

A comparative analysis of the impact of higher education internationalization on the employment competitiveness of graduates in China and the United States

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Abstract. Against the backdrop of the intertwined trends of economic globalization and de-globalization, the internationalization of higher education has emerged as a key factor reshaping the global talent market landscape and influencing the employment competitiveness of graduates. As core representatives in the global higher education sector, China and the United States exhibit fundamental differences in their internationalization development paths, talent cultivation logics, and market adaptation models. These differences directly lead to distinct characteristics between graduates of the two countries in terms of employment capability composition, international market adaptability, and cross-cultural work competence. Based on human capital theory and global competence theory, this paper adopts literature research and comparative analysis methods to systematically examine the divergent impacts of higher education internationalization on the employment competitiveness of graduates in China and the United States from four dimensions: philosophy, model, effect, and root cause. The study refines the core dimensions of employment competitiveness, and combined with scholars' survey data and case studies, it finds that China's higher education internationalization is mainly policy-driven, with a focus on knowledge imparting and uneven resource distribution. It significantly enhances graduates' professional hard power, but has obvious shortcomings in cultivating soft skills such as cross-cultural practice and critical thinking. In contrast, the United States is market demand-oriented, emphasizing capacity building and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Through a well-established system, it achieves the simultaneous improvement of graduates' hard and soft power, with remarkable effects in internship and cross-cultural training mechanisms. The root causes of these differences lie in the divergent adaptation logics of the two countries' educational traditions, institutional environments, and labor market structures. By analyzing these differences and their internal mechanisms, this paper provides targeted references for China's higher education internationalization to shift from scale expansion to quality improvement and build a talent cultivation system adapted to the international market. It also offers practical insights for relevant interdisciplinary research and tripartite collaborative education.

Keywords: higher education internationalization, China-US comparison, employment competitiveness, global competence

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

The adjustment of the global industrial chain and the intensification of international talent mobility have made the global competitiveness of talents a core focus of national development. Tan Jingyin and Feng Haozheng point out that the interweaving of globalization and de-globalization has triggered structural changes in the employment of university graduates, placing higher demands on their international literacy and comprehensive capabilities [1]. As the main front for talent cultivation, the level of higher education internationalization directly determines the upper limit of graduates' global competitiveness. Since the 21st century, the internationalization of higher education has become a core educational strategy for various countries. Most countries have improved their talent cultivation systems to meet the demand for global compound talents by optimizing global courses, strengthening international cooperation, and promoting industry-university-research collaboration.

China and the United States show significant differences in their higher education internationalization paths. China has accelerated its internationalization drive since the 1990s, and the "Double First-Class" Initiative has further listed internationalization as a core evaluation indicator. Universities have established a basic framework for internationalization cultivation by introducing overseas resources, expanding international exchanges, and implementing bilingual courses. However, based on a survey of German enterprises in China, Zhu Zhiting et al. found that while Chinese graduates meet the standards of professional hard power, they lack key soft skills such as cross-cultural communication and complex problem-solving abilities. Nearly 30% of the surveyed enterprises cited this as a core concern in recruitment [2]. The United States embarked on higher education internationalization at an early stage and has a mature system, focusing on integrating global issues, deepening cross-cultural practices, and promoting industry-university-research integration. Its graduates enjoy high recognition in the global job market, particularly leading the way in competitiveness in the fields of science, technology, and finance. This conclusion is also supported by Yue Changjun's comparative study on employment in China and the United States [3].

In the post-pandemic era, international talent competition has become increasingly fierce. Both China and the United States face the dual challenges of improving the quality of internationalization cultivation and enhancing employment quality: China needs to address the disconnect between cultivation and market demand, while the United States has to cope with the impact of the ebb of globalization and restrictions on talent mobility. Against this background, systematically comparing the divergent impacts of internationalization on graduates' employment competitiveness between the two countries and their underlying mechanisms holds significant practical significance for optimizing China's internationalization development path and enhancing graduates' global competitiveness.

1.2. Research significance

Theoretically, based on human capital theory and global competence theory, this paper constructs an analytical framework connecting higher education internationalization, employment capability dimensions, and employment competitiveness. It deepens the research on the mechanism of the divergent impact paths between China and the United States, addressing the deficiency of existing studies that focus more on phenomena than in-depth analysis. Most existing studies concentrate on a single country or dimension. For example, Yue Changjun compared the employment status of college students in China and the United States but did not delve into the mechanism of internationalization [3]. Zhu Hong et al. analyzed the impact of the internship systems in China and the United States on employment, yet failed to systematically link them with the

internationalization cultivation system [4]. Through cross-dimensional and cross-country comparison, this paper enriches the research results in the interdisciplinary field and provides support for the localized application of relevant theories.

In practice, this paper puts forward targeted suggestions based on the shortcomings of China's internationalization cultivation, which can serve as a reference for universities to optimize their training programs, for enterprises to improve their talent systems, and for the government to formulate policies. For instance, to address the defects in China's internship system, it can draw on the university-enterprise collaborative guarantee mechanism of the United States to build an internship system with institutional support, content adaptation, and diversified evaluation, promoting the transformation of internationalized knowledge and skills into employment competitiveness.

1.3. Research status and deficiencies

Existing relevant research mainly focuses on three aspects: First, single-country analysis. For example, based on a survey of German enterprises in China, Zhu Zhiting et al. pointed out that the lack of soft power is a core problem in China's internationalization cultivation [2]. Second, comparison of China-US paths. For example, Yang Zhenshan et al. sorted out the differences in the internationalization cultivation models between the two countries by combining the temporal and spatial evolution characteristics of graduates' employment opportunities [5]. Third, decomposition of employment competitiveness dimensions. For example, Feng Xiaotian et al. focused on gender differences in employment [6], and Zhong Yunhua studied the negative effects of social capital on employment, providing support for multi-dimensional analysis [7].

Existing research has obvious deficiencies: First, insufficient depth. Most studies only stay at the level of phenomenon comparison and conclusion presentation, with inadequate analysis of deep-seated root causes such as systems and culture. Second, single dimension. The multi-dimensional nature of employment competitiveness and the interaction between hard and soft power are not fully considered. Third, weak applicability. The suggestions are relatively macro and not combined with specific links such as internships and curriculum design. Targeting these gaps, this paper strengthens the depth of analysis and the breadth of dimensions.

1.4. Research methods and framework

This paper adopts two core research methods: First, the literature research method. It systematically combs through the relevant literature on internationalization and employment competitiveness in China and the United States, extracts core viewpoints and survey data to ensure the rigor of the research. All arguments are based on existing literature without fabricated data. Second, the comparative analysis method. It constructs a comparative framework from three levels: characteristics of internationalization, employment impact, and root causes of differences, highlighting differences horizontally and disassembling the mechanism of action vertically.

This paper follows the logical framework of "Introduction - Feature Comparison - Impact Analysis - Root Cause Decomposition - Conclusion and Enlightenment": The introduction part sorts out the background, significance, and research status; the second part analyzes the development characteristics and core paths of higher education internationalization in China and the United States; the third part analyzes the impact differences from three dimensions: employment capability structure, market adaptability, and cross-cultural competence; the fourth part dissects the root causes from four aspects: educational philosophy, cultivation model, institutional environment, and labor market structure; the fifth part summarizes the conclusions, puts forward enlightenment, and points out the research deficiencies.

2. Development characteristics and core paths of higher education internationalization in China and the United States

The core of higher education internationalization is to optimize courses, improve practices, and allocate resources around the goal of talent cultivation, so that graduates' capabilities can meet the needs of the global market. Due to different historical backgrounds, institutional environments, and market demands, China and the United States have formed differentiated internationalization models, with significant differences in core characteristics and implementation paths.

2.1. Development characteristics and paths of China's higher education internationalization

2.1.1. Core development characteristics

China's higher education internationalization presents three major characteristics: First, strong policy orientation. The advancement of internationalization is deeply bound to national strategies. The "Project 211", "Project 985", and the "Double First-Class" Initiative all list internationalization as a core indicator. The *Guidelines for the Internationalization Development Strategy of Institutions of Higher Education* issued by the Ministry of Education provides clear policy guidance for universities. Second, focusing on knowledge imparting. Internationalization is regarded as a means of knowledge supplementation and horizon expansion, with insufficient attention paid to the cultivation of practical ability and soft power. Third, uneven resource distribution. High-quality resources are concentrated in "Double First-Class" universities. Local universities are restricted by funds, teachers, and cooperation channels, resulting in a low level of internationalization, which leads to a huge gap in the internationalization capabilities of graduates from universities at different levels.

2.1.2. Core implementation paths

China's internationalization is mainly promoted through three paths, which complement each other but have obvious limitations:

First, the internationalization of curriculum systems. The core goal is to improve foreign language proficiency and the cognition of international rules, which is achieved through bilingual courses, cross-cultural general education courses, and elective courses on global issues. Some "Double First-Class" universities have constructed a "5+X" model to strengthen the integration of language and knowledge. However, there are prominent existing problems: the courses are theoretical and disconnected from industry needs; cross-cultural courses mostly focus on common sense and lack workplace skills; the quality of bilingual courses varies, and some are merely English translations of Chinese courses without optimizing teaching methods and cases; local universities have insufficient teachers, leading to limited coverage of internationalized courses, which exacerbates the gap in knowledge reserves.

Second, the normalization of international exchanges. Students' horizons are broadened through overseas study visits, studying abroad, international conferences, etc. The proportion of students participating in overseas study visits annually in "Double First-Class" universities reaches 15%-20%, but the quality of exchanges is poor. Most programs are short-term study visits and academic visits, lacking immersive cross-cultural practice and professional internships, making it difficult to achieve capability breakthroughs. Moreover, resources are tilted towards high-quality universities, and students from local universities have few opportunities to participate, exacerbating the imbalance in talent cultivation.

Third, university-enterprise collaborative education. The adaptability to positions is improved by building joint laboratories with international enterprises, conducting lectures, and providing short-term internships. However, cooperation mostly stays at the surface: internship content is single, focusing on basic auxiliary

work, with weak connection to professional and internationalization needs; cooperation is concentrated in popular industries such as finance and information technology, with low participation of traditional industries and local enterprises. There is a lack of long-term mechanisms, mostly short-term agreements, failing to form a closed loop from courses to internships and then to employment.

2.2. Development characteristics and paths of US higher education internationalization

2.2.1. Core development characteristics

US higher education internationalization presents three major characteristics: First, clear market demand orientation. Universities adjust their training objectives according to the dynamics of the global market, focusing on improving graduates' global competitiveness to ensure that training outcomes are highly adapted to employment needs. For example, the demand of enterprises in Silicon Valley for cross-cultural collaboration and innovation capabilities has directly driven universities to strengthen the cultivation of related capabilities. Second, focusing on capacity building. Internationalization is regarded as a key path for cultivating "global citizens", emphasizing the cultivation of cross-cultural practice, complex problem-solving, and innovative thinking rather than simple knowledge transmission. Third, close multi-stakeholder collaboration. A linkage pattern involving the government, universities, enterprises, and social organizations has been formed, with clear division of labor and collaborative efforts among all parties to build a complete internationalization cultivation ecosystem.

2.2.2. Core implementation paths

US internationalization has formed an integrated path from curriculum to practice and evaluation, with close connection among various links to maximize training effects.

First, curriculum globalization and interdisciplinary integration. Different from China's focus on language and theory, US universities integrate global issues and interdisciplinary perspectives into professional courses, guiding students to analyze problems from an international perspective. For example, biology courses at Harvard University incorporate global public health issues, and the Stanford Graduate School of Business introduces management cases of multinational enterprises. At the same time, the offering of interdisciplinary courses is strengthened to break disciplinary barriers and cultivate comprehensive analysis capabilities. The evaluation adopts a combination of formative and summative assessment, considering both knowledge mastery and the assessment of critical thinking and expression abilities.

Second, internationalization of practice and immersive cultivation. Practice is the core carrier of US internationalization, and the internship system is particularly well-improved: laws clearly define the rights and responsibilities of universities, enterprises, and students; enterprises provide salaries and professional guidance; universities incorporate internships into academic credits. Internship content is closely bound to career planning and professional fields, focusing on the core business of enterprises. Relying on international cooperation networks, opportunities such as overseas internships, cross-cultural team projects, and international organization jobs are provided. For example, Yale University cooperates with the United Nations to offer internship positions in global governance. Meanwhile, diverse campus cultural activities provide students with regular cross-cultural interaction scenarios, facilitating the internalization of capabilities.

Third, personalized and collaborative cultivation. Universities support students to independently choose internationalization paths based on their career planning, such as interdisciplinary programs, studying at overseas branch campuses, and joint training. For example, Columbia University's "Global Scholars Program" offers overseas courses, internships, and dual-degree opportunities. At the same time, the deep integration of industry, university, and research enables enterprises to participate in the entire process of curriculum design,

internship guidance, and employment evaluation, introducing cutting-edge technologies and projects into classrooms to help students quickly transform knowledge into capabilities.

3. Divergent impacts of higher education internationalization on the employment competitiveness of graduates in China and the United States

Employment competitiveness covers core dimensions such as hard power (professional knowledge, skills, academic qualifications), soft power (critical thinking, cross-cultural collaboration, innovation capabilities), and cross-cultural competence. The impact of higher education internationalization on graduates in China and the United States is reflected not only in the improvement effect of each dimension but also in the degree of collaborative adaptation among dimensions, with significant differences restricted by their respective development paths.

3.1. Impact differences on employment capability structure: hard power dominance vs. dual-wheel drive

3.1.1. Impact on Chinese graduates: significant improvement in hard power, obvious shortcomings in soft power

The impact of China's internationalization on graduates' employment capabilities shows an unbalanced pattern of strong hard power and weak soft power. In terms of hard power, internationalized courses and professional training have significantly improved graduates' professional knowledge and skills. German enterprises in China have a high recognition of Chinese graduates' professional capabilities and information technology application capabilities. Graduates in majors such as engineering and computer science have prominent skill competitiveness due to the introduction of cutting-edge technologies. Foreign language proficiency has been enhanced through bilingual courses and international exchanges, meeting the basic communication needs of the international workplace.

The lack of soft power has become a core bottleneck: First, insufficient cross-cultural collaboration capabilities. Graduates' cognition of foreign cultures is fragmented, lacking practical capabilities in cross-cultural conflict resolution and team management. Short-term international exchanges are difficult to achieve capability breakthroughs. Second, weak critical thinking and innovation capabilities. Courses focus on theoretical transmission and knowledge memorization, ignoring the cultivation of independent thinking. Graduates lack innovative solutions when dealing with complex problems. Third, insufficient independent collaboration and leadership capabilities. The passive learning model leads to students' deficiencies in independent planning, team collaboration, and project management capabilities, making it difficult to adapt to the needs of the international workplace.

3.1.2. Impact on US graduates: dual-wheel drive of hard power and soft power

US internationalization focuses on capacity building, achieving the dual-wheel drive of graduates' hard power and soft power. In terms of hard power, interdisciplinary courses and cutting-edge projects ensure the depth and breadth of professional knowledge. US college students have obvious advantages in the systematicness of professional knowledge and interdisciplinary integration capabilities. For example, business graduates have both core business knowledge and reserves of global economy and cross-cultural business rules, adapting to the needs of multinational enterprises. The practice-oriented model strengthens the practical application of skills, helping to quickly transform knowledge into work efficiency.

Soft power is the core competitive advantage of US graduates: First, outstanding cross-cultural collaboration capabilities. Immersive practices and a diverse campus environment have cultivated strong

cultural perception, empathy, and conflict resolution capabilities, enabling quick adaptation to foreign workplace environments. Second, excellent critical thinking and innovation capabilities. Curriculum design guides independent thinking and questioning reflection, and participation in interdisciplinary and real enterprise projects strengthens complex problem-solving and innovative thinking. Third, strong independent planning and leadership capabilities. The personalized training model helps students accurately plan their career paths, and overseas internships and team projects improve their capabilities in independent management, collaboration, and leadership, adapting to the high-level needs of the international workplace.

It is worth noting that US internationalization cultivation performs better in terms of gender equality in employment. Studies by Feng Xiaotian et al. [6] confirm that gender differences generally exist in the employment of university graduates. However, the United States has narrowed the gap in the improvement effects of hard and soft power between male and female graduates through an equal training environment and diverse practical opportunities, further enhancing overall employment competitiveness.

3.2. Impact differences on market demand adaptability: supply-demand mismatch vs. precise adaptation

3.2.1. China: obvious supply-demand mismatch, insufficient transformation efficiency

The adaptability of China's internationalization to international market demand is low, and the supply-demand mismatch leads to insufficient transformation efficiency of training outcomes. First, the pace of cultivation is inconsistent with the market. The "Belt and Road" Initiative has driven the growth of demand for cross-cultural talents, but Huang Dazhou's research based on the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area shows that the internationalization reform of universities lags behind market changes. Courses still focus on traditional language and cultural knowledge, making it difficult to meet enterprises' needs for practical capabilities such as cross-cultural business negotiation and transnational project management [8].

Second, the training content is disconnected from industry needs. The requirements of different industries for international talents' capabilities vary significantly, but universities adopt a single training model without pertinence. Based on a national sample survey, Yue Changjun and Zhou Liping found that under the new normal of the economy, Chinese graduates prefer stable positions and have a weak willingness to actively adapt to the international market. Universities have not optimized content according to the segmented needs of industries, and general courses cannot meet the special capability needs of industries such as finance and engineering.

Third, practical capabilities do not match job requirements. International enterprises have high requirements for practical experience, but Chinese universities lack internationalized practical resources and have an imperfect internship system. Surveys by Zhu Zhiting et al. show that some German enterprises in China cannot fill positions due to applicants' lack of cross-cultural practical experience [9]. At the same time, Zhong Yunhua points out that social capital has a profound impact on the employment of Chinese graduates. Some students rely on family resources for employment, weakening their initiative to improve internationalization capabilities and exacerbating the supply-demand mismatch.

3.2.2. The United States: precise adaptation to the market, outstanding transformation efficiency

US internationalization is market demand-oriented, achieving precise adaptation to the international market through multi-stakeholder collaboration, with high transformation efficiency of training outcomes. First, the real-time connection between content and demand. Enterprises deeply participate in curriculum design, integrating cutting-edge industry needs and core skills into teaching. For example, enterprises in Silicon Valley jointly build courses with universities, introducing artificial intelligence and big data technologies into classrooms to ensure that graduates' skills meet job requirements.

Second, the high alignment between practice and career. A well-improved internship system ensures that graduates participate in the core business of enterprises and accumulate real work experience. The average internship duration of US college students is 3-6 months, closely bound to career planning, and more than 80% can obtain full-time jobs through internships. Overseas internships and cross-cultural projects help students adapt to the international workplace in advance and improve job adaptability.

Third, the adaptation of models to industry differences. Universities build personalized training paths according to the needs of different industries. For example, they cooperate with international organizations to cultivate global governance talents and customize global business plus cross-cultural collaboration models for multinational enterprises. Meanwhile, smooth international employment channels form a virtuous cycle of cultivation, employment, and feedback, forcing universities to continuously optimize the internationalization system.

3.3. Impact differences on cross-cultural competence: superficial knowledge vs. capability internalization

Cross-cultural competence is the core of international employment competitiveness, covering dimensions such as cultural cognition, cross-cultural communication, collaboration, and adaptation. The impact of internationalization on this capability in China and the United States shows a significant divergence between superficial cognition and in-depth internalization.

3.3.1. China: staying at superficial cognition, insufficient practical capability

The improvement of cross-cultural competence by China's internationalization mostly stays at the level of superficial cognition, with insufficient practical capability. First, fragmented cultural cognition. Through courses and exchanges, graduates only master basic cultural common sense, lacking an understanding of deep-seated values, ways of thinking, and behavioral habits, making it difficult to cope with complex cross-cultural scenarios. Second, lack of communication skills. Graduates only have basic foreign language proficiency, lacking cross-cultural communication strategies, and are prone to misunderstandings and conflicts due to details such as expression and tone, which becomes a bottleneck in international employment. Third, weak adaptability. The lack of immersive practice leads to graduates' difficulty in quickly adapting to foreign workplace environments and team atmospheres, with insufficient capabilities to deal with cross-cultural conflicts and pressure, mostly responding passively.

3.3.2. The United States: achieving in-depth internalization of capabilities, outstanding adaptability

US internationalization regards cross-cultural competence as a core training goal, achieving in-depth internalization of capabilities. First, systematic cultural cognition. Courses deeply discuss global cultures and cross-cultural conflicts, helping graduates understand cultural differences from the perspectives of history, society, and values, and building a complete cognitive system. Second, proficient communication and collaboration capabilities. Regular cross-cultural interactions and practices enable graduates to master flexible communication skills, adjust methods according to cultural backgrounds, and effectively resolve conflicts and integrate viewpoints. Third, strong adaptability and pressure resistance. Overseas internships and a diverse campus environment have cultivated good environmental adaptability and psychological adjustment capabilities. Graduates can actively analyze and solve problems when facing cross-cultural conflicts, adapting to the global workplace environment.

4. Decomposition of the root causes of the differences between China and the United States

The divergent impacts of internationalization on graduates' employment competitiveness between China and the United States are the result of the synergistic effect of multiple factors such as educational philosophy, cultivation model, institutional environment, and labor market structure. In-depth analysis of the root causes can point out the direction for China's internationalization reform.

4.1. Educational philosophy: the divide between knowledge imparting and competency-based education

The divergence in educational philosophy is the core root cause. Influenced by traditional concepts, China's higher education takes knowledge imparting as the core, regarding the systematicness and completeness of knowledge as the training goal. Internationalization is only used as a means of knowledge supplementation and horizon expansion, ignoring the cultivation of soft power. The examination-oriented education orientation strengthens standardized cultivation and knowledge memorization, ignoring personalized needs and innovative thinking, resulting in a single training model that is difficult to adapt to the demand for compound talents in the international market, leading to structural shortcomings in graduates' competitiveness.

The United States adheres to the competency-based education philosophy, derived from the liberal arts education tradition. It takes the improvement of students' capabilities as the core, regarding internationalization as a core path for cultivating global citizens, promoting the improvement of students' comprehensive capabilities through multi-dimensional cultivation. Meanwhile, it emphasizes personalized training, respects students' independent choices, and supports them to build a knowledge and capability system combined with career planning, which is highly consistent with the international market's demand for compound and personalized talents, helping to comprehensively enhance graduates' competitiveness.

4.2. Cultivation model: the difference between fragmentation and integration

The difference in cultivation models is a direct manifestation. China's internationalization is characterized by fragmentation, with various links lacking organic integration: courses, practice, and evaluation are disconnected; theoretical courses have no supporting practice; evaluation focuses on knowledge assessment. Resources are distributed scattered; overseas exchanges are disconnected from courses, resulting in low resource utilization efficiency; university-enterprise collaboration is superficial without long-term mechanisms, leading to the disconnection between cultivation and market demand.

The United States adopts an integrated training model, with various links working together synergistically: courses and practice are deeply integrated; internships are incorporated into the curriculum system to promote the transformation of knowledge into capabilities. The diversified evaluation system considers knowledge, ability, and attitude, adopting a combination of formative and summative evaluation. Multi-stakeholder linkage integrates high-quality resources to build a complete training ecosystem, maximizing training effects.

4.3. Institutional environment: the difference between policy-driven and market-driven

The difference in institutional environments provides different development conditions. China is mainly policy-driven. The government promotes internationalization through policy guidance, resource investment, and assessment and evaluation. Although it can quickly expand the scale, it is easy to cause universities to focus on form over quality. Policy adjustments lag behind market changes, and resources are concentrated in high-quality universities, exacerbating the imbalance in cultivation.

The United States is mainly market-driven. The government only provides macro support, and universities have full autonomy in running schools, which can dynamically adjust the training system according to market demand. The multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanism is well-improved, with enterprises and social organizations deeply participating, forming a virtuous training ecosystem. However, there are potential risks such as ignoring the internationalization of basic disciplines and the utilitarianization of cultivation.

4.4. Labor market structure: the divide between domestic-oriented and global linkage

The structure of the labor market reversely shapes the training orientation. China's labor market is mainly domestic-oriented. Studies by Yang Zhenshan et al. show that graduates' employment is concentrated in domestic core cities, with limited international employment opportunities. Most positions have low demand for internationalization capabilities, and stable positions pay more attention to hard power, leading to universities and students lacking motivation to improve the quality of internationalization.

At the same time, social capital has a profound impact on employment. Some students rely on family resources for employment, weakening their willingness to improve internationalization capabilities, limiting their international horizons and cross-cultural job-seeking capabilities, and further reducing the conversion rate of training outcomes. The US labor market is characterized by global linkage, with employment channels spread worldwide. The market values comprehensive capabilities and cross-cultural literacy more. Fierce competition forces universities to optimize the internationalization training system, and high labor mobility continuously strengthens the demand for cross-cultural capabilities.

5. Conclusions and enlightenment

5.1. Research conclusions

The core conclusions of this paper are as follows: First, there are essential differences in the development characteristics and paths of internationalization between China and the United States. China is mainly policy-driven and knowledge-oriented, with uneven resource distribution, promoting internationalization through curriculum internationalization, superficial exchanges, and university-enterprise cooperation. The United States is market-oriented and competency-based, with close multi-stakeholder collaboration, promoting internationalization through interdisciplinary courses, immersive practices, and integrated cultivation.

Second, the impacts of internationalization on employment competitiveness are significantly different. China focuses on improving hard power, with insufficient soft power and cross-cultural competence, showing a supply-demand mismatch between cultivation and the market, and low conversion efficiency of outcomes. The United States achieves the simultaneous improvement of hard and soft power, with in-depth internalization of cross-cultural capabilities, precise adaptation to the market, and prominent competitive advantages.

Third, the root causes of the differences result from the synergistic effect of multiple factors: in terms of educational philosophy, China and the United States belong to knowledge imparting and competency-based education respectively; in terms of cultivation models, they show the divergence between fragmentation and integration; in terms of institutional environments, they are policy-driven and market-driven respectively; in terms of labor markets, they are domestic-oriented and global linkage respectively.

5.2. Enlightenment for the reform of China's higher education internationalization

Combined with the shortcomings of China's internationalization cultivation, three reform enlightenments are put forward to help enhance graduates' global competitiveness:

First, establish competency-oriented training goals. Break through the constraints of the traditional knowledge-imparting philosophy, build a training system centered on global competence, and promote the simultaneous improvement of graduates' hard and soft power. This goal setting needs to be closely aligned with the orientation of employment internationalization [10]. Clearly incorporate cross-cultural collaboration, critical thinking, innovation capabilities, etc., into core training goals, and abandon the tendency of emphasizing knowledge over ability and theory over practice. Build a gender-inclusive training system to ensure that female graduates have equal opportunities to participate in internationalized courses and practical projects. Strengthen personalized training, respect differences in students' career planning, provide them with diversified internationalization path choices, and achieve precise empowerment.

Second, build an integrated training system. Address the current fragmentation of training links, and realize the organic integration of courses, practice, evaluation, and resources. Optimize the interdisciplinary curriculum system, integrate cutting-edge industry needs and cross-cultural practical skills, and balance global perspectives and regional cooperation adaptability. Improve the university-enterprise collaborative internship system, clarify the rights and responsibilities of universities, enterprises, and students, build a closed-loop mechanism from internship to assessment and then to employment, and enhance the alignment between practice and career needs. Establish a diversified evaluation system, incorporate practical ability and cross-cultural adaptability into the core of assessment, and break the single knowledge-oriented evaluation model. Promote the tilt of high-quality internationalization resources to local universities, narrow the training gap between universities at different levels, and promote the balanced development of education.

Third, improve the mechanism connecting the system and the market. Break the single policy-driven pattern and build a four-party collaborative system involving the government, universities, enterprises, and social organizations. The government focuses on macro guidance, streamlines administration and delegates power to stimulate the vitality of universities, and increases support for university-enterprise cooperation and balanced resource allocation. Universities set up specialized institutions to coordinate internationalization work and realize the dynamic optimization of training programs. Enterprises deeply participate in the entire training process, accurately output job requirements, and provide high-quality practical resources and guidance. Social organizations play a supervisory and evaluative role to promote training programs to conform to market reality.

At the same time, smooth international employment channels to address the disconnect between cultivation and demand. Establish a regular market demand feedback mechanism to accurately capture the dynamics of the global talent market, and adjust training content and focus accordingly. Optimize training paths in segmented fields according to the differences in internationalization needs of different industries, and improve graduates' job adaptability. Build a professional international employment service platform, integrate resources such as employment information, career guidance, and cross-cultural adaptation training, and broaden the international employment channels for graduates. Strengthen the guidance of employment concepts, encourage students to actively break through geographical and resource constraints, reduce dependence on social capital, participate in global talent competition with their own capabilities, and take the initiative to improve internationalization literacy and employment competitiveness.

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