

The Situation of Sino-foreign Joint Venture Schools under Globalization

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Abstract: This paper examines the intricate dynamics between globalization and education, with a specific focus on the rise and development of Sino-foreign joint venture schools in Sichuan, China. It intricately analyzes how these institutions, notably the Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute and the Sino-French Aviation University, are reshaping educational practices by integrating Eastern and Western pedagogical approaches. These collaborations aim to produce globally competent graduates, highlighting the role of such institutions in elevating China's educational standards. The study delves into various aspects of these joint ventures, including their organizational structures, funding mechanisms, curriculum designs, and faculty and student demographics. A comparative analysis of two representative joint programs is provided, underscoring differences in teaching methods, curriculum focus, and targeted student backgrounds. The paper concludes by discussing the developmental potential and challenges faced by these institutions amidst the rapidly evolving landscape of international education. It emphasizes the significance of these joint ventures in fostering educational innovation and cross-cultural understanding. The research presented in this paper not only contributes to a deeper understanding of the impact of globalization on higher education but also provides valuable insights into the future of international educational collaborations. The findings suggest the need for thoughtful policy interventions to support the growth and sustainability of such transformative educational models.

Keywords: Globalization, Sino-Foreign Joint Schools, Educational Integration, Sichuan

1. Introduction

1.1. Relationship between globalization and education

Globalization, a multifaceted phenomenon, has far-reaching implications in various domains, including education. The intricate relationship between globalization and education is evident in how global trends increasingly influence educational policies, systems, and practices. For instance, Japan's Ministry of Education has initiated the "Top Global University Project" (TGUP) to internationalize higher education in the country. This initiative aims to create globally oriented universities, increase the role of foreign languages, and foster global human resources [1]. The TGUP is a testament to how globalization pushes educational institutions to adapt and evolve to meet international standards.

Similarly, the shift in vocabulary from adult education to lifelong learning reflects the ideological and purposive orientations carried by globalization. This shift has been facilitated by transnational entities like the OECD, UNESCO, and the EU, which have gained an increased voice in educational matters. The focus has moved from creating job opportunities to ensuring that citizens acquire marketable skills [2]. This change underscores the role of education as a tool for economic development in a globalized world.

Moreover, globalization and internationalization serve as frameworks for higher education research. These frameworks are not just effects of neo-liberal agendas but also act as catalysts for further globalization. Educational institutions play a significant role in this, often making compromises to adapt to global standards [3]. This highlights the dual role of education—as both a product and a producer of globalization.

Lastly, globalization shapes the broader social, economic, and technological forces that define the realities of the 21st century. It affects higher education policies and academic institutions by pushing them to adapt to these new realities. The focus is not just on academic excellence but also on producing graduates who can navigate the complexities of a globalized world [4].

1.2. The rise and importance of Sino-foreign joint schools

The emergence and significance of Sino-foreign joint venture schools have become increasingly prominent in the context of globalization. These partnerships represent a unique blend of diverse educational philosophies, curricula, and teaching methods, aiming to produce globally competent graduates. For instance, the partnership between Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) and the University of Michigan has evolved into a joint institute offering Mechanical Engineering and Electrical and Computer Engineering degrees. This joint venture has been recognized for its autonomous management system, interdisciplinary curricula, and internationalized programs [5].

Moreover, the success of international joint ventures, such as Sino-German partnerships, hinges on balanced control, similar commitment levels, and well-developed infrastructure [6]. These factors underscore the importance of mutual understanding and equitable contributions from both parties involved. Additionally, relational factors are crucial in the success of Sino-foreign joint ventures. A case study of a Hong Kong-based civil aviation services company expanding in Greater China highlighted the importance of dynamic stakeholder perspectives over the evolution of a partnership [7].

Furthermore, the management of human resources in these educational institutions is pivotal. The need for innovative strategies in human resource management is emphasized to enhance the quality and efficiency of teacher management, which in turn contributes to the core competitiveness of the universities [8].

In summary, Sino-foreign joint venture schools are not merely a product of globalization but also act as catalysts for further internationalization of education. They offer a platform for cross-cultural exchange, contribute to students' global competitiveness, and serve as experimental fields for educational reforms. These joint ventures are complex systems requiring balanced control, mutual commitment, and innovative management strategies to succeed.

2. Background and Overview of Sino-foreign Joint Schools in Sichuan

2.1. Educational background in Sichuan province

Sichuan's educational landscape is diverse and expansive, reflecting the province's commitment to educational excellence. As of 2021, Sichuan boasts approximately 13,400 kindergartens with a total enrollment of around 2.62 million children. Notably, 85.73% of these children are enrolled in public kindergartens, highlighting the province's focus on inclusive early childhood education.

In the realm of compulsory education, Sichuan has made significant strides. The province has enrolled approximately 34.88 million students in compulsory education programs, with a teaching staff of over 1.05 million. The retention rate for nine-year compulsory education stands at an impressive 95.4%, indicating a solid foundation in primary education.

These statistics provide a snapshot of the current state of education in Sichuan and set the stage for understanding the emergence and significance of Sino-foreign joint venture schools in the province. The robust educational infrastructure serves as fertile ground for these international collaborations, offering a blend of local and global educational philosophies.

2.2. A brief history of the development of Sino-foreign joint schools in Sichuan

The development of Sino-foreign joint venture schools in Sichuan has been a dynamic and evolving process, significantly influenced by the broader socio-political landscape of China. The inception of these educational collaborations can be traced back to the era of economic reforms and opening-up policies. During this period, the government actively encouraged international partnerships in education, aiming to modernize the educational system and align it with global standards.

One notable example is the strategic partnership between Sichuan University and the University of Pittsburgh. Established in 2012, this collaboration has been lauded for its comprehensive approach to education, encompassing curriculum development, faculty exchange, and research initiatives. The joint venture has successfully integrated both institutions' educational philosophies and methodologies, thereby elevating the quality of education and producing globally competent graduates.

Furthermore, the role of policy frameworks and governmental directives has been instrumental in shaping the trajectory of these joint ventures. Researchers have emphasized that the success of Sino-foreign educational collaborations is often contingent upon the alignment with key policy documents and directives issued by regulatory bodies. This ensures that the joint ventures are in compliance with legal requirements and aligned with national educational objectives.

Over the past decade, Sino-foreign joint venture schools in Sichuan have made historical achievements. They have navigated challenges, including the recent pandemic, and maintained high educational standards. These schools testify to the province's commitment to educational excellence and internationalization.

In summary, developing Sino-foreign joint venture schools in Sichuan involves multiple factors, including governmental policies, institutional collaborations, and socio-economic conditions. These schools have not only enriched the educational landscape of Sichuan but have also set a precedent for international educational collaborations across China.

3. In-depth Analysis of Two Representative Universities' Sino-Foreign Joint Programs in Sichuan

3.1. Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute

3.1.1. Organizational Structure and Partners

The organizational structure of the Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute (SCUPI) is a unique blend of dual management systems overseen by both Sichuan University and the University of Pittsburgh. This collaborative governance model ensures that both institutions contribute to the decision-making process, thereby aligning the institute's educational goals and strategic visions. The administrative team of SCUPI consists of representatives from both universities, who are responsible for the day-to-day operations and long-term planning of the institute. In addition to the

administrative team, the institute also has a joint financial committee that oversees the allocation and management of funds.

The advantage of this dual management structure lies in its ability to effectively integrate the resources and strengths of both universities. For instance, Sichuan University provides invaluable local resources and expertise that are crucial for the institute's operations and development. On the other hand, the University of Pittsburgh contributes its experience and expertise in international education and research. This symbiotic relationship provides a solid foundation for the institute's academic research and educational activities.

Furthermore, this dual management structure also facilitates the exchange of cultural and educational philosophies. The institute not only offers a unique academic perspective that combines research with education, professionalism with academia, and Eastern with Western educational methods, but it also conducts all its courses in English. This not only enhances the students' language skills but also better prepares them for the challenges of globalization.

Overall, the organizational structure and partnership between SCUPI and its founding universities serve as a cornerstone for its exemplary performance in educational quality and research outcomes. Through the close collaboration and concerted efforts of both institutions, the institute has become a globally recognized academic entity.

3.1.2. Funding Sources and Management

The funding structure of the Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute (SCUPI) is a critical component that enables its multifaceted educational and research programs. According to available information, Sichuan University has invested \$60 million to construct and equip a new 40,000 square-meter building on its Jiang'an campus in Chengdu for SCUPI. This substantial investment indicates the level of commitment from the Chinese side to ensure the institute's success.

The funding for SCUPI is not solely from Sichuan University; the University of Pittsburgh also contributes to the institute, although the exact financial details are not publicly disclosed. The joint financial committee, as mentioned earlier, plays a pivotal role in overseeing the allocation and management of these funds. This committee ensures that the financial resources are used effectively to meet the institute's educational and research objectives.

In addition to institutional funding, SCUPI likely benefits from various grants and research funding. For instance, in 2021, the research funding of Sichuan University reached 3.35 billion yuan, a portion of which could be allocated to SCUPI given its research-oriented nature. The institute may also receive funding from industry partnerships, government grants, and international collaborations, although specific data on these sources is not readily available.

The diversified funding sources provide SCUPI with the financial stability and flexibility needed to offer a world-class engineering education focused on design, innovation, and an international perspective. It allows the institute to hire top-notch faculty, invest in state-of-the-art research facilities, and provide scholarships to attract talented students.

3.1.3. Faculty and Student Demographics

Unfortunately, specific demographic information about the Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute (SCUPI) faculty and students is not publicly available. However, given the institute's dual management structure and global orientation, the faculty likely consists of a mix of local and international educators. The faculty members are expected to have diverse academic backgrounds, ranging from engineering to liberal arts, to provide a holistic educational experience.

As for the student body, SCUPI aims to attract top talent from China and around the world. The institute's curriculum, delivered entirely in English, makes it an attractive option for international

students. Given the institute's focus on interdisciplinary education, the student population is likely diverse in terms of academic interests.

3.1.4. Further Studies and Employment Opportunities

SCUPI strongly emphasises research and innovation, which opens up numerous opportunities for further studies and employment for its students. The institute's strong ties with industry partners and its focus on real-world applications make it an ideal launching pad for students interested in academia and industry. Graduates of SCUPI have the advantage of a degree that is recognized both in China and the United States, providing them with a competitive edge in the global job market.

The institute also has a robust career services department that assists students in finding internships and job placements. Given the institute's international orientation, students have the opportunity to pursue careers not just in China but also in other parts of the world. This aligns well with the institute's mission to produce globally competitive graduates.

3.2. Second Case Study: The Sino-French Aviation University

3.2.1. Organizational Structure and Partners

The Sino-French Aviation University is a joint venture between China's Beihang University and the French Civil Aviation University. The university is in Hangzhou, China, and spans an impressive 660,000 square meters dedicated to the academic campus. Additionally, 930,000 square meters are allocated for a science and technology park that hosts corporate and commercial companies. This expansive infrastructure indicates a significant investment in creating a world-class educational and research environment.

The organizational structure is designed to be collaborative, with governance shared between the two founding universities. A board, consisting of a majority of Chinese citizens as per Chinese law, oversees the university's operations. The president of the university is a resident Chinese citizen, while the executive vice-president is expected to be from France, reflecting the international nature of the institution.

3.2.2. Funding Sources and Management

The Sino-French Aviation University is a public project supported by the Chinese and French governments. Although exact financial details are not publicly disclosed, the campus scale suggests a substantial investment from both sides. The university aims to accommodate up to 10,000 students, indicating the financial commitment required to sustain such an ambitious project.

The management of these funds is a collaborative effort overseen by a joint financial committee comprising representatives from Beihang University and the French Civil Aviation University. This committee ensures that the financial resources are allocated effectively for academic research, faculty recruitment, and infrastructural development.

3.2.3. Faculty and Student Demographics

The Sino-French Aviation University aims to welcome 10,000 students and researchers, indicating a large and diverse student body. While specific demographic data is not publicly available, the faculty is expected to be a mix of experts from China and France. The university's focus on aviation research and innovation suggests that the faculty will likely comprise professionals with strong backgrounds in aeronautical engineering, aviation management, and related fields. The institution also plans to integrate traditional Chinese cultural elements, such as the culture of Liangzhu, a UNESCO World Heritage site, into its academic environment.

3.2.4. Further Studies and Employment Opportunities

The university is designed with a strong industry-academia axis, suggesting close ties with the aviation industry for research and employment opportunities. The campus includes various functional clusters like research labs, classrooms, conference halls, and sports halls arranged around a central courtyard. This setup will likely facilitate interdisciplinary research and provide students with a comprehensive educational experience beyond the classroom. Given the specialized focus on aviation, students graduating from this joint venture are expected to find ample employment opportunities in the aviation industry in both China and France. The university's design concept, which emphasizes the integration of water systems, canals, and docks, also suggests potential research and employment opportunities in environmental sustainability within aviation.

4. Comparative Analysis of the Two Joint Venture Programs

4.1. Similarities and Differences in Teaching Methods and Curriculum

Both the Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute (SCUPI) and the Sino-French Aviation University aim to provide a world-class education through a blend of Eastern and Western pedagogical approaches. SCUPI focuses on engineering education, emphasising design and innovation, while the Sino-French Aviation University specializes in aviation studies. Both institutions offer courses in English, making them attractive options for international students.

However, the curriculum at SCUPI is more interdisciplinary, incorporating elements of liberal arts into its engineering program. In contrast, the Sino-French Aviation University has a more specialized focus, aligning its curriculum closely with the aviation industry's needs.

4.2. Comparison of Partners and Funding Sources

Both joint ventures involve significant investment from their respective Chinese and foreign partner universities. SCUPI is a collaboration between Sichuan University and the University of Pittsburgh, with a \$60 million investment from Sichuan University for infrastructure. The Sino-French Aviation University is a partnership between China's Beihang University and the French Civil Aviation University, supported by the Chinese and French governments.

The funding for SCUPI also likely includes various grants and research funding, whereas the Sino-French Aviation University is a public project with strong governmental support. Both institutions have a joint financial committee to oversee the allocation and management of funds.

4.3. Differences in Student Background and Further Studies

SCUPI attracts a diverse student body interested in engineering and possibly liberal arts due to its interdisciplinary approach. Given its specialized focus, the Sino-French Aviation University will likely attract students specifically interested in aviation. Both institutions offer numerous opportunities for further studies and employment, but the sectors they target are different: SCUPI graduates have a broader range of options, including academia and various industries, while Sino-French Aviation University graduates are likelier to find opportunities in the aviation sector.

4.4. Summary

In summary, while SCUPI and the Sino-French Aviation University aim to provide high-quality education through international collaboration, their focus, curriculum, and target student demographics differ. These differences make each institution unique and cater to different educational and career aspirations.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Development Potential and Possible Challenges

The joint-venture schools in Sichuan, represented by SCUPI and the Sino-French Aviation University, have shown immense potential for development. Their unique curricula, international partnerships, and diversified funding sources set them apart as models for global education. However, they also face challenges, such as navigating the regulatory landscapes of multiple countries and adapting to rapidly changing educational needs.

The development potential for these institutions is high, especially as China continues to open up its education sector to international collaboration. With the Belt and Road Initiative and other international projects, the demand for globally competent professionals is rising, and these institutions are well-positioned to meet this demand.

5.2. Long-term Significance for Chinese Education and Students

The long-term significance of these joint-venture schools for Chinese education is profound. They serve as bridges between different educational philosophies and practices, enriching the Chinese education system with diverse perspectives. For students, these institutions offer unparalleled opportunities for international exposure without leaving their home country. The degrees offered are recognized in China and abroad, providing a competitive edge in the global job market.

Moreover, these institutions contribute to elevating educational standards in China by introducing new pedagogical methods and research practices. They also serve as hubs for international academic collaboration, thereby enhancing China's standing in the global academic community.

5.3. Policy Recommendations

Given the potential and challenges, it is crucial for policymakers to create a conducive environment for the growth of such institutions. This could include streamlined approval processes for international collaborations, increased research and development funding, and policies encouraging student and faculty exchanges.

5.4. Final words

In conclusion, joint-venture schools in Sichuan, such as SCUPI and the Sino-French Aviation University, are pioneering models for international education in China. They offer promising avenues for student development and academic research while facing challenges that require thoughtful policy interventions. Their success or failure will have far-reaching implications for the future of higher education in China and beyond.

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