survey was intended to find out how students perceive reported sexual harassment cases, given the recent prevalence of such stories on social media: "Do you believe that in many cases people who claim to be sexually harassed are making a fuss unnecessarily?" 8.59 percent said yes, 20.55 percent not sure, and 54.91 percent no. Right after the Yes / Not Sure / No option, we provided a text box "Please explain why," and 14.95 percent typed in their thoughts. There were 52 comments altogether, and the longest one had 417 words. We grouped the quotes into four themes: Victim's View, Bystander's View, Accused's View, and Supporters of Our Project. We provided short comments following the most impactful long ones.

Victims' View

> Till now, not a single case during the #MeToo movement has been proven as a false rape claim. Exposed sexual harassment issues often involve unequal power structures between actors and victims. Actors are much more likely to have stronger influence and control of public opinions.

This student seemed to be quite well-informed but also worried about the "power" and "influence" often owned by the "actors." Indeed sometimes powerful people can even use their influence to end the investigation. (Tippett, 2018).

> There should not be any notion of "fuss" if sexual harassment takes place, because I think the boundary of whether being sexually harassed depends on the victim. If he or she feels offended,

> then someone must stand out to deal with it. Otherwise, when it gradually becomes worse and worse it will be too late to stop. So, in the beginning when it feels uncomfortable it should be stopped.

We used the word "uncomfortable" in our survey, and repeatedly we saw and heard the word in students' answers. "How uncomfortable is unacceptable" was discussed later at length, both privately and in groups with students, which revealed that the biggest issue might be the definitional confusion. We tried to elaborate on the definitions in the booklet in the hope of providing "relief" and/or "reinforcement" of students' past possibly unpleasant and/or confusing experiences (Ashton, 2014; Dempsey, Dowling, Larkin, & Murphy, 2016):

> It has violated human rights, and the victims cannot protect their rights if they remain silent. Everyone needs to be protected, although they have a different understanding of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should be treated seriously, no matter in what kind of forms. Refusing or hesitating to report sexual harassment will only indulge offenders.

This quote implied that the definition depends on each individual, and it echoed with other chats in contending that "not reporting will only give [sexual offenders a] 'green light' on offending."

More than a dozen comments stated that it is "the most basic right" to protect oneself and to be heard. For instance, one respondent said, "Even it is possible that someone is making a fuss out of some kind of reason but without actual investigation, we should not hold the bias in the first place." One student emphasized that, in a university setting, self-protection awareness may be low because students consider their studies to be their first priority. This student also believed that sexual harassment is barely reported because merely the topic is considered taboo: "It's too hard for the victim to speak up in the first place, not to mention sexual harassment can cause serious mental trauma and make one feel insecure in an environment that one is supposed to be safe in."

In our second question, we gave one possible scenario where "Someone touches your body and it makes you uncomfortable," but back then we did not know that "uncomfortable" appeared so many times in students' responses. One typed "As long as a perpetrator is making her or him uncomfortable, then she or he is being sexually harassed." Another put it more emotionally: "If someone feels sexually harassed you have to believe them as they are the victims and it encourages other victims to come forward; instead of 'victim shaming' them by telling them that they are 'making a fuss unnecessarily,' you should think that they might have really got hurt, physically or mentally. There is no fussing about this!"

Another thematic word was "shame," and we did not use this word in our survey. It emerged from the data. One student typed: "People are shamed enough to talk about sexual harassment. Those who claim to have been harassed are not likely to say something unimportant. How is it unnecessary?" Another one explained: "People tend to put the stigma on the reporters; therefore, underreporting and self-shaming is a much bigger issue than the harassment itself."

The word "important" occurred with exclamation marks multiple times: "Sometimes what others think not important is actually very important for the victims!" "Unnecessary? That cannot be a joke. More than important and necessary!" "If we don't report what happened to us, it will encourage the one who harasses us to further harm others, and, more importantly, they get worse and worse."

Another comment also mentioned the #MeToo Movement: "Based on my understanding of #MeToo I think sharing their stories is good, and it emphasizes women's attitudes, and I'm sure there are many other reasons, but if a woman doesn't speak up for herself and thinks too much of how other people

might criticize her, then who else would speak up for her? She must stand on her own feet and believe in herself and fight for her rights."

Two comments touched upon the cultural environment: "In China, people are not encouraged to speak out the fact that they are sexually harassed, especially when they're involved with foreigners. So those who claimed to have been harassed must have thought about it very seriously. They went through [a] very hard time to make the decision, whether to report or not to. In this case, if it's reported, then it must be very bad. They wouldn't be making a fuss unnecessarily." Another one came to the issue of definition: "Sometimes, it is really a blurred area of sexual harassment, but it hurts us because things like this are not easy to tell others. If this person admits having been sexually harassed, it might mean that they were very close already. But if you're close with someone, maybe from another country, where they don't believe that is sexual harassment, then people will say 'well just a misunderstanding.' But it hurts. I think they should know that it hurts."

Bystander's View

Approximately 10 comments were neutral. One such comment stated that reports of sexual harassment were "different from case to case, because everyone has different understandings to sexual harassment and various extent of tolerance." "Because we have our basic sense of sexual harassment, we should be able to make a judgement." "It depends on a lot of things." Other students implied that sexual harassment might not be worth reporting: "It could cause psychological disorder, if you have to go through that." "They could be mentally disturbed, if not justified." Some believed that it would be too difficult asking for justice: "Nobody can reject the report from any victim but reporting a harassment itself is kind of difficult because harassment usually doesn't leave any evidence." Moreover, several comments sounded rather pessimistic: "Maybe nothing will change." "Because they may be feeling in danger about what happened, but it is a personal feeling which mostly depends on oneself; as someone else, we cannot simply decide if it is unnecessary or not. There is nothing we can do."

Accused's View

Perhaps unsurprisingly, some respondents took a different tone that accused women of "[misunderstanding] men who are trying to take care of them or just to help them. They think men are trying to harass them just because they misunderstand." Some said that "feminist women can feel uncomfortable about others' behaviors and it's totally a personal thing, and there's no such standard to 'help' others judge."

Also, there were a handful of comments that expressed concerns about the accuracy and veracity of accusations: "Perhaps. Although the definition is clear, it depends on our state of minds at that time. Maybe we are drunk, maybe we agreed on consent, but next day the person regrets it. It's hard to say." Another student asked the following question: "What if some people allegedly claim so but with wrong purposes?" And a third student contended that "sometimes it is not even sexual harassment, but people still make a fuss about it, and this makes real sexual harassment incidents diminish in importance."

Supporters of Our Project

We were pleased to see comments expressing support for our project: "It is an important issue to discuss. It will improve our awareness, whatever the result is." "This is a big deal. The survey is great." "This is undoubtedly a serious problem. I'm happy that you're asking us."

This open-ended question elicited 52 answers, and we thoroughly read them at different times to understand students' perspectives and feelings. During the interviews, we tried to probe into their deeper thinking on the topic. Participants were extremely open in expressing their opinions and even told us about

some sources they utilized for information on similar issues. These were undergraduate students in their early years in higher education, so they also shared with us the rather radical differences between their high school environment and university life, "especially this university, with so many foreigners." We placed an emphasis on probing the multicultural setting on the international campus, and they further confided to us about their relationships with peers from other cultures.

DISCUSSION: PURSUING ACTION AND RESEARCH OUTCOMES

To introduce practical, effective, and specific prevention measures to students, we needed to gauge the awareness of sexual harassment on campus, where more than 8,000 students study together, with approximately 10 percent from other countries. Although respondents were exposed to a variety of social media platforms, 27.74 percent were not sure, or did not know exactly, what sexual harassment meant. Comparing the fact that at least 1 in 4 participants admitted that they were unsure about the meaning of sexual harassment with the interview data, we were quite alarmed about the level of awareness. One quote from an interview: "You have no idea how ignorant my friends are, and they even believe that they're supposed not to know much about these things."

An international student posted on social media about the survey: "What's going on in this university? Are people harassing people... sounds scary." We acted, and plan on continuous advocacy, knowing some students might not readily understand. Prevention is never an easy job, exactly because when it is successfully prevented, people would not realize how bad it could be if it happened. At the presentation we made for the university funding committee, we showed two pictures (Figure 1 and Figure 2):

Figure 1

The Local Church Built in 1872

Figure 2
The Local Church On Fire in 2014

It was an extremely painful real-life example. This was the local church built in 1872 for people in the community, it is not only a landmark, but also a place where many people put their memories and hearts. However, in 2014, a fire happened. It was reported that the irreversible damage could have been prevented. The lesson was bitterly powerful, and concerned citizens and officials took preventative actions against future fires. The university funding committee unanimously agreed that similar prevention measures against sexual harassment should be carried out, even if the effort might be misunderstood, or even if some might see them as “scary.”

Institutional support was crucial for the success of this research project. The topic is considered sensitive in Chinese higher education, but it did not hinder the university from fully endorsing the project. The number of books in the university library related to sexual harassment increased from fewer than five to more than 30. An experienced lawyer was invited to give a presentation on the topic. By the end of the presentation, we invited questions from the audience, and there were only a couple of enquires, which indicated that the sensitivity level was, as expected, high. After the whole-campus survey, a series of awareness-raising actions took place before the end of the first semester of the 2018-2019 academic year.

During the following semester, an information booklet and a one-page flyer were distributed across campus. Based on the survey results, nearly 40 percent of respondents would be unsure about reporting - or would not report if they were sexually harassed. To protect their rights and dignity, detailed explanations and clear instructions were provided in the booklet, including cultural and legal matters, possible scenarios in a study environment, and the reporting mechanisms. When asked whether they believed that, in many cases, people who claim to be sexually harassed are making a fuss unnecessarily, slightly less than 55 percent chose “No.” It is important to note that this was a hypothetical question, and it was framed as if it happened to others, not to the respondents themselves. It did make a significant difference if a question was about “yourself” or “your friends.” For example, less than 25 percent of respondents felt that they had been sexually harassed, whereas more than 55 percent understood that their friends had been sexually harassed.

During interview conversations, both female and male participants stated that they never had been made uncomfortable by sexual behaviors - but that their friends had experienced unpleasant interactions.

They were also cautious when talking to researchers and when signing the consent forms. A student said that she only volunteered because she could tell that we were female researchers through our email addresses.

The university gives safe sex lectures regularly, but participants indicated that the specific topic of sexual harassment was "quite interesting" to talk about, particularly at an "official" level. One participant recalled that it was always some international academics who delivered the safe sex seminars because "Chinese teachers just wouldn't talk about it." Another student showed us several social media articles (on their mobile phone) about some cases, trying to make a point: "If something happened in any Chinese university the official discourse would be different in their 'tone' or 'different' meaning they would be trying to cover up. Read these articles and you can sense that." Both of these interviewees expressed that our project had set a different institutional tone, as it was aiming to protect students from unethical and inappropriate behaviors.

Volunteer students struck us as forward-thinking and open-minded, but we wished there were more interviewees. We conducted four formal interviews. While we are grateful that the interviews were open and rich in detail, we are aware that this is a limitation of our study. Future research could conduct similar projects on other multicultural campuses, including international branch campuses, to enhance the transferability of our findings and add to our understanding of sexual harassment in other educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

Potential harm can be avoided through preventative programs, and students need to have greater awareness and protect themselves. Many students were confused about sexual harassment consequences and responsibilities, and social media was misleading. Therefore, guidelines for effective consent and evidence keeping were clearly explained in our booklet. By the end of 2020, when most students got back on campus after a crucial stage of the Covid-19 crisis, another public lecture was delivered covering awareness and prevention of sexual harassment, and this time with a short British video about consent that encourages people to be as polite about sex as they are about tea.

This project was only the beginning in preventing sexual harassment on multi-cultural campuses in and beyond China. In the future, more detailed documents and pertinent training need to be implemented and infused in student life. Should students come from a Chinese high school where dating is almost forbidden, or should they feel vulnerable as they are far away from their home countries, institutions should ensure that students have access to people they can talk to in confidence when they feel confused, people they can report to when they are taken advantage of, and people who can help and support their recovery process when there is harm or damage to their mental health and dignity.

This research project was funded by the university, and the management board has designated two senior members to help establish an anti-harassment policy. With the increasing number of joint programs and international campuses all over the world, we hope that such policies can be implemented through university practices, students are safe, and potential perpetrators are deterred.

We would like to close with two students' chat with us:

Student A: I have a strong sense of self-protection and I know a lot about law.

Student B: What law, Muslim law, Indian law, American or Chinese law? Can they really protect you? Or are you just saying to yourself: "Oh I'm not going to this pub; I'm not doing gym; I'm not even talking to that guy whom I like; but no, no, no, I want to be safe.

Student A: That's not what I meant.
Student B: Then tell me, what do you mean?
Researcher: That's a good start …

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Understanding the Attraction of the Microcampus: A Quantitative Investigation of Students' Motivations to Enroll in Transnational Education

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ABSTRACT

As collaborative transnational education models are increasing in number globally, this study provides a snapshot of motivations for newly enrolled students at microcampuses in China, Cambodia, Jordan, and Indonesia. This research centers on the influence of country choice for students. We apply Nye's (1990, 2004) concept of soft power on student motivations and conduct quantitative analysis to trace enrollment influences. Mainly, in this case we find that U.S. soft power potentially influences students abroad to enroll in dual-degree programs. Other motivations related to cost and U.S. culture are apparent influences. Furthermore, findings provide greater insights into emerging trends in international student mobility. Our study also identifies strategies to sustain transnational education ventures in the face of challenges. Implications of this research are especially of use to university stakeholders, faculty leaders and policymakers who are working to advance U.S education on an international platform.

Keywords: dual-degree programs, international education, partnerships, soft power, transnational education

INTRODUCTION

Recent shifts in the global sphere - such as increasing nationalism (e.g., Brexit, "America First"), the COVID-19 pandemic, and national calls for racial justice - have resulted in a recalibration of international relations and policies that have had an immediate impact on international higher education. Since the onset of COVID-19, universities are grappling with projected declines in international student enrollment and questioning student mobility as "the *sine qua non* of internationalization" (White & Lee, 2020, para. 28). The ongoing proposals to limit international student visas to the United States (U.S.) is a major concern (Anderson, 2020). Additionally, one in four international students in the U.S. are now concerned about their personal safety (Marklein, 2020). Several countries have reported that their students are reconsidering plans to study overseas (Mitchell, 2020; Niazi, 2020); hence, universities are transitioning

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from face-to-face coursework to blended programs that combine online and in-person learning (Segar, 2020).

Even prior to COVID-19, international student enrollment had been in decline. The *Open Doors* survey from the Institute of International Education (IIE) recorded steady declines in new international student enrollment since the 2016-17 academic year. More recently, the 2019/20 data reveals that overall international student enrollment declined by 1.8% in the US and new international student enrollment declined by 0.6% (Institute of International Education, 2020). A survey conducted by NAFSA: Association of International Educators found that these dwindling enrollment numbers could be the consequence of shifting political agendas and warned that these declines could cost the US economy, in particular, to lose billions of dollars (NAFSA, 2020). Similarly, concerns have been expressed that international students are less likely to enroll in US universities due to neo-racist processes, such as visa delays, travel restrictions, and discrimination based on a person's place of origin (Lee, 2019; Royall, 2017).

Given these shifting tides, transnational education (TNE) programs offer much promise as a way to increase student recruitment (Levatino, 2017). For example, the University of Arizona's (UA) internationalization strategies, via the "microcampus" initiative, have increased its transnational network from one campus launched in 2015 in China to six campuses around the world today. The growth of the microcampus initiative stems from students expressing a desire to attain a US degree and to learn from U.S. faculty. From a student perspective, a U.S. university degree's global appeal, even if offered abroad, could be one reason for this growth. In turn, universities that establish dual-degree programs may do so to provide a wider range of educational programs, improve research collaboration efforts, increase internationalization, and raise global prestige (Obst & Kuder, 2012). Institutions also benefit from collaborative TNE programs as they facilitate collaborations with industry that can lead to investments in education through scholarships and pathways to internships (Yao & Garcia, 2018).

As we will detail in this article's conceptual framework, U.S. soft power may especially be at play as students decide to enroll in TNE programs. Nye's (1990, 2004) concept of soft power has been applied to higher education to demonstrate that universities personify - and are physical extensions of - a nation's culture and values. For example, Trilokekar (2010) applied the concept of soft power to explore the function of foreign policy on the internationalization of Canadian education. Other scholars have used the concept to understand the role of university rankings as a tool used by governments and university leaders to reshape higher education systems for greater global reach (Lo, 2011; Stetar, Coppla, Guo, Nabiyeva & Ismailov, 2010). Soft power is thought of as a combination of organic attractions, such as a country's "ideals, tradition, art, and language," and these attractions are described as indicators that can persuade and attract others to a country (Stetar et al., 2010, p. 192). While onshore international student enrollment and (offshore) TNE program enrollment are two distinct internationalization activities (Levatino, 2017), we paid special attention to what motivates students to enroll in collaborative TNE programs such as microcampuses. It is unclear if there have been declines recorded in other TNE models, but given that microcampuses are growing in number, we asked the following question: *What motivates international students to pursue a TNE degree from a US university?*

The microcampus model can be understood as an example of a 'Collaborative TNE Provision' on Knight's (2016) framework of transnational education (TNE), as it is specified as a partnership between a host and a partner university located abroad (p. 38). Given the partnership between two universities, all microcampuses provide dual-degree programs. With several studies warning of the risks involved in

building and investing in TNE models (e.g., Alam, Alam, Chowdhury & Steiner; 2013; Harding & Lammey, 2011; Lanford, 2020), microcampuses offer a viable alternative as they utilize overseas partner university spaces to deliver their degree programs. Previously, researchers of the University of Arizona microcampus research and assessment team reported on two of the initial microcampuses in China and Cambodia (Castiello-Guetiérrez & Ghosh, 2018). This article builds on this past research to offer a deeper understanding of newly enrolled students' motivations to enroll in a microcampus program at two new campuses in Indonesia and Jordan. Little is known about what motivates students abroad to enroll in microcampus dual-degree programs, as opposed to travelling abroad for a degree or enrolling exclusively at a local university. As we embark in this "post-mobility world" (White & Lee, 2020, para. 4), a nuanced understanding of the factors that motivate today's newly enrolled TNE students would provide scholars with valuable details on new student mobility patterns and afford university leaders with information on ways to sustain or increase international student enrollment. We employ Nye's (1990, 2004) concept of soft power to explain the appeal of a U.S.-based TNE program to students. Further, we utilize Knight's (2016) terminology to place microcampuses on the TNE framework as a collaborative provision.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional TNE activities have been traced back to the late nineteenth century (Lanford & Tierney, 2016). Despite the investment risks associated with TNE programs over the past decade, such models are reported to have increased in "scale and scope" around the world (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016; Knight, 2011, p. 35; Obst & Kuder, 2012). The microcampus model is financially differentiated from traditional branch campuses in that the initial investment is kept low, as operational costs are shared between the partners (a collaborative TNE) and there is no need to invest in a brick and motor space (White, 2017). Furthermore, another key feature that differentiates the microcampus model from other dual-degree programs is that students have the ability to spend each semester at a new microcampus location to complete their degrees. As the microcampus network grows, students have the option to graduate having lived in various countries within the microcampus network. The following section will review student and university motivations for dual-degrees and the challenges with TNE programs. We also include literature on US soft power to explain the appeal of a U.S. degree.

Student Motivations

Despite the increasing number of dual-degree programs, only a handful of studies report why students choose to enroll in TNE programs that offer dual-degrees. A well-known advantage of a TNE program is that it increases access to higher education as students can participate in programs while staying in their own country, thus eliminating relocating costs and alternative living expenses (Wilkins, 2011). A study with participants from a TNE program in Malaysia found that a combination of push-pull factors motivates students to enroll in TNE programs (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2017). For instance, the lower cost of studying at home versus overseas is indicated by students as being important when choosing to enroll in a TNE program. The perception of increased employability is yet another motivator (British Council, 2014).

Additionally, student motivations are also influenced by the local political climate, economic outlook, and their families. For instance, students from China are often influenced by their parents to enroll in TNE programs (Bodycott, & Lai, 2012). Fang and Wang (2014) find similar motivations among Chinese students to enroll in a TNE, as local higher education conditions serve as "push" factors. However, their study reveals that Chinese students view enrolling in a TNE as a way to "regain access to reputable domestic higher education institutions" or go overseas for graduate school (p. 484). Their study also finds that, when

choosing to enroll in a TNE program, Chinese students are more concerned with the characteristics of the Chinese university that partners with a foreign institution; they believe that if the local university partner is reputable, then the foreign partner university will also be of similar quality. Other motivations included the overall marketability of the degree program offered by the TNE program, the safety of the country where it was being offered, and the language of instruction provided by the TNE program.

Yao and Garcia (2018) report that students are motivated by English language instruction, their perceptions of a foreign - specifically a German degree - as well as low tuition costs when choosing to enroll in a TNE program. Besides language, Wu (2014) documented that students were frequently motivated to learn from a new culture. When choosing to enroll in a program abroad, "intercultural immersion" was expressed as important in participants' decision-making process as it helped them network (Wu, 2014, p. 431). These examples echo Li, Haupt, and Lee's (2021) findings that, in addition to personal reasons, *macro and meso* level factors, such as labor markets and the program structure itself, influence student motivations.

TNE Challenges

Even though TNE programs are increasing, they often face serious issues of sustainability (Shams, 2016). After a few years in operation, numerous TNE programs have been reported to shut down operations or cancel their programs. Recently, University College of London decided to end its partnership with the Qatar foundation (Redden, 2019). This year, Yale-NUS unexpectedly announced its closure as well (Horowitch, 2021). In such cases, staff have been known to lose their jobs or be relocated to other campuses. Redden (2019) also states that closures are common, as cross-border programs have been known to shut down after a few years in operation. Students and faculty are often left to deal with the consequences of unpredictable closures on their own.

Altbach (2010a, 2010b) warns that TNE programs are not sustainable due to the challenges of hiring home campus professors, regardless of their professoriate rank, to relocate to international sites. The financial costs, as well as personal and professional risks all to relocate to a new country, can be too taxing. Often, such hiring challenges result in inequitable hiring practices that cause the partnership to be undermined (Lanford, 2020). Additionally, TNE programs might offer condensed course schedules since faculty are willing to make the trip for only short durations of time. These challenges can result in poorly designed academic programs and service to students. Furthermore, Oleksiyenko (2018) warns that unhealthy organizational environments can lead to the erosion of academic freedom. Providing the same level of quality despite the distance can be a daunting task in the face of different legal and political systems in the countries of partner universities (Wilkins, 2017).

Employability is yet another challenge for TNE programs. Knight (2011) argues that while dual-degrees may be attractive to students as they perceive them to increase their chance of being employed, each degree needs to be valid. A multi-stakeholder group study reported that employers do not view dual-degree graduates as more marketable and were "less likely to hire dual-degree graduates" (Culver, Puri, Spinelli, DePauw, & Dooley , 2012, p. 58). Another study found that eight out of ten employers specifically seek to hire foreign returnees, as they cite employee cultural-awareness as a highly desirable asset for their companies (Straits Times, 2019). While dual-degrees may be marketed as a promising venture that allows students to obtain two degrees, if the race to quickly accrue credentials does not translate to meaningful jobs, the sustainability of TNE programs comes into question once again.

TNE programs are commonly viewed as providing an internationalization at home experience, but they can offer a migration pathway to the partner country. In a recent study by the British Council (2014), which included data from 300 TNE enrolled students from ten countries; students reported that, by enrolling in TNE programs, their communication and analytical skills improved and their chance of employment increased. However, the study also found some evidence that enrolling in TNE programs can lead to brain-drain as the best and brightest leave their home countries for further studies at either the foreign institution or in other nations. While we currently lack global TNE data to fully understand the phenomenon of brain drain, the British Council's report cites one example of a university sending 350 students abroad and only 50 (14%) students returning, with most students choosing international contexts for work and further study.

To enhance their longevity, TNE ventures must address these challenges, especially to the needs of students. To gain a nuanced understanding of student motivation, we first define and place the microcampus initiative within the transnational education framework. Next, we apply the concept of soft power on international higher education to understand the appeal of TNE programs.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

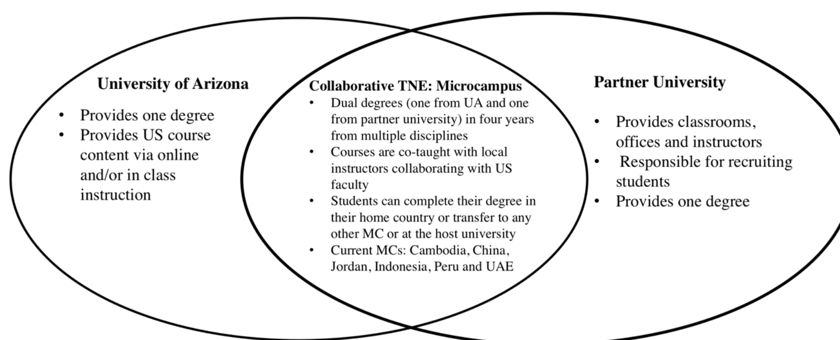
Placing Microcampuses within the Transnational Education Framework

We anchor the contributions of this research using two concepts. First, as Obst and Kuder (2012) have pointed out, definitions of TNE programs differ between institutions, and given that the microcampus initiative is new, we use Knight's (2016) Transnational Education Framework to distinguish and define this type of TNE. Second, we apply Knight's (2016) use of the terminology TNE, as opposed to cross-border education, to describe microcampuses as this model places an emphasis on the "movement of academic programs and providers between countries," as opposed to the movement of students (p. 36). Today, TNE has gained its meaning and popularity through everyday use—not through the conceptual foundation of the term.

Knight's (2016) framework distinguishes between collaborative and independent TNE provisions, as she specifies that independent TNEs are branch campuses or distance education programs. Collaborative TNEs, in turn, include joint/multiple degree programs, twinning programs, or locally supported distance programs where there is collaboration between institutions. Collaboration can be found in the provision of space, student services, and curriculum. From this framework, we identify the microcampus model as a collaborative TNE provision as it is a partnership between a host and a partner university that is located abroad. We offer this figure to further illustrate the microcampus model (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

A Collaborative TNW Between The University Of Arizona And A Partner University



Note: This figure illustrates this type of TNE provision, a collaborative TNE.

Our next objective is to identify student motivations for enrolling in a microcampus. Specifically, we want to understand the attraction of a U.S. TNE provision for students around the world. To help conceptualize our findings, we borrow and expand upon Nye's (1990, 2004) concept of soft power for the field of international higher education. Nye (2005) defined soft power as the "attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals and foreign and domestic policies" (p. 11-12). Other scholars, such as Lo (2011), point out that Nye's concept of soft power places an emphasis on "co-opting people rather than coercing them" (p. 213). Similarly, Knight (2014) points out that the concept has been interpreted by some as neo-colonizing. Soft power is a particularly important influence when it comes to U.S. higher education (Lee, 2014). While students have several choices before enrolling in an educational program, certain factors seem to attract or motivate them more over others. Through this study's use of Nye's (1990, 2004) concept of soft power, we trace the influence of soft power on student motivations to study in a microcampus.

The Microcampus Model

A microcampus is located at the campus of a partner institution that is located outside the US. As of Fall 2019, microcampuses provide dual-degrees (with the University of Arizona) out of Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Jordan, Peru, and the United Arab Emirates. In the near future, additional microcampuses are set to launch in Hanoi, Mauritius, Manila and Iraq. Currently, students in China are enrolled in Law degrees. The Indonesia microcampus provides undergraduate mechanical and/or industrial engineering degrees. Jordanian students are enrolled in a Master of Science in engineering management, and Cambodian students are enrolled in civil engineering degree program. Microcampus students graduate with two degrees: one from the partner university and the other from the University of Arizona (White, 2017).

Aside from classroom spaces and offices for faculty and staff, each campus provides students with study areas, campus library, and online access to the host university's library materials. Tuition structures differ by location. For example, tuition for the first half of the program is priced by the partner institution, and this revenue is collected by the partner university. When students begin the second half of their dual-degree program, they pay a premium on their tuition as they begin taking UA classes that are co-taught by a local instructor and a UA professor - or by a UA faculty member based in the host country. This tuition is then split equally between the partner institutions. Initial costs are low since there is no need for investing in building spaces for students.

As the microcampus model grows, one unique feature is that it would showcase a new type of student mobility, as students can move between campuses without being in the same country throughout their degree. This initiative has also paved the way for the University of Arizona to expand its international network. In 2020, as a response to COVID-19 imposed restrictions on student visas and international travel, the university announced the launch of *UA Global Campus* which will provide students opportunities to study across five continents in 34 countries (University of Arizona Global, 2020).

Soft Power and International Higher Education

Soft power impacts global outcomes and international activities. It is especially evident in international higher education. Nye (2004), who coined the term, suggests that university leaders' efforts to internationalize an institution are in fact promoting U.S. soft power. He defines soft power as a combination of a country's cultural, political and foreign policies that have the power to influence and attract others. For instance, if a nation's cultural norms can have a broad ranging appeal to others, soft power is generated. Soft power is also enhanced when a country's political values emphasize democracy

and its foreign policy promotes human rights. A country's soft power values also need to be attractive to other countries' citizens. Another dimension of foreign policy enhancing or impacting soft power is via the current digital revolution. McClory and Harvey (2016) reported that world leaders and diplomats now maintain an online presence, and their communications via these major social media platforms impact foreign diplomacy and soft power. While most of the literature on soft power by these political science scholars points to the universal appeal of a country's policies and politics, Stokes (2017) highlights that, for some nations, U.S. soft power appeal is enhanced through cultural exports, such as music, film, and television programs.

Scholars such as Nye have argued that the U.S. has seen a decline in soft power (Nye, 2004, 2005). *The Soft Power 30 Study* reported a further decline in soft power due to a rise in nationalist policies and an overall fragile state of global alliances (McClory, 2019). The removal of the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement, the U.S. - China trade war, government shutdowns, and immigration bans and restrictions have each contributed to the decline of U.S. soft power and given rise to more coercive forms of power (McClory, 2019; Nye, 2004). This trend, coupled with challenges caused by COVID-19, indicates that the future of U.S. international higher education activities may be grim. However, in the meantime, as Mitchell (2020) stated at the recent *International Higher Education Forum*, TNE initiatives could offer universities some semblance of an alternative as the academic world plans its recovery. We argue that the soft power concept is particularly important during these unprecedented times to predict future performance of TNE programs.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

To understand newly enrolled student motivations across four microcampuses, this study utilizes quantitative analysis to answer the following research questions:

1. What motivates students to participate in a microcampus dual-degree program? Are there differences by degree and location?
2. What are the future academic and career plans of students who enroll in a microcampus dual-degree program?

Data Collection and Sample

The students surveyed in this study were all newly enrolled in a microcampus dual-degree program and between the ages of 17-22 years. We administered online surveys via Qualtrics to students in the China, Cambodia, Indonesia and Jordan campuses. The survey was adapted from a previous study by Lee et al. (2017) on student mobility and motivations. The survey was modified and piloted with microcampus administrators and students. Using feedback from the pilot, we tailored the survey to ask questions about motivations for enrolling in the dual-degree program and students' future plans.

A total of 60 respondents from four microcampus locations are included in this study. A total of 22 (19%) students from China, 12 (13%) students from Indonesia, 10 (100%) from Cambodia, and 16 (84%) students from Jordan completed the survey. A majority of participants from Indonesia (62%), Cambodia (63%) and Jordan (75%) are male. From China, 6 out of 22 participants declined to provide gender information. Out of those who responded to the gender question, female participants accounted for (50%) from China. (Note: All percentages correspond to participation rates.)

Data Analysis

In addition to descriptive statistical analysis (means, standard deviation, range) to understand the dimensionality of potential constructs from the items in our survey, we conducted an Explanatory Factor

Analysis (EFA). The overall intention of the EFA analysis is to identify underlying factors that help us to make better sense of potential reasons that contribute to the motivation of students to enroll in collaborative TNE programs. In the past, scholars have documented that students who pursue a foreign degree do so to either experience a different culture, learn English, or pave the way to better career options (Pyvis & Chapman, 2007; Wilkins, Balakrishnan, & Huisman, 2012; Wu, 2014; Yao & Garcia, 2018). Through an EFA, this study would also contribute to understanding the current reasons students from these four countries are motivated to enroll in collaborative TNE programs.

Additionally, the EFA method allowed us to identify the latent variables factor structure of the scale, remove items that did not fit the resulting factor structure, and measure the validity and reliability of the motivation scale. Afterwards, we performed a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to measure if there are differences between countries in students' motivation to enroll in their respective microcampus programs. This additional step provides a quantifiable method of understanding how students from different countries form their decisions to enroll in a collaborative TNE.

FINDINGS

Overview

The findings confirm through EFA that U.S. soft power factors play a major role in motivating students to enroll in microcampus dual-degree programs.[1] In particular, we find that a degree from a U.S. university and deeper immersion in U.S. culture are most appealing to students. Our findings echo that of Wu (2014), in that our study's TNE students are motivated by intercultural immersion when they choose to enroll. Our data also show that students, despite their nationality, were motivated to learn from U.S. faculty and to learn more about American culture. These findings resemble Stetar et al., (2010) as they reiterate ways in which U.S. soft power can be used as a strategy to attract students and advance an institution's global reach.

Similar to Yao and Garcia (2018), we also find the cost of tuition to be a motivator for students. The overall economic advantage of the microcampus tuition rates allows students to stay in their home country yet pursue a degree from a U.S. institution. In analyzing the data using EFA, we provide further survey item details and quantitative results to understand the motivations of newly enrolled students.

EFA Results

Sixteen items encompassing a range of motivations that encourage students to participate in a dual-degree program were administered to newly enrolled students at four microcampus sites. We conducted a scree plot test (See Figure 2) and found that a four-factor structure (Figure 3) of the motivation scale was the best structure to describe these data. We label the four factors as: US Education, Cost, Language Skills, and American Culture. Two items that did not fit the four-factor model were dropped to improve the overall factor structure. For our analysis, we consider the following factors to fall under the US Soft Power framework*: US Education, Language Skills and American Culture*.

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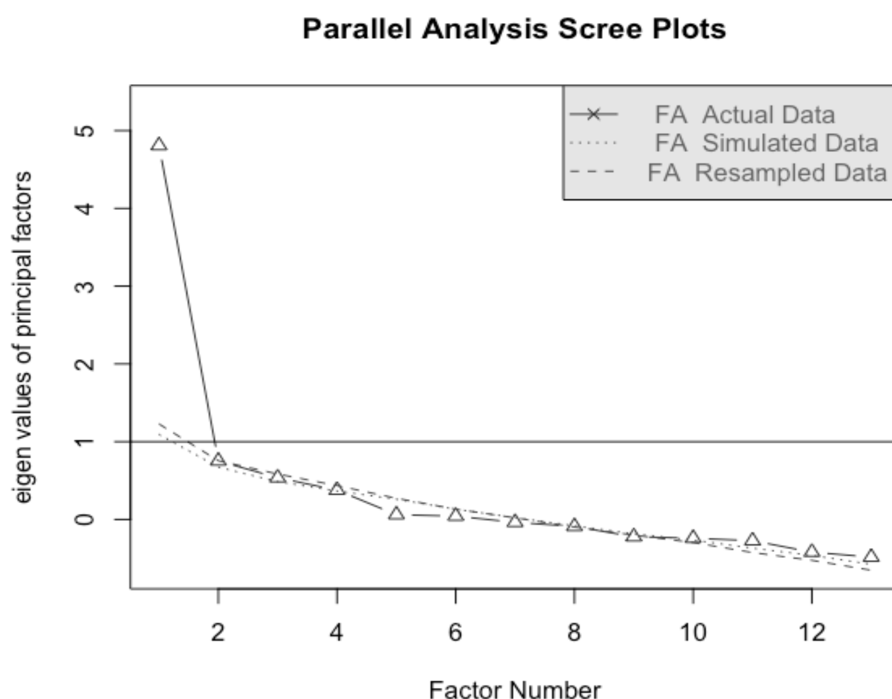
[1] The results of this study only represent the motivations of students enrolled in the University of Arizona (UA) microcampus network. To date, Arizona is the leading institution behind microcampus initiatives. While our findings corroborate the results of previous studies (e.g., Stetar et al., 2010; Wu, 2014), we emphasize that our findings do not necessarily generalize to the motivations of other students who are enrolled in TNE programs from the U.S. or any other country.

Figure 2

Scree Plot Test



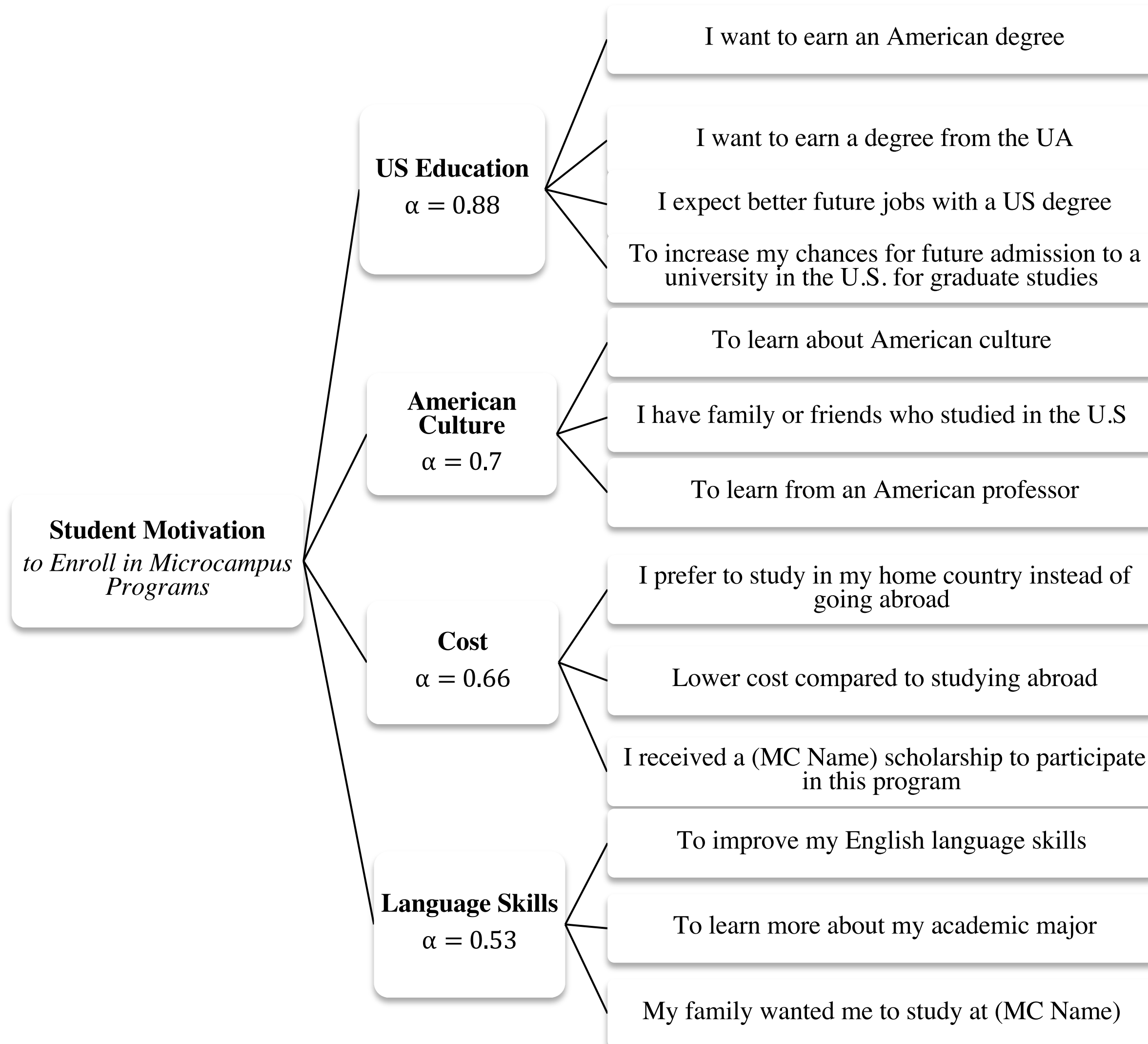
We used DeVellis's (2003) internal consistency standards to interpret our EFA results. DeVellis categorizes internal consistency as follows: an internal consistency number of above .90 would indicate that the scale can be shortened, 0.8 to .90 is very good, .70 to .80 is respectable, .65 to .70 is minimally acceptable, and .60 to .64 is undesirable. All numbers < .60 are unacceptable.

After Varimax rotation, the EFA results show that a four factor-structure of the motivation scale explained 56.8% of the variance in the pattern of relationships among the items. The US Education factor alone explained 20.7% of the variance. The Cost factor accounts for 13% of variance, American Culture accounts for 8.5% variance, and the Language Skills factor accounts for a further 14.6% of variance. Results show a Tucker Lewis Index of factoring reliability of 0.98. This is an acceptable value, as it is above 0.9.

The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability value for the US Education factor had the highest reliability at 0.88 (Very Good). The items included in U.S. Education factor include items that ask about the motivations to gain a degree specifically from the U.S. Items labeled under the second factor of American culture have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 (Respectable). This second factor has items that relate to US life and culture. The third factor, Cost, which relates to items concerning the cost of tuition and scholarship, has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.66 (Minimally Acceptable). The final factor, Language Skills, which includes items concerning students' desire to learn English, has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.53 (Unacceptable).

Figure 3

Four Factor Structure



To further investigate the differences in motivation between countries, we conducted a one-way between groups MANOVA (Figure 4) to understand the differences in motivations between newly enrolled students from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, and Jordan. Considering the small sample size of this study, we used Pillai's trace as the test statistic in the MANOVA. It appears that there is a statistical significance between groups on at least one factor, as shown by Pillai's trace statistic $V^{(s)}$ =1.292, p =.001, F=2.213.

Figure 4

One-Way Between Groups MANOVA Results

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	0.982	149.169	13	36	0	0.982
	Wilks' Lambda	0.018	149.169	13	36	0	0.982
	Hotelling's Trace	53.866	149.169	13	36	0	0.982
	Roy's Largest Root	53.866	149.169	13	36	0	0.982
University	Pillai's Trace	1.292	2.213	39	114	0.001	0.431
	Wilks' Lambda	0.173	2.221	39	107	0.001	0.442
	Hotelling's Trace	2.488	2.212	39	104	0.001	0.453
	Roy's Largest Root	1.284	3.752	13	38	0.001	0.562

Next, from the MANOVA results, we performed post-hoc analysis of one-way ANOVAS. For the U.S. Education factor, MANOVA Least Significant Difference (LSD) comparisons showed that newly enrolled students in China place less of an emphasis on valuing U.S. Education than students from Jordan, Indonesia, and Cambodia. Microcampus students from China were also least motivated to enroll by the Cost factor. Students from Jordan were least motivated by the Language Skills factor. Furthermore, students from Indonesia were most motivated to enroll in the microcampus program to improve their English language skills and learn more about their major. While students are not required to be in the U.S. at any time during their dual-degree at a microcampus, this finding could suggest that they are motivated by the potential impact of receiving an education that is delivered partly by U.S. faculty through English instruction. The importance placed on language and on learning about their major further suggests that students weigh the impact a microcampus experience would have on their future career prospects. No differences were found across the nationalities for the American Culture factor. Cambodian students were the most motivated by the Cost factor, but this finding was not statistically significant given the small sample size.

Next, we examined mean values (Table 1) for the motivation items by country to gather nuanced information for each item by country. In examining mean values, we deviate slightly from the MANOVA results as we understand how each item in the scale was rated, as opposed to analyzing whole factors from EFA results. By doing so, we developed a fine-grained understanding of how an item fares by country. For instance, do students from a specific country rate (high/low) that they want to "increase their chances for future admission to a university in the U.S. for graduate studies" by enrolling in a collaborative TNE program? An analysis of the itemized means provides tangible implications for university leaders to improve their TNE ventures.

Table 1

Student Motivations For Enrolling In A Dual-Degree Program

Motivation Items	Cambodia	Indonesia	Jordan	China	All Students	
I want to earn an American degree	3.67(0.71)[1]	3.58 (0.51)	3.81 (0.4)	2.82 (1.01)	3.43 (0.81)	**

I want to earn a degree from the UA	3.44 (0.73)	3.58 (0.51)	3.25 (0.68)	2.53 (1.01)	3.13 (0.87)	**
I expect better future jobs with a US degree	3.89 (0.33)	3.75 (0.45)	3.69 (0.48)	2.94 (0.97)	3.5 (0.75)	**
To learn from an American professor	3.67 (0.5)	3.17 (1.03)	3.06 (0.85)	3 (1)	3.17 (0.91)	
To improve my English language skills	3.67 (0.5)	3.83 (0.39)	3.19 (0.83)	3.28 (0.96)	3.44 (0.79)	
To learn more about my academic major	3.44 (0.73)	3.58 (0.67)	3 (0.82)	3.12 (1.05)	3.24 (0.87)	
To increase my chances for future admission to a university in the US for graduate studies	3.56 (1.01)	3.58 (0.51)	3.31 (0.87)	2.71 (1.1)	3.22 (0.96)	*
To increase my chances for future admission to a local university for graduate studies	3.11 (1.17)	3.25 (0.62)	2.81 (0.91)	2.29 (1.05)	2.8 (1)	*
I have family or friends who studied in the US	2.78 (1.39)	1.83 (1.11)	2.44 (1.21)	1.94 (1.14)	2.2 (1.22)	
I prefer to study in my home country instead of going abroad	2.78 (1.3)	1.92 (0.9)	2.63 (1.09)	2.12 (0.99)	2.33 (1.08)	
Lower cost compared to studying abroad	3.67 (0.71)	2.83 (0.94)	3.19 (0.98)	2.71 (0.99)	3.04 (0.97)	
I received a university scholarship to participate in this program	2.11 (1.45)	2.92 (1.44)	2.53 (1.25)	1.41 (0.8)	2.19 (1.32)	*

I received a private loan to participate in this program	2.33 (1.58)	2.42 (1.38)	1.25 (0.68)	1.41 (0.8)	1.74 (1.17)	*
My family wanted me to study at [University name]	3.11 (1.17)	2.58 (0.9)	1.5 (0.89)	2.12 (1.27)	2.2 (1.19)	**
To learn about American culture	2.78 (1.09)	2.92 (1)	2.63 (0.89)	2.88 (1.02)	2.79 (0.97)	
Other	2.5 (1.73)	2.5 (2.12)	NA	NA	2.63 (1.51)	
N	10	12	16	22	60	

*Note*s: Survey scale: 1= Not true/Not important to 4 = Most true/ Important; [1]standard deviation in parenthesis next to means; difference between country level groups is significant at the *0.1, **0.05, ***0.001 level

One similarity is that the majority of students from all countries believe that they will attain a better job in the future with a degree from a U.S. institution. However, such a belief is still not the top motivator for students in Jordan and China. Students in China reported that the top reason for wanting to enroll in a dual-degree program is to improve their English language skills. Similar to findings from other studies (Wilkins, Balakrishnan, Huisman, 2012; Yao & Garcia, 2018), the improvement of English language skills remains to be a key indicator of Chinese students' motivation to enroll in a U.S. degree. For the same question, students from Jordan reported that their top motivation is that they want to earn a U.S. degree.

Findings also revealed that the provision of scholarships from the Indonesian partner university is an important factor, leading students to enroll in their dual-degree program. Interestingly, apart from Chinese students, Jordanian, Indonesian, and Cambodian respondents report that enrolling in a dual-degree program with the microcampus would increase their chances for graduate admission to a university in the U.S. The lower costs of studying at a microcampus is most attractive to Jordanian and Cambodian respondents. Students from Jordan are enrolled in graduate degrees, whereas students at all other sites are enrolled in undergraduate degrees. Our finding that the cost of tuition is a key influence in graduate students choosing to enroll in microcampuses is similar to Yao and Garcia's (2018) finding where Vietnamese graduate students were found to be motivated by the cost of German education via a collaborative TNE program.

Our study's limitations included a small sample size from each of the countries. Since our sample consisted of newly enrolled students, it was challenging to recruit students via our university email since students were still getting acquainted with the various online university platforms at the time of this study. Another missing piece of information is that we do not know the reasons that deter students from enrolling in microcampus programs. In the future, it would be worth conducting parallel studies that include interviews with students enrolled in other similar, competing programs to further understand their enrollment decisions. Despite these limitations, we believe this is the first study that compares motivations of newly enrolled students across multiple countries to enroll in collaborative TNE programs. The factors identified by this study have also been corroborated by previous similar studies (Culver et al., 2012; Wilkins et al., 2012; Yao & Garcia, 2018).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Immediately deducible from our findings is that newly enrolled students across microcampuses are most motivated by the U.S. as the country of choice to pursue a degree. This finding potentially highlights an important distinction between collaborative TNE students and international students in their motivations to enroll in U.S. education. Over the past decade, U.S. education has become “a harder sell” (Marklein, 2011), and the continued drop since 2016 in international student enrollment further suggests a decline in the appeal of U.S. education (Fisher, 2019). Nevertheless, our findings indicate that when U.S. education is offered via a collaborative TNE provision, students are motivated to enroll. Motivations differ between students from each country. However, our MANOVA results indicate that students from China, when compared with the other countries’ participants, were least motivated by the U.S. Education items. The size of China’s education market could be one major reason why students are more motivated by other factors. Travel restrictions and political tensions due to the Trump administration’s xenophobic rhetoric could also be another factor that could have influence on this finding. It could be that students were more motivated to enroll at the Chinese partner university because of its prestige, or *985* status. For the dual-degree program, the Gao Kao score requirement was lower compared with the score requirement for other programs at the university. This meant that for some students with lower Gao Kao scores enrolling in the dual-degree program made it possible to be admitted into the Chinese partner university (Fang & Wang, 2014). This implies that there is not “a one size for all” approach when building TNE programs. The sustainability of these programs can perhaps be maintained if leaders organizing TNE programs are adaptable to changing political and sociocultural events.

Secondly, findings demonstrate that participants, overall, are influenced by factors that fall under the U.S. soft power framework. While domestic politics and immigration policies may have resulted in a decline in U.S. international education enrollment, our results indicate that a collaborative TNE provision may provide students with an alternative - one where they can remain at home, but still earn a U.S. degree and gain English language skills. Scholars have pointed out that soft power prospers when the “nation projecting it is well-respected on an international scale” (Stetar el al., 2010, p. 192). In the case of the U.S., the global reputation of the country’s higher education system seems to be a particular draw. However, challenges remain. Along with the ramifications of COVID-19 (such as halted travel and deglobalization) (Irwin, 2020), the U.S. concurrently bears the brunt of two additional multifaceted challenges. First, the nation potentially faces a looming economic recession (World Bank, 2020). Second, the recent national reckoning of systemic racism has resulted in unrest across several states. These intricately layered complexities can, if not remedied soon, undermine U.S. soft power as a civil society is crucial to enhancing soft power (Nye, 2008).

Our study provides a clear indication that students value U.S. education and the acquisition of a degree from a U.S. institution (in this case, a research-intensive public university). U.S. institutions with similar characteristics might be encouraged to offer TNE programs. An unsurprising, yet important, finding is that the cost of programs matter to students and their families. For TNE programs, it is more so a concern, as students often struggle with the choice of either acquiring a degree from their local education systems (which would result in significantly lower tuition costs) or taking on additional debt by pursuing foreign degrees. Given that the majority (above 60%) of our study participants, regardless of country, represent middle class and low-income groups, the cost of tuition needs to consistently remain affordable. Competitive tuition rates and scholarships are important, especially considering the warnings of an

impending global recession during this decade (UNCTAD, 2019). Given that the international monetary fund (IMF) reported a rise in global debt, particularly in low-income developing countries (Mbaye & Badia, 2019), higher education policymakers and university leaders should factor in global economic performance as they plan TNE programs or the expansion of existing programs. Ultimately, soft power is not fixed; it is mediated by social and political factors, including racial protests, public health management, and geopolitical relations. Given the documented declines in U.S. soft power (McClory, 2019; Nye, 2005) as we approach a post-COVID world, we recommend studying the concept of soft power through similar TNE programs to monitor changes to international student motivations to enroll in dual degrees.

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Examining Neocolonialism in International Branch Campuses in China: A Case Study of Mimicry

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ABSTRACT

The number of International Branch Campuses (IBCs) is increasing at a striking rate in Global South nations; however, structures that privilege colonizing countries arguably continue. On one hand, IBCs are considered by some scholars as a neocolonial expansion. On the other hand, IBCs are welcomed by many Global South shareholders since IBCs are considered a new model of world-class education that can contribute to local contexts. Nevertheless, Western knowledges and values can also be difficult to resonate with the receiving countries due to different social and political environments. In this paper, I first argue that a neocolonial attitude is embedded in the nature of Western IBCs in China through the framework of mimicry and resistance. Then, I raise questions concerning how shareholders in China legitimize IBCs as a supplementary form of Chinese higher education. Finally, I argue that IBCs risk the reproduction and reinforcement of coloniality and Western privilege in global contexts.

Keywords: international branch campuses, mimicry, neocolonialism, world-class universities

INTRODUCTION

The number of International Branch Campuses (IBCs) offered by universities from the West has dramatically increased during the past two decades. The number of IBCs expanded from 18 in 2002 to 82 in 2006 and doubled to 162 in 2009 (Garrett, 2002; Becker, 2009; Verbik & Merkley, 2006). As of 2017, there are 249 operating IBCs, and the number is still expanding steadily (Altbach, 2010; Escriva-Beltran, Muñoz-de-Prat & Villó, 2019, Verbik, 2017). Although there are a few IBCs set up by non-Western universities, such as China's Xiamen University in Malaysia, most IBCs are offered by Western universities from the US, the UK, Australia, and various nations in the European Union (Lanford & Tierney, 2016).

Statistics show that many Asian countries are the most popular and welcoming receiving territories for international branch campuses (OBHE/C-BERT, 2016). The phenomenon of the emergence of hundreds of Western international branch campuses in Asian countries in a short period can be partially attributed to the rise of neoliberalism and globalization. Globalization plays a significant role in the internationalization of higher education, and IBCs are therefore the products of geopolitical and economic changes (Sidhu &

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Christie, 2014). Slaughter (2014)'s theory of academic capitalism analyzes the discourse of internationalization of higher education. According to academic capitalism, “the rise of neoliberalism [create] many openings for entrepreneurial educational and scientific endeavors” and “move universities toward markets” (p. 19). Government funding for higher education in Western countries started to decrease in the 1990s and accelerated after the 2008 financial crisis; specifically, state funding to public higher education institutions in the U.S. declined from 31% of public college and university revenues in 2008 to 23% in 2013 (Sav, 2016). The significant decline of government funding pushed Western universities to seek additional funding from Asia, the Middle East, and other Global South regions (Siltaoja et al., 2019). However, beyond funding considerations, some researchers (e.g., Hou, Hill, Chen, & Tsai, 2018; Nguyen, Elliott, & Pilot, 2009; Siltaoja et al., 2019) questioned the impact of IBCs in Asian contexts, noting that the establishment of international branch campuses in former colonial lands create neocolonial power relations and reproduce Eurocentric cultural hegemony (Bhabha 2004; Lo, 2011; Nguyen, Elliott, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2009).

This article endeavors to specifically examine international branch campuses in China through a neocolonial theoretical lens. The case of the University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) has been studied through the frameworks of neocolonialism, mimicry, and coloniality, as well as the discourse of “world-class” higher education. This article first enables an understanding of how neocolonialism is embedded in the practice of IBCs in China. Then, it interrogates 1) why IBCs, to some extent, have become a more desirable and prestigious option for students than many other Chinese universities; 2) the dynamic power relations among players within IBCs; and 3) how relevant shareholders include officials, educators, and students in China legitimize and resist neocolonial practices in IBCs.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

Neocolonialism

I begin by clarifying the concept of neocolonialism that I draw on. According to Nkrumah (1969), "[t]he essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. Its economic system and political policy is directed from outside" (p. ix). Despite the reality of Eurocentric power relations, many countries in the Global South are independent and have complete sovereignty of their territories and economies while politics and culture are deeply influenced by the West. Nkurmah (1969) further contended that “[t]he result of neo-colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world” (p. x). As such, neocolonialism can, therefore, be situated in the field of education. As described by Altbach (1971), neocolonialism “is partly a planned policy of advanced nations to maintain their influence in developing countries” (p. 237). In the field of education, neocolonialism can be through multiple practices: using the foreign model of administrative structures to manage a school; adopting Western pedagogy and curriculum; using English or other languages of the former colonial power as the medium of instruction; and/or seeking foreign aid and technical assistance. Nguyen et al. (2009) noted that the establishment of IBCs can probably be seen as the practice of neocolonialism in the education field in the Global South countries. Although certain values that are not neocolonial in nature, such as equity and diversity, might be worth pursuing in the Global South contexts, the blind importation of Western administrative structures and pedagogies in a foreign context is unlikely to be successful. Moreover, duplication of Western education would possibly have a substantial negative effect on the host country, as some of the imported norms and values could weaken its cultural influence and research capacity (Nguyen

et al., 2009). From a neocolonial perspective, the operations of IBC campuses with Western models of administration and instruction could be viewed as a tactic to raise extra funding for Western institutions and maintain the influence of Western culture. IBCs as simple duplications of Western institutions would also be considered a neocolonial practice.

Mimicry and Resistance

The concepts of *mimicry* and *resistance* are raised by postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha (2004) and have recently been adopted by Siltaoja, Juusola, and Kivijärvi (2019) to analyze IBCs in the United Arab Emirates. The authors specifically employed both concepts "to understand how IBCs reproduce the fantasy of being world-class operators and how the onsite Western faculty members identify with or resist this world-class fantasy" (p. 76). Mimicry, according to Siltaoja et al. (2019), offers a useful theoretical approach to study the complexities of construction and destruction, negotiating identities, and resistance to the colonialism of neo-colonization (p. 78). I draw on Siltaoja et al.'s approach to analyze neocolonialism embedded at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China in this article to examine its world-class assumptions and the negotiation and resistance of the practice of neocolonialism within UNNC.

I begin by introducing three forms of mimicry: cynical mimicry, bounded mimicry, and failed mimicry. According to Siltaoja et al. (2019), cynical mimicry means that "knowledge from the West [that] is transferred to IBCs [is] contested but nonetheless performed" (p. 85). In other words, IBCs import faculty members, textbooks, and courses from the West without considering whether the contexts fit the needs of local students and the environment. Bounded mimicry indicates power relations between the West and the Other. Foreign faculty members are regarded as the carriers of Western practices, yet Westerners are also considered the Other as they constitute a threat from the perspective of administrators representing the host country. As such, the local management is, to some extent, in opposition to Westerners as a form of resistance to the influence of neocolonialism on their students (Siltaja et al., 2019). The concept of failed mimicry contends that the introduction of IBCs to local contexts for the purposes of developing a "world-class" education is destined to be unsuccessful, as IBCs can never become true duplications of their home universities. Even though students at IBCs are taking English-language courses generally developed by Western faculty members, the experience cannot ostensibly be the same partially because students at the main campus usually have more programs, more elective courses, and more library resources; nevertheless, it is also arguable that the smaller campuses provide greater opportunities for interaction with academic staff and other students. Inherently, international branch campuses located in other countries that have completely different geopolitical and cultural backgrounds, as well as different educational policies and student populations, cannot replicate the main campuses in the Western contexts. Therefore, an analysis through the lens of failed mimicry might show that, although main campuses at home countries portray themselves as world-class due to their high rankings and Western curricula, IBCs as "colonies" fail to replicate the entire features of the original campuses (Siltaja et al., 2019).

Coloniality

An integration of the theory of coloniality of power by Quijano (2007) is important to understand why China and some of the other countries in the Global South welcome international branch campuses that offer Western curricula and ideologies. Coloniality of power is an unbalanced power relationship that proposes the notion that other cultures, epistemologies, and races are inferior to the West (Quijano, 2007). In the Asian context, though, Quijano argues that "the high cultures could never be destroyed…they were nevertheless placed in a subordinate relation not only in the European view but also in the eyes of their own

bearers" (p. 170). Totality in knowledge is another notion derived from the coloniality of power. As argued by Quijano, the West believes it is the ideal model for the rest of the world. Additionally, the West succeeded in imposing this imagination, and the consumption of the supremacy of Western culture is welcomed by many other cultures that once had been colonized (Quijano, 2007). As stated by Quijano, "European culture was made seductive and became a universal cultural model" (p. 169), and the fantasy that the coloniality of power created is thus believed by many people from the Global South. Hence, nations from the Global South created a welcoming environment for international branch campuses that could recruit local students, although the cost of studying in IBCs is often lower than studying at the main campuses in the West, the tuition fee in IBCs are usually much higher compared with local institutions (Wilkins et al., 2012).

This article endeavors to link the analytical frameworks of neocolonialism, mimicry, and coloniality with the context of China. This approach is guided by three questions: How is neocolonialism embedded in the practices at IBCs in China? Why have IBCs become more desirable and prestigious institutions than many other Chinese universities? And how do China's higher education policies both legitimize and resist neocolonial practices from the West at IBCs? I will introduce the context of Chinese higher education and the case of UNNC in the following sections. After explaining those contexts, I will describe my findings and conclude with a final discussion.

THE CONTEXT OF CHINESE HIGHER EDUCATION

Since the late Qing dynasty and the establishment of the first modern university in the 1890s, knowledge from the West had been noted as the primary way to save China and make the nation strong again (Yang, 2014). Chinese higher education is hugely influenced and reformed by higher education practices in Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Particularly, I would suggest that Tsinghua University is the first Chinese university that experienced neocolonialism from the West because Tsinghua was partially funded by the "Gengzi Indemnity" (also known as "Boxer Indemnity") – payments made by China approved by the U.S. for educational use, specifically, to send a maximum of 400 students to the U.S. (King, 2006). As such, the "Gengzi Indemnity" functioned first as a preparatory school for students who were sent by the government to study in the United States.[1] With the proposal and promotion of the "Four Modernizations Policy," Chinese higher education was reformed so it could emerge on a more international stage (Yang, 2014), particularly after China's economic opening in the 1980s (Zha et al., 2019). After the Cold War, Chinese universities started to learn and adapt mostly from the higher education system in the United States (Yang, 2018).

To promote the internationalization of Chinese higher education, more Chinese students and scholars traveled abroad to study; Chinese universities integrated foreign textbooks and adopted English as a supplementary medium of instruction; and the Chinese government encouraged foreign institutions to partner with local universities or programs (Yang, 2014; Zha et al., 2019). Chinese universities also attracted more international students by offering government scholarships and developing English-taught classes (Zha et al, 2019). However, Zha et al. (2019) contend that the ways Chinese higher education promotes its internationalization are framed with a Western neocolonial imaginary without stressing epistemic differences (Zha et al., 2019). This critique argues that the internationalization of Chinese higher education is a Westernization of its higher education system and unintentionally devalues Chinese

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[1] See https://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/en/About/History.htm

epistemologies. Mimicking Western institutions alone without merging the favorable aspects from both Western and Chinese higher education foundations would not make Chinese universities more competitive in the era of globalization; on the other hand, it promotes Western higher education and reproduces Eurocentric cultural hegemony. A critique of international branch campuses in China as the product of the internationalization of higher education is rooted in similar issues.

International branch campuses, which are called Sino-foreign joint universities in China, have been regarded as supplementary in the process of the internationalization of Chinese higher education. Chinese government and universities have imported Western educational resources to encourage international exchange with - and within - Chinese universities and use foreign qualifications to attract both domestic students who can afford the high cost of tuition and international students who want to study in China and earn Western degrees without the requirement of Chinese language proficiency (Yang, 2014). According to Escriva-Beltran, Muñoz-de-Prat, and Villó (2019), the number of IBCs of China has surpassed the United Arab Emirates, and China has become the top host country of IBCs during the past five years because of considerable financial and political support from the Chinese government. As of January 2017, the total number of IBCs in China had increased to 32 (Escriva-Beltran et al, 2019). On the other hand, China is also exporting its own IBCs to other countries, especially countries located in Southeast Asia and Central Asia that embrace the "One Belt, One Road" initiative (e.g., Xiamen University Malaysia; Soochow University in Laos).

THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM NINGBO CHINA

Higher education in China used to be disengaged from the rest of the world and strongly influenced by the Soviet model before China's "reform and opening-up" policy in 1978 (Ennew & Yang, 2009). Concurrent with globalization and internationalization in higher education, however, China has been striving to transform its universities into so-called "world-class" universities which concentrate on Anglo-Saxon criteria (Deem et al., 2008). Rather than reforming its own universities, the establishment of IBCs as a form of Western importation of higher education to China has become a simpler approach to make the illusory "world-class education" accessible to Chinese students (Siltaoja et al, 2019). I introduce an international branch campus in China offered by the U.K. named the University of Nottingham Ningbo China and apply this case to specifically examine the possible neocolonial endeavors embedded in IBCs in China.

The University of Nottingham Ningbo China is an important case to analyze because it is the first IBC to gain legal status as an independent campus in China (Ennew & Yang, 2009). UNNC offers 29 undergraduate and 18 graduate degree programs, employs more than 900 academic and professional staff, and has over 500 doctoral students.[2] The definition of UNNC is however contested. I noticed that there is a nuance between the definitions of UNNC on its website and the website of the UK main campus. The Chinese website of UNNC ("About the University," n.d.) states the following:

> The University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) was the first Sino-foreign university to open its doors in China. Established in 2004, with the full approval of the Chinese Ministry of Education, we are run by the University of Nottingham with co-operation from Zhejiang Wanli Education Group, a key player in the education sector in China.

Nonetheless, Nottingham's British main campus website simply categorizes UNNC as its overseas

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[2] See https://www.nottingham.edu.cn/en/About/Who-we-are.aspx

independent campus, without mentioning its cooperation as a joint-venture campus with Zhejiang Wanli Education Group ("China Campus," n.d.). Although the Zhejiang Wanli Educational Group provides financial investment and management of the services on the UNNC campus (Feng, 2013), its effort and support are not well acknowledged on the side of the U.K. This situation is described by Feng (2013) as an "unequal academic marriage" because of the two universities' unequal footing, and "the lack of academic status of Zhejiang Wanli (University) [allows] Nottingham to clone the University of Nottingham in China" (p. 482). The difference in the descriptions of UNNC indicates that the influence of the host countries has been weakened due to neo-colonization from the West. This nuance will be further discussed in the following sections of the article.

FINDINGS

Neocolonialism through the Lens of the Mimicries

Cynical mimicry mainly indicates that the transference of Western knowledge to IBCs is contested but still practiced, and resistance presented by faculty, staff, and students is an expression of frustration and irony (Siltaoja et al., 2019). The curricula at UNNC are offered by its British main campus, including teaching materials (Feng, 2013; Yang, 2012). Some programs and courses introduced by the British campus are highly in line with the demand of the Chinese market, such as business and computer science programs (Feng, 2013). However, not all courses fit local demand and the cultural and political background of Chinese students. For instance, Business Law, Accounting Information Systems, and Business Ethics are some of the compulsory courses for B.Sc. Finance, Accounting and Management students at UNNC.[3] The law, accounting, taxation systems, and ethical norms in the UK cannot just simply be applied to the Chinese contexts, and instructors could somehow feel awkward teaching students practices that are not even a part of Chinese society, while students are very likely to feel that the course content does not resonate with their interests and needs. Some case studies in the textbooks can be changed to cases that happened in China, "but the foundational issues and the epistemology of the knowledge remain Western" (Siltaoja, 2019, p. 86).

As with many other IBCs, the promotion of UNNC's international and world-class aspirations seems more important than satisfying local needs. This phenomenon can be explained by several reasons. First, even though the curricular content offered by UNNC might not fit the Chinese context well, they can still be good preparation for Chinese students who intend to enroll in Western institutions in the future. According to UNNC's Annual Quality Report of 2017-2019 Academic year (2019), 82.4% of the graduates chose to study abroad, and 81.7% of them went to universities that rank in the top 100 of the QS higher education rankings. British and U.S. universities occupy the dominant number of universities in the QS top 100. Second, providing courses that are independent of the local contexts but in an international setting could be a strategy to attract more international students. In fact, 8.9% of undergraduates and 12.5% of postgraduate students at UNNC are international students or students from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, as well as exchange students from the British main campus, Malaysia campus, and other partnership universities.

Aside from the 82.4 % of students who went abroad for graduate school, other graduates needed to get jobs in the Chinese labor market. According to Feng (2013), job placement rates of UNNC students are very high; the results of the *UNNC 2018-2019 Annual Quality Report* show that after six months after

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[3] See https://www.nottingham.edu.cn/en/old-business/undergraduate-programmes/bsc-hons-finance-accounting-and-management.aspx

graduation, “84.3% of class 2019 graduates went on to further study, and 11.4% of graduates went directly to work” (University of Nottingham Ningbo China, 2020). Feng (2013) suggested that such success is because UNNC students are trained to think broadly and critically. Due to the Western liberal education at UNNC, one could argue that students have good English skills, extensive training in critical thinking, and a well-chosen specialization, and these strengths make students who already have extensive social capital more competitive and preferable in the Chinese labor market. According to Sitaoja et al. (2019), “the world-class fantasy operates as an invisible power that calls upon the imposing of standardized practices and enforces Western hegemony” (p. 85), and, at UNNC, the situation is similar because the educational quality, Western practices, and British degrees offered at UNNC are believed by many people to be superior to other Chinese universities (Yang, 2012). This is evidenced by the fact that UNNC admitted top the 6% of *Gaokao* (Chinese National College Entrance Examination) participants, and the enrollment score ranks only second to Zhejiang University (The University of Nottingham Ningbo China, 2019). In terms of the lens of coloniality, high-achieving Chinese students attend UNNC and believe Western education is superior to other Chinese universities, which is different from the forms of colonialism. For instance, Indigenous people in Canada were compelled to attend “Indian residential schools" runed by Canadian settlers to be reformed as civilized “Canadians” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Coloniality of power that put forward by Quijano (2007) explained that Eurocentrism plays a dominant role in the intellectual field of China and cultural coloniality is still rooted in Chinese society and its people. Through the decisions of students, usually from middle- and upper-class backgrounds, to attend IBCs voluntarily, coloniality is therefore perpetuated in China. The coloniality of Chinese society aided the practice of neocolonialism through an intellectual form that is invisible and peaceful but might cause potential long-term risks. It could reinforce the global imaginary that Western education is superior and preferable, thereby devaluing Chinese traditions and epistemologies.

Bounded mimicry has been analyzed through the different definitions of UNNC as an entity. As mentioned, the official website of UNNC states clearly that the institution is a joint venture between the University of Nottingham and Zhejiang Wanli Education group. However, Nottingham's British main campus's website simply defines UNNC as an overseas campus in China, which is a part of the Nottingham system along with its British main campus and Malaysia campus. The definition of UNNC on its British main campus' website overlooks the roles of Zhejiang Wanli Education Group and the Chinese government's support as well as the nature of UNNC as a Sino-British cooperative institution. The reasons that UNNC might be less prone to highlight its arrangement with Zhejiang Wanli Education Group in the U.K. might contribute to the factors that the joint partner Zhejiang Wanli University, which used to be a vocational college, is not a well-known and prestigious university in China (Feng, 2013), and an emphasis on UNNC as an overseas campus could attract more attention and support from individuals on its British main campus. Another potential conflict can be seen by how Fujia Yang, the president of UNNC and the former chancellor of Nottingham, described UNNC in different circumstances. President Yang once maintained, when UNNC was established as a new campus, that one of the initiatives was "to bring together the best of the UK and Chinese educational values and practices” (Ennew & Yang, 2009, p. 30). However, Yang later asserted that "we want the University of Nottingham Ningbo China to be like the University of Nottingham in Britain" (Feng, 2013, p. 477). These conflicting statements show that the relationships among the Chinese government, UNNC, and its British main campus remain ambiguous.

According to the Director of Center of Research on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running

Schools, Xiamen University, Jinhui Lin, and the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (Lin & Liu, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2004), Sino-foreign cooperative universities are Chinese universities, and branch campuses of foreign countries are not allowed. In practice, although UNNC is hugely supported by Wanli Group and the Chinese government with funding and policy, Nottingham, to some degree, conceals its affiliation with Chinese educational and governmental groups by maintaining degrees that are offered by and are identical to those at the British home campus (Yang, 2012). Another possibility is that Nottingham is emphasizing the supremacy of its Western educational model. President Yang's different descriptions of UNNC reveal the conflict of values between individuals who hope UNNC would be an extension of the British campus in China, while others might hope for cooperation and a merging of the educational advantages between the U.K. and China, justified and regulated by Sino-foreign cooperative education policy in China.

I also maintain that the intentional neglect of UNNC's close ties with China is a strategy to attract Western faculty and students. At UNNC, faculty members and students are perhaps more willing to regard themselves as working and studying in an overseas campus instead of in a Chinese university. For some faculty members, working at the University of Nottingham without mentioning the location of China may facilitate entry to other faculty positions in Western countries. As for some of the students, a transcript or degree issued by Nottingham's main campus in the UK, without an indication of where they did their coursework, can be an asset when applying for top Western graduate schools. Coloniality plays a significant role in these perspectives. Stein and Andreotti (2016) noted that the dominant global imaginary assumes Western knowledge and education are superior and universal. In China, Western education is also believed by many as synonymous with "world-class" education, and there is an increase in upper- and middle-class families in China choosing to send their children to study abroad (Zha et al., 2019). Likewise, some students studying at IBCs might believe their degree could show their capability of studying at Western, English-speaking institutions, rather than indicating their experience and knowledge of non-Western contexts could contribute to the internationalization of Western institutions. Coloniality, to some degree, shows the lack of cultural confidence in their home countries and cultures, which results in the embrace of neo-colonization from the West.

Although UNNC, as a Sino-British cooperative institution, strives to highlight its British origins, the mimicry is still flawed because China's cultural, economic, and political environment is quite different from the U.K. UNNC endeavors to make its campus a British style university - from its physical appearance to its curricula. The style of the UNNC campus was built as an "elite private college in the West," and, in particular, "the administrative building, with its august-looking steeple clock tower, is a replica of the Trent Building on the home campus in Britain" (Feng, 2013, pp. 477-478). Such decisions create an illusion that students are studying in a "world-class" Western campus. Beyond the buildings and facilities, the courses provided by UNNC are "anchored in Western liberal education," with English as the medium of instruction. Additionally, the course materials, the exams, and the standards of recruiting staff and faculty are all decided by the British campus (Ennew, 2009; Feng, 2013; Yang, 2012).

Notwithstanding, the experience of studying in the UK cannot - and should not - be duplicated in China. First, the "long-term equivalency in teaching standards" is hard to guarantee (Yang, 2012, p. 147). Secondly, the distance of UNNCC from the Nottingham home campus can cause inefficient communication. In addition, since the campus of UNNC is located in Ningbo China and the majority of its students are Chinese, many students may not reach the admission standard of English proficiency at the main campus,

and teaching standards and expectations could be impacted (Yang, 2012). Students at the British campus usually complete their degree in three years, while students at UNNC complete their bachelor's in four years. This is because English for Academic Purposes courses are required during the first year to make sure students are well adjusted to a fully English teaching environment (Ennew & Yang, 2009). Furthermore, although branch campuses in China claim to have full academic freedom, instructors of humanities and social science disciplines often have to be careful when discussing culturally and politically sensitive topics (Du, 2020). In addition, foreign faculty members may have difficulty maintaining their Chinese working visas if they are reported for discussing politically sensitive topics with students in the class. Therefore, though branch campuses can simulate the appearance of a foreign-style campus, the real experience of studying abroad cannot be easily duplicated, which speaks to the failed mimicry of IBCs from a neocolonial lens.

Justifications of IBCs from China's perspective

China, as the receiving country of IBCs from the West, has its justifications for importing Western higher education as a cooperative model. Although mimicking Western institutions through the operations of IBCs can be seen as neocolonial, the local government legitimates IBCs as cooperative institutions and as a supplementary form of the Chinese higher education system that contributes to the local contexts. First, IBCs such as UNNC contribute to economic development and the needs of the domestic labor market. Second, IBCs are an affordable way to increase domestic higher education capacity and can provide access to high-quality education while bolstering the academic reputation of the host country (Taji, 2004; Lane, 2011; Kinser, 2011; Khoury, 2013; cited in Siltaoja, 2009). In the case of China, Chinese officials also employ their specific approaches to legitimize IBCs in China, arguing that they are not simply "colonies" of Western universities. Rather, IBCs in China are justified as a form of cooperation to combine the essence of Chinese education and Western education, thereby educating Chinese students to have an international and multicultural horizon to serve the local labor market in a more global environment (Ennew & Yang, 2019). In addition, IBCs are justified to retain Chinese students to stay in China to pursue their postsecondary degrees instead of going abroad. However, since many programs offered by UNNC fall under the "2+2" model (students study in China for their first two years and then move to the British main campus for their last two years), UNNC encourages its students to travel overseas to study in its partner universities (Ennew & Yang 2009; Feng, 2013; Yang 2012). In addition, the university's annual report indicated that 82.4% of undergraduate students at UNNC went to graduate school outside of China (University of Nottingham Ningbo China, 2019). That said, instead of keeping students to study in China, IBCs in fact motivate more Chinese students to study abroad for graduate school. Encouraging more students to study abroad expands their international horizons, but also arguably reinforce and reproduce the supremacy of Western higher education.

China's educational policy documents also legitimize IBCs. According to the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (Ministry of Education, 2004) and the interpretation by Lin and Liu (2007), the establishment of an overseas campus in China by foreign countries is prohibited by China's educational policy. Also, according to the interpretation of Chinese education officials, Sino-foreign cooperative universities do not simply branch campuses, as defined by Western institutions; rather, they are a new form of Chinese institution that supplements the Chinese higher education system. One policy forbids Sino-foreign cooperative universities to adopt the phrase, "China campus." Therefore, the Chinese names of IBCs must start with the names of the Chinese

cities (Ministry of Education, 2004). For example, the Chinese version of UNNC is translated to Ningbo Nottingham University, and the name of NYU Shanghai in the Chinese version is Shanghai New York University. Although the Chinese names of IBCs sound like joint-venture universities, the English versions of the names of these IBCs still convey the sense that they are overseas campuses, which make the regulations tokenistic since English is the official language of IBCs while Chinese is a supplementary language only used in certain unofficial circumstances.

The Regulations of 2004 also stipulate that some of the leaders and the president at Sino-foreign cooperative universities must be Chinese citizens. According to Feng (2013), the board of UNNC has seven members from Britain and eight from China, and, in 2019, according to UNNC's official website, the number of university leaders with Anglo-Saxon names decreased to four ("University Leadership," n.d.). In addition, UNNC also sets the position of Secretary of the Communist Party of China to make sure that UNNC is in line with the laws and policies of China, to help the university to gain more support from the local government as well as helping the university to solve conflicts on campus (Feng, 2013). Having a Secretary of the Communist Party is one of the dominant features of Chinese universities, and supervision of the Chinese Communist Party can possibly be the most convincing evidence to argue that an IBC is not totally controlled by the Western institution. However, it is also noticeable that the Provost and most Deans at UNNC are not Chinese, and their responsibilities typically focus on the academic affairs of the university ("University Leadership," n.d.). Whether the leadership roles held by Chinese citizens and the Communist Party have enough power to intervene with British academic interests remains unknown and is worthy of further investigation.

Chinese culture courses are required exclusively for Mainland Chinese students at UNNC and are different from the politics courses required by other Chinese universities, such as "Theories of Marxism and Maoism" and "Deng Xiaoping's thought" (Tu, 2011, p. 430). UNNC students take Chinese culture and politics courses in a non-traditional fashion. The courses are divided into two parts, which concern the theme of "Modernization and China." These courses are intended to improve student's critical thinking skills and their ability to handle complex Chinese and international affairs.[4] However, only a small page on the official website of UNNC mentions the Chinese culture courses, and there is no corresponding English version of the page. Also, the Chinese students of UNNC are only required to pass these courses with the lowest requirement, and the Chinese culture courses would not show on the Nottingham transcript. This exclusion might indicate the relative unimportance of these courses (at least from the perspective of the academic affairs department), and the existence of these courses may simply satisfy the regulations of the Chinese Ministry of Education.

CONCLUSION

Discourses of internationalization, modernization, and world-class education are dominant in justifying the existence of IBCs as key to improving cross-cultural exchange, modernizing local society, contributing to domestic and global economies, and exchanging knowledge. Inherently, the resonance of neocolonialism from the West and the nature of coloniality from the Global South is leading to an increase of IBCs. By introducing Western "world-class" higher education and expanding Western-trained academics to the Global South, colonialism becomes invisible with the notions of modernity (Mignolo, 2002). Less has been written that examines IBCs from a neocolonial perspective in both Chinese and English literature.

[4] See https://www.nottingham.edu.cn/en/research-centres/crsfu/home.aspx

This article sheds some light on the neocolonial nature of IBCs in the Global South contexts. IBCs not only provide courses and degrees from the West, but IBCs also assert that they share the same values - such as equity, diversity, and inclusion - as their main campuses. However, these values are neither well implemented in the West nor their IBCs. For instance, the tuition of UNNC for domestic undergraduates is almost ten times higher than most of other public Chinese universities. The high tuition of IBCs only allows Chinese students from high-income families to attend IBCs in China and excludes most Chinese students who could not afford the cost. IBCs, as a supplementary form of local higher education, are not for everyone; they are exclusive and reproduce social inequality.

Additionally, a desire to achieve the “world-class” fantasy, such as through the promotion of university ranking criteria, arguably moves IBCs away from achieving the goal of combing Chinese and Western traditions in education (Stack, 2019). By contrast, at UNNC, as well as many other IBCs in the Global South, Eurocentric knowledge is highly valued, but local knowledges are overlooked. Western supremacy is therefore reinforced and reproduced through IBCs. In the case of UNNC, though it uses some strategic approaches to defend itself as a new and supplementary type of institution in the Chinese higher education system, and provides some Chinese culture courses, these justifications are still compromising and ostensibly only satisfy the requirements of Sino-foreign regulations and educational policies.

What is clear is that, despite the interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of international branch campuses in some of the Global South countries will continue to increase, and they provide unique opportunities for students from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. However, as argued, IBCs created more inequalities in the Chinese higher education landscape and promoted Western knowledge in the Global South contexts. Therefore, it would be important to decentralize coloniality and promote cultural confidence instead of Westernizing Chinese higher education. It would be important for Chinese higher education sectors to integrate their own knowledges, cultures, and traditions into curricula, which might further contribute to the work of decolonization and interrupting Western hegemony in the global higher education landscape.

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Understanding International Joint and Dual Degree Programs: Opportunities and Challenges during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This empirical article examines the policies, perspectives, and practices of building and developing cross-border and transnational higher education (TNHE) programs, with special attention given to the international joint and dual degree programs in North America and Asia. Specifically, this paper reviews the historical, political, and social dimensions of two international collaborative academic degree programs between the United States and Mainland China using Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI) and Sun Yat-set University (SYSU) as the case study. Findings suggest that IUPUI's most cited challenge with SYSU concerns alignment with general education requirements. On the other hand, SYSU's biggest challenge with IUPUI concerns language and cultural differences. This article offers five recommendations for teacher-scholars, policymakers, and advanced practitioners interested in developing, designing, and implementing dual degree programs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Implications for future research on and applications and practices for TNHE programs are discussed.

Keywords: comparative education, covid-19, education abroad, higher education, internationalization, student mobility, transnational education

INTRODUCTION

International higher education in the United States, and indeed worldwide, has reached a critical moment (de Wit & Altbach, 2021a) as a result of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and associated lockdowns (Ammigan et al., 2022; Bergan et al., 2021; Hudzik, 2021). The challenges are most notable with regards to student enrollment and retention, the international mobility of students and scholars, international programs and services, and the increasing reliance on information and communication technologies to connect individuals, institutions, and countries (Bista et al., 2021; Chan et al., 2021; McKeown et al., 2022). These profound challenges are due largely to the fragilities and inequalities across the digital, gender, social and educational lines, that are fundamentally reshaping higher education as a global industry during the pandemic (de Wit & Altbach, 2021b; Kommers & Bista, 2021). While the processes and outcomes of internationalization practices (e.g., teaching and learning modes, admissions,

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mobility, quality assurance) have been widely examined and critiqued (e.g., promoting elitist, hegemonic, and neoliberal agendas), little research has examined the rise of cross-border and transnational higher education (TNHE) programs in the United States and abroad (Jiang, 2021; Lee & Gough, 2020). Furthermore, the number of studies to have currently explored the future of TNHE, and, more specifically, international joint and dual degree programs in the post-COVID-19 era is limited (Bamford, 2020; Ergin & Leal, 2020; Li & Haupt, 2021; Lane et al., 2021). [1]

Prior to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, international partnerships and international collaborations had received much attention in the field of international and comparative higher education (Altbach et al., 2020; Gatewood, 2020; Lanford, 2020; Oleksiyenko et al., 2020). Historically, the expansion of TNHE in East and Southeast Asia was triggered by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, which forced many internationally mobile students to return to their home countries (Sutrisno, 2020). Since then, TNHE programs have represented an increasingly legitimate strategy for globally comprehensive research universities in host countries like China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore to engage transnationally as higher education organizations (Lee & Gough, 2020). These special or unique international academic partnerships would serve as one of the following three types: 1) as student exchanges, 2) as cooperative development projects between the Global North and Global South (i.e., capacity building, local development), or 3) as international joint or dual degree programs with largely unidirectional student mobility (Kinser & Lane, 2020). In other words, TNHE has been able to provide a reliable, bona fide education, with a flexible, cost-efficient tuition. TNHE programs can help students obtain international qualifications or degrees that promote transnational learning, collaborative research, and global mobility. TNHE can also play a crucial role in enhancing international strategic planning, global learning, and institutional prestige to help institutions position themselves for a world-class status to improve their academic rankings and to increase the quality of national higher education systems and academic programs worldwide (Oleksiyenko et al., 2021). While the rise of TNHE programs has become a reflection of elitism, populism, and global politics in the era of mass higher education, the ideals and outcomes of these programs have also been questioned by teacher-scholars and advanced practitioners (American Council on Education [ACE], 2014; Bamford, 2020; Knight, 2013). Furthermore, the impact international joint and dual degree programs can have on internationalizing an academy has received less attention in higher education journals and books (ACE, 2014; Asgary & Robbert, 2010; Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Kuder et al., 2014; Lane & Kinser, 2014; Merkx & Nolan, 2015). Because higher education institutions around the world have enacted travel bans and quarantines, as well as suspended face-to-face teaching as a result of the global pandemic, new research is needed to examine the current and future landscape of TNHE programs and, more specifically, international joint and dual degree programs (Bamford, 2020; Ergin & Leal, 2020; Haupt et al., 2021; Hou, 2020; Krusekopf, 2018; Li & Haupt, 2021; Steagall et al., 2021).

Hence, this article explores, examines, and questions the changing landscape of international joint- and dual- degree programs in the COVID-19 era. Using international collaborative degree programs between Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis' (IUPUI) and Sun Yat-sen University's (SYSU) as a case study, this paper investigates the commonalities and disparities of international cross-

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[1] International joint and dual degree programs are also sometimes known as collaborative degree programs or 2+2/1+1 programs.

border collaborative degree programs; the different policy formats, expected outcomes, and programmatic challenges of international joint and dual degrees; and the major governance approaches and regulatory measures that governments and policy leaders have adopted in managing the growing prominence of these unconventional education institutions and programs between the United States and China. The ultimate goal of this research is to address three questions commonly asked in the field of international higher education: 1) What does the current literature suggest the aims, goals, and purposes of international joint and dual degree programs are, 2) How do international joint and dual degree practices align with the academic missions and goals of the home campus, 3) How do the interactions among policies, procedures, and practices differ between the U.S. and China in relation to the growth of collaborative academic degree programs. Because the goals of internationalization practice in education have changed dramatically to include accessibility and affordability, this paper will have applicability and pertinence beyond the national contexts of the United States and China and includes all types of universities (e.g., public, private, research, liberal, for-profit) as well as university stakeholders interested in TNHE programs at a time when institutions are scaling back their international ventures due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Buckner, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transnational Higher Education (TNHE)

In today's rapidly expanding international education sector, colleges and universities worldwide are providing increased opportunities for global development and engagement (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Hudzik, 2021; Lee & Gough, 2020). Notably, the growing number of students studying abroad, the rising number of international joint and dual degree programs, and the proliferation of international branch campuses are only a few of the initiatives reflecting the changing meanings of cross-border and transnational higher education (TNHE) (Bamford, 2020; Hou et al., 2017; Steagall et al., 2021). Knight (2007) defined cross-border education as "the movement of people, programs, providers, curricula, projects, research and services across national or regional jurisdictional borders" (p. 24). Cross-border education facilitates cooperation, cultivates soft power, provides academic exchange opportunities, and enhances public diplomacy (Lee, 2021). It provides students access for studying toward a foreign qualification without leaving their own country, which suggests that education programs and providers can cross national and regional borders.

TNHE (i.e., borderless education) refers to the movement of higher education providers and programs across national borders, which allows students to study in foreign programs without having to leave their home country (Knight & Liu, 2019). TNHE has the capacity to internationalize practices in teaching and learning, encourage inward and upward social mobility for faculty and staff, and foster knowledge transfer and exchange within and between societies (Ergin & Leal, 2020; Zapp & Lerch, 2020). The most common types of TNHE are international joint and dual degree programs, franchising, twinning, branch campuses, and research partnerships (Lee & Gough, 2020). The post-pandemic TNHE landscape has also promoted distance TNHE, in which students participate in online courses offered from an awarding institution that has no physical campus in their home country (Krusekopf, 2018; Li & Haupt, 2021; Sammour et al., 2020). All of these transnational activities have pressured higher education institutions to partner with comprehensive research universities as an effective tool to broaden course offerings, strengthen research collaboration, and raise the international visibility or institutional prestige of the university (Hou et al., 2017; Hudzik, 2021). In other words, TNHE operates as a foreign institution that delivers educational

programs through foreign partners (Sutrisno, 2020). While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly sparked new questions about the roles and functions of TNHE in regard to nation states and the global public good, scarcity certainly exists in the current literature on assisting teachers-scholars and advanced practitioners interested in developing these rapidly growing programs within the local, national, and international contexts (Bamford, 2020; Ergin & Leal, 2020; Haupt et al., 2021; Kompanets & Väätänen, 2019).

TNHE and Chinese Higher Education Landscapes

According to the September 2021 report conducted by the Cross Border Education Research Team (C-BERT) at the University of Albany, State University of New York (SUNY), approximately 306 international branch campuses are found to be in operation across 37 countries worldwide. Lane et al. (2021) estimates that there are more than 250 international branch campuses existed during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a student enrollment of approximately 180,000 worldwide as of June 2021. The top five exporters of international campuses are the United States (86), the United Kingdom (43), France (38), Russia (29), and Australia (20); the total number of importing countries is 83 (C-BERT, 2020). While international campuses have become a salient phenomenon in the efforts to internationalize the academy, the challenges of funding and building such programs are plentiful (Lane & Kinser, 2014; Zapp & Lerch, 2020). A few of the issues scholars have debated and criticized are the intercultural competencies of faculty members (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017), cultural relevancy of a curriculum (Knight & Liu, 2019), and quality assurance of programs and services (Blanco, 2021; Hou, 2020).

Historically, the concept of cross-border and TNHE (e.g., student exchange programs, branch campuses, foreign partners, joint partnership programs, regional educational hubs) was coined in 1919 when Nicholas Murray Butler, Elihu Root, and Stephen Duggan, Sr. established the Institute of International Education (IIE) with the strong belief that the United States would be unable to acquire peace unless greater understanding of foreign nations were achieved (Goodman & Ruland, 2013). Specifically, Carl Joachim Friedrich became recognized as the first student to study abroad in the United States, when he asked IIE in the early 1920s to offer educational fellowships abroad so 13 German students could study the social and political sciences (Goodman & Ruland, 2013). Since then, Friedrich's vision has expanded with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) joining forces with the IIE in 1925 to provide international exchange opportunities to nearly 100,000 students, scholars, and alumni each year (Kuder et al., 2014). Today, TNHE has become an integral part of the internationalization strategy in higher education as a result of the rising middle-class economies (Buckner, 2019; Li & Haupt, 2021). Both the DAAD and IIE are leaders in supporting and promoting the development of international education and transnational networks among institutions.

This is most notable in mainland China, where the forces of globalization, alongside the rise of nationalism and populism, have been at the forefront of the policy debate during the COVID-19 pandemic (Jiang, 2021; Yang, 2020). The recent developments in globalizing and internationalizing Chinese higher education have fueled several institutions' pursuit of transnational education activities through collaborative degree programs (also known as 'international joint and dual degree programs') offered by foreign institutions (Yu, 2020). For example, during the COVID-19 lockdown, NYU Shanghai served more than 3,000 Chinese students who were not able to reach the U.S. as originally intended (Lane et al., 2021). A recent internal survey by the College Board finds that the U.S. is still the leading educational destination

of choice among Chinese students (Blumenthal, 2021). China has invested significantly in its higher education system, moving from an elitist to a massified model (Zhang, 2021). As Min (2004) observed, higher education has experienced structural reforms ranging from governance, curriculum design, and financing to adopting strategies for developing world-class research universities. The Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) (2010) has proposed a series of policy reform initiatives (e.g., Project 211, Project 985), for elevating its university system to a world-class status. Today, 116 institutions are classified as Project 211 and 39 universities are Project 985.

Project 211 and Project 985 were established to increase international competition and global competitiveness in China's most elite research universities, with special attention being given to the top 39 comprehensive research universities. The goal of accomplishing such a policy agenda was further realized by establishing the *National Outline for Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development 2010-2020*, wherein MOE outlined the need to develop universities "at or near a world-class level… and have significantly enhance international competitiveness by 2020" (MOE, 2010, p. 5). This prompted the Chinese government to create a new project called 'World Class 2.0' for forming hubs for international collaboration with overseas universities (Cao & Yang, 2019). In other words, China has launched several policy initiatives as part of the nation's pursuit of economic liberalization and its desire to pursue neoliberal economic reforms (Jiang, 2021; Zhang, 2021). While China's main competitors (i.e., India, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam) have invested in large and differentiated higher education systems, one of the most significant policy initiatives has been the rise of international joint and dual degree programs (i.e., collaborative academic degrees) (Bamford, 2020; Chan, 2012; Haupt et al., 2021; Hou, 2020; Hou et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2021).

International Joint and Dual Degree Programs

Before the global COVID-19 pandemic, local governments had pressured higher education leaders to establish a global strategy for their institutions due to reductions in state funding that cause them to seek out additional revenue and talent to achieve comprehensive internationalization (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Kuder et al., 2014; Lane & Kinser, 2014; Zapp & Lerch, 2020). ACE (2021) defines comprehensive internationalization as "a strategic, coordinated framework that integrates policies, programs, initiatives, and individuals to make colleges and universities more globally oriented and internationally connected" (p. 1). Faculty members and campus leaders sought to foster comprehensive internationalization by facilitating transnational education, specifically international joint and dual degrees, as a vehicle for fostering international mobility (student, faculty, and staff) and for moving beyond academic-level collaborations (Bamford, 2020; Steagall et al., 2021). Joint degree programs are stand-alone programs where the student remains enrolled at two institutions in different countries (Knight, 2011). Students who complete joint degrees receive a single diploma or credential issued by the host institution (ACE, 2014). For example, at IUPUI, joint degrees would "involve collaboration by an IU academic unit and a partner institution to offer a degree program that neither would have the resources to offer without combining expertise and instruction; upon completion of a joint degree program, both institutions' names appear on the diploma" (IU Global, 2021). However, students who enroll in dual degrees receive two separate credentials from the two partner institutions involved in an existing degree program (Hou, 2020). One should note that the term "joint/dual degree programs" should not be confused with student exchange programs or virutal exchange, as these programs are study-abroad rather than degree-seeking programs (Kinser & Lane, 2020).

In general, international joint and dual degrees have a variety of goals and purposes (Chevallier, 2013; Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Kuder et al., 2014; Knight, 2011; 2013; 2015; Krusekopf, 2018; Lafleur, 2018; Lane & Kinser, 2014). Goodman and Rulan (2013) highlighted these programs' intentions as cultivating strong global partnerships, attracting top talents, and promoting mobility of students. Goodman and Rulan believe that collaborative degree programs play an important role in the internationalization strategies of higher education where both undergraduate and graduate students seek to differentiate their learning pathways and broaden their minds and skills for a global marketplace. Figure 1 summarizes the purpose and function of international joint and dual degree programs in the global landscape of higher education.

Figure 1

Purpose And Function Of International Joint And Dual Degree Programs

Purpose and Function of International Joint and Dual Degree Programs		
Academic	*Economic*	*Political*
To raise institutional recognition and prestige	To acquire human capital (revenue for institution)	To promote global citizenship and social justice
To enhance quality of education	To meet the demand of the globally competitive knowledge-based economy	To achieve international visibility and reputation in university league tables
To foster academic excellence	To meet the demand of national economy	To promote national identity, culture and values
To develop intercultural and international awareness	To meet the demand of regional (Asian) economy	To foster regional collaboration and cooperation in East Asia and the Pacific

Source: American Council on Education, 2014

As shown in Figure 1, international joint and dual degree programs serve three primary purposes: academic, economic, and political. In the academic realm in particular, international joint and dual degrees enhance the quality of teaching and learning, promote academic excellence, and develop intercultural competencies and awareness. In economic terms, international joint and dual degrees meet the demand of the knowledge-based economy, while in terms of politics, they promote national identity and foster collaboration and cooperation with developed and transitional economies. In other words, these programs can raise economic development and increase social cohesion. Furthermore, international joint and dual degrees foster upward social mobility as well as promote self-resilience, personal growth, and global citizenship (Culver et al., 2012; Haupt et al., 2021; Yamutuale, 2017). While this list is not all-inclusive, international joint and dual degrees are inevitably on the rise around the world (Bamford, 2020; Krusekopf, 2018).

Statistically speaking, Brenn-White and van Rest (2012) estimated that approximately 6,462 joint degree programs exist in Europe. Obst et al. (2011) has estimated that about 100 international joint and dual degrees exist in the United States, while ACE (2014) has estimated about 62 international joint and dual degrees to be present in mainland China. While no accurate data is found on the exact number of international joint and dual degree programs around the world, many collaborative degree programs exist in Europe as a result of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) program which seeks to foster the harmonization of the European higher education system (Curaj et al., 2015; Kompanets & Väätänen, 2019; Obst & Kuder, 2012; Steagall et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2017).

Globally, more international dual degree programs are found than international joint degree programs (see Table 1).

Table 1

Percentage Of International Joint And Dual Degree Programs By Degree Type

Types	Percentage
Joint Degree Programs	33%
Dual Degree Programs	84%
Joint and/or Dual Degree Programs in Planning Stage or Under Consideration	68%

Source: American Council on Education, 2014

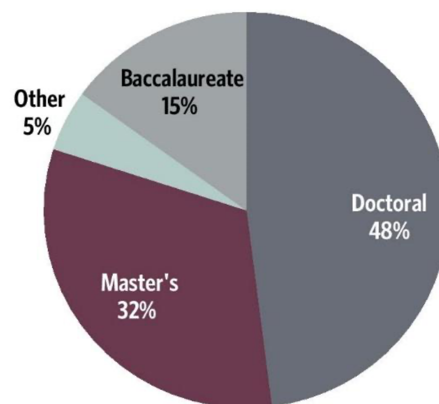
The large percentage of dual degree programs worldwide likely resulted from the flexibility given to establishing such programs in the host country. Dual degrees are highly flexible because course equivalencies and program requirements do not necessarily need to be aligned with the partnered institutions, due to international dual degrees being awarded individually rather than jointly (Asgary & Robbert, 2010; Bamford, 2020). On the other hand, international joint degrees are quite the opposite because they require additional financial resources and institutional agreements (Kinser & Lane, 2020; Knight, 2011; Obst & Kuder, 2012).

Most developing and developed countries that seek to establish international joint degree programs are prevented from creating them due to the legal restrictions and regulations set forth by their respective Ministries of Education. For example, Indonesia and Malaysia have a legal restriction that prohibits institutions of higher education from offering joint degrees (Haupt et al., 2021; Yuki, 2013). In Thailand, all universities must follow strict guidelines for academic cooperation between Thai Higher Education Institution and Foreign Higher Education Institutions. On the other hand, joint degrees at IUPUI are considered new degrees and must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Because of their complexity and the time commitment required for their development and approval, joint degrees are rarely considered by IU academic units (IU Global, 2021). Hence, international dual degree programs are far easier to establish than international joint degrees.

Aside from the quantity of joint and dual degree programs, a large number of international collaborative degree programs, particularly in mainland China, are granted at the doctoral degree level, rather than at the master's and bachelor's degree levels (see Figure 3).

Figure 2

Percentage Of International Joint And Dual Degree Programs In China By Degree-Level Type



Source: American Council on Education, 2014

As shown in Figure 3, 80% of international joint and dual degree programs in mainland China are at the graduate level, 48% are doctoral degree level programs, and 32% are at the master's degree level. Undergraduate programs make up only 15% of the joint and dual degree programs in mainland China. These graduate and professional programs can help learners acquire a new foreign language, provide them with the opportunity to reside in a developing or developed country for a long period time, and open international employment opportunities that are not readily available in traditional higher education programs (Asgary & Robbert, 2010; Bamford, 2020; Council of Graduate Schools, 2010).

From a faculty and administrator perspective, international dual and joint degree programs are a global strategy for strengthening the institutional relationships with partners abroad, increasing mobility rates, developing globally competent learners, and advancing campus internationalization strategies for continuous multidimensional partnerships (Bamford, 2020; Kinser & Lane, 2020; Lafleur, 2018; Steagall et al., 2021). In addition to deepening relationships with partners overseas, these programs help the home campuses increase graduates' employability, promote knowledge mobilization and transfer, and raise institutional revenue and growth for all constituencies (Culver et al., 2012; Haupt et al., 2021; Lane et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021; Zhang, 2021). Dr. Nina Lemmens, former director of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) office in New York, is quoted as having once said:

> International joint and dual degree programs are popular because once they are set up, they give all parties a good sense of security: the two involved universities have gone through an intense procedure of administrative scrutiny and decision-making and can be sure that everybody involved in the university is now positive about the commitment. The students know exactly what they are buying into and don't have to undergo the sometimes very difficult process of credit acknowledgment on their own (West, 2015).

In other words, international collaborative academic degree programs strengthen the relationships between the host and sending countries and serve as a strong marketing tool for attracting foreign talent (Kinser & Lane, 2020; Kuder et al., 2014; Obst & Kuder, 2012). The benefits of these programs from the different standpoints of the home and partner institutions are summarized below (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Benefits Of International Joint And Dual Degree Programs: Home and Partner Institution

Home Institution	Partner Institution
Internationalization of departments/units	Internationalization of departments/units
Research collaboration and opportunity	Research collaboration and opportunity
Enrollment increase	Enrollment increase
Recognition and prestige	Recognition and prestige
English preparation of international students	Foreign language preparation of U.S. students
Broadening course offerings	Broadening course offerings
Increase diversity among students	Increase diversity among students

Source: American Council on Education, 2014

CASE STUDY

The Dual Degree Programs Partnership for IUPUI and SYSU

This paper uses Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI), and Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU) as the case study for understanding the historical, political, and social dimensions of

international dual degree programs between the United States and mainland China. Indiana University's partnership with SYSU was started in 2007 when IUPUI first initiated an alliance with SYSU. Today, more than 400 SYSU students and 200 SYSU scholars from China study and/or work at the IUPUI campus each year (IUPUI Office of International Affairs, 2021). IUPUI-SYSU has offered several transnational higher education courses and programs that include collaborative research projects, dual degree programs, facilitated transfer arrangements, and student exchanges. IUPUI-SYSU also had plans to initiate a joint master's degree program in Philanthropic Studies, but plans were immediately scratched due to the on-going worldwide coronavirus pandemic. The following section provides an overview of the two institutions.

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)

IUPUI was founded in 1969 when Indiana University and Purdue University joined forces to create a leading urban research institution dedicated for education, research, health and life sciences, and community engagement (IUPUI, 2014). Indianapolis Mayor Richard Lugar, one of the most influential leaders in establishing IUPUI, firmly believed that a world-class city must have a university that serves the city, state, and beyond. IUPUI's first mission was to "serve the citizens of this State and Nation with excellence in teaching, diversity in research, and full application towards the solving of community problems" (IUPUI, 2014, p. 3). Since its founding, IUPUI has achieved remarkable growth in terms of student enrollment, diversity, access, governance, curriculum, and academic standards. IUPUI has also recently tripled its number of international students from 606 foreign students in 1999 to 1,850 foreign students in 2020 (IU Office of International Affairs, 2020).

Today, IUPUI offers degrees in Global and International Studies, has developed an international videoconferencing facility for overseas communication, and has worked on the *Global Cities Initiatives: A Joint Project of Brookings and JP Morgan Chase* on international trade and economic development (O'Meara & Peck, 2019). IUPUI is one of the few institutions by the American Council on Education (ACE) that has completed the 2012-2014 ACE Internationalization Laboratory and has received the prestigious 2009 Andrew Heiskell Award from the Institute of International Education (IIE) (IUPUI, 2014). As of today, IUPUI has five main international partnerships: 1) Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China; 2) Trisakti University in Jakarta, Indonesia; 3) EM Strasbourg Business School in Strasbourg, France; 4) Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya; and 5) University of the State of Hidalgo in Pachuca, Mexico. Among those programs, IUPUI offers three types of international joint and dual degree programs: 1) dual undergraduate degree (2 + 2) (2 years in China and 2 years in U.S.), 2) dual master's degree (1 + 1), and 3) joint degrees (IU Global, 2021). Approximately 95 percent of its transnational degree programs are dual degrees, with only two joint degrees active: 1) global MBA degree between the Indiana University Kelley School of Business and University of Manchester,[2] and 2) M.S. degree in finance between Indiana University Kelley School of Business and Tsinghua University.[3] The university's current chancellor is Nasser H. Paydar, who has been widely credited and praised as the first higher education leader to launch the Indiana University China Office in 2015, as part of the IU Global Gateway Network. The gateway offices support scholarly research and teaching, conferences and workshops, study abroad programs,

[2] The Kelley–Manchester Global MBA Program offers students the opportunity to earn two MBAs, one from the Kelley School in the United States, and one from the Alliance Manchester Business School in the United Kingdom. The joint MBA program provides students with professional development and a global literacy that enables them to succeed in today's complex and interconnected business world.
[3] Tsinghua University in China and the Kelley School of Business offer a joint MS in Finance. The program is taught in both Chinese and English, focusing on global financial rules and regulations.

distance learning initiatives, executive and corporate programs, and alumni events (IUPUI Office of International Affairs, 2021).

Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU)

SYSU was founded in 1924 by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in the Guangdong Province of China. Dr. Yat-sen was the first president and founding father of the Republic of China and believed that a great university must have a vibrant community of teaching and scholarship characterized by its revolutionary spirit. Today, SYSU is a comprehensive research university with an enrollment of over 50,000 undergraduate and graduate students in its five campuses in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Zhuhai. SYSU's mission is "to advance knowledge and educate students in arts, science, technology, and other academic areas that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century" (SYSU Website, 2021). The University adheres to the socialist orientation of higher education, focusing on the fundamental task of nurturing virtue and talents. SYSU is the only university to have established a Center on Philanthropy in Mainland China in partnership with the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. SYSU is a member of Project 985 and Project 211 and has been consistently ranked in the top 10 universities in mainland China[4].

IUPUI-SYSU: Overview of International Dual Degree Programs

IUPUI- SYSU currently offers six dual degree programs and no joint degree programs. Specifically, all six of the dual degree programs between IUPUI and SYSU are at the undergraduate level held at the Indianapolis campus. The six dual degree programs are: 1) B.S. in business, 2) B.S. in media arts and sciences, 3) B.S. in public affairs, 4) B.S. in mechanical engineering, 5) B.S. in mathematics, and 6) B.S. in computer science. The Indiana University system has a total of 23 dual degree programs and no joint degree programs. Of the 23 dual degrees, six of the dual degree programs are held at SYSU in partnership with IUPUI. The other 17 dual degree programs are at the flagship campus of Indiana University Bloomington. Of the 23 dual degree programs at Indiana University, 22 should importantly be noted as bring from Asia and only one from Europe. Additionally, of the 23 dual degree programs, 17 are at the graduate-level, and 6 are at the undergraduate level. All six of the undergraduate dual degree programs are at SYSU. In turn, SYSU offers about 24 international joint and dual degree programs. [5] Of the 24-joint and dual degrees, eight are with the United States and twelve are with the European Union.

DISCUSSION

Perspectives, Issues, and Opportunities

The IUPUI-SYSU collaborative academic degree program serves as an excellent model other institutions around the world could consider when establishing and creating international dual degree programs during the COVID-19 era. IUPUI-SYSU is considered one of the first dual degree programs

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[4] See, for instance, the Academic Ranking of World Universities: http://www.shanghairanking.com/World-University-Rankings-2020/China.html. Also see Times Higher Education Rankings: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-china

[5] The 24 cross-border collaborative academic degree programs are with the following university partners (in no specific order): Carnegie Mellon University, Johns Hopkins University, Northern Illinois University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Oklahoma State University, University of Cincinnati, University of Virginia, Vermont Law School, Lancaster University, University of Strasbourg, Griffith University, University of Surrey, University of Birmingham, University of Waterloo, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, ETH Zurich, Grenoble Institute of Technology, Institute Mines-Telecom, Chimie ParisTech, Rotterdam School of Management, University of Technology Sydney, University of Alberta, Lingnan University, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

between the United States and Mainland China prior to the great economic recession in 2009. IUPUI enrolls a large proportion of international students, with a total of 1,850 foreign students during the 2019-2020 academic year (IUPUI Office of International Affairs, 2020). Its flagship campus, Indiana University Bloomington, enrolled 6,331 international students and was ranked with the top 35 receiving institutions among doctoral-granting universities in the United States (Institute of International Education, 2020). Similarly, SYSU enrolled 4,183 foreign students around the world during the 2019-2020 academic year (*U.S. News Report*, 2021). While the program is strong in terms of policy structure and enrollment, one of the challenges facing the dual programs is the incorporation of the IUPUI General Education Core. The IUPUI ACE Internationalization Laboratory Report (ACE, 2014) states that the "Development of 2+2 agreements with international institutions have become more challenging since the curricula must be designed to incorporate the IUPUI General Education Core" (p. 169). This result is not surprising as the survey by ACE (2014) indicated that general education requirements are one of the biggest challenges U.S. institutions face when working with foreign institutions.

In addition to general education policy requirements, IUPUI has also experienced academic challenges and issues pertaining to housing and accommodation for international students in Indianapolis, IN. According to the IUPUI laboratory report (ACE, 2014), institutional leaders expressed concerns that SYSU students who enroll in dual degree programs will likely not find on-campus accommodation at IUPUI. The IUPUI laboratory report predicted that "beginning next year, there could be an additional 200 students from Sun Yat-Sen University (SYSU) under the 2+2 agreements with various schools at IUPUI" (p. 165). Because IUPUI is designed as a commuter school rather than as a residential campus, the lack of on-campus housing for Chinese students will likely pose a significant challenge for a long-term successful partnership.

A third challenge outlined in the IUPUI laboratory report (ACE, 2014) is the lack of U.S. faculty members and staff working at SYSU. Specifically, the IUPUI laboratory report expressed concerns that some IUPUI faculty members and/or staff are resistant to conducting collaborative research projects with China, likely due to a misalignment of their viable scholarly interests, or fear of losing access to Western archives at their home institution. The IUPUI (ACE, 2014) report also indicated that a large number of IUPUI scholars and staff have never traveled to China, much less to SYSU, to assist with the development process of their dual degree program. This policy challenge is not at all surprising given that the ACE (2014) survey found that a small percentage (15%) of American faculty, staff, and students reside in dual degree partner institutions. IUPUI (ACE, 2014) concluded in its report that the university should hire a U.S. liaison to represent IUPUI in Guangzhou, which could help the institution further cultivate and sustain key relationships with faculty members and staff at SYSU, and "[maximize] enrollment through the Sun Yat-sen University 2 + 2 programs" (p. 169).

CONCLUSION

This article highlights the growing complexities and nuances of developing international joint and dual degree programs during the COVID-19 era. Specifically, this article outlines the juxtaposition between the policy positions of implementing international joint and dual degree programs and collaborations and cooperation among and within stakeholders. While a common consensus and understanding exists on inter-institutional collaborative degree programs, the lack of institutional rules, rituals, and policies in place, as well as cultural differences and preferences, is a major source of concern when developing future international joint and dual degree programs. As Bamford (2020) noted:

> The complexities of student experiences are evidenced both in terms of the students' differing cultural backgrounds and their responses to the challenges of different cultural encounters in the classroom and with regard to the cultural experience of participating in an international joint double degree, such as navigating different national cultures and different pedagogic approaches (p. 139).

Needless to say, this article seeks to provide institutional leaders and policy leaders with policy-relevant information in the world of TNHE, especially considering the greater interest in international joint and dual degree programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this article is not meant to be exhaustive by any means, it does pinpoint that no two dual or joint degree programs are identical or even similar. Instead, each international collaborative degree program serves different purposes, functions, and meanings in the global landscape of higher education, and those differences vary by type, location, size, and prestige of each institution.

Future research should examine the impact international joint and dual degree policies have on internationalizing higher education, the role international joint and dual degrees have in shaping the internationalization of curriculum, the value that is added for students who complete cross-border collaborative degree programs, and the effects of outward and inward mobility scholarship programs (e.g., China's National Merit Scholarship) on access to and completion of joint and dual degrees (Bamford, 2020; Jiang, 2021; Li & Haupt, 2021). Additionally, new collaborative research that uses advanced quantitative or qualitative research methods is vastly needed in order to understand the academic policies regarding course equivalencies, credit transfers, grading/evaluation methodologies, and general education requirements); the institutional policies regarding accreditation policies and procedures, quality assurance standards, articulation agreements, study abroad programs, and student exchange agreements; and the campus policies regarding academic freedom, academic integrity, faculty, and student expectations, health and safety, and off-campus housing, all in relation to international joint and dual degree programs (Hou et al., 2016; Zheng, et al., 2017). This research is also essential for communicating policy-relevant information to policy leaders, international consultants, and social entrepreneurs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (McAllister-Grande & Whatley, 2020).

Recommendations: Policies and Applications

Given the ongoing restrictions and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, this paper illustrates that measuring the effectiveness and sustainability of international joint and dual degree programs is a major source of concern (Lafleur, 2018). As recommended by Li and Haupt (2021), however, "higher education institutions should envision TNE as a central segment of international higher education in the post-pandemic era, given that student mobility is expected to take years to recover" (para. 4). Hence, the benefits of evaluating and critiquing the policy formation of international collaborative degree programs like IUPUI-SYSU may be crucial to further assist policymakers and institutional leaders in developing these programs during and after the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, as evident in Yu's (2020) and Ergin and Leal's (2020) studies. Below are five recommendations university leaders and policymakers should consider when developing international joint and dual degree programs during the COVID-19 era.

1) *Establish clear expectations and maintain shared governance on general education requirements*: As evidenced by the discussion concerning general education requirements, greater communication about curricular expectations should be fostered. Dual and joint degrees pose reputational risks to both IUPUI and SYSU and, therefore, must be carefully evaluated. Higher education leaders in

SYSU should clearly communicate their intended goals, purposes, and missions that align with the IUPUI General Education Core (Gallagher, 2021). At the same time, IUPUI should consider hiring an academic advisor or coach who can meet with students remotely to ensure that students enrolled in the dual degree program complete their general education requirements (Arshakin & Wang, 2017). Degree-granting collaborative programs should be a two-way street, meaning that both institutions are working together between faculty members and staff (Chevallier, 2013). A roadmap from the Office of International Affairs may be helpful to ensure communication flows smoothly between the two universities (West, 2021).

2) *Improve communication between academic affairs and student affairs offices concerning international student housing*: As evidenced by the discussion concerning international student housing, institutions should ensure that the necessary resources and infrastructure are in place to meet future needs. Because IUPUI is classified as a commuter, non-residential campus, higher education leaders should consider establishing key partners with several hospitality agencies or hostels across the state of Indiana to ensure that students could pursue their dual degree program at or near the campus (Lafleur, 2018). IUPUI should consider developing relationships with external partners, donors, or venues who has the capacity to fund and house a growing number of Chinese students in Indianapolis (IUPUI Office of International Affairs, 2020).

3) *Create policies that foster inter-institutional collaboration and cooperation*: Higher education institutions in the United States and China should actively collaborate with national governments and organizations in the policy design, implementation, and operation of international joint and dual degree programs (Conner-Rondot, 2017; Lafleur, 2018). Specifically, campus leaders from IUPUI should collaborate with the international offices, general counsels, faculty members, and upper-level administrators at SYSU in determining appropriate university policies and procedures for their dual degree programs (Gallagher, 2021). The memorandum of understanding (MOU) approved by the IUPUI president should establish, identify, and clarify the rationales, goals, and purposes of such partnership with key governmental level actors (Appendix A). This requires IUPUI and SYSU to hold deep, frank conversations on several policy alternatives, including issues with accreditation standards and quality assurance policies, enrollment planning policies and management procedures, and legal regulatory procedures and practices (Hou et al., 2016; 2017). However, achieving this policy outcome or agenda requires senior leaders and governmental actors to possess a flexibility and adaptability to be able to address what may not be originally planned or scheduled in the partnership or MOU agreement (Zheng et al., 2017). The IUPUI laboratory report (ACE, 2014) emphasized the need to "build a critical mass of IUPUI faculty prepared to engage in international research and collaboration through best practices in international partnerships" (p. 29).

4) *Create a top-down approach to policy decisions*: Institutional leaders (the president, deans, chairs, coordinator, senior international officers) at both IUPUI and SYSU should implement top-down elements into their policy decision-making processes, rather than bottom-up approaches, when establishing new proposals to enhance the cross-border collaborative degree agreements (Gallagher, 2021). This requires upper-level administrators from both IUPUI and SYSU to remain proactive on both sides through open dialogue and communication so as to prevent any unanticipated growth (Lafleur, 2018). The IUPUI laboratory report (ACE, 2014) stated, "Define the criteria for relationships with other universities to move along the continuum from faculty-to-faculty informal collaboration to a small number of full and formal university-to-university partnerships, defined by IU as a 'quality international agreements that have substantial levels of activity'" (p. 29). Namely, international educators should embrace cross-cultural

communication when articulating clear institutional policies, procedures, and guidelines for future development. Cross-cultural communication is crucial because any changes during the course of implementation may require face-to-face or at the very lease online dialogue. By developing mutually beneficial collaborations and relationships, international educators from both IUPUI and SYSU can work together with a shared mission and goal to further the commitment of their inter-institutional collaborative partnership (Chevallier, 2013; Gatewood, 2020; Lanford, 2020).

5) *Engage with governmental associations and governmental agencies*: Institutional leaders from IUPUI and SYSU should work with international higher education governmental associations (e.g., ACE, IIE, Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), Association of Public Land Grant Universities (APLU), NAFSA, China Education Association for International Exchange, Asia-Pacific Quality Network, International Association of Universities (IAU), International Network of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education) individually and collectively to develop, implement and design a common conceptual framework or paradigm that encourage institutional leaders to deepen their policy commitment for international collaborative degree programs (West, 2021). Colleges and universities must not relax key quality standards or procedures in the rush to build international connections. Instead, international educators at IUPUI should consider their domestic policies first when establishing international joint and dual degree program requirements, such as course transfers and course equivalencies. This is because, oftentimes, one size does not fit all (Gallagher, 2021). In addition, governmental agencies such as OECD and UNESCO should work with international leaders to define, assess, and differentiate among the various modes of TNHE (Jiang, 2021). International agencies have a uniquely powerful and privileged capacity to advise and assist countries in the formation, adaptation, and succession of policies related to TNHE activities within both developed and developing economies (Lee, 2021; Zheng et al., 2017).

In summary, this article outlines that adopting flexible and inclusive policies will be able to help remedy or address the ongoing issues facing international joint and dual degree programs or collaborative academic degrees. While no single policy will ever be able to address all issues, this article suggests that working collaboratively to identify policy problems will help institutions enhance their capacity, expertise, and training opportunities for their faculty, staff, and students. IUPUI and SYSU have launched a series of policies, procedures, and reform strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic to encourage, regulate, and guide policy leaders and institutional leaders on the succession of their program. Future research should continue to investigate the integrity and sustainability of international joint and dual degree programs, along with the best path for accreditation, whether national, binational, regional, or international accreditation during the COVID-19 era.

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Appendix A. Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI)-Sun Yet-sun University (SYSU): Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

中山大學
SUN YAT-SEN UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE TRUSTEES OF INDIANA UNIVERSITY (U.S.A.)

AND

SUN YAT-SEN UNIVERSITY (P.R.CHINA)

Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, P.R.China and the Trustees of Indiana University ("Indiana University") in the State of Indiana, U.S.A. (each a "Party" and collectively, the "Parties"), to foster academic exchange and cooperation, enter into this Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") on this [ ] (the "Effective Date") and hereby agree as follows:

1. The Parties shall encourage the following activities in particular:
   a. Exchange of academic materials, publications and other relevant information
   b. Exchange of professors and research staff
   c. Exchange of students, collaborative education programs
   d. Joint research and meetings for research

2. These activities shall be carried out after mutual consultation between the Parties or the divisions thereof. The Parties shall enter into a letter of agreement setting forth the responsibilities of the Parties for each agreed activity and such other matters as the Parties agree are necessary for the efficient achievement of the activity. Each such letter of agreement, prior to becoming effective, shall be vetted in accordance with each Party's internal policies and procedures and signed by an authorized representative of each Party.

3. This MOU shall be effective upon signing by both Parties and shall remain in effect for five (5) years from the Effective Date. The Parties shall discuss the renewal or extension of this MOU at least one (1) year prior to the intended termination date. This MOU may be terminated at any time by either Party with six (6) months written notice. Such termination shall not affect the obligations already in progress.

4. This MOU may be amended any time by the written mutual consent of both Parties.

5. Each Party shall send communications or notices pertaining to this MOU to the other Party at the relevant address set forth below or to such other address designated by that other Party through written notice.

   Indiana University: Office of the Vice President for International Affairs
   Bryan Hall, Room 104
   107 S. Indiana Avenue
   Bloomington, IN 47405 U.S.A.
   Phone: +1-812-855-8669

Fax: +1-812-855-6884
Email: ovpia@iu.edu

Sun Yat-sen University: Office of International Cooperation and Exchange
Room 408, Zhongshan Building
135 Xingang Xi Road
Guangzhou, 510275, P. R. China
Phone: +86-20-8411-1897
Fax: +86-20-8403-6860
Email: adsxy@mail.sysu.edu.cn, guoll3@mail.sysu.edu.cn

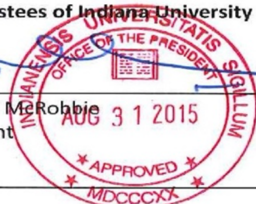
6. Each Party grants, for the term of this MOU, a limited, non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use its logo and name, to the other Party, solely for the promotion of this MOU and any joint programs and projects developed hereunder. Except as otherwise set forth in this paragraph, each Party agrees not to use the other Party's name, trademarks, or other intellectual property in any manner whatsoever without prior written consent in each instance.

7. In the event of a dispute arising out of or relating to this MOU or any letter of agreement entered into pursuant to this MOU, the Parties shall establish a committee of six (6) senior representatives, three (3) appointed by each Party, to attempt to resolve the dispute.

8. While no commitments have been made by the Parties binding the two institutions, the Parties sign this MOU in recognition of their common interests and as a token or good will.

9. This MOU is executed in both Chinese and English, each of which shall be deemed equally authentic, and each Party shall hold one copy.

For
The Trustees of Indiana University



Michael McRobbie
President

Date: ____________

David Zaret
Vice President for International Affairs

Date: 28/8/15

For
Sun Yat-sen University

Professor Luo Jun
President

Date: June 26, 2015

Professor Minghai Wei
Vice President

Date: June 29, 2015

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Reimagining Global Partnerships in Higher Education through Open Systems Theory

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ABSTRACT

Although global higher education partnerships can promote greater intercultural understanding, establish unique environments for student and faculty development, and generate opportunities for innovative and entrepreneurial ventures, they can be beset with problems that negate their potential effectiveness. This paper proposes that open systems theory offers a constructive lens for reimagining global higher education partnerships so that they not only benefit internal stakeholders, but also society. It begins with the basic concepts associated with systems theory, with particular attention to the differences between rational and natural systems, as well as open and closed systems. To project how open systems theory might encourage global partnerships to embrace institutional outreach with the environment, the relationship of open systems theory with community engagement is then explored. Finally, the paper shows how boundaries can be either reinforced or traversed through deliberate buffering, bridging, and boundary spanning strategies.

Keywords: boundary spanning, community engagement, global partnerships, open systems theory, stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

Although global higher education partnerships can promote greater intercultural understanding, establish unique environments for student and faculty development, and generate opportunities for innovative and entrepreneurial ventures (de Wit et al., 2015; Garrett, 2018; Tierney & Lanford, 2016), they can be beset with problems that negate their potential effectiveness. Three specific issues with global higher education partnerships concern the inequitable relationships forged between institutional partners, conflicts among partners due to contradictory values and norms, and a lack of community and regional engagement (Altbach & de Wit, 2020; Healey, 2015, 2018; Lanford, 2020; Oleksiyenko, 2019). Analyses of institutional cultures have been proposed as an initial step towards diagnosing and addressing problems related to inequitable relationships, as well as contradictory values and norms (Deese et al., 2018; Tierney & Lanford, 2015). Nevertheless, relationships can be impacted by a variety of cultural, social, and political factors which are external to higher education partnerships and institutional cultures. Moreover, values and norms

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are not solely curated within institutions; they reflect the values, norms, ideologies, and expectations of the societies in which institutions are embedded (Tierney & Lanford, 2018b).

With these considerations in mind, how might the individuals tasked with developing a global higher education partnership reimagine the partnership's relationship with surrounding cultures, with attention to the possible impacts on local communities? Additionally, how might a global partnership avoid becoming a "cloistered community" (Lanford & Tierney, 2016), in which the benefits of the partnership are solely accessible to individuals within participating institutions, and instead marshal its resources to engage and support individuals outside of the partnership?

This paper proposes that open systems theory offers a constructive lens for reimagining global higher education partnerships so that they not only benefit internal stakeholders, but also society (Boyle et al., 2011; Jongbloed et al., 2008). As observed recently by Kearney et al. (2019), open systems theory is based on the idea that individuals, institutions, and other entities have variable, yet complex, bonds with their cultures. As a result, these entities have a symbiotic relationship with their broader social systems. Moreover, open systems theory challenges the view of higher education as hierarchical, theory-centered, university-focused, homogenous, expert-led, and discipline-specific (Gibbons et al., 1994). Instead, it offers a different perspective - that the production of knowledge can be applied, problem-centered, network-focused, heterogeneous, community-oriented, and transdisciplinary. This latter model suggests that the traditional activities of research, teaching, and service need not be directed by one entity, but can be driven by multiple collaborators who hold divergent cultural values and norms. It further suggests that institutional resources should be shared with society so that marginalized communities are better supported and the various systems which underpin governments, businesses, and civil society are strengthened.

This paper begins with the basic concepts associated with systems theory, with particular attention to the differences between rational and natural systems, as well as open and closed systems. The implications of closed systems for higher education are illustrated through the examples of the Big Ten Academic Alliance in the United States and global education hubs. Afterwards, the fundamental concepts supporting open systems theory - concerning the co-construction of knowledge through information exchange between systems in the environment, the recognition of hierarchies, the mutability of organizations and organizational structures, and the necessity for open communication and feedback for continuous maintenance - are explained. The case of Yale-NUS College is subsequently analyzed through a discussion of Katz and Kahn's (1978) delineation of organizational subsystems.

To project how open systems theory might encourage global partnerships to embrace institutional outreach with the environment, the relationship of open systems theory with community engagement is then explored. Our argument here is that many global partnerships will continue to operate as elite, closed systems - evading important issues pertaining to institutional transparency, knowledge sharing, academic freedom, and human rights - unless they strategically consider how to engage with their respective societies and support their communities. Then, we turn our attention to how organizational boundaries are understood through the lens of open systems theory, with an emphasis on transactions between different types of stakeholders.

Finally, we consider how those boundaries can be either reinforced or traversed through deliberate buffering, bridging, and boundary spanning strategies. As we will discuss in greater detail, it may be necessary, at times, for a global partnership to purposefully buffer individuals, and their work, from outside criticism, especially when such critiques are precursory threats to the health and safety of students, staff,

and faculty. Nonetheless, bridging and boundary spanning strategies are also important for the vitality and innovative potential of a global higher education partnership, as they can ensure that diverse voices are heard and respected. Such strategies can also certify the long-term sustainability of the partnership by making sure that a broad range of entities are invested in the partnership's continued success, rather than a select few individuals who may exploit the resources engendered by the partnership before leaving for other opportunities.

SYSTEMS THEORY: BASIC CONCEPTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

A system is commonly defined as a group of interacting units or elements that have a common purpose (Emery, 1967). Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1950) attributed the survival of living organisms to their ability to import material from their environment, transform to fit the needs of their systems, and then export useful material back into the environment. Through this process, organisms theoretically derive the essential energy required for survival and evolution. These observations were the basis for his framework of general systems theory.

Systems theory is concerned with problems of relationships, of structures, and of interdependence, rather than with the attributes of an object (Katz & Kahn, 1978). These relationships can be explored through at least two different theoretical perspectives (Scott & Davis, 2016): rational and natural. A rational perspective is motivated by the pursuit of specific goals. Rational systems theorists thus posit that attention to clear goals, as well as the formalization of such goals, drive organizations and facilitate rational behavior within limits imposed by an organization. Natural systems theorists recognize that organizations are composed of social groups whose goals may conflict with the overall goals of an organization. Natural systems theorists note that the greatest resources of an organization are its human capital, and it is therefore important to understand and embody their interests and capabilities.

There are two basic types of systems: closed and open. A closed system consists of structures, relationships, and interdependent entities, but the system itself is entirely isolated - or, to borrow a phrase previously used by one of this article's authors, "cloistered" - from the environment in which it is embedded (Lanford & Tierney, 2016). An open system, on the other hand, freely exchanges information, resources, and energy with its societal and cultural environment, and it relies on these transactions for its equilibrium (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

No higher education institutions could exist for very long as completely closed systems. Colleges and universities are dependent on outside human, financial, and physical resources for survival, and they impact their environments to varying degrees through knowledge production, skill development, and community outreach activities. Nevertheless, many higher education institutions may appear to be closed systems due to exclusionary practices rooted in symbolism, elitist rhetoric, and limited information exchange. Physical barriers could discourage interaction with the surrounding environment, as a university campus with large iron gates that only allow faculty, staff, and students to enter may be materially and symbolically closed off from its cultural and social environment. An institution that fails to perform community outreach or share its scientific discoveries and expertise with the general public is also operating more as a closed system rather than as an open one.

In short, a survey of higher education institutions through the lens of systems theory is likely to find that colleges and universities operate on a continuum between closed and open. In fact, one interesting

aspect of higher education is that institutional prestige is often directly related to the degree with which an institution embraces closed systems through several intentional practices: admissions standards that benefit individuals with high levels of economic, social, and cultural capital; the production of esoteric publications that have limited public appeal and impact due to restricted circulation and specialized language grounded in disciplinary conventions; internal reward systems that privilege research and teaching activities within the institution, rather than as outreach to local communities; and the cultivation of academic networks with "peer institutions" that can offer the expanded resources of a marginally open system while preserving the exclusivity of an elite closed system (Bourdieu, 1973; Tierney & Lanford, 2017).

The Big Ten Conference in the United States is a useful example of an elite, somewhat closed system that nurtures academic cooperation through shared resources. Although most people in the U.S. know the Big Ten Conference through its member institutions' athletic competitions, the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) is arguably more impactful due to the financial, cultural, and scientific resources that are shared amongst its members, including library materials, patented technologies, and software licenses (Heyboer, 2012). The BTAA also facilitates inter-institutional collaboration for scholars interested in pursuing research projects. In total, researchers working in the BTAA conduct approximately $10.5 billion in funded research each year.[1] University of Maryland president Wallace Loh has testified to the importance of the academic networks offered by the Big Ten Conference, stating that he would not have encouraged Maryland's membership "if it was a conference that did not have this consortium" (Heyboer, 2019). While many of the research and teaching activities of BTAA members undoubtedly serve the public good and function in a more "open" manner, the resources closely held by the BTAA ensure that member institutions hold a certain degree of elite status among universities in the United States and internationally.

Many global higher education partnerships have been motivated by the same factors - a desire for elite status through association with a limited number of identified "peer institutions." One example is the proliferation of "education hubs" in aspiring and established global cities around the world. Knight (2011) has defined educational hubs as the following:

> A critical mass of local and foreign actors - including students, education institutions, companies, knowledge industries, science and technology centers - who, through interaction and in some cases colocation, engage in education, training, knowledge production, and innovation initiatives (p. 223).

While education hubs may outwardly appear to be open systems in that they embrace participation from a broad range of entities, they are frequently rather closed systems due to the limited range of individuals and institutions that are invited to reap the benefits of participation. Additionally, two acknowledged problems with education hubs have been 1) the circumscribed exchange of information and resources with the public due to limitations on academic freedom and 2) a lack of transparency concerning financial incentives and activities related to innovation and entrepreneurship. To reiterate, closed systems have relatively little interaction with other systems or their immediate external environments, whereas open systems freely interact with other systems and/or the external environment. Thus, the stated objectives of education hubs - to bring together a diverse and accomplished group of researchers, to forge collaborations on innovative research topics and pedagogies, and to project soft power through scholarly inquiry - often fail to achieve their ambitious goals due to circumscribed relationships with their environments. However,

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[1] See, for example: https://newbrunswick.rutgers.edu/discover-rutgers/big-ten-experience

a deeper interrogation of the fundamental concepts behind open systems is necessary to analyze how global higher education partnerships might benefit from engagement with open systems theory.

OPEN SYSTEMS THEORY

According to Katz and Kahn (1978), an open system is defined as having identifiable repeated organizational processes that import energy from the environment, transform inputted energy into products, export the product into the environment, and re-energize the system from resources in the environment. Open systems theory accepts that organizations are contingent upon their environment, and the environments are concurrently dependent on organizations. One fundamental proposition of systems theory is the generation and co-construction of knowledge. Hence, an open system engages in mutual information exchange with other systems in its environment and relies on these transactions for its equilibrium. The environments are what support the organizations and shape how they are composed. The connections with external elements can be more critical than those that exist among the internal components (Scott & Davis, 2016). This is because, at times, the divisions between organization and environment are constantly changing and evolving.

The organizational structure of open systems theory is one that acknowledges the activities of participants who may have different intentions, but are situated within their larger environments. Open systems rely on processes of communication and feedback for continuous maintenance among specialized and interdependent subsystems. In 1978, Katz and Kahn speculated that there were four types of subsystems for these processes: adaptive, maintenance, production, and managerial. The functions of the adaptive subsystem are designed to ensure that the organization can meet the changing needs of its environment. The maintenance subsystem is responsible for maintaining the stability and internal personnel of the organization. The production subsystem focuses on the activities of converting inputs into outputs and the services that are provided by the organization. The managerial subsystem coordinates the functions of the other subsystems, settles conflicts, and relates the overall organization to the environment. The managerial subsystem crosses all subsystems of the organization to encourage each of the subsystems to attain goals and sustain a high level of operations.

Within all organizational systems, subsystems form and interact. Yet, open systems are distinguished by their recognition of how hierarchical systems function. Trish (1983) identifies the formation of groups, or “clusters,” that are positioned - or position themselves organically - in a hierarchical fashion within an environment. Universities have departments, programs, fields of study, and administrative groups that could be considered “clusters.” These clusters are part of a hierarchy within the institution that is constantly evolving and determines their resources and range of activities, but they are also responsible to scan the external environment for how they process, and work within, the larger community.

According to systems theory, the university is informed, like any other open system, by constraints related to financial, structural, and physical resources (Scott & Davis, 2016). These constraints provide the constants of the environmental framework within which the system must operate. A system wants to maintain a general state of balance among all external and internal operating forces. Colleges and universities want to be able to thrive during periods of financial duress, fluctuations in the educational periphery, changes in policies or accreditations, and competition with external entities.

One could suggest that a university’s primary output/product is knowledge. Students come to universities to develop their skills and their knowledge of various subject areas. Faculty participate in

research to analyze new data, develop theories, and contribute to existing knowledge, ostensibly for both external and internal environments. As noted by Scott and Davis (2016), "the open systems perspective stresses the importance of cultural-cognitive elements in the construction of organizations. Nothing is more portable than ideas" (p. 31). However, an open systems perspective would emphasize that the institution - or system - did not "create" knowledge. Resources and foundational knowledge were initially derived from the environment; obtained as an input; packaged, enhanced, and modified to the desire of the learner, or adapted by the researcher; and then released as an output back into the external environment. As a result, open systems are capable of self-maintenance on the basis of throughput of resources from the environment (Scott & Davis, 2016).

When applying open systems theory to global higher education partnerships, one could further argue that partnerships' sustainability issues are directly related to a lack of open engagement with their immediate environments. Take, for example, the case of Yale-NUS College. Since its founding in 2011, the high-profile partnership between Yale University and the National University of Singapore has been heralded for its audacious goal in contextualizing a "Western liberal arts" education - with small class sizes, an emphasis on critical thinking, and interdisciplinary coursework - for an urban Asian environment renown for early specialization, especially in the fields of finance, commerce, and technological innovation. From its inception, though, Yale-NUS College has faced criticisms that the partnership between NUS and Yale was financially imbalanced (in that the Singaporean government provided the preponderance of funding for the college); academic freedoms on campus were scarcely reflective of the city's environment; and student development was focused on generating an elite class that would enjoy the benefits of a world-class educational experience, as well a prestigious credential, but ultimately have a limited impact on the educational or cultural development of Singapore. Justification for this latter critique was reflected in a 24 September 2010 speech by Dr. Ng Eng Hen, the then-Minister for Education. According to Ng, a primary goal of the Yale-NUS Liberal Arts College was "to provide an education model to develop leaders of industry, academia and indeed of nations, as Yale has consistently done."[2] As a result, Yale-NUS College's engagement with the surrounding environment was minimal, its impact on the city's educational values and pedagogies was restricted, and the activities of the small alumni base in Singapore were equally limited. These institutional issues - indicating a lack of reciprocity and transparency with the environment - have resulted in a surprising and peremptory announcement of the institution's closure by Singaporean officials on 27 August 2021 (Sharma, 2021).

One could analyze the case of Yale-NUS College through open systems theory by engaging with the aforementioned literature on adaptive, maintenance, production, and managerial subsystems. Previous work has noted that the long-term sustainability of global higher education partnerships like Yale-NUS suffers from inadequate planning and funding volatility, poor faculty and staff morale, and leadership turnover (See Lanford, 2020). Thus, durable systems should be developed that allow for institutional adaptation in concert with the environment, a strong maintenance subsystem that provides professional support for faculty and staff (particularly those from foreign countries), a production subsystem that deliberately considers institutional outreach with the environment, and a managerial subsystem that anticipates administrative turnover by preparing emergent leaders within the organization.

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[2] Speech by Dr. Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defense, at the Grand Opening of NUS Business School's Mochtar Riady Building at NUS Business School, on 24 September 2010 at 4.30 pm.

Of these four suggestions, institutional outreach with the environment is perhaps the least common to be found in global higher education partnerships. Therefore, it will receive extended discussion in the following section, with specific attention to the established literature on community engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement has challenged the dominant epistemology guiding the understanding of the ways higher education relates to the social world, along with what is considered scholarship. When Ernest Boyer (1996) famously addressed the purpose of scholarship, an influential paradigm for the institutional scholarship of communal knowledge sharing was introduced. Boyer's paradigm encouraged faculty engagement within the community to not only be part of the curriculum, but to also be recognized and rewarded in the university. Boyer suggests four functions of the academic profession. The scholarship of discovery participates in basic research, which Boyer emphasizes as the main ingredient of academic scholarship. The scholarship of integration makes connections across disciplines so that research can fit into the "larger picture." The scholarship of application integrates theory and practice. The scholarship of teaching invigorates the entire research enterprise through the sharing of knowledge to develop engaged students. Boyer's proposed functions for a reconsideration of scholarship have had a profound effect on teaching, service, and research in the United States, especially in colleges and universities that seek to serve regional interests rather than compete for "world-class" status.

This reciprocal nature of knowledge acquisition, construction, and sharing between universities and communities are the same foundational features of community engagement. Community engagement requires collaborative, reciprocal processes that recognize - and respect - the value of knowledge, perspective, and resources shared among partners. This perspective is the antithesis of a closed system which presents universities and communities interacting in a unidirectional "expert" paradigm (Benson et al., 2000). In U.S. higher education, community engagement is recognized by the Public Purpose Institute (in partnership with the Carnegie Foundation) as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."[3] Community engagement is consistent with definitions of open systems theory in that "the open systems perspective stresses the reciprocal ties that bind and relate the organization with those elements that surround and penetrate it" (Scott & Davis, 2016, p. 106). One of the motives for community engagement in higher education is supported by open systems theory through the flow of information. Academic conferences, associations, field networks, and scholarly publications are key platforms for information sharing. Participation in community engagement can also open new avenues for information transfer. The external environment, or community, can be viewed as the ultimate source of materials, resources, and information (Scott & Davis, 2016). Community engagement can also provide a new perspective, or lens, on the way the information is processed. External agencies, such as the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, have called for community engagement to be a function of the university, stating that "teaching, learning and scholarship engage faculty, students, and community in mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration. Their interactions address community-identified needs, deepen students' civic and academic learning,

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[3] For updated information about the community engagement classification, see https://public-purpose.org/initiatives/carnegie-elective-classifications/community-engagement-classification-u-s/

enhance community well-being, and enrich the scholarship of the institution."[4] Open systems similarly depend upon interactions with their external environments for knowledge flows and for existential legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

From an open systems perspective, there is a close connection between the condition of the environment and the characteristics of the systems within it (Emery, 1967). One of the features of open systems is that they possess inputs and outputs (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Inputs for the university (as an open system) include staff, students, curricula, and physical and financial resources. Outputs of the university include students who graduate and re-enter their external communities, new research that is presented as public scholarship, and/or institutional contributions to their communities through public service. Hence, an institution needs to be active in the environment from which "inputs" are derived so it can produce a civically engaged "output." This is particularly important for institutions in urban or rural environments where marginalized and/or low-income communities are dependent upon close interactions with a college or university for employment, education, and infrastructure development. If an institution exploits its environment for "inputs," but singularly focuses its "outputs" in the form of scholarship, teaching, and service to aspirational communities in other locations, the result is an imbalanced and unhealthy relationship between the environment and the institution.

Sandmann and Plater (2009) have recognized that the concept of "community" has become increasingly complex in an age of globalization:

> At a time when community has attained the fluidity of convenience as we belong to multiple communities that are global, disciplinary, transcendent, and increasingly, electronic, other administrators, faculty, staff, students, and trustees long for the certainty of belonging to a physical community even as they want it to be international in its connections (p. 15).

In an effort to reach these multiple communities and compete in a global economy that is perceived as hypercompetitive, institutions with aspirations to expand their alumni bases, research grant opportunities, and student applicant pools are increasingly branding themselves as "global universities" (Myers & Bhopal, 2021; Shimauchi & Kim, 2020). While internationalization strategies may make sense from economic and human resource perspectives, they have rarely resulted in increased openness and transparency. Rather, administrative plans to open international branch campuses and expand other forms of global partnerships have too often been shrouded in secrecy so that important stakeholders have a limited opportunity to voice their concerns (Aviv, 2013; Deese et al., 2018; Healey, 2018; Wilkins, 2017). Fundamentally important discussions about the role of academic freedom have been ignored, if not dismissed, even when the protection of basic human rights is at stake (Deese et al., 2018; Tierney & Lanford, 2015; Walsh, 2019; Wilkins, 2017). Even though the connections possible through global engagement should facilitate open access to multiple communities, they seemingly endeavor to preserve closed access within elite communities. We counter here that an approach to global partnerships informed by open systems theory should instead embrace community engagement as a core value (Sandmann et al., 2016) so that transparency, knowledge sharing, and human rights are placed at the forefront of discussions and activities. From an open systems perspective, institutional transformation and societal transformation can then work hand-in-hand. The question is how to encourage community engagement when higher education is

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[4] See http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org

perceived as insular and reticent to external critique. For this reason, the remaining discussions will focus on organizational boundaries - and how they might be reimagined.

ORGANIZATIONAL BOUNDARIES

Systems have boundaries that define and impose structure (Scott & Davis, 2016). In universities, boundaries within departments or between colleges are imposed to establish clear lines of distinct processes. A strategy for community engagement should create opportunities for universities and the external environment to permeate the boundaries. Through such a strategy, knowledge and resources can be shared while the importance of the boundaries is still recognized.

Many theorists have produced working understandings and definitions of organizational boundaries, especially within the literature on open systems theory (Aldrich, 1971). While open systems theory focuses on the value of transactional relationships and information flows, boundaries nevertheless exist to demarcate structures that make organizations unique. The ways that organizational boundaries are defined have been related to the people that exist within bounded organizations, the activities they are engaged in, their interpersonal relationships, and/or the roles they inhabit (e.g., Laumann et al., 1983). The identification of individuals as “members” or “non-members” is one way in which organizational boundaries are cultivated. Organizations, such as colleges and universities, can be similarly classified on the basis of their common or divergent features. However, these boundaries - whether established through identification strategies or classifications - can be barriers to the transactions necessary for open systems.

A fundamental principle of open systems theory is the socially constructed nature of boundaries. Socially constructed boundaries can be examined through the roles that individuals assume, the frequency of interactions between individuals, and the strength of their interactions. If norms develop among a group of individuals, and individuals align their behavior according to those emerging norms, then organizational boundaries may be perceptible due to the normative processes that have forged strong bonds among those individuals.

Scott and Davis (2016) further suggest that open systems theory recognizes organizational boundaries developed through external demands. Such an identification of boundaries may be interrelated with the concept of stakeholders. Jongbloed et al. (2008) define stakeholders as any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of an organization’s objectives. University stakeholders can include such diverse groups as students, alumni, research communities, businesses, and community agencies. The government is an important stakeholder in higher education and possesses influence over university policies and financial resources. Similar external stakeholders, such as grant foundations and policy institutes, have the ability to exert considerable pressure on a college or university’s internal activities. While such pressures may seem like a negative influence, colleges and universities that involve external stakeholders in decisions and processes can gain a better understanding of current and emerging societal issues; attain key information that helps the organization develop meaningful institutional priorities; and improve and align their research, teaching, and service activities to achieve greater societal impact.

Nevertheless, open systems theory is unique in its emphasis on the transactions that span, permeate, and redefine the existing boundaries. This is not to say that boundaries should cease to exist. Open systems without boundaries can cease to be definable, separate entities, and universities would fail to be the unique organizations they are without limits and boundaries. Our goal here is to point out that higher education

organizations, such as colleges and universities, can strategically invite and cultivate external engagement, or they can deliberately fortify boundaries to limit or close off such transactions. Such practices are known as buffering, bridging, and boundary spanning.

BUFFERING, BRIDGING, AND BOUNDARY SPANNING

Within a university, buffering strategies often focus on protecting the institutional missions of instruction and research from external demands that are perceived as being ill-informed about the nature of teaching and scholarship. One useful example is the recent, concerted attack on Critical Race Theory in the United States by political stakeholders who hope to stifle criticism informed by empirical data and disciplinary expertise. Such attacks have rightfully been viewed by colleges and universities as destructive to core tenets of higher education - such as academic freedom, shared governance, and tenure - that are fundamentally important to scientific progress and humanistic inquiry (Lanford, 2021). In fact, similar attacks on academic freedom have increasingly occurred throughout the world in recent years. These attacks have threatened not only the production of quality scholarship, but also the safety of students and faculty whose research not only questions prevailing societal norms, values, and institutions, but also highlights gross injustices in existing political, legal, and educational systems (Ahmad, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021; Tierney, 2021).

The university has been traditionally viewed as a "sanctuary," as it generally possesses a physical campus that can be isolated from the external environment. Nevertheless, such institutions are still accountable to the laws of local and state governments. Hence, the concept of a university as a sanctuary is based on the buffering actions that individual members choose to undertake to support their internal members and external communities. For example, universities have refused to share confidential information with authoritarian governments when a student or faculty member's human rights are threatened; they have also advocated for the rights of marginalized people and provided legal resources when necessary (Tierney et al., 2017). The university also embraces an internal culture of its own language, values, and customs that are assiduously passed on to generations of students and reinforced through ceremonies and rituals (Tierney & Lanford, 2018a). One essential component of university culture, identified as early as 1852 by Cardinal Newman in *The Idea of a University*, is the pursuit of knowledge through the interrogation of doctrinaire belief systems (Lanford, 2019). Without buffering, the external environment could place restrictions on such pursuits, especially when new data and analyses raise important questions about the impact of industrial activities on the environment, expose unethical political or business practices, or compel a reevaluation of historical narratives that privilege dominant cultures and perspectives. Without buffering, external demands could also diminish the quality of an institution's activities, whether they include impactful research that improves society or the development of critical thinking skills in students. This concern about the demands of powerful external forces is why colleges and universities steadfastly defend concepts like academic freedom and tenure, which are critical for protecting the pursuit of knowledge, the impact of scholarship, and the overall quality of a student's educational experience.

Buffering strategies are not meant to be solely inclusive or territorial; there is a need for strategic decision-making processes to participate with external demands in limited ways. Honig and Hatch (2004) suggest that "periods of buffering can help organizations incubate particular ideas and ignore negative feedback from their environments that can derail their decision-making" (p. 23). Through strategic buffering, an organization can also demonstrate that potentially damaging external demands are being

symbolically adopted without having to change the dynamics of the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). For instance, universities frequently meet the credentialing requirements of external agents while still developing and testing new curricula to meet the evolving demands of labor markets and society.

Whereas buffering strategies purposefully limit interactions between the organization and the external environment, bridging strategies focus on how to increase those interactions. As noted by Honig and Hatch (2004), "bridging activities involve organizations' selective engagement of environmental demands to inform and enhance implementation of their goals and strategies" (p. 23). Another important bridging strategy involves inviting outsiders to lend their expertise and perspectives to the organization. It has been well established that creative and innovative organizations welcome individuals from diverse backgrounds and disciplines (Lanford & Tierney, 2022). The bridging of external agents into the university may be institutionalized through a Board of Regents or an alumni association, or it can occur on an *ad hoc* basis through informal channels available to influential financial donors or corporate entities. These groups may be brought in to lend their financial support and/or professional expertise to a university's aspirations. In short, bridging between internal and external groups can facilitate organizational progress on a wide range of issues, from external feedback that leads to the development of innovative ideas to the targeted sharing of resources that results in mutually valuable partnerships.

To nurture bridging strategies between groups, work towards common goals, and build durable relationships, careful attention to boundary spanning is necessary. Customarily, in educational literature, boundary spanners are depicted as individuals who operationalize their existing networks and relationships among various groups to create and/or strengthen an inter-organizational relationship (Lanford & Maruco, 2018; Shrum, 1990). These boundary spanners usually have invaluable communication skills and insider cultural knowledge that allow them to understand the unique needs and expectations of the partners in a relationship (Adams, 2014; Fear & Sandmann, 2001; Jordan et al., 2013; Miller, 2008). Organizational leaders who move seamlessly through different roles within and between organizations are given special recognition in boundary spanning literature (Cross et al., 2013). While boundary spanning individuals can be a tremendous asset for a partnership, their departure can also weaken, or even dissolve, existing bonds (Broschak, 2004). Therefore, it is generally good practice to identify and nurture multiple boundary spanners so that a partnership can tolerate inevitable personnel changes.

As colleges and universities continue to imagine themselves as global brands and develop their teaching and research initiatives across boundaries in increasingly complex ways, their global partnerships can benefit from this multi-layered, integrative approach, which underscores the connections, rather than the divisions, between partners. For example, a research partnership that is reliant on a small number of specialists can be bolstered through the deeper exploration of synergies between departments and programs, as well as potential community partners. Even if few synergies exist, an openness to new forms of knowledge could result in unexpected opportunities for greater understanding and innovation.

Although individuals receive much of the attention in boundary spanning scholarship, boundary spanning organizations can also unite different institutions around common goals and foster a sense of trust among partners (Goldring & Sims, 2005; Miller, 2008). Rather than viewing international branch campuses, for instance, as entities that are discrete from the home institution and the host country, such campuses can be operated as boundary spanning organizations that utilize resources from the core and put them to work in activities that respond to local and regional demands. In turn, bonds of trust between the campus and the

host environment can be nurtured through a shared sense of purpose and the flattening of hierarchies and power relations. The local and regional environment would become stakeholders in the branch campus, providing singularly valuable contextual knowledge that could inform future strategies by the home institution. Similar to open systems theory, boundary spanning seeks feedback from community and university environments through stakeholder networks; this information is subsequently interpreted and translated back into the partnership (Adams, 2013). Universities, therefore, benefit by avoiding stagnant partnerships and cultivating new opportunities for knowledge sharing within communities (Sandmann & Weerts, 2008).

Open systems theory recognizes that organizations are inextricably connected to their environments, but many boundaries can be challenging to transcend (Scott & Davis, 2016). These boundaries exist as a filtering system for the transfer of information, resources, and energy. Organizations depend on mechanisms to separate and refine these environmental factors as they adapt to changing systems. Individuals who are able to collect, interpret, communicate, and share information are key players in both open systems communications and in community engagement. Boundary spanners are collaborative, respectful, and able to accurately characterize the interests of different stakeholders. They are thus able to move fluidly through the separate bounded systems.

CONCLUSION

The university is a living and constantly changing organism that interacts with its external environment in countless ways. Other papers in this special issue have demonstrated the power of theories related to neocolonialism and mimicry in critically analyzing how global higher education partnerships can be re-envisioned to better reflect the cultural values and societal goals of the environments in which they are situated (Clarke, 2021; Xu, 2021). In this paper, we have similarly proposed that an engagement with systems theory - and open systems theory in particular - can recognize these interactions in a powerful manner, such that the significance of community engagement can be better appreciated by higher education institutions engaging in global partnerships. Moreover, we contend that successful partnerships strategically manage their bridging, buffering, and boundary spanning strategies so that organizational mission statements and values are protected while a diversity of perspectives that can improve processes and products are welcomed. We further suggest that a reimagining of global higher education partnerships is imperative - especially in this time when authoritarianism is on the rise and scholarly inquiry is subject to increased politicization - for greater transparency with stakeholders, an honest accounting of vital issues like academic freedom and human rights, and the future legitimacy of the academic enterprise.

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Building a University Partnership to Support Early Grade Reading in Nigeria: The Case of the Nigeria Centre for Reading, Research and Development

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ABSTRACT

While most international educational development projects are engaged in capacity development, trainings rarely have enough depth to result in lasting changes in the capacity of local stakeholders. The case of the Nigeria Centre for Reading, Research and Development (NCRRD) at Bayero University Kano used a different model. Six NCRRD faculty spent six months at Florida State University (FSU) attending courses on literacy and elementary education, attending grant writing trainings and reading seminars, observing literacy instruction in schools, and participating in conferences. After returning to Nigeria, the fellows were mentored by FSU faculty through the stages of a research project; all fellows subsequently submitted articles to international journals. FSU supported the administrative structures of NCRRD, assisting in the development of financial and compliance infrastructure. The outcomes of the partnership included 1) the establishment of the NCRRD as a center for excellence in reading in West Africa, 2) the publication of contextually relevant literature to inform policymakers and practitioners, and 3) the establishment of graduate programs in reading. This paper discusses the challenges faced by the institutions during the establishment of the NCRRD and makes recommendations for institutions interested in developing long-term international partnerships.

Keywords: capacity development, higher education, literacy, Nigeria, university partnerships

INTRODUCTION

University-to-university partnerships involving institutions in sub-Saharan Africa have the potential to increase the rigor and relevance of research on key development topics, including the teaching of early grade reading. However, this type of research support has largely been left out of large scale, donor-funded education projects. This paper examines the case of the Nigeria Center for Reading, Research and Development (NCRRD), which developed through a USAID-funded collaboration between Florida State University (FSU) and Bayero University Kano (BUK) in Nigeria. This paper will briefly review relevant

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literature on international university collaborations in sub-Saharan Africa, describe the NCRRD model, and conclude with recommendations for future capacity development activities in the region.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

To date, much of the international donor aid aimed at higher education capacity development has been devoted to scholarships to study in high-income countries, rather than the development of capacity in context (McCowan, 2016). In recent years, donors have paid greater attention to the sustainability issues associated with this approach, as it often leads to brain drain when highly educated individuals leave their positions for better paying opportunities, often abroad. This approach also ignores the fact that an individual's capacity to conduct research and engage in high quality teaching is related not only to their individual knowledge and skills, but also to the infrastructure of the institution in which they are embedded, which may also need development. These issues of brain drain and the importance of building infrastructure have led to greater interest in university-to-university collaboration as a development approach. For example, USAID has released several funding opportunities in the past two years through the Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX) Annual Program Statement.

We use the term "north-south" in this paper to describe collaborations between institutions in high and low- or middle-income countries, in alignment with previous work (e.g., Adriansen & Madsen, 2019; Asare et al., 2020). While many north-south university collaborations have focused on capacity development in health fields (Frantz et al., 2014), projects supporting the development of basic education - for example, through capacity development for faculty at teacher training institutions - have been far less common. As an applied field, education offers many opportunities to combine research, practice, and capacity development in projects that are of interest to faculty at both northern and southern universities. One example of this type of collaboration is the Centre for the Promotion of Literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa (CAPOLSA) at the University of Zambia, a partnership with the University of Jyväskylä in Finland (Serpell, 2014).

University-to-university partnerships can be highly productive but can also be challenging for a variety of reasons, as discussed further below. It is critical for the participating institutions and individuals to agree on a conceptual framework for the partnership from the project's inception. One useful guiding framework for partnership is offered by Wanni et al. (2010), who recommend that partnership participants commit to:

> 1) shared ownership, 2) trust and transparency, 3) understanding of cultural and working environments, 4) clear division of roles/responsibilities, 5) effective and regular communication, 6) joint strategic planning and implementation, 7) strong commitment from staff, 8) supportive institutional infrastructure, 9) monitoring/evaluation, and 10) sustainability (p. 6).

These principles provide a comprehensive structure upon which to build university-to-university partnerships, especially in the context of development projects, with their inherent power imbalances. We will discuss below how several of these principles became key factors in the NCRRD project implementation.

Institutions' Motivations for Pursuing Partnerships

For a collaboration to be considered successful, it is first necessary to understand the motivations for partner institutions to engage in such projects and plan to ensure those aims are met. Globally, the internationalization of higher education has been on an upward trend throughout the past several decades (Altbach & Reisberg, 2018; Rumbley, et al., 2012). Southern institutions are often motivated by desires to

improve the quality and quantity of research produced by their faculty. While Africa's share of academic publications is increasing (Mouton & Blanckenberg, 2018), sub-Saharan African researchers produce less than 1% of research papers, despite the region having more than 13% of the world's population (Fonn et al., 2018). International collaborations may give southern researchers access to new data or methodologies, or they may lead to new perspectives on issues (Grieve & Mitchell, 2020). In a recent review of education research in Sub-Saharan Africa, Mitchell et al. (2020) found that "over one-third of Nigerian articles appear in journals that lack conventional standards of peer review, some containing spelling or grammatical errors in the title" (p. 370). While publishing in international education journals is seen as more prestigious than in local journals, researchers at southern institutions often need mentorship from an academic with experience in international publishing to achieve this goal (Thomas, 2018). After publication, researchers who have collaborators beyond Africa are more likely to be frequently cited (Confraria et al., 2018). Southern institutions may also be motivated to develop their capacity to obtain and manage external research funding from foundations, non-profit organizations, and national and foreign governments.

Northern institutions generally have a different set of motivations for engaging in north-south partnerships. Collaborations may be driven by individual faculty members' interests, an institutional desire to be known as a leader in a specific development-related field, or the ability to access development funding for research activities. More broadly, international partnerships can enrich northern universities' academic programs at home by promoting intercultural and global citizenship skills for domestic students (Maringe & Foskett, 2010; Mock et al., 2016). For example, students at the northern university may benefit from research internships related to the collaboration that develop valuable cross-cultural communication skills. As a result of these motivations, many U.S. institutions have maintained or increased their financial commitments to internationalization, even during budget cutbacks (Blessinger & Cozza, 2017). While the motivations of the northern and southern universities likely differ, thoughtfully designed university-to-university collaborations can meet both sets of institutional goals.

Challenges to Developing Equitable Partnerships

Development projects bring an inherent power imbalance, and university-to-university collaborations in the sector are no exception. Previous university collaborations in various fields have often been unbalanced in terms of decision-making power (Adriansen & Madsen, 2019; Asare et al., 2020; Craveiro et al., 2020; Walsh et al., 2016), with northern faculty generally serving as first author on publications, for example (Gonzalez-Alcaide et al., 2020). Financial control generally stays with the northern partners, an issue that causes frustration at southern partner institutions (Dean et al., 2015). These funding patterns, in which development funds are awarded to the northern institution, which then subcontracts to the southern institution, are often attributable to perceived institutional weakness regarding the financial management of external funding at southern institutions, or at a minimum, lack of an established track record on funds management.

Power dynamics can also be visible in decision making processes around collaborative research projects. The research priorities of northern and southern academics may not match, and the leverage of funding may mean that the northern academics control what is studied and how. Local politics regarding topics can also be challenging and not well understood by foreign researchers, causing stress in relationships (Grieve & Mitchell, 2020). These patterns can be seen as the legacies of colonialism in some African countries (Adriansen & Madsen, 2019; Mitchell et al., 2020).

An additional challenge in the development of north-south university collaborations is ensuring gender equity, which is often a key priority for development funders. International collaborations are more likely to involve male academics in Africa, reflecting the relatively low percentages of female faculty (Asare et al., 2020). More broadly, there are relatively few female research leaders in sub-Saharan Africa (Owusu et al., 2017), which may be partly due to their low rates of participation in early- and mid-career capacity development projects. The lack of role models in academic research for young women likely impacts the career decisions of female university students in African universities. Differences in cultural gender norms across partner institutions may be challenging, but a successful capacity development project should be inclusive—not only of women, but of individuals with disabilities and other groups that are disadvantaged in specific contexts, including racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

Local Context: Nigeria and Bayero University Kano

Nigeria is a major recipient of donor funding related to educational access and quality in primary grades.[1] However, as of 2017, relatively little attention had been paid to creating a local base of reading research experts with the skills to conduct rigorous research to support ongoing initiatives. While a critical analysis of reading research from Nigeria has not, to our knowledge, been done, a recent analysis of reading research from South Africa identified a number of weaknesses in published studies, including a lack of methodological rigor and poor analysis of findings (Biesman-Simons et al., 2020). This lack of rigor in education research means that interventions often draw on literature produced by northern researchers using samples of children in northern countries. The lack of high quality, locally relevant research is a constraint to the improvement of reading instruction and outcomes in Nigeria, as well as other low and middle-income countries. Additionally, teacher training systems in Nigeria have remained weak (Barnes et al., 2019), as interventions focus on in-service teacher training for more immediate results.

The concept of the NCRRD emerged from the Northern Education Initiative (NEI) Plus activity (2015-2020), a USAID-funded project that built upon the prior Northern Education Initiative to increase access to quality basic education and improve early grade reading skills. NEI Plus was implemented by Creative Associates International in collaboration with three U.S. organizations and four local organizations.[2] Noting the systemic gaps in the areas of research production and pre-service teacher training, USAID's education officers in Abuja facilitated the development of a partnership between Bayero University Kano (BUK) and Florida State University to create the NCRRD.

Bayero University Kano (1975) was the first university in Kano, Nigeria's most populous state and second-largest city. BUK currently has nearly 50,000 undergraduate and graduate students and 4,518 staff, including 1,575 academic staff. The Faculty of Education's six departments offer a wide range of degree programs, including general education, adult education, special education, science and technology education, and counseling. BUK's Directorate of Research Innovation and Partnership had previous experience supporting external grant funding to the university's Centre for Dryland Agriculture.

[1] Major donors include the World Bank, USAID, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNICEF, and the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID; now the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office [FCDO]).

[2] Partner organizations included Education Development Center (EDC), Florida State University (FSU), Overseas Strategic Consulting (OSC), Value Minds, Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), the Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN), and the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN).

Importantly, BUK was prepared to commit faculty time and resources to the new center, and to continue to fund the center after the USAID collaboration funding ended.

At the beginning of discussions regarding the NCRRD, FSU was already engaged in multiple research and development projects in Nigeria, including NEI Plus. Moreover, FSU faculty had existing relationships, experience working in the region, and years of experience working on early grade reading projects in sub-Saharan Africa. With more than 50 years of experience with international university-to-university collaborations, FSU's administration and grants management systems were prepared to not only manage the project, but to mentor BUK's administration through the project. As a large state university and pre-service teacher training institution, FSU had many similarities with BUK regarding its aims for its academic programs, including the development of new teachers who were prepared to teach reading using evidence-backed pedagogies, thereby ensuring that all children learned to read. In short, FSU was a good fit for this collaboration.

THE NCRRD MODEL

The collaboration between FSU and BUK to create the NCRRD had five main components: 1) a graduate literacy course, 2) residencies at FSU, 3) support in building a resource library, 4) assistance in developing new courses and degree programs on literacy, and 5) research mentorship. These activities were implemented from 2017 through 2020.

Individual-level capacity development began in October 2017, when FSU faculty traveled to BUK to deliver a graduate level course on early grade reading to the faculty fellows. This course provided the faculty fellows (who would later attend FSU for extended residencies) a foundation in the current evidence base on early grade reading. The course was delivered in several multi-day sessions, ending in December 2017. During this course, FSU faculty supported NCRRD faculty in writing research papers related to their areas of interest, which were later developed into an edited book, as discussed further below. Fellows who completed all course activities successfully received certificates of completion.

To provide in-depth training on the science of reading and research methodologies, six faculty fellows from BUK came to FSU for six-month residencies. During the residencies, fellows completed coursework in three areas: 1) early grade reading, 2) research methods, and 3) international and multicultural education. Each fellow audited four or five courses. In addition to coursework, fellows visited local primary schools to observe reading instruction and meet with school administrators. All fellows attended one national- or international-level conference, including the Comparative and International Education Society, the International Literacy Association, and the Literacy Research Association; some of the fellows presented their work at these conferences. Attendance at the conferences allowed the fellows to build their professional networks and exposed them to current research in the field of early grade reading.

During their residencies, each fellow was matched with an FSU professor as a research mentor. The mentors had extensive research and publication experience. Mentors helped fellows to develop a research question, design studies, and develop data collection tools. Upon their returns to BUK, fellows collected and analyzed data, then wrote a journal article for publication in partnership with their mentors. These publications and presentations helped to establish the credibility and expertise of the NCRRD fellows in the field of early grade reading, both within Nigeria and internationally. These mentorships have continued beyond the formal end of the project (June 2020) with the development of new empirical projects.

To further establish the NCRRD as a center of excellence in early grade reading, the project purchased books and other print materials for the NCRRD library; these books were unavailable in Nigeria

and have become an invaluable reference for researchers and graduate students in the region. In addition, FSU provided - and continues to provide - the NCRRD fellows with free access to thousands of journal titles through its subscriptions to journal databases. This will allow NCRRD faculty to stay up to date on developments in early grade reading globally and to conduct new research. The materials available in the library were further bolstered by textbooks, articles, and other materials brought to BUK by the fellows after completing their residencies, as well as by new computers and other technology purchased by BUK.

The NCRRD has also engaged in national-level curriculum development work and the development of new academic programs to promote sustainability in line with the project's objectives and the principles for successful partnerships (Wanni et al., 2010). The NCRRD has designed - and proposed to the National Universities Commission - the incorporation of reading components into the curricula of language-learning-based programs at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in all Nigerian universities. Additionally, the NCRRD has designed two new programs at BUK focusing on early grade reading, in collaboration with the BUK Faculty of Education and the School of Continuing Education. These programs are currently awaiting the approval of the Academic Development Committee and the University Senate and are expected to commence at the beginning of the 2021 academic year. The NCRRD will promote and support specialization in reading at both the master's and PhD degree levels within Faculty of Education degree programs.

NCRRD PROJECT OUTCOMES

The central goal of the NCRRD project was to establish a center for early grade reading research and training to serve Nigeria and West Africa. This was successful, and the NCRRD is now open and operating. As a sign of its ongoing commitment to the NCRRD, the Nigerian Government has approved, in their 2020 national budget, the construction of dedicated buildings with the required facilities for the NCRRD. It is expected that the work shall be completed in 2021. Upon full approval of its new academic programs, the NCRRD will have a direct impact on the teaching of early grade reading in Nigeria.

An important aim of the project was to establish the centre's reputation as a producer and disseminator of research. One means of doing this was through the commencement of the Annual National Conference on Children's Books and the Teaching of Early Grade Reading in Nigeria, the first of which was held in September 2019 and the second in March 2020. Stakeholders and researchers from across Nigeria attended, including representatives of State Universal Education Boards, universities, teacher colleges, publishers, community-based and international nongovernmental organizations, and donor agencies. The high attendance at these two conferences - more than 800 attendees each - demonstrates the interest in early grade reading in Nigeria, as well as the capacity of the NCRRD to serve as a convener in this field. The conferences provided networking opportunities and helped build stakeholder relationships. The NCRRD has also concluded plans to commence the publication of the bi-annual journal, the *Nigerian Journal of Reading*, later this year.

Dissemination of research in international-level journals is a critical element of being perceived as an international center of excellence. As a result of this project, as of early 2021, five peer-reviewed journal articles have been submitted and 12 conference presentations made, including at the Comparative and International Education Society and the African Studies Association. All empirical papers have been first authored by the NCRRD faculty fellows, with support from FSU co-authors. This reflects the leadership and control that the NCRRD fellows had over their projects. They were matched to FSU mentors with expertise on their specific topics; this may have reduced some of the conflict identified in previous studies

regarding control over the research agenda (Gonzalez-Alcaide et al., 2020; Grieve & Mitchell, 2020). Journal articles focused on a variety of topics related to EGR in Nigeria, including the challenges of teaching large classes (Adamu et al., 2020), reading comprehension instruction, gender representations in Nigerian reading textbooks, and how parents supported their children's literacy development at home during COVID-19 school closures.

Additionally, the project produced an edited book, which reviewed international evidence on EGR and contextualized it for application in Nigerian classrooms and teacher training colleges (Tsiga et al., 2020). With the support of the Nigerian government, 3,000 copies of the edited book have been distributed to stakeholders across the country.

The NCRRD has already influenced policy and practice in several ways concerning early grade reading in Nigeria. The Director of the NCRRD has contributed to the development of the National Reading Framework for Nigeria through participation in its Technical Working Group. NCRRD faculty have consulted and collaborated with various programs and program implementers working in Nigeria, including USAID's Northern Education Initiative Plus, the Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA), Jolly Phonics, the British Council, UNICEF, and RTI International. They have also collaborated with other colleges and universities in Nigeria. Recently, NCRRD faculty supported the University of Maiduguri in developing new diploma programs in Early Grade Reading and Conflict Based Education, through a separate USAID activity. The NCRRD faculty's local knowledge and expertise in early grade reading will help ongoing and new education projects to be both rigorously designed and contextually appropriate.

In sum, the NCRRD has become a convener in the area of early grade reading in Nigeria in a short period of time. It has spread evidence-based knowledge and practices to stakeholders across the country, such as faculty at teacher training colleges, who might otherwise not have had access to this information. The NCRRD has demonstrated its capacity to work with both local and international partners to improve the teaching of reading in Nigeria, and is actively working to secure additional funding, both independently and in collaboration with FSU.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The experiences of the FSU, BUK, and USAID teams during the largely successful development of the NCRRD lead to the following set of recommendations for future projects, in Nigeria and elsewhere. First, the full commitment of both higher education institutions, as well as the support of USAID Nigeria's education team, was critical. This commitment helped in smoothing out administrative challenges, such as assignments of faculty to various activities. The full commitment by BUK, as evidenced by their assignment of faculty fellows from several academic departments to the NCRRD, also points to the sustainability of the Centre. BUK's former Vice Chancellor, Professor Muhammad Yahuza Bello, during whose tenure the NCRRD commenced, was a champion of the project throughout, supporting its activities financially and administratively. The Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of academic matters at the time, Professor Sagir A. Abbas, is now the Vice Chancellor, and he pledges similar support for the center. Having champions in senior leadership roles at the university is highly beneficial in a capacity development project like the NCRRD.

Second, this project was successful because there were two-way benefits, both for the institutions and for the individuals involved. The NCRRD project was relevant to both institutions' goals to increase internationalization, as well as to increase research funding and output. Faculty participants benefitted individually as well, with the production of journal articles and other research products that were valued

for merit evaluations and internal advancement. More specifically, BUK faculty were supported in designing rigorous research, learning analytic methods for use in empirical research, and writing for international audiences. FSU faculty were able to engage in research that they could not have completed on their own, as outsiders to the context. These research relationships have continued into new projects, due to the benefits they bring to all parties.

Third, this project is distinguished from many previous higher education capacity development projects because it was designed to provide both breadth and depth of capacity development. Previous approaches have often focused either on long-term investments in individuals - for example, through funding doctoral programs for faculty from low- and middle-income countries at universities in high-income countries - or shorter-term, broader training with larger numbers of faculty on site in their home countries. The NCRRD development project did both, and this combination was effective for both quality of outputs and sustainability. The six-month residencies with ongoing research mentorship provided the content and methodological depth necessary to develop a center of excellence. The residencies were not degree programs; the courses were audited rather than taken for credit, allowing ample time for research, writing, listening, and interaction to expand skills and experiences. This depth of experience among the six BUK faculty was then embedded as the core of the NCRRD, and additional activities, such as curriculum development and conferences, involved the larger group of NCRRD-affiliated faculty at BUK. This combination of breadth and depth in capacity development should reduce or avoid problems faced by previous approaches, such as brain drain caused when one or two core individuals leave an institution - or when a broad, shallow training proves to be inadequate to develop local research leaders.

The major challenges were situated outside of the immediate implementation team. A sustainable research center requires infrastructure beyond the researchers themselves, such as grants managers, proposal support, and administrative assistants (Gomo, 2011; Grieve & Mitchell, 2020). Some of this support existed at BUK, but, as the project progressed, the team saw the need to provide more training and support on the administrative components of the NCRRD. At other institutions, it could be necessary to build this infrastructure from the ground up. Steps that are routine for U.S.-based institutions, such as obtaining Dun & Bradstreet's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAMS) numbers, which are required to receive U.S. government funds, can be daunting for institutions in low- and middle-income countries that are new to the process of registering to obtain this funding.

Beyond the university, the project also encountered challenges related to slow government approval of new courses and content on early grade reading for undergraduate and graduate programs in Nigeria. The NCRRD developed these materials early in the project; however, due to the shutdown of government activities necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, final approval had not yet been received from the National Universities Commission and National Commission for Colleges of Education. When approved, these courses will mark a key area of impact for the NCRRD in teacher training for national early grade literacy.

CONCLUSION

The NCRRD project was successful in developing a new university research center that is supporting new academic programs and producing rigorous, context-relevant research. We believe that this has been due to the team's joint commitment to the ten principles discussed by Wanni et al. (2010). In particular, trust, communication, and joint planning were critical. This aligns with research from other

contexts pointing to the importance of relationships in university-to-university collaborations (Larsen & Tascon, 2020). Additionally, we encourage those who are planning collaborations to pay the necessary attention to institutional infrastructure, monitoring, and evaluation. For collaborations to be sustainable, capacity development needs to occur not with individual faculty, but with a broader group, including financial and administrative support staff. Engaging in both deep and broad capacity development across the necessary range of skills and competencies will lead to more sustainable and productive research centers.

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Higher Education Partnerships between the Global North and Global South: Mutuality, Rather than Aid

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ABSTRACT

Higher education partnerships between the Global North and the Global South are a recognized as means of developing research and education capacity, especially in the institutions of the Global South. Due to the realities of individual agreements, however, not all partnerships work effectively. This article examines a Norwegian and Ethiopian university partnership named "The South Ethiopia Network of Universities in Public Health (SENUPH)" as a case study to identify key elements in the development of effective, mutually beneficial partnerships from policy and institutional perspectives. The first part of this article outlines the different concepts of aid-focused partnerships and mutuality-focused partnerships. The second part reviews the evolution of the Norwegian Funding Programmes for Higher Education Partnerships. The third part describes the mission and key characteristics of SENUPH. The final part analyzes the policy implications for the development of functional, mutuality-focused higher education partnerships, as learned from the SENUPH case study. The Norwegian case provides three implications for how to make such mutual partnerships functional: 1) the importance of fostering the authorship of the partnership among key actors; 2) the significance of multiple phases and periodic evaluation to assess the progress of the partnerships; and 3) the promotion of knowledge and skill development among recipients so they can promote growth and cause a spillover effect that has a positive regional impact.

Keywords: case study, higher education partnership, mutuality, policy development

INTRODUCTION

The Concept of Higher Education Partnerships

In today's knowledge-based society, knowledge creation has become an important aspect of national governments' strategies for enhancing international competitiveness. National governments not only compete to create knowledge, they also cooperate, and one form that this cooperation takes is a higher education partnership in research and education (Hanada & Horie, 2021). Higher education partnerships around the world can be classified into two main types. The first is the aid-based partnership. This type of partnership often involves institutions of higher education in Global North countries supporting institutions

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of higher education in Global South countries, and the basic framework emphasizes the relationship between the supporter and the recipient. Additionally, this kind of support can be provided as a part of overseas development aid. The second type of partnership is the mutuality-based partnership, where parties are expected to cooperate as equal partners rather than in a supporter-recipient relationship. This type of partnership can exist between countries that have similar - or different - degrees of economic and educational development.

The concept of the partnership is not limited to higher education; it can be found in many sectors. One major international example is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Consisting of 17 goals and 169 targets, the SDGs are a "call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030." (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). Of these, SDG 17, entitled "Partnerships for the Goals," aims to "enhance North-South and South-South cooperation by supporting national plans to achieve all the targets." In terms of education, SDG 4 aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," and proposals have been issued to improve various all levels of education, from pre-school education to higher education. In addition, SDG 5 declares that "ending all discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, it's crucial for a sustainable future." Naturally, gender equality is an important issue for educational institutions, so a wide range of initiatives - from educational systems to support for school attendance - are required for greater equity. Here, partnerships are expected to play a role in achieving those goals where countries commit to make improvements on their own.

However, not every partnership functions effectively. For example, even if the partnership is based on the idea of the mutual benefits between the supporter and the recipient, in reality, the burden on one party or the other may be heavier, making the partnership difficult to sustain. Alternatively, even if departments that are party to the partnership agreement cooperate with each other, the partnership may be reduced to a mere facade if university-level cooperation cannot be secured. Furthermore, the partnership may not function as expected if cultural differences between the respective parties are overlooked (Lanford, 2020). In short, the success or failure of a partnership depends significantly on government-led policy development and university-led program development. Therefore, an examination of policy development and program development to ensure sustainable partnerships can be considered an essential research topic.

With these issues in mind, this paper focuses on the South Ethiopia Network of Universities in Public Health (SENUPH), a higher education partnership between the University of Bergen in Norway and four universities in Ethiopia - namely, Hawassa University, Dilla University, Wolaita Sodo University, and Arba Minch University. This paper takes up the case of SENUPH for the following two reasons. First, SENUPH aims to promote the independence of education and research activities at institutions of higher education in Southern Ethiopia, and mutuality is secured among the parties involved. Second, the benefits of the partnership are not shared among the parties; rather, the aim is to ensure sustainable contributions beyond the end of the partnership because the program is designed to share research outcomes with the region of Southern Ethiopia.

This study is based on the findings obtained from an on-site investigation conducted by the author at the University of Bergen in 2018, interviews conducted with faculty and program coordinators involved in SENUPH as part of an online follow-up interview conducted in 2020 and a review of the relevant literature. First, the author contacted a SENUPH program officer in June 2018. The program coordinator introduced the author to a professor responsible for managing SENUPH at the Centre for International

Health in the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Bergen. The author visited the University of Bergen in August 2018 and interviewed the professor and program coordinator about the mission, objectives, and goals with partner universities in the establishment of the SENUPH project schemes. Although the author planned to visit the University of Bergen in 2020 for a follow-up interview, the plan was canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Alternatively, the author continued online communication with the program coordinator in 2019 as a follow-up investigation. Before and after the interview, the author read a series of policy papers, program descriptions, and related papers to deepen their understanding of the SENUPH project.

From a university program development perspective, Hanada (2019) focused on the following three elements required for overcoming differences in academic culture to ensure the proper functioning of SENUPH: 1) educational philosophy, 2) the relationship between students and faculty, and 3) the researcher training systems. By contrast, from the perspective of developing policies to support partnerships, this study focuses on the policies enacted by the Norwegian government. Specifically, the author explores the policy development process for ensuring effective partnerships by conducting a multi-layered analysis of both the content of policies enacted by the Norwegian government and the situation surrounding the recipients of assistance under SENUPH.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Norwegian Funding Programmes for Higher Education Partnership

SENUPH is backed by the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED), which was launched by the Norwegian government in 2013 (Norad, 2020). Since the latter half of the twentieth century, the Norwegian government has implemented development support programs for Global South countries through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), which is under the direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Looking at the content of the support programs for higher education that have been implemented over the last 30 years, there is an evident shift from aid-based to partnership-based programs.

The first example of this is the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) that was implemented from 1991 to 2011. NUFU, which was jointly administered by Norad and SIU (SIU has been reorganized as the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education), was a subsidy program that supported the promotion of joint research between Norwegian universities and universities in the Global South, as well as educational and research activities in graduate programs, university management, and the training of technical staff at universities in the Global South (SIU, 2015a). More specifically, the program operated under the following six goals:

> contribute to the development of institutions in the South; produce knowledge in areas deemed relevant to goals and objectives at institutional and national level; educate new researchers; develop Master's and Ph.D. programs in the South; promote gender equity in research and academic cooperation; to establish sustainable environments for research and research-based teaching; and to contribute to the enhancement of quality and relevance in research (SIU, 2015a, p. 14).

NUFU began in 1991, and programs were implemented for periods of approximately five years across four stages: 1991-1995, 1996-2000, 2002-2006, and 2007-2012. In the last subsidy period from 2007 to 2012, approximately 400 million Norwegian Krone (NOK) was allocated to 69 projects in 19 countries in Asia and Africa. Together, these projects produced 194 Ph.D. students (46% of whom were female), 294

master's students (37% of whom were female), and 2,030 scientific publications, including 790 peer-reviewed articles. Furthermore, 63 new programs were established in partner universities where 336 staff training sessions were held (SIU, 2013, p. 5).

The next example is Norad's Programme for Master Studies (NOMA). NOMA, which focused on capacity building for master's programs in Global South countries, was implemented from 2006 to 2014. The indicators of success are the number of master's programs established at institutions in the Global South, including master's programs of direct relevance for the work force; the number of candidates educated through the NOMA master's programs; and the number of candidates educated through NOMA and employed by institutions in the South (SIU, 2015a, p.13). In terms of major outcomes, 2,031 NOMA-sponsored students (41.5% were female) have been enrolled during the whole program period, and 81% of them were awarded their master's degrees by higher education institutions in the Global South. Also, 91.8% of NOMA master's graduates who responded to the NOMA/NUFU Tracer study report as being in employment, and the majority of them remain in their country or region of origin. Furthermore, at program level, 44 master's programs and courses were established at 28 institutions in 18 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (SIU, 2015b).

SENUPH, which the author researched for this paper, has been funded by the NORHED since 2013. NORHED funded research and educational collaborations between institutions of higher education in the Global South and institutions of higher education in Norway. Between 2013 and 2020, a total of NOK 756 million was allocated to 50 projects involving 13 Norwegian universities and 60 universities in 26 countries (Jávorka, Allinson, Varnai, & Wain, 2018). SENUPH is one of these projects, and it has received NOK 15.5 million (Norad, 2015a). The three main features of NORHED are as follows. First, there are six areas eligible for support: 1) Education and Training; 2) Health, 3) Natural Resource Management, Climate Change and Environment; 4) Democratic and Economic Governance; 5) Humanities, Culture, Media and Communication; 6) Capacity Development in South Sudan. Each project receives subsidies for partnerships with institutions of higher education related to one of these areas. Second, initiatives aimed at improving the gender disparity are mandatory for all six areas. Third, rather than temporary cooperation during the grant period, partners are encouraged to cooperate with a view to the medium-term effects through 2030 and the long-term effects through 2050, and program continuity is emphasized. While programs are developed with an eye on the long term, policy development and program operations are regularly assessed, and evaluation reports have been published in 2014, 2015 and 2018 (Norad, 2015b, 2016, 2018). In 2020, the second phase of NORHED, or NORHED II, was announced for 2021-2026, and SENUPH is expected to continue receiving funding under Phase II to the tune of NOK 19.7 million (Norad, 2020).

Finally, another important aid program administered by the Norwegian government is the Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation (NORPART). Launched in 2016, NORPART provides subsidies to support academic cooperation in pedagogy and publication mutual student mobility between universities in Norway and the Global South. (Nordhagen, Jones, Wold, Tostensen & Dahle, 2020). One core feature of this program is that, instead of one-way mobility where students from the Global South come to Norwegian universities to earn their degrees, students at both universities spend time at the other institution, and degrees are granted by the home university (SIU, 2017). Most conventional student mobility between the Global South and the Global North is one-way, but many of the students studying abroad from Global South countries remain in the destination country or another Global North country even after studying abroad. Hence, the program is designed to prevent brain drain

from the Global South, whereby talented individuals with valuable higher education credentials emigrate from their home countries to the Global North. In the first phase of the program from 2017 to 2021, 21 projects were adopted, and they are expected to receive subsidies totaling NOK 97 million (SIU, 2017).

Mission of the SENUPH

The collected data through field survey and literature review reveal how significant this partnership has been for developing the capacity of higher education in Africa. For example, the African Development Bank Group (2008) points out that the proportion of science and technology engineers in Africa is 35 per million, which is extremely small compared to 4,103 per million in the United States, 2,457 per million in the European Union, and 168 per million in Brazil. Furthermore, the number of papers authored by researchers in Africa's 54 countries between 1999 and 2008 was only about 27,600, which is almost the same as the Netherlands alone. The situation has not improved much since then. Citing a policy paper published by UNESCO, for example, Norad (2020) points out that the researcher population per million people is about 3,500 in OECD countries, compared to just 66 in the least developed countries. Similarly, it was reported that while OECD countries accounted for more than 70% of the world's scientific publications, the least developed countries only accounted for 0.6%, with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for no more than 1.4%. Since the beginning of this century, the World Bank Task Force on Higher Education and Society (2000) has pointed out that strengthening higher education will be a crucial factor for the economic development of Global South countries in the 21st century, and the African Union (2006) specifically cites the quality of research and education as an area that requires improvement. As the above the data shows, an effective strategy might tackle the challenge through the promotion of partnerships with countries where research and education infrastructure is well developed. Under these contexts, partnerships with universities in the Global North are being sought out as a means to help overcome this issue.

The issues facing Southern Ethiopia and the mission of SENUPH are outlined as follows. According to projections published by the United Nations, the current world population of about 7.6 billion is expected to increase to about 9.8 billion in 2050 and to about 11.2 billion in 2100 (United Nations, 2017b). In addition, approximately 50% of the world's population growth from 2017 to 2050 is projected to come from nine countries: Ethiopia, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and the United States. Meanwhile, Ethiopia is already experiencing rapid population growth, with a massive uptick from 66.5 million in 2000 to 99.87 million in 2015 (United Nations, 2017a). With such rapid population growth expected going forward, the improvement of public health, with an eye on improving the quality of life, has become an urgent issue in Ethiopia (CMHS, 2015).

The population of Southern Ethiopia is about 16 million and includes nearly 50 ethnic groups (CMHS, 2015). In the region, preterm birth, neonatal death, and pediatric malnutrition are serious problems even though the overall fertility rate is high (CMHS, 2015). To remedy this situation, one of the main efforts of SENUPH is to deploy highly skilled specialists who are working to improve public health. Although the societal demand for training specialists in Ethiopian institutions of higher education is increasing, myriad issues act as obstacles, such as the need to improve the education and research infrastructure and the need to produce educators and researchers who can oversee human development. This makes it difficult for the region to develop professional specialists on its own (CMHS, 2015).

In response to this, the University of Bergen and Hawassa University established a joint Ph.D. program under the SENUPH framework at the latter institution. Efforts were undertaken to improve the quality of master's programs in public health at all four universities involved in the partnership with an eye

on developing highly-skilled public health professionals who can undertake the improvement of local public health. The four main goals of the partnership are to increase the number of female students in master's and doctoral programs, promote domestic cooperation in education and research by forming an inter-university network in Southern Ethiopia, and share research outcomes with public institutions. To achieve these four goals by the end of the grant period in 2018, SENUPH was effectively designed by each of the five university members of SENUPH. First, a new doctoral program will be established at Hawassa University, which already has a master's program in public health, as a nexus for education and research; the University of Bergen will, in turn, engage in direct cooperation to improve the education and research capabilities of Hawassa University. Next, master’s programs in reproductive health, human nutrition, and medical entomology and vector control will be established respectively at Dilla University, Wolaita Sodo University, and Arba Minch University. By developing a system that allows students who have completed one of these master's programs to proceed to the doctoral program at Hawassa University, the project will form a network to independently develop highly-skilled human resources in the field of public health for Southern Ethiopia. To select the specialized fields for the master's programs at these three universities, the program directors identified the three aforementioned master’s programs in the field of public health with the aim of providing education and research tailored to the local situation. In addition, the research achievements of SENUPH will be shared with the regional health bureaus in Southern Ethiopia with an eye on possible applications on the front lines of public health.

DISCUSSION

Key Characteristics of the SENUPH

Based on the findings of field survey and Hanada (2019), this paper examines the characteristics of SENUPH based on the six indicators proposed by NORHED (partnership model, holistic approach, education and research, employability, digitalization, and inclusion and gender equality).

Looking at the *partnership model, holistic approach,* and *gender equality*, NORHED strongly recommends the development of North-South-South partnership models. As for the holistic approach, rather than focusing on just one indicator, programs are expected to pursue improvements based on the fact that different components are interrelated and interdependent. SENUPH is a model designed to contribute to the development of education and research in Southern Ethiopia by sharing the benefits of the partnership not only among the universities involved, but also with education and research activities throughout the region. Specifically, Hawassa University, which is receiving assistance from the University of Bergen through the joint Ph.D. program, is collaborating with the three other universities to share research outcomes with the local community and work towards gender equality (As of August 2018, 11 male students and nine female students are enrolled in the joint doctoral program). In addition, a holistic approach has been adopted to realize a framework for the universities in Southern Ethiopia to independently undertake the development of highly-skilled professionals to improve regional public health. In this sense, this partnership can be considered an example of the North-South-South model whereby Hawassa University, with its joint Ph.D. program with the University of Bergen, acts as a central hub for the region and collaborates with the other three Ethiopian universities. Therefore, the University of Bergen is in a position to support the future independence of education and research at Hawassa University, and it has explicitly stated that the authorship of the joint Ph.D. program lies solely with Hawassa University.

Education and research is expected to be updated by effectively utilizing the partners universities’ existing education and research capital instead of creating everything from scratch. In this respect, as well,

no new project-based faculty is hired especially for the joint Ph.D. program, and six Hawassa University faculty members and four University of Bergen faculty members are also handling some coursework. These four University of Bergen faculty members are also teaching classes at Hawassa University. In this way, the essence of both universities has been incorporated into the subjects, doctoral dissertation guidance, and researcher training, and existing capital is being effectively utilized. In addition, Hawassa University students are required to study at the University of Bergen as part of their coursework and doctoral dissertation preparation, but the period of study at the University of Bergen is limited to a maximum of three months to prevent brain drain. The internet is fully utilized for all other classes and research activities, so, in this way, *digitalization* is being promoted.

The third point is the development of a researcher development system to ensure *employability*. In the College of Medicine and Health Sciences at Hawassa University, the focus is on students conducting research under the supervision of the faculty in the graduate school. Meanwhile, the Center for International Health in the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Bergen expects its students to pursue independent research while receiving supervision from the faculty in the graduate school. From these differences, it can be inferred that there are not many opportunities for enrolled students to carry out independent research at Hawassa University, compared to the University of Bergen. Therefore, some graduates end up becoming university faculty or assuming other professional positions without having had sufficient opportunities for practical training in research, including conducting surveys and presenting findings. On the other hand, between three and five percent of graduates of doctoral programs in medical fields at the University of Bergen secure full-time teaching and/or research jobs, and most of the graduates who want to become researchers are expected to further hone their skills as postdoctoral fellows. Hence, there are major differences in the policies employed by these two universities for the training of young researchers.

One point that was raised in the interviews conducted for this paper is that, in general, researchers looking for solutions to regional issues in the field of public health must gain more experience in teaching and research after completing their doctoral programs, so the establishment of a system for training young researchers is an urgent issue. However, another point that should be explored is whether the introduction of a Norwegian post-doctoral system could end up being a major disadvantage for Ethiopian students in terms of employment after completing their doctoral programs. With this in mind, subjects have been established that aim to incorporate a young researcher training framework into the joint Ph.D. program and provide students with practical research experience, while also respecting the young researcher training policies of both universities. Considering the issue of employability in Ethiopia, a Norwegian-style researcher training system has been adopted that strikes a balance between both universities' systems for the development of young researchers.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The following three points can be raised as implications for making partnerships functional, in terms of both Norway's policy development and SENUPH's program development. First, during policy development, it is important to guide policies that foster the authorship of partnership among key actors (i.e., universities). In terms of Norwegian policy development, the earlier programs (NUFU and NOMA) were practically aid-based programs for universities in the Global South, but the more recent programs (NORHED and NORPART) appear to be mutuality-based partnerships. With SENUPH, the University of Bergen is in a position to support the future independence of education and research at Hawassa University,

and it has explicitly stated that the authorship of the joint Ph.D. program lies solely with Hawassa University. As discussed previously, it is extremely important to cultivate authorship on both sides of a partnership without creating a dependency between a supporter and a recipient. To achieve this shared authorship, first and foremost, there must be a clear benefit for both universities, so it is necessary to create a mechanism enables the sharing of those benefits with the local community rather than just with the parties involved. This must be included in the program requirements to enhance the social significance of the partnership. For example, a partnership can contribute to the international community by striving to achieve some of the SDGs. Recognizing that contributions are being made both domestically and internationally is beneficial to the universities that are parties to the partnership. A policy framework that encourages this cycle is desirable.

Second, subsidized programs must have multiple phases and a mid-term evaluation. In the case of NORHED, which funds SENUPH, the subsidized program encompasses multiple phases. In particular, NORHED requires a project design to outline the medium-term effects through 2030 and the long-term effects through 2050. Concurrently, it has introduced an evaluation system that regularly evaluates policy development and program operations. Depending on the type of partnership, funding for a single project may conclude with a single phase. Since project outcomes must be shared widely at home in a short period of time as part of social accountability, evaluations tend to emphasize numerical targets whose results are easy to see; qualitative aspects, however, may be more difficult to assess. In addition, the university may be overwhelmed by the need to set numerical goals, so qualitative improvements might be neglected. When running a project, issues can arise that make it impossible to implement a partnership as it was initially envisioned. While the program is in session, new situations like these can be addressed through trial and error and deliberation, so it is preferable to balance the qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the solutions and establish a mechanism that enables flexible policy operation so that adopted projects can be replaced if piecemeal efforts do not generate results.

Third, the primary target of the subsidized program should be “soft” elements like human development, educational program development, and joint research, as opposed to “hard” elements like infrastructure development. Although NORHED includes support for small-scale infrastructure development, it is clear from the four programs implemented after NUFU that Norwegian subsidy programs have basically focused on “soft” support. On the other hand, some other countries focus on “hard” support by operating subsidy programs targeting the establishment of universities in the Global South or the construction of libraries or other school buildings; this focus on “hard” support tends to solidify the positions of the supporter and the recipient. Additionally, the Norwegian government pays close attention to the prevention of corruption, so, from this perspective, one could say it is rational to focus on “soft” support that leaves behind few physical objects.

In conclusion, after showing that there are two types of higher education partnerships, (aid-based and mutuality-based), the author of this paper examined the case of SENUPH at the policy level to highlight how mutuality-based partnerships effectively create benefits for both parties. Mutuality-based partnerships emphasize the mutual benefits of the supporter and the recipient, and the specific structure and contents of the partnership tend to be designed by the universities of the two sides. On the other hand, in the aid-based partnerships, the basic schemes, such as areas to be supported, are sometimes designed in advance by the government or governmental agencies. Therefore, the degree of freedom tends to be relatively higher in the mutuality-based partnerships. The Norwegian case provides three implications on how to make such mutual

partnerships functional: 1) the importance of fostering the authorship of the partnership among key actors; 2) the significance of multiple phases and periodic evaluation to assess the progress of the partnerships; and 3) the promotion of knowledge and skill development among recipients so they can promote growth and cause a spillover effect from partnerships in the local region. While identifying the six supporting areas as policy intentions, it would be an example of good practice to secure the authorship of the universities to implement effective mutuality-based partnership.

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Case Studies of Japanese Universities' Collaborations with ASEAN, China, and Mongolia

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ABSTRACT

This paper elaborates on recent trends in Japanese higher education partnerships through three cases of collaboration between Japanese universities and higher education institutions in China, Mongolia, and the Southeast Asia (hereinafter referred to as ASEAN). Our analysis shows that partnerships were shaped by both top-down government policies and bottom-up activities based on institutional visions and past relations. Japan's educational quality and reputation, particularly in science and technology, is highly regarded by higher education institutions (HEIs) interested in developing competitive international programs. On one hand, Japan is striving to deepen and expand its partnerships with HEIs, particularly within Asia. A number of domestic and international factors - such as Japan's population decline; increasing competition among HEIs both on the domestic and international front; an ambition to remain competitive in a twenty-first century, knowledge-based economy; and Japan's strategy to strengthen its influence in Asia - drive the partnerships. On the other hand, while earlier partnerships were limited to student and faculty exchange or joint research projects, institutions increasingly prioritize more comprehensive strategic partnerships. Such strategic partnerships are important to overcome barriers during the COVID-19 pandemic that limit physical movement and interaction, and they may drive even greater collaboration and integration among Asian higher education institutions.

Keywords: ASEAN, China, Japan, Mongolia, transnational higher education

INTRODUCTION

An active engagement in global networks, partnerships, and collaborations with overseas institutions is the cornerstone of internationalization efforts at higher education institutions (HEIs). Global partnerships can be transformative for universities, enhancing research output, teaching and learning, curricula, student experiences, and the reputation of both institutions (Knight, 2014; Koehn & Obamba, 2012; Lanford, 2020). Japan was one of the first countries to actively develop robust international ties with foreign institutions. In the 1980s, the Japanese government's clarification of the national vision for internationalizing higher education resulted in a rapid increase in exchange programs for international

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students and academics. Additionally, a number of foreign universities opened branch campuses in Japan by the end of the 1990s, including thirty-six branch campuses of United States (U.S.) universities; these branch campuses absorbed Japan's expanding demand for higher education due to the second-generation of baby boomers reaching college age.[i] Nevertheless, the Japanese government did not officially recognize these branch campuses as registered higher education institutions under Japanese education laws. This fact, combined with a prolonged recession of the Japanese economy that began in 1990 and a declining birthrate, eventually caused all campuses except one (Temple University in Tokyo) to close by 2004 (Huang, 2010; Lane, 2011; Lanford & Tierney, 2016). Therefore, during the early 2000s, the internationalization of higher education in Japan was similar to many other nations in that it mostly involved receiving students or sending students to another country.

Over the past decade, however, the higher education partnership landscape in Japan has slowly transformed from a focus on student exchange to long-term partnerships at multiple levels - from faculty level joint programs to institution-wide strategic partnerships with key "knowledge-partners." This transformation has been driven by a declining college-age population and an aging society, increasing domestic and international competition in research and education, and other economic, political, and social circumstances (Gyenes, 2020; Yonezawa, 2020). In addition to a series of government-led projects to promote internationalization and regional collaboration, official guidelines on creating a double degree, or joint degree, were introduced in 2014, followed by an amendment in the school law that allowed institutions to grant foreign degrees (Kuroda et al., 2018; Sugimura, 2016). Moreover, the number of overseas bases of Japanese universities reached 690 by 2018, and several joint universities were established in Egypt, Malaysia, and Vietnam under bilateral government agreements (Sugimoto, 2017).

In this paper, we highlight some recent trends in Japanese higher education partnership policies in light of this international expansion of Japanese higher education. In what follows, we elaborate some of the driving factors for these partnerships, highlight common challenges, and analyze opportunities for expansion through three case studies of Japanese universities' strategic partnerships in Southeast Asia (ASEAN), China, and Mongolia.

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION

Previous literature demonstrates internationalization efforts at Japanese higher education institutions, described by a series of interrelated government-funded projects mainly focusing on the promotion of international student exchanges (both inbound and outbound) (e.g., Poole et al., 2020; Sugimura, 2018). During the Meiji period (1868-1912), the Japanese government received Western teachers to teach academic subjects at Japanese HEIs and sent students to Western countries to learn the "modern" knowledge as part of the higher education development process (Nakayama, 1989). Similarly, in the post-World War II period, Japanese students were sent to the U.S. through scholarship programs such as Garioa-Eloi (1947-1951) or Fulbright (1946-present) (Ninomiya et al., 2009).

Japan has been one of the top destination countries for student mobility in East Asia. As a result of government policies to recruit international students – the number grew rapidly from mere 5849 students in 1978 to 312,214 students in 2019 (JASSO, 2020). The series of policies, as shown in Figure 1, to recruit international students aimed to internationalize universities, to serve as a "catalyst for university reform" and to cement Japan's academic and research reputation overseas (Lassegard, 2006, p. 120). The latest policy to increase the number of international students to 300,000 by 2020 aimed to recruit excellent foreign

students who would work and contribute to Japanese economic development and internationalize the Japanese campuses (Rakhshandehroo & Yamamoto, 2017).

The key funding for internationalization of higher education under these policies, particularly Global 30 initiative (launched in 2009) or the Super (Top) Global University Project (launched in 2014), was associated with the expansion of English-taught course offerings, the recruitment of international faculties, and the creation of an “international” environment in teaching and research. However, the programs introduced under these initiatives often existed in silos from the rest of the institution, and many suffered from a lack of sustainable funding once a project ended. As a result, institution-wide internationalization did not happen on most universities (Poole et al., 2020).

Figure 1

Japanese Policies For The Internationalization Of Higher Education

	Main policy initiatives	1954	1983	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1	Japanese government scholarship scheme	Mainly Japanese-speaking students from Asia					To recruit highly-talented students from all over the world																
2	100,000 international students plan																						
3	Strategic International Headquarters (SIH)				To develop university-wide internationalization at 20 pilot																		
4	300,000 international students plan						To promote inbound mobility including English-speaking students; reached the target 300,000 in 2020 (all student visa holders)																
5	Global 30							13 universities: to offer courses and degree programs in English, shared															
6	Inter-University Exchange Project (Re-Inventing Japan)									Two-way student mobility program under partnerships in designated regions/countries below													
	Campus Asia and ASEAN									13 programs													
	North America and EU									12 programs													
	ASEAN										14 programs												
	AIMS with ASEAN											7 programs											
	ICI-ECP (EU)											5 programs											
	Russia and India												9 programs										
	Latin America & the Caribbean, Turkey													11 programs									
	Asia (Campus Asia and ASEAN)														25 programs								
	Russia and India															9 programs							
	Collaborative Online International Learning																9 programs						
	EU																	3 programs					
	Africa																	8 programs					
7	Go Global Japan										To promote outbound student mobility												
8	Top Global University Project (Comprehensive Internationaliation)												Type A: 13 universities (global competitiveness in research and education); Type B: 24 universities (institution-wide internationalization)										

THE INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION OF JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

East Asian universities have been at the forefront of expanding and improving their transnational higher education systems (Yonezawa, 2014) to proactively construct global reputations (Collins & Ho, 2014). Under state policies and directives, East Asian universities have enhanced transnational programs and linkages, forging bilateral ties and establishing branch campuses with partners from both within and outside the region (e.g., Kitamura, 2014; Garrett et al., 2016). Across much of East Asia, international collaboration in higher education has long been a tool to attract highly skilled individuals and promote the internationalization of higher education (Kuroda et al., 2018).

Japan, on the other hand, is perceived to be slow to react to these changes, with some scholars commenting that “Japanese institutions have been virtually absent” at transnational higher education markets (Ohmori, 2004, p. 14). Although Japan lags behind in the race of establishing overseas campuses or offering joint programs, international collaborations in higher education, particularly with strategic countries, have always been a priority (Jung, Horta, & Yonezawa, 2018). Initially taking form as “human resource training” projects or faculty-level joint research projects with partner institutions, higher education collaborations began to take more comprehensive forms. The recent Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,

Science, and Technology (MEXT) documents illustrate government policies to promote the overseas expansion of Japanese institutions not only to recruit international students, but to promote Japanese expertise.

Overseas partnerships in Japanese higher education date back as early as the 1960s – when the Japanese government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs signed human resource development program between Japanese universities and Thailand's King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (Nagano, 2017). The project included joint research, as well as short- and long-term faculty exchange programs. In 2005, MEXT policy documents began to mention "overseas bases" as one key strategy to recruit highly talented international students (MEXT, 2005). Shared and independent overseas offices of Japanese higher education institutions increased in the past decade, reaching 690 in 2018. The majority of these overseas bases (67%) are in Asia, particularly in East Asia (MEXT, 2020a). In 2007, the Asian Gateway Initiative, a comprehensive political and economic guideline, proposed that Japan should be the gateway connecting Asian countries, encouraging cooperation and linkages with overseas institutions (Kuroda et al., 2018).

One program that supports this regional focus is the Inter-University Exchange Project (also referred to as "Re-Inventing Japan"). The project, implemented since 2011, offers financial support to collaborative programs with overseas institutions - with different countries/regions in each project (Kuroda et al., 2018). The majority of collaborative programs supported by the projects focus on Asia (4 projects, 59 programs), followed by the US and EU (2 projects each with 20 programs in total), thereby aligning with Japan's foreign policy objectives (MEXT, 2020b) (also see Table 1).

In 2015, Japan amended its School Law, legally allowing higher education institutions to introduce joint degrees with foreign universities (Kuroda et al., 2018). Before 2015, HEIs could offer only student exchange programs, double degree programs, and twinning programs by matching their programs with partner universities and granting separate degrees (MEXT, 2010). In 2014, though, the government introduced guidelines for developing international joint diploma programs (MEXT, 2014), recognizing the necessity for such programs to "enhance [Japan's] international competitiveness from the standpoints of developing education, research, and human resources" (p. 1). Since then, twenty-four joint degree programs have been introduced in five years, while the number of double degree programs increased from 197 in 2007 (MEXT, 2007) to 1,196 by 2017 (MEXT, 2020c).

In 2018, the Central Council for Education introduced a comprehensive deliberation on the future vision for higher education in Japan under the title, "*Grand Design for Higher Education toward 2040*" (MEXT, 2018a). The vision calls for a shift in higher education in conjunction with current social changes, such as the 100-year life society, globalization, and regional revitalization. In this grand design, the "international expansion of higher education institutions" is described as one action to diversify the student population on campus to overcome the declining birth-rate. It states the following:

> In order to break away from an education system centered on Japanese students entering universities at the age of 18 and to accept a diverse range of students, it is necessary to promote international expansion through the establishment of overseas schools of Japanese universities and cooperation with overseas partner institutions in Asian countries that have a high need for Japanese higher education (MEXT, 2018a, p. 16-18)[ii].

According to current estimates, the 18-year-old population in Japan, around whom the current higher education model is focused, will decrease to 70% of the current level by 2040. On the other hand,

several other Asian countries are expanding their higher education capacities to enroll more college students than ever (MEXT, 2018a), and many universities in Asia are proactively seeking to improve their higher education systems through innovative approaches to establish "world-class universities." This creates increased competition for Japanese institutions in the Asian higher education marketplace.

Figure 2

The Rationale For Japan's International Expansion Of Higher Education

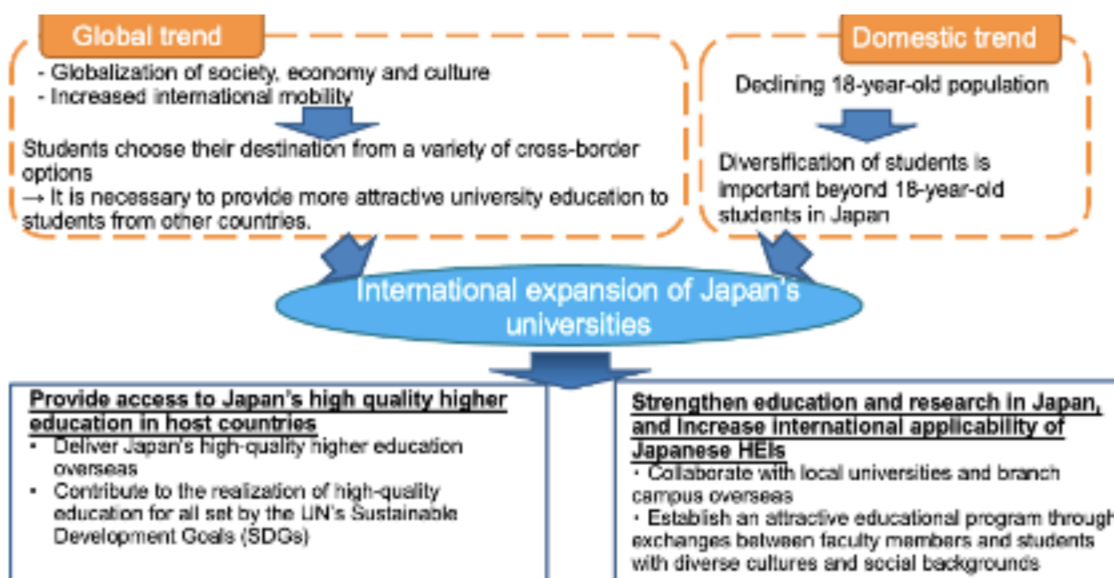


Figure 2 presents the rationales for expanding Japanese higher education overseas, including global trends - such as globalization, increased student mobility, and competition among providers to attract the best students - and the domestic context, including a decrease in the college-age population and the necessity to recruit more students. The guideline proposes that, by offering programs abroad, Japanese higher education would deliver high-quality education in foreign students' local communities while strengthening the Japanese higher education sector's global competitiveness.

Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has already introduced a tentative "post-300,000 international student plan" which follows the 300,000-student plan that drove significant developments in internationalization of higher education from 2008-2020. According to Saito (2019), the next internationalization policy targets transnational collaborations to create joint degrees, overseas bases, joint programs, and/or overseas institutes with partner universities, rather than mere student mobility.

Thus far, Japanese universities do not have an overseas branch university campus entirely managed by a Japanese university. The first branch campus of a Japanese national university in Malaysia, supported by both governments, is under development (Kakuchi, 2019). The C-BERT database at the University of Albany maintains a list of international campuses around the world; it lists two institutions as Japanese branch institutions. One is a joint institute of Dalian University of Technology, China and Ritsumeikan University, Japan, and a reasonable debate could be had over whether the institute is RU's branch campus. The other one is Hawaii Tokai International College, a two-year American accredited college that allows students to transfer to Tokai University.

Moreover, a number of joint universities have been established in Egypt, Malaysia, and Vietnam based on inter-government agreements (Kuroda et al., 2018). The Egypt-Japan University of Science and

Technology (E-JUST) was founded in 2009. Then, in 2012, the Malaysia and Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIIT) was set up at University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Later, in 2016, the Vietnam-Japan University was established. All three institutions are national universities in their respective countries and were established to prepare highly skilled individuals for careers in science and technology fields by adopting Japanese-style education. In other words, although Japan is often criticized for lagging behind in cross-border education, there are already a number of initiatives to export its educational models and develop joint institutes and degree programs.

Compared to Australia, the United Kingdom (U.K.), or the U.S., Japan's case is unique in a way that financial gain is not the priority. Often, a number of government-related organizations work together to form a holistic and comprehensive collaboration covering education, economy, trade, and foreign relations. For example, the above-mentioned universities (MJIIT or VNU) involved the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), along with the MEXT. (Kuroda et al., 2018). The Edu-Port Japan platform established in 2016 to "disseminate Japanese-style education and promote collaboration in education" (MEXT, 2017) is another example. The mission of the platform is 1) to build strong trust and collaborative relationships with other countries through education, 2) to promote the internationalization of Japanese educational institutions, and 3) to promote the overseas expansion of Japanese education institutions. It is a strategic approach by the Ministry of Education to expand collaboration between public and private institutes by involving economic and trade organizations, such as METI and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), while aiming to expand Japan's education sector overseas by involving MOFA and JICA (Hayashi, 2019). Although the project revolves around compulsory education and technical and professional colleges, it also includes institutes of technologies and universities that prepare teachers.

In short, Japan's government policy documents and recent actions in fostering transnational higher education indicate more comprehensive joint programs involving state actors, universities, and industries at all levels of education. In the following section, we elaborate on some of the driving factors for these partnerships, common challenges, and opportunities for expansion by drawing from three cases that represent three different joint collaborations.

Three Cases of International Partnerships with Japanese Higher Education Institutions

Knight & McNamara (2017) classified transnational higher education according to two organizational principles: a) the nature of the relationship between two providers/HEIs (independent or collaborative) and b) by the mode of program delivery (program only, physical campus, or online). In this classification, independent program and provider mobility is "primarily responsible for the design, delivery, and external quality assurance of its academic programs and qualifications being offered in another country" while a collaborative relationship would consist of the HEIs in both countries working together on the design, delivery, and external quality assurance of the academic programs (Knight, 2019). As Table 2 shows, independent programs are referred to as "Franchise programs" while collaborative programs are considered "Partnership programs." In the second row, an "International branch campus" is distinguished as an independent approach, while a "Joint university/institute," often established by both HEIs in two countries, is considered collaborative.

As we will describe in greater detail below, the first case - The Osaka University ASEAN Campus Project - is, in reality, similar to a "franchise program." The ASEAN campus was established in order to

promote the internationalization of education and research at Osaka University (Osaka University, 2020). In this project, a number of courses delivered to partner institutions are accredited by Osaka University.

Table 1

Six Categories Of Transnational Higher Education – International Program Provider Classification

Independent		Collaborative	
1	Franchise programs	4	Partnership programs
2	International branch campus	5	Joint universities/colleges
3	Self-study distance education	6	Distance education with local academic partner

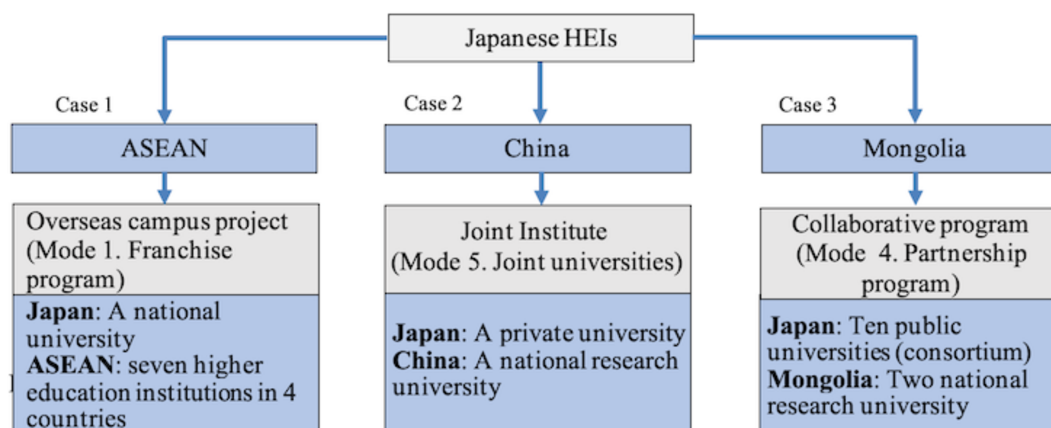
Source: Knight & McNamara, 2017

The second case - the Chinese Japanese Joint Institute at Dalian University of Technology (DUT-RU) - is an example of a joint institute offering academic programs jointly developed by two collaborating HEIs. Therefore, it is a classic example of a "joint institute."

The third case - The Mongolian Engineering Higher Education Development Project - is a collaborative program offering a twinning program and other joint programs; however, as a bi-national project to develop higher education in the receiving country, it has other aspects that do not fit in the classification of a "collaboration." For example, a "collaborative program" provision indicates joint efforts and responsibilities in degree granting, curriculum, and quality assurance. However, the programs under the third case are entirely managed by either the receiving or the sending institution; to be more specific, the "training programs" are managed by the Japanese institutions, while the "curriculum development" aspect is entirely managed by the universities in Mongolia. As it is made under two government agreements, we call the project a "collaborative program." However, with the main aim to build teaching resources and develop the curriculum at Mongolian universities, it looks more like a one-way collaboration of receiving Japan's education and know-how.

Figure 3

Three Cases Of Japanese Higher Education Partnerships



Source: Knight & McNamara, 2017

Drawing on a case study methodology (Yin, 2008), we reviewed relevant government policies, program/project reports, and other key documents from each partnership with the intention of analyzing

different Japanese higher education partnerships. After describing each case, we explain the scope of the collaboration, provide contextual information, explain the main driving forces from receiving and sending institutions, and highlight challenges and opportunities for further development. Then, the three cases are compared for their similarities and differences.

Case 1: The Osaka University ASEAN Campus Project

The Osaka University ASEAN Campus is an overseas campus project of a Japanese national university (Osaka University) established in the ASEAN region in April 2017 to facilitate Osaka University's activities in the region. It includes joint programs and student exchanges at seven higher education institutions[iii] in four countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Brunei Darussalam) in the region. It aims to promote Osaka University's education and research, particularly in science and technology programs such as bioengineering, applied physics, infectious diseases, environmental engineering, halal science, biodiversity, and bioresources. In addition, it offers programs in Japanese language and culture. The activity in ASEAN is viewed as part of a long-term strategy of investment in the development of the region to build a strong foundation for future collaboration (Sanders, 2019).

The region is distinctive for its growing youth population, its expansion of higher education, and its increased efforts to promote higher education partnerships in the region as a part of overall regional integration. The population of 15- to 34-year-olds is 213 million, and it is predicted to reach its peak in 2038 at 220 million (ASEAN Secretariat, 2017). Major university consortiums, such as AUN and ASEAN + 3 U Net, play a strong role in facilitating joint programs and other educational development projects.[iv]

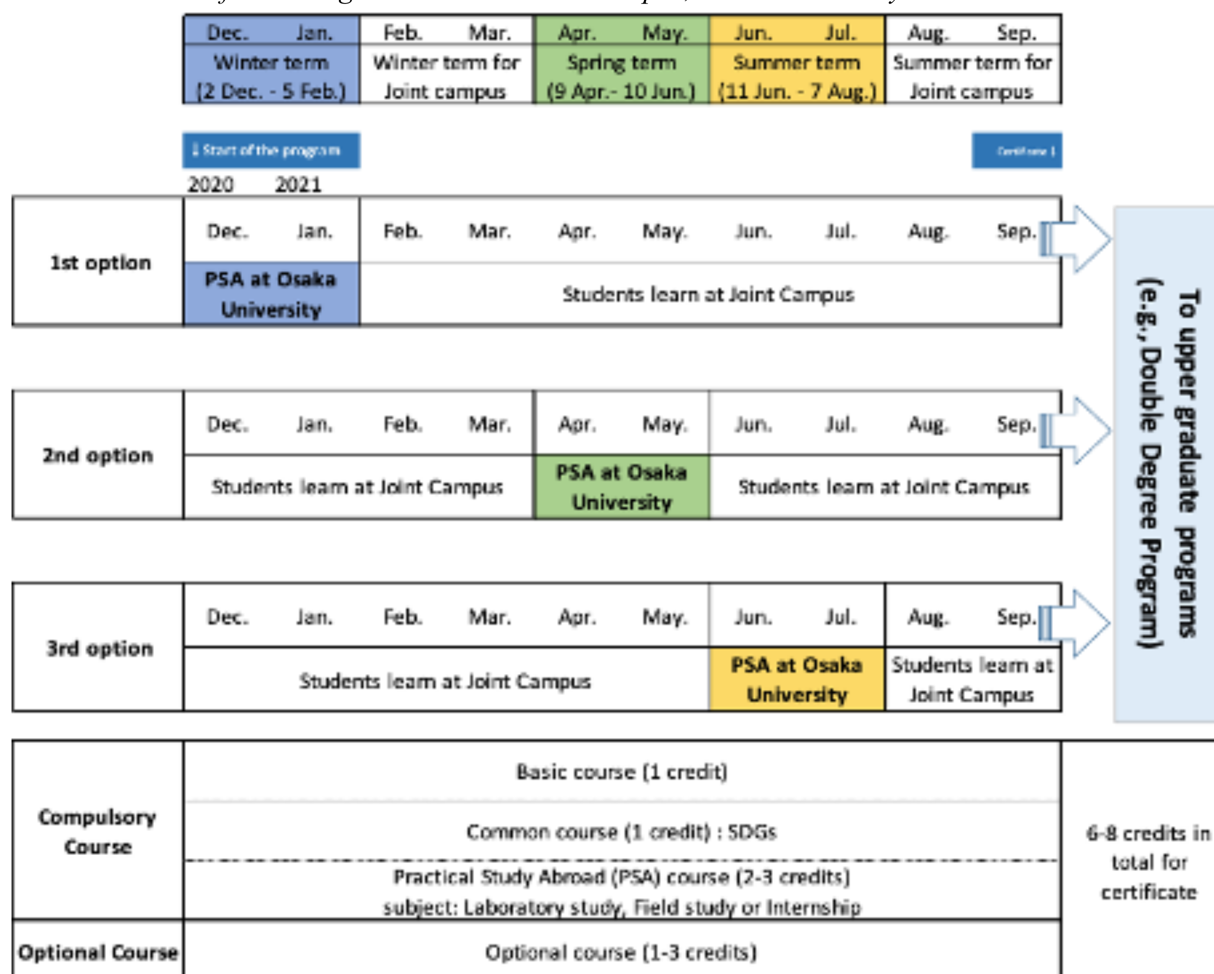
Osaka University set up the ASEAN Campus project with the following main objectives: 1) to prepare highly skilled, globally-competitive graduates in the local context, 2) to promote joint research between local industry and Japanese firms in the region, 3) to contribute to society by co-creating knowledge and innovation together with industry, government, academia, and civil society, 4) to set the structure for future innovation networks, and 5) to establish a new location for recruiting students. In other words, the ASEAN campus promotes a comprehensive partnership in the region, including industry, academia, and government.

The ASEAN campus is located at Mahidol University in Thailand and facilitates the following three main programs, including a Double Degree Program, Career Advance English Program in Brunei, and a newly introduced International Certificate Program (ICP).

The ICP program was launched in Fall 2020 as a non-degree, short-term program for students from partner universities in the ASEAN region. In total, students complete six to eight credits by taking online courses and visiting Osaka University for approximately sixty days. Students can come to Osaka University at the beginning, middle, or end of their respective programs. The flexibility of this program suits fast-paced regulations, such as national border lockdowns that were implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. In case students cannot travel to Japan, they can change their plans after consulting with their professors, and they can reschedule to travel for later semesters of their choice (see Figure 4). Once they complete 6-8 credits, students receive a certificate from Osaka University. The program serves as one pathway to Japanese industry and education. The students completing this program learn about Japanese style education (e.g., labs), language, and culture. Most importantly, they form a connection with Osaka University professors. At the end of the program, they have more opportunities to work in Japanese companies in the region or to continue their education at graduate schools in Osaka University.

Figure 4

International Certificate Program At The ASEAN Campus, Osaka University



This overseas campus project has mutual benefits and contributes to regional development. Students from universities in the four ASEAN countries can obtain a high-quality education that might not be available at their local universities. Further, this project helps the universities develop human resources for the local community, as well as infrastructure that connects industry, government, and universities internationally.

From Osaka University's perspective, this project can attract and recruit highly motivated students for graduate studies by offering remote education and opportunities for research at its overseas units. The quality of education and research are equivalent to the Japanese curriculum. In addition, the graduates can also work for Japanese companies in the region, thereby cultivating high level local talent through long-standing collaborations in the ASEAN region (for example, in bioengineering) and the co-creation of innovation networks. On the other hand, like other international programs of Japanese universities, this project faces several challenges, such as a limited number of English-taught programs beyond science and technology or student difficulties in mastering the Japanese language if they pursue other fields.

Case 2: The Chinese Japanese Joint Institute at Dalian University of Technology (DUT-RU)

Since the 1980s, China has encouraged foreign HEIs to establish institutes and programs in collaboration with Chinese HEIs. The purpose has been to introduce advanced foreign education resources

to enhance Chinese HEIs' academic capacity and global competitiveness (Hu and Willis, 2016; Huang, 2008). Hence, transnational higher education has grown dramatically in China; by the end of 2019, there were over 600 Chinese HEIs collaborating with foreign HEIs/providers in running 2238 cooperative programs and institutions (Education on Line, 2020). Nearly half of the Chinese-foreign cooperative operations were at an undergraduate level, with 9 Chinese-foreign cooperation universities, 88 Chinese-foreign cooperation second-tier colleges, and 881 Chinese-foreign cooperation programs.

The International School of Information Science and Engineering (ISE) of Dalian University of Technology of China-Ritsumeikan University of Japan (DUT-RU) is the only Chinese Japanese cooperation second-tier college approved by the Ministry of Education of China. Founded in 2013, it set a precedent for international cooperation in higher education between the two countries. The host university, Dalian University of Technology (DUT), is a "First-Class" university in the national "Double First-Class Project"[v] that aims to build world-class universities in China. Therefore, the joint collaboration is supported by the Chinese government through policy regulation and funding.

DUT has strengths in science, engineering and Japanese language. The provider university, Ritsumeikan University (RU), is one of the leading private universities in Japan, and it has attached great importance to internationalization in recent years. The joint institute is located in the Kaifaqu campus of DUT in Dalian city, Liaoning province. The School of Software of DUT and the College of Information Science and Engineering of RU have promoted educational and research exchanges since October 2007. In 2009, a delegation from DUT visited RU and proposed the idea of cooperation between China and Japan in running a university (Okubo, 2015).

The institute offers four-year degree programs with a maximum capacity of 210 students in each cohort (totaling more than 800 students). Forty students transfer to RU in the third year and receive degrees from both universities. The remaining students obtain their degrees from DUT. The ISE provision supports education development in three languages. The faculty members from DUT all have overseas study experience.

ISE sets three main objectives: 1) to create an educational model for developing globally competitive graduates in information technology (IT); 2) to establish an educational and research hub in East Asia, particularly in the northeastern region of China; and 3) to promote international collaboration between industry and academia (Okubo, 2015). The joint university has three education models: a dual undergraduate degree program (DUDP), a short-term study aboard program, and an international internship program. RU students have an opportunity to visit DUT for a certain period of time to jointly conduct research and corporate internships.

The educational and research hub acts as an Asian gateway for human resource development; the provision of human resources to Japanese, Chinese, and global corporations; and the formation of a joint industry-academic consortium. To promote collaboration between Japanese/Chinese corporations and RU/DUT, the two universities created a joint management committee not only for educational collaboration, but also for the enhancement of collaborations with industry. These committees invite guest professors, offer internship opportunities, provide scholarships, and sponsor laboratories.

In 1998, Dalian city built a software park with over 500 companies, about half of which are foreign-funded companies primarily from Japan, the U.S., and South Korea. From the host perspective, DUT aims to respond to the global demand for IT professionals by learning from Japanese vocational training and by combining the teaching resources and expertise of the two schools. In doing so, the partnership is offering

an innovative educational model to prepare international talents in the software and IT industries, with an emphasis on cross-cultural communication and teamwork skills.

From RU's perspective, the partnership establishes a secure route to accessing talented Chinese students from one of the top institutions in China. Moreover, RU receives a set number of excellent international students in specific fields of study each year. RU also sends its domestic students abroad to take advantage of Dalian software park. The joint institute plays the role of a pilot model for the international expansion of Japanese higher education, enhances the internationalization of its home campus, promotes international industry-academia collaboration, and increases its global reputation. Further, students not only improve their skills to work in a global marketplace, but they develop cross-cultural understanding along with international experience.

In sum, both students and faculties benefit from this collaboration. RU is able to recruit talented Chinese students whose skills can improve the institution's global reputation. In turn, DUT introduced an innovative training system that integrates the teaching resources of two institutions and prepares students to shape the global information technology industry.

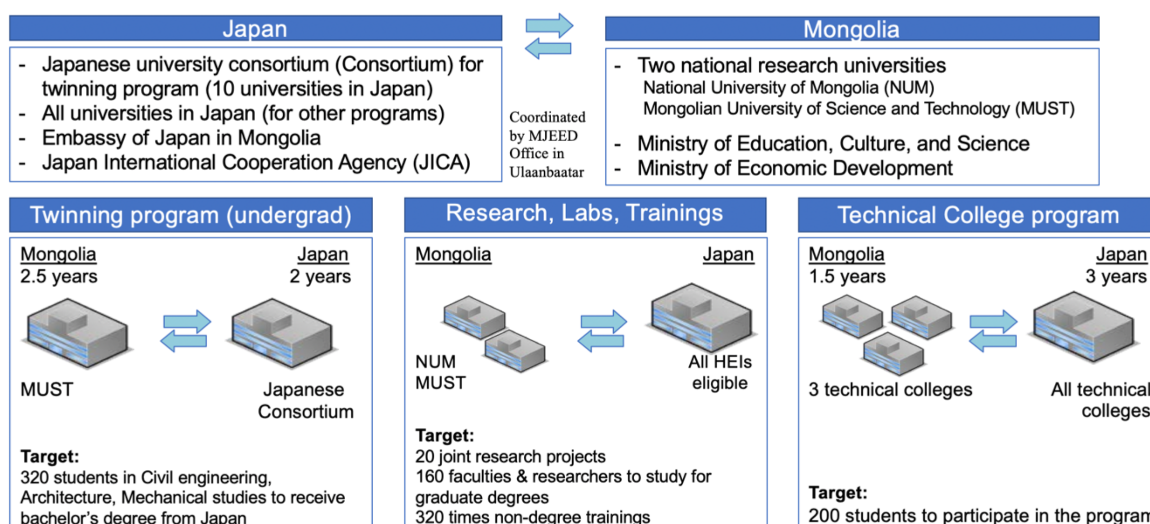
Case 3: The Mongolian Engineering Higher Education Development Project

Higher education has been one of the key reform areas in Mongolia since 2010 to enhance the quality and relevance of higher education programs and university management, and to prepare globally competent education programs and human resources (Asian Development Bank, 2011; HERP, n.d.). Less than one fifth of university faculties in the higher education sector held doctoral degrees. Research output is limited due to heavy teaching loads, a lack of research funding, and laboratory equipment and structural issues that disincentivized research (HERP, n.d.). Therefore, the Mongolian government sought international support and received a couple of long-term loans - one of which was from the Japanese government under a "Mongolian Engineering Higher Education Development Project" as a ten-year ODA loan[vi] technical cooperation project between 2014-2024. The main aim of this project is to 1) improve the quality of engineering education (particularly at undergraduate level), 2) strengthen the teaching resources through graduate degree and non-degree trainings in Japan, 3) improve the teaching and research environment, and 4) develop high quality, highly-skilled graduates in the field of engineering (JICA, 2014). To achieve these aims, the project established a twinning undergraduate program, in addition to joint-research projects, the training of faculties and researchers in Japan (both graduate degree and non-degree), and a technical college program to prepare engineers (see Figure 5).

The twinning program is between a Japanese university consortium consisting of ten national universities in Japan and a leading national university in Mongolia in the field of engineering and technology, the Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST). The twinning program selects domestic students to study for 2.5 years at MUST in the fields of civil engineering, architecture, and mechanical engineering while taking intensive Japanese language classes. Then, the students take Japanese language tests and admission tests to transfer to Japanese counterpart universities. Although mastering a foreign language in two years while building foundational academic knowledge is challenging, many students have been able to meet the language requirement and transfer to Japanese universities. The entrance tests, the Japanese language program at MUST, and the remainder of the two years at Japanese universities are funded by the project. If a participating student in the joint program does not meet the counterpart university's admissions requirements, they either complete the program at their home institution or apply again the following year.

Figure 5

Mongolian Engineering Higher Education Development Project Scheme



Overall, the project aims to foster 1000 graduates in the field of engineering through twinning programs, graduate level programs (Master's and Ph.D. degree programs) for junior faculties, non-degree programs for other senior faculties or faculties with graduate degrees, and technical college programs (see Figure 5). Facilitated by the JICA project office in Ulaanbaatar, the project fosters collaboration between institutions in two countries. The junior faculties from Mongolian HEIs are required to return to their institutions after receiving their graduate degrees in Japanese universities and work in the joint research projects, teach in the twinning program, and contribute to further faculty and institutional level partnerships. In other words, the collaboration ensures a holistic collaboration from student exchange to program development and research collaborations.

This partnership is also beneficial for Japanese universities and technical colleges. The 320 undergraduate students, 160 graduate students, and 200 technical college students (the target has not yet reached yet due to difficulties such as language difficulties) are filtered through a rigorous selection process, and all receive full scholarship if selected to study in Japanese counterpart. Japanese HEIs and technical colleges receive high quality students, in addition to being supported to form a long-term partnership with top national universities in Mongolia.

Although the Japanese government has provided technical cooperation in engineering higher education to other developing nations for over 60 years, such twinning and joint programs have only recently been introduced in the past decade (Nakano, 2017). This kind of long-term bilateral government initiative to support university level partnerships, with a larger aim to strengthen mutual relations and multilateral collaboration, can also be seen in joint institutes established in Egypt (Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology was founded in 2010), Malaysia (Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology in 2011), and Vietnam (Vietnam-Japan University in 2016).

DISCUSSION

The comparison of these cases shows that the Japanese style of education and research, particularly in science and technology, is highly valued by partner governments and institutions interested in developing and strengthening their own programs. They are especially interested in developing graduates with the

knowledge and skills to compete on the global landscape. The approach to the partnership seems to be both top-down - encouraged by government policies and bilateral negotiations at the government level - and bottom-up, driven by institutional visions and mutual contacts. The case in Mongolia involves two governments, and the programs are directly supported by the funding from the project (top-down); however, once the program ends in 2024, the Mongolian universities are interested in continuing the partnership by making direct partnership agreements with Japanese universities. The partnership case in China can also be considered top-down, as the DUT is directly supported by the government in its funding and education plans. However, DUT developed the program with its own institutional goals to connect industry with the university. Finally, the case of ASEAN is a bottom-up approach initiated by the universities and established through existing faculty-level collaborations concerning student exchange and research. Osaka University began its collaboration with universities in the ASEAN region during the 1970s through its alumni networks. Over time, OU expanded its partnership to other universities in the region, now reaching four countries.

The partnerships have evolved to include industry, academia, and government entities with a variety of programs, ranging from non-degree trainings, to double degree programs, to internship programs through additional joint programs. The new international certificate program at ASEAN Campus, for example, strives to provide a flexible, short-term study abroad opportunity at the Japanese campus, allowing students to take the rest of the credits in their home country. Students who graduate from this program have multiple pathways; they can choose to work at local Japanese companies or study in the Osaka University graduate schools.

From the Japanese perspective, the motivations for collaboration in all three cases are similar, despite different partnership types. The primary incentives include 1) recruiting high quality international students to Japan, 2) contributing to regional integration in education and economics, 3) expanding institutions overseas, and 4) internationalizing local campuses.

However, all three cases face similar challenges, such as funding to keep the programs sustainable, curriculum development to ensure programs meet local standards and regulations in both countries, the recruitment of faculty to deliver programs in the host institution that meet the home university's standards, and other quality assurance issues. In addition, the pandemic's restriction on mobility disrupted all programs. Most joint programs relied on digital learning, making it difficult for students to gain cultural understanding and social support. It is uncertain how these programs will continue in the future if programs continue to rely on online instruction; there are open questions about whether students would pay tuition fees if programs are fully online (e.g., the DUT-RU joint program's tuition is seven times higher than the average Chinese university tuition) and how online programs might be evaluated in the future.

The pandemic also affected students' plans to study and work. Many students could not complete their programs in time because they could not complete fieldwork or experiments during the time allotted for their scholarship contracts (e.g., the MJEED program). Mongolian students could not return home even after completing their programs because the Mongolian government closed the border, even for its own citizens.

At the same time, increased geopolitical tensions between Asian nations and the US and other Western countries also affects relations with Japanese institutions. In July 2020, Japan approved an innovation strategy which asked research institutes to strengthen codes of conduct concerning research integrity and conflicts in interest while preventing the outflow of sensitive research and technologies linked to national security (Mallapaty, 2020). In the meantime, the Japanese government is considering tougher

rules to address the risk of foreign interference in scientific research, such as a more thorough vetting of visa applications from international students and researchers.

These rules and tensions are likely to slow future TNE collaborations; however, given the Japanese government policy changes and the domestic higher education situation, we think there will be further developments in institutional collaborations. During the pandemic, the institutions depicted in this article's case studies were able to retain students through in-country support and guidance. The delivery of education overseas in a student's home country through overseas campuses, study hubs, and satellite offices became a new trend in 2020 and is likely to stay for the next few years. On a global level, institutions realized that being flexible and delivering the whole program - or a part of a program - in the home country is key to overcoming economic and travel pressures. During the pandemic, the Ministry of Education of China allowed some Chinese-foreign cooperative institutions and programs to take temporary measures to increase student enrollment. Moreover, the Chinese government is assessing how the pandemic has prohibited students to study abroad and is striving to provide more options within the country (e.g., transnational education programs) with the goal of ensuring greater educational equity (Sohu, 2020). Therefore, despite many challenges, transnational joint collaborations are likely to expand or deepen, perhaps through a better utilization of technology.

CONCLUSION

This paper elaborated recent trends in Japanese higher education partnerships, such as policy discourses to promote the "internationalization of Japanese higher education," as well as increased development of joint programs, overseas bases, and joint institutes. Recent policy documents such as the "Grand Design for Higher Education towards 2040" or the "Post 300,000 Students Plan" illustrate the contemporary Japanese domestic situation of a shrinking youth population, increased competition both domestically and internationally, the importance of strengthening Japan's academic and research standing on global scale, and a strategic focus on Asia. As a result, Japanese higher education reform policies are encouraging university partnerships to move beyond student exchange.

While the current literature emphasizes a lack of Japanese international branch campuses and long-term joint collaborations (e.g., Ohmori, 2004, p. 14), we see increasingly diverse partnerships at Japanese universities, especially at national universities. Both the Japanese government and Japanese higher education institutions are interested in fostering deeper, multifaceted collaborations that include government, academic, and industry entities; are adapted to the characteristics of the region/country; and correspond to the needs of local students.

The cases presented in this paper represent three different types of partnerships in different regions - ASEAN, China and Mongolia. The ASEAN partnership is an example of an overseas base of one national university that was established to recruit international students and offer support for joint education and research projects; it hopes to expand its activities with institutions in the region and/or offer short-term programs to suit local needs. The DUT-RU partnership is a classic example of a comprehensive partnership that offers not only joint degree programs, but also joint management and collaborations with Japanese and Chinese companies. The Mongolian Engineering development project is a type of government aid project that trains individuals and develops educational and research programs on Japanese practices. This type of collaboration is most common with developing countries in the region. All projects, however, face challenges, from financial stability to government regulations. In future studies, we aim to collect more data

from local stakeholders to illustrate further details and differences - including the situation during the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

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[i] After the World War II, the first-generation baby boomers were born from 1947 to 1949, and their children born from 1971 to 1974 were the second baby boomers.

[ii] Translated by the authors from Japanese.

[iii] Mahidol University (Thailand), Bandung Institute of Technology (Indonesia), Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology (Vietnam), and Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University, Universiti Teknologi Brunei (Brunei).

[iv] Please refer to: http://www.aunsec.org/

[v] The project launched in 2017 includes building world-class universities and Chinese first-class disciplines at a global level. Cf. Huang 2017.

[vi] Japanese ODA Loan (also called Yen Loan) are long-term, low interest rate loans advanced to developing countries; they have the liability of being paid back (JICA website, https://www.jica.go.jp/pakistan/english/activities/activity04.html).

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The Impact of Evolving Transatlantic Relations on International Partnerships in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the impacts of recent, macro-level developments in transatlantic relations on the ability of United States and European Union higher education institutions (HEIs) to leverage international partnerships in achieving their traditional missions of teaching, research, and service. Using literature to place international education within the broader context of transatlantic relations from the post-World War II era to today, the connection between geopolitics and HEI international partnerships is made explicit. Comprehensive internationalization theory is then applied to illustrate the importance of HEI international partnerships in realizing international education outcomes that are congruent with traditional HEI missions. After establishing the link between transatlantic relations, internationalization in higher education, HEI international partnerships and overall HEI performance, recent developments within transatlantic relations are directly analyzed with regards to HEI international partnerships, highlighting impacts on their ability to function. Finding that progressive transatlantic relations result in improved performance outcomes through HEI international partnerships for US and EU HEIs, and that regressive transatlantic relations produce the opposite outcome, the study offers implications for policy makers and HEI administrators.

Keywords: higher education, internationalization, international partnerships, international relations, transatlantic relations

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, an increasing number of incidents and movements have begun to substantially reshape transatlantic relations, particularly referring to the multifaceted western-world alliance between the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) (Kunz, 2020; Lagadec, 2012). These developments include political and economic isolationism at the national and supranational levels, as well as a rise in nationalism and populism among the citizenry itself throughout the US and EU (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The United Kingdom's (UK) decision to leave the EU (Hobolt, 2016), US trade conflicts with the EU (and

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various individual EU member nations) (Amiti, Redding, & Weinstein, 2019), travel/visa restrictions and differing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic serve as policy manifestations of this larger shift.

This changing context, moving away from the post-World War II (WWII) era in transatlantic relations of cooperation and toward increased individualism and competition, bears wide-ranging implications for the higher education sector, particularly related to several key functions and outcomes of higher education institution (HEI) international partnerships (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Altbach & de Wit, 2017; de Wit, 2002). As international partnerships play a foundational role in the ability of HEIs to leverage comprehensive internationalization in achieving their strategic missions of teaching, research, and service, the impacts of these changes in transatlantic relations are deserving of immediate attention (Hudzik, 2015; Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012). The aforementioned relational evolution across the Atlantic not only affects the international partnerships between EU and US HEIs, government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporations, but also the partnerships between US and EU HEIs and entities in other regions of the world (Altbach & de Wit, 2017; de Wit, 2002). Areas of HEI international partnerships that are directly impacted by these developments in transatlantic relations include, but are not limited to, faculty and student exchange agreements, research partnerships and funding contracts, sponsored student international enrollment agreements, international branch campuses (IBCs), and dual/joint degree programs (Hudzik, 2011). If these international partnerships of US and EU HEIs are negatively impacted through the current state of transatlantic relations, the argument can then be made that recent developments in this international diplomatic area may hinder US and EU HEIs' ability to achieve their foundational missions.

By proceeding in the following manner, this paper contributes to the existing literature by using international higher education theory and comprehensive internationalization theory to link transatlantic relations with overall university performance, while also testing that link through practical observations of case examples. First, the ties between transatlantic relations and higher education are made explicit, and the link to HEI international partnerships is identified. Second, international education is defined, and its connection to overall university performance is detailed. Third, comprehensive internationalization theory is outlined with a focus toward HEI international partnerships in various functional areas of international education and the achievement of HEI missions. Fourth, the current state of transatlantic relations is reviewed, and its effects on the ability of HEIs to implement and maintain international partnerships are analyzed. Fifth, the findings and implications of the theoretical and analytical aspects of the paper are summarized and discussed. Lastly, the paper concludes with a description of the limitations of the study and potential avenues for future research.

LITERATURE AND THEORY

Transatlantic Relations, International Higher Education, and HEI International Partnerships

The period following the conclusion of World War II, extending until recent years, saw a rapid expansion of the transatlantic relationship between the western democracies that remained, or were created, in the wake of the peace negotiations amongst the warring nations (Kaplan, 2004; Lagadec, 2012). US industrial systems, infrastructure, and lands were relatively unscathed since nearly all combat occurred outside of their borders, and the Americans had also experienced a lower amount of casualties due to joining the Allied effort well after the beginning of the conflict in Europe. Therefore, the US was uniquely positioned to embark on an aggressive foreign aid campaign that combined education, economics, and diplomacy (Hogan, 1987; Lagadec, 2012). Through the European Recovery Program, commonly known as the "Marshall Plan" (named after then US Secretary of State George Marshall), the United States propelled

itself from the pre-war era, which favored isolationism, into an expansive effort to support its allies across the Atlantic in their rebuilding plans, providing funding for a vast array of public-facing projects. These undertakings included constructing new roads and buildings, enhancing international trade and investing heavily in public research and higher education, largely through international exchange and cooperation among HEIs (de Wit, 2002; Hogan, 1987).

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) served to interlock the western democracies on both sides of the Atlantic along security lines, entering them into a collective defense agreement so as to deter potential post-war aggressions from growing and strengthening military and economic powers, namely the Soviet Union (Kaplan, 2004). Whereas the United States had previously been wary of becoming involved in European conflicts (both World Wars provide examples), the advent of NATO ensured that there would be a quick military response from the US government should one of its European allies come under attack. In combination, the implementation of the Marshall Plan and the signing of the treaty establishing NATO spawned a new age of transatlantic relations (Kaplan, 2004; Lagadec, 2012); one where the future of the western powers on both sides of the ocean were intricately woven together through a complex integration of economics, diplomacy, and security, which were heavily supported by cooperation efforts in higher education (de Wit, 2002; Hogan, 1987; Vestal, 1994).

The platform for integration and expansion in the transatlantic relationship, established by post-war measures such as those above, as well as a broad range of international trade and financing developments (e.g., World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), etc.) (Irwin, 1995; Lagadec, 2012), allowed for activities in many sectors to prosper and flourish – in programmatic scope as well as in the resulting economic and educational benefits for the array of stakeholders involved in such activities (de Wit, 2002; Hogan, 1987). It is thusly not a surprise that the expanded nature of the post-war economic transatlantic relationship led to extensive international development in the education sector, particularly at the post-secondary level through the proliferation of HEI international partnerships (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004).

The Fulbright Program and Erasmus+ are two examples of programs at the national/supranational level that emerged through this period of expanded cooperation and were used to leverage the connection between transatlantic relations and HEI international partnerships. Emerging as a key piece of US educational and cultural diplomacy in 1946, between the end of WW2 and the full realization of the Cold War, the Fulbright Program (named after the Arkansas senator that originally proposed it) has provided funding and support for exchange between the US and countries throughout Europe and the rest of the world through partnering HEIs. The underlying goal of the Fulbright Program is to use the internationalization of education to nurture and sustain cooperation between partnering countries (Bettie, 2015; Lebovic, 2013). While primarily serving to fostering deeper cohesion and sense of collective identity throughout Europe, the EU's educational and cultural exchange program, Erasmus+ (originally named "Erasmus" at its 1987 founding), also provides exchange pathways and funding opportunities for students, scholars, and professionals in partner countries throughout the world, in addition to within the EU (European Commission, 2020). Both initiatives, while implemented from a macro perspective, are byproducts of progressive transatlantic relations which enable institutional level international partnerships between HEIs from both program countries and partner countries on both sides of the Atlantic and throughout the world.

The internationalization of higher education (to be defined extensively in the following section) contains numerous activities and elements that have vast socioeconomic ramifications, not just for countries directly involved within the transatlantic discussion, but globally as well (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Vestal, 1994). From the movement of students and faculty members, to workforce development, to increased research and development (R&D), to improved international relations, to increased language learning/proficiency and many matters both beyond and in between, the activities created, maintained, and expanded through the internationalization of education (largely enabled by HEI international partnerships) has provided the seed for a vast throng of participants and beneficiaries (Altbach & Knight, 2007; de Wit, 2002; Knight, 2004; Vestal, 1994).

Internationalization of Education and University Performance

Having established the relationship between transatlantic relations and the internationalization of education, it is now necessary to properly define what the internationalization of education means and how it is connected to overall university performance. Due to developments over time in the scientific study of internationalization in the higher education sphere, the definition of the term "international education" has shifted and adapted to accommodate more complexity, but its foundation is based on an understanding of internationalization in higher education as a part of the response to globalization more broadly (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Prominent international education scholar Jane Knight established the precise definition that is commonly accepted within the field today (de Wit, 2020): "Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2003, p. 2). Framed this way, the internationalization of higher education can be understood as an effort that is ongoing and develops over time across a broad swath of dimensions; further, internationalization is intentionally injected throughout core strategies and activities in every facet of higher education (Knight, 2004).While the rationales for pursuing internationalization cover a broad span of categories, including social, political, economic, and academic motivations (Knight, 2004), they can also collectively be viewed as positively contributing to overall HEI performance (de Wit, 1995, 2000). The established literature on HEI performance has concluded that HEIs around the world strive to achieve three overall missions which comprise their organizational performance: teaching, research, and service to society (Agasisti & Pohl, 2012; de Wit, 1995; Hudzik, 2011; Lehmann, Meoli, Paleari, & Stockinger, 2017). Though HEI's differentiate in terms of the focus and distribution of effort put toward these missions depending on their self-categorization into various classifications (e.g., research-intensive HEIs, teaching-focused HEIs, community colleges, etc.) (Jungblut & Jungblut, 2017), these three broad missions are widely recognized. So while the motives and activities encompassing the internationalization of higher education come from a wide variety of stakeholders, from an institutional perspective, internationalization is intended to improve the education of students, the production of knowledge, and an institution's contribution to societal service by ensuring that the university is strategically aligned to incorporate an international, intercultural, and global dimension into every function (Altbach & Knight, 2007; de Wit, 2000; Knight, 2004). Research incentivizes this organizational behavior by producing evidence that internationalization in higher education produces positive outcomes in teaching (increased student knowledge, openness, independence, analytical/critical thinking, cultural competence, leadership skills, etc.), research (improvement in ranking/recognition/reputation, citation index frequency, international publications, etc.) and service to society (positive public health metrics, local economic development, environmental sustainability, etc.)

(Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012). This directly links an HEI's pursuit of internationalization to its ability to improve its performance of its three core missions.

Comprehensive Internationalization and HEI International Partnerships

With the connection between transatlantic relations and the internationalization of higher education explained, and the question of why HEIs pursue internationalization answered, the specifics of how HEIs achieve internationalization must be addressed. Comprehensive internationalization theory, originally posited by scholar John Hudzik, bridges the conceptual gap between internationalization as a strategy that improves overall HEI performance and how that strategy is implemented to achieve institutional outcomes and goals (Hudzik, 2011, 2015; Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012). Hudzik (2011) provides a thorough definition of comprehensive internationalization which highlights its institutional foundations, its operational orientation and its urgency:

> "Comprehensive internationalization is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility (Hudzik, 2011, p. 6)."

Hudzik introduces depth by explaining how comprehensive internationalization, through its complete internal organizational alignment from top to bottom (Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012; Hudzik & Stohl, 2012), also affects every external action and effort of the HEI, including a focus on international partnerships and relations within global networks (Hudzik, 2011, 2015).

The implementation of comprehensive internationalization requires an HEI to internally accumulate support from every level and area of the institution, and its portfolio of stakeholders, to commit to actions that increase student mobility (incoming and outgoing), expand language learning, develop international internship opportunities, participate in international research, integrate international dimensions into the curriculum and translate its global efforts into benefits for local communities (Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012; Hudzik & Stohl, 2012). Functional outcomes of comprehensive internationalization implementations through HEI international partnerships include faculty professional development, student/faculty diversity, developments in curriculum delivery/design, improvement in institutional competitiveness and ranking systems and improved research, among others (Hudzik, 2011). Because external relationships are necessary for the existence of the activities which produce such outcomes, formal HEI international partnerships are critical to the success of comprehensive internationalization efforts (Sandström & Weimer, 2016).

Specific types of HEI international partnerships that enable the realization of comprehensive internationalization goals include staff and student exchange agreements, international internship and service learning programs, collaborative degrees, joint research agreements, curriculum development partnerships, capacity building initiatives and online/virtual collaboration, amid many others (Hoseth & Thampapillai, 2018; Sandström & Weimer, 2016). The literature shows that these HEI international partnerships supply the programmatic pathway for institutions to reap the positive outcomes of internationalization for their students, staff and stakeholder populations, which improve an HEI's ability to achieve their three core missions (European Association for International Education, 2015; Hoseth & Thampapillai, 2018; Sandström & Weimer, 2016). To illustrate: student exchange agreements enable

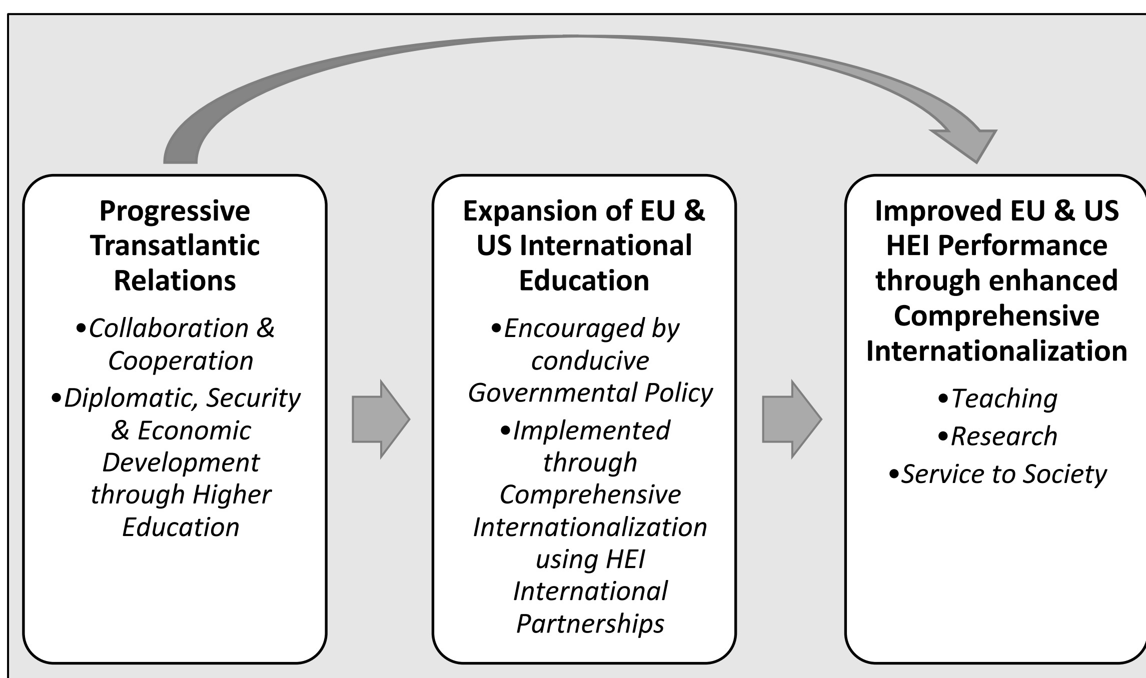
students to build cultural competency through studying abroad, improving outcomes of the teaching mission. Joint research initiatives enable scholars to develop internationally recognized studies and apply for international funding, improving outcomes of the research mission. HEI partnerships centered on providing educational and economic development services within the host societies where they are nested improve outcomes of the service mission (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Hudzik, 2015). Thus, strategy implementation with an eye toward comprehensive internationalization is necessary for an HEI to best achieve its three core missions, and HEI international partnerships play a critical role for such thorough comprehensive internationalization to take place (Hudzik, 2011; Sandström & Weimer, 2016).

CURRENT EVENTS IN TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND IMPACT ON HEI INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The completed review of the corresponding literature and theory shows that the prevailing cooperation and expansion within transatlantic relations following the end of WWII created a stable environment for the proliferation of international education in the US and EU through the furthered implementation of HEI international partnerships (Bettie, 2015; de Wit, 2002; European Commission, 2020; Lebovic, 2013; Vestal, 1994). Further, comprehensive internationalization theory explains how HEI international partnerships provide HEIs with the tools necessary to achieve international education outcomes which improve HEIs' performance in their primary missions (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Hoseth & Thampapillai, 2018; Hudzik, 2011, 2015; Hudzik & McCarthy, 2012; Sandström & Weimer, 2016). Therefore, a positive qualitative correlation is observed between cooperative and collaborative (progressive) transatlantic relations and the performance of HEIs in the US and EU (see Figure 1, below).

Figure 1

Progressive Transatlantic Relations And Improved EU & US HEI Performance



Source: author depiction

This then begs the question - does a retrenchment in transatlantic relations reduce the ability of HEIs to leverage comprehensive internationalization through international partnerships in order to better perform their three core missions? In the midst of a reshuffling of transatlantic relations and a redefining of traditional transatlantic relationships, this question is particularly pertinent for HEIs in the US and EU, as well as their numerous stakeholders. As opposed to the prior era of cooperation, integration, and collaboration (progressive transatlantic relations), recent times have shifted towards isolation, individualism, and increased competition (regressive transatlantic relations) (Amiti, Redding, & Weinstein, 2019; Hobolt, 2016; Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Kunz, 2020; Lagadec, 2012). To investigate the impact of evolving transatlantic relations on the ability of HEIs to implement international partnerships, and therefore improve university performance, a small selection of specific developments in transatlantic relations and their implications for HEI international partnerships are detailed in what follows. These developments include: 1) the UK's departure from the EU, 2) restrictive travel and visa policies imposed by the US, and 3) differing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the US and EU. While rooted and connected philosophically and theoretically to a rise in nationalism and authoritarian populism on both sides of the Atlantic, these examples of the larger trend have very practical impacts and real consequences for HEI international partnerships (Altbach & de Wit, 2017; Laws & Ammigan, 2020; Peters, 2020).

The UK's Departure from the EU

Brexit, or the formal departure of the UK from the EU, required several years, many negotiations, and multiple transitions within the office of the UK Prime Minister. An official process that began with a referendum vote in 2016 was finally executed at the turn of the year between 2020 and 2021, leaving most implementation of the exit to take place in 2021 and beyond (Hobolt, 2016; Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Marginson, 2017). As membership in the EU requires a deep level of European integration along economic, diplomatic, educational, and social dimensions, among others, Brexit necessitates that the UK take a more individual and isolated approach in restructuring its external relationships with the EU, the US, and the rest of the world (Hobolt, 2016; Kunz, 2020; Mayhew, 2017). While political opinions and perspectives pertaining to the advantages and disadvantages of that decision are contentious, there remain practical realities that cannot be refuted, such as the renegotiation of trade deals/partnerships, the joining/maintaining of security/border alliances, and the recalibration/realignment of HEI internationalization, all of which were previously intertwined within broader EU policy (Altbach & de Wit, 2017; de Wit, 2002; European Commission, 2021; Lagadec, 2012; Marginson, 2017).

The consequences of the UK leaving the EU, while being regressive in terms of transatlantic relations, also negatively impacts the implementation of HEI partnerships in the UK, throughout the EU, and in the US as well (European Commission, 2020; Marginson, 2017; Mayhew, 2017). New restrictions of movement between the UK and the EU complicates all HEI international partnerships that require the mobility of students and staff (academic and administrative) (Hobolt, 2016; Marginson, 2017). Additionally, since the UK has left the EU, UK HEIs are now excluded from the valuable Erasmus+ program; meaning, HEIs from the UK can no longer apply for new HEI partnerships or funding through Erasmus+, nor can they apply for renewals or extensions of Erasmus+ programs and funding that they currently receive based on prior membership (European Commission, 2021). Not only does this inhibit the ability of UK HEIs to engage with EU HEIs in international partnerships, such as student/staff exchange agreements and joint research funding initiatives, but it also restricts access to partnerships with certain US HEIs due to the US participation in the Erasmus+ network as a partner country (European Commission,

2020; 2021; Marginson, 2017; Mayhew, 2017). Consequently, upon exiting the EU, the UK instantly loses the ability to use Erasmus+ programming and funding to operate hundreds of partnerships that annually involve millions upon millions of Euros and the inward/outward mobility of tens of thousands of students and thousands of faculty members, most of which are within the EU, but also includes a small subset of funding and student/staff mobility with US partner HEIs (European Commission, 2020). The scale of activity engendered by Erasmus+ makes it inherently difficult for the UK to pivot towards other opportunities and markets to make up for the loss of access to the existing network, and at a minimum would require a significant investment of resources to pursue such a recalibration (European Commission, 2021; Mayhew, 2017). Thus, Brexit constitutes a hurdle in the ability of HEIs in the UK, EU, and US to partner with one another to pursue positive institutional outcomes in teaching, research, and service.

Restrictive Travel and Visa Policies Imposed by the US

Following the 2016 US presidential election, the administration of President Donald Trump, who rode the rising popularity of nationalism and conservative populism to the top of the US executive branch, began pursuing a regressive transatlantic (and global) policy platform focused on revamping US foreign relations strategy to a more isolated and individualistic agenda (Altbach & de Wit, 2017; Laws & Ammigan, 2020; Peters, 2020; Pierce, 2019). A key facet of this policy agenda was to adjust foreign policy in a way as to protect US economic interests from foreign competition. The resulting trade wars between the US and China, and the US and EU are key tenets of this policy program, but more restrictive US travel and visa policies also served this strategy (Altbach & de Wit, 2017; Pierce, 2019). The later has borne consequences for US HEIs engaging in international partnerships with their EU counterparts.

Travel and visa restrictions issued by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) create difficulties for US and EU HEIs that are seeking to partner with one another in any way that requires physical movement (Peters, 2020). By injecting complexity, uncertainty, and legal disincentive into the process of travelling to and lawfully remaining in the US, the effectiveness of many types of HEI international partnerships has been limited. As demonstrated earlier in this work, these mobility-based international partnerships, including international branch campuses (IBCs), student and staff exchange agreements, experiential learning/international internship programs, and collaborative degree programs, among many others, produce positive outcomes in each of the three HEI mission areas (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Hoseth & Thampapillai, 2018; Hudzik, 2011; Hudzik & Stohl, 2012; Sandström & Weimer, 2016). Through the implementation of immigration policies which make mobility inherently more difficult, the ability of US HEIs to engage with their EU counterparts through formal partnerships is significantly hampered (Altbach & de Wit, 2017; Laws & Ammigan, 2020; Peters, 2020). These hindrances contributed to a lull in incoming international researchers to the US, slowing growth during the pre-COVID Trump administration to an average annual rate of 0.6 percent, whereas the previous four years saw average growth of 3.5 percent (Institute of International Education, 2020). This impact on partnerships, in combination with the role that these restrictive and ever-changing immigration policies play in the overall decline in the ability of US HEIs to recruit and retain international students (and their talent and tuition fees), not only bears negative implications for HEI institutional performance, but also for the financial stability of the US higher education sector as a whole (Peters, 2020; Pierce, 2019). This is made evident through the international student enrollment growth rate, which dipped from an average annual rate of 8.1 percent from 2012-2016 all the way to 1.65 percent in the period from President Trump's inauguration until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Institute of International Education, 2020).

Differing Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the US and EU

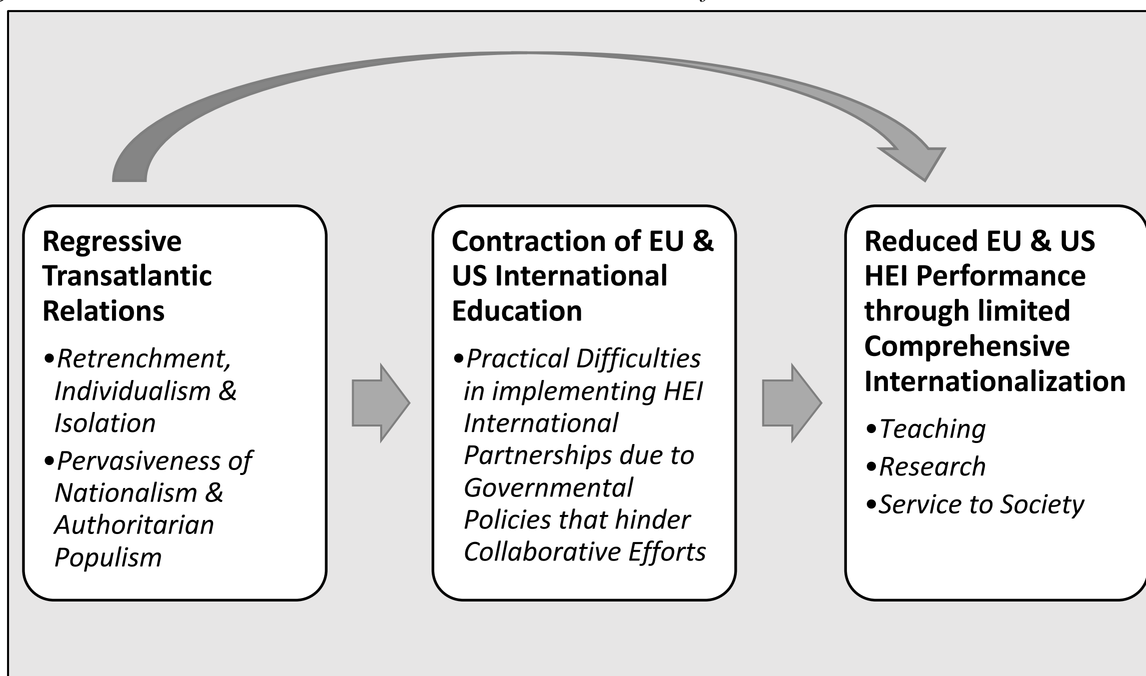
The COVID-19 pandemic has permeated nearly every aspect of life, including acute effects on transatlantic relations, and subsequently HEI internationalization and international partnership efforts (Marinoni, van't Land, & Jensen, 2020; NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2020a; 2020b; Rumbley, 2020). While certain aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic contain elements outside of governmental control, the lack of comprehensive transatlantic cooperation and coordination in the response to the pandemic, including public restrictions/measures, research efforts and vaccine rollout, are a result of regressive transatlantic relations policy choices (Basrur & Kliem, 2021; Linka, Peirlinck, Costabal, & Kuhl, 2020; Seyfi, Hall, & Shabani, 2020). When considered alongside other developments in transatlantic relations that serve to inhibit the ability of individuals to freely move, the competitive and individualistic aspects of the transatlantic response to the pandemic intensify the negative consequences of COVID-19 and pile onto a strained HEI international partnership climate by exponentially increasing the level of operational and financial uncertainty in student and staff mobility (Rumbley, 2020; Seyfi, Hall, & Shabani, 2020). Not only does this exacerbate the limitations to HEI partnerships, as similarly discussed in the two previous examples of developments in transatlantic relations, but the regressive transatlantic response to the pandemic also contributes to the current financial crises of transatlantic HEIs as a result of pandemic related operational losses, which threatens the ability to provide funding for HEI international partnerships in the future (Basrur & Kliem, 2021; Marinoni, van't Land, & Jensen, 2020; NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2020a; 2020b). This has also produced negative outcomes in the short-term, with the cancellation of a multitude of conferences and workshops sponsored by various associations and research interest groups which enable transatlantic networking and partnership growth (Blanco & de Wit, 2020).

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary findings of this study are produced through a thorough application of literature and theory surrounding the history of transatlantic relations and the development of international education in the US and EU, as well as the benefits of comprehensive internationalization for the overall ability of HEIs to achieve their core missions. This investigation results in the conclusion that progressive transatlantic relations and the improved performance of HEIs, through the implementation of HEI international partnerships, are correlated (see Figure 1, above). To test whether the inverse is true (if regressive transatlantic relations and the reduced performance of HEIs, through the hindrance of HEI international partnerships, are correlated) (see Figure 2, below), a small sample of regressive cases in recent transatlantic relations developments was analyzed to observe impacts on the ability of HEIs to partner with one another in the transatlantic context. Research and prior literature on the UK's departure from the EU, travel and visa restrictions imposed by the US, and differing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the US and EU evidences negative impacts on HEI international partnerships in the US and EU. Therefore, it is concluded that the correlation between transatlantic relations and HEI performance, through the ability to implement HEI international partnerships, functions in both directions.

Figure 2

Regressive Transatlantic Relations And Reduced EU & US Performance



Source: author depiction

These findings bear myriad implications for policy makers, HEI administrators, and other HEI stakeholders. While a connection between transatlantic relations and international education has long been observed and documented (de Wit, 2002; Hogan, 1987; Knight, 2004; Vestal, 1994), this study contributes to the field by applying comprehensive internationalization theory to specifically show how evolving transatlantic relations impact the performance of HEIs through the ability to implement HEI international partnerships. With knowledge of this correlation and the theoretical evidence behind it, policymakers interested in improving HEI performance can better advocate for progressive transatlantic relations in order to provide a more conducive environment for the HEI international partnerships which produce positive outcomes in each HEI mission area. Additionally, policy makers that are primarily interested in pursuing progressive transatlantic relations policy agendas have an additional beneficial byproduct to espouse in their argumentation. For HEI administrators, this study also provides a platform for public policy advocacy for progressive transatlantic relations, as well as in requests/applications for supplemental funding for HEI international partnership development to make up for any outcome shortfalls that may result from regressive transatlantic relations. With limited control over the nature of governmental transatlantic policies, this study may also spur HEI administrators to innovate in the area of international partnerships, utilizing technology and creativity (such as virtual mobility) to help stem the losses incurred by regressive developments in transatlantic relations (Marinoni, van't Land, & Jensen, 2020).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study has found that progressive transatlantic relations encourage improved performance outcomes through HEI international partnerships for HEIs in the US and EU, and that regressive transatlantic relations produce the opposite outcome. The historical and theoretical ties between transatlantic relations and higher education have been detailed and the link to HEI international partnerships evidenced. International education and its rationales/benefits have been thoroughly defined and its

connection to overall university performance explicated. Comprehensive internationalization theory has been outlined with a focus toward HEI international partnerships in various operational outcomes of international education and the achievement of HEI missions. Current developments in transatlantic relations were reviewed and their resulting effects upon the ability of HEIs to implement international partnerships were analyzed. Lastly, the findings and implications of the theoretical and analytical aspects of the paper have been laid out, providing beneficial information for policy makers and HEI administrators to use as they formulate strategy moving forward.

While this study produces useful discussion, analysis, and findings, it must also be understood and used within the context of its limitations, which also provide avenues for future research. This paper focuses on developments within transatlantic relations, but future studies on the interplay of international relations in other world regions might also provide insights into HEI international partnership trends and associated outcomes for HEI mission performance. The present work also centers on recent developments from 2016 to today, while future research could take a more holistic, post-pandemic/post-Brexit/post-Trump administration look at the longer-term impacts on HEI international partnerships and their benefits. Should the near socioeconomic/political future produce a return to progressive transatlantic relations, this would provide another chance to test the findings of this study.

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Sociocultural and Psychological Acculturation Strategies of South African International Students in a Flemish University in Belgium: A Photovoice Study

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ABSTRACT

Due to an increase in mobility programs, the number of South African international students is on the rise. Despite this increase there is a lack of research on South African international students. The acculturation challenges of South African international students, studying in Flanders, Belgium in a non-Anglophonic context was investigated. A Photovoice method explored barriers and facilitators in their adjustment process. Participants captured their experiences through a visual lens. Focus groups conducted, utilized images as prompts to the narratives. The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The two main themes identified were related to Sociocultural and Psychological adjustment. We adapted Berry's bidimensional acculturation model, used it as an overarching framework and merged it with an Ubuntu African perspective. The data suggest that for facets of the host nation superficially rooted and easy to adapt to, participants generally adopted an assimilation strategy. Whereas a separation strategy was adopted for facets of the host nation that were deeply ingrained such as worldviews.

Keywords: acculturation, COVID-19, Erasmus, international students, mobility exchange, South Africa, ubuntu,

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic international student mobility was on the rise. The landscape of international student mobility has seen some changes due to the pandemic. UNESCO (2016) defines an international student as:

> An internationally mobile student is an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in a destination where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin.

Recent OECD statistics depict that more than 5.6 million international students had crossed borders to study in 2018 (OECD, 2020). Consequently, the upsurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic will have a remarkable effect on international student mobility trends (Rumbley,2020) impacting more than 3.9 million

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international students globally, thus far (UNESCO, 2020). It is forecasted there will be a decrease in international student mobility as concerns regarding travel bans, visa restrictions and health and safety measures continue (Mok, Xiong, Ke, & Cheung, 2021) coupled with host nations' ability to care for the well-being of their foreign guests (OECD, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is predicted to impact the push pull factors of study destinations. In 2019 China was the biggest sender of international students comprising 518, 300 students (New Oriental, 2020) and this may fluctuate as regional destinations are being considered in lieu of English-speaking destinations (Mok et al., 2021). As English is the lingua Franca in the globalised world, many international students pursue their studies in Western English-speaking destinations such as the USA, UK, and Australia (OECD, 2020). International students are lucrative to host nation economies. During the 2019-2020 academic year international students contributed 38.7 billion to the US economy (NAFSA, 2020), a 4.4% drop from the previous academic year. Current international policies such as the US immigrant policies and Brexit are impacting mobility trends with more students opting for alternative destinations. Mobility trends will also be influenced by the governance of countries regarding the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD 2020). Belgium has a popular appeal for international students due to a strong research culture, home to the European Union, is a multilingual nation and centrally located to other European cities (Kuleuven, 2021). Belgium has an ageing community and international students develop a country's human capital and innovation capacity (OECD, 2020). Belgium and South Africa have a long history based on close cultural and linguistic ties. The bilateral relation between Belgium and South Africa is strong and exports between these countries in 2011 constituted 14.6 billion (Embassy South Africa, 2021). Belgium ranks 6th in the world in terms of foreign direct investment in South Africa and is one of the leading countries in the management of ports and transport, with extensive cooperation between the ports of Antwerp and Durban. Acculturation and Adjustment are terms that are often used interchangeably in research. The process of acculturation involves an interactive process between an acculturating individual and a multi-layered environment (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). When international students engage in behaviours that benefit socio-cultural adjustment such as engaging in intercultural interactions then this positively impacts psychological adjustment which in turn impacts their levels of perceived social support (Shu, Ahmed, Pickett, Ayman & McAbee, 2020). This study will investigate the acculturation strategies of South African international students. Berry's (1980) bidimensional acculturation model is used as an overarching framework merging it with an Ubuntu perspective (Metz, 2013, Tutu 1999). Ubuntu is best described by the Zulu maxim Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu translated as, a person is a person through other persons. A person is socialised to think of themselves as inextricably bound to others (Munyaka & Mothlabi, 2009, p. 69,71,72). Ubuntu is seen as a moral ethical theory and is the ideal through which Nelson Mandela encapsulated this ideology (Mandela, 2013, p. 227).

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE

South Africa is a heterogenous country, termed the "rainbow nation" due to its multiculturality and eleven official languages (Oliver & Oliver, 2017; Tutu,1999). Racial classifications are still used in many South African, scientific studies. Three dominant categories are Caucasian, Black, and Coloured. The term Coloured, previously Cape Coloured is a person of hybrid African ("black") and European ("white") or Asian ancestry (Britannica, 2021). Their origins can be traced back to the arrival of the Dutch in South Africa, with the offspring of the Dutch and Malay slaves further hybridized by the Dutch intermingling with the KhoiKhoi, the San and the Xhosa people (Oliver & Oliver, 2017). As per the guidelines in the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) racial classifications can be viewed as negative, dated

and need to be addressed with sensitivity. In this study we worked with these racial classifications from a diversity perspective, rather than a post-Apartheid perspective. We considered a recent critique from Hendricks and colleagues (2019) that the use of the concept race may enforce an existing mechanism of stigma, discrimination, and racism (Hendricks, Kopano & Kramer, 2019) rather than facilitate understanding through a variety of different perspectives. Africa is a vast and diverse continent and often there is a proclivity to treat Africa as a homogenous continent (Hyams-Ssekasi et al., 2014). Therefore, it was decided to focus on South Africa separately as a target group.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do South African international students experience student life in Belgium?
2. What are the challenges that hinder or facilitate the acculturation of South African international students?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study two theoretical frameworks were applied to link the findings on acculturation. Our primary theoretical framework is Berry's bidimensional acculturation model (1980), and the secondary framework is the African moral ethic of Ubuntu (Metz, 2013; Tutu, 1999). The most used definition of acculturation is ''those phenomena which result when groups of individuals, having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups…" (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149). The compatibilities or incompatibilities in norms, attitudes, and cultural values between two cultural groups need to be examined first, to understand the acculturation taking place (Sam & Berry, 2010). A sojourner's stance toward cultural continuity and cultural change may result in four acculturation strategies. These four orientations are defined in Berry's Bidimensional acculturation model as: Integration, Assimilation, Marginalization and Separation (Berry, 1980). The Assimilation strategy refers to individuals embracing the host culture at the expense of their own cultural group. The integration strategy is when individuals retain their personal and cultural values while adapting to the host culture. The separation strategy is when an individual engages in their own culture of origin but do not embrace the culture of the dominant host nation. Marginalization occurs when an individual disconnects from both their host and home culture due to negative perceptions they have of both cultures (Berry, 1980;1997). Our secondary theoretical framework is Ubuntu which values interdependence, community, collective responsibility, interdependence, and hospitality among people (Assie-Lumumba, 2017; Murove, 2014). Ubuntu is referred to by Letseka as fundamental to African socio-ethical thought, as illuminating the communal rootedness and interdependence of persons, and highlighting the importance of human relationships (2000, p. 179).

RESEARCH METHOD

From an initial scoping of the literature, it was discovered that most studies conducted on international students either utilized a quantitative or a traditional qualitative method (Mok et al., 2021; Shu et al., 2020). This project applied a visual qualitative research framework using the photovoice methodology created by Wang and Burris (1997). The three main goals of Photovoice are: 1. Reflecting and recording the strengths and concerns of their communities, 2. Promoting knowledge and dialogue and, 3. To reach policymakers (Wang & Burris, 1997, p.370). Photovoice has been used to examine groups such as vulnerable women (Miled, 2020); mental health (Vansteenkiste, Morrens & Westerhoff, 2020) and international students (Nokwedi & Khanare, 2020). Through photovoice, researchers can visualize an

individual's perception regarding their social realities through images (Miled, 2020). Images also articulate silenced voices. Photovoice promotes critical analysis, empowering individuals through knowledge constructions and fostering change through innovative solutions (Wang, 1999). Photovoice enabled us to have a better understanding of the acculturation processes of South African international students and aid in potential policy solutions.

Setting

This study was conducted at the university of Leuven in the Flemish region of Belgium. KU Leuven is one of the oldest Universities in Europe established in 1425 (KU Leuven, 2021). It is situated in a small city called Leuven in the Dutch speaking region of Flanders. Belgium is divided into the Flemish and French community (OECD, 2017). Kuleuven, during the 2019-2020 academic year registered 58000 students with 9686 being international students (KuLeuven, 2021).

Sample

Six South African postgraduate Erasmus Mundus to South Africa scholarship recipients (EMA2SA) participated in this study. A convenience sampling method was employed, and participants reflect this sample (Wang, 1999, p.,187). It comprised of four females and two males. At the time of the study five of the participants were completing their master's degree and one participant was a doctoral candidate. The age of the participants ranged from 26 to 42. Three of the participants lived in 50/50 % mixed residence comprising of Belgian and international students, one lived in a 95 % predominantly Dutch residence and two had lived in a private residence as a couple. For the older participant (6), it was an adjustment to live in a student residence away from her husband and children. All the participants received a monthly stipend, which funded their accommodation and subsistence. Student were able to use their stipends at their own discretion. Most of the participants utilized the remainder of their stipends for home necessities like bedding as well as travel expenses. Many joined local sports clubs and cultural organizations like Pangaea. The South African participants came from different socioeconomic backgrounds due to the remnants of the Apartheid system of racial inequality. The research sample reflects this multiculturality comprising of 3 Caucasian South Africans of Afrikaans Dutch descent, 2 Black South Africans (Xitsonga and IsiXhosa tribes) and one Coloured participant (Khoisan). The grant recipients were some of the top scholars in their field and more privileged as scholarship recipients. The South African students prior to receiving the scholarship had entered the job market or were already in employment. Some had shorter periods of mobility such as 3- 6 months whereas others had longer periods including 12-36 months. For practical convenience, an ideal group of participants in a photovoice study would be between 7 and 10 people to allow for in depth discussion. The sample size is comparable to other photovoice studies utilizing smaller samples (Wang, Leen & Hannes, 2018, Wang & Hannes. 2014).

Setting

This study was conducted at the university of Leuven in the Flemish region of Belgium. KU Leuven is one of the oldest Universities in Europe established in 1425 (KU Leuven, 2021). It is situated in a small city called Leuven in the Dutch speaking region of Flanders. Belgium is divided into the Flemish and French community (OECD, 2017). Kuleuven, during the 2019-2020 academic year registered 58000 students with 9686 being international students (KuLeuven, 2021).

Table 1

Information On The Research Participants

No	Sex	Age	Degree	Mobility	Race	Language	Faculty
1.	Female	29	PhD	36 months	Caucasian (Dutch descent)	Afrikaans	Faculty of Science
2.	Female	28	Masters	12 months	Black (isiXhosa descent)	IsiXhosa	Faculty of Architecture
3.	Female	26	Masters	12 months	Black (Xitsonga descent)	Tsonga	Faculty of Architecture
4.	Male	30	Masters	12 months	Caucasian (Dutch descent)	Afrikaans	Faculty of Architecture
5.	Male	31	Masters	12 months	Caucasian (Dutch descent)	Afrikaans	Faculty of Science
6.	Female	42	Masters	12 months	Coloured (Khoisan).	Afrikaans	Faculty of Education and Psychology

Ethical briefing

An introductory interactive information session regarding the goal of the study, the concept of photovoice and ethical concerns was conducted. Issues related to privacy, informed consent and confidentiality were discussed. Each participant signed a consent form in which the potential benefits and harms of the study were explained. Three participants participated in the ethics session. Those who could not attend were briefed on an individual basis. During the ethics sessions a range of images were presented to illustrate which photos might raise some ethical dilemmas. Suggestions were given to bridge this. The ethics session increased awareness of the potential ethical pitfalls. Consent forms in the shape of wallet slips were given to all participants to distribute to potential photographic subjects. Participants were informed that permission was needed by subjects who had visible logos or identifiable facial and or bodily features. Obtaining permission from subjects created discomfort. Consequently, participants opted for the safer choice of capturing photos that had minimal ethical impact, with a preference for taking metaphoric photos (Hannes & Parylo, 2014). Photos with identifiable features of the participants also needed consent and these were signed and returned to the lead researcher.

Data Collection

Two rounds of photo collection, interviews and focus groups took place over a period of 10 months. The first round provided two months' time to capture photos. During the first stage, the participants were in the initial phase of adjustment and had been living in Flanders for a period of three months. Participants were tasked to take photos about their general experiences being international students in Flanders. They were instructed to take ten to fifteen photos each for the first-round submission. The photos selected were sent to the lead researcher before the first focus group took place. Five participants participated in the first focus group. A PowerPoint slideshow represented each photo the participants had submitted. The

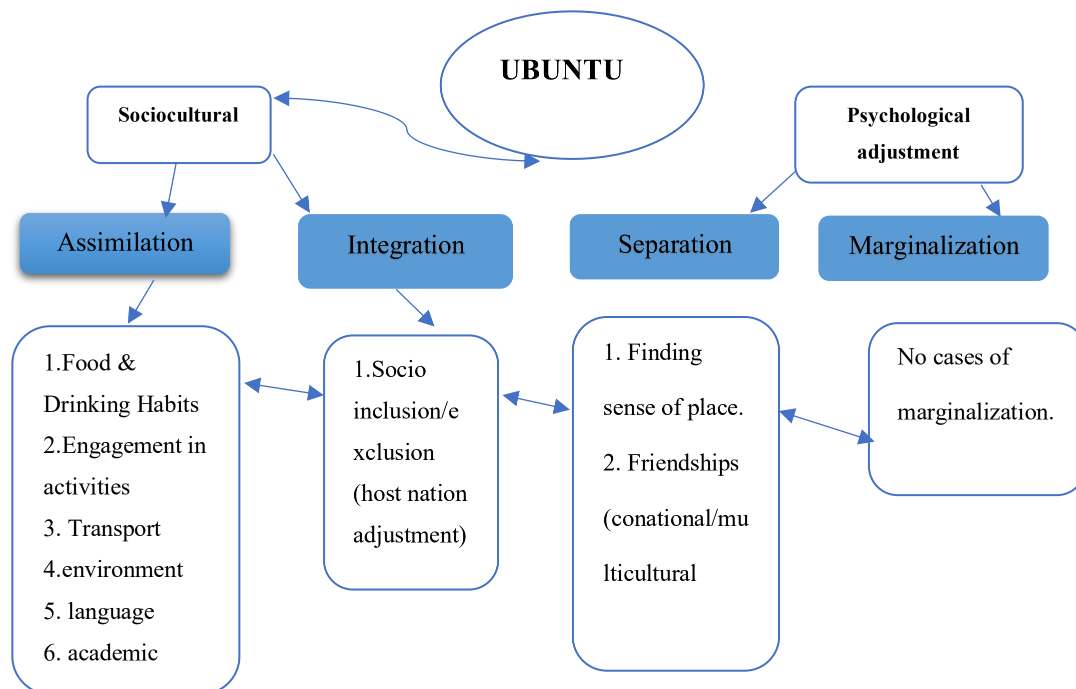
participants were then asked individually to describe the meaning behind their photos. Questions that were used as prompts included:

1. What is the main idea behind this photo?
2. Why did you send in this photo?
3. What message do you want to convey with this photo?

A general inventory regarding the experiences and challenges of all the international students were taken during the first round. Upon transcriptions of the focus groups, certain themes emerged and were clustered into two umbrella themes: Sociocultural and Psychological guided by research done by (Searle & Ward, 1990). Under the umbrella theme of sociocultural adjustment, seven subcategories were founded which included: 1. Food and drinking habits, 2. Engagement in activities, 3. Transport, 4. Environment 5. Language 6. Academic Assimilation and 7. Host nation adjustment. Under the umbrella theme of psychological adjustment, the follow subthemes emerged 1. Finding a sense of place and 2. Friendships.

Table 2

Overview On The Interconnection Between The Four Acculturation Strategies



The theme of Sociocultural adjustment produced the most subthemes and consequently utilized as the main prompt for the second round of photo submission. Participants in the second round were guided by the following prompt: Which opportunities and challenges from a sociocultural perspective are you experiencing as a South African international student in Flanders? The students had 2 months to submit photos related to this question.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to examine the photos. Thematic analysis is a procedure that methodically identifies, organizes, and offers insight into "patterns of meaning" across a data set and permits the researcher to make sense of "collective or shared memories and experiences" (Braun, 2012, p. 57). It involves a process of identifying themes through analyzing and reading data meticulously. The

photos were analyzed and then grouped into different categories highlighting the narratives and later categorized and coded based on similarity. The transcripts were read rigorously. Fundamental thematic outlines were extracted from previous studies conducted in similar contexts and were used as a guide to inform concepts to construct initial findings. These were later fine-tuned based on the content that emerged through an iterative method of coding and categorizing.

Table 3

Overview Of The Steps For Thematic Analysis

	Heading	Interpretation
1.	First impression/non-objective interpretation of the data	Upon receival of the photos, the lead researcher interpreted the photos from her own perspective. This was done intentionally to affirm the importance of the meaning attached to the accompanying narrative and photos. It demonstrated that an image does not only lie in its physical construction but in how the individual who has taken the photo interprets it (Berger, 2011, p.95). Contemporary approaches to visual data now determine that visual data are not only seen as reflections of reality instead the construction of meaning is by the creator (Miled, 2020) as images often demonstrate subjective reality.
2.	Systematizing the data or codifying the data	After the first focus group session the lead researcher systematized each photo with its accompanying narrative to create structure and coherence.
3.	Searching for themes	Axial coding took place initially as the researcher continuously compared axial codes to search for links with other codes. Images were then searched for themes and placed under a code. Once all the codes were retrieved the researcher interpreted the codes to find common themes.
4.	Clustering of Themes	Themes were clustered and re-evaluated. After this the final main themes and subthemes were formed. This was a time-consuming process as some themes overlapped such as socio-connectedness which falls under both Sociocultural and Psychological adjustment.
5.	Direction for continuation of study	As participants in photovoice become co-creators, it was decided to focus solely on the theme of socio-cultural adjustment being the dominant theme. Participants were prompted by the following question: "What were the challenges and opportunities both positive and negative they experienced as South Africans adjusting socio-culturally into a foreign context?"
6.	Re-clustering of second-round themes	The second-round photos were further categorised into different themes based on the clustering of data such as socio connectedness, differences in worldviews, host nation adjustment and social networks
7.	Creating the report	A report was created on their experiences.

RESULTS

Sociocultural and Psychological adjustment were the dominant themes in previous research (Shu et al 2020; Ward & Kennedy, 1993) hence they were utilized as umbrella themes to structure the narrative. The following categories discussed below pertained to Berry's assimilation strategy except for host nation adjustment which focused on the integration strategy.

Food and Drinking Culture

Opportunities

All the participants (6 out of 6) had all sent in photos (a collection of 30 photos) regarding the food and drinking habits of the locals. They learnt about local Belgian food culture by frequenting local bars and restaurants where local people assembled, by observing them, and trying out the local cuisine. Participants sampled the Belgian beer (as Belgians have a rich beer heritage) and familiarized themselves with this culture. Participant 2 discusses the variety of the local beer culture (see Figure 1):

> I think that was the first week we were here actually and not being a beer drinker back home, because we don't have so many beers. I usually drink wine so to find something that was accommodating me as well was a big thing for me. Belgium has turned me into a beer drinker, but I will drop the beer when I leave: Because I won't have Kriek (Belgian beer).

Figure 1

Belgian Beer

Source: photograph of Participant 2

Challenges

Some of the challenges associated with the local food culture was the lower quality of fresh produce. This was attributed to exporting, as exported food deteriorates quicker. Some of the participants (5 out of 6) had commented that they were unable to afford better quality food due to the higher cost of living. Participant 1 (see Figure 2):

> In South Africa we go to the farmers market quite a lot. I am a farm girl…Farming here is so industrialized. I would never pay so much for food in South Africa, and I think that the quality of the food here sucks, that's why they have to buy it off of Spain. I think we have some really nice stuff at home.

Figure 2

Farmer's Market

Source: photograph of Participant 1

Engagement in Activities

Opportunities

Engaging in activities was divided into two subcategories: 1. Participating in Sporting and Cultural Events and 2. Travelling. Five of the participants discussed the different sports clubs they joined such as field hockey and rock climbing and the different cultural events, they attended such as art exhibitions, music concerts and museums. These activities offered the participants an opportunity to learn about the host culture. Travelling was deemed an important past time in getting to know the European culture and (32 photographs) were collected on this theme. Many commented on the convenience of travelling in Europe as it is a smaller country compared to South Africa, e.g. Participant 2 (see Figure 3).

> A few weeks ago, me and (Participant 6) decided to explore a bit more. We spend a lot of time here in Flanders, so we went to Liege for the day, and it was quite striking how different the two cities are to each other. I wanted to show how enthusiastic we were exploring the city that we ended up doing the typical touristic things like climbing three hundred stairs.

Figure 3

Liege

Source: photograph of Participant 2

Challenges

There were no challenges reported regarding engagement in activities.

New Modes of Transport

Opportunities

One of the dominant modes of transport in Belgium is cycling. Participant three used the opportunity to relearn how to ride a bicycle. Several of the participants mentioned the health benefits of cycling and walking and its eco-friendliness. Several photos (25 photos) were submitted regarding this theme. Most of the participants were accustomed to travelling by private transport in South Africa. However, many noted the impracticality of cycling as primary transport in South Africa due to slopes. Participant 2 stated (see Figure 4):

> It was the first time. I think I had not been on a bicycle in many moons. I had to make a shift mentally and I remember saying to you that this kind of really made me miss my car. But in retrospect I walk everywhere now, or I take the bus...I really love that I am more active and walking more I really appreciate that about Europe.

Figure 4

Bicycles

Source: photograph of Participant 2

Challenges

One of the obstacles in cycling was the safety concern regarding extreme weather conditions. Most were unprepared on dealing with the safety issues of frost and snow when cycling. They had to purchase appropriate clothing for the colder conditions and learnt habits such as clothing layering. It was also inconvenient using their bicycles for practical day to day maintenance such as carting groceries in extreme weather, (5 out of 6) participants noted. Participant four below commented:

> I can't use my bicycle; I have to walk. But I can't walk on this because if this part becomes ice, then I am going to slip and fall. It's like your whole world gets turned upside down and you kind of think, am I appropriately dressed? do I have all the right equipment? It's something we are not used to back home" (Narrative 1, Participant, 4).

Environment

Opportunities

Issues concerning the environment like recycling, the impact of the seasons and architecture are discussed. A sample of (35) photos were sent in regarding this theme. The visible changing of the seasons was a new experience for the participants. In the narrative below participant four comments on the quiet ambience created when it snowed and the tendency of the Belgians to retreat indoors. **"**We always wanted

it to snow and… when it snows it's a lot quieter, it gets frighteningly quiet, it gets quite surreal in a way" (Narrative 2, Participant, 4).

One other important component participant mentioned, was the eco-friendly recycling nature of Belgium (4 out of 6) and below Participant 5 commented (see Figure 5):

> This is the heart of the city at night, where very old and new are mixed. Very different from Johannesburg where I grew up. Notice the (near) absence of cars, there are tracks for trams, and bicycles lean against the wall. This city is much cleaner than Joburg. Not only in terms of trash, but also in an eco-friendly way.

Figure 5

Heart Of The City

Source: photograph of Participant 5

The aesthetic old-world appeal of Europe was visually stimulating to the participants depicting European history. Approximately (27) photos were submitted regarding this theme. A point made by Participant 5 (see Figure 6) below refers to how the old buildings depict the story of European history:

> Some of the buildings in Europe were built before Europeans "discovered" Africa. These buildings tell a story of European history. This Dome survived World War 2. I doubt whether some of the more modern buildings will last this long. It is amazing to experience, such, beautiful old buildings. South Africa is a relatively modern country, and we do not have such old architecture in South Africa.

Figure 6

European Dome

Source: photograph of Participant 5

Challenges

Originating from a warmer climate, acclimation to the colder weather conditions was an adjustment. All the participants (6 out of 6) commented that the lack of Vitamin D had impacted them negatively. Participant 1 commented that the colder weather conditions had an impact on the outdoor sport of rock climbing (see Figure 7):

> We went to Luxembourg to do some climbing; nature is for me super important. In South Africa I would go climbing every single weekend because the weather is amazing. I feel at a loss, in Winter. I felt like what the hell should I do now? Because I can't do my sport. I don't want to go outdoors, because it is too cold, and I came to the realization now that I need another sport.

Figure 7
Rock Climbing

Source: photograph of Participant 1

Language

Opportunities

South Africa has eleven official languages of which English is the lingua franca (Oliver & Oliver, 2017). Courses were conducted in English of which South Africans have a native proficiency. Some of the participants (6 out of 6) took the opportunity to embrace the Flemish language by, reading local Belgian newspapers, taking Dutch courses and attending cultural events organised by the local Belgians. Participant 1 commented (see Figure 8):

> This was taken during the Kultuuruur festival, and they did an Art project about sustainability. I am busy looking in the Dutch guide for the next art exhibition to go and see. In my town in Potchefstroom, we have an Art festival called Aardklop which kind of reminded me a bit of Kultuuruur.

Challenges

Some discomfort was experienced pertaining to the Flemish instruction of signposts, Dutch only library signs and books as well as computers set to the Dutch language. Practical concerns were an issue. Participant three who lived in a predominantly Belgian residence experienced discomfort when important announcements were made in Dutch such as a fire drills and felt a safety concern.

Figure 8

Dutch Newspaper Guide

Source: photograph of Participant 1

Academic Adjustment

Opportunities

Academic adjustment was subcategorised into two categories: 1. Curricular related activities and extra-curricular activities. Extracurricular related study trips offered an opportunity for learning practically and in a different setting. Three of the participants in the same course of Urbanism got the opportunity to go on a study trip to China. "This photo (Figure 9) shows how I have moved from Africa to another different environment" (Participant 3). "And it opened another door to somewhere else" (participant 2). "The three of us all went on that trip, and I don't think we would have gotten the opportunity like that if we had stayed and continued studying in South Africa".

Figure 9

China Study Trip

Source: photograph of Participant 3

Challenges

Academic challenges focused on learning in official school settings and having to assimilate to a new academic milieu. Some of the students were concerned regarding the protocol of formal academic

settings: "Belgian people behave according to protocol so as soon as you are in a different situation a different protocol is required" (Narrative 3, Participant, 1).

Participant 3 (see Figure 10) explained the challenge of studying a different course in Belgium:

> That's me in studio preparing for the model and this is very diverted from what I have studied, so very different. It was interesting and very challenging for me, because as I said it's not what I studied in South Africa, so it was very challenging.

Figure 10

Studio Work

Source: photograph of Participant 3

Integration Strategy

The integration strategy (Berry, 1997) refers to host nation adjustment, where participants maintain some of their own cultural elements while also being disposed to learning about the host nation. The cultural component in socio-cultural refers to the norms, values and beliefs of a host nation and can refer to the deeper and invisible sense of a culture ingrained in their ways of being and language (Taulean, 2015).

Host Nation Adjustment

Occasions to learn about the local culture through observation gave participants an opportunity to view facets of the host nation from a different perspective. One such opportunity is related to differences in worldviews regarding the social organisation of individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 1980). Participant six had visited a local Belgian friend who willingly chose to exclude herself from her community and gained a new perspective noting below:

> I visited a Belgian friend in that town, and I asked her to show me what they typically do on a weekend. It's a good quality of life they live, it's just that socio-culturally I feel that she is a bit isolated, and it makes me understand her and Belgians a bit better. I just found her choice of exclusion and not being included in the community she lives in, very different. It's a different way of social organization compared to back home (Narrative 4, Participant, 6).

Ubuntu means that our humanity is inextricably linked to another's humanity (Tutu, 1999) and individualism is usually seen as its antithesis. Identity and solidarity are two themes that appear in Ubuntu (Metz, 2011). When one fails to identify with another, this can be construed as alienation, and can undermine a group's value. Solidarity focuses on ways of mutual aid where there is an expectation that one can help another to a certain degree. Failure to exhibit solidarity could at worse be depicted as ill-will (Metz, 2011). For Participant 4 it was a strange way of social organisation that bordered on not being connected to a community and alienating oneself.

Belgium has a more balanced socioeconomic structure with the majority pertaining to the middle class. All participants noted that Belgium was a safer country with less crime. For Participant 6 it was a culture shock when asked to leave her coat at a coat stand (see Figure 11):

> That photo was a cultural shock photo to me. I have been to a dinner at the faculty club, and we were advised to go and hang our coats in the cloakroom. So, we go and hang our coats in the cloakroom, and I think that oh, my coat is going to get stolen here. So, everybody hangs their coats and after a while well after dinner we go back and fetch our coats, and like most of the people have left and I thought that … only in Africa you can expect your coat to be stolen. Everyone just confidently hangs their stuff, their possessions are not under threat of being taken and there was a fellow African, she is from Kenya, and she says to me; "This still shocks me," I said what? So, she said "that my coat is always there once I come back."

Figure 11

Coat Stand

Source: photograph of Participant 6

This suggest that although South Africans have their doubts about something based on their personal experiences, their actions are brought into alignment with the behaviour of the host nation.

Challenges (Social Barriers)

A major obstacle to the South African international students' adjustment was the difficulty in acquainting the locals. They attributed this to the perception that the Belgians were reserved and cautious in allowing foreign people access into their social circles. All the participants noted a social barrier. Participant 1 stated (see Figure 12):

> This was taken at Kultuuruur (Culture hour) it's an Art installation. Each potato has something to do with networks and each potato is connected to another potato. It has something to do with the way people form groups and the way the groups interact with each other…In Belgium people are a little bit more cautious to reveal themselves…. Although there are some people that I think I can be friends with, but we are going to need some time to let them let their guard down…They are not cold but there is a certain kind of barrier.

Figure 12

Art Installation

Source: photograph of Participant 1

In Ubuntu, a human being is an intrinsic communal entity rooted in the context of the interdependence of social relationships and is never seen as an atomistic, isolated individual (Gyeke, 1987). All the participants (6 out of 6) had experienced a social barrier. They experienced an inaccessibility of entering the Belgian social circles despite attempts at joining. Participant three stated that in the beginning she felt socially excluded and unwelcome from her primarily Belgian residence when no one had welcomed her. She eventually took the stance that this is how Belgians are culturally and adapted accordingly. Participant 6 noted that there was an exclusion not based on race but an exclusion that you are not Belgian stating (see Figure 13):

> I have not experienced first-hand any racist kind of incidents here and I find that there is a lot of social exclusion but not based on race like it would be in South Africa. The social exclusion is that you are not Belgian, so you are not quite assimilated into the conversation around the table or the conversation at the pub. You always must listen and try and rely on your Afrikaans to try and follow the conversation and so it is an exclusion of a different kind.

Figure 13

Leuven Hates Racism

Source: photograph of Participant 6

Participant six refers to an exclusion of a different kind, not racial but based on being non-Belgian. There are various terms of discrimination that exist such as Islamophobia, Xenophobia and Afrophobia that might

not necessarily pertain to race but may be linked to an anti-immigrant sentiment (Michael, 2017). Feeling socially excluded is also antithesis to Ubuntu as it has an emphasis on community and hospitality (Waghid,2014). Participant four below expresses his feeling of social exclusion and lack of hospitality. He felt unwelcome in the group stating:

> Half of my teammates are Dutch speaking, and the other half are French speaking, and I'm the only first language English speaker…This was probably the hardest thing for me to deal with because a lot of the guys in the team won't make the effort to speak English to me or to kind of make you feel welcome in the group. You kind of get treated like an outsider.

Figure 14

Belgian Hockey Club

Source: photograph of Participant 4

Most Belgians have an English proficiency and participant four is proficient in Afrikaans which is mutually intelligible with Dutch (Gooskens & Bezooijens,2006). This could be linked to linguistic exclusion, however there is something more deeply embedded. The linguistic exclusion could be attributed to not having mastered the native language yet, meaning the host nation may not automatically default to English. He felt a lack of Ubuntu traits such as interconnectedness and hospitality where an individual is accountable from a moral point of view to others (Murove, 2014). Some of the personal characteristics of this participant included that he was very outgoing, sporty, and self-assured. The lack of community could be attributed to his more communalistic Ubuntu worldview as opposed to the individualism of the Belgians (Hofstede, 1980). Cultural value conflicts result from the struggle between the values and behavioral expectations present in the host culture to that of a sojourners home culture (Constantine et al., 2005). However, it is possible that cultures can both possess degrees of individualist and collectivistic traits. Participant four being Caucasian, his non-visibility should have counted in his favor, yet he still felt treated like an outsider. There are still levels of Xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe (Michael, 2017; Nwabuzo, 2016). The European network against racism coined the term Afrophobia to describe instances of discrimination and exclusion, targeting people of African origin (Nwabuzo. 2016).

Psychological Adjustment

Separation Strategy

Opportunities

Finding your sense of place was one of the themes and (5 out of the 6) participants had sent in photos on this theme. Photos submitted, illustrated navigating their way in their new surroundings and

trying to find their place as Africans. As a solution they sought African ties such as searching for African speciality stores or connecting with other South Africans. Participant 4 (see Figure 15) discussed this longing for home:

> This bar reminds me a bit of home and I feel a bit at home here. When you speak to people about the giraffe… they take it a bit for granted they don't know what it's about. For them it's just a bar for me it's a bit more than that. It's the combination of real Belgian elements because they've got the big range of Belgian beers and then you've got this African element which is represents the wealth and relates to this idea of the watering hole.

Figure 15

The Watering Hole

Source: photograph of Participant 4

Some saw the challenge of finding a sense of place as an opportunity to learn more about their own African identity. Participant 3 started learning to play a traditional Venda instrument noting that she appreciated learning about her culture while in Europe (see Figure 16): "I forgot what it's called because it's actually a Venda instrument, and it was just amazing for me to learn about it here in Europe that's why I put it there, like learning about SA while in Europe" .

Figure 16

Venda Musical Instrument

Source: photograph of Participant 3

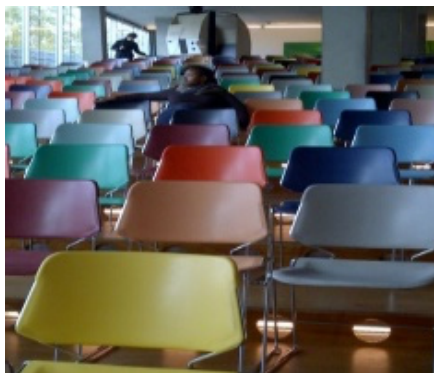
Challenges

The psychological challenges are linked to Berry's separation and marginalization strategy (1980) and these challenges were linked to loneliness and feeling out of place. Participant 2 commented (see Figure 17):

> I think that photo kind of represented all the empty chairs around. When I looked at it, I thought wow, that is kind of how I felt, when we first got here. There is a whole sea of people who are so different from me, but you still stand alone.

Figure 17

Sea Of People



Source: photograph of Participant 2

Friendships

Opportunities

The opportunity to acquaint with people from different cultures was valued. South Africans were able to learn from other cultures and see things from a different perspective. Participant 3 stated below (see Figure 18):

> We were celebrating our friend's birthday. It was a sunny day, and she had no idea We've become quite a close-knit group of friends in our class. I thought that was something else. There are no Belgians in our class, there are two Africans, and the rest are all from Europe and we have really become a close-knit group of friends so that was special.

Figure 18

Friend's Birthday

Source: photograph of participant 6

Challenges

Due to difficulties gaining access to the host nation, the South Africans opted for alternative avenues of social support and networks. Subsequently, they gained access with fellow co-nationals also referred to as the monocultural network and international students from different countries known as the multicultural network (Bochner, Hutnik & Furnham, 1985). The monocultural network offers an important role in the expression of collective, cultural, and ethnic value whereas the multicultural network provides recreational and mutual support (Bochner et al., 1985).

DISCUSSION

In this paper we discovered that Berry's assimilation and integration strategy is linked to Searle and Ward's (1990) sociocultural adjustment and Berry's separation and marginalization strategy as linked to Searle and Ward's (1990) psychological adjustment (Berry, 1980). We discovered that South African international students adopt either an assimilation or integration strategy as it pertains to some facets of their sociocultural adjustment and take on a separation strategy concerning other aspects of their psychological adjustment. An assimilation strategy was adopted by the South Africans for aspects of the host nation that were superficially rooted such as assimilating to the food culture or changing a transport mode. This is a choice and obtainable by trying out the local food culture or changing a habit. Conversely, intangible issues such as deeply rooted Flemish culture would only appear if one spent a considerably longer time in this setting. The findings demonstrate that the integration strategy was the least accessible strategy due to perceived social barriers constructed by the Belgians. This is consistent with other research done respectively on other sojourners in Belgium (Wang et al., 2018; Figueiredo, Oldenhove & Licata, 2018). This study is also consistent with other research on African international students struggling to negotiate cultural value conflicts of individualist and collective traits (Okusolubu, 2018; Boafo-Arthur, 2014). Consequently, the South African sample took on a separation strategy when it came to connection. This study is consistent with other research that Berry's integration strategy (1980) like Bochner et al's Bicultural network (1985) is the least utilized strategy pertaining to host nation adjustment whereas Berry's separation strategy similar to Bochner et al's (1985) monocultural network is the most utilised as it pertains to connecting with fellow conationals followed by the multicultural network with fellow international students. No cases of marginalization were reported as this applies more to refugees, who unlike international students did not voluntarily enter the acculturation process (Maringe, Ojo & Chiramba, 2017).

UBUNTU

From a universalist approach the word community refers to an ideal to strive for when relating to others in society and not an existing society already present in the world (Metz & Gaie, 2010). This community can consist of both interpersonal, biological, and non-biological bonds (Gyeke, 1987). Community can be observed as an objective standard, guiding a majority in what they want (Metz, 2013; 2017). Each individual adds their own knowledge, experience and abilities to the final social goal negotiated through indabas to reach a consensus (Metz & Gaie, 2010). This means that the communal character of Ubuntu does not subordinate the rights of an individual but instead an individual pursues their own good through pursing a common good (Metz, 2017). With the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on international mobility, it will now be more important for international institutions to find ways of interconnection and understanding the other as this will impact push pull impact trends of international students. One of the factors the international students will look at will be how the host nation takes care of its foreign guests (OECD, 2020).

One thing we learnt from other Africans living in Belgium at that time, is that exposure to exclusionary mechanisms, although not directly linked to race, may have deeper roots in a colonial past. Whether it is foreigners undergoing medical screenings with Belgian-approved doctors only, or intrusive tests to gain visa acceptance, bank records checked, police clearance, or policing by authorities verifying paperwork or by simply opening a bank account. This was perceived by fellow Africans as a lack of trust from the host nation towards them. Afrophobia and other forms of discrimination still exist (Nwabuzo, 2016) and there is still a lack of recognition on the role colonization has played (Ngongo & Landmeters, 2019). Colonialism has caused great damage to some African nations and the refugee crisis is at an all-time high (Butticci, 2020). There remain visual markers of colonialism in societies. In South African universities, symbols of colonial culture in post-colonial African societies remain (Chowdhury, 2019) and in Belgium, establishments such the Royal Museum for Africa have also been charged with promulgating colonial propaganda; however, steps have been made to include a postcolonial analysis (Ngongo, & Landmeters, 2019). The removal of the Rhodes statue of the Rhodes must fall movement at the University of Cape Town sparked much controversy, however it opened a dialogue for the examination of deeper moral concerns regarding the preservation of colonial symbols (Chowdhury, 2019) showing that deeper seeded invisible markers of oppression are still present in institutions of higher and international education. Though bringing awareness, the removal of statues does not solve the ingrained problem of invisible forms of oppression that are still present today with its roots in deeper colonialist issues. A space needs to be created in higher educational institutions where dialogues of decolonisation in Academia need to be implemented which would add greatly to the value of exchange. This space of dialogue of colonial pasts should lead to suggestions on how to best relate to it, share it and to move forward. We posit this space should incorporate Ubuntu principles to create an atmosphere of open dialogue and humanity. This space can be related to third sphere hybrid space that Hendricks et al (2020) posit, which enable cultural identity and boundaries to be re-negotiated. This space offers a strategic meeting place, fostering collective change which could lead to a more inclusive and equitable society combined with an Ubuntu ethic. The value of an exchange program should not only be evaluated in terms of its economic advantages, or the extent international students assimilate or integrate. It should be evaluated based on how it contributes to a better understanding of each other and our different viewpoints. The ideal conditions for an international exchange would be to strive to create a greater interdependence between the integration and separation strategy under the moral ethic of Ubuntu. The power of exchange is perhaps in not taking a position (marginalization, separation, and integration but in learning to be more interdependent with others. By applying Ubuntu ethic to Berry's model there is a greater fluidity between categories.

The world we live in is governed by categories, whether racial, ethnic or by nationality, and we need to go beyond these labels leading towards a more universal moral ethic Ubuntu perspective. Looking at it from the Post humanist perspective of Braidotti (2019) in the Zoe/Bios continuum, Zoe speaks to a post anthropocentric worldview of life as radical interdependence where generic life in all its forms is valued which ultimately moves us away from bios as the life of humans organized in society. This sentiment is echoed with the Ubuntu totemic system where an individual sees themselves as interrelated not only with other humans but also with nature and the spiritual order (Metz, 2017; Gade, 2012). Our world is contiguous and co-constructed meaning that all people and life forms matter and are of equal importance (Koole, 2020). Combining an Ubuntu perspective to Berry's model allows us to unite the West, East, North and South and might lead us to abandoning the four categories that have situated the acculturation

experiences of international students for so long and allow us to introduce a more Ubuntu influenced approach in its place. Ubuntu is along the same lines of thought with Braidotti's post humanist critique where we reconceptualize our existence and way of thinking.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

By incorporating an Ubuntu ethic into international mobility programs, this could foster more exchange. This could be done by re-evaluating modules and introducing new courses with Ubuntu principles. By involving the Belgian community in university exchange programs could aid in mutual exchange. A dialogue between Belgium and South African higher institutions regarding their aims for policy exchange in a post pandemic sense needs to be initiated. New support strategies need to be implemented especially from an online perspective. Mobility programs with an Ubuntu element can foster bilateral initiatives, closer ties and cultural diplomacy (soft power). This global interconnectedness of academic fields with Ubuntu components would provide higher education institutions with a powerful mechanism for infusing internationalization into the core activities of higher education. Future research could investigate how a more feminist perspective might help us shift the focus from successful acculturation perceived as integration to a more holistic type of exchange where the boundaries between the categories can move where one can oscillate between the different categories or redirect us to a different category or a different positioning.]

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my late Dad John Ryan Swarts. Thank you for always believing in me and for giving me wings to fly like an eagle.

Empirical Article

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Meteoric Rise of China as a Host Country for Studies: Exploring the Choice of International Students' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The number of countries engaged in providing international education has grown consistently over the years. Traditionally, European countries and the US have been regarded as the only dominant destinations for overseas students. However, recent studies indicated that several new countries have emerged as study destinations. China, one of them, is on the rise in hosting international students. Through a systematic document analysis method, this paper sought to figure out the trend and primary reasons why international students choose China for their study destination. Long-time considered the world's largest sending country, China counts today among the top largest welcoming countries worldwide. In contrast to the recent studies conducted in some reputed higher education institutions in China claiming Chinese universities' reputation as the most pulling factor, this study reveals that, apart from other non-negligible factors, economic reason remains the major pulling factor of international students.

Keywords: China, inbound students, international education, international student mobility, pull factors

INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of education has become a topic of great interest to many scholars and educational stakeholders. Student mobility, with its tremendous growth in the past few decades, has been particularly caught attention. The number of mobile students rose from 2 million in 1999 to 5 million in 2016 (OECD, 2018), and it was estimated to reach 8 million in 2020 (UNESCO, 2019). New emerging economies, formerly considered as peripheral world's side, share a significant part in receiving those internationally mobile students. To the theoretical discourses painting the trend of student mobility from 'developing countries' toward 'developed countries', from the 'South' to the 'North', and from the 'periphery' to the 'center,' meaning that there is a center of knowledge consumers and a center of knowledge providers, today, the destination pattern does not necessarily obey that conception (Wen & Hu, 2019; Jiani, 2016). The composition of international mobile students has significantly changed over the last two decades, with student mobility shifting from a mostly unidirectional East-West flow to a multidirectional movement comprising non-traditional sending and receiving countries (Jon et al., 2014; Jiani, 2016). In fact, this is a

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limitation to the dependency theory, underpinned by the push-pull theory. The dependency theory stands for the premise that the world is unequal; there is a center for knowledge (North) and a center for knowledge consumers (South) (Altbach 2003). Similarly, the push-pull model explains that international student mobility follows the same direction. People from less developed countries (the South) migrate to developed countries (the Nord) due to the challenges, such as lack of educational and employment opportunities, political instability, and natural disasters in the home country (Wen & Hu, 2019). Thus, like dependency theory, the push-pull theory overlooked the reverse direction.

However, it is worth noting that although the "North" still controls the process (Altbach & Knight 2007), many "southern countries" have become study destination hubs. International higher education can be provided by western developed countries as well as less developed countries, such as China and several other emerging countries.

Since internationalization of education is perceived more as a commercial purpose than merely educational, new emergent countries are in intense competition with traditional receiving countries. There is no more separation of knowledge consumers and knowledge providers. Altbach and Knight (2007) note that earning money is a key motive for all internationalization projects in the for-profit sector and some traditional non-profit higher education institutions with financial incapacities. In this respect, the rise of competition for providing education and welcoming international students is quite understandable. Providers have developed and put in place strategies and opportunities, either by exporting institutions and curricula abroad or attracting students, scholars, and academic members to the home country's institutions (CampusFrance, 2018). Seekers, such as students, from their side, choose their destination according to conditions and opportunities that each receiving country offers. Among these conditions and opportunities, factors such as regional proximity and cultural resemblance have been remarkably contributed to student mobility trends in recent years (Ward et al., 2001; Jon et al., 2014; Wen et al., 2017). This is mainly encouraged by nationalism rise and security restrictions that have been noticed in recent years in some host countries. The literature also informs that the shift from unidirectional to the multidirectional movement of international students is driven by many factors, such as the rapid economic growth of some emerging countries (Huang, 2007; Jon et al., 2014). Some countries' commitment to reverse mobility patterns by improving their higher education system and a deliberate willing to become destination countries are, among others, the major reasons (Pan, 2013).

Inner-regional mobility particularly has been noticed to be at a higher rate than global mobility (UNESCO, 2018; Wen & Hu, 2019). Europe and Asia are the most significant regions in this regard, with the United Kingdom and France in Europe, China and Japan in Asia, the most prominent hosting countries. In China, for instance, 36% out of the 1.3 million international students came from the East Asia-Pacific region in 2016 (UNESCO, 2018). However, for both inner-regional patterns and global attractiveness, this study aims to address the following questions: What did the recent trend of students' inflows to China tell us? What are the most influential reasons that pull international students to China?

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY: CASE OF CHINA

China has been the biggest sending country of international students for a long time (Wen & Hu, 2019), with over 860 000 international students in OECD countries in 2017 (OECD 2019). It is still recognized as the largest supplier of knowledge consumers. However, thanks to its multiple reforms both in education and economic sectors, China has also joined the ranks of destination countries: the largest host

country in Asia and the third worldwide (Jiani, 2016; Lu *et al.,* 2019). Figures from the Ministry of Education website of the People's Republic of China reveal that 'in 2018 there were a total of 492,185 international students (of which 48% non-degree students) from 196 countries pursuing their studies in China, marking an increase of 3,013 students or 0.62% compared to 2017' (MoE, 2019). The number of inflow students in China has been more than that of outflow for some years. From 2007 to 2008, for instance, the number of outgoing Chinese students increased from 144,000 to 179,800; in 2009 and 2010, the number was 229,300 and 284,700, respectively. 'At the same time, the number of incoming international students reached 195,503 in 2007 before rising to 223, 499 in 2008, 238,184 in 2009, and 265, 090 in 2010 (Pan, 2013). As stated above, China plays a crucial role in inner-regional education in Asia. The majority (59.95%) of its international mobile students in 2018 are from Asia. Only 16.57% are from Africa and 14.96% from Europe (MoE, 2019).

The reinforcement of the 1970s opening-up reform, coupled with the implementation of international policy in 2000, has remarkably increased the number of international students in China (MoE, 2003). The policy gave the Ministry of Education the right to select colleges and universities to provide degree courses and non-degree courses to international students (Xiaozhou & Meihui, 2009). In 2018, 1,004 higher education institutions in China provided international education (MoE 2019). For Pan (2013), China's efforts to shape international students and scholars' inflow through various policies and strategies have enabled China to become a key competitor of internationally mobile students. Its international politics and academic relations largely determine its attractiveness (Pan, 2013).

Historical Evolution and Development of International Education in China

The internationalization of education in China can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century (Cao, 2008). Its historical development can be divided into two phases (Huang, 2003). The first phase, from 1978 to 1992, concerned the policies and regulations dealing with dispatching students, scholars, and academic members for further studies abroad. It also concerned the invitation of foreign scholars and experts to come to China.

As for the second phase, much more in line with this study, it seeks to make China an attractive country for international students. Policies and reforms have focused on constructing international higher education institutions, followed by developing an international curriculum system and a substantial expansion of international students in those institutions. It also involved international students' exchange, foreign lecturers' recruitment, and the enhancement of international frame support (Xiaozhou & Meihui, 2009).

Policies and Institutions' Reforms

The construction of international HEIs was underpinned by the *'211 and 985 Projects*'. The '*211 Project*' was initiated in 1995. Although its aims and scope focused more on the national standard for building about one hundred universities and eight hundred critical disciplines, some programs have approached the international level (Xiaozhou & Meihui, 2009). Higher education institutions have doubled from 1045 in 1995 to 2491 in 2013 (Liu & Morgan, 2016). As for the '985 Project' issued in 1999, it intended to build several world-class universities and world-famous high standard research institutions to attract overseas students across the world. These projects have brought tremendous progress in internationalizing higher education in China. According to Huang (2003), before the initiation of these projects, in 1989, for instance, there were only two universities in China that legally undertook transnational education: The John-Hopkins Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies and the Goethe

Institute in Beijing. Under the '985 Project', the Chinese government, through the Ministry of Education, allowed and even encouraged some universities and HEIs to provides international education. From 1999, there were already about 70 HEIs granted to undertake some transnational education with foreign partners; among them, about 30 programs were offered by 27 higher education institutions in China in partnership with 25 foreign countries (Huang, 2003).

Curriculum Development

Concerning the development of curricula and programs to meet international students' expectations, critical programs for an internationally competitive market have been initiated. To implementing these programs, textbooks have been imported from western universities (Huang, 2006). The Ministry of Education encouraged universities that provided international education to use English Language and bilingual instruction to attract more international students to those universities (Huang, 2003; Kuroda, 2014).

Given these initiatives mentioned so far, mainly when including the brain drain era in play, the internationalization of education in China is not a new phenomenon. Efforts of its today's meteoric rise as a host country for international students have started a long time back.

METHOD

The main purpose of this study was to understand the reasons for China's meteoric rise as a destination country where the choice of international students is more and more oriented. To meet the above goal, this study employs a systematic and rigorous document review method. Both qualitative and quantitative data generated from policy documents and recent academic studies have been critically analyzed. Many previous studies on students' motivation for choosing China as their destination have revealed different main factors. So far, every single study investigating the motivation of international students for choosing China as a study destination included in its scope, either only one university or some few institutions.

Moreover, studies have been mostly conducted in high-ranking HEIs. Their results showing Chinese universities' reputation as the primary pulling factor do not reflect the shared motivation of most international students in other higher education institutions across China. There is no comprehensive investigation that reveals students' motivation in China. China has not implemented a national survey to study international students' motivation for selecting China and Chinese higher education institutions (Ding, 2016). Therefore, there is a limitation in getting an inclusive rationale on the topic. The particularity of this study is to systematically explore related reliable documents in order to come out with common dominant factors. It aims to fill the gap in the literature regarding major comprehensive motivation of international students in China because there are few previous studies in getting nationwide perspective (Ding, 2016). As mentioned, the study focuses on two significant sources of documents, namely China's government official documents (policies and legislations and released data from the Ministry of Education) and credible academic research and reports. The selection of documents reviewed in this study was based on an extensive and rigorous search, screening, inclusion, and exclusion strategy regarding both sources and contents.

The first source of documents helps to present a macro picture of the legislative cadre regarding the internationalization of education in China. It also depicts some official statistics about international students in China. The second source of information allows us to understand the global trends of student

mobility across the world. It informs on China's role in the play of internationalization of higher education, such as its inbound mobility and global trend compared with other countries.

RESULTS

International Student Enrollment Trends in China

Currently, China belongs to one of the largest destination countries across the world. While keeping the status of the largest country of origin, it has become a destination country for many international students. With this double status, China plays a vital role in the internationalization of higher education market. Chinese innovative policies and strategies for attracting international students made China not only a destination country but a very competitive destination country in the world.

Knowing that it was difficult to pull back many Chinese nationals from abroad and stop a massive outbound, the Chinese government has resolutely implemented some policies and strategies to attract on its soil international students to reverse the so-called brain drain. In 1980, for instance, the total number of international students in China was only about 500. It has reached 2000 in 1987 (Huang, 2003). Since 1995, the number has continued to grow, increasing more than ten times from 36, 855 to 442, 773 (Wen & Hu, 2019). As showed in Figure 1, in only nine years from 2010 to 2018, the number of international students almost doubled, increasing from 265,090 in 2010 to 492,185 in 2018.

Figure 1

Trends Of International Students In China From 2010 To 2018

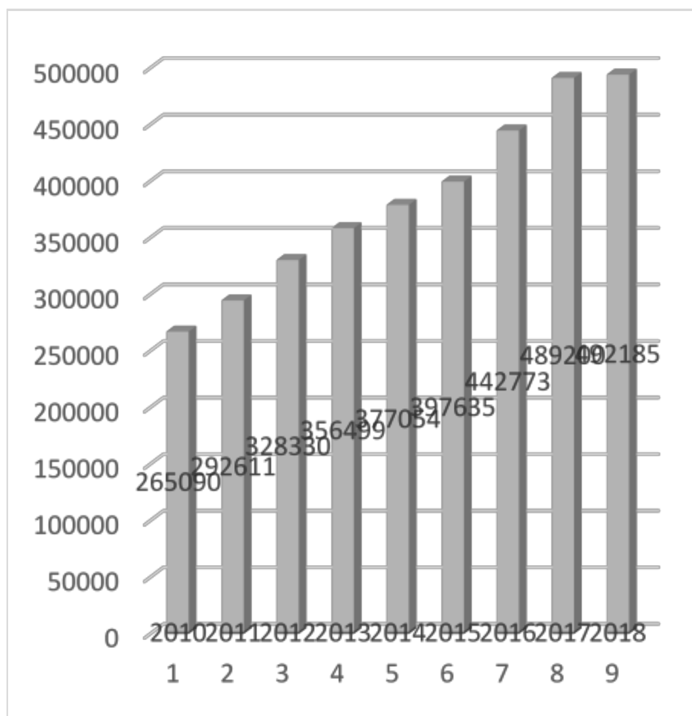
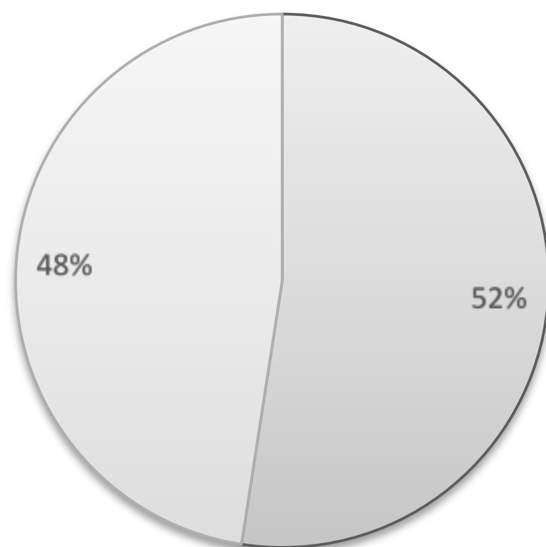


Figure 2

Percentage Of International Students By Education Program In 2018



Hence, in 2018, 492,185 international students have pursued their studies in 1,004 higher education institutions in China (MoF, 2019). Among them, 258,122 were enrolled in degree programs, representing 52.44% of all international students (see Figure 2), an increase of 16,579 (6.86%) as to 2017. There were 85,062 postgraduate-level students, with an increase of 12.28% compared to 2017, of which 25,618 enrolled as doctoral students and 59,444 in master's degrees; 234,063 international students were enrolled in non-degree programs (MoE, 2019).

As shown in Figure 3, Asia is the largest region of international students in China. It accounts for 59.95%, with South Korea, Thailand, Pakistan, and India, the largest sending countries in 2018 (MoE, 2019). Apart from the United States (5th), Russia (6th), and France (13th), the top fifteen sending countries of international students in China in 2018 were all Asian countries (see figure 4). Many Asian international students are within the region, with China, the largest destination country (UNESCO, 2018). Jon et al. (2014) noted that traveling convenience, lower cost added to cultural, political, and historical proximity between host and home countries are important determinants in studying nearby one's home country.

Regarding the field of study, language program is the most shared field among Asian students in China. For example, Ding's (2016) study conducted in 26 higher education institutions in Shanghai revealed that literature (including Chinese language studies) was the largest field of study for international students, with 51.8% mostly Asian students. Considering the most significant number of Asian students, this may explain the big percentage of non-degree students in Chinese HEIs (see figure 2). Although non-degree students are declining compared to the past years, 48% representing non-degree students remains a significant number. Chinese language, as a non-degree program, plays a vital role in attracting students to China. In their study, Ahmad and Shah (2018) found that Chinese language is one of the most pulling factors for international students in China. Most of their respondents have reported that learning Mandarin and experiencing a new culture is their primary motivation for coming to China.

However, the educational quality factor that becomes very attractive for degree programs plays a vital role in decreasing enrollment into non-degree programs. In 2011 and 2015, there were 59.39% and 53.53% international students in non-degree programs (Ewentu et al., 2017).

Figure 3

Number Of International Students By Region/Continent In China

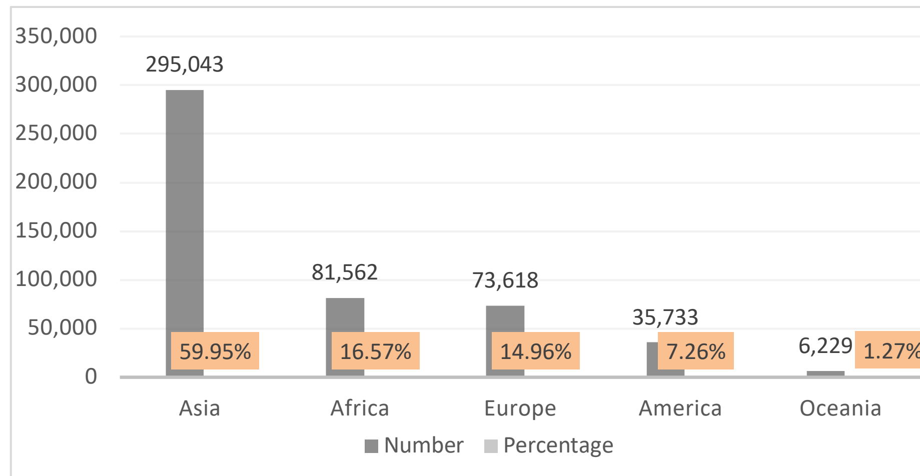
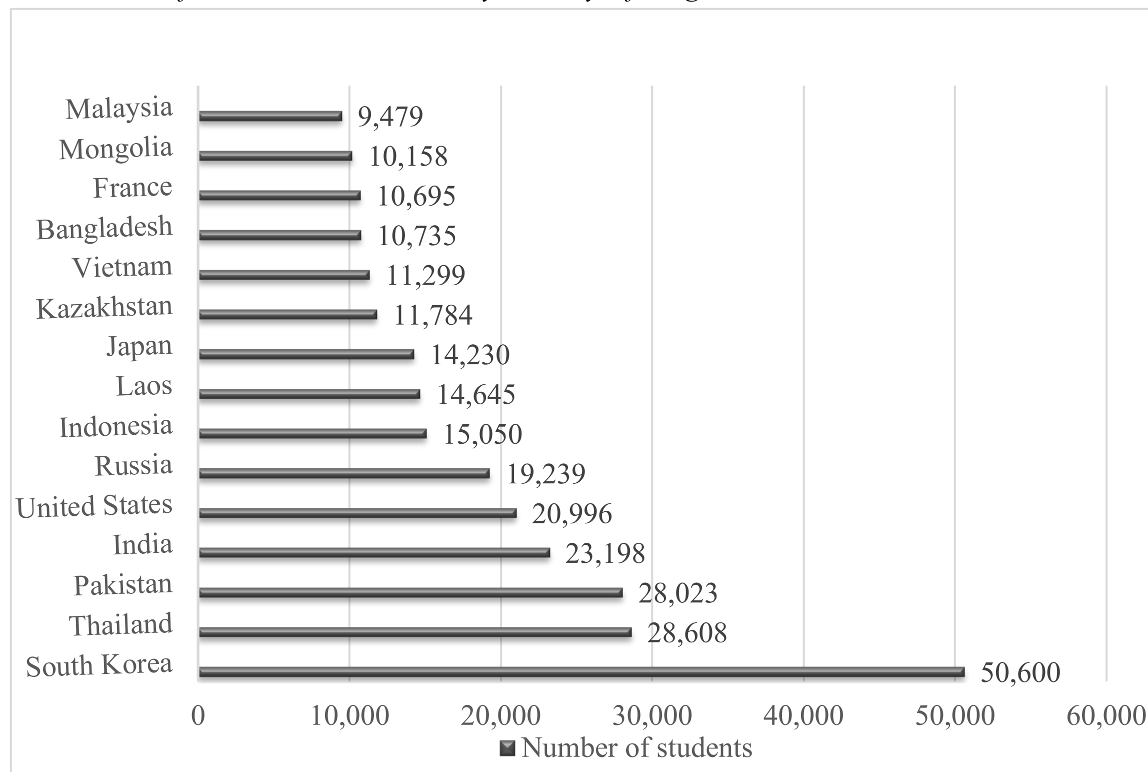


Figure 4

Distribution Of International Students By Country Of Origin In China



China aspires to become the world's largest destination country in the near future. Many countries used to set a certain number of international students to reach by a certain number of years. For example, France had set to reach 500,000 international students by 2027, Japan 300,000 by 2020, Canada 450,000 by 2022 (CampusFrance, 2018; Dauwer, 2018; Esses et al., 2018; Hennings & Mintz, 2015). However,

very ambitious, China has set to welcome 500,000 students in 2020 (Wen & Hu, 2019; Ahmad & Shah, 2018; Kritz, 2016). China has slightly a larger number and, especially to be reached sooner than other countries mentioned. These data show how China is overtaking many traditional and newly emerged receiving countries across the globe. Recent researches revealed that China is the third destination country behind the USA and the UK (Jiani, 2016; Lu et al., 2019).

Table 1

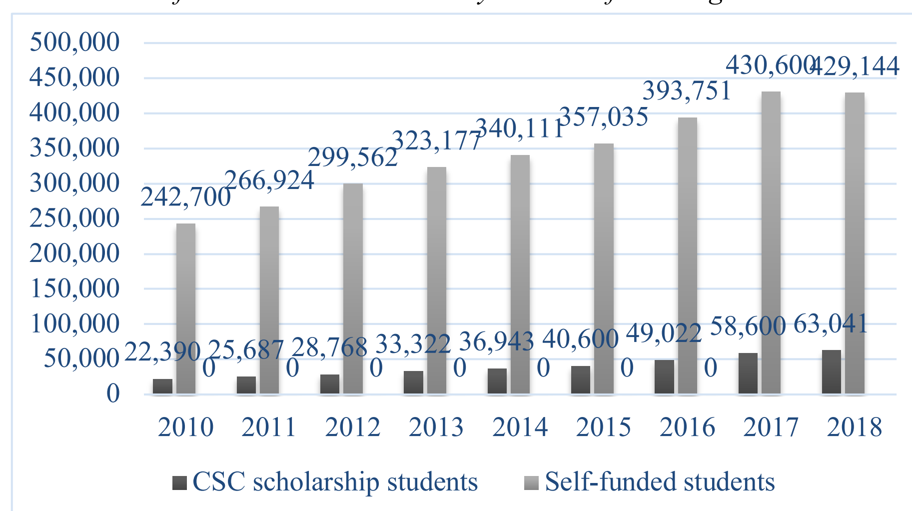
Top 15 Provinces With The Largest Number Of International Students In 2018

No	Provinces/Cities	Number of Students
1	Beijing	80,786
2	Shanghai	61,400
3	Jiangsu province	45,778
4	Zhejiang province	38,190
5	Liaoning province	27,879
6	Tianjin	23,691
7	Guangdong province	22,034
8	Hubei province	21,371
9	Yunnan province	19,311
10	Shandong province	19,078
11	Guanxi province	15,217
12	Sichuan province	13,990
13	Heilongjiang province	13,429
14	Shaanxi province	12,919
15	Fujian province	10,340

Source: MoE, 2019

Figure 5

Distribution of International Students By Source Of Funding In China



Rationale for International Students Choosing China as Destination Country

Considered as a new player in hosting international students, China has implemented various policies, strategies, and measures to attract international students. These policies, strategies, and measures

are supported with strong, innovative, and frequent reforms (Ewentu et al., 2017). Apart from the national macro-orientation, provinces and institutions have set specific strategies and goals to improve the attraction of international students. According to CampusFrance (2018), new players in providing international education develop aggressive new strategies to enhance their appeal and attract more students, particularly from Asia and, increasingly, from African countries. The motivation of international students to choose one country over another regarding the pull factors results from good policies and strategies implemented in destination countries. A study conducted in Malaysia over the past few years confirmed that the increase of international students in the country is mostly driven by the deliberate government policies and strategies to recruit international students (Jon et al., 2014). However, the host countries' economic, educational, political, and socio-cultural situation is a well-known pulling factor.

From the two perspectives above, a range of detailed factors has been well documented. They range from access facility (easy admission, visa simplification, and scholarship availability) to the environment conditions (cost issue, safety, cultural and language issues); and from quality reputation (institutions programs, and degree value) to the opportunities after graduation (employment opportunity and permanent residency). Many empirical pieces of research conducted in China to find out the most shared motivations of international students to choose China as their study's destination reveal each, different reasons (Wen & Hu, 2019; Jiani, 2016; Lu et al., 2019; Ding, 2016; Song, & Liu, 2014). According to those studies, the main reasons are China's rapid economic development, the reputation of HEIs, the supply of scholarships, its good bilateral relations with other countries, or the Chinese language.

After reviewing empirical studies on international students' motivation to pursue their studies in China, it is found that most of the study's findings agreed on two main reasons. One is China's economic boom. The other is the quality reputation of its higher education institutions. For example, Jiani (2016) found out from semi-structured interviews involving 42 participants that China's strong economic growth is the largest factor that pulls international students. Ding (2016) also found in a qualitative research, including 40 respondents from 28 universities in Shanghai, that the rise of international student enrollment in those universities is motivated by China's rapid growing economic strength and Chinese language. However, unlike Jiani (2016) and Ding (2016), Lu et al. (2019) revealed in their survey based on 355 international students in Chengdu that Chinese higher education quality is the most important reason for attracting international students in China. With a larger scope than that of others, Wen and Hu (2019) discovered in theirs involving 1, 674 questionnaire participants and 30 in-depth interviews from eight HEIs in Beijing that the reputation of Chinese higher institutions and its rapid economic growth are the major reasons of China's attractiveness, with higher institutions' reputation ranking on the top. Similarly, Ahmad and Shah (2018) revealed in their mixed-methods research, conducted in two key universities based on 134 valid questionnaires and 25 interviews, that both the rise of Chinese HEIs in global ranking and the rapid influential economic growth are the major factors that pull international students to China. Again, both together, China's increasing economic development (through a competitive science and technology) and the rise of its higher education reputation are found in Song and Liu's (2014) investigation as the top reasons attracting international students to China.

In brief, this systematic review of empirical studies conducted on this issue revealed that China's economic power and its developing HEIs are the primary rationales for international students to choose China as their study destination.

China's rapid economic growth is undoubtedly one of the major reasons attracting international students to China. International students find China's economic power a convincing reason because it is a source of great opportunity for employment, business, and career development. In the literature, most of the surveys conducted on China's attractiveness revealed that only a few participants do not mention China's economic factor. The majority of them always evoke China's economic prospects as a deciding factor (Ding, 2016; Jiani, 2016). China's economic development symbolically attracts international students and enables China to increase the supply of scholarships. This capability to easily mobilize funds, even at the provincial and institutional levels, is attributed to China's economic power. Thus, China's economic boom is a great factor of attractiveness. It does not only attract international students to China. It also attracts many Chinese internationals from abroad to come back. This is because it creates thousands of jobs for those returnees (LockinChina, 2018).

Although studies showed China's economic growth as an essential motivation for international students, other researchers concluded that the reputation of Chinese HEIs is the primary motivation. For them, the rapid economic growth is just symbolic. The real and shared motivation among international students is the Chinese higher education reputation (Liu et al., 2018; Wen & Hu, 2019). Chinese effort in building World-Class Universities has positively impacted the attractiveness of international students. In the 2017 Academic Ranking of World Universities, for instance, China alone was represented by two universities in the top 100 and 45 in the Top 500, while other developing regions such as Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa have together only one in Top 100 universities, and 20 in Top 500 (Liu et al., 2018; Wen & Hu, 2019). Compared to other developing countries or even some developed countries, China is probably the most attractive in quality education. To them, good quality education, especially from very reputed institutions, increases the chance of employment. Thus, the reputation of Chinese universities plays a crucial role in attracting international students to China.

However, apart from the rapid economic growth and the reputation of Chinese HEIs, identified as the most critical factors attracting international students to China, the literature review informs us about other rationales which are not negligible in pulling international students to China. They include, among others, an affordable cost of study and living, Chinese language, Chinese good bilateral cooperation, and scholarships.

Cost of study

The cost of study abroad is the primary element that students consider when choosing a destination (Lu et al., 2019). According to the data from Chinese Ministry of Education, out of 63,041 international students in China in 2018, 87.19% were self-funded. From this perspective, for many of those students, the tuition and living costs are capital for selecting a study destination. Data from empirical studies show that many international students in Chinese higher education institutions have found affordable the cost of study (Ahmad & Shah, 2018; Lu et al., 2019). Many of them opted for China because of that lower cost of study compared to other countries.

Chinese language

A number of international students consider Chinese language as a world prospect language. Several studies have reported that international students think that knowing Mandarin and English would likely increase their opportunities (Ding, 2016). Ding argued that as long as China maintains its attraction as a business player, the language factor will further help the country increase its international students. Thus, they

have chosen China to either learn Chinese or to improve their Mandarin fluency. The reasons mentioned in the literature include: increasing the chance for employment and doing business with China. Hundreds of Chinese Confucius Institutes are established around the world. Those institutes which promote Chinese language and culture across the world bring a lot of international students to China. As mentioned, 48% of international students in 2018 in China are non-degree students. Most of them are in Chinese language program for short or long-term study. Chinese language has been reported in many studies as the most important factor influencing international students to study in China (Ahmad and Shah, 2018; Ding, 2016).

Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperations

The result of good educational, economic and cultural cooperation of China with the outside world plays an important role in attracting international students to China. One Belt One Road initiative, for instance, has played and will continue to play a crucial role in higher education cooperation; it will attract more international to China (Wen et al., 2017; Lu & Tian, 2018). Unlike from western countries where colonial legacy and language ties with many developing countries affect the decision for study destination of international students from those developing countries, in China, its good relationship with the outside world is crucial in attracting international students. Chinese collaboration programs in higher education with many foreign countries bring a lot of international students to China. According to Jiani (2016), many international students in China, especially those from developed countries, rarely mention Chinese higher institutions' reputation. They have chosen universities in China because of the agreement between their home country and China. Wen et al. (2017) confirmed that China's engagement in international relations has expanded the country's inbound students.

Scholarship

The scholarship also is not a negligible factor in attracting international students to China (Pan, 2013; Latief & Lin, 2018; Cheng, 2020), even though available data show that less than 10% of international students are scholarship holders (Ahmad & Shah, 2018). For many international students, getting a scholarship from China is one of the determinant decisions for pursuing studies in the country. Some literature presented that scholarships attract only students from less developed countries (Campbell, 2016), which is not always true. Students from developed countries are also concerned with the scholarship. Although some of them have reported that financial motives do not have a strong impact on their decision, a number of them would not be able to come to China for studies (Jiani, 2016). Thus, scholarship plays a role in decision-making process when it comes to select a study destination abroad. For example, a study conducted by English et al. (2016) on the understanding of Western students' motivations and benefits for studying in China showed that around 75% of the students witnessed that scholarship was extremely important in their decision to come to China.

Being aware of the role of scholarship in attracting international students, the Chinese government has put various kinds of scholarships set at three levels: national, provincial, and institutional. Chinese provincial government scholarships and university scholarships, mostly partial-scholarships, are mainly offered to excellent international students who graduated from Chinese HEIs to pursue further studies in China. It is a good strategy that keeps international students continuing their studies in Chinese higher education institutions.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

International education and student mobility are at an exponential speed across the world. The economic benefits resulting from providing international education have impelled many countries to engage

in international education. Traditional countries, as well as new emergent countries, are all in competition to attract international students. Studies show that new emergent countries are developing even aggressive strategies to enhance their appeal and attract more students (CampusFrance, 2018). They pull not only students from less developed countries but also developed nations. Kishun (2007) notes that new knowledge societies all over the globe are creating world competition for the best students to provide skilled labor. China, one of those newly engaged countries in hosting international students, is becoming one of the largest destination countries in the world. This can be seen, as presented above, from an approximate expectation number of international students that each country has given to reach by a certain time. While China has projected to reach 500,000 international students by 2020 (which is already achieved since 2017 according to (Wen and Hu, 2019), other countries such as Japan, Canada, and France have set to reach 300,000 by 2020, 450,000 by 2022, and 500,000 by 2027 respectively (CampusFrance, 2018; Dauwer, 2018; Esses et al., 2018; Hennings & Mintz, 2015). China is becoming one of the leading countries in hosting a high number of international students. That is why our interest to figure out the reasons that pull international students to China. The study found that, as in many other destination countries, several factors attract international students to China. Factors comprise China's rapid economic growth, coupled with the reputation of Chinese HEIs, an affordable cost of living, Chinese language and culture, the diversification of China's educational cooperations, and the scholarship opportunity. However, among all those factors, the rapid economic growth and the reputation of China's higher education institutions have been found as the most shared pulling factors for international students to China.

Unlike some recent studies that showed the reputation of Chinese universities and HEIs as the largest, this study, based on a systematic and rigorous empirical study review, ranks China's rapid economic growth as the major pulling factor. An extensive review of the literature leads us to find out that economic factor comes at first. The findings of those recent studies are mostly conducted in some key universities and institutions from big cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and so on, do not reflect the motivation of about five hundred thousand international students all over China. Of course, students from those world-class universities can be motivated by the reputation of those universities due to their education quality and their belongingness to the 'World-Class Universities.' However, the education factor is not yet the core force in many universities in China. Economic factor is not just an appearance as Wen and Hu (2019) claimed in their study. When comparing with highly competitive education systems in the world, China's academic standard and research environment sometimes impact international students to decide against studying in China (Jiani, 2016). The economic factor is still the most reported in the literature. In breaking down universities or cities in which various studies have been conducted, the analysis shows that the motivation of those students in key universities is the university's reputation. However, those in regular universities put forward economic reasons to show their interest in studying in China. China's soft power development and the expansion of its markets in overseas countries play a tremendous role in attracting international students.

A comparative analysis made on the worldwide situation shows that the attractiveness of China is also encouraged by the tightening immigration policies in many destination countries in the West, such as the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and many others. For instance, in the United States, studies showed that although they remain the leading destination country for international students worldwide, the enrollment rate has progressively declined (Bogdanovska, 2018). China's engagement in globalization and internationalization plays a significant role in attracting international students as well as foreign experts. Its numerous cooperations

with foreign countries, coupled with increasing economic development, constitute a great advantage for its attractiveness. Thus, although existing research emphasized economic factors and higher education quality, many prior global situations contribute to attracting international students to China.

However, challenges that may prevent the growing attractiveness of China as a study destination also exist. One of them is the rise of racial discrimination that has been noticed in China against foreigners, Africans to be precise. As the second largest student population behind Asian (MoE, 2019), recently some African students were stereotypically perceived to spread the COVID-19 pandemic (Danny, 2020; Lau, 2020) to the point that "African Union expressed concern about the situation and called on Beijing to take immediate corrective measures" (NSONO, 2020). Pandemics in destination and origin countries are emergent factors that affect students' movement and choice for study destination. For instance, a recent study conducted in China Mainland and Hong Kong showed that (2312) 84% out of 2739 respondents expressed any more interest in studying abroad due to the COVID-19 and the mistreatment resulting from it abroad (Kong *et al.* 2021). Like many Chinese students who no longer are interested in studying abroad due to this discrimination, African students might have the same impression of studying in China.

Another challenge might be the foreign residency and work permit policy. Under economic development prospects as the most pulling factor, many international students expect to settle and work in China upon completing their studies. Nevertheless, the percentage of integrating international experts remains so far low compared to many western countries. If this persists, it may affect international students' choice to choose China when having in mind the intention of employment in China after graduation. To maintain the economic factor as the largest pulling factor, foreign residency permit policy needs to be addressed in order to soften this policy. Many growing multinational and private companies in China demand overseas talents. They have the preference of recruiting international talents for the reasons of their international experience and background (LockinChina, 2018). In 2017, for instance, 670,000 overseas Chinese graduates had returned to China and an estimate of 750,000 returnees in 2018; this is because many companies demand overseas talents. According to the same source, the rate of returnees to China is growing by 10% each year. The report added that the rapid development of Chinese private enterprises requires much international expertise to meet the needs of expanding overseas markets and reaching advanced development (LockinChina, 2018). In this respect, China should consider increasing foreign experts and graduates' integration in China to keep its ongoing attractiveness.

It is also worth noting that, unlike many countries that have adopted policies allowing international students to have part-time jobs when studying, China's policies towards its international students' part-time jobs remain restrictive. A part-time job for international students can have three main advantages. One is the preparation and experiences gain for their future career. Two is to relieve the financial struggle faced by many international students when studying. In three, as discussed, multinational and private enterprises are growing in China and need international experience and background. International students who may work in these companies can solve in part the needs of those companies. It will bring a plus to the companies' achievement. Hence, a part-time job is beneficial not only to international students but also to the host country. Regarding the relevance of part-time employment for a student, Tessema et al.'s (2014) study revealed that part-time positively affects students' satisfaction and GPA when students work fewer than 10 hours.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

Based on empirical literature review and official data, this study systematically and rigorously synthesized the reasons for international students to choose China as a study destination. It belongs to

limited comprehensive research of this kind on the issue. The study showed that China's inflows trend is at high speed. It also found out that although many factors pull international students to China, China's rapid economic growth and HEIs growing reputation rank on the top. In comparison to some recent research pointing out Chinese HEIs as the most attractive factor, this study revealed, based on a review of empirical studies', that China's growing economy is the primary factor. Those existing studies present significant limitations in terms of scope. Most of them did not involve many participants and were only conducted in some key universities in the big cities. Thus, although this comprehensive analysis shows a more robust conclusion than existing research, an inclusive and general investigation by the Chinese government might help to understand the matter. It is relevant for the Chinese government to do so because such an investigation significantly contributes to the international higher education policy improvement.

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Spanning Systems and Ecological Fluidity: A Revised Ecological Development Model for International Students

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ABSTRACT

The growth of the number of persons pursuing education outside of their home country has created a relatively new population of transnationally mobile students who experience a pivotal developmental period crossing and across international borders. There are few suitable theoretical models to examine the developmental experiences of this growing population. In his last publication, Urie Bronfenbrenner acknowledged his ecological model was a developmental yet evolving model to be tested and amended by incorporating new evidence. This conceptual paper draws from existing empirical work to advance the ecological model and revise it to be more applicable to and explanatory of developmental experiences of international students in the United States. The resulting model, which we call the *Spanning Systems* model, can be used to identify spaces of potential contradictions or learning in a student's development.

Keywords: ecological model, international students, multiple ecologies, student development, student mobility

INTRODUCTION

The growing number of international students enrolling in U.S. higher education organizations is a well-documented phenomenon (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2018). Higher education is a catalyst and channel for transnational mobility, but international students face unique challenges regarding the collegiate experience. Students whose culture of origin is not the dominant culture of their institution often experience difficulties adjusting to the new context (Braxton et al., 2004). Postsecondary organizations do not have appropriate frameworks for understanding student experiences or building strategies to support these students' cultural adjustment (Owens & Loomes, 2010). Instead, they often place the onus of responsibility on the students to navigate the complexities of new cultural, sociopolitical, and historical contexts.

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Particularly, we are writing in a time and space when the global COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting disruption has affected nearly every facet of life across the planet. International higher education and the transnational mobility of students and scholars have been particularly impacted from the beginning as those abroad in the United States worried about their families back home in affected areas. As the threat amplified, campuses closed and shifted to online course delivery. This prompted the Student and Exchange Visitor Program to announce "flexible adjustments" to student visa requirements related to remote learning even as international students adjusted to the new format (Cheng, 2020). Some students were left scrambling to find a place to live when their dorms closed (Dickerson, 2020). As the virus spread and governments reacted with travel restrictions, some international students began worrying about whether they would be able to return home or back again (Cheng, 2020). The resulting economic fallout from COVID-related shutdowns also caused layoffs and budget cuts affecting international students with employment on campus (Dickerson, 2020). All of these coincided with a surge of xenophobic racism directed against Asian students (Cheng, 2020). Educational experiences for all students are inextricably intertwined with history, politics, economics, and daily life. International students who have not spent their lives embedded in the host country's environment, however, will almost assuredly have different educational experiences than those who have not left home. The above framing of COVID is but an example of how international student experiences are made more complicated by the various spaces they encounter and the policies and contexts that shape those spaces.

All of this points to the necessity of a developmental model for international students that focuses on students' interactions with their environments. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 2005) ecological model offers such a perspective and has been applied to international students in prior research (Zhang, 2018). The model demonstrates the interactions of environmental factors such as culture, politics, economics, and day-to-day interpersonal interactions and how these factors shape students' development. This helps to explain students' experiences as they deal with the historical and contemporary structures of the United States. Prior ecological models, however, are unable to capture the experiences of those students who cross borders to pursue their education. International students are dealing and interacting with the contextual elements of U.S. culture (Lee & Rice, 2007). However, they enter these spaces with the knowledge, experiences, and other influences gained from their own culture, not knowledge born and grown exclusively in the United States. To create a model with explanatory power for this population, further revision is necessary to represent the development of international students and the complex environments they inhabit.

In this conceptual paper, we suggest a more appropriate model that recognizes the essential influence of environmental factors in both the United States and the students' home country context while also acknowledging these two contexts exist in some separate and some overlapping spaces. International students are shaped simultaneously by two different ecologies, one of their home country and that of their host country, the United States. This proposed model, called the *Spanning Systems Model*, highlights the roles of each ecology in students' lives, allowing for scholars and practitioners to identify interactions between students' home context and the United States, opening a potentially fruitful line of inquiry into how international students make sense of structures in their host country pinpointing spaces of contradiction and oppression of international students, and helping institutions develop strategies to aid international students in navigating the realities of living in the United States.. The *Spanning Systems Model* builds upon previous literature and ecological models of development, revising and expanding the model to be applicable to students spanning multiple ecologies.

To describe the reasoning behind the proposed developmental model revision, the following section provides a brief overview of international students and their experiences in the U.S. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model is then explained as well as critiques of the model relevant to international students. Finally, these critiques are used to develop a revised ecological framework that better accounts for international students' experiences and contextual knowledge. The *Spanning Systems Model* is useful for understanding international students developmental experiences because it a) acknowledges the complexity of mobility among ecologies while appreciating that such mobility is not necessarily unidirectional; b) recognizes that said mobility means an individual is never entirely within or outside a given ecology; and c) conceptualizes the process through which an ecology can continue to be relevant, despite an individual's shifting geographic location over time.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND MULTIPLE ECOLOGIES

The extant literature on international students alludes to the types of challenges and experiences they encounter due to crossing contexts. Once international students arrive in the host country, they are embedded in a new ecology structuring their experiences. In the United States, international students are potentially surrounded by languages and cultures different from those through which they have been educated and socialized. Students from non-English speaking countries are challenged to master college/graduate-level material and interact with classmates and instructors in English (Andrade, 2006; Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Even students who are fluent may experience barriers; they too may feel anxious about their accent and catching subtle nuances (Sawir et al., 2012). Differing cultural norms also serve as a challenge to some international students’ successful adjustment. Cultural meanings of eye contact, classroom interactions, and gender roles are all complexities international students must navigate (Lee, 2015; Lee & Opio, 2011).

Time, in part, eases international students’ challenges as they socially and culturally adjust to life in the United States (Wilton & Constantine, 2003; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Difficulties they experience, however, are more than individual adaptation; they are closely related to larger societal issues in the United States, such as discrimination and oppression based on race/ethnicity and nationality. Many international students experience widespread discrimination and hostility against them, including but not limited to ignorance of their presence and abilities, exclusion from social interactions and administrative services, and invalidation of non-American issues (Kim & Kim, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007). Nonetheless, the extent to which students perceive discrimination differs by their racial and nationality backgrounds. International students who identify as white are less likely to perceive discrimination (Lee, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007) and more likely to actively interact with Americans (Gareis, 2012; Trice, 2004) than students who do not identify as white. Students of color reported overt discrimination and even harassment based on their racial identity and nationality (Constantine et al., 2005; Hanassab, 2006; Lee & Rice, 2007).

Interpersonal interactions and relationships are essential components shaping international students’ experiences. Studies suggest that social support plays a vital role in international students’ overcoming such difficulties. International students get support from their family and friends in their home country as well as other international peers residing in the United States when they experience emotional and practical struggles or isolation (Chavajay, 2013; Zhai, 2002). Interactions with Americans are critical, as such interactions reduce acculturative stress and increase international students' satisfaction (Al-Sharideh

& Goe, 1998; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Hendrickson et al., 2011; Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Yeh & Inose, 2003).

BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL MODEL AND CRITIQUES

Given the unique spaces inhabited by international students, it is crucial to create a model that helps explain their developmental context as students in the United States. Bronfenbrenner's model is a useful framework as the experiences of these students are directly shaped by their interactions with cultural values, environmental aspects of discrimination and oppression, and specific instances of interaction with faculty and peers within a university context.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is made up of four mechanisms that influence development (1979, 2005). First, *process* is the interactions between the individual and the environment through which development occurs. Second, *person* is the characteristics of the individual that define how the individual will interact with the environment. Third, *context* is what makes up the environment. *Time* is the final mechanism, speaking to both the broad historical context of the individual's life and the moment in the individual's life certain events are occurring.

The hallmark of Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach is the nested systems in which an individual is situated, composing the *context*. From the center out, an individual is part of a variety of *microsystems* such as school, family, and peer groups. Within this layer, a variety of activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships are perceived and interpreted by an individual, in turn shaping his/her development. The second layer, the *mesosystem*, is described as comprising the connections of two or more of the settings within the microsystem (e.g., school and home). Conceptualizing the mesosystem allows for scholars to grapple with how interactions in one proximal context are influenced by another. For example, a student's interactions in school are likely to be influenced by their parent's view and value of education. The remaining systems in the ecological model, the *exosystem* and the *macrosystem*, incorporate settings that do not directly contain the developing individual. The *exosystem* is only partially proximal to the individual and contains connections of systems containing the individual. The parent's workplace or a school board are typical examples of elements of the exosystem (Thomas, 2005). Finally, the *macrosystem* incorporates the attitudes, values, and norms of broader society, often termed the *cultural milieu* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005). Later, Bronfenbrenner added the element of the *chronosystem* to allow for consideration of how a developmental ecology shifts over time and the notion of *proximal processes* to grapple with the idea of organism-environment interactions through which "genotypes are transformed into phenotypes" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, p. 580).

Critiques

In this theory, the macrosystem is described as monolithic, structuring all other systems and experiences underneath. Macrosystems "may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 81), thus for Bronfenbrenner each macrosystem is a distinct ecology, structuring separate systems within that culture. Bronfenbrenner (2005) acknowledged different macrosystems on the global level, referring to "macrosystem contrasts" (p. 159) as useful for interesting research designs in order to understand the effects on persons developing in these variant contexts. There is no consideration, however, of what it might be like for someone to span multiple contexts during their development. International students' experiences are largely defined by spanning different sociohistorical contexts and cultural values. The cultural values shaping their experiences are hardly monolithic; instead, they are a contradictory swamp of norms and mores. Students were socialized into specific ways of thinking

and behaving for their entire lives to the point that the cultural influences became invisible. Now suddenly, they must adapt to another culture's minutiae without years of socialization. Students could navigate disparate cultures with proper institutional and peer support at the microsystem and mesosystem levels (Constantine et al., 2005), but, in many cases, this support is lacking.

We are not the first to consider a transnational adaptation of an ecological approach. A handful of scholars adopted and adapted the ecological framework with the topic of cross-cultural and cross-border movement in mind (Elliot et al., 2015; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). These approaches can be classified into two categories. The first approach (Elliot et al., 2015) recognizes distinct ecologies but emphasizes movement from one to another. The second approach (Ward & Geeraert, 2016) conceptualizes cross-cultural experiences as overlapping ecologies, where a person exists and develops at the intersection of two divergent ecologies. These adaptations significantly advance our understanding of the issue of moving/existing among multiple ecologies and our theoretical interpretations of ecological systems. Despite these advancements, there is room for improvement.

The primary contributions of Elliot and colleagues' (2016) interpretation are that the model acknowledges the element of *mobility*, separate ecologies depict cultural distance, and such a model implies there are elements of the home ecology that will travel with the "student sojourn" as they confront new systems (p. 2215). A flaw with the model, however, is the authors choose to nest the entire ecology of the home system within the microsystem of the host country. While it is useful to acknowledge that values and norms, as well as people and institutions, in the home context are likely to continue to be influential within the new context, placing an entire ecology within the microsystem is not an ideal way to theorize such a process. It is not wholly logical to think of social values, norms, institutions, individuals, etc., actually being moved to and situated within a new context. Another flaw with this model is the "sojourn" is unidirectional. While unidirectionality might be useful for conceptualizing challenges faced by the initial move (i.e., acculturation challenges or culture shock upon arrival), such a model has limited applicability for students as they move or graduate and consider more complex mobility options (Findlay, 2011).

Ward and Geeraerdt's (2016) model addresses the issue of a home ecology being embedded within a new ecology by recognizing that acculturation challenges are likely to take place where systems bump up against each other, intuitively conceptualizing these systems in contact and conflict. The notion of overlap, however, implicates this approach in a similar problem to that suffered by Elliott et al.'s (2016) model: it does not quite seem logical to have overlapping systems. Norms in the macrosystem are not interacting, policies and institutions in the exosystem are not engaging, and people within the microsystem are not intermingling as the model would suggest. Similarly, the overlap interpretation implies at least part of each system is embedded with the broader systems encapsulated in the opposing ecology. Although elements in these systems are likely to both be relevant for an individual, the systems themselves are not contained or constrained by broader systems in the opposing ecology. For example, brain return policies in China are not constituted along the lines of a U.S. cultural or values system. While some elements might interact (e.g., parents interacting with peers while visiting from home), the broader ecologies and their systems are likely more distinct.

SPANNING SYSTEMS MODEL

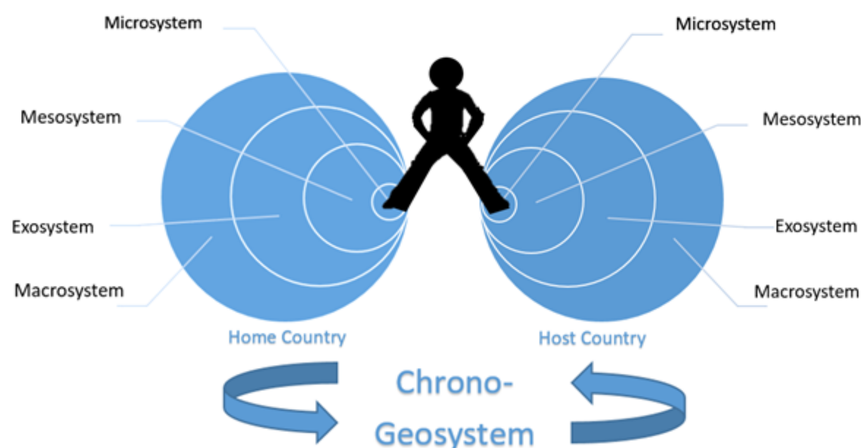
Ecological models should thus be revised to include multiple ecologies, simultaneously influencing the development experience, and each with its own macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem. This proposed model utilizes the classic nested systems format that is the hallmark of

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005) models. Rather than one ecology with the individual nested in the middle of the microsystem, the *Spanning Systems Model* situates the individual across two separate ecologies. At the center of the model is the individual, with a foot in the microsystem of each the home and host ecology to symbolize how the individual shapes and is shaped by the context in which they are embedded (see Figure 1). Functionally, individual development within a given ecology occurs in the same way described by Bronfenbrenner and his adherents, through interactions among the systems. The student exists in a distinct location betwixt ecologies in what ideally could be a harmonious blending of contexts, a space for building multicultural competency, or an opportunity for critical reflection on cultural assumptions. The creation of third cultures that blend the home culture and host culture is a well-documented trend in the literature on study abroad, and these third cultures can still produce valuable learning outcomes related to diversity (Twombly et al., 2012). Acknowledging the influence of detrimental factors, however, the *Spanning Systems Model* can also help reveal spaces of severe discomfort and marginalization based on race and nationality. The model can thus be used to interrogate both positive relationships as well as marginalization. Given appropriate institutional support, international students could co-create with their schools and peers this space of positive development (Constantine et al., 2005), but with the existence of discrimination, the model also helps explain marginalization.

The *Spanning Systems Model* represents the multiple ecologies in which the students simultaneously exist (see Figure 1). Their college experience is shaped by each individual ecology and spanning between the two. Each component of the model will be different for each individual, but the overall design of the *Spanning Systems Model* will remain the same. The major departure from Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 2005) approach happens when an individual departs the home ecology to move to another, during which an individual brings something from their original ecology into their new one. Keeping the two systems separated, connected only through the individual, enables this model to overcome the shortcomings of the previous adaptations discussed above. Any interplay among divergent systems is likely to be a direct result of decisions or connections made through the individual at the center who bridges the ecologies, whether through geographic movement, technology, or a personal blending of cultural constructs.

Figure 1

The Spanning Systems Model



Microsystem

While studying in the United States, international students maintain their relationships with family, friends, and colleagues in their home countries. Especially as information and communication technologies have developed, international communication is easier than ever. International students can contact people in their home countries and thereby continue to be influenced by these microsystems despite physical separation. Interactions with family, friends or significant others can have emotional and psychological effects on international students (Misra et al., 2003; Zhai, 2002). Encouraging words from loved ones can ease stress in unfamiliar environments and motivate them by reminding them of the original purpose of studying in the United States, but imposing a burden of meeting expectations. Relations with people in the home country and roles imposed by them can also determine the frequency and length of home visits and even stay-return decisions after graduation (Hazen & Alberts, 2006; Wu & Wilkes, 2017). Technologies also allow international students to gain collaborative work/research opportunities from their home country without physical attendance. These work-related interactions help the students apply what they have learned in the United States to their home contexts and thereby can expand their understandings of their studies as well as develop future career plans.

The campus life of international students in the United States involves new relationships with roommates, classmates, club members, faculty, etc. These interpersonal relationships make up much of international students' experiences and subsequent development (Glass et al., 2015). Macro social forces, located in the U.S. macrosystem and affecting all subordinate systems, underlie these relationships. The social norms and mores of interpersonal interactions structure conversations, expectations, and reactions. International students' microsystems in the United States are not confined to interactions with Americans. Many international students are involved in associations of students from the same home country or cultural backgrounds. This type of community, by functioning as enclaves within unfamiliar environments, buffers the students against isolation (Chen & Ross, 2015).

Mesosystem

The coexistence of multiple microsystems and the interconnection of the systems through the developing individual form another layer of system in the individual's ecologies called the mesosystem. In the mesosystem, interactions, roles, and activities in one microsystem affect those in other microsystems. For example, international students who experience more difficulties and discrimination in relationships with American classmates may spend more time with other students from similar backgrounds, influenced more by those students than American peers. One thing to note here is that the interconnections of the microsystems are not limited to one ecology. Although international students' microsystems in their home country and in the United States exist in physically separate locations, their connections cross the borderlines, constructing the integrated mesosystem surrounding the developing individual. Examining international students' interaction patterns in microsystems at home cannot be separated from the impact of microsystems in the United States and vice versa.

The mesosystem in the *Spanning Systems Model* is therefore shared between ecologies, depicted in our model by a dashed line (see Figure 2). We posit this shared mesosystem is the natural extension of the transnational student's positionality, whereby all interactions between microsystems are mediated by and exist due to the student at the center of the model. In other words, the shared mesosystem, and whether and to what degree elements in that system interact, is determined largely by the student. For example, a student's parents or friends from the home ecology may interact with friends from the host ecology, but

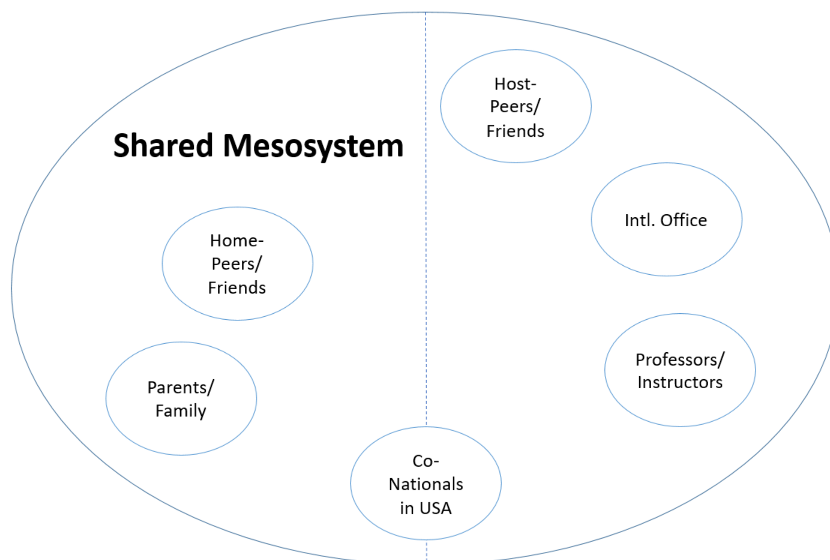
that interaction is because of the connection created and facilitated by that international student. Geographical distance otherwise makes such an interaction incredibly unlikely, thus different microsystems, though within a single mesosystem, are separated and mediated by the individual student.

Exosystem

The exosystem encompasses settings that significantly affect international students but do not directly involve the students (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). International students studying in the United States are influenced by the exosystem that exists in the United States and in their home countries. The students' families' workplaces typically exemplify a component in the home country exosystem that directly affects international students but do not directly involve the students (Renn & Arnold, 2003). Even if an international student's parents' workplaces are abroad, the family work environment can have a direct effect on the student's financial stability and persistence, especially if the student is being funded by family savings/earnings (Lee, 2015). An unexpected termination or bankruptcy might put the student's funding source into jeopardy. This can be particularly problematic for international students as they do not qualify for federal aid, and many students' visas do not qualify them for work (United States Department of State, n.d.). If a student's education is funded through home country government support or a scholarship from home country-based organizations, stipulations attached to these types of funding mechanisms, such as post-graduation residency requirements or employment contracts, will affect the student's post-graduation decision making. In the same vein, emigration policies are also part of the home country exosystem.

Figure 2

The Shared Mesosystem In The Spanning Systems Model



As international students physically move to the United States, the exosystem that exists in the United States exerts its influence on the students. The U.S. institution adjusts itself to accommodate the needs and assets of international students by creating support programs for the students and revising/developing curriculum. Faculty curriculum committees and institutional policymakers represent actors that influence international students without directly involving students (Renn & Arnold, 2003). Immigration policy is another component located in the U.S. exosystem. Nationalism and racism in the U.S. macrosystem structure the U.S. exosystem to craft immigration policies such as the perpetual

surveillance of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program and barriers to entry through the visa process (Grimm, 2019). Students may encounter difficulties throughout their time in the United States because of immigration issues (Lee, 2015), even to the point of requiring authorization from their university's international office to travel outside of the United States. International students are often discouraged from traveling in some cases in case border officials find something wrong with the students' immigration documents, barring them entry.

Macrosystem

Each society has its own historical, social, and cultural contexts that construct the macrosystem. These contexts underlie the society at large, forming social structures, institutions, and behaviors/thoughts of the members of the society (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Socialized and educated in a given society, people learn and internalize language and cultural/social norms and values. International students, carrying their own formative experiences from the contexts of their home countries, encounter the U.S. macrosystem. The home country macrosystem underlies students' experiences and directly affects how they make meaning of their experiences. Exposed to the two macrosystems, international students expand their understanding of different cultures and ways of knowing/thinking (Glass et al., 2015). At the same time, however, students experience the difficulties and tensions that fundamental differences can cause. When there are significant differences between the home and host societal values, adjustment issues become more prevalent (Parham, 2002). Furthermore, hostility against racial/ethnic groups or international students originated from sociohistorical and political contexts and forms tough environments for international students (Lee & Rice, 2007). The broad social forces such as racism and nationalist sentiments underlie the students' daily interactions in the United States, framing how international students are perceived and treated on and off campus by faculty, staff, fellow students, or individuals unaffiliated with the institution.

Chrono-Geosystem

An additional element is that which we term the *Chrono-Geosystem*. In the model (see figure 1), the *chrono-geosystem* is positioned within circling arrows in order to signify mobility across *time* and *geographic* space. Bronfenbrenner's component of the *chronosystem* allows for theorization of development as contexts may shift over time yet does not consider how geographic location might also change with time. Given recent patterns of mobility, particularly among the highly educated (Choudaha, 2017; Robertson, 2013), movement is neither unidirectional nor permanent. Adding this element allows for consideration of how an individual implicated in complex mobility patterns will be subjected to and interact with variant systems as they span contexts, making such a model applicable for interrogating multiple types of mobility. With these adaptations and additions to the original ecological framework, this model offers an adequate solution to the theoretical question posed previously by providing a way to conceptualize the complexities of existing/moving between/among two divergent ecologies.

Person

To speak to the other aspects of Bronfenbrenner's (2015) model beyond context, *person* is an individual's characteristics that shape how they interact with the environment. Based upon their race and nationality, international students are automatically subject to prejudicial and discriminatory interactions from other individuals. These are beyond the control of the students, forced onto them without their consent by the U.S. macrosystems of racism and a history of oppression (Lee & Rice, 2007). Carrying the designation of "international" student can also inhibit specific interactions. Domestic peers and faculty

may be reluctant to interact with international students at all due to preconceived notions of race, nationality, and behaviors (Constantine et al., 2005).

Students engage with these interactions at varying degrees of energy and complexity. For example, students might find cultural enclaves within the institution in which they feel safe and included, contributing to their social integration and likelihood of persistence (Braxton et al., 2004). They may, however, be unable to find such an enclave and withdraw in social isolation. In terms of increasing levels of complexity of activities, students may grapple with racism and discrimination they experience in the United States, or they may choose to focus on their own studies. Engaging in complex activities is associated with the students' perception of their own levels of agency in the control of their interactions (Glass et al., 2015). Students who perceive themselves to have little agency may struggle even further to find a cultural enclave within the institution or to make sense of acts of discrimination. Students who perceived themselves to have high agency may become involved in campus activism to combat institutional racism and daily acts of oppression.

Time

Each student's developmental experience occurs within the overarching context of time. Depending upon the period of the students' lives, they may already have solid understandings of their own identity in relation to the U.S. context. They may also have different familial or financial obligations based upon their age. Time refers to the historical period in which interactions are occurring as well (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Changes in growth rates of international student enrollments are chronologically tied to increasing mobility and economic globalization, as well as the subsequent backlash of global far right movements against immigration and globalization (IIE, 2018). All of these are broad aspects of this period in time that will shape the experiences of international students.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The context, person, and time components discussed here are only possibilities of the ecological influences that may likely appear in an international student's environment based on the literature. The content of the different systems is less important than the form of the model as separate ecologies connected through the individual spanning the ecologies. Each student will carry different cultural understandings and experiences from their home country, and each student will experience the United States differently. The components described here are based on the literature on international students broadly, but not all of these influences will apply to every student. Some of the components are more generalizable than others. Each student will have unique systems shaping their experiences. This may be due to specific circumstances, such as unique individual dispositions and the role of the student's family, or it may be due to differing large societal forces. When utilizing this model, it is vital to respect this diversity by allowing flexibility in what components make up each system.

This framework has the potential to help identify specific spaces in which international students experience and make sense of historic and contemporary social structures during their postsecondary education, as well as their own cultural adjustment, by placing equal attention to the environment from which they are coming. By better understanding the interplay between the United States and the students' own backgrounds, including everything from personal characteristics to their countries' sociohistorical backgrounds, faculty and staff can provide the necessary support to help international students succeed in the United States. This model's acknowledgment of the major historical and contemporary societal structures highlights how institutions must take an active role in creating spaces to help international

students respond and adjust to new, often contradictory contexts. Bronfenbrenner made significant contributions that encourage social scientists across disciplines to consider human development experiences from a variety of units of analysis that create the development context of an individual (Ceci, 2006). We build on this work to consider development experiences that span multiple ecologies and the structures embedded within.

The *Spanning Systems Model* additionally implies a degree of uncertainty in the direction of student development. Many well-known student development theories showcase specific types of growth in students as in moral development (Kohlberg, 1969), college student identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), or gender identity development (Bilodeau, 2005). The *Spanning Systems Model* does not delineate *how* students might grow. It only identifies the influences that will shape this growth. This limits the explanatory power of the model, as the purpose of a student development model is to understand how students grow, but it also expands the possibilities of what to expect from students. Colleges and universities may be less inclined to attempt to guide students through narrowly defined corridors of success instead of helping students navigate their ecologies as they define their own goals, using the *Spanning Systems Model* to identify spaces of contradiction or opportunity. This limitation may actually be a valuable tool in building students' capacity for self-determination.

CONCLUSION

This revised model, or the *Spanning Systems Model*, helps to explain how international students are positioned among the historical and contemporary structures they encounter in the United States after arriving from divergent sociohistorical and cultural backgrounds. These structures are grounded in political, economic, and historical contexts, so international students cannot be expected to easily navigate these systems without support from the institution. As such, the *Spanning Systems Model* has implications for future practice and research related to international students in higher education. For the innumerable benefits international students provide to colleges and universities, institutions are responsible for ensuring these students have physically and emotionally safe experiences in the United States. By understanding students' home culture, acknowledging and combating the existence of oppression, and offering the necessary support to international students as they adjust to life in the United States, practitioners in colleges and universities can begin to convert spaces of marginalization into spaces of cross-cultural learning and growth. This model provides the tools and language for understanding international students experiences and development as well as identifying opportunities for engagement. Scholars might use this framework in their approach to research international student experiences to either posit research questions or account for the complex context in which this population is embedded. Additionally, although this model was adopted with international students in the United States as our population and context of interest, the model could be further adapted to account for the developmental contexts of any individual whose life spans multiple ecologies.

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A Comparison between Pedagogical Approaches in UK and China

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ABSTRACT

With globalization increasingly define the world, international students are undertaking an important agentic role in terms of communicating different cultures. Therefore, their experiences are significant in revealing the pedagogic practices between different country settings. This article attempts to compare pedagogic practices between the UK and China by examining their cultural origins and the potential connections with pedagogical assumptions, placing on a spectrum of teacher/learner-centered pedagogy. Combining with the perspective of Chinese international students who have been studying in the UK, it captures the lived experiences of the actual classroom differences experienced by these students. It concludes with each pedagogy has its benefits and drawbacks respectively, and has its cultural fits, therefore, it is not possible for one particular educational system to completely 'borrow' pedagogic practice.

Keywords: higher education, international student, mobility, teacher/learned-centered pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Globalization contributes to the increase of international students' mobility, especially the flow of non-Western students to the Western ones. The number of international students receiving higher education in the UK, according to UK Council for International Student Affairs (2018), during the period 2015 to 2016, has reached 91,215, which has not only surpassed any other nationalities but also demonstrated a significant year-to-year increase. International students, who have been shaped by, at least experienced different pedagogic practices, play an important agentic role in revealing educational differences between several contexts. Pedagogic practices are usually defined on a spectrum ranging from teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogy, and countries which demonstrate different tendencies on this spectrum might reflect their diverse educational assumptions, underpinning by idiographic cultural contexts. In this article, the experiences of international students in Chinese and British higher education practices will be compared and examined, as their experiences could provide valuable insight into the pedagogic practice from the perspective of students whose educational backgrounds are characterized by different pedagogic practices. Therefore, by understanding educational practices between different countries, international students can gain an ideological distance and interrogate their educational practice, to promote effective communication and minimizing unnecessary conflicts in the context of globalization. This research could also provide

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insights to potential educators by comparing different pedagogic approaches, as they could learn from contexts of each other and contribute a more profound understanding of the equity issue in education.

International students are pursuing their academic goals in contexts that are underpinned by different cultural and educational values; therefore, they can experience differences in the process of being educated and comparing their education system. Making a comparison is a natural yet crucial process as it justifies choice-making and stance with regards to relationships with others and the past. Specifically, comparing educational practices, these students are currently engaging in the one they are accustomed to, they could "make the familiar strange" and deepen the comprehension of their own educational values (Alexander, 2001, p. 27). It is noticeable that students are likely to encounter ideological and pedagogical conflicts, which could be referred to as "culture shock", happening and growing when people are striving to adapt to the new culture (Harvard International Office., 2017). Students may find themselves engaged in the academic aspect of the culture shock where teaching methods, curriculum settings, and assessment criteria are strange to them, which might reveal the different orientation of pedagogic approaches between their culture and the one in-country where they are being educated.

The teacher/learner-centered approach has been an inevitable theme throughout pedagogic approaches, which might be due to the orientation which reveals differences in many educational aspects and the epistemology that underpinned them, for example, the learner identity, teacher-learner relationship, and curriculum settings. Schweisfurth (2013) describes the teacher-centered pedagogic approach as transmissive, where emphasis in education is functioning as reproduction, requiring teachers as authoritative and knowledgeable figures. Where, a learner-centered one is more collaborative and active, with emphasis on individual involvement and critical thinking. This article aims not to make any value judgment, as it is impossible to foresee the ultimate value of a certain approach (Biesta, 2009). Therefore, while it is not possible to predict which approach would produce an ultimate desirable outcome, the comparison between pedagogy in China and UK would still provide a focus on differences in educational assumptions and implications in an international classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture-specific pedagogy

Cultural differences are important in explaining the divergences in Chinese and UK pedagogy. This article adopts the assumption that "all education has national characteristics and grow and develop only in the soil of its indigenous culture and given social conditions" (Ma, 2001, p. 81). Street (1993) suggests that culture should be understood in terms of a process rather than a structured cultural description, which interprets the making of culture as an ongoing process, avoiding the tendency of stereotyping and overgeneralizing. In the next sections, this article will attempt to demonstrate the connections between culture and pedagogy in China and the UK respectively, and concerning literature depicting the culture shock encountered by international students learning in these two countries.

Learner-centered Pedagogy in the UK

The largely learner-centered pedagogy engaged by UK higher education reveals educational assumptions that could be traced back in history. Freire (1993, p.164) criticizes the traditional pedagogy as a "banking" approach, which is characterized by knowledge isolating from reality, students memorizing contents without thinking and questioning, and creativity and personality of students which are suppressed. He encourages the development of "critical consciousness" as an alternative to abandoning the passive and oppressed situation undertaken by students, instead, they could recognize themselves as world transformers

with the help of critical consciousness. The anti-authoritarian orientation strongly expressed by Freire has been extremely influential in the initiation and growth of the concept "critical pedagogy", aiming for individual liberation and emancipation of the oppressed (Burbules & Berk, 1999). To form critical consciousness and achieve the emancipation of individuals, it is important for human beings to become skeptical towards authority instead of believing and absorbing blindly without questioning, as Paul and Binker (1990, p. 66) illustrate that "the art of explicating, analyzing, and assessing these "arguments" and "logic" is essential to leading an examined life". Therefore, the tradition of being critical was started relatively early in Western educational history, leading to an emphasis on fostering critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking is arguably one of the most significant characteristics of a learner-centered pedagogy. The idea of critical thinking is prominent throughout education, and it is always connected to rationality, which, according to Burbules and Berk (1999), is seen as a paramount aim of education in the Western world. Technically, the skill of critical thinking is generally educationally desirable, standing on the exact contrary to the banking approach, characterizing skepticism and the emphasis on rationality, and does not accept truth in an unquestionable manner (McPeck, 2016). The emphasis on rationality and evidence has been included and reflected in higher education assessment criteria in the UK, especially in academic writing. For example, A-Level, the formal assessment for pre-university students entering higher education in the UK, includes "thinking skills" as a subject, which aims to examine the ability "to analyze unfamiliar problems, devise problem-solving strategies, and evaluate the diverse ways a problem may be solved" (Cambridge Assessment., 2018). To think independently and objectively is believed to be an essential skill to succeed in higher education and further professional development in the UK, which also non-surprisingly becomes one of the most evident aspects of Chinese students suffering from learning shock. In the study conducted by Gu and Schweisfurth (2006), a student expresses concern towards writing style in university assignments, particularly the use of references. To synthesize references into arguments could reflect the necessity of rationalized statements and the development of the line of arguments; therefore, to critically analyze references reflects the desirable level of skepticism. So, Chinese students, who have been educated in an educational environment that put less attention on fostering critical thinking skills, might find it unfamiliar and difficult to cope with this type of thinking and writing skill set.

Learner-centered pedagogy could also be greatly defined by power relations in the classroom. Hofstede (2003, p. 98) uses "power distance" to describe "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. From the discourse of learner-centered pedagogy, the culture characterized by a relatively low power distance might be a better cultural fit for learner-centered pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is ideologically anti-authoritarian; therefore, teachers are expected to act as a facilitator in the learning process of students instead of considering themselves knowledgeable and simply passing down knowledge to students. Concerning the authority of a teacher, the learner-centered pedagogy "demands a rethinking of classroom power relations, increasing learner autonomy…and creating space for students to ask questions which teachers with limited subject knowledge might not be able to answer" (Schweisfurth, 2013, p. 54). Teachers do not recognize themselves as an absolute authority who always have final say to the problems emerged by students, and students, instead of relying heavily on the knowledge of teachers, depending on their explorations and discussions to pursue answers, could also mean that they are assuming greater responsibilities for their learning. In the sense of independent learning and learning responsibilities, one of the Chinese students experienced learning shock because he would merely complete tasks assigned by teachers back in China without

producing anything original, however, he felt the need to conduct research himself to address problems (Gu and Schweisfurth, 2006). Therefore, a more equal relationship between teachers and students in the UK relates to greater autonomy as well as learning responsibilities compared to their China counterpart.

However, learner-centered approach is subject to critiques. Biesta (2009, p.39) criticizes learner-centered approach as essentially "a form of therapy that is more concerned with the emotional well-being of pupils and students than with their emancipation", which creates further risks for students as they might acquire neither emancipation nor knowledge. Concerns are rising as the learner-centered approach appears less secure and predictable in achieving intended learning outcomes (Hussey & Smith, 2003), therefore it is important to evaluate its cultural fitness when applied in an educational environment that is more examination-orientated.

Teacher-centered Pedagogy in China

According to Hu (2002), "Chinese culture of learning" refers to a complete system of educational assumptions, norms, behaviors, and values with the idiographic nature of Chinese society, which tend to be deeply rooted in culture and sometimes difficult to challenge in Chinese teaching and learning practices. Therefore, with relatively strong culture-oriented educational practices in China, it might be considered as a demanding process for international students to adjust to pedagogy characterized by Chinese educational assumptions, especially for those who have been brought by a radically different educational discourse.

On a continuum of learner/teacher-centered pedagogy, classrooms in Chinese higher education tend to be more teacher-centered. Jin and Cortazzi (2006) describe the observed Chinese class as teacher-centered interaction of a high level, with an evident belief of the benefits of role modeling, while students are expected to learn and memorize. They also point out that this educational model persists in the higher education setting, learners sometimes are advised to memorize a prescribed list of vocabulary or paragraphs from the textbook in university education. In such a context, the ability of critical thinking is less emphasized, requiring memorizing instead of understanding and analyzing. An international student in a Chinese university finds this type of academic standard skeptical, he reports having to take exams where books are allowed in exam venues, which is merely "a long exercise in copying" (Matthews, 2015). Although it is sometimes considered as same as "rote-learning" and being deprecated by the Western educational context, it reflects a more or less influence of Confucian tradition (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Hu, 2002). The passive form of receiving knowledge is justified based on the assumption which values the accumulation of theoretical knowledge, especially those that have been written in textbooks, instead of putting it into immediate practice (Hu, 2002). For instance, language education in China tends to focus on the theoretical aspect such as grammar instead of real-life communication skills. Therefore, teachers as the possessor of theoretical knowledge would not-surprisingly become the center in the classroom setting, opposing learner-centered pedagogy which encourages students to actively analyze authoritative knowledge. Although it is inappropriate to assume all Chinese students would take this culture of learning for granted, it remains relevant and influential in modern China (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997). In certain educational settings, for example, language education, the effectiveness of the teacher-centered approach is questionable from the Western perspective (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006). Therefore, it is a question worth considering whether one single type of pedagogic approach could be applied to every educational setting, and to what extent it could be complemented by its alternative.

The tendency towards teacher-centered pedagogy does not only reveal the lack of learning responsibilities associating with students, but also implicates the role of a teacher is related to high authority.

One of the reasons that might explain the situation is the absolute respect for education in China, a traditional Confucian thought holds a firm belief in the transforming function of education, both in the sense of mentally transforming people, making them think beyond mundane lives, as well as strengthening a nation (Hu, 2002). The "ideal" Chinese students are supposed to be "determined, diligent, and prepared to endure hardships they routinely encounter" (Li, 2002, p. 263), demonstrating a strong disciplinary implication on attitudes towards learning instead of the learning skills.

Great efforts and inputs, which might result from decent learning attitudes are emphasized in an examination-oriented Chinese educational context, as they are often believed to lead to good examination performances, as in Chinese culture, the ability is considered as acquired rather than innate (Hu, 2002). The teacher-centered pedagogy adopted by the Chinese education system is regarded as effective in achieving good grades in exams, therefore, students would pay special attention when teachers covering contents that will appear in the exams, other contents might be regarded as irrelevant and unimportant. The examination-oriented phenomenon is described by Hu and West (2014, p. 256) as "almost every activity taking place in the education system revolves around achieving better results in graduation examinations". This particular orientation could also find its Confucian origin, as it is believed people with less prestigious and wealthy families could find their ways moving upwards through social mobility, with the help of education (Lee, 1996), and examination is thought to be their last resort.

METHODOLOGY

The research intends to find out the differences between the pedagogy conducted in the UK and Chinese classroom, therefore it is important to obtain detailed descriptions from individuals who have experienced the two pedagogies. In this sense, to be accessible to details of personal experiences of Chinese teachers, an interpretivist stance has been adopted. Sticking to the very truth is an important concern for interpretivists, they "seek lived experiences in real situations" (Woods, 2006, p. 3) to be accurate, which also allows them to understand the experiences and perceptions of the participants. Although interpretivists are subject to criticisms in terms of the tendency of creating artificial boundaries (Cohen et al., 2011), subjectivity may be inevitable to add personal explanation and knowledge to the data analyzed in a more detailed and insightful manner. Particularly, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with five Chinese international students who have been educated in the UK and asked them to compare pedagogy in the UK and China. The theme "pedagogy" has been addressed in terms of asking questions about their expectations before overseas education, challenges they encountered, and their process of adapting Western pedagogy.

FINDINGS

Among the interviewed Chinese returnees, there is a clear sense of "otherness" of the Western pedagogy. Their answers to the questions concerning their expectations before conducting their studies overseas reveals their awareness and deliberate preparations (whether materially or psychologically) for Western ways of teaching. Some of the interviewees mentioned that although they have not been to Western countries themselves, they still anticipate Western pedagogy to be radically different from Chinese ones through books and previous education in China. For example:

"I expect the UK has a different educational system from China, and I think there're no certain rules or procedures to follow."

"Since I'm studying a course in engineering, my understanding was that the UK may focus more on practical rather than skills."

"I don't have much understanding of Western education, but I think it's completely different, Western education may be more open-minded and emphasize independent learning."

One of the interviewees expressed that her anticipations and understandings come from textbook and previous undergraduate education in China:

"I used to study at a normal university in China for my undergraduate education, therefore I had learned a lot about Western pedagogies and their ways of thinking."

Noticeably, she also partly attributed her "accurate" expectation to a foreign teacher she once had:

> A foreign teacher of mine has talked about the way Western classrooms are organized and operated...In his class, unlike Chinese teachers who tend to simply stand there and give a lecture, he walked around to interact with students, so there is always a vibrating atmosphere…for students like us, we don't have to be there, the way our foreign teachers behave represents Western pedagogy.

When they arrive in Western countries and experience pedagogies themselves, all of the respondents find the reality generally matches their anticipation. After actually going abroad and experiencing a Western model of teaching, the differences between two pedagogies they have identified becomes more specific and detailed, for example, they spotted the difference of student-teacher relationship between China and Western countries they studied in, such as the classroom equity:

> In a UK classroom that I've been in before, if we were sitting, our professor would lower himself to talk to us at the same height. Many Chinese students are not used to it, as, in China, Chinese teachers were more arrogant and condescending…UK professors also grant us enough respect, when we are expressing different opinions, although some of which they may disagree with, they still encourage us to generate different ways of thinking and creativity. This kind of thing never happened when I was doing my undergraduates in China, maybe things got slightly better when you study in a normal university as it emphasizes pedagogies. In comparison, my friends, who study in other types of universities, don't have the chance of expressing themselves.

The different role of teachers and students adopted in China and Western countries were also pointed out, namely, in Western countries, teachers tend to be facilitators:

"I feel a little bit shock as in the UK, as there are no clear rules that are instructed by teachers. All you need to do is just attend seminars and lectures and learn by yourself. It's quite different compared to China."

"When I just arrived in Germany, I found that my supervisor tends not to give me specific instructions, so I have to completely rely on myself to carry on research, to find answers for every question."

It is also noticeable that a UK and a Chinese classroom have different ways of manage, for example, different pacing:

"In China, teachers are always rushing to fill students with knowledge as much as possible. But in the UK, teachers pay less attention to the quantity of knowledge transmitted, they may be slow-paced, but emphasize fostering students' ability."

They pointed out the scope of knowledge that could be expanded and the extent of student participation in class:

"I feel that they have a different focus. In China, there's more emphasis on theoretical knowledge, but in the UK, we have more chances to conduct actual engineering projects."

> There is an obvious difference in that in a Chinese classroom, students are much less active and participatory. I think the reason is what teachers taught them are essentially bound by a core textbook, leaving little space for expansion, when we're studying knowledge in a single textbook, there's only one framework, which kind of limited our outlook. In Germany it's quite different, sometimes the professor gave us a reading list containing seven or eight books, and therefore, the content could be extended considerably. In this way, our horizon could be expanded, and our interests enhanced.

"In the university I taught, mostly there are courses merely and purely focus on theory, which I think is a little bit detached from reality; In America, the courses focus more on case study instead of theory."

Another difference raised by interviewees was the different evaluative rules adopted by China and Western countries. Although they admitted that relying on examinations could be counted as one of the similarities, the two have completely different assessment criteria:

> In China, the answers to examination questions are mostly fixed and standard, it is not very flexible as students have to provide "right" answers to pass the exam. Yet in Germany, it is not like your answers are marked against a set of so-called "standard answers". Instead, we conduct interviews with our supervisors, then he/she will give our marks according to our understanding and responses to a certain topic.

It can be seen from the responses from the above interviewees that the differences are manifested in various ways, whether it is the inner educational assumptions, or the pedagogic practices that are displayed on the outside. There are also similarities between the two, however these similarities are confined to some basics:

"The two education systems are all campus-based, they both require the role of teachers and students…and they all prefer a face-to-face knowledge-transmitting process."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Generally, the findings reveal that Chinese international students did process a certain level of expectation based on their previous knowledge obtained from reading or other related intercultural experiences. Although the preparations they made beforehand do not always guarantee the adaptation in the Western environment, their expectations seemed to have matched the reality. This could be an indicator of the level of globalization of China. Although China and UK have radically different cultures and ideologies, education in China grants students with a generally accurate description of the West. In the responses of participants, it is not uncommon for them to make comparisons between China and the West, whether consciously or not. Their inclination for making comparison confirms arguments made by Alexander (2001a, p. 521) on comparative education: "globalization dictates a stronger comparative and international presence in educational research".

Noticeably, some of the participants pointed out the differences in terms of transmitting knowledge: Chinese teachers teach, Western teachers guide. In other words, Chinese pedagogy is more teacher-centered while Western countries have more learner-centered pedagogy. A teacher-centered pedagogy could be argued to be attributed to the deep reverence Chinese people have for education and being teacher-centered reinforced the authoritarian status of the teacher in the classroom. Western students who have experienced classroom discipline in China are encountering dilemmas when they return to their home country, as Moneton (2017) felt guilty for attempting to check her phone in class when she returns. The stress on

learning attitudes might essentially reflect an authoritarian perspective on the knowledge which regards teachers as a more important figure in a classroom setting. However, the experiences of students are somehow being neglected, when they are equally important in the classroom as teachers. Moneton (2017) also spots in the Chinese university she studied, it is unnatural for students packing up before the professor declared the end of the class. This might be due to the behavior implies both disrespects to the teacher and a lack of decent learning attitude, i.e., a disrespect for both authority and education.

Participants argue that the teacher-centered pedagogy approach may jeopardize the independent thinking ability of students as students rely on teachers excessively instead of their own critical thinking. However, in this case, students are not the ones to blame, as they are simply attempting to survive the examination-centered educational tradition. Being examination-centered is thought to have a Confucian tradition, as getting an excellent grade in exams is regarded as the last resort for less wealthy or prestigious families to move upwards through social mobility (Lee, 1996). Nowadays, through Gaokao (National higher education entrance examination), those with good grades have the opportunity to enter elite universities and gain a prominent employment perspective. A teacher-centered approach, although subject to criticisms of suppressing personality and creativity, seems to serve the purpose of enhancing students' examination grades. Therefore, it can be seen that Chinese students have a long tradition of getting used to a classroom characterized by strong framing, which emphasizes effectiveness and intensity of knowledge transmission.

In comparison, topics generated by participants when they are describing their Western experiences often include a more equal teacher-student relationship, emphasizing ability-fostering, linking knowledge to reality, and more flexible evaluative criteria. These themes, in line with literature on international students, suggest a weakly-framed UK classroom, which demonstrates an emphasis on the foster of critical thinking skills in UK higher education. The design of a Western class often focuses on fostering students' critical thinking skills and independent learning ability, which is largely different from Chinese higher education. The relatively weak framing happens when teachers recognize themselves as facilitators instead of authoritarian figures. Compared to Chinese pedagogies, Western ones also seem to demonstrate a weaker classification. One of the participants suggested that in Chinese classrooms, students are less active and participatory, and he attributes the reason for the scope of knowledge that could be expanded is limited. This argument coincides with Doherty (2015), who argues that a strong classification involves transferring highly specialized knowledge, which students may find detached from reality and they are uninterested to learn. This participant also gives the example of reading lists given by his Western teachers, which reduces the specialty of knowledge and extends classroom expertise. Besides, compared to Chinese examinations which require standard answers for every question, flexible evaluative criteria also allows students to be as critical as possible. It can be seen that Western countries and China have different educational assumptions, therefore, the clash of ideologies occur in the context of Chinese international students studying abroad.

The main differences of UK and Chinese pedagogy are summarized below:

Firstly, UK higher education tends to emphasize the fostering of critical thinking, and encourages students to be authority-challengers, facilitating students to rationalize and focus on the precision and accuracy of information (e.g., the importance attached to using references correctly). The relatively weak framing happens when teachers perform as facilitators instead of authoritarian figures. Compared to Chinese pedagogy, UK ones also seem to demonstrate a weaker classification. In contrast, the higher education in China is largely empirical, which focuses on understanding the content instead of critically

analyzing it, accuracy and rationalization are therefore undermined, implying a philosophical foundation of educational discourse.

Secondly, Chinese higher education attaches greater importance to the role of discipline, revealing a high level of reverence for the role of teacher authority. Therefore, the learning attitude is stressed, and students are supposed to be diligent and hardworking, which is also believed to contribute to good grades in examinations, implying an authoritarian perspective of education. UK higher education, in radical difference, focuses more on learning skill instead of learning attitude, implying the role of the teacher as a facilitator rather than dominator in a classroom setting and a more equal teacher-learner relationship, maximizing learning responsibilities associated with students.

Thirdly, the Chinese higher education system is much more examination-oriented compared to its UK counterparts. Acquiring good grades in an examination justifies any learning behavior of students and might be the most important motivation for the learning of students. However. it is noticeable that the marking criteria against examinations in China largely examines the level of understanding of what has been taught, and a high score could be achieved if the understanding is in accordance with the marker. In contrast, the assessment in UK higher education values critical thinking abilities demonstrated, in which creativity, originality, and output are of great importance.

Lastly, in terms of cultural equivalence, Chinese culture tends to place more value on degrees of higher education, as the Chinese possess a firm belief that knowledge transforms fate through education, and since China is based on a large population, higher education becomes a scarce resource which is not possible for everyone to access. In Bernstein's terms, the Chinese classrooms are stronger framed while UK has weaker framed pedagogies. A teacher-centered pedagogy, characterized by stronger framing, could be attributed to the deep reverence Chinese people have for education, and being teacher-centered reinforced the authoritarian status of the teacher in the classroom. In comparison, the UK involves much more diversity and options for the definition of being successful which includes but is not limited to gaining access to higher education. It also reveals the difference in the level of individualism between the two countries, as making an effort to receive higher education is increasingly regarded as mainstream and the norm in Chinese society, which is important for members in a collectivistic society to adapt to the group norms (Hofstede, 2003). However, in a society that emphasizes individualistic value and learner-centered pedagogy such as the UK, individual understanding matters more than group opinion.

Both pedagogies have their benefits and limitations. Since the pedagogical practices chosen to be implemented in a certain country depend on various cultural, ideological, and technical factors, it would be innocent to assume countries such as China could effectively apply learner-centered pedagogy to a large extent, and vice versa. Although the examination-oriented and standardized education system has been subject to many critiques concerning its utilitarian tendency, it might be one of the most effective ways of operating Chinese society. The large population in China makes it difficult for the implementation of learner-centered pedagogy, also, "the political context is not conducive to the emancipatory narrative" (Schweisfurth, 2013). Nevertheless, there are certain features of learner-centered pedagogy that could complement the pedagogical practices adopted in China, namely, by incorporating courses characterized by interaction and critical thinking. In UK higher education, despite the fact the relatively equal teacher-student relationship contradicts assumptions behind teacher-centered pedagogy, it could still learn from the great level of reverence for education within Chinese society. As in any society, education is arguably the most significant process for accumulating knowledge and improving society, as well as contributing to

personal development, therefore, although the existence of a physical authoritarian and disciplinary figure may not fit the UK higher education context, the need for students to respect education itself could be emphasized.

The research could be prominent in the sense that there is a noteworthy increase in the number of international students studying in foreign countries. International students who have been exposed to different pedagogies could play an important agent role in promoting effective communication as well as minimizing unnecessary conflicts. By providing an insight into their roles as agents of globalization, international students could gain a deeper comprehension of their experiences, especially with regards to their initial learning challenges in a foreign country, such as the UK, which could also convert to valuable resources in terms of their future practices.

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Essay

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COVID-19 and Prospect of Online Learning in Higher Education in Africa

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ABSTRACT

Although its impacts on higher education functions are yet to be studied across regional, national, and institutional contexts, it is generally observed that COVID-19 disrupts teaching and learning, research and travels, and university community service worldwide. To improve our understanding of the strategies higher education institutions (HEI) can use for staying relevant and competitive in times of crisis and beyond, this essay reflects on current developments in HEI in Africa as linked to COVID-19. It subsequently highlights how African HEI respond to the pandemic, the prospect of online instruction, and the conditions that support the successful integration of technologies in teaching and learning. There is ample evidence that supports that African universities are more likely to significantly embrace digital technologies in the future than ever before. To inform successful technology integration, a generic conceptual model that explains success indicators and success factors in technology-supported learning environments in higher education is presented.

Keywords: COVID-19, higher education, online instruction, success factors, success measures

INTRODUCTION

This essay reflects on current developments in higher education institutions (HEI) in Africa as linked to COVID-19. It subsequently highlights how African HEI respond to the pandemic, the prospect of online instruction, and the conditions and factors that support the successful integration of technologies in teaching and learning. The goal is to understand the strategies HEIs can use for staying relevant and competitive in times of crisis and beyond. The generic conceptual model presented in this essay can better inform instructional designers, faculty, students, and leaders and administrators as to how to optimally integrate digital technologies to teaching and learning during the pandemic and beyond.

The essay first presents an overview of how HEI respond to the pandemic and then discusses relevant strategies to integrate technologies to teaching and learning. In so doing, the essay focuses only on those issues that transcend institutional and national contexts. The focus is on the pattern and trend across the issues and on core theoretical and methodological reconceptualizations needed for optimal integration

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of digital technologies in higher education. Where appropriate, case examples from specific universities are highlighted only to exemplify some of the issues discussed concerning HEI response to the pandemic. The experiences of such universities are not thus claimed to be generalizable to other universities.

As research (knowledge production generally) is also disrupted by it, our understanding of how and to what extent the pandemic affects African HEI is unknown, let alone being complete. Studies that delve deeper into the issues and that match and reflect the size and diversity of the African higher education systems are yet to gain momentum. As described below, this piece draws on available recent international studies on observed impacts of the pandemic, and completed and active research projects on integrating digital technologies in higher education in Africa.

HIGHER EDUCATION RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

Although its precise effects or impacts on higher education functions are yet to be studied across regional, national, and institutional contexts, it is generally observed that COVID-19 disrupts teaching and learning, research and travels, and university community service worldwide. The International Association of Universities (IAU) survey of 424 HEI in 109 countries indicated that the percentage of pandemic-triggered campus closures in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Europe, and the Americas was respectively 77, 55, and 54 (Marinoni, Land, & Jensen, 2020). According to the authors, the highest percentage of closures in Africa might indicate the preventive measures taken, as the region had the lowest reported cases at the time of the study, March and April 2020. The participants of the same study indicated that teaching and learning were not affected by the pandemic (3%), classroom teaching was replaced by distance teaching and learning (29%), teaching was suspended while the institutions were developing alternative solutions (43%), and teaching was cancelled with no viable alternatives (24%). Similarly, a study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicated that 88% of the 165 students sampled from 21 African countries said that their institutions had discontinued in-person classes because of COVID-19 (Koninckx, Fatondji, & Burgos, 2021).

Overall, campus closures were found to be ‘knee-jerk’ reactions made by HEI following the onset of the pandemic. Although the IAU and OECD surveys may not give a ‘complete picture’ about the phenomenon, as they relied on data collected from limited sample sizes and time span while the pandemic is still raging, they can still point to the pattern and trend across the region. Following campus closures, HEI employed varied strategies to ensure their survival and to demonstrate their relevance to society.

Based on the aforementioned surveys and additional literature mentioned below, HEI in Africa could generally be loosely categorized into three depending on how and to what extent they integrate technologies to sustain teaching and learning during the pandemic. Considering the nature of their decisions and practices linked to emergency online instruction, three groups of universities could be formed. The criteria used for such classification include the use of learning management systems, use of interactive or active pedagogies, student and faculty access to computers or laptops, dependable access to Internet connection, and supporting infrastructure. This typology is meant only to facilitate our understanding of the varied ways universities used to respond to the pandemic following campus closures.

The Transformationalists

This category of HEI seems to demonstrate institutional readiness, experience, capacity, and resilience to launch and sustain some form of online instruction. They seem to have quickly developed their learning management systems and usually have dedicated teaching and learning centers or pedagogical centers to spearhead the initiatives. Faculty, students, and staff go through mandatory trainings and are

generally skilled at exploiting available technologic tools. Faculty quickly adjust course activities and deliverables to better suit online settings, and administrators show flexibility in meeting deadlines.

Despite some challenges linked to unstable Internet connections and power outages, this category of universities generally secures a shared basis of understanding that going and staying online is both pedagogically and economically defensible. Their shift to online instructions is quick and transformational and generally satisfying for faculty and students. However, that 29% of African HEI were able to quickly migrate to online teaching and learning (Koninckx, Fatondji, & Burgos, 2021) does not necessarily mean that they have transformational online experiences. Flagship universities, international branch campuses, universities having partnerships with international institutions, and well-resourced universities could belong to this category.

Although they cannot represent the experiences of other universities, the experiences of some universities regarding emergency online instruction are worth highlighting. This can exemplify how a transformational strategy to respond to the pandemic looks like in reality. In Ghana, most private and public universities resorted to emergency remote education. The University of Ghana had a learning management system called SAKAI and practiced blended learning before the pandemic. Students "have been able to enrol to the LMS (learning management systems), which gives them access to free rich online learning materials, video tutorials from lecturers, discussion forums to interact with peers, chat rooms to connect with lecturers, and online quizzes and tests, and move all assignments and peer reviews online. Lecturers are now using the live chat option to interact with students" (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p.39).

An independent, public, not-for-profit university in Morocco, the Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, had pioneered a distance learning program in March 2020. A university-wide survey indicated, "student satisfaction rates with learning efficacy and online teaching remain very high, comparable to pre-pandemic figures" (Morocco World News, 2021, n.p.). The New England Commission of Higher Education, a regional accreditation association that evaluates HEI in the Northeastern United States and worldwide, accredited Al Akhawayn University as the first in Africa in online instruction.

In Egypt, private and international universities seem to lead emergency online instruction following campus closures. Private universities use such learning management systems as Moodle or Blackboard; faculty upload their lectures to the platforms and some also use Zoom live sessions to meet their students (Bozkurt et al., 2020). The American University in Cairo (AUC) case is briefly highlighted to shed some more light on how online instruction is planned and implemented.

Founded in 1919, the AUC is the only non-profit, private university in Egypt. The AUC has been consistently rated among the top performing universities in Africa and the Middle East. The Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) at the AUC coordinates the implementation of innovative pedagogies, including the integration of digital technologies in teaching and learning. Faculty and students have been using the learning management system, the Blackboard, for years. The AUC announced campus closure days before the Egyptian government announced, on 14 March 2020, the national closure of schools and universities. Faculty training for "contingency had started before this announcement and continued for one more week" (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 33). The following excerpt explains the process that led to the sudden migration to fully online instruction and the support systems put in place.

> Following guidance from the Provost in late February, CLT implemented an initial contingency plan to train faculty members on Blackboard and Panopto lecture capture platforms in addition to preparing a comprehensive online resource within days of the decision to plan for the online

> transition. CLT conducted training in collaboration with members of the Technology Solutions team from March 5th - March 12th for over 540 faculty members. By the time AUC announced it would move fully online on March 15th, the CLT team had worked hard to prepare resources on its website produced specifically to guide faculty for emergency remote teaching on conducting lectures, interactive classes, and alternative assessments online…. CLT offered 28 webinars (attended by over 390 faculty members), responding to faculty needs, and initiated a system for faculty to request online consultations (over 400 consultations were handled (CLT, 2020, p. 2).

To support effective online teaching and learning, additional initiatives were undertaken. New guidelines and policies were developed to ensure harmony and ethical delivery of online instruction. To better inform reiterative course design and instruction, frequent faculty and student satisfaction surveys were conducted, and results were shared with them timely. Overall, adequate (technological, material, financial, and human) resources and agile leadership seemed to contribute to effectively sustaining online instruction for almost two and a half consecutive semesters. Although its generalizability to poorly funded public universities might be questionable, the AUC experience could inspire other universities to embark on designing and delivering online instruction during the pandemic and beyond.

The Late Experimenters

Many African HEI were not ready for online instruction but most of them have started developing some kind of digital or self-study solutions (Koninckx, Fatondji, & Burgos, 2021). These universities do not seem to have sufficient institutional readiness, experience, and or capacity for quickly establishing online learning environments or optimally using available learning platforms. Following campus closures, they tended to develop a general understanding that technology integration could help them to 'keep going' until normalcy is restored. However, the 'digital divide' between students from low and high socio-economic backgrounds regarding access to technology and connectivity challenged their ambitions. Overall, although this category of universities has resorted to online instruction following campus closures, success seems compromised by limited access to dependable facilities and equipment, unreliable Internet connections, faculty and student limited technology skills, and or pedagogies not relevant to online learning environments.

Case stories from some universities are highlighted here to exemplify this category. Egypt lately (after mid-April 2020) announced national guidance on how to move forward for both public and private universities. Guidance was provided for "alternative assessments, and pass/fail grades for the second term which was taught online", and "failed projects would be given a second chance to improve" (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 33). Faculty in public universities produced video or audio lectures and shared them with their students via university webpages or YouTube (Bozkurt et al., 2020).

In Kenya, most universities use such learning management systems as Moodle or Google Classroom. However, online instruction, "left out thousands of learners, especially those from disadvantaged communities, where power shortages, poor connectivity, and lack of digital devices are prevalent. Educators face a number of challenges regarding their digital proficiency and internet accessibility (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 37). Similarly, Namibian universities having their campuses in the capital Windhoek could access Internet connections, unlike those located in rural areas, where Internet connection is limited and unreliable. Although universities provide USB devices for students to access the Internet, many students do not have laptops or computers. As a result, "while universities indicated that

they would go online, in practice, there was a real challenge to get students and teachers connected" (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 40).

A typical challenge in South Africa concerns appropriate online pedagogies. All HEI are mandated to shift to online instruction quickly, but 14 of the 26 public universities "battle to cope with online learning" (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 46). Pedagogies that could result in satisfying online experiences were not considered. For instance, a "lecturer at the University of Pretoria was told that she needs to simply prepare all her lessons as usual and then present them in front of a camera that will record the sessions and stream them to the students. This seems to be the modus operandi of many of the universities" (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 46). Moreover, it was found that most students used learning management systems only for administrative purposes and not for actual learning as such.

In Uganda, as part of emergency online instruction, universities like Uganda Christian University, the largest private university "had gone as far as preparing take-home examinations…Petitions by some students against the take-home examinations resulted in the Ministry of Education and Science producing a stay of issuance of any manner of examination whatsoever" (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 49). Other initiatives include the partnership created between Makerere University (the largest public university) and MTN Uganda (the largest Telecommunications Network), which enabled students and lecturers to access learning platforms free of charge (Bozkurt et al., 2020).

The Laggards

Of the HEI that closed campuses, 22% of students indicated the absence of online or remote learning solutions at all (Koninckx, Fatondji, & Burgos, 2021). Universities of this type seemed overwhelmed by the pandemic, and they did not seem to have the economic and technical affordances to embrace technologies. They did not demonstrate institutional readiness and capacity to launch online learning anytime soon either. These universities seemed to acknowledge the bitter reality that their competitiveness and resilience as institutions were publicly tested and were left behind. However, this unforgettable lesson might trigger these universities to aggressively embark on future technology integration.

PROSPECTS OF ONLINE INSTRUCTION IN AFRICA

African HEI generally seem to get a valuable and unforgettable lesson from the pandemic, albeit the hard way. That methodically embracing technology in teaching and learning is an essential strategy not just for boosting national and international competitiveness but for mere institutional survival or existence, at least in times of crisis. The transformational universities outlined above may clearly understand that they survive 'forced' migration to online instruction without prior planning. This can leave the impression that future strategic instructional planning for online instruction can accrue even more substantial results. These universities may thus decide to scale up further and or sustain their online offerings. The late experimenters may engage in debates and discussions to convince protesting faculty and students to embrace technology further. They may invest more on technology acquisition and development and may systematize training and professional development opportunities for faculty. They may start working on narrowing down the digital divide and the technical and logistical challenges they face. On the other hand, the laggards may start, from scratch, discussing the roles technologies could play in teaching and learning. Their pedagogical or teaching and learning centers may revamp their philosophies and activities and try to catch up with the rest of the world in the future.

Generally, COVID-19 seems to teach universities worldwide that using technologies to support purely online learning and/or blended learning is not an option; it is a survival strategy at least in times of crisis. The flexibility and affordances technologies could bring to the content, method, time, and place of learning and teaching would be more clearly understood in the future.

Emerging developments at the institutional, national, and continental levels are also strong indications of a more intensified integration of technologies to catalyze higher education functions in the years to come. A study of 30 African HEI (Bekele & Ofoyuru, 2021) indicated that technology integration in teaching and learning, research, and administration is considered one of the *strategic pillars* to improve education quality and competitiveness. Moreover, a study of African university-society partnerships (Bekele et al., In press) indicated the understanding, among partners, that the further development of technology infrastructure, Internet connectivity, online engagement and presence directly affect the quality or successfulness of partnerships. Moreover, the African Union and national governments also consider technology integration as one of the strategic pillars for meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union 2063 vision.

Overall, the COVID-19 lesson plus the inclusion of technology in continental, national and university strategic plans could be considered as powerful indications that African universities are more likely to significantly embrace technologies in the future than ever before. Blended or purely online learning environments are more likely to become normalized strategies. Damtew Teferra, professor of higher education and leader of the Higher Education Cluster at the African Union, also claims that online delivery in Africa "may become a more regular and more recognized practice in the post-COVID-19 era" (Teferra, 2021, n.p.). A more significant question to ask would then be linked to the optimal or effective integration of technologies to teaching and learning.

Of those universities that did employ remote learning solutions during the pandemic, the percentage of students who rated their learning experiences as not at all effective, minimally effective, and highly effective were respectively 13, 21, and 8 and hence, "40% of students perceive that they have learned less than half of their original academic curriculum; and only 10% reported to have learned about the same" (Koninckx, Fatondji, & Burgos, 2021, n.p.). This compromise of the already poor-quality higher education in Africa is alarming for all stakeholders. Consequently, understanding the conditions under which technologies optimally impact learning and teaching is as crucial as timely.

PROBLEMATIZING SUCCESS IN ONLINE INSTRUCTION

A programmatic research project (Bekele, 2009a &b, 2010; Bekele & Menchaca, 2008) was conducted to problematize successful technology integration in higher education worldwide. The project included systematic reviews of international literature on educational technology and empirical data collected from Africa. The ambition was to identify conditions and factors that affect the optimal integration of technologies in higher education. As an outcome of the research project, a generic conceptual model that explains both success indicators and success factors in technology-supported learning environments in higher education was developed.

The model was used to conceptually scaffold an empirical study conducted in the California State University (CSU) system (Menchaca & Bekele, 2008). This research analyzed the experiences of learners and faculty in an online, distance education environment by using a participatory action research methodology. Generally, results indicated that the success factors found in the CSU online program

corresponded to the factors stipulated in the conceptual model. The model has since then been widely used to support research and instructional practice internationally.

Although the model was developed more than a decade ago, its salience and fecundity to African contexts seems to become more vivid now than ever. As explained below, the model is holistic in its inclusion of the many core categories of success factors and conditions and is generic in its selection of the most significant considerations that transcend institutional and national realities. It can better inform faculty, instructional designers, technology developers, students, and university leadership and administration as to how to successfully integrate technologies in teaching and learning.

The model, see Figure 1 below, maintains that a host of factors at human, technologic, course, pedagogic, and leadership levels jointly impact success measures such as student and faculty motivation and satisfaction, higher learning, faculty professional development, and sustainability and scalability of online instruction (Bekele 2009b, p. 81-84). These success measures or indicators and success factors are briefly explained below.

Success Measures

These are processes or outcomes that designate benefits or gains universities, faculty and students can accrue from getting involved in online instruction or learning. The model considers faculty motivation and satisfaction, professional development, and sustainability and scalability of online instruction as *secondary success measures*. Student motivation and satisfaction, and higher learning such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and metacognition are considered *primary success measures,* as learning is the primary concern of (higher) education. Although the model views learning as an *active social process*, success is finally measured in terms of student acquisition of higher-order thinking skills which are increasingly required in the labor market. The primary and secondary success measures are presumably impacted by a host of factors at several levels.

Success Factors

Human, technologic, course, and pedagogic factors impact success *directly* (hence, they are considered as *essential success factors)*, as indicated by the single-headed arrows that point toward the success measures in Figure 1 whereas leadership factors affect success only *indirectly* yet substantially through affecting the other four factors (they are thus considered *desirable success factors)*. Each major success factor is briefly described next.

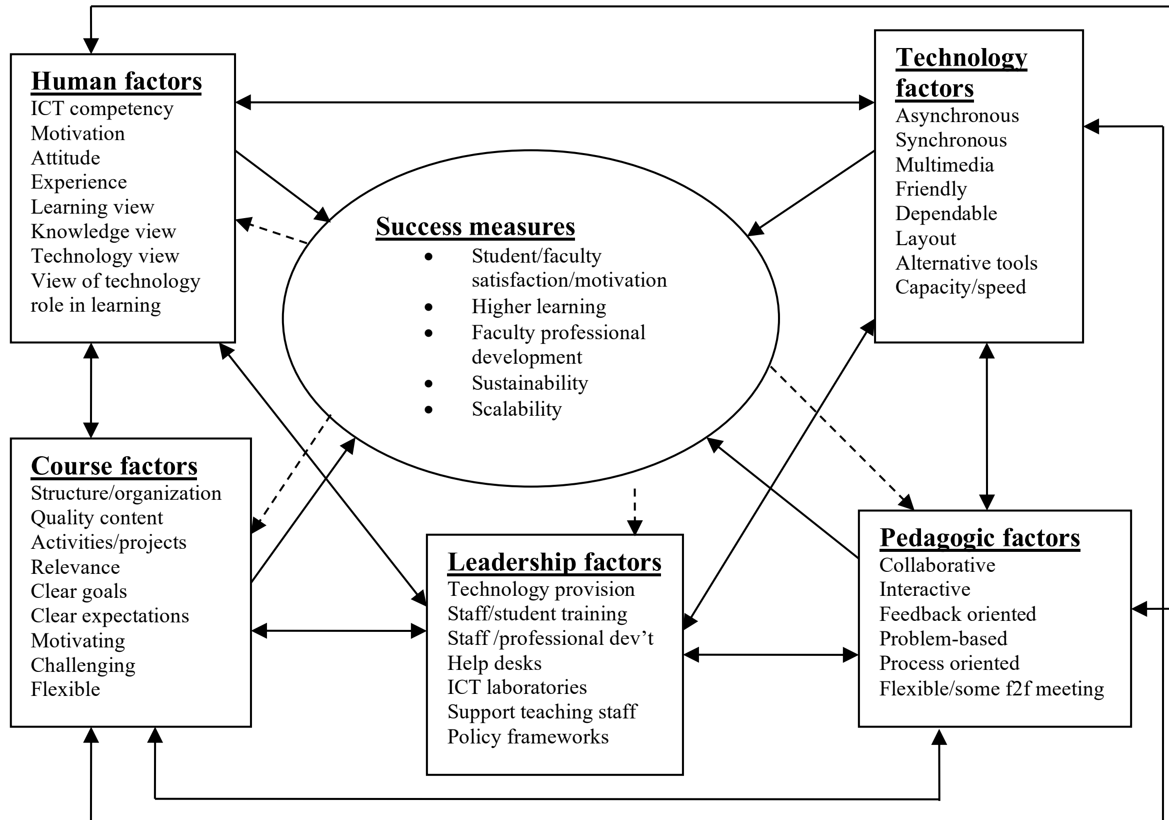
Human Factors

These refer to student and faculty characteristics such as their understandings, viewpoints, perceptions of and their competencies in technology use. Higher levels of technology skill, positive attitude toward technologies, and experience in online learning would facilitate meeting learning outcomes and faculty satisfaction and motivation. Student and faculty views about technology role in learning as well as their views of knowledge and learning would also impact success substantially. For instance, if participants (faculty and students) view knowledge as something to be acquired and defended versus generated, acquired and modified, it is more likely that they would stay *passive* in the learning process. If they view learning as a process of knowledge acquisition per se, that would not bring success either as online environments are generally pertinent to bring active, productive learning. Finally, if participants assume that technologies are mere vehicles for storing information versus technologies as cognitive and communicative tools, active and meaningful learning would not happen.

Thus, to achieve success, students and faculty should hold favorable and appropriate assumptions, views, and attitudes toward and about online instruction in addition to the acquisition of technical competencies, knowledge, and skills. It is argued that faculty characteristics and professional development are some of the most significant factors that affect successful online learning (Karkouti & Bekele, 2019).

Figure 1

Model Of Success In Online Learning



Source: Bekele (2009b, p. 83)

Technologic Factors

These factors seem to reflect the public view of educational technology and refer to the capabilities or attributes of technologies and unlimited access to them. If students and faculty have dependable access to an ample variety of technologies and Internet connections, then that should have a favorable impact in the how, when, where, and even what of learning. Moreover, online collaborations at various levels are possible only when one has multiple tools at hand. Both synchronous and asynchronous tools that support digital multimedia are required to execute course-related tasks effectively and efficiently.

However, the technological platform should be as user-friendly and appealing as possible. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), only 28% of the African population has access to the Internet, which is much lower compared to Internet users in the developing countries (47%) and worldwide (54%) (ITU, 2019). Substantial development of Internet infrastructure and connectivity can play a decisive role in improving and sustaining online instruction in African HEI. That the African Union,

its member countries and universities consider technologies as one of the strategic pillars for catalyzing significant institutional and societal transformations seem promising.

Pedagogic Factors

These primarily refer to the how of learning and instruction. Success would come if learning is truly student-focused, collaborative, problem-based, feedback intensive, and generally process-oriented. Students should have ample opportunities to regulate their progress, and projects and exams should support critical ability over sheer memorization of course contents. Flexibility in achieving milestones and timelines is crucial.

Course Factors

These refer to the critical elements needed in course development. Students should not be considered as virtual nomads; they should get some form of content that is organized, relevant, clear in its goals and expectations, flexible, and appropriate in scope. The model proposes that course factors are among the *core* factors that directly impact success measures and leadership factors.

Leadership Factors

These factors denote the role university administration and teaching and learning centers play in technology leadership. Support may be provided in the form of acquiring new and powerful technologies, arranging student and faculty regular trainings, creating new opportunities for faculty professional development, establishing permanent IT help desks, establishing IT laboratories for experimentation, hiring teaching support staff, and providing all other logistics required in the successful execution of online courses. Presumably, these factors substantially impact all the essential success factors directly and success measures only indirectly.

Relationships among Success Factors

There also exists a complex relationship among the success factors themselves, as indicated by the double-headed arrows in Figure 1 above. Presumably, each success factor affects and is affected by the other. Student and faculty attitude, understanding, and motivation, for instance, may directly impact the optimal use of technologies, the adoption of certain learning methods, and the nature and quality of courses. If there is no adequate technology leadership, it may be difficult to acquire powerful technologies, adopt collaborative and process-oriented learning, develop quality courses, and get motivated in and develop appropriate views and assumptions about online learning.

On the other hand, if several or most or all of the success measures are met, all the essential and desirable success factors may be positively affected, as indicated by the dashed arrows which spread from the center in Figure 1 above. For instance, once success of some sort is brought, students and faculty might improve their understanding of and attitude to online instruction, more or better technological tools might be acquired and used, process-oriented learning approaches might be strengthened, better support systems might be put in place, and quality might be added to online courses. These impacts, however, would come mostly through dealing with the *essential* success factors first. Generally, meeting the *primary* and *secondary* success measures heavily depends on the simultaneous and systematic consideration of the *essential* and *desirable* success factors outlined above.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although COVID-19 disrupts higher education functions in Africa and globally, it should be at times considered as an opportunity to experiment with new strategies of institutional survival. Because of the pandemic, many HEI are 'forced' to embrace technologies to accomplish their basic functions. There is

clearly a dearth of research on its effectiveness though. However, a synthesis of research conducted in 31 countries worldwide "suggests that the current practices can be defined as emergency remote education and this practice is different from planned practices such as distance education, online learning or other derivations" (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 1). There is an urgent need to evaluate the effectiveness of current emergency remote learning practices and then to deliberate on successful technology integration for teaching and learning in higher education in Africa.

As the conceptual model presented above maintains, the quality and extent of technology integration could be enhanced through a methodical consideration of factors at various levels. Reconceptualization of curricula, teaching philosophies and methods, and student assessment is needed to suit online learning and teaching environments. Faculty and student views about learning and teaching using technologies and their skills are significant determining factors as the availability of technologies and Internet connections. University teaching and learning centers or pedagogical centers can play critical roles in spearheading these initiatives. To support evidence-based decision-making, continued experimentation and research on the conditions and factors that affect quality in technology-supported learning and teaching environments in higher education are warranted.

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Book Review

van der Wende, M., Kirby, W.C., Liu, N.C., & Marginson, S. (Eds.). *China and Europe on the new Silk Road: Connecting universities across Eurasia.* Oxford University Press, 2020. 448 pp. $115. ISBN 9780198853022.

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This timely edited volume examines the relationship between European and Chinese higher education, strengthened and mediated through the New Silk Road (NSR) initiative. The book gathers together 20 chapters that hit this topic from different angles, but all still point out the main argument of the book: that the NSR initiative is contributing to the creation of a new equilibrium between the two blocs and that China is emerging as an equal partner in this new equilibrium, moving itself out of being a mere importer of higher education. Below, I first summarize the main points of each of the 20 chapters in the edited volume, which have diverse focuses. I subsequently move to commentary.

The first chapter is an introductory one written by the editors van der Wende, Kirby, Liu, and Marginson. It sets out the conceptual framework and introduces the chapters in the book. In Chapter 2, Kirby discusses the international origins of Chinese universities and argues that Chinese universities do not have a substantial new model to offer to the world globally. He argues that this will limit the impact of Chinese universities on the universities along the NSR. In Chapter 3, van der Wende dwells on the increasing weight of Chinese higher education felt across the globe. She argues that the discussions on competition vis-à-vis cooperation and convergence vis-à-vis divergence are becoming increasingly important. She points out that such discussions are complex as these processes take place all simultaneously. For example, while Beijing may be interested in cooperating and playing a leading role in artificial intelligence (AI), the potential convergence is not likely due to the different perspectives on data privacy and data sharing. In Chapter 4, Tijssen and Winnink discuss the macro-level effects of NSR on the China-Europe scientific cooperation trends and patterns. They conclude that it is early to dwell on clear-cut changes in patterns of cooperation given the short time the NSR initiative was founded and the gradual nature of building up such patterns.

The following three chapters dwell on collaboration programs between China and Europe. Specifically, in Chapter 5, Xie dwells on the EU–China Higher Education Cooperation Program and the China Europe International Business School. She frames these programs as quiet successes. In Chapter 6, Feng and Gao investigate the international university consortia along the NSR, highlighting China's

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increased role among the consortia built on the area covered by the initiative. In Chapter 7, Marrewijk provides a case investigation of Xi'an Jiaotong–Liverpool University (XJTLU), located in Jiangsu province, arguing that this institution has successfully paved the way in building new perspectives on internationalization in Chinese higher education. Overall, these three chapters point out that China's role in EU-China collaboration programs is moving from a follower to an equal partner.

In Chapter 8, Welch and Postiglione broach within-Asian collaboration, specifically focusing on China and Malaysia relations. They argue that the Silk Road was not just on a land route, to begin with, and the communities in China's south already include significant Chinese ethnic communities. Thus, the universities in China and its South, especially Malaysia, have strong ties, which are strengthening further through the NSR initiative. In Chapter 9, Gao discusses the evolution of China's policy paradigms towards Sino-foreign partnerships. She highlights three main phases in China's policy paradigms. The first phase is about "bringing in" (p. 164) foreign resources for developing China's national higher education. The second is "moving up" (p. 168) of foreign resources within Chinese higher education, consolidating what is already inside. The third phase is the "going out" phase of Chinese higher education. The author contends that the third phase coincides with the kick-off of the NSR initiative, through which Chinese universities started playing an increasingly international role. The following two chapters, in a way, complement what is discussed as the "going out" (p. 172) phase by Gao in Chapter 9 and focus on different ways in which Chinese universities exert their influence internationally. To illustrate, in Chapter 10, Zhu, Zhang, and Huang dwell on how the NSR is an opportunity for Chinese engineering education to go global, and in Chapter 11, Brink and Vries discuss the impact of China-EU cooperation on the EU's legal frameworks regarding the recognition of professional qualifications.

In Chapter 12, Deursen and Kummeling dwell on the current challenges regarding transporting personal data through the NSR. They argue that the EU has more strictly protected personal data and privacy-related matters, although China's practices are advancing. Due to the law in the EU, the transfer of personal data outside the EU would only be possible as long as the other party ensures the same level of protection. Thus, they contend that this may put personal data transfer through the NSR into a deadlock. In Chapter 13, Hardman discusses how China is rapidly building up its research capabilities on artificial intelligence. Hardman explains with data that China is increasing its AI research output internationally but concludes that the influence of this line of research tends to be national and not yet global. Hardman also proposes that researchers in China and Europe need further policy guidance on whether and in which circumstances to collaborate.

Chapters 14 and 15 provide sociological and philosophical comparative lenses. In Chapter 14, Marginson and Lili compare the ideas of society, state, higher education, and the overall world setting between Sinic cultural zone with the main focus on China, and Western cultural zone with the main focus on the Anglo-American component. The authors argue that regardless of profound differences between the two cultures, the recent generations have seen a convergence in higher education in the Anglo-American world and China. However, they also argue that this could result from parallel evolution rather than an ultimate identity. In Chapter 15, Düring examines the Confucian and Kantian views on scholarship and the functions attributed to them in society and political order. She argues that there are fundamental similarities in both schools of thought, such as the idea that scholars should be provided with space free from coercion to develop their own teachings and thoughts, and that they should be able to speak against those who yield power – "not because they are wrong, but because they are human" (p. 285).

In Chapter 16, Sachsenmaier discusses the development of the humanities area in Chinese universities. He demonstrates that other than scholars who have chosen to study China as their focus, it would be too early to argue that the international standing of the humanities in China has risen significantly. In Chapter 17, Tian and Liu investigate the roles played by world-class universities and research universities on the NSR overall. Their findings indicate a mismatch between European and Chinese universities. While Chinese universities are highly motivated to contribute to the NSR, the European ones mainly focus on conducting and coordinating relevant academic discussions, research programs, and language courses. The European universities see the NSR as a sign of openness and cooperation from China, while some are still concerned about actual influences and outcomes.

In Chapter 18, Sporn and van der Wende dwell on whether the NSR impacts our perception of higher education. They discuss whether China is developing a new university model. The authors argue that while China has elevated itself from an importer to an exporter of higher education through the NSR, the university model it provides does not have a global appeal. The university model China portrays is unique in its governance in that it is centrally led by a party state combined with autonomous disciplinary science. While this may find appeal in emerging countries, it is not easy to import by others. In Chapter 19, Huang contributes to the discussion in the previous chapter and argues that China never made exporting its higher education model to the NSR an explicit priority in the first place. Instead, his findings suggest that China focused on two main points: (1) actively engaging with the NSR countries to provide training in language, culture, and professional programs and to attract inbound students from NSR countries, and (2) building collaborative ties with researchers in the NSR countries, especially in hard sciences.

Chapter 20, the last chapter, dwells on how the relationship between Russian and Chinese higher education has evolved over time and the competition in central Asia. Froumin and Cao argue that Russian higher education used to be perceived to have better-quality higher education institutions than Chinese institutions; however, this has changed, and now there is a two-way equal relationship between the two systems. They also argue that NSR has created a competition between the two states when it comes to influencing post-Soviet Central Asian countries where Russia has been influential to date.

Throughout the book, China's rise as a global research powerhouse is emphasized several times and well documented. Several chapters argue that China has moved itself out of an uneven aid relationship to equal-level cooperation with the European universities, e.g., Chapters 3, 5, and 9. However, the rise of Chinese universities is not on all fronts, and their rise is almost exclusively dependent on STEM-related areas. I am pleased to see that this is well-captured and documented with data in chapters such as 1, 3, 10, 16, and 18. A central discussion in these chapters revolves around how strong policy support, funding, and international engagement helped China rapidly grow its STEM-related scientific areas. By contrast, Chapters 16 and 18 demonstrate how this rapid growth is not the case for humanities and social sciences. A good argument related to this comes from van der Wende in Chapter 2, who argues that while tightly controlled policies are helping Chinese higher education to rapidly move up globally, they also may be preventing China from becoming a world-leading core country not only in social sciences and humanities but also in STEM areas, as the autonomy of researchers could be key in developing breakthroughs and innovations.

However, one issue that could have been done better is the organization of the book. The 20 chapters included in the book are not categorized accordingly with themes, and some chapters look at very different issues (i.e., ranging from legal discussions to philosophical and historic discussions). While this

helps provide the reader with a comprehensive account, not having a thematic categorization makes reading and summarizing the book slightly harder. However, it is apparent that the editors ordered the chapters accordingly with their relevance to each other.

Also, because of its emphasis on the NSR, the edited volume also discusses the connectivity Chinese higher education establishes with other systems within Asia. These include ASEAN higher education with a specific focus on Malaysia (Chapter 8 by Welch and Postiglione) and Russian higher education (Chapter 20 by Froumin and Cao). These chapters are welcome but are not adequate. Several other countries may hold significant implications on the NSR and the rise of Chinese higher education. The world is increasingly becoming multipolar, and many other countries within Asia are agentically developing their higher education system (e.g., Choi, 2012). For example, effective higher education systems like Korea and Japan and India's large higher education system are mostly overlooked. Central Asia was briefly discussed in the volume, notably in the 20th chapter, but not with an agentic language, rather a passive one. In actuality, for example, Kazakh universities are taking initiatives to improve their science system (Chankseliani et al., 2020; Sagintayeva & Kurakbayev, 2015). Also, the countries located in the western part of Asia, some would call it the Middle East, are also overlooked. These countries may hold a gatekeeping position on the connectivity between the EU and China, and the universities within them could play significant roles on European and Chinese universities. For example, a recent paper shows that higher education connectivity between China and Turkey is exponentially increasing (Oldac & Yang, in press).

The overall impression from the book is reflected in the multiple reiterations that China is rising globally, and its higher education follows the same trend. The NSR is a potential way Chinese HE "goes out" and internationalizes. Chinese higher education intends to increase its soft power through the NSR. Still, the chapters in the volume mostly agree that China does not have a substantially new model to export globally, and thus its impact will be limited for now. Kirby -who is the co-editor of the book and the writer of the second chapter- argues that the origins of all major Chinese universities are intellectually, institutionally and architecturally of international in origin. Thus, Kirby argues that the implications of the NSR on globalizing Chinese education will not be as influential as scholars working in this field imagine. An important point I would like to draw attention to is that while Chinese Higher Education may not be very different institutionally from those in other parts of the world, the question of how much differentiation is possible in a globalized and immensely ranked world should also be asked. Thus, while the book rightly points out that Chinese universities may not have a substantially new model to offer to the world, the converging role played by globalization and rankings should not be overlooked here. Also, Marginson and Yang, in the 14th chapter of the same edited volume, highlight substantial cultural differences between the East and West, although, to them, some of these are waning -such as the increased individualism in China. To them, China does have a different model for personal formation rooted in its Confucian and Daoist traditions. Parallel to Marginson and Yang's argument, it could be that China not having a substantially new model to offer globally could be related to parallel evolution rather than an ultimate identity. Only time can show us if this argument is valid.

The volume is a valuable contribution to the discussions in international and global higher education literature. Furthermore, the chapters significantly contribute to the detailed study of European-Chinese relations in higher education and the multi-polarization of the world higher education space. Thus, the volume is an invaluable source for postgraduate students and academics working in the relevant fields.

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