

REVIEW
of **Nataliia Paziura**,
Professor, Doctor of Sciences (Education),
Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages for Specific Purposes
State University “Kyiv Aviation Institute”
of the **thesis**
**The Development of Cooperation and Academic Exchanges between
Ukrainian and Chinese Universities (the Beginning of the 21st Century)**
written by
Wang Yixuan
submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the specialty 011 Educational, pedagogical sciences

1. Topicality of the performed work and its connection with the relevant plans of the branches of science

Over the last few decades, the higher education landscape has been transformed by international student mobility that has brought various benefits to students, institutions, communities, and countries. Benefits of international student mobility and academic exchange can be observed at different levels. At the individual level, academic mobility enriches students’ experiences by developing intercultural awareness and a deep understanding of the global issues, which may increase their competitiveness in the labour market. At the institutional level, universities view international exchange programs as mechanisms to enhance students’ intercultural understanding and competencies, which contributes to their overall employability and career choices in an increasingly global society. At the national level, the mobility of students can promote global knowledge sharing and support national science and technology strategies.

Yet, despite the consistent increase in international cooperation between Ukrainian universities and higher education institutions of other countries aiming at Ukrainian students’ participation in exchange and study abroad programs since recent years, the number of Ukrainian undergraduate students undertook an international learning experience is relatively small.

In this context, Wang Yixuan’s thesis contributes to the understanding of the issue of students’ outbound mobility, which allows stakeholders, faculty members, administrators, researchers, and program developers, to provide targeted services that can optimize students’ learning environment and improve students’ satisfaction with their experience in exchange programs. It also provides insights into designing marketing strategies for the government and universities in recruiting international students.

The topic of Wang Yixuan’s thesis “The Development of Cooperation and Academic Exchanges between Ukrainian and Chinese Universities (the Beginning of the 21st Century)” corresponds to the topic of scientific work Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Personal and Professional Development of a Modern Specialist in the Conditions of Integration into the International Educational Space carried out at the Department of Pedagogics and Innovative Education at Lviv Polytechnic National University (number of state registration 0121U113179).

The topic of this thesis was approved (Minutes N 6/22 dated 01.02.2022) at the meetings of the Academic Council of the Institute of Jurisprudence, Psychology and Innovative Education of Lviv Polytechnic National University.

2. The most significant scientific results contained in the thesis

The most significant outcomes of the submitted thesis have been achieved in the field of pedagogical theory and methodology due to: - the author's substantiation of the theoretical basis for cooperation and academic exchanges development; - his analysis of the peculiarities of academic exchanges development in the discourse of Ukrainian-Chinese cooperation from the perspective of social, economic, cultural aspects; - the presented ideas as for the improvement of cooperation and academic exchanges between our two countries.

3. New facts obtained by the dissertator

The scientific novelty of Wang Yixuan's thesis is obvious and lies in the following results. *For the first time*, the development and implementation of cooperation and academic exchanges between Ukrainian and Chinese universities at the beginning of the 21st century *has been analyzed*. The theoretical basis of cooperation and academic exchanges development *has been substantiated*. The peculiarities of cooperation and academic exchanges development in the discourse of Ukrainian-Chinese experience through the prism of social, economic, cultural as well as legal factors *have been highlighted*. The implementation of cooperation and academic exchanges between Ukrainian and Chinese universities in a wide range of disciplines and fields *has been characterised*. different ways to improve cooperation and academic exchanges in universities of Ukraine and China (creating various types of intermediary institutions involving scholars, diplomats and NGOs; building networking education between universities in different countries and regions; expanding long-term cooperation in the educational, cultural and social spheres; increasing the level and quality of teaching through new approaches to managing international activities in higher education institutions; improving curriculum and services to attract talented young people inside and outside the country) *has been suggested*.

It has been clarified the content of concepts "international education", "international educational exchange", "cultural diversity", "academic collaboration and research", "interdisciplinary cooperation", "globalization of education". The scientific comprehension of the concepts used in research papers on the internationalization of higher education, academic cooperation development and academic exchanges in universities *has been improved*.

The thesis statements on the development of academic cooperation and exchanges between universities according to modern theories of higher education internationalization *gained further development*.

The materials presented in the publications of Chinese scholars on the problem of academic cooperation as well as innovative ideas and approaches used in the process of academic exchanges in a modern learning environment *have been introduced* into scientific discourse.

4. The degree of validity of the scientific statements, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the thesis

The analysis of Wang Yixuan's thesis and publications allows us to make a conclusion about undisputed validity of the scientific statements, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the thesis. A number of contradictions in the sphere of Ukrainian-Chinese academic cooperation and exchanges between the need to ensure effective academic cooperation and exchanges between universities in different countries and the initial stage of this process in Ukraine and China; the need to organize academic cooperation and exchanges between universities in these countries and the discrete nature of its implementation; the need to improve the development of academic cooperation and exchanges between universities in Ukraine and China and the insufficient level of studying its theoretical foundations and best practices has forced the author to carry out the presented research.

To achieve the goal and objectives of the research, theoretical (analysis, synthesis, qualitative method, comparison, case method) and empirical methods (method of collecting research data and research literature) research methods were used to obtain reliable results.

The source base formed by the author is characterized by diversity and includes a significant amount of scientific publications, legislative and regulatory documents.

The thesis is characterized by an appropriate scientific level. It clearly justifies the choice of the research topic, defines its object, subject, aim and objectives, and the content of the abstract highlights the essential aspects and main provisions of the thesis. The scientific propositions, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the thesis are based on a wide approbation of the research results. The applicant presented the main points of his research at numerous scientific-practical and scientific-methodological conferences of various levels, as well as other scientific-practical events.

The scientific level of the thesis, its relevance, accomplishment, and practical significance are undeniable.

5. Significance for science and practice of the author's obtained results

The practical and theoretical significance of the research results lies in the fact that the main findings can be further implemented in higher education institutions of Ukraine, especially when teaching "Actual Problems of Theory and History of Pedagogical Science" and "Internationalization of Education: Directions, Trends, "Perspectives" courses for PhD students and "Comparative Pedagogy" for students obtaining master's degree. The author's suggestions can be used by university authorities for management improvement as those contributing to the improvement of cooperation and academic exchanges between two countries. The research materials, conclusions and results can be used by scholars for further educational research. The main findings, conclusions and results of the research were implemented in Ukrainian universities, namely Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Stepan Gzhytskyi National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnologies of Lviv, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, and Lviv Polytechnic National University.

6. Recommendations for the use of the results and conclusions of the thesis

The university authorities can implement the author's suggestions for management improvement and determined ways contributing to the improvement of cooperation and academic exchanges between two countries. Besides, on the basis of the research materials, conclusions and results further educational research can be carried out.

7. Assessment of the content of the thesis and its completeness

Wang Yixuan's thesis is a complete academic paper with a clear structure and sequence content of scientific statements, which are relevant to the purpose and the research objectives. The work consists of two abstracts in English and Ukrainian languages, a list of the author's publications, an introduction, three chapters, conclusions to the chapters, general conclusions, a list of references, and appendices.

The first chapter, *“Cooperation and Academic Exchanges of University Teachers and Students as a Scientific and Pedagogical Problem”*, presents the analysis of the previous scientific researches of international education and education globalization concepts. The significance of academic cooperation and exchange between the university faculty and students in China and Ukraine, the theoretical foundations of the development of educational cooperation and academic exchanges between universities of the two countries are outlined. The important result of the research is revealing common advantageous areas of cooperation and exchange in academic spheres of two countries: engineering and science and technology; agriculture and biological sciences; medicine and life sciences; mathematics and physics; social sciences. The important questions about the theoretical basis of academic cooperation and exchange of university teachers and students' development have been raised. The research methods (literature research method, background analysis, qualitative research method, the case study method), used to conduct the comprehensive study are presented.

The second chapter, *“Peculiarities of Cooperation and Academic Exchanges Development in the Discourse of Ukrainian-Chinese Experience”*, substantiates the social, economic and cultural aspects of academic exchanges and cooperation between universities in Ukraine and China. A legal basis has been laid down for the scope, modalities and procedures of cooperation, forming the foundation for the smooth implementation of educational cooperation and exchange programs between the two countries. Wang Yixuan concludes that educational cooperation and academic exchanges between Ukraine and China are constantly improving and innovating on the premise of complying with the relevant laws and regulations of the respective countries, and also provide a reference for the development of laws and regulations on educational cooperation between other countries.

The third chapter, *“The Implementation of Cooperation and Academic Exchanges between Ukrainian and Chinese Universities”*, the peculiarities of the organization of educational exchange programs for university teachers and students are presented. The chapter distinguishes and characterizes the scope and main features of scientific cooperation and exchanges between Ukrainian and Chinese universities as well as ways and suggestions to improve cooperation and academic exchanges between two countries. The ways for improvement the exchanges and cooperation projects between Ukraine and China in the field of education have been

offered: continuity, a deeper level of the academic exchanges and cooperation. At the same time, in order to strengthen the interaction and exchange of education between universities of the two countries, in addition to the attraction of culture and education, the author insists on giving full play to the role of government scholarships, increasing the number of exchange students, creating a brand name for educational cooperation, and enhancing the international visibility of institutions of higher education.

The carried out detailed analysis allows us to state that the thesis of Wang Yixuan is an independent scientific research in terms of structure, content, validity of the main provisions and conclusions.

8. Discussion points, recommendations and comments on the content of the thesis

In general, while highly appreciating the scientific and practical significance of the obtained results, we consider it appropriate to express certain comments and wishes:

1. In subchapter 1.2 the author presents the results of her research of the theoretical basis of cooperation and academic exchange development. Unfortunately such theories as Social Capital Theory, Social Learning Theory, Innovation and Evolutionary theory, Collaborative Learning Theory, Social Constructivist Theory are not exemplified by Ukraine-Chinese cooperation in this field.
2. We think that in subchapter 2.3 the legal basis for exchange programs between Chinese universities and universities of South-East Asia, countries in ASEAN or countries of the Belt and Road Initiative should have been analyzed in order to give an idea of the scope of cooperation and academic exchanges in Asia-Pacific region.
3. Unfortunately the thesis does not take into account the present reality of Ukraine and its economy, demography and other aspects, considerably influencing further perspectives of the development of academic exchange and cooperation between Ukrainian and Chinese universities.
4. We are sure that the thesis would have gained significantly if Wang Yixuan had presented in appendices a summarizing table of Ukrainian and Chinese universities, taking part in academic exchanges programs, number of students involved in them, characteristic of programs in different years to illustrate the dynamics of this process.
5. The linguistic and stylistic design of the thesis corresponds to the peculiarities of the academic style, but at times it is rather literary (especially while describing personal experience). Some repetitions about advantages of Ukrainian Chinese cooperation and its fields are observed in the text.

9. Completeness coverage of results in publications

The main statements and results of the thesis are sufficiently fully presented in Wang Yixuan's 11 publications (among them 9 single publications): 2 chapters in collective monographs, 4 articles in journals included into the list of specialized scientific publications of Ukraine, 5 papers certifying the approbation of the thesis materials at international scientific and practical conferences.

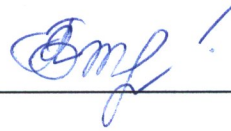
Conclusion

The analysis of the thesis, abstracts and published works gives grounds for the conclusion that Wang Yixuan's thesis on the topic "The Development of Cooperation and Academic Exchanges between Ukrainian and Chinese Universities (the beginning of the 21st century)" is an independent and complete academic paper that has scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance for pedagogical science and practice.

We believe that the thesis deserves our positive evaluation and meets the requirements of the Order On Approval of Requirements for Thesis Formatting (as amended) No. 40 of 12 January 2017 by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and the Procedure for Awarding the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and Cancellation of the Decision of a One-time Specialised Academic Council of a Higher Education Institution or Research Institution to Award the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 44 of 12 January 2022). Its author Yixuan Wang deserves the award of the scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the specialty 011 Educational, pedagogical sciences, field of knowledge 01 Education/Pedagogy.

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