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Exploring and Improving the Quality of Master's Degree Students in Local Universities

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Abstract

In recent years, influenced by the surge in the number of master's degree applicants and the new crown epidemic, the scale of graduate student admissions has maintained a relatively stable growth trend. While promoting the development of postgraduate education in China, the expansion of graduate students has also made universities face the challenge of declining quality of student sources. Therefore, this paper takes the total admission data of master's degree students from 2018 to 2022 of university A as the research sample, and analyzes the quality condition of student source of university A by analyzing the application ratio, overall admission, source of candidates and other basic conditions. It is found that: firstly, the admission ratio of university A is higher than the overall national admission ratio and reaches 5.63 in 2022. The proportion of admitted candidates of first-volunteer shows a wavy upward trend, while the proportion of admitted candidates of transfer is generally decreasing and shows a wavy downward trend. Secondly, the proportion of graduated students of double first-class construction universities among admitted candidates is relatively small, and the admitted candidates of A universities are mainly dominated by candidates of the first and second batches of undergraduates. Meanwhile,the percentage of admitted candidates of management and economics-related majors reached 70%. Thirdly, the analysis of the basic situation of admitted candidates found that the proportion of our students in the total admissions varied between 25% and 30%, which was relatively large. The proportion of admitted candidates from previous years is much higher than the proportion of admitted freshmen, with the proportion varying between 50% and 60%. The proportion of admitted candidates in the province is generally decreasing, but still occupies 70% of the total. In this paper, we analyze the situation related to the student source of college A, gain an in-depth understanding of its student source quality situation, and propose a path to improve the student source quality, which has important practical significance for college A to improve the student source quality structure and alleviate the continuous decline of student source quality.

Keywords

Master's Degree; Student Source Quality; Path to Improve.

1. Introduction

Postgraduate education is an important way to cultivate high-level and high-quality talents, and occupies an significant position in China's modern education system. For the country, postgraduate education is an important strategic task to enhance the comprehensive strength and competitiveness of the country, and an important supporting force to promote the national science and technology level and comprehensive national power. For colleges and universities, the advantages and disadvantages of postgraduate education quality is an important embodiment of the school's ability and level of running schools. The quality of postgraduate student sources is the foundation and prerequisite for cultivating high-quality talents. According to the relevant statistics, there is a surge in the number of master student applicants

ISSN: 2710-0170

from 2018 to 2022. The number of master student applicants in China was 2.38 million in 2018, but increased to 4.57 million by 2022, an increase of 92.01%. At the same time, the number of enrollment of graduate students is also rising, and the total number of admissions reaches 1.013 million by 2022, and the relevant data are shown in Figure 1. Meanwhile, according to Figure 2, it can be found that the national master's degree application and admission ratio from 2018 to 2022 generally showed a relatively stable wave rise.However, under the background of the continuous expansion of the number of master student applicants and enrollment scale, the ratio of applicants to admissions of A university also shows a relatively large rise, with a smaller rise from 2018 to 2019 and a rise of 0.58 times from 2019 to 2022, and the enrollment ratio in 2022 is a record high for A university, with an enrollment ratio of 5.63.

With the social requirements for candidates' schools and academic qualifications, more candidates give priority to colleges and universities that are one level higher than their own schools to apply for admission, and more of the exempted students flow to the double first-class construction colleges and universities, and the students of A university are more inclined to apply for outside schools, and most of the first volunteer candidates' undergraduate school levels are basically lower than those of the applied colleges and universities, which has caused a decline in the quality of student sources. At the same time, in the context of high-quality economic development and continuous upgrading and optimization of industrial structure, enterprises are in urgent need of high-quality talents, which also creates an important challenge for enrollment. Therefore, in the context of expanding enrollment scale and changing economy, how to attract high quality students to apply has become an important challenge in the enrollment work of colleges and universities.

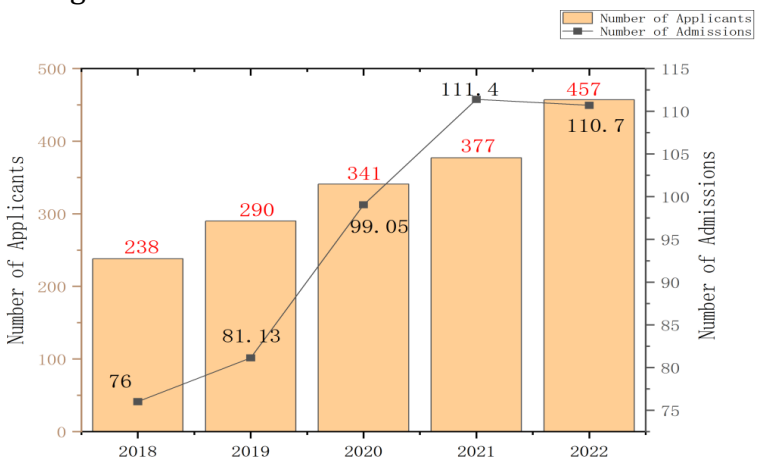


Figure 1. National master's degree registration and admissions

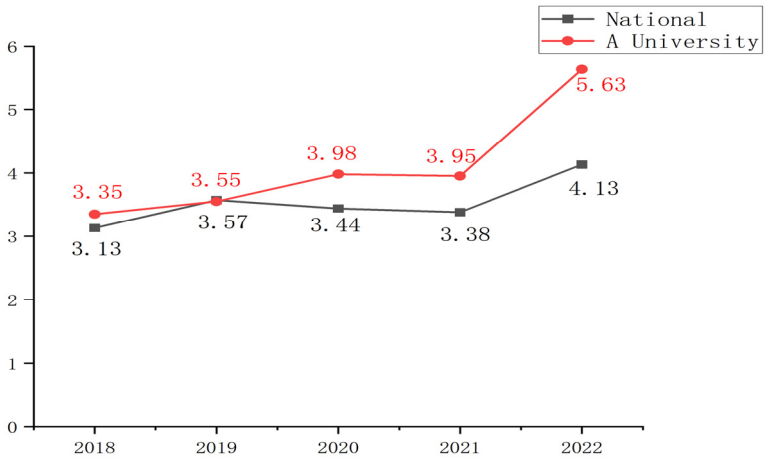


Figure 2. National and A university master's degree application and admission ratio

ISSN: 2710-0170

2. The Analysis of the Student Source of Master Students

2.1. Overall Analysis of Admissions

Table 1 mainly depicts the total admissions of university A from 2018 to 2022. It can be found that the overall number of admissions to master's degree programs in University A from 2018 to 2022 is showing an upward trend, with an overall increase of 63.23%. Figure 3 mainly shows the proportion of the number of first-volunteer, transfer and exempt students admitted to the total number of admissions. From Figure 3, it can be clearly observed that the proportion of first-volunteer admissions in A university shows a wave-like upward trend of rising, falling and rising again. However, the admission proportion of transfer candidates shows the opposite situation, showing a wave-like decline. The proportion of admissions for exempt students is relatively stable.

Table 1. Overall analysis of admissions

	Academic Degrees	Full-time professional degree	Part-time Professional Degree	Promoted students	Total Admissions
2018	293	418	155	7	873
2019	330	445	155	6	936
2020	369	670	155	9	1203
2021	438	773	186	9	1406
2022	443	770	205	7	1425

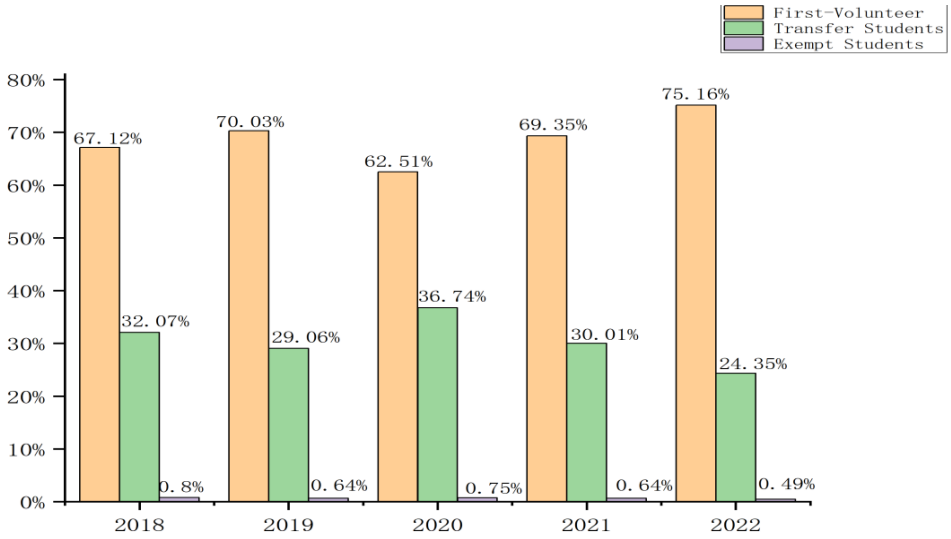


Figure 3. Overall admissions to College A

2.2. Analysis of the Source of Admitted Candidates

Figure 4 mainly depicts the sources of graduation institutions of admitted candidates. From Figure 4, we can find that the source of candidates admitted to university A is mainly composed of four forms: double first-class universities, the first batch of undergraduate universities, the second batch of undergraduate universities and other study methods.In general, the proportion of the examinees in the total admission of the double first-class universities in A university is in the shape of"inverted U", and the proportion of admissions of double first-class universities candidates fell to 4.21% in 2022, the lowest point in the past five years. The proportion of candidates admitted from the first batch of undergraduate universities basically changes around 50%, but it has been in a state of decline since 2020, and in 2022 the proportion dropped to 46.25%, which resulted to a increase in the proportion of the second batch of undergraduate students significantly. The proportion of admitted candidates in other forms of

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study basically remains at about 2%. From the data in Figure 4 and the analysis, it can be fully found that the quality of student sources in A universities has declined more seriously, and it needs to pay great attention and take corresponding measures to solve the problem.

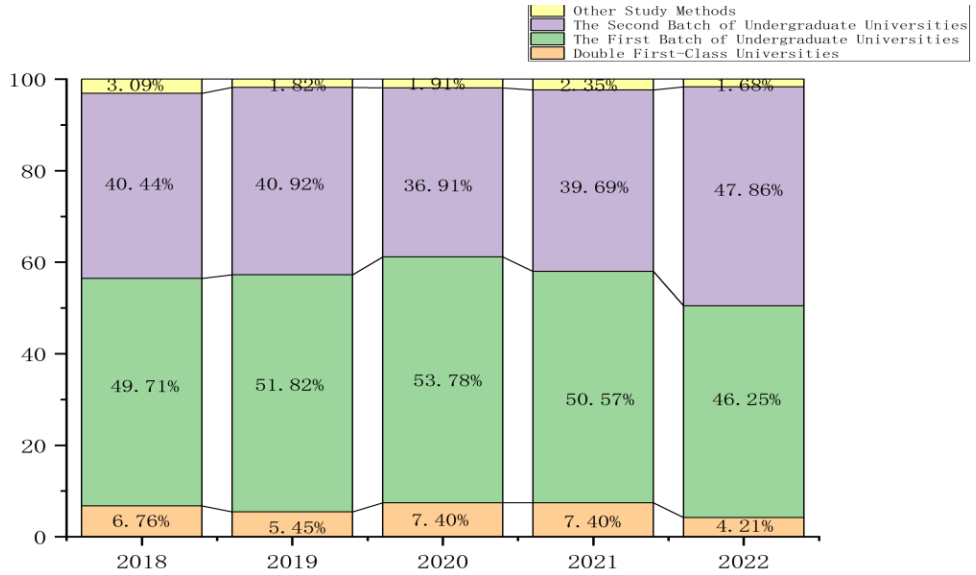


Figure 4. Source of graduation institutions for candidates admitted to A universities

A university covers seven categories of economics, management, law, literature, science, engineering and art, which is a multi-disciplinary university of finance and economics. Table 2 mainly shows the situation related to the graduation majors of admitted candidates. From Table 2, it can be clearly found that the admitted candidates of A university are mainly students graduated from economics and management, accounting for more than 70%. Secondly, the admitted candidates are mainly students of law, literature, engineering, art and science related majors, accounting for about 5%. Finally, there are a small number of admitted candidates from medicine, agriculture and history related majors. According to the analysis of relevant data, it is found that the graduation majors of admitted candidates are closely related to the major goal orientation and development of A university.

Table 2. Source of graduation majors of candidates admitted to college A

Numble	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Economics	28.06%	33.65%	35.00%	33.36%	36.70%
Management	40.32%	38.46%	35.83%	35.78%	36.84%
Legal Studies	10.54%	8.44%	7.81%	6.76%	5.05%
Literature	4.81%	2.99%	3.99%	4.62%	5.19%
Engineering	6.19%	7.05%	7.15%	6.61%	5.19%
Artistic Studies	1.03%	3.31%	4.07%	4.98%	4.98%
Science	7.45%	5.13%	5.15%	6.76%	4.98%
Pedagogy	0.34%	0.32%	0.33%	0.57%	0.35%
Medicine	0.69%	0.32%	0.08%	0.07%	0.35%
Agronomy	0.46%	0.32%	0.58%	0.43%	0.28%
History	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.07%	0.07%

2.3. Basic Situation Analysis of the Admitted Candidates

Figure 5 mainly depicts the share of admissions to our school and external schools in the total number of admissions from 2018 to 2022.From Figure 5, it can be found that the proportion of

ISSN: 2710-0170

candidates admitted from external schools is much higher than that of our candidates, and the proportion of admitted candidates from external schools has shown a small fluctuation in the last five years, with a change of first decreasing and then increasing. The number of adimitted candidates from external universities accounted for 75.65% of the total number in 2022. The proportion of candidates finally admitted to the University has shown a general downward trend in the last five years, from 27.84% in 2018 to 24.35% in 2022. The loss of students from our school is more serious.

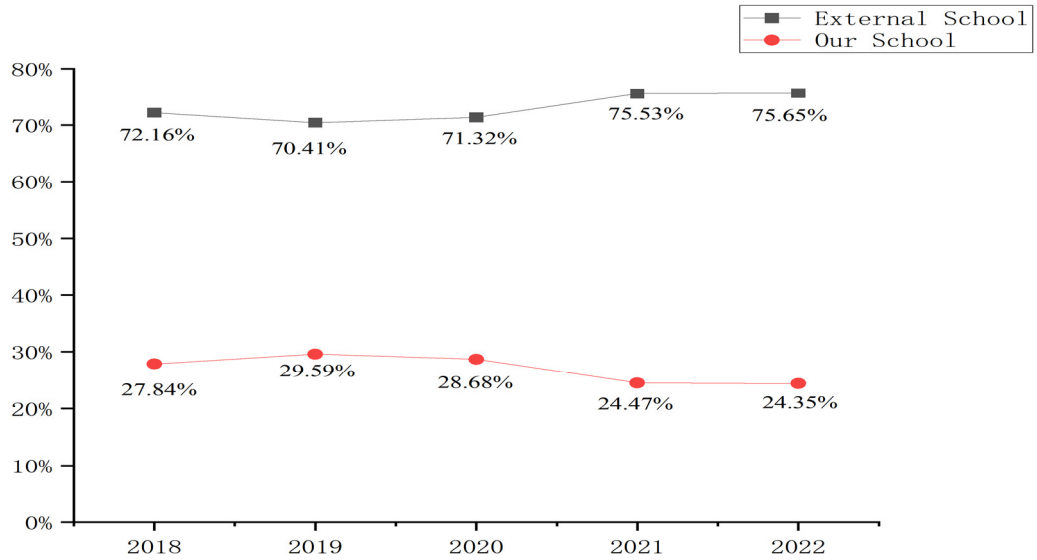


Figure 5. Admission of candidates from A universities to our university and outside universities

Figure 6 shows the proportion of fresh graduates and former students among the candidates admitted by A university. From the figure, we can find that the proportion of former students is generally higher than that of fresh graduates (except for 2019). The proportion of former students in the admissions of A university has been maintained between 50% and 60% in the past five years, and the overall trend is upward. The proportion of former students in the admissions of A university has increased from 48.72% in 2019 to 57.96% in 2022, which indirectly led to a decline in the number of fresh graduates admissions. From the above analysis, we can see that the number of students admitted to A university is mainly former students, and the number of fresh graduates has declined, so more attention should be paid to the attraction and enrollment of fresh graduates.

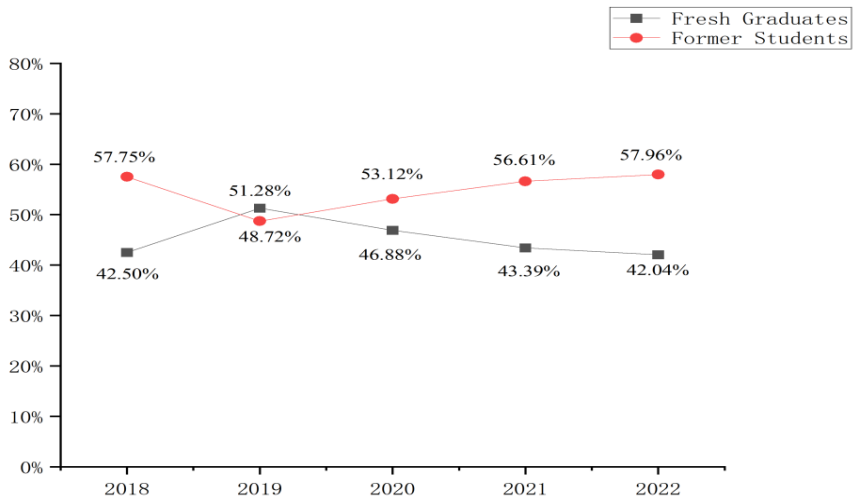


Figure 6. Admission of freshmen and former students to A universities

ISSN: 2710-0170

Meanwhile, this paper divides the candidates according to the geographical area, and the specific results are shown in Figure 7. We can find that the source of candidates of A university mainly comes from the provincial colleges and universities, and the proportion of admitted candidates from provincial colleges and universities reached 70% by 2022. However, from the figure, it can be significantly found that the proportion of candidates admitted to A university within the province is showing a decline in the past five years, from 82.7% in 2018 to 70.39% in 2022, and the proportion of candidates admitted from outside the province has risen, reached 29.61% by 2022.

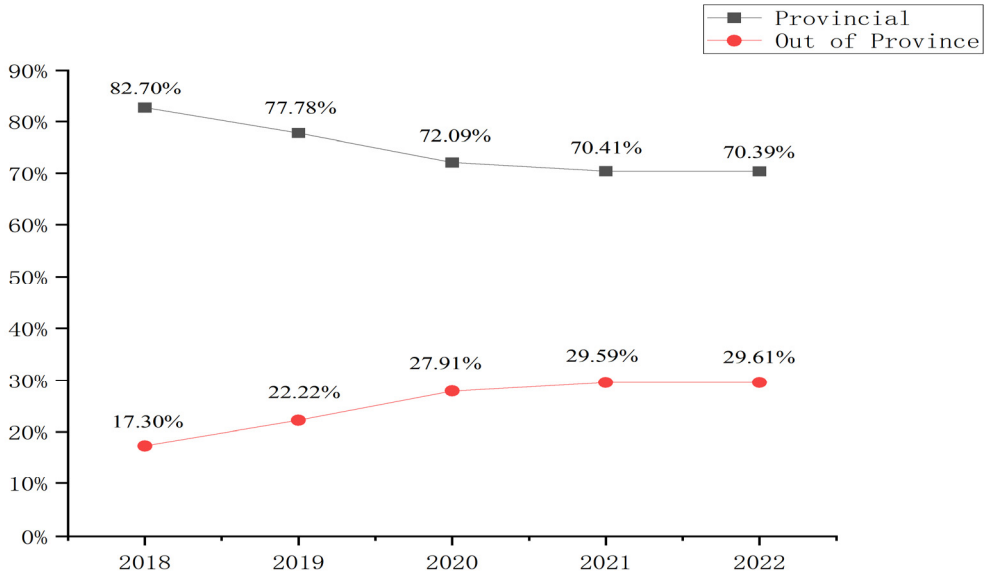


Figure 7. Admission of candidates from A universities in the province and outside the province

3. Analysis on the Path to Improve the Quality of Student Sources

3.1. Take Multiple Measures to Fully Explore the Student Source of A University

From the previous analysis, we can find that most of the candidates admitted to A university consist of the first batch and the second batch of undergraduate candidates, while our students occupy a more important proportion.Therefore, it is one of the important measures to improve the student sources quality of A university to deeply explore and retain the students of our university. How to retain the excellent students of our university has become an vital issue in the process of enrollment. In recent years, A university has tried its best to attract outstanding candidates of our university to apply for admission through a series of policies and incentive measures. The main ones are: First, the policy support is strong. For excellent students, they can take graduate courses in advance and offset the credits of the corresponding courses after they are admitted to graduate school, they also can apply for early graduation after completing the corresponding credits.At the same time, A university has developed a the Bachelor's and Master's linking program, and very outstanding undergraduates can apply for the program. Compared with ordinary candidates, the Bachelor's and Master's linking program can greatly help students reduce the obstacles in academic research, academic system and other aspects. Secondly, the award policy covers a wide range. Set up freshman academic scholarship, admitted candidates from A university can apply for freshman academic scholarship on the basis of enjoying other comprehensive academic scholarships. Third, the research team cultivation program. For senior students, the university's master's and doctoral supervisor research team selects outstanding students from A university to enter the team for academic cultivation directly, shorten the cultivation time and using its strong academic atmosphere,

ISSN: 2710-0170

profound teaching staff and other advantages to attract students from A university and candidates with exemption qualifications to apply.

3.2. Build a Comprehensive Multi-level Enrollment Publicity Team

In order to get a better quality of students, the university not only needs to rely on the extensive publicity of the enrollment management department, but also needs the publicity of the second-level school, master's and doctoral tutors and excellent students. Therefore, A university needs to change the structure of the existing enrollment publicity team and build an “all-round and multi-level” enrollment publicity team with “University + enrollment office” as the main body, and give full play to the guiding role of second-level school, master’s and doctoral tutors, excellent students or students in university enrollment publicity. The first level is the enrollment publicity form of “University + enrollment office”, which is mainly responsible for the overall enrollment policy, the enrollment publicity plan, operation of enrollment publicity channels at school level and guidance of enrollment publicity of second-level school, giving full play to the effect of the “main responsibility” of enrollment management department. The second level is the “second-level school + master’s and doctoral tutor" publicity team. Under the background of the enrollment policy required by the enrollment management department, the colleges at all levels integrate the disciplinary characteristics,teaching staff, scientific research, outstanding students and other characteristics of the college to build a publicity program with college characteristics. At the same time, the master's and doctoral tutor is one of the important factors to attract candidates to apply for admission, and give full play to its influence effect in the enrollment publicity work. The master's and doctoral tutors use their own reputation, scientific research conditions, team funding policies and other conditions to provide a more reliable guarantee for high-quality student sources. The third level is the “student representative” publicity. This level of enrollment publicity is mainly to fully display the publicity influence of current students and outstanding graduates. Current students can make use of their own life and learning experience to fully show all aspects of the school in WeChat circle of friends, microblog, Tik Tok and other self-media platforms, so that candidates, students’ parents and other interested people can have a deeper understanding of the school. Excellent graduates mainly publicize the advantages of the school widely to their surrounding people in their daily work and interpersonal communication.

3.3. Integrate the Publicity Channels and Build the “New Media” Matrix Publicity Mode

With the rapid development of modern information technology and the influence of epidemic factors, “online” live streaming, microblog and other new media enrollment platforms have attracted more and more attention. The traditional publicity method is mainly through the “official website + offline preaching” publicity mode, which is time-consuming and laborious. With the emergence of new media technology, the new recruitment publicity method also highlights its own advantages, which has an important impact on expanding the scope of publicity and reducing the sunk cost. On the basis of the existing publicity mode, A university has taken some new approaches -- building “official website + WeChat Official Account” as the main publicity position, and coordinate the use of new media publicity mode such as network broadcast, microblog, TikTok platform and H5 publicity, etc. In the publicity mode of WeChat Official Account, A university sets up columns such as college introduction, tutor team, enrollment chapter and professional catalog through WeChat Official Account to introduce its own resources and advantages in all aspects. By September 2022, A university's Wechat Official Account has accumulated more than 13,000 followers. The online webcast publicity mode mainly takes each college as the main part to introduce the college and its majors. In recent years, A university has cooperated deeply with authoritative education media, and organized each college of university A to participate in the online live broadcast activities of postgraduate

ISSN: 2710-0170

enrollment publicity released simultaneously on such as Bilibili, microblog, Sina and other platforms, with the viewing volume of each session reaching more than ten thousand people. At the same time, university A fully utilizes microblog, TikTok, H5 and other methods to further expand the publicity mode of the university.

4. Conclusion

The quality of graduate student sources is an important guarantee to ensure and improve the quality and level of cultivation in colleges and universities, and the in-depth analysis of the quality of student sources has an important guiding effect on the enrollment work. This paper has a significant effect on improving the quality of student sources of university A by analyzing the ratio of applicants to admissions, total admission, basic information and sources of candidates. From the above data analysis, it can be found that: Firstly, the total admissions and the ratio of applicants to admissions of A university are increasing in general, the proportion of first-volunteer admitted candidates to total admissions is basically above 70%, the proportion of transfer candidates to admissions is basically maintained between 25% and 30%, and the proportion of admissions of exempted candidates is basically maintained at about 0.6%. Secondly, according to the analysis of candidates' graduation institutions and majors, the proportion of candidates from double first-class universities is basically around 6%, the proportion of candidates from the second batch of universities is growing year by year, and the proportion in 2022 even exceeds that of candidates admitted from the first batch of universities. At the same time, the admitted candidates are mainly those majoring in management and economics, accounting for more than 70%. Thirdly, the proportion of candidates admitted from A university, former graduates and provincial universities among the candidates admitted to A universities is maintained at 28%, 55% and 70% respectively.

In this paper, through the analysis and research of the enrollment and admission data in the past five years, we found that the quality of students admitted to college A tends to decline in general, and measures need to be taken to alleviate the pressure of declining quality of student sources in university A. Specific measures include: Firstly, university A starts with the source of its own students, improves various policies and incentive measures to provide strong support for its own candidates to apply for admission. Secondly, relying on the publicity of the school and the admission office, give full play to the publicity of the second-level colleges, graduate instructors and students to the school and the major. Thirdly, with the development of modern science and technology, “official website + WeChat Official Account + online live broadcast platform matrix (TikTok and other self-media platforms) + H5 publicity” enrollment publicity matrix is built to integrate and break through the existing publicity mode and channels.

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