

A Brief Analysis on the Development of Internationalization of Basic Education from “External” to “Internal”

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Abstract: In view of globalization, the internationalization of basic education has become a world trend. It is an important strategic tool for each country to actively deal with the challenges of globalization, and it is also the main way to improve the quality of education around the world. The development of the internationalization of basic education requires the active participation of all countries around the world, in which it will have an impact and influence on the educational development, educational concept, and teaching management of all countries. However, only by conforming to the historical and inevitable trend of the internationalization of education, understanding the actual situation of the country's economic development, social development, and educational context, studying and implementing development strategies, as well as integrating healthy internationalization into the educational practice, then the internationalization of education can develop further so as to promote the rapid development of the whole world's education cause.

Keywords: Basic education; Internationalization; Development; Strategy

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1. Introduction

Internationalization of education involves the cooperation, exchange, joint research, and training of education institutions from different countries or international education organizations to carry out international understanding education or international aid, etc., in terms of ideas, goals, curriculums, teachings, evaluations, and managements in order to realize a fusion and innovation, thus improving the cultivation ability of internationalized talents ^[1]. The internationalization of education promotes mutual exchange of education, mutual tolerance in the understanding of cultures, interdependence and integration of relations, as well as the mutual promotion of the national strength of all countries in the world. Among them, the internationalization of basic education is an important aspect in the internationalization of education.

2. Internationalization of basic education is an inevitable choice for the development of world economy, society, and education

With the intensification of economic globalization and world integration, basic education, as a cultural carrier to promote its development, has become one of the important means of national strategies in improving national competitiveness, promoting foreign relations, as well as expanding cultural influence, and is bound to join in the tide of internationalization. Research data have shown that many countries regard the internationalization of basic education as a long-term national priority development goal. After World War II, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) began to encourage

its member states to teach international understanding in primary and secondary schools. Through the *Recommendations concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, all segments and all forms of education have an international content and a global perspective ^[2]. The EU (European Union) education projects from 1995 to 2006 include Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Tempus, and Erasmus Mundus program, the lifelong education overall action plan from 2007 to 2013, etc. Through the implementation of the integration of education and training, these programs enhanced the education exchanges between EU countries, the flow between teachers and students, the level of teachers' academic teaching and students' quality, the social cohesion, as well as improved the education quality. Members of the European Union countries promoted the development of the EU integration to become a developed knowledge society with sustainable economic development. In 1949, in the United States, the Fulbright Act provided funds for students, scholars, and professionals to study and be involved in international exchange. In 1961, the Fulbright-Hays Act stated that in order to improve and strengthen U.S. foreign relations, a better understanding of U.S. foreign policy should be promoted among people around the world through educational and cultural exchanges ^[3]. In 2000, the *American Policy toward International Education* advocated that foreign language learning should be strengthened in education from early childhood to middle school, and students should be encouraged to learn to cooperate with the international community. In 2002, teachers were encouraged to introduce international knowledge to students from kindergarten to increase the number of international students. In 2004, *Preparation for Citizenship in the Age of Globalization* pointed out that international education in primary and secondary schools aims at strengthening economic awareness, integrating international society and national culture, as well as safeguarding national security ^[4]. In 1984, Japan introduced the plan to accept 100,000 foreign students toward the 21st century with "Japanese in the world" as the educational goal while education liberalization, emphasizing individuality, and internationalization as the reform guidelines. In 1997, it proposed to promote the international exchange of primary and secondary schools as well as the international experience exchange among teachers. In 1998, the education for international understanding was added to primary and secondary schools' curricula. In 2001, the government vigorously promoted student exchange, launched "The International Student 100,000 Plan," provided additional financial aid and teachers, subsidized private schools for the education of international students, as well as appointed primary and secondary school teachers to teach in international schools ^[5]. In 1896, *The Selection of Students to Study Abroad* suggested that 40 young students should study the German junior high school and senior high school courses continuously. In 1902, *The Constitution of Imperial College*, which was modeled on the western university system, was promulgated. From 1927 to 1937, the Nanjing Nationalist Government sent about 100 students to Europe and the United States each year, with a maximum number of students reaching about 1000 students per year. In 1988, *China Service Center for Overseas Study* was established to provide consultations and services for international students. In 2010, the *Outline of the National Plan for Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Program (2010-2020)* listed education internationalization as an important task in the new education reform and development. This formed a multilevel and a wide range of international education exchanges and cooperation, requiring further improvement in the level of education internationalization and training of international talents.

3. Conflicts and reasons in the process of internationalization of basic education

The internationalization of basic education is an inevitable trend of the world development. It has a certain role in promoting the improvement of education quality in all countries, but it brings challenges to the educational development, educational concept, and teaching management. Therefore, in the process of internationalization, it is necessary to be able to detect problems, sum up experiences, and deal with the

relationship between national education and the development of world education.

3.1. Lacking measuring standard in the evaluation of the internationalization of basic education

There is no uniform measure for the evaluation of the internationalization of education in a region or a school. Some believe that by setting up international classes (departments) for the purpose of studying abroad, introducing several international courses, and establishing project cooperation relations with foreign schools can reach the standard of basic education internationalization without clarifying the true purpose and essence of the internationalization and failing to elevate the cultivation of students to the height of international awareness.

3.2. Narrowed significance of the internationalization of basic education

The significance of the internationalization of basic education lies in expanding students' international vision, cultivating their awareness of international competition, as well as enhancing their ability of international communication, cooperation, and multicultural understanding. However, many educational institutions now regard the internationalization of basic education as a way to pursue short-term interests. For example, students are sent abroad to study and obtain certificates. The study content is single, and the internationalization of basic education is narrowed as a tool for minimal collective and individual development.

3.3. Ideological conflicts from cultural differences in the practice of internationalization of basic education

The internationalization of education itself involves intercultural communication and cooperation. In regard to that, different cultures would seek a common ground while reserving their differences, tolerate one another, and share on an equal footing, but in the practical sense, they are easily faced with sensitive issues such as cultural penetration and erosion of educational sovereignty. If the educational resources, methods, or ideas are not strictly screened, or the international quality of teachers is substandard, the integration of local education will result in an opposition, which will lead to ideological confusion or obvious conflict among students, thus going against the original intention of international education exchange.

3.4. Imbalanced pace of the internationalization of basic education with the development speed of regional education

The first is that the pace of the internationalization of basic education cannot keep up with the development speed of regional education, thus unable to meet the needs of regional participation in international competition in the process of economic globalization. In this case, it would be difficult to introduce advanced educational resources, educational methods, educational ideas, etc. There would also be a defect in the social and economic development as well as the quantity and quality of the cultivation of international talents. The other is to blindly accelerate the process of the internationalization of basic education. In this case, the regional education would not be able to keep pace with the internationalization, resulting in the integration of advanced educational resources, educational methods, and educational concepts, which increases the burden of regional education.

4. Realizing an international and high-quality development of basic education from “external” to “internal”

The purpose of internationalization of basic education is to broaden students' international vision,

understand major international problems, pay attention to cultivating their curiosity and imagination, improve their critical thinking, communication, and cooperation, cultivate their rule consciousness and global consciousness, as well as improve their understanding of multiculturalism ^[5]. It is necessary to tap on student's potential, encourage their personality development, improve their ability in terms of intercultural communication and cooperation, effectively integrate excellent education models, ideas, and methods with the traditional education of the country, integrate healthy internationalization into the educational practice of the country, properly handle issues, such as economic competition, cooperation, peace, development, as well as multicultural integration, and maintain the development of the two-way exchange so as to improve the quality of basic education in the country.

4.1. Wisely learning from others but avoid following others blindly

Educational resources, methods, and ideas are the results of a country's cultural development and selection of a unique educational background and a specific national culture. In the process of introduction, the balance between global consciousness and national consciousness should be maintained and not practiced blindly without research or screening. On the basis of retaining the traditional culture and education of the country, it is necessary to adapt to the national conditions and learning conditions while drawing lessons from excellent foreign educational resources, methods, ideas, and other educational functions. The most important is to extract a suitable core key element for the future development of local students and the cultivation of high-quality talents in the effective combination of the advantages of conventional basic education with the essence of international education.

4.2. Expanding the policy of opening up basic education to the outside world based on local conditions

First of all, the internationalization of basic education should be supported by education policies that expand the opening up, orientate the internationalization of education with an open and inclusive attitude, provide students with more diversified choices and opportunities in looking at the world, aim to cultivate talents with international awareness, international vision, and international cooperation with communication skills, as well as create an environment of seeking common ground while reserving differences and developing together for multicultural international education. Secondly, the scope of basic education internationalization should be expanded step by step while adapting to local conditions. Due to the differences in the speed of economic development, educational resources, degree of foreign communication, as well as the educational concepts of schools and teachers, the educational context in different regions of a country varies greatly. Hence, the practice and applicability in the process of internationalization of basic education cannot be generalized. According to specific practice modes and the educational context, international education modes which conform to the local conditions should be explored.

4.3. Appropriately handling ideological conflicts caused by cultural differences

The guidance of students' mainstream orthodox ideology is mainly in schools, especially during the phase of basic education. The discrimination and analysis ability of students are poor, but their absorptive capacity and plasticity are extremely strong. The ideological differences of one country with the other country to be studied is unavoidable. The key is in the education of teachers and schools as well as the presentation of teaching materials. It is necessary to deal with the relationship between educational and ideological nature of classroom contents from the strategic height of safeguarding national interests, national consciousness, and the development of educational cause in guiding students to inculcate correct political stands and scientific values.

4.4. Scientific planning of curriculum

The key to the increasing internationalization of basic education lies in the continuous reform and improvement of curriculum. In order to bring a halt to the traditional idea of learning a foreign language only as a language tool, language learning should be combined with cross-cultural understanding and international awareness to a larger extent while commending the role of teaching materials as cultural carriers along with the educational significance of cross-cultural communication. At the same time, a variety of special courses should be offered, such as cultural comparison courses in higher education and foreign cultural appreciation courses, which can be simplified and incorporated into basic education so that students would have a clear understanding of cultural differences and an inclusive attitude.

4.5. Improving teachers' professional development in an international context

Teacher development is a term used to describe the process of the continuous progress of teachers in terms of knowledge, experience, attitude, etc. [6]. In the context of internationalization, the professional development of teachers should continuously strengthen the integration of personal professional development and international education. It is necessary to have the consciousness to actively master advanced and excellent international educational concepts, cutting-edge knowledge in related fields while expanding international vision, accepting different educational methods other than the traditional ones, carrying out cross-cultural academic exchanges and cooperation, as well as guiding students to take initiative in inquiry-based classrooms and the use of certain languages. The internationalization of education poses great challenges to domestic teachers. The government and schools should provide a platform for teachers to continuously improve their teaching internationalization by means of "going out and bringing in," increasing international academic exchanges and remote synchronization of international courses, etc.

5. Conclusion

In short, basic education would determine the level of talent development of a country in the future, in which the development of a country cannot be separated from talents. Under the background of economic globalization, the internationalization of basic education, as one of the national strategic means, has become the consensus of all countries in the world. The internationalization of basic education, however, is not only to improve the education quality of a country or a nation, but it is much more important for the world; through national education exchanges and cooperation, the mutual understanding between countries and nationalities would be enhanced, thus having a profound impact on safeguarding world peace as well as promoting the common prosperity and progress of mankind.

Disclosure statement

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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