

MODERN WORLD TRENDS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: CHINA

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The article analyzes the trends that are typical for the current stage of development of higher education. They are divided into two large groups, according to the factors that affect their formation. The article also investigates the relationship which can be found between these trends. The author also reviews the possible impact of these trends on the further development of the system of higher education. The presence of these trends in China is considered as a part of the China's integration in the world's international economic relations process.

Key words: system of tertiary education, PRC, international economic relations, massification, globalization.

СУЧАСНІ СВІТОВІ ТРЕНДИ У ВИЩІЙ ОСВІТІ: КИТАЙ

Стаття аналізує тренди, що є типовими для сучасного стану розвитку вищої освіти. Вони поділені на дві групи відповідно до тих факторів, що впливають на їх формування. В статті також досліджуються зв'язки між цими трендами. Автор статті розглядає можливий вплив цих трендів на майбутній розвиток системи вищої освіти. Наявність світових трендів у системі вищої освіти в КНР розглядається як частина складного процесу інтеграції КНР у систему міжнародних економічних відношень.

Ключові слова: система вищої освіти, КНР, міжнародні економічні відносини, масифікація, глобалізація.

СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ МИРОВЫЕ ТРЕНДЫ В ВЫСШЕМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ: КИТАЙ

Статья «Современные тренды в высшем образовании: Китай» анализирует тренды, которые являются типичными для современного состояния развития высшего образования. Они разделены на две группы в соответствии с теми факторам, которые влияют на их формирование. В статье также исследуются связи между этими трендами. Автор статьи рассматривает возможное влияние этих трендов на будущее развитие системы высшего образования. Наличие мировых трендов в системе высшего образования в КНР рассматривается как часть сложного процесса интеграции КНР в систему международных экономических отношений.

Ключевые слова: система высшего образования, КНР, международные экономические отношения, масификация, глобализация.

Problem formulation. An academic revolution that has been transforming the higher education for the last several decades can be characterised by such two features as its scale and diversity. It results in forming new and intensifying existing trends in tertiary education, bringing it on the new level of existence. Taking into account the growing influence of the tertiary education on all the spheres of man's economic and scientific activity, these trends indirectly affect numerous the international economic relations.

As for the unsolved part of the problem we consider the PRC's participation in tertiary education trends and the further influence of the tertiary education on the international economic relations. The purpose of the study is to analyze trends typical for the tertiary education and their typicalness for the PRC.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. The paper analyzes the latest works and papers of eastern and western scientists and researchers, such as Yao Amber Li, John Whalley, Shunming Zhang, Xiliang Zhao, Golikov A.P. and some others, reports made by the UNESCO, the UNO, HoF Wittenburgand and some research centres as the Boston Consulting Group.

Formulation of the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to deduce the relationship between the growing influence of financial and social factors on the modern trends that can be found in the modern system of tertiary education.

Main material. In general one can consider that education is a 'transfer of knowledge and information which main goal the implementation of educational tasks' or 'the process and the result of mastering a system of scientific scholarship and practical skills' [3, p. 117; 4, p. 4]. Numerous trends appearing in higher education and caused by the academic revolution can be concerned with the main trend which is the trend of massification. On one hand, the tertiary education system (TES) is to meet the growing demand. But on the other hand, it has to correspond with the growing specialization. Modern societies of the developed countries are transforming from industrial to knowledge societies which means that "social realities are being shaped by knowledge-based processes and reflective enlightenment" [8]. It means that the very TES is under different transformations caused by numerous factors.

The increasing role of the People's Republic of China in modern international economic relations leads to the growth of the impact of its educational system. The tertiary education in PRC has played a significant role in the further development of the country, including economic, scientific and social aspects. So the problem of educational quality upgrading was highlighted in both the 10th (2001 – 2005) and 11th (2006-2010) five-year plans [2]. It is also used as a way of expanding PRC's global influence through providing scholarships to students all over the world [6, p. 197-200].

According to the study by HoF Wittenburg (Institut fuer Hochschulforschung an der Martin-Luther-Universitaet Halle-Wittenberg) commissioned by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture there are "five main transformations or trends that can be considered as global" [8]. As for the Boston Consulting Group they also shape out five global trends but of a more economic or even financial type

[17]. Though some of these trends can be considered as similar, some of them differ greatly, which made it possible for us to divide them in two main groups according to the factors that determine and influence them (see Pic.1).

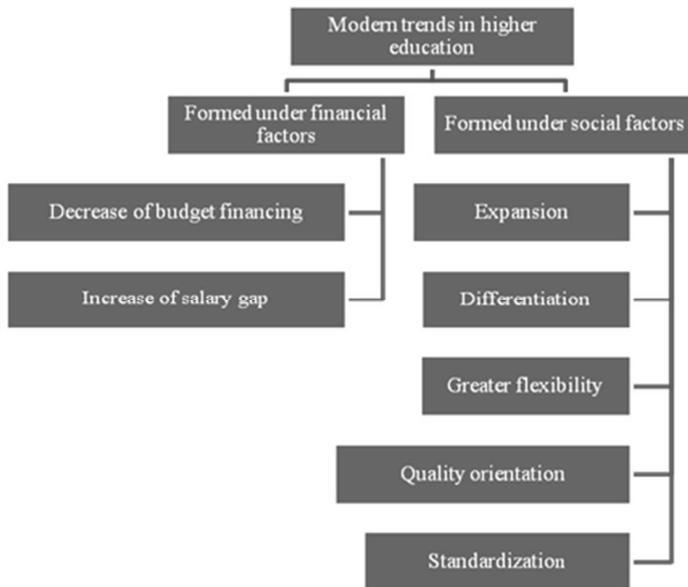
As we can see from the pic. 1 nowadays trends are tightly connected with those processes that take place in the world economy and human society in general (e.g. deepening income inequality, differentiation, growth of flexibility, standardization etc.) [11, 20].

As we said before we divided them into two general groups according to the main factors that influence these trends.

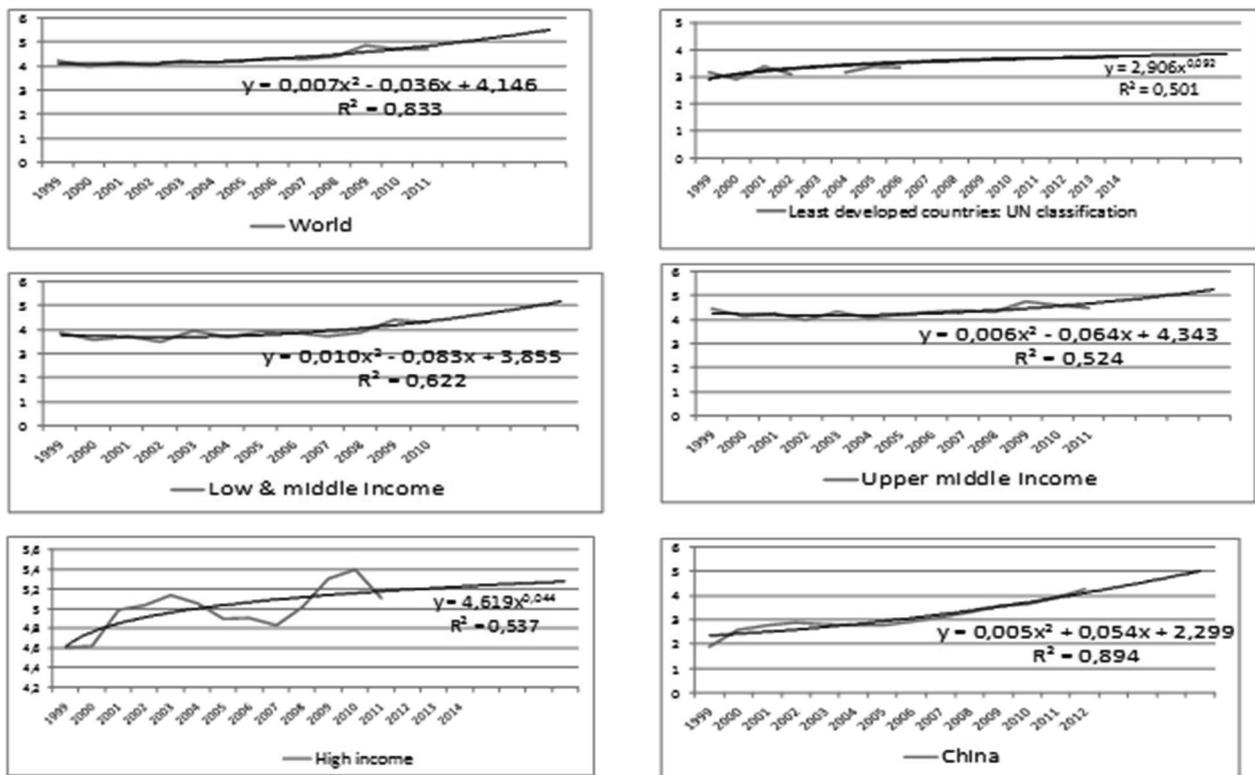
As for financial factors we consider those concerned with money. We suppose that these factors matter greatly for the development of the tertiary education. And the main target of the TES in the country's scale is assimilating "the available knowledge" and building "comparative advantages in areas with good growth prospects" [9].

The problem of insufficient budget funding is becoming burning issue (Pic. 2).

As we can see from the picture, this is almost equal for all the groups of the countries and does not differ significantly from the world average. The country showing a really big growth in expenditure on the education according to the graphic is China. But still it does not exceed the world average. Such a slow increase means that "the task of funding



Pic. 1. Two main groups of global modern trends in higher education. Made by the author [8; 17]



Pic. 2. Government expenditure on education, % of GDP. Made by the author [6, 10]

educational institutions is becoming increasingly difficult" for developing countries because of the youth population growth. And "even for developed countries it means that public universities with a high-level dependence on state funding will meet severe difficulties in covering their costs" [7].

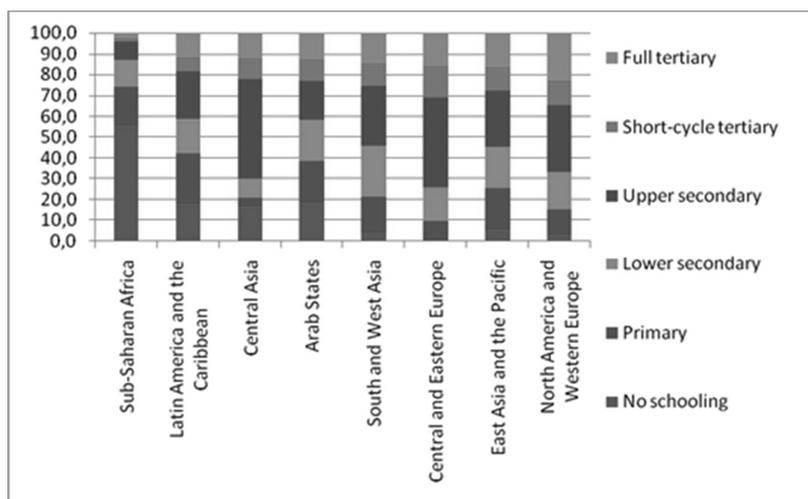
Another financial trend is concerned with rising demands for a greater return on investment in higher education. K. Porter in her article "The Value of the College Degree" notices that the return on investment is high, as "college graduates have much higher earnings and lower unemployment rates, on average, than people with a lower-level degree or diploma" [13]. Furthermore, according to Pew Research Center and its research studies the importance of higher education published in 2014, "unemployment rate among low-skilled professionals is two or three times higher (around 12%) than among medium- and high-skilled professionals (less than 4%)" [16].

So despite any negative trends the share of people who get the tertiary education is growing. The incensement of the share of highly-qualified labour force means the expansion of the higher education.

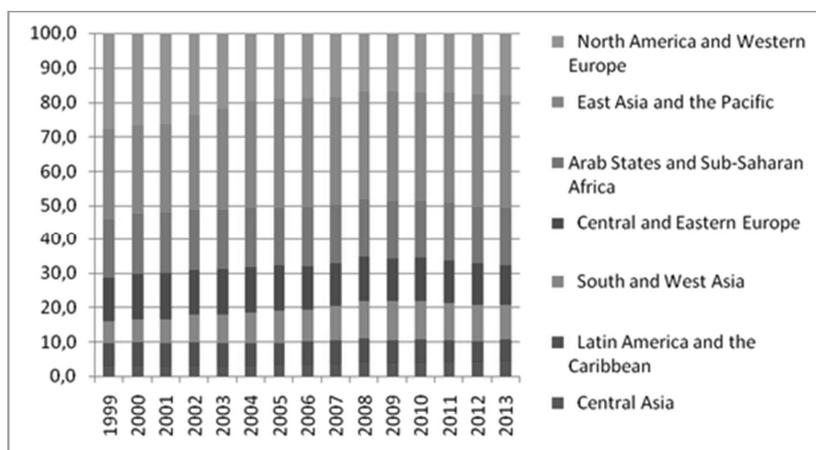
As we can see from pic. 3, the share of people with full tertiary education is almost the same (around 12%) for all the regions except for North America and Western Europe (with the highest rate of more than 20 %) with the exception for Sub-Saharan countries (with extremely low rate of less than 5%). So, the main feature of this trend is its independence from the level of society's economic development.

Another side of expansion is the globalization of education. These two features are tightly connected, as the expansion of the tertiary education is also based on students' increasing mobility (Pic.4). It is also becoming a new source of financing for some universities as a substitution to "lost state aid, since these students pay full tuition" [14].

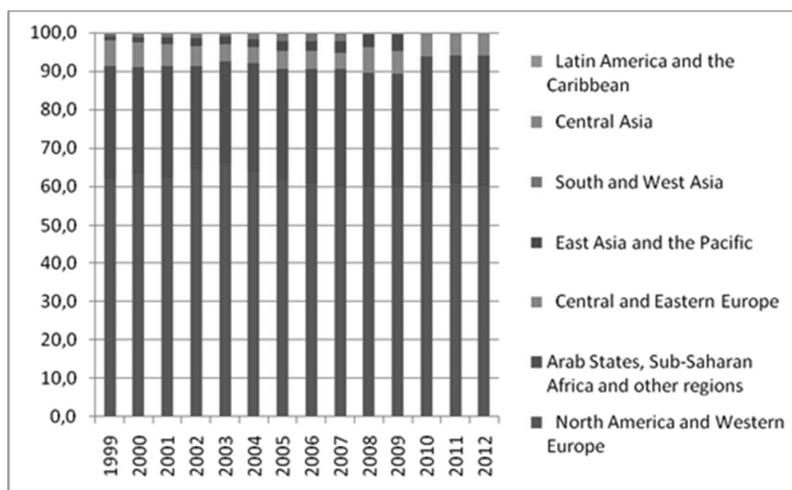
As we can see from the graphic, the countries with the most part of the students studying abroad were those situated in North America and Western Europe (almost 30% of all the students in the beginning of 2000-s), but since 2000-s their share has been decreasing (less than 20% in 2013) which means that the share of these two



Pic. 3. Educational structure of population aged 25 and older. Made by the author [1, 18]



Pic. 4. The part of outbound students. Made by the author [18]



Pic. 5. The part of inbound students. Made by the author [18]

regions has reduced by half. This happened on the background of the growing popularity of the countries in East Asia and Pacific region – from about 25% in 2000 to more than 30% in 2013.

The share of all other regions has been almost static for the last decade.

As we can see from pic. 4, the most popular countries where students head for are the countries of North America and Western Europe. Their share has been fluctuating around 60% for the last decade, but still does not decrease much. Quite interesting that more than 20% of students studying abroad want to study in such countries as Arab states, Sub-Saharan countries etc. Countries of Eastern Europe are of a small popularity among students studying abroad, as their share is less than 10%. As it is shown on Pic.4, such regions as South, West or Central Asia or Latin America are not popular among those who study abroad.

Another side of expansion is the differentiation. The growing number of students means that higher education must meet increasing number of different social requirements.

Apart from providing scientific training in a given subject, study programmes must meet differentiated social requirements and convey technical skills which higher education has not offered so far. Concurrently, higher education institutions are to respond to the differentiating demand for higher education by offering course programmes beyond the mainstream. This leads to formation of another trend – greater flexibility [5].

The Greater-Flexibility-Trend means that the disappearance of traditional professional patterns and growing individualization call for a multiplication of study options. New business and delivery models are gaining traction. Institutions are providing alternatives to traditional degrees, including accelerated three-year degrees, industry accreditations etc.

On the delivery side, online programs, particularly hybrids that blend online and face-to-face learning, offer traditional brick-and-mortar institutions significant opportunities [17].

According to the Ambient Insight report devoted to the World Market for Self-Paced eLearning Products and Services: 2010-2015, Asia is the region with the highest growth rates worldwide (almost 30%) though its expenditures are the second highest after North America (less than 5%). Inside the Asia region India "has the largest growth rate followed by China and Malaysia". With their high growth rates of self-paced eLearning, India (almost 60%), China (more than 50%) and Malaysia (more than 40%) are not only the leaders in the region, but also world leaders [15].

Finally, many educational institutions have a digital footprint abroad, making courses accessible to students wherever they live and whenever they want to learn, making this trend a basis for further globalization.

But at the same time it means that the universities are becoming more quality orientated. So, expansion, differentiation, and greater flexibility presuppose and bring about new approaches to quality assurance in higher education. The need to generate general social and political acceptance for higher education services, stakeholder expectations, supply-driven control of demand for higher education, the requirements of curricular development, as well as performance assessment of teaching-learning processes result in new forms of quality assurance, quality documentation, and evaluation being implemented.

One of the consequences of globalization is standardization. This trend is taking place not only in the context of the current European-wide introduction of modular and tiered study programmes prompted by the Bologna process. It is a world-wide process, supported by the United Nation Organisation [18, 19]

Summary and the prospects for further research in the area.

An academic revolution that has been transforming the higher education for the last several decades can be characterised by such two features as its scale and diversity. It results in forming new and intensifying existing trends in tertiary education, that bring it on the new level of existence. Though some of these trends can be considered as similar, some of them differ greatly, which made it possible for us to divide them in two main groups according to the factors (financial and social) that determine and influence them.

The increasing role of the People's Republic of China in modern international economic relations leads to the growth of the impact of its educational system. The tertiary education in PRC has not only played a significant role in the further development of the country, including economic, scientific and social aspects. But it is also used as a way of expanding PRC's global influence through providing scholarships to students all over the world.

So, as we can see from all said above, China is balancing between following the mainstream in higher education and searching for its own way

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