

Article

Cultivating International Talents in Local Universities: Current Status and Strategic Pathways

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Abstract: Guided by national strategies for educational modernization, this study explores the pathways for international talent cultivation in local universities. While local universities are pivotal in the higher education system, they face unique challenges such as limited global vision, mismatched curriculum systems, and resource constraints. Through literature analysis, a questionnaire survey of 493 students, and in-depth interviews with 10 faculty members, this research identifies key issues including vague cultivation goals and a "one-way import" model of internationalization. To address these challenges, the study proposes a comprehensive framework: aligning university goals with national strategies, promoting a value-led "connotative" transformation of curricula, and extending global service impact through industry-academic partnerships. The findings provide both theoretical insights and practical strategies for local universities to enhance their global competitiveness and contribute to the high-quality development of higher education.

Keywords: Local Universities; International Talent Cultivation; Higher Education Internationalization; Curriculum Reform; National Strategy; Cross-cultural Communication

1. Research Background

In the context of the national strategic framework to "contribute more educational strength to modernization," there is a strong emphasis on "establishing a major education center with global influence and elevating the country's position in the global educational landscape... improving the capacity for global talent cultivation and aggregation, and playing a leading role in global education governance." This strategic deployment provides clear guidance for the development of higher education [1]. As a vital component of the higher education system, local universities shoulder the significant responsibility of cultivating high-quality, internationalized talents. However, due to constraints in geography, resources, and policy, local universities face several challenges in international talent cultivation. These issues primarily manifest in the limited internationalization of faculty, a lack of alignment between curriculum systems and international standards, and insufficient global vision and cross-cultural communication skills among students. Consequently, the internationalization efforts of local universities are somewhat restricted. Therefore, exploring scientific and effective pathways for international talent cultivation based on the actual conditions of local universities has become a key priority. To address these issues, this study employs methods such as literature analysis and questionnaire interviews to conduct a refined analysis of the challenges and proposes strategies to optimize international talent cultivation in local universities.

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2. Research Significance

Theoretical Significance: Conducted under the guidance of national strategic development goals, this study performs an in-depth investigation and analysis of the current status and challenges of international talent cultivation in local universities. It aims to provide theoretical support for developing a more open, proactive, and effective cultivation system and promoting the construction of high-level talent hubs. First, by analyzing the current situation and existing problems, the study proposes implementation plans tailored to the specific needs of local universities. Second, it reveals the unique characteristics and underlying patterns of the internationalization process in regional institutions. Although local universities differ in geography, resources, and policies, they share common issues in talent cultivation; this research explores these internal regularities to provide new insights for the theoretical development of international higher education. Third, by comparing similarities and differences and analyzing successful experiences, the study puts forward innovative and operational strategies, injecting new vitality into the development of local universities.

Practical Significance: This study enables local universities to gain a more comprehensive and profound understanding of their own problems and challenges. Guided by national development strategies, it offers specific and effective response measures. First, it helps institutions set clear internationalization goals aligned with global trends. By enhancing curricular exploration and focusing on innovative thinking and practical skills, it guides students to transform knowledge into tangible results, thereby better meeting international demands and improving their future employment competitiveness and social adaptability. Second, it provides a transformation pathway for local universities by promoting shifts in instructional models and offering practical guidance for talent cultivation. Finally, it extends the concept of social service by actively establishing partnerships with foreign universities, enterprises, and research institutions. By providing students with more opportunities for practical engagement, it helps them enhance their capabilities through experience and strengthens their competitive edge in the global job market.

3. Research Process

3.1. *Defining the Characteristics of International Talent Cultivation in Local Universities*

Through the method of literature analysis, this study organized and summarized successful experiences in international talent cultivation both domestically and internationally. The findings indicate that strengthening international talent cultivation not only helps faculty and students broaden their global horizons and promotes academic exchange and cooperation, but also enhances the standing of local universities in global educational competition. National strategic guidance emphasizes that "education, technology, and talent are the foundational and strategic supports for modernization." This underscores that in their internationalization process, local universities should integrate regional characteristics and disciplinary strengths, actively align with national strategic needs, and form a unique international talent cultivation system by innovating their training models [2].

3.2. *Analysis of the Current Status and Challenges of International Talent Cultivation*

3.2.1. Current Status of International Talent Cultivation in Local Universities

This study selected several local universities and conducted online questionnaire surveys among students, as well as in-depth interviews with 10 faculty members with varying years of teaching experience. The research focused on three dimensions-internationalization of curriculum goals, curriculum content, and curriculum implementation-to understand their views and collect suggestions.

- 1) Internationalization of curriculum goals is a key indicator of whether a university's educational objectives align with international standards.
- 2) Internationalization of curriculum content reflects whether international elements are integrated into the syllabus and whether student learning needs are met.
- 3) Internationalization of curriculum implementation examines teaching methods and tools to determine if they help students improve cross-cultural communication skills and broaden their global vision.

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 493 valid responses were recovered, representing a recovery and validity rate of 98.6%. Analysis of the 493 samples showed that 52.63% were male and 47.37% were female. The majority of respondents were from Economics and Management disciplines, followed by Medicine and Education. These data provide primary materials for an objective and comprehensive analysis. The interviews with 10 teachers also followed these three dimensions to gain deeper insights into their opinions and the practical difficulties they encounter in teaching.

3.2.2. Student Perspectives

(1) Internationalization of Curriculum Goals

Based on the analysis of curriculum goals, the study focused on the question: "Do you think the courses implemented by your university have clear international talent cultivation goals?" The results showed that 64.21% of students were "unclear" about whether their courses had such goals; 23.58% believed the goals reflected international cultivation but "not prominently"; and only 12.21% believed the university possessed "clear" internationalized curriculum goals (Figure 1). This indicates that in current local university practices, there is either a lack of clear internationalization objectives or a vague perception among students regarding these goals. It also reflects insufficient curriculum planning, specifically a failure to closely integrate course objectives with international talent cultivation, leading to a low perception of curriculum value among students [3].

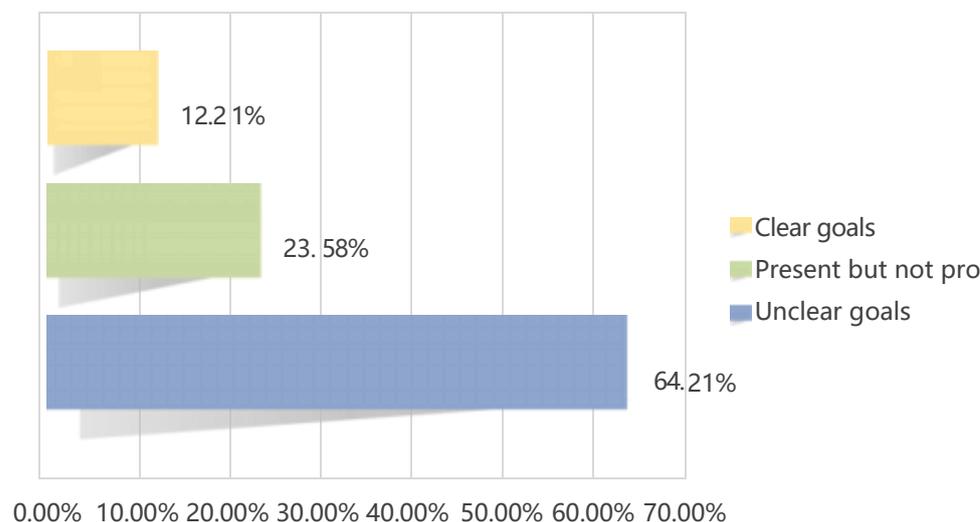


Figure 1. Investigation on the internationalization of curriculum goals.

(2) Internationalization of Curriculum Content

In the analysis of the internationalization of curriculum content, a survey was conducted around the question: "Do you think the university needs to offer additional courses with international characteristics beyond general education subjects like English and Computer Science?" The results showed that 71.35% of students believe the institution should increase the number of courses with international features to broaden global

perspectives and cultivate cross-cultural communication skills. Meanwhile, 18.29% of students felt that the existing curriculum is sufficient to meet their developmental needs, and 10.36% remained neutral (Figure 2). These findings indicate that the majority of students have high expectations for internationalized curriculum content, hoping that the university can help them enrich their knowledge systems and expand their global horizons through more diverse course offerings. Therefore, in the process of international talent cultivation, local universities should take student learning needs into account and develop curriculum content or practical activities with international characteristics to help them enhance their future competitiveness in the job market.

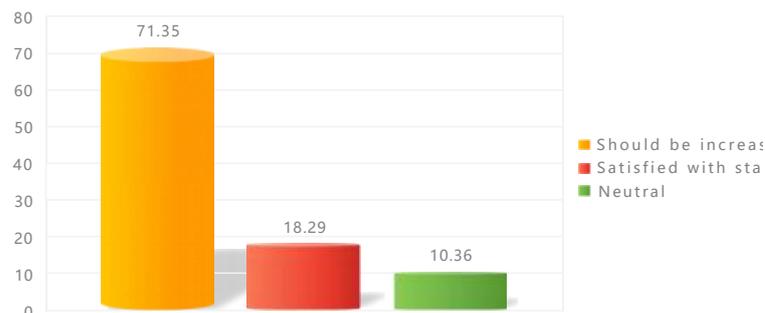


Figure 2. Survey on the internationalization of curriculum content.

(3) Internationalization of Curriculum Implementation

The survey on the internationalization of curriculum implementation focused on "whether the university organizes faculty and students to participate in international academic conferences and seminars, and whether advanced teaching equipment and methods are employed." The results indicate that 44.31% of students believe the university has achieved this; 41.30% believe that curriculum implementation can be further improved by increasing internationalized content; and 14.39% stated that the university has not taken effective measures to promote the internationalization of curriculum implementation (Figure 3). These data suggest that there are significant deficiencies in the curriculum implementation process of local universities. Most notably, there is a lack of organized international academic exchange activities and a low level of innovation in teaching methods. This limits students' access to cutting-edge international knowledge and practical experience, thereby hindering the development of their global perspectives.

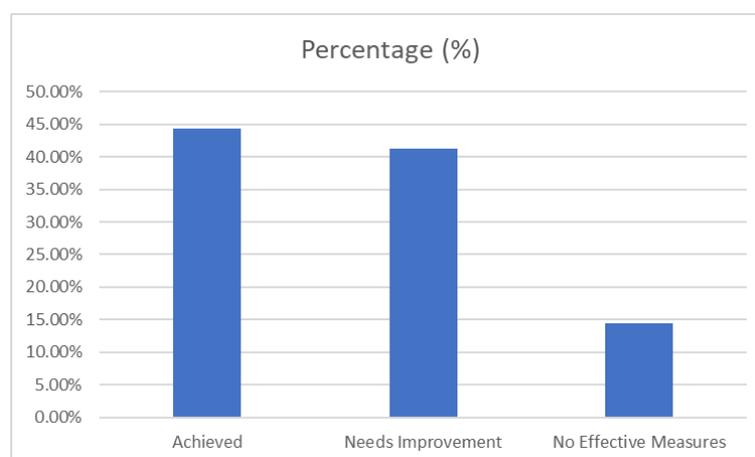


Figure 3. Survey on the Internationalization of Curriculum Implementation.

3.2.3. Teacher Perspectives

To achieve a holistic understanding of international talent cultivation, this study complemented student surveys with in-depth faculty interviews focused on three dimensions: curriculum goals, content, and implementation. Regarding curriculum goals, faculty consensus indicates that while institutional objectives for global vision and bilingual proficiency are explicitly defined, a notable misalignment persists between these strategic targets and actual pedagogical innovation. This often results in a degree of programmatic uniformity (homogenization) that fails to meet the dynamic requirements of the global labor market, as evidenced by students who possess strong theoretical foundations but lack a competitive edge in international recruitment.

In terms of curriculum content, the current framework is characterized by an asymmetrical reliance on imported resources. Faculty noted that while the introduction of foreign textbooks and experts facilitates global exposure, there is a critical need to transition from a "one-way acquisition" model to a reciprocal exchange that also promotes local academic contributions globally. Furthermore, the current English-centric approach could be further optimized by integrating more diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives through practical simulations, such as international negotiations.

Regarding implementation, institutions have increasingly utilized "smart classrooms" and digital infrastructure to enhance instructional efficiency. The recruitment of high-caliber international faculty and the use of bilingual materials have also strengthened students' communicative competencies. However, the synthesis of these interviews suggests that a developmental gap remains. The current internationalization efforts are primarily "import-oriented," leading to a decoupling of theoretical instruction from practical application. To overcome these structural imbalances, local universities must shift toward a more integrated ecosystem that balances the introduction of external expertise with the global promotion of local resources, supported by refined instructional methods and robust institutional frameworks [4].

3.3. Challenges Faced by Local Universities in International Talent Cultivation

The comprehensive analysis of survey data and faculty interview feedback underscores several critical developmental gaps and structural misalignments that warrant further investigation. These multidimensional challenges, which span from high-level strategic planning to the practical nuances of classroom instruction, provide a nuanced perspective on the current state of internationalization within local universities. Consequently, the following sections identify the core bottlenecks that currently constrain the optimization of international talent cultivation.

3.3.1. Limited Adaptability of Curriculum Teaching to the Demands for International Talents

While local universities recognize the importance of internationalization and have implemented measures like bilingual teaching, many efforts remain superficial and fail to reach the core of talent cultivation [5].

First, curriculum design often overemphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of global vision, cross-cultural exchange, and innovative thinking. The integration of international elements is frequently limited to the rigid adoption of foreign textbooks without a refined analysis of students' actual learning needs.

Second, beyond a solid theoretical foundation, international talent cultivation requires the enhancement of practical and cross-cultural skills. Some local universities have failed to build platforms that align with international standards, depriving students of opportunities for international exchange and hindering the development of their practical and innovative capabilities.

3.3.2. Structural Gaps Between Curriculum Systems and Academic Requirements for International Talent Cultivation

Cultivating international talents requires students to take additional courses (e.g., global languages, cross-cultural communication skills) or participate in overseas internships.

To meet these goals, some universities establish dual-degree programs with foreign partners. However, implementing these arrangements presents logistical complexities. As internships often last three to six months and involve extensive placement cycles, coordination challenges arise between existing academic timelines and the intensive requirements of international talent programs.

Furthermore, while dual-degree systems provide broader academic horizons, the intense curriculum and heavy workload can lead to students having a weak grasp of professional knowledge or struggling to balance domestic and international study progress. Differences in educational systems and curriculum designs between countries also create obstacles for students when transitioning between learning environments.

4. Pathways for International Talent Cultivation in Local Universities

4.1. *Serving National Strategies and Establishing Clear Cultivation Goals*

Under the trend of globalization, local universities, as vital hubs for cultivating high-quality talents, must align their internationalization goals with national strategic frameworks. National strategic directives provide a clear direction for local universities, requiring the cultivation of composite talents with a global vision, cross-cultural communication skills, and international competitiveness as a primary goal.

First, universities should leverage "curricular exploration" to strengthen research on international communication theories with distinctive national characteristics [6]. Under the current national development framework, local universities should strive to build international academic platforms that integrate global vision with local wisdom. By organizing international seminars and publishing research reports or specialized papers, institutions can enhance their academic influence and discourse power in the global arena, providing a solid foundation for the implementation of external strategies [7]. Additionally, local universities should actively introduce advanced foreign academic resources and research methods, integrating them into local practices to form a unique theoretical system [8].

Second, talent cultivation goals should be adjusted and optimized in line with national strategic needs. Guided by international cooperation initiatives such as the "Belt and Road," local universities can strengthen partnerships with participating countries. By offering internationalized courses in economics, culture, and law, they can train talents equipped for cross-cultural engagement [9].

Finally, there should be a focus on cultivating innovative thinking and practical abilities. By launching innovation and entrepreneurship courses and competitions, universities can ignite students' creative drive and encourage them to transform knowledge into tangible results. This not only meets the demands of the international market but also enhances students' employment competitiveness and social adaptability.

4.2. *Focusing on Value Guidance and Promoting the Connotative Transformation of Curricula*

Based on your requirements, I have organized the text into three cohesive, professional paragraphs in English. This version avoids excessive headings and integrates the technical terms naturally into the narrative flow:

International talent cultivation serves as a vital supplement to traditional internationalization concepts and offers an effective avenue for local universities to demonstrate their core values. Consequently, these institutions must pivot away from outdated education models that prioritize the mere scale of courses and student enrollment numbers. Instead, they should drive a comprehensive curriculum

transformation through conceptual innovation, strategic top-level design, and the substantial deepening of educational content, shifting the focus from quantitative growth to qualitative excellence [10].

At the heart of this transformation is conceptual innovation and the building of a shared consensus. This process is anchored in a core philosophy where the university provides strategic leadership, individual colleges act as the primary operational bodies, and academia remains the central theme. Within this framework, scholars serve as the driving force for academic excellence and international influence, while students are positioned as the central protagonists of the learning process. Such an integrated approach is instrumental in accurately positioning internationalized education, fostering students' global visions, and ultimately enhancing the institution's international academic standing.

To ensure sustainable progress, universities must implement scientific top-level designs that align local institutional conditions with global educational trends. By defining clear goals, standards, and implementation pathways, universities can ensure that the internationalization process remains structured and purposeful. This must be accompanied by the deepening of curriculum content and the strengthening of academic foundations. By leveraging disciplinary strengths to collaborate with domestic and international partners—including universities, enterprises, and government agencies—local institutions can introduce top-tier disciplines and cutting-edge technologies. Aligning with world-class standards and promoting interdisciplinary innovation will ultimately optimize the academic layout and significantly bolster the university's overall research capacity and talent cultivation quality.

4.3. Extending Services and Increasing the Impact of International Talent Cultivation

Guided by national strategic objectives for the new era, local universities are advancing systemic modernization and global engagement, positioning themselves as pivotal hubs for international talent cultivation. By leveraging global education governance frameworks and regional development initiatives, these institutions are expanding their social service functions through strategic alliances with international enterprises and research bodies, thereby driving systemic optimization through the deep integration of industry, academia, and research. From a student-centric perspective, participation in diverse international exchange programs—such as overseas internships, academic visits, and global volunteering—is actively encouraged to broaden horizons and cultivate essential cross-cultural competencies, linguistic proficiency, and collaborative problem-solving abilities within immersive cultural environments. Parallel to this, faculty development is enhanced by providing opportunities for participation in international collaborative projects and exposure to cutting-edge educational philosophies, which enriches pedagogical quality and facilitates the practical application of research. To reinforce this developmental trajectory, local universities should increase strategic investment in internationalized faculty growth—including robust financial support, refined career pathways, and optimized evaluation mechanisms—thereby attracting high-caliber talent and elevating the collective excellence and global competitiveness of the academic staff.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the internationalization of talent cultivation is not only a response to global educational trends but also a strategic necessity for local universities to achieve high-quality development. This study reveals that while local universities have made significant strides in adopting international resources, there remains a notable gap between strategic goals and actual pedagogical outcomes. Issues such as the procedural implementation of curricula and the misalignment between existing academic systems and international requirements merit further systematic refinement.

To navigate these bottlenecks, local universities must transition from a model of "quantitative expansion" to one of "intrinsic quality." This involves a multi-dimensional approach: integrating national strategic needs into institutional goals, empowering faculty and students as the core participants of internationalization, and fostering a balanced ecosystem of "bringing in" external expertise and "sharing" local academic contributions. By optimizing curriculum structures and strengthening global partnerships, local universities can effectively cultivate high-caliber talents with a global vision and local perspective, ultimately contributing to the sustainable and harmonious evolution of the higher education landscape. Composite talents who possess both deep local roots and a broad global perspective, ultimately elevating their position in the global educational landscape.

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