

31.3.2026

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**Title**

Marginal Revolution : The Impact of Transnational Education on Higher Education in Host Countries: A Case Study of China / Xiaojiong Ding

**Publication year**

2019

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education policy. - 32 (2019) 3, S. 419 - 440

**Inventory number**

48546

**Keywords**

Ausland : China : einzelne Hochschulen ; Ausland : China : Studenten, Studium, Lehre ; Hochschulreform : allgemein

**Abstract**

Since the twenty-first century, transnational education (TNE) has been closely related to the concept of capacity building. Although empirical evidence of the impact of TNE on capacity building in host countries is largely missing, a handful of studies have revealed that TNE has a limited impact on local higher education. This study attempts to discover reasons for this limited impact, finding that TNE's academic weakness and isolation from local faculties and programmes impede knowledge transfer and organizational learning. As a result, TNE is at the edge of the local higher education system and exerts a marginal impact on host countries' capacity building. To prevent TNE from being 'a mere imported capacity with no impact on the local system' (OECD and the World Bank in Cross-border tertiary education: a way towards capacity development. OECD, Paris, 2007, 12), TNE urgently needs to establish its own brand instead of living on partner universities' brand effect. Moreover, communication between TNE and local higher education needs to be facilitated. (HRK / Abstract

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