

Academic Exchange between Taiwan and China: A Preliminary Results of National Taiwan University

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Abstract

This paper aimed to investigate the internationalization practices at the National Taiwan University (NTU) as representative of higher education institutions in Taiwan. In particular, it focused on the Chinese scholarly relations between Taiwanese scholars and their counterparts in mainland China and other countries. The authors of this paper attempted to initiate a dialogue about what it means for NTU scholars to be in a Chinese professoriate and to interact with other mainland and Chinese scholars. It explored NTU scholars' perceived patterns and approaches of cooperation, and issues and challenges in the social interaction with mainland and Chinese scholars in a similar albeit different academic culture and discourse. The authors hope that the practical findings from the realities of the 14 interviewees at the NTU could add to the knowledge base for better understanding of the practices of Taiwanese higher education faculty in international partnerships with mainland and other overseas Chinese scholars. The findings indicate that an increasingly reverse discrepancy among Taiwanese and Chinese academic qualifications and talents has aroused some concerns among the NTU participants. As China's economy progresses, higher education quality improves, and so the academics and students. A sense of anxiety and worry about the declining academic funding and quality in Taiwan is common among NTU participants when comparing with their Chinese counterparts.

Introduction

Literature on internationalization of higher education with an emphasis on academic exchange has a long interest in the structures and practices of Western higher education in, namely European countries, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (for example, Daly & Barker,2005;Eldridge & Wilson,2003;Meiras,2004;Peters,2003;Rizvi & Walsh, 1998;Robertson &

Webber,2000;Saffu & Mamman,1999; Wilson & Robertson,1998,2003,2004) Issues of this phenomenon in the South-East Asia have traditionally been underrepresented. Recently, there is a growing interest in understanding the greater Chinese society, including Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and Singapore, and in developing comparative education research in the Chinese context (Bray & Qin, 2001;Harding,1995).A number of scholars have endeavored in investigating the practices and outcome of change initiatives on higher education in Singapore, Hong Kong and China (for example,Chan & Postiglione,1996;Gopinathan,2001; Mok & Lee 2000; Mok & Tan,2004; Mok & Welch,2003;Ngok & Kwang,2003; Post,2003; Sanderson,2002; Selvaratnam,1994).However, little has been known about the practices and impacts of change on higher education in Taiwan. Meanwhile, the call for regional cooperation among higher education institutions within and beyond the Asia region has widely extended in the academia. For Taiwan professoriate, cooperation and interaction between Taiwan, and mainland / other Chinese scholars plays a major role in aligning with the institution's goal for internationalization, and in achieving the synergy and win-win situation in teaching and research development (Ho,2008).

This paper aimed to investigate the internationalization practices at the National Taiwan University (NTU) as representative of higher education institutions in Taiwan. In particular, it focused on the Chinese scholarly relations between Taiwanese scholars and their counterparts in mainland China and other countries. The authors of this paper attempted to initiate a dialogue about what it means for NTU scholars to be in a Chinese professoriate and to interact with other mainland and Chinese scholars. It explored NTU scholars' perceived patterns and approaches of cooperation, and issues and challenges in the social interaction with mainland and Chinese scholars in a similar albeit different academic culture and discourse. The authors hope that the practical findings from the realities of the 14 interviewees at the NTU could add to the knowledge base for better understanding of the practices of Taiwanese higher education faculty in international partnerships with mainland and other overseas Chinese scholars.