

Effective Convergence Management for International Students in Guangxi Universities

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Abstract

This research aims to 1) study the effectiveness level of convergence management for international students in Guangxi University, 2) analyze the exploratory factors of effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi University, and 3) propose an effective convergence management guideline for international students in Guangxi University. The research method is a mixed-method quantitative research. The researchers collected data from a sample of 520 people. The statistics used in this research are percentage, frequency, mean, standard deviation, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The qualitative research used in-depth interviews with relevant people by selecting a purposive sampling method. The data were analyzed by interpretation and inductive conclusion generation. The content analysis from documents and interviews were done by writing descriptive text.

The results of the research found that: 1. The overall level of effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities is high, though performance across different dimensions is uneven. Institutional Regulations were perceived as the most effective area, while Organizational Structure was rated the lowest. 2. The exploratory factor analysis identified seven critical factors of effective convergence management: institutional regulations, cross-cultural support, staff competence, student adaptation, consistency of management, admission standards, and organizational structure. 3. Based on the findings, a set of targeted recommendations is proposed to effectively improve the convergence management of international students in Guangxi universities. These include establishing

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comprehensive and detailed management regulations, developing a culturally inclusive support system, enhancing staff's intercultural communication competence and service awareness, guiding international students to improve their adaptability, promoting consistency in management, optimizing admission standards, and strengthening organizational coordination mechanisms. The findings of this research can effectively enhance the effectiveness of convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities and promote the sustainable development of Guangxi's international education sector.

Keywords: Convergence Management; Integration; Effective Management

Introduction

In recent decades, China has become a leading global study destination, driven by its economic rise, growing international influence, and promotion of international education. According to data from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, China had become the third largest destination country for international students globally, and the largest in Asia, as of 2019, following the United States and the United Kingdom. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the management of international students has undergone a gradual transition from initial exploration to increasing standardization. After the reform and opening up, as the number of international students grew rapidly, the country began to establish a more systematic management framework, shifting the focus from merely expanding enrollment to improving the quality of education (Liu, 2022).

Beginning in 2010, convergence management was formally emphasized at the national policy level. Both the "Plan for Studying in China" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2010 and the "Quality Standards for Higher Education for International Students in China (Trial)" issued in 2018 clearly stated the requirement of "actively promoting the convergence of management and services between international students in China and Chinese students" (Liu, 2022). The convergence management refers to a systematic and coordinated management approach that supports international students in adapting to and integrating into the host country's education system, cultural norms, and social environment. It aims to reduce gaps between international and local students, foster mutual understanding, and promote

academic development and social adaptation (Huang & Chen, 2022). The concept emphasizes unified standards, shared resources, and coordinated policies across teaching, student affairs, and services, avoiding “double standards” and ensuring greater consistency in the rights and responsibilities. At the same time, convergence does not mean complete uniformity it respects cultural diversity while encouraging balanced, integrated, and collaborative management. Through standardized yet differentiated services, convergence management seeks integration without homogenization and coordination without uniformity (Wang, et al., 2023). With the continuous deepening of China–ASEAN relations and the steady advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative, regional cooperation in education has entered a new stage. As China’s key gateway to ASEAN, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region enjoys unique geographical, cultural, and policy advantages, making it a major hub for international education (Zhou & Ou, 2024). According to the Department of Education of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, in the past ten years, except for 2012 and 2021, the number of international students studying in Guangxi has exceeded 10,000 yearly (China News Service, 2022).

On January 5, 2022, the Department of Education of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region released the "14th Five Year Plan for the Revitalization and Development of Higher Education in Guangxi." Further requirements were put forward to expand open cooperation in higher education. It was written: "Implement the project to improve the quality of studying in China, guide universities to conscientiously implement the 'Quality Standards for Higher Education for International Students in China (Trial),' gradually improve the enrollment and admission standards of the Guangxi government's ASEAN scholarship for international students, promote the construction of branded majors and courses for international students, improve the management and service system of the entire chain of international students, promote the convergence management of international students..." (Department of Education of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2022)

Given the multiple issues currently exposed in the convergence management of international students in Guangxi universities, the research on the effectiveness of convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities holds significant theoretical and practical value. This study will help identify the current gaps in convergence management, promote institutional reform in Guangxi

universities through enhanced convergence strategies, and build an inclusive, fair, and efficient management ecosystem. It aims to facilitate the transition from a focus on the quantity of international students to improving the quality and effectiveness of their education, thereby advancing the overall governance capacity and international education level of Guangxi universities, contributing to the internationalization of China's higher education and shaping a more positive, balanced, and far-reaching global influence.

Research Objectives

1. To study the level of the effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities.
2. To analyze exploratory factors of the effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities.
3. To propose the guidelines for the effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities.

Research Methodology

The research on Effective Convergence Management for International Students in Guangxi Universities, which the researcher conducted the research according to the following topics:

1. Population and Sample

The population used in this research consisted of 520 international student administrators and faculty members from universities in Guangxi.

The sample consisted of 520 international student administrators and faculty members, comprising 312 international student administrators and 208 international student instructors. The sample was selected from universities in Guangxi using a quota sampling method.

2. Research Instruments

The researcher used a quantitative data collection tool for this study. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument, divided into three sections:

2.1 Section 1: Closed-ended questionnaire regarding personal factors including gender, age, educational background, and work experience.

2.2 Section 2: Closed-ended questionnaire regarding Effective

Convergence Management for International Students in Guangxi Universities.

2.3 Section 3: Closed-ended questionnaire regarding Effective Convergence Management Guidelines for International Students in Guangxi University.

3. Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher analyzed data using a ready-made computer program and accompanying tables. The data analysis and hypothesis testing were conducted as follows:

3.1 All questionnaires were checked for completeness and accuracy. Complete and accurate questionnaires were selected for data analysis.

3.2 Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis using a ready-made computer program. The steps were as follows:

3.2.1 Calculate the frequency and percentage of individual factors.

3.2.2 Calculate the mean and standard deviation of the questionnaire scores, representing the average score of the effectiveness of convergence management for international students at Guangxi University.

3.2.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a statistical technique used to explore and group related variables into a single component, especially when it is unclear which variables belong to which group. EFA is used to identify the factor structure hidden in a set of observed variables and to construct new, abstract variables (latent factors) from these variables.

3.3 Qualitative Research

Once data were collected from observations, recordings, and interviews, the researcher used a set of criteria to verify reliability. Data were examined prior to analysis, a common method used in qualitative research. Data were analyzed by organizing the data according to relevant content. The data were analyzed using the Effective Convergence Management Guidelines for International Students at Guangxi University. The researcher organized the data and presented it in print, and organized the activities in accordance with the spatial data collection and conclusions. The researcher interpreted and validated the findings by synthesizing, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from the collected data. At this stage, the researcher compared the content obtained from the questionnaires and discussed the results with information from a review of relevant documents. The summarized and interpreted findings were compiled into a study.

Results

From the study on Effective Convergence Management for International Students in Guangxi Universities, the researcher can conclude the results of the study according to the objectives as follows:

Part 1 Research Results: The Level of Effective Convergence Management for International Students in Guangxi Universities

To address the first research objective, the overall level of effective convergence management and the performance of each of its seven constituent dimensions were analyzed based on descriptive statistics. The mean scores of the items within each dimension were averaged to create a composite score representing the perceived effectiveness of that dimension. The results are presented in Table 1

Dimensions of Effective Convergence Management for International Students in Guangxi Universities		n=520		Interpret	Rank
		\bar{X}	S.D.		
1	Unified and Strict Admission Standards	3.58	1.30	High	6
2	Efficient and Clear Organizational Structure	3.46	1.20	High	7
3	Standardized and Complete System of Regulations	3.85	1.17	High	1
4	Professionalism and Quality of Staff	3.69	1.25	High	3
5	Comprehensive Cross-Cultural Service and Support	3.78	1.17	High	2
6	Principle of Consistency in Management and Services	3.62	1.27	High	5
7	Level of International Student Adaptation and Development	3.63	1.26	High	4
Overall Average		3.66	1.23	High	

Table 1 Mean Scores and Rank of Effective Convergence Management Dimensions

The results from the descriptive analysis, as presented in Table 1, indicate a commendably high overall level of effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities, with an overall average mean of 3.66. However, while the overall picture is positive, the performance across the seven dimensions is uneven, revealing important nuances.

Specifically, Institutional Regulations received the highest rating (Mean=3.85, Rank=1), followed by Cross-Cultural Support (Mean=3.78, Rank=2) and Staff Competence (Mean=3.69, Rank=3). This widespread positive assessment suggests that, from the perspective of administrators and teachers, the principles of convergence management are being actively applied. It likely reflects the successful implementation of sustained policy focus from national and regional authorities, such as the "Plan for Studying in China" and Guangxi's "14th Five Year Plan."

Conversely, Organizational Structure was perceived as the least effective dimension, ranking last with a mean score of 3.46. The key finding, therefore, lies in the disparity between the well-regarded regulations and the lower-rated organizational structure. This indicates that while foundational rules are perceived as well-established, their execution through the university's operational framework presents a greater challenge. This suggests a gap between policy design and practical implementation, highlighting a significant opportunity for improvement in organizational efficiency and coordination.

Part 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Effective Convergence Management for International Students in Guangxi Universities.

To address the second research objective, the quality of the measurement instrument was examined prior to performing an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). First, the internal consistency reliability was assessed. The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire was 0.966, with the coefficients for all seven dimensions exceeding 0.95, which indicates excellent reliability. Second, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was confirmed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.956 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .001$). Collectively, these results demonstrated that the data was highly suitable for EFA.

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	23.841	21.479	21.479	23.841	21.479	21.479	11.537	10.393	10.393
2	10.038	9.043	30.522	10.038	9.043	30.522	10.029	9.035	19.428

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
3	7.867	7.087	37.608	7.867	7.087	37.608	9.984	8.995	28.423
4	6.99	6.298	43.906	6.99	6.298	43.906	9.242	8.326	36.749
5	6.588	5.935	49.841	6.588	5.935	49.841	9.231	8.316	45.065
6	6.128	5.52	55.361	6.128	5.52	55.361	8.861	7.983	53.049
7	5.456	4.915	60.276	5.456	4.915	60.276	8.023	7.228	60.276

Table 2 Total Variance Explained

As shown in Table 2, based on the criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1, seven factors were extracted, which collectively explained 60.276% of the total variance, indicating a satisfactory and meaningful result. Each factor was interpreted and named based on the substantive content of the items that loaded highly onto it. The seven factors are identified as follows:

Factor 1: Cross-Cultural Support: This factor, comprised of 20 items, reflects the university's provision of comprehensive multicultural and cross-cultural support. An effective support system is crucial for enhancing the adaptation and overall positive experience of international students.

Factor 2: Organizational Structure: This factor, consisting of 17 items, represents the efficiency of the university's organizational structure. An effective structure ensures superior overall planning, coordination, and communication among departments involved in international student affairs.

Factor 3: Institutional Regulations: This factor, including 17 items, pertains to the soundness and detail of institutional regulations. Comprehensive and meticulous regulations provide clear guidelines for all students to follow, thereby facilitating effective management.

Factor 4: Consistency of Management: This factor, made up of 15 items, assesses the consistency of management policies applied to both international and Chinese students. Applying standards equitably is fundamental to creating an environment of fairness.

Factor 5: Student Adaptation: This factor, comprised of 15 items, focuses on the adaptation of international students. It encompasses both the students' own efforts to adjust and the university's essential role in actively promoting and guiding their integration.

Factor 6: Admission Standards: This factor, consisting of 14 items, relates to the implementation of rigorous admission standards. Clear and strict standards serve as the foundation for the subsequent management and overall teaching quality for international students.

Factor 7: Staff Competence: This factor, including 13 items, evaluates the professional qualities of faculty and staff. Their competence, including cross-cultural communication skills and service awareness, provides vital support for the management of international students.

Part 3 Effective Convergence Management Guidelines for International Students in Guangxi University

Based on the empirical findings, this study proposes seven core guidelines to enhance the effectiveness of convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities. First, unified and strict admission standards should be established to ensure the foundational quality of incoming students. Second, the organizational structure must be optimized to improve cross-departmental coordination and communication. Third, a comprehensive and transparent system of regulations is needed to ensure consistency and predictability in management. Fourth, the professionalism and intercultural competence of staff should be continuously enhanced through systematic training. Fifth, a multi-layered cross-cultural support system must be developed to foster a sense of belonging. Sixth, the principle of consistency should be upheld to ensure equal treatment for both international and Chinese students. Finally, universities should proactively guide and facilitate student adaptation through integrated academic and social support. By systematically implementing these guidelines, universities in Guangxi can not only substantially improve the quality of education and management for their international students but also strengthen the brand and appeal of "Study in China" on a regional and global scale. Ultimately, this will foster a more inclusive and dynamic internationalized campus, contributing positively to the broader landscape of global educational exchange and mutual understanding.

Discussion

1. The first finding of this study reveals that the overall level of effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities is perceived as high. However, the effectiveness across its constituent dimensions is uneven, with the Standardized and Complete System of Regulations being the most highly-rated dimension, while the Efficient and Clear Organizational Structure is perceived as the weakest. This finding is consistent with the research of Wang, Zhang, and Wang (2023), who analyzed the implementation of convergence management at a major Chinese university. Their research constructed a model that emphasizes both top-level unified standards and decentralized responsibility-sinking to the academic colleges. Our study's high rating for regulations reflects the successful implementation of such unified standards driven by national policy. Conversely, the low rating for organizational structure aligns with the challenges of sinking responsibility effectively, which, as Wang, et al. (2023) imply, requires a more refined and coordinated structural approach to avoid implementation gaps between policy and practice.

2. The second finding of this study, through exploratory factor analysis, identified seven critical factors of effective convergence management. This multi-faceted framework provides a more granular, empirically-derived structure for the broader theoretical dimensions discussed in the literature. This is consistent with the research of Huang and Chen (2022), who conceptually divide convergence management into four primary dimensions: management convergence, service convergence, life convergence, and teaching convergence. Our seven factors empirically validate and specify this theoretical structure. For instance, our factors of Principle of Consistency in Management and Services and Standardized and Complete System of Regulations provide specific components for what Huang and Chen (2022) term 'management convergence.' Similarly, factors such as Comprehensive Cross-Cultural Service and Support and Level of International Student Adaptation and Development elaborate on the conditions necessary for 'life convergence.' Thus, our seven-factor model validates the broader conceptual framework in the field while offering a more detailed empirical lens for analysis.

3. The third finding suggests that to achieve the high-quality, sustainable development of international education in Guangxi, the strategies for convergence management must be continuously optimized. This is consistent with the research of

Xiong (2023), who argues that the increasing diversity of international students requires an innovation of management methods beyond traditional, rigid approaches. Xiong's (2023) study proposes moving towards a more people-oriented and flexible management approach, which involves respecting students' individual characteristics and cultural backgrounds while guiding them toward institutional norms. This resonates with our finding that while standardized regulations are important, factors like cross-cultural support and student adaptation—which require flexibility and a deep understanding of individual needs—are also key. Therefore, Xiong's (2023) call for innovative and flexible strategies

4. provides a strong theoretical backing for our conclusion that a proactive and continuous improvement of management practices is essential for sustainable development.

New Knowledge

This study offers several insights into the effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities.

First, the research provides new knowledge by identifying an empirical framework for assessing convergence management. While the concept has been discussed theoretically, this study used data from practitioners to establish a seven-factor structure. This model, which includes dimensions from admission standards to student adaptation, offers a practical tool for universities to systematically review and understand the components of their management practices.

Second, this study generates knowledge regarding the current state of effective convergence management in Guangxi universities by providing a quantitative snapshot of its strengths and weaknesses. The findings highlight a disparity between the well-regarded Standardized and Complete System of Regulations and the lower-rated Efficient and Clear Organizational Structure. This insight into the specific challenges, particularly in operational and structural efficiency, can help university administrators better understand the key areas that require attention for future improvement.

The researcher can summarize in the form of a 7 - Factor Convergence Management Model in Universities diagram.

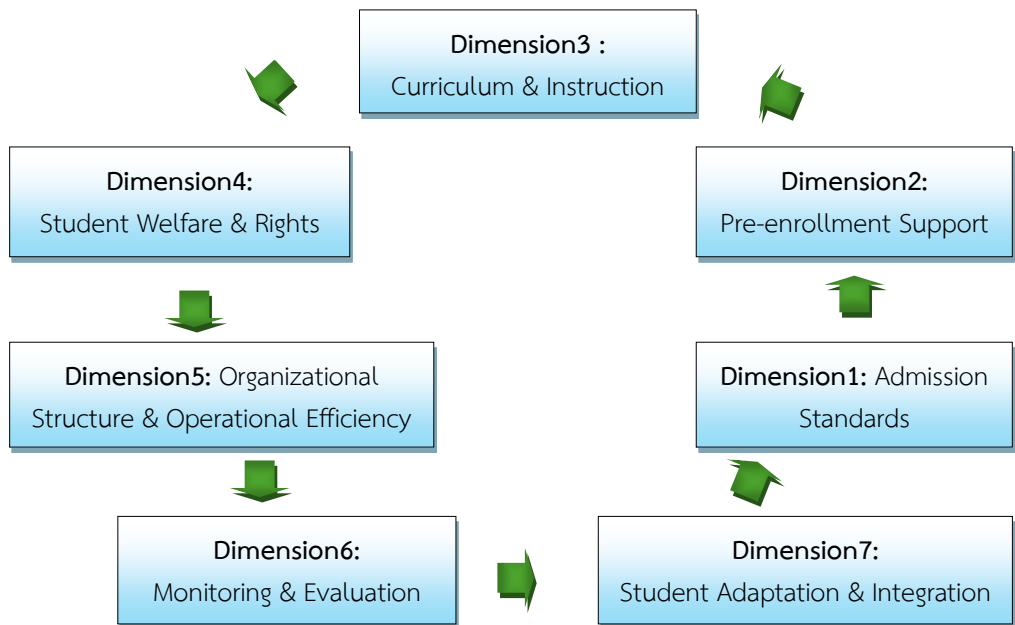


Figure 1 7-Factor Convergence Management Model in Universities

Conclusion and Suggestion

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities. The study concludes that:

1. The overall level of convergence management in Guangxi universities is high, but with significant variation across its dimensions. There is a clear strength in the establishment of institutional regulations, but a notable weakness in the efficiency of the organizational structure that implements them.

2. The effectiveness of convergence management is shaped by seven critical factors: Institutional Regulations, Cross-Cultural Support, Staff Competence, Student Adaptation, Consistency of Management, Admission Standards, and Organizational Structure. Cross-Cultural Support was identified as the most dominant structural factor.

3. The findings support the development of targeted strategies to enhance convergence management. By focusing on improving the lowest-performing areas and leveraging the most influential factors, universities can create a more effective,

equitable, and supportive environment for international students. The results of this study offer a valuable reference for policymakers and university administrators in Guangxi and other regions of China, contributing to the broader goal of improving the quality of international education.

Suggestion

Based on the research findings, the following suggestions are proposed to enhance the effective convergence management for international students in Guangxi universities, with each suggestion corresponding to one of the seven identified factors:

1. **Establish Comprehensive Management Regulations:** While regulations are a strong point, universities should continue to refine them, ensuring they are detailed, comprehensive, and cover all aspects of student life, leaving no regulatory gaps that could cause confusion or inconsistency. This includes establishing sound rules and regulations that apply to all students while fully considering the special circumstances of international students, so that everyone has clear guidelines to follow, such as addressing the inability of international students to take certain public courses or the difficulties they face in securing internships due to some restrictions.

2. **Develop a Culturally Inclusive Support System:** Given its structural importance, universities should prioritize building a robust, multi-layered support system that includes mental health services, platforms for intercultural interaction, and culturally responsive curricula to promote students' genuine integration. For instance, this includes providing urgently needed multilingual support for campus navigation and academic systems, as well as increasing the variety of special dietary options in cafeterias.

3. **Enhance Staff Competence:** Invest in systematic professional development for administrators and teachers, focusing on enhancing their cross-cultural communication skills, policy knowledge, and service awareness to build a more professionalized support team. Faculty and staff must be trained to treat all students with consistent professional ethics and patience and should receive specialized cross-cultural communication training.

4. **Guide International Student Adaptation:** Implement proactive guidance programs that help international students understand and navigate their new academic and social environment, while also creating opportunities for them to

actively improve their own adaptability and sense of belonging. This can be achieved by strengthening methods such as peer-mentoring programs, encouraging active interaction between international and Chinese students, and enhancing psychological support services.

5. Promote Consistency in Management: Actively work to eliminate "double standards" in all aspects of management, including academic assessment, disciplinary actions, and resource allocation, to foster an environment of fairness and equity for both international and Chinese students. It is crucial to find the right balance; the goal is convergence, not complete uniformity. This requires establishing a standardized, full-chain process for managing international students, rather than resorting to special treatment or privileges.

6. Optimize and Strictly Enforce Admission Standards: Universities should establish a unified, scientific, and rigorous admission evaluation mechanism to ensure the quality of the international student body, which serves as the foundation for effective management and academic success. This involves raising the admission threshold, strengthening fairness, making the process clearer, and improving the efficiency of information management for student records.

7. Strengthen Organizational Coordination: Universities must reform fragmented management structures by clarifying departmental responsibilities, establishing efficient cross-departmental coordination mechanisms, and creating integrated service platforms to improve communication and operational efficiency. Departmental divisions should be more scientific and rational, with each department having its own specific regulations for international student affairs and clearly defined roles for faculty and staff.

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