
Guest editorial: Transnationalization of higher education: challenges and opportunities

In the last few years, higher education development has been significantly affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This global health crisis has affected not only international student mobility but also international and/or cross-border collaborations among higher education institutions and/or universities. Meanwhile, the intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has driven the phenomenal transformations of higher education teaching, student learning, research knowledge transfer and wider engagements across multiple sectors. The growing popularity of adoption of technology, AI and other forms of machine learning devices has shaped higher education developments across various parts of the globe, though such technological transformations have intensified the digital divide globally.

This special issue sets out against the broader policy context highlighted above to critically examine how institutions in Asia have responded to the global health crisis by creating and/or developing alternative learning experiences for students who would choose transnational higher education programs or study at university campuses offering transnational learning experiences through internationalization at home. When going through the global health crisis, together with the impact of the geo-politics on the internationalization of higher education, international research reveals changing patterns of international student mobility. Confronting with the worsening Sino-foreign relations, different international studies show students and parents in China and Asia place top priority on personal safety and security when choosing destinations for overseas studies. Fearing the “health risk” or “personal security” because of the cultural discrimination resulting from the differences when managing the global health crisis, some students and families would have chosen transnational higher education programs as higher learning alternatives.

This special issue selects six articles to examine how transnational higher education has further developed against the global health crisis context. A few key issues are being identified when critically discussing the challenges and development opportunities of transnational higher education in Asia. Central to the debates issues are related to quality assurance issues, student learning matters and governance of transnational higher education programs and campuses. Discussions focus not only on the China mainland experience but also on development trends and challenges in other parts of Asia like Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and the United Kingdom. We hope the discussions and analysis offered by this Special Issue would deepen our understanding of transnational higher education and make contributions to the literature of cross-cultural education and international education through partnership and collaboration.

List of selected articles

When infrastructures collide: transnational higher education and Chinese international students’ (im)mobility in the pandemic era



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Transnationalization of higher education in China and Asia: quality assurance and students' learning experiences

Pedagogical relationships in short-term study abroad programmes: exploring the role of consumer identity in collaborative learning among Chinese students in the UK

Building capacity and status through transnational joint doctoral programs: a case study in China

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Revisiting quality assurance and qualification recognition of cross-border higher education during pandemic – Does physical mobility matter from an Asian perspective?

Is internationalization abroad a prerequisite for university students' intercultural competence development?

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