

# Development of Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools in Private Colleges and Universities

**Bei Chen**

*Hunan International Economics University, 410000, China*

**ABSTRACT.** *Private colleges and universities are an important part of higher education in China. The development of Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools is an effective way for colleges and universities to introduce high-quality educational resources and hence improve the quality of education. However, there are still many problems in current development of Sino-foreign cooperative education. This paper will summarize the status quo and development characteristics of Chinese-foreign cooperative education in our private institutes, analyzing the difficulties that China-foreign cooperative education faces and putting forward strategic development countermeasures.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Private universities; Sino-foreign cooperative education; Strategy*

## **1. Introduction**

### ***1.1 Status of Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools***

Relevant statistics show that there are currently more than 80 private colleges and universities in China participating in Sino-foreign cooperative education, especially in the central and eastern regions of China, where there are many private universities[1]. Zhengjiang Province was ranked the first, with 15 projects run by 10 universities. The number of projects run in Heilongjiang and Guangdong was also comparatively large, with about 10 or so. There were 8 in Hubei Province and other provinces. 203 majors are run by these Chinese universities and their foreign partners cooperatively and most of them are in economics.

### ***1.2 Characteristics of Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools***

As of 2017, the Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run institutions established or held by our private universities accounted for 6.4% of the national colleges and universities, but the total number of private colleges and universities accounted for 28.8% of the total number of colleges and universities nationwide[2]. It can be seen

that the development of Sino-foreign cooperative education in private colleges is relatively small, which is obviously inconsistent with its status in China's higher education. In addition, the Chinese-foreign cooperative education of public colleges generally takes the undergraduate level as the main body, and the graduate level also has a certain scale. By comparison, the Sino-foreign cooperative education of private colleges and universities is mainly based on specialties. The graduate level only breaks through the blank situation. In general, the overall level of running schools for privately-run colleges and universities is low, and there is still much room for development[3].

The Sino-foreign cooperative education projects and institutions held by private universities are mainly economics, accounting for 49.3% [4]. As for the professional setting of Chinese-foreign cooperative education in private colleges, it is generally concentrated on the professions with faster market returns. The professional setting of Sino-foreign cooperative education in private colleges and universities is basically the same as that of public colleges and universities. It has not been set up for its own situation, and even the same profession has been set up between the same private colleges and different foreign universities.

## **2. The Dilemma of Chinese-Foreign Cooperative Education in Our National Colleges and Universities**

### ***2.1 Contradiction between Private Universities and Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Aims of Running Schools***

In the development of private colleges and universities in China, the basic feature of private education is to invest in running schools, which is essentially different from the donation of schools in Western countries. China's private colleges and universities have very strong market behavior and will be guided by market logic, an investment behavior that meets market demand to obtain economic benefits. Nevertheless, Sino-foreign cooperative education is a form of cross-border education, which belongs to the category of education service trade in the international arena, and according to China's relevant rules and regulations, Chinese-foreign cooperative education institutions are not allowed to engage in for-profit projects. The balance of the project should continue to be used in education project and teaching activities and improve the school environment. However, the investment of private colleges and universities in China at this stage determines that the nature of running a school will inevitably have a profit-seeking appeal.

### ***2.2 Economic Dilemma***

Currently, there is no financial aid system for private education from local and state government, which leads to the lack of funds in most private colleges and universities. As a consequence, they generally focus on one-time investment, with

tuition as the main source of income. This phenomenon has also led to the fragile capital chain of most private colleges, and even in the course of operations.

China's private colleges and universities are generally under these three kinds of situations in terms of economic funds: one is that they can't make ends meet for the capital is insolvent; the second is debt-running; and the third is basically balanced in terms of revenue and expenditure, but lacks a large amount of developmental funds. In the case of relatively tight funding for running schools, private colleges and universities tend to believe that it is unrealistic to complete Chinese-foreign cooperative education by raising students' tuition fees, because the tuition fees of private colleges are several times that of ordinary ones. Such a move will inevitably have a negative impact.

### ***2.3 The State and School Lack the Cognition of Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Running a School***

According to the survey, most private colleges and universities have limited understanding of cross-border education due to the diverse characteristics of this kind of education. Leaders and teachers of these private institutes generally do not have a clear understanding of what cross-border education means. Some scholars believe that as long as they cooperate with foreign schools, they are Sino-foreign cooperative schools. Some private colleges and universities are engaged in Sino-foreign cooperation in enrollment. However, in fact, some of the projects are overseas internships, short-term visits to the school, and even some of the school's study abroad program has not been approved by the national and local education administration.

As for local and state government, although they can realize the significance of cross-border education for increasing educational quality, the support from them is not sufficient, especially for private universities. The access system for Sino-foreign cooperative education project in China is strict. Supervision from educational administration is strict, too. Consequently, private universities has low interest in Sino-foreign cooperative education, which is also the direct reason for the unsatisfactory development of Sino-foreign cooperative education in these universities.

## **3. Countermeasures for the Development of Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools in China's Private Colleges and Universities**

### ***3.1 Implement the Classification Management of Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education***

There is an inherent contradiction between the public welfare and profitability of education, but this does not mean that private colleges cannot be profitable by holding Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools. For example, in the process of operation, the government can absorb some private capital into education. And the

newly revised “Education Law” also clearly states that schools and educational institutions that are organized or participated in financial funds, donated by inheritance, may not be established as for-profit organizations, which also clarifies the legitimacy of private colleges' profit-seeking demands from the legal level. Therefore, in the specific operation process, the state should strengthen the management of cooperative education as soon as possible. Government finance can be inclined to private education, and the non-profit should be clarified when holding Sino-foreign cooperative education in private universities.

### ***3.2 Increase government's Funding Policy Support***

Although private universities have decades of development in China and are of great significance to the formation and development of China's higher education system, there is a widespread phenomenon of discrimination against private universities in the society. The government should correct the public's misunderstanding of private colleges and universities by promoting the orderly development of private education.

As has mentioned above, lack of funding and financial support system from the government have been the main reasons that cause the insufficient development of Sino-foreign cooperation projects in private universities. Most of them are confronted with the problems of single source of funds, poor school hardware, and unqualified teachers, which will inevitably impact the development of the projects negatively. To promote the sustainable development and ensure the stable development of cross-border education in private colleges, government should give certain economic and policy, for example, providing policy support in the application guidance of cooperative education, tax reduction and exemption, and financial subsidies.

### ***3.3 Introduce Excellent Foreign Educational Resources***

The teaching quality of Sino-foreign cooperative education is the lifeline for the sustainable development of Sino-foreign cooperation projects in private universities. If the quality of the projects cannot be guaranteed, Sino-foreign cooperative education will lose its significance. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the introduction of excellent foreign educational resources and improve utilization.

First of all, private colleges and universities must clarify the characteristics of high-quality educational resources, and in the process of introduction, they must combine these with the characteristics of their own. Secondly, in the process of introduction, the ideological understanding of domestic scholars should be changed. In cooperative education, private colleges and universities should pay special attention to the concepts of foreign universities, such as the concept of running a school, personnel training mechanism, teaching methods and internal management systems, constantly improving their own school-running level, and at the same time, maintaining their own school-running characteristics and school-running status. Also,

private universities should adapt to the needs of local and regional economic and social development by adjusting the teaching materials and methods. Lastly, judging from the current development situation, the strength of private colleges is far less than that of public schools. Therefore, when cooperating in running schools, they should avoid overlapping with the disciplines of public schools. It is necessary to highlight their own characteristics and create a situation of sustainable development.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In developing Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools in private universities, both the government and the institutes have a role to play. The state should take measures to promote the classification management of Sino-foreign cooperative education, and provide economic and policy support as well. The private universities should make full use of the educational resources from their foreign partners and improve the quality of the cooperative projects. When both sides work together, the healthy, long-term and sustainable development of Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools in private universities can be achieved.

#### **Acknowledgement**

Project supported by the Scientific Research Program of Hunan International Economics University (Grant No. 2016A02).

#### **References**

- [1] Jin-Hui L, Zhi-Ping L (2017). Importing quality higher educational resources through Chinese-foreign cooperation in running school. *US-China Education Review*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 1-8.
- [2] Meiqiong, Qin (2019). Analysis of the Status Quo and Suggested Policy Adjustments for Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools. *Chinese Education & Society*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 54-67.
- [3] Zhu J Z, Yuan C S, Guo P, et al (2018). Data Mining Research Based on Analysis of the Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools. *Applied Mechanics and Materials*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 376-381.
- [4] Minxuan Z. *New Era* (2019), *New Policy: Cross-Border Education and Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools in the Eyes of a Fence-Sitter*. *Chinese Education & Society*, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 23-40.