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Wang Qing

*School of Economics and Management, Huazhong Agricultural University, Wuhan 430072, Hubei, wangqinghzau@vip.163.com*

Muhammad Saqib Khan

*School of Management, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan 430070, Hubei*

Zhou Deyi3

*School of Economics and Management, Huazhong Agricultural University, Wuhan 430072, Hubei*

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# Transnational Entrepreneurship Education System Based On Cross-Border E-Commerce In The Context Of Belt And Road

Wang Qing<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Saqib Khan<sup>2</sup>, Zhou Deyi<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Economics and Management, Huazhong Agricultural University, Wuhan 430072, Hubei

<sup>2</sup>School of Management, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan 430070, Hubei

**Abstract:** This article analyzes the significance of Chinese colleges and universities in carrying out entrepreneurship education for international students from the Belt and Road Initiative, and puts forward the idea of constructing an education system centered on the establishment of a Belt and Road: Innovation Farm transnational entrepreneurship network platform. Based on this idea, Huazhong Agricultural University has carried out three aspects of transnational entrepreneurship education practice namely the Belt and Road student team training, Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship education practice system, and the establishment of an innovation farm in Pakistan.

Keywords: Belt and Road initiative, transnational entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, Cross-Border E-Commerce

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The "Belt and Road" initiative puts China and the countries along the route into a community of mutual prosperity, interests and responsibilities. The construction of such a community requires a large number of professionals with cross-cultural communication capabilities. In the past few years, the number of overseas students from the countries along the Belt and Road has increased rapidly and has become the main force to achieve the development goal of "building China the largest country for studying abroad in Asia by 2020". Some scholars believe that this is actually individual behavior of Belt and Road countries, and has not yet been systematically planned and designed from the national macro strategy<sup>[1]</sup>.

According to the Push-Pull theory put forwarded by American comparative higher education expert Altbach, international students from countries along the Belt and Road studying in China are relatively more attracted to China's development potential. Carrying out entrepreneurship education for international students from the Belt and Road countries will disseminate the tide of "double innovation" to these students and they will have a more systematic understanding of the Chinese model, making them the best promoters of the "Belt and Road" initiative and the best carrier for capital exchange and intellectual support.

How to carry out entrepreneurship education for international students from the Belt and Road countries? Major part of the existing research on entrepreneurship education is focused on Chinese students, and most of the entrepreneurial perspectives are limited to China. This article starts with cross-border e-commerce as the basis of the Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship education and attempts to explore a feasible way for the entrepreneurship education for international students from Belt and Road countries.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The literature related to this research can be roughly divided into two aspects. One is the research on the Belt and Road initiative and the "double innovation" talent training: Zhou Guping and Jian Yue first analyzed the importance of "Belt and Road" initiative and pointed out the talent support needed to implement the "Belt

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\* Corresponding author. Email: wangqinghzau@vip.163.com (Wang Qing)

and Road” initiative, including non-universal language talents and overseas high-end talents. On this basis, five paths were given to cultivate the talent needed to implement the Belt and Road: strengthening international awareness and capabilities, deepening curriculum reform, encouraging overseas practice, strengthening education for studying in China, and launching multilevel overseas schools<sup>[2]</sup>. Yu Xiaozhong and Gao Qingxin believed that through the cooperative mechanism of collaborative innovation, the establishment of a new Belt and Road cooperation mechanism, the most important is the collaborative innovation of talents. Only when talent training meets the requirements, can it play a role in supporting the Belt and Road initiative<sup>[3]</sup>. Yang Hongyun and Su Shibin, drawing on the "three plus one" model, which are putting forward the development of general courses related to the Belt and Road countries, and strengthening the guidance of cultural creative entrepreneurship, interacting with the innovation and entrepreneurship education of the countries along the route through "Send out, bring in"<sup>[4]</sup> activities.

Second aspect is the research on transnational entrepreneurship education. Hou Honghong believed that transnational innovation and entrepreneurship can be mainly divided into three models: research project incubation, original project derivation, and cultural project transplantation. He proposed three promotion models, first is optimizing the curriculum setting for the cultivation of innovation and entrepreneurship culture, second is providing the perceptual experience of innovation and entrepreneurship practice, third is creation of an entrepreneurial environment that encourages innovation and tolerance for failure<sup>[5]</sup>. Chen Yinfei and Chen Haibo believed that they can teach international students the basic principles and practical knowledge of international finance, cultivate students' ability to analyze the balance of payments of various countries, engage in foreign exchange transactions, prevent foreign exchange risks, and capture international investment opportunities, and help students to develop rational thinking, cultivate teamwork awareness, honesty and trustworthiness and innovative entrepreneurship<sup>[6]</sup>. Yang Xiu and Xianghua Xiang analyzed the impact of the “Belt and Road” initiative on the education of universities in Guangxi. They initially designed the Guangxi-ASEAN transnational entrepreneurship curriculum system and gave three suggestions for application<sup>[7]</sup>.

Existing research generally believe that the Belt and Road initiative has put forward new requirements for entrepreneurship education and has achieved certain results, but there are still some shortcomings: (1) Treat Chinese students and international students differently and carry out different entrepreneurial education separately. In addition to the repeated deployment of entrepreneurial faculty, it has not fully tapped the potential of Chinese and foreign students. (2) Although some literature has designed a multinational entrepreneurship curriculum system based on regional characteristics, it only laid out the design but lack the practice and cannot test the feasibility and effectiveness of the system design.

### **3. THOUGHTS ON BELT AND ROAD TRANSNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION SYSTEM**

#### **3.1 Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship types and educational demand analysis**

Through interviews with existing “Belt and Road” transnational entrepreneurs in Hubei Province, the specific manifestations of entrepreneurship can be roughly divided into the following types: (1) Cross-border e-commerce based on the four parks of Wuhan Comprehensive Experimental Zone. This is a relatively large-scale and universal cross-border entrepreneurship project. For a period of time, it is also the most likely place for entrepreneurs in the province after receiving cross-border entrepreneurship education. (2) China-foreign two-way traditional foreign trade. Such projects have relatively high capital requirements and high business thresholds. Generally they are not the first choice for college students to start a business, and they are currently few. But if combined with local elites (international students in China and their families), it is still commercially viable. (3) International students from the Belt and Road countries attracting Chinese investment,

return home and start business. These international students are studying in China, and they have experienced the thriving Chinese e-commerce business. They have a strong curiosity about e-commerce entrepreneurship. They want to learn from China's business model and copy it to their own countries. There are currently few such entrepreneurial projects, but they have the most potential. If it takes shape, it is not only the best way to export capital overseas, but because the core personnel are international students, it can reduce friction in a cross-cultural environment, strive for more local recognition, and be able to share growth dividends within a certain period of time.

According to the results of the interviews, the three types of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills commonly required by Belt and Road multinational entrepreneurs are: (1) Internet entrepreneurship and cross-border e-commerce knowledge; (2) International trade and international relations knowledge; (3) Cross-cultural communication skills. The above three types of knowledge and skills are important to the three types of entrepreneurship, but according to the different types of entrepreneurship, the first type of entrepreneurship focuses more on internet entrepreneurship and cross-border e-commerce related knowledge, and the second type of entrepreneurship focuses on international trade and knowledge of international relations. The third type of entrepreneur needs to have strong cross-cultural communication skills.

The knowledge and skills required by the Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship are the goal and also the most important basis of the Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship education system. With the further development of practical teaching, the demand for knowledge will become more specific and detailed.

### **3.2 Thoughts on the Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship education system**

#### **3.2.1 Establish a Belt and Road national "innovation farm" transnational entrepreneurship network platform**

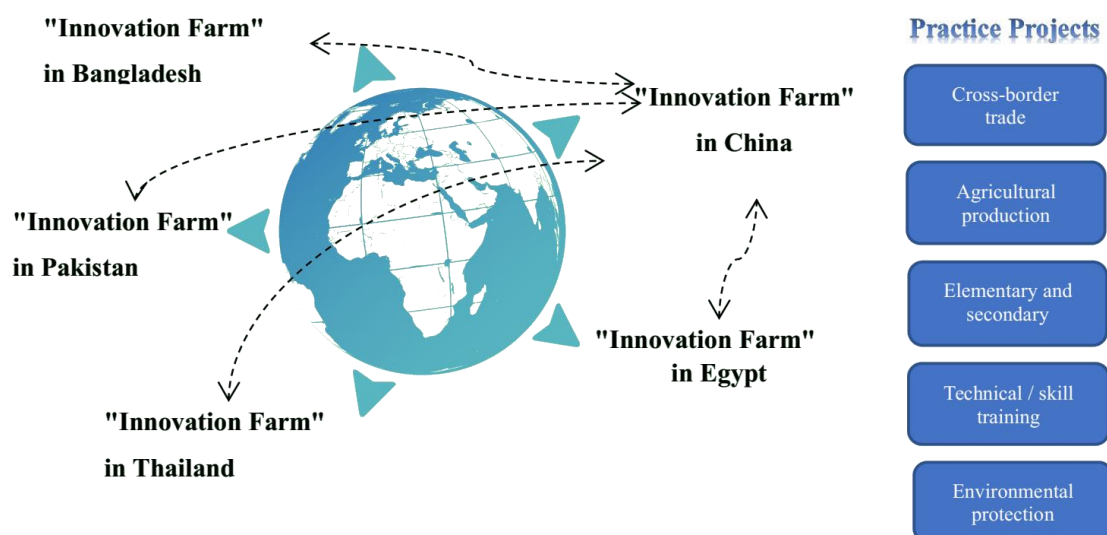
Based on the establishment of friendly cooperation memorandums with colleges and universities in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Thailand, the "innovation farms" have been gradually established in China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Thailand to build a network platform for students from all over the world to innovate and start their own businesses. Based on the principles of friendship, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation, China-Pakistan, China-Bangladesh, China-Egypt and China-Thailand cross-border innovation and entrepreneurship talent exchange projects have been reached.

The "innovation farms" of the above countries will serve as incubation bases for cross-border innovation and entrepreneurship projects. At the same time, they will collect innovation and entrepreneurship projects for their own countries and partner countries, and recruit project partners and project members in the partner countries in the form of project cooperation. Jointly complete half-year to one-year cross-border entrepreneurship practice projects.

At the same time, countries need to carry out in-depth integration with domestic companies and entrepreneurial mentors to provide all-round support such as funding, policies and communication platforms for entrepreneurial projects and teams from partner countries. During the practice of cross-border exchanges, each country needs to provide effective and reasonable logistic support, follow-up guidance and process management for the players participating in the cooperative country.

Cross-border practice projects include but are not limited to the following categories:

- ① Cross-border trade: cross-border e-commerce with various categories and traditional cross-border trade;
- ② Agricultural production: including special agriculture such as poultry farming, rice plantation, flower plantation, and coffee plantation;
- ③ Elementary and secondary education: various primary and secondary education programs including



**Figure 1. Belt and Road national "innovation farm" transnational entrepreneurship network platform**

arts, sports and entertainment;

④ Technical / skill training: including cross-border e-commerce platforms, data mining, graphical programming, and various technical / skill training such as agricultural technology and biotechnology;

⑤ Environmental protection: including degradation of plastic products, water purification, soil improvement, etc.

Cross-border practice projects can be innovative research topics, practical service/ production projects, or entrepreneurial projects. The cross-border practice projects generated by "innovation farms" in various countries would be funded by countries and supported by local cooperative enterprises with funding and project guidance

### 3.2.2 "1 + 1 + 1" practical courses

① Campus training: Interested students will be organized to focus on practical business English, cross-border e-commerce ERP simulation, entrepreneurship simulation training, cross-border e-commerce operation practice, product selection and design, etc., to accumulate skills required during later internship practices.

② Practice internship: Outstanding students would enter the "innovation farm" in each country. They will conduct a month-long inspection and research, apply the skills learned in campus training, find innovative research topics or entrepreneurial projects in the "innovation farm". The most innovative and feasible projects will be selected into the "project pool" for further incubation;

③ Transnational entrepreneurship practice: Project leaders in "project pool" would select students who have the potential for innovation and entrepreneurship from various countries to participate their projects by organizing written tests, interviews, project recruitment, commercial road shows, etc.. After that, selected students will carry out a multinational entrepreneurship practice with their project team.

### 3.2.3 Project management system

The practice content of "1 + 1 + 1" practical courses adopts a project management system, from project collection to member recruitment, from process management to schedule control, to build as much as possible a practical environment for entrepreneurial projects. Forcing students to break away from the "challenges" of the campus and the care of their teachers, truly enter the practical state and establish a good psychological quality and working ability for future employment and entrepreneurship.

#### 4. PRACTICAL EXPLORATION OF "BELT AND ROAD" TRANSNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION BASED ON CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE

##### 4.1 Exploration of the Belt and Road team training of Chinese and foreign students

After multiple rounds of cross-border e-commerce training, a multinational entrepreneurial atmosphere have been set up and interested and capable students are gathered. Through school-enterprise cooperation, a total of more than ten cross-border e-commerce training and entrepreneurial lectures were conducted, and the number of participating students was nearly two hundred, of which nearly half were foreign students from Belt and Road countries. Interest is the best teacher, under the voluntary registration recruitment mechanism, a group of Chinese and foreign students who have strong interests in multinational entrepreneurship have been recruited. These students have become the backbone of various entrepreneurial competitions and entrepreneurial projects.

A mixed Chinese and foreign team is formed to conduct corporate training and participate in cross-border e-commerce entrepreneurship competitions. Chinese and foreign students have their own strengths and weaknesses, and forming a mixed team can make up for each other. Chinese students are all undergraduate students majoring in economics and management. They are familiar with e-commerce business processes, and can quickly get started with various operations of cross-border e-commerce platforms. Language is their disadvantage. Foreign students are mostly master and doctoral students. Although they only know a little about e-commerce, they can define English keywords and description terms of products from the perspective of consumers. Organizing Chinese and foreign mixed teams to run cross-border platform account for enterprises and participating in various cross-border e-commerce entrepreneurship competitions, all achieved good results. Practice has proved that the growth of Chinese and foreign students in mixed teams is much larger than that of similar student teams. Chinese students can gain international perspective and cultural self-confidence, and foreign students can quickly master business Chinese and e-commerce operation methods.

Core students are screened to integrate resource advantages and personal interests and incubate multinational entrepreneurial projects. The key to incubating an entrepreneurial project is to form an excellent team. The core members of the team are all excellent students from previous internships and competitions. Chinese and foreign students brainstormed together, combined market research and corporate interviews to form a preliminary project idea, and divided labor and collaboration according to the characteristics of Chinese and foreign students: Chinese students are responsible for the overall planning and daily operation of the project, and foreign students are responsible for integrating overseas social capital and developing markets .

##### 4.2 Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship education practice system based on cross-border e-commerce

The establishment of a comprehensive and integrated entrepreneurial practice system from module to system and from basic to comprehensive is shown as below.

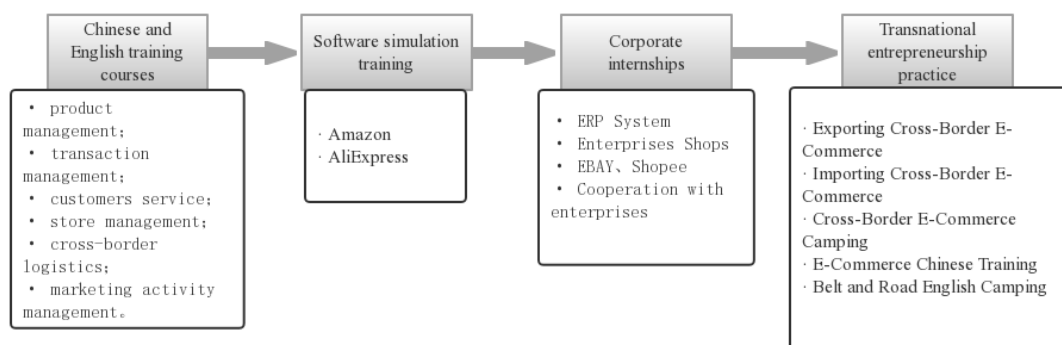


Figure 2 Schematic diagram of entrepreneurial practice

The Chinese and English training courses include a full-English practical elective course "Cross-Border E-Commerce Training" for students majoring in economics and management, and a creative and entrepreneurial general course for cross-border students, "Cross-Border E-commerce Practice", Teaching students in Chinese and English the six operational links of product management, transaction management, customers service, store management, cross-border logistics and marketing activity management in cross-border e-commerce.

Software simulation training is closely integrated with the teaching content of the training courses. In the dynamically changing e-commerce environment provided by the software, students act as enterprises and individuals and independently operate service items provided by cross-border e-commerce platforms to develop cross-border e-commerce business. The simulation training platform is mainly selected from the largest overseas cross-border e-commerce platform Amazon and the cross-border e-commerce platform of China Alibaba Group AliExpress. Students can master the entire flow of cross-border e-commerce business operations in simulation software, effectively preventing operational risks.

In terms of corporate internships, professional teachers in the school have conducted in-depth cooperation with cross-border e-commerce enterprises, and they have jointly organized third-year students from economics and management to carry out professional internships with corporate trainers outside the school. In that internships, students work in teams of three and operate a real online store as a team. They are responsible for the operation of product selection, product listing and delivery. The student team can obtain 30-50% of the profit during the operation. The company is responsible for providing cross-border e-commerce online store account and training and guidance in the operation link. It also bears all the operational risks while obtaining most of the profits. Teaching internships are conducted in the cross-border e-commerce experience hall in the university's entrepreneurial incubator. The hall has an operating area, a shipping area, and a photo studio.

The ultimate goal of entrepreneurship education is to provide students with a certain degree of employment or entrepreneurship. Transnational entrepreneurship practice is part of the implementation of the Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship education practice system. Most students will choose to work in the cross-border e-commerce industry after they have accumulated sufficient employment skills. Some students start their business ideas after learning cross-border e-commerce. At present, four Belt and Road multinational entrepreneurship projects and one foreign company have been hatched.

#### **4.3 Exploration of Building Pakistan's "Innovation Farm"**

The completion of Pakistan's "Innovation Farm" has verified the effectiveness of the "Belt and Road" multinational entrepreneurship education practice system based on cross-border e-commerce.

Growth of the founder: The core member of Pakistan's "Innovation Farm" is a Pakistani student who completed the cross-border e-commerce English training course in February 2019; he also learned AliExpress in simulation software in April of the same year and participated in the first national new retail buyer entrepreneurship skills competition held by Alibaba; entered a cross-border e-commerce internship in May, systematically learned the Amazon platform, and continued to operate Amazon stores for 8 months, earning thousands yuan in the first month. In July, we cooperated with cross-border e-commerce enterprises to carry out a 10-day cross-border e-commerce online training for 35 students in Pakistan, and then provided 15 outstanding trainees with two-month cross-border e-commerce part-time jobs; in December we have completed company registration and started further planning for systematic and continuous cross-border cross-border e-commerce training to provide more Pakistani students with employment or entrepreneurial opportunities.

Promotion of cross-border e-commerce forum: On December 3-5, 2019, the entrepreneurial instructor of the school visited Faisalabad Agricultural University in Pakistan with several Pakistani students to participate in the second cross-border e-commerce international exchange forum. During the forum, the two entrepreneurial teams reached a cooperation agreement and formally established the "China-Pakistan Cross-Border E-Commerce

Association".

Innovation Farm in Pakistan: Gilgit NGO AKRSP (Agha Khan Rural Support Program) and Faisalabad Agricultural University Institute of Agriculture and Resource Economics have become Pakistan's "Innovation Farm", which will work with the entrepreneurial team in China to cultivate more multinational entrepreneurial projects.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This article first analyzes the significance of Chinese colleges and universities in carrying out entrepreneurship education for Belt and Road countries, and puts forward the idea of Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship education based on cross-border e-commerce. Based on the summary of three existing types of Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education needs, this paper puts forward the idea of an education system centered on the Belt and Road countries: "innovation farm" transnational entrepreneurship network platform. Based on this idea, Huazhong Agricultural University has carried out three aspects of transnational entrepreneurship education practice namely the Belt and Road student team training, Belt and Road transnational entrepreneurship education practice system, and the establishment of an innovation farm in Pakistan.

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