

## Introduction

Over the past 10 to 15 years, international student mobility has become an increasingly important part of the global higher education landscape. The total number of mobile tertiary education students was estimated to have reached more than 3.6 million in 2010, a nearly 50% increase since 2004 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2012). Traditionally, international student mobility has focused on the major English-speaking destination countries (MESDCs), such as the US, the UK, and Australia. Although MESDCs are still the dominant providers of education for international students, they experienced some declines or moderations in international enrollments in the latter half of the last decade. In addition, increased student mobility within East Asia indicates a shift toward a stronger Asian influence in the student flows of global international education (JWT Education, 2008).

This research briefly reviewed the development of international education and found four factors affecting international education: culture, politics, the economy, and human resources. These four factors can reflect fundamental drivers for different countries/regions at different times (Knight & de Wit, 1997, 1999). Culturally, the main motivations for nonprofit universities entered the international market is for enhance cultural understanding (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2006). European countries support internationalization of higher education at the very early stage, especially after the European Union was initiated, for they believe it is enhancing the sharing of knowledge and culture, also it is helpful to strengthen their networks among political and economic elites from different countries, and to improve mutual understandings in order to maintain a stable and multicultural society (Ma, 2008). Politically, Industrialized nations viewed higher education as another battleground for winning “hearts and minds” in the world, particularly from the North to the South, during Cold War period by providing assistant programs, scholarships, the translation and reprinting of books, the provision of foreign aid (Altbach, 2005). “Winning hearts and minds” still composes part of the international higher education equation even today. Such government-sponsored scholarship programs as Australia’s Colombo Plan scholarship, Japan Foundation for the Promotion of Science international programs, and America’s Fulbright Programs provide opportunities for international study often combine elements of altruism and national interest (Altbach, 2005). The varied international components of higher education are becoming increasingly commercialized as HEIs and systems confront the challenges of massification, decreasing state support, and the effects of privatization (Garnier, 2004). Economically, many countries recruit

international students to earn profits by charging high fees—including Australia, Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. International students produce significant income for local HEIs and the host country's economy, for example, international students bring more than \$12 billion to the U.S. economy annually (Altbach, 2005; Altbach & Knight, 2007). Host countries view international students as a source of highly trained personnel for the labor market, and some nations, such as the U.S., have established immigration regulations that permit international graduates to remain once they have finished their studies (Altbach, 2005). For other countries, such as Singapore, the immigrant law is generally opened opportunities for foreign students to stay, strategies are as granting them working permit and even citizenship to keep talented workers in the country (Ducanes & Abella, 2008).

Nation-states often promote international education for cultural, political, economic, and human resource purposes. It would be interesting to determine if there are gaps between national imperatives and individual motives as well as how the gaps could be bridged by taking a closer look at individual students' needs and perceptions. Taiwan, a non-English-speaking country, tries hard to internationalize itself by realizing various policies and programs to attract students from abroad in order to promote a multicultural campus and society as well as establish a global reputation and additional revenue. This study, therefore, uses Taiwan, as a case study to examine this important issue.

## Taiwan's Context

### Taiwan's Policies for International Education

Historically, Taiwan has emphasized its international student recruitment through political and cultural considerations as Taiwan needs diplomatic alliances in its longstanding struggle for political legitimacy and cultural legacy against the Mainland China regime during the Cold War era. Since the end of the 1990s, the Taiwanese government has pushed for internationalization at a higher education level due to pressure to achieve global competitiveness. However, unlike MESDCs, Taiwan spends more funding to encourage global intellects to come study rather than make money from those foreign friends.

Moreover, in order to respond to the effects of globalization and the knowledge economy on higher education, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has proposed several policies and projects in the past 15 years, including Report for Promoting Higher Education's International Competitiveness (RPHEIC), Project for Expanding Foreign Student Recruitment (PEFSR), Blueprint for Recruiting Foreign Students Policy at Higher Education Level (BRFSP), and Study-in-Taiwan Enhancement