Comparison of the Partner Institutions' Perceptions of the Cross-border Higher Education

Program and the Impact on Program Implementation:

Case Studies of Two Sino-U.S. Business Management Programs

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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July 2011

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to my advisor, David Chapman, for his advice, guidance, and encouragement during all stages of the completion of this dissertation. I am greatly inspired by his keen insights on interesting cross-border higher education topics, and his complete devotion to the profession of international education. I am very grateful to my co-advisor John Cogan for his advice, continuous encouragement, and support.

Thanks to my committee members, Joan Dejaeghere and Frances Lawrenz, from whom I have benefitted greatly from many discussions with, especially during many critical moments of my dissertation writing. I am very grateful to their invaluable comments. Their critical perspectives and guidance that always helped me explore the issues further.

My research would never be realized without the participation of faculty and staff members at the four universities I studied. I would like to thank all of the individual participants for their kindness to make time for interviews and their willingness to share their perspectives on the collaborative programs of their institutions. My deep gratitude goes to the intermediaries at institutions for their generous assistance for this research.

My colleagues and friends provided various forms of supports that sustained me throughout this long journey of research and writing. Many thanks to my dear CIDE fellows, for their wonderful companionship and support. My special thanks to Amy Lee, Rhiannon Williams, the faculty and staff members at the Department of Postsecondary Teaching and Learning for their generous support, persistent attention and concern for my work and professional development.

Finally, my greatest gratitude goes to my loving family, my father Jie Jinliang, my mother Liu Shurong, my husband Shi Qi, for their love and encouragement all along the way.

**ABSTRACT**

This study examined discrepancies and similarities between the partner institutions' perceptions of the motivations, expected outcomes, and desired strategies achieving such outcomes in their cross-border higher educational programs from a game theory perspective, in the context of Mainland China (hereafter referred to as China). By comparing the key stakeholders' perceptions from the partner institutions, this study identified compatibility and potential conflicts between the partner institutions involved in cross-border higher educational programs and to analyze these discrepancies and similarities in relation to program implementation strategies to identify potential impact they could have on the program implementation. Two Sino-U.S. business management programs were used as cases to answer the set of research questions that are informed by game theory. A conceptual framework that is grounded in international education, strategic management, and game theory, was devised to capture the dynamic phenomena in cross-border education.

This study found that regardless of the institutions' home country (China or the United States) and their institutional type, similar types of motivations and expected outcomes were identified across all four participating institutions (those with official accreditation). These motivations and expected outcomes included 1) brand recognition and academic reputation, 2) strategic positioning, 3) capacity development and learning, and 4) revenue generation. However, institutions appeared to have different interpretations of these openly stated motivations and expected outcomes, based on their own institutional contexts. The findings suggested that within each partner institution, faculty and administrations (including leaders) sometimes placed a different level of emphasis on expected outcomes, even though key stakeholder groups shared a common understanding around the institutional motivations and expected outcomes mostly as a baseline outcome. The key participants from both partner institutions tended to apply their own interpretation references to their partners, which led to misperceptions between the partners.

Moreover, findings from this study suggest that the strong compatibility between the partners' motivations, expected outcomes, and the preferences of various outcomes made the joint-venture model most appealing to both the Chinese and the U.S. institutions. This compatibility mostly focused on the outcomes of brand recognition, academic reputation, strategic positioning, and financial sustainability of the collaborative programs. Potential conflicts existed between the partners' preferences around these outcomes in the long run, especially between brand promotion and revenue generation. As the collaborative programs continued to evolve and possible external environmental changes occurred, so did the partners' expected outcomes and the related preferences. As a result, the partners tried to make changes and/or added new components to the original chosen strategy. Therefore, although the collaborative programs had been successfully established with the chosen desired strategy, there were potential conflicting discrepancies between the partners' expected outcomes and preferences for various aspects of the desired strategies at a later stage.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine discrepancies and similarities between the partner institutions' perceptions of the motivations, expected outcomes, and desired strategies achieving such outcomes in their cross-border higher educational programs from a game theory perspective, in the context of Mainland China (hereafter referred to as China). By comparing the key stakeholders' perceptions from the partner institutions, this study aims to identify compatibility and potential conflicts between the partner institutions involved in cross-border higher educational programs and to analyze these discrepancies and similarities in relation to program implementation strategies to identify potential impact they could have on the program implementation. Two Sino-U.S. business management programs were used as cases to answer the set of research questions that are informed by game theory. A conceptual framework that is grounded in international education, strategic management, and game theory, was devised to capture the dynamic phenomena in cross-border education.

Background

International organizational arrangements in higher education are by no means a new phenomenon. However, the globalization and internationalization impact derived from economic development directly or indirectly perpetuate the scale of cross-border educational delivery significantly. In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in both scale and format of transnational higher education worldwide (Garrett & Verbik, 2004). As economic globalization has increasingly dominated the development of today's

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world, higher education has also become increasingly international. "International education is now a multi-billion dollar industry" (Shanahan & McParlance, 2005, p.220). Rapid expansion of students seeking higher education outside of their own countries or provided by a foreign institution has been well documented in recent years (OECD, 2008, 2010; UNESCO/UIS, 2009).  In 2000, the International Development Program (IDP)[1] in Australia predicted that the number of international students seeking higher education through a foreign university would reach 1.4 million in 2010, and rise to 3.1 million by 2025 (Blight & West, 2000).  According to the OECD (2010) statistics, in 2008, there were already over three million tertiary students enrolled outside their country of citizenship. The UNESCO/UIS (2009) reported 2.8 million students were enrolled in educational institutions outside of their country of origin in 2007.

While abundant statistical data are available on international student mobility from various sources such as UNESCO, OECD, and World Bank, there is hardly any consolidated official data available on one of the key contributors—cross-border higher education programs—to the overall growth of student enrollment in foreign institutions (or courses offered by a foreign institution) worldwide (Knight, 2006a). For some countries, cross-border education[2] delivery constitutes a significant proportion of their entire international student body. Australia, for example, indicated that one fourth of its entire international student enrollment is through their offshore programs (Bannerman, Spiller, Yetton & Davis, 2005, p. 7).

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[1] IDP is a global company that is part-owned by 38 universities in Australia.
[2] Cross-border higher education is used to refer to cross-border joint educational programs and/or institutions. See Chapter two for a more detailed discussion of the differences between key terminology.

Similar dramatic increases in the scale of cross-border program delivery has been witnessed worldwide (Garrett & Verbik, 2004). Some country-specific data is available on this newer version of higher education provision crossing national borders (program mobility in comparison to the traditional form of individual mobility (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007). Public data from the United Kingdom and Australia show that around 300,000 international students participate in their transnational programs, and these students' countries of origin are concentrated in Asia, mainly Singapore, Malaysia, and China, and consist of 54 percent of the total (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). In 2008, of the total 294,163 international students studying in all Australian higher education institutions, 93,596 (31.8%) studied offshore3 (AEI, 2010). For international branch campuses alone, the number increased by 43 percent from 2006-2009 (Becker, 2010).

There is still a great need for systematic empirical research on cross-border higher education. The complexity of cross-border educational programs are under-explored despite their increased frequency. Currently, most of the cross-border education literature and observations are highly concentrated on a few areas. Examples include national regulations (dos Santos, 2002; Huang, 2006a, 2006b; Larsen, Momii & Vincent-Lancrin, 2004; Grant McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001; Verbik & Jokivirta, 2005), GATS implications (Knight, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003; Sauvé, 2002), quality assurance of the programs (Larsen & Momii, 2004; OECD, 2005; Stella & Gnanam, 2006; Van Damme, 2001), and opportunities and risks (Knight, 2006b; Liston, 2004; Magagula, 2005; Shanahan & McParlane, 2005), and teaching and learning experiences (Debowski, 2003; Evans & Tregenza, 2002; Gribble & Ziguras, 2003). More empirical research that systematically

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[3] In the AEI report, offshore students referred to those students study at an Australian university's offshore campus and have not physically studied in Australia.

analyzes the implementation of educational programs and their outcomes is urgently needed.

Many articles written by scholars and practitioners report on a variety of challenges in cross-border education, such as issues related to over-burdened faculty and cultural inappropriateness of educational delivery in cross-border educational programs. Recent doctoral studies have started to explore this phenomenon more systematically, focusing on strategic partner selection (Affolter-Caine, 2008; Liu, 2007), student learning style (Heffernan, Morrison, & Sweeney, 2006; Hoare, 2006), cultural identity development (Lembright, 2007), and student satisfaction on the quality of these educational programs (Keok, 2005). In addition, a few research projects have been commissioned by national governments (e.g., Australia and the United Kingdom) and international organizations (e.g., OECD and UNESCO), with the aim of understanding the status quo (Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, 2005a; Drew et al., 2008; Tang & Nollent, 2007), market prosperity (Fazackerley & Worthington, 2007), national regulations and quality assurance mechanisms in cross-border education deliveries (Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, 2005b; Baird, 2006; Hopper, 2007; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; Vincent-Lancrin, 2007). Unfortunately, these studies typically do not have strong theoretical support or do not examine issues at the program level.

Similar inter-organizational collaborations in the business world, be it strategic alliances, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, license agreements, or supplier arrangements, have been intensively debated and investigated, both theoretically and empirically (Borys & Jemison, 1989; Burgers, Hill & Kim, 1993; Child & Faulkner, 1998; Clarke-Hill, Li & Davies, 2003; Das & Teng, 2000a, 2000b; Dyer, 2001; Faulkner,

1995; Kogut, 1998; Parkhe, 1993a, 1993b; Pfeffer & Nowak, 1976; Walter, 2005). Therefore, in this study this literature is examined to shed some light on cross-border higher education programs.

<center>Problem Statement</center>

With the dramatic growth in cross-border educational programs, it is unclear whether the involved institutions have fully understood each other's motivations and expectations. Consequently, it is unclear why and how partner institutions collaborate with each other to deliver cross-border educational programs. Furthermore, if partners do hold different expectations for the potential outcomes from the collaboration, it is not clearly understood how their different views impact the operation of the programs and how they collaborate while maintaining a balance between their competing interests. These issues are common across most types of organizational collaboration.

Much discussion and debate has addressed the rationale that drives the dramatic development of cross-border education and the potential benefits it might generate (Altbach & Knight, 2006; Altbach, 2004a, 2004b; Knight, 1997, 2004, 2005; van der Wende, 1997). A prominent trend has emerged, that is, revenue generation has been widely identified by the exporting side of transnational programs. At the same time, rationale such as satisfying unmet demand and building educational capacity is reported more frequently by the importing side of transnational programs. Other frequently mentioned motivations include building an international reputation, student and staff advancement, meeting differentiated student needs, innovation through new delivery systems and providers, and enhancing mutual understanding (OECD, 2004; Saffu & Mamman, 2000; Tang & Nollent, 2007; Zhang, 2003).

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These articles and studies on the rationale for cross-border education either focus on the national level motivations without moving onto the institutional level, or look only at the institutional level rationale, most often from the exporter side. Knight (2004) specifically pointed out that "there is a close liaison between national level and institutional level rationales, but it is not always as close as one would expect" (p.25). She also suggested that in many regions of the world, where internationalization is not a priority at the national level, the institutional level rationale has greater importance. Unfortunately, to date, no studies have analyzed both involved institutions' motivations and expectations together in their particular collaborative program. As a result, it is unclear whether educational institutions in their particular collaborative programs have a clear mutual understanding about each other's intent or if they have consistent expectations when they establish the partnership.

Numerous studies from the cross-border higher education literature have identified benefits and risks, as well as challenges during the operation of cross-border higher educational programs (Davis, Olsen & Bohm 2000; Huang, 2003a, 2003b; Knight, 2006b; Liston, 2004; Magagula, 2005; McBurnie & Pollock, 2000; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; OECD, 2004; Shanahan & McParlane, 2005; Wang, 2008). These challenges and conflicts mainly focus on areas such as standards for student admission, teaching and assessing student learning, faculty issues, limited resource support from the parent universities, and management issues. However, these discussions have remained at the operational level and have failed to seek the underneath reasons that might have caused these challenges. A detailed review of these challenges and conflicts suggests that many of them may have been caused by the different perceptions and expectations the partner

institutions have for each other and for the joint program itself. As a consequence, well-intentioned administrators and educators involved in cross-border educational programs often find themselves unprepared, and in unexpected and conflicting circumstances (Larsen et al., 2004).

The high level of uncertainty and lack of full control might be a major source of these emerging challenges and conflicts in cross-border educational delivery. The nature of cross-border educational programs determines that it has to be handled together with both or all involved partners. A majority of cross-border educational programs involve two or more educational institutions from different nation-states in a variety of ways (Davis, Olsen & Bohm, 2000). Their joint efforts can be perceived as an inter-organization cooperative arrangement, which carries inherent instability (Bannerman, Spiller, Yetton & Davis, 2005; Parkhe, 1993b). Involved parties are vulnerable to each other due to the uncertainty of the other partner's future behavior and the absence of hierarchical authority that enforces compliance. Research has identified that in cross-border educational partnerships, the absence of a shared vision, trust, commitment, and effective communication among partners are key factors related to deterioration and potential termination (Heffernan & Poole, 2004).

Scholars from the business field have been particularly interested in firms' motivations for becoming involved in inter-organization arrangements and the overall success or failure of such efforts (Das & Teng, 2000; Gomes-Casseres, 2003; Hatfield & Pearce, 1994; Hatfield, Pearce, Sleeth, & Pitts, 1998; Kogut, 1998; Larsson, Bengtsson, Henriksson, & Sparks, 1998). These studies suggest that partners often have both similar and different goals and expectations (Child & Faulkner, 1998). The discrepancy among

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partner motivations can jeopardize the implementation of the program, as well as create true synergies for the collaboration (Borys & Jemison, 1989; Child & Faulkner, 1998). Therefore it is important that motivations must not be in conflict and must be clearly identified among partners in order to successfully implement the joint ventures. High levels of complementary objectives between the partner are often associated with less managerial and implementation difficulty (Child & Faulkner, 1998).

<center>Review of the Conceptual Framework</center>

Game theory concerns how players interact with each other to obtain their individual goals. It is particularly powerful in understanding and predicting how rational participants behave in a social situation that involves two or more "players" whose interests are interconnected or interdependent (Davis, 1970). In this way, game theory is of direct relevance for this study in terms of inter-organizational relations between educational institutions.

Game theory suggests that players' personalities and subjective preferences for anticipated payoffs significantly influence their choice of strategies in the game, thus inevitably having an impact their cooperative relationship. In any given game, players would either explicitly or implicitly evaluate all possible outcomes they could achieve through different strategies. This evaluation is a rationalization process that is defined by their own personality and value judgment of the potential payoffs.

While cross-border higher education programs are all unique in many aspects, the nature of these programs shares a common feature: cooperation between the involved partner institutions through their international inter-organizational partnerships. This inherent nature indicates that a cross-border higher education program depends on the

inter-dependent partner relationship. Therefore, this study perceives cross-border higher

education programs as an arrangement between two or more partner institutions from

different nation-states; thus, there is an inter-organizational relationship between the

involved partner institutions. In this study, the partnership in a given cross-border higher

education program is the game, of which two or more higher education institutions from

different nation-states are the players. These partnerships can be perceived as non-zero-

sum games, within which players bring in a mixture of motives and interests while

interacting with each other for anticipated outcomes.

The personalities of partner institutions are described by using their institutional

profiles (type of institution, history and traditions, and current development), the overall

missions as higher education providers, and their values and beliefs of the cross-border

higher education program's role in higher education. The assumptions are that these

partner institutions are rational and defined by their institutional context. Furthermore,

the decisions on which strategies to chose are always to maximize anticipated the

outcomes.

The establishment of a cross-border partnership suggests that the players have

jointly agreed to act towards a certain outcome. Game theorists call it an equilibrium

outcome[4]. Therefore, the existing collaboration program is perceived as the equilibrium

outcome of the game played by the two partner institutions. The overall setup of the

collaboration program illustrates the chosen strategy that the partners' mutually desired.

Consequently, the partner institutions' share of responsibilities and the allocation of

resources are specific components that constitute each partner's overall strategy in the

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[4] An equilibrium outcome in a two-person game is a situation where either of the players has any incentive
to deviate from what they have chosen to do unilaterally.

international inter-organization collaboration.

However, the stability of the equilibrium outcome depends on whether the outcomes are the most mutually preferred for both players and whether there are other self-interests that are worth each player's unilateral deceiving actions. Accordingly, during the course of program implementation and development, the partner institutions could make mutual and or unilateral changes to their chosen strategies, while fulfilling their responsibilities and adding new initiatives in the collaboration, based on their mutual interests or self-interests. These changes and new initiatives could strengthen or weaken the existing cross-border collaborations.

If the players value their own self-interests significantly more than the mutual interests, it is highly likely that they will end up with a prisoners' dilemma situation. This means that the partners will forgo some of their most desired outcomes but only act towards a less desired outcome because of the risks of being appropriated by the other player. In this situation, the significant discrepancies between how the players value the different outcomes could negatively impact their collaboration because both would avoid choosing the most cooperative strategy.

If the partners value their mutual interests much more than the self-interests, then such discrepancies in potential outcomes could be addressed through collaboration. If the partners have only mutual interests but no self-interests, then it is a pure coordination game. In such a situation, the partners share the same values for the potential outcomes and do not harbor any self-interests; therefore, they only want to coordinate with each other to achieve that outcome.

Research Questions

Based on the conceptual framework, the following research questions are posed to address the purpose of this study:

1. To what extent do partner institutions in a cross-border higher program share similar views about their collaboration?

    a. What are the similar and/or different perceptions of motivation and expected outcomes perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher education program?

    b. What are the similar and/or different preferences for the expected outcomes perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher education program?

    c. To what extent do the partner institutions hold similar views for the current chosen strategies to achieve the desired outcomes from the program?

2. How do the partners' similar and/or different views of the inter-organizational partnership and collaboration impact the implementation of the cross-border higher education program?

    a. Were there any changes partner institutions made to the planned strategy during the implementation? If so, what were they?

    b. What are the partners' desired future changes for the program's development?

Methodology

This study employs a case-study approach to investigate the intended research questions. Two Sino-US higher education programs were purposefully selected as cases to answer the research questions. Both cases offer U.S degree of business management at the Master's level. The two U.S. institutions in the selected cases represent a primarily teaching-focused private university and a large public state university with both research and teaching focuses. The two Chinese partner institutions in the selected cases are of similar institutional types in terms of funding sources.

Within each of the selected Sino-U.S. higher education programs, individual informants were selected for one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. These informants came from three stakeholder groups, including key leaders, administrators, and faculty members. The criteria for the selection were that they had to have direct involvement with the collaborative program.

For data collection methods, this study used document analysis, site visits, observations, and one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The conceptual framework served as the guideline for the data collection and analysis process for this study. A pilot study was conducted at a Sino-U.K. cross-border program offering an Associate degree in business management to test the data collection plan and instrument. Relevant documents included each institution's mission statement, strategic planning documents, collaboration agreement, advertisements, program marketing plan, course schedules, and evaluation results.

The researcher also visited the sites of both studied programs[5], the campuses of the two Chinese partners, and one of the U.S. partners. Observation notes were written as

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[5] Both collaborative programs are housed at the Chinese partners' locations.

necessary. A total of twenty-two interviews were conducted with involved leaders, administrators, and faculty members from both sides of the partnerships (12 from the Chinese partners and 10 from the U.S. partners). On average, semi-structured interviews took about one to one-and-a-half hours. Most of the interviews were conducted at the program sites, with two over the phone and one through an online Skype meeting.

## Assumptions

Several assumptions were applied to this study. First, the research assumed that the key stakeholders carried the institutional perspectives and preferences for the potential outcomes. Second, the researcher assumed that an institutional perspective could be identified based on views collected from the involved key stakeholders. Although stakeholders may have different perceptions about the same issue, when it comes to institutional decision-making about investment and new initiatives, certain common ground would exist among stakeholders. Third, should dramatically different views be found across key stakeholder groups at the partner institutions, the relevant problems would also be identified from the implementation strategy for the cross-border higher educational programs.

## Significance of the Study

This study adds to the literature on cross-border education by providing new perspectives on its inter-organizational cooperative relationship through systematically conducted empirical research. Findings of this study demonstrate the extent to which institutions collaborating in cross-border higher education programs understand each other's intents and how they coordinate the mutual and unilateral activities to achieve these similar and/or different intent.

If discrepancies are identified between the partner institutions' views about the outcomes of the cross-border higher education programs and the best strategies to achieve these outcomes, such findings would benefit university leaders and policy makers, both those who are already involved and those who are planning to become involved in cross-border higher education delivery. The findings could help them become more aware of the different intents and perceptions held by their partners, identify the potential challenges and issues stemming from these different perceptions, and therefore proactively address them. As suggested by game theory, being able to see your partner's perspective and to look at issues from both sides of the partnership helps institutions to strategically influence their inter-dependent partnership, as well as respond to the challenges.

If partner institutions share similar expected outcomes from the program, the findings are still helpful because leaders of the institutions can be informed about the mutually desired outcomes and can collaboratively work on the mutually beneficial strategies to achieve those outcomes. Such mutual understanding lays the groundwork for an effective and successful partnership. This study could also identify important features of the mechanism to ensure collaboration, and thus achieve a more sustainable program.

Finally, findings of this study could benefit policy makers both at the institutional and the national levels. At the national level, policy makers will be more informed about the congruence as well as potential gaps between the intentions of the local institutions and foreign institutions. As a result, they could be more intentional when developing relevant policies and regulations and thus encourage the development of cross-border higher education in their desired direction.

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Organization of the Thesis

This study has five chapters. Chapter one presents the identified problem in the real world and the gaps in the literature that set up the context of this study, the purpose of the study, the intended research questions, and provide an overview of the conceptual framework and methodological design the study used. Chapter two reviews the literature in the area of international higher education, strategic management, and game theory, which serve as the theoretical groundwork for the development of the conceptual framework of this study. The methodological approach, research design, methods, data collection protocols, and data analysis procedures are discussed in detail in Chapter three. Chapter four presents the analysis and the findings from the two studied cases. Finally, in Chapter five, findings of the two cases are synthesized and compared to discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study. Policy recommendations and suggestions for future research are included at the end.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines discrepancies and similarities between the partner institutions' perceptions of the motivations, expected outcomes, and desired strategies achieving such outcomes in their cross-border higher educational programs from a game theory perspective, in the context of China. By comparing the key stakeholders' perceptions from the partner institutions, it also addresses the potential impact these discrepancies and similarities could have on the program implementation, in the context China. This literature review intends to provide a theoretical basis for this purpose, to develop research questions, and to construct the conceptual framework to guide the study.

The literature review in this chapter consists of four parts. The first part of the review starts with a critical discussion of the key terms that has been used to describe the flow of educational resources and services across national borders, and an overview of the development of cross-border higher education provision. The second part reviews literature on cross-border higher education. Specific emphasis is assigned to programmatic challenges, the commonly identified risks, and institutional motivations. In the third part, studies from the field of strategic alliances that explain motivations for inter-organizational collaboration are borrowed to provide a starting point for understanding partner motivations for establishing joint educational programs. The major external stimulus for this phenomenon and the internal needs that explain institutions' eager participation in cross-border educational provisions are explored. Finally, game theory is introduced and the conceptual framework of this study is developed. Research questions are posed based on the literature and discussion at the end of this chapter.

Terminology and Delivery Mode

In this section, key terminologies are synthesized and discussed in order to clear up some of the confusion about cross-border higher education programs.

*Confusion from Different Definitions*

An effort to conceptualize the flow of people, resources, programs, and institutions in the higher education arena is discussed throughout the literature. Although there are various educational formats, an increasing number of individuals, organizations, and higher education programs are moving across nation borders. The focus of this study—cross-border higher education programs[6]—is one of the more recent developments of such movement in the field of higher education. Because of its rapid growth in quantity and the of its delivery mode, the terminology used in the literature varies. Terms such as offshore, transnational, cross-border, and borderless have been used interchangeably to refer to the newer forms of higher education moving across national border. Table 1 contains brief definitions for these terms identified from the literature.

These terms vary in the aspects or scope, even though they all refer to a broad scenario of this international phenomenon in the higher education sector. The lack of specific definitions and overlap among different terms used for such phenomenon causes confusion and misconceptions. Therefore, it is critical to discuss the most commonly used terms at the outset. To better define the targeted programs of this study, the researcher

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[6] For the purpose of consistency, offshore education, transnational education, and cross-border education will be treated synonymously.

argues that emphasis should be given to the key features of these programs (i.e., the international inter-organizational relationship).

Table 1. A List of Key Terminology

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Cross-border education | Higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, program, institution/provider or course materials cross a national jurisdictional border. Cross-border education may include higher education by public/private and not-for-profit/for-profit providers. It encompasses a wide range of modalities in continuum from face-to face (taking various forms from students traveling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning, including e learning, using a range of technologies. |
| Transnational education | All types of higher education study programs, sets of courses of study, and educational services (including distance education), in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programs may belong to the education system of a state different from the state in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system. |
| Off-shore education | Australia started using this term to differentiate those students who receive Australian education outside of Australia (offshore) from those who study in Australia (onshore). The term refers to international students, studying offshore, but still enrolled in Australian provider institutions. It includes distance education, locally supported distance education, twinning programs, articulation programs, branch campuses and licensed or franchised programs. |
| Borderless education | Refers to "the blurring of conceptual, disciplinary and geographic borders traditionally inherent to higher education." |

*Sources: (Adam, 2001; D. Davis, Olsen, & Bohm, 2000; dos Santos, 2000, 2002; GATE, 1997; Lembright, 2007; G. McBurnie & Pollock, 1998; OECD, 2005; UNESCO/Council of Europe, 2001)*

When examined together, offshore education is almost an identical term to transnational education used to "simply describe offshore international student enrollments regardless of delivery method" (Knight, 2006a, p. 335). However, the term is not universally applicable to any other nation except Australia. As McBurnie and Pollock (1998) argued, "such term is appropriate only if your nation happens to be a continent" – meaning Australia (p. 17).

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the General Agreement in Trade and Services (GATS)[7] provided a definition of "transnational education" which has been widely adopted. However, much concern has been raised regarding the confusion about what is included in this generic term (Adam, 2001; Davis et al., 2000; dos Santos, 2002; Knight, 2004; J. Knight, 2006a). Its breadth makes it difficult to focus when analyzing specific types of programs.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2005) provided a comprehensive definition for cross-border higher education in the "Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education." In comparison to "offshore education" and "transnational education", "cross-border higher education" addresses the notion of increasingly significant national boundaries that are embedded in this global phenomenon, within which individuals, materials programs, and organizations are increasingly mobile. Based on this definition, Knight (2006a) proposes an analytical framework that includes two elements, putting more focus on the "subjects" that flow across borders. This analytical framework includes two main categories: 1) what moves:

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[7] Global Alliance for Transnational Education® (GATE®) is an alliance of businesses, educators, quality-assurance agencies, governments, and intergovernmental organizations that address issues related to quality assurance in transnational education. In August 2003, it was transferred to the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA).

people, programs, providers, and projects/services; and 2) under what conditions:

development cooperation projects, academic exchange, linkage agreements, and

commercial/profit oriented initiatives. Using this framework, Knight identified two

significant shifts of this flow of higher education crossing borders. They are 1) a shift

from student mobility to program and provider mobility, and 2) a substantial change in

the national approaches from aid to trade. She further suggested that the shift from the aid

to trade has been driven by a variety of motivations (with an economic motivation

becoming increasingly significant).

Knight's (2006a) framework is helpful in that it clears up this complex

phenomenon by categorizing the diverse practices covered under the concept of cross-

border higher education. However, it is worth noting that these categories are not

mutually exclusive. The activities covered under each category are often intertwined or

overlapping. For example, individual mobility and program/provider mobility are highly

correlated. For many of the cross-border higher education programs, students and parents

view them as a means to seek future study abroad opportunities (Lembright, 2007; Tang

& Nollent, 2007). For some institutions, a study abroad program or student/faculty

exchange program might not be established without first establishing a "commercial

educational trade" program with foreign institutions. Given that there is a significant

"data deficit" for cross-border education (Knight, 2006a, p. 24), it may be too early to

conclude which kind of development is driven by which motivation.

In addition, some scholars tend to view cross-border education as the "abroad"

component of a broader internationalization process of an institution, as compared to

other "dimensions of internationalization  [which are] purely domestic and refers to the

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international and intercultural dimensions of curriculum teaching, research, and helping students to develop international and intercultural skills without leaving their country" (Larsen, Momii & Vincent-Lancrin, 2004, p. 3). As a result, a hard line has been drawn between the commercial-type, cross-border educational program/provider mobility and the "traditional" type of internationalization approaches (Altbach & Knight, 2006). While these are important and reasonable concerns based on the current extremely imbalanced development, they fail to look at cross-border education from the importer's perspective. For example, cross-border delivery that is considered to be "abroad" is actually "domestic" internationalization for the importing institution. Whether they are commercial or "traditional" might not be a determinant factor. In fact, many of the cross-border programs correspond with other types of individual exchange activities. Drawing a hard line between program and person mobility only restricts our analysis to one dimension of the programs. In borrowing the terms from game theory, the game is constantly changing, because the players are interactively changing the rules of the game. Players who fail to realize this dynamic will be less likely to fully exploit the opportunities in the game.

*Diverse Delivery Modes*

The diverse delivery modes cross-border higher education has is another reason that makes the conceptualization of these programs difficult. McBurine and Zigura (2007) synthesized these diverse modes into three categories: distance education, partner-supported delivery, and branch campus. Their categories are clear in that they only focus on program/institution mobility in cross-border education. However, the criteria they adopt to differentiate these programs are still vague. For example, having a branch

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campus is a higher education provision that involves "a brick-and-mortar presence in the host country, fully or jointly owned by the awarding institution" (p. 28). This overlaps with the "partner-supported delivery" category. In some countries, the government provides the entire "brick-and-mortar" infrastructure in order to invite more prestigious foreign universities to provide educational programs in conjunction with domestic institutions. Table 2 summarizes the commonly observed delivery modes of cross-border higher education programs in the literature.

Table 2. A list of Mode of Delivery in Cross-border Education

| Branch Campus | Campuses set up by an institution in another country to provide its educational or training programs to foreign students. |
|---|---|
| Franchising | An institution authorizes another institution or organization in another country to provide its educational services. |
| Articulation | Two or more institutions jointly agree to define a study program in terms of study credits and credit-transfers, so that students pursuing their studies in one institution have their credits recognized by the other, and accepted for transfer in order to continue their studies. |
| Twinning | An agreement between two higher education institutions in different countries where joint programs are offered. In both institutions, students follow exactly the same courses, have the same materials, and pass the same examinations. Students complete their initial years of study at the local institution and finish at the site of the awarding institution, thereby receiving a degree from that university or college. |
| Distance Education | Distance education programs that are delivered through satellite, computer, correspondence, or other technological means across national boundaries. |

*Source: (Bernardo, 2002; Garrett & Verbik, 2004; Lembright, 2007; UNESCO/Council of Europe, 2001; Van Damme, 2001)*

*Cross-border Educational Programs: An International Inter-organizational Arrangement*

Another way to look at cross-border education may be to focus on the institutional level and consider all the above-mentioned categories as different ways and activities that occur in a relationship between institutions.

Beerken (2002, p. 297) attempted to go beyond some of the "nominal differences" and focus on the essential features, which he referred to as "international arrangements between organizations in higher education." Beerken (2002) presented a multidimensional typology to categorize international, inter-organizational arrangements in higher education, identifying several critical dimensions: *size* (number of involved organizations), *scope* (the scope of activities being undertaken), *nature of integration* (within the higher education sector or across different sectors) and *intensity* (the extent to which authorities are transferred from individual organizations to international arrangements). His work contributes to the existing literature of cross-border higher education for its potential to become a useful tool that distinguishes different forms of cooperation, and thus helps contain units of comparison for future studies.

This study adapted Beerkens' (2002) approach of cross-border educational provision by focusing on its inter-organizational relations between the involved partner institutions, within which all specific collaborations, exchanges, and program deliveries are captured. Such an approach not only allows the study to incorporate both partners' perspectives equally, but also views the inter-stage—the joint provision—as the anchor of the study. Therefore, this study concentrates on the partnerships in cross-border education provision.

Focusing on this meso-level of a cross-border higher education programs helps the researcher capture the common nature of the targeted phenomenon. Influences from supranational organizations and nations-and-states are the external context for these partnerships; collaborations and activities at the institutional and individual level can be captured as different types of events that exist within any of the given arrangements. This

approach also allows the researcher to analyze cross-border higher education programs from a game theoretical perspective. That is, each of the categories (branch campus, franchising, articulation, twinning, and distance education) represents a distinct inter-organizational relationship defined by the partner institutions' chosen strategies for implementing their collaborative programs. Each also illustrates a unique outcome of a cross-border higher education game played by two players across nation-and-state borders.

Since different types of cross-border educational programs bring up different issues and implications both for local and foreign partners (Chiang, 2007), taking this approach helps the study clearly define the types of activities incorporated in particular form(s) of cross-border higher education in their particular contexts. Therefore, this study uses the term cross-border education for the purpose of consistency, even though other scholars choose to use terms such as offshore program, transnational program, joint degree program, multinational education for these educational programs and institutions (Adam, 2001; Altbach, 2000; Davis et al., 2000; dos Santos, 2000, 2002; GATE, 1997; Knight, 2006a, 2006b; Lembright, 2007; McBurnie & Pollock, 1998; UNESCO/Council of Europe, 2001). This study also uses terms such as joint provision and transnational education programs interchangeably.

Development Scale of Cross-border Educational Programs

As economic globalization dominates the development of today's world, higher education is also becoming increasingly international. "International education is now a multi-billion dollar industry" (Shanahan & McParlane, 2005, p. 220). Rapid expansion of students seeking higher education outside of their own countries or provided by a foreign

institution has been documented in recent years.  In 2000, the International Development Program (IDP) in Australia predicted that the number of international students seeking higher education through a foreign university would reach 1.4 million in 2010, and rising to 3.1 million in 2025 (Blight & West, 2000), but by 2008, there were already over three million international students enrolled in foreign universities.

While affluent statistical data are available on international student mobility from various sources, such as UNESCO, OECD, Institute of International Education (IIE), there is hardly any consolidated official data available on one of the key contributors— cross-border higher education programs—to the overall growth of enrollment of international students worldwide (Knight, 2006b). For some countries, cross-border education delivery constitutes a significant proportion of their entire international student body. Australia, for example, indicated that one fourth of its entire international student enrollment is through their offshore programs (Bannerman, Spiller, Yetton, & Davis, 2005, p. 7).

Similar dramatic increases in the scale of cross-border program delivery has been witnessed worldwide (Garrett & Verbik, 2004). Some country-specific data is available on this newer version of higher education provision crossing national borders (program mobility in comparison to the traditional form of individual mobility) (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007). Public data from the United Kingdom and Australia shows that around 300,000 international students participate in their transnational programs, and these students' countries of origin are concentrated in Asia, mainly Singapore, Malaysia, and China, and consist of 54 percent of the total (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). Only in international

branch campuses over the past three years, the number has increased by 43 percent since 2006 (Becker, 2010).

One noticeable feature of this development is that the pattern of this on-going educational inter-organizational arrangement is hardly reciprocally balanced. Although limited data has been collected, the imbalanced flow of education programs and other resources being exported from developed countries to less developed ones is clearly emerging (Altbach & Knight, 2006). In addition, these cross-border education programs usually concentrate on a limited number of subjects, such as business management, accounting, human resources, and ICT, which require minimum investment in an establishment. Other subject areas that involve more financial cost in facilities (e.g. labs and other equipment) such as medicine and agriculture are largely missing (Yan, 2006). In this section, the development scale of cross-border higher education programs are presented based on a handful of countries that have some available statistics.

*Major Exporters*

From the exporting side, according to the Universities Australia[8] (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2005a), offshore programs of Australian Universities grew from less than 50 members in 1992 to about 1500 members in 2002, and 1684 members in 2005. In New Zealand, it was estimated that 17% of its all foreign tertiary-level students were enrolled through their operation abroad in 2002. The United Kingdom (UK) quoted an estimate of approximately 190,000 overseas-based students, including distance learning in 2004, which accounts for an estimated 50% of UK international enrollments (OBHE, 2005, cited in Tang & Nollent, 2007; Larsen et al., 2004). The United States (US)

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[8] The Universities Australia is the former Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee.

probably has the largest number of institutions and programs abroad, but this does not indicate it is the most active country since the proportion of total institutions and programs might not be as significant as some other countries (Larsen et al., 2004). Newer exporters include European countries (e.g., France and Germany), and some Asian countries (e.g., Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), South Korea, Malaysia, and India) who are also noticeably trying to export their education services to China, to compete with others countries (Tang & Nollent, 2007).

*Major Importers*

Singapore, Malaysia, and China (including Hong Kong SAR) are the few nations and regions that receive most of the cross-border educational deliveries (54%) (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007, p. 25). Since the late 1990s, five branch campuses have been established by foreign universities in Malaysia, and more than 600 of its private institutions are involved in some transnational education program. In addition, Hong Kong SAR reported 150 foreign educational institutions, and 40 foreign professional organizations offered 645 courses in 2001. Undoubtedly, this number has grown substantially in the next 10 years.

Finally, China, in particular, has witnessed rapid growth in the development of cross-border education to the point where it has become one of the leading importing countries of educational programs in the world (Garrett and Verbik, 2004). According to the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) (2003b), by the end of year 2002, a total of 712 Sino-foreign educational programs/institutions were in place, a nine-fold increase compared to 1995, mostly offering bachelor's degrees and above. Business administration, enterprise management, accounting, and human resource management

were the most common areas of study. More recently, program and institution mobility

has also occurred in Eastern Europe, South America, and more recently in wealthy

countries in the Middle East (Larsen et al., 2004). According to Feng and Gong (as cited

in Tang & Nollent, 2007), over 1,300 programs operate in China with another 378

candidate programs at the bachelor's degree level or above currently awaiting approval

by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Most of the foreign counterparts are from

developed nations, especially the United States, Australia, and Canada (Ministry of

Education China, 2003b).

After about four years of suspension on giving government approvals for new

Sino-foreign higher education programs and a nation-wide evaluation and scrutinizing all

existing programs, the Chinese MOE (2010) released a list of current qualified Sino-

foreign higher education programs. According to this official data, as of July 19, 2010,

there are total of 541 cross-border higher education programs (including programs and

branch campus) currently running in China, among which 384 offer undergraduate

degrees and 147 grant graduate degrees. These international programs are still highly

concentrated in the eastern part of China and the majority of the foreign partners are from

English-speaking countries that are actively advocating for the WTO/GATS regulation.

For example, among all cross-border higher education programs, 73.3% of the foreign

partners are from Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, United States, and New Zeeland.

Australia alone makes up about one four of this group (Zhang, 2010).

*Blurring Line between Exporter and Importer*

Many importing countries do not want to remain solely on the receiving end.

Since they consider cross-border education provision as an important means to build the

capacity of their education system, many of them aspire to gradually shift from being importers to becoming exporters of education in the form of becoming a regional education hub, or a niche education exporter. Singapore and Malaysia are two representatives of this group (Hoare, 2006; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). Cities, regions, and in some cases even countries are attempting to transform themselves into "education hubs" that mostly feature international higher education programs and campuses (Kinser & Lane, 2010; Knight, 2006).

A similar trend is also identified in China. Tang & Nollent (2007), who report on the cross-border educational market in China and Hong Kong SAR, concluded that the "Chinese market situation is changing rapidly with its internal capacity building very fast," such as the substantial number of Chinese university staff obtaining additional skills; and its opening up to (transnational education) in a much bigger way than previously" with the purpose of "helping its HE infrastructure to mature and be self sustaining" (p. 19-20). The Chinese MOE is also trying to establish educational programs in other nations, mainly about Chinese language, cultural study, and Chinese traditional medicine (Garrett & Verbik, 2004; Hayhoe & Liu, 2010). A most noticeable trend is the establishment of Confucius Institutes around the world. Since the first Confucius Institute opened in 2003 in South Korea, there have been more than 282 Institutes established in about 88 nations worldwide (Confucius Institute Online, 2010).

Challenges and Conflicts Emerging from Program Implementation

With its dramatic increase, cross-border educational programs are not short of challenges and conflicts. This section synthesizes some of the commonly identified issues in practice: the implementation of joint programs. A detailed review of the identified

challenges and conflicts from cross-border educational programs suggests that many are due to discrepancies among partner institutions' perceptions and expectations of various components of the joint program. Such inconsistency further leads to a lack of shared vision, trust and commitment between/among partners. This result echoes the findings of a study conducted on an Australian offshore educational program conducted by Hefferman and Poole (2004). In their study identified key factors such as the lack of a shared vision, trust, and commitment between the two partner institutions all of which could lead to the deterioration and potential termination of the partnership. These challenges and conflicts are presented in five categories: standards for student admission, teaching and assessing student learning, faculty workload, resource demands (related to the parent institutions), and management issues.

*Standards for Student Admissions*

The success of a cross-border educational program can be challenged by the unstandardized policy of entrance requirements (Lembright, 2007, p. 38). For example, one observation is that the required language proficiency is usually too high for local students. In order to fulfill an enrollment plan, some of the local partners tend to lower the standards on entrance language proficiency. Foreign institutions perceive this as lowering the admission standards, thus reducing the overall quality of the program. However, from a local institution's perspective, such a high entrance standard makes it simply impossible to enroll any students. Regardless, students will receive intensive language training courses after they are admitted (Tang & Nollent, 2007, p. 2).

Another observation is that local partner institutions in Hong Kong stated that they lower the enrollment standards because foreign institutions "are willing to bend the

rules and are willing to compromise the standards for financial rewards" (Chiang, 2007, p.

16). In the case of China, compared to other Chinese public universities, Sino-foreign

programs usually have lower entrance requirements[9]. Except for a few students who have

the qualifications to enter public institutions, most students choose joint programs instead,

usually with a clear purpose to study abroad at a later stage.

*Teaching and Assessing Student Learning*

In 2000, of all 263 Australian offshore programs, the importing institutions

mostly shared administrative functions of the program (provide facilities, student support,

marketing, financial and administrative services). Of those 164 institutions that shared

academic responsibilities, they tended to concentrate in academic support (tutoring and

recitation). A few of them also participated in teaching and assessing student learning,

and even fewer participated in curriculum development (Davis et al., 2000).

Exporting institutions perceive that their local partners tend to work on their own

with more freedom, and that they struggle less with the required standards. Some of them

also found the assessment by local partner institutions appear to inflate the grading.

Therefore, from a quality control perspective, some of the foreign institutions completely

take on the teaching and assessment responsibility and only have the local partner

institutions work on tutoring and academic support. In contrast, importing institutions

might perceive this as an equity issue. Many of them complain about having no voice in

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[9] Chinese students in Sino-foreign educational program come from two sources: in-plan and out-of-plan students. The former group includes student who passed the national university entrance exams and obtained the required grade for their expected institutions. Many Sino-foreign educational programs enroll out-of-plan students. There is also a tendency to have dual cross-border education degrees with high-ranking universities or provincial key universities usually enrolling in-plan students, while the twinning programs and articulated programs tend to enroll out-of-plan students (Tang & Nollent, 2007).

student learning, even though they are the people who work directly with the students, teach classes and answer questions. Many perceive this as unfair to the students as well. Local instructors and/or tutors believe that their students work whole-heartedly but can not pass because the core teachers are not available to them (Tang & Nollent, 2007). These issues could potentially be solved with clarified expectations and trust between partners on standards of the core academic practices.

Another challenge related to teaching is the "truncated delivery mode" many cross-border educational programs have adopted (Hoare, 2006). In this mode, foreign instructors fly to the joint program campus to do short and intensive lectures. The core teaching is condensed into a few weekends throughout a semester or for a few continuous weeks, followed up with local staff tutoring and/or recitation sections. However, this delivery mode significantly reduces the pedagogical soundness of the educational practice (Hoare, 2006). Lecturers find that they are unable to deliver the course content as planned within such a time constraint due to the cultural and linguistic difficulties. As a result, they resort to more didactic pedagogical practices but they believe it is the least desirable way to teach. While some of the adult learners in the cross-border programs might appreciate and benefit from such a delivery mode, since they did not need to quit their jobs to get the education they want, other students complain about the lack of contact with the foreign faculty members. Furthermore, students also reported that their program has "no logical consistency" (p. 191). This is due to the fact that the course rotation was determined by the capacity of the lecturer's availability rather than any careful structuring of the subject's introductory courses to more challenging ones.

*Faculty Workload*

Closely related to the teaching and assessment challenges, lack of foreign academic faculty involvement is one of the commonly criticized problems in cross-border education delivery. It is widely recognized that not all exporting institutions send their best faculty to teach in cross-border education at the importing institutions (Altbach, 2006; Feng, 2007; Wang, 2007). On one hand, there is research providing strong evidence that foreign lecturers do develop cultural competencies from teaching in cross-border programs. This results is a benefit to the university in enhanced organizational knowledge and abilities as well (Hoare, 2006). However, not all faculty members appreciate the international experiences offered by cross-border programs. Some foreign faculty members are already teaching a full load on their own campuses, not to mention the pressure to research in order to maintain tenure requirements. Teaching abroad is simply not a priority and not beneficial to their professional development (Chiang, 2007; Debowski, 2003).

In addition, those who do value overseas teaching and collaboration may be overwhelmed due to the intense international travel requirement as well as the extra workload (Fazackerley & Worthington, 2007). Workload increases significantly from teaching at home to teaching abroad even for the same course. Since some of them do not have any formal or informal pre-departure training in intercultural awareness, they also experience tremendous challenges such as various levels of culture shock (Hoare, 2006). Such an issue could be perceived more negatively as "unconscious hegemony, imperialism or epistemological arrogance because busy lecturers … have no sufficient time to research and rewrite a program to suit a foreign context" (p. 241).

From the importing institutions' perspective, having foreign faculty members physically teaching in cross-border education is one of the most important signals of the quality of the program (Sun, 2006). First, students in the cross-border educational programs prefer more in-person contact with the foreign faculty members (Chiang, 2007). Second, some of the importing institutions try to promote collaboration between their own teaching staff with the foreign faculty members. This kind of collaboration is valued and considered to be an effective means of teaching capacity building and quality improvement. For example, some of the Chinese institutions coordinate discussions and research sessions for local and foreign teaching staff to compare and discuss the pedagogical issues they encountered (Wang, 2007). Without a sufficient amount of involvement from the foreign faculty members, both students and importing institutions may be left unsatisfied.

For some other importing institutions, securing enough qualified local teaching staff could also be a challenge (Feng, 2007). For example, some of cross-border joint programs are not perceived as value-added academic programs by the importing partner, and as a result do not have their key teaching staff involved in the programs. Many of the teaching staff for these programs are either provisionally hired or are retired professors. Therefore, the teaching team tends to be unstable, thus affecting the quality and sustainability of the program (Feng, 2007). One misunderstandings revealed in another study is that while some of the exporting institutions expect quality academic support and/or collaboration from their local partners, the latter might perceive the cooperation as "their [foreign partner's] program" and "they should be responsible for the quality" (Chiang, 2007).

Furthermore, although many governments and universities actively promote cross-border higher education programs with confident quality assurance mechanisms, the involved faculty members question the negative impact from inappropriate program design. Issues such as "taylorization of academic work" arise from this concern (Schapper & Mayson, 2004). Standardized curriculum and assessments are sometimes employed as a measurement of the consistency of cross-border program quality and as a way to achieve efficiency. However, it is also criticized that academic teaching staff in such a context "is no longer valued for their intellectual contribution to student learning but for their ability to deliver prepackaged education with efficiency and economy (Schapper & Mayson, 2004).

*Resource Dependency with Parent Institutions*

Studies in corporations and other services organizations have reported that establishing an international presence places significant pressure on an institution's internal resources, particularly staff. This is a common issue in cross-border education programs and it applies to both partners (Mazzarol, Soutar, & Seng, 2003). To some extent, this reflects a lack of alignment between cross-border education involvement and the overall parent institution's mission and development.  For example, as the scale of cross-border educational programs increase, issues of competing resources with the parent institution become more apparent. Recall the challenges related to faculty discussed earlier. Such demands only make the situation worse. One of the cross-border program coordinators from an exporting institution commented that the foreign partner's main campus just could not accommodate that many international students transferring from the joint program to the UK campus (Tang & Nollent, 2007). Similar incidents have

occurred in importing institutions as well. Students enrolled in most of the twinning programs plan to transfer to foreign institutions for the last part of their studies. However, due to the visa requirements of the foreign governments, many of these students could not go. Students staying on the local campus are perceived as "an additional burden," since their accommodations were not part of the plan (Tang & Nollent, 2007). Such an increase in cross-border education enrollment also poses a challenge to the academic delivery. The more students who are enrolled in the program, the more resources are needed for teaching and academic support.

*Management Issues*

Some of the other identified obstacles relate to program management, such as, poor supervision and inadequate communication between providers and host institutions (Lembright, 2007). Few cross-border collaborative programs establish new hierarchy governing structures, and committees and/or boards of directors tend to be overshadowed by local partner institutional bureaucracies (Yan, 2006).

In addition, field studies have shown that some of the profound difficulties that teaching staff encounter are largely due to the lack of concern about academic quality from those who established the program contract (Hoare, 2006). It could be that some programs are actually established through brokers who are independent from either partner institutions which can eventually lead to a situation that partner institutions know little about each other's motivations and expectations, and thus undermines the quality of the program. Inappropriate hiring procedures are also observed from both exporting and importing institutions (Tang & Nollent, 2007).

Risks and Benefits

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The perceived risks and benefits of cross-border education, to a large extent, reflect the stakeholders' intent to participate and/or take action. The anticipated risks and benefits of cross-border education from the perspective of the exporting and importing institutions are synthesized from the literature. Issues of culture, quality, and economic gains were found to be the center of the debate (Lembright, 2007). However, the arguments do not always distinguish the kinds of risks and benefits for a country, an institution, or an individual student because they tend to be intertwined. As a result, it is not clear how a particular institution creates a balance between the perceived risks and benefits before it becomes involved.

Since the focus of this study resides at the institutional level, this section only presents risks and benefits from an institutional perspective (see Table 3), while recognizing that there are still many risks and benefits for nations-and-states (Magagula, 2005; Stella & Gnanam, 2006) or enrolled individuals (Bernardo, 2002; Lewis & Pratt, 1996; Pyvis & Chapman, 2007). It is important to note that although these arguments will be presented under different categories, they closely intertwined with one another.

Table 3. Risks and Benefits (institutional level)

| Issues | Institutions | Risks | Benefits |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cultural | Exporting | • Being perceived as cultural and educational colonizing | • Increased diverse student body at home campus<br>• Increased exposure to and incorporation of multi-cultural perspectives for involved faculty and staff |
| | Importing | • Accepting the underlying Western values that come with the educational practices | • Increased diverse student body at home campus<br>• Increased exposure to and incorporation of multi-cultural perspectives for involved faculty and staff |
| Quality | Exporting | • Unacceptable or low admission standards for recruitment<br>• Lower assessment standards for student learning ("grade inflation")<br>• Losing the complete authority/control on actual knowledge delivery and assessment<br>• Overburdened faculty if teaching overseas was perceived as zero value-added to their own professional lives<br>• Increasing resource demand that competes with the needs of the home campus<br>• Reputation of the home institution | • Further development of the "home" curriculum because of the need to fit with overseas context<br>• Gain from the mutual exchange of ideas and collaboration with local partners<br>• Innovation in terms of generating new knowledge (new courses and/or new research projects)<br>• Enhanced academic reputation overseas |
| | Importing | • Receive "off-shelf" knowledge from developed countries<br>• Over concentrated in a few subject areas that might not be the most needed | • Gain access to "advanced" educational resources (curriculum, expertise and library resources) at significantly lower cost (develop it all by themselves) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | • The imported knowledge lacks applicability to the local context<br>• Increasing resource demand from cross-border education may compete with the needs of other programs at the parent campus<br>• Overburdened faculty if being charged for teaching in cross-border programs<br>• Unsatisfied faculty if teaching cross-border courses are perceived as losing academic autonomy<br>• Reputation of the home institution | • Build reputation by collaborating with foreign educational institutions<br>• Obtain better administrative and management skills from foreign partner<br>• Hire more qualified local staff/faculty who are capable of delivering cross-border courses |
| Economic | Exporting | • Substantial capital commitment at the start up stage<br>• High transaction cost in terms of international travel<br>• Unrealistic expectations of student enrollment | • Gain access to a market that is not otherwise available (Increased market share)<br>• Reduced residential cost for cross-border students overseas<br>• Cross-border program student transfer to home campus or continue to study at exporter's home campus (student fees and other expenses)<br>• Enhanced profile |
| | Importing | • Lack of on-campus, cross-border program students if all transfer to foreign campuses in the last phase of the study.<br>• Unrealistic expectations of students enrollment<br>• Damaged reputation<br>• Unexpected policy changes | • Gain access to the market that is not available otherwise (Increased market share)<br>• Increased international student enrollment at home campus through exchange program<br>• Enhanced profile, especially compared to local competitors |

*Sources:* (Altbach, 2000, 2004a; Bernardo, 2002; Knight, 2002c; Lembright, 2007; Lewis & Pratt, 1996; Liston, 2004; Mazzarol et al., 2003; McBurnie & Pollock, 2000; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; Ziguras, 2001)

Motivations: Why Do Universities Establish Cross-Border Educational Programs

Some of the common motivations for cross-border higher education include economic gains, building an international reputation, student and staff advancement, meeting different student needs, increasing access to tertiary education programs, innovation through new delivery systems and providers, capacity-building in transition economies, and enhancing mutual understanding (Saffu & Mamman, 2000; Tang & Nollent, 2007; Zhang, 2003). However, it appears that the literature on institutional motivation for cross-border educational program is not thoroughly explored in terms of the specific types of programs. This section summarizes the existing literature on the motivation and rationale at the national and institutional level from both the exporting and importing perspectives.

*National Rationale for Cross-border Education*

*Exporting countries.* It was widely claimed that governments of exporting countries are mainly interested in gaining the following: 1) "Mutual understanding," viewing student mobility as a means to enhance political, cultural and economic ties; 2) "Skilled migration" (Larsen, Momii, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2004), where highly skilled international students are encouraged to stay in the host country after their studies (for example, Germany) (Adam, 2001); and 3) Revenue-generation where international students are viewed as a potential source of revenue (for example, Australia and New Zealand) (Larsen et al., 2004).

The rationale of specific nation-states have been explored through policy analyses on the impact from the WTO/GATS perspectives since education is included as an

internationally tradable service (Knight, 2003). The revenue-generation rationale, in particular, has been a prominent perspective in recent years (Altbach & Knight, 2006). Indeed, the substantial income derived from international students has strongly enticed institutions in these countries to "actively market themselves on the international scene" (Naidoo, 2006, p. 333).

*Importing countries*. Many of the importing countries encourage cross-border education for the purposes of building domestic capacity, widening student choice in education systems facing resource constraints, increasing participation rates, reducing brain drain, stimulating the local economy, providing niche education markets, and enhancing innovation and competitiveness in the higher education sector (Knight, 2005; Verbik & Jokivirta, 2005; Vincent-Lancrin, 2007). However, nations and regions might have different approaches that reflect their diverse rationale as well. For example, in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, cross-border education is handled through a "free market" approach, with minimum government registration requirements (which is perceived as not being related to program quality assurance) (Chiang, 2007). As a result, cross-border education is mostly expected to meet the demand from students, especially working adults who look for opportunities to extend their education degrees without sacrificing their current jobs. One of the requirements for establishing cross-border delivered courses in HK is that such courses should not be in direct competition with its local courses. Therefore, cross-border provision is not considered to be "complementary" to Hong Kong's local education system, but only "supplementary" (Chiang, 2007).

While meeting the unmet market demand is one of the driving forces in China, it appears that the central government also focuses on the capacity building benefits. It is

widely claimed that establishing Sino-foreign educational programs aims to draw high quality educational resources into the country (Feng & Gong, 2006, cited in Cao, 2004; X. Sun, 2004; Tang & Nollent, 2007; Zhou, 2003). Cross-border higher education is perceived as an effective means to improve the quality of China's human resources and upgrade the educational system (Zhang, 2003).

Accordingly, the Chinese government has implemented a series of new policies and initiatives to ensure the basic quality of existing and future programs since the beginning of the 21st century. The government has established a comprehensive policy framework and administrative monitoring mechanism to ensure that Sino-foreign educational programs/institutions add value to the Chinese education system (Ministry of Education China, 2003a, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2006). For example, according to a recently released official document, "Recommendations on issues in Sino-foreign educational cooperation", the importance of "quality education" is re-emphasized by explicitly directing flagship universities in China to carefully choose their partners (Ministry of Education China, 2006). In the most recent government official's public address and in announced policies, China clearly pointed out that the guiding principle and intended outcomes for having Sino-foreign higher education programs is to introduce advanced educational resources through these collaborations (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2010; Zhang, 2010).

*Institutional Rationale for Cross-border Education*

The institutional rationale is in some aspects reflected through the national rationale; however, these two are not always consistent (Knight, 2004). At the institutional level, the rationale for institutions' internationalization efforts are widely

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discussed. Since cross-border higher education provision is often considered to be a dimension of an institution's internationalization process, the institutional rationale on internationalization are relevant and reviewed.

Knight (2004) identified five emerging rationales for institutions' internationalization efforts: 1) expanding their international profile and reputation in order to achieve a strong worldwide reputation as an international, high-quality institution; 2) student and staff development for enhancing international and intercultural understanding and skills; 3) income generation, for both public and for-profit institutions; 4) strategic alliance as a means to achieve academic, scientific, economic, technological, or cultural objectives; and 5) research and knowledge production.

In general, scholars who are more skeptical about commercial delivery in cross-border education—a newer form of internationalization—perceive institutions' motives to be very different from those for "traditional internationalization" (individual mobility and collaborations) (Knight, 2006a; Vincent-Lancrin, 2007). These scholars conclude that the latter is academic and mutual understanding driven and the former is purely money driven (Altbach & Knight, 2006; Altbach, 2007).

*Exporting institutions.* A few studies have addressed motivations for cross-border collaborations at the institutional level specifically; however, these studies have only covered the perspective from one side of the partnership. These studies and documents largely reveal that the majority of the exporting institutions' motivations are money seeking (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2005a, 2005b; Liston, 2004).

Mazzarol et al. (2003) suggested that delivering education overseas is similar to other "soft service" enterprises trying to establish an international presence through

"forward integration." Studies have shown that "forward integration" has increased service enterprises' market share and have had a significant positive effect on financial performance.

One study conducted by IDP Education Australia (Davis, Olsen & Bohm 2000) sent out a survey to all Australian universities. This survey collected information on universities' positions on offshore provision, impact, rationale for offering offshore programs, impact on university faculty, and issues and challenges facing the university as a result of involvement in offshore delivery. Although the study is somewhat outdated, the findings are still relevant and representative of exporting institutions' motivations, given the leading role that Australian universities have taken. The result of this study showed that the most important motivation for the majority of the universities to establish offshore programs is to generate additional sources of income (through "revenue generation" and "reputation expanding"). Furthermore, "ensuring the program is commercially viable" is considered to be the key challenge for universities. Interestingly, the findings also revealed that providing opportunities for students and staff to gain international experience was of the least important motivation by more than half of the respondents.

Similarly, Saffu and Mamman (2000) in their study on alliance experiences of 22 Australian universities reviewed the contradictory motivations of Australian universities—claiming the altruism and scholarship side of their motivations for offshore educational delivery, while the true motives appear to be revenue and economic gains. Saffu and Mamman (2000) suspected that the altruistic nature of the Australian universities' motivation had hindered the evaluations of their performance and therefore

suggested a more market-oriented approach to cross-border education, as it could

generate clearer evaluation criteria. Likewise, one of the experts in the transnational

program had the following comment: (cited in Heffernan, Morrison, & Sweeney, 2006)

> "If it is the case that Australian universities adopt a colonial
> perspective about education, "We have this wonderful Bachelor's
> degree or whatever, and we will take it across to educate the
> uneducated Asians", then that will fail because that era has long since
> passed. If we adopt education as a business and we say "We are in the
> business of delivering educational services" and we go to the trouble of
> finding out what needs and demands there are, and then adapt our
> services to satisfy those needs and demands, then I think Australia has
> a lot to offer" (p.1).

However, taking a business approach does not always apply well in educational

delivery, since educational practices carry a strong cultural and ideological undertone.

Hoare's (2006) ethnographic study of one Australia-Singapore cross-border program

found out that in real practice, the "economic side is rarely overlooked whilst culturally

sensitive internationalized curriculum and pedagogy is left to chance" (p.241). Such a

finding suggests that the economic-driven business approach might actually have a

negative impact on the quality of program delivery.

Bannerman et al. (2005) critiqued Saffu and Mamman's study for their

inclusiveness approach on considering "any collaborative relationship" (Saffu &

Mamman, 2000, p. 509), thus failing to distinguish collaborative activities on the basis of

the strategic intent of the partners, namely, the academic ones from the commercial ones.

They further concluded that this was the reason for the inconsistent findings on

Australian universities' motivations. This critique, therefore, reminds researchers and

practitioners to distinguish among the types of cross-border educational activities

according to their underlying motivations.

In some cases, this might be done easily, since some universities with historically long-established, cross-border collaborative programs are clearly motivated by academic and cultural exchange. A great example of this would be the Johns Hopkins Unversity-Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies, the very first Sino-foreign cross-border higher education program established in modern China in the 1980's (Altbach, 2006). However, in other cases, it might not be so obvious. For example, many of the reports from Australian universities also documented that academic focused exchange activities are being carried out under commercially initiated collaborations as well (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2005a, 2005b; Liston, 2004).

Furthermore, traditional non-profit public universities are actively involved in delivering their educational programs abroad. Hsiao (2003) studied transnational programs in Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, and China that provided collaborations with schools in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. She found that 71.4% of all 182 participating programs were delivered by nonprofit educational institutions. The survey of program coordinators from the foreign institutions found that they all ranked "educational distribution—the benevolent provision of needed education for underserved populations" as the most important purpose of their program. The United States ranked academic exchange as the second most important purpose, whereas, the United Kingdom and Australia both ranked "promoting academic reputation" as the second most important purpose. The profit factor was the third most important purpose for providers from all three countries.

Hsiao (2003) attributed this low importance given to profit to the fact that the majority of the programs studied were nonprofit education institutions. She also

concluded that transnational educational programs are perceived as "a means through which both institutions could support academic exchanges and have an international presence" (p. 93). Therefore, she stated that the findings added a different dimension to transnational education, which was that they were "viewed only as a profit making venture." She also suggested that program marketing efforts should be made to emphasize these "less tangible benefits that come from transnational education" (p. 93).

*Importing institutions.* The above-mentioned studies only illustrated motivations from the exporting side. Few studies have examined the demand side of cross-border education. In comparison to the exporting institution, the importing partners' interests are underexplored. Many importing institutions' rationale has been inferred from what has been clearly pronounced by their central governments. This inference is only legitimate for some of the public institutions in highly centralized education systems, because these institutions tend to be influenced more by their central governments. However, as the trend of decentralization of higher education and increased competition continues, such influence becomes less direct. Take China for example. Although it has been several years since the MOE issued the policy changes for Sino-foreign cooperation programs and specifically directing the 98/5 flagship universities[10] to carefully choose world-famous institutions and programs as their partners, according to a recent market analysis on Sino-foreign cross-border collaboration conducted by British Council, "only a few renowned foreign universities have been found" (Tang & Nollent, 2007, p. 28).

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[10] Since May1998, with a significant amount of funding provided, the Chinese government has concentrated on a handful of flagship universities in the country to construct world-class universities so as to advance international recognition and competitiveness of Chinese higher education. This group started with only nine selected universities by the MOE. Currently, there are 39 universities included. These universities are referred to as 98/5 universities.

On one hand, Chinese institutions claim that the purpose for Sino-foreign programs is to respond to the market need and introduce high-quality educational resources from their foreign partners; on the other hand, many collaborative programs have been reported to be of low quality and have slight increased the enrollment (Chen & Dong, 2003; Yan, 2006; Zhong, 2006). Whether the formation of these programs was due to the lack of experience (as many of them claimed), or because they were only motivated by money, was difficult to tell.

In conclusion, it appears that for many institutions, both exporters and importers, the economic rationale is part of their common interest, if not the only one. Both sides also might have academic related motivations for cross-border collaborative programs, with exporting institutions expecting more international/intercultural competencies from students, faculty, and parent institutions as a whole; and importing institutions largely expect advanced knowledge and educational best-practices. One recent study found that these contradictions in expectations from cross-border education programs between the exporting side (to attract students to the foreign campus) and the importing side (to attract the best foreign universities to teach students locally) were the most problematic (Tang & Nollent, 2007, p. 2).

Since the findings are mixed, it is still unclear what has motivated institutions to develop cross-border collaborations and which motivation is the most prominent for them in program delivery. More empirical study is needed to look into the specific inter-relationship of these programs. As Chiang (2007) questioned: whether the capacity of partner institutions is built or not is largely unclear, because "the realistic considerations of cross-border education, particularly the demand side of it, are not fully empirically

explored" (p. 3). While importing governments have optimal hope for these institutions' involvement in cross-border education provisions, institutions might be satisfied with the superficial appearance of the joint relationship with a foreign institution, instead of making the effort to strengthen the academic competencies.

The unilateral approach many of the studies and articles have undertaken tends to polarize the general perception of the programs without diagnosing the specific inter-relationships and interactions. As a result, both exporting and importing institutions are either being criticized for their money-seeking motivations or applauded for their pure academic development (capacity building) motivation. One clear conclusion that can be drawn from the literature is that institutional motivations and purposes differ across countries/regions and probably across different types of institutions as well. Involved institutions tend to have mixed motivations. Among these motivations, it is truly debatable whether the economic motivation actually facilitates or diminishes the appropriated quality of the cross-border educational program delivery.

Therefore, it is important to look into the different types of cross-border collaborations to determine whether the involved partners share similar or conflicting motivations as they embark on joint provision. Since the nature of these programs is collaboration, they have to be delivered through coordinated efforts from both sides, no matter in what specific ways they share the responsibilities. Clearly, identifying the mutual interests and potentially different goals of partner institutions can help clarify their expectations, build shared vision, and facilitate the level of trust to be developed between the two. As a result, better coordination and synergy could be generated for the joint effort.

Theoretical Foundations for This Study

With the inter-organizational partnership approach the researcher chose, this study grounded its theoretical foundation in strategic alliances literature. This section reviews a wide range of literature on strategic alliances in the business sector and illustrates how these theories can be applied to cross-border higher education. These studies on strategic alliances found their theoretical roots in economic theories and organizational theories. Although the research in the field itself is still in a development stage (Parkhe, 1993a), a wide range of studies, both theoretical and empirical, have been conducted to explain the motivation, formation, structures, management, and performance of the alliances (Burgers, Hill, & Kim, 1993; Child & Faulkner, 1998; Clarke-Hill, Li, & Davies, 2003; Faulkner, 1995; Kogut, 1998; Park & Ungson, 1997; Parkhe, 1993b; Pfeffer & Nowak, 1976).

The reviews in this section focus on firms' motivations for establishing strategic alliances. First, useful concepts that can be "translated" into the context of cross-border higher education will be introduced and discussed (Beerkens, 2004, p. 59). Second, external stimulus will be discussed and followed with the major internal motivators for inter-organizational alliances. Finally, game theory will be introduced and adapted to illustrate the importance of partners' clear intentions and consistent expectations in forming alliances, and enhanced inter-organizational coordination for successful collaborations.

*Key Notions*

*Strategic alliances*. The border-crossing and inter-organizational features of cross-border higher education program can be clearly identified in studies on

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international strategic alliances in the business world. A widely cited definition of international strategic alliance is provided by Parkhe (1993b):

> "Strategic alliances are the relatively enduring inter-firm co-operative arrangements, involving flows and linkages that utilize resources and/or governance structures from autonomous organisations, for the joint accomplishment of individual goals linked to the corporate mission of each sponsoring firm" (p. 581).

With such a broad perspective, many definitions for different formation types are identified, such as joint ventures, R&D consortia, licensers, mergers, and acquisitions to name a few. These specific forms can be seen has laying out on a continuous, with free market (transactions) on one side and complete amalgamation on the other (Lorange & Roos, 1992). A similar range could also be identified in the context of cross-border higher education, with students/faculty exchange arrangements on one side and established full international branch campuses on the other. Motivations and governance structures vary across this continuum as well.

*Competitive advantage.* Competitive advantage is considered essential to a firm's performance in a competitive market. It is recognized that firms should develop unique characteristics in order to distinguish themselves from their competitors. Strategies such as lowering prices, selective advertising, and/or product improvements and innovations could be employed to achieve a competitive advantage.  Porter (1985) gave an even more specific definition: "competitive advantage is to achieve above average industry profitability and garner it by differentiating or by being the lowest cost producer in the industry" (cited in Child & Faulkner, 1998).

*External Stimulus*

It is claimed that all alliances are sparked by a change in external trading conditions which then reveals an interval resource inadequacy that needs to be "corrected" if a competitive advantage is to be maintained. In the business world, some of the most commonly identified external stimuli are globalization of markets, perceived opportunities for economies of scale or of scope, the shortening of product life cycles, and the ability to access adequate resources and competencies (Child & Faulkner, 1998). Appling this to the context of higher education, we can observe similar circumstances – that universities need to form international collaborative relationships.

By concentrating on formal linkages between organizations in the field of higher education, Beerken (2002) identified some of the basic drivers for institutions engaging in inter-organizational arrangements as changes in the production of knowledge, the policy domain, and  the technological domain. These changes demand adaptations in contemporary university organizational structures.

There is an increasing need for knowledge produced in the context of application, in addition to those produced in the traditional discipline-specific structure. The required competencies and skills could not be found within the conventional structure, so they have to be pursued in other disciplines and sectors. Inter-organizational linkages, especially those across disciplines and sectors, respond to this need. Awareness of globally interrelated features in nature, society, politics, and business, calls for further analysis and deeper understanding of all international institutions. More international interaction between universities, disciplines, and sectors are an answer to this call (Beerkens, 2002).

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The changes in the policy domain are affecting organizational boundaries in that more autonomy is being diverted to institutions, and resources and funding are becoming more diversified and competitive. Inter-organizational arrangements help universities pull resources together more strategically and gain access to and exploit complementary assets; therefore, these arrangements achieve added value.

There is an explosion of opportunities created by new technologies in information exchange and communication. Through technology, a new means to interact has been created, leading to new access opportunities for markets and resources that were unimaginable in the past. The value that could be added from international and cross-cultural experience is widely recognized by students, academics, and employers. Therefore, there is a need for logistic adaptation such as transferring and recognizing credits as well as quality assessment.

The process of globalization and internationalization has a significant impact on how a university manages itself, its structure, and/or resource base, in order to obtain sustainable competitive advantages. The continuously liberalized global markets demand a substantial increase in various forms of international inter-organizational arrangements in higher education (Beerkens, 2002).

Traditional competitive advantages within national boundaries might lose their relevance through globalization and internationalization. For example, new players (foreign providers) are entering the game due to newly opened local markets. From the foreign providers' perspective, there are newly opened markets in developing countries and opportunities to expand their "businesses" through "economics of scales". How universities acquire resources has also expanded due to technological development, and

how they develop and deliver the curriculum has been transformed. Finally, the new markets might require a different set of resources; thus, universities need to restructure their resource base accordingly. For example, local knowledge needs to be added to a business management curriculum delivered across national borders to maintain quality and relevance. One way to do so is to hire or collaborate with local experts to revise (develop) the (new) curriculum.

*Internal Need for Inter-organizational Collaborations*

Several schools of thoughts in the strategic alliances literature have been established to better understand the circumstances that firms find beneficial to co-operate with other firms; however, each is limited by its particular perspectives, so no single theory is sufficient to fully explain what drives organizations to collaborate. (See Barringer & Harrison, 2000, for a comprehensive review and critique). Of particular relevance to the cross-border higher education are the transaction cost theory (Kogut, 1998; Williamson, 1975, 1985), resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Nowak, 1976), organizational learning theory (Hamel, 1991; Inkpen, 1998), and strategic positioning theory (Porter, 1985). These theories are synthesized in this section.

*Transaction cost theory.* Transaction cost economics rationalizes firm inter-organizational linkages to be mainly efficiency motivated. According to this theory, firms form alliances because it helps reduce transaction costs. Transaction costs are those costs associated with contracting, monitoring, and administering market transactions. Therefore, companies will form alliances only if the transaction costs involved are perceived to be lower than those for the other options such as aggressive advertising (Child & Faulkner, 1998). For example, when a business transaction goes beyond

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national borders, the cultural and social uncertainty usually increases transaction costs significantly, making it much higher than contracting with a local partner to finish the job (Kogut, 1998; Williamson, 1975, 1985).

Critiques of transition cost theory mainly fall into two categories. First, transaction costs are highly judgmental because they involve unquantifiable costs (such as loss of proprietary expertise to a partner), so these less tangible costs are difficult to capture in numbers (Child & Faulkner, 1998). Second, transaction cost as a motive captures only part of the alliance formation and largely misses the importance of trust established in the alliances. It also does not allow equity or fairness to play a part in the decision-making process.

With regard to cross-border education, transaction cost theory can partially explain institutions' motivations. For example, if student and scholar exchange programs are established under a cross-border relationship, it could reduce some of the transaction costs (Beerkens, 2002). Income from cross-border educational programs could be used for scholarships to support future student and staff exchanges. Exporting institutions delivering their education services through a local partnership may significantly reduce their start-up cost and achieve more effective marketing strategies. However, transaction cost theory does not fully explain why some of the exporting institutions are moving towards an international branch campus model. For educational institutions, the value of some of the intangible resources such as academic reputation is also difficult to capture precisely. Therefore, transaction cost theory is less powerful in explaining such a trend.

*Resource dependency theory.* Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and other resource dependency theorists propose that the key to organizational survival is the ability to

acquire and maintain resources. Resource dependency theory treats the environment as a source of limited resources, and views firms as dependent on other firms who might possess a different set of resources. To deal with the uncertainty from the changing environment, firms attempt to manage their environments by cooperating with others. Therefore, when resources and competencies are not readily or sufficiently available to firms, they are more likely to establish ties with other organizations. At the same time, they also attempt to exert power, influence, or control over the organizations that possess those resources (Child & Faulkner, 1998). Furthermore, intangible resources also give one firm more power and competitive advantages over their competitors and collaborators. "A strong reason for organizations to collaborate with others lies in their recognition that they lack critical competencies which they cannot develop readily, and/or sufficiently rapidly, on their own" (p. 35).

Clark (1965) pointed out that alliances among private colleges in the U.S. have arisen in a search for competitive advantage. He noted that by banding together, expensive facilities could be shared, and stronger fund raising efforts could be developed. In a cross-border educational collaboration, the resources dependency theory could apply equally well to both the importing and the exporting side. It can also explain the circumstances in which commercial motivations may work together with capacity building motivations. The advanced and market preferred academic asset (curriculum, expertise, or the image of "foreign" degree) owned by a foreign institution is a kind of resource that might be too expensive for a local importing university to develop by itself. On the other hand, local universities have advantages in terms of their already established local reputations and other social network resources that the foreign institution does not

have. Thus, a formation of the cross-border educational program between the two universities could be highly preferred. This theory could also potentially explain a local institution's competitive advantages as compared to incoming foreign competitors. By elaborating the benefits and challenges posed by cross-border higher education to developing countries, Magagula (2005) concluded that under the WTO/GATS circumstances, universities in developing countries still have unique comparative advantages such as the locally recognized quality, and relevance of their educational programs to the local context, academic staff, teaching resources and basic infrastructure.

*Organizational learning theory.* A joint venture may be sought in order to achieve an opportunity for organizational learning to transfer "tacit knowledge," which is communicated only by teams working together (Kogut, 1998). Kogut (1998) pointed out that a joint venture is often used for "the transfer of organizationally embedded knowledge that cannot be easily blueprinted or packaged through licensing or market transactions" (p. 319).

Faulkner (1995) categorized two kinds of learning: 1) individual learning, and 2) organizational learning. Individual learning in corporations is theoretically easily appropriated by other competitors, since an individual with the developed competence may be attractive to another firm. Similar to Kogut's (1998) idea, Faulkner (1995) considered organizational learning as a level beyond that of the individual, and as embedded in the rituals, routines and systems of a firm—in its culture. Therefore, it is more deeply rooted in a firm's core competencies and less likely to be appreciated by other firms. In some way, organizational learning can be seen as the dynamic counterpart to the resource dependency theory of the organization (Faulkner, 1995).  A firm will

diagnose its own resources and skills in relation to the external environment and then find that in order to correct its resource deficiency, some of the organizational embedded knowledge is only available through closely working together with some other firms. Faulkner (1995) suggested that "Alliances that are genuinely strategic should be competence driven, explicitly adding to the task or knowledge system, or to the organizational memory of each partner. The idea of the organization as a residuary for learning is widely acclaimed" (p. 18).

The Chinese government and institutions expect that by importing foreign higher educational programs, high quality educational resources will be imported, but "high quality educational resources" is interpreted broadly. These resources can be categorized into two types of resources: 1) core resources related to teaching and learning, such as the curriculum, the academic experts, teaching facilities, and textbooks and other materials; and 2) intangible knowledge that forms "a modernized university system," such as educational value, curriculum design, the credit system, administrative management, academic autonomy, board of director mechanism, and faculty and student evaluation procedures (Sun, 2006). This kind of knowledge is not easily transferable but has to be gradually learned through collaboration.

*Strategic positioning theory.* Strategic positioning implies that alliances are motivated by the desire to shape competition and consolidate the firm's market position. Strategic positioning theory is rooted in the economic rationale so as to improve their relative market power and competitive positioning (Porter, 1985). For example, their motivations can be gaining access to new markets, increasing speed to market,

overcoming foreign government regulations, and countering the other competitors'

strategic move (Child & Faulkner, 1998).

The concept of strategic fit is quite straightforward. For example, in cooperating

between firms from developed and less developed countries, the firms from developed

countries are usually interested in market access and working around the government

regulations that restrict their access. On the other side, firms from less developed

countries are generally seeking opportunities to obtain new technology, managerial

expertise, capital, and international markets as well. This scenario can also be captured by

resource dependency theory and organizational learning theory in that access to market

could be considered a special intangible resource possessed by firms from less developed

country.

*Summary*

To some extent, these four theories all explain the motivations firms have to

collaborate. However, no single theory is sufficient by itself to fully explain what drives

organizations to collaborate. Each perspective offers a unique explanation for the

formation of strategic alliances (Bannerman et al, 2005). One conclusion that can be

drawn from the literature is that firms enter into alliances with a variety of motivations

and intents. Singling any one out could easily bias our understanding of a collaboration

and limit firms' ability to fully exploit the opportunities it offers. As higher education

institutions are increasingly rationalizing and functioning as entrepreneurial organizations,

the same argument applies to them when they cooperate across national borders to deliver

education and services.

Game Theory

Game theory concerns how players interact with each other to obtain their individual goals. It is a particularly powerful tool for understanding and predicting how rational participants behave in a social situation that involves two or more "players" whose interests are interconnected or interdependent (Davis, 1970). In this way, game theory is of direct relevance for this study in terms of inter-organizational relations between educational institutions. This section includes an introduction of basic concepts and principles used in game theory, with a specific focus on the most relevance to this study. Then we need to explore a further explanation on why and how game theory can be used to guide this study. Finally, a conceptual framework is constructed to demonstrate the application of game theory for a given cross-border higher education collaboration.

*Brief Introduction to the Theory*

*"What economists call game theory, psychologists call the theory of social situations, which is an accurate description of what game theory is about."*

--- by David K. Levine, Department of Economics, UCLA.[11]

The application of game theory has a long history in people's daily lives. It has been used to study the win/lose situation in board games, such as go (an board game played since ancient China), bridge, or poker. The Art of War, one of the oldest books on military strategy written during the 6th century BC by Sun Tzu, is considered e one of the earliest applications of game theory in military strategies and tactics. However, it was not until the 20th century that game theory became a unique field when John von Neumann

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[11] http://levine.sscnet.ucla.edu/general/whatis.htm

provided the foundations of game theory in 1928 by proving the basic mathematic

minimax theorem. With the publication in 1944 of the *Theory of Games and Economic*

*Behavior* the field was established (Davis, 1970).

Most research in game theory now focuses on how groups of people interact with

one another in an effort to achieve their own goals. Its applications are not limited to

economics, but are used in political science, pure mathematics, psychology, sociology,

marketing, finance, and warfare (Davis, 1970). Game theory has been used to explain

numerous social phenomena. Empirical economists mostly use lab-based game

experiments to identify the conditions under which players collaborate more. Some of the

identified factors that may have an effect on the outcome of the game are personalities of

players, their subjective preferences, and the mores of society (what the players believe to

be a fair outcome), to name a few (Child & Faulkner, 1998; Davis, 1970).

*Basic Construct in Game Theory*

*To understand the literature on Game Theory, the terms should first be defined.*

A "*game*" is a situation in which multiple players are involved. Players must act,

or make certain decisions. As a result of the behavior of the players—and, possibly,

chance—there is a certain outcome: a reward or punishment for each of the participating

players (Davis, 1970).

A "*player*" in a game does not always need to be an individual person. It could be

a team, a corporation, and a nation.

A "*strategy*" is a complete description of how players behave under every

possible circumstance. It could be one action or a set of actions. Strategy "has no

connotation of cleverness" (Davis, 1970, p. 11).

A "*utility*" is a mechanism that relates the goals of a player to the behavior that will help reach these goals. It is simply a "quantification" of a person's preferences with respect to certain objects (Davis, 1970, p. 52).

"*Equilibrium strategy*" is two strategies that are said to be in equilibrium if neither player gains more by changing his or her strategy unilaterally.

*Non-zero-sum, two-person game* involves a two-person game where there are generally both competitive and cooperative elements. Players in games with both cooperative and competitive elements have mixed motives. Therefore, the interests of the players are opposed in some respect and complementary in others. These types of games are "generally more complex, more interesting, and encountered more frequently in everyday life" (Davis, 1970, p. 66). In contrast, in a zero-sum game[12], the players have no common interests. In a completely cooperative game on the other extreme, the players have nothing but common interests (Davis, 1970).

*Rationality and irrationality* are the most important assumptions of game theory in that people are rational and their decisions on which strategies to chose are always to maximize profits. Such an assumption is the source for many critiques on the applicability of game theory in real-life situations, where people are not always rational but irrational. When feelings of pride, fairness, jealousy, spite, vengefulness, altruism, and clarity arise, the best profits may be sacrificed. Much of the current work in game

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[12] Games in which the interests of the players are diametrically opposed are called zero-sum games. The term "zero-sum" is derived from parlor games such as poker where wealth is neither created nor destroyed. Therefore, in a zero-sum game, the amount of payoffs one-player gains equals the amount of payoffs the other player loses. This game is distinguished from a non-zero-sum, in that one man's loss may not be another's gain. (Davis, 1970, p. 6)

theory relates to the incorporation of these issues (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1996).

Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996) present several explanations that illustrate how rationality can be interpreted to fit with real-life situations.

People can all be rational and yet perceive the situation quite differently, because information is not perfectly shared and/or available to all players. This leads to differences in perceptions, and sometimes misperceptions. People can have wrong expectations and still be rational. They are doing the best they can, given what they know. Likewise, people can all be rational and yet evaluate the same outcome quite differently. Monetary return is not the only kind of payoff people pursue. They are motivated by many things—pride, fairness, jealousy, spite, vengefulness, altruism, and charity are just a few of the possibilities. Understanding and clarifying each other's motivations, and building shared vision and consistent expectations can help players anticipate each other's future moves and respond accordingly (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1996).Therefore, this study considers rationality in a context of cross-border educational delivery as follows: an institution is rational if it tries to make the best decision based on its evaluation of the situation to achieve its most preferred outcome.

Conceptual Framework: Cross-border Higher Education Program as a Game

The previous section reviews the related literature on international higher education, strategic management, and game theory. This review provides the foundations for the researcher to address the purpose of this study: 1) to examine similar and different opinions partner institutions hold for their partnership programs, and 2) how do these opinions impact the implementation of cross-border educational programs. Game theory

is a useful approach due to the inter-organizational nature of the cross-border higher

education program. A conceptual framework is developed based on the game theoretical

model and integrated literature from international higher education and strategic

management. This section presents the conceptual framework and research questions.

To construct a game theoretical model for cross-border higher education programs,

the model must specify the following constructs: who are the players, what is the strategy

set for each of the players, what are the possible outcomes of their selected strategies, and

what are players' utility functions—that is their preference ordering for each of the

outcomes. The application for each of these constructs in developing the conceptual

framework is discussed in the following section.

*The Game*

This study perceives cross-border higher education programs as an arrangement

between two or more partner institutions from different nation-states; thus, there is an

inter-organizational relation between the involved partner institutions. Therefore, the

partnership in a given cross-border higher education program is the game, of which two

or more higher education institutions from different nation-states are the players. These

partnerships can be perceived as non-zero-sum games, within which players bring in a

mixture of motives and interests while interacting with each other for anticipated

outcomes.

*The Players*

Players do not always have to be entire universities and/or colleges, but may only

include the group of individuals and/or units to the extent that they are directly involved

in the targeted cross-border programs. Therefore, a player could be the involved college, academic department, and/or a program track.

*Personalities*

The personalities of the players, their subjective preferences, and the mores of society define players' desired outcomes from the game (Child & Faulkner, 1998; M. D. Davis, 1970). In this study, the personalities of partner institutions are described by using their institutional profiles (type of institution, history and traditions, and current development), the overall missions as higher education providers, and their values and beliefs of the cross-border higher education program's role in higher education.

*Rationality*

This study follows with the basic assumption of game theory, that is the rationality of the players. Participating institutions are rational and their decisions on which strategies to chose are always to maximize anticipated outcomes. As discussed earlier, monetary return is not the only type of payoff players are looking for. Some payoffs are not always quantifiable and /or directly measurable (e.g., institution reputation and brand influence). Institutions' evaluations of possible outcomes and decisions on which is their best strategy differ because they have diverse motivations for cross-border higher education programs. Therefore, this study considers rationality in the context of cross-border educational delivery as follows: an institution is rational if it acts on its evaluation of the situation (preference) and does the best to achieve its most preferred outcome.

The previous review of strategic alliances literature has illustrated that organizations collaborate due to some external stimulus as well as internal needs. The

implication for this study is that higher education institutions establishing cross-border

programs are also likely to respond to some of the external factors, depending on their

own profiles, missions, and strategic planning, as well as the social and economic

environments to which they belong. Under the overriding trend of economic globalization

and increasing international competition in higher education, it is also reasonable to

assume that involved institutions share some similar external stimulus, even though they

originated and are functioning in different nation-states, which could be quite a distinct

social and economical environment.

The literature has also reported that firms enter into alliances with variety of

motivations and intents, such as to reduce transaction costs of program delivery, to pull

together rare but critical resources, to build particular organizational capacities, and/or to

strategically establish advanced positions in the market. The implication of these

motivators for this study is that partner institutions might have a diverse set of goals that

they want to achieve through cross-border higher education program delivery. Similar or

not, these outcomes might not be equally important for both partners. These factors

together construct what possible outcomes and benefits an institution would expect from

their involvement in cross-border higher education delivery (see Figure 1).
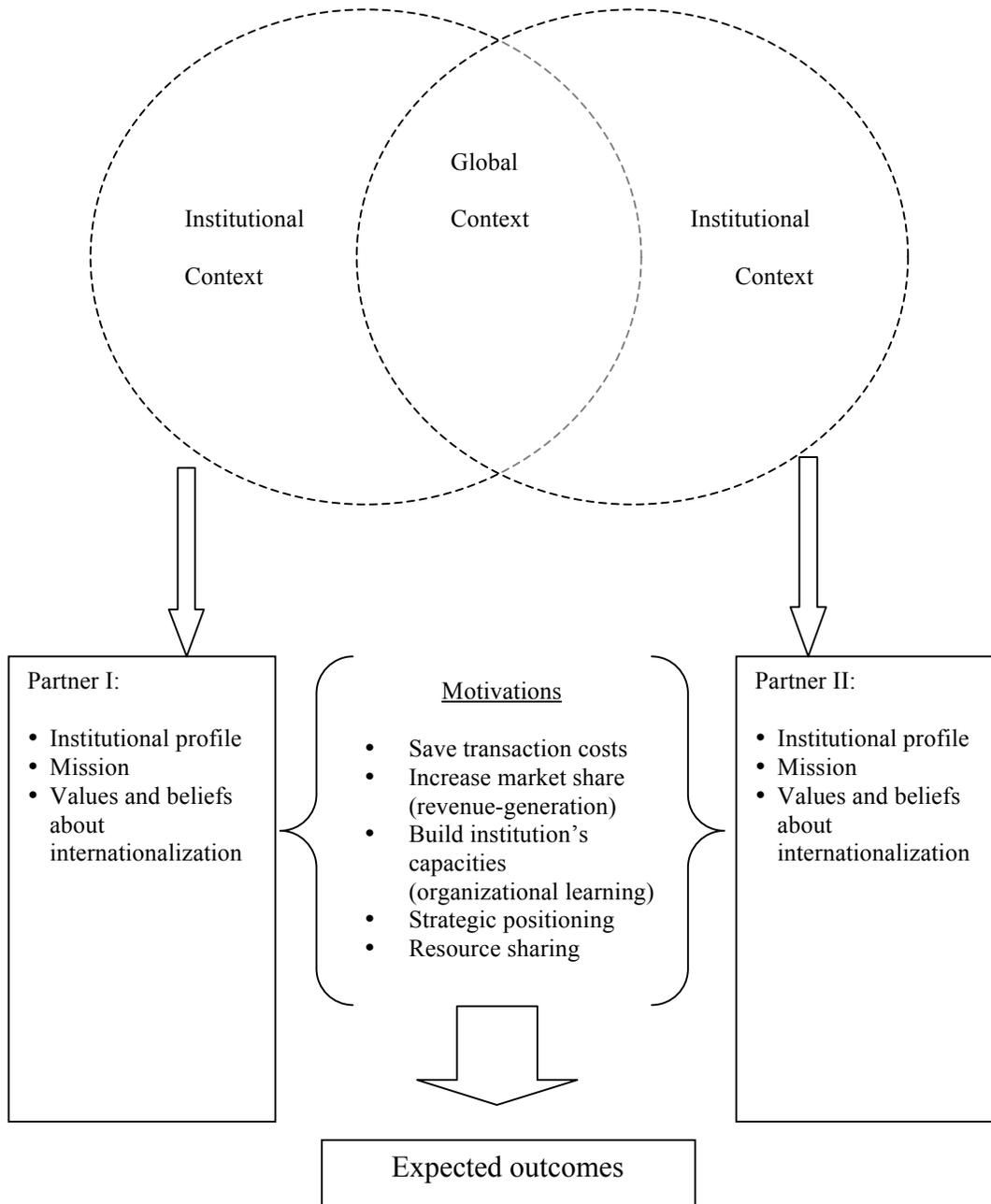
Figure 1. Partner institutions' inter-related motivations and expected outcomes of cross-border higher education programs defined by their global and institutional contexts (Developed by researcher).

*Strategy*

In game theory, *strategy* is a complete description of how players behave under every possible circumstance. It could be one action or a set of actions (Davis, 1970). It is

a term with many interpretations in real world. In game theory, strategy determines the moves players would take during a particular game at different stage. When applying this concept to the provision of a higher education program, it is natural to think about the partner institutions' share of responsibilities, the allocation of resources, both institutions' efforts in fulfilling their responsibilities, and the other particular program activities partner institutions emphasized in the collaboration. This sharing of responsibilities and actions allocated between partners are specific components that constitute each partner's overall strategy in the international inter-organization collaboration. Because the existing collaboration program was perceived as the equilibrium outcomes of the game played by the two partner institutions, the overall setup of the collaboration program illustrates the combination of partners' equilibrium strategy.

*Outcomes*

Outcomes that emerge from the cross-border education program are results based on each partner's utility function (preference level) and strategies each has employed. Outcomes are also the combination of each partner's payoffs. There are always multiple possible outcomes but only one could be actualized, depending on each partner's choice of strategies. Based on the partners' motivations and preferences for expected outcomes, they settle on one outcome that is defined by their chosen strategies. The establishment of a cross-border education program implies that such a situation is an equilibrium outcome for both partners, at least temporarily. Therefore, the achieved equilibrium outcome can be captured through observable facts of the cross-border program itself, as well as the partners' perceptions of the actual benefits from the cross-border higher education program.

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*Utility*

   Utility does not have to be captured in an absolute numerical value, but can be reflected in relative terms. That is, even if partner institutions cannot quantify exactly how much they would prefer one potential outcome to another, they can at least rank them. Therefore, the utility function in this study is how each partner evaluates and ranks the importance of possible outcomes given their particular institutional characteristics and motivations.

   Based on the game theoretical perspective, the second part of the conceptual framework for cross-border higher education program was developed as descried below (see Figure 2). The two main research questions and sub-questions were developed accordingly.

1. To what extent do the partner institutions in a cross-border higher program share similar views about their collaborations?

    a. What are the similar and/or different perceptions of motivation and expected outcomes perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher education program?

    b. What are the similar and/or different preferences for the expected outcomes perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher?

    c. To what extent do partner institutions hold similar views for the current chosen strategies to achieve the desired outcomes from the program?

2. How do the partner's similar and/or different views of the inter-organizational

   partnership and collaboration impact the implementation of the cross-border

   higher education program?

   a. Were there any changes the partner institutions made to the planned

      strategy during the implementation? If so, what were they?

   b. What are the partners' the desired future changes for the program's

      development?

Partner I:
Expected
outcomes

Partner II:
Expected
outcomes

Utility:
preference of all
potential

Utility: preference
of all potential
outcomes

**Cross-border
Higher
Education
Program**

- Combination
  of partners'
  chosen
  strategies

- Achieved
  Outcomes:
  as a result of
  inter-
  organizational
  collaboration

Strategy set for Partner I

- Share of
  responsibilities
- Allocation of
  resources and
  efforts in fulfilling
  responsibilities
- Other program
  activities partner
  institutions
  emphasized

Strategy set for Partner
II

- Share of
  responsibilities
- Allocation of
  resources and
  efforts in fulfilling
  responsibilities
- Other program
  activities partner
  institutions
  emphasized

Figure 2. Partner expectations, and preference pattern for expected benefits through cross-border higher education program provision, and achieved outcomes (Developed by researcher).

Conclusion

In reviewing the literature from the fields of international education, strategic management, and game theory, this chapter provides a theoretical basis for the identified problems in cross-border higher education. Based on this review, a set of research questions were posed and a conceptual framework was constructed to guide the study. The next chapter discusses the methodological approach and research methods employed to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological approach this study employed to address the research questions on cross-border higher education programs. More specifically, this chapter constitutes the overall research design, methods, and data collection protocol, basic description of the selected cases and participants, and data analysis process. A detailed description of the data collection and analyzing plan shows the expected process of this study. Finally, concerns and limitations of the research methods are discussed.

Methodological Approach: Case Study Approach

The objective of the study is to examine the discrepancies and similarities between partner institutions' perceptions of motivations, expected outcomes and strategies for cross-border higher education programs, and the potential impact these discrepancies and similarities in perceptions might have on the operation of these cross-border educational programs. The scope of this study is cross-border educational programs that have been established in China and are collaboratively provided by Chinese and U.S. universities. This study employed a case-study approach to investigate two main research questions:

1. To what extent do the partner institutions in a cross-border higher program share similar views about their collaboration?

   a. What are the similar and/or different perceptions of motivation and expected outcomes perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher education program?

b. What are the similar and/or different preferences for the expected outcomes perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher education program?

c. To what extent do the partner institutions hold similar views for the current chosen strategies to achieve the desired outcomes from the program?

2. How do the partners' similar and/or different views of the inter-organizational partnership and collaboration impact the implementation of the cross-border higher education program?

a. Were there any changes the partner institutions made to the planned strategy during the implementation? If so, what were they?

b. What are the desired future changes for the program's development?

Case studies have been widely used by researchers across disciplines who are interested in understanding complex social phenomena (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) defines a case study as "an empirical enquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p.23). The nature of this study fits well with a case study approach for several reasons.

First, the research questions guiding this study concern the interdependent relationship between partner institutions in the selected cross-border higher education programs. Using a case study is appropriate for such a dynamic phenomenon, of which "the investigator has little control over events" (Yin, 2003, p. 1). Another advantage the

case study approach carries that would indeed benefit this study is that the multiple sources of data help to converge information through triangulation (Yin, 2003, p. 13). In this study, the researcher is not only able to collect data from both sides of the partnership to capture the partner institutions' different perspectives, but also to pay attention to the institutional context in which the partner institutions exist.

However, case study research has limitations. The first is the possible threats to internal validity. Grounding the research questions in game theory helps strengthen the internal validity of this study. Moreover, multiple data sources will allow a cross-examination of evidence for each case.

Limited external validity is another challenge case study researchers face.  This study does not intend to generalize findings beyond the scope of the selected cases. The researcher attempts to gain in-depth and a comprehensive understanding of the selected Sino-US higher education programs in China in order to capture the partners' perception differences, and influences on the partnership program. Multiple cases studies at various cross-border higher education programs allow pattern matching across cases. Moreover, since each cross-border higher education program in this study represents a particular outcome from a set of combined partner strategies, findings from this study would only be generalizable to other cross-border programs with similar setup structures and types of players.

Finally, one of the limitations of the case study approach is a possible lack of rigor due to low reliability. In order to address this limitation, this study follows Yin's (2003) two suggestions to ensure the reliability of the study. One is to have a pre-designed protocol for data collection applied across multiple cases (see Appendix A for

the case study protocol); and the other one is to have a case study database that documents the data in a systematic way.

<div align="center">Research Design</div>

This study adopted a multiple-case research design. The purpose of this study was to analyze the inter-organizational partnership in cross-border education from a game theory perspective. Two Sino-US higher education programs were purposefully selected as cases to answer the research questions. To capture the dynamic and complex partnership of a cross-border education program, the researcher developed a conceptual framework that is grounded in international education, strategic management literature, and game theory. This framework served as the underlying guideline for the data collection and analysis process for this study. Detailed discussion of the conceptual framework can be found in chapter two. This section presents the sampling criteria and the operationalization of the main framework components in the data collection instrument.

*Sample: Participant Selection*

This study contains two stages of participant selection due to the unique feature of targeted cases—cross-border higher education programs. The two stages included selecting the cases and selecting the individual informants within each of these programs. This section discusses the criteria for participant selection in each stage.

*Selection of cases*

The unit of analysis in this study was a typical collaborative partnership inherent in cross-border higher education programs. Two cases were purposefully selected to control the variations among existing cross-border higher education programs. The final selected

cases are two representative Sino-U.S. collaborative degree-granting programs in China. The criteria used to select these cases were both theoretical (based on the conceptual framework) and realistic (real issues facing a dissertation study).

The first criterion to help narrow the sample selection was the overall set up of the cross-border higher education programs. As discussed earlier in the literature review chapter, cross-border higher education programs have several delivery modes. Because the purpose of this study was not to provide a comprehensive description of this globally developing phenomenon, but rather, to investigate the dynamic relationship between involved partner institutions in operating these programs, the researcher chose a two-partner, degree-granting cross-border higher education program as the first case selection criteria to narrow the list.

Available official data on cross-border higher education programs, although limited, showed that the majority of these programs are collaboratively delivered through collaboration between a local institution and a foreign provider. Even for those international branch campuses, most of them still collaborate with a local partner in one way or another (ACE Center for International Initiatives, 2009; Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008). Therefore, the structure of the two-partner, degree-granting cross-border higher education program was both representative and practical.

The second criterion was partner institutions' countries of origins. Educational practices are cultural-specific and have to conform to national policies. To control for the large variations among different cross-border higher education programs, the researcher chose programs that are collaboratively delivered in China by Chinese and U.S. universities. China has become one of the most popular places attracting foreign

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educational providers to establish their higher educational programs. With its large population and growing demand for higher education, China will probably continue to be the "hot spot" for future cross-border higher education programs. United States has always been actively involved in different types of international higher education delivery. According to the 2010 Chinese educational statistics, the U.S. is a leading collaborative provider of cross-border higher education degree-granting programs in China (Ministry of Education China, 2010; Zhang, 2010).

With the game theory perspective that guided this study, it was important to equally involve partners of the chosen cross-border higher education programs. Because the focus of this study is an inter-organizational partnership, the topic tends to be sensitive. Accessibility of the chosen cases and the involved partner institutions was of vital importance for successful data collection. The researcher is originally from China and is currently pursuing her degree in the United States. With the advantages of knowing both language and easier location accessibility, one practical and manageable approach would be to confine the research to programs jointly provided by the U.S. and Chinese university.

The third criterion concerned the official status of the potential cases. More specifically, whether a Sino-US program is officially registered with both countries' (China and United States) formal education systems was another criterion used for this study. On its official website[13], the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) periodically releases information about Sino-foreign, higher education degree programs that are currently active and have been officially approved. On the U.S. side, the Higher Learning

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[13] Website of Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Education: http://www.cfce.cn/pinggu2010/bxmd.htm

Commission (HLC)[14] is a commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and

Schools (NCACS) that accredits more than 1,000 institutions across 19 States in the north

central region of the U.S.[15] The HLC requires all of its member institutions to register

their Off-Campus Sites[16], under three categories: in-state, out-of-state, and out-of-U.S.

Therefore, programs that both officially recognized by the Chinese MEO and registered

with the HLC's Off-Campus Site Offering under the "out-of-US" category were

identified as potential cases for this study.

Finally, the selection pool could be further narrowed down to universities offering

a U.S. degree in order to control for the variations among the kinds of academic degrees

offered through the joint provision. This criterion is a strong indication for the extent to

which the U.S. partner investigates their intangible property-the brand name of their

institution. Therefore, it can be perceived as a controls factor that capture one dimension

of partner institutions' investment in academic function in the joint provision.

As a result of applying these criteria, five Sino-U.S. cross-border higher education

programs were identified. Among these five programs, two of them offer business

management programs at the Master's level. The other three offer bachelor's degrees in

various fields of studies.  To further control for variations such as degree level and fields

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[14] The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) website:
http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com_directory&Itemid=192
[15] The Higher Learning Commission accredits institutions in 19 north central states: Arkansas,
Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota,
Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Wyoming.
[16] A site is considered off-campus when it offers 50% or more of a degree program, a full degree
program, or a degree completion program (even if less than 50% of a degree). Non-credit and
courses that do not carry credit that applies to a higher education degree, such as ESL or GED,
were not considered in terms of identifying degree program locations.

of study, two Sino-foreign MBA programs were finally selected as the cases for this study.

*Accounting for uncertainty of international research project*

There tends to be a high level of difficulty accessing data for organizational studies, especially when the project is an international one. In addition, the nature of this study required that the researcher have to not only information about the two selected cases, but also to each of the involved partner institutions. Therefore, prior to the data collection, all five Sino-U.S. collaborative programs were kept on a sample list, with the hope of having access to at least three of them.

Based on her personal and professional experiences in various higher education institutions of both countries, the researcher realized that having intermediate access was important for gathering data about these collaborative programs and partner institutions. In the end, only two programs were selected as study cases because the researcher was able to find a contact person to introduce her to each of the institutions. An attempt to contact a third potential case was unsuccessful.

*Representativeness of the two selected cases and partner institutions*

Although only two cases were included in the study mainly due to their accessibility, they turned out to be representative of the type of cross-border higher education program with key features according to the previous selection criteria. These criteria were that the two chosen cases could represent the simplest game structure for a commonly observed delivery model for cross-border higher education (i.e., the number of players (two), with similar cultural backgrounds, and the same external political

environment (China and U.S.). Moreover, the two selected Sino-foreign programs both offer business management degrees at the Master's level.

Nevertheless, the two selected cases do capture interesting variations that guaranteed possibilities for cross-case comparison and some level of generalization. According to game theory, all players are assumed to be rational and their rationality is based on various personal factors of the players. Games with similar structure and strategy sets could yield very different outcomes because different types of players are involved. In this study, while the overall institutional profile was operationalized as the description of players, institutional type (private vs public; teaching oriented vs. research oriented) appears to be a commonly used indicator to differentiate various higher education institutions. The two U.S. institutions in the selected cases each represent primarily teaching-focused private universities and large public universities with both research and teaching focuses.

The two Chinese partner institutions in the selected cases are also of similar institutional types in terms of funding sources. Both universities are public universities and funded through the "211 Project" [17] (211, hereafter) and "985 Project" [18] (985, hereafter). Most higher education providers in China are still publicly funded institutions. Chinese public universities were differentiated as either ordinary or key higher education

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[17] The "211 Project," initiated in 1995, is a targeted funding stream for one hundred selected universities that are most likely to be key universities. The purpose is to strengthen their teaching and research excellence. For a full list of 211 Project universities released from the Ministry of Education, see: http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_94/201002/82762.html

[18] The "985 Project" initiated in 1998 has been targeting at a handful of flagship universities with affluent funding and policy support, to construct world-class universities so as to advance international recognition and competitiveness of Chinese higher education. Only nine universities were in the beginning phase of the project, but there are now 39 universities in this group (MOE, 2010). For a full list of 985 Project universities released from the Ministry of Education, see: http://edu.people.com.cn/GB/116076/120144/9021736.html

institutions. Key universities tend to have better teaching and research capacity and are nationally recognized for certain discipline areas. Traditionally, international communication and collaborations with foreign universities have been highly concentrated in the key university category. More recent higher education reform initiatives such as "211" and "985" have furthered such a distinction due to the initiatives' purpose of benchmarking with the international standards for these universities and constructing world-class universities.

As of 2008 (MOE, 2010), "211" and "985" universities all together constituted only 6% of the higher education institutions in China; however, they host 75% of all Chinese Ph.D students/candidates, 60% of the Master's students; 85% of the national key disciplines and 96% of the national key laboratories, and 70% of the research funding for higher education in general. In addition, the 2010 MOE Sino-foreign degree-granting program data show that the majority of these international collaborative programs are established with "985" and or "211" universities.

Even though this is a very small group of higher education institutions in China, it captures the majority of graduate-level education, as well as the international higher education activities in China. The two selected 985 Chinese universities are representative of those higher education institutions that are most likely to be involved in international collaborations.

Basic information about the two final cases and the participating partner institutions are presented in Table 4. Pseudo names were created for both collaborative programs and each of the partner universities with some indications about the program and institutional types.

Table 4. Basic Information of the Two Sino-U.S. Programs and Partner Institutions

| Sino-U.S. Program | U.S. Partner Institution | Chinese Partner Institution | Degree Level | Field of Study |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tantru (China) EMBA Program | University of Tantru, Business School | Guang-Da University, Yu-Cai College | Master | Executive Business Management |
| Safron China IMBA program | Safron University, Business School | Fazhan University, School of Business Management | Master | International Business Administration |

*Selection of individual informant*

Within each of the selected Sino-U.S. higher education programs, individual informants were selected for one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. These informants came from three stakeholder groups, including key leaders, administrators, and faculty members. The criteria for the selection were that they had to have direct involvement with the collaborative program.

For a cross-border higher education program, leadership personnel such as program directors and program coordinators appointed at each of the partner institutions were definitely the key informants for this study. These individuals who are in the leadership positions are key agents that translate the institutional values into the actual programs and activities. Their perceptions on the institutional motivations and expectations largely represent the organizations' visions. In most cases, they are also very influential, directly or indirectly, in the decision making process that concerns the home institutions' involvement in the cross-border higher education program. Therefore, these individuals in key leadership roles were selected.

Administrative support staff and faculty member from both sides of the partnership were  also key participants. The intent and expectations of any organization is the collective reflection of those who are directly involved. The result of successfully achieving any institutional goal depends on the actions of these key stakeholders. Therefore, it is essential to interview individuals from each of these categories who have been directly involved in the executive, administrative, and academic processes of the program. Furthermore, because the perceptions of each side of the partnership are critical components of this study, each participant's affiliation with the home institution was identified.

In general, the researcher gained better access to the Tantru EMBA program and its partner institutions than the Safron program. With only limited help from the contact person involved in recruiting for the Safron case, the researcher was unable to recruit the leaders who oversee the partner institution's international programs at the college level. Nonetheless, program leaders, administrators, and faculty members who were directly involved in the program were interviewed. A general observation and impression from the interviews was that the U.S. participants in the Tantru case appeared to be more open and willing to share information than those in the Safron case. Whether this was because of the different recruiting process or some other program-related reason, it is hard to tell. Table 5 presents a list of final interview participants from each study site.

Table 5. Interview Participants by Stakeholder Group and by Institutional affiliation

| Studied Cases | Category | Chinese Partner Institution | U.S. Partner Institution | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tantru (China) EMBA program | 1. Chair or leadership personnel at the partner institutions who oversee the universities' international activities | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| | 2. Program director and assistant director (including program coordinator) | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | 3. Faculty members | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| | Subtotal | 7 | 6 | 13 |
| Safron IMBA program | 1. Program director and assistant director (including program coordinator) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | 2. Administrative staff | 1 | | 1 |
| | 3. Faculty members | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| | Subtotal | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Total number of participants | | 12 | 10 | 22 |

Data Collection Methods and Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

This study used document analysis, site visits, observations, and one-on-one semi-structured interviews as data collection methods. These methods allowed the researcher to collect data from multiple sources. Obtaining different streams of information provided the researcher with a more comprehensive and holistic picture of the studied programs. The previous chapter presented the conceptual framework grounded in international education, strategic management literature, and game theory. This framework served as a guide for the data collection and analysis process for this study. This section presents the

data methods used in this study and each discussion of data method is followed by a discussion about its connection to the pre-developed conceptual framework. A data collection matrix that maps out these streams of information against the research questions and components of conceptual framework is presented in Appendix B.

*Document analysis and site visits*

Collaborative programs are embedded within an institutional context in which internal and external pressures exert influence on their motivations and ultimately the structures and behaviors of the collaborative programs. Thus, relevant documents included each institution's mission statement, strategic planning documents, collaboration agreement, advertisement, program marketing plan, course schedules, and evaluation results. The researcher obtained these documents from multiple sources, including archive files, local newspapers, program and institution websites, and interview participants.

The researcher also visited the sites of both studied programs[19], the campuses of the two Chinese partners, and one of the U.S. partners. Observation notes were written as necessary. Relevant program activities were observed including observation of daily administration work, a road-show program promotion, a U.S. Commerce Association ceremony event (the targeted program participated for marketing purposes), and informal interactions around the campuses. The data collected from the document analysis and on-site observation helped to illuminate the environmental and institutional contexts of the partner institutions, as well as the physical and functioning structures and the overall organizational cultures of the studied programs.

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[19] Both collaborative programs are housed at the Chinese partners' locations.

The content analysis of these documents helped the researcher establish an initial understanding of the studied programs and the involved partner institution, which benefit the individual interviews. More importantly, results from the document analysis and on-site observation were triangulated with interview data to uncover the value of cross-border education, learn about the partners' institutional cultural and academic contexts, and identify the administration and curriculum structures of the joint programs, and finally, construct profiles of the studied programs and partner institutions.

*Semi-structured interviews*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals directly involved in each program, including institutional leaders who oversaw the international affairs of the partner institution, the designated program director or coordinator, key administrative staff members, and faculty members who offered courses for the program.

The semi-structured interview design is more appropriate for this study than structured interviews or surveys for several reasons. First, for each category, interviewees were affiliated with the two partner institutions. Questions about the institutional motivations needed to be asked in a way that encouraged them to respond from the perspective of their home institutions. Second, the possible expected outcomes for each institution might not be exactly the same, thus the strategies to achieve them would be different accordingly.

The design of the semi-structured interview protocol ensured in-depth conversations with the interviewees and covered the core components of the conceptual framework. They also allowed the researcher to have enough flexibility to pursue the uniqueness of each participant and organization. Each interview was guided by the

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interview protocol; however, probes or alternative questions were used to explore particular issues that were relevant to that particular program site, partner institution, and/or informant.

Each interview included four sets of questions that were linked to the conceptual framework and research questions. The first set of questions asked about the participants' home institutions' values related to cross-border higher education and their overall description of the collaborative program. The second set of questions mainly asked about participants' perceptions of the motivations and expected outcomes that their home institutions had for being involved in the target program, as well as those of their partner's. The third set of questions concerned participants' understanding of the priority of benefits and outcomes for their home institutions in the collaboration and their perceptions of their partner's priorities. Finally, the last set of questions explored participants' assessment of program success, strategies to sustain and enlarge the gains, and the challenges encountered. (See Appendix E for interview protocol and interview questions).

<div align="center">Case Study Protocol and Pilot Study</div>

A case study protocol (see Appendix A) was developed prior to the actual data collection. A pilot study was conducted to test the data collection plan and instrument. The pilot study took place in November 2008 and was conducted at a Sino-U.K. cross-border program offering an Associate degree in business management. The purpose of the pilot study was mainly to test the case study protocol (such as identify the intermediate person for access, process of participant recruitment, and possible sources for collecting relevant documents) and to test the interview protocol. The case study

protocol and interview questions were revised based on the experience and feedback from the pilot study.

*Data Collection Procedure*

Data collection started with an online search to identify and collect relevant materials for the targeted collaborative programs and involved partner institutions. For each studied program, the official registration information was collected from the official agency, as reported on the website of the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Higher Learning Commission. Then the websites of the studied programs and the partner institutions were explored and relevant materials were documented. As for the collaborative programs, the materials covered a wide range of information including program history, admission, curriculum and course schedules, faculty resources. This information along with news and activities were documented. As for partner institutions, the search focused on institutional history and traditions, the current mission and values, strategic planning, faculty resources, and international related programs and activities. The documents collected prior to the field trip were all documented.

The field trip to both studied programs and three of the involved university campuses took place from February to November 2009. For each partnership program, contact with a prominent insider of the program was established first. In both cases, the purpose of the study, request for data collection permission, and the criteria of individual informant selection were presented to this person. The intermediate person then provided a list of potential interview participants for the researcher to contact individually.

The process of participant recruitment and schedule of interviews for the two selected cases differed. In the case of the Tantru EMBA program, the intermediate person

introduced the researcher and the study to potential participants on the U.S. side as well as to the program director on the Chinese side. The researcher contacted the U.S. participants who had agreed to participate and scheduled interviews with them. At the Chinese partner institution, the assistant program director helped the researcher identify potential participants and schedule all the interviews.

As for the case of the Safron IMBA program, the initial contact person is affiliated with the Chinese partner institution but not directly involved in the studied collaborative program. The researcher was introduced to the program director on the Chinese side first and then was introduced to the U.S. director. Both program directors provided a list of their side of potential participants' names and contact information. The researcher individually contacted all potential participants through emails to introduce herself and the study, as well as extend invitations to participate in the study. The Invitation Letter for Recruitment can be found in Appendix C. Individual interviews were scheduled accordingly with those who agreed to participate.

On average, individual interviews took about one to one-and-a-half hours. The majority of the interviews for the Tantru EMBA program took place at the participants' offices. Two of the interviews on the Chinese side were conducted off-campus to make it convenient for the participants. There was no individual office space available for most of the interview participants from Safron IMBA program because the collaborative program shared office space with other program administration staff. As a result, most of the interviews for this case were conducted in a conference room at the program site. Of the three interviews with the Chinese faculty, two were conducted over the phone and the other one in a classroom right after the participant finished teaching a course. Finally, the

interview with the U.S. program director from Safron University was conducted through an online Skype meeting because he had to stay at another program site that Safron University has in China.

All of the interviews were audio-taped with the participant's permission. For each interview, the researcher emailed the consent statement and interview questions prior to the scheduled interviews. A hard copy was also provided for face-to-face sessions. The invitation letter, the consent statement, and interview questions were prepared both in English and in Chinese. Interviews with Chinese participants were presented with the Chinese version of these document and the interviews were conducted in Chinese as well. These documents (consent statement, interview protocol, and interview questions) are included in Appendices D and E.

<center>Coding and Data Analysis Procedure</center>

All the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The researcher transcribed two of the English interviews and all eleven of the Chinese interviews. Interviews in Chinese were first transcribed verbatim into Chinese and used during the analysis process. Only selected quotes reported in this paper were translated fully into English. A professional transcriber was hired to finish the rest of the transcriptions (eight interviews). For this set of interviews, the researcher reviewed the transcriptions while listening to the audio recordings.

The researcher did all the coding and analysis of the collected data. NVIVO (a computer software program for qualitative data analysis) was used for data management and analyses, including initial coding, theme development, and pattern matching. All of the transcripts, some of the collected documents, and observation and interview notes

were imported into NVIVO. For the hard-copy materials collected from the site visits, summaries were written into a Microsoft Word document and then imported into NVIVO. The documents were reviewed and used to triangulate with findings from the interviews.

The coding and analysis approach that this study employed was both deductive and inductive. "All analysis involves both deductive and inductive thinking" ((Hatch, 2002, p. 161), and LeCompte and Schensul (1999) point out that deductive and inductive approaches do not contradict one another. Although a researcher might start with a deductive step, he or she could still give attention to other emerging new categories or themes. The research for this study was deductive because the researcher constructed a conceptual framework by examining the existing literature on international higher education, strategic alliance management, and game theory for common themes and their interrelations pertaining to the implementation of the partnerships. A study with cases that contain a degree program of the two partner institutions would likely be overwhelmed with an enormous amount of information. The pre-design conceptual framework helped the researcher remain focused on the core purpose and research questions the study planned to address.

Based on this conceptual framework, the researcher designed the interview protocol, to obtain information about those areas in accordance with the conceptual framework. The main components were program and institutional profiles, motivations and expected outcomes, preference levels, and strategies. Within each of these components, the researcher already had identified some common themes from the

literature, and they were used as a reference point during the data collection and the analysis process.

As a result, the researcher first did an open coding with the guide of the conceptual framework for each case. Relevant attention was given to other emerging themes as well. The code developed from the first-round analysis were grouped into the main components based on the framework. The researcher then reviewed and synthesized the coded data. The result of this analysis process suggested new components and generated sub-themes that refined the pre-designed conceptual framework. The framework was refined accordingly. While the main components remained the same, the sub-themes that contributed to each component were constructed based on the two case studies. Major modifications appeared in three of the five areas: 1) the "institutional context (profile of partner institution)" component was further separated into "institutional context (home institution)" and "partner profile (involved college)." "History and tradition" became prominent enough so it was listed as a sub-theme instead of part of the institutional profile; 2) the "program profile" component was refined; and 3) the "strategy" component was separated into two aspects to capture the "overall strategy" and "change(s)" partners had employed in the past and planned for the future. As for the "motivation and expected outcome" and "utility function" components, coding were specified by the partner institutions and their perceptions of the other party.

After the coding and analysis process for each case, the researchers synthesized the main findings from both cases to answer the research questions. A detailed list of the initial codes and refined codes is presented in Table 6. For each case, stakeholders' perceptions were compared for their perceived motivations, expected outcomes, utilities,

and strategies. Between-case analysis was conducted to examine the application of game

theory in the studied programs. Theoretical and policy implications were developed from

both the individual cases and between-case analyses.

Table 6. List of Initial Codes and Refined Codes

| Initial Code Derived from Pre-designed Conceptual Framework | | Refined Codes after First-round Coding | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Main Component* | *Sub-themes* | *Main Component* | *Sub-themes* |
| Institutional context (Profile of partner institution) | • Institutional profile<br>• Institutional mission<br>• Values towards cross-border higher education | Institutional context<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Partner profile (partners) | • Home universities<br>  ○ Institutional profile<br>  ○ History and traditions<br>  ○ Mission<br>  ○ Value towards Internationalization<br>• Partner institutions (involved college)<br>  ○ Profile<br>  ○ History and traditions<br>  ○ Mission and future development<br>  ○ Value towards Internationalization |
| Program profile (Achieved outcome) | • Facilities<br>• Management and administration<br>• Student recruitment and admission<br>• Curriculum<br>• Teaching and assessing student learning<br>• Research collaboration<br>• Extra-curriculum activities | Program profile | • Development status<br>• Organizational structure<br>• Academic component<br>• Financing structure |
| Motivation and | • Cost saving<br>• Market | Motivation and expected | • Branding through internationalization |

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| expected outcome* | expanding (revenue generating) • Capacity building (Organizational learning) | outcome* | effort • Strategic positioning • Revenue generating • Market expanding • Capacity Development |
|---|---|---|---|
| Utility function (preference level)* | • First • Second (if applicable) • Third (if applicable) | Utility function (priority of various expected outcome)* | • First • Second (if applicable) • Third (if applicable) |
| Strategy | • Share of responsibility • Allocation of resource • Other promoted activities | Strategy | • Overall strategy and rationale   o Administration   o Academic   o Partner commitment • Moves (for desired outcome)   o Changes (modification of the original plan)   o Future moves     o Academic quality     o Marketing     o Reputation (Brand influences)     o Financial structure |

Note: * These components and sub-themes were coded by each of the partner institutions.


## Limitations and Conclusion

The researcher brought some assumptions and biases into this study. The

researcher's experience and affiliation with the educational systems in both countries

contributed to these assumptions and or biases. One of the assumptions the researcher had

was that informants would share their opinions honestly. Even though there were

possibilities that some of the informants might give more politically correct responses to some of the questions, overall, the researcher trusted that they would provide accurate and honest information about their opinions and perceptions of the programs. Moreover, multiple sources of data would help the researcher verify the collected information. Although being a Chinese citizen gives the researcher an advantage in communicating with members of the local institutions, such identity also carries potential influence, which might further affect the dynamics with the Chinese interviewees.

Overall, the case-study design fit the study due to the identified problem, the research questions, and the theoretical perspective the researcher chose to apply. This design allowed the researcher not only to incorporate both positivistic and interpretative approaches to investigate the cross-border institutional partnership through a game theory lens, but also to capture the holistic and meaningful features of the complex, real-life phenomenon in the case of cross-border higher education programs (Yin, 2003).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings from the two selected cross-border business management programs. As discussed in Chapter Four in this study, the established collaborative programs in this study were the equilibrium outcomes of the game the two partners played. The setup structures including the partners' share of responsibilities and actions taken while implanting the collaborative programs illustrate the partners' chosen strategies in the game. Therefore, the approach in presenting the findings from the two case studies was to construct the game by identifying the equilibrium outcomes, motivations and expected outcomes, utility functions, and strategies.

In this chapter, each case starts with a rich description of the collaborative program itself and the involved partners. Then main findings are then organized following the main structure of the conceptual framework, which includes motivation and expected outcomes, preference level for various expected outcomes, and strategies. Patterns are identified based on between-case comparisons. Finally, answers to the main research questions are synthesized.

Case One: Tantru (China) EMBA program

*Case Description*

The Tantru (China) EMBA program is a Sino-US Executive Master of Business Administration program located in southeast China, jointly offered by the Business School at University of Tantru (BSUT) in the United States, and Yu-Cai College (YCC) in Guang-Da University (pseudonyms are used for all of the involved institutions). Both partners' home institutions are elite universities in their own countries. BSUT is a top-20

US business school at a public research-oriented university in the Midwest of the United States, and YCC-affiliated with one of the "985 Project" flagship universities in southern China, which is a top business school with traditionally wide international connections. The Tantru (China) EMBA program's collaboration with the Chinese university was inaugurated in 2001, after three years of partner selection and negotiations including gaining accreditation and approval both from China and from the United States.

*Partners*

To fully understand the partners' motivations, perspectives on the expected outcomes from the collaboration, the partners' overall strategy and future moves to construct the equilibrium game, it is important to understand the unique institutional features of the colleges with regard to internationalization. Thus, this section first provides a comprehensive description of the two partner institutions, YCC and BSUT, as well as the home universities, respectively. A brief history and the current status of the home (Chinese) universities are introduced first, followed by the Chinese universities' missions and development with regards to its internationalization process. Then, the U.S.-based partner institutions are presented with a similar structure, including each institution's history and current status, overall mission, and internationalization development at the college level.

*Home university of the Chinese Partner: Guang-Da University (GDU).*

Guang-Da University (GDU) is the home university with which YCC is affiliated. It is located in the one of the leading cities of Chinese economic reform and "opening up" policy in the southern region of China, neighboring Hong Kong and Macao. With its

rapid economic growth in the last two decades, the city has become the home of many businesses, both domestic and international.

Guang-Da University (GDU) was founded in the 1920's and was established as a "vibrant community of scholarship and learning characterized by its revolutionary spirit" (Guang-Da University, 2010e). The 1920s was the most politically and economically chaotic time in China when the nation was striving for new democracy from the old feudal society. GDU was founded for "the purpose of training revolutionaries" (Guang-Da University, 2008a). Early in the mid 1930's, GDU had already begun to enroll graduate students. In the 1950s, since the founding of the People's Republic of China, universities and departments were rearranged nationwide and GDU became a comprehensive university. It had always been one of the key national universities, and was one of the first group of the "211 Project" and "985 Project" Chinese flagship universities, so now GDU is a highly regarded comprehensive public university in China (Guang-Da University, 2008a).

Currently, GDU has established four campuses in the province. With a total of twenty-five schools and colleges, GDU offers undergraduate to doctorate level degrees in a wide variety of subject areas. As of 2010, GDU had a total student population of over 80,000, including 30,000 undergraduates and 20,000 graduate students. There are more than 12,000 faculty and staff members, of which over 860 are full professors and 1,500 associate professors. Throughout its almost 90 years of development, GDU has evolved in particular features such as "being open, scientific, and revolutionary" (Guang-Da University, 2008b). GDU continues to be committed to its mission "to advance knowledge and educate students in arts, science, technology, and other academic areas

that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century" (Guang-Da University, 2008e).

GDU self-perception of being international is an important characteristic because of their long tradition of being open and revolutionary, as well as its particular location, which has always been the gateway for China's opening to the world and the bridge connecting the inland with overseas. It is the "geographical background" for GDU's long-term 'tradition of openness'" (Guang-Da University, 2008b).

Recently, GDU has prioritized its development focus to strive for a higher level of international exchange activities and internationalization processes. As of 2010, the university hosted about 1,500 international students and has been actively involved in international academic exchanges. GDU had has formed educational exchange and collaboration partnerships with more than 117 well-known universities and academic institutes, of which 36 are from Asian countries, 41 from Europe, and 40 from North American (Guang-Da University, 2008d). At the undergraduate level, GDU has formed six 2+2 twinning programs with foreign universities, including those from the United States, Australia, and Hong Kong (Long, 2009). There are also two international programs delivering full foreign Master's degrees of Business Management at GDU, both within the Yu-Cai College (Guang-Da University, 2008d).

Overall, GDU considers itself very internationally oriented. For example, during a nationwide media recruiting interview for prospective students, GDU's Director of Recruitment described the most noticeable features of GDU as its internationalization, which is reflected in GDU's overall university culture, working style, and active

involvement with international academic exchange activities, especially compared to most inland Chinese universities (Long, 2009).

*Chinese partner institution: Yu-Cai College.*

Yu-Cai College evolved from Yu-Cai University, which was a missionary university originally founded by Americans in late 19th Century. In the 1920's, the Nationalist government acknowledged Yu-Cai University as "an international, private, Christian university" ((Yu-Cai University (international), 2008). When the national policies started to prohibit foreigners from operating universities in China, Yu-Cai responded by establishing a predominantly Chinese board of directors who took over the administration from the Americans. The U.S.-based board of trustees was transformed into the Yu-Cai American Foundation, mainly taking on the responsibility for hiring foreign faculty for the university (Yu-Cai University (international), 2008).

Until the 1930's, Yu-Cai University had already become a comprehensive university that had areas of study including liberal arts, science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, and business. Yu-Cai University, with its strong connections with the United States, had student exchange programs with the U.S., Japan, and the Philippines, as well as retrospective degree recognition with a U.S. university at that time. As early as 1919, "15 renowned universities, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Stanford and Toronto, announced that [Yu-Cai's] graduates would be eligible to apply for their postgraduate programs, which was a milestone in the College's history " (Yu-Cai University (international), 2008).

Being forced to relocate to Hong Kong during the World War II, Yu-Cai University re-established its campus in China after Japan's surrender. Engaging a

considerable number of renowned faculty members from top institutions, such as

Tsinghua University and others, YCU consolidated its leading position in the field of

Humanities in China (Yu-Cai University (international), 2010. With the first nationwide

higher education reform by the People's Republic of China in 1952, Yu-Cai University

(Mainland China) merged into Grang-Da University and another institution, including the

campus facility, the former programs, and faculties. In the 1960's, Yu-Cai University

(Hong Kong) Alumni Association revived Yu-Cai University in Hong Kong and it has

continued to the present.

The identity of Yu-Cai University has been strongly sustained among alumni and

is well recognized in the local region. In 1988, at the centennial anniversary of YCU, Yu-

Cai College was officially established in Grang-Da University with efforts from a group

of strongly determined alumni from Hong Kong and overseas (Yu-Cai College, 2008b).

Currently, Yu-Cai College is under the auspices of both Grang-Da University and its

board of trustees, who reside in Hong Kong, provide a large amount of funds for the

college's development (Yu-Cai College, 2008a, 2008b). This is a unique governing

structure among Chinese higher education institutions. While abiding by GDU's policy as

a public university in China, YYC's strategic development is highly influenced by the

board of trustees (interviews). For example, one of the well-respected senior professors

from YCC described such a relationship as follows:

> Nowadays, YCC and YCU (international) do not have any official
> relationship, only we share the same origin. YCC was re-established
> because back in the 1980's, a group of YCU overseas alumni wanted to
> give donations, but only to the old Yu-Cai, not Guang-Da University. In
> the end, as a compromise, Yu-Cai College was founded.  Therefore, our
> college is in fact "one college, two systems." We have dual leadership.
> One is Guang-Da University. The other one is the board of trustees, which

is a group of successful old YCU overseas alumni based in Hong Kong. The board of trustees guides the main strategic development direction for the college. However, YCC still has to be affiliated with Guang-Da University, since they [the board of trustees] are not an eligible entity to run educational organizations according to Chinese laws. For example, the positioning of YCC to gradually transition from an economics school to a business school was a decision made by the board of trustees. Once they made this decision, YCC then took this proposal to Guang-Da University for discussion. GDU agreed that such a plan aligned with the overall university's development, so they approved it even though GDU already had another business school.

Faculty member from YCC

Yu-Cai College currently offers bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D programs in the fields of economics and business management. Among the 99 total faculty members, 31 of them are full professors and 37 are associate professors. Yu-Cai also provides various international professional development opportunities for its faculty, including financial support for overseas study opportunities in doctoral level programs, attending international conferences, and other international academic activities (Yu-Cai College, 2008c).

With its unique historical roots with Yu-Cai University and the advocates from the board of trustees for a strong international focus, YCC has been committed to internationalization of the college since the very beginning (interviews). According to the Director of the Tantru (China) EMBA program, internationalization was the most noticeable feature of YCC. International MBA programs at YCC has been rated highly by the MOE nationwide MBA Evaluation, as well as by other rating agencies (Yu-Cai College, 2008d). The college also hosted two of the only foreign-degree-granting programs within the GDU (one from the United States and one from a European country), twinning 2+2 and/or 3+1 undergraduate programs with Canadian, British, and Australian

universities, and student exchange programs with more than 30 different universities

from the United States, European countries, and other Asian countries (Yu-Cai College,

2008d).  For example, in 2009 alone, the college had 55 students studying abroad (Yu-

Cai College, 2008d).

Besides the variety of international programs and activities YCC has, many of the

undergraduate courses at YCC are taught in English by its own faculty.  The Tantru

(China) EMBA program director reflected upon his own experiences of giving seminars

and lectures in English to undergraduates at YCC:

> I think those students are highly qualified. Whether they are students in
> trade or economics, they can take these courses and lectures in English.
> Their interpretations were accurate and answered questions with fluent
> English. Students from other universities cannot always perform at this
> level.
>
> Executive Director of Tantru (China) EMBA program

Eighty-three percent of YCC's faculty members have had international experience

in their backgrounds; some are returnees from well-known foreign institutions; others

have studied abroad and had training funded by the college; still others have been

involved in other international academic activities.  Through one of its prestigious U.S.

partner institutions, YCC has sent more than 40 of its own faculty members to this private

research-oriented university for professional development training (Yu-Cai College,

2008c, 2008d).

*Home university of the U.S. partner: University of Tantru.*

The University of Tantru  (UT) is one of the largest public land-grant universities

in the north central region of the United States. Established in the mid 19th century, UT is

now a public comprehensive university and is ranked among the prestigious universities

in the United States. With a student population of over 50,000 and more than 14,554 faculty and staff members, UT offers more than 150 graduate and undergraduate degrees, as well as several professional degrees.  The university's mission statement described it as follows:

> The [University of Tantru ], was founded in the belief that all people are enriched by understanding, is dedicated to the advancement of learning and the search for truth; to the sharing of this knowledge through education for a diverse community; and to the application of this knowledge to benefit the people of the state, the nation, and the world. (Mission Statement, UT website)

This mission statement reflects the university's public nature and strong commitment to research and teaching, integrating three main dimensions: research and discovery, extraordinary education, and dynamic public engagement. Since Fall 2004, UT has launched comprehensive strategic plans for internationalization of the entire campus, aspiring to become one of the top three public research universities in the world within a decade. With such a vision as a guide, the international task force was established to make recommendations on how to achieve this goal. During the planning process, there were campus-wide conversations, involving faculty, staff, and students.

The international efforts were acknowledged from one of the largest associations focusing on international education in the world. UT recently received a prestigious award recognizing its outstanding and innovative efforts in campus internationalization, along with four other universities because internationalization is a core element of the university's mission. More importantly, internationalization has been implemented through campus-wide initiatives and "[wa]s no longer an option at [UT] and that international programs have become an integral part of the campus culture and our

teaching, research, and outreach programs" (Speech of Assistant Vice President and Dean of International programs (UT Web News, 2010).

In 2008-2009, the university hosted more than 4,000 international students and scholars on campus from 127 countries, and the undergraduate population had almost 3% international students. There was over 20% of undergraduate students who studied abroad in 2006-07, in over 70 countries. With the new strategic positioning goal, the university is striving for a goal of 50% of its graduates having a study abroad experience (UT International Office website). The university has established 250 exchange agreements and many informal linkages with institutions around the world.

*U.S. partner institution: Business School of University of Tantru  (BSUT).*

The Business School of University of Tantru  (BSUT) was founded in 1919. Offering degrees from a full undergraduate program to a master's level program and doctoral level and executive programs. The BSUT currently enrolls more than 5,000 students and has an alumni network of 50,000 graduates worldwide (BSUT Annual Report, 2009).   The BSUT has received its accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)[20] since the beginning of the 1920's, indicating their excellent teaching and research in the field of business education.

BSUT is committed to a mission of "discovery, opportunity, and community," by "develop[ing] exceptional academic resources (outstanding faculty and academic programs), appropriate amounts and types of financial resources, and organizational and

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[20] AACSB is The International Association for Management Education, devoting to the advancement of higher education in management education. It is also the premier accrediting agency of collegiate business schools and accounting programs worldwide.

operational resources that allow the entire [BSUT] community to move efficiently and effectively toward realizing our mission" (BSUT, 2008, p. 6).

As of 2009, there were over 130 faculty of which 106 (78%) were tenured and/or tenure-track faculty members (BSUT Annual Report, 2009). Ten of the school's professors were honored as among the field of management's most-cited authors during in the past quarter century (BSUT Faculty and Research webpage). With this distinguished group of scholars and teachers, the school is highly ranked for the number of articles its faculty publishes in leading academic journals, including one of the mostly used marketing models and the development of a new academic field of modern management education (BSUT website: http://www.[ BSUT].edu/about/index.aspx).

With its mission "to discover transformative knowledge about the issues faced by organizations and managers in a dynamic global economy," the BSUT is fully committed to delivering a global experience to its students (BSUT, 2010, p. 6). Particular leadership positions that oversee the international programs were created within the administration structure; the BSUT had student exchange relations with 23 exchange partner schools in other countries; three highly regarded Joint Executive MBA degree programs on two continents; 18 short-term and summer study programs, and 10 short-term global enrichment elective partnerships; and faculty exchanges with two foreign universities. The BSUT has alumni in 78 countries around the world.

With such strong global connections, BSUT has established distinct features in the area of internationalization. BSUT has recently introduced an international experience requirement for all students including both undergraduates and graduates. Most recently, BSUT's effort to promote and integrate an international component into their business

education was recognized by a substantial national grant[21] from the U.S. Department of Education, specifically focusing on further developing the nation's capacity for international business education and research. The home institution also provides strong support for this new development at BSUT by matching federal funds for the project (BSUT, 2010).

In summary, aligned with University of Tantru's overarching mission and goals, BSUT has made substantive contributions to the university's goal toward internationalization, becoming one of the leading colleges promoting internationalization strategies at the university. Both the home university and the business school itself have established a strong international component and demonstrated an exceptional higher education institutional profile of highly integrated international features.

*Administration Structure of the Tantru (China) EMBA program*

The organizational structure of the Tantru (China) EMBA program is highly integrated. The main leadership and decision-making authorities remains with the leaders of the two partner institutions, including the college dean and associate dean from YCC; and the associate dean, assistant dean, and director of the International Program Office from BSUT. This group of leaders jointly make major decisions about the Tantru (China) EMBA program. A co-academic director mechanism was also created to jointly oversee the academic affairs of the Tantru (China) EMBA program, one academic director appointed from each side (YCC & BSUT, 2006). The noted responsibilities include: creating bylaws and advice on areas such as regular curriculum review and change, rules

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[21] The Center of Business Education and Research network was created by Congress in 1988 and administered by the U.S. Department of Education under Title VI, Part B of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The network links the manpower and technological needs of the United States business community with international education, language training and research capacities of universities across the country.

for appointing the teaching staff, the admissions procedures, and other quality control over the EMBA program.

While equally involving leadership and scholars from both partners, the Tantru (China) EMBA program has its own team of administration staff who are not directly affiliated with any of the partner institutions, but co-sponsored by both partners and the program's operational budget.  This administrative team includes an executive director, an assistant director, and two other staff members, housed in the Tantru (China) EMBA program office (the office hereafter) in YCC's main administration building.  Within BSUT, the International Program office is also closely involved with the daily operation of the Tantru (China) EMBA program (YCC & BSUT, 2006).  Figure 3 illustrates the organizational structure of the Tantru (China) EMBA program and its relationship with both partner institutions
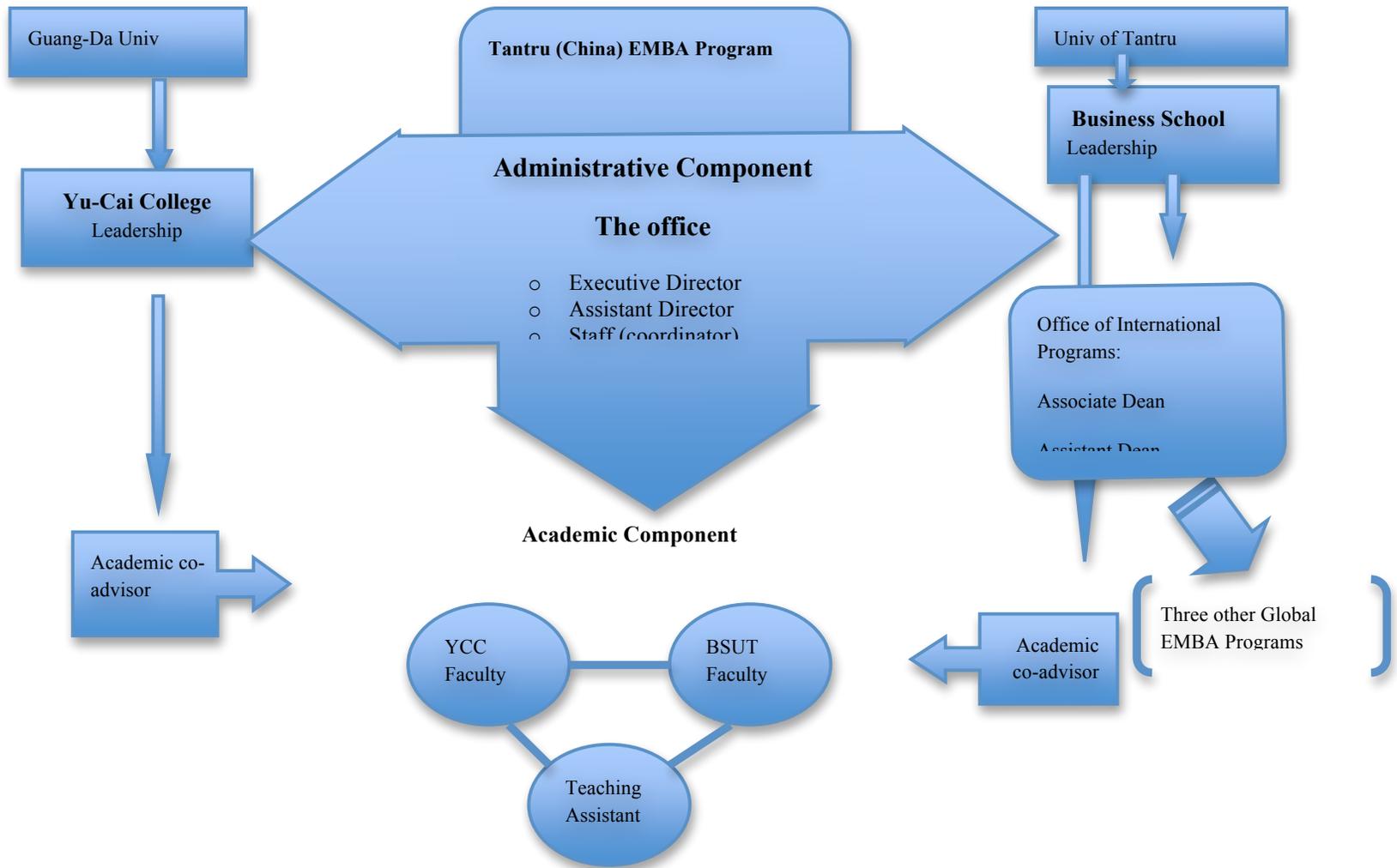
Figure 3 Organization Chart for Tantru (China) EMBA Program

*Academic Component*

The elite status of both partner institutions and the design of the EMBA Program constitutes a unique profile for a "high-end" Executive MBA program in China. These features include a unique "global-and-local curriculum" delivered through a co-teaching model, multi-cultural collaboration for mock business plans through the "virtual team project," and a two-week international residency in the United States just before and including graduation.

The program offeres 18 executive-level MBA courses over 18 months for a total of 51 credits. All courses are taught face-to-face in English. Courses are delivered on two consecutive weekends each month. Every course is co-taught by two faculty members, one from BSUT and one from YCC, and facilitated by a doctoral graduate student or junior faculty member from YCC. The involvement of faculty from both local and foreign institutions in the core academic component of the program was designed to create and deliver an academically sound "global-and-local curriculum" (interview).

As graduation nears, Tantru (China) EMBA program students work on a half-year "virtual team project" with other students enrolled in BSUT's other global EMBA programs in European countries. By graduation, students complete their two-week integrated international residency in the United States, and graduate with an MBA degree from BSUT (EMBA Program Office, 2008, 2010).

*Finance /Budget Structure*

The initial funding was mainly drawn from alumni contributions. BSUT received more than a million-dollar donation from an old Yu-Cai University alumnus. In addition, the board of trustees of YCC provided the other half of the total intial fund for the China

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side. The operational cost of the Tantru (China) EMBA program is totally based on tuition, so the needed revenue to cover operating expenses depends on its class size. Partner institutions share the cost and profit equally.

In summary, as one of the earliest joint executive business management programs established in China since 2001, the program has successfully built a reputation in the local region of southern China. On multiple occasions, the joint venture has been ranked by China EMBA Forum as the top joint EMBA program in China based on the program's market reputation, evaluation by graduates, and program features. The EMBA Program is self-sustainable with a small but steady enrollment scale, and is a well-recognized executive business management program in the local region.

*Motivation and Expected Outcomes*

This section presents findings around partner institutions' motivations and expected outcomes for the Tantru EMBA program. These findings mainly came from individual interviews with involved leaders, administrators, and faculty members. During each of the interviews, participants were asked to share their perceptions of 1) their affiliated institution's motivation and expected outcomes for the collaborative program, and 2) their partner institution's motivation and expected outcomes. Interview data around this set of questions were coded and analyzed to identify the major motivations and expected outcomes shared by key stakeholder groups for both partners, as well as their perceptions of each other's perceptions. These perceived organizational motivations and expected outcomes were also triangulated with other collected documents such as the official collaborative program agreement, institutional missions and value statements, and the evaluation report. Finally, these findings were summarized to answer research

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question 1.a, which asked about the partners' similar and different motivations and expected outcomes.

Across different stakeholders and institutional affiliations, interviewees talked about three motivations and expected outcomes[22]. These categories are: 1) enhancing reputation and branding through internationalization, 2) capacity development, and 3) revenue generation. Leaders, administrators[23], and faculty members appeared to have consensus over these motivations and expected outcomes for their home institutions. This finding applied to both partner institutions.

*Enhancing Reputation and Branding through Internationalization*

Although reports varied by the amount of emphasis given to certain points, almost all interviewees, regardless of their positions and institutional affiliations, referred to strengthening the institution's reputation and brand image through internationalization efforts as one of the reasons for their home institutions' involvement in the Tantru (China) EMBA program. Successfully delivering an international collaborative degree-granting

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[22] One of the faculty interviewees from YCC did not give any opinion about YCC's motivation and expected outcomes for the Tantru (China) EMBA program. When asked about the question, he simply stated that: "I am not in the leadership role. That I cannot tell." All other interviewed faculty members and administrators shared their opinions.

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[23] Administrators interviewed for the Tantru EMBA case include the executive director and the assistant director from the office. They were identified as administrators from the Chinese partner during the recruitment process. However, throughout the interviews, it became clear that these two participants considered themselves to be representatives of the Tantru (China) EMBA office, rather than either of the two partners. Therefore, interview data from the executive director and assistant director were coded and served as a reference to triangulate with emerged themes from YCC and BSUT interviews. When comparing the two partners, the office staff's perceptions were presented separately from the other stakeholder groups.

program like the Tantru (China) EMBA program represents such internationalization endeavors and contributes to such a solid international reputation.

Leaders, faculty members, and administrators from YCC pointed out that the main reasons for YCC's collaborative delivery of the Tantru (China) EMBA program was to enhance the institution's brand name and prestigious status in China through internationalization. Internationalization is perceived as an effective strategy for YCC to build a strong brand name in the field of business management. Programs like Tantru EMBA have helped YCC to strategically position itself among all other Chinese institutions and similar programs. One of the YCC leaders shared her thoughts:

> YCC historically has been strongly established as an economics department. It is now transitioning to become a business school. … Since China has a short history in management education, it would be better if we collaborate with top business schools to establish our own management program. To stand on the shoulder of the giant is the best way to learn. … I think our college saw collaborations with these top schools as the best way to start building our own image as a business school. These collaborations are vital to our brand as well as our own positioning among all the other business schools in China.
>
> YCC leader

Another key leader at YCC also shared a very similar response:

> We are inspired to become a model program of such kind [executive business management program] in the Southern region or the entire country. In another words, with the collaboration program with [a BSUT], we hope to increase both institutions' brand image, to enhance YCC's [brand] influence.
>
> YCC leader

Moreover, when asked about YCC's motivation and expected outcomes, almost every YCC interviewee, from top leadership to faculty members, as well as the

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administrator from the office, referred to YCC's historical roots with foreign universities

and its present development direction towards internationalization as the main motivators.

Having international collaborations with renowned foreign institutions, such as

BSUT, along with maintaining international connections through several types of

activities and programs, was important to YCC because it was a feature that is deeply

embedded within the college's tradition, brand, and identity. As one of the involved

faculty members, who served as dean of Graduate School at Guang-Da University at the

time of BSUT's partner selection stage in the 1990's, was engaged with the entire

negotiating process, representing the Guang-Da University. His answer to the motivation

question goes beyond the scope of YCC, offering a broader percepective from the home

institution-GDU level.

> This [motivation for establishing EMBA Program] was quite obvious at
> the time. Back then, Guang-Da University hoped to have some
> international collaborations, especially with those elite foreign
> universities. … Internationalization is the goal for [YCC]. Yu-Cai itself
> has historically been very international. Being international is a tradition
> for [YCC]. The board of trustees has paid particularly attention to this. …
> YCC is very different from the Business School of [Guang-Da University].
> Therefore, YCC also needs high profile international programs to
> highlight its prominent features.
>
> <div align="right">YCC faculty member</div>

Therefore, enhancing brand name through internationalization was one of the

main motivators and expected outcomes for YCC. Similarly for BSUT, building an

international reputation at the global level was one of the motivations and expected

outcomes shared by participants from BSUT. Internationalization is perceived as the key

feature of a successful leading business school in today's world, so BSUT wanted to

<div align="center">115</div>

establish their global reputation and network by developing a set of deep partnerships

with elite foreign academic institutions in geographic areas that are important to the

regional business community. This requires a critical mass of enrolled students. A key

leader from BSUT who oversees the schools' international affairs noted that:

> [Tantru (China) EMBA program] builds the reputation of [BSUT] at the
> global level. It becomes known in other parts of the world. It helps to
> create a part of our brand identity, the international dimension.
>
> BSUT leader

Another BSUT leader also pointed out that:

> [Cross-border collaboration] illustrates our global reach—meaning global
> commitment like we are in China….widening our network in China of
> alumni and corporate research in that region.
>
> BSUT leader

*Capacity Development*

Interviewees from YCC and BSUT described several reasons that appeared to be

development related, although with different emphasis and meanings. For YCC, capacity

development was described as a main motivation closely related with the reputation and

brand enhancement. Leaders and faculty considered the Tantru (China) EMBA program

to be a way to build YCC's own capacity in business management education.  Such an

international collaborative program is a strong indicator of the college's ability to deliver

a high-quality business education program at a higher level. For example, one of the

leaders described such capacity building as a contribution to the field of management

education in China. He said:

> Our motives are very simple. Through our participation in the BSUT
> [Tantru]  EMBA Program, we definitely hope to further enhance the
> quality of China's management education, especially if the collaboration is
> with such a good university from the U.S. With this experience, YCC can

strengthen and improve our own management education too. … There is no doubt here, since China didn't have any executive business management education in the past. It is something that is unprecedented and we were making all progress from scratch. … Everything that came with this collaboration, including teaching methods, the curriculum, and degree plan, is what I mean by developing our own capacity.

<div align="right">YCC leader</div>

Another leader gave a more in-depth description of ways in which the Tantru (China) EMBA program contributes to the development of YCC's own capacity in business management education. She concluded that YCC benefits from the program in several different aspects:

There are several aspects to what I mean by learning from [BSUT]. One is that when we started [the Tantru (China) EMBA program], we didn't have any executive business management program. Now, we have accumulated a lot of good experience, so that we would know how to run such a program in the future, just by ourselves. Another aspect relates to training administrative staff and its influence on our faculty. … For me, I want to use this collaboration as a platform to develop our own faculty. I hope some of our junior faculty, especially those new Ph.D graduates, can get involved as teaching assistants in the co-teaching model, so that they can learn from those senior faculty members from [BSUT]. There might be research collaboration opportunities as well. But this is more up to the faculty's individual research interest and agenda.

<div align="right">YCC leader</div>

Along the same line, YCC faculty also noted that because BSUT had a longer history and experience in running business education programs, thus the partner had more expertise from which YCC could learn. The two interviewed senior faculty members from YCC referred to the benefit as learning about the overall MBA curriculum, course arrangement, and educational module from the partner institution. For example, one

professor, who served as both teaching faculty and co-academic director, discussed the

academic benefits at both curriculum and individual levels:

> Through internationalization [the BSUT Tantru (China) EMBA program
> as part of it], we can introduce a good education model of business and
> management. Once we introduced the model, then we can learn from it.
> This is for sure better than nothing. It can also help us to improve our own
> teaching and administration. … Teachers can learn from and communicate
> with foreign faculty through co-teaching.
>
> YCC Faculty member

Faculty development and benefits for students at home emerged as one of the

motivations and expected outcomes from interviews with the BSUT side.  It was very

important for BSUT that their international programs worldwide should provide a wide

range of cross-cultural business learning experiences for faculty and students ([BSUT

case study published from their Europe collaboration], 2000).  A partnership with an elite

Chinese business school has become necessary not only because of China's emerging

economy and enormous market potential, but also because of the strong connection that

local U.S. businesses have developed with China.  The program has served as a "real-life

laboratory" for faculty to experience and learn about one of the world's rapidly emerging

economies, as well as to gain a better understanding of the transitioning nature of the

Chinese economy.  These first-hand experiences and knowledge can be brought back to

students on the U.S. campus as faculty members integrate the information into their

domestic teaching.  One of the BSUT leaders summarized this as follows:

> Having our faculty involved in these kinds of programs [Tantru (China)
> EMBA program], going to China to teach and interact with Chinese
> business people, provides them with experience that they can bring back to
> the classroom here to the benefit of our domestic students.
>
> BSUT leader

BSUT faculty appeared to strongly agree with the leaders concerning this motivation. Faculty perceived that BSUT participated in the Tantru (China) EMBA program because the institution wanted to provide its faculty with the learning opportunities and direct experience in China, and to be able to bring those first-hand experiences back to integrate into their daily work at the home university. Students also had the opportunity to directly work with the Chinese students enrolled in the Tantru (China) EMBA program. As one of them responded to the motivation and expected outcome question during the interview:

> We like to do it for many reasons and one reason is it gives our faculty exposure to international environments and our faculty like doing it. They enjoy it. You know it broadens their perspective and gives them a wider perspective and that perspective is positive. We have a similar program in the [U.S. city name] These programs give us the opportunity of getting our students linked up with executive MBA students around the world [virtual team project] because they have to learn how to work with them. So it gives a great opportunity to our students, so that is the second big thing.
>
> <div align="right">BSTU faculty member</div>

*Revenue Generation*

When answering the motivation and expected outcome questions, none of the interviewees from YCC talked about profit or financially related motivations; however, after the researcher probed further, YCC leaders explained that making money had never been the primary purpose but profit is an important factor to sustain the program. In other words, revenue generation is not the main motivation for YCC but there is a minimum expectation level: the joint program has to be self-sustainable so as not to further demand financial support from the home institution. An YCC leader described this financial aspect,

As a business school, any program development, profit is always a non-ignorable factor. Any program, if it were not making a profit, it wouldn't be able to survive in the long term no matter how good its reputation is. Therefore, profit is also a factor in our consideration. However, it is just one of the factors, not the only one, nor is it our primary purpose. We can endure a short-term loss, but in the long run, it has to be [profitable].

YCC Leader

Interviewees from BSUT were more likely to mention the revenue generation as one of their institution's motives and expected outcomes. All three interviewed BSUT leaders talked about the financial interests for BSUT's effort in expanding its global programs. Very straightforwardly, one of them said, "Obviously there is a financial motivation to be extending these programs. …There is revenue provided from the program as well. And it helps us financially." Another BSUT leader revealed the importance of the revenue brought in by all of the global executive programs at BSUT.

All three global MBA programs, including the BSUT China program, are playing a very important role in the revenue for the school. So that's one very important piece, that the programs bring in very important money and revenue. And especially considering the economic times we live in, it's even more important that we have programs like these that are revenue producing.

BSUT leaders

While BSUT faculty members tended to put more emphasis on the academic benefits as the main motivations, they did address the importance of self-sustainability for the school's global EMBA programs. One of them explained:

There is also a necessary condition for each of these three programs. They have to pay for themselves. … We can have a program where you could lose money for a year or two, but we wouldn't do it any longer than that. I think that we make money on all three and we make money on the executive program here.

BSUT faculty member

*Partner's Perceptions of Each Other's Motivations and Expected Outcomes*

To address the first research question, interviewees were asked not only about perceptions of their own institutions, but also those of their partner's. Overall, leaders from both sides recognized each other's motivation in enhancing brand reputation, in developing faculty (and or) institution capacity, and in student benefits; however, leaders from both partners expressed some level of uncertainty about the other side's financial interest. For example, one of the YCC leaders noted that:

> This expectation [profit] has been very clearly made by [BSUT]. They don't want this program operating at a loss. … Also, they want to expand their influence in China. Therefore, they hope to gain some financial benefits through this partnership with us. Furthermore, they considered this partnership program beneficial to their own program as well. … They sent their faculty and other EMBA students here to learn about the economic and business environment in China as well. … I think the US business school has a long-term goal.
>
> YCC leader

Some other YCC interviewees touched on their partner's main motivations and expected outcomes, but remained skeptical about BSUT's stated motivations and outcomes. For example, one involved leader from YCC, who also oversaw the college's MBA Center that hosts its domestic program and YCC's other international MBA programs, made a comparison between BSUT and other partners from Europe based on her personal experience with multiple foreign partner institutions:

> I am not very sure about BSUT's motivations. I feel that institutions from different parts of the world have different motivations. I think European universities are more interested in internationalizing their own programs and staff, as well as expanding their influences. They don't care too much about the profit.
>
> YCC leader

While she clearly articulated BSUT's other motivations and expected outcomes such as establishing a global strategic positioning and providing benefits to faculty and students, this leader hesitated when she continued:

> As for BSUT, for now, I feel that...I don't know if I am right about it or not, but … they care a lot about financial returns. … I think in the very beginning, they had their strategic considerations. … This [faculty and student learning about China] is a benefit to them. [But] of course, I think business schools from the United States do have strong financial interest.
>
> <div align="right">YCC leader</div>

Similarly, interviewees from the BSUT side, overall, touched on most of YCC's stated motivations and expected outcomes, although some noted that their knowledge about YCC's expectations were limited to what they were told by the other side. One of the interviewed BSUT faculty members was the main founder of the Tantru (China) EMBA program, as well as the other BSUT global executive MBA programs. He has also served as the co-academic director for the program over the years. This senior faculty member named what he thought were the three main motivators of YCC:

> Firstly, they had already made a decision to internationalize the school and that was what the board of trustees was trying to connect them with—the prestigious schools in the United States for. … The second thing was that they like our experience in a transition economy [in Europe]. We knew something about a country that had a large communist block before and then now is slowly going into [capitalist]. … Why were they doing this? Because they wanted to learn from us like we wanted to train our faculty and have our faculty learn about China and this was their way to learn; and they knew that many students wanted a foreign degree.
>
> <div align="right">BSUT faculty member</div>

BSUT leaders all recognized YCC's strong interest in becoming more internationalized and the important role of having strong foreign partners. As one of them noted, "[Another motivation for YCC] is that having a strong partner in the US, adds

value to their brand. … So I think that is a key motivator." However, among BSUT

leaders, perceptions of YCC's financial interest varied. Some were very certain about

YCC's strong interest in a financial return, while others were uncertain about whether

"budget is a motivation" for YCC at all.

Research question 1.a asked about the similar and/or different perceptions of

motivation and expected outcomes perceived by the key stakeholder groups including

leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher

education program. Based on the official documents collected from both institutions, the

discussion with participants from both sides about their own institution's motivation and

expected outcomes, findings for this sub-question can be summarized as follows:

1. For both partner institutions (YCC and BSUT), key stakeholder groups,

   including leaders, administrators, and faculty members at had a mutual

   understanding about the reasons that each organization became involved in the

   Tantru (China) EMBA program delivery, as well the general expected

   outcomes.

2. For both partners, the major types of motivations and expected outcomes

   related to brand recognition and reputation, capacity development, and

   revenue generation.

3. Although common themes emerged for both partners' stated motivations and

   expected outcomes, the partners appeared to have different interpretations of

   the three types of motivations and expected outcomes because of their specific

   institutional contexts. First, although both partners pursued international

   brand recognition and reputation. BSUT focused on a broad global level,

while YCC was mainly concerned about the national and/or or regional level.

Second, although participants from both partners' institutions referred to

capacity development, they concentrated on different kinds of capacities.

While BSUT strongly focused on providing learning opportunities to

individual faculty members and students back home in the U.S., YCC's

understanding about capacity building went beyond the institutional and

individual level. More specifically, capacity appeared to be a broad concept

for YCC that covered a wide spectrum: from adding value to the overall

business education for Chinese higher education and the local workforce, to

the organizational level learning of how to design and deliver an executive

MBA program, and to the possible individual benefits for faculty and staff.

Third, YCC perceived making a profit as only a side issue if there was a

surplus from the Tantru (China) EMBA program; however, BSUT considered

the actual advantages that YCC could potentially gain from the Tantru (China)

EMBA program as part of their profit making strategy.

4. The leaders from both partner institutions were more likely to hold mixed

perceptions of each other's interest in financial returns for the Tantru (China)

EMBA program.

*Utility Function: Preferences for the Stated Motivation and Expected outcomes*

This section presents findings on the partner institutions' utility functions for the

Tantru (China) EMBA program. During the interviews, participants were asked to

prioritize all of the motivations and expected outcomes that they came up with earlier,

and their perceptions of the partner's priorities over various motivations and expected

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outcomes. Based on the priorities each individual described, the researcher identified and described general themes to construct each partner institution's overall utility function for the collaborative program. Finally, the partners' utility functions as well as their perceptions of each other's preferences were compared to provide answers to research question 1.b which asked about the partners' similar and different preferences for the expected outcomes.

There were variations among individuals from different stakeholder groups for both partners. To give a better illustration of these different perceptions, tables were created to summarize different perceptions hold by stakeholder groups[24]. These tables help to demonstrate the overall pattern of the preference level across different stakeholder groups for each institution and that of their partner's.

Table 7 presents the stakeholder groups' perceptions about various motivations and expected outcomes for YCC.  Among all of the Chinese interviewees (leaders, administrators, and faculty), building YCC's brand reputation through internationalization was of the top priority for the institution.  Closely related to this top priority was the perceived academic benefit this collaborative program brought to the college, faculty, and local students. Almost all of the Chinese interviewees ranked revenue and profit as the lowest priority, except one junior faculty member who served as the TA for the Tantru (China) EMBA program. For example, YCC leadership stated firmly that:

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[24] Data collected from the office staff were included in the analysis for both partners, because of their mutual affiliation to either side of the partnership. Their comments on either side's outcome preference served as a reference point when the researcher interpreted this set of data to construct utility functions.

The most important thing for us is the brand of this program and our college. And through this branding program, we can enhance our understanding and knowledge towards management education.

YCC leader

Table 7. Priorities assigned to by stakeholder group for YCC

| Motivation and expected outcomes | Brand reputation | Revenue and profit | Capacity development |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadership | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Faculty | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| TA (junior faculty) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The office | 1 | 3 | 2 |

Note: 1 representing the highest priority and 3 being the least priority.

Involved leaders and faculty from YCC attributed the contributions of their collaborative program with the U.S. partner to the broader Chinese higher education system. They described capacity building beyond the institution itself. The local need for a high-quality business management program in China and the fact that China did not have adequate resources and expertise in meeting such a demand were the two most frequently mentioned topics that emerged from the interviews. Faculty members from YCC also referred to various academic benefits from the collaboration, both in terms of the overall program and curriculum design and individual professional development. Senior YCC faculty appeared to put more weight on the broader curriculum side, however, and much less on the individual benefits.

As for revenue generation, the majority of the Chinese interviewees put it as of the lowest priority, for sustainability purposes only. Leaders claimed that "[YCC] could endure a short-term loss;" however, "in the long-run, [Tantru (China) EMBA program] has to be self-sustainable". One of the YCC leaders even asserted: "We [YCC] do not really care how much [revenue] this program can bring to us." According to this leader,

the most important aspect of YCC's participation in the Tantru (China) EMBA program

was the process of collaboration, because "Such [collaboration] process is a learning

process for YCC."

In summary, the researcher interpreted and synthesized the overall utility function

for YCC as the following: 1) The most desirable outcome would be YCC's successful

collaboration with a top U.S. business school, such as BSUT, to offer an EMBA program

with the full American design and to learn from the foreign partners through the process

of such collaboration, as well as extra revenue generated; 2) As long as the Tantru (China)

EMBA program continues, YCC gains in terms of enhanced institutional reputation and

capacity development; 3) Financial loss can be tolerated for the short-term. Long-term

financial self-sustainability is the bottom-line.

On the BSUT side, participants from different stakeholder groups tended to share

diverse opinions in terms of the priority BSUT had for the Tantru (China) EMBA

program. Leaders mostly expressed their concerns about the budget. Leaders were more

likely to put budget as the highest priority, except only one rated brand reputation as the

highest. They explained that the financial interest had not been the major motivation for

BSUT, but rather a reality the organization had to face. For example, one of the BSUT

leaders described:

> The priorities would definitely be revenue. That isn't the primary motive,
> but without it reaching at a certain level, we wouldn't be able to do any of
> the programs. "Certain level" means breaking even. At minimum, we have
> to break even. Otherwise we cannot operate. So, that's first. It has to be a
> financially viable operation. …But the revenue, profit is not the major
> reason we do it. The main reason we do it is to build our reputation and to
> provide interesting opportunities for faculty. [If unable to be break even],

we would continue to give it as much opportunities as possible for it to begin to make a profit again.

<div align="right">BSUT leader</div>

Nevertheless, leaders rated reputation building and academic benefit right after revenue generation. In comparison, BSUT faculty as a stakeholder group, in general, tended to put academic related outcomes as the most important. BSUT faculty also recognized the institution's strategic positioning purpose and the budget reality. However, they did not put as much emphasis on the revenue constraints as that of the leaders. For example, one of the faculty members depicted the priority as:

> Let me say that our standpoint of internationalizing the faculty is the most important; there is also a necessary condition for each of these three programs; they have to pay for themselves, which they do. If it got to the point with any one of them [couldn't pay for themselves], we can have a program where you could lose money for a year or two, but we wouldn't do it any longer than that.

<div align="right">BSUT faculty</div>

Table 8 presents this stakeholder groups' perceptions about motivations and expected outcomes for BSUT. The overall utility function for BSUT can be synthesized as follows: 1) In general, the most desirable outcome for BSUT is to successfully deliver a business management program with academic excellence in China with the direct involvement of its own faculty and students with the Chinese counterpart, as well as a financial situation beyond breaking even; 2) Although leaders and faculty appeared to assign different priorities to brand reputation and capacity related outcomes, these two are compatible with one another inherently, because the reputation of the program is carried through the academic profile of the organization. Therefore, as long as the Tantru (China) EMBA program was delivered with BSUT faculty's direct involvement and with

BSUT's quality standard, the purpose of brand reputation and capacity development outcomes was served; 3) Financially, the Tantru (China) EMBA program had to be self-sustainable, bu short-term financial loss could be tolerated, such as one or two years. In particular, BSUT is a public university so it could not subsidize any offshore program with state funding, but only with outside donations.

Table 8. Priorities assigned by stakeholder group at BSUT

| Motivation and expected outcomes | Brand reputation | Revenue and profit | Capacity development |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leader A | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Leader B | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Leader C | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Faculty | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| The office | 1 | 3 | |

Note: 1 representing the highest priority and 3 being the least priority.
* The same number assigned to more than one column for the interviewee means equally weighted.
* The empty cell is due to no relevant comment identified for that expected outcome.


*Partners' Perceptions of Each Other's Priorities*

When asked about interviewees' perceptions of their counterparts' preference level for expected outcomes, drastic differences were identified for each other's priorities, especially on the BSUT side. Table 9 and Table 10 presented these perceptions by stakeholder group for YCC and BSUT, respectively.

Table 9. YCC's perceptions of partner priorities by the stakeholder groups

| Stakeholder groups (YCC) | Perceived Priorities for BSUT's expected outcomes | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Brand reputation | Revenue and profit | Capacity development |
| Leaders | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Faculty | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| TA (junior faculty) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The office | 1 | 3 | 2 |

Note: 1 representing the highest priority and 3 being the least priority.

Table 10. BSUT's perceptions of partner's priorities by the stakeholder groups

| Stakeholder groups (BSUT) | Perceived Priorities for YCC's expected outcomes | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Brand reputation | Revenue and profit | Capacity development |
| Leader A | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Leader B | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Leader C | 3 | 2 | 1 ( benefit for student) |
| Faculty A | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Faculty B | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Faculty C | | | |
| The office | 1 | 3 | |

Note: 1 representing the highest priority and 3 being the least priority.
* Empty cell is due to no relevant comment identified for certain expected outcome.

A detailed review of the interview data showed that, first, a common theme was that Chinese participants seemed to have more consensus as a group about BSUT's overall priorities across stakeholder groups, while the U.S. participants appeared to have different perceptions about YCC's priorities. Second, the majority of the participants from both institutions agreed upon a baseline for the Tantru (China) EMBA program that related to the outcomes of international brand reputation and a break-even budget. For example, one YCC leader believed the most important outcome for the partner was brand influence, which was the same as YCC's perceived expected outcome,

> I think [their most important expected outcome] is about their influence.
> They want to establish a strategic base [for BSUT]. In some sense, this
> base is [the students]…Every year the best students were recruited into
> this program. These are their students, not ours, because this is a BSUT
> degree. So, this is their wealth, because it is human capital. In the long run,
> they will become very influential. I think this is the most important thing
> for them.
>
> YCC leader

This leader further explained how he believed that YCC and BSUT shared the same expectations about the revenue consideration. He said,

> For this delivery model, if without profit, it cannot be sustained in the long run. So, profit is what BSUT considers. This is what we consider too. If the program cannot provide some revenue, I won't continue to run it either. So, we share common thoughts on this. But another shared opinion between us is that, we both believe, at least on the overall development of this program, profit is not our goal. We don't put this as a top priority. In other words, we can endure a short-term loss financially. Of course, we are not losing. I think BSUT has made a lot of effort in supporting this. … So, we agree on that this program has to be financially self-sustainable.
>
> <div align="right">YCC leader</div>

From the interviews, it is clear that participants from YCC and BSUT hold different perceptions about the other side's priorities, mostly for the financial interest and academic related outcomes (capacity building for YCC, faculty and student benefits for BSUT).

Although leaders appeared to be very confident and believed that both BSUT and YCC considered profit only as an important sustainability factor, not a primary motive, explicitly or implicitly, they suspected that the other side had comparatively stronger interest in gaining profit than their own institution did. For example, one of the BSUT leaders pointed out that both institutions shared the same motivation and expectations for brand reputation and revenue. However, he believed that YCC's ultimate goal was on the financial side while BSUT cared more about the benefits to their faculty and students. As he stated:

> I think the motives, goals, outcomes for YCC are a little different than ours, expect for revenue. I think that is their primary goal. They want to make money. I don't think the faculty situation is as important to them, because they end up using faculty members to teach who are not at

YCC. … And I do think that they are interested in building the reputation of YCC, so that it helps them and other programs, which add to their revenue. So I think they are much more driven by the financial aspects than we are.

BSUT leader

In contrast, one of the YCC leaders revealed how she came up with the impression that profit was a more important outcome for USBS. She said:

Of course, the program has been financially stable now. … but still [BSUT] expects the program to have an enrollment size of about 40. In fact, this program only needs an enrollment of 30 students to be self-sustainable. Well, this is why I feel that USBS really cared a lot about the profitability of this program. … As for us, the bottom line was not important to us at all. All that we hoped for was to continue on with this program and to make it better. … I actually hope we can further deepen our partnership. … But so far, I still don't see much interest [from BSUT] in these types of projects.

YCC leader

Research question 1.b asked about similar and/or different preference levels for the expected outcomes perceived between the two partners. The researcher reviewed the findings for this question by comparing the synthesized utility functions for both partners as well as their perceptions of each other's perceptions.

In summary, both partner institutions' identified utility function appeared to be very similar and highly compatible, especially those articulated by the leaders. The most desirable outcome and the following preferences are almost identical between the partners, especially on brand reputation and financial self-sustainability of the program. More specifically, individuals in the key leadership positions with both institutions gave top priority to brand reputation while recognizing the importance of self-sustainability of the collaboration program. This findings suggests that both within and between partner

institutions, there was a reasonable amount of commonly shared perceptions for the institutions' overall preferences.

In spite of the similarities, partners appeared to have nuanced differences in their more preferred aspects. The majority of the YCC participants emphasized the importance of having an international brand reputation, while BSUT tended to have diverse opinions on the importance between revenue generation, and faculty and student benefits. Overall, these differences were not prominent, especially at the initial development stage of the BSUT EMBA program, since both partners worked to establish and strengthen the brand reputation in the local market while trying to make the program sustainable through initial setup funds and revenue generated through enrollment. Yet, such nuanced differences between the partner's preferences may challenge the partnership when the program reaches financial stability and starts to generate surpluses.

*Strategy*

As discussed in the previous chapters, because the existing collaboration program was perceived as equilibrium outcomes of the game played by the two partner institutions, the overall setup of the collaborative program illustrates the combination of the partners' chosen strategies. The setup of a collaboration program constitutes many components. Therefore, it was important to detail the major share of responsibilities and areas for resources to understand each partner's desired strategies. To better illustrate the strategies that the partner institutions employed in their collaboration, a detailed descriptions of the Tantru (China) EMBA program that was presented in the Case Description section at the beginning of this chapter served as a starting point for the analysis.

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During the individual interviews, participants were asked about specific activities their affiliated organizations had implemented to achieve their desired outcomes or to increase the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes. Therefore, common themes emerged from this set of interview data were identified as the key features of the overall strategy for stakeholders of both partner institutions. The common themes that emerged from the interviews were triangulated with case descriptions to facilitate the researcher's interpretation.

Although the case description section provided an overall picture of the existing program based on documents and interview data, this section is by no means a repetition. These common themes drawn from the interview data are the key reported aspects and activities of the program that had already been implemented. More importantly, involved individuals perceived these key features and activities as essential for achieving their desired expected outcomes and sustaining the success of the collaboration. It provides important supplemental information beyond what was already presented as well as a triangulation to ensure validity of the findings.

Based on these two sets of data, this section presents findings to research question 1.c which asked about the similar and/or different views partners of Tantru (China) EMBA program hold about their current strategy. First, an overview of the partners' overall strategy is reiterated, supported by evidence drawn from the interview data. Next, the identified key features from the interview data are presented. Finally, the partner's perceptions of the overall strategy as well as the key features are compared to exam the similar and different desirable strategies the partners hold.

*Overall Strategy: Deliver a U.S. Degree Program through a Highly Integrated Collaboration Model*

Collaboration partnerships with institutions from another country come in many forms. YCC and BSUT agreed to set up a highly integrated collaboration program granting a degree from BSUT instead of using other models such as a branch campus, a twinning program with dual degrees, franchising and articulation, a student exchange program, or faculty exchange and visiting program,. Therefore, the establishment of the Tantru (China) EMBA program is a result that fulfilled both partners' expected outcomes.

On the administration side, YCC provides most of the facilties such as space for the administration team of the Tantru (China) EMBA program. This team is all locally hired Chinese who partner jointly to oversee the administration of the program. For example, both partners make joint decisions on the hiring of the executive director, the salary cost of this hiring, and some of the marketing expenses.

On the academic side, BSUT and YCC employ a highly integrated strategy. The co-academic advisors supervise the academic related issues of the program. The co-teaching model demonstrates the equal share of teaching responsibilities. The student admission decisions are also joint ones. The Chinese staff and faculty handle the first review and interview process and BSUT gives out the final admission. The co-academic advisor mechanism is an important feature of the Tantru (China) EMBA program, because it aims at shared leadership between both partners.

Finally, for the financial aspects, partners agreed on a cost-sharing structure. That is, besides a half-and-half investment in the start-up funds for the initial establishment of

the program, partners both share some costs for administration and academic affairs. The two partners then split the revenue in half.

By fall 2009, when the researcher completed the data collection for this study, participants from both partners felt that the overall setup and the current delivery model of the Tantru (China) EMBA program had been successful. For example, one of the YCC leaders described the current delivery model of the Tantru (China) EMBA program as the most important thing for the program's success over the years, as well as to survive in an increasingly competitive local market in the future.

> That [to continue the current success] would be [to keep] our current model [of the EMBA Program], the integrated management model we have, the academic arrangement we have, all of that. … Nowadays, besides our program [EMBA Program], there is a lot of competition … lots of great universities, elite universities from the U.S. So, this kind of model does exist. … If we want to survive in this market, we have to continue on with this current model.
>
> <div align="right">YCC leader</div>

From BSUT's perspective, this overall strategy worked the best for both by maintaining high academic quality and cost reduction. More specifically, in running the collaboration program, BSUT wanted to ensure the high academic quality of their EMBA program, so BSUT is the only one granting a degree for the Tantru (China) EMBA program, thus serving as the ultimate decision maker in academic affairs. However, as one of BSUT's global EMBA programs, appropriate customization of the original curriculum was also a good enhancement to this high academic quality. BSUT considered it to be a global-and-local curriculum delivered through a co-teaching arrangement.  As one of the BSUT leaders described:

> We must have ultimate control in the classroom. … The content of the course, and the grades of the course have to be determined, ultimately, by our faculty. But at the same time, we recognized that the Chinese faculty members bring in some special knowledge that has to go into the course.
>
> BSUT leader

Not only did the co-teaching model address the issue of local input in the curriculum, which would ideally make the program better in terms of the fit with the local context, but it was also more preferable in terms of cost reduction since BSUT only had to provide half of the teaching resources. Since it is generally higher cost to have faculty from BSUT teaching all the courses, the co-teaching model fit with the cost-effectiveness of the overall strategy for BSUT, compared to the other alternatives such as a branch campus, or articulation/franchising everything to a local partner. The BSUT leader addressed these features as:

> It probably would cost more to only have our faculty teaching it, primarily because they are paid more. And it wouldn't have the global and local nature of it.
>
> BSUT leader

*Key Features of the Overall Strategy for the Current Success*

Within such a comprehensive strategy, what are the specific features partners perceived as essential for the current success of their collaboration? Do participants from the partner institutions share similar views over these key features? First-round analysis of the interview data resulted in fifteen basic codes, from which three categories were identified. These categories were created based on the common nature of the fifteen basic codes identified during the analysis. The categories are 1) administration, 2) academic component, and 3) partner commitment. In other words, these are the main

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areas participants identified as important for the current strategy that allowed for the program's success.

*Administration.* Overall, administration was the most frequently mentioned feature. Participants from both partner institutions pointed to this administrative structure of having a highly professional executive team independently handling the implementation on the ground as the essential reason for its efficiency and success. Across the board, both partners considered that such an administrative structure "operated in an effective and more or less seamless fashion." Leaders and faculty members all recognized that "the success of the program is highly dependant on the capabilities of the program director on the ground there."

Over the years, BSUT and YCC leaders came to realize that the program's sustainability was highly dependent on the executive director's capability in marketing and recruitment. Leaders from both sides put much attention and resources on the administrative aspect of the overall strategy. According to both faculty and administrators, besides the effective and highly competent administrative staff, the independent operational structure the office was a key for its success. An YCC faculty member pointed out that:

> [The Program] operates on a director accountability system. The executive
> director was hired from outside … and [we] grant him/her high authority.
> So, when to use YCC's resources? When to use the BSUT brand? This has
> to be handled carefully. Because if you only use YCC, that wouldn't work.
> You have to have BSUT as the backup. But BSUT is too far away. So, the
> local connection is also important; you have to rely on YCC. I think [with
> the office], everything is coordinated nicely, whether it is for YCC or
> BSUT, for administration or academics. There has not been any defeating
> or accusing of each other so far.
> 
> YCC faculty member

The office staff member also recognized such independence as a type of support granted from YCC. As one of the office staff members pointed out:

> YCC tried to hire the best administrative staff for this Office. … And [the office] is completely separated from all the other college's programs so as to remain independent. On the financial side, they also provide as much support as possible for our program's promotion.
>
> <div align="right">The office staff</div>

*Academic component.* The academic component was another category participants reported as an important feature for Tantru EMBA's success over the years. Participant comments covered almost every academic related feature of an education program including faculty input, the co-teaching model, the fully adopted curriculum plan from BSUT, the integration of the EMBA program with other home institution components, and the importance of enrolling qualified student.

In particular, across the board, YCC leaders and faculty members emphasized the great faculty resource as the most important factor for the success of the program. One of the BSUT leaders noted that "about 20% of BSUT's faculty members have been to China and taught in the Tantru (China) EMBA program. The large majority of them are tenure-track research-oriented faculty." BSUT faculty members also shared this emphasis, as one of them reflected:

> I think one of the reasons we have been successful is that unlike other programs, we have sent our own faculty over there. It is not just something where we say this is the University of [brand name], but the people we send are really all adjunct faculty.
>
> <div align="right">BSUT faculty member</div>

Leadership from both sides commented on the fact that one of the important factors for success has been having a full academic curriculum brought by USBS and

incorporating it with the co-teaching model. The USBS has "ultimate decision making

power" on curriculum, but for classroom teaching, co-teachers and teaching assistants

provide good supplements. As one of the YCC leaders said:

> We provide half of the faculty for this program. In this way, when we
> were selecting faculty members, even though they were still the same
> courses [from USBS], we would try to consider choosing faculty members
> who had some level of understanding about Chinese culture, economics,
> and management in their background. In this way, we integrate some local
> characteristics and content into the curriculum.
>
> YCC leader

BSUT faculty also recognized the purpose of having such a co-teaching

model for the potential benefit of faculty from both sides:

> The original idea I think was a very good one, which was that we wanted
> to build up the faculty in the local Chinese college. … The whole point
> was that you co-teach so you can build up the local faculty, so there is a
> kind transfer of knowledge, if you will.
>
> BSUT faculty member

*Partner commitment.* Participants from both YCC and BSUT, across different

stakeholder groups, overwhelmingly commented on each other's commitment, especially

from the leaders. For example, BSUT leaders and faculty members emphasized the

amount of time and effort that was taken during the initial partner search and program

establishment stage. One of the YCC faculty members shared his observation during the

implementation of the program:

> At least from what I observed, I think YCC really treated [Tantru (China)
> EMBA program] as one of our brand programs to work on. The
> commitment from the YCC side has been very strong. On the BSUT side,
> based on my interaction with [BSUT leader], I think he also valued this
> program a lot. So we got enough commitment at the leadership level.
>
> YCC faculty member

As the program continued to grow, the partners also were appreciative of each other's input on various types of resources and the commitment showed during a time of crisis when the program encountered financial difficulties. One of the YCC leaders put it nicely as:

> I think BSUT has made a lot of effort in supporting this [to get over the financial difficulties]. They did send their best faculty here. With all these travels, you know, there is no doubt about… These are the things that you cannot use money to measure.
>
> YCC leader

Partner commitment was not identified in the proposed conceptual framework that guided the design and the data analysis of this study. However, the theme came out so strongly from the interview data that it could not be ignored for a comprehensive description of the partners' desired strategies. A similar pattern was also identified for the "changes to the strategy" section, which is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

To compare stakeholder groups' perceptions about these desirable features of the current strategy between partners, Figure 4 provides an overview of the interviewees' comments on the three key features of the program design and implementation for their desired outcomes as discussed above. A case represents one individual interview. The X-axis shows the number of cases coded for each area by their organizational affiliation. The Y-axis lists three themes and institutional affiliation of the case. The chart gives a clear representation of how many individuals from each partner organization commented on the categories.
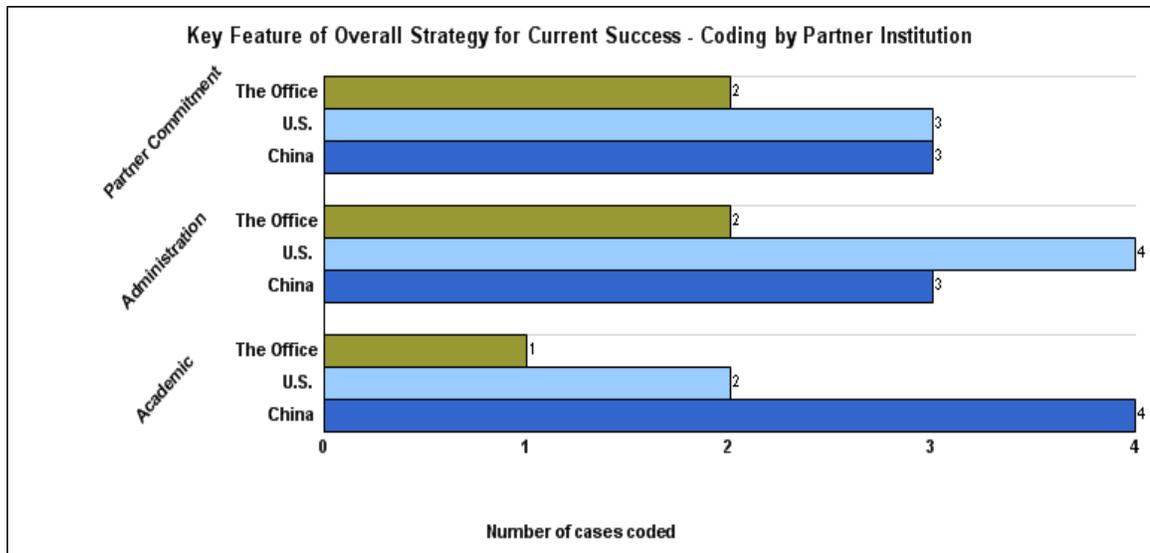
Figure 4. Key Features of the Overall Strategy for Current Success, Coding by Partner Institution

Figure 4 demonstrates that participants from both partner institutions, a shared similar emphasis on administration aspects and overall partner commitment of the overall strategy, but had different perceptions of the academic component. Out of 13 participants (six from the U.S., five from China, and two from the office), nine of them talked about the administration of the collaboration and eight participants referred to partner commitment, fairly equally emphasizing these issues, including the office. Seven participants' comments fell under the academic component, with only two from the U.S. and five from China, one from the office, suggesting some variations existed between the partners' perceptions of this component.

In summary, the findings suggest that at the overall strategy level, there was fair amount of compatibility between partner institutions. Both partners were satisfied with the overall structure the Tantru (China) EMBA program established. The partners shared a comparatively higher level of consensus on the administration aspect and each other's commitment. However, partners had different perceptions about the academic aspects.

More specifically, the Chinese partner reported a higher level of emphasis across all three categories, while the U.S. partner showed less emphasis on the academic areas for the current success of the EMBA program.

*Changes to the Strategy*

The Tantru (China) EMBA program is not static but has developed over several years along with the partners' chosen strategies. Thus, during the course of the program implementation the partners have both made modifications to their chosen strategies. These changes to the strategy have been determined by initiatives and actions that either partner has taken since establishing the Tantru (China) EMBA program or that each intends for future development. Moreover, assuming that both partners want to maximize their payoffs, these changes (or future plan) to the original strategy reveal their intent for the most desirable outcomes. This section presents findings on the identified changes made to the original strategy as well as those desired for the future.

During the interviews, after the participants were asked to reflect on specific activities their affiliated organizations have implemented in order to achieve their desired outcomes or to increase the likelihood of achieving their desired outcomes, a follow-up question was posed asking whether there were things about the program that could be changed or done differently to increase that likelihood. Interviewees' responses to these two interview questions were analyzed to identify the implemented changes, as well as the desired changes for future development.

The interview data were used to develop answers to research question 2.a, which asked about whether partners had made changes to their original chosen strategies, and research question 2.b that asked about their consideration for future changes. As for the

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future changes, after reviewing the code interview data, common themes were identified

and synthesized to describe each partner's desirable changes for Tantru (China) EMBA

program's future development.

<div align="center">*Prior Changes and Critical Incidents*</div>

After reviewing the interview data, specific initiatives and critical incidents

shared by interviewees were noted and summarized. These initiatives and incidents were

then compared with other official documents and other interview data to determine

whether it was a modification made to the original strategy. Both mutually agreed upon

changes and unilateral modifications were identified. Based on the participants'

descriptions, these changes appear to be mostly initiated by YCC.

*Cooperative Changes*

*Expanded academic exchange activities between partners.* One of the specific

changes is that new academic exchange activities have been developed since the

partnership was established through the Tantru (China) EMBA program. YCC proposed a

short-term student exchange program and BSUT collaborated on such a proposal. One

BSUT leader talked about this development as part of the partnership:

> We also have a partnership with YCC on a short-term program that we
> send our students. They help provide a program in [city name] for our
> students for this two-week program. So these students go to China for two
> weeks and they spend a week in [the local area]. YCC provides the
> program for them there and a week in [another city name]. … So, once we
> established a close partnership, then we tried to deepen that relationship by
> involving that partner in other things that we are trying to do
> internationally.
>
> <div align="right">BSUT leader</div>

*Market expansion.* Another incident related to the marketing effort was that, two

<div align="center">144</div>

years ago, with a purpose of expanding the Tantru program from the southern regional market to a national scale, YCC initiated a change to the delivery model of the Tantru (China) EMBA program.  The plan was to change the program from offering courses over two weekends to a one-week model. This adjustment was expected to attract more students outside of the local region, in that prospective students from other regions would have a lower cost for travel. This alternative model was implemented for one year and then discontinued. One of the YCC leaders reflected on this change:

> We wanted to enlarge the program's influence at a national level. That's why we initiated the change … There is no doubt about us [the program influence] in Southern China. However, southern China is only … Most of these company headquarters are located in Beijing and Shanghai, where other similar programs were established. So, the market is very divided in that sense… We didn't continue with that ambitious plan. … [instead] we decided to be based in [the local market] and expand to Hong Kong, Vietnam or other Asian countries [in the future].
>
> YCC leader

*Surviving through a difficult operation period*. Back in 2003, when China was dealing with SARS, the program was unable to recruit enough students to maintain a break-even budget. The collaboration almost felt apart, since financially breaking-even was one of the key factors for both partners. In particular, BSUT is a public university that they could not subsidize any offshore program with state funding, but only with outside donations.  Nevertheless, both partners decided to continue with the collaboration even though the program was losing money.  One of the main founders of the Tantru (China) EMBA program from BSUT remembered the crisis and explained that an executive director change helped the program emerge from the crisis. He described that:

> [SARS] was a nightmare because we couldn't get any people out there. … The revenue fell sharply and that was a very difficult period. … We had

an exit strategy in that [agreement], if something was not working, then it was better to be honest both at home and with your partner. … But the board of trustees [YCC] … wanted us and their diagnosis was: it was not the failure of the program. It was the failure of the management.

<div align="right">BSUT faculty member</div>

As a result, BSUT worked together with YCC in finding a new executive director. A leader from YCC shared details about what they did to address the difficulties:

So our decision was to change the executive director. We asked for help from our first and second student cohorts, who were very committed to the program. In fact, the new executive director we hired was one of them. She quit her own job to work for us.

<div align="right">YCC leader</div>

Over the years, BSUT and YCC leaders came to realize that the program's sustainability was highly dependent on the executive director's capability in marketing and recruitment. Leaders from both sides put great attention and resources into the administrative aspect of the overall strategy.

*Unilateral Modification*

Two unilateral modifications were identified on the YCC side. One related to the faculty team YCC provided for the Tantru (China) EMBA program. The other modification related to the degree diplomas Tantru EMBA students could receive. BSUT showed a very different response to these two changes that were made to the original design of the program.

*Hiring of outside faculty as a substitute for YCC's faculty input.* As discussed earlier, an important feature of the overall strategy for implementing the Tantu EMBA program is the co-teaching model. This arrangement was expected to provide various professional development and in-service training opportunities for YCC faculty as well as

facilitate communication between student and BSUT faculty. However, during implementation, YCC modified the originally planned strategy of using its own faculty in the co-teaching model. Instead, they hired a number of outside faculty members from Hong Kong, Europe, and other well-known international collaborative programs in China. According to several interviewees, only four or five YCC's faculty members have co-taught with BSUT faculty throughout the years. At the time of the data collection, two YCC faculty members were directly involved.

As an alternative approach, YCC leaders tried to get more of their own faculty members involved in the program. However, this alternative approach was not in line with what BSUT originally had planned. For example, one of the YCC leaders was very keen about faculty involvement. She described the alternative approaches that YCC and the EMBA Office had worked on together recently, such as providing after-class lectures:

> Another way to get YCC faculty involved with the EMBA program is through Chinese lectures. For example, one of our faculty members is in the field of organizational behavior. We had him do lectures on Chinese organizational behaviors. The BSUT EMBA Program course was very general. But this faculty's lecture had a unique contribution. … That's why I don't mind spending extra money on running some Chinese lectures. ... I really hope YCC faculty can play a bigger role in the EMBA Program. I hope YCC can contribute more in this area, instead of only as a recruitment department.
>
> <div align="right">YCC leader</div>

In recent years, YCC has been actively recruiting more foreign-trained Chinese scholars to the college:

> In recent years, we came to realize this [lack of YCC faculty teaching in EMBA] has become a more and more serious challenge. … Therefore, we started to hire new faculty members from overseas. Not only did these new faculty members get their Ph.D. degrees abroad, but they also had teaching experience or tenure positions overseas. This year, we plan to hire three or four of them. In the future, if we could get ten of this type of faculty, they would play a big role in the [EMBA Program].

Moreover, the original design of the co-academic director mechanism has almost become mere words. In reality though, because no major issues around curriculum and other academic affairs had emerged, the Chinese co-academic director mostly contributed to ensure quality of the student admission process. According to the Chinese co-academic director:

> There is really anything to do as a co-academic advisor. It is mostly to help ensure student quality during the admission and to be prepared about potential disagreement on the curriculum. But we try to be respectful to our partner. It is their degree in the end. So, I usually don't need to do anything as a co-academic [director].
>
> YCC faculty and co-academic advisor

The executive office has been very professional and efficient that most of the communications between the partners are facilitated through the executive directors, including those academic and curriculum related ones.

*Adding a second degree to the Tantru (China) EMBA program.* The other unilateral modification identified occurred at the time of the study was conducted. The office worked together with YCC on a proposal to the GDU graduate school for approval of an optional one-year extension as an add-on to the Tantru (China) EMBA program. With this option added to the program, currently enrolled Tantru EMBA students could take an additional year of courses from YCC, if interested. As a result, they could receive another domestic executive MBA degree granted by GDU.

According to BSUT interviewees, "the office has organized certain events" without informing BSUT. This proposal was not communicated to BSUT ahead of time. The BSUT found out about the change when they received the updated program brochure

and the new information was already amended onto the program-marketing material. This

unilateral move on the YCC side posed challenges to the partnership. While BSUT

leaders were very cautious as not to draw a conclusions and referred to this incident as an

"on-going" and "very sensitive issue" when they talked about this incident during the

interview, it was clear to the researcher that they were very concerned that YCC had

implemented such a dramatic modification to the Tantru (China) EMBA program without

consulting with BSUT. One BSUT leader linked this incident to the challenges he

encountered in the collaboration:

> It is difficult because, on one hand, I really do believe overall we have a
> very strong collaborative partnership with YCC and, at the same time,
> periodically there are these moments come up that are challenging.
>
> <div align="right">BSUT leader</div>

YCC leaders and the office staff argued that such a change was based on student

expectations and the fact that this change was communicated to BSUT after it went

public was more of a lack of communication during the process of management change at

the executive office, rather than trying to achieve some suspicious financial self-interest

for YCC. As one of the YCC leaders said about this modification during the interview,

> We made [the Tantru (China) EMBA program] into a double degree
> program. That means students enrolled in the EMBA program can get
> another GDU's degree. We did this because we thought, even if this is a
> U.S. program, we still hope these students can have some connections
> with YCC, beyond those within the classroom. This is one of the goals for
> us to be in the collaboration. This is also why we try to invite our YCC
> faculty for after-class lectures. … We hope those students are not only
> connected with YCC in the EMBA rogram, but in the future as well.
> That's why we added another degree to it.
>
> <div align="right">YCC leader</div>

YCC leaders were aware of the different perceptions BSUT held and suggested

that the lack of communication was the failure point. One of the YCC leaders was still

positive that the BSUT would collaborate on this modification as she explained,

> For me, I think communication is the key. In other words, for things that
> [we] thought were great, sometimes are not so good from [BSUT]'s
> perspective. Just like this adding the second degree thing. In between the
> transitions of our previous and current executive director of the EMBA
> program, there was a vacancy period. We got this proposal approved with
> the previous executive director. After we successfully got it, our Dean
> forwarded the results to their Dean, 'See, we got this approved.' Well,
> they were very surprised. They thought 'Where did this come from?' But
> our assumption was the previous executive director already reported this
> to BSUT; obviously she didn't. This was the result of a lack of
> communication. So, we have been doing more communication about this
> in recent three months. … I think [USBS] has misperceptions about what
> [YCC] did on this. I don't think this will be a big problem. We are trying
> to change [BSUT] opinions on this.
>
> <div align="right">YCC leader</div>

Even after several in-depth discussions around the incident with both sides, it was

still hard for the researcher to interpret what YCC's real intent was. However, what can

be drawn from all pieces of information about this incident was that YCC did want to

have a stronger presence in the Tantru (China) EMBA program and build more of a sense

of belonging for YCC with these students and alumni. Therefore, at least on the YCC

side, this move had a clear brand promotion purpose.

In summary, for research question 2.a that asked about changes partners had made

to the program, the findings suggested that there were both mutually agreed upon changes

and unilateral modifications by the time of the study. Of the three identified mutually

agreed upon changes and/or actions (e.g., continue with the partnership), two of these,

which concerned academic connections and partnership development between the

partners, appeared to be successful and benefitted the Tantru (China) EMBA program

and the partnership. The other unsuccessful initiative had to do with marketing and recruitment for the Tantru (China) EMBA program.  Of the two unilateral changes, both were initiated on the YCC side. While BSUT appeared to be disappointed by the use of outside faculty as substitutes for YCC faculty, they remained passively cooperative. In contrast, YCC's attempt to add a local degree as an add-on to the Tantru (China) EMBA program caused serious concerns on the BSUT side.

*Desirable Future Changes*

To identify the partner's desired future changes, individuals were asked about possible changes and suggestions they would like to make to the current program so it could be more successful. These interview data were reviewed and analyzed. First-round coding on all 13 interviews generated 85 coding references for 16 basic codes. After reviewing all of these coded data, similar and related codes were combined, ending up with eight codes as sub-themes. Finally, based on the second-level thematic codes and the main aspects of the existing inter-organizational partnership discussed in the conceptual framework, five major themes for the partners' desired future changes were identified. These themes are 1) academic quality, 2) deeper partner relations, 3) brand influence, 4) marketing, and 5) budget and cost structure. Table 11 provides a detailed list of the codes used for this three-level analysis process. References in Table 11 represent pieces of information that were coded in the interview data. Therefore, the number of references listed for each code in the last column on the right reflects the density that a topic was referred to by participants.

Table 11. Five Emerged Major Themes, Sub-themes, and Basic Codes for Desired Future Changes

| Major themes for Changes | Sub-themes | Basic code | Number of interview coded | Number of references coded |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic Quality | | | 13 | 53 |
| | Faculty | | 10 | 31 |
| | | Collaboration and communication | 6 | 13 |
| | | Faculty involvement | 5 | 11 |
| | | Renowned faculty | 4 | 7 |
| | Curriculum | | 7 | 17 |
| | | Global and local integration | 7 | 15 |
| | | Extra-curriculum (lectures) | 2 | 2 |
| | Activities | Developing existing activities | 6 | 7 |
| | Student | | 4 | 8 |
| | | Incoming students | 3 | 4 |
| | | Student participation and behavior | 2 | 4 |
| Deeper Relation | Deeper Relations | | 7 | 15 |
| | | Communication | 3 | 4 |
| | | Integration at home | 5 | 9 |
| | | Consistency in management | 2 | 4 |
| | | Cross-cultural understanding | 2 | 2 |
| Marketing | Marketing | Marketing | 6 | 14 |
| | | | | |
| Brand Influence | Brand Influence | | 5 | 11 |
| | | Brand promotion | 3 | 6 |
| | | Strategic positioning | 4 | 5 |
| Cost structure | Cost structure | Cost structure | 3 | 4 |
| Total | | | 13 | 85 |

From Table 11, we can see that among all five major themes, "academic quality" is the one that contains the highest emphasis while interviewees consider future changes. Within this major theme, suggested changes cover almost all aspects of an academic program, including faculty, curriculum, activities, and students. The "deeper relations" and "marketing" themes elicited a fair number of comments from seven commenting on deeper relations and six participants commenting on marketing out of the total thirteen. Far fewer participants commented on the "brand influence" and "cost structure" theme, with five talking about brand influence and three interviewees talking about cost structure. However, since the contributors to these two themes tended to be from one side of the partnership, the researcher decided it was important to identify these two in the final major areas for future changes.  These major themes are discussed in the following section to provide a detailed understanding each partner's particular desired future changes for their collaboration.

*Academic Quality*

Every interview participant suggested potential changes and or development to the current collaboration to continue to strengthen the academic component. These suggestions centered on faculty, curriculum, activities, and students.

First, participants shared ideas about ways to encourage faculty involvement and participation from the home institution, more in-depth communication and collaborations, believing these improvements would "make the program stronger."  While BSUT did not have many difficulties sending their faculty, the leaders and faculty were more or less concerned about "over stretching" their faculty from the home programs. Faculty members strongly suggested continuing support from both partners with good incentives

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to increase participation, both in terms of policy support on the teaching load for tenure-track faculty and for good travel arrangements and compensation. They also pointed out that the needed extra support would help overcome these realistic difficulties to promote more in-depth collaboration. As one of the BSUT suggested:

> There is some effort to integrate across the instructors, but there is not a time for people to sit down and decide 'how this curriculum should go together so that it's delivered with the best possible logical sequence'. … It probably would require either giving someone an extra credit around the workload … some travel grant or something like that …[to] enable faculty members to work out the final version together and some assistance so they could work ahead of time to work on parts of the curriculum and ideas back and forth.
>
> <div align="right">BSUT faculty member</div>

Similarly, YCC leaders, faculty, and the office staff recognized the importance of faculty involvement and the currently unsatisfactory situation. As one of the YCC leaders firmly stated "The change should be on faculty." Along the same line, one of the YCC faculty members discussed the problems of not having enough YCC faculty members involved,

> You have to rely on your own faculty. You cannot always just hire people from outside. One, it increases cost. Second, the GDU and MOE would have some second thoughts for this. Even BSUT may say "Hey, after all, you are not using your own faculty?" YCC knows about this. It is not a long-term solution. However, the key point is whether some of our faculty do have the capacity and business experience to teach in this program.
>
> <div align="right">YCC faculty member</div>

One of the YCC faculty members felt strongly that, the lack of consistency in the faculty team for the Tantru (China) EMBA program was a main reason for the faculty's low commitment and participation. He, therefore, suggested that both YCC and BSUT needed to establish a more consistent team of faculty members to teach in the program.

Very much from a marketing perspective, interviewees from the office expressed their expectations for more renowned faculty members, so as to attract more prospective students to the program.  To them, whether these faculty members were directly affiliated with either partner institution did not matter.

Second, closely related to the faculty related changes, another main topic that came up under the "academic quality" theme was ways to strengthen the global-and-local curriculum. Although these comments all centered on the global-and-local curriculum, the emphasis being put on the approaches to further develop this component differed across partner institutions, as well as the office. Clearly, from the BSUT side, across all stakeholder groups, leaders and faculty both emphasized that the ultimate decision-making on curriculum had to remain with BSUT, because they were the degree-granting authority and the program delivery was based on BSUT's accreditation. BSUT faculty expected contributions from their counterpart on the application of business management theories in the local context. As one professor put it clearly,

> So the purpose of co-teaching was not only the training, which is called training-the-trainer model, but it was to the students point of view, is to what they learn and the case study about how that learning applies to a company in China; so that's why it's called global and local. You see, so the Chinese faculty's job was to translate that in a way in which the students could see the context of it.
>
> BSUT faculty member

Therefore, the changes to the curriculum became a challenge, but rather BSUT faculty suggested the possibility of incorporating more available materials on Chinese business cases in the future.

From the YCC side, leaders and faculty perceived ways of participating in the global-and-local curriculum beyond the extent of applying theories to the Chinese context. In some way, they weighted the locally accumulated expertise and knowledge as equally important for the EMBA Program. For example, one of the YCC leaders gave an example,

> We have a faculty member who had distinguishing experience in helping local companies get on the stock market, their challenges and development. … We are inviting him for lectures. I was even thinking about maybe having him individually teach one of the Tantru EMBA courses, because that [course] is a Chinese issue. Well, if it has to be co-taught, we can do it half and half, meaning he offers a one-day class, and teaches whatever he has on the Chinese business management and development. In this way, our faculty can deliver local knowledge to students in the program. … [but] overall, I feel that the office respects the BSUT [course] arrangement.
>
> <div align="right">YCC leader</div>

From a similar perspective, one of the involved Chinese faculty members pointed out that it was necessary to re-evaluate and modify the U.S.-based business management curriculum to some degree. He questioned whether the current business management education in the U.S. was up-to-date enough with the economic crisis and the ethic issues recently discovered in the business executive managers, or in the extent that it should be tailored more to fit with the Chinese business context and community better.

A good sign about this discrepancy on curriculum change was that, at a minimum level, BSUT leaders considered the discussion and process of constructing a more seamlessly connected global-and-local curriculum to be an important feature of a deep and trusting partnership. The BSUT leaders showed respect for their partner's input on curriculum issues and were trying to deal with the issues in an appropriate way.  This cooperative attitude was well received by YCC, as one of the YCC leader noted: " I think,

in fact, USBS appreciates YCC's contributions [on the curriculum]. They just haven't found the right ways to do it yet."

Within the "academic quality" theme, some suggestions and expected changes related to students enrolled in the Tantru (China) EMBA program. These comments mostly came from the BSUT side, implying that there was a discrepancy between the two partners. The "student" sub-theme consisted of two codes: "quality of incoming students" and "student participation." Only participants from BSUT leaders and faculty shared expectations for future moves or changes in these two aspects relating to students. In general, they noticed a gradual improvement in student quality in the Tantru (China) EMBA program over the years, but both leaders and faculty members from BSUT shared future expectations of maintaining and continuing to enhance the quality of future incoming students. Specifically, they expected improved business experience backgrounds at the executive level and in English proficiency.

Lastly, participants made suggestions about ways to strengthen some of the existing activities of the program. As long as the EMBA program was "financially sound," in a general sense, one of the leaders from BSUT stated that,

> We would probably put the priority on the high cost activities, assuming
> that they were going to make the program stronger and in the long run,
> make it more successful.
>
> BSUT leader

One BSUT faculty member aspired to extend the current international residency to create a much more integrated system to allow more students to have mobility across all of USBS's global executive MBA programs around the world.

*Deeper Partner Relations*

Ways to develop deeper partner relations emerged as an important area as interviewees suggested changes for future success. For example, suggested included having more efficient communication and transparency, developing more interest and understanding of each other's culture, and further integrating the Tantru (China) EMBA program with other programs at the home institution. Participants from both YCC and BSUT expressed their preferences for more cross-culture sensitivity and understanding concerning their communication.

Several participants from the BSUT shared their concerns about both leadership and staff changes at both partner institutions and the office. In the past, changes in leadership and staff within either partner institution strongly affected the partners' relationship. Sometimes, these impacts were negative, especially when it was a change of leadership. Suggestions included better between-partner communication, future development for better program administration and management procedures, and further institutionalization of the collaboration program within the home institution.

*Brand Influence*

Comments on the theme of brand influence came only from YCC participants and the office staff members. Although some of the suggestions were closely related to Tantru program's marketing and recruitment strategies, their emphases were on increasing "brand influence" both for the Tantru (China) EMBA program itself and that of the home institutions. This strong emphasis on expanding the brand influence differentiated these comments from those about desired changes for the "marketing"

theme. Moreover, YCC leaders and the office staff also expressed their future desires for the program's positioning beyond the southern China region.

Key administrative staff members from the office discussed their preferences for more presence from both partner institutions so as to better support program promotion in terms of the branding effects. According to one of the key staff members, the current marketing strategy focused mainly on promoting Tantru (China) EMBA program's brand image. Even though the partner institution's brand name was used, they expected more promotion of the brand names of both home institutions in the local market. For example, a key administrative staff member explained the differences:

> I think YCC can do more in promoting the college brand. From promoting brand names at the college level, every program underneath the college was promoted. Therefore, in this respect, I think we didn't make enough effort. At least in comparing ourselves to all the others, such as Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business and China Europe International Business School [competing programs in China], we are a little bit reserved. If we can put more effort into promoting the "parent brand" [YCC and BSUT], the program as a "child brand" would benefit greatly.
>
> The office staff

From a student learning and development aspect, one YCC faculty member also talked about possibilities and expectations for USBS's contribution to brand promotion of the EMBA Program in China as well. He stated:

> I, of course, expect BSUT to put in more effort to [promoting this brand], especially building a stronger network for students and the business community, because this is their degree. … Students' and alumni's sense of achievement is important. To promote your brand takes a lot of effort. BSUT has a lot of connections with the American companies. Through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, they [BSUT] can provide more substantive connections for students. Sometimes, the more you recommend and connect [students], the more companies will know about your name.
>
> YCC faculty member

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*Marketing and Recruitment*

"Marketing and recruitment" is another theme that emerged concerning the partners' desired strategic moves. Leaders from both partners, together with the office staff made suggestions in this area. For example, both YCC and BSUT learned from their experience with the program that the enrollment outcome highly depended on the executive director's capability in marketing and recruitment. Both partners now agree to offer a competitive salary and benefit package for the executive director of the office, so as to retain a highly effective manager.

Leaders from BSUT, in general, expect a much larger enrollment for the program than what it has experienced. Across the board, these leaders stressed the importance of marketing and recruitment for the Tantru (China) EMBA program to continue and become more successful. For example, one of the BSUT leaders noted that,

> We would like to see more students recruited. We are in a very large
> market and to not be able to get more than thirty-one students for this most
> recent cohort is a problem. So if I could change anything it would be being
> able to communicate more effectively about why that is and not just say
> oh well it's the economy or it's this or that. I think we do a good job of that,
> but I think we could do a better job.
>
> <div align="right">BSUT leader</div>

At the program implementation level, BSUT has mostly been "supportive and tries to facilitate" on the side of marketing, since BSUT perceives YCC and the office as having the best "knowledge about the local market." They tried to provide more help in different ways with building a web link directly to the EMBA China program on the BSUT website.

However, key staff members from the office expected more involvement from

BSUT on marketing and recruitment. For example, they believed that BSUT could help

with recruitment from U.S. firms that had branches and employers in China.  One of them

discussed that:

> So far, 95% of the program's promotion was in China, on us [the office].
> The U.S. side has not been very involved in marketing of the EMBA
> program. This was probably set up like this in the initial agreement. It is
> not their [USBS] responsibility. But anyhow … it would be much better if
> both sides promoted the program. So I think [BSUT] can do something
> more [in marketing to help recruitment].
>
> The office staff

*Budget and Cost Structure*

"Budget and cost structure" was not a commonly identified area for which

participants made suggestions. Rather, BSUT leaders were the only group concerned

about the existing budget and cost structure. However, because of the significant impact

any changes in this area would have for the program and the partnership, it was identified

as a major theme during the analysis. The BSUT leaders suggested that it was necessary

to take a closer look and make some adjustments. For example, one of the BSUT leaders

explained:

> Probably the financial arrangement may need to be examined, because we
> don't have any information about how YCC's financial performances are.
> We only know how we do it. We don't know if they earn more profit or
> less profit than us. The arrangement is that we split the revenue, but then
> we have agreed to share some costs, and like we help to pay for the part of
> the executive director's package, and we help pay part of the marking cost.
> And I am sure our cost is higher.
>
> BSUT leader

To synthesize the findings for research question 2.2 which asked about each

partner's desired future changes to the current structure, two charts are presented below

based on the thematic coding to provide an overview of these desired changes and

identify patterns that exist between the partners and/or among stakeholder groups. In

Figure 5 and Figure 6, the coded data are charted by interviewees' institutional

affiliations and stakeholder group, respectively. These two charts provide alternative

ways to present the same set of coded interview data to identify these patterns.
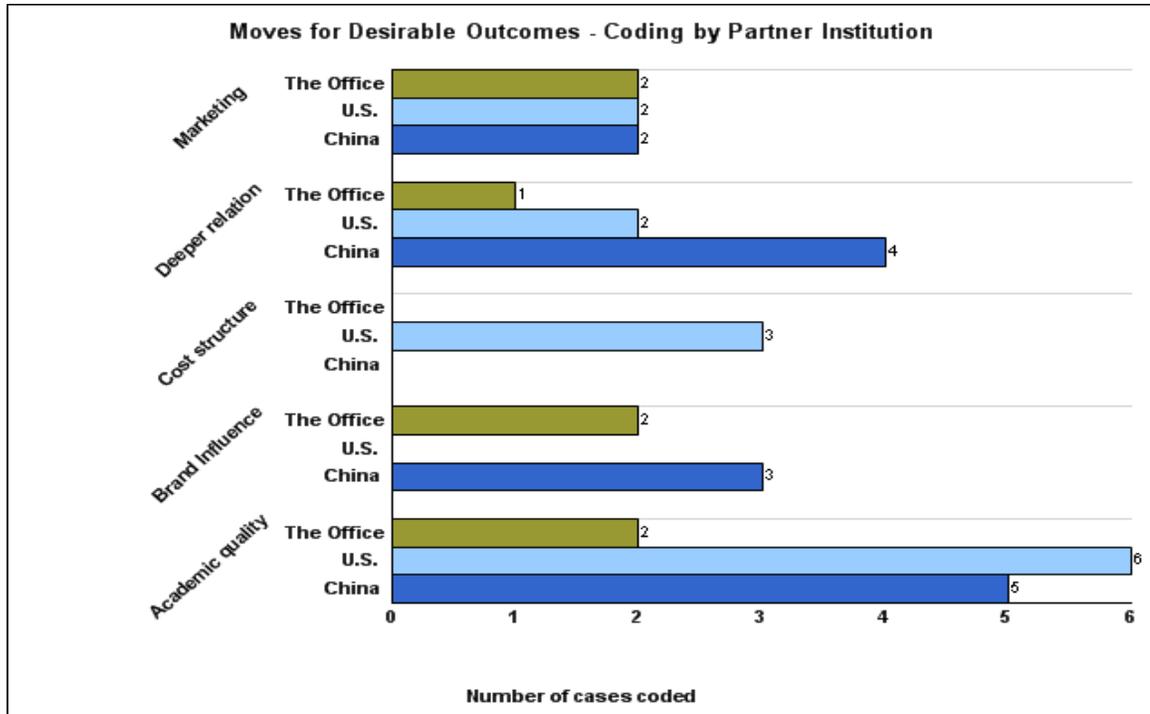


Figure 5. Major desired changes for future success, charted by partner institution

In Figure 5, the participants suggested changes are presented based on the five

main themes and by participants' affiliation.  It is clear from Figure 5 that all thirteen

participants, regardless of their affiliation, suggested changes that fell under the academic

quality theme.  The next dominant area of suggested changes was deeper partner relations

and marketing efforts. The next areas for the suggested changes were brand influences

and lastly the cost structure.  A noticeable difference between partner institutions is that

none of the U.S. participants commented on changes or activities related to brand

promotion, while none of the participants from China, including the office staff, commented on the cost-structure area.  Moreover, an equal number of participants from both partners, along with the office staff, recommended changes in the areas of marketing.
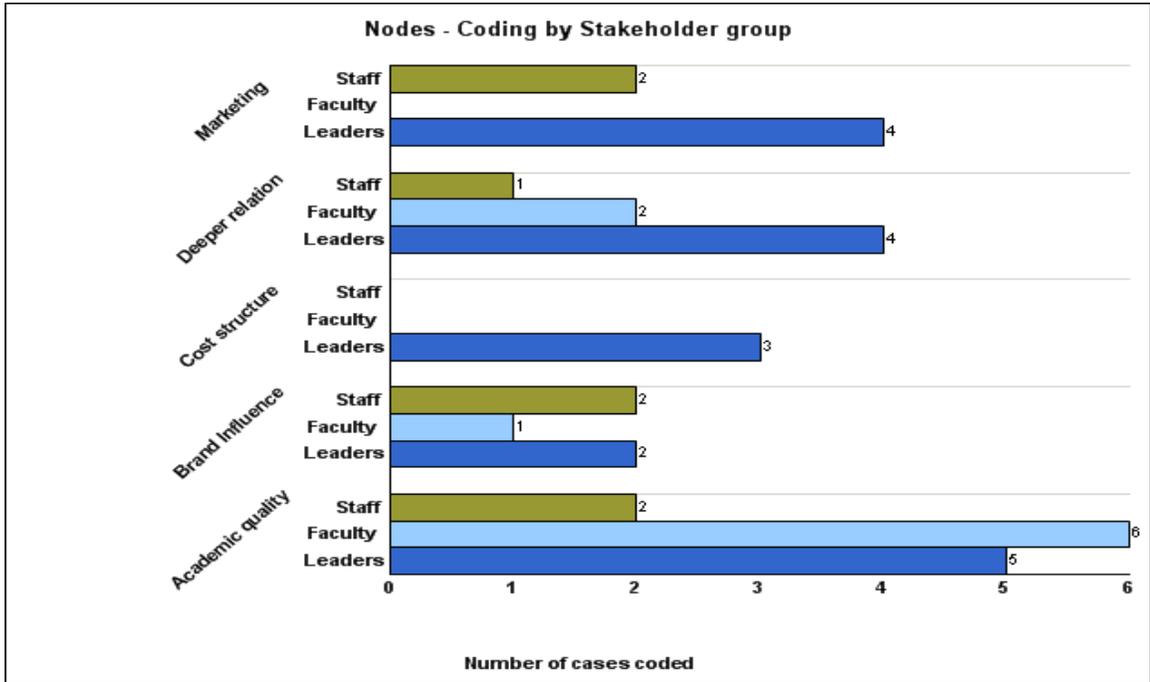


Figure 6. Major desired changes for future success, charted by stakeholder group

Figure 6 presents the same data by stakeholder group across partners. This chart demonstrates that faculty members were mostly concerned with academic quality issues and talked about changes and activities in this area. A few of them commented on partner relations, mainly from as the previous co-academic director. None of the interviewed faculty members commented on marketing and cost structure areas for future moves. The office staff also did not comment on any changes for the cost-sharing structure.

In summary, findings suggest that while partners appeared to share common preferences for the program's future development on strengthening the academic quality

and increasing effective marketing plans, there were clear discrepancies between their desired strategies for brand influence and the cost-sharing structure.

Answer to the Main Research Questions from Case One-Tantru (China) EMBA Program

Previous sections in this chapter presented findings from the Tantru (China) EMBA programs on all five sub-questions that asked about the similarities and discrepancies between partners concerning 1) motivation and expected outcomes, 2) the utility function for each partner, 3) the desired features for the overall strategy, and 4) desired changes to the chosen strategy and future success. In this section, the researcher integrates these findings to generate the final answers to the two main research questions. These questions are:

1. To what extent do partner institutions in a cross-border higher program share similar views about their collaboration?
2. How do partners' similar and/or different views of the inter-organizational partnership and collaboration impact the implementation of the cross-border higher education program?

*Comparison of Partners' Views on the Tantru (China) EMBA program*

The first main research question asked about the extent to which partner institutions in a cross-border higher program share similar views about their collaboration. The researcher synthesized and interpreted the findings for the three sub-questions to answer the main question for the case of Tantru (China) EMBA program.

First, YCC and BSUT share the same types of motivations and expected outcomes from their collaboration, including brand reputation, capacity development, and revenue generation. Leaders and involved faculty from both partner institutions

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understood each other's stated motivations and goals. Involved individuals from both partners were able to identify the publically stated motivations and expected outcomes for the other side. Even though there were different levels of uncertainty and some variations in the priorities among some participants, they touched on each other's main points fairly well.

Second, the utility functions identified for YCC and BSUT also appeared to be highly compatible. More specifically, both partners acknowledged that the baseline for the Tantru (China) EMBA program should be the high academic quality that is ultimately BSUT's realm of responsibility and financial self-sustainability. Consequently, YCC and BSUT appeared to be satisfied with the current implementation of the program with no desire for fundamental modification. The two partners also appear to be mutually interested in desired modifications to the current implementation concentrated on academic quality, effective marketing and recruitment, and strengthening the partnership and partner commitment.

Nonetheless, both partners tend to suspect that the other side has stronger financial interests than they themselves have. Partners were generally uncertain about each other's preference for potential outcomes that go beyond the baseline of academic quality and financial sustainability, with BSUT being more skeptical about YCC's hidden agenda. Accordingly, partners' desired future changes to the current implementation appeared to deviate, with YCC and the office strongly emphasizing the promotion of brand influences versus BSUT which is more concerned with enrollment size and modifying the cost-sharing structure.

Finally, findings suggested that while the partners appeared to share similar types of motivations and expected outcomes, they tend to have different interpretations of some of these core outcomes, especially about profit-making and capacity building.

1. *Perception of profit and revenue.* YCC perceives profit making as only a factor if there is a surplus from the Tantru (China) EMBA program; however, BSUT considers the actual advantages that YCC could potentially benefit from the BSUT program to potentially enlarge the revenue from YCC's other programs.

2. *Perception of capacity development.* While BSUT strongly focused on providing experiential learning opportunities for the benefit of individual faculty and potential students back home, YCC's understanding of capacity building went beyond the institutional and individual level. More specifically, capacity appeared to be a broad concept for YCC that covers a wide spectrum: from adding value to the overall business education of Chinese higher education and local workforce, to the organizational level learning of how to design and deliver an executive MBA program, and to possible individual benefits for faculty and staff.

*Impact of Partners' Similar and Different Views on Program Implementation*

To answer the question on the impact of the partners' views on the program's implementation, the researcher needed to identify the relationship between the partners' similar and different views of the collaborative programs with the desired strategies and changes for future success. In searching for these potential connections, the researcher relied on the partners' identified similar and different perceptions across four main

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components based on the pre-designed conceptual framework[25] to diagnose the

compatibility and potential conflicts between the partners. Table 12 and Table 13 present

these compatible and contradictory views, respectively.  Patterns that demonstrate the

relationship between the partners' perceptions about the collaborative program and the

implementation strategy emerged.

Table 12. Compatibility between partner perceptions across four main components

| Compatibility | YCC | BSUT |
|---|---|---|
| Motivation and expected outcomes | • Internationalization<br>• Build up capacity to deliver executive business management program<br>• Generate revenue | • Strategic positioning in China<br>• Gain faculty experience on Chinese culture and economy to benefit the students at home<br>• Generate revenue |
| Utility function | • Baseline: academic quality & financially break even | • Baseline: academic quality & financially break even |
| Overall strategy | • Build an academically sound and financially sustainable full U.S. EMBA program by<br>  • Introducing full U.S. curriculum (from elite universities)<br>  • Having renowned foreign faculty<br>  • Financially stable<br>• Partner's commitment | • Build academically sound and financially sustainable full U.S. EMBA program by<br>  • Maintaining ultimate control of academic component<br>  • Benefitting own faculty team<br>  • Financially stable<br>• Partner's commitment |
| Changes to the chosen strategy | • Strengthen the academic component<br>  • Extend academic connections (student exchange program)<br>  • Alternative ways for faculty to be involved<br>  • More collaboration between faculty<br>• Strengthen marketing and program reputation<br>• Strengthen deeper partner relationship | • Strengthen the academic component<br>  • Extend academic connections (student exchange program)<br>  • Further develop global-local curriculum<br>• Strengthen marketing and program reputation<br>• Strengthen deeper partner relationship |

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[25] The pre-designed conceptual framework only has "desired strategy" as one component to capture the implementation strategy. However, based on the analysis of the interview data, it becomes clear that partner's desired strategy is reflected through two aspects: 1) their satisfaction toward the current implementation and 2) the desirable changes they would like to have.

As detailed in Table 12, one clear pattern can be observed. There is overall compatibility in academic quality assurance and financial requirements that exist across the four components. More specifically, it was clear that the partners were both committed to the overall motivation and expected outcomes in establishing an academically sound and financially stable cross-border higher education program in China. Their utility functions were also fairly compatible at the higher priorities, thus they had established a mutually agreed upon baseline for the collaboration. The original chosen strategy reflects these compatible expectations. As a result, at the early stage of the joint program, strategically positioning its brand and representing the home institution worldwide was the most important goal, for BSUT. Similarly, being able to collaborate with a top U.S. business school and offer an EMBA program with the full U.S. design and instruction was considered to be the most important goal for YCC.

Moreover, the partner relations were identified as strategy components, suggesting the importance of the relational aspect along with other programmatic aspects during the implementation. While there is insufficient evidence to pinpoint that these positive features for the YCC-BSUT partner relationship was a result of the partners' overall compatible perceptions of the collaborative program, the compatibility definitely facilitated the development of a healthy partner relationship.

Table13 lists the potential conflicts between the partners' perceptions across the four main components. Overall, compared to the compatibility analysis, there were far fewer items identified for potentially conflicting perceptions between the partners. Nevertheless, a comparison of the partners' utility function showed that there were nuanced discrepancies identified among other priorities. As discussed earlier, different

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interpretations about revenue generation and capacity development were identified

between the partners. These different interpretations were presented in the previous

section.  While analyzing the compatibility and potential conflicts, the researcher used

each partner's specific meaning of those motivations and expected outcomes instead of

the general category. These different interpretations revealed the partners' different

preferences in their utility functions. Such differences pertained to the partners' self-

interests.

Table 13. Potential conflicts between partner perceptions across four main components

| Potentially conflicts | YCC | BSUT |
|---|---|---|
| Motivation and expected outcomes | • Enhancing home brand reputation | • Revenue provided to home campus |
| Utility function | • 3$^{rd}$: Brand promotion<br>• 4$^{th}$: Enlarge program enrollment<br>• 5$^{th}$: Faculty involvement | • 3$^{rd}$: Faculty involvement<br>• 4$^{th}$: Enlarge program enrollment<br>• 5$^{th}$: Brand promotion |
| Overall strategy | • Outside hiring | • Global-and-local curriculum through co-teaching model |
| Changes to the chosen strategy | • Promote home brand<br>• Stronger presence of YCC faculty and contribution to the academic component | • Remain the ultimate decision maker for academic affairs<br>• Re-consider budget and cost structure |

Clearly, as the program developed, the partners' preferences for potential

outcomes diverged, because their self-interests led the program in different directions,

thus posing potential challenges to the program and partner relations. More specifically,

for both partners, the expectation of profit generation was not pressing at the beginning,

but generating more revenue beyond the break-even point was expected in the long run.

Since the partners perceived profit making from the collaboration very differently, as the

joint program evolved beyond its initial inception, there has been a delicate balance

between priorities: the choice between strengthening and continuing to expand the

program's brand reputation beyond the southeast region of China with the current

enrollment size versus concentrating on the local business community to expand the

enrollment numbers.

In addition, the extent of using home brands in promoting the Tantru (China)

EMBA program has become another issue of potential conflict. Comparatively,

promoting the (China) home brand more in the program's promotion and broader scale of

the program's brand influence would benefit the Tantru (China) EMBA program in

general, but it would give YCC more advantage simply because the college is locally

based.  Such promotion would not benefit BSUT directly in the same way. Although

having a stronger brand reputation may attract more prospective students, the two goals

(generating revenue versus expanding the brand) could be a potential conflict in the short

term, as each goal demands a great proportion of the limited program resources.

Consequently, while both partners acknowledged their expectations on revenue

generation from the collaboration program, YCC presumably would be more satisfied

with a breaking-even situation than BSUT.  Therefore, the partners need to maintain a

delicate balance between efforts in brand promotion (including the home brand) and

emphasizing the local market for larger enrollment.

Without clearly articulating the specific meanings of these core motivations and

expected outcomes with one another, the partners relied on their own assumptions and

interpretations while implementing the program. As a result, when challenges emerge, the

involved individuals may misunderstand and become skeptical about each other's self-

interests. For example, the partners' different perceptions about revenue generation has led to their suspicions of each other's comparatively stronger interests in profit making.

The partners' different perceptions around capacity development also appeared to affect the partner relations in a negative way. These differences have not become prominent at the present stage. However, as YCC gradually increases its own capacity in executive business management education, the current academic arrangement of the collaborative program may be challenged. At the current stage, as long as both partners still agree on the granting of a single BSUT degree with the ultimate decision-making power on the BSUT side, and maintaining an adequate quality of the program, different implementation methods can be tolerated. As YCC continues to develop its own faculty team and becomes more involved with the BSUT China program, it will, in fact, increase the compatibility between the partners' perceptions about academic quality.

Conclusion from Case One: Tantru (China) EMBA program

Overall, the collaboration game structure is still strong in the case of the Tantru (China) EMBA program, because self-sufficiency and a high-quality of the program image are still the collective goals that the partners share for the program. Neither of the partner's self-interests would be meaningful if this common ground disappeared. These different preferences could jeopardize the short-term implementation of activities, but with effective communication and strong partner commitment in place, it is unlikely that both partners would terminate the collaboration. Thus, the pressing issue was for partners to negotiate and achieve their shared outcomes given the current situation. Since there is still overall compatibility, it is highly likely that the two partners could ultimately agree on a new balance through another round of communication and negotiation.

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Case Two: Safron-Fazhan IMBA Program

In this section, findings from the second studied Sino-US cross-border higher

education program, the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program, is presented. Although a

relatively smaller number of interview participants were recruited for this studied case

compared to the Tantru EMBA case, within each of the partner institutions for the

Safron-Fazhan IMBA program, there was at least one program leader, one administrator,

and two or three faculty members interviewed from each side. Altogether the researcher

conducted nine individual interviews, with six of them at the site of the studied program,

two through phone calls, and one through online communication software (Skype).

Using a similar structure as case one, findings were organized into four major

components to generate answers for the four sub-research questions: 1) motivation and

expected outcomes; 2) utility function (preference level of expected outcomes); 3)

perceptions of the overall strategy and desirable features for the current success; and 4)

desirable future changes to the strategy. Finally, data were compared and synthesized to

identify patterns and relationships to generate answers for the two main research

questions.

*Case Description*

The Safron-Fazhan International MBA program (Safron-Fazhan IMBA) is a Sino-

U.S. Master of Business Administration program delivered in a major city in

southwestern China, jointly offered by Safron University (SU), a private U.S. university,

and Fazhan University (FZU), a Chinese "985 Project" flagship university (note that

pseudonyms are used for the college names). The Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was

established in 2003 and offers a two-year Master of Business Management program

granted by Safron University, and accredited through the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). It was also the first International MBA program approved by the Ministry of Education to be delivered in the west region of China.

Upon successfully completing all the required courses, students are granted a Master of Business Management from Safron Univercity and a course completion certificate from the Chinese partner university, Fazhan University. The Safron-Fazhan IMBA program has had seven student cohorts with an average enrollment size of 45, with a cumulative total of more than 100 graduates in China.

*Chinese Partner Institution: Fazhan University (FZU)*

Fazhan University is nationally known in China for its programs in science, technology, and engineering, and for its innovation and product development in the electronics industry. It is located in a major city in western China, which has developed into a new research and development and manufacturing center for many global companies and well-established Chinese local companies.

As instructed by the central government, Fazhan University was founded in the 1950's on the basis of the incorporation of electronic science divisions of three primary Chinese universities at that time. Since its origins, the university has been nationally regarded as one of the most prestigious universities in the fields of science and electronics engineering. In 2001, as one of the seven earliest key universities in national defense, Fazhan University was admitted into the nation's Project 985 so it could receive special support for developing world-class universities and world-famous research-oriented universities. FZU has gained an excellent reputation in the local region, as well

as the entire nation, especially for its traditionally renowned reputation in science and information engineering. Its graduates have been highly valued by global and local companies, like Intel, Agilent, Boeing, Ericson, Timken and Nokia (Fazhan University website, 2010).

The directly involved college from Fazhan University in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program is the School of Economics and Management (SEM) at FZU, which was established in 1993, and evolved from the former Department of Management Engineering established in 1982. The school offers bachelors, masters, and doctoral level education in the areas of Management Science and Engineering, Emerging Technology Management and Information Management and E-commerce, as well as general business management programs. In 2001, after the second-round of the China MBA Education Quality Assurance & Evaluation, FZU's MBA programs were ranked among the nation's top few for its overall performances and academic rigorous. Moreover, with its unique electronics and engineering focus, the school's MBA programs have been highly recognized among programs of the same or related fields.

*U.S. Partner Institution: Safron University (SU)*

Safron University was originally established as a private Safron College in 1915 in the Midwest of the United States, and then re-named Safron University in 1983. The founding principle for the origin of Safron College was to provide higher education to those who might not have access to this type of high quality education. Safron University is a private, non-profit, teaching-focused liberal art university offering undergraduate and graduate level programs both in the United States and in other nations across the globe.

The university is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association. As of November 2010, Safron University has five schools and colleges, including 1) Business and Technology, 2) Communications, 3) Education, 4) Fine Arts, and 5) Arts and Sciences. With a student to faculty ratio of 14.7:1, Safron University has 184 full time faculty and 1,632 adjunct faculty. Among this faculty group, all full time faculty and 599 part time faculty are based on Safron's home campus, and the other 1043 part time faculty members works on the university's extended campus and/or course sites. It offers 65 undergraduate programs, 42 master's programs, and one doctoral program (Doctoral of Management).

One of the unique features of Safron University is the international reach the university has developed, with a strong emphasis in business management. The only accredited doctoral-level program Safron University offers is in management at its home campus in the United States. With its home campus based in the Midwest of the United States, Safron Univeristy now has 107 total extended campuses across the United States and worldwide, including 41 military bases and 32 metro campuses within the United States and ten international campuses[26] in countries such as the U.K., Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Thailand and China. Interestingly, many of Safron University's branch campuses within the U.S. are located on military sites (Directory of HLC Institutions; Safron University Fact Sheet, 2010). Being international is the most distinctive characteristic of Safron University, with the institution's commitment to become a globally oriented university. It envisions itself as "a premier U.S.-based international university setting a distinct standard for global education" (University

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[26] Safron University referred to all of these sites as extended campuses, including the international ones. However, it seems that many of them are course sites and the university does not own a campus at there.

Mission Statement, online resource, 2010). Throughout the individual interviews with the

Safron participants also shows that, the university's international feature is widely shared

among leaders, administrators, and faculty members. For example, the Safron China

program director believes that the university's focus on internationalization has evolved

and has become the identity of the university, since its first attempt at an extended

campus in 1975. With its 107 campuses all over the world covering 20 states in the U.S.

and six other countries in Asia and Europe, and the high mobility of faculty and students

across these campuses, Safron University is indeed international.

Safron University enrolls students from 50 states of the U.S. and 129 countries

across the globe. Of the university's total 22,000 enrollment in 2010, there were about

8,000 enrollments at its home campus and 21,000 students enrolled from Safron's

worldwide campuses and/or course sites (including those extended campus within the

United States).  There were all together 8,000 undergraduate students and 21,000

graduate students, of which about 5,000 and 13,000 were enrolled as part-time students,

respectively (Directory of HLC Institutions; Safron University Fact Sheet, 2010).

According to Safron University's publically listed University Fact Sheet, the university,

among private non-profit U.S. institutions, hosts the highest number of degree-seeking

graduate students and offers the highest number of Mater's degree to minority students in

the U.S.[27]

*School of Business at Safron University, Global Campus, and Safron China Program:*
*Who is the partner?*

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[27] Sources listed in the university's Fact Sheet include: Diversity Issues in Higher education in 2010 and
IPEDS Data Center, nces.ed.gov

Assuming a business program comes from the school of business at the foreign partner's institution, the researcher started collecting documents and materials about the School of Business at Safron University as the U.S. partner for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. The School of Business at Safron University has recently become a member of the Association to Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The business and management programs that Safron University offers are accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

Throughout the data collection process, however, it became obvious to the researcher that the School of Business at Safron University holds a minimum official relationship with the studied collaborative program—the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. Rather, a "global campus" division (pseudonym) at Safron University and its sub-division "Safron China Program" were identified as the key players representing the U.S. partner university in the operation of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program.

Nonetheless, in terms of the unit's administration function and official organizational structure, there is hardly any publically available information, except a website directly linked from the university's home page. The global campus is listed as one of the five main sections linked on the homepage of Safron University together with other main sections such as "academics", "admissions". Its online home page primarily provides detailed information on each of the extended campuses and/or program sites that Safron operates within and outside of the United States. No official organizational chart was found from the university website that could help the researcher to clearly understand to which unit the "global campus" reports to, if there is any.

Based on all of the materials collected, the researcher rationalized that the global campus might be a central administration unit with direct oversight by one of the associate presidents of its international programs. According to the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program organization chart (Figure 7), the supervision unit of Safron China Program is the university's Office of International Affairs, which is parallel to the School of Business and other departments (the Safron-Fazhan IMBA Program Operational Report, 2006).
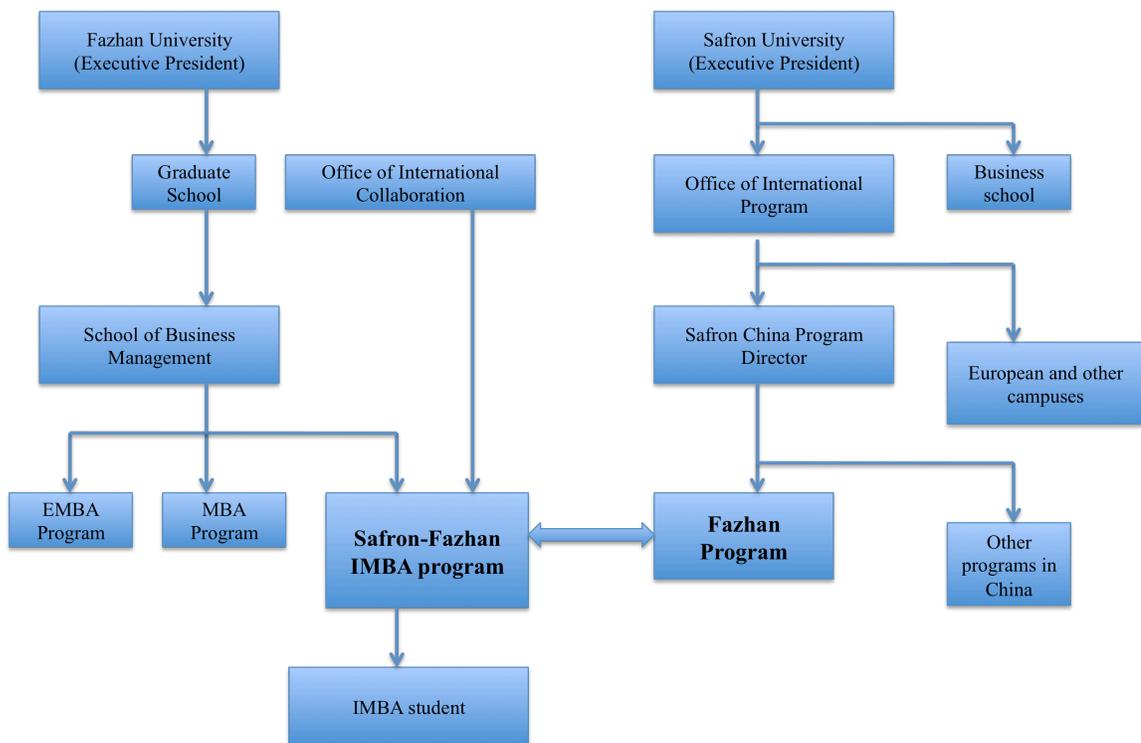


Figure 7. Administration System of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA Program

Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 7, the Safron China Program is not officially hosted underneath Safron's School of Business, but rather reports directly to an associate president at Safron University. The interview data also suggest that the dean of the School of Business, together with other university leaders, attends the commencement for all their collaboration programs in China, including the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program.

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Occasionally, one full-time faculty member from the School of Business on Safron's home campus will go to China to teach for a term, but the full-time faculty at Safron's home campus are not highly involved in the teaching of the program. Instead, adjunct faculty is hired to teach in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. One of the interviewed Safron leaders explained that the working relationship between Safron China Program and the home campus is as follows,

> From the president down, the university is very active in China. … [a list of colleges and schools named by the interviewee]; this is all at this school. So from here, we (the Safron China Program) deal with various deans and all the top administration at Safron University including the vice president of academics, and they come [to China].
>
> <div align="right">Leader of Safron China Program</div>

As one of the first few foreign institutions to deliver U.S. education in China, Safron University has been providing an MBA program in China since 1996, including a total of three program sites in three different cities, with Safron-Fazhan IMBA located in the western region of the nation and the two other program sites located on the east coast of China. The Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was the third endeavor of the Safron China Program, and was finally established in 2003 as the first joint MBA program with an international education provider in western China that was officially approved by the Ministry of Education. While the Safron-Fazhan site only offers a master's degree, the Safron China Program currently has both master level and undergraduate level programs offered in the area of business management at one of the other sites. It has also facilitated the establishing of a Confucius Institute at the university's home campus in 2008.

*Administrative Structure of Safron-Fazhan IMBA Program*

Although the Safron China Program is based mainly on the east coast (at another Safron China site) it oversees all three programs that Safron University currently operates in China, including the studied Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. While residing on the east coast, the China program director visits all three sites regularly to work with all three on-site coordinators (also as Safron representative) and the relevant partners on all aspects of the programs' operations. The distance between the different programs does not appear to be an issue to the China director and the work teams, as much of the work can be handled well through online communication, phone calls, and other methods. In fact, due to schedule problems, the researcher was unable to interview the China director face-to-face. Instead, the China director suggested using Skype (an online communication medium), which worked well and ended with a one hour and 40 minutes in-depth interview.

As for the day-to-day operation of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program, partners have agreed upon a fairly parallel administration structure that involves one individual from both partners serving as program co-director, each officially referred to as the China director and U.S. director, although the U.S. director herself feels that her role is more like a coordinator than director. For the purpose of maintain consistency in presenting the findings, the researchers referred to the director from Fazhan University as the Chinese co-director and the director from the Safron University as the Safron on-site coordinator (and or representative). These two individuals work together on all activities pertaining to the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. The Safron on-site coordinator reports directly to the director of the Safron University China Program, while the Chinese co-director reports to the School of Business and the Office of International Collaboration at Fazhan University. An assistant staff member supports the team. (See Firgure 7 for an

organizational administration chart recreated from the Safron-Fazhan IMBA Program

Operation Report (2006) to illustrate this administrative structure.

According to official documents, the leadership at the school of business

management and the leadership at Safron University jointly oversee the development of

the collaborative program. However, throughout the site visits and individual interviews,

it seems that the co-director (appointed by SBM) and the China Program Director of

Safron University (based in China) jointly oversee the development of the IMBA

program. The host universities (Fazhan University) and the school of business

management have minimum involvement in the program.

*Academic component*

*Curriculum and course schedule*. The Safron-Fazhan IMBA program offers an

academic calendar that consists of five academic terms, with nine weeks per term. A total

of 36 credit hours are required for all enrolled students, including 27 credit hours of the

MBA curriculum and nine credit hours of graduate electives. Students who select an area

of emphasis have to earn a total of no less than 48 credit hours. Other prerequisite

language courses may be required for students with insufficient English proficiency. Of

all courses offered in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program, the first four introductory

courses are bilingual courses taught by Chinese faculty. These courses use the original

English textbooks and course materials; however, Chinese is the language of instruction.

Safron University is responsible for the delivering of all of the core courses and electives.

All major courses after the first four introductory courses are taught in English.

*Course delivery model*. All courses offered at the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program

are taught in face-to-face classes every weekend during academic terms. Because of its

weekly in-class, face-to-face academic schedule, the partner institutions consider this

program an atypical model so it is "more like a full-time MBA" (Online Introduction to

the Safron China Program), compared to many of the joint MBA programs currently

running in China. One of the key leaders of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program also

proudly noted that:

> 80% or up-to 90% of the joint MBA programs currently being delivered in
> China use a highly concentrated delivery model, usually consisting of one
> or two weekend intensive meetings. Those foreign professors come and
> stay for less than a week. But our professors stay here for the entire two
> months of that academic term and hold classroom meetings every week.
>
> Program leader

*Faculty*. The main teaching staff consists of faculty members affiliated with and

accredited by Safron University. The majority of this faculty group include adjunct

faculty selected and hired from the entire Safron University system, by the Safron-Fazhan

IMBA program. The hiring criteria include: a Master's or higher level degree in the

relevant field of study, adequate teaching experience, and substantial work experience in

the industry, and motivation to teach in China. The Chinese co-director and the Safron

on-site coordinator provide supplemental suggestions and recommendations for hiring.

Few faculty members from the school of business and management at Fazhan University

participate in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. The Fazhan faculty teaches the four

introductory courses and a few others who serve as teaching assistants for core courses.

*Financial structure*

The initial investment included adequate space and facilities for the program

provided by the school of business management at Fazhan University and the marketing

cost for initial program promotion. Once the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was

established, it has been funded with tuition money as its main revenue. An annual operational budget is outlined every fiscal term, and negotiated and approved by both partners. The two partners together monitor the financial progress. Specific costs (direct and indirect) of the programs are officially identified and only direct cost is shared between the partners in the annual budget.

Most likely due to business confidential and sensitivity considerations, the researcher was unable to collect any budget related materials to review for details (for both case one and two). However, the Joint MBA Operating Agreement (Safron-Fazhan, 2002) lays out the general cost-sharing structure in Fiscal Article XI. Specifically, a two-year monitoring period without any settlement was assigned so that the two partners were assured that direct costs would be covered. After this process, the document states, "[They] will disperse funds that have not been used to cover direct cost" and "the disbursement will be shared equally to reduce the indirect cost of each of the parties" (p. 6).

Based on the interview data, the operational budget covers all of the direct costs, such as facilities and utility, staff and faculty salaries, accommodations, transportation, marketing and promotion, and other costs incurred from teaching. Indirect costs involve related administration costs that may occur at the home institutions for both partners. For example, on Safron's side, costs include registration and services at the home central administration unit, and international travel for the program's opening ceremony and commencement. On the Chinese side, a university administration fee is collected, because a course-recognition certificate is issued for each Safron-Fazhan IMBA student.

In summary, the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program has successfully operated since its inauguration in 2003, accomplishing its general mission "to make affordable high quality business and management programs available to students in Western China (Safron-Fazhan IMBA Operating Agreement, 2003 version, p. 2).

*Motivations, Expected Outcomes, and Preferences*

This section presents findings around the partner institutions' motivations and expected outcomes for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program, as well as their preferences for these expected outcomes. First, for each partner institution, key stakeholders' perceptions of their own institution's motivations and expected outcomes, and preferences are presented. These interview findings were also triangulated with official documents (e.g., Collaboration Agreement of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program). Participants' stated preference for various outcomes were synthesized to identify each partner institution's utility funtions they hold for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. Next, the researcher compared the partners' motivations and expected outcomes, and their utility functions to indentify similarities and discrepancies and provide answers to the first two sub-questions of this study.

The official document that two the partners agreed on with regard to the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program is the Joint MBA Operating Agreement. In this agreement, the partners (Safron University and Fazhan University) mutually acknowledge that the goal for both partners in the joint IMBA program is "to make affordable high quality business and management programs available to students in Western China" (p.2). It is quite clear that the partners mutually agreed on the expected outcomes when they entered into the operation. More importantly, this shared understanding about the collaboration, while

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broadly stated, has clear specifications. That is, the program is expected to be of high quality but has to remain affordable to students from the local region. Furthermore, this agreed upon goal also set up a geographical boundary that both partners expected their program to have an impact on western China. Lastly, the goal appeared to suggest that the collaborative program should be somewhat student oriented.

As for the interview data collected for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program, across the two partner institutions, there are shared and partner specific motivations and expected outcomes identified. The participants' perceived their home institution's motivations mainly centered around four themes: 1) brand reputation, 2) strategic positioning, 3) capacity development, and 4) program expansion. While brand reputation and strategic positioning were the two most shared categories identified by both partners, the Chinese partner also tended to focus on capacity development and the U.S. partner emphasized enhancing their international brand reputation and program expansion. Interviewees from both partners claimed that financial return was not their motivation; however, the program is expected to achieve a break-even financial status.

*Safron University*

Participants from Safron University, including program leaders, faculty members, and staff members all pointed out that brand recognition and academic reputation was one of the major reasons their home institution initiated the collaboration of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program One leader explained the importance of the international identity of the university:

> [Safron] University has as it's positioning… the reason for its existence [is] a model of international [university]. Not just having some international programs inside a home campus, but also to be physically located in other

locations and have people on the ground all the time teaching and knowing the place where they are. … This is really important for us in terms of making us an international university. … Many people within the United States pick [Safron] because of this international [feature].

<div align="right">Safron program leader</div>

This leader then described this brand reputation outcome for Safron University with regard to the local region. He noted that:

One of the things that happened in here in China with our MBA is that many foreign companies really enjoy our MBA, [company names]. It's a big list and they like our program because its American oriented and secondly it has a lot of English in it. I think companies like to send their own people to our program. Why? Because even in [city name], these companies they speak English and they are international. So western [foreign] companies like to use our program.

<div align="right">Safron program leader</div>

Faculty and staff members said that having a successful collaborative IMBA program in China helps to establish Safron's credibility in the region and enhances the visibility of the home university. For example, one of the interviewed faculty members, who currently serves as the dean of faculty at one of Safron University's extended campuses in the United States and who has been a faculty member for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program during the past five years, shared his thoughts about Safron's motivation and expected outcomes:

Naturally, [Safron] was looking to enhance its credibility as a graduate level institution of higher learning, [through] prestige, [and] visibility as a good university internationally. I think we have achieved that. It was difficult at the beginning because there was so much competition. I think we are realizing our international goals. The university now does have visibility as a very successful international business school.

<div align="right">Safron faculty</div>

Participants from the Safron side strongly shared the vision that through their

collaborative operations in China, "People in China that would never know about [Safron]

would come to Safron in the United States or [list of European cities' names]."

Furthermore, throughout the interviews, their strategic positioning emerged as

another important reason and as an expected outcome for Safron's involvement in China.

Seven years after Safron established its first collaborative program on the east coast of

China, precisely one year after the central government's China Western Development

initiative in 2001, Safron University started to search for a new partner in western China

for a possible new collaborative programs. It was a very forward thinking and strategic

decision for Safron to start developing its third operation far into the nation's west region.

The Safron China program director explained how Safron started to collaborate with

Fazhan University as:

> [Western region] is a really important area.  Seven years ago we didn't
> want to just be on the eastern fringe of China; we wanted to find
> something representative of this new western movement and we arrived at
> [here] seven years ago; we looked at [a list of city names in the west
> region]. As for [Fazhan University], I don't want to say they are MIT, but
> MIT has a business MBA school and the University of Illinois has a very
> important area that has almost the same program that [Fazhan University]
> has. … it's very high end science (referring to Fazhan University's
> program in general) and they work for the government a lot; but at least
> when we talked to companies about China, they are always talking to us
> and saying they have software engineers from Fazhan, electronics
> engineers from Fazhan. So it's a very well known university.
>                                                    Safron China program director

Closely related to its international brand promotion and strategic positioning

rationale, expanding the university and operation scale was another primary motivation

and expected outcome. The Safron on-site coordinator, a locally hired employee who is

Safron's on-site representative, was very straightforward while talking about this

motivation. The official affiliation with the foreign partner and the cultural lens

embedded within his background experience has made his perspectives unique.  He

reflected about Safron University as follows:

> [Safron] is not that highly ranked in the United States. [It is] just a regular
> university. But [Safron] is very smart in promoting itself. [Safron] is
> actually very recognizable among those universities that have international
> campuses. So what they want is to promote and expand their campuses as
> many as possible, so as to achieve its reputation. Officially, they [may]
> talk about disseminating education to people. Well, that is a fact. They
> operate a program here, therefore [they] assume some of the
> responsibilities of the locals' education. However, their real intent is to
> expand their operation scale. You know, really that [the desire for
> expansion] comes from the U.S. culture. They just want to expand.
> <div align="right">Safron on-site coordinator and representative</div>

Nevertheless, he strongly believed that profit was not Safron's motivation and

expected outcome for the collaborative program, even though he emphasized the

expansion motivation. With his several years of work experience and close relationship

with leaders and faculty from Safron, she believed that although Safron is a private

institution and that Safron has demonstrated its non-profit nature as an education provider,

he pointed out that:

> Safron really does not gain much of a surplus from all of their campuses.
> For example, the [country name] campus, it is facing bankruptcy in recent
> years. But [Safron] still invests every year to sustain it. And [Safron] also
> offers a lot of financial aid and scholarships to students. You see that's
> why I think they are really into their reputation and the expansion.
> <div align="right">Safron on-site coordinator and representative</div>

When talking about the motives and expectations around expansion and profit, the

leaders and faculty from Safron University were more indirect. The researcher had to

probe and talk around the topic several times to get answers.  The interviewed faculty said, "the expansion of Safron campuses in China is a reasonable goal," and that the university "would someday be able to expand to [other Chinese city names]." Another interviewee, the Safron's China program director, used Wal-Mart as a metaphor. He described the analogy as follows:

> We have some models, universities and their work in terms of China, [for example] Johns Hopkins University and Princeton University. I don't want to throw away Harvard, but these are two very important universities and efforts with regard to China. Safron [University] is Wal-Mart. What it means is we [Safron University] can provide things with a much lower price tag and provide many services and concepts and ideas that are not available to other people. Not everybody goes to Princeton and Johns Hopkins. We say what are those guys doing and what are the products that they have and what can we take from that and use in a way that normal people can use. We are service oriented. I'm not telling you [though], I don't think we are going to pull next to Princeton; Wal-Mart will not pull next to Gucci right?
>
> <div align="right">Leader from Safron China Program</div>

Both the program leader and faculty members stressed the importance of quality control while discussing the motivations and expected outcomes around expanding. The above-quoted model using the good practices of well-known universities and/or programs is one example. One faculty members reflected on his experience in China and on other international campuses to illustrate how Safron and the Chinese partner came to realize the importance of maintaining adequate quality while also expanding,

> We realize what our goal is and we are patient trying to achieve the goal. I think at times, the people in China and the China host universities and at our own main campus in [city name], have been a little bit impatient with [Safron's] progress. When we first came to [Chinese city name] we had too much trouble bringing in 70 students in one class. I would teach 2 days a week on Saturday and Sunday. I had 70 students in the morning class, 70

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in the afternoon and maybe 60 on Sunday. Now the student population is getting lower, but the students have gotten better. [They have] more English competency. I think our own professors have gotten better because we are very selective on who we bring to China.

<div align="right">Safron faculty member</div>

Nonetheless, program leaders, faculty, and the administrator believed that the institution was not operating the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program for profit, but only as non-profit educational program development. The Safron leader pointed out that:

We work at a definite break-even. There are many things that we have to fund outside of the money that we really collect in China. We have a lot of expenses here to run this operation. But on the other hand what we also have that we didn't have ten years ago [is] we have a branding that is Safron University, that we are working every day and expanding. We know about key cities, the most important cities in China, like [city names]. That is enormous.

<div align="right">Safron leader</div>

In summary, the identified motivations and expected outcomes for Safron University included to enhance its international brand reputation with good academic reputation, to strategically position the university in a promising educational market, to expand operation scales with adequate quality control, and to operate at a minimum level of a breaking-even point.

When asked about the priorities and preferences, participants for their home institutions, some of the interviewees from Safron University appeared to be very hesitant, particularly the Safron China program director and one other faculty member. In general, these interviewees tended to avoid directly answering the priority question and instead gave lengthy discussions that at times appeared to be irrelevant. The researcher probed as much as possible to determine the participants' opinions mostly through rephrasing the

questions, probing and asking for further clarifications, and summarizing their discussion points for confirmation. In contrast, the on-site program coordinator, who is a local Chinese but represents Safron University on site answered the same questions more directly.

In summary, the researcher found that participants from Safron University shared very similar views about the institutional priorities for various identified motivations and expected outcomes. Table 14 presents these perceived priorities. Brand recognition and strategic positioning are rated as the top priority followed by program expansion, with revenue and profit as the lowest priority. The program leader, after pointing out that being international is the inherent nature of Safron University, strongly emphasized the strategic positioning as:

> The number one priority is China itself. … We never think of going to [country name]; my life is too short; this is one of the most important places to be at this time; China is the question and China is the answer … For us to be in [city name] and in the west it is a continuing building effort in China and it's a very important place to be. We might not be getting returns right now but I think the investment is a wise investment to be there.
>
> Safron China program leader

Table 14. Priorities assigned to by the stakeholder group for Safron University

| Motivation and expected outcomes | Brand recognition | Strategic positioning | Expansion | Revenue and profit |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Program leader | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Faculty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Administrator | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Note: 1 represents the highest priority and 4 is the least priority.

After reviewing the coded interview data and other available materials, the researcher synthesized the overall utility function for Safron University as follows:

1) The most desired outcome for Safron University would be to successfully deliver an affordable MBA program in an internationally promising market with a credible academic reputation with a financial situation better than break-even.

2) Adequate program quality has to be maintained, both in regard to student satisfaction (both enrolled and potential students) and program accreditation.

3) A larger program scale would be preferred to the extent that program credentials and a good market reputation can be maintained.

4) Financially breaking even could be the bottom line for the collaboration, depending on the strategic importance and how promising that potential market appeals to Safron University.

*Fazhan University*

On the other side of the partnership, all together five interviews were conducted, including with the program leader, administration staff, and three faculty members (two of them teach for the program and one served as a teaching assistant in the past). In general, it was difficult to get access to the faculty on the Chinese side, mainly due to their schedules. Although all three of them were willing to share information about their experiences in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program, none of them wanted to schedule a face-to-face meeting, since they were either working from home or were teaching. As a result, one of the interviews took about 20 minutes and was conducted in a classroom right after the professor's teaching session. The other two interviews were conducted over the phone. Both phone interviews took about 40 minutes. These interviews focused on the faculty member's personal experience with the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program; only one of the professors shared her opinions from an institutional perspective.

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Overall, the interviewed leader, faculty members, and administrator shared their opinions about Fazhan University's motivation[28] for strategic positioning and capacity development. Enhancing the institution's brand reputation is somewhat embedded in the idea of positioning.  The program leader and administrator from the Chinese side interpreted their strategic positioning in regard to the future trend of internationalization in higher education, which was somewhat different from their counterpart at Safron. The program leader stated that:

> The future of higher education is international and global. Therefore, no matter if you (institutions) are willing or not, internationalization is a development path that higher education institutions all walk on. Sooner or later, (Chinese) universities will all have to become internationalized. More universities will be operating international collaborative programs. Now [since] we have had this [Safron-Fazhan] IMBA program successfully running for years, we became the first mover. We have gained advantages in this respect. With several years of history and a good reputation, you know, so long as I do it with good quality, we will have much more advantages than other peer programs in the future. This is why we have to do this and do this early.
>
> <div align="right">Chinese program co-director</div>

According to the staff member at the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program, the motivation for the Chinese partner institution is simply: "The School of Business and Management just wants to take the lead." As an alumna from Fazhan University, she remembered that,

> [When Safron-Fazhan IMBA just started], that was really early, at least several years ago. I remember when I was still a freshman here at the university, I had heard about this program already. Even that early, they started to work on this program. There wasn't any legitimate international

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[28] During the interviews, faculty member referred to the school of business management as the partner institution. To maintain consistency, Fazhan University is used instead.

program in [city name] at that time. They [the institution] must be very
forward thinking.

<div align="center">Chinese Staff member from the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program</div>

When it comes to capacity building, across stakeholder groups, participants
strongly commented on this primary goal and expected outcome. The program leader,
faculty, and administrator all said that the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program increases the
program variety that the school of business management can offer to prospective students
and the local community. The school already had domestic MBA and EMBA programs
operating with good reputations, but the international piece was missing. With the
prominent regional economic development in regard to foreign investment and new
operational branches from multinational firms, the Chinese partner perceives that the
Safron-Fazhan IMBA program has completed the overall profile of the institutions and
offers the much-needed education to the local workforce. For example, the Chinese
program leader described:

> Our principle is that, [the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program] is a supplement
> to Fazhan University in terms of providing education services, particularly
> at a higher level: a master level. We used to have only domestic programs.
> Now, through [this] international collaboration, then we have a good
> supplement.
>
> <div align="right">The Chinese program co-director</div>

The program leader and administrator from Fazhan University felt very strongly
that the institution's involvement in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was not to make a
profit or extra revenue. With no hesitation, the program leader shared detailed
information with the researcher about the budget structure of the program and provided
his rationale as follows:

Neither university (partner) does this program for profit because the cost for it is very high. Some people would say, even our faculty members, 'Wow, your (the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program's) tuition charge is quite expensive.' I said to them, it is not expensive at all. You can compare us with [Safron's other MBA programs on the east coast]. We charge seventy thousand (Ren Min Bi)[29], but the [east coast program] charges students one hundred twenty thousand (Ren Min Bi). You see that is because of the regional differences and [we adjust for] the economic situation in the western region. In general, we do not depend on this program to make money. This is not our purpose.

The Chinese program co-director

Only one of the interviewed faculty members commented on the institutional motivation and expected outcomes. While acting as the coordinator for the domestic executive MBA program at the School of Business and Management, this professor also teaches an introductory course for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. She talked about profitability and capacity building as two compatible outcomes for having the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program:

Just like a corporation during its development, a higher education institution has to diversify the education programs it can offer. Diversification helps to increase financial returns and reduce risks. Through such diversification, institutions can also establish a connection with different customer populations. There is a student need for this type of program [international MBA]. [The Safron-Fazhan IMBA program] targets this market.

Faculty member from Fazhan University

In summary, the local Chinese participants strongly agree on the motivations and expected outcomes. They stated that the priorities are developing their brand reputation as an institution with some competencies in delivering an international program and

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[29] The currency exchange ratio between Chinese RMB and U.S. dollar is about 6:1.

building capacity with regard to complementing the institution's program variety. The leader and administrator claimed that profit was not a motivation but breaking even was expected. Nonetheless, faculty members seemed to suggest that just as capacity development was a reason for having international programs, profit might be another one as well.

Table 15. Priorities assigned to the stakeholder group of Fazhan University

| Motivation and expected outcomes | Brand recognition and | Strategic positioning | Revenue and profit | Capacity development |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Program leader | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Faculty* | | | 1 | 1 |
| Administrator | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

Note: 1 represents the highest priority and 3 is the least priority.
*Only one faculty member shared opinions around motivation and expected outcome. The empty cell is due to no interview data identified.

Table 15 presents the perceived priorities participants from Fazhan University stated as the motivations and expected outcomes. As for Fazhan University, because the program leader and administrative staff member consistently talked about both the institution's brand reputation together with its strategic position in regard to internationalization as compared to other local Chinese universities, these two were assigned with the same priority. Although the data are somewhat limited, as presented in Table 15, the program leader and the administrator from Fazhan University shared very similar views about the institutional priorities for various identified motivations and expected outcomes. Based on these assigned priorities and discussions with participants, the utility function for the Chinese partner institution (the school of business management at Fazhan University) is summarized as follows:

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1) The most desired outcome for the school of business management at Fazhan University was to successfully collaborate with a credential foreign university in delivering a solid MBA program that had a credible academic reputation in the local region, with a financial situation exceeding break-even.

2) Adequate program quality had to be maintained to the extent that the regionally well-recognized academic reputation was not sacrificed.

3) Financially breaking even as the bottom line for the collaboration.

*Perceptions of the Partners' Motivations, Expected Outcomes, and Preferences*

Mutual understanding between the partners clearly exists in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. Together as a group, each side explicitly and implicitly articulated each other's motivations and expected outcomes as to what the other side did.

The Chinese participants comprehended the partner's motivations, expected outcomes, and preferences.  For example, while discussing Safron's motivation, the Chinese program director had a lengthy discussion about how he understood his partner's expectations and priorities. As we can see from his opinions, he considered Safron as an international-oriented university who came to China and [city name] because of the potential education market. He believed that Safron was not profit seeking, but had the purpose of building a legitimate international university brand:

> I think they [Safron University] is mostly interested in the potential of the Chinese education market. Foreign universities operate on tuition. However, in the first few years, they didn't have much expectation for extra gains. They are here because of the market. They have a very long-term goal, really a long-term one. Secondly, they want to expand [Safron University]. They are just one of those four thousand something universities in the United States—not a very renowned one. But they primarily want to enhance their brand name internationally, because this is

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[Safron's] unique feature. They have strong capabilities in operating international schools. I think universities all have their uniqueness. Safron has its own reasons and ways to survive. Although it is not a prestigious institution in the U.S., they have been very successful overseas. Of course, someone may still argue that they gain financially anyway. But I don't think they actually expect for surpluses from these international programs to support their home campus. … There may be some financial gains, at least they could have this to fund other costs in China, such as having their president here visiting or to support other programs in China.

The Chinese program co-director

Participants from Safron University also understood their partner's motivations, expected outcomes, and their preferences which were all quite close to what their partners had talked about. All stakeholders referred to the signal effect for the partner's regional reputation, as well as the expectation for a break-even budget. For example, both the administrator and faculty from Safron emphasized that their Chinese partner was mostly interested in the reputation effect of having such a successful international MBA program with "a [U.S.] university that is recognized in being successful in the area of IMBA" (interview with a faculty member from Safron University). The locally hired administrator compared the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program with other peer programs at the school of business management and noted that:

In fact this program holds the lowest status among all the programs offered through the school of business and management. The profit this program brings in is the lowest, because of our high cost. So, the school really seeks a reputation only. This is the first international collaboration program they have. I think from their perspective, if the program loses money, they definitely would not want to do it. But so far, we have never operated below our expenses. So the program continues and collaboration is good.

The Safron on-site coordinator and representative

The program leader from Safron University perceived its partner's motivations and expected outcomes beyond reputation development. While he shared the same perspectives as the faculty and administrator on the reputation and financial factor for the partner's expected outcomes, the program leader also strongly emphasized the Chinese partner's motivation for organizational learning. He believed that the local partners used the collaborative program as a "laboratory" to develop their own programs at home and that "to learn as much as possible in the business area." He saw other similar domestic programs offered by the local partner as competitors. Although he acknowledged that such learning was happening less, there had been a lot in the past and would continue to be one of the partner's expected outcomes. As he reflected:

> When we first arrived, the questions were how do we use books; how do
> we use cases; how did we find professors; how did we treat professors to
> make sure they were comfortable here; how did we work in our
> classrooms in terms of numbers; how many teams we had; and how many
> times did we meet during the week. … Now these days, our partnering
> universities use any of those pieces or methods. They are using the same
> things and even the same books.  Inside the universities the professors and
> administration they talk to each other about their experiences so they
> know what is the best of the best in terms of methodology and what's
> working.
>
> <div align="right">The Safron China program director</div>

Research question 1.a asked about the similar and/or different perceptions of motivation and expected outcomes perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher education program.  Based on the collected documents and discussions with participants from both sides about their own institution's motivation and expected outcomes, the findings for this sub-question can be summarized as follows:

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1.  The partner institutions (Safron and Fazhan), shared the same type of motivations and expected outcomes concerning brand recognition, strategic positioning, and revenue generation, but each had its own set of interests in entering the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program delivery.

2.  Participants from the partner institutions appeared to have a clear understanding about the reasons that each organization became involved in the collaborative IMBA program delivery, and the general expected outcomes the other side hoped to achieve. While the Safron program leader, faculty, and administrator all recognized Fa-Zhan University's expected outcomes in enhancing brand recognition motivations, only the program leader talked about the organizational learning aspects of Fazhan's expected outcomes. Similarly, the Chinese participants commented on all of Safron's stated motivations and expected outcomes with a fairly actuate understanding.

3.  With respect to Fazhan University's capacity development and learning goal, the partners appeared to focus on different levels. Specifically, the Safron leader believed that the Chinese partners had a goal of organizational learning, meaning implicit learning through which knowledge and information could be transferred among involved individuals and partner institutions, mainly from Safron University to Fazhan University. However, the majority of the Chinese interviewees referred to capacity development at the institutional level, emphasizing the increase in program variety that Fazhan University had gained.

Interestingly, none of the interviewed faculty members (three Chinese and two Americans) while reflecting about their experience reported any teaching and/or research related communication between the Chinese and the Safron faculty. The only exception was the Chinese faculty who served as teaching assistant for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program for a year. Ironically, although she felt the teaching assistant experience was extremely benefitial for her own development as a MBA teacher, she still did not think there were any observable impact from the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program to the other MBA programs at the school of business management.

4. Participants from both partner institutions claimed that the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was not for-profit, but rather operated mostly at a break-even level so as to achieve the mutually agreed upon goal of providing an "affordable high quality business management program."

Research question 1.b asked about similar and/or different preferences each partner had for the collaborative program. Earlier in this section, after a discussion about each partner's motivation and expected outcomes, the researcher synthesized the utility function for each of the partners, and their perceptions of the other partner's priorities. Based on these data, the researcher revealed the findings for this question by comparing the synthesized utility functions for both partners as well as their perceptions of each other's perceptions.

In summary, both partner institutions' identified utility function appeared to be very similar and highly compatible, especially around the officially agreed upon partner goal, although the Chinese faculty's opinion is largely missing (only one faculty member)

due to lack of relevant interview data collected. From the overall observation and discussions with all of the interviewees, the level of participation from the Chinese faculty in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was extremely rare, which might be one of the reasons that so little information was collected from them about the institutional perspectives.

Nevertheless, the findings suggest that both within and between partner institutions, there was a reasonable amount of commonly shared perceptions for the institutions' overall preferences. The mutually agreed upon and documented official goal of the two partners in the Joint MBA Operating Agreement set up common ground for the partners. While the stated goal left enough flexibility for interpretation, it did specify three important aspects of the expected outcomes, including program quality, cost and pricing, and the region. The findings from the interview data demonstrated that participants from the partner institution strongly agreed on this stated goal and shared similar interpretations for the specified aspects.

*Strategy*

In this section, the overall setup of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program is reiterated with details on each partner's share of responsibilities and resources to understand each partner's desired strategies. In addition, common themes emerged from the interview data around the participants' identified specific activities that their affiliated organizations had implemented to achieve their desired outcomes or to increase the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes. This section presents findings on research question 1.c, which asked about the similar and/or different views partners of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program held about their current strategy. Based on these two sets of data, the partners'

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perceptions of the overall strategy as well as the key features are compared to examine the similar and different desirable strategies the partners hold.

*Overall Strategy: Deliver a U.S. Degree Program with Adequate Credentials through a Joint Operation Model*

Safron University and the school of business and management at Fazhan University set up a joint operation model to deliver a U.S. business management program granting a degree from Safron University and a certification for taking courses from Fazhan University.  Instead of using other models such as a branch campus, a twinning program with dual degrees, franchising and articulation, a student exchange program, or faculty exchange and visiting program, the two partners agreed on a joint operation model with equally shared administration, divided teaching responsibility (prerequisite courses by the school of business and management at Fazhan University, core and elective MBA courses by Safron University), as well as a cost-sharing budget structure.

On the administration side, the school of business and management at Fazhan Unversity provides most of the needed administration and teaching facilitates such as offices and classrooms for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. Each partner had designated a full-time program director and/or coordinator. Together with a program-based office staff member, this team of three works jointly on the daily operation of the program in a shared office space with other groups of administrators for the domestic MBA and EMBA program. The IMBA team members' office desks are arranged to face one another with a spacious path running through the office leading to a small area for visitors and informal meetings, but the IMBA team appears to be distanced from the rest of the group.

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On the academic side, the curriculum is clearly split up between the partners. The Chinese faculty member teaches the four introductory courses, and Safron University takes responsibility for the core and elective courses. Saforn University is responsible for the academic affairs of the program including the selected textbooks and materials with consultation from the Chinese partner, including the introductory courses (recommending textbooks and materials to the Chinese faculty). Fazhan University provides teaching assistants and appoint junior faculty to audit Safron faculty's courses as part of the original agreement, so that the appointed Chinese faculty can "help in communication, participate in teaching activities, assist and cooperate with Safron professors in studying cases in China" (Joint MBA Agreement, 2002, p.5). The Chinese program co-director, the Safron China program director, and the Safron on-site coordinator jointly make student admission decisions. Faculty on neither side played a part in the admission decisions. The teaching space that is provided for the joint program is well equipped; however, there is no assigned office space for the faculty members.

As for the degree and diplomas, the Joint MBA Agreement (2002) provides evidence that students receive not only the MBA degree awarded by Safron University, but they also receive a certificate from Fa-Zhan University which states that the students have completed the program. The agreement also specifies that potential dual degree arrangement can be developed and transfer credits will be maintained; however, no evidence was found about another degree has been offered from Fazhan University.

Another interesting detail is that U.S. and international students enrolled in any of Safron University's campuses and or course sites can apply for short-term study opportunities across Safron campuses. For example, students at the Safron-Fazhan IMBA

program can apply for a one academic term study abroad opportunities during the summer term at the Safron University's home campus or go for a ten-day company visits in the U.S. Another global MBA program at Safron University requires all enrolled students spend each one of the five academic terms on five out of the total six international campuses/course sites the university operates.

Finally, for the financial aspects, the partners agreed on a cost-sharing structure. After a two-year process of identifying direct costs, currently the Chinese program director together with the on-site Safron program coordinator proposed a detailed budget with all direct costs every fiscal year, and the leadership from both partners reviewed and approved the budget.

Based on the interview data on participant's perceptions of the current success of the program and specific features that contributed to this success, participants from both sides of the partnership (except only one Chinese faculty shared her thoughts on this part) talked about the inter-dependent relationship between the partner institutions and felt that this relationship really determined the collaboration's success. Participants recognized that Safron University needed to partner with a highly recognized local institution both for being in compliance with the Chinese government policy requirement and for an efficient way to establish marketable credibility to the potential student population.

Moreover, since the school of business management at Fazhan University provided all needed facilities, the administration, and promotion prior to the actual recruitment for the IMBA program, Safron was able to establish their new program with close to zero financial risks. On the other side, Fazhan University wanted to have an international business management program that had proven quality and credentials. With

the ready-to-use curriculum, foreign faculty, and administrative facilities, Fazhan University was able to have a U.S. degree program fully delivered by accredited foreign professors with minimum input for start-up promotion costs.

Both partners appeared to be quite satisfied with what the program had achieved, particularly because the operation had been financially stable at such a low tuition rate while still providing good quality and useful knowledge to students. As for their criteria to measure the program's success and adequate quality, the program leaders from both sides focused on the program's good reputation among alumni groups and well-recognized alumni achievement, and the successful delivery of the needed knowledge and skills to students.

While asking for specific features and/or activities that contributed to the program's success, several features appeared to be prominent: a U.S. business management program that is delivered by faculty from the United States with good credentials, providing useful knowledge and industrial experience to students, the full English instruction, and the course delivery mode. However the partners appeared to emphasize different aspects of the program.

On the Chinese side, participants emphasized the importance of having a term-based course schedule, which helped to ensure the academic quality of the program. The Chinese program co-director, who was a retired faculty member from the School of Business Management as well as the former director of the International Affairs Office at Fazhan University, shared his opinion about the importance of having such a term-based schedule:

Having the term system is really the most important piece. Our program is very different from other Sino-foreign educational program in that we have rigorous scholarship and education. How rigorous? That is, we maintain the traditional teaching-learning sequence in our program. Our professors come over for two months and have class sessions every week. Students have homework after every session. Professors discuss homework with students. For students, this is the best way to learn. But this is an extremely high cost on our side. Time for these professors is very precious. Once in a while, we have students suggesting changes to make the delivery model into a 3-4 day intense teaching one. If we do that, it will make our recruitment much easier, because part-time students prefer that model over our current one. But our partner didn't want to change. So I really appreciate our partner's forthrightness as a university with rigorous quality requirements like this. They are here to deliver knowledge, not just to sell credentials.

<div align="right">The Chinese program co-director</div>

Although participants on the Safron side, including leaders, administrators, and faculty members also talked about the quality assurance component of the program, they discussed specific ways that both institutions used to ensure the teaching quality of the IMBA program.

I think [both partners] have taken great steps to ensure that the people who teach here are experts in what they teach, their credentials are top notch─they have had experience teaching elsewhere. … [Safron University] actively measures the performance of the professor in the classroom─making sure that the professors update the courses every time they teach it. Both institutes keep a close eye on what the professors are teaching. They get feedback from the students. They make sure that the methodology involves students. Without dictating how things are going to be taught, the administration on both sides does involve itself with the professors to make sure the bar is raised instead of lowered.

<div align="right">Safron faculty</div>

Leaders and administrators also commented on two key factors that contributed to the success of the program: effective collaboration between the Chinese program director

and the on-site Safron coordinator, and the collective experience that had been developed

over the seven years of implementation.  For example, the on-site program coordinator

representing Safron University commented on why she felt the program had been

successful:

> I think all of those (operation). The operation structure (both
> administration and academic) and the uniqueness of our program
> (international faculty with regular term based teaching), [the experience]
> we have developed over the years. We have to maintain all of them. Also
> our recruitment strategies, as well as the share of responsibilities and
> collaborations between myself and professor [Chinese program director's
> name] in this team.
>
> <div align="right">Safron's on-site coordinator and representative</div>

Interestingly, this coordinator, who was appointed from Safron's side, worked

closely with the Chinese program co-director that she even took up tasks that were not

part of her job description. However, she was very committed to her work and shared

extremely personal respects towards both the Chinese program co-director and the Safron

China program director.  She described how she handled the "dual reporting" lines she

had used while working with both directors:

> My boss [The Safron China program director] gave me a lot of flexibilities.
> My official job responsibility only include promotion, facilitate
> communication between faculty and the Chinese. But in reality, I did a lot
> more. I worked together with professor [name of the Chinese program co-
> director] and [administrative staff member] on almost everything,
> recruitment, and student issues. Professor [The Chinese program co-
> director] respect me too. Therefore, I also report to him. You know, not
> the type of report from an employee to a boss, but more like giving
> feedbacks. All these things (outside of job description) had nothing to do
> with the U.S. side. My boss knows all about these. [He knows] what I do
> is good for the program. [Interestingly], he sometimes reminded me not to
> do too much, you know, like saying that don't make yourself work too

hard, you only need to do this and that. Americans stick to their rights and responsibilities like that.

<div align="right">Safron's on-site coordinator and representative</div>

Although participants from both partner institutions felt their collaborative program had been a success and that the collaboration should continue with its general design, each partner reported disappointing incidents or challenging aspects of the IMBA program. While efforts had been made to address some of the challenges, others remained unsatisfying. As the Chinese program director concluded his interview he ended by saying: "Anyhow, you see, this program is not without problems. There is nothing exceptional about it, nor nothing horrible. We are not thinking about expanding or becoming outstanding or anything like that, just try to maintain what we have. "

Research question 1.c asked about the similar and/or different views the partners of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program held about their current strategy. Based on these two sets of data, the partners' perceptions of the overall strategy as well as the key features were compared to examine the similar and different desirable strategies the partners held.

In summary, the findings suggest that at the overall strategy level, there was strong compatibility between the partner institutions, because each partner possessed the types of competitive advantages and resources that the other partner needed. With regard to the partners' views of the current chosen strategy, the data suggest that both partners appeared to be quite satisfied with what the program had achieved, with a set of shared assessment criteria that was very customer oriented. In particular, the partners perceived the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program as generally successful because the operation had been financially stable at a very low tuition rate while still being able to provide adequate

education that was well accepted by students and local employers. Moreover, the partners shared a highly collaborative team of administrators who were both committed and culturally sensitivity.

However, while both partners believed the program had demonstrated adequate educational quality, there appeared to be a mismatch between the partners' perceptions of the current quality assurance components for the IMBA program. Specifically, the Chinese participants focused on the program's delivery model that maintained a traditional teaching-and-learning process of a term system. The leader and faculty members from Safron tended to emphasize the faculty credentials and quality of course instruction. Nevertheless, such differences did not conflict with one another.

Moreover, a generally observed attitude from both sides throughout the interviews with participants revealed that the involved participants believed that things had improved over the past and both partners were committed to making the program better. These challenges and difficulties are presented and discussed in the next section.

*Changes to the Strategy*

This section presents findings around the changes that each partners made to the original strategy. During the course of program implementation, the partners both made modifications to their chosen strategies and will continue to consider future changes. These changes to the strategy were identified in this study as those initiatives and/or actions the partners mutually or unilaterally took in regard to their collaborative program. After reviewing the interview data, specific initiatives and critical incidents shared by interviewees were noted and summarized. These initiatives and incidents were then compared with other official documents to identify whether it was a modification made to

the original strategy.  Both mutually agreed upon changes and unilateral modifications were identified. These findings were synthesized to provide answers to research question 2.a, which asked about whether the partners had made changes to their original chosen strategies, and research question 2.b that asked about their consideration for future changes.

Moreover, participants from both sides, mostly leaders and administrators, shared the same opinion on the future of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program—that it should be "just to continue on exactly what we have been doing."  Thus, the researcher decided to present the pattern of desired changes for each partner without identifying the prior changes and future considerations.

*Cooperative Changes*

*Expanded academic exchange activities between partners.* One of the specific changes was that new academic exchange activities had been developed since the partnership was established through the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. Safron University allows credit transfers among all of its domestic and international campuses. Since the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was established, there have been short-term student exchange activities between Safron's home campus in [city name] and Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. U.S. students have come to Fazhan University for two weeks mostly for experiential learning and corporation visits. Safron-Fazhan IMBA students can also apply for a full-summer term study opportunity at Safron's home campus or choose to go on a ten-day corporate visit program in the U.S.

*Program quality assurance improvement.*  The Chinese program co-director and Safron University's on-site program coordinator have felt that the quality of instruction

continues to be an issue. Throughout the years, they experienced challenging incidents

due to problems with Safron faculty from poor instruction quality to issues of

discrimination and/or lack of cultural sensitivity. While they both trust that Safron

University hired qualified individuals either with Ph.D. degrees or Master's degrees with

extensive experiences in the field, the Chinese program co-director and the Safron on-site

coordinator both felt that just by looking at someone's résumé was not sufficient to make

the right decision. As a result, there has been some trial-and-fail about the faculty, as the

Chinese program co-director described,

> [Safron University] does not have a lot of full-time professors. They
> cannot afford that many (at the scale Safron has been operating). Most of
> them are adjuncts. Well, for adjunct faculty, the quality might not be very
> consistent. Some of them may have a lot of experience, but they do not
> know how to teach. Before [professors] come here, I review their résumés
> and backgrounds. Some look very nice, with many years of corporate
> experience and expertise and they are now teaching. But after the person
> comes, I sometimes feel that … students complain about the lack of
> systematic instruction or just bad teaching methods or styles.
>
> <div align="right">The Chinese program co-director</div>

The leader, administrator, and faculty on Safron's side acknowledged the issue

and clearly knew that their partner "hates it." They shared two major approaches about

how they tried to address these issues that have affected the quality of the Safron-Fazhan

IMBA program.  Safron University has already gradually increased their faculty pool by

accrediting qualified individuals and pointed out that the overall situation has

significantly improved over the past few years. The program leader and faculty both

pointed out that "people line up for China." so they are now able to choose "those who

want to come for the right reason, not just come to see [city name]. The leader shared that:

Now we have additional people who [we] can say 'Oh we had a problem with a professor. Can you come early and help us?' so that has been something that we didn't like; [Fazhan] people hated it and I think we are doing better. … We now we have professors scheduled almost all the way up to 2011.

Safron China Program director

Safron faculty and program leaders also worked together on the issues of cross-cultural sensitivity. For example, one of the interviewed faculty members developed a faculty handbook and orientation materials that Safron China Program uses at all Safron University programs in China.

*Obtaining legitimate accreditation for program credentials.* One of the notable changes that Safron University has made was to become a member of ACBSP in 2007. The Chinese program co-director remembers how things changed,

You know, Chinese students find out about things. There were prospective students who would question that. They find out that 'Oh, your (referring to Safron University) business school is not even a member of AACSB nor ACBSP system. You are not accredited.' So [Safron University] started to work on that accreditation. They started in 2005 and it costed them two or three years. They finally received it in 2007. I can see that they really made an effort during that period. The accreditation association, they have certain standards. ACBPS even sent a group of people to China several times. They didn't come here, but we had to submit all of their required materials for their review. After this, [Safron University] actually did a check of some of their faculty and made some improvements.

*Unilateral Changes*

*Decreased Chinese faculty involvement.* As discussed earlier, teaching assistants and course auditing opportunities were written into the original agreement. This arrangement was expected to provide a variety of learning opportunities for Fazhan University faculty. However, only in the first few years, have appointed junior faculty

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members from Fa-Zhan University sat in on the IMBA courses. No teaching assistant has been assigned in recent years.

One of the junior faculty members who served as a teaching assistant for the IMBA program in 2003 for one year, was working with the domestic EMBA program group at that time, and was sent by the program coordinator to "see how they teach." She shared extremely positive opinions about her experience as a teaching assistant and claimed that she learned various things from the Safron faculty member. She remembered:

> It was very helpful to me to know about his teaching style. The class was very interactive and it was very practical. They [Safron faculty in general] are practical and market oriented. What they teach in class focuses on things that students can actually apply in reality. [They use] a lot of case studies, pre-designed case studies, and introduced a lot of tools. Not like us, just some stories in the book.
>
> Chinese faculty

Nevertheless, based on the interviews with all three faculty members, the program leader and administrator, there has been a minimum level of communication between the faculty from both partners, as well as the administration team. Another interviewed faculty member who is currently teaching one of the introductory courses and used to be the coordinator for the domestic EMBA program at the time when Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was established, remembered:

> At that time, they still had a foreigner as the on-site coordinator. We were in the same office. He just sat right behind me. But since we belong to different programs, we didn't have much communication at all. Both programs were at a pilot stage. (Probe: Why was there not any sharing and communication?) Because the two programs employed completely different operation systems. EMBA has to comply with what our graduate school requires. We also used the traditional managerial style. But I think maybe nowadays, the [domestic] EMBA may have learned something from their operation styles.

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All interviewed participants felt that hardly any communication and collaboration between faculty had been arranged or developed for the two partners. There was simply no interest from Chinese faculty. As one of the Chinese faculty noted with emphasis: "No one organize anything like that! Actually, even if someone did organize something, [I think] nobody would go anyway!"

Interestingly, both Fazhan University and the school of business management have put a lot of funding and effort into developing their own faculty. According to the interviewed faculty members, in recent years, the school of business management has funded many young faculty members for their overseas training and other experiences. The school also just hired a number of Ph.D. returnees. However, because they tend to have heavy teaching and research loads, faculty are not interested in IMBA teaching assistant experience. Moreover, faculty from Safron University tend to be teaching oriented, while the Chinese faculty are mostly interested in research collaboration and co-authorship opportunities.  For example, one of them described:

> I hope there could be more communication, especially on the research side,
> to have more opportunities for research collaboration. For instance, if
> some of their faculty members are interested in China related issues, we
> can collaborate. We can help them get better materials and data. They can
> also help us in the same way. Communication in terms of teaching would
> still be good. But that is very rare.
>
> Chinese faculty

Throughout the discussion, faculty members all commented on the independence of the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program.  Communication and sharing between faculty as well as the administration team was mostly left to individual efforts and rare incidents.

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*Passive collaboration.* Besides the faculty issue that was discussed earlier, the other commonly raised concern was about students' English proficiency. While the leaders, administrator, and faculty member from both partner institutions talked about this as one of the challenges they encountered in the IMBA program, it appeared that nothing had been done in the past to address this issue and no future changes were suggested. In fact, the leader and on-site project coordinator believed that besides the training in business management that the program could provide to the local students, helping them achieve a higher level of English proficiency was another service the IMBA program offered and it had been successful in that respect.

In summary, as for the partners' desired strategies, data from the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program revealed that both partners (Safron University and Fazhan University) were both quite satisfied with their joint IMBA program, with the shared criteria. Both partners shared a mutual understanding that the quality of Safron-Fazhan IMBA program had to meet enrolled students' and the potential markets' expectations, emphasizing the measurable and observable criteria such as class sessions and schedules, as well as program and faculty credentials. Nevertheless, the two partners appeared to have different concerns. More specifically, both sides still agreed on the overall delivery model of the IMBA program, but the only observed discrepancy between the partners was Fazhan University's concern about faculty and teaching quality, and Safron University's dissatisfaction towards students' English proficiency.

Answer to the Main Research Questions from Case Two:

Safron-Fazhan IMBA Program

Previous sections presented findings from the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program on all five sub-questions that asked about the similarities and discrepancies between partners concerning 1) motivation and expected outcomes, 2) the utility function for each partner, 3) the desired features for the overall strategy, and 4) desired changes to the chosen strategy and future success. In this section, the researcher has integrated these findings to generate the final answers to the two main research questions. These questions are:

1. To what extent do partner institutions in a cross-border higher program share similar views about their collaboration?

2. How do partners' similar and/or different views of the inter-organizational partnership and collaboration impact the implementation of the cross-border higher education program?

*Comparison of Partners' Views on the Safron-Fazhan IMBA Program*

The researcher synthesized and interpreted the findings for the three sub-questions concerning partnership motivations and expected outcomes, preferences, and desired strategies to answer the first main question for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program case.

First, the partner institutions (Safron and Fazhan) share the same type of motivations and expected outcomes concerning brand recognition, strategic positioning, and revenue generation, but each had its own set of interests concerning the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program delivery. Nevertheless, the partner institutions appeared to have a clear understanding about the reasons that each organization became involved in the collaborative IMBA program delivery, and the general expected outcomes the other side hoped to achieve. Both partner institutions believed that the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program was not for-profit, but rather would operate mostly at a break-even point so as to

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achieve the mutually agreed upon goal of providing "affordable high quality business management program."

Different perceptions about capacity development and learning between partners were identified. Specifically, the Safron leader believes that the Chinese partners aimed at organizational learning, an implicit learning style through which knowledge and information is being transferred among involved individuals from Safron University to Fa-Zhan University. However, the Chinese partner mostly perceived capacity development at the institutional level as adding program diversity, with probably good hopeful thinking for more implicit information sharing and learning among individual and /or across different programs.

Second, both partner institutions' identified utility function appeared to be very similar and highly compatible, especially around the officially agreed upon partner goal. Both partners agreed upon three important aspects of their expected outcomes, including program quality, cost and pricing, and the Chinese region where it should be delivered. As a result, the preference level for both partners was almost identical: to establish a regionally well-recognized MBA program with adequate quality that satisfied the needs of the enrolled students and the potential market, with a financial situation exceeding break-even.

Third, both partners appeared to be quite satisfied with what the program had achieved, particularly because the operation had been financially stable at such a low tuition rate while still able to achieve a good reputation among alumni and within the region. Program leaders and administrators from both sides used this good reputation

among students to provide the needed knowledge and skills as their criteria when

describing the program's success and adequate quality.

*Impact of the Partners' Similar and Different Views on Program Implementation*

In this section, the researcher first presented the compatibility and potential

conflicts identify in the four major components between partners, including the

motivations and expected outcomes, the utility functions, the overall strategy, and the

changes to the chosen strategy. Table 16 and Table 17 present these compatible and

contradictory views, respectively. Emerged Patterns and relationships are synthesized to

demonstrate potential connections between the partners' perceptions about the

collaborative program and the implementation strategy.

Table 16. Compatibility between the partners' perceptions across the four main components

| Compatibility | Fa-Zhan University | Safron University |
|---|---|---|
| Motivation and expected outcomes | • Brand reputation and strategic positioning in terms of first mover in the internationalization process<br>• Capacity building with regard to program diversity<br>• Revenue generation | • International visibility and program creditability<br>• Strategic positioning in China and western China<br>• Revenue generation |
| Utility function | • The most desired outcome: to successfully collaborate with an accredited foreign university in delivering a solid MBA program that owns a credible academic reputation in the local region, with a financial situation exceeding break-even.<br>• Financially breaking even would be the bottom line for the collaboration. | • The most desired outcome to successfully deliver an affordable MBA program in an internationally promising market with a credible academic reputation with a financial situation better than break-even.<br>• Adequate program quality has to be maintained, both in regard to students (enrolled and potential students) satisfaction and program accreditation.<br>• Financially breaking even could be the bottom line for the collaboration, depending on the strategic importance and how promising that potential market appeals to Safron University. |
| Overall strategy | • Financially stable or better with a low tuition rate while still able to provide adequate quality and knowledge to students and maintain a good reputation in the local region<br>  • Current course delivery model<br>• Effective and efficient collaboration within administration | • Financially stable or better with low tuition rate while still able to provide adequate quality and knowledge to students and maintain a good reputation in the local region<br>• Reduce cost in faculty accommodations |
| Changes to the chosen strategy | • Strengthen the academic component<br>  • Extend academic connections (student exchange program)<br>  • Ensure quality instruction and quality faculty<br>• Strengthen marketing and program promotion | • Strengthen the academic component<br>  • Extend academic connections (student exchange programs)<br>  • Accreditation for the program<br>  • Preparing faculty with cultural sensitivity<br>• Strengthen marketing and program promotion |

As illustrated in Table 16, both partners' motivations and expected outcomes, appeared to be highly compatible even though they were stated differently. Both partners wanted to complement one another. Brand reputation and strategic positioning in the local region for a well-recognized flagship local university would help the foreign partner's efforts in achieving some level of credibility in the local region. The local partner potentially would be able to host a foreign program of accredited quality at a very low cost. Moreover, having an international education provided through Fazhan University not only means adding program diversity, but more importantly, it sends a good signal about the university's (or the School of Business Management in this case) overall capacity. Therefore, both partners' expected outcomes focused more on reputation and market positioning rather than generating more revenue. As long as the two partners continued to use accreditation and market (or student) satisfaction as their primary quality assurance criteria, cooperation could be sustained.

Table 17. Potential conflicts between the partners' perceptions across four main components

| Compatibility | Fazhan University | Safron University |
|---|---|---|
| Motivation and expected outcomes | • Brand reputation and strategic positioning with regard to internationalization | • Expand program scale |
| Utility function | • Adequate program quality has to be maintained to the extent that the regionally well-recognized academic reputation would not be sacrificed | • Larger program scale would be preferred to the extent that program credentials and a good market reputation can be maintained. |
| Overall strategy | N/A | N/A |
| Changes to the chosen strategy | N/A | N/A |

Note: Empty cells mean no applicable information was identified.

Nevertheless, potential conflicts still exist between the U.S. partner's expansion motivations versus the local partner's protection of the already established brand reputation; however, no conflicting changes and/or future desires of the partners' current chosen strategy were identified in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program (Table 17). Currently, both partners want to establish a strategic position in the local education market as an institution with a good reputation in delivering an international business management program. Both shared a mutual understanding that the current potential market for the collaborative IMBA program has been a small one, but with greater potential in the future. Although expaning operation scale was one of Safron University's motivation and expected outcomes, it appeared that the university might consider creating new program sites to achieve such goal rather than expand enrollment number for the Safron-Fazhan IMBA program. However as Fa-Zhan University gradually builds up its own capacity in delivering similar programs to the extent that a market-acceptable program quality does not fit with its home reputation, the university may decide to terminate such a collaboration.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings from the two studied cases and presents the conclusions and theoretical implications. The discussion integrates the findings from the two cases and the related literature to provide conclusions and recommendations in response to each of the research questions. The rest of the chapter discusses potential theoretical and practical implications, policy recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

This study examined two Sino-U.S. business management programs at the master's level, involving two pairs of universities (a Chinese and a North American university for each pair) in China with the purpose of examining discrepancies and similarities between the partner institutions' perceptions of their cross-border higher educational programs from a game theory perspective. The two U.S. partner institutions represent different types of universities: 1) a top-rated business school with a strong research focus at a well-known large public university, and 2) a private non-profit university with a teaching focus and a large number of extended campuses both within the U.S. and across the globe. While both of the Chinese partners are well-respected flagship universities in China (one in the eastern part and the other in the western region), each has its own distinctive features. That is, one is a College of Economics and Business Management with strong international connections and traditionally well-established economics programs but striving for a new focus on management while the other business school has a shorter history but has a unique business management program specifically targeting the field of electronics and informational engineering.

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Research Question One: To What Extent do the Partner Institutions in a Cross-border

Higher Education Program Share Similar Views about their Collaboration?

Research question one addressed the core issue of higher education institutional

collaboration as it concerns not only the partner institutions' understanding about the

collaborative programs from their own perspectives, but also their understanding of their

partners' perspectives. This study examined the involved partner institutions' views about

the collaborative program in regards to four main components: motivations and expected

outcomes, level of preferences for the identified outcomes, mutually desired strategies,

and desirable future changes. For each of these components, the partners' perspectives

were synthesized based on opinions shared from key stakeholder groups and the official

documents of the partner institutions and the collaborative programs. Most importantly,

the involved partners' perceptions of their counterparts were also identified and

compared to examine similarities and discrepancies.

This study found similar motivations and expected outcomes that are discussed in

the literature of cross-border higher education and internationalization in higher

education. However, previous discussions either attribute specific motivations to local or

foreign institutions separately, or question the underlying real economic return motives

for foreign institutions, or emphasize the academic educational development motivation

from participating in a cross-border higher educational program (Altbach & Knight, 2006;

Larsen et al., 2004; Saffu & Mamman, 2000; Tang & Nollent, 2007; Verbik & Jokivirta,

2005; Vincent-Lancrin, 2007; Zhang, 2003). More specifically, the importing institutions'

motivations and expected outcomes are largely underexplored but rather are only

generally inferred from what was articulated from national and governmental

perspectives (Feng & Gong, 2006, cited in Cao, 2004; Sun, 2004; Tang & Nollent, 2007; Zhou, 2003).

This study found that regardless of the institutions' home country (China or the United States) and their institutional type, similar types of motivations and expected outcomes were identified across all four participating institutions (those with official accreditation), including both the Chinese and the U.S. partner institutions involved in the two studied cases (Tantru China EMBA program and Safron-Fazhan IMBA program). These motivations and expected outcomes included 1) brand recognition and academic reputation, 2) strategic positioning, 3) capacity development and learning, and 4) revenue generation. However, institutions appeared to have different interpretations of these openly stated motivations and expected outcomes, based on their own institutional contexts.

As for the partners' levels of preference for the identified expected outcomes, the findings suggested that within each partner institution, faculty and administrations (including leaders) sometimes placed a different level of emphasis on expected outcomes, even though key stakeholder groups shared a common understanding around the institutional motivations and expected outcomes mostly as a baseline outcome.

The key participants from both partner institutions also tended to apply their own interpretation references to their partners, which led to misperceptions between the partners. Between the partners, the participants' understanding of each other's level of preferences for expected outcomes varied between the two studied cases. A more accurate interpretation of each partner's motivations and expected outcomes was found in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA case and their perceptions about each other's level of

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preference aligned well. For the Tantru China EMBA case, however, there was hardly any institutional consensus identified. Even among the involved leaders, the partner's perceived preferences varied greatly. The partners in the EMBA program also tended to have misperceptions about each other's motivations, expected outcomes, and preferences towards these outcomes.

*Motivations, Expected Outcomes, and Level of Preference*

The findings about the partners' motivations and expected outcomes from this study strongly resonated with the resource dependency theory and strategic positioning theory from the strategic alliances literature. The partners' expected outcomes for brand recognition, academic reputation, strategic positioning, and having the programs financial self-sustainable were found to be the most mutually desired outcomes and were highly compatible. There were also cost reduction and organizational learning incentives for both partners (the later was more prominently found on the Chinese side).  However, based on the partners' preferences for their potential outcomes, these two sets of reasons appeared to be more like nice additions, rather than the decisive factors.

Brand recognition, academic reputation, strategic positioning.  For both the Chinese and the U.S. partners, regardless of their institutional type, the most desired outcomes included developing brand recognition, an academic reputation, and strategic position of the home institution in the perceived educational market (either globally or regionally), along with operating within a sufficient break-even budget.  With its huge population and growing economy, China has become a potential market for institutions with a global outlook of their future development. Institutions from the United States have generally been interested in establishing an internationally recognized brand and

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academic reputation at a global level. Similarly, the Chinese institutions are driven by the same reasons. It was important for both the Chinese and the foreign institutions to have a presence in this large market with great potential. Such a presence is closely related to the outcomes around brand recognition and academic reputation.

The partners' motivations and expected outcomes in these three aspects were highly compatible because the comparative advantages and resources possessed by one partner were difficult and costly for the other partner to obtain by working alone. For both studied cases, the most appealing feature for the Chinese partners was to have a U.S. partner offering a U.S.-designed business management degree in China so that they were able to strategically position themselves among other competitive peer organizations (nationally or regionally). The Chinese partners emphasized that U.S. universities are leading experts in the field of business management and Chinese universities have not had domestically developed business management educational programs. Therefore, the best way was to have a U.S. partner who has this type of expertise.

The most appealing aspect for the two involved U.S. institutions included the strategic importance of China at a global level, the partners' knowledge of several factors including the local sociopolitical environment, Chinese business practices, the local market, and Chinese culture, and a well-recognized local brand and academic reputation. To successfully position themselves among their peers in an increasingly globalized higher education market, the U.S. partners wanted to establish their presence around the world. In China, these features are important not only because the Chinese government requires such collaboration, but also because the U.S. institution could not easily obtain the knowledge and reputation their Chinese partners have. The ready-to-use facilities

available at the Chinese universities were another plus. Therefore, the joint-venture model became the mutually desired strategy for the Chinese and U.S. partners, compared to other models such as a branch campus or exchange program model.

Therefore, the Chinese institutions wanted to add an international feature to the traditionally developed institutional profile so as to demonstrate their capabilities in providing programs with internationally compatible standards compared to peer institutions within and/or across the local region. In contrast, the U.S. institutions needed to establish their presence in a particularly unfamiliar market of which they might not have adequate brand recognition or an established academic reputation.

*Revenue generation.* Revenue generation was also an important motivation and expected outcome for all involved universities. Although individuals all down played revenue generation as a motivation, they all acknowledged that revenue was absolutely a critical expected outcome for these institutions. Different expectations as to how much of a surplus the joint program should be able to generate may exist, but maintaining a break-even budget was the bottom line for all involved institutions, private or public, research-oriented or teaching-oriented.

With no government subsidies provided for such high-cost international programs, it was legitimate that the involved institutions to make revenue generation an important outcome. As higher education increasingly becomes subsidized by individuals, institutions have to make ends meet. It is not so much of a problem for cross-border higher educational programs when revenue generation is considered, but it may become a problem for the partner institutions when it comes to a cost-effectiveness analysis,

especially when other expected outcomes such as brand recognition, academic reputation, and capacity development are involved.

Cross-border higher education and strategic alliances literature has also pointed out that organizations establish collaborations and alliances because they want to save transaction costs and start up costs, among other costs. This study found that cost reduction and cost sharing were other appealing features prompting the involved institutions to favor the joint-venture model over a more expensive model such as an international branch campus, but these savings were not the most important ones. Reducing startup costs was prominent in the Safron-FaZhan IMBA case. Except for the cost involved in partner selection and negotiation, Safron University had close to zero input until the program had recruited its first cohort. In the Tantru China EMBA case, the cost was shared equally including the initial endorsement money. The U.S. partner favored the co-teaching arrangement not only because it helped to reduce costs and work load from the U.S. faculty, but also because such an arrangement defined the program's critical academic feature—the global-local curriculum. Nevertheless, if it were not for of the needed resources from the local partners such as a supporting local brand, reputation, and local knowledge, the U.S. institutions could have chosen a different strategy.

Another interesting finding was that the actual outcomes in regard to these motivations (brand recognition, academic reputation, strategic positioning, and revenue generation) differed across institutions, not so much between the Chinese and the United States, but more so by the partner institutions' academic reputations. In particular, the more renowned partner institutions in the EMBA case were looking for brand recognition internationally (both national and international regions for the Chinese partner-YCC)

with a leading academic reputation for excellence in the field of business management. The partner institutions in the IMBA case were expecting an outcome of an added international credential. Although also a well-recognized flagship university like the other Chinese partner in the EMBA case, the business school of the Chinese partner in the IMBA case had not yet gained an equally elite academic reputation in the field of business education, but with a reputation of holding rigorous academic standards. The U.S. partner in this case brought an international curriculum and market-acceptable credentials at an affordable price for the western region of China.

As demonstrated from the studied cases, brand recognition, academic reputation, strategic positioning, and a break-even budget were the most important expected outcomes mutually desired by all institutions at least for the first stage of establishing the joint programs. Nevertheless, as the joint programs continue to grow and become stable in the regional market, the institutions' preferences for these outcomes might change, especially in regards to an increased relative importance of revenue generation.

The partner institutions in the Tantru China EMBA program clearly illustrate how different preferences of the outcomes of brand promotion and academic reputation, strategic positioning, and revenue generation can diverge between partners. Once the collaborative program evolved into a solidly development stage, the U.S. partner, a top-rated business school from a renowned public university in the United States, believed its brand name and academic reputation had been successfully established in China. At the same time, the goal of providing learning opportunities for faculty was achieved because of the direct presence of the school's core faculty members in China. On the other hand, after ten years of collaboration and rapid developed institutional capacity, the Chinese

partner was no longer satisfied with simply adding an international component to their brand name, but wanted a stronger presence in the joint program and continued to promote the elite brand recognition to an extended region (national or international regions).

Mutually recognized major parameters that both partners used to evaluate the actual outcomes and clear understanding of each other's perspectives appeared to be important. The case studies demonstrate that the more recent cost-effective analysis each partner applied appeared to be different and posed challenges, especially for the Tantru China EMBA program where the partners did not have a shared understanding about each other's expectations around the academic quality and the breadth of the potential market. In contrast, in the Safron-FaZhan IMBA case, the two partners had a better agreement on the assessment criteria for the joint program's academic quality as well as the potential market range, so the partners were more content with the current enrollment size of the joint program. As a result, these two partners continued to share a mutual understanding about the academic reputation they would like to achieve and agreed upon the western region of China as their current goal for brand influence.

*Capacity development/learning.* The cross-border higher education literature has pointed out that developing countries invite quality foreign institutions and programs into their nation-states because they want to increase local access to higher education, to enhance the quality of the local educational programs' teaching and research faculty, and/or increase the variety and relevance of domestic education to meet the growing market demand (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007). However, while some developing countries have claimed that there has been noticeable improvement and benefits from cross-border

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higher education such as Malaya and Singapore, other developing countries such as

South Africa have reported very few positive results, if not negative results (OECD,

2008). Scholars have cautioned that, overall, there has been little evidence to support any

direct contribution to capacity development from these newer forms of cross-border

higher education endeavors (OECD, 2008). They emphasized that to achieve capacity

development outcomes, developing countries need appropriate policies and a clear

framework for regulations (OECD, 2008; Vincent-Lancrin, 2007).

This study found that capacity development was often a stated motivation and

expected outcome for the Chinese partners; however, the U.S. institutions also seemed to

have learning expectations from the collaborative program for their involved faculty and

students back home. In general, participants from the U.S. institutions did not fully

understand what their partners were expecting in this area. Moreover, it was unlikely that

either the Chinese or the U.S. side would prioritize a capacity development outcome as

the most important one nor invest to facilitate such development within the collaborative

programs. Instead, capacity development appeared to be presumed as a by-product of the

actual provision of the program. Therefore, even in a country like China that has

developed quite specific national policies and some quality assurance mechanisms to

guide cross-border collaborative programs, the presumed outcomes of capacity

development at the institutional and individual levels are largely left unfulfilled, or in

better cases, not maximized.

More specifically, this study found that almost all of the interviewees from the

Chinese partner institutions talked about capacity building as a key component of their

participation in a cross-border higher education program, whether as a perceived benefit

or as an actual outcome. Findings from the two studied programs illustrated that leaders, administrators, and faculty referred to capacity at three levels: the system and sector level, the institutional level, and the individual level. At the system and sector level, capacity referred to a more developed and advanced curriculum for the field that had not been traditionally established within the nation. It also referred to fulfilling a responsibility to prepare the local work force with much needed knowledge and skills. At the institutional level, capacity referred to an enhancement of program variety and implicit learning about the curriculum and program operations. Finally, the individual level referred to communication between faculty and/or administrators from the two institutions about teaching and other communications with potential connections to a broader international academic community.

For the U.S. partners, if there were any capacity related outcomes expected, they tended to be limited to the faculty's experiential learning and to the indirect benefits for students back home. Such an outcome was found to be closely related to brand reputation and academic quality. For the more renowned U.S. partner, the core faculty group ensured an elite reputation for its brand identity and academic quality. Although the less renowned U.S. partner did not have any stated goal for capacity development, the institution worked on cross-culture appropriateness to improve teaching quality from a quality assurance aspect.

Nonetheless, these capacity development opportunities tended to be left to chance when there were no specific institutional policies, organizational structure, or resource investment that facilitated and sustained the academic and/or scholarly communication and collaboration with the partners' home institutions. Even when some learning

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opportunities existed for the involved faculty members, the marginal effects also dropped significantly over time if there was no systematic support to expand such results to a great extent.

Finally, the differences between the partners' understanding about capacity contributed to the partners' misperceptions in the EMBA case. More specifically, the business school at the University of Tantru, while strongly interested in faculty learning opportunities and the development of a global-and-local curriculum, failed to realize that the Chinese partner was most likely to be satisfied with gains at the system/sector and the institutional levels and were willing to forgo opportunities at the individual level.

These findings also echoed the organizational learning theory from the strategic alliances literature that institutions might have such motivations as they enter into a collaboration (Child & Faulkner, 1998; Hamel, 1991; Inkpen, 1998); however, this study further demonstrates that without strong intentions and a formal investment, the extent to which such implicit learning occurs during a collaborative program could be very limited or highly dependent on the involved individuals. Thus, it may take a long time to realize the actual effect from implicit organizational learning.

For example, the setup of the two studied Sino-U.S. cases both incorporated opportunities for organizational learning although they had different features in their delivery structures: in the EMBA case they had a co-teaching model between faculty from both partners plus junior faculty (and/or graduate students) as teaching assistants versus in the IMBA case where they had a divided intro- and major-courses model. The Chinese partners either had one of two teaching models: 1) they had a few of their leading senior faculty members co-teaching with their U.S. peers hoping to learn about

the U.S. style curriculum and course development, the different teaching styles, the evaluation process of both teaching and student learning, the academic decision-making process, and the program operations system; or 2) they had junior faculty and/or graduate students involved as teaching assistants so they could benefit from in-class observation and facilitation with the more experienced foreign and/or local faculty members.

Comparing the two studied cases, the EMBA Chinese partner gained more in regard to organizational learning because of the more institutionalized co-teaching arrangement and the prominent positions of the partner institution's faculty members and leaders. As a result, the spillover effect from the Tantru China EMBA program to the host partner institution was substantial. When such learning efforts were challenged by reality, the involved leaders were able to exercise other powerful influences through alternative means. For example, to encourage more Chinese faculty to serve as teaching assistants in the EMBA program, one of the YCC leaders required "experience in Tantru (China) EMBA program" as an informal prerequisite for junior faculty members who wanted to teach in YCC's other domestic MBA program.

In contrast, the divided course delivery in the Safron-Fazhan IMBA case did not have any institutionalized component to support organizational learning between the Chinese and the U.S. partners. Without strong involvement from the core faculty and college leaders from the Chinese partner institution, communication between the Chinese and Safron faculty was minimized to the few involved faculty who served as teaching assistants. Moreover, even though they were housed in the same building and the same office, the IMBA administration team functioned independently with minimum communication with the other faculty members and staff team.

Research Question Two: How do Partner's Similar and/or Different Views of the Inter-

organizational Partnership Impact the Implementation of the Cross-border Higher

Educational Program?

Research question two addressed the practical aspects of cross-border higher

educational programs related to how the partners' shared and divergent views played out

in their chosen strategies of delivering foreign degree programs in collaboration with

their other partners. The two studied cases represented a joint-venture model that the

partners mutually desired and chose as the main strategy to actualize their motivations

and expected outcomes for the cross-border higher educational endeavor.

Findings from this study suggest that the strong compatibility between the

partners' motivations, expected outcomes, and the preferences of various outcomes made

the joint-venture model most appealing to both the Chinese and the U.S. institutions. This

compatibility mostly focused on the outcomes of brand recognition, academic reputation,

strategic positioning, and financial sustainability of the collaborative programs. Potential

conflicts also existed between the partners' preferences around these outcomes in the

long run, especially between brand promotion and revenue generation. As the

collaborative programs continued to evolve and possible external environmental changes

occurred, so did the partners' expected outcomes and the related preferences. As a result,

the partners tried to make changes and/or added new components to the original chosen

strategy. Therefore, although the collaborative programs had been successfully

established with the chosen desired strategies, there were potential conflicting

discrepancies between the partners' expected outcomes and preferences for various

aspects of the desired strategies at a later stage.

From a game theory perspective, the selected case was structured as a collaboration game in which the partners perceived payoffs from the common interests that grew out of their own self-interests. As a result, in general, the Chinese and U.S. partners in these two programs planned to continue their collaborative programs through coordination and negotiation. In both cases, the involved partner institutions chose the overall strategy of delivering a collaborative U.S. higher-level business management program between the Chinese and U.S. institutions over other operational strategies such as an international branch campus, twinning collaboration, franchising, articulation, and individual exchange programs (such as a student exchange program or hosting visiting scholars). They chose this strategy not only because of the government regulation constraints, but also because each institution had certain competitive advantages that the other partner mostly desired, based on their own institutional context and values toward cross-border higher education in general.

During the course of the program's development, the mutually desired outcome the partners had always agreed upon were brand recognition, academic reputation, and being financially stable. In both cases, the changes they cooperatively acted upon were related to the mutually desired outcomes around brand recognition and academic reputation, as well as ensuring a break-even budget. For example, the partners worked together to ensure the quality of their programs to achieve their desired brand recognition and academic reputation. The IMBA partners made efforts to gain market-preferred accreditation for the program, to ensure better faculty credentials and in-class instruction. In contrast, the EMBA partners managed to use their best faculty resource (outside hiring

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on the Chinese side) to achieve the desired academic excellence and become one of the most recognizable international programs in China.

As for the revenue generation outcomes, the partners in both cases agreed upon a baseline outcome: a break-even budget. None of the involved institutions wanted to lose money in their international collaboration, but revenue generation would become meaningless if it were considered alone. Instead, all of the partner institutions tied the revenue outcomes to brand recognition and academic reputation. For example, the IMBA partners tried to reduce their operational costs, such as providing standard accommodations for on-site teaching faculty and using an effective marketing plan at a low cost, while the EMBA partners added extra incentives to facilitate faculty participation from the U.S. campus and spent more money to hire more renowned outside faculty to compensate for the lack of faculty participation from the Chinese partner.

However, unilateral modifications to the chosen strategy were also found in both cases, mostly on the Chinese partners' side, relating to the capacity development outcome. The Chinese and U.S. institutions did not share a mutual expectation about this outcome. The partners' perceived relative importance of the capacity related outcomes were different, compared to the outcomes of brand recognition, academic reputation, and revenue generation. In the EMBA case, faculty learning and the benefits to the students back home were compatible with the U.S. partner's most desired outcomes of brand recognition and academic reputation. On the other hand, the Chinese partners used capacity at the national and sector levels and/or diversifying the institutional program to justify the capacity goal, but passed over the more implicit and possibly more costly type of capacity development at both the institutional and individual levels. As a result, the

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partners either cooperatively agreed to forgo the capacity related outcomes, or developed new initiatives that led to mistrust and misperceptions about each other's real intents for the collaborative program.

For the collaborative game structures that were identified from the two studied cases, any involved institutions would most likely achieve and maximize their mutually desired outcomes around brand recognition, academic reputation, strategic positioning; however, the expectations around capacity development and large revenue generation would be left unmet or not maximized. Just as the mutually desired outcomes were conditioned on the collaborative program's ability to be financially breaking even, revenue generation as an outcome would be also contingent upon adequate program quality and high operational cost. As long as the partners' preferences and the external policy environment did not change, institutional and individual level capacity development as an outcome would not be maximized through a collaborative program similar to the cases in this study. Even if both partners had some capacity related outcomes, just like the EMBA case in this study, when rationalized through the collaborative game structure identified in this study, both partners would forgo what they could achieve most but would settle for a secondary desirable outcome.

More specifically, in an ideal situation, where both the Chinese partner and the U.S. partner valued the outcomes of capacity building through the collaboration, they would both contribute to strengthening this outcome, because such results would presumably be beneficial for both partners, as well as the collaborative program. That is, for the Chinese partner, more advanced institutional and individual resources could be introduced into the Chinese educational system and be fully integrated into its own

institutional capacity and have an impact on the development of the Chinese faculty and staff. This type of cooperation could also benefit the foreign institution, like the U.S. partner in the EMBA case, as well as the cross-border program itself in that the involved U.S. institution would perceive the global-and-local curriculum as an improvement and development of its own academic curriculum. This, in turn, also would lead to an enhanced quality of the collaborative program due to the enhanced relevancy of the foreign education program in the local context.

In this type of game structure, in regards to the outcomes of capacity development, both partners have two strategies from which to choose. The Chinese partner could either do everything they could to maximize the outcome of capacity development at all three levels (system, institution, and individual), or they could do nothing more than what was needed to maintain the high academic quality of their collaborative program. The U.S. partner simply had two strategies to respond to the Chinese partner: to cooperate or not to cooperate. With the partners' different strategy choices, each partner achieved somewhat different payoffs.

As for the U.S partners, regardless of which strategy the Chinese partner chose, they would choose to collaborate, as long as local participation in the academic aspect would not lower the quality of the program. If the local partner had adequate academic personnel to participate, it would be the best. However, if the local partner did not have such capacity to participate, the U.S. partner would probably be better off with minimum academic collaboration (for example, only allowing teaching assistants or in-class observations from the local partner staff) but take full charge of the academic affairs of the program. As the two studied cases illustrate, neither of the U.S. partners showed any

non-collaborative responses to this unilateral change from the Chinese side nor did they challenge the existence of the program.  Instead, the U.S. institutions both passively cooperated, because as long as they were the ultimate decision makers on academic affairs, the outcomes for brand recognition and academic reputation would not be affected.

The only differences between the two cases was that while the IMBA U.S. partner was not bothered by the lack of global-local curriculum collaboration and decreased Chinese faculty participation, the EMBA U.S. partner mostly expressed their disappointment with the missing piece of the global-local curriculum.  For the EMBA U.S. partner, although they preferred collaboration and communication with the Chinese faculty and would have liked to use their expertise on the academic side because of the perceived quality enhancement for the global-local curriculum, the incentive was not enough.  This was because the EMBA U.S. partner (both faculty and leaders) saw the benefit of the co-teaching component mostly related to the translation and application of the more advance theoretical and scientific findings to the local context.  In addition, the faculty-learning component desired by the U.S. partner was not specifically related to their co-teachers but more broadly to China and the local business community.  The decreased perceived benefit of having an YCC member or a qualified faculty member from another institution to deliver the course was not significant enough for the U.S. partner to actually walk away from the collaboration. Therefore, the U.S. partners would continue with the originally chosen strategy, regardless of what their Chinese partners did with the capacity and learning related components, as long as the modifications did not affect the overall program quality and reputation.

Given that the collaborative program was successfully established and financially self-sustainable, as long as the foreign partner provided academically sound curriculum and high-quality foreign faculty resources, the Chinese education system benefitted at the macro level no matter what. Further, the Chinese institution evaluated the payoffs for whether to facilitate further integration at the institutional and individual levels during implementation. The potential cost for the Chinese partners to integrate concerned not only direct costs such as faculty salaries, but also other non-financial costs such as changing departmental policies and organizational structures to facilitate more local faculty involvement. The potential organizational changes could have been costly especially when organizational norms were challenged. The two choices for the Chinese partner were: 1) with a much higher cost, they could choose to localize the curriculum, facilitate more interaction and communication with the foreign experts, and further prepare the faculty and staff; or 2) at a comparatively much lower cost, they could choose not to localize, simply by hosting the foreign faculty and presenting the entire foreign curriculum to the students.

While the first choice would presumably enlarge the long-term benefits for the Chinese institution's capacity development, the difference between the short-term pay-offs from these two choices would be small, if not negative. Therefore, the Chinese universities would most likely take advantage of the more cost-effective choice based on their most desirable outcomes to not localize or incorporate foreign academic resources or to do less than what they could have done. As a result, the capacity development component did not receive much specific investment, but mostly was left to chance and rare individual efforts. The two studied cases demonstrated the same pattern of unilateral

changes on the Chinese side. That is, their faculty involvement significantly decreased over the years, both for co-teaching or the teaching assistant component.

In the identified collaboration game structure from the two studied cases, the Chinese partners' more cost-effective choice in regard to individual level capacity development also added more incentives in their most desirable outcome for brand recognition and academic reputation. In the EMBA case, it turned out that hiring outside faculty increased the financial cost, but it was a comparatively quick and easy solution and also helped maintain a high profile for the collaborative program. For the IMBA case, the Chinese faculty members who taught the introductory courses in the program received the local standard salary for teaching, which was significantly less than the salary for foreign faculty.  For the Chinese partner in the IMBA case, without a strong academic reputation in the traditional area of business management, using their own faculty and curriculum could have led the local market (prospective students) to interpret that the involvement of local faculty produced lower quality for the collaborative program; thus, it would have been a negative payoff. This meant that the Chinese partners' unilateral changes in the capacity related component did not affect the partners' most desirable outcomes, but may have contributed more to it (branding effect and academic reputation for the EMBA case; market-oriented academic reputation and cost savings for the IMBA case).

As a result, the capacity development component for the Sino-U.S. collaborative program did not receive much specific investment on the Chinese side, but mostly was left to chance and rare individual efforts. In fact, both involved Chinese institutions tried alternatives that were not directly related to the collaborative programs but were more

cost-effective ways to quickly build capacity at the institutional and individual levels. These alternatives included actively recruiting foreign-trained returnees to China and supporting international training and collaboration activities for Chinese faculty.

There may be several ways that both partner institutions could have chosen to facilitate capacity development in their cross-border higher education programs; however, the above presented game structure would hold true for this form of cross-border higher education unless the perceived payoff structures changed significantly, either on the foreign provider side or the Chinese government side.

Finally, one of the key findings from this study was the potentially significant impact of a clear and shared understanding about each partner's perception of each other's motivation and preferences for program implementation. The two studied cases each demonstrated the importance of having a shared understanding between the partners, not only from one's own perspective, but also more importantly, from the partner's perspective. The partner's interpretation of the other party's motivation and expected outcomes greatly impacted the evaluation of the partner's preference. Different types of motivations, expected outcomes, and preferences are somewhat easy to identify, but different subtle interpretations and misperceptions tend to cause conflicts and mistrust.

For example, a comparison of the Tantru (China) EMBA program and the Safron-Fazhan IMBA case showed that, beside their overall compatibility around the outcomes of brand recognition, academic reputation, strategic positioning, and revenue generation, the partners in the IMBA program (Safron University and Fazhan University) had different categories of stated motivations and expected outcomes, one for expanding the operation scale and the other one for capacity development, respectively. In contrast, the

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EMBA partners shared very similar stated motivations and expected outcomes (brand recognition/strategic positioning, capacity development/faculty learning, revenue generation). Interestingly, the two IMBA partners had a good understanding about each other's expected outcomes and the related preferences. Consequently, the changes (both past changes and future desired changes) to their current chosen strategy were mostly mutually desired. The only unilateral change that was made on the Chinese side did not affect program implementation, mostly because it was not integrated into the original design. The EMBA partners, on the other hand, tended to interpret each other's expected outcomes and preferences from their own perspectives. Although the two partners might have shared similar language about their motivations and expected outcomes, the subtle differences between their interpretations and preferences for different outcomes posed challenges to the development of the partnership. Without a clear understanding about these misperceptions and subtle changes in the partners' perceived preferences, the EMBA partners' desired future changes diverged. As the Chinese institution continued to push for more brand promotion, the U.S. partners pushed for more effective marketing and recruitment for larger enrollment.

The development of the two studied cases illustrate when the self-interests of partners emerge and are not communicated and addressed properly, it might challenge the cooperative structure of the game. On the other hand, when partners share a clear and mutual understanding about their common goals, as well as self-interests, the collaboration continues with far fewer conflicts even though each partner holds onto its own self-interests. For example, the EMBA program showed more conflicts and mistrust in the recent development efforts while the IMBA program had always been highly

collaborative but kept working on the aspects that were dissatisfactory.  Nevertheless, an overall collaborative game structure still holds, so the partners in both studied cases could continue the collaboration through more communication and negotiation.

It is important to recognize the subtle differences and potential misperceptions about each other's expected outcomes, preferences, and the desired strategies because they could lead the partners to different and potentially conflicting tactics for the collaborative program. Furthermore, without a clear understanding of each other's interpretations around these expected outcomes, the partners tended to assume different reasons for their partners' new strategies, proposals, or ideas for further development of the program. Such assumptions may pose a potential threat to the trust between the partners, thus challenging the partnership.

<div align="center">Theoretical and Practical Implications</div>

Findings from the two studied cases showed that game theory was especially applicable not only explaining how and why the partners settled on their original chosen strategies to play their games (the cross-border higher educational program delivery), but more importantly, how the partners played out their intended outcomes by exercising different bargaining power and modifying the chosen strategies to maximize their shared and/or self-interests. Although the generalizability of this study is limited to similar types of partner institutions and a similar delivery model of a cross-border higher educational program, some of the key findings have both theoretical and practical implications.

As suggested by game theory, an in-depth understanding of the players who are involved in the game and the external sociopolitical environment are two important factors that facilitate a better interpretation of each partner's stated motivations, expected

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outcomes, and more precise assessment of each other's preferences. Consequently, with this understanding, the partners would be able to anticipate how the other side would react when circumstances changed, be prepared for the emerging embedded conflicts, and be proactive about the situation. A good example is Safron University's effort to obtain academic accreditation from quality assurance accrediting associations between 2005-2007. The Chinese MOE started the nationwide Sino-foreign collaborative program reviewing initiative in 2004. According to the government's initiative, all existing Sino-foreign collaborative programs had to conform to more rigorous standards released in 2003. This demonstrated the powerful influence from the policy environment and how it could actually change the players' preferences for different outcomes.

Another key issue to address for a collaboration game is the cooperation between partners to work towards shared interests over their self-interests. Such cooperation requires a great amount of trust. Partners always have some shared interests and some self-interests, but a new round of negotiation is needed when either, both, or one of the partners' preference levels change.  Strong trust between partners and open communication about each other's expectations and goals help make the negotiation process more constructive and beneficial for both partners.

To prevent problems in cross-border higher educational collaboration, formally writing the main expected outcomes could help to establish mutual understanding of the common ground that both parties agreed upon at the outset of the collaboration. The important factor that makes the formal writing work well as an effective guiding document rather than an empty agreement is that, major parameters of the mutually desired outcomes should be specified, while maintaining flexibility in allowing various

options to achieve those outcomes. The different findings from the two studied cases strongly suggest a positive impact of such an agreement around the main criteria about the outcomes. This agreement could ultimately help avoid misperceptions and future conflicts.

Partner institutions should constantly revisit their expectations for collaboration to ensure a shared understanding around potential outcomes and preferred strategies. In doing so, they may find nuance differences between how the partners perceive these shared goals, even if they use similar rhetoric. Leaders and involved staff members should attend to these issues through tactful and open communication, yet be direct and specific.

Strategic management theorists have found that a mechanism to increase the frequency of interaction and behavioral transparency would be effective in encouraging collaboration and cooperation (Parkhe, 1993). The differences between the two studied cases support this finding. Although this study is not a large-scale quantitative study that can be generalized to all other cross-border higher educational collaborative programs, the administrative structures of the studied Sino-U.S. programs are very representative of commonly observed programs from the field. This comparison of the different dynamics in relation to the partnership and understanding of each other's motivations and outcomes demonstrates the importance of having more frequent interaction and better behavioral transparency.

In the EMBA case, leaders and key staff from both partners met in person twice a year, once in November for the opening ceremony of the program and once in May for the graduation ceremony. Although there were frequent email exchanges and some

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phone conversations between the U.S. partner and the executive office, it was not as effective as the U.S. on-site representative that the U.S. partner in the IMBA case had. With the amount of authority that was granted to the on-site coordinator in the IMBA case, not only was the interaction more frequent and direct (face-to-face), collaboration and commitment was strongly established at the program site because the U.S. representative went out of his way to assume extra work (outside of his job descriptions) for the program operation. Moreover, in the EMBA case, the majority of the daily operations were left to the executive office, so much of the academic related communication between both sides was channeled through the executive director instead of the co-academic directors. As a result, the Chinese faculty were skeptical about the office's role in facilitating academic related issues even though everyone was very satisfied with the professional and efficient performance of the executive office.

Cross-cultural understanding emerged as an influential factor in cross-border higher educational collaborations. Better cross-culture communication and understanding greatly improved the behavioral transparency between the partners. Knowledge about local culture and communication competence to function in the local culture, especially for the involved key leaders, appeared to be influential and powerful. The findings from this study showed that the indirect and more reserved communication style on the Chinese side might have contributed to the misperceptions the U.S. partner developed in the EMBA case. In contrast, the involved participants on the Chinese side across the board were less challenged with their U.S. partners' communication style, partly because the U.S. style tends to be more open and direct. It is worth noting, however, that most of

the involved Chinese program leaders and faculty members had all studied abroad in

Western countries, and some had many years of work experience in the United States.

While the U.S. partner leaders in the EMBA case were constantly challenged by

the different communication styles from their Chinese partners, the key leader and faculty

members from the IMBA U.S. partner appeared to have greater understanding about the

Chinese as well as the local culture. One of the key differences may have been individual

personnel in the two programs. The Safron China program director from the U.S., who is

married to a Chinese wife and who has lived and worked in China for more than 10 years,

showed extremely culturally appropriate communication styles and served as an

important connection point and cushion between the two cultures during conflicts. As his

counterpart from the Chinese side commented with strong feelings:

> He is truly a China expert. Although he does not speak Chinese, he knows
> China (the Chinese cultural and sociopolitical context) well. Even if it
> were just an eyewink or a facial expression, he knows exactly what you
> want to say. Your (the Chinese) operational style, managerial system, he
> knows them all. So he has been super cooperative (in terms of program
> operation) here.
>                     The Chinese program co-director in the IMBA Program

Moreover, the switch from using a foreign on-site representative to a locally hired

professional had a great impact on the program's day-to-day operation and facilitated the

on-site faculty's cross-cultural communication issues.

Another factor that facilitated more frequent interaction and behavioral

transparency relates to the organizational structures that the partners adopted in their

collaborations. From an organizational structural perspective, the EMBA program

appeared to have a more integrated system than the IMBA case. The executive director

in the EMBA case was hired by both partners and reported to both sides of leadership.

However, the partners in the IMBA case each had their own representatives on-site. Interestingly, the two cases showed that an integrative model might not be more efficient in terms of facilitating communication between partners, but could introduce confusion because of unclear and overlapping reporting lines. When the Chinese partner and staff at the executive office both understood their neutral role and dual reporting responsibilities, the U.S. partner appeared to think of the executive office as "theirs." The distance differences between the executive office and the leadership at the two locations probably contributed to this unbalanced perception between the partners.

In the IMBA case, although the partners adopted a more parallel structure setup, the locally hired on-site U.S. representative worked for both sides in her daily work, but clearly wore her official hat when necessary. Program leaders from both sides were aware of the dual role she had assumed, but both leaders appreciated the outcome. In the back of their minds, they both knew the coordinator was, in fact, a U.S. representative and only responsible to the U.S. program leader.

The findings from this study strongly suggest that setting up frequent and direct (face-to-face) contact beyond emails is very beneficial. Arranging regular check-in opportunities and face-to-face contact could help increase both the frequency of interaction and behavioral transparency. With the development of new technologies, such opportunities can be arranged through online meetings with no significant increase in transaction costs.

Whether hiring a local on-site representative or not, involved leaders and faculty members need to continue working on their cross-cultural communication and understanding competencies (for both sides). Similar findings have been discussed in the

partnership literature; the involved partners should seek to be transparent about the differing roles of leaders and stakeholders and the differing authority and power in the relationship. These shared understandings can facilitate communication and clarify responsibilities (Wiley & Root, 2003).

Cross-border higher education literature points to various ways higher education can move across national borders, including establishing an international branch campus, joint program, twinning program, franchising, articulation, student and/or scholar exchange program, and joint research/curriculum project (See Chapter Two: Literature Review for a full list of the definitions of these delivery models). Due to the sampling procedure employed and the qualitative nature this study had, the findings are not directly generalizable to explain why and how these other models would be more desirable for some other higher educational institutions. However, each of these models reflects a certain strategy through which involved institutions can actualize their motivations and expected outcomes. Institutions could take a similar approach of using game theory to examine the partners' perceptions and level of preferences for potential outcomes to determine favorable strategies.

Establishing an international branch campus, probably the most costly strategy for an institution to deliver its educational program across national borders, ensures that the providing institution assumes full responsibility over the academic quality and gains the entire benefit from brand recognition and academic reputation, as well as the generated revenue. However, some of the institutions have been held back from this delivery model due to the high costs and risks of operating in a cross-cultural market (McBurnie and Ziguras, 2007).

If not for the high costs and risks, prestigious foreign institutions would have favored the international branch campuses much more over other types of collaboration. They still can achieve the faculty- and student-learning goal by having their own faculty and students moving across the home and branch campuses. The local fit of the curriculum is still achievable because there are numerous local hiring opportunities.

The new development trend of significantly increased international branch campuses in international higher education delivery provides a good example for how it could become the most desirable strategy for prestigious foreign universities; when the external environment changes, the game structure changes accordingly. Many countries, particularly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, have recently provided support through funding, infrastructures, and financial scholarships to foreign education institutions to set up branch campuses in their countries. Singapore, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates, for example, have been leaders as "educational hubs" or have designated regions (such as the Dubai International Academic city) with attractive funding such as providing campus facilities and tax-free trade zones (Becker, 2010; Kinser & Lane, 2010; Knight, 2010).

According to a recent report on international branch campuses, there has been a 43 percent increase in the number of international branch campuses worldwide, which brings its total number to 162. U.S. institutions make up 48 percent of all current campuses (Becker, 2010). Even though the literature has not agreed on a particular definition of what constitutes an international branch campus, this substantial increase in development illustrates how involved players use their competitive advantages to achieve the best possible outcome. Governments and/or their invited local business/university

partners become the players working with the foreign universities in this new development trend.

Establishing a twinning program is another model that is very similar to the studied joint-venture model, but it involves less frequent travel for the foreign side. Students enroll in each partner institution during their study semesters on each campus according to the divided academic semesters between partners. This model shares some of the same advantages as the joint-venture model, but it appears to be less efficient for brand recognition and academic reputation within the potential market. Consequently, it is a less effective strategy for strategic positioning.

Another disadvantage of the twinning model is that it does not benefit from the local institution for its capacity development motives and potentially hurts the capacity at a national level, due to a potential "brain drain" effect. Evidently, in China, with the dramatic development of Sino-foreign collaborative programs, the twinning model has become very recognizable, particularly for cross-border higher educational delivery at the undergraduate level. However, a recent administration document released from the central government specifically recommended that Chinese institutions incorporate a "1 (year)+2+1" structure over the earlier "2 (years)+2" structure for their twinning programs. This recommendation clearly demonstrates the unfavorable attitude and concern of "brain drain" from the Chinese national government.

The franchising model poses great risks to the home institution's brand and reputation, because of the minimum involvement from the provider institution in delivering the program affects the home institution's brand identity. The articulation model also demonstrates the lowest amount of input and risks to brand identity as well as

faculty resources; however, beyond the increased student mobility, the involved institutions do not gain much from this model. If it were not for the strong interest from institutions to develop international/global brand recognition and academic reputation as well as the related revenue increase, exchange programs (both for students and faculty) or research and curriculum collaboration model would better serve the purpose of individual and institutional capacity development.

## Policy Implications

One of the reasons that game theory has been a powerful tool in understanding social dynamics is that both players and external agencies can actively influence the game environment, so as to make the game structure more favorable for themselves. Players participating in cross-border higher educational delivery can exercise such power in the same way through national and institutional policy changes.

At the national level, the Chinese government possesses great advantages because China serves as the game environment for Sino-foreign education collaborations and because China still has a semi-centralized political system that oversees the higher education sector. The Chinese government should capitalize on these advantages to develop relevant guiding policies and national program evaluation systems to shape the sociopolitical environment of Sino-foreign collaboration to maximize the nation's favorable outcomes.

The current stratified administration division between the central and provincial government splits the government's responsibilities over cross-border programs between undergraduate and/or above versus other associate or technique training courses. More rigorous government approval and evaluation criteria are applied to programs at a higher

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level while allowing the market to direct associate level and postsecondary technique training programs. This approach implies that what the Chinese government really wants is to address the nation's postsecondary higher education access issue with the help of Sino-foreign educational programs while keeping its capacity building and leapfrogging purpose for higher education at the undergraduate level and above.

Nevertheless, if the Chinese government truly wants to use Sino-foreign collaboration to gain access to more advanced foreign knowledge and expertise, as it has claimed, then one of the important pieces they could add to the current monitoring system is to go beyond the vague concepts, such as "reasonable return," "prestigious university," and "renowned faculty" to specify the measurement criteria that defines high quality international collaboration academic programs. Moreover, the Chinese government should start to look at higher education development at a global level. Given the competitive advantage that China has as being an attractive market for universities worldwide, in general, it could be more beneficial to Chinese higher education development for the Chinese government to continue to push the joint-venture model instead of the branch campus model. This would be especially true for Chinese universities that are trying to achieve "world-class" status among the international higher education market. Available government funding could be allocated more strategically such as establishing competitive funds to encourage a joint-venture model within which partners institutions would strive to develop and disseminate global-and-local knowledge or other collaborative academic initiatives, instead of investing in creating new campuses and/or "knowledge cities" or "knowledge hubs" to host prestigious foreign institutions

trying to establish their own campuses. Potentially, funding could also be used to leverage the unbalanced educational development between the East and the West.

At the institutional level, from the Chinese side, policies and incentives could be given to encourage faculty and administration collaborations that foster joint curriculum development, reform, and/or optimal program operation and governance. The Chinese partner university could be much better off by having a small international program with good quality to gain a branding effect on their overall capability in providing high quality education, and intentionally facilitate various ways of implicit organizational learning, and encourage alternative ways to develop institutional and individual capacity building. This approach would be similar to the Chinese partners in the two studied cases, who both had other more efficient capacity development strategies aimed mainly at elite brand recognition and academic reputation building with the benefit of having a top regarded partner from the United States or a comparatively better brand reputation with international features.

From the foreign institutions' perspectives, it is important to be aware that high tuition and admission standards, and relatively high English language proficiency are typically needed to deliver a good quality international degree program in China. Thus, the potential market may still be rather small at the current stage. However, the long-term strategic importance of China as a prosperous market with good quality students is promising with the fast-growing Chinese economy, the international exchange rate trend between the Chinese RMB and U.S. dollar, and the noticeable improvement in English proficiency of prospective students (especially the younger generation).

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If the external sociopolitical environment permits, foreign universities should continue to look for opportunities with affordable cross-border higher educational delivery in China. Some universities (most likely the prestigious ones) with good resources in the nation's political and cultural context may be able to work their way through the government obstacles to establish their own campuses in China, but other universities could still be successful and benefit from a carefully selected local partner working with a carefully defined, mutually desirable outcomes. Still others could take advantage of the opportunities from local-and-global collaborations to not only deliver a foreign style curriculum but to strive for more innovations which could outperform both the foreign and local universities because of their contributions to their respective fields. However, if what the foreign institutions are looking for is limited to increased revenue generated from the collaboration, they will most likely be disappointed given the current political situation in China. Similarly, if a foreign institution does want to achieve global-and-local knowledge development, they need to ensure that their partner stays on the same page and shares a mutual understanding of the parameters that define the global-and-local feature.

Once a joint-venture cross-border higher educational program is established, partners could try to develop other related components such as facilitating student/faculty exchanges, incorporating credit transfer into the system, and encouraging other related scholarly exchanges and collaboration projects, so that both partner institutions have mutual benefits beyond their joint venture. After all, inter-organizational collaboration is the backbone of cross-border higher educational programs and directs how the program evolves over the years.

Finally, from a broader international higher education perspective, it all comes down to the player's utility function, both for the institutions and the government. The Chinese government and higher education institutions must determine the level of academic quality they want to have for higher education within or outside of the country. If the market is going to be so influential in the future development of international higher education that brand recognition and academic reputation become one of the most important criteria for the quality of an educational program, then the Chinese government and institutions need to determine what they want to provide: a "Wal-Mart" or "Gucci" or one that is "developed in China" with international recognition and standards. In the end, it may be all of them. However, it is unclear if higher education should let the market become its ultimate quality assessment agent. If not, the involved stakeholders such as institutions, scholars and educators, international organizations, and academic accreditation commissions should respond to such a prevailing trend of commercialization and capitalization in higher education across the world to develop means that guide and ensure international academic quality.

## Limitations and Future Research

The field of cross-border higher education provision is highly underexplored. While general discussions and critics are extremely helpful in drawing attention to this topic, there is great need for empirical studies with solid theoretical grounds and or rigorous methodological designs, be it qualitative or quantitative and/or mixed method ones, both for theory development and practical implications.

Although this study is grounded in well-tested theories from related fields, there were also limitations. First, the application of game theory to a complicated educational

collaborative program proved to be complex and challenging. To operationalize the involved partner institutions as players in the game was challenging and problematic. Higher education institutions are multidimensional and there is a host of various stakeholder groups. To synthesize an institutional perspective from a set of diverse opinions from key stakeholder groups involved certain assumptions and weight assigning by the researcher. Future research could apply game theory at the individual level to identify the diverse interests of the involved stakeholders through larger-scale empirical research or experimental lab studies.

Second, while the researcher conceptualized the current operation of the studied programs as both the achieved outcomes and the desired strategy, more detailed conceptualized key parameters for different types of expected outcomes could benefit future studies with similar approaches. Moreover, due to limited resources and access, this study was limited to only one of the many different types of cross-border higher educational models. Future research with more resources should look into comparative studies to explore the best strategies for different outcomes.

Due to various restrictions, participant recruitment for the IMBA case was not as effective as the EMBA case. It is difficult to tell whether this limitation was because the home institutions (from both the Chinese and the U.S. side) genuinely lacked involvement and valued the joint IMBA collaboration less, or because the researcher was not able to successfully recruit leadership participation at the partner institutions. Either way, the findings and interpretations about this case are limited to the collected information.

Future studies could look into the identified challenges that emerged from the different organizational structures and cross-cultural understanding this study found and further explore the factors and practices that contribute to frequent communication and behavior transparency in cross-border higher educational collaborative programs. For example, an organizational study could be greatly beneficial to cross-border higher educational programs. They could examine the different operational systems and organizational structures these joint-venture programs employ and identify the optimal administrative structure.

Another area of future study could be to examine some of the implicit but influential aspects of a cross-cultural and inter-organizational collaboration. Some the possible questions could be: How do different power structures that are already embedded in the partner institutions impact the new cooperation team? How do the local culture and the foreign culture intersect in the collaboration, particularly through the key administrative personnel? What are the tradeoffs of having locally hired representatives versus foreign representatives from the foreign partner? and How could cross-cultural competencies facilitate and address these cultural and organizational challenges?

Finally, an outcome-based assessment study about cross-border higher educational programs could benefit the fields both in theory development and practical application. Outcome-based assessment can facilitate the involved partners' ability to identify realistic evaluation criteria for their mutually expected outcomes.

## Conclusion

Findings of this study demonstrate the extent to which institutions collaborate in cross-border higher education programs and the perceived outcomes for the partners.

They also show how the two studied partners coordinated mutual and unilateral activities to achieve these outcomes. Partners might not always share the same motivations, but they could have highly compatible expected outcomes and preferences of the outcomes. The overall stability of the studied cross-border higher educational programs depended on between-partner compatibility. In order to maintain such a collaboration game, partners should clearly articulate what each wants to achieve, how to achieve the outcomes, and what works the best. However, having a clear understanding of only one partner's perspective is not enough. Sometimes, it is even more important for an institution to fully understand the other partner's views so as to better anticipate what the partner wants to achieve and how the partner wants to achieve it.

As suggested by game theory, being able to look at issues from both perspectives helps institutions strategically influence their inter-dependent partnership as well as respond collaboratively to changing situations. Leaders and decision makers should work together to identify the potential challenges and issues of these different perceptions, and therefore be able to proactively address them. There are always two sides of a coin, so collaborations are a balancing game of which all partner institutions need to be aware. Institutions bring their own points of view, but partners add different perspectives, particularly in cross-cultural programs. Radical differences cannot survive in these collaborations. Still, subtle differences could potentially dissolve the partnership if not attended to promptly and appropriately.

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Appendix A: Case Study Protocol

A.  Introduction to the research study and purpose of protocol.
    a.  Research questions
    b.  Theoretical framework and propositions
    c.  Role of protocol in guiding the case study investigator
B.  Data collection procedures
    a.  Names of sites to be visited, including contact persons
    b.  Data collection plan, such as site visit schedules, interview schedules.
    c.  Expected preparation prior to site visits (identify specific documents to be reviewed and where they could be accessed)
        i.   The general description about the partners' institutional profile: website of the home institutions as well as accreditation organizations
        ii.  Sino-U.S. program: registration information from the MOE website; available description about the program, its development, and its related news reports

C.  Outline of case study report (for each case)
    a.  The Sino-U.S. program in operation (major, degree level, student enrollment size and population, size of faculty and staff, affiliation)
    b.  Historical development of the Sino-U.S. program
    c.  Both partner institutions (background info about the university as well as the directly involved college/department)
    d.  Rationales for offering the program (both partner institutions)
    e.  Expected outcomes from the collaboration and perceived importance of outcomes (both partner institutions)
    f.  The best strategy for the expected outcomes (both partner institutions)
    g.  Challenges, conflicts, and problems
    h.  Actual benefits from the collaboration (both partner institutions)
        i.   Successful aspects/components of the program
    i.  Attachments: chronology, references to relevant documents, and list of persons interviewed.
D.  Comparison across multiple cases
    a.  Overall pattern matching
    b.  Answers to the research questions
    c.  Theoretical and policy implications

Appendix B: Data Collection Matrix

| Research Questions | Components of Conceptual Framework | Document | Interview Questions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. To what extent do partner institutions in a cross-border higher program share similar views about their collaboration?<br><br>a. What are the similar and/or different perceptions of <u>motivation and expected outcomes</u> perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher education program? | Institutional context | • Mission statement<br>• Strategic Planning document<br>• University website<br>• Department/program website<br>• MOE's registration info<br>• HLC off-site registration info | • How would you describe your institution's values towards cross-border higher education?<br>• How would you describe your program to someone who is new to the program? |
| | Motivations and Expected outcomes | • Strategic plan (if available)<br>• Program evaluation/report<br>• Institutional newsletter | • What are the major factors that have motivated your home institution to collaborate with XXX University?<br>• What do you believe to be the major reasons for your partner institution's involvement in this program?<br>• What outcomes/goals do you believe your home institution expects to achieve through the provision of this Sino-U.S. partnership program?<br>• What do you believe to be the outcomes/goals your partner institution expects to achieve through the provision of this Sino-U.S. partnership program? |

| What are the similar and/or different <u>preference levels for the expected outcomes</u> perceived by the key stakeholder groups including leaders, administrators, and faculty of the partner institutions for the cross-border higher? | Utility function (preference level for the expected outcomes) | | • Which one of these do you rank as the most influential factor and the least influential factor to reach for through the joint program?<br>• Which one of these do you think to be the most influential factor and the least influential factor for your partner institution?<br>• *How would you rank the importance of these* outcomes/goals for your institution? And why?<br>• How would your partner institution rank the importance of these outcomes/goals? And why? |
|---|---|---|---|
| c. To what extent do partner institutions hold similar views for the <u>best strategies</u> to achieve the desired key outcomes from the program? | Strategy | MOE's registration info<br>HLC off-site registration info<br>Contract/ Agreement<br>Program Brochure<br>On-site observation | • What specific activities has your institution taken when implementing this program that increase the likelihood of achieving its goals?<br>• What are the key factors for achieving the current level of success? And to sustain it?<br>• How are activities coordinated between partner institutions?<br>• What are the main factors that challenge the current provision of the program? What did the program do to address these problems/challenges?<br>• What are the things that could be changed or done differently to increase that likelihood, if there are any? |

| 2. How do the partners' similar and/or different views of the inter-organizational partnership and collaboration impact the implementation of the cross-border higher education program?<br><br>a. To what extent are key participants satisfied with the outcomes from their chosen strategy in the collaboration?<br><br>b. Were there any changes partner institutions made to the planned strategy during the implementation? If so, what were they?<br><br>c. What are the desired future changes for the program's development? | The cross-border higher education program (the actual outcome) | • MOE's registration info<br>• HLC off-site registration info<br>• Marketing material<br>• Program website<br>• Evaluation report | • To what extent do you believe the program has successfully achieved both partner institutions' expected outcomes/goals?<br>• What are the things that could be changed or done differently to increase that likelihood, if there are any?<br>• To what extent do you feel your institution has been transparent about the expected outcomes from the program delivery? And why?<br>• To what extent do you feel your partner institution has been transparent about the expected outcomes from the program delivery? And why?<br>• Have there been conflicts or challenging issues? What kinds of conflicts have occurred? How were they resolved? What factors contribute most to these incidents? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |

Appendix C: Invitation Letter for Recruitment

Dear participants,

You are invited to participate in a research study on cross-border higher education collaborative program between xxx University and xxx University. You are selected because you play an important role in the educational management and delivery of the xxx program. This letter describes this study and seeks your participation.

My name is Yiyun Jie, a PhD candidate at the University of Minnesota. I am currently working on my dissertation under the supervision of Dr. David Chapman.

My dissertation looks at cross-border higher education programs collaboratively provided by a Chinese and a U.S. university. The objective of my study is to explore the partner institutions' perceptions of expected outcomes from cross-border higher education program and strategies to achieve them, and the potential impact of different perceptions might have on the operation of cross-border educational programs. My main methods for this study are document analysis and interviews. Directly involved administrative staff and faculty members will be interviewed. Understanding key stakeholders' perspectives on the partner institutions' involvement in the collaboration and their experiences of working in the program is especially important for this study.

I am currently visiting xxx campus for data collection. It is greatly appreciated if you would be willing to spend an hour to share your perspectives and experience in the xxx program. I have attached an interview protocol and consent form for your reference. Thank you very much and I look forward to seeing you soon.

With regards,

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Invitation Letter for Recruitment [In Chinese]

## 关于高校国际合作办学课题的访谈邀请信

2009年4月xx日

尊敬的参与者:
特邀请您参与关于xx学院与xx学院中外合作办学课题的研究访谈. 对您的邀请是源于您在xx教育合作项目的教学与管理工作的直接参与. 这封信将介绍该课题的有关情况, 并恳请您接受访谈.

此课题的研究员是: 揭祎赟, 明尼苏达大学教育政策与管理系比较与国际教育发展专业的一名博士生. David Chapman博士是此课题的论文导师.

中国高等教育中的跨国合作办学项目是此研究课题关注的主题. 该课题的目的是探索中外合作办学项目中参与的伙伴机构对于该合作项目的预期目标, 成效, 和实施策略的相同或者相异的理解, 以及这些理解对合作办学项目的实施进程可能存在的潜在影响. 此课题的主要研究方法包括文本资料分析与深入的个人访谈. 研究者将采访直接参与合作项目的主要管理人员, 以及部分实施教学的教师. 深入了解这些项目实施过程中的利害关系主体的工作实践体验, 以及他们对各自所属教育机构在参与伙伴关系中的理解与感受, 是此研究课题至关重要的组成部分.

我的访谈将会占用您一个小时左右的宝贵时间.如果您愿意参加并与我分享您关于中外合作办学项目的经验与感受, 我将不胜感激.

仅附随此邀请函一并附上访谈说明书与采访问题纲要.
诚挚感谢您对此研究项目的参与, 我期待与您的会面.

此致

敬礼

揭祎赟, 博士候选人
美国明尼苏达大学
教育与人类发展学院
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Appendix D: Consent Statement for Interviews

The cross-border higher education program: An international inter-organizational collaboration

You have been directly involved in the IMBA program and you are invited to be in a research study of how partner institutions understand each other and collaboration in cross-border higher education programs.

You were selected as a participant because you have been involved with the IMBA program. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information
The purpose of this study is to investigate the discrepancies and similarities between partner institutions' perception of expected outcomes and strategies in cross-border higher education program, and the potential impact the discrepancies might have on the operation of cross-border educational programs.

Interview questions are formed to answer the following research questions:
1). To what extent do partner institutions collaborating in cross-border higher programs hold similar views regarding their partnership?
2). To what extent do partner institutions' similar and/or different views about the program have an impact on the operation of the cross-border higher education program?

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, we would like to invite you to a one-on-one interview that will take about one-hour's time. The interview will be recorded for transcribing purpose, if you agree, so as to be sure your thoughts and opinions are collected accurately. I would also like to review documents related to the collaborative program that you can offer. These materials are collected for document analysis only and will guide my understanding about the planning and implementation of the program.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study
There are no immediate or expected risks for participating in the interview.  The interview is completely anonymous and confidential. All identifiable personal information will be excluded from the transcription of the interview.
Every possible effort will be made to protect your identity. Pseudonyms will be used for individuals and institutions. No name will be used in any report of this study; Any

information about the program, your affiliated institution, your position and expertise that could led to identification will be eliminated. The tape will be stored in the locked drawer for two years.

There are also no immediate or expected benefits for you for participating in the interview. However, your participation will allow the researcher to learn about the potential perspectives about the cross-border program and their impact the on the operation of the program. The result of this research could assist involved stakeholders with 1) better understanding of the interrelated partnership between participating educational institutions in cross-border higher education program; 2) constructive recommendations for strategic planning that facilitate future development of the collaborative program and the inter-organizational partnership.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Webster University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
This study is being conducted by: Yiyun Jie, graduate student in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration, University of Minnesota, USA. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact Yiyun Jie at jiexx008@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than me or my instructor, contact Research Subjects Advocate line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; telephone (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Researcher:
Yiyun Jie
Ph.D. Candidate

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College of Education and Human Development
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001-612-719-1397

Academic Adviser:
David Chapman
Wallace Professor of Education
College of Education and Human Development
University of Minnesota

Consent Statement for Interviews [In Chinese]

## 访谈协议
### 跨国高等教育合作项目: 国际教育机构间合作伙伴关系探析

您被邀请参与关于电子科技大学经济管理学院与韦伯斯特大学商学院学院中外合作办学课题的个案研究. 此研究将探析跨国高等教育合作项目中合作双方对合作伙伴的理解以及在合作关系的实践经历.

兹所以邀请您是因为您在此中外合作办学项目的教育管理与教学工作的直接参与. 请您在同意参与这项教育研究之前阅读此协议书, 并提出您想要提出的任何问题.

背景
该课题的目的是探索中外合作办学项目中参与的伙伴机构对于该合作项目的预期成效和实施策略的认同与理解, 以及这些理解对合作办学项目的实施进程可能存在的影响.

相关访谈问题的设计是为了探讨并回答一下两个主要研究论题:
1). 参与跨国高等教育合作项目的相关机构对于他们的合作伙伴关系, 在哪种程度上持相同或不同的理解和观点?
2). 跨国高等教育合作项目中领导人, 管理人员, 以及教师等参与主体对合作项目的相同/或不同的理解和观点, 对于该项目的实施产生何种程度上的影响?

程序
如果您愿意参与此研究, 我邀请您进行60分钟左右的轻松随意的访谈. 在您同意的情况下, 我会进行录音以便准确收集您的观点想法. 此外, 我还想查看您所能提供的与合作办学项目相关的文件资料, 仅限于文本分析的目的, 以便了解合作项目的规划与实施问题.

风险性和受益性
参与这项课题的访谈没有任何风险. 我们的访谈内容是完全匿名, 并会得到保密妥善保存. 所有的个人信息都会在记录编写阶段被完全屏蔽. 研究员会以所有可能的形式来保护您的个人信息. 机构, 教育项目, 与个人将会以其他匿名做为代称.

参与此项课题没有直接利益收获. 但是您的参与将会有助于研究者掌获关于合作项目各类可能存在的各类理解和观点, 以及这些不同的和类似的观点对于项目实施的影响. 此课题的最终研究成果能够协助相关主体 1) 更好的理解参与跨国高等教育合作的伙伴机构的互动关系; 2) 提供有建设性的策路规划建议以利于合作项目和伙伴关系的良好发展.

保密性:
此课题的相关档案将得到妥善保存. 在任何出版物中, 研究者都不会使用访谈对象的姓名, 所属机构, 职务, 以及特殊技能等任何可能确认其身份的个人信息. 研究资料将会被安全的保存. 研究者是唯一能接触这些资料的人.

自愿性
您的参与是完全基于您的自愿. 您决定参加与否将不会影响您现在或将来与中山大学, 或者明尼苏达大学的关系. 如果您决定参与, 您也可以在任何时候选择不回答某些问题或者退出而不影响以上这些关系.

联系与问题:
此课题的研究员是: 揭祎赟, 美国明尼苏达大学教育政策与管理系博士候选人. 如果您有任何疑问, 您现在可以向我提出. 您以后如果有任何问题, 也请通过电邮方式联系我. 我的电邮地址是: jiexx008@umn.edu.

如果您对此课题的存有某些疑问并希望同研究员及其指导教授以外的相关人员提出, 您可以联系研究对象保护热线. 地址是: D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. 邮编 55455; 电话: 001-612-625-1650.

您将会得到此协议书的一份复印件做为保存.

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

<u>Introduction:</u>

Professor xx. Thank you very much for taking time to sit down with me to talk about your experience with [name of the Sino-U.S. program] offered through [two partner institutions]. I appreciate it very much. It will probably take us about one-hour's time to go through all my questions. Do you have any time constrains right after this? Faculty answer: …

OK, thank you. (I will try my best …). First of all, I would like to clarify my role in this study and the reasons and purpose of me doing the interviews with you.

This is a study I am working on as the dissertation project for my doctoral study in the Comparative and International Development Education program at the University of Minnesota. I am interested in finding out how and why higher education institutions from different nation-states come together to collaborate with each other to offer a degree program. Therefore, through this interview, I am trying to understand how do directly involved faculty members and administrative members, like yourself, perceive your institutions' involvement with the joint degree program.

Our conversation is completely confidential. I will be the only person who has access to the original transcriptions. Any identifiable personal information and conversation will be coded or blocked from the final report.

Also during the interview, if there's anything that you are concerned or have questions, please let me know. You do not have to answer any question if you do not wish to.

Do you have any other questions about the study and the interview before we begin?

Interview Questions [revised after pilot]

<u>Beginning:</u>
Let me start our conversation with your working experience in the collaborative program. How long have you been involved with this program? Can you tell me about your responsibilities in the program?

1. How would you describe your program to someone who is new to the program? [not necessarily a student or parent, but just an outsider]

   *Probes:*

   • What are some of the distinguishing features of this program?

   • What are some of the unique qualities of your home institutions and partner institutions bring to this Sino-U.S. program?

2. How would you describe your institution's value towards cross-border higher education?

   *Probes:*

   • What does having a cross-border partnership program mean to your institution?

   • How does the collaborative program fit into the institutional mission and future development of your home institution?

3. What are the major motivators for your home institution to collaborate with XXX University? And Why?

4. What do you believe to be the major reasons for your partner institution's involvement in this program?

5. What outcomes/goals do you believe your home institution expects to achieve through the provision of this Sino-U.S. partnership program?

   *Probes: If you have to rank the priority of these outcomes, how would you rank the importance of these* outcomes/goals for your institution? And why? Especially when it comes to a point of making decisions about the program, what would be the priority of working towards these outcomes?

6. What do you believe to be the outcomes/goals your partner institution expects to achieve through the provision of this Sino-U.S. partnership program?

   *Probes:* How do you think your partner institution ranks the importance of these potential outcomes of the program? And why?

7. What specific activities has your institution taken when implementing this program to increase the likelihood of achieving it goals?

   *Probes:*
   - What are the trade-offs for pursuing these activities?
   - What are the things that could be changed or done differently to increase that likelihood, if there are any?
       - The sharing of responsibilities: roles of your institutions and your partners?
       - How could your institution arrange resources to invest in the program: administrative aspects vs. academic aspects?
       - What particular aspects of the program or activities could be emphasized or coordinated?

8. To what extent do you believe the program has successfully achieved both partner institutions' expected outcomes/goals?

   *Probes:*
   - What are the key criteria for your assessment of the success of the program? (e.g., *student, faculty, timelines, authorship, intellectual contributions; financial support at the outset*)
   - To what extent do you think your partner shares the same criteria in their assessment of the program?
   - What are the key factors for achieving the current level of success? And to sustain it?

9. What are the main factors that challenge the current provision of the program? What did the program do to address these problems/challenges?
   - About the intense international travel and faculty participation?
   - About team teaching/ consistency of assessing student learning?

10. To what extent do you feel either your institution or the partner institution has been transparent about the expected outcomes from the program delivery? And why?

11. How are activities coordinated between partner institutions?

    Probes:

    A. In what ways do you coordinate with your partner?

    B. How often do you communicate with your partners about the goals and expectations for the program?

12. Have there been conflicts or challenging issues? What kinds of conflicts have occurred? How were they resolved? What factors contribute most to these incidents?

13. What happens when a partner or an individual appears to violate the terms of the partnership agreement?

Interview Questions [In Chinese]
访谈问题

1. 您如何理解您所属的大学关于中外教育合作交流的办校理念是什么?

   *Probes:*

   • 国际合作办学对您的所属教育机构有着什么意义?

   • 此合作办学项目是如何与您的所属机构的整体办学方针理念以及未来发展方向相协调的?

2. 您会如何向不了解IMBA的人介绍此项目?

   *Probes:*

   • 此项目的显著办学特色是什么?

   • 参与合作办学的伙伴机构为此项目带来的那些独特的优势与特色?

3. 您认为xx学院参与此项目的主要动因有哪些?

   *Probes:*

   A. 以上所谈到的各类动因, 您认为哪一些是最具有影响力的动因? 哪些是最次要的动因?

   B. 您认为, 作为合作伙伴的xx学院参与合作办学的主要动因有哪些?

   C. 对于以上谈到的伙伴方的各类动因, 您认为哪一些是最具有影响力的动因? 哪些是最次要的动因?

4. 您认为xx学院对于xx项目的预期目标和成效是什么?

   *Probes:*

   A. 对于这一系列的预期目标和成效, 您如果衡量它们的重要性? 为什么?

   B. 对于这一系列的预期成效, 您认为韦伯斯特大学商学院会如何衡量它们的重要性? 为什么?

5. 在项目合作实施的过程中, xx学院针对预期目标与成效的实现, 采取了那些具体策略?

   *Probes:*

   A. 为了实施这些措施, 学院做出了什么策略上的取舍?

B. 如果可以对目前项目的实施做出某些调整, 您认为xx学院应该做出一些什么样的调整, 从而更好的实现预期目标和成效呢?

 a. 比如: 与xx学院关于项目管理实施的分工方面: 合作伙伴机构双方各自承担的职责以及双方的协作?

 b. 关于合作双方资金投入的侧重点: 合理分配与有效投资? 特别是在管理和教学两方面?

 c. 合作项目的哪一些方面, (比如, 某些教学活动与管理机能等)应该给与着重加强发展和协调?

6. 到目前为止, 您认为xx项目在何种程度上是一个成功的教育合作办学项目?

Probes:

C. 您具体从那些方面以及什么样的标准来衡量此项目的成功与否呢?

D. 您是否认为韦伯斯特大学商学院也会以相似的标准吗? 为什么?

E. 您认为促成xx达到目前(成功的)阶段, 并能继续保持下去的重要因素都有那些?

F. 您认为xx还有面临着哪些挑战以及困难需要克服呢?

7. 您认为xx学院与xx学院, 双方在参与xx项目的实施过程中, 关于其各自预期成效的公开透明度达到何种程度? 为什么?

8. 伙伴机构双方的各项工作是如何协调进行的?

Probes:

G. 您和您的合作伙伴之间, 就合作项目的预期目标与成效进行的交流有多频繁?

H. 您们的工作协调主要通过哪些方式进行?

9. 是否曾经出现协作方面矛盾与问题? 是什么样的矛盾? 这些矛盾是如何解决的? 什么是导致这些矛盾的主要因素?