

A Research on the Path to Strengthen Legal Education for International Students in China

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Abstract: With the deepening of China's new measures for opening-up, China has emerged as the "target country" for students from many countries around the world seeking to study abroad. In China, legal education for international students is closely linked to the overall improvement of international students' training quality, which is conducive to improving the international education supply level for international students in colleges and universities, as well as maintaining the order of education for these students in China. In order to strengthen legal education for international students in China, it is necessary to set up public compulsory courses for legal education, form full-time teaching faculties, and explore the new cooperative teaching mode between the first classroom and the second classroom.

Keywords: Quality of education; International students in China; Legal education

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1. Introduction

In recent years, China has been progressively opening-up, engaging in friendly exchanges and joint progress with people all over the world^[1]. With the implementation of several measures to further open-up, China's cultural and educational exchanges with the world have also achieved fruitful results. There are many colorful cultural years, tourism years, art festivals, and other cultural and people-to-people cooperation events. Bridges that connect people from various countries around the world are being built. China has emerged as the first "target country" for students from many countries around the world seeking to study abroad. Empirical studies have demonstrated that expanding the measures of opening-up to the outside world has a considerable influence on promoting the idea of "studying in China"^[2]. The number of international students studying in China has greatly expanded over the past several years, and there are also considerable changes to the structure of the source of students and their choice of majors^[3]. Hence, it is of great significance to improve the overall quality of education for international students in China. As a form of education for international students, legal education still has several shortcomings. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to improve the implementation path of legal education for international students in China, so as to ensure the orderly development of collaborative international education construction.

2. The necessity of strengthening legal education for international students in China

With the implementation of China's new measures to open-up to the outside world, China's neighboring countries have become the source countries of international students studying in China. According to statistics, in 2016, the total number of source countries and regions of international students studying in China was 205, of which the number of international students from Asia and Africa saw an increase by

10.34% and 23.70%, respectively, compared with the previous year^[4]. From the perspective of the structure of the source of students, in 2018, there were 258,122 international students with academic degrees in China, among which 160,783 were undergraduate students, accounting for 62.3%, 59,444 were master's students, accounting for 23.0%, and 25,618 were doctoral students; on the other hand, there were 234,063 non-academic students; for the first time, the number of academic students in China exceeded that of non-academic students^[5].

2.1. There are many shortcomings in the legal education for international students in China

International students in China come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, which presents significant managerial and educational difficulties. For instance, some foreign students lack a fundamental understanding of discipline and frequently do not comply with school procedures when it comes to learning^[6]. They tend to be late for classes or skip classes altogether; also, they do not abide by classroom rules, neither do they work hard. Therefore, a systematic legal education would be conducive to promoting the establishment of a harmonious and orderly campus as well as a healthy and diverse campus cultural environment for these students. At the same time, the school will also gain a good reputation of international education^[7].

At present, major colleges and universities have set “Ideological and Moral Cultivation and Fundamentals of Law” as a compulsory course to carry out legal education for students. However, this course is solely for Chinese students; it does not pay attention to legal education for international students in China, and there is no special legal course. Among the courses set up by colleges and universities around China for international students, there are many Chinese history and culture courses. This reflects the importance attached to cultural education for international students. However, there are shortcomings in legal education courses. They are mainly manifested in the following aspects: first, there is a lack of theoretical courses on legal education for international students, and most colleges and universities have not set up relevant legal education theoretical courses for these students; second, the current legal education textbooks are not applicable to these students; therefore, if these students wish to learn the Chinese law, they can only learn China's relevant systems and norms through the Chinese and English student handbook issued by the University, but this is far from enough to improve their legal quality; in addition, communication barriers exist in legal education for international students because the teachers of legal education are not proficient in foreign languages; therefore, the responsibility of providing legal education to international students is often shouldered by their managers, of which most of them do not have formal legal training; as a result, they often have low legal literacy, thus resulting in substandard legal education^[8].

2.2. Legal education is an important component for improving international students' training quality

The rule of law is not only the primary means by which China governs its country and society, but also an achievement in the development of human civilization. Legal accomplishments should be the core accomplishments of college and university students. Knowing the law, understanding the law, and safeguarding their rights are the fundamental qualities that students require for future work and life. As mentioned above, under the background of the new measures of opening-up, the number of international students seeking academic education in China has increased year by year. This objectively requires a change in the training mode and an active exploration of the training of professionals, in order to meet the needs of the national measures. In terms of training goals, the concept of developing friendly relations with foreign countries should be shifted to the training of compound talents who can serve the new measures^[9]. The quality of talent training is the key to international students' education.

It is the bounden duty and mission of international education to cultivate outstanding international students who agree with China's concept in development and promote the construction of the new measures. On the one hand, with the promotion of the new measures, China has successively issued relevant policies to provide a basis for the employment of international students in China. A more open and flexible talent training mechanism is being built, thus attracting outstanding international youth to work in China^[10]. The objective reality of employment in China inevitably requires international students to be familiar with the laws and regulations in China and to master the necessary legal knowledge, so as to meet their working and living needs in China. On the other hand, with the promotion of the new measures, a large number of enterprises in China are "going global," exploring the international market, participating in international competitions, and serving the economic development of countries around the world. In order to further promote this, a large number of talents from countries around the world should be recruited. International students in China are undoubtedly an important group for such jobs. They need to understand the laws and regulations in China as well as international legal rules, in order to be better qualified for their jobs, help Chinese enterprises to "go global" and participate in the economic development of countries around the world. Therefore, strengthening legal education for international students in China is closely linked to the overall improvement of their training quality and is conducive to improving the international education supply level in China^[11]. If international students wish to be employed in the future, they must be familiar with the legal knowledge of various countries and develop firm legal awareness as well as pragmatic problem-solving skills with adept legal knowledge.

2.3. Legal education is an important guarantee for maintaining the order of education for international students in China

Legal accomplishments are comprehensive skills acquired by students through long-term efforts. They reflect a person's capability in acquiring legal knowledge and belong to a dynamic process of continuous development. Hence, colleges and universities must develop students' legal accomplishments in a systematic, diversified, effective, and collaborative way, so that the rule of law runs through the whole education^[12].

Legal education for international students in China is an urgent need for China to stabilize the order of education and strengthen social governance. In recent years, the growth in the number of international students in China has promoted the internationalization of local universities and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries. However, the violation of laws and regulations by these students has also become increasingly prominent. In recent years, many provinces in China have committed crimes against international students. In July 2017, among the 19 people detained by the police in Xuzhou for alleged drug abuse, 9 of them were international students. Furthermore, in July 2019, a few international students from a university in Fuzhou broke the law by pushing and shoving a traffic policeman^[13]. In addition, the types of illegal cases involving international students have gradually diversified, bringing new challenges to social governance. The illegal cases involving international students accepted by the First Intermediate People's Court of Beijing once accounted for 58% of all illegal cases involving international students in the same year^[14]. Therefore, if the growing trend of illegal cases of international students continues, it will leave a huge impact on the order of education for international students in China and the construction of the rule of law to a certain extent. It is of great significance to strengthen legal education for international students in China under the new situation.

3. Strategies to strengthen legal education for international students in China under the new situation

Under the background of the new measures of opening-up, several changes have taken place in the objectives and orientation of education for international students^[15]. The quality of legal education for

international students in China is related to the students' future employment and the maintenance of educational order. Under the new situation, it is necessary to continue to improve the path of strengthening legal education for international students in China.

3.1. Setting up public compulsory courses for legal education

Schools should carry out legal education for international students throughout the entire talent training process. A good legal education should first be based in the classroom. Colleges and universities should set up public compulsory legal education courses and corresponding syllabuses, teaching plans, and teaching contents based on national laws and regulations as well as in combination with the characteristics of certain majors. In this way, international students can focus on understanding the legal framework and meet the development requirements of their majors. This lays a legal foundation for international students to engage in related work in the future ^[16]. As an example, for international students majoring in engineering, topics related to their future work fields, such as “engineering contract” and “safety management responsibility,” should be included in their learning, so that they would develop a certain level of understanding of specific legal issues involved in engineering enterprises and construction, as well as nurture their own legal awareness. The majority of law textbooks are not suitable for international students' learning and reading because they do not include international legal knowledge, and most of them are in Chinese. Hence, colleges and universities should appoint specialized staff to compile both, Chinese and English legal education textbooks according to certain logical relations with the situation of international students and promote their application ^[17].

3.2. Forming full-time teaching faculties

Legal education is a comprehensive education that contains solid theoretical knowledge. It is impossible to actualize legal education for international students in China solely by relying on counselors. In order to strengthen legal education for international students, it is necessary to form a team of full-time teachers with different qualities, so as to realize the normalization of legal education construction for international students in China. Colleges and universities that accept international students need to further strengthen their efforts in training full-time teachers to conduct legal education courses for international students. Full-time legal education teachers should have the following qualities: first, they should have professional legal theoretical knowledge and be able to skillfully use legal theory to analyze the behavior of students; second, they must have good foreign language communication skills and be able to skillfully use foreign languages to effectively communicate with international students; third, they should have cross-cultural communication skills and be able to deal with conflicts arising from various cross-cultural factors. The realization of this goal requires relevant disciplines and management departments to actively formulate teaching construction plans ^[18]. Teachers are the impetus for teaching activities, and their level of teaching is the key factor affecting the quality of education. Facing the new situation, it is necessary to strengthen the training of teachers engaged in legal education, so that they would not only have rich legal theoretical knowledge, but also good foreign language level and cross-cultural communication skills.

3.3. Exploring the new cooperative teaching mode between the first classroom and the second classroom

Legal education for international students involves both, theoretical and practical experience. Therefore, in addition to forming full-time teaching faculties, colleges and universities should raise the level of their teaching staff by diversifying the topics covered in legal education. On the one hand, colleges and universities must improve their legal literacy and professional quality by strengthening the legal professional training of management teachers; in addition, the teaching contents should be relevant to

students' lives. For example, the legal education for international students in China should not only focus on personal safety, but also on the practical problems faced by international students on a day-to-day basis, such as illegal residence, as well as exit and entry management. Therefore, inviting professionals such as judges, prosecutors, entry-exit public security personnel, and other experienced workers to serve as second classroom teachers, arranging special lectures, guiding students in case analysis on legal practice issues, and using typical cases to carry out vivid and intuitive legal education may improve students' learning outcomes ^[19].

Second classroom activities are also of great significance to legal education for international students. Legal education practice activities enable international students to effectively transform their legal theoretical knowledge into practice and improve their legal quality and problem-solving skills. Colleges and universities should focus on the coordination of the first and second classrooms and promote collaborative education between them by organically participating in the entire process and connecting the whole process ^[20]. Relying on the construction of campus legal culture, colleges and universities should provide a platform for legal education activities based on student associations in order to enhance the value of legal education in campus culture, establish an off-campus legal education base, and promote the development of second classrooms by using real cases. Second classroom activities would not only help students understand the knowledge learned in the first classroom, but also exercise their capabilities in analyzing and solving problems. The integration and coordination of the first classroom and the second classroom will help expand the forms of legal education and improve the effect of legal education for international students.

4. Conclusion

Legal accomplishments should become the basic accomplishments of college and university students. Knowing the law, understanding the law, and safeguarding their rights are the fundamental qualities that students require for future work and life. Strengthening legal education for international students in China is closely linked to the overall improvement of their training quality, which is conducive to improving the international education supply level in colleges and universities as well as maintaining the order of education in China. The strategies to strengthen legal education for international students in China are as follows: setting up public compulsory courses for legal education, forming full-time teaching faculties, and exploring the new cooperative teaching mode between the first classroom and the second classroom.

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