

Research on the Impact and Countermeasures of Post Epidemic Era on International Students Education in China's Universities

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Abstract

The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought unprecedented public health crisis to the world in this century. The epidemic has a serious impact on international cooperation and exchanges in many aspects such as global economy and education. As an important part of the internationalization of universities, international students education are facing serious difficulties and crises under the global epidemic. This paper will analyze and discuss the far-reaching impact of the post-epidemic era on the international students education for universities, and propose some corresponding measures from the perspective of front-line staff in China's university.

Keywords

Post Epidemic Era; Studying in China; Impact; Countermeasures.

1. Introduction

Under the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented changes in the world, universities are facing enormous difficulties and challenges in international students education which has always been attached great significance by Chinese government. At the first National Education Conference in the new era, President Xi indicated that as part of our effort to train global future elites, we should develop internationally competitive education to attract outstanding students from around the world, thus making China a major world education center and a sought-after destination for international students [1]. With the implementation of strong and effective epidemic prevention and control measures and the gradual realization of universal vaccination in China, we have ushered in the post epidemic era. As an important part of the internationalization of higher education, in the face of the difficulties and challenges under the normalization of epidemic prevention and control, the requirements of connotative development of international students education, and the goal of strengthening the brand of "studying in China", universities should take the initiative to respond, innovate practice, explore the upgrading and transformation of studying in China, and build a long-term mechanism of international students education management service.

2. The Current Situation of International Students Education in China's Universities During the Post Epidemic Era

Facing the sudden global spread of the epidemic, international students education in China's universities has encountered great challenges in enrollment, cultivation, management and service:

2.1. International Students Enrollment

Effective enrollment is difficult to implement, further more the international students enrollment market competition is becoming increasingly competitive. Affected by the global epidemic, according to China's current immigration policy, most international students are temporarily unable to enter China, which has led the most objective and negative impact on the

international students education. The number of admission application has been greatly reduced, even the proportion of application for withdrawal from school has also largely increased. Moreover, domestic teachers cannot normally participate in overseas education exhibitions to attract outstanding young people to study in China, which make the traditional enrollment promotion cannot be effectively carried out. Since international students education in China has entered the stage of "improving quality and efficiency", universities focus more on standardizing management and improving the ability of teaching and management service. However, student number is still the premise of international education. Most universities have medium or long-term plans for the scale of international students. Different with the planned enrollment of domestic students, the enrollment of international students in China is the market enrollment. Therefore it is necessary for universities to promote in different ways with different thoughts. Under this circumstances, Some universities have to adjust the enrollment scale plan or find other promotion ways to deal with the increasingly competitive market competition environment.

2.2. Online Teaching

It is difficult to carry out online teaching and evaluate the teaching effect. When COVID-19 broke out, some students had left China for the winter vacation in 2020. In the early stage of the outbreak, many students could not predict the development trend of the epidemic and also chose to leave China urgently, which resulted in the number of students staying in China being much smaller than those abroad. In response to the COVID-19 impact on normal school opening and class teaching, the Ministry of Education requires that the online teaching during the epidemic prevention and control in universities should be jointly implemented and guaranteed by the government-led, university-based and social participation, so as to achieve "suspended school, ongoing teaching and learning" [2]. Under this guidance, universities arrange online courses in time. However, in the process of practice, online teaching is faced with various problems such as time difference, restrictions of network and teaching platform in other countries, and lack of contact between teachers and students. The traditional interaction mode between teachers and students becomes difficult to realize, which seriously affects the effect of teaching implementation. Especially for graduating students who cannot implement thesis writing, get tutor guidance, reach practical requirements in some disciplines and complete graduation defense normally. Many graduating students are not able to graduate on time.

2.3. Students Management

The convergence management of Chinese and international students has been gradually promoted, but the risk of public opinion still exists. When the epidemic occurred in 2020, most of the students staying in campus were international students. The epidemic prevention work of the students became the most important and essential task for university authority at that time. The university attaches more importance to international students than ever before, which brought an objective opportunity for the convergence management of Chinese and international students. However, in recent years, social public opinion events of international students in China have occurred frequently, and the society pays increasingly high attention to international students affairs. Negative public opinion events can directly affect the social reputation of universities, which become a forward new problems for the management of international students in universities in China.

3. Exploration of Countermeasures for International Students Education in China in the Post Epidemic Era

Recent years, President Xi has instructed many times about studying in China, and since the outbreak of the disease, he has reply letters to international students in China two times. This

fully reflects the government cordial concern for international students and its affirmation and encouragement for teachers and staffs who have been working with international students, and also provides a strong impetus for further work of international students education in the new era [3]. Universities should take the initiative, bear the mission in mind, actively respond to the challenges faced by international education in China in the post epidemic period, and promote the upgrading of management services and construction of mechanism.

3.1. To Develop Student Enrollment Channels and Strictly Control the Quality of Student

Students enrollment is the base of international students education, and it largely determines the quality of international students education. Therefore, it is of great significance to do enrollment well at any time.

3.1.1. To Explore a Diversified Enrollment Promotion Model

To take multiple measures to explore a diversified enrollment promotion model under the global epidemic situation. In order to effectively solve the enrollment dilemma, universities can jointly carry out online education exhibitions with government platforms such as Confucius Institutes and Chinese language learning centers, school resources such as overseas cooperative colleges and excellent alumni, as well as social resources such as overseas local educational institutions, so as to provide the latest enrollment information for students planning to study in China; Edited short videos or photo collections based on the content of quality courses, teaching classes, campus life to upload to mainstream social media such as WeChat official account and other social media to promote.

3.1.2. To Improve the quality of International Students

To strictly improve the quality of students. Good student quality is the prerequisite for good education and it plays a vital role in cultivation quality. Universities should actively take measures to further optimize the students structure and upgrade the quality of students in China. Universities shall strictly review the applicant's academic qualifications, physical conditions, economic conditions and other application conditions required by the government policy-Higher Education Quality Standards for International Students in China (Trial). At the same time, in order to effectively select students, universities can establish online preparatory classes with overseas friendly schools. Preparatory classes can set up basic courses such as Chinese, China Overview and so on. During students' online preparatory classes, universities conduct substantive assessment on students' learning attitude, learning ability, examination results and other aspects to select excellent students. Relevant government departments can also actively explore a unified examination model for international students enrollment to make the admission of studying in China more unified and standardized.

3.2. To Optimize Online Teaching with Rational Utilization of Resources

Although there are many difficulties in online teaching, it is still the most effective teaching mode under the current epidemic situation. Teaching quality is the focus and guarantee of work of international student education. Universities must not lower the teaching quality because of the epidemic. In order to adapt to the current difficult environment and improve the quality of online teaching, universities could try the following suggestions:

3.2.1. To Establish the Attendance and Homework Management System

Teachers can establish a both strict and flexible online attendance regulation to accurately grasp the students' attendance situation. For students who do not attend classes without any reason, their attendance should be strictly recorded. For those have objective reasons, they shall timely take recording courses or self-study in other ways to make up. In order to fully test

whether students grasp the knowledge points, teachers can leave relatively more homework and effectively check through homework or small papers to ensure the quality of online classes.

3.2.2. To Make a Students-Oriented Online Class

make a student-oriented class and ask students fully participate in the class. Universities can appropriately adjust the class time according to the time difference of students from different countries, so as to provide time convenience for students. At the same time, teachers can increase the online interaction with students to make students fully feel the classroom and improve their enthusiasm for class with various teaching methods and resources, such as public excellent online English-taught courses online, which also make the online teaching easy to carry out, and it can also highly improve the teaching quality.

3.3. To Establish Convergence Management Mechanism and Improve Emergency Response Ability

Besides the enrollment and cultivation of international students education, daily management and service is also an important part. Good management and service will give students a sense of belonging.

3.3.1. To Establish Convergence Management Mechanism

In 2018, the Ministry of Education issued "Higher Education Quality Standards for International Students in China (Trial)", which clearly stated "to gradually realize the convergence of teaching and management between Chinese and international students." [4] The convergence management of international students in China is "the management of the teaching, research and life of foreign students with the same trend as that of Chinese students. It is a foreign student management model proposed by referring to the meaning of education itself and the methods adopted by foreign countries for foreign student education" [5]. However convergence is not equal to the management with Chinese student management because they are different in many ways. Universities should speed up the establishment of convergence management mechanism for Chinese and international students, combined with the cultural characteristics of international students and their living habits.

3.3.2. To Strengthen the Emergency Response Ability of Public Opinion

At present, international students education in China is in a complex and severe international environment. Any change in the international and domestic situation may have an impact on the education of foreign students in China. In the post epidemic era, schools should improve their ability of risk prediction. Meanwhile, international students in China are a group prone to public opinion. The occurrence of public opinion has a serious impact on the social influence of universities. The publicity department and student management department of universities should make plans and pay attention to public opinion monitoring. Once public opinion occurs, university should immediately start the emergency plan, actively respond to the crisis and avoid the adverse situation after public opinion occurs.

4. Conclusion

As the most essential part of Belt and Road Initiative, education of international students in China is not only a positive guiding role for China to establish a good international image but also a prominent embodiment of China's soft power. The level and quality of education of international students in China have a direct impact on China's educational internationalization level and the country's overall diplomacy. In the post epidemic era, it is of great significance to adhere to the work of international students in China. In the face of difficulties, universities should actively look for new opportunities to establish and improve the management and service mechanism for international student education as soon as possible and strive to

cultivate a batch of excellent international youth who know China, understand China and love China, so as to contribute to the construction of human destiny community.

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