Editorial

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Abstract

This issue collects six papers which investigate ongoing challenges and developments in Chinese higher education. It publishes papers from emerging researchers who chart contemporary directions in research and practice relating to institutional governance and philanthropy, the changing identity of university leaders and teachers, the formation of liberal arts and business studies curriculum. The papers focus on education in China and abroad, and offer cross-national and intercultural perspectives of high relevance in a changing world.

Keywords

governance – philanthropy – educator identity – curriculum

Contexts Shaping Change

The flourishing grow and diversification of higher education in China opens myriad areas in need of research and development. These areas span the spectrum, from hefty matters associated with governance, substantial matters around curriculum reform, and nuanced topics to do with the identity
of teachers, leaders and institutions. There is a vast and expanding literature about these matters in Chinese, and *IJCE* extends an excellent vehicle for engaging a broader audience. To this end, this issue collects six papers which investigate ongoing challenges and developments in Chinese higher education.

The first article by Xintong Lu examines the development of female leaders in Chinese universities. The author works from 21 interviews to build insights into the challenges faced by women in educational leadership and the facilitators of female educational leadership roles in Chinese universities. The findings reveal that women in educational leadership in Chinese universities are facing a wide range of challenges, and that female leaders tend to be effective in resolving conflict. Lu also points to the necessary of introducing more rigid legislation and policy by the government to establish a truly equal position. Addressing these matters is essential to enhance the gender balance of university leaders. This is a topic of global importance, and it is instructive to learn about the Chinese experience and perspectives for development. The case study insights are intrinsically interesting and informative on their own. The findings are relevant not just for China or Asia, but for all higher education systems.

The second article by Leping Mou examines the concept and essence of liberal arts education as reflected in the curriculum of the Christian universities through a qualitative methodology employing archival document analysis. This article provides historical analysis on century-old formations of Chinese higher education, then interplays this insight into contemporary interest and reforms in liberal arts education. The article offers unique perspectives on current interest in China and globally on introducing forms of education which move well beyond training in functional skills and instead embrace broader forms of talent cultivation. The latter necessarily requires a much broader view on students and education. This paper brings into contemporary view insights from earlier and formative epochs of Chinese higher education.

Hongmei Sziegat and Chengwen Hong shift the issue’s focus to another topic of contemporary relevance, the nature of fundraising and philanthropy in Chinese universities, giving particular focus to foundations. The paper works from an interesting international framework on philanthropic fundraising models, looks at developments in Chinese universities, analyses policy, and looks and challenges and strategies for development. Building from their in-depth analysis, the paper contributes strategies for philanthropic fundraising by Chinese universities.

In the next paper Chang Da Wan, Molly N.N. Lee, Morshidi Sirat and Wen Zhuo Heng explore notions of identify and governance, this time with respect to Chinese community-based higher education institutions in Malaysia. The
Editorial

This issue of the International Journal of Chinese Education contains several articles that focus on important contemporary challenges and opportunities facing Chinese higher education. The papers in this issue, written by Taha Javaid, Klaus Solberg Söilen, Gaetan Massebeuf, Thi Bao Quynh Le, Anamarija Medunic, Cynthia M. Douglas, and other authors, explore various aspects of Chinese education, both at home and abroad. The articles address topics such as the growth of Chinese education, the identity of teachers and leaders, fundraising and business training, and historical facets of curriculum and governance.

The first article, by Taha Javaid, Klaus Solberg Söilen, Gaetan Massebeuf, Thi Bao Quynh Le, and Anamarija Medunic, delves into the case studies of three private Chinese community higher education institutions in Malaysia. It examines the Chinese identity in this context, the history and operations of these institutions, and the implications for governance and development. The paper reveals unique facets of hybrid institutions which are very interesting to discover, and as well contribute novel insights of growing relevance given the regional and global expansion of Chinese higher education.

Together, Taha Javaid, Klaus Solberg Söilen, Gaetan Massebeuf, Thi Bao Quynh Le, and Anamarija Medunic extend analysis of the growth of Chinese education, this time with respect to differences in characteristics between Chinese and Western MBA programs. MBA programs in China have flourished, but how do they compare in terms of process, experience, quality and outcomes? How are they different, and what commonalities might be expected? Through comparative case study analysis, the paper unpacks contemporary weaknesses and opportunities for strengthening and diversification. The authors elaborate a theoretical framework proposed by Kolachi and drawing on selected empirical data from faculties, students and employers to highlight weakness prevailing in Chinese MBA programs. The findings show that Chinese business schools differ significantly to Western schools in terms of resources, capabilities and fundamental cultural philosophies. The data shows that although students satisfied with Chinese MBA programs, there is scope to redesign curriculum in ways that would enhance confidence in the programs. This kind of analysis aligns well with China’s Double First Class Policy which seeks diversification, contextualisation and quality enhancement.

The final paper by Cynthia M. Douglas taps again into Chinese identity, this time in terms of what culturally responsive teaching means for a teacher who is a member of a minority community of ethnic Chinese in Glodok (Chinatown) in Indonesia. It unpacks the experience of a single Chinese-Indonesian teacher. Implications which flow from the paper go to culturally responsive teaching, teacher identity, and the need for distinct forms of teacher training. Through these, the study makes points which advance practical understanding of intercultural education and specifically with respect to Chinese and Indonesian cultures, and which advance research on identity, Asian and Chinese education, and teaching.

These articles all focus on important contemporary challenges and opportunities facing Chinese higher education. As these brief reviews convey, the papers focus on Chinese education at home and abroad, on topics of emerging relevance to higher education in general, on globalisation and diaspora, on the identity of teachers and leaders, on fundraising and business training, and on historical facets of curriculum and governance. A core feature of these
articles is their nuanced and informed use of individual and institutional case study methods, which is a nice juxtaposition to the quantitative studies often featured in IJCE.

The articles were all submitted with a view to using IJCE as a platform to advance understanding of these issues and promoting further research and discussion. Notably, they all involve current or recent top-level graduate students, bringing fresh voices to this research field and helping a new generation of scholars flourish. Many of these scholars are Chinese who have engaged in graduate study abroad, bringing unique comparative insights into emerging epistemologies, practices, opportunities, and qualities.

The editors offer many thanks to the authors, reviewers and members of the editorial board for their ongoing contributions. Scholarship relies on such contribution.