

# MARKETING STRATEGIES OF TEACHER EXCHANGE IN UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONALIZATION

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**Abstract:** *In the process of university internationalization, the teacher exchange is inevitable and of great significance. This paper reveals the importance of teacher mobility from the perspective of some representatives of higher education institutions who participated in a qualitative research study. Answers were collected from 30 respondents from 14 countries, who are teachers with experience and practice. The results reveal that teacher exchange is among the top five strategies of universities in their international activity. Finally, some conclusions are drawn regarding the successful experience and activities for teacher exchange proposed.*

**Key words:** *Marketing strategy, Teacher exchange, University internationalization, qualitative research*

## 1. Introduction

It is well accepted that university internationalization accelerates university development, and dozens of scholars have made productive research about the topic of university internationalization. In Shapiro (1973) and other scholars' opinion, higher education marketing is of great importance, as it improves colleges and universities' competitiveness. The incentives for developing effective marketing strategies and successful promotion of schools are to find new and effective teaching methods for school teachers and administrators, including curriculum-related products, financial cooperation, teachers' necessary assistance and multi-channel sales work (Waugh, 1998).

Knight (2004) points out that internationalization integrates international, intercultural or global dimensions into post-secondary education's purpose, functions or delivery. Morley (2005) thinks that upon the productivity aims, university need to manage lectures, staff and students for higher education internationalization.

In the marketing perspective of university internationalization, it is well recognized that the so called 7Ps need to satisfy customer needs. Ivy (2008) emphasizes that product,

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price, place, promotion, people, physical facilities and processes should take into consideration building marketing strategies. What is more, Gronroos (2004) points out that considering service marketing and customer orientation, the 7Ps are of great importance to sustainable competitive advantage.

It is well recognized that the student is the major player in education service provision, Kitchroen (2004) points out that in a whole view, parents, government and the society are also education industry customers. Another statement is that faculty and administrative staff are internal customers, student, the industry and society as external customers under the context of education service (Schmidt, 2002; Sahney, 2004).

Teacher exchange plays a crucial role in university internationalization, serving as a key driver in education quality, research cooperation, and teachers and students' international perspective. These activities contribute to enhancing educational quality, promoting research collaboration, broadening international perspective, building international networks, etc. By fostering these exchanges, universities can enhance their global competitiveness and prepare their students for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The research about teacher exchange in university internationalization is inevitable and of profound significance.

The main goal of our research was to find out the behaviours of universities regarding the teacher exchange in the process of university internationalization. For achieving this goal, an exploratory survey was conducted, which has revealed that global values and awareness, exchange experience, teacher and student relationship and function, funding support, clear responsibilities and rights, diversification, academic platforms, long-term regular exchange, cost-effective, low cost, high revenue projects are of great help to teacher exchange. While language skills, social skills, knowledge and skills on the specific subject area, culture difference and food difference usually become the issues for teacher exchange. To solve these issues, some specific activities are proposed in the end.

## **2. Literature Review**

Wahab (2016) thinks that student numbers, quality staff and resources are key factors of education provision, thus the competition mainly appears here. In a report, UNESCO (2004) points out it is universally accepted that academic staff development turns out to be a key priority. It is noticed that facilities and faculties in universities can attract more students (Tang, et al., 2004). Stöttinger and Schlegelmilch (2002) find out traditional knowledge transferring continues to lead in university teaching. Avram (2009) emphasizes teachers' innovative information transmitting, students' communication, teacher involvement, valuable study materials. Students make courses selection upon teachers' reputation (Hughes, 1988). Tran and Nguyen (2015) point out that internationalization, especially the international students' growth, impacts teachers' professional view and teaching practice. Meeting the students' needs and internalizing curriculum becomes the main focus of internationalization (Arkoudis and Tran, 2010; Carroll and Ryan, 2005; Ryan, 2011; Sanderson, 2011).

Knight (2006) points out that the lack of faculty interests and involvement has become the greatest difficulty in internationalization implementation. Beelen and Leask (2010)

think academic staff are inevitable for international education. In Australia, academic staff receives considerable focus in internationalization (Webb, 2005; Leask, 2008). The academic staff internationalization reflects their culture and world view (Sanderson,2008). Lots of skills, English languages skills included, are necessary for academic staff (Beelens, 2007). In study programmes, there are exchanges among students, teachers, foreign languages, curriculum, etc. (Knight, 2004).

Besides teachers, staff is well discussed as the personnel involved in international education. The accountability and outcomes-based education emphasize the ability development of students and staff in internationalization (Knight, 2004). The further learning of self, culture, learning, literacy practice are necessary for staff (Frank, 1999).

#### 4. Methodology

This research was aimed to find out the behaviours of university teacher exchange in the university internationalization process, and a qualitative research through an exploratory survey was conducted. The sample members have been selected from people who have rich partnership experience, such as the top management staff with great vision, like the presidents, vice presidents, or the officers in charge of policy making from the government or departments, or the senior experts with rich partnership working experience in the universities. The initial plan of this exploratory research was to select respondents from over 50 universities or institutions, but some refused to participate for different kinds of reasons: some closely guard a secret, some messages failed to reach as the contact has changed, the positions has changed, some filled in the questionnaire carelessly, etc. In the end, the effective sample contained 30 people. Data were collected as follows: 19 people participated in individual interviews, and 11 people filled in a self-administered questionnaire sent by e-mail (7 people) or Wechat (4 people).

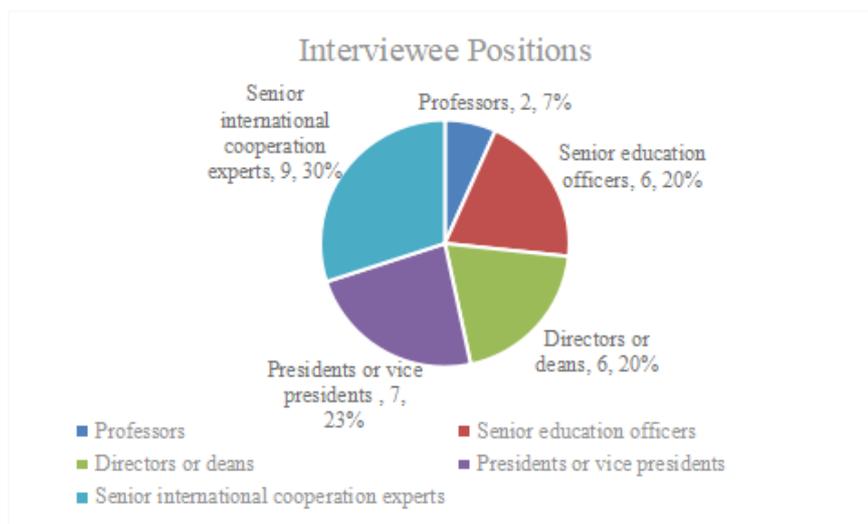


Fig.1. The sample structure by participants' position

The structure of the sample by the employers of the interviewed people is the following: one academic exchange centre, one international high school, one international company, five governmental agencies and twenty-two universities. According to the position of the interviewees, the structure consists of two professors, six senior education officers, six directors or deans, seven presidents or vice presidents and nine senior international cooperation experts (see Figure 1).

Regarding the country of origin of the participants, the sample contains one member from each of the following countries: United States, Finland, Indonesia, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Great Britain and Sweden, two from Canada, two from France, three from Switzerland, four from Germany and eleven from China.

The questionnaire used for data collection contained several open-ended questions about the university/institution, university internationalization importance, international cooperation success and failure, and international cooperation trend, paths and strategies, etc. It aims to conclude the university performance about teacher exchange in internationalization. The data were analysed using the Content Analysis in order to extract the main themes addressed by participants in their answers.

## 5. Results and Discussions

This section contains the major themes resulted from the answers provided by the sample members.

*The most successful experience of teacher exchanges in international cooperation between universities.*

In the interview, the questions “What do you think the international cooperation of universities includes” and “in terms of the importance of international cooperation, what do you think the ranking should be?” aim to summarize all the main international cooperation contents and their importance ranking. From the interview recordings, the university international cooperation includes: student training, degree programs, research cooperation, staff exchange, teachers and research platform, cooperative education program, students short term projects, student exchange, international academic conferences, teacher exchange, internship, academic visiting, international partnership, joint education for student, foreign experts/teachers, cultural exchange, foreign affairs exchange, joint publication, summer and winter program, teacher training, academic exchange, diversification, international activities cooperation, and dual degree program.

It shows that student exchange, staff /teacher exchange, research cooperation, cooperative education program, academic exchange are the top five contents in university international cooperation content importance ranking.

To further understand teacher exchange, the interview focused on the questions “In your understanding, what is the successful experience of teacher exchange in international cooperation between universities and colleges? What are the issues that need attention?”, and teacher exchange is the way that university partnership gets the deep understanding of each other’s education, teaching, research, management, culture, which is the window and channel of continuous cooperation. In the interview records, it

finds out that the successful experience mainly relies on three parts: teacher, university, project.

In a successful teacher exchange in international cooperation, the teacher should have self-development needs fulfilled, respect their culture and habits, be immersed in exchange, broadening understandings of teaching and research methods.

The global values and awareness plays a great role for teacher to decide to exchange, and it should be in line with the university strategy.

*“As a teacher, we should put our values and awareness of global challenges at the heart of our decision-making, our interactions with students, our programmatic and partnership choices; enable students to integrate global perspectives in their career paths, in their teaching, in their research and in their daily actions. And the first thing is that we should ensure that teachers are given recognition for their teaching and training activities based on our university’s agreement and in line with the institutional strategy.”* —Vice President in a university, France.

Exchange results oriented help carry out teacher exchange, and the exchange experience in a key of exchange success or failure.

*“The successful experience of teacher exchange in international cooperation means that the international teaching experience will produce results once the academic is back to his/her home university, in incorporating intercultural and international dimensions into the curriculum, teaching, research and extracurricular activities at the home university. Some of the aspects that need attention, in order to facilitate the best teacher experience, are the professional and national cultural differences, as, sometimes, they can cause misunderstandings.”* — director of international office, Romania.

Teacher is well connected with students in the international exchanges, so that teacher-student relationship becomes crucial in the international teacher exchange.

*“As a teacher, what drives me right now, well, I think, as a teacher, the respectability, you are very focused on yourself, as you teach you will know it is not about you, it is about the students that you get involved with. Which means that you become more flexible and feel more conformable, it is about inspiring students to find the answers by themselves. Then you gradually become a better teacher.”*—Senior international cooperation expert, UK.

In a successful teacher exchange in international cooperation, the university should provide funding support, clear responsibilities and rights, have university policy support, take professional position encouragement, have diversification of the teaching staff, try to help teachers connect with overseas university tutors and establish academic platforms, find the qualified teacher who have time and interests in exchange and the results will be great, set up management by objectives and evaluate visiting performance.

The advantageous projects are the good choice for teacher exchange, and the problems and misunderstanding also deserve attention.

*“Through the exchange of teachers, colleges and universities gain from each other’s learning, find their own positioning and continue to forge ahead in the advantageous projects. It is necessary to pay attention to the problem that the cooperative institutions should enhance understanding, do not cause unnecessary misunderstanding, and effectively improve the efficiency of cooperation.”* —Senior international cooperation expert, China.

In a successful teacher exchange in international cooperation, the teacher exchange project should be long-term regular exchange, cost-effective, low cost, high revenue, bringing about the diversification of instruction methods, making the teacher exchange a fruitful activity in the university internationalization.

Language and teaching environment are the factors that deserve university focus, as they will impact the overall results of teacher exchange.

*“Usually we would like to invite our partner university's teachers to come to our university to teach for a year or two. However, except teaching Chinese, they need to have good English proficiency to deliver the class. Furthermore, there is a teaching environment and payment issue for us if we send our teachers to our Chinese partner university to teach.”* —Vice president in a university, South Korea.

The research also shows that language skills, social skills, knowledge and skills on the specific subject area, cultural differences and food differences become the issues in teacher exchange, which need a good selection for exchanges, training, and partner university support to solve the issues.

## 6. Conclusion

With the acceleration of internationalization, the opening of education to the outside world has become an inevitable trend in the development of universities. By introducing excellent overseas teachers, sending teachers to study abroad and participating in international academic exchanges, colleges and universities can effectively improve the internationalization level of teachers, and thus improve the overall teaching level and scientific research ability of the school. To manage the teacher exchange in university internationalization and solve the existing issues/problems, some specific activities are proposed.

Proposed specific activities:

- A1. Recruitment and selection: develop strategies to attract and select talents with international background, such as enhancing the internationalization of campus recruitment, participating in international academic exchange activities, setting up overseas talent scholarships, etc.
- A2. Training and development: establish an international training system for teachers, and provide training courses in foreign languages, cross-cultural communication, international studies, etc. Encourage teachers to participate in international academic conferences and carry out international cooperative research to improve the internationalization level of teachers.
- A3. Evaluation and incentive: establish an international teacher evaluation system, incorporate teachers' international achievements into the evaluation system, and encourage teachers to actively participate in the opening up of education. At the same time, a corresponding reward mechanism will be established to commend teachers and teams that have outstanding performance in the opening up of education.
- A4. Academic exchange and cooperation: actively participate in international academic exchange activities and establish stable cooperative relations with international

counterparts. Teachers are encouraged to participate in international research cooperation projects to enhance the international academic influence of the school.

- A5. Institutional guarantee and support: establish the corresponding institutional guarantee and support system to ensure the effective implementation of the manpower strategy. It includes the formulation of international talent training plans, the improvement of teacher evaluation system, and the optimization of student exchange and cooperative school-running processes. At the same time, the necessary financial support and management services should be provided to ensure the smooth progress of education opening to the outside world.

The successful experience and proposed activities are summarized upon respondents' management and practice experience, providing valuable consideration for university internationalization, and will be further developed in time.

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