

# Chapter 71

## International Student Mobility Trends between Developed and Developing Countries

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### ABSTRACT

*The authors offer international student mobility trends between developed and developing countries. Global outflow, inflow, and net inflow trends are described to display an overall and dynamic landscape of international student mobility. International student mobility trends between developed and developing countries are compared from perspectives of absolute and relative quantities. Relationships between mobility trends and economic growth are explored using regression analysis with applicable variables such as global outflow number and global GDP, outflow number and GDP in developing countries, inflow number and GDP in developed countries, etc.*

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of global higher education is clearly evident in these numbers: 97 million students enrolled in higher education institutions in 2000 compared to 263 million forecasted for enrollment in 2015. At the same time, the number of students who chose to study abroad had increased from 1.3 million in 1990 to 4.3 million in 2011 (UNESCO Bangkok Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, 2013).

China and India are the two main sources with regard to outbound international student mobility. One in five of the world's international students are from either China or India, with more than 700,000 tertiary-level students enrolled in a higher education system outside their home country. In the U.S. alone, these two countries contributed to 84% of all increases in international student enrollment between 2000-01 and 2010-11 (Choudaha & Chang, 2012). The number of Chinese students in the U.S. during 2013-2014 increased to 31 percent of all international students in the

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U.S. – the highest concentration the top home country has had since Institute of International Education began producing the report in 1948 (Haynie, 2014).

Traditionally the U.S. and U.K. have been the most prestigious choices for inbound international students, due to dominating university top 10 rankings with the likes of Harvard, Oxford, MIT and Cambridge (Haynie, 2014). The U.S. enrolled a record-breaking number of international students during the 2013-2014 school year, welcoming 886,052 undergraduate and graduate students to colleges and universities throughout the country (Haynie, 2014). More recently however they have had to compete with the rapidly growing Asian higher education market. Asia is among the fastest growing destinations for international students, and China continues to be the most popular destination in Asia, ranking third among countries that host the most international students (Sheehy, 2013).

Investment in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines is increasingly seen from the perspective of the U.S. and Europe as a means to boost innovation, particularly in manufacturing, the sector which helped Asian economies grow exponentially over the last two decades (Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2013). STEM innovation, a key driver of national economic growth, has increased significantly the global demand for STEM talent. In 2013, more than one in three international students in the U.S. were enrolled in STEM, which translates to over 300,000 international students, a 27 percent increase from five years ago (Chang & Kono, 2014).

Based on the data of 48 countries and regions from 1999 to 2008, Wei (2013) explored economic and educational determinants attracting international students in different countries. The results show that merchandise trade volume between countries facilitates international student mobility across borders, and that international students from developing countries put the same weights

on educational and economic factors for peer developing countries as potential destinations, while only economic factors are taken into consideration for developed countries as potential destinations. On the other hand, international students from developed countries often value educational factors more for developed countries as possible destinations, while equally weigh educational and economic factors for developing countries as possible destinations. Caruso & Wit (2013) study the economic determinants of intra-European student mobility and find the expenditure per student appears to be a crucial determinant.

Shields (2013) puts forward a new theoretical perspective of network to analyze the international student mobility which is found that international student flows are closely related to world trade and, increasingly, international governmental organizations. On the basis of a large data set on Erasmus and non-Erasmus students in seven European countries, Souto-Otero (2013) suggests a two-pronged approach to increase participation: one focusing on better information and communication and the other stressing the benefits of Erasmus mobility. Based on a large questionnaire survey and associated in-depth interviews with UK students enrolled in universities in six countries from around the world, Findlay et al (2012) argued several different dimensions of social and cultural capital are accrued through study abroad. Kondakci (2011) probed the Turkey case of 331 international students studying in public universities of Turkey, with results suggest that private rationales are prominent for students coming from Western and economically developed countries, and economic and academic rationales are prominent for students coming from Eastern and economically developing countries.

Although many descriptions, comparisons, reviews, and discussions about international student mobility trends and related factors in certain countries and regions are scattered in the literature, widely variant definitions of ‘international’ or ‘foreign’ students in education systems across

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