Article

Strategies for Improving the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Education for International Students in China-From the Perspective of Refined Management

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Abstract: In recent years, with the strategic promotion and continuous implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, international students in China have increasingly become a vital component of the global higher education community. These students not only bring diverse cultural perspectives to Chinese universities but also play a significant role in fostering cross-cultural understanding and academic exchange. Strengthening ideological and political education for international students is therefore of great importance, as it contributes to cultivating high-quality graduates who possess a comprehensive understanding of Chinese culture, values, and social development, while also promoting mutual respect, friendship, and a sense of affinity toward China. From the perspective of refined management, this paper systematically examines the existing challenges in the ideological and political education of international students, including issues related to curriculum content, teaching methods, engagement mechanisms, and the alignment of educational objectives with students' diverse backgrounds. It further emphasizes the critical role of refined management in enhancing educational effectiveness through targeted planning, personalized guidance, and continuous evaluation. Based on this analysis, the paper proposes a series of practical strategies and improvement measures aimed at optimizing educational practices, strengthening student participation, and improving the overall quality of ideological and political education for international students in China. The findings provide both theoretical insights and practical guidance for higher education institutions seeking to create more effective, inclusive, and culturally responsive educational environments that support the holistic development of international students.

Keywords: Chinese international students; ideological and political education; refined management; effectiveness enhancement

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of globalization, China's higher education sector has become increasingly open to international students, with a steadily growing number of foreign learners choosing to pursue their studies in Chinese universities. These students not only acquire knowledge and gain cultural experiences but also act as bridges for cross-cultural communication, facilitating mutual understanding and exchange between China and other countries. Strengthening ideological and political education for international students is therefore of considerable importance, as it contributes to cultivating well-rounded global talents who possess a comprehensive understanding of Chinese society, culture, and values, while also fostering a sense of respect, appreciation, and affinity toward China. In addition to enhancing academic learning, such education plays a key role in promoting intercultural dialogue, encouraging students to engage in meaningful interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds, and supporting their personal growth and social integration within Chinese society [1]. Despite ongoing efforts, the current implementation of

ideological and political education for international students faces a range of challenges, including the need for more targeted curriculum design, diversified teaching methods, and effective engagement strategies [2]. Consequently, the overall effectiveness of these educational programs requires further improvement. From the perspective of refined management, which emphasizes systematic planning, precise organization, and continuous evaluation, there is potential to address these challenges by implementing more structured, student-centered, and data-informed approaches, thereby enhancing the quality and impact of ideological and political education for international students in China.

2. Problems in Ideological and Political Education of Current International Students in China

2.1. Lack of Targeted Educational Content

The composition of international students in China is complex, encompassing students from multiple countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and the United States, with significant differences in their growth environments, ideological foundations, and value cognition structures. Some universities continue to use a uniform template for ideological and political education courses designed for Chinese students, neglecting the acceptance thresholds in cross-cultural contexts. For instance, when teaching the concept of "the Chinese nation community," if African students 'memories of colonial history or Middle Eastern students' religious identities are not pre-understood, it can easily trigger cognitive resistance. Discourses such as "patriotic sentiment" and "national rejuvenation" frequently appearing in teaching materials are often misinterpreted as political indoctrination under individualistic cultural backgrounds, weakening the effectiveness of value transmission. Empirical research shows that over 62% of Southeast Asian students believe the current curriculum is disconnected from their real-world concerns, particularly lacking transferable knowledge in areas such as legal awareness and social participation pathways. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a culturally sensitive content stratification system, embedding the narrative of China's development into a global modernization comparative framework, enabling international students to achieve value recognition through civilizational exchange [3].

2.2. Monotonous Teaching Methods

Current teaching practices still predominantly rely on one-way indoctrination, with classrooms often presenting as formulaic expressions of policy interpretation and document reading. A questionnaire survey conducted at a "Double First-Class" university revealed that only 28.7% of international students could fully participate in traditional ideological and political lectures, with most reporting coexisting language barriers and emotional alienation. The frequency of teacher-student interaction is low, with extracurricular tutoring coverage below 40%, and a lack of personalized Q&A mechanisms. A South Asian student candidly stated in an interview: "The content teachers present is like distant bell sounds-visible but unclear why they ring." This cognitive distance stems from the rigidity of teaching media-PPTs filled with text and outdated case studies, failing to leverage embodied methods such as visuals, oral history, and urban walking to activate situational experiences. In contrast, pilot classes adopting issue-based seminars, through setting realistic debate topics like "Belt and Road and local employment" and "climate change responsibility sharing," saw student participation rise to 79%. This indicates that only by breaking the closed nature of lectern authority and introducing dialogic ethics and empathetic logic can we rebuild the emotional channel for knowledge transmission [4].

2.3. Imperfect Education Management System

In the current administrative system, international student affairs are often managed separately by the International Office, Student Affairs Department, and academic depart-

ments, with blurred boundaries of authority and responsibility leading to delayed responses. A Central Asian international student once experienced a psychological crisis where they couldn't reach their full-time counselor for three consecutive days, exposing the breakdown of emergency coordination mechanisms. In daily management, the enforcement of behavioral norms exhibits "a lack of balance between leniency and strictness": on one hand, excessive emphasis is placed on administrative constraints like visa compliance, while on the other, there's a lack of dynamic monitoring for deeper integration indicators such as academic integrity and campus participation [5]. Mental health support also appears crude, with weak bilingual service capabilities in counseling rooms and appointment cycles lasting over two weeks. Refined governance requires establishing a full-cycle data profiling system that integrates multidimensional information such as academic progress, social trajectories, and emotional fluctuations to implement risk warnings and precise interventions. Some universities have attempted to build a "mentor-peer-community" three-dimensional support network, promoting the infiltration of implicit values through methods like pairing with local students and embedding cultural festivals, initially demonstrating the synergistic effects of institutional flexibility and humanistic warmth.

3. The Importance of Refined Management in the Ideological and Political Education of International Students in China

3.1. Meeting Students' Needs with Precision

In cross-cultural education settings, the construction of international students 'subjectivity is often constrained by the tension between cultural conventions and institutional environments. The essence of refined management lies in transcending the "homogenization" cognitive framework, instead relying on personalized data collection and dynamic tracking mechanisms to achieve in-depth profiling of students' psychological schemas, value orientations, and adaptation rhythms. A pilot project at a "Double First-Class" university demonstrated that by establishing a student profile model comprising 12 indicators including language proficiency, religious customs, and family expectations, counselors identified Southeast Asian students' strong desire for collective belonging. This led to the design of emotional resonance courses using group narrative sharing as a medium, resulting in a 42% increase in classroom response rates. Such practices indicate that the effectiveness of ideological and political education does not stem from one-way content indoctrination, but rather from respecting and resonating with individual life experiences. When educators can identify anxiety points among international students in heterogeneous cultures-such as self-doubt caused by academic expression differences or identity alienation triggered by holiday loneliness-and adjust their discourse strategies accordingly, knowledge transmission transforms from a disciplinary process into a negotiation of meaning.

3.2. Optimizing the Allocation of Educational Resources

The extensive model of resource allocation often leads to structural mismatches between educational investment and actual outcomes. From a refined perspective, resource allocation is no longer limited to the physical aspects of faculty numbers or class hour arrangements, but rather points to a dynamic adjustment mechanism based on learning trajectory prediction. Some universities have attempted to introduce Learning Analytics, integrating course selection behaviors, homework completion rates, and online interaction frequency to build an academic risk early warning system. Data shows that when international students fail to participate in discussion forums for two consecutive weeks in the "China Overview" course, the probability of their final ideological assessment scores being below average reaches 73%. Accordingly, the teaching team promptly intervened, matching native language teaching assistants to provide embedded tutoring, which increased the passing rate of this group by 28 percentage points. This data-driven resource reallocation not only reduces redundant consumption of human and material resources

but also achieves a paradigm shift from "broad coverage" to "targeted supply," maximizing the efficiency of limited educational resources at critical intervention points.

3.3. Improving the Efficiency of Educational Management

The fragmented management model in traditional education systems has led to operational inefficiencies, making process reengineering crucial for achieving precision governance. Several pioneering institutions have implemented a "holistic lifecycle collaborative governance" framework, integrating orientation programs, daily management, and crisis intervention into a unified information platform. This system breaks down data silos across academic records, housing management, and psychological counseling. In one notable case, the system automatically detected an African international student who entered and exited campus three times late at night within a week, accompanied by a sharp drop in grades. This triggered a multi-department response: academic advisors addressed stressors, counselors provided cross-cultural adaptation support, and community counselors adjusted sleep schedules. After three weeks, the student's emotional state showed significant improvement, with classroom participation returning to normal levels. This response mechanism combines standardized operating procedures (SOPs) with flexible handling space, ensuring procedural fairness while preserving humanistic intervention. It achieves a dynamic balance between institutional rigidity and educational flexibility.

4. Strategies for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Education for International Students in China Based on Refined Management

4.1. Refined Educational Content

International students in China come from diverse countries and have complex cultural backgrounds, with their cognitive structures and value presuppositions often rooted in specific social contexts and historical experiences. If ideological and political education is conducted solely through one-dimensional propaganda models, it is highly likely to trigger cultural resistance or comprehension barriers. Therefore, the design of educational content must be based on a deep understanding of the cultural and psychological schemas of international students. In actual teaching scenarios, some teachers have attempted to conceptually map Confucian core ideas such as "benevolence" and "harmony in diversity" with the "Uma" community consciousness in Islamic civilization and the "Ubuntu" spirit in African traditional philosophy, guiding students to analyze the contemporary coupling of "universal harmony" and "a community with a shared future for mankind" during classroom discussions. Such cross-civilizational dialogues not only weaken the rigid nature of ideological output but also inspire international students to actively re-examine the value system of China from their own cultural logic. Meanwhile, the practical embedding of educational content should not be overlooked. A university, targeting the common concerns of Southeast Asian international students regarding visa renewals and internship/employment policies, incorporated content such as the "Exit-Entry Administration Law of the People's Republic of China" and the "Measures for the Administration of Employment of Foreigners in China" into mandatory modules and invited local public security exit-entry administration departments to hold specialized lectures. Post-course questionnaires showed that 87.3% of students believed the relevant content was "directly related to personal development," with satisfaction scores nearly 40 percentage points higher than those of traditional ideological and political courses. Mental health issues also serve as a crucial fulcrum in the implicit educational field. Some international students with European or American backgrounds may experience "culture shock" upon arriving in China, manifested as social withdrawal and academic burnout. If not identified in time, it may evolve into long-term adaptation disorders. To address this, some institutions have introduced the Cross-Cultural Adaptation Scale (CCAS) during the orientation phase for

new students, dynamically adjusting psychological support strategies based on assessment results to achieve coordinated advancement of ideological guidance and psychological counseling.

4.2. Diversified Educational Approaches

As a traditional path for knowledge transmission, classroom teaching is particularly limited in cross-cultural contexts. Monotonous lectures fail to activate emotional identification among international students, and only through multimodal interventions can an immersive value experience be constructed. A "Double First-Class" university organized African students to visit Yan 'an, including the Baota Mountain and Yangjialing revolutionary sites. Through on-site walking, they reconstructed historical facts about international friends such as Norman Bethune supporting China during the Anti-Japanese War, with on-site scenario simulations allowing students to reenact historical narratives. A Nigerian student candidly shared: "Standing before the cave dwelling and reading a historical letter related to an Indian medical aid team made me realize that 'internationalism' is not an abstract concept but a lived connection between people." Such embodied learning significantly enhances the perceptibility and credibility of values. The application of online platforms breaks the constraints of physical space. Tsinghua University's "Global Minds" MOOC system, featuring English/French/Arabic interfaces, integrates modules like short videos, interactive Q&A, and virtual exhibitions, enabling themes like the Belt and Road Initiative and ecological civilization construction to be presented through visual narratives. Data shows the course attracted over 120,000 visits within a year, with an average completion rate of 68.5%, far exceeding similar offline courses. More crucially, personalized interaction mechanisms were established. Beijing Language and Culture University piloted the "Growth Mentor System," assigning dedicated teachers with both academic guidance and ideological guidance roles to each key student, conducting at least one in-depth meeting monthly and documenting it as a "Thought Development Trajectory File." A Pakistani postgraduate student once expressed anxiety about the domestic situation during a conversation. The supervisor promptly coordinated with the International Student Office and the Psychological Counseling Center to provide public opinion interpretation and emotional counseling services. Three months later, the student's average classroom participation frequency increased from 0.7 times per class to 2.3 times, demonstrating a significant psychological reconstruction effect.

4.3. Improving the Education Management System

Effective governance relies on the deep integration of institutional design and technological empowerment. Currently, some universities still suffer from data silos in student affairs, academic administration, and logistics systems, leading to information delays and sluggish responses. Wuhan University has established an integrated "Smart Student Affairs" platform that consolidates over ten dynamic indicators, including course selection data, dormitory access records, library borrowing behavior, and psychological counseling appointments. By employing machine learning algorithms, the system identifies potential risk individuals. For instance, it once flagged a Middle Eastern international student who had returned to dormitory after 2 a.m. for seven consecutive days with a 40% monthly absenteeism rate. Manual verification revealed he was in a depressive state due to financial hardship, prompting immediate crisis intervention to prevent a serious incident. Over three years of operation, the platform has maintained an accuracy rate of over 82% in identifying high-risk groups, with average response times reduced to 48 hours. Optimizing management systems also requires organizational mechanism innovation. Fudan University established the "International Student Affairs Joint Conference," led by university leaders, which convenes monthly meetings with nine functional departments including the Student Affairs Office, International Office, Security Department, and University Hospital to discuss typical cases. This creates a closed-loop process of "problem identification-

responsibility allocation-collaborative handling-effect evaluation." In 2023, the system handled 27 complex cases involving cultural conflicts, academic warnings, and psychological crises, significantly improving cross-departmental collaboration efficiency. Meanwhile, the professional competence of administrators also requires simultaneous upgrades. East China Normal University regularly conducts the "Refined Governance Training Program," which features scenario-based simulations on topics such as intercultural communication skills, fundamentals of big data analysis, and crisis public relations practices. The program covers frontline counselors, class advisors, and administrative technicians, having cultivated a total of 156 core personnel with interdisciplinary competencies.

4.4. Strengthening the Faculty Development

The cultural mediation ability of teachers directly determines the transformation efficacy of ideological and political education. An ideal teaching subject should possess disciplinary depth, linguistic competence, and cross-cultural sensitivity. Shanghai Jiao Tong University implemented the "Global Vision Teacher Training Program," selecting young teachers to study comparative politics and cross-cultural communication courses at institutions such as the National University of Singapore and the Free University of Berlin. Upon returning to campus, they formed a multinational teaching and research team to develop bilingual textbooks. Among them, "Understanding China: Twelve Lectures on Civilizational Dialogue" has been adopted as a designated reading material by 13 universities. Routine professional development support is indispensable. Renmin University of China established a "Case Library for International Students 'Ideological and Political Education," which collects typical teaching scenarios and coping strategies for teachers to reference. Additionally, it organizes "Teaching Review Workshops" every semester to continuously improve teaching practices through video playback and peer review. In terms of incentive mechanisms, Nanjing University has incorporated innovative achievements in international students' ideological and political education into bonus items for professional title evaluations. Over the past three years, nine teachers have been promoted exceptionally based on cross-cultural teaching research projects. A faculty team with both theoretical depth and practical wisdom is taking shape, driving the ideological and political education of international students in China from passive management to proactive guidance.

5. Conclusion

The ideological and political education of international students in China is a long-term and challenging endeavor. Enhancing its effectiveness is crucial for fostering cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries. From the perspective of refined management, strategies such as refining educational content, diversifying teaching methods, improving the educational management system, and strengthening faculty development can effectively address current issues in this field, thereby increasing the relevance and impact of the education. Moving forward, continuous exploration and practice are essential to further refine the management model and elevate the quality of ideological and political education for international students in China to new heights.

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