

Overview of Education Research on Chinese National Conditions for International Students in Recent 30 Years

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Abstract: China's national conditions education is an important part of the education of international students in China. After analyzing and refining research hotspots and development trends from the dimensions of literature quantity and annual distribution, research theme evolution, theoretical basis and educational goals, it can be found that the number of literature in this field shows a significant growth trend. The research content has gradually expanded from early language and culture education to national conditions cognition, cross-cultural adaptation and national image communication. The research points out that the current research needs to further deepen theoretical construction and practical innovation, provide references for the curriculum design of national education in colleges and universities, and help international students to fully understand China's development path and cultural connotation.

Keywords: International Students; China's National Conditions of Education; Research Review

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

Amid the global trend of economic integration and educational internationalization, cross-border educational exchanges are becoming increasingly frequent among countries worldwide. According to data from Study in China, the number of international students coming to China has surpassed 490,000, with over 1,000 institutions offering programs (The data comes from the official website of Study Abroad China). Over the past three decades, the number of international students in China has tripled, forming a significant bridge for China's interactions and exchanges with the world.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education formulated and released the 'Study in China Program,' which clearly stated the need to 'strengthen education on Chinese laws and regulations, excellent traditional culture, and national conditions, to help international students gain an objective understanding of China's social development' [1]. This initiative set clear educational goals. Chinese President has shown deep concern for the development of international students in China and eagerly hopes that these students will learn more about China and share their experiences with the world [2].

Over the past three decades, China's international influence has grown significantly. The 'Belt and Road' initiative has led to a surge in international students coming to China. These students come from diverse cultural backgrounds and have varied educational needs, which often lead to numerous challenges when integrating into Chinese society. Cultural conflicts frequently result in psychological distress. Additionally, China aims to enhance its soft power through educational cooperation, promoting its development model and cultural values. As a result, national conditions education has become a crucial component of this effort. The Ministry of Education has mandated that national conditions education be integrated into the training system for international students. However, most current research focuses on language instruction, with little systematic exploration of national conditions education.

1.2 Research Methods and Innovation Points

This study primarily employs the literature review method to systematically examine the relevant literature on China's national conditions education for international students in China over the past three decades, both domestically and internationally. It aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current research status and development trends. By searching through academic databases such as

China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Wanfang Data, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Springer, a total of 501 documents across various categories were collected. By tracing the literature's development, this study reveals the theoretical foundation and practical approaches of national conditions education research, providing theoretical support for building an educational system that promotes understanding, friendship, and love for China. This effort aims to support the internationalization of higher education and enhance the country's soft power.

2. Literature Review and Research Status of Chinese National Education for International Students in China in the Past 30 Years

2.1 Literature Development and Trend

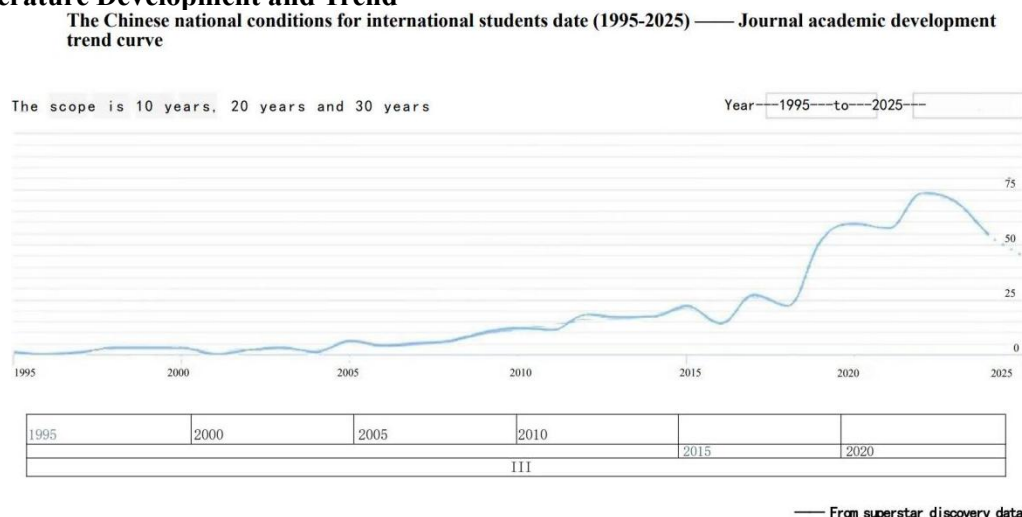


Figure 1. Academic Trend Curve of Journals

Reviewing the history of education and teaching for international students in China, the People's Republic of China (PRC) accepted 33 foreign students (some sources say 35 (The data is sourced from the official website of Peking University)) to Tsinghua University (later transferred to Peking University (The data is sourced from the official website of Peking University)) in January 1951 to participate in the 'Special Class for Eastern European Exchange Students on Chinese Language' [3]. This marked the beginning of the education of international students in China. Over nearly 75 years, from 1951 to 2009, the focus of education and teaching for international students was primarily on language and culture. In 2010, the introduction of the 'Study in China Program' sparked a wave of research on national conditions education, with many scholars

By searching for 'Chinese national conditions for international students' across all fields in Chinese, from 1995 to 2025, using academic databases such as CNKI and Wanfang Data, a total of 1,177 related documents were collected, including 592 journal articles, 448 theses (356 master's theses and 90 doctoral theses), 58 conference papers, 5 reports, and 74 information materials. After screening the journals, this study primarily focuses on 592 journal articles published in various journals. The analysis of the annual distribution of the literature shows that from 1995 to 2015, the number of documents was relatively low, totaling 145; since 2016, a total of 447 articles have been published. Notably, the number of journal articles in 2022 was the highest in the past three decades in this research field, reaching 73, as shown in Figure 1.

focusing on improving the quality of national conditions education and enriching educational content.

It is worth noting that the research on Chinese national education for international students in China has experienced a breakthrough from nothing to more and more in the past 30 years, and has been maintaining a growing trend, indicating that the research heat in this field continues to rise and has high research value.

2.2 Literature Sources and Types

In terms of literature sources, they are mainly concentrated in various educational journals, among which the relevant literature published in Science and Education Journal, Shenzhou Scholars, International Student Education Management and other journals accounts for a large proportion (Figure 2). In core journals, the

research in this field is mainly published in (Figure 3). Chinese core journals (Peking University)

Chinese national conditions for international students date(1995-2025)—publication type

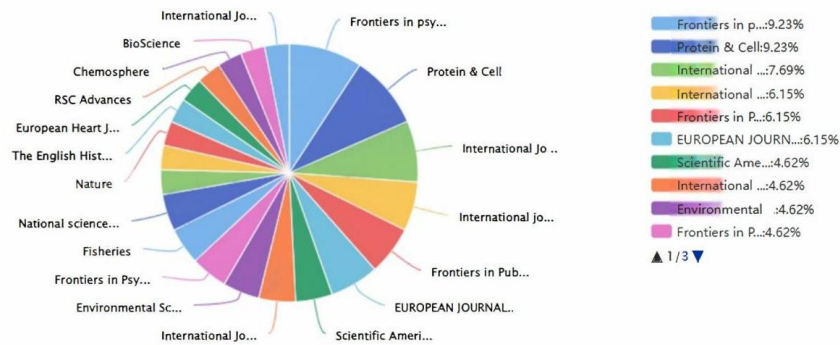


Figure 2. Journal Species Statistics

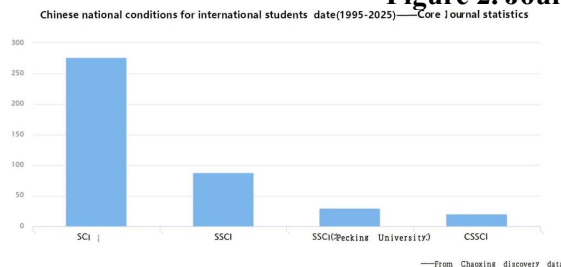


Figure 3. Statistical Chart of Core Journals

2.3 Major research Institutions and Scholars

The researchers found that Beijing Language and Culture University, Beijing Normal University, Shandong University, Henan University, Renmin University of China and other universities are the main forces in the research on Chinese national conditions education for international students in China, with a large number of published literature and outstanding research results. These universities include both undergraduate and junior colleges, which are representative to some extent, as shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

—From Chaoxing discovery data

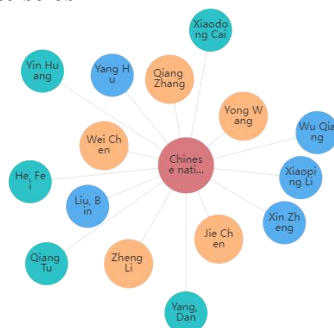


Figure 5. Key Researchers

In the field of high-yield scholars, researchers such as Qiang Zhang, Yong Wang, Wei Chen, Jie Chen, and ZhengLi have published numerous high-quality research papers. Their work has significantly contributed to the development of China's national conditions education for international students in China. Together, their contributions have established a diverse research framework for this area, promoting deeper and more comprehensive development in the field, as shown in Figure 6.

2.4 Evolution of Research Topics

According to the Modern Chinese Dictionary, 'national conditions' is defined as: 'the basic situation and characteristics of a country in terms of its society, nature, politics, economy, and culture, and specifically refers to the basic situation and characteristics of a country during a specific period.' The two courses correspond to an overview of China and national conditions. The former focuses on China's basic situation and historical features, with content that is mostly static and continuous; the latter focuses on new changes in Chinese society, emphasizing contemporary dynamics and timeliness, with content primarily centered on social trends.



Figure 4. Major Issuers

Some argue that the overview of China emphasizes stability and continuity, while the national conditions course places more emphasis on contemporaneity[4], which aligns with Su

Jianing (2024)'s view on the education of national conditions for international students in China, suggesting an increase in the proportion of contemporaneity content[5].

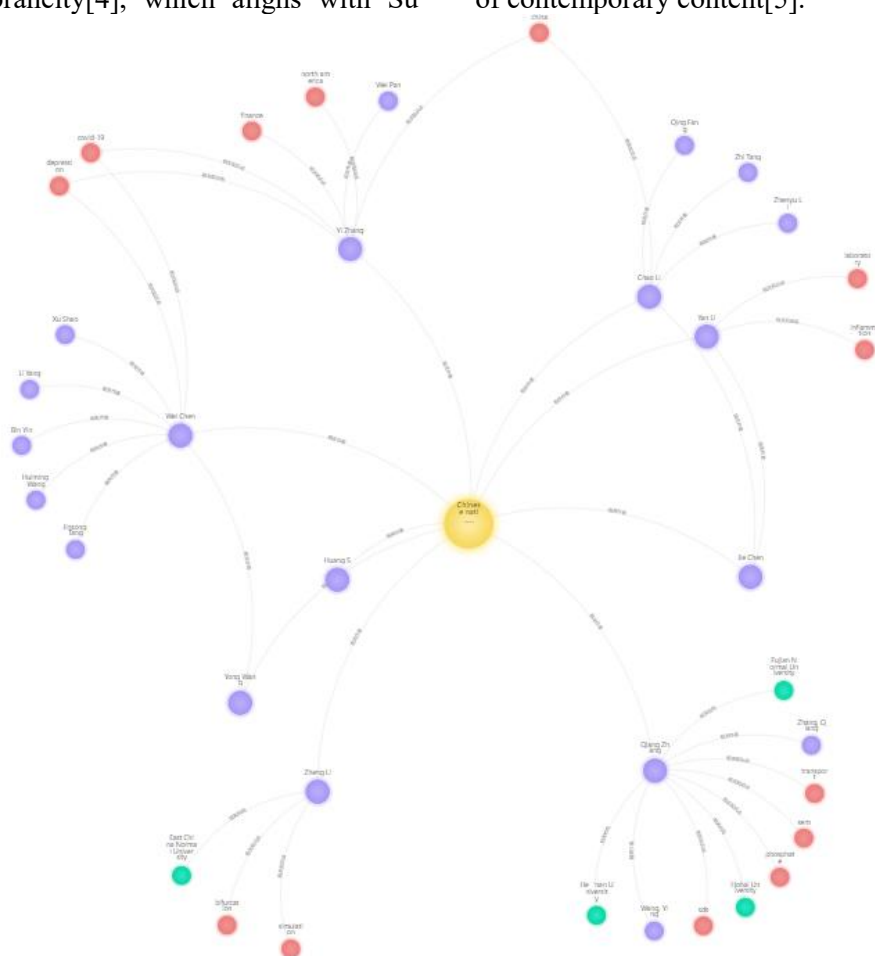


Figure 6. In-depth Correlation Knowledge Graph of Major Scholars

The research topics in the literature on this field can be broadly categorized into three stages: 1. Early stage (1995-2010)-The focus was primarily on language and cultural instruction, with an emphasis on imparting static knowledge about China. During this period, most studies centered on the foundational framework of the 'Overview of China' course. For instance, Liu Yuanman (2023) highlighted the core and boundaries between the 'Overview of China' and the 'National Conditions' courses, emphasizing the stability and historical continuity of the former. Li Quan (2019) noted that early Chinese student education focused on language teaching, with cultural education as a supplement, and had not yet developed an independent system for national conditions education. Sun Wangzhou and Wang Qian (2016) found through teaching practice that national conditions education positively influenced the Chinese proficiency and cultural adaptation of international students,

although the content design still primarily focused on traditional history and culture. 2. Development stage (2011-2020)-Under policy guidance, research shifted to the goal setting and curriculum design of national conditions education, emphasizing 'contemporaneity' and cultural identity. After the 'Study in China Program' (2010) was launched, scholars began to focus on the contemporary significance of national conditions education. Su Jianing (2024) proposed that 'contemporaneity' should encompass social development and international engagement since the reform and opening up, suggesting that educational goals should be achieved through the dynamic updating of teaching content. Liu Liangjun and Hao Yunfei (2024) called for enhancing the practicality of national conditions education, promoting the shift from 'knowing China' to 'befriending China' and 'loving China.' Zhao Qianhui et al. (2022) proposed reducing cognitive conflicts among

international students through cross-cultural activities and enhancing cultural identity, based on the theory of cultural adaptation strategies. 3. Deepening Stage (2021 to present)-Focusing on cross-cultural communication, national image building, and digital teaching innovation, the concept of 'all-round education' and 'micro-learning' has been introduced. As the Belt and Road Initiative advances, research perspectives have expanded to include international communication. Wang Yao (2024) developed a new framework for national conditions education for international students in China, emphasizing all-staff, all-process, and all-round education based on the concept of 'all-round education.' Wang Jing and Hu Pengfei (2023) introduced the 'micro-learning' model, enhancing the flexibility and timeliness of national conditions education through fragmented teaching. Yuan Yuan (2024) explored innovations in digital teaching, proposing an advanced path from 'perceiving China' to 'understanding China.' Liu Tao (2022) and Miao Yu (2024) further emphasized that cultural identity is the core goal of national conditions education, which should be achieved through ideological and political education in courses and cultural experience activities to guide values.

3. The Theoretical Basis and Educational Objectives of the Study on Chinese National Education for Overseas Students in China in Recent 30 Years

3.1 The Theoretical Support System for the Study of Chinese National Conditions Education for International Students in China

In existing literature, scholars suggest integrating Marx's concept of the 'complete person' into the national conditions education for international students in China. This approach aims to cultivate a 'complete person' as the core philosophy of national conditions education for these students, as understanding China is crucial for their all-round development. By objectively recognizing and accepting China, students can better engage in education and form an objective perspective on different cultures and social systems worldwide. National conditions education should encompass knowledge, values, and skills to enhance the overall quality of international students [6]. Xiao Longzhong and

Mao Liqun (2024) used theories from pedagogy, psychology, and other disciplines to emphasize that national conditions education should focus on the comprehensive development of international students in terms of cognition, emotion, and values. They also explored the necessity of cultivating a complete person from the perspective of the theory of human comprehensive development and discussed the construction of educational mechanisms from the perspective of educational ecology, adding theoretical depth to the discussion.

In terms of educational content, some scholars argue that the 'contemporaneity' of China's national conditions education is crucial for enhancing the quality of such education for international students and promoting their understanding of contemporary China. The 'contemporaneity' they refer to involves focusing on China's social development over the past 40 years since the reform and opening up, explaining China's participation and contributions in various global fields, as well as its diplomatic principles [7]. However, the current content of national conditions education lacks this 'contemporaneity.' Han Yuan (2024) emphasizes the ideological and political function of cultural courses, suggesting that contemporary cultural values can be integrated into these courses through optimized course settings and innovative teaching methods. Su Jianing (2024) argues that 'contemporaneity' should encompass all aspects of contemporary society, which can be achieved by continuously updating content and utilizing diverse educational resources, with a more comprehensive focus.

To better achieve educational goals in teaching and learning practices, the (2024) study draws on Lasswell's 5W communication process theory to develop the 'Overview of China' textbook, aiming to help international students gain a deeper understanding of China's national conditions. Wang Jing and Hu Pengfei (2023) adopted the 'micro-learning' concept to create a flexible teaching system, making national conditions education more aligned with the daily lives and academic schedules of international students. Additionally, cultural theories are widely applied in educational practices. Xiao Xiao (2022) emphasized the importance of respecting and understanding the differences among students from diverse cultural backgrounds in national conditions education.

Through cross-cultural exchange activities and multicultural courses, she helped international students overcome cultural barriers and gain a better understanding of China's national conditions and culture. Zhao Qianhui, Zhang Mu, and Mao Lizhen (2022) analyzed the psychological and behavioral changes of international students adapting to Chinese culture from the perspective of cultural adaptation strategies. They proposed corresponding national conditions education pathways to help international students adapt more quickly to their studies and lives in China, thereby enhancing their sense of identity with Chinese culture. Liu Tao (2022) and Miao Yu (2024) argued that cultural identity is a key goal in the education of international students in China. By enhancing cultural education and fostering a cultural exchange atmosphere, they aim to promote international students' recognition of Chinese culture, reduce cultural conflicts, and improve educational outcomes.

In the educational management of international students in China, scholars such as Peng Qinghong and Li Huilin (2012) and Huang Zhan and Liu Jing (2014) have emphasized that the management of international students in higher education institutions should follow the theory of assimilation, integrating these students into the school's overall educational system. Peng and Li traced the historical evolution of the management model for international students in higher education institutions, while Huang and Liu applied this theory to practical management. Both argue that, given China's unique educational context, the management of international students should align with educational principles and international practices, integrating seamlessly with the management of domestic students. This approach also aims to facilitate the comprehensive integration of international students into campus life, allowing them to experience China's national conditions and culture.

3.2 Teaching Objectives for International Students in China based on Chinese National Conditions

From a cognitive perspective, national conditions education is an effective way for international students to quickly integrate into China. It is also a crucial method for telling China's story, spreading China's voice, and fostering international students' understanding,

friendship, and love for China [8]. This approach is essential for shaping a credible, lovable, and respectable image of China in the world [9]. By teaching Chinese students about China's national conditions, they can better understand China's history, culture, and customs through their language skills [10], thereby improving their Chinese proficiency, adapting to life in China, and overcoming communication barriers and misconceptions about Chinese culture. Additionally, this can promote cultural exchanges between China and the world, enhance the international dissemination of Chinese culture, and meet the practical needs of building a community with a shared future for mankind and constructing a 'Belt and Road' [11]. It also helps the world gain a better understanding of China, presenting a real, multi-dimensional, and comprehensive image of China, thereby facilitating the personal growth and development of international students [12], such as enhancing their intercultural communication skills [13]. In this process, they can achieve an objective view of the world's 'sameness' and 'difference,' promoting their all-round development as complete individuals [14].

From an emotional perspective, national conditions education aims to enhance international students' recognition of China's development path and their cross-cultural understanding. The 'Quality Standards for Higher Education of International Students in China (Trial)' clearly stipulates that international students should be familiar with China's history, geography, society, economy, and other basic cultural knowledge, understand China's political system and foreign policy, and comprehend the mainstream values and public morals of Chinese society, fostering a strong sense of rule of law and moral awareness [15]. This defines the content of national conditions education for international students, which includes a comprehensive overview of China and its current situation.

From a practical standpoint, national conditions education helps international students in China enhance their ability to tell China's story effectively. The Chinese culture they learn and the national conditions education they receive at various stages help them progress from understanding Chinese culture and national conditions knowledge, to comprehending, applying, and ultimately independently sharing

this knowledge, thereby developing the ability to objectively, comprehensively, and multidimensionally disseminate Chinese culture[16].

4. Research Challenges and Prospects

This study employs a literature analysis method to comprehensively review academic journals on Chinese national conditions education for international students in China from 1995 to 2025. It clearly illustrates the changes in research intensity reflected by the volume and annual distribution of literature, identifies key time points, and precisely distinguishes the sources and types of literature, highlighting the value of core journals and different documents. The study also delves into major institutions and scholars, outlining the academic cooperation network and the lineage of knowledge transmission. Furthermore, it thoroughly analyzes the application of educational theories related to teaching and learning in the context of Chinese national conditions education for international students, such as cross-cultural education theory, cultural identity theory, and assimilation theory, in their studies. These theories are applied in specific practices, including knowledge transmission, cultural understanding, value shaping, and the cultivation of international communication skills. Currently, there are still some research challenges in the field of Chinese national conditions education for international students [17].

4.1 Existing Research Challenges

1. The fragmentation of theoretical construction. Current research often relies on a single theoretical perspective, such as cross-cultural adaptation theory, lacking systematic integration. Zhang Fangfang and Qian Shiyin (2022) noted that the application of Marx's 'complete person' theory remains at the conceptual level and has not yet developed into an operational theoretical model. Xiao Longzhong and Mao Liqun (2024) further emphasized that the integration of multidisciplinary theories, including education, sociology, and communication studies, is insufficient, which limits the explanatory power of research.
2. Homogenization in Practical Innovation. Currently, the practice of educating international students about China's national conditions is characterized by a single model. For instance, Wang Jing and Hu Pengfei (2023) found that

despite the introduction of the 'micro-learning' concept, most universities still rely heavily on traditional classroom lectures, with lagging development of digital resources. Liu Keyun (2023) noted through a case study that the integration of regional culture is insufficient, and the homogenized 'Introduction to China' courses fail to meet the diverse needs of international students.

3. The ambiguity of the evaluation system. This means that there is a lack of scientific standards for assessing educational outcomes. Xia Qing (2022) found that only 38% of universities have established an evaluation mechanism for national education, and these mechanisms often rely on subjective feedback, such as questionnaire satisfaction, without incorporating quantitative indicators like cognitive levels and cultural identity. Han Yuan (2024) called for the development of a three-dimensional evaluation system encompassing knowledge, skills, and values, but this has not yet reached a consensus.

4. The Efficiency Dilemma of International Communication. The role of international students as 'people-to-people diplomats' has not been fully realized. Li Yi (2021) found through empirical research that only 27% of international students actively participate in spreading China's stories, highlighting the urgent need to enhance their intercultural communication skills. Duan Peng (2024) noted that most existing studies focus on the educational process, with insufficient attention to tracking the effectiveness of communication efforts.

4.2 Future Research Direction

In view of the above research challenges, the following directions can be considered for future research in this field:

1. Enhance the construction of theoretical models. We can draw on the 'cognition-emotion-behavior' model proposed by Xiao Longzhong and Mao Liqun (2024) to develop a localized theoretical framework for national education. Additionally, we should explore the synergistic mechanisms between 'holistic education' (Wang Yao, 2024) and convergent management (Peng Qinghong and Li Huilin, 2012) to create an educational ecosystem that involves all members of the community.
2. Promote practical innovation and the development of case libraries. Educational planners can develop a 'dynamic national conditions database' based on the 'Reference

Framework' (Zu Xiaomei, 2022), integrating cutting-edge cases such as rural revitalization and technological innovation (Huang Yi, Jiang Shaohua, 2023). This will enrich and promote practical innovation in the education of Chinese national conditions for international students. Given that many scholars have proposed the concept of integrating extracurricular activities with regional practices in teaching Chinese national conditions, further efforts can be made to adopt a 'micro-learning + immersive experience' model (Wang Jing, Hu Pengfei, 2023; Yuan Yuan, 2024). Additionally, generative artificial intelligence technology can be utilized to enhance interactivity in the teaching process of Chinese national conditions for international students (Zhao Liancheng, Du Xinxuan, 2024).

3. Enhance the evaluation system and conduct international comparative studies. Researchers can refer to the "Quality Standards for Higher Education of International Students in China" (2021) to develop a multi-dimensional evaluation tool that includes cultural knowledge tests, cross-cultural competence assessments, and value orientation analyses (Xia Qing, 2022). Additionally, they should conduct international comparative studies, drawing on the experiences of the United States "International Understanding Education" and the EU's "Cultural Diversity Education," to refine the model of national conditions education in China (Lu Qin-ni, 2024).

4. Enhance the cultivation of international communication skills. In the context of a comprehensive ideological and political education environment, develop an integrated educational approach that combines 'ideological and political education in courses + social practice + digital communication' (Liu Liangjun & Hao Yunfei, 2024). Additionally, enhance the effectiveness of Chinese students in spreading China's national conditions to international audiences through activities such as short video creation and participation in international forums (Fang Xingxuan et al., 2022).

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