

# **Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Era of Globalisation: What have been its Implications in China and Japan?**

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*This article describes the internationalisation of higher education in the era of globalisation in China and Japan. It presents the following issues: the relationship between internationalisation and globalisation; major characteristics of the internationalisation of higher education; a comparison between China and Japan; and the results of globalisation based on case studies from the two countries. The article concludes that globalisation has led to changes in the internationalisation of higher education in China and Japan, but not changed the most essential part of internationalisation of higher education in either country.*

## Introduction

This article is concerned with the internationalisation of higher education in this era of globalisation. The meaning of internationalisation can be interpreted in many ways: often it is used interchangeably with globalisation, however it is regarded here as differing. In particular, internationalisation is not seen as an outcome of globalisation, or as a way in which a country responds to the impact of globalisation. By differentiating between the concepts of internationalisation and globalisation, the article addresses two major questions. First, what are the most important characteristics and dimensions of the internationalisation of higher education in the era of globalisation? Second, what does the internationalisation of higher education mean for both China and Japan today?

The article consists of the following sections: the differences and the relationship between internationalisation and globalisation; major characteristics of the internationalisation of higher education in the era of globalisation from a historical and comparative standpoint; a comparison of China and Japan focusing on the major forms, aspects and dimensions of the internationalisation of higher education especially since the 1990s; and an analysis and discussion of the meaning and outcomes resulting from globalisation based on case studies from China and Japan. The article concludes by arguing that while globalisation has led to changes in the internationalisation of higher education in the two countries, it has not changed the essential structure of the internationalisation of higher education in either.

## Internationalisation and globalisation

Internationalisation and globalisation can be described in a vast number of ways. In the case of higher education, some scholars suggest that “internationalisation 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, 2002). This definition suggests that there are many dimensions of internationalisation and that it is a dynamic process of institutional change. As for globalisation, it can be defined as “the process and consequences of instantaneous world-wide communication made possible by new technology. The consequences include an explosive growth in the

quantity and accessibility of knowledge and continually increasing integration and interdependence of world financial and economic systems" (Grunzweig and Rinehart, 2002). With regard to the link between internationalisation and globalisation, according to Jane Knight, "globalisation is a phenomenon of a process which is affecting many sectors and disciplines and education is no exception. Internationalisation of higher education is both a response to globalisation as well as an agent of globalisation. Internationalisation is changing the world of higher education and globalisation is changing the process of internationalisation" (Knight, 2003). Peter Scott affirmed that there is a dialectical relationship between internationalisation and globalisation. Internationalisation reflected – and may still reflect – a world order dominated by national governments. However, globalisation is a different phenomenon. It reflects not only the processes of global competitiveness between the great market blocs of the United States, the European Union and the East-Asian countries. It also involves intensified collaboration as a global division of labour between low-cost mass manufacture and services provision of labour, and high-value technology and innovation, or sometimes their co-location, most notably in the ex-Communist bloc (Scott, 2000).

This article differentiates between the concepts of internationalisation and globalisation in three ways. First, internationalisation has been widely discussed since at least the 1960s, whereas globalisation came into consideration mainly during the later part of the 1980s. Second, globalisation aims principally at establishing a single or universally-acknowledged model, beyond countries and cultures, while internationalisation emphasises an exchange or communication between different countries and cultures. Third, internationalisation occurs with the precondition that different countries and cultures exist, whereas globalisation proceeds on the assumption that countries and cultures are of decreasing significance. There is, however, a close relationship between the two terms. With the rapid progress of economic globalisation, advancement of new technology and increasingly frequent exchanges between countries and cultures, some activities that once were conducted between countries or cultures (*i.e.* at an international level) are likely to reach a global level, possibly resulting in universally accepted standards or values.

In addition, this article emphasises both aspects of the internationalisation of higher education. On the one hand, it refers to the internationalisation of higher education in the home country, such as accepting incoming international students, developing internationalised curricula, and integrating international dimensions into teaching, learning and research activities into home institutions. On the other hand, it denotes dimensions of sending abroad students, faculty members, and researchers, and of transnational or cross-border higher education activities, including

curricula that are exported and provided in higher education institutions in foreign countries.

As the term “globalisation” often refers to economic globalisation, this paper examines recent changes in the internationalisation of higher education in the two countries mainly from that perspective.

## **Internationalisation of higher education in the era of globalisation**

From a historical perspective, the internationalisation of higher education occurred as early as the 12th century when, in Europe, medieval universities emerged. As indicated in Table 1, its development can be divided into three phases. In each phase, the internationalisation adopted different forms and its aims varied due to differing contexts or rationales. Table 1 divides the characteristics of the internationalisation of higher education into five categories that can be used to describe it in each phase. The first category is context, or background, identifying the different social contexts in which changes occurred in the internationalisation of higher education, from serving Christendom in Europe, through industrialisation and colonisation, to the Cold War. The second category records the major driving forces – religious, academic, economic and political factors – that affected changes in the internationalisation of higher education in each phase. The third category notes the aims and objectives of internationalizing higher education, from the needs of the Christian Church, to educational development and colonisation, and finally to political and economic development and technical assistance. The fourth category is concerned with the forms and dimensions of the internationalisation of higher education. Before the 17th century, the major form of internationalisation of higher education lay in the mobility of people, including both students and scholars moving mostly between different areas and countries of Europe. The Modern era includes movement to new areas of religious institutions, such as church universities in colonised countries. The years from 1945 to the 1980s are again mainly characterised by the mobility of people but within national programmes of co-operation, development and technical assistance. The fifth category, major areas, refers to the areas or regions in which the internationalisation of higher education took place. Initiated in Western Europe, it spread to North America and other European countries, especially in the 19th century. Since 1945, it has expanded from a limited number of countries or areas to be promoted at regional and worldwide levels.

With the rapid progress of economic globalisation, the internationalisation of higher education has entered a new phase with new characteristics, especially since the 1980s. As for driving forces, policy and practice concerning the internationalisation of higher education in individual

**Table 1. Internationalisation of higher education from a historical perspective**

	Medieval (12th-17th century)	Modern (18th century-1945)	Contemporary (1945-1980s)
Context	Christendom in Western Europe	National development, industrialisation and colonisation	The Cold War
Drivers	Religious and cultural	Economic and political	Political and ideological
Aims	Expansion of Christianity and spread of Christian culture	Establishment of modern higher education systems and also a means of colonisation	Importation and exportation of political ideologies, as well as technical assistance for developing countries
Forms and dimensions	Personal mobility and movement of university campuses into other areas, occurring at an institutional and individual level	Export or import of higher education models at a national level and founding of regional organisations	Internal educational programmes, development of co-operation with developing countries at national levels, more organised and systematic
Major areas	Europe, especially Western and Southern Europe	Between European countries, between Europe and North America, and between Europe/North America and other countries in Asia and Africa, etc.	Change from particular countries or areas to regional and global levels

countries are not only affected by their national policy, character and identity, but are also influenced by calls and pressures from international, regional or global organisations. Various factors, especially the rapidity of economic globalisation, the advancement of information technology, and the introduction of market-oriented mechanisms, exert an increasingly significant influence in individual countries. Thus, compared with what had happened prior to the 1990s, the current internationalisation of higher education is much more strongly driven by economic factors in a more competitive environment at a global level.

However, the situation in developed countries differs greatly from that in developing countries. In many developed countries, particularly English-speaking countries in Europe and the United States, the internationalisation of higher education is more commercially-driven by an entrepreneurial spirit, for example in adopting full-cost tuition fees for international students and undertaking profit-oriented transnational programmes in Australia and the United Kingdom. In the majority of developing countries, internationalisation is more affected by academic factors, for example in dispatching students and faculty members abroad for advanced studies or research, as part of efforts to enhance the quality of education and research activities and to establish world-class universities in China. With regard to the content of the

internationalisation of higher education, it is characterised by a transition from technical assistance for developing countries by developed countries, to a growing global competition; and from personal mobility and the transplantation of national higher education models or systems within particular countries or areas, to the internationalisation or standardisation of programmes, degrees, diplomas, transnational education and quality assurance at a global level. Regarding its forms and dimensions, nationally-oriented or -organised programmes have basically been replaced by institution-based projects in most countries and by exchange programmes initiated by regional or international organisations. Further, the private sector is participating increasingly. However, in most non-Western countries, government-oriented policies and links or co-operation between governments and institutions are still strongly emphasised.

Based on the characteristics of the internationalisation of higher education in today's era of globalisation, three distinguishing types can be identified: an import-oriented type, an import and export type, and an export-oriented type. Table 2 shows that differences in the internationalisation are not only influenced by the economic level and the stage of development of higher education, but they are also affected by the usage of the English language, i.e. whether or not English is used as a national or major language. As Altbach pointed out, "The role of English affects higher education policy and the work of individual students and scholars [...] English-language products of all kinds dominate the international academic marketplace" (Altbach, 2004).

Table 2. **Three types of internationalisation of higher education**

	Import-oriented	Import- and export-oriented	Export-oriented
Country	Most developing countries, or countries with colonial experiences	Most non-English-speaking developed countries and some developing countries with their unique cultures or traditions	Especially English-speaking developed countries
Characteristics	Seeking competent professional personnel but having a weak modern higher education system	Importing English-language products to enhance the quality of learning and research, and exporting educational programmes with distinctive characteristics	Attracting foreign students from developing countries and non-English-speaking countries; and exporting transnational education services as trade
Issues and challenges	Brain drain and loss of national identity	Conflicts between foreign imports and national characteristics	Quality assurance and negative effects resulting from commercialisation of higher education

In sum, since the 1990s, aspects of the internationalisation of higher education have gone beyond simple mobility of international students and faculty members. They have come to include activities such as internationalisation of curricula, transnational higher education, establishment of international organisations, and consortia of universities at both regional and global levels. The international perspective has been integrated into almost every dimension of higher education, including educational programmes, administrative structures and campus life. What is more important, because of the increasing number of co-operative higher education activities occurring at regional and especially at global levels, it is becoming more difficult to differentiate between the meaning and practice of internationalisation and globalisation of higher education. In a major sense, the internationalisation of higher education is now preceding towards a phase of globalisation, though its pace, content and means of implementation vary greatly among countries.

## A perspective from China and Japan

The internationalisation of higher education is not a completely new phenomenon in either China or Japan. As early as the latter part of the 19th century, both countries had already made various endeavours to establish modern higher education systems by sending students and faculty members abroad for advanced studies or research. Both countries made great efforts to adopt foreign academic patterns, notably from Western models such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. This section deals with the key research question “What changes have taken place and taking place in this era of globalisation in regard to the internationalisation of higher education in these two non-English-speaking, Asian countries?”.

### China

Prior to the later 1990s, the internationalisation of higher education in China had been fundamentally characterised by growth in the number of students and faculty members sent abroad for further studies or research. Initially, almost all were sent with public funding and their numbers were quite limited. Most were selected from the leading universities. Since 1981 when the Chinese government issued a document permitting students to go to abroad at their own expense, the number of Chinese students studying in foreign countries has risen dramatically. To illustrate this, in 1990, only 7 647 students and faculty were sent abroad, and nearly all of them were funded by central and local governments (*China Education Yearbook Editorial Board, 1991*). By 2003, the number of scholars and students who went to foreign countries for study or research had risen to 117 300, 93% of whom were private students (*China Education Yearbook Editorial Board, 2004*). Along with

this, the Chinese government also instituted various measures to attract foreign students to China. From the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to the 1980s, only 50 000 foreign students came to China and the majority of them pursued merely short-term language studies. In contrast, in 2003 alone, the number of foreign students in China totalled 77 715, from 175 countries (*China Education Yearbook Editorial Board, 2004, p. 337*). It can thus be said that, during these years, sending students abroad constituted the most important part of the internationalisation of higher education in China.

The meaning of internationalisation of higher education has changed significantly in China since the latter part of the 1990s, through activities involving the university curriculum and the importation of foreign educational programmes. The internationalisation of the curriculum in China has three general aspects: introducing English-language products into Chinese campuses; implementing instruction in English or bilingually (Chinese and English); and integrating an international dimension into university teaching and learning. As an example of the first aspect, the most recent, original English-language textbooks have been translated into Chinese, and China's universities have adopted almost all the textbooks now used in the leading universities in the United States, such as at Harvard and Stanford universities and MIT, in the fields of science, engineering, medicine, law, trade, management and some humanities. Concerning the second aspect, in 2001, the Ministry of Education (MOE) issued a document requiring that 5% to 10% of all curricula in the leading universities be taught in English within the following three years, especially in such areas as biology, information science, material sciences, international trade and law. The third aspect, integrating an international dimension, refers to a dramatic expansion in the number of programmes for foreign languages/cross-cultural studies, mostly taught in English at undergraduate level and leading to international professional qualifications at graduate level.

Special mention should be of the rapid increase in the number of joint or transnational programmes in partnership with foreign institutions since 1995. These include programmes leading to degrees from foreign universities or universities in Hong Kong. By 2004, the number of joint programmes provided by Chinese higher education institutions in collaboration with foreign partners had reached 745, and 169 joint programmes were qualified to award degrees from foreign or Hong Kong universities (MOE, 2005).

In addition, much effort has been made by the government to provide a Chinese higher education service for local students outside China. Although the number of degree-conferring programmes offered outside the country is much smaller than the number provided on Chinese campuses, rapid progress has recently been made. For example, Fudan University of China and Singapore National University have agreed to establish branch campuses at

each other's university, to co-operate in recruiting students, and to mutually recognise some of their curricula, credits, diplomas and degrees. Such transnational education activities continue to take place, as they did prior to the 1990s, in Japan, Korea and other South-east Asian countries that used to be greatly influenced by Chinese culture, but they can now be found in some Western European countries as well, including Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. Further, compared with prior to the 1990s, transnational programmes exported by Chinese universities are no longer confined to studies in the Chinese language, but now also include some professional programmes such as international trade, management, science and engineering (Huang, 2003).

Another important strategy for promoting the internationalisation of higher education in China is to establish several huge universities and support them with enlarged budgets with the aim of them becoming world-class or world-renowned institutions. Since 2000, the number of universities that have been specially funded by the MOE, together with other central ministries and local authorities, has continued to grow. By 2003 they amounted to 34. It is likely that in the next few years the number of selected universities encouraged to become world-famous will increase to 38 (Huang, 2005a). The goal of establishing world-renowned universities indicates that the internationalisation of higher education in China is no longer confined to personal mobility and joint programmes in co-operation with foreign partners. Rather, it shows that China is trying to build up its own centres of excellence and to participate in global competition.

### **Japan**

In 1983, the Japanese government launched the "100 000 Plan", intending to accept 100 000 international students to study in Japan by the year 2000. Prior to 2001, when the target was attained, bringing in more international students had constituted a key component of the internationalisation of Japanese higher education. The first ten years of this plan were said to be successful (Umakoshi, 1997; Horie, 2002). The number of international students in Japan increased from 10 428 in 1983 to 52 405 in 1993. However, this growth was not in itself evidence that university education in Japan had developed an international reputation (Yonezawa, 2003).

In parallel with the increase in international students coming to Japan, after the economic growth of the 1970s and 1980s, the number of Japanese who went abroad for advanced studies also expanded rapidly. This corresponds to a similar trend in China during the same period, as student mobility was the predominant form in the internationalisation of higher education at that time. But, in contrast to a large number of incoming international students from Asian countries, the vast majority of outgoing

students from both Japan and China chose English-speaking countries, especially European countries and the United States, as their host for advanced studies.

A great deal has been done to develop and implement programmes designed for international students on Japanese campuses. Among these, increasing numbers of English-language programmes, specifically provided for international students, have been introduced in many institutions. They include both non-degree and degree-conferring programmes, ranging from six months to three years. Since the 1980s, many Japanese private universities have established branch campuses in foreign countries, mostly in English-speaking countries such as the Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States and some in European countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands. These campuses were intended for Japanese students who travel abroad for foreign language training programmes, particularly in an English-language learning environment.

In the early 1980s, US institutions began providing cross-border programmes in branch schools or institutions in Japan, entirely for Japanese students (Sukigara, 1993). The number of branch campuses founded by the United States rose rapidly each year from only 1 in 1982 to 18 in 1990. By 1990 the total founded in Japan by all foreign institutions had risen to 36. But prior to February 2005, none of these branches of foreign institutions had been accredited by the Japanese government as higher education institutions in accord with the Standards of Establishment of Universities and Colleges. Consequently, credits gained at these branch campuses were not transferable to other Japanese institutions, nor could students graduating from these branch campuses be accepted into higher-level Japanese educational programmes. Hence, with a steady decline in Japan's 18-year-old population, many of these US institutions recognised that they could not expect to increase their revenues by enrolling Japanese students; since the early 1990s, the number of these branches has decreased, now to less than 10 (Huang, 2005b). Although by the 1990s their numbers had grown quickly, the branch campuses by foreign institutions were neither officially approved nor supported by the central government, nor were they regarded as part of the Japanese higher education system. It is thus safe to state that Japan chose to stimulate its internationalisation of higher education through its focus on attracting incoming international students.

With the increased impact from globalisation, several major changes have recently taken place in the internationalisation of higher education in Japan. First, more and more private institutions have attempted to export their educational activities by providing transnational programmes in other countries. These all differ from the preparatory Japanese-language programmes that were offered abroad in the 1980s in that they confer

graduate level degrees, covering professional programmes such as engineering, management and literature. Moreover, these double or joint degree-conferring programmes are provided not only in co-operation with English-speaking countries, but also in partnership with non-English-speaking countries such as China, Singapore and other South-Asian countries. For example, Waseda University, one of the top private universities in Japan, announced that in 2006 it would initiate a graduate school in co-operation with Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and offer a double Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduate programme in technology management for students mostly coming from South-Asian countries. Upon successful completion of this programme, students are awarded two master's degrees – an MBA from Nanyang Technological University and an MBA in technology management from Waseda University (Huang, 2005c). Second, the Japanese government has begun to consider revising the legislation concerning approval of foreign institutions in Japan and to adopt new strategies for recognising transnational branches and programmes. For example, in February 2005, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) officially recognised Temple University Japan (TUJ), which is the oldest and largest American university in Japan. This approval makes it possible for Japanese universities to recognise TUJ credits and allows TUJ graduates to apply to the graduate schools of Japanese public universities. Third, there has been a marked increase in the number of double or joint degree programmes based on numerous bilateral and multilateral co-operation agreements between Japanese and foreign institutions. These occur not only in the private sector but also in some national and public universities. A clear example is the joint two-year master's programmes provided by Tokyo Institute of Technology (TIT) and Tsinghua University in China for both Japanese and Chinese students on their respective campuses. After graduation, students from both universities are entitled to receive double master's degrees from the two universities. Fourth, facing pressure from globalisation in recent years, Japan has also launched national plans to enhance the quality of higher education. In June 2001, the Japanese government issued a guideline for reconstructing Japanese universities, especially national universities. The guideline identified the goal of encouraging the "top 30" universities to attain the highest global standards. Later, the programme was changed into a scheme of cultivating "Centres of Excellence in the 21st Century". As in China, the central government is supporting the selected units with an expanded budget. By focusing on nine key disciplines, exemplified as life sciences, medical sciences, chemistry, material sciences, mathematics, physics, earth sciences, information science, and electrical and electronic engineering, Japan hopes to considerably

enhance the quality of its research activities in higher education and to increasingly integrate the international dimensions into research.

## **Analysis and discussion**

In the current era of globalisation, the internationalisation of higher education has been affected by more diverse driving forces than previously and has combined worldwide trends with China's and Japan's domestic socio-economic backgrounds. Internationalisation is no longer solely affected by economic reforms and the open-door policy in China as it was prior to the 1990s; nor is it stimulated uniquely to enhance mutual understanding and promote Japan's intellectual contribution to the international community through a strong presence of international students, as occurred in the 1980s. Compared with previous decades, since the later 1990s, the role of central governments in the two countries has become more limited in regulating the internationalisation of higher education. Accordingly, individual institutions are taking initiatives for their own involvement. Globalisation has given rise to new forms and wider dimensions of internationalisation of higher education in the two countries. Examples include importing foreign higher education services and exporting educational programmes abroad. Facing the challenges of a competitive environment at a global level, both countries have realised the importance of building several world-renowned universities, pursuing world-class quality of teaching and research, and enhancing the quality of their higher education in the light of universally accepted standards.

However, based on the concepts of internationalisation and globalisation of higher education as defined here, this does not necessarily mean that the inherent character of the internationalisation in China and Japan has fundamentally changed. As globalisation has not affected the daily life of Japanese people to the extent it has affected the United States and European countries (Kurimoto, 1997, pp. 83-104), neither has it impacted dramatically on local universities and regional societies in China (Yang, 2002). Globalisation has not changed the essence of the internationalisation of higher education in the two countries. A clear indicator is that both countries still export more students abroad than they accept from abroad, especially from Europe and the United States; and both countries import more foreign educational programmes and services than they export. In this sense, it is appropriate to classify both China and Japan as the import and export type identified earlier. To be more precise, it is Western models and institutions that provide the foreign imports, a pattern that has continued from the colonial into the contemporary period (Altbach and Selvaratnam, 1989). China and Japan are still influenced by the English-language products that they use, though to differing degrees. The internationalisation of higher education in both countries still maintains its basic character as a process of catching up with

advanced countries and approaching the current centres of learning, mostly identified with the English-speaking countries in Europe and even more so the United States. This phenomenon does not seem to have a significant link with the level of national economic development, the political system or the stage of higher education development, but rather is due to the fact that neither of the two countries has established the universally-recognised excellence of its own academic system or maintains a quality of higher learning that can exert academic influence at an international or global level.

Undoubtedly, globalisation does not affect the internationalisation of higher education in China and Japan in the same way or to the same extent. Compared with Japan, China's central government still exercises strong regulation of and authority over the internationalisation of the country's higher education as a matter of policy. Moreover, as noted earlier, its policy of internationalisation is normally advocated for a few leading universities only – and all of them belong to the national sector. In China, there is no stimulation of mass internationalisation, but rather of internationalisation that is restricted to several select institutions with the intent to train the elite. Currently the major form of internationalisation of higher education in China is the provision of incoming foreign educational activities, especially joint programmes leading to foreign degrees or degrees of universities in Hong Kong. These have now been recognised as an integral part of Chinese higher education and are regarded as one of the most effective ways to facilitate the internationalisation of higher education. In Japan, however, individual private institutions, aided and regulated by the central government but also strongly competing for enrolments, play a more crucial part in the internationalisation of Japanese higher education both by accepting incoming international students and by exporting educational programmes abroad. Furthermore, as stated by Kurimoto Kazuhiro, because different sectors in Japan are expected to play different roles in the higher education system, the meaning and forms of internationalisation vary according to the different sectors and institutional types. So, while the major concern of internationalisation for the prestigious universities is closely related to their research activities, in other institutions, internationalisation simply means organised visits by Japanese students to foreign countries as part of their course requirement (Kurimoto, 1997, pp. 100-101).

## Conclusion

Globalisation has resulted in and will continue to give a rise to new forms or wider dimensions of the internationalisation of higher education in both China and Japan. However, at this stage it has not changed the most essential and intrinsic parts of the internationalisation in the two countries, largely because China and Japan have not been centres of learning. As globalisation

continues to exert a strong influence on aspects of the internationalisation of higher education, more diverse dimensions will probably continue to be integrated into the internationalisation processes. Activities related to the internationalisation of higher education will continue to expand at regional as well as global levels. Inevitably, the internationalisation of higher education will see more values in common between both China and Japan and other countries, but it is extremely difficult or impossible for globalisation to give rise to a single, globally-accepted model of internationalisation of higher education so long as sovereign countries and strong national identities exist.

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