

A review of research on intercultural communication among international students in China

Hu Wenhan¹, Wei Qing¹, Wan Jia¹, Liao Caizhi^{1,*}

¹Normal College, Chengdu University, Chengdu, Sichuan, 610000, China

*Corresponding author

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Abstract: This paper takes 51 academic papers related to intercultural communication among international students in the past 20 years (2004-2024) as the research object. Firstly, data visualization analysis is carried out on them ^[1] to present the current situation of research in this field in terms of publication year, research institution, author name, author unit, journal name, keyword co-occurrence, etc. Then, based on the content analysis of relevant topics, the research contents are classified and studied from the perspectives of nationality, major, education background and comprehensive factors of international students in China ^[2] : Several modes and promotion methods in intercultural communication are proposed according to different nationalities; From the perspective of various professional categories, let us identify the existing problems and propose strategies to address them; From an academic perspective, let us understand the status quo and influencing factors of intercultural communication among international students; From the perspective of comprehensive factors, specific concepts and improvement strategies are proposed. In addition, this paper also tries to put forward the prospect of future research from macro and micro perspectives: it hopes to improve the research by studying the trend of transnational mobility, the development of internationalization of higher education, and how ethnic groups and families affect the cross-cultural communication of international students in China.

1. Introduction

The Outline of the National Medium - and Long-Term Plan for Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020) proposes a wide range ^[3] and multi-level educational exchange and cooperation ^[4]. Since March 1952, students from Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and other Eastern European countries began to study in China. In 2013, the country put forward the development idea of "The Belt and Road", and Chinese students in China showed a double-digit growth trend ^[5]. According to the Report on the Development of Overseas Study in China (2022), the number of international students in China is increasing year by year ^[6]. Receiving international students in China is not only an important part of international education, but also a carrier of Chinese culture transmission ^[7], which is also conducive to improving the international competitiveness of China's education. In recent years, under the premise of frequent global public health events, the training of international students in China has suffered a certain blow. Coupled with the changes in

international relations and the tension of public opinion, the emotions and attitudes of international students in China have also undergone certain changes ^[8]. Promoting the cross-cultural communication of international students from the ideological level can help them cultivate the correct mentality of respecting cultural differences and enhance their psychological robustness. Therefore, this paper aims to sort out the research results made by experts in this field, analyze the status quo and characteristics of the research on intercultural communication of international students in China, and make a qualitative analysis of its research theme and representative findings, with a view to providing references for scholars' follow-up research ^[9].

2. Selection of the research literature

In this study, relevant literatures from March 1, 2004 to March 1, 2024 were retrieved from CNKI, VIP, Wanfang and other databases. The search keywords included "international students in China", and the search results showed 14,774 articles. Then, the subject word "intercultural communication" was used to search, and repeated articles, scientific and technological reports, investigation reports and papers unrelated to content were eliminated. 51 relevant research papers were finally obtained through screening, including 47 journal papers and 4 academic dissertations.

3. Literature analysis of the research papers

The basic information of literature generally includes publication year, author name, author unit, journal name, content sorting, etc. Taking the above categories as indicators, the comprehensive quantitative statistical research on the papers in this research field can objectively present the research status in this field.

3.1. Annual trend of paper publication

The number of published papers is an important index reflecting the output of scientific research. With the help of relevant data analysis software, the distribution of academic journals and dissertations published in the year from March 1, 2004 to March 1, 2024 related to cross-cultural communication studies of international students in China can be obtained. As can be seen from Figure 1, the research in this field began in 2008, and by 2023, the research on intercultural exchange of international students in China shows a gradual upward trend in general. It can be seen that since the introduction of Study in China Plan, the education of studying in China has entered a stage of standardized development, quality and efficiency improvement, and the scale of studying abroad has expanded rapidly. However, it gradually increased after 2015 and reached its peak in 2021. The research literatures from 2015 to 2021 accounted for 58.82% (30 articles) of the total number of published papers. It can be seen that the research on intercultural communication of international students in China has attracted more and more scholars' attention in recent years.

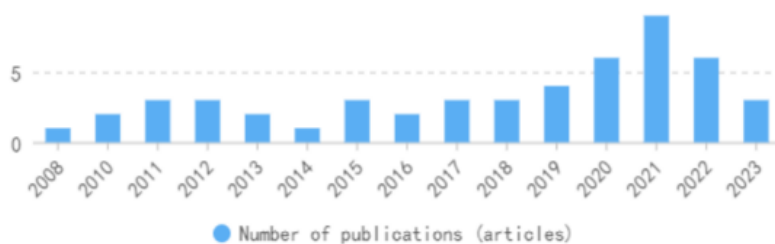


Figure 1: Number of publications from 2008 to 2023.

3.2. Analysis of the authors and institutions

3.2.1. The researchers are mainly from universities

The authors of the 51 research documents are all from higher education institutions. Table 1 lists the first authors with more than 2 articles, all of which are researchers from various universities, including graduate students, administrators, teachers, etc. Table 2 lists the research institutions whose frequency is published more than two times. As can be seen from the paper, the research institutions engaged in cross-cultural exchange for international students in China are mainly universities. According to the work or study units of the paper authors, most of the researchers are from the Ministry of Education, and the researchers, faculty members or graduate students designated by the training institutions for overseas students will make quantitative statistics of the issuing institutions, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The first author who has published 2 or more research articles.

Author	Number of published articles	Percentage	Frequency of citation	The institution
Chen Yue	2	3.92	4	Nantong University
Liang Zehong	2	3.92	5	Guilin University of Technology
Lu Jie	2	3.92	8	Nanjing Xiaozhuang University
Qi Hua	5	9.80	263	Beijing Normal University
Li Tengzi	2	3.92	11	Chongqing Normal University
Wang Chungang	3	5.88	21	Jiamusi University
Liu Xingxing	2	3.92	7	Wuxi Vocational and Technical College
Du Keyun	3	5.88	28	Zhejiang University
Chen Ye	4	7.84	14	Zhejiang University of Traditional Chinese Medicine

3.2.2. The research institutions are mainly higher education institutions

Table 2: Institutions involved in the publication of research literature twice or more.

Publishing agency	Participate in publication frequency
Beijing Normal University	7
Renmin University of China	3
Huaqiao University	3
Tongji University	2
Hubei University	2
Jiamusi University	2
Zhejiang Chinese Medical University	2

3.2.3. Analysis of source journals

Among the 51 research articles, 4 master and doctoral papers were excluded, and the remaining 47 articles were published in 42 different journals with different priorities, including education, policy, economy, language, medicine, etc. Among them, there were 5 CSSCI source journals,

accounting for 10.63% of the total academic journals, while 42 non-CSSCI source journals papers, accounting for 89.37% of the total academic journals. The names and journal contents of CSSCI source journals are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Analysis of the CSSCI source journals.

Journal name	Number of papers published	Proportion
Journal of Hubei University	1	2.12%
Ideological education research	1	2.12%
Chinese Journal of Education	1	2.12%
Education comments	1	2.12%
Language teaching and research	1	2.12%

(Note: "Proportion" refers to the proportion of the journal volume to the total academic journal volume)

It can be seen that the proportion of CSSCI source journals included in the cross-cultural exchange of international students is small, and the attention that has been paid to this research is not high. But it is worth noting that, in addition to the CSSCI source journals included papers, the international public relations "China national expo" the Chinese education " journal of traditional Chinese medicine management the world education information and other national journals and the industry has certain influence included a total of six students cross-cultural exchange papers, about 12.76% of the total academic journals contained. It can be predicted that "cross-cultural exchange in the field of international students", as a major development trend in international education, is attracting increasing attention.

3.2.4. Co-occurrence analysis of literature key words

Figure 2 analyzes the keyword co-occurrence of 51 retrieved papers by applying Citespace, from which it can be seen that the research mainly involves the themes of cultural identity, cultural adaptation, cultural tradition, cultural curriculum, and cultural belonging in cross-cultural exchanges of international students coming to China, and also pays attention to the themes of higher vocational colleges and universities, education management, barriers to adaptation, and the Belt and Road, the whole research covers a wide range of topics and a relatively broad theme.

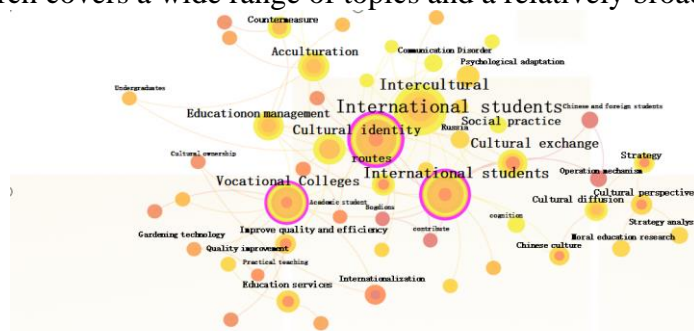


Figure 2: Atlas of keyword co-occurrence analysis in the research literature.

3.2.5. Main contents of the research

Through the literature review, it is found that in recent years, the articles on the cross-cultural exchange of international students in China have a wide range of contents, involving different professional groups, according to the discussion of international students in different countries, different educational levels, and the perspective of comprehensive factors.

3.2.5.1. The nationality of international students is divided as the direction

Through interviews and questionnaires on Korean students, the researchers found that the students had three different cultural modes to adapt to the opportunities and challenges faced by cross-cultural exchanges, namely "separate", "transitional" and "integrated"^[10]. Through the analysis of the survey data of Japanese students in China, the author concluded that to help international students adapt to cross-cultural exchanges should start from the following. First, cultivate their positive attitude. Second, strengthen the help and support for international students in Japan, and encourage students to actively participate in various cultural activities^[11]. In addition, according to the investigation and study of cross-cultural exchange between European and American students in China, the cultural adaptation process is divided into "sightseeing psychological stage", "severe cultural shock stage" and "basic cultural adaptation stage". At the same time, the targeted solution strategies are summarized in the teaching work and daily management^[12].

3.2.5.2. Research from the professional perspective of international students

From the psychological perspective, the problems among medical students focus on the following aspects, such as food preference, communication and communication with different cultural backgrounds, whether they get trust and understanding from the other side, and adaptation to the local natural environment^[13]. The reasons for this are cross-cultural sensitivity and attachment anxiety. However, the researchers also found that the happiness and positive emotional level of medical students was better than that of Chinese medical students, especially the difference between women and men was significant, and the positive psychological level of women was lower than that of men^[14]. Some scholars also put forward both internal and external improvement strategies to improve the phenomenon. First, foreign schools should establish the idea of student-centered subject status. To improve teachers' teaching level, conduct comprehensive and deep study on teaching knowledge, leaders optimize teacher management system, and reform teaching materials and curriculum^[15].

3.2.5.3. from the educational level analysis

Several valuable findings are obtained through intensive research of short-term overseas students and preparatory students in China. The overall condition of preparatory students is good and they are satisfied with their life in China. There are gender differences in the cross-cultural adaptation of the subjects, and girls are better than boys, and there is almost no difference in region and age. In addition, in the short term, European and American international students in China are mainly influenced by many factors, such as gender, age, Chinese language level, professional background, study abroad time and cross-cultural experience. Faced with the problem of cultural adaptation in cross-cultural communication, international students may experience the dual process of both mental and physical adaptation, and their adaptation speed also varies from person to person. In order to help students in China to smoothly transition to the cultural adaptation stage, they need to have a more inclusive and open understanding of Chinese culture and local lifestyle, and strive to understand the basic situation of the current Chinese society with a more positive attitude on the basis of improving their Chinese proficiency^[16].

3.2.5.4. Perspective of comprehensive factors

From the perspective of the current situation of cross-cultural communication and management countermeasures, researchers believe that a lot of time and energy is needed to invest in the

adaptation of international students. Managers should not only pay attention to the study and life adaptation of international students, but also pay attention to their internal mental health^[17]. Some scholars put forward the concept of "cultural intelligence" based on the perspective of internal factors and external environmental influence of international students, and believe that the adaptation of cross-cultural communication among international students is closely related to it^[18]. Some scholars also put forward two improvement strategies based on the three different cultural adaptation models of Korean students in China: First, make full use of the communication network resources of "integrated" students and Korean students in China. Second, the new management mode combining separation and homogeneity.

4. Conclusion

In this study, 51 academic papers published in China Knowledge, Wanfang, and Wipro in the last 20 years on the topic of "international students coming to China" and "intercultural communication" were analyzed by using literature analysis, synthesizing the contents of previous studies and data to analyze the publication time of the literature on intercultural communication of international students coming to China, studying the main authors, research institutions, research dynamics, and deeply analyzing the current research hotspots. We synthesized the previous research content and data to analyze the publication time of the current literature on intercultural communication of international students in China, studied the main authors, research institutes, and research dynamics of the topic, analyzed the current research hotspots in depth, and visualized the dynamics of the current academic research results on intercultural communication of international students in China^[19], and looked forward to the future research:

From the macro level, despite the rapid development of education in China, the research on the high quality of studies is insufficient, and the research on the current problems and achievements is concentrated, but less research on the trend of transnational flow, internationalization of higher education and policy making.

From the micro level analysis, although the scholars from the country, education level, professional category, comprehensive factors has carried out some research, but less involves the difference between students origin and the Chinese culture of contrast and its influence in the home in the process of cultural adaptation, after graduation to adapt to and employment situation, work to adapt problems, etc., therefore, the micro level research can be more specific, such as specific national cultural differences, customs differences, ideas, and the cross-cultural adaptation to problems is how to affect, so as to discuss the specific strategies.

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