

# ***A Study on the Challenges and Development Opportunities Posed by Multiculturalism in the Education Management of International Students***

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**Abstract.** Against the macro backdrop of the evolving economic globalisation and the proliferation of cultural diversity, Chinese and Western cultures intertwine, with a myriad of multicultural ideas circulating among the migrating populace. This exerts a profound influence on the cultural consciousness and ideological perspectives of international students in the new era, as well as shaping the lifestyles of adolescents in this era. This paper will attempt to examine the concerns involved when managing overseas Chinese students and provide the insights and countermeasures that could help in the management of Chinese international students. Studies show that in a multicultural environment, the challenges facing international students include poor cultural identity, utilitarian ways of adapting to cross cultures, and the use of disjointed pro-integration processes. Considering this, this paper suggests three optimisation avenues: Firstly, to codify the content of multicultural education and design educational objectives in relation to age and the cognitive stage of students. Secondly, to penetrate the various education in a global cultural sense and expand on cultural inclusiveness by means of creating environment and engagement teaching. Thirdly, to sharpen the integration mechanism through multicultural evaluation in the management system to enhance the emotional experiences and practical judgments.

**Keywords:** Multiculture, Higher Education, International Students, Campus Activity, International Flow

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Research background**

In the current information age, globalisation of culture has become the order of the day. With the influx of self-media, individuals in different ethnic backgrounds in different nations have attained virtually zero-proximity cultural interactions. The growing magnitude of the international student traffic is a challenge that universities all over the world face in the need to reconcile cultures and educational goals. There are studies that show that the curriculum taught to international students in China does not have any regional features, and as a consequence, the cultural identity of such students is absent [1]. Moreover, there is also a similar tendency of cultural self-preservation among international students in cross-cultural adaptation, whereby the Chinese students tend to conduct

business that is utilitarian in nature in Singapore [2]. Unilateral forms of incentives like scholarships are inadequate in the effort to have a profound integration among international students [3]. Even in cases when physical education is used as an effective means of cross-cultural adaptation, problems like insufficient integration of resources remain in the practical sphere of application [4].

Multicultural education is based on the concepts of equality, respect, and integration of different cultures. When it comes to multicultural education, the exceptional worth of each culture is acknowledged and honored, as no culture has been left out in the holistic growth and cultural diversity of the globe. Nowadays, many schools and areas are involved in the deep studies of multicultural education programs. The formation of the social support system at the University of Washington focuses on a top-down solution that is student-focused, market-based, and very service-oriented, and targets to support the needs of foreign students with multiple cultural backgrounds [5]. This project can provide China with valuable insights. This mechanism has produced impressive results, as the "do as the Romans do" policy applied in Yunnan has created cultural identity among foreign students in the province [6]. Also, researchers have developed a pragmatic avenue of national conditions education among the international Chinese students through the lens of a 'whole person' [7]. There is a need to incorporate the regional culture into the national condition's education in a holistic and systematic design [8]. The integration and identification of international students in a multicultural environment can be achieved in universities by optimising their management systems and developing new frameworks and models [9,10]. These accomplishments give the theoretical framework to the analysis of the impacts and issues of multiculturalism on educational management in this paper, and also serve to indicate that educational strategies need to implement the improvements.

## **1.2. Research significance**

Embarking on the macro environment of shifting economic globalisation and growing cultural diversity, there exists an interwoven between cultures of different countries and ethnicities, and where hundreds of cultures and worldviews collide, this results in the divergence of cultures, and the education sector is the place where it is practised. These multicultural factors, due to the presence of international students who have diverse backgrounds, have an effect on the decisions made in educational management. Nowadays, many countries pay increased attention to the inclusion of multicultural education into the school construction planning projects that not only shape the new trends of the macro-level educational development but also introduce new challenges to the micro-level teaching management in the globalised environment. To this end, this paper presents the view of multicultural education, the role of cultural diversity in the management and decision-making in higher education, and how to put effective multicultural education mechanisms in place in the education sector. Hopefully, with the adoption of more scientific and rational policies, the international students will better integrate into their host communities and have a positive experience in learning and development.

## **2. Multicultural challenges to educational management of international students**

The international students have formed a distinct ethnic community in global migration today. A key aspect of empowering universities to design their management strategies for education is the ability of students to maintain their national and ethnic cultural identity, and at the same time be capable of understanding and integrating into the nations that host them. There is diversity between multicultural and monocultural students [11], and international students in a multicultural setting face language obstacles and varying work ethics [12]. This can be achieved by joining mixed groups and taking advantage of their environmental pressures as a way of ensuring international

students cross-culturally adapt by allowing them to recreate their inner worlds of their own through communication and learning to form cross-cultural identity [13], and by increasing their abilities [14]. Ideological education is the main foundation of multicultural education, which is not equal to disciplinary/professional education, so in practice, it requires a combination of implicit and explicit approaches to the educational process. However, there are many challenges in implementing educational management in a multicultural background.

### **2.1. Insufficient efficiency of the incentive mechanism**

The incentive system, a prominent manifestation of cultural diversity in higher education management, offers both material rewards like scholarships and spiritual incentives. However, research reveals that many Chinese international students have not integrated into the local society despite these incentives, suggesting that incentives alone are insufficient. When the environment fails to inspire an urgent and profound desire for assimilation among international students, they remain unaffected by multicultural education and confined within their conservative self-circles. Thus, merely employing incentive strategies will not suffice for universities to promote multicultural education effectively.

Spiritual motivation involves increasing the sense of belonging and cultural identity of students through organising spiritual and cultural events or undertaking artistic exchanges. International students tend to be in a disadvantaged situation, as they remain in a foreign country and are confronted with a plethora of challenges and problems of everyday life. Many educational research centres are considering how to enhance the feeling of security and well-being of the international students. These pedagogical discourses include moral and political aspects of international education, including the relationships between international students and their educators or educator agents, and the framework of the relationships between international students and the reproduction of social privilege and inequalities.

Professional education continues to be the major focus of academic activity in the present-day environment of higher learning. Although humanistic activities are undertaken in schools, they are not enough to accommodate international students. The majority of international students restrict their lives to attending school classes within the campus and rarely participate in any activities in town after school to be able to build stronger multicultural and emotional bonds. Lacking real-life interactions and experience, students are left to a level of learning superficially, and they cannot really become part of the local community.

### **2.2. Acculturation is utilitarian**

Chinese international students also demonstrate a utilitarian attitude when it comes to in-campus and club life in foreign institutions of higher learning, where they struggle to blend in with it. This speaks of a low degree of efficacy of multicultural education.

It has been demonstrated in literature that even though the percentage of certain Chinese foreign university international students engaged in campus and club activities has been increasing in recent years, they still tend to retain their strong sense of native identity and fail to fully fit in the local society. They are rather closer to the self-defensive tendency and not on the trend of multiculturalism. The vast majority of international students do not make their choices depending on their interest in cultural diversity, but based on their academic or professional advancement. Such utilitarianism does not allow its acculturation to alien cultures, and multicultural education is unable to develop a significant impact. Moreover, the majority of the school activities are poorly designed to support the needs and cultural background of the international students, and that is the reason why harmony among the international and local students is not well stimulated.

In practical terms, when dealing with cultural diversity in the realm of international education, the question of the cultural adjustment of international students is rather complex. A utilitarian attitude and drawbacks in the design of activities inhibit the knowledge and recognition of multiculturalism among international students, thus hindering their cross-cultural awareness and judgment. Discussing the way to maximise the design of activities and promote the intensive incorporation of international students and local culture is an urgent topic in the context of international education.

### **2.3. The pro-integration mechanism is not systematic**

The absence of established pro-integration systems in universities to achieve successful cultural assimilation of international students has resulted in the failure of the latter in a multicultural background.

Although universities have put in place various policies to help international students assimilate and naturalise, these policies are often not systematic and profound. As has been discussed above, the incentive measures used in universities usually focus purely on the financial side of the drive and fail to consider the integration requirements of international students in terms of lifestyle and ideological orientation. International students as adults have a deep cultural imprint that they cannot easily associate with and understand foreign cultures within a limited period of time. They are likely to undergo shallow assimilation even when they engage in the activities of the local campuses. The shallow level of cultural integration, lack of cultural identity processes, and poor practices in cross-cultural education demonstrate an imbalance between the educational management of the universities and the needs of cultural diversity in the present time. This not only hampers the performance of multicultural education but also limits the life experiences of foreign students. Universities also fail to offer multidimensional and daily assessment of international students' performance, emotional recognition, cultural rightness, and sentimental feelings, which results in a gap between measures to promote integration and the goals of the measures. The uniformity of approaches does not allow the full utilisation of multicultural resources, whereas material incentives without emotional and experiential backgrounds find it hard to cultivate a sense of naturalisation and cross-cultural communication skills in international students.

The existing process of international student integration in the universities has systematic weaknesses, and the relevant pro-integration mechanism has not come into being. This is expressed in disjointed management, one-sided support, and monolithic strategies. These deficiencies not only hinder the profound multiculturalism cognition among international students but also suppress the process of cross-cultural flexibility.

## **3. Optimisation pathways**

### **3.1. Systematised multicultural education content promotes integration**

To mitigate the above problems, systematic and multicultural education should be offered at universities, thus encouraging the learning and growth of international students through the management and decision-making processes in education. To begin with, the university faculty needs to conduct systematic research and teaching on multicultural education for international students with greater scientific rigour. Secondly, there must be a reasonable choice of the content of multicultural education, keeping in mind legislation on the individual physical and psychological development of international students. International students are usually over 18, with a small percentage of them being teenagers between the ages of 10 and above who enter into their study abroad trip with their parents. As a result, multicultural education should be a hierarchical and targeted observation of cognitive development patterns at various ages. The learning material ought

to be separated, and the learning outcome of every stage ought to be improved based on age peculiarities and educational targets.

To be more precise, the content of multicultural education must be adjusted to different cognitive levels. As an example, the multicultural education curriculum should not be too complicated for international students under the age of 18, as they are still in the process of mental development. In the case of foreign students, the local cultural education may be based on the fundamental cultures and national conditions of the 56 ethnic groups in China, since the multi-ethnic culture of China is an essential part of multicultural education. For elderly international learners with a higher level of cognition, that is, corresponding modifications are to be made regarding the multicultural education content. Specifically, it is necessary to pay attention to the idea of arranging educational practice-based activities that will allow international students to strengthen their emotional ties to the culture, its historical background, and other aspects of the host nation. It is only through this that international students will not only learn cultural aspects but also have an emotional enrichment. This is a method through which cultural education is spread, and students have an objective view of the globalised era and the strengthening of their civic responsibility. It therefore helps foster better comprehension and acceptance of the host country based on first-hand experiences and in the resultant boosting of their assimilation into the local society.

### **3.2. Infiltration of multicultural education based on world culture**

The wider international relations of power and inequalities between countries influence the ways of teaching as well as the contents of the knowledge. The interaction between international highly mobile students and the institutions is only decolonised through participatory teaching methods, and international students of the university are therefore better suited to living in other countries and receive relatively favourable treatment and opportunities. Consequently, in order to improve the resilience of international students to risks and their perceptions of security in foreign settings, it is critical to increase multicultural education in the framework of the global culture. This would be possible by encompassing the different studies on international cultures in the teaching material, such as discussing how power disparity cuts across the international student life experience, and what international students can do to obtain more equal chances. It is only under the conditions of incorporating multicultural education and a fair-minded approach, philosophy, and attitude to the educational management of international students that the international students will be able to enhance the level of population mobility, communication, and mutual development under globalisation.

The environment is an important means of various learning. Universities can, by creating a multicultural environment in international classes, inculcate the "a community with a shared future for mankind". This unconsciously induced environment will make students increase their multicultural literacy and develop a wide cross-cultural approach. In particular, it is possible to put decorations about various countries, ethnicities, and world events, thematic walls on corridor walls, hallway walls, and internal and external classroom walls to provide a rich cultural environment. By the cultivation and the fostering of this atmosphere, an idea of a common future of mankind will be seeded in the minds of every child in the student population. Moreover, the teachers can also carry out activities in the classroom environment to ensure that the international students get maximum opportunities to communicate with each other, besides simply educating them in the host country. To the international students, practical experience is easier to understand and recollect than that from a book or a simple theoretical discussion, which is of a deeper influence. The lack of authentic friendship and life encounters is a sure way of holding back the overseas growth of international students. Through this approach, universities could not only easily assimilate international students into their new cultural environment but also ensure mutual understanding and co-operation between



students of different cultural perspectives, which would ultimately open greater cultural interactions and mutual developments in the era of globalisation.

### **3.3. Improve the educational integration mechanism for international students in the context of cultural diversity**

Considering the problem of poor integration and strong cultural marking among the international students in the present multicultural environment discussed above, two major tasks should be well mitigated to improve the application of multicultural education in institutions of higher learning.

On the one hand, one should use a student-centred approach, which is directed by the purpose of inculcating multicultural feelings. The multicultural education objectives should fit well with the educational management and development targets of the university. More so, the level and emotional coverage of the integration of international students into the local community in the context of cultural diversity must be integrated into the educational management integration process. This process may also include the elements of evaluation and assessment, which may slowly develop into a diversified evaluation model via diverse means, such as teacher evaluations, student evaluations, peer evaluations, and group evaluations in collaborative learning groups. It is important to focus on meaningful cultural practices of students in the host country, which allows them to share more multicultural attitudes and engage in practical activities during their learning, which would foster an appropriate understanding of the situations they are in. Simultaneously, the appropriate changes to multicultural education content or teaching approaches should be made by the teachers and corresponding departments based on feedback gained during the formative assessments, with the goal of providing an authentic flavour of multiculturalism and continuously promoting the inclusion of cultural diversity into the process of managing higher education.

Secondly, in this mechanism of integration, there is a need to intensify learning content and field experiences of the students. As an example, during preparation, most international students have to learn how to speak the language and overcome the language barrier first. The educational integration evaluation at this point should be mostly based on basic theoretical knowledge tests, such as understanding of language among the students, their understanding of traditional culture, and their understanding of various customs. From the perspective of enabling the incorporation of international students, the area of focus will also focus on the holism of the evaluation and assessment criteria, the depth of content, and the normalisation of the processes. Also, the percentage of multicultural aspects in the assessments must be raised, and the daily performance of students, their behavioural patterns, ideological and moral character, manifestations of cultural feelings, and other factors must be integrated into the scope of the assessments, and hence direct the students to improve their host countries.

## **4. Conclusions**

The growing complexity and fluidity of the issue of cultural diversity in international education management and decision-making necessitate a dynamic stance that will help analyse the relevance and necessity of multicultural education, thus promoting international students to possess global perspectives, inclusive mindsets, and cross-cultural communication skills.

In the present day, universities and other educational facilities struggle with the idea of strengthening the integration and permeation of multicultural education among international students. Such problems as a low degree of real integration and one-sidedness are encountered. International students are not satisfied with material and economic incentives. In addition, international students do not have sufficient means of complete assimilation into local society. The educational processes and the systems that are supposed to be in place are not flawless, which

prevents the precise assessment and encouragement of integrating international students. The nation, schools, and teachers must make concerted efforts to address these issues. To stay up to date with the times, the government must create the respective management and evaluation measures to maximise educational goals. The schools must also take various initiatives to establish a multicultural environment and provide education programs that are based on local conditions. According to the situation, teachers must use the educational opportunities to teach and conduct research individually. One can establish a strong foundation for the future growth and development of international students through unity, cooperation, and a multifaceted approach, expecting to produce a new generation with multicultural, literate, and internationalist perspectives.

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