

Thinking on Construction and Development of Student Associations in the Universities for Overseas Chinese under the Perspective of Students' Growth Needs

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Abstract—As an important informal student organization in universities for overseas Chinese, student associations play a distinctly important role in cultivating high quality talents. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the growth needs of students in the universities for overseas Chinese for student associations are divided into the need for sense of belonging, the need for self-improvement, the need for socialization and the need for realization of self-value. Meeting the four growth needs of students is the key to the construction and development of student associations in universities for overseas Chinese. In the end, concrete suggestions are proposed to solve the problem of how to strengthen the construction and development of student associations in the universities for overseas Chinese according to the four needs.

Keywords—universities for overseas Chinese; university students; association management

I. INTRODUCTION

The universities for overseas Chinese are responsible to cultivate high quality talents that can adapt to the economic and social development of residence place for the society with Chinese in Hongkong, Macao and Taiwan as well as overseas Chinese, and to cultivate builders and successors that have an international vision, stress the practice and dear to bear for social development of China. The cultivation of high quality talents cannot do without quality-oriented education. As the informal organization with the high degree of students' participation, wide scope of coverage and abundant types on campus, student associations in universities are important media and carrier to realize the quality-oriented education. The source of students in the universities for overseas Chinese is diversified, including students from mainland China, Hongkong, Macao and Taiwan and overseas students with obvious personality characteristics. The freedom and development, learning and practice, action and reflection of student associations in universities meet students' needs for the

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multi-culture communication, the improvement of quality and ability and the realization of self-value. Therefore, we must meet students' growth needs and pertinently research the construction of student associations in the universities for overseas Chinese to provide theoretical thinking for the construction of student associations in universities.

II. THE DEFINITION OF STUDENT ASSOCIATION AND THE RESEARCH BASIS

In 2016, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China, the Ministry of Education and All-China Students' Federation printed and distributed the Interim Measures for the Management of Student Associations in Universities, which proposes "Student associations in universities are the mass student organization which is voluntarily formed by university students according to their hobbies and interests and independently implement activities according to the rules to realize the common will of members". Chinese scholar Yang Fan addresses, "Student associations in universities are informal student organization that has a clear development goal and rules and is founded according to students' shared vision. It must conform to the school's rules for the establishment of associations and independently implement activities."^[1] The definition describes the elements of student associations in universities and reveals its internal features, so it is used in this paper. After years of research, people's needs are divided into five levels, namely physiology, security, love and belonging, respect and self-realization. The needs for physiology and security are the most basic needs of people. The latter three needs are high level needs of people. The need for belonging means individuals yearn for integrating in the group and becoming a part of some group. The need for respect means individuals yearn for other's respect and acceptance. The needs for respect are realized in the socialization. The need for self-value realization means individuals fully excavate their potentials and fulfill some wish or goal and gain the sense of fulfillment to realize self-value. Individuals can meet the high level needs after the low level needs are met. This is the main contents of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory.^[2]

III. STUDENTS' GROWTH NEEDS ARE THE KEY TO THE CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS IN UNIVERSITIES FOR OVERSEAS CHINESE

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, students' growth needs for student associations in the universities for overseas Chinese are divided into student's need for sense of belonging, self-improvement, socialization and self-value realization.

A. Meet Students' Need for Sense of Belonging in the Universities for Overseas Chinese

The sense of belonging is an important psychological need. With the sense of belonging, people will have a sense of security mentally. Maslow observes belonging and love are prerequisite of people's self-realization. All people have needs for satisfaction and social interaction. The majority of students in the universities for overseas Chinese come from abroad. They come from other places and learn in universities. If the need cannot be met, they will have a feeling of loneliness and mental illness, which severely influence and restrict students' academic performance and physical and psychological health and growth. This is because students in the universities for overseas Chinese leave the familiar place to attend school in an alien land. The unfamiliar environment, culture, language and habits different from that of their hometowns make them have a strong need for the sense of belonging. The main participators of student associations in universities are freshmen who lack a sense of security, have vague cognition on personality and the yearning and expectation for the new environment and new friends. Student associations in universities are formally established by students who choose independently, have the shared ideal and hobbies and similar ages and cultural level according to the schools' articles of association. Students from different areas, different majors and different grades get together and freely and independently implement the rich activities, centering on the emotion between members in associations. It's easier for them to communicate and integrate in the group. Particularly, it meets the need of overseas students for the sense of belonging and promotes students' mental health.

B. Meet Students' Need for Self-Improvement in the Universities for Overseas Chinese

When receiving education in universities for overseas Chinese, students at home and abroad transit from campus to society. Students' outlook on life, values and world outlook become clear and are established. In this process, students need professional education and correct guidance and conduct a clear, integral and scientific cognition on things. Freshmen in the universities for overseas Chinese are creative, have an active mind and strong thirst for knowledge, like practice, dare to express. They are competent to fulfill tasks in learning and work. Therefore, it is imperative for schools to guide, enlighten and educate students. In order to complete the task, except for the professional education, student associations with an independent participation and free cultural atmosphere create favorable conditions for students' integrated development. Associations of culture and art can strengthen students' comprehensive quality and help students to improve

cultural and artistic accomplishment. Meanwhile, it attracts students to learn and identify the traditional Chinese culture, promoting cultural exchange, expanding students' horizon and enriching their cultural life on campus. For example, since the establishment of drum corps of the 24 solar terms in Huaqiao University, it has gone through the process from spontaneous practice to standard rehearsal, the imitation of works to the creation of exquisite works, the performance for entertainment to cultural diffusion. It has participated in hundreds of performances and competitions so far. In 2012, it appeared on the Phoenix Satellite Television to give New Year's greetings to overseas Chinese worldwide. Twenty years of trials and hardships contribute to the countless great achievements. It has become a brand of campus culture nationwide so far. Student association of exercise and fitness can invigorate students' health effectively and encourage students to participate in physical exercise, guiding them to form a healthy living habit and promoting the development of their physical and psychological health.

C. Meet Students' Need for Socialization in the Universities for Overseas Chinese

The mission of universities for overseas Chinese is to cultivate high quality talents that adapt to the local economic and social development in the residence place of students from Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and foreign countries. Students receive higher education to integrate in the society, make contributions to the society and realize the value of life. The realization of the value goal needs university students to prepare for entering the society, and university students must complete the task of individual socialization in youth. University students must conduct the individual socialization during university. On one hand, university students must actively enter the expectant social environment, experience social relations and practice socialization skills; on the other hand, they must actively take part in expectant social activities and form values and standpoint and grasp social experience. The socialization level of university students directly determines the speed and ability of individuals in integrating in the society in the future, directly influencing university students' career development and the happiness degree of life. Therefore, university students have a strong need for socialization. University students' need for socialization mainly embodies in occupying social relations and acquiring social skills. The natural advantages of student associations meet students' development needs on it. Students can find friends with a common goal, experience social relations and practice social skills in associations. Besides, club activities, social practice and community services organized in associations enable students to experience social environment, obtain social practice, which avail individuals' preparation for socialization. Except for classroom learning, the acquisition of students' social adaptation ability must also depend on social practice. In the constitution of organization and daily life, student associations provide platforms for students at home and abroad to practice social skills. Specifically, the club activities and practice train students' language skill, behavioral skills of and thinking in socialization.

D. Meet Students' Need for Self-Value Realization in the Universities for Overseas Chinese

Nowadays, people's living standard and cultural quality improve greatly. Individuals fully excavate their potentials, show talents, realize self-value and acquire the sense of satisfaction mentally, which become a value appeal. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the value pursuit is the highest level of needs theory. The realization of the process needs to discover and go beyond oneself. Students in the universities for overseas Chinese yearn for showing talents in learning and life on campus, which needs the platform to realize self-value. In university life, the platform with a wide coverage for students to show themselves is student associations. From the perspective of the need for self-value realization, the internal supply of student association conforms to university students' internal need. Therefore, undoubtedly, participating in student association is an effective way to meet students' need for self-value realization. As for the reason to participate in associations, 82.5% of interviewees are to learn skills in which they are interested. Student associations are highly independent in establishment, theme settings, the setting of rules and member management. Members of associations have responsibility for the development prospect of associations. Instead of being restricted by the management department, they shall improve the association combination by virtue of their own efforts; make cadres in associations conduct a good teamwork by virtue of their own efforts; make the atmosphere and relationship in associations harmonious by virtue of their own efforts; make friends, train skills and improve the comprehensive ability through efforts. They will have a sense of achievement and realize self-value.

IV. WAYS TO CONSTRUCT STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE UNIVERSITIES FOR OVERSEAS CHINESE IN ORDER TO MEET STUDENTS' GROWTH NEEDS

A. Strategies for the Construction of Student Associations In the Universities for Overseas Chinese to Meet Students' Need for the Sense of Belonging

First, strengthen the construction of students' shared values to lay foundation for the formation of shared vision of student associations. "Values are faith of members in an organization to support and be loyal to the association. It is accepted by members and produces huge cohesion in the organization and has a strong incentive function, continuously stimulating members to have more enthusiasm on attitude. Under the guidance of the values, members in the organization can reach a consensus in ideology and behavioral pattern and turn the organization into an efficient and ordered organism with mutual trust and harmony and coordination of members, at the meantime make joint efforts to achieve the goals in the organization."^[3] Bringing the education of core values in the education and training system of associations becomes the required course of each member; strengthen the construction of student cadres' core values in the association and give play to function of backbone; resolve students' doubts and confusions and clarify their vague values according to their actual needs and hot issues cared by students; integrate students' values in associations in the implementation of club activities and the

service awareness of members. Secondly, build the shared vision of student associations and strengthen the communication between members. Training the shared language of student association forms the common aspiration of development; in-depth exchange forms the consensus on the association's development; strengthening the training of academic advisors and cadres in the association implements the top-level design of the association's development and establishes the vision of students for the joint development of the association. In students' daily life, platforms of fellowship, experience sharing, cultural experience and virtual communication, and new type communication tools such as weibo, WeChat and QQ can be used to promote students' communication. The frequent communications, cozy communication atmosphere and smooth communication channels draw the distance between members in student association close and make it full of a sense of belonging.

B. Strategies for the Construction of Student Associations in the Universities for Overseas Chinese to Meet Students' Need for Self-Improvement

First, attach importance to the team construction of instructors in the association and make them guide the association. Schools shall give full play to student association's outstanding role in improving students' quality and integrate the selection, assessment and treatment of instructors in associations in the overall development plan. The instructors in associations shall like students, have a three-dimensional knowledge and professional skills, advance with the times and be adept in learning and leading students. Meanwhile, they play roles in providing theoretical guidance, technical support and activity guidance for student association. The assessment and incentive system must be established for instructors, combining the assessment result with teachers' position promoting, in order to substantially change the phenomenon that instructors have "undeserved reputation" in associations. Second, the course selection system will be implemented with students' club activity as the carrier. The characteristic education is effective to promote the quality-oriented education for students. In universities for overseas Chinese, the source of student is extensive and multiple cultures integrate, meanwhile, student association is very characteristic in campus culture. It's necessary to combine the characteristic education with the activities in student association at the same time implement the course selection system. For example, multi-cultural activities with association as the carrier like "Chinese Bridge", "Paradise of Chinese Culture" and "Food Festival" enable students to experience the communication of multiple cultures and train students' intercultural communication competence. Third, center on the cultural construction of associations and give play to the unique appeal and attraction of culture in student association. The universities for overseas Chinese must transmit the excellent traditional Chinese culture and promote the integration of cultures, strengthening the brand construction and cultural atmosphere of student association and manifesting the full-bodied characteristics and artistic personality of student association. Meanwhile, the good cultural atmosphere in associations can be used to affect students' behaviors and

guide their value orientation and meet their needs in self-growth.

C. Strategies for the Construction of Student Associations in the Universities for Overseas Chinese to Meet Students' Need for Socialization

Hayek observes the spontaneous order helps people to pursue different even conflicting personal purpose. [4] Among all the student organizations in universities for overseas Chinese, only student association is highly independent with the extensive participation of students. It breaks up the limitation of colleges, majors, regions and grades in universities. Students' ability in cross-cultural communication can be trained in the multi-cultural atmosphere. They learn the open and tolerant and win-win ways to deal with affairs in the communication and cooperation with different students. Besides, they can practice the thinking and skills of socialization in student association before formally entering the society. First, the "small society" of student association in universities will be better built through establishing the reasonable organizations and service management organization and the rigorous association management system and the personalized management strategies. Students at home and abroad can feel the level of organization, experience life, freedom and development, learning and practice, accelerating the socialization through action and reflection. Second, strengthen the balanced development of associations and stress the connection between associations and the society. The universities for overseas Chinese can establish associations jointly, associations built by universities and enterprise, associations built by universities and local areas to connect associations. In this way, enterprises and communities can provide economy and practice platform for student association. Members of associations can acquire the opportunity to "simulate" social roles and improve the practice ability and promote the socialization through visiting and practicing in enterprises and conducting social practice and service in communities.

D. Strategies for the Construction of Student Associations in the Universities for Overseas Chinese to Meet Students' Need for Self-Value Realization

For student associations in universities for overseas Chinese, the members in it determine the development of it. Associations are under few restrictions, mainly depending on its development and the internal operation. Therefore, it's of vital importance to establish the reasonable evaluation system for the development of associations. A reasonable and flexible evaluation system can be established to evaluate student associations horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, evaluate the influence of activities in associations, degree of students' participation and the characteristics of activities, such as whether it can serve the mission of universities for overseas Chinese in transmitting the excellent traditional Chinese culture, whether it can promote the "one factor dominates and multiple factors integrate" of campus culture, whether it can promote students' "harmony in diversity" in the foreign culture. Vertically, check the internal construction and management of associations, including whether the internal organizations of

student association are sound, whether the assignment of responsibility is clear and the degree of members' satisfaction. Collective awards and individual awards can be set to stimulate associations or members to make contributions to the construction and development of associations, in order to meet university students' need for self-value realization. Student association in the universities for overseas Chinese is the platform to show most of students' activities. Therefore, the shining point of each member can be excavated through innovation activities and the creation of conditions. The activities in associations meet diversified learning needs of students at home and abroad, improve their ability in self-education and help them to show themselves. Nowadays, students at home and abroad have a strong consciousness of competition and democracy, especially students at abroad. We must attach importance to the democratic management and construction of associations and bring in "catfish effect", implementing the democratic and competitive management of cadres in associations and guiding students to realize self-value in competition and democratic selection.

V. CONCLUSION

As an important informal student organization, student association in the universities for overseas Chinese plays a vital role in training high quality talents. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the growth needs of students in the universities for overseas Chinese for student association are divided into the need for sense of belonging, the need for self-improvement, the need for socialization and the need for self-value realization. Meeting the four needs of students is the key to the construction and development of student association in universities for overseas Chinese. In the end, the specific ways to construct and develop associations are proposed from micro and macro levels on the basis of meeting students' growth needs.

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