

Statistical Analysis of the Research Literature of International Students in China from 2000 to 2018 in China National Knowledge Infrastructure

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Abstract: By the end of 2020, China will become the largest destination for international students in Asia, with the number of international students studying in China reaching 500,000. In this context, the study of international students in China has become one of the most significant topics in the field of education. An analysis of the articles included in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) from 2000 to 2018 found that the number of articles related to international students in China increased with the increase in the number of international students in China. Researches were mainly focused on “education management” and “development methods”. However, there are still some topics need to be explored further such as the study of international students from important source countries and the admission and quality assurance of international students education in China.

1. Introduction

The 2000 issued Regulations on the Administration of The Reception of International Students by Higher Education Institutions and China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 mark the period of systematic standardization of the education of international students in China. The topic, international students administration in China, is already at the national strategic level. In the Outline of the National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) and the Study in China Program, China is expected to become the largest destination for international students in Asia by 2020. At present, the total number of international students studying in China has increased from 52,150 in 2000 to 492,185 in 2018. The rapid growth of the number of international students coming to China means that the study of international students in China has become one of the important subjects in the field of education.

The reason why the articles of international students in China are chosen as research subject is that after 2000 the number of research on the number of international students coming to China increased, which means there are a large number of researches done by scholars on the topic of international students in China. The study of international students in China are categorized by Niu Zhongguang and Zhou Lei ^[1] in five stages: start-up and stagnation period (1949-1978), re-start period (1979-1989), initial development period (1990-1999), period of rapid development (2000-2009) and heavily rapid development period (2010-2016). They suggest that there are limitations and deficiencies in the current study of international students in China with the singleness of theories and repetition of subjects and content in literature. Zhu Hong and Hu Jinguang ^[2] believe that although the number of articles of international students in China has increased rapidly, most studies lack theoretical foresight, and the quality of articles still needs to be improved.

Based on past articles, this paper categorizes the articles included in China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) from 2000 to 2018. Not only heated topics and shortcomings in the research of international students in China are discussed but also some suggestions are proposed for further study.

2. Research Objects and Research Methods

This study is based on articles included in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). These articles are selected and analyzed according to the following search conditions: a. According to the social science characteristics of the field of study of international students in China, the science and technology categories are excluded. b. Taking into account the direct correlation of the study, the CNKI search item is “the name”, the search term is the exact match of the word “international students in China” without using logic, word frequency and extension function. c. All periodicals published between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2018, are searched. According to the above-mentioned conditions there are 1,164 Chinese documents but 2 duplicate articles are deleted, so the formal implementation of this study is based on these 1162 articles.

The classification of topics selected in this study is based on the Study in China Program. Specifically, the two hot sub-topics, “education management” and “development ideas”, are further discussed and analyzed.

3. Research Statistics and Analysis

3.1 Characteristics of Number of Text

The number of relevant articles of international students in China is highly correlated with the scale of the number of international students studying in China. Both the number of international students in China and the number of researches of international students in China showed an upward trend between 2000 and 2018. According to the data published by the official website of Ministry of Education, People’s Republic of China, the number of international students in China increased from 52,000 in 2000 to 492,000 in 2018, while the number of articles for international students in China also increased from 18 in 2000 to 187 in 2018, showing that with the increase in the number of international students in China, the interests of scholars to international students in China is also on the rise.

3.2 Statistics and Analysis of Topics of the Articles

As can be seen from table 1, “education management” occupies the largest number of “international students in China”, with a total of 732 articles in 19 years, accounting for 62.9% of the total number. Especially since 2014, the number of articles titled in “education management” has increased significantly, indicating that education management is the core of the education of international students in China.

A total of 171 articles on “development methods” accounted for 14.7% of the total. Due to the launch of the National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) and the Study in China Program, a relatively high number of articles were published between 2010 and 2013. From 2017, the number articles of “development methods” show an upward trend, indicating that in the new situation work of international students has once again been paid attention to.

The number of “Chinese Language Learning” ranked third, accounting for about 7.8% of the total research results. As the basis of studying in China, since 2013, the number of articles on “Chinese Language Learning” has been increasing year-by-year, reflecting that the increased demand and problems of Chinese language learning.

3.3 Further Analysis of Articles on “Education Management”

As can be seen from Table 2, the “Education Management” related topics accounted for the largest proportion of the topics, reaching 486, accounting for 67.7%. The management of international students in China is one of the most important jobs in the project of international students in China, so the discussion is also the most. The number of literatures on the topic of “cross-cultural adaptation” is on the rise year by year, indicating that the management of international students in China is more of a process for international students to adapt to Chinese culture, so more and more scholars are paying attention to this field.

In addition, the number of topics related to “Daily management” also accounts for a certain proportion. Apart from focusing on the academic development of international students in China, the daily management also draws attention, including mental health, safety education and handling of emergencies. Sub-topics such as “Teaching management” “policy and regulation” and “management mode” have few articles, reflecting the current study of international education is not specific enough. Topics including teaching management, policy and regulation formulation and management mode need to be further refined and improved.

3.4 Statistics and Analysis of the Topic of “Development Methods”

As can be seen from Table 3, the main sub-topic of “development methods” mainly focuses on “development methods”. There are 115 articles, accounting for two-thirds of the total number. In addition, the articles on the “current status of development” accounts for a relatively small proportion, indicating that the understanding of the current development status of international students in China is not comprehensive and in-depth. There is a small number of articles on “internationalization of education”, and the literature on such topics has mainly focused on the link between the project of international students in China and the internationalization of universities. The small number of the sub-topic, “development prospects”, indicates a lack of forward-looking discussion on the development of the project of international students.

4. Conclusion

With the growth of the number of international students in China, the number of research articles related to international students is also increasing. Meanwhile, the number of regional/country studies is also diversified. In terms of research topics, “development methods” and “education management” have always been the focus of the study of international students in China. “Major courses” and “Chinese language learning” have shown a relatively rapid development in recent years, indicating that with the increasing number of international students pursuing degree programs in China and the increasing importance of Chinese language, the importance of these two topics is gradually increasing.

However, in order to strengthen the quality of the international students education, it is necessary to further strengthen the research in the following areas. First, the study of students’ source countries should be focused. Through the study of the origin of international students in China, we can further develop the high-quality international students. Studying the background and culture of the international students and implementing appropriate cross-cultural strategies can manage the international students more effectively. Second, it is necessary to strengthen the policy system, such as the scholarship system and admission policy research. On the one hand, we can learn experience from abroad, and provide reference for our country to set up a reasonable scholarship system for overseas students. On the other hand, at present, China does not have unified admission examination standards for international students. Also, it is hard for different levels of education and different majors to set admission standard. Besides, it is necessary to find out how to develop standardized examination process. Researches can provide a theoretical basis for the future standard settings. Third, it is significant to strengthen the assessment of curriculum quality and other aspects of research. Researches on quality assurance are important including how to strengthen the teacher teams and how to build attractive professional courses and practical teaching models.

References

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- [2] Zhu Hong & Hu Jinguang, The Literature Review of Foreign Students Education Research in the Past Decade, Journal of World Education, vol.449, no.17, pp.43-47, 2018.

Table 1 Statistics of Research Topics

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	In total
Development methods	8	1	2	1	6	4	7	7	2	6	16	10	10	22	13	10	9	14	23	11
Policy Research	1					1														2
Ideological Education	2	1				1	1	2	2		1		3	5	5	6	2	5	1	37
Admission	1					2				3	1	4		2			3	3	2	20
Training Mode							1									5	71			13
Major Courses										3	2	4	4	11			10	11	21	66
Quality Assurance								1		2	3			2			5			13
Education Management	3	4	4	3	4	7	5	12	13	12	35	23	40	51	85	102	107	98	124	732
Human Resources							1	2	1		2									6
Living Service						3														3
Chinese Language Study		1				2		1		4	4	2	6	3	9	15	15	13	16	91
Historical Study	1			1		1		2	1				1							7

Table 2 Statistics of Education Management

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	In total
Education Management	3	3	3	3	3	6	3	9	8	7	25	12	30	30	50	75	68	63	86	4
Teaching Management								1	1					4	1	1	1	1	1	10
Daily Management									2				1	2	11	6	12	7	10	51
Cross-culture Adaptation					1	1	1	2	1	4	9	10	9	14	20	21	25	27	28	173
Policy & Regulation							1		1	1	1			1			1			6
Management Mode			1									1			1					3

Table 3 Statistics of Development Methods

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	In total
Development Methods	6		1		2	2	6	3	1	4	8	5	8	15	11	10	8	11	20	115
Development Status					1	2		2	1	2	5	3	1	1	1		1	1	3	24
Development Foresight	1				1		1				1	1		2				1		8
Education Internationalization	1	1	1	1	2	2		2			2	1	1	4	1			1		20