

The Impact of Multicultural Education on University Students Well Being in China

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Abstract: *Using a methodologically sound approach, this study explores how Multicultural Education affects the mental health of Chinese college students. The study uses a deductive methodology based on positivism to examine the results of multicultural education. Expert educators and students participating in intercultural education programs are surveyed to acquire primary data. Statistical analysis with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is performed on the gathered data to reveal hidden quantitative patterns and insights. A broad group of Chinese college students is reflected in this study thanks to a straightforward random selection method. This research adds to our knowledge of multicultural education's upsides and downsides and highlights the value of creating a welcoming and peaceful classroom. The results support the idea that multicultural education has a beneficial effect on pupils by fostering mutual appreciation of different cultures and enhancing the educational experience as a whole.*

Keywords: Multicultural Education, University Students, Well-Being, China, Positivism, Deductive Approach, Primary Data, Statistical Analysis

1. Introduction

The term "multicultural education" refers to the practice of teaching pupils of all ages about and from a variety of cultural backgrounds. As a result, it is safe to say that students at all educational levels benefit greatly from multicultural education, and that this benefits society as a whole in the long run (Paras et al., 2019). Because of its unique approach, multicultural education has been instrumental in shaping the current educational system. Multicultural education is an important lens through which to analyze the most pressing problems confronted by students from different cultural backgrounds. In the works linked below, we will examine the effects of multicultural education on both students and teachers. The goal of multicultural education is to increase respect for and appreciation of different cultures among students and faculty. In particular, the literature will explore the good and negative effects of intercultural education. Furthermore, it inspires students at all educational levels, making it one of the most important educational reform initiatives. In particular, this approach to education will help students develop their sense of cultural identity and their emotional maturity. The many mechanisms and elements that go into multicultural instruction will also be covered. All of these elements and procedures play important parts in facilitating students' educational pursuits. Students have been given more agency as a result of multicultural education's emphasis on learning about other cultures. It has also established an educational impact that

has aided students' development. Because of this, their level of comprehension has increased, and their confidence has grown. The significance of intercultural education in furthering the best possible learning environment will also be emphasized.

Students at Chinese universities may find it difficult to communicate with one another and their professors due to the huge variety of cultural backgrounds among them (Peters et al., 2020). The continuous multiplicity of cultures represented on university campuses in China increases the possibility of cultural misunderstandings and a lack of awareness between diverse student groups. Some students may feel alienated in a multicultural school setting if they do not share a common cultural background with any of the majority culture's identities. As multicultural education gains popularity, it is possible that some schools will struggle to find a good middle ground between purely academic subjects and cultural knowledge.

Due to the need for additional training and materials, intercultural education at the university level can be an expensive endeavor. Students may have trouble making use of the school's resources to learn more about their cultural background. The degree of difficulty may change from college to college (Cook et al., 2020). Some schools may have a disproportionately large representation of one culture, while others may have an unusually small one. The lack of representation might lead to feelings of isolation for those who aren't given a voice. Students could feel insecure and inadequate if they believe they will be judged according to stereotypes associated with their culture. Without an understanding of the world's many cultures, it may be difficult for students to fully appreciate and learn from the experiences of their classmates.

The introduction of intercultural education on Chinese university campuses has made racial discrimination more likely. Although it's possible that college students in China could benefit from a multicultural education, it's also important to consider the challenges that could arise from implementing such a program. It is crucial that multicultural education be done in a way that respects the identities and cultures of all participants, and that students be given the tools they need to learn more about their own roots (Caetano et al., 2020). Both of these conditions must be met for something to be possible.

In the majority of modernized nations, the reform movement in schools began in the twentieth century. Cultural variety in the classroom, often known as multicultural education, is a function of a country's socioeconomic status (Rachmadtullah et al., 2020). Community and academic interactions are strengthened through a solid intercultural education. Several significant concerns, including issues of diversity and equity in the classroom, have also been addressed. Students from diverse educational backgrounds have been able to effectively interact and work together within the framework of the new multicultural education system. Because of this goal, learners of various ages and backgrounds may grasp the concept of culturally integrated education. Intelligent and accountable individuals are the backbone of any country's development. A significant role in the progress of society is also played by multicultural education. There have been several efforts made at the state and federal levels to expand opportunities for intercultural education. It's one of the most important things for people to grow and flourish. Students at all educational levels in the 21st century can benefit from healthy educational competition by developing their global perspectives and social consciousness.

Through exposure to many cultures, students of all ages and backgrounds will be able to develop their full potential (Drane et al., 2021). However, this approach to education also has the potential to achieve the goal of fostering diversity-based unity among students at all educational levels. In addition, it can aid students in understanding cultural distinctions. There can be no cultural distinctions in education; all pupils, at all levels, must have access to the

same resources. Multicultural education is being implemented with the primary goal of enhancing student agency and academic performance across the curriculum. It has empowered students to accept religious diversity and ensured the safety of all pupils by fostering cultural interchange. Students have improved their ability to recognize learning difficulties and to appreciate and accommodate differences among peers. The success of every educational endeavor depends entirely on the abilities and motivation of its students. There should be no barriers due to differences in culture. However, it has been seen that pupils of diverse languages and cultures are not treated equally in many nations. Cultural and behavioral barriers to learning must also be identified by educators.

1.1 Problem Statement

Students encounter numerous challenges on their path to a multicultural education, which in turn complicates the educational environment. The tensions surrounding various ethnic groups have contributed to the rising stress within the student body (Sharma & Bhaskar, 2020). Disparities between Whites and Blacks, men and women, indigenous and outsiders, and Asians and non-Asians all contribute to the persistence of these conflicts. Ethical issues aggravate conflicts and disrupt students' ability to get along with one another. Learning methods are disrupted, and this has a negative impact on efficiency. Compounding problems include violations of human rights, reports of crimes, state failures, environmental deterioration, and the plight of refugees. Because of all these problems, spreading knowledge and ideas is extremely difficult. The battles triggered a degeneration in learning processes brought on by societal limitations and stratifications (Tang, 2022).

Providing an effective and equitable intercultural education might be hindered by a lack of access to different teaching materials. As a result, classrooms may not be diverse and welcoming places, and teachers may be unable to present new ideas and viewpoints. Educators may struggle to address the needs of all pupils, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, without such resources. There are a variety of factors that contribute to the scarcity of multicultural education resources in China's classrooms. The price tag associated with buying supplies is one factor. Due to financial constraints, many Chinese educational institutions are unable to provide students with the resources they require. Furthermore, the government does not adequately provide schools with intercultural education resources. Schools are not particularly motivated to purchase intercultural education resources because the federal government does not have a stance on the topic (Huang et al., 2020). A lack of awareness of the importance of intercultural education in China is also a contributing factor. There is a lack of different teaching resources because many educators do not fully grasp the scope of multicultural education. Teachers in China may feel uneasy about using materials from other cultures in the classroom because they believe such resources are not culturally acceptable or relevant. The supply of necessary materials is inadequate. Schools in China have limited access to intercultural education resources due to a lack of local production (Yang, 2020). To add insult to injury, even if there were more resources, many of them would be culture-bound and hence useless for teaching purposes.

Multicultural education in China has serious difficulties due to language issues. Although Mandarin Chinese is the medium of teaching in Chinese schools, many pupils from ethnic minority groups may speak languages other than Mandarin. Because of this, they may have trouble paying attention in class and grasping the concepts being taught. Students' inability to communicate effectively with their teachers and peers is a significant barrier to their success in multicultural classrooms. This can cause them to withdraw emotionally and get frustrated with the learning process as a whole. Students' inability to take part in class discussions or do

homework may contribute to their overall academic performance. Teachers may not be fluent in the languages their students speak, which further complicates the issue of language barriers in multicultural education (Koirala, 2021). This can make it challenging for educators to provide the necessary modifications and assistance to these pupils. There can be misconceptions and miscommunication when professors don't fully grasp their pupils' situations. Students from underrepresented groups may also struggle due to a lack of professors who are fluent in their languages. Teachers who speak more than one language have a distinct advantage when it comes to communicating with their students and imparting knowledge to them. Overall, kids from ethnic minority groups and their teachers face substantial obstacles due to linguistic limitations in China's multicultural classrooms. To overcome these obstacles, we need to invest in teacher professional development programs, culturally responsive pedagogy, and language assistance services (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019).

1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To determine the effect of multicultural education brings to the students' well-being, in term of their behaviour and growth (Communication, Socialization, Cultural Ethics, Religious, Self-Motivation, and Knowledge).
- ii. To discuss factors that can helps multicultural education to improve the student's well-being, in terms (Environment, Community and Family).
- iii. To explore the problems faced when using multicultural education to increase students' wellbeing.

1.3 Significance of Study

Understanding the effect of multicultural education on Chinese university students is crucial for educators because it sheds light on the values and beliefs that students bring to the classroom from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Teachers can better meet the requirements of students from different cultural backgrounds by developing lessons that take into account their students' cultural beliefs and practices. A more welcoming and supportive learning atmosphere can result from this. Teachers in China's higher education institutions would benefit greatly from an appreciation of how multicultural education affects their students if they were to adopt a more welcoming and productive approach to classroom management.

Due to the rising diversity of students and faculty in Chinese colleges, multicultural education has gained prominence in recent years. This sort of learning has the ability to introduce pupils to new ideas and worldviews, broadening their horizons and enriching their education. In addition to fostering an appreciation and understanding of other cultures, intercultural education can help students get a deeper understanding of their own culture and identity. Last but not least, higher learning results and a more peaceful campus atmosphere may result from multicultural education's efforts to foster acceptance and tolerance. Therefore, Chinese colleges should think about the effects of multicultural education and how it might lead to more accepting and tolerant communities.

2. Literature Review

Concern for the emotional well-being of today's college students has risen in prominence over the past few decades. As China's higher education landscape diversifies, so has the relevance of intercultural education in fostering student success. To better understand how multicultural education may affect the success of Chinese college students, this review seeks to gather together pertinent studies. Multicultural education refers to a pedagogical approach that values and honors cultural, linguistic, and social diversity (Parker, 2019). It pushes teachers to adopt

practices that respect and welcome a diverse student body. Several professors have stated that multicultural education in universities is good for students' mental health since it helps people of different backgrounds feel more connected to one another.

Several studies have looked at how one's cultural background influences happiness among Chinese college students. Strong cultural identities are associated with psychological well-being in children, according to the literature. Multicultural education can improve students' well-being by helping them feel more connected to their roots and open to new viewpoints. Communicating effectively across cultural divides is essential for international students to establish friends and feel accepted at university. Multicultural education helps students become better communicators and more comfortable interacting with others from different cultural backgrounds. Multicultural education has been linked to more successful societal integration, which may improve students' mental and emotional well-being.

Multicultural education focuses primarily on helping students develop intercultural awareness and empathy. Students benefit from this because they learn to appreciate and embrace differences in others. Students with higher levels of intercultural sensitivity also report lower levels of stress and anxiety, demonstrating a positive relationship between intercultural education and psychological well-being. Less discussed but no less important are the positive effects of multicultural education on students' mental health. When they feel their school truly appreciates and respects them for who they are as individuals, students report higher levels of happiness and mental health. Multicultural education has been shown to improve academic performance by increasing students' well-being and engagement in class.

This analysis of the studies highlights the importance of intercultural education in enhancing the lives of Chinese university students. More and more research demonstrates that schools who actively accept and promote diversity are better for the mental, emotional, and social health of students. By highlighting cultural identification, cross-cultural discussion, empathy, and academic support, multicultural education has the potential to positively impact the lives of Chinese college students (Holloway et al., 2023) in the classroom and beyond. However, further research into the specific processes and long-term advantages of multicultural education on students' well-being is required to develop more effective therapies and policies for bettering students' experiences in higher education.

Higher education institutions in China are not alone in recognizing the importance of intercultural training. This research review seeks to investigate how students' communication, socialization, cultural ethics, religious comprehension, motivation, and learning are impacted by multicultural education at the university level. As stated by Yassin et al. (2020), the purpose of multicultural education in higher education is to help students improve their intercultural communication skills. When students interact with people from many different cultures, they gain a richer understanding of the complexity of language, culture, and communication. Better communication promotes openness and receptivity, which in turn strengthens relationships and reduces feelings of isolation. Improved language skills are only one way that intercultural education can benefit children's overall health and happiness.

Students at universities come from different walks of life, so it's important to provide them with a multicultural education that helps them connect with one another. Strong interpersonal connections are fostered by providing students with more opportunities to work together on assignments, projects, and social occasions. Multicultural education benefits students' mental

well-being and growth by fostering a stronger sense of social belonging and acceptance among them.

Through exposure to other cultures, students are able to reflect on the ethics and values that inform their own. As their horizons widen, they learn to appreciate and embrace cultural differences. Students who have a deeper cultural understanding are better able to make moral judgments and respond with compassion and understanding to challenging situations (Richards & Dignum, 2019). Therefore, intercultural education helps pupils grow emotionally and morally. Chinese university students need to acquire a solid understanding of religion because of the country's religious variety. Children who are exposed to different cultures are better able to appreciate and accept the values held by those who are different from themselves. This information is useful in promoting religious harmony on campus by addressing common myths and misunderstandings. Evidence demonstrates that students who are given the opportunity to learn about and interact with people from other cultural backgrounds and religious views develop greater openness and compassion.

Students who take part in a multicultural education program are more likely to develop a healthy sense of self-identity and an appreciation for the differences that make each person special. Children gain strength of character, determination, and self-awareness via such experiences. Children who take the time to learn about and appreciate their cultural heritage grow up to be resilient adults. Therefore, the health and well-being of kids improves as a result of their exposure to different perspectives in the classroom.

Multicultural education broadens students' horizons by exposing them to diverse cultures and ways of life from throughout the world. Students who invest in learning about the customs and beliefs of people from all around the world develop a more nuanced understanding of the world at large. They will be more prepared for the analytical challenges of today's interconnected world if they acquire this knowledge. Lessons about other cultures help students' mental health and growth.

Multicultural education has a significant impact on the well-being of Chinese college students, according to the study. Communication, socialization, cultural ethics, religious understanding, self-motivation, and information acquisition are just few of the talents that students gain and apply during their time at university, enriching and adding meaning to their lives. A school environment that promotes and celebrates diversity is good for students' academic performance, personal growth, and emotional well-being. These findings demonstrate the urgency with which China's universities must embrace multicultural education practices in order to create a community that is welcoming to students of all origins.

College graduates in China have a lot to thank their cosmopolitan education for. This review of the literature examines the ways in which students benefit from intercultural education. It focuses on the ways in which schools, communities, and families may collaborate to make their schools safe and stimulating places for students of all backgrounds.

The success of intercultural education initiatives depends critically on the school's environment. When the classroom is designed with all students in mind, it increases the likelihood that they will feel comfortable and at ease there (Ardoin, 2023) and encourages learning. Colleges with ethnically diverse faculty, staff, and administration are better able to meet the needs of international and minority students, according to research. People are more likely to get along, feel less discrimination, and speak openly about their experiences with

various cultures in a community that values variety. Safe and supportive learning environments in universities are good for students' mental health because they foster students' academic and personal growth.

The teachers and staff play a crucial role in assisting students in adjusting to and integrating into the varied student body at their institution. Peer groups and interactions with people from diverse backgrounds help students improve their ability to communicate and socialize across cultures. Cultural clubs and foreign student organizations provide a forum for students to learn about and celebrate one another's heritages outside of the classroom. The benefits of community service to students' mental, emotional, and social well-being are well-established. Supportive environments for children' holistic development can be found in schools that provide a sense of belonging and cross-cultural dialogue.

The value of family to a student's development as an individual and as a college student cannot be stressed in the context of multicultural education. Students, especially those studying abroad, benefit greatly from words of support from loved ones back home. Multiethnic adolescents with strong familial ties performed better emotionally and academically, according to the study's authors. Combating homesickness and loneliness can also be accomplished through participation in cultural events of one's home country. Multicultural education should recognize and respect the significance of families in the lives of their students.

The research review emphasizes the role of context, community, and family in multicultural education's potential to enhance the well-being of Chinese university students. A school climate that accepts and appreciates its diverse student body is essential for fostering a sense of belonging among them. Intercultural communication and socialization are emphasized in the classroom and in extracurricular activities for the benefit of students' mental and emotional well-being (Billingsley & Hurd, 2019). In addition, having family members on campus can be a great help to multicultural students as they work to adapt to and maintain their cultural identities within the framework of higher education. Pupils in China's increasingly diversified and multinational school system benefit from all of these factors, which work together to create a nurturing and challenging atmosphere for learning. Taking into account the foregoing factors can amplify the good benefits of multicultural education on students' lives, leading to a more inclusive and tranquil campus community as a whole.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Understanding the impact of intercultural education on the well-being of Chinese university students can be aided by the influential motivation theory of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), introduced by Deci and Ryan in the 1980s, contends that the fulfillment of individuals' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is crucial to the cultivation of intrinsic motivation and the achievement of one's full potential.

Freedom of action and choice are hallmarks of autonomy. Improving college students' well-being through intercultural education requires protecting their right to individual autonomy. When students are immersed in a school climate that values diversity, provides them with choices, and encourages them to learn about and from various cultures, they are more likely to feel like they have some control over their education. Students can find cultural materials that appeal to their interests and identities through intercultural education (Rocha et al., 2023). Consequently, success and satisfaction in higher education in China are more likely for students who actively engage in multicultural education.

When we talk about someone being competent, we mean they have faith in their own skills to complete tasks and achieve goals. Multicultural education has the ability to significantly affect students' perceptions of their own talents because it promotes open communication, understanding, and respect amongst people of different cultural backgrounds. Students benefit from increased intercultural competence, communication skills, and cultural awareness when they are provided with opportunities to explore perspectives and experiences outside of their own. Students who believe they can adapt well to different cultural contexts had better levels of self-esteem, academic engagement, and pleasure. College success depends on students' ability to adapt to the unique culture of each institution they attend.

The term "relatedness" is used to emphasize the significance of having positive relationships with others. Multicultural education promotes a friendly and inclusive learning environment by increasing opportunities for students of various cultural backgrounds to communicate and learn from one another. Through group work, interactions across cultures, and common experiences, students are able to bond with one another and develop a sense of belonging. The positive interactions that flourish in multicultural classes are beneficial to students' mental health because they help them feel less isolated and more a part of the larger university community. An encouraging social environment may do wonders for a school's multicultural education program and the students who participate in it.

Overall, Self-Determination Theory serves as a useful lens through which to examine the impact of intercultural education on the well-being of Chinese university students. By addressing students' essential psychological demands for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Dwyer, 2019), multicultural education equips them to appreciate and learn from cultural diversity. When students in China's universities are organically motivated and performing at their highest levels, the country's multicultural educational climate has a better chance of thriving.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

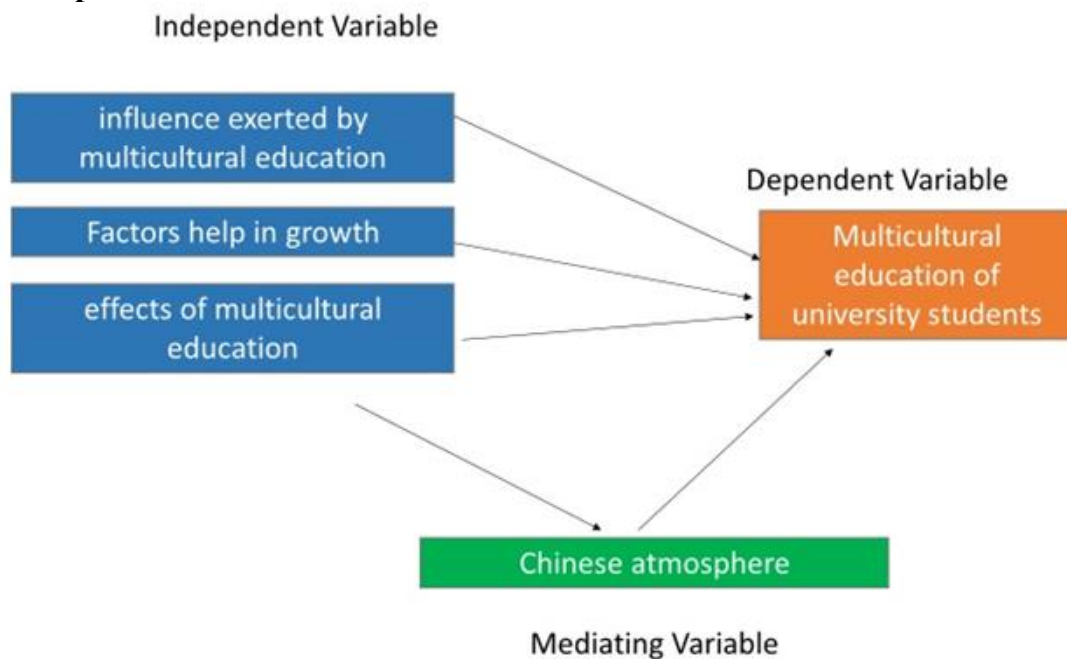


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
 Source: Self-developed

3. Methodology

In order to guarantee the rigor, correctness, and validity of the research findings, a specific research approach was employed for this study on the effect of multicultural education on the well-being of university students in China. The research stance and methodology, as well as the data collection and analysis techniques, have been meticulously chosen to meet the study's aims and yield useful insights.

This study used a positivist approach to research. This strategy is congruent with the aims of the study because it relies on observation and logic to draw conclusions. Positivism's emphasis on establishing objective and quantifiable facts that can be reliably evaluated and studied makes it a good fit for studying the advantages of intercultural education. This attitude seeks to ensure that pupils' comprehension is maximized by focusing on clear and concise information that leaves little room for subjective interpretations.

Deductive methodology was chosen since it is consistent with the positivist stance. This strategy entails conducting research in accordance with previously formulated assumptions and theoretical frameworks. Because it permits structured analysis and comparison of data, it is a good tool for studying how multicultural education impacts the mental health of college students. Researchers can use this method to zero in on the data that really matters and come to solid findings.

Primary data gathering will be used to complete this study. The requirement to get fresh and current data on the topic at hand drove this selection. The researcher's goal is to collect quantitative data that can be assessed and analyzed through surveys and questionnaires delivered to educators and pupils. This method allows for the methodical and organized investigation of the students' perspectives on and interactions with intercultural education. Statistical methods and software, most notably the SPSS statistics package, are used to process and interpret the data. This method permits an in-depth examination of the accumulated data, which increases the trustworthiness and validity of the study's conclusions. Researchers can successfully convey findings and trends on the effect of intercultural education on students' well-being through the use of graphs, figures, and descriptive statistics.

A basic random sample strategy was opted upon as the method of choice for this study's sampling. This method guarantees that each member of the research population has an equal shot of getting chosen. This method reduces the possibility of bias and increases the findings' applicability to a larger group of Chinese college students who are enrolled in multicultural education courses. The Cochran-Baker Formula was used to come up with the required sample size.

4. Results

The survey's findings highlight the positive impact that multicultural education practices in China's setting have on college students' perspectives and understanding of multiculturalism. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their tolerance of individuals who are different from themselves has increased as a result of their exposure to multicultural education in China. This demonstrates the success of multicultural education programs in creating inclusive environments at Chinese colleges.

The results demonstrate that Chinese university students appreciate multicultural education and recognize its benefits. There was widespread agreement among the participants that exposure to different cultures through formal education enhanced their ability to communicate with those of different ethnicities. The consensus of the participants also implies that China is doing a lot to encourage multicultural education in its universities.

Significant expansion in multicultural education has been observed in Chinese institutions, which has been linked to rising student numbers. This finding demonstrates the commitment of these groups to advancing equitable schooling practices. There has been a positive cultural climate in China's universities, demonstrating the significance of cultural variables in fostering multicultural education. Participants also remarked on the Chinese government's openness to multicultural education's growth in the higher education sector, pointing to a supportive climate for the expansion. In addition, the study found that multicultural education in Chinese colleges improved students' learning results, demonstrating its efficacy in encouraging students to think across disciplines.

The results indicate that exposure to different cultures through the classroom helps college students learn more about and appreciate China's rich cultural heritage. Students who were exposed to multicultural education were more likely to have a positive perspective of China and its rich cultural history, as was the consensus among those who participated in the study. In addition, multicultural education is significantly responsible for students' enhanced fluency in Chinese, which is crucial for productive cross-cultural exchange. The findings also suggest that intercultural education has helped college students gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. Further, participants' decision-making process has been influenced by multicultural education while engaging with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds, underscoring the significance of intercultural education in developing cultural sensitivity and flexibility.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this research demonstrate the value of intercultural education practices for Chinese college students. Students' ability to understand and communicate with people from other cultural backgrounds, as well as their understanding of and respect for diversity, have all been shown to increase as a result of multicultural education. Multicultural education has thrived in China's colleges thanks to the country's welcoming culture and accommodating administration. Improvements in critical thinking, acquaintance with Chinese history and literature, and understanding of Chinese culture and values are common among students who participate in intercultural education programs. These findings demonstrate the importance and usefulness of multicultural education practices in creating welcoming learning environments and enhancing students' intercultural competence at Chinese higher education institutions.

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