

**Developing Management Guidelines for International Students' Learning Success
at Guangxi Minzu University, China**

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were: 1) to investigate problems and needs of international students, teachers, and administrators on the learning success of students and 2) to develop the management guidelines for international students' learning success. The respondents were 160 international students, 84 teachers, and 6 administrators from Guangxi Minzu University. The research instruments employed in this study were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and a set of questions for the focus group discussion meeting. The information and data collected were analyzed through content analysis and descriptive analysis.

The findings indicated that: 1) the opinions of international students, teachers, and administrators towards the problems of students' learning success were at a moderate level. In terms of student performance, and student outcomes, teachers and administrators rated them at a moderate level; however, the student achievement was at a low level. All respondents viewed the needs of students' learning success at a high level. Besides, international students rated the need for student achievement at the highest level. 2) The 7 chapters of guidelines for international students' learning success included 1) Understanding cultural differences 2) Making a study plan 3) Finding learning resources, 4) Being positive 5) Developing good time management habits 6) Building social networks and 7) Seeking help and support, were evaluated by the 3 specialists and possessed the IOC values from 0.67 to 1.00, meaning the guidelines were acceptable and could be used with international students to achieve learning success at a university.

Keywords: Management Guidelines, International Students, Learning Success

1. Introduction

Education has always been highly valued in China, from the imperial examination system to the strategy of rejuvenating the country through science and education. International students choose to study in China mainly because China is an educational powerhouse, with a high and rapidly improving quality of higher education. Of course, in addition to studying in China, tuition fees are relatively reasonable, and there are a variety of scholarships, among others. In the past few years, China's outstanding performance and contribution have also made more international students choose to study in China and express their willingness to stay in China for development.

According to data from the Ministry of Education, China has remained the world's largest source of international students for many years and is also the world's third-largest and Asia's largest destination country for international students. At a seminar held by the Think-tank for Globalization (CCG) in May last year, Miao Lu, Secretary-General of CCG (cited in Yang, D. 2022), said that international students in China are an important bridge to enhance mutual understanding and trust between China and foreign countries, as well as an important driving force for enterprises to go global and for China to participate in global governance.

Nowadays, with the increasing influence of China on the world, more and more foreign students choose to complete their studies in China. However, due to cultural differences, language barriers, and other factors, these students face many challenges. As mobile cultural messengers, international students bring pressure and challenges from their native culture. This is a common phenomenon for personal development and socio-cultural exchanges in the host country. These problems are like the obstacles that international students overcome when entering a strange cultural environment. They need to adjust their behavior and thinking to adapt to the new living environment.

It is undeniable that international student mobility has a profound impact on host countries and individuals, but while enjoying the benefits of such exchanges, we must also be aware of the challenges and problems inherent in it. Xu Jialu (2020: pp. 117-119) believed that the construction of a campus support service system for international students is not sound enough, the theme design of activities is not enough, and the professional service system is not mature enough. Therefore, some suggestions are put forward for the promotion of campus activities of international students in China: the construction of material culture and spiritual culture in colleges and universities should keep a coordinated development; University spirit and humanistic spirit should develop harmoniously. The cultural communication ability and professional serviceability of colleges and universities should be integrated and developed.

In many aspects such as study, life, social interaction, etc., it is inevitable for international students to encounter difficulties in adapting to the new environment. Laping Sheng (2022: p. 2) mentioned that learning success is important for international students. A gap has been noted in the exploration of different domains of adaptation among international students. That is, although empirical studies have identified sociocultural adaptation and psychological adaptation as being interrelated, whether there is an association between learning adaptation and other domains of adaptation remains unclear. As the sociocultural context is an important factor that influences international students' cross-cultural adjustment, an investigation into the association of learning adaptation with psychological and socioeconomic adaptation among

English-instructed international students in China would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of international students' experiences in their host country.

2. Research Objectives

- 2.1 To investigate problems and needs of international students, teachers, and administrators on the learning success.
- 2.2 To develop the management guidelines for international students' learning success.

3. Review of Related Literature

Learning success usually refers to the positive results and performance of students in learning activities. This can include excellent performance on exams, research projects, etc. Learning success is not just achievement, but also includes the development of an in-depth understanding of learning knowledge, problem-solving skills, innovative thinking, and critical thinking (Miller & Ause 2018, pp. 33-62).

The terms learning success, student achievement, and student outcomes are terms commonly used in education to describe student performance and outcomes in learning areas.

Research shows that student achievement in higher education institutions is crucial to the evaluation of their overall quality (Alyahyan & Düşteğör 2020, p. 4). Student achievement is the progress of students in the learning process. This can include outstanding performance in learning performance, extracurricular activities, social practice, artistic performances, sports competitions, etc. Student achievement reflects students' efforts and talent potential and is an important reflection of students' personal development and growth

Student performance: Early student performance prediction can help universities provide timely actions, like planning for appropriate training to improve students' success rate. Exploring educational data can certainly help in achieving the desired educational goals (Fullerton & Simon, 2018, pp. 2-8).

Student outcomes are a reflection of students' learning abilities and creativity, as well as an important manifestation of students' application of the knowledge they have learned into practice. Yang Dan, Liu Rui & Zhang Wei (2020, pp. 206-212) stated that they are commonly used words in the field of education and are widely used in communication between educators, students, and parents. The use of these terms helps measure and evaluate students' learning performance, while also encouraging students to pursue excellence and develop comprehensive personal abilities.

4. Research Methodology

This research is quantitative and qualitative.

3.1 Population

This research was conducted at Guangxi Minzu University. The population of this research was divided into 2 groups; namely, 1) 160 international students, and 2) 84 teachers and 6 administrators in the College of International Education. They were obtained through purposive sampling.

3.2 Research Instruments

The research instruments employed in this research were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and a set of questions for the focus group discussion meeting. The questionnaires were divided into three parts: (1) general information, (2) problems of international students on learning success, and (3) needs of international students on learning success. The five-point Likert rating scale was used to evaluate the respondents' opinions. For the validity, the three experts were invited to evaluate the questionnaires by using the technique of IOC (Index of item objective congruence). The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated by the technique of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability of questionnaires for the students set, and for the teachers and administrators set were 0.841 and 0.836, respectively.

For the semi-structured interviews, the three experts and five outstanding students were invited to share ideas and experiences on the student's learning success.

For the focus group discussion meeting, the three experts were invited to evaluate the suitability and correctness of the guidelines for international students' learning success, and presented in the form of IOC (Index of item objective congruence).

3.3 Data Analysis

The data and information collected were analyzed through content analysis and descriptive analysis, then interpreted and presented in terms of frequency, percentage, mean (μ), and standard deviation (σ).

The criteria and range of averages were defined as follows:

4.51-5.00 = highest level of problems and needs

3.51-4.50 = high level of problems and needs

2.51-3.50= moderate level of problems and needs

1.51-2.50 = low problems and needs

1.00-1.50= lowest level of problems and needs

4. Research Results

For the research results, it can be concluded as follows.

4.1 Problems of international students towards the learning success in the opinions of international students, teachers, and administrators at Guangxi Minzu University

Table 1 The opinions of international students towards the problems of students' learning success

	N=160		Level of problems
	μ	σ	
Student achievement	3.41	0.50	Moderate
Student performance	3.38	0.51	Moderate
Student outcomes	3.34	0.50	Moderate
Total	3.38	0.50	Moderate

According to Table 1, the problems of international students towards the learning success of students in three aspects were at a moderate level ($\mu=3.38$, $\sigma=0.50$). In terms of student achievement, student performance, and student outcomes were at the moderate level ($\mu=3.41$, $\sigma=0.50$, $\mu=3.38$, $\sigma=0.51$, and $\mu=3.34$, $\sigma=0.50$, respectively).

Table 2 The opinions of teachers and administrators towards the problems of international students' learning success

	N=90		Level of problems
	μ	σ	
Student achievement	2.03	0.42	Low
Student performance	2.68	0.77	Moderate
Student outcomes	3.21	0.70	Moderate
Total	2.64	0.63	Moderate

According to Table 2, most teachers and administrators rated the problems of international students towards the learning success of students in three aspects at the moderate level ($\mu=2.64$, $\sigma=0.63$). In terms of student performance, and student outcomes were at a moderate level ($\mu=2.68$, $\sigma=0.77$, and $\mu=3.21$, $\sigma=0.70$, respectively). However, student achievement was at a low level ($\mu=2.03$, $\sigma=0.42$).

4.2 Needs of international students towards the learning success in the opinions of international students, teachers and administrators at Guangxi Minzu University

Table 3 The needs of international students towards the students' learning success

	N=160		Level of problems
	μ	σ	
Student achievement	4.53	0.49	Highest
Student performance	4.35	0.67	High
Student outcomes	4.35	0.64	High
Total	4.41	0.60	High

According to Table 3, the needs of international students towards the learning success of students in three aspects were at a high level ($\mu=4.41$, $\sigma=0.60$). In terms of student achievement, most international students rated at the highest level ($\mu=3.38$, $\sigma=0.51$). In terms of student performance, and student outcomes were at a high level ($\mu=4.35$, $\sigma=0.67$, and $\mu=3.34$, $\sigma=0.50$, respectively).

Table 4 The needs of teachers and administrators towards the learning success of international success

	N=90		Level of problems
	μ	σ	
Student achievement	4.44	0.57	High
Student performance	4.24	0.59	High
Student outcomes	4.45	0.56	High
Total	4.38	0.57	High

According to Table 4, the needs of teachers and administrators towards the learning success of international students in three aspects were at a high level ($\mu=4.38$, $\sigma=0.57$). In terms of students' achievement, students' performance, and students' outcome were at a high level ($\mu=4.44$, $\sigma=0.57$, $\mu=4.24$, $\sigma=0.59$, and $\mu=4.45$, $\sigma=0.56$, respectively).

4.3 To develop the management guidelines for international students' learning success.

Besides the results of problems and needs of international students' learning success, we should get in-depth interviews with outstanding students and expert teachers to clarify the directions for students through learning success as follows.

The Results of Interviews with the outstanding students on the learning success.

Through interviews with the five outstanding international students in China, it can be seen that their experience in achieving excellent learning results in China mainly includes: making full use of the country's high-quality educational resources, actively facing language and cultural differences, arranging study and life reasonably, and having the courage to ask questions, etc. Regarding the study of international students at Guangxi MinZu University, it is recommended that the school strengthen construction in aspects such as psychological counseling for international students, teacher team building, and curriculum setting. At the same time, other international students and junior students should also learn from these successful experiences and strive to improve their learning results.

The Results of Interviews with the Expert Professors on the International Students' Learning Success.

Through interviews with three teachers from the School of International Education of Guangxi MinZu University, we learned that the learning challenges faced by foreign students in China are mainly reflected in language barriers, cultural differences, and differences in learning concepts and methods. To achieve learning success in China's universities, foreign students need to actively adapt to the country's educational environment, establish a good teacher-student relationship, participate in extracurricular activities and practical projects, and improve their comprehensive abilities. At the same time, they should also adopt active learning strategies, to improve their learning performance. When facing cultural differences, we must maintain an open mind, respect our country's culture and customs, actively participate in our country's culture, and learn to adjust ourselves. Only in this way can foreign students study and live better in Chinese universities and become talents with an international perspective.

5. Research Discussion

5.1 The Investigation of problems of international students, teachers, and administrators on the learning success of students

In terms of student achievement, most international students rated this aspect at a moderate level whereas teachers and administrators rated it at a low level. Most students, teachers, and administrators agreed that students' Chinese listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills have not improved significantly. Most students also mentioned that they cannot adapt well to the Chinese way of teaching and Chinese culture so their learning performance is not good. However, most teachers and administrators think that students can adapt well to the Chinese way of teaching and Chinese culture, and they don't think that international students' learning performance is not good. It might be that students find ways to adjust their learning status (Shen, 2021: pp. 1-31); therefore, teachers and administrators couldn't notice this type of problem.

In terms of student performance, international students, teachers, and administrators rated this aspect at a moderate level. Due to language barriers, it is difficult for students to make friends with Chinese people. They also mentioned that students don't like to participate in group work. Sometimes students feel embarrassed because they don't know how to deal with Chinese people.

International students are undoubtedly the most critical challenges in language and cultural adaptation. These findings are consistent with the research of Stockinger, K., Rinas, R., & Daumiller, M. (2021: p. 2). They confirmed that the critical role of adaptability in educational settings could predict student performance in learning and non-learning areas involving increased classroom engagement, positive school behaviors, and increased learning engagement, learning-reduced self-handicaps, increased learning achievement, successful college degree completion, and increased overall satisfaction.

According to the results above, it can be found that language communication is the primary problem that international students face. They also mentioned that it is difficult for them to participate in class discussions in fluent Chinese, to read the books assigned by the teacher, and to actively answer the questions raised by the teacher in class. As foreigners coming to China for the first time, they may find that they are not fluent in Mandarin and sometimes they have difficulty understanding the meaning of some everyday expressions. In the classroom, if their language skills are limited, it would be very difficult to understand the course content. In addition, if they are unable to communicate effectively with their classmates and teachers, it may affect their academic performance and social life. Many international students find it difficult to adapt to Chinese culture, they feel lonely because they don't have someone to confide in, and they are not sure how to achieve mutual understanding. They avoid the discomfort of communicating with Chinese people. These results correspond to the study of Yang Junhong (2005: p. 19). She found that language and cross-cultural communication are the barriers for international students to study and stay in China. She also mentioned that the biggest difficulty that international students encounter in cross-cultural communication is that they have difficulty understanding the ways of communication of Chinese people and do not understand the difference between the true feelings and politeness of Chinese people. Specifically, in terms of study, it is very difficult for international students to learn Chinese.

Acculturation is another important issue for international students. Different cultural backgrounds may lead people to have different understandings and views on the same thing. China's food culture, traffic rules, etiquette, and so on are different from those of foreign students in their home countries, which takes time to get used to.

Some countries have also established special international student management agencies to strengthen management and provide thoughtful services to international students. However, this aspect of work in our country has just begun. Institutions such as the National "International Students Education Management Association in Colleges and Universities" and the local "Foreign Students Education Management Research Association" as well as the "International Education College" or "International Student Management Office" only provide International student education, management, and services, but there is less systematic work. Mu Weiping (2020: pp. 62-65) believes that due to cultural differences between different countries, the cross-cultural adaptation of international students in psychological, learning, and social culture shows a dynamic trend, and they are faced with obvious challenges of cross-cultural adaptability. Some suggestions are put forward to improve the psychological adaptation of international students. It is also necessary to pay attention to the construction of international students' teachers, including strengthening the construction of international students' teachers in China and providing various learning guidance. Finally, to improve the management, to help students social and cultural integration.

5.2 The Investigation of needs of international students, teachers, and administrators on student learning success

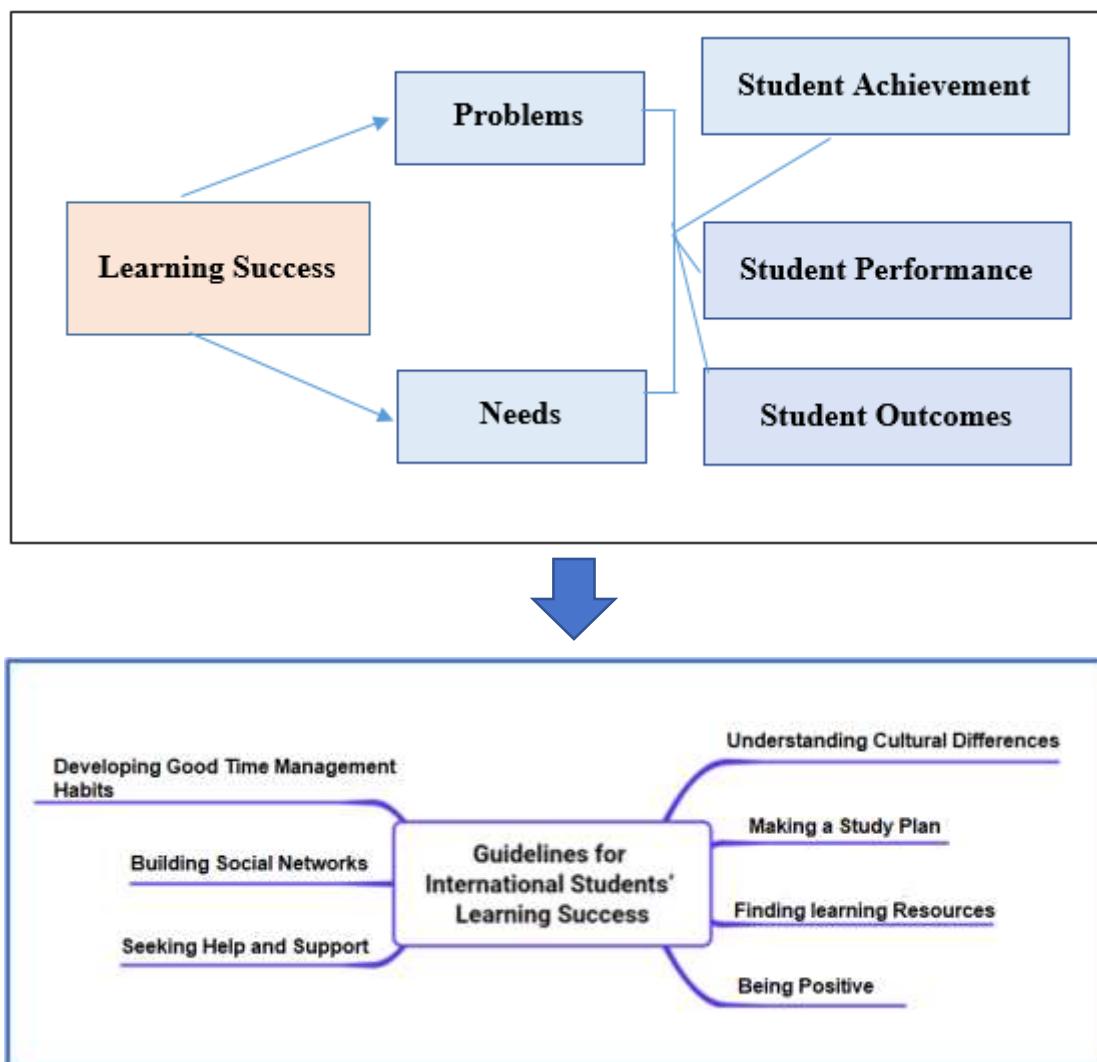
For international students, most of them want to learn Chinese. They need to learn about Chinese culture, history, and travel guide information. They are interested in Chinese culture, hope to get some help from Chinese friends in their daily lives, hope to make more Chinese friends, may think there is no sense of belonging here, and hope to get more attention from the international student administration office of the university. Zhu Guohui (2011: p. 17) found through a survey that the difficulty of cultural adaptation for international students is medium. Among them, the most difficult aspect of cultural adaptation is understanding the local accent. Shen Sixian (2021: pp. 1-31) suggested that international students can obtain information from various aspects and actively explore ways to effectively use self-regulated learning strategies to promote their Chinese learning.

For teachers and administrators, university teachers also need to provide high-quality teaching and guidance to meet the academic needs of international students. This requires teachers to have solid professional knowledge, good teaching skills, and communication skills. At the same time, teachers need to constantly update their knowledge systems to adapt to the changing educational environment.

For managers, the management of international students is also important. They need to develop reasonable policies and management systems to ensure the safety and welfare of international students in the school. Administrators also need to work closely with teachers to ensure that international students receive high-quality teaching and guidance. In addition, managers also need to deal with various emergencies and problems, such as cultural conflicts, language barriers, learning difficulties, etc. The solution to these problems requires managers to have management experience, good communication skills, and decision-making ability.

6. Research Body of Knowledge

Figure 1 Research Body of Knowledge



This research investigated the problems and needs of international students, teachers, and administrators on the learning success at the School of International Education, Guangxi Minzu University, and came up with guidelines for the successful management of international students at Guangxi Minzu University in China. The data and information for management guidelines were the results of content analysis, surveys, and interviews with five outstanding students and three specialists.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations for Implementation

- 1) Schools need to fully understand the issues and needs of international students, teachers, and managers of the School of Education and Management
- 2) Schools need to develop Guidelines for International Students Academic Success

3) Schools should hold a symposium and invite representatives of international students, teachers, and administrators to conduct in-depth discussions on issues related to academic success.

7.2 Recommendations for Further Study

To better develop guidelines for the academic success of international students, schools first need to develop a deep understanding of the issues and needs of international students, faculty, and administrators. Specific methods include:

1) Conduct surveys to collect information from international students, teachers, and administrators on factors affecting academic success, difficulties, and needs.

2) Review relevant domestic and foreign literature and analyze the theoretical and practical experiences of international students' academic success.

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