

## Study on Cross-Cultural Management for International Students in China

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### Abstract

Based on the cultural shocks in the education management for international students in China, cross-cultural management can improve the management efficiency and promote education of international student in China effectively.

**Key words:** Cross-cultural management; Foreign students in China; Culture shock; Higher education; Internationalization

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With the development of higher-education internationalization, more and more international students have studied in China. The total number of international students exceeded 230,000 in 2009, reached 26 million in 2010. According to China's long-term Education Program, the number of foreign students in China will reach 50 million in 2050. China will become a country with a big number international students. These international students have become the main body of cross-cultural education. Therefore, facing to cultural conflict in the management of international students, cross-cultural management can resolve cultural conflicts, and promote the steady development. It is the effect way to the administrators in universities who are in charge of the international education.

### 1. CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

Cross-cultural management means the management depending on different cultural backgrounds of people, goods and the management thing and so on. Cross-cultural Management for International Students means the management for overseas students in order to improve the international quality and strengthen the academic influence. With the advancement in science and technology, the world economy is developing rapidly, and emerging international trend.

Higher-education has gone beyond the national boundaries, and international students studying in China meet some culture shocks in different economic environment, political environment, legal and social environment. Now cross-cultural management for international students studying in China is very important. In Chinese cultural environment, communications between the administrators and international students is often quite different, mainly because of the different cultural environment. Cross-cultural management need full understanding of cultural factors to understand each other, to clear the culture shocks and to realize the teaching aids successfully.

### 2. CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT CAN CLEAR THE CULTURE SHOCK OF OVERSEA STUDENTS

Culture shock is a phenomenon that the human may be nervous sometimes, or feel uneasy in the psychological states, which leads to the abnormal of mental and emotions. Somebody considers this "culture shock" as a kind of disease, which can be often see from people who suddenly leave their familiar native culture or

social environment to a totally strange alien culture and society. The factors that people can stand the effect of culture shock in different degrees are determined by their experiences, education situation and their adaptability to changes of their environment.

There are various differences between the national culture and social environment of the foreign students and the exotic culture, which have effected on their lives and study in some degree. The main reasons are as follows.

### **2.1 Different Values and Customs can Bring Culture Shock**

In western countries, people believe in personal dignity, praise highly personal spirit and carry forward personal value. Their standard of being human is putting themselves first.

Westerners are good at independent thinking, judgment and solving problems, and they realize their personal dreams and aims by themselves. They respect others, keep distance to others' privacy, cherish money and organize their work, study and entertainment well without wasting any time. Some students coming from Africa and Middle East where their agriculture are still in the primary stage and the pace of their lives is slow, because of which the Africans have very little time consciousness no matter their post and education degree and are often late for class. However, the value, way of thinking and standard of behavior have big difference with those of westerners. That Chinese pursue in respecting ancestors, authorities and morality, and pay attention to etiquette has make Chinese people form characteristics of being kind towards others, being peaceful existence with each other and paying attention to the interests of the whole.

### **2.2 The Differences on Verbal Communication Habits**

In historical origin, language and culture happened at the same time. They condition each other and have restrictive relations. Language reflects the important characteristics of the nation edgewise, and is an important basis for cross-cultural communication. Chinese people speak euphemistically while the Japanese are more subtle. They believe that there is no need to make it very clear and they often express their meanings by a look and some subtle movements while Westerners like speaking to the point and expressing the meaning relatively straightforward. If they feel satisfactory with the work results, they usually praise it immediately. "If there are shortcomings, they will be put forward suggestions for improvement, especially in the public service." (Traveled the United States, 2003) The verbal communication habits differences directly result in the disharmony during the exchange with westerners. It is often the case that when Chinese people say something for a long time, the Westerners cannot understand it at all. This foreign cultural difference has brought a certain degree of difficulty to students' cross-cultural management.

### **2.3 The Difference in the Way of Thinking is the Performance of Cultural Difference in Nature**

The East and the West belong to two different cultural systems and thus they are two types of thinking: the Chinese affected by yin and yang and eight trigrams think that the World coexists with I while Confucianism and Taoism developed the organic whole mode of thinking from a different perspective. This mode of thinking had very little self-consciousness. Therefore, the Chinese are particular about the benefits of the entire golden mean: the fairness, avoiding extremeness, focusing on moderation and opposing excessiveness, while in the West, they have very strong individual sense and their mode of thinking are generally from small to large, from concrete to a whole. They also focus on a diversified multi-ideas way of thinking and spirit of innovation and active thinking.

As management staff of foreign students, it is necessary to understand these differences, not only to provide the necessary life services, facilities and equipped with necessary academic and technical support forces for foreign students, but also to focus on their adaptation of social and cultural dimensions in the future work to alleviate a variety of cultural conflict, and put the foreign students management work to a new level.

## **3. THE SPECIFIC MEASURES ON CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN COLLEGES**

In the new time and situation, education and management of foreign students must be adjusted according to the new situation. The cultural factor should be put into the major position in the management work.

### **3.1 Improve the Foreign-Affairs Management Ability of Working Staff on Foreign Students**

The management of university teachers is a job of high principles, polices and widely involved, which is usually charged by the professional person who is responsible for the objectives management, which requires the teacher not only have the keen political quality and stable style of working, but also have the ability to cross-cultural management. They are required to learn the relevant laws and regulations and related policies and documents as well as properly handling problems in the case of different cultures in conflict. For example, in foreign affairs policy, when foreigners arrive in school, the school should go to the local police station to apply for accommodation registration within 24 hours, and visit visa or tourist entry to the Public Security Bureau to apply for a student visa within a month, and handle the expand resident the permit in time to avoid illegal stay in China. Otherwise, according to Chinese law, illegal residence for one day, they will accept a fine of 500 yuan. Foreign Affairs have no small matter. The management staff should enhance

learning to improve the professional level and to ensure that the foreign affairs go on smoothly.

### **3.2 Improve the Cross-Cultural Communication Ability of the Management Staff on Foreign Students**

The teachers should have equal awareness in cross-cultural communication. The different cultures and civilizations of different nations have their own strengths, and does not exist a hierarchy. Therefore, we must establish a sense of equality and carry on communication and exchange under the premise of equality and mutual respect, only by way of which can we achieve mutual understanding, mutual complement and common progress. A television commentator has referred to three different attitudes in the exchanges between different civilizations: to look up at them, to look down on them and to look at them equally. In cross-cultural communication, we should look students from different countries equally. In addition, we should strengthen the study and research and firstly understand our own culture. Chinese culture has a long history and we should not only have the basic Chinese cultural literacy, but also understand each other's culture, otherwise we will lose the foundation for effective communication. As the saying goes, "Know your enemy and know yourself".

When doing cultural exchanges with foreign students, we should seek common ground while reserving differences and looking for the shared values and skillfully avoid conflicting values which is conducive to dialogue resonate to improve communication quality. Shared values is two or multi-cultural pursuit or accepted values today. In 1993, at the Chicago World Religions Conference conveyed by German theologian Hans Kung, theologians and philosophers all over the world in World Religions Parliament made the Global Ethic Declaration. The Declaration have two basic principles, "Everyone should be treated in accordance with human nature"; "Do unto others, do not impose on others", and considers that the later principle is the moral of the golden rule, which has universal significance. In 2005, the U.S. psychologist Catherine (Katherine Dahlsgaard), dals Jiade read the philosophy and religious books of China (Confucianism and Taoism), South Asia (Buddhism and Hinduism), Western (Athens, Greece, Philosophy, Judaism, Christianity and Islam), and found these books show the six shared virtues: courage, justice, humanity, abstinence, wisdom, and transcendence. Its sources are diverse, which both come from Western culture, and from the Eastern culture, including China. The occurrence of cross-cultural communication is to find differences between cultures, put emphasis on differences and understand mutual differences, which can make the dialogue avoid the reef and find shared values to improve communication quality. People advocate of intercultural dialogue, not a cultural conflict, which means that people already have the wishes, faith and hope of seeking common points while reserving

difference. Social psychology studies have shown that similarity in attitudes, beliefs and values, will greatly enhance the mutual appreciation while the opposition rarely brings attraction. "That the similarity can breed love is not only suitable for college students, but also for the children and the elderly, for different occupations, as well as people of different cultures" (LIU, 2010). We can find out the common denominator of both cultures. Chinese culture and other cultures must have something in common, which is very good basis of exchange. There may be differences between different cultures, but some conflicts cannot form contradictions, so we can retain their characteristics. On the other side, there must be some contradictions, which is our main work to explore how to resolve in the cross-cultural communication. Therefore, we have to seize the common, retain the difference and seek common ground while reserving differences.

### **3.3 Update Teaching Concept and Create Active Teaching Environment with Inclusiveness**

Due to the long-term effect of teaching concept and environment of their country, the foreign students will appear some untoward effect in the daily teaching. For example, they are often teaching in small classes in foreign teaching, and the teachers often organize students 4 students as a team to the face to face discussion and exchange. The students take turns to speak, and the teaching atmosphere is lively. During the major holidays, such as the National Day, Christmas, they will hold some celebrations. As teaching management department of foreign students, it is necessary to accurately determine the outstanding elements of its culture, and create a different culture of mutual tolerance and exchange of learning spaces in class.

### **3.4 Organize Cross-Cultural and Academic Activities to Enhance the Cultural Blending and Cross-Cultural Communication**

Students from around the world are a treasure of the school. We should make full utilization of these sources to enhance the management philosophy of the school education, and to promote cultural integration through communication and understanding between the various countries and nations. The students management department can organize some national culture and history-related activities with students to strengthen their sense of belonging through cultural interaction with Chinese students, to promote cultural understanding, cultural blending and cultural adaptability, which is helpful to facilitate the management department to carry on cross-cultural management work of foreign students.

Chinese civilization has always emphasized communication and blend. The blend and collisions of multi-cultural cannot only enhance understanding, deepen friendship, but also play an irreplaceable role in our harmonious social development and progress of human civilization.

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