

The Implementation of “Internationalization at Home” In a Chinese Research University: An Empirical Study from the Student Perspective

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Abstract: The disruption of traditional internationalization of higher education due to the pandemic has arisen more awareness of internationalization at home, an effective pathway surpassing spatial mobility. This study aims at depicting the implementation of internationalization at home in one of the top Chinese research universities and revealing the influential factors that affect students' participation in international-related activities. This study conducted online questionnaires and adopted 174 high-quality responses. The results show that: (1) students' global cognition and the university's international atmosphere and resources have a significant positive impact on students' participation in international activities. (2) their global competence and the understanding and basic knowledge of internationalization at home have a non-significant but positive effect. (3) however, students' global awareness and teachers' global competence have a non-significant negative impact on students' behavior. Based on these results, the university still needs to find ways to convert students' enthusiasm into actual participation, and a higher level of internationalized faculty is highlighted.

Keywords: Internationalization at home, international higher education system, university students, survey research.

1. INTRODUCTION

The process of internationalization has boosted the development of higher education (Jibeen and Khan, 2015). However, since 2020, the internationalization of higher education has been disrupted due to the pandemic (Zhou, 2020; Ma *et al.*, 2021; Bista *et al.*, 2021). With border closure, travel restrictions, and rising conservatism and anti-globalization, international mobility has witnessed a precipitous decline (OECD, 2022). Thus, it is crucial to figure out a new way that is less dependent on the spacial mobility of people to support the internationalization of higher education (Zhang and Liu, 2017). The redefinition of the internationalization of higher education is more urgent for developing countries (Xu and Cai, 2021), as most of them define internationalization as Westernization (Wang and Gao, 2000). However, the opportunities to study in Western countries are only available or affordable to those from high socioeconomic backgrounds. The majority of students have limited access to develop their international competencies which are significant to everyone nowadays. In this case, the new revolution of higher education in developing countries contains developing a more independent internationalized pathway and getting every student into this process.

1.1 Definitions

Internationalization at home (IaH) provides a practical theoretical basis referring to involving the majority of ‘home students’ in the internationalization process and making them prepared for a highly connected international world. As an academic concept, IaH was first developed by Nilsson at the spring conference of the European Association for International Education (EAIE) in 1999. It was initially defined as any international-related activity except students' cross-border mobility (Nilsson, 1999). Based on Nilsson's understanding, Wächter (2003) notes that two pillars of IaH are the understanding beyond mobility as well as teaching and learning in multi-cultural environments. Knight (2006) specified its definition as activities that develop students' global competencies, intercultural skills and international understanding, including curriculum and programs, teaching/learning processes, extra-curricular activities, liaison with local cultural/ethnic groups, and research or scholarly activity. This classification extends the original definition of IaH and draws attention to informal educative and cross-cultural activities (Li and Niu, 2015). While this classification was doubted by

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Beelen and Jones (2015), who pointed out that the core and foundation of IaH is curriculum.

IaH has evolved significantly, moving beyond curriculum design to encompass a wide range of activities, including language training, intercultural communication, and student mobility (Beelen & Jones, 2015). This shift reflects a broader trend towards comprehensive internationalization, which seeks to embed international and intercultural dimensions across all aspects of university life.

1.2 Policies and strategies

Besides theoretical discussions, IaH is put into practice in many European countries. *The EAIE Barometer: Internationalisation in Europe* (2015) shows that 56% of European universities have applied IaH into their strategies. 64% of European higher education institutions have reported the application of IaH (Sursock, 2015). For instance, the University of Southern Denmark published *Principles for the internationalisation strategy* in 2018, which adopted IaH into their international development plan (Hurford, 2021). Lahti University in Finland also integrated the development and internationalization of the Lahti region into future education, and proposed specific strategies to cope with fierce competition at home and abroad (Dang, 2015). In this case, IaH as an academic concept and a practical pathway is of long-term sustainability (Wang and Yang, 2022).

1.3 Previous studies in Chinese contexts

Although international research has witnessed more than 20 years, Chinese scholars started to conduct research on IaH in 2016, when the first Chinese published journal article discussing the concept and its practical significance was published by Jiang. Zhang and Liu (2017) conducted a comprehensive literature review of IaH and analyzed the motivation and strategies for carrying out IaH in Chinese higher education institutions. While Zhang (2018), Zhong (2019) and Huang (2019) turn to a more practical focus on the implementing conditions of Chinese universities. The attention on IaH has reached a climax due to the epidemic, and the necessity of applying IaH has been emphasized (Cai, 2021; Fang, 2022). Empirical studies have thus increased. For instance, Qin *et al.*, (2021) explored the practical path of IaH in local medical schools. Students' voice has shown in empirical research on IaH (Cen 2022; Li and Yang, 2022).

1.4 Research gaps

Based on international studies, most of them have investigated the conditions to apply IaH, such as policies, strategies, administrations, and infrastructure. While there is little attention on the evaluation of IaH implementation, including home students' learning outcomes and experience. Students' voice is ignored and little empirical evidence can support the further development of the IaH concept and practice.

From the perspectives of Chinese contexts, the understanding of IaH is limited. Many Chinese scholars have added the notion of IaH into the grand international proposal without clarifying its definition, implementing conditions, and specific actions. The current studies pay more attention to the background knowledge related to IaH, which is largely based on European settings. With insufficient efforts in implementing and reflecting on IaH practice in Chinese higher education institutions, it is difficult to develop indigenized IaH theory and make theoretical or practical breakthroughs. In addition, students' voice is still weak in previous studies.

Thus, this study intends to illustrate how IaH is being implemented in one of the top research universities in China and to identify the key variables that influence students' involvement in international-related activities. This study is structured as follows. After the introduction, the second part moves on to the methodology, including the instrument development, model design and the sampling strategy. The third section presents the results based on data collection and it is followed by the discussion and conclusion.

2. METHOD

This study adopts a case study design via a quantitative research approach. According to Stake (1995), case study research is oriented by research questions and is concerned with the complexity and uniqueness of the particular case. Case study design is the best choice as the internationalization process differs from country to country and the level of internationalization varies from university to university. Correspondingly, students' experience is shaped by the complexity and specificity of their campus. Another strongly supported evidence is that case study design is the most commonly used research design in IaH empirical studies (Nillson 2003; Bergknut 2006; Dang 2015; Hurford 2021). In this case, this study selects one of the top 20 Chinese research universities with the approval of ethic application by its faculty.

2.1 Instrument development

This study adopts online questionnaires as the research instruments to explore the impact of IaH implementation on university students. Based on the definition of IaH, the structure of the questionnaire is divided into several dimensions: students' global cognition, global competence, global awareness, their understanding and basic knowledge of internationalization at home, the university's international atmosphere and resources, and teachers' global competence.

The development of instruments mainly draws upon the questionnaires developed by Ren (2021) and Wu (2020), referring to the adoptions of the *University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES)*, Assessment Scale of College Students'

International Competence compiled by Liu and Wu. (2015), and *Survey on the Impact of Z university undergraduates' Family Economic Level on Social Capital* used by Wang (2017), combined with the "Iceberg Model of Undergraduate International Literacy" and student development theory. The reliability coefficients of these scales and the influencing factor scale in each dimension are all above 0.7.

Combining these scales and the characteristics of IaH, the researchers compiled the closed-ended questionnaire *Students' International Literacy and Its Influencing Factors in Chinese Research Universities Survey*. After pilot testing and multiple modifications, the final questionnaire instruments cover three modules: (1) Basic information, including the grade (undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhDs), the faculty, academic performance (optional), English levels (national college entrance examination scores, College English Test 4/6, IELTS, TOEFL, GRE etc.). (2) A total of 31 questions using a 5-point Likert scale refer to students' international literacy from the perspectives of students' global cognition, global competence, global awareness, and their understanding and basic knowledge of internationalization at home. (3) A total of 15 questions using a 5-point Likert scale referring to the influencing factors from the perspectives of the university's international atmosphere and resources, teachers' global competence, and individual participation.

2.2 Data collection

Following the principle of convenient sampling, this study distributed questionnaires to students in a Chinese research university through social media and campus communities, and received 205 responses. However, in the process of collecting data, the researchers found that there were questionnaire responses from non-target groups, which would greatly affect the scientificity of this study. Therefore, researchers adopted the following three ways to ensure the quality of data. Firstly, verify the student identity of the subjects when collecting their responses. Secondly, check the IP address of the online submission. Considering the data collection was carried out in the middle of the semester, all students were supposed to stay on campus. Thus, the researchers removed those responses whose IP addresses were not in Beijing or Guangdong province. Thirdly, it generally takes at least 3 minutes to complete all the 50 questions and the responses completed in 3 minutes were removed. In the end, a total of 174 high-quality questionnaires were selected as the research data.

3. ANALYTIC MODEL

This section demonstrates the model design based on the questionnaire framework and data collection.

3.1 Result variable

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of IaH practices on talent cultivation at this Chinese research university. The outcomes are reflected in students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness, and participation in international or cross-cultural activities. Among these factors, students' behaviors are the most direct and measurable indicator. Therefore, the result variable of this paper is the students' participating behaviors in international activities, which corresponds to six questions in the questionnaire, including "I have actively engaged in communication with foreign students on campus." "I have voluntarily participated in the overseas exchange programs." "I have voluntarily participated in international academic conferences or forums." "I have voluntarily taken courses related to the politics, culture, history, or economic development of other countries." "I have taken courses that are conducted in bilingual or foreign language." "I have voluntarily joined international clubs, associations, or student organizations." As the questions are designed in the 5-point Likert scale, the higher scores represent the higher level of engagement in international activities. In this case, the researchers weighted the sum total of the responses to these six questions to generate the result variable "student participation".

3.2 Explanatory variables

According to the research questions and questionnaire design, the core explanatory variables of this study include students' global cognition, global competence, global awareness, and their understanding and basic knowledge of internationalization at home; the university's international atmosphere and resources; and teachers' global competence. Since all of the explanatory variables are comprised of multiple questions, factor analysis is conducted to generate coalescent variables based on the factor scores.

Explanatory variable 1: students' global cognition

This indicator refers to questions 1 to 9 in the second module of the survey. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.8890, and the reliability is above 0.6, which allows us to attempt factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($p < 0.05$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure is 0.887, indicating the data is suitable for factor analysis. The principal component analysis is conducted, yielding two principal components with eigenvalues above 1, which explain 66.38% of the standardized variance, and all uniqueness values are below 0.6. Based on the data results and the scree plot, orthogonal rotation is performed on the two principal components, resulting in a cumulative variance contribution rate of 66.38% for the two principal components. The rotated factor loading matrix is shown in the table below, according to which a new variable "students' global cognition" is generated by the formula:

$$(0.4427f1rz+0.216f2rz)/0.6638.$$

Explanatory variable 2: students' global competence

This variable covers questions 10 to 12 in the second module of the survey. The factor analysis could be conducted considering the reliability is over 0.6, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.8676, the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($p < 0.05$) and the KMO measure is 0.731. The principal component analysis is

conducted, yielding one principal component (uniqueness value is below 0.6) explaining 79.08% of the standardized variance. The rotated factor loading matrix is shown in Table 2, according to which a new variable "students' global competence" is generated.

Table 1: The rotated factor loading matrix for explanatory variable "students' global cognition"

Code	Question	Factor1	Factor2
Q2-1	I am familiar with the cultural traditions, manners and customs of at least one foreign country.	0.6245	0.4438
Q2-2	I understand legal systems in many different countries around the world.	0.8418	0.0278
Q2-3	I understand the political and economic systems of various countries globally.	0.8366	0.1705
Q2-4	I can briefly outline the historical development of at least one foreign country.	0.6724	0.3715
Q2-5	I understand that globalization is an inevitable trend in the process of social development.	0.0332	0.8657
Q2-6	I understand the role of international organizations in society.	0.3094	0.8026
Q2-7	I always keep up with international news, and express my own opinions.	0.7171	0.2898
Q2-8	I am familiar with international campus life.	0.7536	0.1338
Q2-9	I understand international rules and conventions.	0.7715	0.2989

Table 2: The rotated factor loading matrix for explanatory variable "students' global competence"

Code	Question	Factor1
Q2-10	Besides my mother tongue, I can master at least one. foreign language in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing.	0.8697
Q2-11	I can easily obtain the information I need from foreign websites.	0.9069
Q2-12	I can read foreign literature fluently.	0.8909

Explanatory variable 3: students' global awareness

Corresponding to questions 13 to 31 of the second part of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.9096 and the reliability is over 0.6. Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($p < 0.05$) and the KMO measure is 0.894, which allow factor analysis. According to principal component analysis, there are four principal components (eigenvalues > 1), which

explain 65.53% of the standardized variance (uniqueness values < 0.6). The orthogonal rotation is performed on the four principal components, resulting in a cumulative variance contribution rate of 65.53%. The variable "students' global awareness" is thus generated by the formula:

$$(0.1846 * f1 + 0.1678 * f2 + 0.1520 * f3 + 0.1509 * f4) / 0.6553.$$

Table 3: The rotated factor loading matrix for explanatory variable "students' global awareness"

Code	Question	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
Q2-13	When communicating with foreigners, I am able to stand in their shoes.	0.6544	-0.1279	0.2246	0.0313
Q2-14	I am willing to experience the culture and lifestyle of other countries.	0.2143	0.1535	0.8333	0.0617
Q2-15	I am willing to establish and maintain long-lasting connections with people from other countries.	0.2346	0.1133	0.8307	0.2093
Q2-16	If someone from a different cultural background come to talk with me, I am willing to communicate with him or her positively.	0.3425	0.2681	0.7210	0.1658
Q2-17	I can work with people from different cultural backgrounds.	0.7333	0.2240	0.2600	0.1523
Q2-18	I can collaborate and study with people from different countries in the university.	0.8049	0.0961	0.2015	0.1284
Q2-19	In a foreign cultural environment, I can adapt and adjust my behavior, language and strategies flexibly.	0.7457	0.1046	0.2995	0.1743
Q2-20	When facing conflicts in a cross-cultural environment, I can handle my emotions.	0.8204	0.0728	0.1399	0.1099
Q2-21	I am willing to understand and respect the culture and values of foreigners.	0.3493	0.6464	0.3320	0.0358
Q2-22	I believe that all individuals, regardless of race or skin color, are equal.	0.0864	0.7650	0.2773	-0.0394
Q2-23	I believe that all cultures are valuable.	0.1442	0.7488	0.2408	0.1288
Q2-24	I am willing to take international courses.	0.3028	0.3709	0.4446	0.2761
Q2-25	I am a citizen of China as well as a global citizen.	0.0395	0.5485	0.0972	0.5481
Q2-26	I think knowledge should be shared globally.	0.0487	0.6244	-0.1082	0.4794
Q2-27	I believe that people from all countries should collaborate together to address global issues caused by globalization.	-0.0545	0.7035	0.0703	0.4912
Q2-28	I believe that I am able to contribute to my country and the global society.	0.3039	0.2108	-0.0087	0.6570
Q2-29	I believe it is important to consider international issues from the perspective of all cultures and make impartial judgments.	0.2399	0.0037	0.1641	0.6350
Q2-30	In my opinion, this discipline should be actively criticized and innovated on the basis of international reference.	0.1921	0.2134	0.2679	0.7091
Q2-31	I believe that university students should actively participate in international	0.1044	0.1047	0.3840	0.7096

activities.				
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Explanatory variable 4: students’ understanding and basic knowledge of internationalization at home

This variable is constructed on the numeral value of the responses to the question “I believe it is essential for universities to carry out Internationalization at Home education.” A higher mark represents a deeper level of understanding and solid knowledge of IaH.

Explanatory variable 5: the university’s international atmosphere and resources

The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the scale (including question 1, 2, 5 to 7, 9, and 10) is 0.8931, with a reliability over 0.6. According to principal component analysis, there is one principal component explaining 61.1% of the standardized variance. The variable “the university’s international atmosphere and resources” is generated and accounts for 61.10% variance contribution rate.

Table 4: The rotated factor loading matrix for explanatory variable “the university’s international atmosphere and resources”

Code	Question	Factor1
Q3-1	My university offers many international courses.	0.8127
Q3-2	My university uses foreign-language original textbooks for many courses.	0.8072
Q3-5	My university provides sufficient exchange programs.	0.7593
Q3-6	My university provides financial support for students participating in international programs.	0.7717
Q3-7	There are many foreign students in my university.	0.7490
Q3-9	My university organizes various international or cross-cultural activities.	0.8280
Q3-10	My university invites numerous foreign scholars to conduct lectures.	0.7390

Explanatory variable 6: teachers’ global competence

By conducting principal component analysis, there is one principal component accounting for 76.06% of the standardized variance.

Table 5: The rotated factor loading matrix for explanatory variable “teachers’ global competence”

Code	Question	Factor1
Q3-3	My university has recruited sufficient foreign teachers.	0.8721
Q3-4	I believe that our teachers are equipped with broad global view.	0.8721

3.3 Model design

The regression model to be adopted in this study is as follows. y represents the result variable “student participant”. x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5 , and x_6 represent explanatory variables 1 to 6. z_k stands for all control variables. ϵ refers to residual term and β_0 is constant term.

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + \beta_6x_6 + \sum_{k=1}^n \alpha_k z_k + \epsilon$$

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Student participation varies as it ranges from 1.2 to 6 with a standard deviation of 1.22. Among the explanatory variables, the standard deviation of students’ global cognition, global competence, global awareness, and their understanding and basic knowledge of IaH is 0.74, 1, 0.5, and 0.82 accordingly, indicating the data is relatively stable.

Among the control variables, the data of grade levels ranging from 1 to 9 with a standard deviation of

2.10 represents a distribution of participants (from first-year undergraduates to postdoctoral researchers). To be specific, 56.6% of the questionnaire respondents are at the undergraduate level, and 43.4% are at the postgraduate level. This balanced proportion suggests that the sample is representative, which contributes to the scientific validity of the research results.

From the perspective of faculty (n=37), the standard deviation is 8.95 with the minimum value of 1 and the maximum value of 37. Therefore, the sample has gathered participants from various academic backgrounds. Concretely speaking, the highest proportion lies with the Faculty of Education (15.59%), followed by the School of Economics and Business Administration, accounting for 3.4%.

Regarding participants’ academic performance, 40% of them have ranked top 20%-50% and 29.15% of participants at top 5%-20%. The standard deviation is 1.26, indicating a significant variation in academic performance among the students participating in the survey.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics

Code	Mean.	Standard deviation	Min.	Max.
Result variable				
Student participation	3.503448	1.223607	1.2	6
Explanatory variables				
Students' global cognition	1.30e-09	0.7420673	-1.865744	1.61466
Students' global competence	-6.57e-09	1	-2.349373	1.731298
Students' global awareness	2.35e-09	0.5017535	-1.448977	0.9427623
Students' understanding and basic knowledge of IaH	4.155172	0.8217082	1	5
The university's international atmosphere and resources	1.63e-10	1	-2.492613	1.83684
Teachers' global competence	-6.51e-09	1	-2.044421	1.622005
Control variables				
Grade	5.574713	2.099448	1	9
Faulty	10.41954	8.945685	1	37
Academic performance	2.597701	1.262714	0	5
English level	2.816092	1.107293	0	5

4.2 Regression analysis

Based on the preset model, a regression analysis was conducted, yielding an F-value of 13.35 and an adjusted R² of 0.4165. This suggests that the

explanatory variables and control variables account for 41.65% of the variance in student participation. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 7: Regression statistics

Variable	Regression coefficient	Standard error	Significance
Explanatory variable			
Students' global cognition	0.5073553	0.1551411	***
Students' global competence	0.1498159	0.1128588	
Students' global awareness	-0.1975679	0.189873	
Students' understanding and basic knowledge of internationalization at home	0.0276139	0.1045005	
The university's international atmosphere and resources	0.3888113	0.1148831	***
Teachers' global competence	-0.0124414	0.1148831	
Control variable			
Grade	-0.0376155	0.0439172	
Faulty	-0.0023221	0.0085841	
Academic performance	0.1484321	0.0608011	**
English level	0.0932592	0.0787558	

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The regression results indicate that the core explanatory variables, including students' global cognition, global competence, their understanding and basic knowledge of internationalization at home, and the university's international atmosphere and resources, all contribute to promoting the students to actively participate in the process of internationalization of higher education. Among them, students' global cognition and the university's international atmosphere and resources are two significant promoting factors, suggesting that this Chinese research university already possesses the necessary international resources and has the basic conditions to implement IaH. These foundations enable the university to transmit international knowledge and impact students' practice substantially. Dating back to its official documents, international literacy training is listed as an indispensable part of talent training programs, which

are adapted to the characteristics of different majors and future employment prospects. Strong measures are taken, such as crediting courses of international knowledge and awareness as part of the requirement for graduation.

It is worth noting that students' global awareness has a non-significant negative impact on students' participation. This means that even if students realize the value of cultural diversity and are intentionally given more IaH opportunities, some students are still unwilling or unable to take action. Based on previous research, there are several possible explanations for this misalignment. Firstly, home students may have "passive xenophobia" because international students may be so competitive that threatens their academic achievements (Harrison and Peacock, 2010). This negatively impacts classroom

management, group work, and meaningful interactions among students from different cultural backgrounds.

Secondly, due to language barriers, home students may be afraid of being embarrassed or offended if they use incorrect or inappropriate expressions. This kind of powerful emotional barrier affects not only home students but also international students. Therefore, most students choose to study in homogeneous groups to ensure the best learning experience and academic results (Volet *et al.*, 2012).

In addition, although the goal of non-elite and non-exclusive IaH is to provide international learning and communication opportunities for all students, inequality still lies in the differences in the subjective willingness and ability of the potential participants. Those who possess cultural capital are more likely to seize the opportunities, while students who need these educational investments are excluded, leading to a “Matthew effect” in the practice of IaH (Harrison, 2015). The existing economic barriers also reflect that participating in international activities is not affordable for everyone.

Another noteworthy result is that teachers’ global competence has a non-significant negative impact on students’ participation. As this survey takes a student perspective, the result shows their controversial comments on the teachers’ global competence, revealing the urgent need to standardize teachers’ professional development adaptive to the internationalized world.

As for the control variables, students’ participation in international activities decreases as the education years extended. Although it’s not significant, it is a warning sign. Undergraduate students are required to take international modules to earn credits for graduation, but this requirement is inapplicable for masters and Ph.D. students, which may be the reason for their lower engagement. In addition, the long-term and short-term exchange programs offered by the university mainly target undergraduate students, while doctoral students rely on the joint programs supported by the China Scholarship Council. To some extent, the implementation of IaH in this university relies on the mandatory formal curriculum and the spillover effect of the international exchange programs. However, as researchers, master students and doctoral students should improve their all-around global literacy to keep them at the forefront of international research, strengthen their ability to publish articles in international journals and promote the influence of Chinese voices in the international academic community.

Academic performance has a significant and positive impact on students’ participating behaviors, which means students with higher scores are more

likely to engage in the institutionalization process. This result corresponds with the principle of selecting the best candidates when the opportunities are limited. On the other hand, the university has not involved everyone in the IaH practice.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From the data analysis of students’ participation in international activities and its influencing factors, it is evident that the university has provided students with relatively abundant international resources, especially internationalized curriculum and inclusive campus. These efforts have laid the foundational conditions for implementing the concept of IaH and cultivating global talents. The university has made some progress in enhancing students’ global competence and improving their understanding and basic knowledge of IaH, but further investments are still required. While the most urgent tasks are recruiting more diversified faculty members and helping students transfer their intention into actual behaviors.

In general, the theoretical dimension of IaH refers to a systematic transformation of higher education in the process of internationalization, and its practical dimension takes the form of international educational mechanism integrating international elements (Zheng *et al.*, 2022). Based on this, this study proposes some recommendations from the perspectives of institutional strategies and students’ conscious activities to address the issues mentioned above.

Adapting to the irresistible trend of internationalization of higher education, Chinese research universities are supposed to clarify the idea of internationalized development, especially the value of IaH, exploring an equal pathway to engage every student and faculty member. It is also necessary to integrate it into the institutional arrangements, such as applying an internationalized management system according to local conditions. The student-centered ideology should always be placed in the center of these constructions so that the universities can understand the needs of students and provide them with necessary administrative and academic support for their international-oriented development.

There’s no denying that a high-quality international curriculum system is the core element of IaH (Bond, 2003). Thus, global awareness should be integrated into the curriculum design (Xiao, 2022). General education curriculum that refers to global issues or foreign culture and history should be set as a compulsory part of graduation credits for undergraduates and postgraduates. To be supportive and eliminate the emotional barriers for disadvantaged students, the curriculum should contain both lectures (compulsory) and seminars (optional). These kinds of additional resources could be of great help for personalized learning without potential discrimination. For example, Chinese universities could draw on the curriculum

design from top overseas universities, cover globalization knowledge, culture, economy, and other aspects based on domestic needs, and provide students with a comparative perspective to learn and conduct research. In terms of course language, the international common language could be combined with the native language or applied solely as a tool for training students to access outward knowledge and information and employ them in knowledge production (Zhang and Huang, 2021).

A diversified campus and cross-border platform for home students and international students are proven to be contributors to their active participation (Hou and Han, 2019). To make it more transparent and inclusive, the universities could consider breaking the barriers between different disciplines and conducting interdisciplinary activities that maximize access for every student. Moreover, adopt different forms of international activities from on-campus to off-campus to create a multicultural environment, so that students can develop awareness and habits tailored to the global village.

As there are still some barriers that hinder students from taking part in international-related campaigns, they need to make their engagement conscious activities. Firstly, establishing their multi-identities which include being global citizens could be regarded as the premise of overcoming difficulties in intercultural communication with diverse groups. In the era of frequent international mobility, it is crucial to actively adapt to a multicultural future rather than passively acquire international knowledge from formal education (Shan, 2013). Driven by the strong conscious of developing IaH competence, students can accumulate their knowledge basis and enhance global competence through independent learning. For example, students could develop a habit of keeping up with global events, master at least one foreign language as a communication tool, and regularly browse foreign journals to gain the latest information and form a holistic view of the world.

Lastly, IaH also provides an unbiased point of view of breaking the center-periphery system in the world. It supports a de-westernized way of internationalization for developing countries. Thus, students in Chinese universities should establish cultural confidence, and try to be cultural ambassadors who actively disseminate Chinese culture and dispel misunderstandings. Only in this way can they overcome their negative emotions like fear and avoid total and uncritical acceptance of exotic cultures and policies without retaining local treasures. At the same time, showing respect and seeking agreement while shelving differences should always be kept in mind, which corresponds with the idea of “a community of shared future for mankind” proposed by the Chinese government (Deng, 2020).

6. Limitations and Further Recommendations

Some limitations could be improved in future studies. Firstly, the target group was limited to one Chinese university and the sample size is relatively small (n=174). As a result, the findings in this study may not be generalized to other types of higher education institutions. Researchers could involve more research universities to do larger-scale of cross-sectional research. Secondly, some explanatory variables showed a non-significant impact on the result variable. As the explanatory variables are comprised of several questionnaire items, the results could not explain the impacts of solo constituents. The variable “teachers’ global competence” may be the typical example. While its negative impact may also be related to the limited (n=2) question items, future studies should add more relevant questions. As for the control variables, English was the only language selected by this study, leading to a restricted evaluation of students’ global competence as some students may be good at other foreign languages. Researchers could consider using ‘foreign language’ in general as a substitution.

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