

A different story

--- Innovation and change through alliances in higher education

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Key success factors of international alliances in business have been addressed a lot in academic world. The most popular elements are, for example, due diligence partner selection, the forms, such as from JV to wholly-owned business, to merger and acquisition; how to manage cultural differences; the importance of trust etc.

Globalization has in recent years resulted in a converging of tastes worldwide, this has led to the mushrooming growth of strategic alliances throughout the world in a wide range of industries, and higher education is not exception. However, innovation and change are highly required in order to achieve success in this specific field, which differs a lot from business alliances.

In order to explore more in-depth knowledge of cooperative strategy employed in international alliance in higher education. This paper will use empirical cases to reveal the specific characteristics of alliances in higher education. It attempts to chart new water into cooperative strategy by comparing the key success factors in alliances between higher education and business by taking examples of cases between the UK and China.

There are a set of distinctive innovation and changes found in higher education alliances through three phases: formation, operation and development. For example, in formation phase, relying on due diligence to determine an appropriate partner is not enough, comparatively personal links are more effective; in operation stage, localizing the joint-ventured project based in China is not applicable; while keeping foreign attractiveness is critical; culture differences are highly valued resources in higher education collaborations, whereas in business alliances they are viewed as problematic; In development stage, there is no intention that alliances in higher education disintegrate within years and result in merger or acquisition.

The reasons for these distinctions are subject to the differences in nature of business and higher education. This paper helps find these reasons. Based on the above demonstration, this paper finally develops a typical route towards running successful alliances in higher education in an innovative way, which attempts to enrich the scope of cooperative strategy by expanding it to a non-business industry, from which a different story is found!

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