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TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AND INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SINGAPORE AND RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the trends in higher education and internationalization policies in context of Singapore and Russia. The main idea of this research is analysis and comparison of education system policies in Singapore and Russian Federation in order to discover the key differences and possibilities for future development and growth factors. Correlation analysis of the economical and educational statistical data reveals common principles responsible for the economic success. Problems and possible actions in the area of higher education in Russian Federation are discussed.

Keywords: internationalization, Singapore, Russia, education system, innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Population size, structure and changes have important implications for production, investment and consumption activities as well as community development, social networks and kinship ties. A good understanding of demographic forces and emerging trends is useful for policy makers, planners, businesses and the academia. Population size, structure and changes have important implications for production, investment and consumption activities as well as community development, social networks and kinship ties. A good understanding of demographic forces and emerging trends is useful for policy makers, planners, businesses and the academia.

In 2015, among the resident population aged 25 years and over, the share with at least post-secondary qualifications was 52.0 per cent (Figure 1). This was a jump from 38.3 per cent in 2005.
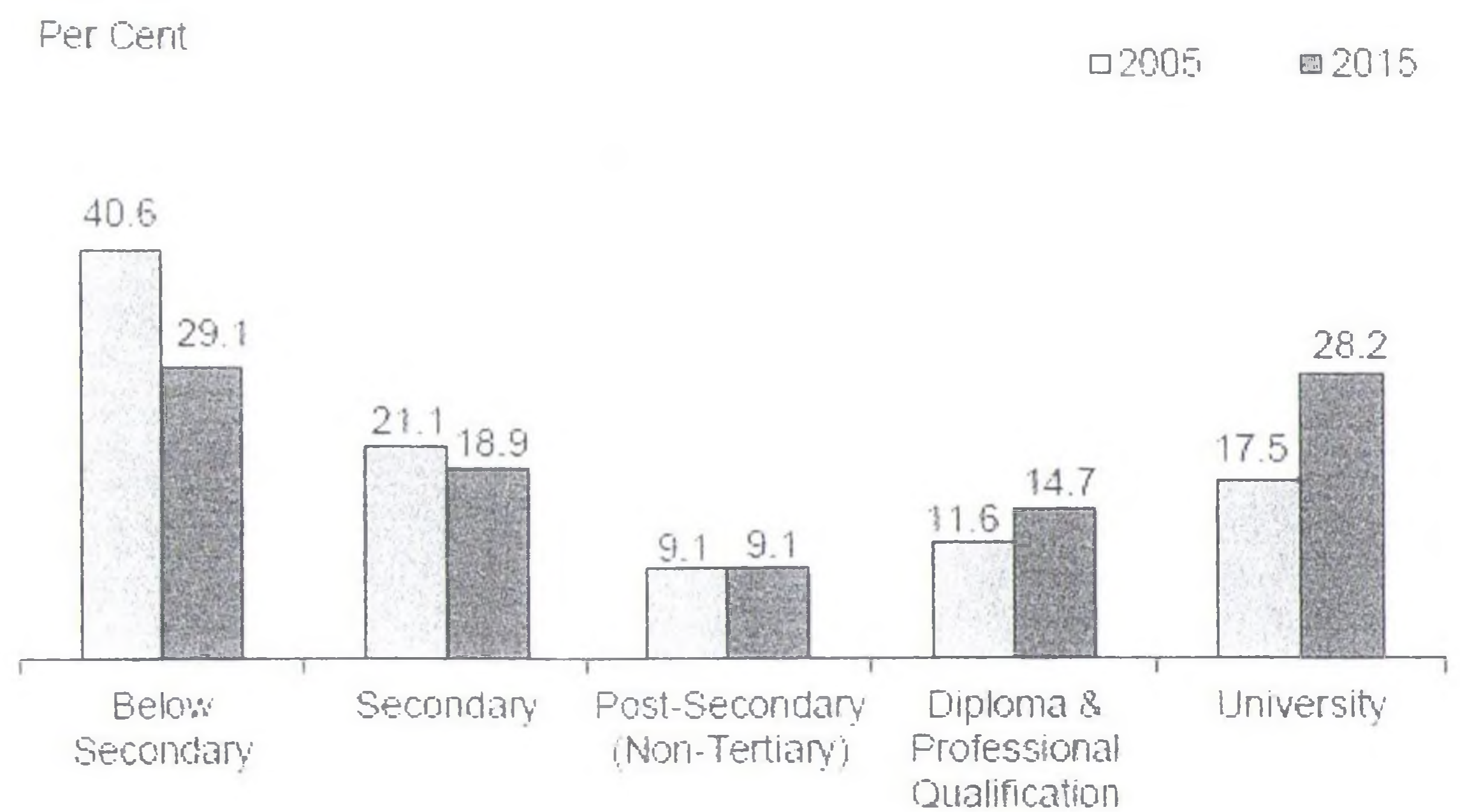
Figure 1. Highest Qualification Attained of Resident Population Aged 25 Years and Over.

The jump was largely due to the higher proportion of university graduates, which rose from 17.5 per cent in 2005 to 28.2 per cent in 2015. Similarly, there was also a higher proportion of diploma & professional qualifications at 14.7 per cent in 2015, compared to 11.6 per cent in 2005.

Large differences in proficiency related to age, educational attainment, and immigrant and language background are found in most countries/economies; but the differences observed in Singapore (especially those related to age and educational attainment) are much larger than in most other countries/economies. Adults aged 55 to 65 scored 66 points lower than 25-34 year-olds in literacy (compared to the OECD average of 29 score points lower), and the likelihood of scoring at or below Level 1 in either literacy or numeracy is 41.2 percentage points higher among older adults (compared to the OECD average of 16.5 percentage points higher).

Internationalization. The term 'internationalization' is used to discuss the international or intercultural dimension of higher education. This term has become a major trend of higher education all over the world. This literature review demonstrates that the internationalization of higher education has also attracted interest among education researchers; such as Altbach [1], Knight [2], [3], Ellingboe [4], Yang [5] and may others.

The researchers are interpreting 'internationalization' of universities as a dynamic, multi-dimensional and complex process ([2], [6]), as a 'going global' by the government; and 'to be a global university' by the national universities.

Knight defines internationalization of higher education at the institutional level as "the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institutions" [3].

Ellingboe [4] expands Knight's definition to: Internationalization is the process of integrating an international perspective into a college or university system. It is an on-

going, future oriented, multidimensional, interdisciplinary, leadership driven vision that involves many stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused, ever changing external environment. While this definition is more comprehensive and encompassing, it is cumbersome.

Knight further classifies internationalization strategies or programs at institutional level into two streams of activities - Internationalization "Abroad", and Internationalization at "Home" [7].

'Internationalization Abroad' includes cross border internationalization activities that happen abroad, including mobility of students, faculty staff, programs, offshore campuses et al. The other stream "Internationalization at Home" is internationalization that occurs on the home campus. It refers to the international and intercultural dimension of curriculum, the teaching/learning process, research and a host of activities which help students develop international understanding and intercultural skills without ever leaving the campus [8].

As observed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), internationalization is also seen as "the complex of processes whose combined effect, whether planned or not is to enhance the international dimension of experiences of higher education in universities and similar educational institutions" [9].

For a university, internationalisation means the awareness and operation of interactions within and between cultures through its teaching, research and service functions, with the ultimate aim of achieving mutual understanding across cultural borders [5].

Internationalization of Singapore Higher Education. Many universities worldwide, including Singapore - are pushing ahead to create more internationalized campuses or environments to attract international students and staff; to embark on a number of programs and partnerships with other universities, joint degrees, teaching and research.

The Singapore government's intention of internationalizing and developing Singapore into a global education hub dates back to the mid-1980s, when education was identified by the Economic Review Committee in 1986 as both a catalyst of human resource development and potential contributor to the Singapore economy [9]. Since early 2000, the internationalization of Singapore universities has accelerated.

It has been acknowledged in various world economic forums and competitiveness reports that the Singapore education system, including the university sector, has played a significant role in its phenomenal economic development from a third world country in the 1960s to the first world economy of today. Over the years, the Government has implemented many policies and initiatives to reform the universities, establishing and strengthening partnerships with foreign world-class universities [9].

As examined from the various documentary sources, today Singapore is one of the world most competitive and globalized economies. The Global Competitive Report 2016-2017 [10]ranked Singapore the 2nd most competitive economy in the world [10], just behind Switzerland, and ahead of USA, Netherlands and Germany. The same report also ranked the quality of the Singapore educational system in first place. The DHL Global Connectedness Index 2016 ranked Singapore the 2nd most global connected country in the world [11], just behind Netherlands. Singapore tops both of its new city-

level globalization indexes: Globalization Hotspots (cities with the most intense international flows) and Globalization Giants (cities with the largest absolute international flows) [11].

It is well known, that Internationalization is seen as one of the ways a country and a university responds to the impact of globalization [1].

Economic and education system developments go hand-in hand in Singapore. They are like the inseparable twins in Singapore nation building. The Ministry of Education, Singapore (MOE) spells out on its WEB-site the role and emphasis of education in Singapore, as follows: "Education is placed at a premium in Singapore as our people are the only resource that we can develop and rely upon. It is the most effective means of fully realising the potential of the people" [12].

In Singapore, universities are viewed as the key 'instruments' to foster and attract talent, both local and foreign – to develop Singapore into a regional educational hub or global school house. The 'internationalization' of Singapore universities aims to produce 'world ready' graduates, enhance 'global competitiveness', and talent augmentation (attracting foreign talent) [9].

Part of the overall initiative is to make Singapore a hub for international education which will give Singaporeans and international students the opportunity to study with prestigious western institutions which have been invited to set up centres of excellence and research in Singapore [13].

Because of Singapore's necessary engagement with other countries, it has significant experience with various aspects of international education

Universities of Singapore. Singapore is home to four public universities and a number of boutique private universities. The most popular of them are The National University of Singapore (NUS) (established in 1980 with the merger of the Singapore University and the Chinese language Nanyang University), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) (established in 1991 to become a second full-fledged public funded university in Singapore), and Singapore Management University (SMU) (established in 2000). NUS and NTU are considered the 'world class' universities. They also form collaborative partnership projects to offer joint degree programmes and joint research as part of their internationalization drive. Singapore University of Technology and Design is shaped by the best academic practices of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Zhejiang University in China [14].

Singapore universities have been actively promoting study in Singapore by visiting institutions in neighbouring ASEAN countries to tell students that 'there are good universities in the east' and that they should not instinctively look to the west for tertiary education [13].

Singapore universities have implemented their programs and activities to promote internationalization at home and abroad. Singapore will continue to internationalize its higher education as national borders become more open and as universities become more competitive and innovative.

National University of Singapore. From modest beginnings as a medical college with 23 students, the University now spans three campuses, enrols 38,000 students from more than 100 countries in many critical fields of study, and forges partnerships around

the world. The University has also established a number of overseas education and research facilities with reputable international partners.

Entrepreneurial education is provided through the NUS Overseas Colleges programme. The students of the NUS are offered overseas internship opportunities, where they study at prestigious partner universities while gaining first-hand entrepreneurial experience and exposure.

The NUS Overseas Colleges are located in: Silicon Valley, United States (2002), Shanghai, China (2004), Stockholm, Sweden (2005), Beijing, China (2009), Israel (2011), New York, United States (2014).

World's Top Universities in Singapore. Singapore has invited a number of the "world's top universities" to establish branch campuses on the island. These include highly respected names such as Harvard Business School, Chicago Graduate School of Business, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cornell University, John Hopkins Medical School, New York Institute of Finance, INSEAD, Wharton Business School, Georgia Institute of Technology.

Bilingual policy. The policy of bilingualism (proficiency in the English language and in one's mother tongue—Chinese, Malay, or Tamil) is an important dimension of Singapore's internationalization policy, important not only for employment prospects but also to promote and develop a more harmonious and better integrated multicultural Singapore society.

The main specific feature of Singapore education system is the use of English, as the medium of instruction and curriculum. Aside from English, other languages are spoken and recognized. Thus, mother tongue languages such as Chinese, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil are included in the curriculum

Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, the founding and first Prime Minister of Singapore acknowledged recently in his memoire [15] that "It is Singapore good fortune that under the British, Singapore had been the regional centre for education. The most significant was the use of English as the medium of instruction and curriculum". The use of English as an international language and the sole medium of instruction for the University. It is one of the foundations of Singapore's ability to engage with other nations – the ability of its students and workforce to communicate in English. Lee insisted that English had to be used as "the language of the workplace and the common language" because "as an international trading community, we would not make a living if we used Malay, Chinese or Tamil" [15]. Education system with a bilingual policy teaches English as 'the language of commerce, technology and administration', as well as 'languages of cultural heritage such as Malay, Chinese (Mandarin) and Tamil' [13], which gives Singapore's students such advantages as: ability to travel and attend distance education or academic programs run in English by foreign higher education institutions.

Businesses and government in Singapore can engage with their counterparts in countries where the respective language is used. Lee's personal experience was the basis for Government policy, which pursued the teaching of Mandarin and other 'mother tongue' languages. Again, it is clear that Singapore is forever 'looking out' on a number of fronts (e.g. education, language, business, culture) whilst building itself as a nation. It is also clear that Lee Kuan Yew was a major determinant of Government policy and, as such, the direction of the Republic [13].

International Students in Singapore. About 20% of the undergraduates and 70% of postgraduates are foreign or international students [12]. There are two features of the Singapore international student program, which are most striking. The first is that international students pay double the tuition fees that Singaporeans pay at the polytechnics and only about 60% more than Singaporeans at the universities. The government subsidy for international students is 69%. The government subsidy for international students is 46% for non-laboratory-based programs. Although tuition fees vary slightly between institutions. The second striking feature of Singapore's international student program is that all students who take advantage of the government subsidy (called a tuition grant) are bonded to stay and work in Singapore for 3 years after completing their study [13].

As an open economy, Singapore has consistently designed and implemented policies, programs, and activities to internationalize its higher education.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the system attributes that are associated with the spectacular success of Singapore and other East Asian countries, in building science capacity and outputs, are absent or largely absent in Russia. Traditionally Russians see their nation as strong in mathematics and physics. This does not show in the PISA results. However, it is apparent in pockets of research excellence, as the Scimago data reveal. The quality of physics-related research can be understood as part of the legacy of state-managed Soviet science. Russia lacks an East Asian-style state. The characteristic East Asian state takes a comprehensive responsibility for social order and prosperity. The quality of the bureaucracy is high and the merit principle is generally accepted. There is corruption, but arguably on a lower scale than in the Soviet and post-Soviet states. Finally, as discussed, Russian science has low levels of international engagement by comparison with parallel national science systems across the world – in the Englishspeaking world, both of Western and Eastern Europe, East and Southeast Asia, Brazil and India. Russia is partly decoupled from and ineffective within the global research system. English-language skills are not developing rapidly as they are in East Asia, and the comparative publication, citation and research collaboration data indicate a serious problem.

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