Problems and Countermeasures of the International Education in China

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Abstract

Although more and more international students study in China’s universities and higher education institutions, China’s international education is still at the primary stage, reflecting in students’ number, study level, teaching affairs and daily management etc. In order to improve international education as well as local education, universities has to follow MOE’s education direction, set up a scientific and reasonable management system, focus on promoting quality teaching and learning, and welfare of students in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Land.

Key words: international education, problems, countermeasures, education direction, teaching and learning, welfare, management systems, rules and regulations

1. Introduction

In recent years, many foreign students choose to study in China. As in 2013, the number had increased rapidly to 356 499, from 200 Countries and Regions. These students are studying in 746 universities and higher institutions across China. To handle international student affairs, universities and high institutions will have to face
these management affairs, like enrollment, teaching and learning and welfare. The management level in a university decides international students’ learning and life quality. However, as internalization of higher education has recently been discovered, universities have a lot of management problems occurring.

2. Management Problems of International Education in China’s Universities

2.1 Overseas education in China at the primary stage.

In general, overseas education in China is still at the primary stage in 3 indexes, like international student percentage, international programs quantity and degree level in a university. The total number of overseas students in the whole China is large, while the number is small for a single university. Only some famous universities have high percentage of international student. On the other hand, overseas student number indicates the quantity of international programs. For degree issue, many universities are strong in non-degree programs and weak in degree ones. Chinese linguistics programs, Chinese tradition medicine, tourism study programs are developing fast. However, higher research programs develop slow and postgraduate international students accounts for only 11.4% out of the total international students in the whole China. Except from the above 3 indexes, the level of study communication between international students and local students is low. For Chinese students, most of the courses are using Chinese as medium, international students seldom get the chance to study together with local students.

2.2 Quality of Teaching still needs improvement in some universities.

About teaching affairs, teaching materials, teaching activities and evaluation system are the main aspects. There is no doubt that most of the universities in China have enough teaching resources, but skilled and professional lecturers are still highly needed. Some domestic well-known universities use qualified lecturers ranking its quality of education very high. Some universities have just started international education in recent years, but lack experience and lecturers. Hence, cannot coordinate international student’s affairs. There is no uniform standard of assessing performance and evaluation system at the national level. An institution that has enrolled international students has to control its teaching system by itself to protect its reputation. However, quality education in different university is unable to compare, the problems associated with teaching activities are not easy to find. There is lack of supervision, planning, human resource finance and lack of monitoring. Many universities try to meet international requirements but neglect the education concept. They focus on teaching activities and result but pay less attention to Chinese cultural education. Moral education is obviously neglected. Students are not familiar with Chinese culture, language, laws and rules etc. Science knowledge is a small part of
international education which should also contain cultural communication, mutual understanding as well.

2.3 Management level in some universities should be raised.
For the issue of daily management, some colleges and universities have not kept pace with the requirement. In some universities, they haven’t set up the full and efficient management system, which leads to some management vacuum and chaos. Some departments couldn’t figure out the true situation of students’ affairs, and they provide help or service that international students don't need. However, the real needs were not satisfied. Therefore, it’s necessary that different departments should understand how they can provide necessary services for international students, which doesn’t mean to meet all students’ request, but necessary ones. The other aspect is about management personnel. Some management personnel are not happy to serve for international students because of poor language ability and lack of cross culture communication ability. When they are communicating with international students, they are not happy and passionate, like doing something undesirable. This phenomenon is common in some new colleges or universities who just start for international education, which will have a negative influence on university’s reputation.

Many colleges and universities focus mainly on routine activities like admission, teaching, functions, meeting, examination etc. This is because there is lack of funding for scientific research to standardized management system. Rules and regulations are adopted from other universities or translated from Chinese students manual. Although some universities have a number of management rules, they do not punish students at the very beginning until things become serious, which makes the regulations not a deterrent to students.

3. Countermeasures to international student management
3.1 The university has to present an explicit direction for the management on the basis of scientific management theory and principle.
This direction should include concrete information, like education objective, rules and department responsibilities, and so on. With help of the direction, the management efficiency can be achieved, all departments can develop their full potential energy, and the goal of university’s internalization can be fulfill.

The goal of educating international students in China is to cultivate international talents with good knowledge, innovations, make friends and serve the world. The principles of international student management should follow school management theory. These principles should be respected and abided by in the international education.
3.1.1 The principle of directivity
The directional principle implies that the international education and management should adhere to the leadership of the government, to avoid any damage to the country and the interests of common people, and in line with national student management policies. In the process of educating international students, the goal is to cultivate international talents with good knowledge, to make friends and serve the world. Therefore, in the daily management events, the university should pay attention to the student’s concerns, and help them understand and master the relevant China's laws and regulations. Also the rules of school management system, cultivate students a spirit of social responsibility.

3.1.2 The principle of initiative
This principle means to implement international education by relying on staffs. As every teacher on campus is related to this career, teachers are supposed to be active in fulfilling their responsibilities in their work. What the university can do is to make some rules which can benefit those who contributed to the international education.

3.1.3 The principles of being scientific
The scientific principle means to manage things in a scientific way which has been proved useful, effective, efficient, reasonable and feasible through repeated practice. Firstly, the rule of unity is important. The university has to consider everything in totality. Internalization means collaborating with all departments of the university, not only the duty of International Education College or International Office. Only by this way, will every department capture international students in action plan and provide necessary services for the students. Meanwhile, the whole university can be upgraded. Secondly, the rule of dynamic has to be used. Everything is developing and changing. If the university wants to manage students better, they will have to pay attention and compile current information. The university can encourage students to give feedback about teaching, daily management etc., so that they can make some adjustments and have effective dynamic management. Thirdly, the rule of efficiency can be borrowed. As a university, the authority will have to consider its input and output, and try to make a balance between them. Therefore, the university can borrow some economical but efficient management ways to achieve the best result by using limited manpower, material resources, financial resources and time. In concrete terms, if the university wants to manage international students scientifically, they will have to consider the following suggestions: Different departments should be aware of their own responsibilities. Only responsibility is explicitly and clearly defined, so that every staff will be assigned a duty to perform.
A command system should be set and work powerfully. To achieve the unity management policy, the university has to appoint one department as the key one to work as the brain. This department will execute universities requirement and won’t make other departments confused. Also, the command system can get necessary accurate information or students’ effective feedback. A set of reasonable rules and regulations can be formed. As management practice has tested some management theory, the university can consider summing up the experience and forming some rules and regulations in words. Some advanced management technologies can be used. Young international students are prone to new science and technology, which is convenient and cheap for good management. The university can use website, cell phone, mass medium to spread information.

3.1.4 The principal of rationality
This principal requires the authority to set a good management system and its staff for international education. Every person takes its position and related responsibilities to form an optimal function structure.

3.2 The authority designs a scientific international education system.
International Education College is the basic organization for administrating international education, while the authority should make its functions and responsibilities scientific, rational and clear. Professional staff, sophisticated rules and a scientific organization are 3 main decisive aspects that make good results. As an administrative agency, if it’s not rationally set with too many divisions and staff, it will affect its function. International Education College should be a department that has qualified staff with professional experience, including the divisions of teaching management, daily service and admission, to lead other colleges as the pivot international students’ education. International students’ education is not only related to International Education College, which should be supported by different departments of the university, like international office, security department, logistic department, library etc. International office can take care of international students in some aspects like Immigration affairs, residence permit, diplomatic supports etc. Security department should put the security education first, and be active in these aspects, like security check and drill, emergency cases, etc. Logistic department provide a lot of services for international students, like accommodation, dining, recreation, sanitary, transportation, internet, etc. However, these services should be convenient, good and inexpensive, otherwise, international students will flow out for better providers. Library can provide a calm and comfortable or conducive atmosphere for reading by international students, where they can find the required books for reference.
In China, there is no problem to provide enough hard resources, and a lot of facilities are new and advanced. However, there is still a long way to go for holding enough expertise staff. The university should always be cognizant of human resources. By establishing a reasonable talents mechanism, the university tries to abstract and recruit more young international youth talents and train more excellent young teachers in domestic or abroad.

3.3 Strengthening teaching management level to ensure teaching quality
Teaching quality is the key point of international education. The university should focus on promoting its teaching quality and assure the quality by raising the teaching management level. If students complain about the teaching affairs too much, the university will have to check every aspect of teaching affairs carefully to find out the true reasons. Ensuring teaching quality, there are several aspects related, like hardware resources, teachers, teaching process and monitoring, academic Coordinator etc.

Firstly, the authority should emphasize on building a high quality teaching faculty. There should be an international teacher admission, training, monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Not all teachers can be admitted to teach international students, only those who have passed the experts selection can be. If the teacher has been admitted, then they can join the training program to practice teaching skills and make some improvement. The experienced teachers can be appointed as the supervisors for young admitted teachers. For those who grow up quickly and act well can receive some material and verbal motivation, and they have more chance to be promoted comparing other teachers. For those who are not suitable for international education should be retrained or stopped the international students teaching.

Secondly, the teaching contents should meet international standards. The university tries to introduce teaching curriculum from western developed countries, texts book as well, so that students can connect to international education smoothly.

Thirdly, multiple teaching methods can be used. The university should gradually change the teaching methods from passive acceptance to active learning. Lecturers encourage international students to put forward their views, active participation, and open more discussion-oriented seminars. The university should support teachers to go abroad for one or two subjects learning, and emphasize teaching exchanges and cooperation among different universities.

Fourthly, the supervision system should play a role in the teaching. Also, the authority should set some monitoring steps for these lecturers, to monitor and control their class behaviors by class visit and feedback receiving. The inspectors should step into the classroom to know the young lecturer’s performance in class, and the university should do some survey to collect questionnaires from international students. For
international students, their final result comes from the combination of attendance, classroom performance, homework assignments, practice and final exam etc.

3.4 The university can improve management rules and regulations.  
In the daily management of international students, often there will be some common problems. For these common problems, the authority has to formulate relevant regulations written both in Chinese and English. In the processing of formulating the rules and regulations, the university should make scientific, rational and normative. Also, the university needs to pay attention to students’ advice and feedback, taking into account the actual needs of the seriousness and practice. At the beginning of the orientation, or in the class meeting, counselors should deliver and explain all rules and regulations to all new students. By gradually improving the management rules, teachers can handle common affairs according to student’s manual book, which will reduce the workload.

After a reasonable regulation has been formulated, the regulation must be effectively implemented. If not, it will inevitably decline its authority and bring bad influence to the university. Therefore, in practice, the counselor must go deep into all aspects of students’ affairs, make prevention first to identify problems and avoid deteriorating, give serious punishment for those who break university laws.

3.5 The university can find some innovative ways of management  
3.5.1 Introducing the way of convergence model  
Presently, many universities in China put international students to a different status, and everything is different from the local students. Actually, international students are eager to study and live with local students, so are Chinese students. That’s the basis of applying convergence model in the students’ management. This particular model has a lot of advantages, which greatly help international student understanding Chinese culture and Chinese ordinary people. At the same time, Chinese local students can learn a lot from the international friends, including language, culture and ways of thinking. In addition, universities can organize international students and Chinese students to participate in social activities for the university honors. Through social activities can also enhance student exchanges, mutual understanding and friendship. And the gradually, the best atmosphere for international study can be formed.

3.5.2 Strengthening services to improve student’s self-management  
The highest level of management is self-management, and the highest level of service is self-service. In order to let students help themselves, the university can support international students to form some organizations, like student associations, country unions, and study program unions etc. Student participation in school management
and autonomy is necessary, which can fully meet student needs and improve students’ enthusiasm for participation.

4. Discussion
Apart from the management of admission, teaching, daily management, universities can explore more deeply into extracurricular activities. Young students are open, passionate and energetic. In order to enrich their student lives, the university can organize a lot of extracurricular social activities for international students, such as sports games, visiting, tourism, Chinese culture appreciation, and public service activities and so on. Through these activities, both Chinese local students and international students can benefit and grow up by the influence of each other.

Reference

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