

Research on the Strategy of Introducing International Students Based on Talent Structure -- Taking Singapore as an Example

Yu Jinhe, Zhao Haoyi, Xu Zhilong*

International Exchange College, Ningbo University of Technology, Ningbo 315211, China

**Corresponding author*

Keywords: Talent structure, National brand of higher education, Overseas students in china, Internationalization of higher education, High-level talents, Singapore higher education

Abstract: With the Continuous Improvement of China's Economic and Educational Quality, the Number of Overseas Students in China Has Gradually Increased. At Present, China Has Become the Third-Largest Importer of International Students in the World. How to Improve the Quality of International Students, Promote the Development of International Students in China, and Make Rational Use of the Resources of International Students to Meet the Talent Demand of China's Current Development Has Also Become an Issue of Great Concern. Singapore Has Grown from a Resource-Poor Island Country to the Most Competitive Country in the World, Which is Closely Related to Its Successful Talent Introduction Strategy. Based on Singapore's Talent Introduction Policy, This Paper Analyzes China's Foreign Student Introduction Policy from Three Aspects: Introducing Talents, Retaining Talents, and Developing Talents, Hoping to Further Enhance the Talent Benefits That Studying Abroad May Bring through Policy Guidance.

1. Introduction

As the mobile carrier of intellectual capital, talent is an important resource to promote the development of science and technology and the economy in the era of globalization. According to the relevant statistics report of the United Nations, by 2020, the total number of international talents studying and working outside the country of birth has reached 281 million, accounting for 3.6% of the global population, an increase of about 40% compared with 20 years ago^[1]. With the acceleration of globalization, the international talent competition is becoming increasingly fierce. Major developed countries have achieved the goal of maintaining their leading edge by perfecting their policy systems and actively introducing global talents, and achieved phased results. According to statistics, nearly half of international talents will flow to developed countries in Europe and America in 2020^[2]. In the talent introduction strategies of various countries, the introduction of international students has become an important way of international talent introduction.

Since 1950, China has officially started to accept overseas students in China. After more than 50 years of development, China has become the third-largest importer of international students in the world after the United States and Britain^[3]. Since the reform and opening-up, China's economy,

science, and technology level have been continuously improved, and various international cooperation strategies have been implemented, all of which have driven the continuous increase in the number of foreign students enrolled in China. In recent years, the number of overseas students in China has increased by 5.7% ~ 7.7% driven by the “the belt and road initiative” initiative alone [4]. Although the number of enrolled students has been significantly improved, there are still some problems in China's foreign enrollment, such as poor quality of enrolled students, inadequate utilization of enrolled resources, and difficulty in retaining talents. We should fully realize that the significance of attracting international students to China should not only be limited to increasing the number and scale of international students, but also be reflected in the practical value that the education of international students in China can bring corresponding economic benefits, cultural output and talent supplement to our country. In view of this, China should effectively integrate the vision, demand, and other factors of economic and social development into the whole process of foreign students' introduction policy formulation, so that the education of foreign students in China can effectively improve the quality of education in the process of serving the national strategy, and finally form a virtuous circle of mutual promotion between political economy and cultural education, and create a better education brand of “studying in China”.

Through the research of some scholars, it is found that there are some problems in the current talent structure in China, which are mainly reflected in the professional technology, professional structure, quality structure, and so on.

In terms of professional technology, the proportion of senior positions in junior middle schools is unreasonable, and all trades are in the form of rugby with small ends and big middle, and high-level professional and technical personnel are in short supply in the talent team; In terms of professional structure, there are more professionals engaged in health, culture, education, agriculture, forestry, and animal husbandry, while there are fewer professionals in industries and service industries. In terms of quality structure, there are not enough high-level and high-quality academic leaders, there are more grassroots talents, and there are even surplus problems. There are few practical talents, but many conventional talents. Specifically, there are few key talents who need to tackle key projects, and many general scientific and technological talents. Although most of the current talent teams tend to be younger, many young talents are not strong in actual organization and development ability [5]. Talent is the basic factor that affects the country's rise and fall, and the strategy of strengthening the country with talent is listed as the first strategy to achieve China's prosperity. We make good use of the advantages of importing overseas students into big countries and guide overseas students and researchers who meet the needs of China's talent gap to study and find jobs in China through policy guidance and institutional reform.

In view of this, this paper will make a comparative analysis of the existing enrollment strategy of international students in China and the current talent introduction policy abroad, and discuss the enrollment scheme of international students that is more suitable for the existing talent structure in China.

2. Establish an Open and Rigorous Talent Screening System

At present, most of the foreign student system in China takes increasing enrollment as an important assessment index. Influenced by the policy lever, some colleges and universities in China attract international students to China by lowering the admission standards and lowering the difficulty of courses for international students. Although this series of measures are conducive to the rapid increase of the number of international students, it leads to a lower threshold for admission and graduation in China, which to some extent affects the international reputation of China's higher education. At the same time, China's foreign enrollment system adopts a lower level of Chinese

language requirements and a unified academic qualification examination standard, which often ignores the differences in basic education levels caused by different levels of economic development in different countries, which leads to the low overall level of international students in China and the uneven introduction of talents.

In the absence of resources, it took Singapore only 50 years to successfully transform from a backward third world country to the most influential country in Asia and even the whole world, which largely benefited from its forward-looking strategy of “talent building”. Since 1991, Singapore has formulated the strategy of *Singapore: A New Starting Point*, and explicitly proposed to build Singapore into an international academic and cultural center, make full use of international talents and resources, and break the resource dilemma faced by Singapore. At this point, Singapore began to benchmark its domestic education against the world-class education standards, and comprehensively promoted the internationalization of higher education by formulating more perfect admission standards, strengthening international exchanges, creating targeted talent introduction projects, selecting truly high-quality talents, and providing targeted subsidy policies to enable them to stay in Singapore and build Singapore. China should learn its talent absorption concept of “emphasizing talent qualification and lightening indicators” and apply it to the recruitment system of ordinary foreign students.

At present, China should improve the enrollment standards, set up a unified and open international enrollment examination based on students' academic qualifications, and match the basic knowledge requirements of participating in domestic higher education. Ensure that international students have enough knowledge reserves to adapt to the daily teaching in colleges and universities, and have the ability to meet the graduation requirements of Chinese colleges and universities, so as to meet the purpose of talent introduction in China, and form a virtuous circle of high-quality enrollment, high-quality teaching and excellent reputation for studying abroad.

Here, we can borrow the words of Winfried Pohlmeier, Vice-President of Konstanz University. “Our strategic goal is not to employ a certain number of international talents, we just hope that the best talents can come to work in Konstanz. If 90% of them are foreigners, let it be 90%. Internationalization is not an end in itself”^[6]. China should strengthen the assessment and screening standards for foreign students, at the same time, increase the material rewards for high-quality talents, select outstanding students to study in China, enhance the international talent reserve in China, build a talent pool that meets the needs of China's economic development, and realize the significant change from quantity to quality of foreign students in China.

3. Pay Equal Attention to the Introduction of Higher Vocational Colleges and High-Tech Talents

With the development of China's economic level and education quality, the number of foreign students in China has gradually increased. From 2004 to 2016, the number of international students in China increased from 111,000 to 443,000, an increase of nearly three times^[7]. However, at present, most of the overseas students in China are ordinary undergraduate students who study abroad for a short time, and their destinations are mostly concentrated in economically developed cities, which can't effectively fill the talent gap in China.

3.1 Accelerate the Pace of Brand Building in China's Higher Education.

In June 2020, China's Ministry of Education officially pointed out in a series of documents that the brand of “studying in China” should be built as a key project to promote the improvement of China's education quality and opening to the outside world^[8]. Under the influence of China's “985” and “211” educational projects, the quality of China's higher education has improved significantly,

but the brand effect of “studying in China” has not yet formed. Compared with European and American countries, the popularity of higher education in China is low, and the strength of attracting outstanding talents is slightly insufficient.

On the basis of strengthening the screening and broadening of overseas students in China, China should also pay more attention to the construction and maintenance of the brand image of higher education. In addition to continuously improving the teaching level and talent training ability, Chinese universities should pay more attention to maintaining the relationship with employers and international evaluation institutions. By means of marketing, we should strengthen brand publicity and enhance international popularity, so as to further improve the quality of students and broaden the way for talent introduction in China. Finally, a virtuous circle of mutual promotion between education quality and brand building will be formed.

3.2 Strengthening the Construction of International Education System in Higher Vocational Colleges

In 2018, the number of international students in China reached 492,000, of which only 17,000 were studying in higher vocational colleges, accounting for 3.45% of the total number of international students in China^[9]. In recent years, the number of international students in higher vocational colleges in China has increased slightly, but the overall increase is small. The reason is that most of the higher vocational colleges in China have a single teaching mode, and the lack of educational experience for international students leads to a low level of curriculum internationalization.

At present, the cooperation between China's colleges and universities and international institutions is getting closer and closer, and many excellent international exchange programs have been created, which have played an important role in improving the education level and attracting international students to China, leaving valuable successful cooperation experience.

Higher vocational colleges should also carry out international cooperation projects to provide opportunities for overseas students in higher vocational colleges to come to China, attract vocational and technical students to come to China, and fill the vacancies of skilled workers through college cooperation, mutual recognition of credits, and international curriculum construction. At the same time, strengthening the cooperation among international higher vocational colleges is also conducive to improving the quality of technical courses, improving the educational level of higher vocational colleges in China, and enhancing the brand image of colleges, so as to change the rigid influence of Chinese people on vocational and technical education to a certain extent, increase the number of blue-collar technicians, and meet the needs of national talents.

4. Enhance Cultural Stickiness and Increase the Rate of Overseas Talents Staying in China

How to promote international students' integration into local culture, enhance their sense of belonging, improve their employment environment and increase their rate of staying in China is another important issue facing foreign education in China.

With human resources to make up for resource defects and drive social and economic development, Singapore's achievements in promoting the integration of foreign talents are also worth learning from. Its ways and means are roughly divided into the following three points:

4.1 Establish High and Diverse Scholarship Subsidy Policies.

For foreign students, the Singapore government has put forward the “New Talent Strategy Plan” and “Global Campus Plan” to encourage international students to study in Singapore from two

aspects, namely, strengthening overseas publicity, expanding enrollment and promoting international student assistance, providing “green channel” for talent visas and cooperating in running schools. At the same time, Singapore's investment in higher education is extremely high. Since 2008, Singapore's expenditure on higher education has always been above 32% of the total government expenditure on education. The government has set up hundreds of scholarship programs for elites from different countries in the world, aiming at attracting students with outstanding talents from all over the world to study in Singapore to the greatest extent.

Compared with Singapore, China's visa concessions are slightly insufficient, and the scholarship policy also presents some problems, such as fewer types, less publicity, and insufficient talent screening intensity, which can't give full play to the role of attracting and screening outstanding international students. According to the needs of talents in China, China should formulate detailed and explicit scholarship policies for overseas students of different majors, and use national means to strengthen overseas publicity to enhance the international popularity of China's higher education.

4.2 Create an Open and Inclusive Social Environment and Enhance the Sense of Integration of International Talents.

As a multi-ethnic and religious country, Singapore has made many policy efforts to create a diverse and inclusive social environment and promote the integration of foreign talents with local residents. In order to promote the absorption of international immigrants, Singapore has set up a special office of citizenship and population, which is responsible for promoting the integration of international talents into local areas and has made positive contributions to this end. At the same time, promote the promotion of English, improve the popularity of English, and lower the language barrier of international talents.

China has always adopted a preferential policy for international students, providing them with a better accommodation environment than domestic students. At the same time, in order to avoid management problems, most colleges and universities in China adopt district management to avoid contact between international students and domestic students. However, although these methods effectively avoid the conflicts between students due to cultural differences, they also arouse people's doubts about the super-national treatment of international students, deepen the internal contradictions and cultural barriers, and make international students unable to gain enough cultural understanding and sense of belonging.

China should start from the internationalization of university courses and strengthen the promotion of international Chinese, reduce the differentiated education for foreign students in China, so that foreign students can really integrate into ordinary university classes and Chinese university life, help them establish Chinese social circles, enhance the understanding and recognition of foreign students about Chinese culture, and enhance cultural stickiness.

4.3 Optimize Supporting Services to Stimulate the Vitality of Talents.

Singapore's government has implemented the policy of “nesting and attracting phoenix”, which provides a good development and living environment for foreign talents. Take Weiyi Science and Technology City, which was built in 2000, for example. As a comprehensive science and technology city covering work, study, life, and leisure, it provides convenient conditions for high-level talents' research and development, entrepreneurship, and life through its core functional areas, multi-functional development spaces, and living areas, so as to maximize their potential development. At the same time, Singapore also provides good educational conditions for the children of foreign talents. After non-permanent residents donate to the education fund of the Ministry of Education, their children can choose to attend local schools ^[10].

Employment policy is the fundamental guarantee for the employment of international students in China. Around 2016, the state and regions successively introduced new policies, allowing international students who meet the requirements of academic qualifications and achievements to apply for work permits, scientific research talents, skilled immigrants, and other “green cards” in China as fresh graduates and gradually relaxed^[11]. China's colleges and universities should give full play to the role of employment offices for international students, provide them with preferential policies and employment and settlement guidance, and make it more convenient for students to stay in China. At the same time, China should also introduce the residence education policy for the partners and children of international students to attract more master's and doctoral talents to work in China.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

Through case analysis, this paper makes a comparative analysis of the talent introduction policies of China and Germany, Singapore, and other countries, and puts forward some ideas for the improvement of China's current study abroad policy, mainly in the following three aspects:

1). Establish a rigorous and open talent screening system, while improving the talent selection standards, broadening the application channels for international students, and attracting outstanding talents to China.

2). To meet the needs of China's talent structure, we should strengthen the absorption of international students in higher education and higher vocational education, fill the shortage of Chinese talents in disciplines and occupations, and achieve the goal of serving the national strategy of overseas students.

3). Improve the employment system for foreign talents, enhance the cultural sense of belonging of foreign personnel, retain and develop talents, and truly realize “天下英雄,尽入吾彀中矣”(It means all the talented people in the world have been recruited.)

This paper provides a reference for the improvement of the overseas students' policy. At present, China should give full play to the advantages of a stable domestic environment and steady economic growth. While further improving the overseas students' policy, it should enhance the preferential treatment for talents from all walks of life, provide a safe and superior working development environment for international talents, and finally help the stable development of China and the world economy.

Acknowledgment

Research on Brand Building of Overseas Students Study in Zhejiang: Current Situation, Target and Countermeasure, Zhejiang Province education planning project, project number: 2021SCG090.

References

- [1] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “InternationalMigration 2020Highlights”,https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesapd_2020_international_migration_highlights.pdf
- [2] Pan Qingzhong. An analysis of the strategy of international talent introduction, encouragement, and integration [J]. *People's Forum Academic Frontier*, 2021 (24): 33-41. DOI: 10.16619/j.cnki.rmltxsqy. 2021.24.004.
- [3] Zhang Linlin. *Research on the Management of International Students in China* [D]. Northeast Normal University, 2018. DOI: 10.27011/d. cnki. gdsu.20010.000000000005
- [4] Cheng Lihao, Liu Zhimin. Evaluation of the influence of the belt and road initiative Initiative on studying in China -- On the high-quality development of overseas students' education in China [J]. *University Education Management*, 2022, 16 (02): 110-124. DOI: 10.13316/j.cnki.jhem.20878.000000000005
- [5] Liu Dan. *China's talent structure imbalance and countermeasures* [J]. *Inner Mongolia United Front Theory*

Research, 2015(05):41-43.

[6] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, "International Migration 2020 Highlights "

[7] Zou Jiayi, Hui Ruyi, Huang Chen, Tang Xi. *The export of Chinese culture and the formation and development of the upsurge of studying in China in Southeast Asia* [J]. *Communication Research*, 2019,3(05):26.

[8] Ministry of Education, *Ministry of Education and other eight departments have made comprehensive arrangements to speed up and expand the opening of education and education in the new era* [EB/OL]. official website, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. *Work Dynamics*. (2020-06-18) [2021-06-15]. <http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyBxWFB/gz>

[9] Xiao Yi, Li Xuan. *Research on the current situation and countermeasures of talent training for overseas students in higher vocational colleges* [J]. *Comparative Study on Cultural Innovation*, 2021,5(06):176-179.

[10] Ke Zuntao and Gong Cheng: *Singapore's Strategy of Building a Country with Talents and Its Enlightenment*, *Changjiang Forum*, No.5, 2019.

[11] Wan Yufeng. *Quality first to achieve the connotative development of overseas students in China* [EB/OL]. [2019-07-20]