



ПРОФЕСІЙНА ОСВІТА (ЗА СПЕЦІАЛІЗАЦІЯМИ)

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OVERSEAS WORK EXPERIENCE AS A TREND IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGERS IN CHINA

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The article examines the rising trend of Chinese managers seeking international work experience as a strategic approach to enhance their professional qualifications. This phenomenon is gaining importance in China as the country deepens its integration into the global economy, driving demand for managers proficient in cross-cultural communication, global business practices, and innovative management strategies. The primary focus of the article is to analyse the impact of international work experience on the skills and effectiveness of Chinese managers, while also exploring the role of government and government-supported organizations in facilitating these opportunities. The research reveals that international work experience significantly enhances managerial qualifications, particularly in areas such as strategic thinking, cross-cultural communication, and adaptability. Managers who gain exposure to global work environments acquire a deeper understanding of international business trends and best practices, which they subsequently implement in their Chinese workplaces. These skills drive innovation, optimize business operations, and support China's broader goal of developing globally competitive enterprises. The article is distinctive in its focus on the People's Republic of China, addressing how international work experience contributes to the professional growth of Chinese managers within the country's unique socio-economic landscape. It emphasises the relatively recent nature of this trend, noting that widespread international exposure among Chinese professionals has emerged primarily in the past decade. By analysing this development, the study offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how foreign work experiences are leveraged to enhance managerial qualifications in China.

Key words: *China, manager, internationalisation, professional development, acquisition of practical skills, interculturality.*

Introduction. In today's interconnected world, professional development and competitiveness are critical for both companies and individuals striving to excel in dynamic, international markets. In China, the trend of overseas work experience as a component of professional development has gained significant momentum among managers. This trend, influenced by China's ongoing globalisation, highlights the value of cross-cultural skills, international exposure,

and adaptable management approaches. The pursuit of overseas work experience is not limited to China. It has become a global trend influencing professional practices in regions such as Ukraine and other countries where businesses seek to strengthen their global influence. As one of the largest economies in the world, China has an extensive global footprint in trade, investment, and cultural exchange. For Chinese companies expanding abroad, managerial effectiveness

across diverse cultural settings is crucial. This has led many Chinese managers to seek overseas work experience to better understand foreign business environments, acquire new leadership skills, and improve their adaptability to various international settings. A distinctive feature of manager training and professional development practices (in both public and private sectors) today is the strong support from the state for overseas work experience. Numerous companies, branches, foreign offices of Chinese management organisations, and other institutions offer extensive opportunities for staff rotation and international placements.

Literature review. The idea of seeing abroad work of the Chinese managers (especially the state affiliated ones) as a part of their professional skills development and the state organised program of managers' acquisition of practical skills is quite new for the contemporary professional education sphere, but is already reflected in some publications, such as "Managers' Country-Specific Experience and Outward Foreign Direct Investment" [6], that investigates how overseas work experiences influence managers' effectiveness in foreign direct investment, especially in emerging markets, highlighting the importance of international exposure for Chinese managers facing foreign market challenges. "Executives' Overseas Work Experience and the International Knowledge Spillover Effect" [7] examines how the overseas experience of Chinese executives impacts knowledge transfer and innovation within their companies, especially through their interactions with foreign markets. In their collective publication "Exploring the Impact of TMTs' Overseas Experiences on Innovation Performance of Chinese Enterprises" (2019), L. Yang, C. Xu & G. Wan address the mediating effect of R&D strategic decision-making on the relationship between overseas experience of top management teams and innovation performance, particularly in high-growth Chinese industries. The publication "CEO Overseas Experiences and Corporate Financialization: Evidence from Chinese Companies" [16] explores the link between CEOs' overseas experiences and their companies' financial strategies, noting how international insights contribute to better

investment decisions and corporate growth. The article of no-name author, presented on Equal-Ocean platform in 2023 and named "The Joys and Challenges of Chinese Companies' Expatriate Employees" offers a practical perspective on how Chinese companies approach expatriation, discussing challenges and strategic advantages of sending employees abroad to bridge cultural gaps and enhance managerial skills.

These and other publications relevant reflect the value of overseas experience for Chinese managers, noting its impact on knowledge exchange, adaptation, and innovation – insights that are increasingly relevant as Chinese companies expand globally. They collectively demonstrate that overseas experience is seen as vital for managers in China, contributing to knowledge spillover, innovation, and adaptability in foreign markets.

Purpose of Article. The aim of this article is to present contemporary practices in China regarding the professional development of managers through overseas work experience, as well as to identify the role of Chinese state and non-state organisations in supporting such practices. The focus group includes mid-level managers working in public administration and the banking sector, as they are, on one hand, considered civil servants (and thus subject to certain restrictions on international travel) and, on the other hand, are precisely the professionals to whom the state provides a wide range of international opportunities for skills enhancement.

Research Methods. To explore overseas work experience as a trend in the professional development of managers in China such methods were used:

– *Literature Analysis Method* to discover the impact of overseas work on managerial effectiveness on the base of scientific articles, state and normative documents and other publications. This method provides empirical support for the tangible effects of overseas experience;

– *Case Studies Method* to provide context and examples of overseas work experiences within specific companies and sectors, demonstrating practical applications and challenges in adapting international practices as well as to study the programs that offer the Chinese managers to have overseas working experience;

– *Comparative Analysis Method* to examine differences in career trajectories between managers with and without overseas experience, revealing how state and NGO support influences outcomes for internationally-experienced professionals.

These methods collectively provide a robust framework for analysing both the impact of overseas experience and the role of organizational support in the professional growth of Chinese managers.

Results & Discussion. Overseas assignments provide managers with a unique opportunity to develop skills beyond what domestic experience offers. Working in foreign environments enhances cultural awareness, adaptability, and the ability to navigate diverse business climates. Chinese managers returning from overseas assignments are often better equipped to handle cross-border collaborations, understand foreign market dynamics, and implement innovative practices. China's official policy encourages managers, including those in state positions, to gain overseas work experience, particularly in sectors such as foreign trade, technology, education, public administration, and environmental management. This policy reflects China's strategic goal to enhance its global influence, increase competitiveness in international markets, and improve cross-border collaboration. Reasons for promoting overseas experience police for managers in China can be defined as following:

– China's government sees international experience as a part of their global competency and the pathway for managers to understand global markets, regulatory standards, and diverse business practices in sectors where China seeks to expand its global presence, such as finance, technology, and green energy;

– for managers in government roles, overseas experience is considered essential for handling complex foreign relations, trade negotiations, and policy exchanges. China emphasises building a cohort of public officials who can navigate global political and economic landscapes effectively;

– Chinese managers with overseas experience can help transfer knowledge gained abroad, driving innovation and productivity in Chinese

industries that is seen as new perspectives for the domestic workforce (especially in technological research and R&D sector);

– China's global trade network requires managers who are adept at cross-cultural communication and can effectively lead multicultural teams. Overseas experience helps Chinese managers develop these skills, crucial for negotiations, partnerships, and operations with foreign entities [6; 11; 16].

In China now many high-level government and public sector positions require candidates to have foreign work experience. Applicants for ministry or provincial department roles that focus on foreign relations, trade, or investment often need 1–3 years of overseas work or study experience. Similarly, senior positions in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) with international operations or partnerships mandate prior international experience. Candidates for academic administrative roles, particularly those managing international programs or collaborations, are generally expected to have at least 1–2 years of foreign experience. Provincial trade departments and national economic roles that engage in international trade and investment typically require 1–3 years of experience in foreign trade environments. Leadership positions in government-backed innovation and technology sectors, as well as those overseeing sustainability, environmental policy, and international partnerships, also call for international experience, especially in R&D or technology sectors abroad. In some cases, state departments even require an advanced degree from a foreign institution in addition to practical experience [2; 4; 9; 12].

In addition to setting these requirements, the Chinese government actively provides practical opportunities for managers to gain international work experience. Several programs have been implemented to equip managers with global competencies, often facilitated by government agencies and non-governmental organisations. The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China offers scholarship programs to support Chinese professionals in studying abroad, promoting international exposure and expertise among Chinese nationals [5]. Multinational companies in China have developed talent manage-

ment programs with international assignments for Chinese managers, aiming to improve managerial quality through expanded educational and employment opportunities abroad. Additionally, organisations like the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) have established programs to enhance the operational capacity of Chinese NGOs engaged in international projects, particularly in humanitarian aid and development [12].

The Chinese PhD League supports managers with PhD degrees by offering internships, typically for a minimum of two years, in overseas branches of Chinese companies and banks. These initiatives collectively equip Chinese managers with essential skills and experience to perform effectively in global settings, thereby bolstering China's international engagement and competitiveness [10].

Emphasising overseas work experience brings substantial benefits to Chinese managers and the state of China, impacting the growth of a globally skilled workforce, enhancing China's international presence, and shaping its industries [15]. For Chinese managers, international experience provides insights into global markets, business practices, and regulatory frameworks, giving them a competitive advantage in managing international operations. Working abroad hones communication and leadership skills, especially in cross-cultural contexts, making managers more adaptable to diverse environments. Exposure to advanced technologies, innovative management practices, and new methods allows managers to bring these insights back to China, supporting the modernisation of domestic practices. Overseas experience broadens managers' strategic perspectives, enhancing their decision-making abilities and overall management quality [1].

For China as a nation, a pool of globally experienced managers bolsters its international competitiveness, with these leaders better positioned to support foreign investments, manage cross-border operations, and foster partnerships. Cultural awareness gained from international experience is vital for state officials in diplomacy, trade, and policy, helping to strengthen China's diplomatic and trade relations by building trust and managing perceptions with foreign

counterparts. Knowledge transfer from returning managers drives productivity and innovation, particularly in high-tech sectors, research, and green energy, which aligns with China's goals to advance its technological capabilities and reduce dependence on foreign technology [7]. As managers become more efficient and skilled, they improve the performance of state-owned enterprises and public institutions, aligning these organisations with international standards and enhancing their global competitiveness [3]. International networks formed by managers during their time abroad can also expand China's global reach and influence, particularly in areas highlighted by initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative. In this way, managers serve as cultural ambassadors, contributing to China's soft power on the global stage.

Researchers also identify several challenges for both Chinese managers and China as a whole in implementing a policy that promotes overseas experience. Chinese managers often struggle with cultural differences, language barriers, and unfamiliar workplace dynamics, leading to stress and difficulties with integration. While some managers gain valuable skills abroad, there is a risk that they may choose to remain overseas due to better career opportunities, quality of life, or professional advancement. Adapting to local regulations, labour laws, and business practices abroad can also be challenging, as these often differ significantly from China's standards [13]. In some cases, overseas experience may foster a preference for foreign business practices, which may not always align with Chinese standards or the unique requirements of the domestic market. Prolonged exposure to foreign values and systems can shape managers' outlooks and lead to ideological tensions as they balance these influences with their responsibilities back in China.

For China, limited adaptation by managers can restrict their effectiveness in foreign roles and reduce the overall impact of knowledge transfer when they return. Brain drain poses a major challenge, as significant government investment is often required to send managers abroad. If these managers choose not to return, China loses both its financial investment and the expertise they could have contributed domestically [8]. Mana-

gers' missteps abroad may lead to diplomatic or legal issues, potentially impacting China's reputation. Preparing managers to comply with foreign laws and practices is essential but difficult to achieve in short training periods. Another challenge lies in harmonising foreign methods with China's regulatory environment and cultural norms, as a rapid influx of foreign practices may conflict with China's industrial policies or regulatory practices, requiring careful adaptation. The programs that send managers abroad require substantial financial resources, including government funding for scholarships, training, and living expenses. The return on this investment can be slow if managers struggle to implement their knowledge upon return or if their skills do not directly translate to the Chinese context [14]. The government must also carefully manage any ideological shifts among returning managers, particularly when foreign values conflict with Chinese policies. These tensions can complicate the reintegration process and may occasionally necessitate adjustments in personnel policies.

Conclusions. Overseas work experience has become essential for managerial development in China, giving individuals and companies a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Supported by government and non-governmental programs, this trend reflects China's commitment to building a workforce skilled in international business and cross-cultural interaction. China's policy of promoting overseas experience for its managers aims to create a well-rounded, globally competitive leadership class. The benefits are substantial, providing managers with insights into global markets, opportunities to build valuable networks, and greater adaptability across diverse environments. However, challenges like cultural adjustments, regulatory complexities, and rapid adaptation must be addressed to ensure these skills are effectively applied within China. Key areas for further scientific research include exploring how international exposure shapes Chinese managers' leadership styles and decision-making, how foreign practices are adapted to the Chinese market, strategies to retain talent with overseas experience, and reconciling foreign and local cultural values and others.

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ДОСВІД РОБОТИ ЗА КОРДОНОМ ЯК ТЕНДЕНЦІЯ ПРАКТИКИ ПІДВИЩЕННЯ КВАЛІФІКАЦІЇ МЕНЕДЖЕРІВ У СУЧАСНІЙ КНР

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Ця стаття досліджує тенденцію отримання китайськими управліннями міжнародного досвіду роботи як стратегії підвищення професійної кваліфікації. Це явище стає все більш актуальним у контексті інтеграції Китаю в глобальну економіку, яка потребує менеджерів із розвиненими міжкультурними компетенціями, знаннями сучасних бізнес-практик та інноваційних управлінських підходів. Фокус-групою вибрано державних управлінців та менеджерів системи місцевого самоврядування середньої ланки.

Метою статті є аналіз впливу міжнародного досвіду роботи на професійний розвиток китайських менеджерів, а також дослідження ролі урядових та підтримуваних урядом організацій у створенні можливостей для стажування за кордоном.

У дослідженні використано якісні методи дослідження, характерні для галузі порівняльної педагогіки. Для глобального розуміння контексту проблеми було проаналізовано літературу щодо міжнародного досвіду підвищення професійної кваліфікації державних службовців в інших країнах.

Результати дослідження засвідчують, що міжнародний досвід роботи значно покращує ключові навички менеджерів (стратегічне мислення, міжкультурну комунікацію та адаптивність). Це сприяє інноваціям і оптимізації бізнес-процесів, що відповідає стратегії Китаю зі створення конкурентоспроможних підприємств.

Наукова новизна статті полягає у вивченні специфіки Китаю щодо підвищення кваліфікації управлінських кадрів, що зумовлює особливості впливу міжнародного досвіду роботи на професійний розвиток менеджерів. Аналізується тенденція, яка набуває популярності в КНР лише протягом останнього десятиліття, та розкривається, як цей досвід адаптується до соціально-економічного середовища країни. У статті зроблено висновок, що досвід закордонної роботи видається важливим інструментом для розвитку висококваліфікованих менеджерських кадрів у КНР. Він сприяє не лише особистісному зростанню менеджерів, а й підвищенню конкурентоспроможності компаній на міжнародних ринках.

Результати дослідження корисні для урядових структур (у розробці програм стажувань), компаній (для планування професійного розвитку працівників), освітніх установ (у разі створення бізнес-програм із міжнародним компонентом), а також міжнародних організацій, які співпрацюють із китайськими менеджерами. Стаття може слугувати основою для подальших наукових розвідок щодо впливу міжнародного досвіду на професійний розвиток менеджерів та управлінців у різних галузях, дослідження довгострокових ефектів стажувань та адаптації іноземного досвіду до китайського середовища.

Ключові слова: Китай (КНР), менеджер, інтернаціоналізація, професійний розвиток, підвищення кваліфікації, інтеркультурність.

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