Research on the Scholarship Management for International Students in China in the Post-Pandemic Era

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Abstract: In the post-pandemic era, the management system of scholarships has played an important role in recruiting and training international students for Chinese universities. Meanwhile, there are some problems needs to be solved and optimized in the management of scholarships. The universities shall focus on its development goal of international education, continuously improve and perfect the scholarship management system of studying in China.

Keywords: Post-pandemic era; International students in China; Management of scholarships.

1. Introduction

Education of international students in China is an important component of the education internationalization and a part of the national diplomatic strategy. It has played an important role in promoting the opening up of education and serving the "the Belt and Road" initiative. Doing a good job in the education of international students in China is beneficial to the international dissemination of Chinese excellent culture as well as the world has a better understanding to the real China. At present, education of international students in China has completed the scale requirements of the "Study in China" plan proposed in 2010, and it has entered a new development stage of improving quality and efficiency. The global COVID-19 pandemic has brought huge impact and challenges to the internationalization of education. At the same time, it has made more aware of the importance of international education and cultural communication. In the post-pandemic era, although the number of applications for studying in China has continued to decline, Recruiting and training international talents with global competence is still an urgent need for work of international education China, and the scholarship policy and management has played an irreplaceable role in this process. Making good use of scholarships of studying in China is of great significance in attracting more outstanding young people from all over the world to study in China.

2. Scholarship categories for international students in China

(1) Chinese Government Scholarship

It’s a scholarship program offered by the Ministry of Education of China in accordance with the educational exchange agreements signed between the Chinese government and relevant governments or international organizations. The Chinese government scholarships are divided into undergraduate scholarship, master's scholarship, doctoral scholarship, Chinese language learning scholarship and advanced learning scholarship according to the types of students. In addition, they are divided into the Great Wall Scholarship, the China-EU Program Scholarship, the China-

ANU Program Scholarship, the Pacific Island Countries Program Scholarship, etc. according to the projects. The purpose of the establishment of the Chinese Government Scholarship is to support outstanding students and scholars from all over the world to study or conduct research in Chinese universities.

(2) Other scholarships

Other scholarships include local government scholarship, Confucius Institute scholarship, school scholarship, enterprise scholarship, etc. Nearly each province and some big cities in China establish corresponding scholarships according to their development. Generally, the standards of the scholarships are different, but the categories are the same as those of Chinese government scholarships. Many cities have set up the "the Belt and Road" scholarship and Sister City scholarship. Almost all universities which have qualification to enroll international students have set up scholarships for international students. The scholarships basically divided into full awards and partial awards.

Obviously, the establishment and management of international student scholarships have played an important role and made significant contributions in recruiting and training international students.

3. Main problems of Scholarship Management

Influenced by the comprehensive strength of the university, the region where the university is located, the country and region where the students come from, and other factors, there are large differences in the types of scholarships that can be applied for students from different universities. Only a few universities in China have Chinese government scholarships, and most of the "double first-class" universities have the qualify, while the majority of universities do not have. In addition, the management system of the Chinese government scholarship is also relatively perfect. According to the survey, most of provinces, cities and schools have established international student scholarships and corresponding management systems, making clear requirements for the application, evaluation and distribution, so as to standardize the management of scholarships. However, some colleges and universities still have lax management, weak supervision and
improper use of the scholarship which has led to the failure of scholarships to play a positive role in the process of recruiting and training international talent students in China, and has caused some prominent problems and serious consequences.

1. Inappropriate establishment

In the post-pandemic era, the willingness of international students to study in China is not satisfied, and the applications has decreased but the enrollment competition increased. Some universities have not set out from the development of international education, blindly pursued the scale of international students, ingeniously set up various kinds of scholarships to attract students, and engaged in malicious competition with similar universities in enrollment, which completely violates the fundamental purpose and principle of scholarship establishment. As a result, the threshold of scholarships has been greatly reduced. Many students who should not award scholarship but make it. For those students who have studied in China, when they choose to enter a higher education, they no longer consider the comprehensive strength and professional ranking of the university, but only focus on whether the school provides generous scholarships. On the other hand, the improper establishment of scholarships has also led to an increase in the transfer rate of international students in domestic universities.

2. Unreasonable allocation

It is mainly reflected in two aspects. Firstly, the standard is too high and unacceptable. Many scholarships set up by universities for international students are easier to award and much higher compared with Chinese students. The full scholarship not only cover tuition and accommodation fees, but also provides monthly living allowances, which has aroused widespread concern of the society about "super national treatment". Secondly, the allocation of scholarships for studying applicants and on-campus students is unreasonable. In order to enroll more students, some universities have greatly biased the number of scholarships obtained towards to enrollment, leaving only a small number for outstanding students who have already studied at school. As a result, many students with good behavior on campus fail to award, while studying applicants who don’t deserve it get the scholarship, which makes the rewarding significance of the scholarship disappeared.

3. Lack of standardization

As mentioned above, although many universities have established scholarship management systems, they have failed to timely adjust and update relevant systems and methods according to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, some universities provide scholarships for international students but no corresponding management method. There is no rules and regulations to be followed in the process of application, evaluation and granting, which is arbitrary. They do not aim at recruiting and selecting excellent students, but at how to use up the scholarship quota allocated by the higher education department, which leads to that students who do not meet the requirement finally get the scholarship. In addition, some new problems have arisen in the process of granting scholarships in the post-pandemic era.

4. Strategies of scholarship management Optimization

1. Strengthen the top-level design and improve the regulatory system

The scholarship system for international students shall serve the university’s education concept. It should be combined with long-term development strategies such as the internationalization construction and "double first-class" construction of the school. To adapt to the internationalization process of the university, it is necessary to focus on the positioning and purpose of the scholarship, establish and continuously optimize the scholarship management system, then it can mobilize the enthusiasm of international students to participate in the process and enhance their sense of honor. What’s more, it is also very important to constantly establish the supervision system of scholarships to ensure that inappropriate scholarships are not set up because of blindly pursuing the scale of international students. The awarded money of the scholarship should not be too much and the coverage should not be too wide which seems to everyone can award the scholarship easily.

2. Emphasize the original value of scholarships and optimize the allocation

Scholarships shall not be separated from their roots. On the one hand, they should encourage international students to integrate into their university life, work hard and achieve their own development through rewards. On the other hand, through the incentive role of scholarships, it is necessary and meaningful to guide international students to actively participate in such fields as promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries, learn more excellent Chinese culture, make contributions to the economic and social development of the country where they live, tell good stories about China, spread good voice of China, and become ambassadors of spreading Chinese culture. The allocation principle of scholarships must not be aimed at recruiting more students, nor simply favor the scholarship to studying applicants in order to improve the quality of enrollment. Optimizing the allocation of scholarships is a dynamic adjustment process and a necessary means to bring into full play of the efficiency of scholarships.

3. More standardized, rationalized and humanized management system

At the beginning of the establishment of the scholarship, it is essential to clarify the characteristics such as the amount of award, cycle, and targeting groups, so that students can quickly identify the scholarship which is suitable for them. In the selection process, the criteria and process should be clarified, and the material requirements and submission methods should adapt to the students' preferred methods to make it more humanistic. Scholarships shall be granted in full and on schedule to ensure compliance, openness and transparency of the process, so as to enhance the enthusiasm of international students apply to study in China. Another key for management optimization is to optimize the ways after the scholarship students come back to China when granting. Because Many universities suspended the granting of scholarship to overseas students during the pandemic period. When students return to campus, a large amount of scholarships should be granted. For these students, the university should try to grant scholarship by stages according to their performance after returning to school, avoid one-time granting, and establish a whole process reward and granting mechanism.

5. Conclusion

The attraction and training of outstanding international students studying in China demonstrates the internationalization level of China's higher education and also
reflects China's radiation and influence in the world. In the post-pandemic era, it is an important issue for universities to build a more reasonable and effective scholarship management system for international students studying in China. It will make contribution to the healthy development of education of international students in China as well.

References


