How Do Jiangsu Universities Manage the COVID-19 Pandemic?

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in China since December 2019 quickly escalated into a global health emergency, the rapid spread of the virus has a great impact on Chinese universities and social development. This study aims to show the managerial role of Jiangsu universities with students during the COVID-19 crisis. Jiangsu universities have been doing a significant contribution to the crisis management of virus. The contributions were in the following areas: alumni resource collection, medical rescue and emergency management, mental health maintenance, control of staff mobility and innovation in online education models. Through the support of these methods, Chinese universities have been playing a positive role in the prevention and control the epidemic situation and face the problems of alumni’s difficulties, the risk of deadly infection to medical rescue teams and health workers, infection of teachers and students, and the unsatisfactory application of information technology in resolving the crisis. In response to these risks and emergency problems, we propose some corresponding solutions for public dissemination, including issues related to medical security, emergency research, professional assistance, positive communication, and hierarchical information-based teaching.

Journal of Marketing Management and Consumer Behavior

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1- Introduction

The world is facing an unprecedented public health crisis through The pandemic that scared most of the world's homes where the fast spread of new coronaviruses through China and the world in the period of 2019-2020 had a major impact on the people life[1, 2]. The crisis of the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics in the world has a lot of worries. China is one of these societies that has been attacked and effected by these viruses in stopping many industrial, educational and other fields[3].

The Corona Virus crisis has clouded the education sector; as it pushed schools, universities and educational institutions to close its doors, reducing the chances of its spread which caused great concern among the associate for this sector where that outbreak has set new requirements for crisis management[4]. The universities bells were silent, silence prevailed in classes and halls, books slept on the shelves of libraries and closed the doors of universities and everything not only this but everyone, young and old, had to keep their homes and lock the doors on themselves. The virus seemed pervasive and pronounced as it saw its victories sweeping cities and countryside without exception, but it did not know what was being planned seriously and sincerely until its weak ruse was overthrown, and it was not weak, but in front of the will, determination and persistence no enemy cannot be defeated[5, 6].

Chinese universities have suffered from the spread of the Coronavirus as one of the first countries to be exposed to the virus, Jiangsu universities have worked quickly to eradicate this virus and restore life to normal. These universities have intensified their research and development studies to manage this crisis. Due to the quarantine imposed on China, these universities have discovered modern ways of education and successful solutions for the management of the virus spread crisis and student issues[7].

Jiangsu universities have arisen these requirements primarily in many fields in order not to interrupt the academic life of students with the period of quarantine, the universities have been innovative in employing applications of information technology in teaching as online lectures which based on a wide range of information technology equipment, engage in novel methods and achieved effective teaching outcomes. All of this prompted educational institutions to switch to E-Learning, as a long-discussed alternative and controversy over the need to integrate it into the educational process; Especially after the educational process was directly affected by industrial automation and the development of technology-artificial intelligence and the internet of things- as well as the information technology revolution that broke into most forms
of human life and became an integral part of it. New ideas in this sector have led to the universities capabilities in COVID-19 crisis management these ideas helped students keep getting information[8, 9].

We studied the managerial role of Jiangsu universities with students during COVID-19 crisis due to that previous studies overlooked to study the importance of universities on COVID-19 crisis management. So this paper aims to provide a basic understanding of the managerial role of Jiangsu universities with students during COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, to describe the importance role of Jiangsu universities on COVID-19 crisis management in education sector.

2- Literature Review

2-1. Crisis Management

Crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a disruptive and unexpected event that threatens to harm the organization or its stakeholders[10, 11]. The study of crisis management originated with large-scale industrial and environmental disasters in the 1980s. It is considered the most important process in public relations [11]. Crisis management is a process by which an organization handles disruptive and unexpected events that threaten to harm the organization or its stakeholders[12]. Meanwhile, according to Gultekin, crisis management is the act of a ruling leader of organizations during a crisis[11, 13]. In other words, crisis management requires systematic decision making and the formation of a team to implement those decisions and the ability to make new decisions to achieve results as soon as possible[11]. On the other hand, Bozgeyik defines crisis management as a series of internal relationships or crisis monitoring that can pose a danger to workers, leaders and the external environment of the organization[11, 13]. Cener defines crisis management as a specialized process that requires efforts to predict events that might disrupt significant future relationships[11, 13]. In line with Cener, Mitroff stated that crisis management is a process that includes a number of activities such as prediction, prevention and preparation, property determination and control, recovery, and learning[14, 15]. Crisis management can also be defined as the process by which crisis indicators are obtained and assessed for potential risks, taking the necessary steps and implemented to minimize losses in a crisis situation. In this condition, a leader is needed who can make decisions quickly, effectively and efficiently. In carrying out crisis management the leaders act quickly and efficiently against any country that threatens its existence and harms its activities[16].
The study of crisis management stems from large-scale industrial and environmental disasters in the 1980\[17\]. According to research Seeger, and Sellnow there are three elements that are common in crises: a threat to the organization, an element of surprise and a short decision time. Venette argues that crisis is a transformation process in which the old system cannot be sustained. Therefore, the fourth defining quality is the need for change. If changes are not needed, the event can be more accurately described as a failure or incident. On the other hand, according to Arnold Howitt, Herman and B Leonard in dealing with such situations, where the unfamiliarity and uncertainty of the end of the crisis, the leaders of the organization must be able to improvise \[18, 19\]. For example, the work from home policy, the ongoing adjustment of work practices, includes the adoption of new tools to assist lecturers and teachers that can be useful to sustain even after the crisis has passed \[20\]. Meanwhile, according to Murat in general there are several elements in crisis management, namely the crisis management team, professional consultants, crisis management plan makers, legislators; training and consulting providers, disciplinary action enforcers\[13\]. The easiest way to solve a crisis is to try to solve the problem with teamwork. So, a crisis management team must be formed in every organization. The crisis management team consists only of specialists. This team works to discuss potential risks that the organization may face and how to deal with them. Teamwork will create a tendency among staff to work together against a crisis situation. The strategies required for crisis management are identified by the crisis management team; this team is made up of people who have been brought up dedicated to the risk of a crisis. It is important to establish an emergency information center an extraordinary crisis control center to manage a team from one center\[11, 13\]. From these various opinions it can be stated that crisis management is a process that occurs in an organization in response to major events that can threaten the sustainability of the organization, policy makers, or society general. Thus there are three essential elements for defining a crisis: the threat to the organization, the element of surprise, and the swift decision. In this context, according to Tutar an organization are required to detect problems when a crisis occurs, identify problems in the framework of the planned objectives, identify the most practical opportunities, evaluate the usefulness of resolutions to form the final resolution and monitor stages such as implementation of the resolution\[11, 13, 21\].

2-2 Control of the flow of personnel and innovative education

Student groups are one of the important components of China’s inter-provincial mobility. In order to strengthen isolation and quarantine the channels of communication, many universities
have decided to implement a delayed start to the academic year. At present, there are 33.66 million college students in China, of whom 8.83 million are inter-provincial students. During this period, colleges and universities have announced the postponement of school opening, which is helpful for epidemic control [22].

At the same time, in order to prevent delays in educational progress, under calls from the Ministry of Education of China, colleges and universities have implemented online education network platforms to help college teachers conduct online lectures through systematic training and technical support. Many leading universities have shown remarkable initiative in accepting their social responsibilities, opening teaching platforms to society without charge, sharing more than ten thousand high-quality course resources. High profile examples include the Universities Lecture Network, Universities Online School and Foreign Language Online Learning Platform, among others [22, 23].

With Coronavirus (COVID-19) dominating the news cycle, starting throw around words like "quarantine" with an uneasy casualness, so Jiangsu Universities used quarantines for students to stop the spread of contagious diseases where quarantine keeps them away from others even they don't unknowingly infect by anyone. In order not to interrupt the academic life of international students with the period of quarantine, the universities have been innovative in employing applications of information technology [9, 24].

2-3 Quick Response from Chinese Universities

Social services are an important function of universities (Wang and Zha 2018). Providing support for outbreak control is both a university function and a responsibility. Facing the new type of coronavirus, Chinese universities have responded reasonably quickly [22]. Although the Chinese are looking forward to the most important festival of the year, the Spring Festival, universities have still been performing higher education functions, and playing their traditional role in terms of social services, scientific research and talent training functions [22].

2-4 Provide Psychological Assistance to Help Social Stability

With the deepening of epidemic prevention and control, public roads are subject to traffic control, and residential communities are under closed management [22]. In order to prevent and solve the psychological problems of citizens at home for indefinite extended periods, major universities have provided psychological counselling services [22, 25].
The Universities combined with a number of institutions and units to launch an emergency public welfare project on “Combating Epidemics and Psychological Assistance” to provide online frontline medical workers and the public with psychological assistance and one psychological counselling[26, 27]. Universities published the nation’s first Mental Health Guidance Manual for the “Anti-epidemic War”, which is published online and offline, to calm the citizens. Professors of some colleges and universities of physical education have demonstrated videos of home exercise programs to help citizens adjust their physical and mental health and improve their immunity [22].

3- The relationship between crisis management and Jiangsu universities

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has become the predominant educational issue for this generation and has reached every corner of the education and healthcare delivery spectrum. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic with its uncertainty has also made the educational institutions nervous in responding[28]. Initially, educational institutions at various levels considered crises to be something normal, even tended to underestimate them; including the possible crisis and the impact it could have. Once educational institutions became aware of the impact of the crisis, they leaders began to respond. But they cannot respond as if they were ready, following a preconceived plan. The most important thing in facing the current health crisis situation according to Arnold M. Howitt and Herman B. Leonard is that top leaders must admit that there has been a major crisis that has occurred. Perhaps this is a difficult step, especially at the beginning of the crisis[20].

This is where the strategic role of a universities is needed in a crisis situation by carrying out crisis management. In contrast to risk management, which involves assessing potential threats and finding the best way to avoid them, crisis management deals with threats before, during, and after they occur. It is a discipline in the broader context of management consisting of the skills and techniques necessary to identify, assess, understand and deal with serious situations, particularly from the first time they occur to the point where recovery procedures begin. What universities need during a crisis is not a predetermined response plan but behaviors and mindsets that will prevent them from overreacting to past developments and help them see into the future[24].

The urgency of move online brought on by the recent Covid-19 pandemic, has added to the stresses and workloads of university faculty and staff who were already struggling to balance teaching, research and service obligations, not to mention work and life balance. Faculty of all
backgrounds and ages have had to prepare and deliver their classes from home, with all the practical and technical challenges involved, often without adequate technical support. Many platforms were created on the social media such as "WeChat," and most of them were previously, the application links were sent across the groups, and each student installed these applications on their phones and smart devices[29]. Through supervisors, students were trained to use them. After preparing the schedule, model teachers were ready to deliver model lessons across the channel for each class, and each of the subjects and the class schedule was distributed across the supervising schools until I reached the students. Each student now knows precisely when classes for their year of studies are being broadcast, the lesson will be interactive; it will be just lectures given on the Internet. Education was interactive, there must be a process of continuous evaluation, composition, there must be duties and be corrected and there are exams and after the end of each unit of study were questions[22, 30]

Managing a successful Covid-19 crisis in universities consists of multiple related plans that achieve one or more education goals. It assures that education remains feasible from a diverse standpoint to maintains a strategic focus intended to be continuous until changing the education strategy[31]. If the plan doesn't work, change the plan to chive the goal and get the response and reaction; a response can come in many forms, including an answer to a question, an emotional reaction. Recovery and repair the plan with the process of getting better, returning to a usual condition after a period of trouble or difficulties. Following with something similar, related, or supplementary, following up his convictions with the plan[32].
4- Conclusion

Crises can affect the universities either periodically or suddenly. In facing a crisis, universities must be able to implement a crisis management approach innovatively and be prepared for all kinds of crises. Due to the fact that a crisis can affect universities negatively and significantly. This commentary has demonstrated how Jiangsu universities became a notable example to emulate for the COVID-19 crisis management response all over China. In particular, we highlighted the important role of Jiangsu universities on COVID-19 crisis management in education.

Jiangsu universities have been making great positive contributions to emergency crisis management. These contributions were primarily made in the following parts: health monitoring for their international students, availability of living materials for students under quarantine, graduate students' problems, innovation and advancement in online education models, emergency crisis management and staff mobility control. In the battle of epidemic prevention and control, Jiangsu universities have provided significant support and made remarkable achievements in epidemic control and social stability.

By presenting and sharing the experiences of prominent Jiangsu universities' responses to the COVID-19 virus, we hope to present some management ideas and practical implications that other countries should think about, and be better equipped to face similar catastrophic situations in the future.

Reference

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