

*Full Length Research Paper*

## What drives Chinese private colleges' internationalization?

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**Internationalization of private higher education has attracted considerable interest recently. After clarifying the status quo of Chinese private colleges, we proposed the conceptual model of Chinese private colleges' internationalization. This paper adopted a "strategy tripod" perspective in integrating the impact of the resource-, contingency-, and institution-based factors on Chinese private colleges' internationalization. Propositions were developed to indicate the driving forces of Chinese private colleges' internationalization and showed the influence of Chinese private colleges' internationalization on their performance like reputation and income. Generally, internationalization of Chinese private colleges was an important way to improve their performance in the long run.**

**Key words:** Chinese private colleges, internationalization, driving forces, strategy tripod.

### INTRODUCTION

With the development of private higher education all around the world, study on private colleges becomes a continuing trend. Private colleges refer to colleges responsible for their own funding, along with internal governance and management, the relationship to government and public authorities, and their planning. In the existing literature, private colleges in the United States, Poland, Britain, Hungary, and Russia have been explored. Yet very little is known about private colleges in China.

Due to economic globalization, internationalization of private colleges is not a new phenomenon. Hurtado et al. (2013) thought internationalization had become a key theme in higher education. Huang (2007) provided a detailed description of transnational higher education in

China, he just concentrated on joint operations and programs which are one of the forms of internationalization and it was primarily suitable to public higher education. Hence, to study on internationalization of Chinese private colleges is supplementary to existing literature.

There are literatures on motivations of internationalization of higher education, but they have focused on internationalization of public higher education, not private colleges. Moreover, the existing literatures have focused on the goals of internationalization. While one of the forms of internationalization and it was primarily suitable to public higher education. The author argues that internationalization itself is in particular a goal.

As a result, the lack of study on the factors driving

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Chinese private colleges' internationalization is a major gap.

Therefore, the study of Chinese private colleges' internationalization not only can provide theoretical guidance to private colleges, but also can fill in the major gap and enrich the existing international literature.

There are two purposes in this paper. First, we integrate the resource-based view, contingency theory, and the institution-based view to seek the driving factors of Chinese private colleges' internationalization. Based on resource-based view entrepreneurial spirit is a very important factor driving the internationalization of Chinese private colleges. Based on contingency theory industry competition is a motivation of Chinese private colleges' internationalization. Based on the institution-based view governmental supportive regulations cannot be neglected in Chinese private colleges' internationalization.

Second, the author attempts to propose the fundamental relationship between internationalization and private colleges' performance. My aim is to fill in the two major gaps in the higher education internationalization literature by addressing two fundamental questions: (1) What is the driving factors of some Chinese private colleges to engage in internationalization? (2) What are the effects of Chinese private colleges' internationalization on their performance?

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: First is the review of related literature. Second is on the status quo of Chinese private colleges. Third, strategy the tripod perspective is used to analyze the driving factors of Chinese private colleges' internationalization, advancing some related propositions. Fourth, a conceptual model is proposed that links entrepreneurial spirit, industry competition, and governmental supportive regulation to internationalization and links internationalization to its effects. Fifth is the measurement of the related variables and then conclusion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature examines two basic questions about private colleges. The first question is: what is the development history of private colleges? From the literature private colleges have been discussed in some countries such as the United States, Poland, Britain, Hungary, and Russia. Williams and Colby (1991) traced the history of the private junior college in the United States. Szabłowski (2001) argued that private higher education institutions in Poland were not as well treated as public institutions. Beloff (2001) showed launching process of a British private college which focused on liberal education. Gömbös (2003) introduced private colleges in Hungary. Petrenko and Glanzer (2005) described the development of private Christian colleges in Russia. To sum up' they all

concerned the history of private colleges.

The second question addresses the operation of private colleges. For example, Russo and Coomes (2003) argued that the long term pricing strategy of private college must be sensitive to its basic mission. Rood (2009) examined first-generation students' college choice and persistence at a private Christian college in the U.S. Northeast. Jones (2010) explored general education assessment at private historically black colleges and universities. Giles (2012) indicated the impact of adult degree programs on private college or university.

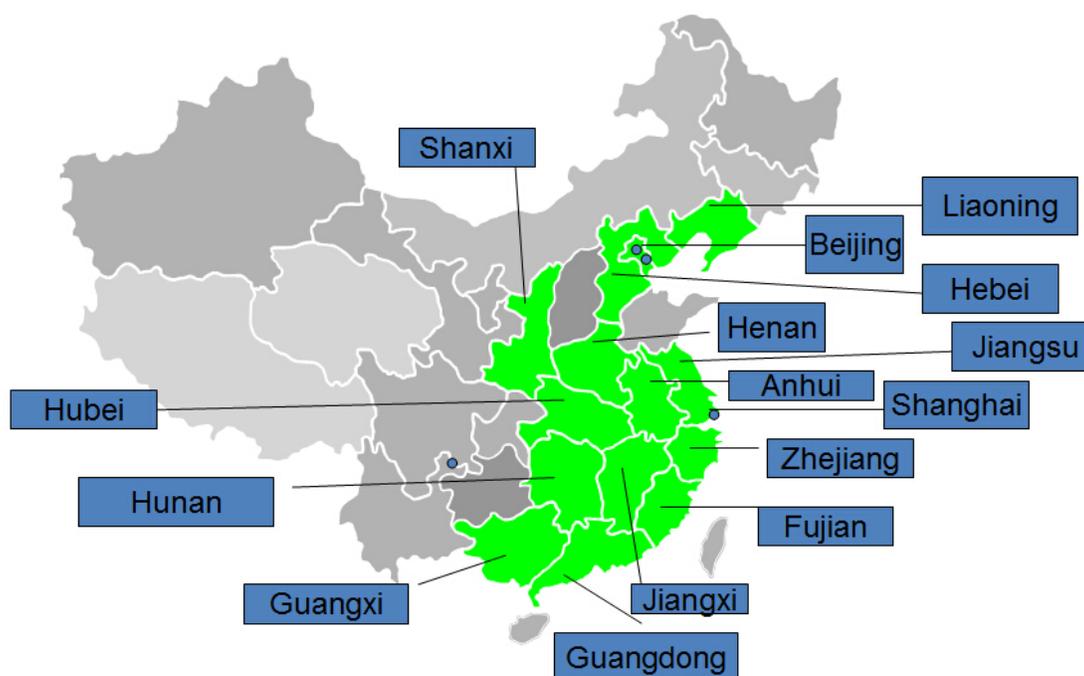
Internationalization is a popular term, and there are many ways to define it. Scott (2000) argued that internationalism of the university took two main forms—internationalism associated with imperialism and internationalism focusing on science and scientific method. Huang (2003b) who was interested in Chinese higher education indicated internationalization had changed from activities concerning traditional outflows of international scholars, faculty members, and students to those relating to transnational higher education and internationalization of curricula. Altbach and Knight (2007) argued that internationalization included the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions—and even individuals—to cope with the global academic environment.

As for the motivations for internationalization, Altbach and Knight (2007) argued profit-seeking, knowledge and language acquisition, demand absorption and many others were the motivations for internationalization. Chen and Weng (2008) proposed that the internationalization of higher education was driven by inner power of knowledge universality and outer power of politics, economy and culture. According to Wang (2014), apart from the mutual understanding approach for internationalization of higher education, there were capacity-building approach, the skilled migration approach and revenue-generating approach. And she argued that there were different motives in accordance with different approaches. For instance, revenue-generating approach had more concern of generating revenue.

### The status quo of Chinese private colleges

There are two kinds of full-time teachers in Chinese private colleges: senior teachers who have rich life and teaching experiences and young teachers who are innovative and risk-taking. Full-time staff are supplemented by part-timers, who include retired scholars of distinction and persons on-the-job in firms who have teachers' qualification certificate. Part-time faculty can afford important financial savings.

A majority of income of Chinese private college come from tuition. In Chinese private colleges, every student



**Figure 1.** The status quo of private colleges' internationalization in China.

must be able to afford to pay the fees charged. The tuition is constrained by the education committee, to illustrate, most of the Chinese private colleges in Shanghai can only charge one student tuition 10000RMB per year. Small part of majors like art can charge one student tuition 13000RMB or 15000RMB per year.

As at April 24, 2012, there are altogether 403 independent private colleges in China. Last year, my students and I had searched 403 Chinese private colleges' WEB sites one by one. We found that some private colleges showed communication or cooperation with other schools abroad. As for international behavior, to visit foreign schools or to be visited by foreigners is very popular. Some provinces in the East or middle of China are doing better in private colleges' internationalization than others; examples include. Shanxi Province, Jiangsu Province, Liaoning Province, Zhejiang Province, Anhui Province, Hubei Province, Hunan Province, Guangxi Province, Guangdong Province, Henan Province, Fujian Province, Jiangxi Province, and Hebei Province. In direct-controlled municipality, Beijing City and Shanghai City are doing better in private colleges' internationalization than Tianjing City and Chongqing City. In Figure 1, the provinces with better internationalization are marked with green color. Beijing City and Shanghai City are also labeled.

Some Chinese private colleges do better in internationalization. For example; Xi'an International University, Xi'an Siyuan University, and Xi'an Fanyi University are in

Shanxi province doing well in internationalization. Wuyishan Vocational College is in Fujian province doing well in internationalization. Nanhua College of Industry and Commerce, and Lingnan Institute of Technology are in Guangdong province doing well in internationalization. Hebei Foreign Studies University, and Shijiazhuang Economic Vocational College are in Hebei province doing well in internationalization. Wuchang University of Technology, and Wuhan College of Foreign Language and Foreign Affairs are in Hubei province doing well in internationalization. Hunan International Economics University, and Hunan Institute of Information Technology are in Hunan province doing well in internationalization. Silicon Lake College, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University and Sanjiang University are in Jiangsu province doing well in internationalization. Zhejiang Shuren University, and The University of Nottingham Ningbo China are in Zhejiang province doing well in internationalization. Guangxi Economic Vocational College, and Talent International College Guangxi are in Guangxi province doing well in internationalization. Xinyang International Vocation Institute is in Henan province doing well in internationalization. Jiangxi Fenglin College of Foreign Economy and Trade are in Jiangxi province doing well in internationalization. He University is in Liaoning province doing well in internationalization. Beijing City University is in Beijing doing well in internationalization. Sanda University is in Shanghai doing well in internationalization. In greater detail, those typical private colleges are shown

**Table 1.** Typical private colleges doing well in internationalization.

<b>Typical private colleges doing well in internationalization</b>	<b>Province or direct-controlled municipality</b>
Beijing City University	Beijing city
Hebei Foreign Studies University	Hebei Province
Shijiazhuang Economic Vocational College	Hebei Province
He University	Liaoning Province
Zhangzhou College of Science & Technology	Fujian Province
Wuyishan Vocational College	Fujian Province
Jiangxi Fenglin College of Foreign Economy & Trade	Jiangxi Province
Xinyang International Vocation Institute	Henan Province
Wuchang University of Technology	Hubei Province
Wuhan College of Foreign Language & Foreign Affairs	Hubei Province
Hunan International Economics University	Hunan Province
Hunan Institute of Information Technology	Hunan Province
Nanhua College of Industry and Commerce	Guangdong Province
Lingnan Institute of Technology	Guangdong Province
Guangxi Economic Vocational College	Guangxi Province
Talent International College Guangxi	Guangxi Province
Xi'an Siyuan University	Shanxi Province
Xi'an Fanyi University	Shanxi Province
Xi'an International University	Shanxi Province
Sanda University	Shanghai city
Zhejiang Shuren University	Zhejiang Province
The University of Nottingham Ningbo China	Zhejiang Province
Anhui Sanlian University	Anhui Province
Anhui Foreign Languages University	Anhui Province
Silicon Lake College	Jiangsu Province
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University	Jiangsu Province
Sanjiang University	Jiangsu Province

as Table 1.

According to the direction of the internationalization, private colleges can implement the "going out" and "please come in" strategy. "Going out" can be called "outward internationalization". "Please come in" can be called "inward internationalization", similar to argument of Internationalization at Home (Horn et al., 2012). The "going out" strategy means China actively participates in pushing the indigenous talent to the world and the "please come in" strategy means China is eager to attract talent all around the world to work in China. Horn et al. (2012) argued strategy of recruiting international students and strategy of infusing international content into the curriculum can be termed Internationalization at Home.

There are many forms of internationalization. Avila (2007) clarified programmatic structures for internationalization, including interinstitutional agreement, student mobility, faculty mobility, international networks for research and teaching, the internationalization of the curriculum, cooperation in research.

According to Huang (2007), more foreign higher education services in China were imported than those exported. After searching all of the Chinese private colleges' WEB sites, like Huang (2007), the author finds most of the Chinese private colleges that are engaging in some internationalization are practicing inward internationalization. Their international behaviors include accepting foreign interviews, inviting overseas choir (for example, Hunan international Economics University), enrolling overseas students (for example, Xi'an International University; Talent International College Guangxi), hiring foreign teachers (for example, Zhejiang Shuren University; The University of Nottingham Ningbo China), importing foreign advanced management technology (The University of Nottingham Ningbo China ;Hainan Technology and Business College; Xi'an Siyuan University), and operating jointly (for example, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University; The University of Nottingham Ningbo China). Specially, the University of Nottingham Ningbo China is now enrolling students internationally and joint

training international doctors.

Some Chinese private colleges that are engaging in some internationalization are adopting outward internationalization. Their "going out" way includes sending a few students to study abroad (for example, Wuhan College of Foreign Language and Foreign Affairs; Xi'an International University; Hebei Foreign Studies University; Talent International College Guangxi), sending some students to work abroad (for example, Xinyang International Vocation Institute; Anhui Sanlian University), sending a few teachers to study abroad (for example, Beijing City University; Shijiazhuang Economic Vocational College; Zhejiang Shuren University; Sanda University), participating in the international forum (Talent International College Guangxi), dispatching some students to foreign schools for paid internships (for example, Shanghai Zhongqiao College; Yang-en University), dispatching some graduates to work in other countries (63 graduates from Xinyang International Vocation Institute once were hired in South Korea) and investing in foreign countries. But investing abroad is risky. Chongqing Hailian Vocational Technical College invested in Australia in 2002 and several years later it failed.

### Strategy tripod Perspective

Peng (2005) argued that the institution-based view was a new leg of the international business strategy. Then Peng et al. (2008) argued the institution-based view, in combination with the industry- and resource-based view, puts the strategy tripod on firmer ground. Peng et al. (2009) believed the institution-based view had enriched the strategy discipline, leading to a strategy tripod. Because the strategy tripod framework exposed multi-level influence on international strategies, more and more papers on international business are from the strategy tripod perspective. To illustrate, Gao et al. (2010) focused on export behaviors using strategy tripod perspective. Xie et al. (2011) examined foreign firms' strategic positioning in the host country from strategy tripod perspective. Krull et al. (2012) studied the internationalization of engineering consulting firms from strategy tripod perspective. Like them, this work adopts the strategy tripod perspective on driving factors of Chinese private colleges' internationalization.

### The resource-based view and proposition development

The resource-based view envisions the organization as a collection of strategic resources which are heterogeneously distributed across organizations (Barney 1991) to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. Internal

organizational resources are all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, organization attributes, information, knowledge, and so forth (Barney, 1991). Based on that, it is argued that resources include human resources, property, information, entrepreneurial spirit and so on. Entrepreneurial spirit which manifested among all the entrepreneurs is the spirit of risk-taking, being innovative and proactive. With its risk-taking nature, an entrepreneurial person is willing to devote the necessary resources to opportunities that may result in costly failures. Innovativeness is the proclivity to engage in and support novelty, new ideas, creative processes, and experimentation which lead to new products, services, or technological processes (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). The proactive quality requires substantial financial and managerial commitment.

The person who has entrepreneurial spirit has a propensity to engage in the pursuit of new market opportunities and the renewal of existing areas of operation. They are willing to bear hardships and stand hard work. They are enterprising and proactive. They hope to lead a private college to be big, strong and distinctive. Internationalization of Chinese private colleges includes intake of foreign students, so it is a way to be big. Internationalization of Chinese private colleges boosts graduates' obtaining employment, so it is a way to be strong. What is more, internationalization is just a way to make a private college to be distinctive.

In China, chairman of the board of directors in private college is entrepreneur (Pettigrew, 1979) who takes primary responsibility for mobilizing people and other resources to initiate, give purpose to, build, and manage a new organization. It is the entrepreneurial spirit that enhances the internationalization of Chinese private colleges. As a case in point, Talent International College Guangxi is pursuing internationalization because of the chairman of the board of directors, Hou Zhenmei. Thus, it is proposed that entrepreneurial spirit will be positively related to Chinese private colleges' internationalization.

**Proposition 1:** From the resource-based view, entrepreneurial spirit will be positively related to Chinese private colleges' internationalization. The entrepreneur who has entrepreneurial spirit in a Chinese private college will be prone to pursue internationalization.

### Contingency theory and proposition development

Contingency theory holds that organizations adapt their structures in order to maintain fit with changing contextual factors, so as to attain high performance (Sousa and Voss, 2008). Contingency variables include national context, organizational context, strategic context and other environmental variables. The author takes the perspective

that contingency theory can be a very useful theoretical lens to view the internationalization of Chinese private colleges.

Chinese private colleges are competitive in searching for students and enrollment. There are main three reasons. First, the family planning policy in China which has been carried out for more than 30 years leads to nationwide enrollment declines. Second, enrollment arrangement in China needs to follow the stipulations from the Ministry of Education. For instance, only the university entrance exam candidates who are in excess of or equal to the prescribed admission score can be admitted. Moreover, it is only when the candidates selecting the very Chinese private college would be enrolled. Third, private colleges in China are to some extent been looked down on. In China the candidate needs to fill in three universities or colleges including private colleges he or she wants to attend. Private colleges in China usually row in the back in the admissions handbook.

Thus, to a private college in China which hopes to attract student enquiries and admissions, there should be distinguishing feature. Internationalization is the very distinguishing feature. Private colleges with internationalization will attract candidates who want to go abroad in the future. Private colleges with internationalization will also attract candidates who want to learn foreign language well. Private colleges with internationalization will even attract candidates who are from foreign country. So internationalization strategy of private colleges in China is imminent.

In addition, private colleges in China not only compete with public universities, but also with other private colleges. Intense competition in enrollment is undeniable for Chinese private colleges. Intense competition is characterized by heavy advertising, diverse product alternatives including all kinds of majors, and added services. A case in point was that when one private college opened a new major enrolling well in 2011, many private colleges opened the same major in 2012. In such conditions, internationalization may be desirable. For example, they can attract foreign students to learn Chinese or study for diploma in the domestic campus.

Therefore, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 2:** From contingency theory, industry competition has a positive effect on Chinese private colleges' internationalization. When the competitive intensity becomes greater, the desirability of internationalization for Chinese private colleges will be stronger.

### The institution-based view and proposition development

The institution-based view asserts that organizations sharing the same environment will be isomorphic to other

organizations, that is, organizations will resemble each other and behave similarly over time. When an organization is uncertain about what to do, it may imitate other successful organization. The institution-based view focuses on the interplay between institutions and organizations (Gao et al., 2010). Strategic activities are socially and normatively defined because their motives derive from an actor's propensity to legitimate or account rationally for such activities (Dacin et al., 2007). Institutions exert three types of isomorphic pressure on organizations. That is coercive, normative, and mimetic (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Thus institutions shape both the goals and means of the organization.

Institutions include laws, regulations, norms, customs and so on. Trilokekar (2010) highlighted the contributions of Canadian federal government to the internationalization of Canadian higher education. Governmental supportive regulations refer to institutional policies and practices favoring internationalization. Wang (2014) counted the frequency of internationalization in several education policy in China, and found that initially the policy granted universities the autonomy to engage in international academic exchange and cooperation; then the policy proposed comprehensive international tactics which encourage Chinese students to study overseas and admit foreign students to study in Chinese universities.

Sometimes Education Commission in China carries out some aid programs, for example, scholarship program for both Chinese and foreign scholars. The document of 2003-2007 Action Plan for Revitalization of Education highlighted the significance of the private sector. Thus, Chinese private colleges are explicitly encouraged by the regulations. This action of internationalization might do merely because of supportive regulations from the government. And this action might do merely due to other colleges starting the action. Also, it is asked to set up a specialized sector coping with international affairs. Then Chinese private colleges have to create international exchange sector advancing their internationalization. They are all supportive regulations from the government which enhance Chinese private colleges' internationalization.

Thus, the following proposition is made:

**Proposition 3:** From the institution-based view, governmental supportive regulations play a big role in driving Chinese private colleges' internationalization. The more governmental supportive regulations, the more Chinese private colleges will engage in internationalization.

### Internationalization and performance

It is accepted that business performance is a multi-dimensional and highly complex phenomenon (Lenz, 1981). In previous studies, performance can be a firm's

sales growth, return on investment, profit and market share. Assessment of performance can be a difficult and complex task. Peng and Luo (2000) argued performance could be measured both financially and strategically.

From the perspective of students, internationalization of universities will prepare graduates to enter positions that perpetuate the status quo, it also offers opportunities to create global citizens who challenge the hegemony of world structures and argue for social transformation, emancipation, and social democracy (Allen and Ogilvie, 2004). From the perspective of the universities, Altbach and Knight (2007) argued that developing countries seek to attract foreign students to their universities to improve the quality and cultural composition of the student body, gain prestige, and earn income. In this paper, based on Altbach and Knight (2007), performance of a Chinese private college mainly includes the school's reputation and income.

### Internationalization and reputation

Reputation has been defined as the knowledge about an organizational true characteristics and the emotions toward the organization held by stakeholders (Weigelt and Camerer, 1988). According to Sauder and Fine (2008), reputation is a signal providing an assurance of quality in the face of uncertainty.

Chinese private colleges with internationalization show comprehensive strength, for international activities, involve in many resources and show inclusion of multiculturalism. So internationalization means the ability of the university or college. Colleges with high comprehensive ability are associated with good reputation. Moreover, internationalization also means that the graduates may have a greater chance of finding a better job. The reputation value of a Chinese private colleges is high in a society where their impressions of certain colleges to screen job applicants and the reputation value is even higher if the college is also applied as a criterion (Tao, 2007). In addition, Chinese private colleges which perform internationalization can upgrade teachers. Teachers who have once lived in another country own a wider field of vision than others. Usually, Chinese private colleges with a number of those teachers mean quality of teaching.

Therefore, Chinese private colleges which perform internationalization will get good reputation. Private colleges with internationalization influence the college's reputation positively.

**Proposition 4a:** Internationalization has a positive effect on reputation of Chinese private colleges.

### Internationalization and income

Earning money is a key motive for all internationalization

projects in the for-profit sector and for some traditional nonprofit universities with financial problems (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Income-seeking is the common trait of Chinese private colleges. Where does their income come from? First, a majority of income of Chinese private college come from tuition payments, that is, the money paid by students. Second, a relatively small proportion of income is from other sources. Some income may be from firms if the private college cooperates with firms such as renting out the classroom in the holidays. Some income may be from donation of a benefactor or outside donor organization; only a very small part is from the education committee's support.

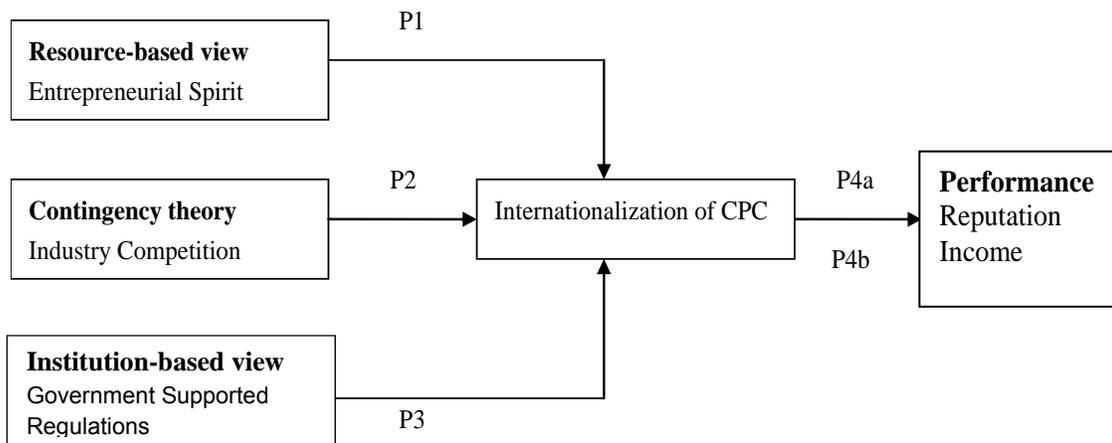
In the short run, private colleges to pursue internationalization will involve in many resources, for example, financial aid, and related services. In the long run, private colleges with internationalization can find a new way to enhance income. As a result, more and more overseas Chinese concern the college and the college will get more donations. Further, more and more firms care for the college, so the college will have more cooperation chances and get more income. Moreover, the education committee will give more opportunity to the private college. That is, the government will give more incentives to the private college which has become international. More important, more students' enrolment leads to more tuition. What's more, many countries recruit international students to earn profits by charging high fees—including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Altbach and Knight, 2007). China is no exception.

Therefore, private colleges with internationalization influence the college's income. In the long run, internationalization has a positive effect on income of private colleges in China.

**Proposition 4b:** Chinese private colleges' internationalization has a positive effect on income in the long run.

### A conceptual model

Based on the view, a framework is presented as Figure 2, which can be tested through a series of regression models. The core tenet of this model is that it integrates the resource-based view, contingency theory, and the institution-based view to seek the driving factors of Chinese private colleges' internationalization. Based on resource-based view, entrepreneurial spirit is a very important factor driving the internationalization in Chinese private colleges. Based on contingency theory industry competition is a motivation of Chinese private colleges' internationalization. Based on the institution-based view governmental supportive regulations are the factors that cannot be neglected in Chinese private colleges' internationalization. In addition, internationalization is related to private colleges' performance. Internationalization of



**Figure 2.** The conceptual model of Chinese private colleges' (CPC) internationalization.

higher education can be interpreted as a result, as a direction of cultivating students' ability, as a kind of education spirit, as a set of activities, and as a kind of trend and processes (Wang and Liu, 2009). In this model, internationalization of Chinese private colleges is the way to acquire performance such as reputation improvement and income increase.

### Measures

When available, existing measures can be adopted or adapted. When existing scales of the constructs are not available, measure can be guided by conceptual definitions.

**Entrepreneurial Spirit construct.** The scale can be adapted from Ang and Hong (2000). Entrepreneurial spirit includes several dimensions: risk-taking propensity, achievement orientation, innovation, and desire to gain status. Items like "I'm willing to take substantial risks for substantial returns", "I don't like doing things which I do not know much about" and "I have a strong preference for high-risk projects" can be used for "risk-taking propensity". Item like "When I do something, I see to it that it gets done excellently" can be used for "achievement orientation". Items like "I can beat around difficulties through creativity" and "It is welcome to introduce internationalization strategy" can be used for "innovation". Items like "I want to be accorded high status in the society" and "Social status is not an important consideration when I choose my career" can be used for "desire to gain status". Measure of each item ranges from one to five, that is a five-point scale.

**Industry Competition construct.** This can be measured with the total number of private colleges, the total number of graduates from private colleges, the total number of

entrants into private colleges, the total number of students attending the college admission examination in the last five years. These data can be found in National Bureau of Statistics of China.

**Governmental Supportive Regulations construct.** Measure of each item is on a scale from one to five, with one indicating low governmental supportive regulation and with five indicating high governmental supportive regulation. Ask board of education in various provinces to "provide travel support for faculty to attend foreign colleges", "provide faculty with released time to develop international projects" as well as "provide funding for international projects" (Ray and Solem, 2009).

**Internationalization of CPC.** The construct can be measured with a five-item scale that one means inconformity to the fact, and five means to conform well to the fact. Ask faculty members and students to evaluate items. For example, "Our college has engaged in some international projects for a long time", "I have participated in an international program", "Our principal pays attention to internationalization strategy", "There are some reports on internationalization of our college", "International activities of our college are related with a lot of foreign country".

**Performance measures.** Reputation can be measured with a five-item scale developed for this study by drawing on Volkwein and Sweitzer (2006). From arguments of Volkwein and Sweitzer (2006), structural characteristics such as mission, governance, age, size, wealth influence reputation. And faculty recruitment, salaries, support, research publication, and scholarly productivity can also influence reputation. Besides, student academic success, student growth, graduation rates, and alumni attainment can influence reputation too. They concluded the bigger is the better, regardless of the measure of size. So enrollment can be one of the indicators of reputation.

### The nationally developed ranking can be relied upon:

Top 100 Private Colleges published by Chinese Alumni Association. The index is made of three indicators, which are talent training, educational investment, and social prestige. Although the rankings are not perfect, the private college in the list is interpreted as the best-known. The reason is that objective data are to be measured.

However, reputation can also be measured through surveys with an advantage. That is, the choice of weights attached to various measures is left to the respondents, not to the investigator (Williams and Dyke, 2008). Reputation can be measured with a five-scale. Items are like "our college has a good reputation because of internationalization in the recent year". If you evaluate one, you disagree with the item, and if you evaluate five, you agree with the item greatly.

Income can be measured with a five-scale that captured the total revenue change between after-international-activity and before-international-activity. Ask financial managers and the principal in Chinese private colleges to evaluate items. For example, "As for income of the last year, our college benefited from international projects" and "our college expanded in enrollment because of international projects".

### Conclusion

The paper makes several contributions. Theoretically, a "strategy tripod" perspective is adopted in integrating the impact of the resource-, contingency-, and institution-based factors on Chinese private colleges' internationalization and it is argued that internationalization of Chinese private colleges is the way to improve performance such as reputation and income.

Therefore, the conceptual model of Chinese private colleges is a significant theoretical contribution. The insights from this paper enrich the literature of private higher education and the literature of internationalization of higher education. Empirically, the author and her students searched 403 Chinese private colleges' WEB sites last year and this paper lists detailed private colleges which do well in internationalization. Methodologically, the author borrows study method from management discipline. This approach allows innovation in the pedagogy discipline. Although being a conceptual paper, the author suggests that quantitative studies be conducted. She not only puts forward propositions, but also explains how the constructs in the conceptual framework could be measured.

Several limitations of this study should be noted and point to the need for further research. First, quantitative studies need to test the advanced propositions and deepen this paper. Further research should pay more attention to data collection. Second, the status of Chinese private colleges is not all-sided because the research

design is not longitudinal. Future work should consider adopting longitudinal design. Third, although entrepreneurial spirit, industry competition, government supportive regulations are factors driving Chinese private colleges' internationalization, they are by no means exhaustive. Further research should explore other important factors.

### Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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