Strategies for Internationalizing Student Development at Regional Undergraduate Institutions in China: A Study

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Abstract

Purpose –This article takes the internationalization strategies of regional undergraduate students in China as the research object, aiming to explore the existing problems and challenges, and propose targeted improvement suggestions. Through extensive investigation and in-depth analysis of typical undergraduate institutions in Shandong Province, China, the limitations of current internationalization practices have been revealed, and a series of suggestions and strategies suitable for regional universities in China to develop internationalization of higher education have been derived.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Firstly, the theoretical basis for the internationalization of student development was introduced. Secondly, the current situation of internationalization in the development of regional undergraduate students in China was elaborated. Then, taking Liaocheng University as a case study, the practice of internationalization development in regional undergraduate colleges in China was analyzed. Subsequently, based on SWOT analysis, and a student development internationalization model hypothesis was proposed, revealing ten different strategies. Next, the feasibility and expected results of implementing internationalization strategies for students in this article were analyzed. Through designing survey questionnaires, statistics, and analyzing data, an in-depth analysis of the development strategies for international students was conducted. Finally, the research conclusions of this article were drawn, and limitations and future research directions were analyzed.

Findings – This article provides valuable insights and references for improving the internationalization level of Chinese local university students through detailed case studies and successful practice sharing.

Research Implications – However, in China, there has not yet been a mature model for the internationalization of student training. In summary, this study aims to develop an international talent cultivation path that meets the unique characteristics and development requirements of regional universities in China, in order to cultivate high-quality professional talents with both international perspectives and a deep understanding of local backgrounds in the era of globalization.

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Ⅰ. Introduction

This paper focuses on the strategies for internationalization of students in regional undergraduate institutions in China, aiming to delve into existing issues and challenges, and propose targeted improvements. Through extensive surveys and in-depth analyses of typical undergraduate institutions in Shandong Province, China, it reveals limitations in current internationalization practices, including but not limited to representativeness of samples, adaptability of strategies, integration of internationalization with localization, and the construction of a comprehensive evaluation system.

Building upon these findings, this study advocates for a more refined and differentiated approach to internationalization that emphasizes tailored strategies considering the practical conditions of regional colleges and universities in Shandong Province, China and their regional socio-economic development needs. It also calls for the establishment of a multi-dimensional assessment framework for internationally-minded talent, encompassing academic achievements, cross-cultural communication skills, innovation capabilities, and social responsibility.

Moreover, the paper pays heed to the influence of evolving global educational landscapes and changes in Chinese education policies on the internationalization efforts at regional undergraduate institutions, advocating for timely adjustments and optimization of strategies in response to shifting external environments. By presenting detailed case studies and sharing successful practices, it provides valuable insights and references for enhancing the internationalization levels of students in Chinese local universities.

In China, international exchange and cooperation is regarded as one of the four basic roles or functions of higher institutions. Meanwhile, the internationalization of higher education is being attached more and more importance in the whole world. It is the same In China that the internationalization of higher education is becoming much more importance than ever. One of the most important aspects of the internationalization is the internationalized cultivation of college and university students. However, in China, there is still no any mature mode concerning the internationalization of student cultivation.

In summary, this research endeavors to carve out a path for international talent cultivation that aligns with the unique characteristics and developmental requirements of regional Chinese universities, thereby fostering high-caliber professionals equipped with both an international perspective and a profound understanding of local contexts in today's globalized era.

1. Background, Problem and Significance of the Study

In the process of globalization, internationalization has become a significant trend in higher education reform and development worldwide. The traditional functions of higher education primarily encompass talent cultivation, scientific research, and service to society. In China, since 2011, higher education systems have further reinforced cultural inheritance and innovation as new functions, and in 2017, international exchange and cooperation were established as another key function, demonstrating the country's commitment to improving higher education quality and enhancing its international influence in the context of globalization.

Regional universities in China, as integral components of the higher education system, play a pivotal role in fostering student internationalization. However, compared to nationally-supported top-tier universities and first-class disciplines, they face numerous challenges in their internationalization efforts due to factors such as regional economic disparities, uneven distribution of educational resources, limited financial investment,

varying levels of internationalization among faculty members, and diverse student backgrounds. This has resulted in a relatively slower pace in internationalization processes, necessitating the exploration of internationalization strategies that suit their unique characteristics and resource conditions.

Against the backdrop of the continuously advancing wave of globalization, China's higher education system has actively responded by incorporating international exchange and cooperation into its basic functions, regional universities have also initiated attempts to engage in student internationalization. Nonetheless, there exist significant gaps in their approaches: firstly, there is a dearth of mature and referenceable models for internationalization; secondly, theoretical research in this area is insufficient and lacks targeted, practical solutions. Current internationalization measures have yet to develop systematic and mature theoretical guidance and practical models that cater to the resource endowments, regional characteristics, and student profiles of local universities.

Therefore, conducting in-depth research and exploring internationalization strategies tailored to the actual conditions of regional universities in China is not only an inherent requirement to address the shortcomings in current internationalization practices and enhance the quality of higher education but also an urgent task to meet societal demands for globally competitive talents. Such research holds considerable importance for promoting balanced development and enhancing international competitiveness within China's higher education sector.

Amid intensifying global talent competition, accelerating the internationalization of students in regional universities can help cultivate talents with a global perspective and international competitiveness, contributing to national development strategies and driving sustained and healthy socioeconomic progress.

Investigating and implementing effective student internationalization strategies can enable regional universities to introduce advanced educational philosophies and teaching models, optimize curriculum design, and improve teaching quality, thereby raising the overall standard of higher education in China.

Studying and promoting internationalization models suitable for regional universities can narrow the gap between universities in different regions and of different types, facilitating balanced development in higher education and achieving a higher level of educational equity.

By engaging in internationalization initiatives, regional universities can participate actively in international academic exchanges and collaborations, enhancing their international reputation and influence, thus securing more discourse power and competitive advantages for Chinese higher education on the global stage.

The author's research on internationalization strategies for students at regional universities in China responds to the development trends of higher education in the era of globalization and serves as a necessary means to uplift the quality of higher education in China, promote educational equity, and enhance international competitiveness. This study aims to thoroughly analyze the current status, problems, and challenges in the internationalization process of regional universities and, based on these findings, propose a system of internationalization strategies that are consistent with national and institutional realities, providing theoretical guidance and practical references for the internationalization journey of these institutions.

2. Literature Review, Domestic and International Practices

2.1 International Research and Practices Abroad

United States: In the United States, the internationalization of university students is regarded as a critical element in enhancing global competitiveness. American universities foster cross-cultural communication skills

and global perspectives in their students by offering internationalized curricula, establishing international exchange programs, encouraging participation in overseas study and internships, and recruiting foreign faculty members. For instance, Ivy League institutions like Harvard University and Stanford University, along with other top-tier universities, boast rich networks of international exchange and diverse multicultural educational environments. Furthermore, government initiatives such as the Fulbright Scholarship program provide ample opportunities for students to study abroad.(Wei, Y., Li Y. , 2020; Wang, Z., Teichler, U., & Zhang, Y., 2021; Li, S. 2021)

Europe: The establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has significantly propelled the internationalization process among higher education institutions within the region. The European University Alliance (e.g., under the Erasmus+ program) encourages large-scale student mobility among member states, allowing students to freely exchange and study across different countries, accumulating transnational learning and work experience. Concurrently, renowned European universities like Oxford and Cambridge, among others, have engaged in extensive practical applications and in-depth research regarding curriculum design, internationalization of faculty, and international cooperative education.(Wei, Y., 2020; Wang, Z., 2021; Li, S. 2021)

Oceania: Universities in Oceania countries such as Australia and New Zealand equally prioritize the internationalization of their students. Leveraging their geographical advantages, they collaborate closely with other Asian Pacific nations to build an open and inclusive international education system. For example, the Australian Government's 'Australia Scholarships' initiative attracts a substantial number of international students while encouraging domestic students to study overseas. Additionally, major Australian universities have achieved notable accomplishments in areas such as curriculum internationalization, overseas partnership projects, and building multicultural campus environments.(Wei, Y., 2020; Wang, Z., 2021; Li, S. 2021)

Asian Developed Countries: Advanced Asian countries like Japan, South Korea, and Singapore lead the way in internationalizing their student populations. Not only do they reinforce collaboration with European and North American universities, but they also focus on interaction within the regional context. Japan's "G30 Plan" and "SGU Project" (Super Global University) strive to elevate the international standing of universities, drawing in more international students and faculty, while also furnishing increased opportunities for domestic students to study abroad. South Korea, through initiatives like the 'Global Seoul Mate' program, actively promotes international exchange among students and teachers.(Wei, Y., 2020; Wang, Z., 2021; Li, S. 2021)

Developing Countries and Regions: A growing trend among developing countries and regions in student internationalization involves the gradual rise in international awareness and the expansion of international cooperation. Despite constraints in funding and resources, many countries are endeavoring to enhance the internationalization of their higher education sectors through policy guidance and support, such as establishing scholarships and promoting bilateral or multilateral education agreements. Emerging economies like Brazil, South Africa, and India are witnessing their higher education institutions proactively forging partnerships with developed nations and other developing countries, offering a variety of internationalization pathways, including short-term visits and joint degree programs.(Wei, Y., 2020; Wang, Z., 2021; Li, S. 2021;)

2.2 Research and Practices in China

In China, with the acceleration of reform and opening-up and the process of education internationalization, research and practices concerning the internationalization of university students have increasingly gained

prominence. In recent years, domestic advancements in this field can be categorized into several aspects:

1) Theoretical Research: Scholars explore from perspectives of policies, systems, and culture, discussing the updating of concepts, strategic planning, and the construction of evaluation systems for international talent cultivation in Chinese universities.

2) Practical Exploration: Institutions of higher education have implemented various measures to promote internationalization, such as establishing International Cooperation Colleges, carrying out Sino-foreign joint education programs, adding English-only or bilingual courses, launching short-term or long-term overseas exchange programs, hosting international academic conferences, and summer schools.

3) Internationalization of Faculty: Encouragement and support are provided for teachers to pursue advanced studies or visiting scholar positions abroad, while hiring foreign experts and scholars to teach in China, thereby enhancing the international perspectives and teaching abilities of the faculty.

4) Student Mobility: Through state-sponsored scholarships, various scholarship programs, and inter-university exchange agreements, there is a strong push to actively promote Chinese students' outbound study and exchange experiences, while attracting international students to study in China, realizing a two-way exchange.

5) Curriculum and Teaching Reforms: Drawing on advanced international educational philosophies and teaching models, revisions to the curriculum system are underway, driving the international transformation of course content and teaching methods, nurturing students' cross-cultural communication skills and global competitiveness.

Overall, China has made significant progress in the internationalization of university students. However, it still faces challenges such as how to systematically and efficiently advance the internationalization process while preserving local characteristics, and how to cultivate a larger pool of high-quality talents with global competence through diversified and multi-level international practices. These are the current focal points for both research and practical endeavors.

3.Research Objectives and Goals

The purpose of this study is to delve deeply into the current situation and issues surrounding the internationalization of student development at regional universities in China, systematically review and learn from advanced domestic and international experiences, with the aim of constructing a strategy system tailored to China's national conditions and the practical circumstances of these local institutions. The specific objectives are as follows:

1.Theoretical Construction: By conducting an in-depth analysis of theories related to international education and literature pertaining to higher education internationalization, the core principles and tenets guiding the internationalization of student development will be clarified, providing a robust theoretical foundation for subsequent strategy design.

2.Empirical Research: Through field investigations, data collection, and analysis, this study aims to comprehensively reveal the current status and challenges faced by regional universities in China regarding the internationalization of their students, identifying key factors influencing this process.

3.Strategy Development: Based on the above theoretical explorations and empirical research findings, combined with regional characteristics, resource allocation, and student needs, a highly targeted and

operationally feasible model for the internationalization of student development will be proposed, along with a substantiated argument for its feasibility and effectiveness.

4.Practical Guidance: It is expected that the research outcomes will directly guide regional universities in formulating and refining their internationalization strategies, thereby contributing to enhancing their students' competitiveness in a global context and propelling the overall improvement of the quality of higher education in China and the strengthening of its international influence.

5.Policy Recommendations: Addressing the problems encountered during the internationalization of student development at regional universities, forward-looking and innovative policy suggestions will be put forth, aiming to provide scientific grounding and reference frameworks for relevant government departments in formulating related policies.

In summary, this study seeks to advance the deepening and development of the internationalization of student development at regional universities in China on both theoretical and practical levels, thus promoting balanced growth within the realm of higher education in China and facilitating its alignment with international standards.

4. Research Contents and Methods

4.1 Research Content

1.Theoretical Foundations and Conceptual Definition: Firstly, the study systematically reviews and organizes theories related to international education, higher education internationalization, and student internationalization development, clarifying the connotations, elements, and evaluation criteria of students' international competencies, laying the theoretical groundwork for the research.

2.Overview and Lessons from Domestic and International Experiences: An exhaustive examination of the practice models, successful experiences, and existing issues in student internationalization from developed countries and regions, particularly, extracting principles and strategies applicable to regional universities in China.

3.Analysis of the Current Situation in Chinese regional Universities: Through multiple research methods including literature review, field investigation, questionnaire surveys, and in-depth interviews, the study comprehensively understands the current state, main issues, and underlying reasons of student internationalization at local Chinese universities.

4. Construction of an Internationalization Training Strategy Model: Based on theoretical analysis and empirical research, a student internationalization training strategy model is formulated specifically for local Chinese universities, encompassing areas such as curriculum design, faculty development, international exchange programs, international cooperative education, and support for students pursuing advanced studies abroad.

5.Application and Anticipated Impact of the Strategy Model: Via case analysis and scenario simulation, the study explores the feasibility, applicability, and projected outcomes of the constructed strategy model in practical settings, addressing potential challenges and countermeasures.

4.2 Research Methods

1. Literature Review: Reviewing domestic and international literature to obtain theoretical foundations, practice models, and lessons learned about student internationalization.

2. Empirical Research Method: Employing quantitative research methods such as statistical analysis and questionnaire surveys to understand the current state of student internationalization at regional universities; using qualitative research methods like in-depth interviews and case analysis to uncover specific issues and challenges in the internationalization process.

3.Comparative Study: Conducting comparative analysis of differences and similarities in student internationalization practices among various types of universities domestically and internationally, providing evidence for constructing an internationalization strategy tailored to local Chinese universities.

4.Model Building and Validation: Based on the results from theoretical and empirical research, creating a student internationalization strategy model applicable to regional universities, which will undergo preliminary validation through expert consultation and feedback revision.

5.Predictive and Simulation Analysis: Leveraging relevant theories and data to forecast the potential effects of implementing the strategies and using simulation exercises to examine the value and adaptability of the strategy model in future scenarios.

1.5 Explanation of Two Expressions

1.Regional Undergraduate Institutions

As above-mentioned, there are 3,012 institutions of higher learning in China, including 2,756 full-time higher institutions (1,270 undergraduate institutions and 1,486 junior colleges) and 256 adult institutions of higher learning. Among the 1270 undergraduate institutions, some are run or governed by Ministry of Education or other ministries of China, and the other are run or governed by provincial governments. When we say "regional undergraduate institutions" in China in this research, we only refer to those provincial public undergraduate institutions among the 1270 institutions. All the private undergraduate institutions are not included. In this sense, the total number of regional undergraduate institutions in China is 725. Namely, our research conclusion is only suitable to these 725 undergraduate institutions of higher learning, including both colleges and universities. Different expressions in this dissertation such as regional institutions, regional undergraduate institutions, regional colleges and universities, regional universities, or local ordinary colleges and universities, etc., all refer to these 725 public undergraduate colleges and universities governed and funded by provincial-level governments, excluding undergraduate institutions in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, China.

2. Internationalization of Student Development

In China, scholars or researcher sometimes use the word cultivation instead of development when they talk about internationalization of student development. In our research, the expressions of internationalization of student development, internationalization of student cultivation, internationalization of student education, internationalizing student development, internationalization of student, etc., all mean the same.

Ⅱ.Theoretical Foundations for Internationalization of Student Development

1.Overview of Higher Education Internationalization Theories

Higher education internationalization is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept with theoretical roots spanning multiple disciplines, including economics, sociology, education, and management. As a global phenomenon, higher education internationalization aims to facilitate exchange, collaboration, and integration among universities and educational institutions from different countries and cultural backgrounds, with the objectives of enhancing education quality, boosting innovation capacity, cultivating talents with a global outlook and competitiveness, and promoting harmonious economic, cultural, and social development worldwide.

1.Cultural Perspective: From a cultural standpoint, higher education internationalization underscores the exchange, mutual learning, and coexistence of cultures, advocating for cross-border academic exchanges and cultural integration. This aims to nurture students with intercultural communication skills and a sense of global citizenship. Achieving this is facilitated through the introduction of internationalized courses, recruitment of international faculty, and organization of international academic activities, leading to the diversification of campus culture and educational content.

2.Economics Perspective: Within the economic lens, higher education internationalization highlights the marketization and commodification of higher education services amidst intensified global competition. Higher education institutions, motivated to attract top-tier international students and faculty, enhance their international prestige, and secure international research collaboration opportunities, often proactively engage in the competitive landscape of the global higher education market. They achieve this by embracing international cooperation, sharing resources, and recognizing degrees mutually, all of which contribute to bolstering their international competitiveness. This economically driven internationalization process not only facilitates the global circulation of capital, technology, and human resources within the higher education domain but also plays a part in upgrading the quality and efficiency of higher education services in response to global market demands and the preferences of international education consumers.

3.Educational Perspective: From an educational standpoint, higher education internationalization is viewed as a transformation of educational philosophy and models. It calls for the internationalization of educational content, methods, and evaluation systems, encompassing the globalization of curriculum content, innovation in teaching methodologies, and the cultivation of global competence. Implementation of measures such as curriculum integration, credit transfer, and dual-degree programs aim to realize both international standardization and personalization in talent development.

4.Sociological Perspective: The sociological perspective accentuates the impact of higher education internationalization on social structures and social change. With the acceleration of globalization, higher education internationalization contributes to breaking down geographical boundaries, facilitating the global flow of knowledge and talent, and ultimately promoting openness, inclusiveness, and harmonious development within societies.

5. Management Perspective: The managerial perspective focuses on strategic planning, resource allocation, and organizational management within the process of higher education internationalization. Developing effective internationalization strategies, optimizing the distribution of educational resources, and enhancing management efficiency are central concerns in the field of higher education management, ensuring the

successful implementation of internationalization goals.

In summary, the theory of higher education internationalization constitutes an integrated and multidimensional conceptual framework. At its core lies the drive towards global openness, collaboration, and mutual benefit, which in turn fosters continuous enhancement in the quality and influence of higher education amidst globalization. When discussing the internationalization of student development, these theoretical foundations serve as both theoretical underpinnings and practical guidelines for devising and executing effective internationalization strategies.

2.Construction of a Student Internationalization Competence Model

The construction of a student internationalization competence model is a systematic endeavor aimed at defining and describing the array of abilities and attributes students should acquire throughout the process of higher education internationalization to better adapt to global learning environments, career demands, and societal developments.

In the theoretical research concerning the development of a student internationalization competence model, scholars have extensively explored ways to cultivate higher education talents possessing a global vision, intercultural communication skills, international competitiveness, and global civic literacy. Key theoretical frameworks and concepts include:

1.The Becker-Smith Model of Internationalization Competence

This model proposes a five-dimensional construct featuring language proficiency, cultural adaptability, global awareness, international interaction skills, and international employment competitiveness. The model underscores the importance of language skills as a foundation, alongside several other crucial aspects for adaptation and success in a global context.

2.Martin Albrecht's Model of Global Competence

This model elucidates that global competence comprises four core dimensions: cognitive abilities (understanding global interdependence and complexity), interpersonal skills (intercultural communication and collaboration), values and attitudes (awareness and commitment to global citizenship), and technical skills (utilizing information and communication technologies for global interactions).

3. Juan de Fuertes and Horst Wagner's Framework of Internationalization Competencies

This framework emphasizes five elements of internationalization competence: language skills, intercultural communication, global awareness, international network building, and global career orientation.

4.UNESCO's Framework for Global Citizenship Education

Although not specifically designed for higher education internationalization, UNESCO's advocacy for global citizenship education holds considerable relevance in fostering student internationalization capabilities. It encompasses essential themes such as respect for human rights, social responsibility, cultural diversity, and sustainable development.

5.Harold Leavitt's "Index of Inter-nationality"

While originally conceived for organizations rather than individuals, this theory highlights multiple dimensions of internationalization, including the internationalization of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This provides insights into constructing a student internationalization competence model.

In practical applications, the construction of a student internationalization competence model typically integrates the aforementioned theories, adapting them to specific educational contexts and student

characteristics, to establish a set of localized and customized ability components and indicator systems that align with targeted goals. These models aim to guide universities in designing and implementing effective internationalization education strategies to cultivate graduates capable of thriving in global living, learning, and working environments. For instance, here is a simplified illustration of an internationalization competence model that outlines possible core elements:

（1）Intercultural Communication Skills: Language Proficiency, demonstrating mastery of at least one widely used international language with strong listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities; Cultural Sensitivity, understanding and respecting diverse cultural values, customs, and behavioral norms, effectively communicating in multicultural settings; Adaptability, swiftly adjusting to studying and living in culturally diverse environments, with conflict resolution skills in cross-cultural contexts.

(2) Global Awareness and Vision: Global Citizenship Literacy (comprehending global issues, engaging with international affairs, and acknowledging personal responsibilities and roles within the global community); and Global Knowledge Base (possessing a basic understanding and insightful perspective on international politics, economics, law, science, and technology).

(3) International Competitiveness: Professional Knowledge and Skills (possession of internationally recognized knowledge and skills in one's field, demonstrating the capacity for internationalized learning and research); International Internship and Work Experience (gaining practical international exposure through overseas internships, participation in international competitions, and involvement in international volunteer activities); and International Certification and Qualifications (acquiring internationally recognized professional certificates to enhance career competitiveness).

(4) International Cooperation and Communication Skills: Teamwork (playing an active role in international teams, showcasing strong teamwork and leadership abilities); International Network Building (the capability to establish and maintain international academic and professional networks, being adept at initiating and engaging in international cooperation and communication).

(5) Self-motivation and Lifelong Learning: Autonomy in Learning (having the ability to independently solve problems and engage in self-directed learning, adapting to rapidly evolving international environments); Innovation Mindset and Critical Thinking (cultivating an innovative spirit, sharpening critical thinking skills, enabling informed decision-making when confronting international challenges).

In constructing a student internationalization competence model, it is crucial to integrate the actual characteristics and needs of regional universities in China, giving thorough consideration to regional economic conditions, cultural backgrounds, and the state of educational resources. This ensures the operational feasibility and practicality of the model, while also paying close attention to educational equity and sustainable development. The overarching aim is to elevate students' global competitiveness and adaptability comprehensively through the implementation of effective internationalization development strategies within the context of globalization.

3.Theoretical Foundations for the Internationalization of Students in Regional Universities

The theoretical foundations for the internationalization of students in regional universities stem primarily from multiple disciplines such as education, sociology, and economics. Key theories and viewpoints include:

1.Globalization Theory: The deepening process of globalization intensifies the intertwining of nations in terms of economy, culture, and education. Local universities must adapt to this trend by employing internationalization strategies to enhance students' global competitiveness, enabling them to confront opportunities and challenges on a global scale in their future careers.

2.Theory of Educational Internationalization: This theory advocates breaking down national barriers through international cooperation, resource sharing, and educational exchanges to improve education quality and international influence. Guided by this principle, local universities strive to cultivate students with a global perspective, intercultural communication skills, and international competitiveness.

3.Lifelong Learning and Quality Education Theories: Quality education emphasizes holistic improvement of students' overall qualities, where international competence is considered a critical attribute for modern professionals. The lifelong learning theory promotes developing students' abilities for self-learning and self-renewal to adapt to a rapidly changing world, which is particularly significant in the context of internationalization.

4.Human Capital Theory: According to this theory, educational investment can be converted into individual and national competitive advantages. By internationalizing student education, local universities enhance students' language proficiency, international perspectives, and cross-cultural communication skills, thereby increasing their market value and contributing to the international competitiveness of the nation's human resources.

5.Multiple Intelligence Theory: Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory underscores the various domains of intelligence, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligence. In the context of internationalization, particular emphasis is placed on developing interpersonal and cross-cultural intelligence to facilitate effective communication and collaboration in a global setting.

6.Intercultural Communication Theory: This theory emphasizes the ability to communicate effectively across different cultural backgrounds. Local universities need to foster students' intercultural communication awareness and skills through curricular design, practical activities, and international exchanges.

7.World Citizenship Education Theory: This theory highlights the importance of cultivating a sense of global responsibility, respect for cultural diversity, and active engagement in resolving global issues. In the process of internationalization, local universities must not only focus on students' professional skills but also prioritize enhancing their moral ethics and global citizenship qualities.

In conclusion, while implementing student internationalization, regional universities must integrate these various theoretical foundations to build a comprehensive and systematic cultivation system, ensuring that students grow and develop effectively in a global context.

Ⅲ. Analysis of Current Status of Internationalization of Student Development in Regional Undergraduate Institutions in China

1. Major Measures and Practices in Current Internationalization Efforts

In response to the call of the national strategy for higher education internationalization, regional universities in China have actively explored and implemented a series of measures to promote the internationalization of

student development, which are reflected in the following aspects:

1.Curriculum Internationalization Reform: regional universities have gradually introduced international teaching standards and curriculum systems, developed English-only or bilingual courses, adopted high-quality international textbooks, aligned with international education accreditation systems, and thereby enhanced the internationalization level of course content.

2.Internationalization of Faculty: By recruiting and hiring foreign teachers, sending domestic faculty members abroad for further studies, attending international academic conferences, and participating in collaborative research, universities have improved their teachers' global perspectives and teaching capabilities, thereby advancing the internationalization of classroom instruction, academic research, and student guidance.

3. International Exchange and Cooperation Programs: Establishing short-term or long-term overseas study, internship, and exchange programs, such as those under the Belt and Road Initiative, international summer schools, exchange student programs, and joint training projects, encourage students to venture out, gain firsthand experience, and immerse themselves in international educational environments.

4.International Cooperation in Running Schools: Forming joint training programs and cooperative educational institutions with overseas universities, such as establishing Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions and joint degree programs, offering students opportunities to access high-quality international educational resources.

5.International Academic Exchange and Competitions: Supporting students to participate in international academic seminars, forums, and various international competitions, providing them with international platforms to publish and showcase academic achievements, thus enhancing their scholarly competence and international competitiveness.

6.Foreign Language Education and International Certification Exams: Strengthening foreign language teaching efforts, encouraging students to take standardized language tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, and GMAT, to boost their language proficiency and increase the likelihood of success in applying for international programs.

7.International Cultural Activities and Club Development: Organizing international cultural festivals, academic lectures, and cultural exchange events, supporting the establishment of student clubs focused on international exchanges, creating an international atmosphere on campus, and fostering the enhancement of students' cross-cultural communication skills.

Through the above series of measures, regional universities in China have achieved certain accomplishments in the internationalization of student development. However, they still face challenges such as uneven distribution of resources, limited channels for international exchange, and inadequate integration of localization with internationalization.

2. Achievements and Existing Issues in the Internationalization of Student Development at Regional Universities

Regional universities in China have made substantial progress in the internationalization of student development, evidenced by:

1.Expanded International Perspectives: Through the implementation of internationalization programs, these universities have successfully broadened the international horizons of their students, strengthened their cross-cultural communication abilities, and increased their understanding and acceptance of the outside world.

2.Improved Academic Standards: Via academic exchanges, collaborative research, and joint training projects with overseas institutions, the academic standards of students at local universities have been elevated, allowing more students to engage in cutting-edge international research topics and publish high-level academic papers.

3. Growing Number of Talents Exported: With the intensification of internationalization efforts, there has been a steady rise in the proportion of local university graduates pursuing further studies or finding employment abroad, contributing a stream of globally competitive talents to the country.

4. Heightened International Atmosphere on Campus: Hosting various international academic conferences, cultural exchange activities, and by introducing foreign faculty, local universities have fostered a progressively open and inclusive learning environment.

5.Widened International Cooperation Networks: These universities have established stable exchange and cooperation relationships with higher education institutions worldwide, providing students with broader platforms for international exchange and learning.

However, there are several issues pertaining to the internationalization of student development at regional universities:

1. Uneven Resource Allocation: Compared to top-tier national universities, local ones generally receive less investment in resources such as funding, faculty, and hardware facilities, limiting the depth and breadth of their internationalization processes.

2.Severe Shortage of Internationalized Faculty: There are significant difficulties in recruiting and nurturing faculty with international perspectives at local universities, necessitating stronger efforts in building an internationalized teaching staff.

3. Lagging Course and Teaching Reforms: Despite some local universities starting to advance curriculum internationalization, there remains a prevalent issue of insufficient alignment between course content, teaching methods, and evaluation systems with international standards.

4.Low Student Participation: Due to factors like economic constraints and English proficiency levels, local university students have limited opportunities to participate in international exchange programs, and their motivation to do so requires stimulation.

5. Lower International Influence and Recognition: regional universities possess relatively low recognition and influence in the realm of international education, which in part hampers their ability to attract high-quality international educational resources and students.

6.Incomplete Evaluation Systems and Incentive Mechanisms: Presently, a fully established evaluation system and incentive mechanisms for the effectiveness of international talent development at local universities are lacking, hindering continuous improvement and in-depth implementation of such initiatives.

In summary, while Chinese regional universities have indeed achieved some success in the internationalization of student development, they continue to face numerous challenges that require targeted reforms and improvements.

3.Comparative Analysis of Student Internationalization among Regional Universities, Double First-Class Universities, and Industry-Specialized Institutions

Within China's higher education system, there exists a certain disparity in student internationalization among regional universities, Double First-Class Universities, and industry-specific institutions. The main differences are highlighted below:

1.Divergence in Resource Allocation and Infrastructure:

Regional universities often face limitations due to funding constraints, shortage of faculty strength, and international cooperation resources. As a result, their infrastructure for international teaching, overseas exchange programs, and international cooperation platforms may be less mature and comprehensive compared to first-rate universities.

On the other hand, Double First-Class Universities and some industry-specialized institutions, benefiting from national policy support and a rich historical legacy, typically enjoy a superior position in international resource allocation. They usually offer more international exchange programs, international collaborative laboratories, and partnerships with overseas institutions.

2. Variance in the Level of Faculty Internationalization:

The number and quality of foreign faculty members recruited, the dispatch of domestic faculty for overseas research, and the presence of internationally influential educators tend to be lower at regional universities.

In contrast, Double First-Class Universities and certain industry-focused institutions find it easier to attract and retain faculty members with international backgrounds and influence, resulting in a higher level of internationalization within their teaching staff.

3.Notable Differences in Internationalized Curriculum and Teaching Reforms:

regional universities might lag behind in offering fully English or bilingual taught courses, partnering with renowned international universities for joint education programs, and adopting advanced international teaching philosophies and methods.

Meanwhile, Double First-Class Universities and some industry-oriented institutions typically initiate international curriculum reforms earlier and provide a greater number of international joint training programs and courses that closely align with international standards.

4.Varied Opportunities for Student International Exchange:

Students from regional universities generally have fewer opportunities to participate in international academic conferences, exchange student programs, short-term study tours, and international competitions, often constrained by financial conditions and English proficiency levels.

Conversely, Double First-Class Universities and industry-specialized institutions can provide a wider range of diverse international exchange programs. Their students have more chances to pursue advanced studies, internships, or attend international academic events abroad.

5.Different Levels of International Influence and Reputation:

Regional universities generally wield lesser global recognition and influence in the field of higher education, potentially affecting their students' development and employment prospects on the international stage.

By contrast, Double First-Class Universities and select industry-focused institutions command higher academic rankings and international reputations, thereby enhancing their students' recognition and acceptance in the international marketplace.

Despite potential disadvantages in certain areas, many local universities are striving to elevate their internationalization level through various means, such as engaging in regional cooperation, developing specialized subjects and majors, and optimizing resource allocation. These efforts aim to address their shortcomings and make breakthroughs in the internationalization of student development.

4.Reasons to Choose Regional Undergraduate Institutions as Research Objects

First of all, under the background that international exchange and cooperation has been regarded as the fifth responsibility in China, all institutions of higher learning should take measures to promote their internationalization of higher education, which is not to be doubted at all, and is politically correct. This background offers a general reason for the author to focus on regional undergraduate institutions.

Secondly, undergraduate institutions in China can be roughly divided into two types: public and private institutions. Among public undergraduate institutions, some are at national level, some are at provincial level. Taking the three types of undergraduate institutions into account and compare them at the same time, it is not difficulty at all to find out that the main body of undergraduate institutions are regional public colleges and universities. Therefore, regional undergraduate institutions should be focused.

Thirdly, in national undergraduate institutions, they are already on the way to develop their internationalization of higher education.

Just look at the following example of Presidents of these universities:

1.Zhou Qifeng, former President of Peking University, during his tenure, advocated and implemented a series of measures to promote the university's internationalization, including enhancing international academic exchanges and introducing high-quality overseas educational resources.

2.Lin Jianhua, also a former President of Peking University, paid close attention to the globalization of higher education, emphasizing the enhancement of Chinese universities' international competitiveness and innovative capabilities in the context of globalization.

3.Hao Ping, also a former President of Peking University, has long been committed to the internationalization of higher education. Through speeches, reports, or policy-making, he influenced the development of internationalized education and co-authored or edited relevant works with other scholars.

4.Hu Heping, who served as Party Secretary and President of Tsinghua University, dedicated himself to building Tsinghua into a world-class university by strengthening international cooperation and exchanges, and introducing advanced international education philosophies and models.

5. Concurrently, Xu Ningsheng, while serving as the President of Fudan University, vigorously pushed forward the university's internationalization efforts, reinforcing international scientific research collaboration and talent cultivation mechanisms.

6.Yang Wei, a former President of Zhejiang University, proposed multiple strategies in the field of higher education internationalization and facilitated deep cooperation between Zhejiang University and leading international institutions. Following him, Wu Zhaohui, another former President of Zhejiang University, researched extensively on higher education internationalization, covering areas such as interdisciplinary studies, international cooperation platforms, and the cultivation of high-level internationally-oriented talents.

7.Zhu Chongshi, former President of Xiamen University, actively promoted the university's internationalization process, turning it into a model for local universities in China through initiatives like international cooperation projects, attracting outstanding foreign scholars and teachers, and enhancing students' global competitiveness.

8.Zhang Weiguo, while serving as the President of Southwest University, proactively drove the school's international engagement by fostering partnerships with prestigious overseas universities for cooperative education programs, academic exchanges, and joint research, thereby boosting its international influence.

9.Liu Hongmin, the former President of Hebei University of Technology, made significant progress during

his term in international exchanges and cooperation, importing quality overseas educational resources, and nurturing talents with an international perspective.

10) Xie Hongxing, the President of Wuhan University of Science and Technology, has published a series of research outcomes on higher education internationalization and actively propelled the university's collaborative education programs with overseas institutions, faculty development, and international student education in practice.

11.Wang Jiaqiong, President of Beijing Jiaotong University, not only theoretically studied higher education internationalization but also led the institution in implementing various international strategic projects, such as establishing Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions and expanding international exchange and cooperation networks.

12.Chen Yishi, former Founding President of Southern University of Science and Technology, had unique insights and practical experience in higher education reform and innovation, including strategies for internationalization.

13.Zhou Xuhong, who served as the President of Chongqing University, witnessed significant advancements in the university's internationalization endeavors during his term, and also contributed to related academic writings.

14.u Haiyan, a former President of Beijing Institute of Technology, engaged in aspects involving the implementation of internationalization strategies in higher education.

15. Zhang Rong, having served as Presidents of both Shandong University and Xiamen University, consistently advanced the internationalization strategies at each institution, improving the quality of internationalized teaching and education.

16.Dou Xiankang, former President of Wuhan University, held distinctive views on higher education internationalization, focusing on elevating WU's international profile and cultivating an international academic environment.

Obviously, at the national undergraduate institutions like the universities mentioned above, it is very easy for people to reach a consensus that internationalization of higher education at universities like them should be carried out and internationalization plays an important role in their development.

As for private undergraduate institutions, it is much harder for them to promote their internationalization of higher education, in China. The enrollment score of their new students is very low, usually just meeting the minimum line of enrollment, which means students at private colleges and universities generally and basically have less excellent academic performances, which adds limitation their students to be involved into international exchange and cooperation activities. And further, the tuition fee at private institutions is going higher and higher. If they choose to go to study abroad, they will have to pay double tuition.

IV . Case-based Research on Practices of Internationalization Development of Students in Regional Chinese Undergraduate Colleges and Universities

1.Selection of Cases and Research Methods

The case selection process is a critical step in conducting case study research, typically guided by the following principles:

1. Representativeness Principle: The selected case should embody a degree of representativeness that reflects general phenomena or issues within a specific type or level. Choosing Liaocheng University as a typical case for the internationalization training practice of students in local ordinary Chinese universities is due to its typicality and representativeness among provincial and national local institutions. It exemplifies the challenges, opportunities, and responsive measures encountered by such universities.

2. Novelty or Uniqueness Principle: A case should contain distinct features or significant practical experiences to yield valuable research conclusions. If Liaocheng University demonstrates innovation or remarkable achievements in internationalization, it possesses high research value.

3.Comparability Principle: Cases should be conducive to comparative analysis with similar or different contexts to deepen understanding and verify research hypotheses. Selecting Liaocheng University may also be because of its evident comparative advantages within the region, making it easier to compare with other universities at the same tier.

4.Depth Exploration Principle: A case must have an ample amount of information and data support to facilitate in-depth research. Choosing Liaocheng University implies that it has sufficient data and records related to internationalization efforts, enabling thorough empirical analysis.

Regarding research methods, for the exemplary case university, the author will employ several common approaches:

Qualitative Research: Gathering data on the specific practices, experiences, and outcomes of internationalization at Liaocheng University through methods like in-depth interviews, literature review, and policy document analysis.

Quantitative Research: Utilizing statistical data, such as the proportion of students participating in outbound exchanges, the number of international cooperation projects, and the prevalence of bilingual or all-English courses, to measure the extent and effectiveness of the university's internationalization efforts.

Mixed-method Research: Combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to conduct both in-depth case analysis and use statistical tools to validate or interpret observed phenomena.

In the context of our dissertation concerning the internationalization strategies for student development at local Chinese universities, it is crucial to specify the target institutions. As of September 30, 2023, according to data from the Chinese Ministry of Education, there were 1,270 undergraduate colleges and universities across China, with 725 categorized as regional undergraduate institutions under provincial or municipal government supervision, representing approximately 57.08% of the total.

The selection of a suitable case study is essential due to the vast number of regional universities. In this regard, Shandong Province has been chosen for its large population size—second in China—and its robust economic status—third in the nation. With 42 out of its 70 public colleges and universities falling under the category of regional undergraduate institutions Shandong offers a compelling and diverse sample set for examining the implementation and effectiveness of internationalization strategies in local higher education contexts.

These 42 regional undergraduate institutions account for 5.79% of the total 725 institutions all over China. There are 3 national undergraduate universities in Shandong Province which is only 2.23% of 132 national universities. There are 70 undergraduate institutions in Shandong which is about 5.51% of China's total undergraduate institutions. There are 28 private undergraduate institutions in Shandong Province, which is about 6.78% of China's total 413 private undergraduate institutions. If we perform a simple weighted average calculation with these 4 indicators, the result would be: (5.79%+2.23%+5.51%+6.78%) ÷ 4 ≈5.08%.

There are 31 provincial-lever regions in China including 22 provinces, 4 municipalities and 5 autonomous regions. Shandong Province is only one out of thirty-one, namely 3.23%. On another point of view, the population in Shandong is 100.47 million which is about 7.13% of the total 1409.67 billion (1.41 billion). Shandong occupies an area of 155.8 thousand square kilometers which is about 1.62% out of 9.6 million square kilometers--China's total territory. Shandong's GDP is 8.74 trillion RMB which is about 7.25% of the total 120.47 trillion RMB of China in 2022. If we perform a simple weighted average calculation with these 4 indicators, the result would be: (3.23%+7.13%+1.62%+7.25%) ÷ 4 ≈4.81%.

If we compare 4.81% and 5.08%, it is not difficult to find that the former is 94.69% of the latter, which means the two percentage is quite close and equivalent to each other. In this sense, it's reasonable and it makes sense that we choose Shandong as an example.

This chapter will delve into the practical approaches adopted by regional universities in Shandong Province to cultivate students internationally, providing valuable insights for formulating and refining strategies applicable to similar institutions across China.

In accordance with these principles and considering the author's (researcher's) familiarity with the institution, we intend to analyze and study Liaocheng University as a typical case of a regional undergraduate institution. This choice is based on the premise that its position within China's local higher education system highlights the role and contribution of local universities in the national strategic development framework. As a province with strong economic standing, Shandong's university development strategies and resource allocation serve as a reference for other regions. Within this context, Liaocheng University, as one of the provincial local universities, reflects the distinctive paths and models of development under regional economic conditions. Its relatively complete system, notable achievements, or unique strategies being implemented in international talent cultivation make the research findings more valuable for promotion and reference.

There were 301.4 thousand undergraduate students in Shandong Province in 2022. And there were 31.8 thousand undergraduate students at Liaocheng University in 2022, which is about 10.55% of the total undergraduates in this province. Besides, among the 42 regional universities and colleges in Shandong Province, Liaocheng University ranks from 9 to 16 on different university rankings. In short, Liaocheng University is one of the most typical regional undergraduate institutions in Shandong Province. That is the very reason we choose Liaocheng University as a typical example to analyze and do research on.

2.Specific Practices and Characteristics of Internationalization of Student Cultivation at the Case Study Institution

2.1 Introduction to Liaocheng University

Liaocheng University is nestled within Liaocheng City, an esteemed national historical and cultural city known as "The Venice of North China" and "Ancient Capital along the Grand Canal," located in Shandong Province. The university traces its origins back to November 1974 when it was established as the Liaocheng Branch of Shandong Teachers College. It was later approved by the State Council in July 1981 to become Liaocheng Teachers College, and in February 2002, with the consent of the Ministry of Education, it was renamed Liaocheng University. Upholding its school motto, "Dedication, Erudition, Integrity, and Innovation," and embodying the spirit of "Respecting Education, Promoting Learning, Nurturing Virtue, and Striving Forward," the university has cultivated a multitude of outstanding talents who have made significant

contributions to national development and socio-economic progress. Its 230,000 alumni are scattered across the globe.

Currently, Liaocheng University comprises 25 colleges, 9 research institutes, offering 24 first-level master's degree-granting disciplines, 17 categories of Master's professional degrees, and 75 undergraduate majors in 2023. Its academic programs span 13 major disciplinary categories, including Philosophy, Economics, Law, Education, Literature, History, Science, Engineering, Agriculture, Management, Arts, Medicine, and Interdisciplinary Studies. The university's Chemistry, Engineering, Materials Science, and Computer Science subjects have ranked among the top 1% globally in ESI rankings.

With a total enrollment of over 33,000 full-time undergraduates, postgraduates, and international students, the university boasts a faculty of 1,877 full-time teachers (including 1,089 holding doctoral degrees, 206 in senior positions, and 708 in associate senior positions).

The university houses 5 national-level research institutions and platforms co-built by the Ministry of Education and Shandong Provincial Government, 5 national laboratories and engineering technology research centers, 9 provincial key laboratories, provincial engineering technology research centers, provincial engineering laboratories, and provincial higher education engineering research centers of Shandong Province. Additionally, it hosts 6 provincial-level theoretical research bases for social sciences, soft science research bases, provincial humanities and social science research bases of higher education institutions, and provincial intangible cultural heritage research bases. Furthermore, it possesses 4 provincial key think tanks, 4 provincial foreign affairs think tanks, 3 provincial key laboratories in universities, and 4 provincial collaborative innovation centers in higher education. The university also boasts 12 provincially recognized first-class discipline construction projects, 12 key disciplines in Shandong Province, 1 high-level discipline (cultivation) project in Shandong Province, 2 provincial leading university scientific research innovation teams, 2 provincial leading discipline talent teams, 16 provincial young innovation teams, and 16 teams supported by the Shandong Province Higher Education Youth Innovation Talent Cultivation Plan.

In recent years, Liaocheng University has garnered 6 prizes including Second Prize of the National Natural Science, Second Prizes of the National Science and Technology Progress Award, and the National Technological Invention Awards. It has won 4 National Excellent Research Achievement Awards in Higher Education Institutions, 169 provincial and ministerial awards, secured 339 national-level research projects, and 910 provincial and ministerial projects. Over 10,000 high-level academic papers have been published, alongside 255 monographs and translations. The university has organized more than 30 high-level international academic conferences. Its capacity to serve society continues to grow, with over 390 granted patents, more than 60 technology transfers, generating over 600 million yuan in economic benefits.

The university houses 4 National Featured Specialty Programs, 9 National First-Class Undergraduate Major Construction Sites, 6 Teacher Education Programs accredited by the Ministry of Education, and 1 Engineering Education Program accredited by the same authority. It participates in the Ministry of Education's "Outstanding Agricultural and Forestry Talents Education and Training Program" and boasts 2 National First Batch of Comprehensive Reform Pilot Programs for Undergraduate Majors. Moreover, it hosts 3 Provincial "Outstanding Engineer Education and Training Program" initiatives in Shandong Province, 8 Provincial High-Level Application-Oriented Professional Groups (comprising 35 individual majors), 24 Provincial Key Construction Programs under the framework of Provincial Model Universities with Distinctive Applications-Oriented Talents Development in Shandong, 12 Provincial Brand-Specialty Majors, and 22 Provincial First-Class Undergraduate Major Construction Sites. The institution offers 17 courses that have earned recognition

as National First-Class Undergraduate Courses, National Quality Courses, National Bilingual Teaching Demonstration Courses, National Quality Video Open Courses, 30 Provincial Quality Courses, and 40 Provincial First-Class Undergraduate Courses. There have been 96 teaching and research reform projects at the provincial and ministerial levels and above, with 4 textbooks listed in the National Planning Textbook Catalogue. The university has achieved 6 First Prize awards in the National Initial Teaching Achievements Competition, 6 Second Prize awards in the National Teaching Achievements Award, and 112 Provincial Teaching Achievements Awards. Students annually win over 6,000 awards in various competitions such as the China International "Internet+" College Students Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, the Challenge Cup National Undergraduate Extracurricular Academic Science and Technology Works Competition, the Challenge Cup China Undergraduate Business Plan Competition, the National Undergraduate Mathematical Modeling Contest, and the Dragon Boat Race.

The campus spans nearly 3,000 acres, with a total floor area of over 8.2 million square meters dedicated to teaching and research facilities. The total value of teaching and research equipment amounts to 827 million RMB. The library covers an area close to 50,000 square meters, housing 2.669 million printed books, subscribing to 204 Chinese and foreign periodicals, and providing access to 3.83 million e-books, 1.3702 million electronic journals, and 50 Chinese and foreign language databases. The campus environment is elegant, featuring lake views, verdant landscapes throughout the year, conducive to fostering a strong teaching-learning atmosphere and earning the university the reputation of being an ideal place for scholarly pursuits, celebrated with the accolade "Learning at LCU."

The university adheres to a strategic development plan centered around quality improvement, disciplinary strength, talent nurturing, unique features, and openness. By focusing on the fundamental task of moral education, it vigorously promotes high-quality, integrated, and distinctive development. It strives to transform the institution into a nationally renowned, uniquely profiled, and first-rate regionally oriented application-oriented university.

2.2 Overview of International Exchange and Cooperation at Liaocheng University

The university adheres to an open educational philosophy and vigorously implements an internationalization strategy. It has engaged in over 160 projects with more than 100 universities and research institutions across over 20 countries and regions, including Russia, the United States, Poland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and others. These collaborations encompass exchanges between faculty and students, joint research endeavors, cooperative educational programs, joint PhD training, and overseas campus operations. Currently, there are foreign teachers and students from over 30 countries working or studying on campus.

The university jointly operates two Confucius Institutes, one each in Jordan and Samoa, commissioned by the Ministry of Education. It has undertaken educational aid projects in Samoa and Tonga successively. On the institutional front, the university hosts 2 provincial-ministerial level country and regional research centers, namely the "Pacific Island Countries Research Center" and the "Arctic Ocean Research Center," which have gradually evolved into influential new-type think tanks domestically. Additionally, the university has co-established 10 international cooperation research institutions with overseas universities and organizations, such as the "Sino-Russian Joint Center for Mathematics" and the "Center for Knowledge Engineering and Terminology Studies – a Franco-Chinese Joint Research Center."

2.3 Overview of Student Internationalization Efforts at Liaocheng University

Liaocheng University's development in terms of student internationalization can be categorized into three distinct phases:

First Phase: Void Period, Before 1995. During this stage, the university did not host any international students nor did it send its domestic students abroad for studies. Annually, there were fewer than ten foreign teachers employed, all of whom specialized in teaching English. Moreover, only around twenty faculty members had experience studying or working overseas. Essentially, the university's international exchange and cooperation activities were embryonic, and efforts towards student internationalization were virtually non-existent.

Second Phase: Start-up Stage, 1995 - 2010. In 1995, Liaocheng University gained approval to enroll foreign students. In 1998, the first batch of eight international students arrived, all hailing from Japan and enrolled to study Chinese. From 2001, the university began sending its students abroad, while the number of faculty members going overseas for study or work continued to increase. The number of foreign teachers remained steady at around ten. Until 2010, the total number of international students at the university hovered between 30 to 60, with an average annual dispatch of roughly 30 outbound students, peaking at less than 100.

Third Phase: Rapid Development Period, 2010 - 2019. Starting from 2010, the number of students studying abroad saw rapid growth. Between 2010 and 2014, more than 100 students went overseas each year, while the number of long-term and short-term international students at the university also exceeded 100. From 2015 to 2019, the annual outbound student figure surpassed 200, reaching a peak of 289 in 2019 before the outbreak of COVID-19; concurrently, the number of international students hosted exceeded 200, and the university introduced six fully English-taught undergraduate programs capable of delivering both undergraduate and postgraduate courses to international students.

Affected by the pandemic, during 2020-2022, international students were unable to enter China, causing a decline rather than an increase in their numbers. Chinese students faced difficulties going abroad, with only a dozen or so pursuing studies in countries like South Korea, Poland, and Italy each year, putting student internationalization efforts in a challenging state. Since 2023, both outbound and inbound student numbers have steadily increased compared to the pandemic period, although overall, the process remains in a recovery phase and has not yet returned to the levels seen in pre-pandemic 2019, aligning with the general trend of global economic development.

3.Case Analysis and Experience Summary

3.1 Main Achievements

1.The university established a leadership group for international education, elevating international collaboration to one of its core strategic priorities. This move inherently affirmed the significance of international cooperation and exchange within the institution.

2.The university places immense importance on the internationalization of its faculty. A dedicated body was created to recruit high-caliber talents from overseas, primarily targeting Chinese nationals with foreign doctorates. Each year, the university employs over 20 long-term foreign experts, predominantly specialized subject teachers instead of language instructors. Most of these foreign professionals hold doctorate degrees

and possess exceptional expertise in their respective fields. Moreover, the university has set up a special fund to incentivize and support faculty members' overseas study. Generally, faculty members with doctoral degrees or above associate professor rank who apply for this funding receive adequate support. To date, more than 350 teachers in the university have studied or worked abroad for six months or longer. Overall, the institution has built a solid base of teaching staff capable of meeting the needs of student internationalization.

3.The university has formed inter-institutional relationships with over 20 countries and regions worldwide (including 8 top 500 universities globally), establishing multiple platforms and mechanisms for international cooperation and exchange, encompassing student-faculty exchanges, joint research, collaborative education programs, and co-publishing ventures. More than 160 international cooperation projects have been developed, with over 100 specifically tailored for student exchanges.

4.The university has implemented a system that encourages students to study abroad, setting up a dedicated scholarship fund to financially support outstanding students in pursuing overseas studies. Concurrently, it has instituted a presidential scholarship exclusively for international students, aiming to attract them to study at the university, including encouraging visiting doctoral students from foreign institutions. Additionally, the university allocates funds to sponsor its exceptional master's students to pursue doctoral degrees abroad, stipulating that recipients return to work at Liaocheng University upon graduation.

5.The university has engaged in collaborative education ventures with institutions from countries such as Australia, Canada, South Korea, and Germany, venturing into the exploration and practice of domestically nurturing internationally-minded students. Ten Sino-foreign cooperative education projects have been initiated so far. Partner universities from abroad consistently dispatch faculty members to teach specialized courses at Liaocheng University every year.

3.2 Key Features

1.The university's approach to international education has evolved from being overlooked to becoming a priority, with the role and significance of international cooperation and exchange continuously rising within the institution's overall agenda. Student exchange programs, whether outbound or inbound, have emerged as a foundational aspect of international engagement.

2.The university has essentially established a supportive policy framework for international education, which encompasses the systems related to the internationalization of student education.

3. There has been a consistent increase in resources allocated for international exchange and cooperation, thereby maturing the conditions for fostering the internationalization of students.

3.3 Main Issues

1. The concept of international education still requires reinforcement. Many teachers and students harbor differing opinions regarding the university's international exchange and cooperation initiatives. Concerns, skepticism, and even opposition persist regarding Chinese students studying abroad and enrolling international students.

2.The systems designed to encourage and support international education remain imperfect, with varying degrees of obstacles hindering faculty and students from engaging in international collaboration.

3.The weight given to international education in the university's performance assessment remains low,

currently standing at just 2.5%, with student internationalization accounting for only 1%. This falls significantly short of the actual requirements for the work.

4.The number of landmark achievements in international education is still limited, and the contribution of student internationalization to the overall functioning of the university remains relatively low.

5.Insufficient investment by the university in international education, including student internationalization, severely constrains the development of international exchange and cooperation efforts.

6.The curriculum internationalization pertinent to the core work of student internationalization is relatively lagging behind, already impacting and limiting the progression of student internationalization initiatives.

Ⅴ .Construction of Internationalization Strategies for Students at Regional Undergraduate Institutions in China

1. Framework for Student Internationalization Strategies Based on SWOT Analysis

1.1 About the SWOT Tool

SWOT analysis is a widely used tool in strategic planning and decision-making processes that comprehensively evaluates the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of an organization or project. By assessing these aspects, it helps formulate effective strategic action plans.

In the context of the "Framework for Student Internationalization Strategies Based on SWOT Analysis for Local Universities", SWOT analysis is applied in the following areas:

Strengths: These refer to the unique resources, capabilities, policy support, and successful experiences that regional undergraduate institutions possess in international talent development, such as a wealth of international exchange programs, bilingual teaching prowess, and an international background among the teaching staff.

Weaknesses: These denote the internal challenges and limitations encountered by universities in advancing student internationalization, including insufficient financial investment, a curriculum system lacking internationalization, generally lower levels of foreign language proficiency among students, and a dearth of international perspective education.

Opportunities: These reflect favorable conditions and trends in the external environment that promote student internationalization, such as national policies promoting educational openness, an increase in international cooperative education projects, and a growing demand for academic exchanges on a global scale.

Threats: These represent factors in the external environment that pose challenges to the universities' international talent cultivation, including fierce competition in international education, changes in global political and economic situations leading to barriers in international cooperation, and the impact of emergencies such as pandemics on international exchanges.

Through such a SWOT analysis, regional undergraduate institutions can clarify their positioning in international talent development, identify directions for improvement and innovative points, and thus construct a set of student internationalization strategies that are responsive to market demands, effectively utilize internal and external resources, and adeptly address challenges.

1.2 Analysis of Student Internationalization Efforts at Regional Undergraduate Institutions Based on SWOT

1.2.1 Advantages

regional undergraduate institutions have at least the following advantages in student internationalization:

1.Alignment with Regional Characteristics and Needs: regional undergraduate institutions often closely align with the practical realities of local economic and social development. They can tailor international exchanges and cooperation based on regional characteristics and industry demands, thereby cultivating international talents that meet the needs of local economic growth.

2.Potential for International Collaboration: Despite potentially limited resources compared to top-tier universities, local universities can still expand their international reach through flexible partnership models. This includes establishing international joint laboratories, initiating university-industry cooperative projects, and joining international educational alliances.

3.Policy Support and Favorable Conditions: In the process of promoting higher education internationalization, national and regional governments often provide policy support and financial backing to local universities, encouraging them to broaden their international horizons, enhance education quality, and introduce high-quality educational resources.

4.Space for Educational Reforms: Local universities typically have greater flexibility in educational reforms. They can experiment with new educational concepts, curricula, and teaching methods, particularly by integrating international elements into course offerings, thereby developing a competitive and internationalized curriculum system.

5. Diverse Student Body: The student population at local universities tends to be more diverse, contributing to a diverse learning community that serves as a practical platform for cultivating individuals with cross-cultural communication skills and global awareness.

6.Cost-effectiveness: For international students, attending a local ordinary university is often more cost-effective, making it easier to attract a larger number of international students to engage in exchange programs in China. This also benefits home students, enabling them to participate in international exchange programs at a lower cost.

In summary, regional undergraduate institutions can effectively drive the internationalization of student development by leveraging local resources, strengthening international partnerships, responding to policy directives, and implementing educational innovations, thereby fully utilizing their inherent strengths.

1.2.2 Disadvantages

Regional undergraduate institutions may encounter the following disadvantages in student internationalization:

1.Resource Constraints: Compared to national or key universities, regional undergraduate institutions might face significant deficiencies in fiscal support, hardware facilities, and faculty strength, which makes it difficult for them to extensively import advanced international educational resources and attract top-tier foreign faculty members.

2.Low Level of Curriculum Internationalization: Limited by their faculty structure and teaching traditions,

local universities tend to have a curriculum, textbook selection, and teaching methods with a lower degree of internationalization. They often lack professionally-aligned courses that adhere to international standards and offer a fully English-medium instructional environment.

3.Scarce International Cooperation Projects: Owing to factors such as lesser-known status and influence, local universities may have fewer opportunities to secure international cooperation projects, establish joint-degree programs, or sign student exchange agreements. This results in relatively scarce international mobility and exposure for their students.

4. Lower Level of Faculty Internationalization: The average level of international academic exchange, overseas study background, and foreign language abilities among the faculty at local universities may be inferior to those at high-ranking institutions. This directly affects the international outlook and quality of their teaching and education.

5.Inadequate Language Proficiency Among Students: The overall foreign language proficiency among the student body might vary widely, especially in listening and speaking skills. This limitation restricts their ability to participate in international exchange activities and pursue further studies abroad.

6.Cultural Atmosphere and Perceptions: The degree of emphasis on and understanding of internationalization within the campus culture may need improvement. Some faculty and students might underestimate the urgency and importance of internationalization, which hinders the formation of a proactive internationalized atmosphere.

7.Impact of International Accreditation and Rankings: Many local universities have yet to obtain internationally recognized certifications for educational quality and often occupy lower positions in world university rankings. This, to some extent, affects their appeal and competitiveness on the international stage.

In summary, on their path towards internationalization, regional undergraduate institutions need to overcome these weaknesses by means of deepening reform, increasing investments, enhancing faculty development, optimizing curriculum design, broadening international cooperation channels, and other measures, gradually raising their internationalization level and the quality of talent cultivation.

1.2.3 Opportunities

In light of the advantages and disadvantages of regional undergraduate institutions in the internationalization of student development, they can seize the following opportunities:

1. National Policy Opportunities: With the deepened implementation of the national-level Belt and Road Initiative and the continuous introduction of policies by the Ministry of Education and related departments to encourage and support the internationalization of higher education, local universities can benefit from more policy guidance and financial support. This would enable them to develop international projects, import high-quality educational resources, and conduct teacher training.

2.Regional Cooperation and Characteristic Development: Leveraging their geographical advantages, local universities can actively participate in regional and inter-country educational collaborations, such as co-establishing discipline research centers and joint training programs with countries along the Belt and Road route. They can highlight local and ethnic cultural exchanges, transforming their geographical advantages into unique selling points for internationalized education.

3. Online Education and Digital Transformation: Utilizing modern information technology, local universities can share educational resources through online courses and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), breaking down geographical boundaries. This allows them to improve teaching quality at a lower cost and higher

efficiency, and increases the chances to access international educational resources.

4.Collaborative Education and Alliance Building: Joining domestic and international educational alliances or collaborating with prestigious universities to launch Sino-foreign cooperative education programs enables sharing advanced teaching models and management experiences. This enhances their brand recognition and influence in the international education market.

5.Local Enterprise Cooperation and Employment Orientation: Establishing close ties with local and international enterprises to jointly design talent development plans ensures that course content better meets industry demands. This also provides students with internship, employment, and overseas job opportunities, thereby directly applying the outcomes of international education to serve the socio-economic development of the local area.

6.Cross-Cultural Competence Development: Organizing multicultural activities and international cultural festivals fosters a diversified campus culture, cultivates students' cross-cultural communication skills, and shapes an internationalized campus atmosphere.

In summary, regional undergraduate institutions should seize the opportunities presented by the changing times, leverage their strengths, address their weaknesses, proactively seek partners, capitalize on policy dividends, and utilize new technological means. They should constantly innovate international talent development models to broaden students' international perspectives and enhance their global competitiveness.

1.2.4 Threats

Regional undergraduate institutions may face the following threats in the internationalization of student development:

1. Increased International Competition Pressure: As global higher education competition intensifies; renowned overseas institutions and top domestic universities are escalating their international efforts. Consequently, local universities face heightened competition when attracting premium international educational resources, talented international students, and faculty members.

2. Imbalanced Resource Allocation: The uneven distribution of domestic educational resources across different tiers and regions may place local universities at a disadvantage when competing for national policy support, research funding, and high-quality international cooperation projects.

3.Economic and Technological Constraints: Due to potential limitations in funding, technological equipment, and network infrastructure, local universities might struggle to keep pace with the developments in educational informatization and distance education. This could hinder the execution of online international education programs and the deepening of international academic exchanges.

4. Uncertain Factors Such as Pandemics and Wars: Global public health events like the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly disrupted traditional international exchange and cooperation models, severely restricting face-to-face international academic conferences, short-term exchange visits, and long-term study-abroad programs. Concurrently, regional conflicts and geopolitical tensions can seriously impede international cooperation and exchange efforts, including those pertaining to student internationalization.

5.Decreased Student Mobility: Changes in visa policies, rising costs of studying abroad, and safety concerns may lead to a decline in the quantity and frequency of student international mobility, impacting the realization of international talent development goals at local universities.

6.Challenges in International Accreditation and Reputation: Local universities may encounter greater

challenges in obtaining international authoritative education accreditation, improving their international rankings, and building a strong international reputation, which indirectly impacts their capacity to attract international partners and high-quality students.

7.Cultural Differences and Integration Issues: Effectively managing cultural differences, avoiding cultural conflicts, and fostering deep integration across various cultural backgrounds are also potential threats that local universities confront during their internationalization process.

2. A Proposed Model of Internationalization of Student Development: A Hypothesis

In response to these threats, regional undergraduate institutions must actively explore internationalization strategies suited to the new era, continually enhance their educational quality and distinctive features, cultivate diversified paths for international cooperation, and bolster their competitiveness and resilience through internal reforms and innovation.

Based on the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by regional undergraduate institutions in China concerning student internationalization, and drawing from extensive literature review, case studies of exemplary institutions, and the application of SWOT theory, we propose a model for student internationalization strategies that is universally applicable to local universities across China. This model comprises ten interconnected facets, each of which contributes uniquely to the central objective of fostering student internationalization.

The comprehensive and pragmatic model for the internationalization of student cultivation encapsulates 10 carefully devised strategies that collectively address the multifaceted dimensions of this central goal. It is noteworthy that this represents the first systematically organized strategy framework for student internationalization in the context of regional universities in China. We strongly advocate that all regional universities contemplate and implement these strategies diligently in their pursuit of higher education internationalization, with the aim of nurturing a more competent workforce equipped with international perspectives and abilities.

In essence, our preliminary research indicates that regional Chinese universities, forming a vital segment of the broader category of ordinary Chinese universities, must also embrace education internationalization. The heart of their internationalization endeavor lies in talent cultivation, which can be equated to the internationalization of student cultivation.

The culmination of this research effort reveals ten distinct strategies that form the conclusive findings of this discourse. These strategies, grounded in a logical and coherent framework, are designed to guide and enhance the internationalization of student cultivation in local Chinese universities.

These strategies should be tailored to the unique circumstances and resources of each regional university in China, ensuring that they align with the institution's strategic goals and contribute effectively to the overarching objective of cultivating internationally-minded graduates.

Here are the ten strategies we proposed on the basis of the former study and discussion:

1.Establish and cultivate the concept of international operation, providing an ideological and cognitive foundation for the internationalization of student cultivation.

2.Formulate incentive policies and evaluation systems for the international operation of the institution, offering institutional guarantees for the internationalization of student training.

3.Set up a management organization and system dedicated to international school operations, providing

organizational guarantees for the internationalization of student training.

4.Promote the internationalization of regional teacher training, increase the intensity of introducing overseas expertise, and furnish talent guarantees for the internationalization of student education.

5.Prudently and orderly introduce high-quality overseas textbooks to provide intellectual support for the internationalization of student education.

6.Vigorously advance the development of international joint research to provide capability support for the internationalization of student training.

7.Actively engage in Sino-foreign cooperative education initiatives, providing regionalized practice for the internationalization of student training.

8.Encourage students to study abroad, pursue advanced education, participate in internships, and practical training, providing overseas benchmarks for the internationalization of students.

9.Recruit international students, build an international and diverse campus, and create a cultural environment conducive to students' internationalization.

10.Closely monitor the career development of graduates who have received international training, providing practical evidence for the effectiveness of internationalized student training.

These strategies holistically address various aspects of fostering internationalization in regional Chinese universities, ranging from establishing a supportive environment to providing tangible opportunities and tracking outcomes. Besides, these strategies are closely and logically connected as in Figure 1:
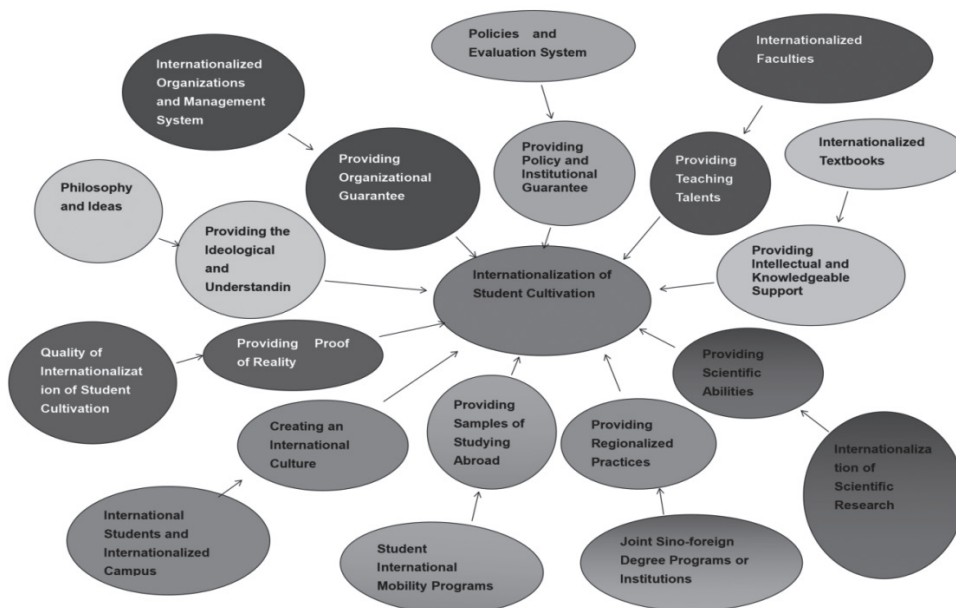
Figure 1. Improved version of strategies of internationalization

This mode is supposed to be a mature or ideal one which is yet to be testified in further study and practices as well as to be revised or modified.

Ⅵ.Feasibility Analysis and Anticipated Outcomes of Implementing Strategies for Student Internationalization

1.Resource Requirements and Condition Guarantees for Implementing Strategies for Student Internationalization

1.1 Resource Requirements for Implementing Strategies for Student Internationalization

The implementation of student internationalization training strategies entails multifaceted resource requirements aimed at providing ample opportunities and environments for enrolled students to enhance their global perspectives, cross-cultural communication skills, and ability to engage in international competition and collaboration. Key resource requirements include:

1.Financial Resources (Funding)

Financial support for international exchange programs, encompassing funds for student exchanges, joint training programs, short-term visits, participation in international conferences or seminars.

Costs associated with recruiting international faculty and importing or purchasing high-quality online educational resources.

Budget for constructing international academic and practical platforms, e.g., setting up international cooperation laboratories, research centers, or international internship bases.

2.Human Resources

A high-quality, internationally-oriented faculty capable of teaching cutting-edge international courses and guiding students in conducting international research.

A specialized management team for international affairs, including offices for international exchange and cooperation, to ensure smooth operation and management of international cooperation projects.

Reinforcement of foreign language teaching capabilities, providing sufficient language training resources to ensure students possess strong foreign language communication skills.

3.Course and Teaching Resources

Development and introduction of an internationally aligned professional curriculum system, comprising English-taught major courses, international general education courses, and cross-cultural communication courses.

Implementation of dual-degree and joint training programs, collaborating with overseas universities to build shared courses and credit recognition systems.

Establishment of overseas internship and training bases to provide on-site learning and work experience.

4.Infrastructure and Information Technology

Provision of modern teaching facilities suitable for international exchanges, such as smart classrooms and remote video conferencing systems, facilitating synchronous teaching and exchange between domestic and foreign universities.

Utilization of cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and other technologies to construct an integrated online-offline international teaching environment, exemplified by "Cloud Classroom" projects.

5.Policy and Systematic Guarantees

Formulation and improvement of relevant policies regarding international exchange and cooperation, including regulations on student outbound (border) study, scholarship establishment, and academic record

management.

Strengthened cooperation relationships with government bodies, enterprises, public institutions, and international organizations to garner more policy support and external resources.

Only when these resources are effectively integrated and rationally allocated can regional undergraduate institutions in China successfully implement strategies for student internationalization training, ultimately achieving the anticipated improvements in educational quality and talent competitiveness.

1.2 Conditions for Ensuring the Implementation of Student Internationalization Strategies

To effectively carry out the internationalization training of students, apart from meeting the resource requirements outlined earlier, certain conditions must also be guaranteed:

1.Policy and Legal Guarantee: Develop and implement corresponding policies and regulations to safeguard the promotion and development of international education. This includes issuing policies to encourage and support student participation in international exchange programs, devising credit recognition mechanisms, establishing scholarships for studying abroad, and improving policies for accepting and managing international students.

2. International Cooperation Agreements and Frameworks: Sign official cooperation agreements with overseas universities to build long-term, stable partnerships. Clearly define the responsibilities and rights of all parties involved to offer students secure pathways for overseas study, exchange, and joint training programs.

3.Evaluation and Supervision Mechanisms: Establish a comprehensive evaluation and supervision system for internationalization training projects. Conduct regular reviews of project performance and actual outcomes, using these evaluations to continually optimize and refine the training strategies.

4.Internal Management System: Enhance the construction of the school's internal international management and service system. This involves setting up specialized offices for international exchange or cooperation, staffed with proficient teams who manage the planning, organization, and implementation of various international projects. They also oversee post-project assessments and assist students with related procedures like visa applications, credit transfers, registration for exchange programs, and selection processes, ensuring a smooth international training journey.

5.Faculty Development: The university should invest more in the internationalization of its teaching staff. This can be done by sending teachers abroad for further studies, participating in international academic conferences, or acting as visiting scholars. Such endeavors expand teachers' international perspectives and elevate their abilities in international teaching and research. Simultaneously, the university should encourage and support teachers to adopt advanced international teaching concepts and methodologies, integrating international elements into their everyday teaching.

6.Information Technology Platform Construction: To provide students with more diverse and convenient international educational resources, the university should leverage modern information technology to develop an international exchange information sharing platform. This platform delivers real-time information on overseas study, internship, and exchange opportunities, assists students in navigating application procedures, obtaining required materials, and may even provide online course resources, transcending geographical limitations and empowering students to engage in international learning anytime, anywhere.

7.Security Assurance Measures: For students participating in overseas study and exchange, the university should establish a solid security protection system. This encompasses providing pre-departure safety education

and training, maintaining an emergency contact mechanism during their stay abroad, and arranging necessary insurance coverage. Additionally, it is crucial to prepare detailed contingency plans to handle unexpected situations, ensuring that students' personal safety and legal rights are comprehensively protected throughout their overseas study period.

2.Implementation of Student Internationalization Development Strategies: Challenges and Countermeasures

2.1 Potential Challenges

In the course of executing student internationalization training strategies, a series of challenges might emerge:

1.Uneven Resource Allocation and Input-Output Ratio Pressures: While numerous institutions strive for advancing internationalization, the fair and effective distribution of finite resources across diverse initiatives presents a formidable challenge. Additionally, the high costs associated with international training may subject universities to pressures concerning the input-output ratio, necessitating a careful assessment of whether substantial investments will yield tangible educational outcomes and returns.

2. Insufficient Internationalization Among Faculty Members: The possession of a faculty with an international outlook and high professional standards is critical; however, at some domestic universities, educators may have relatively insufficient overseas experience, English language teaching capabilities, and international research collaboration backgrounds.

3.Students' Language Proficiency and Adaptability Issues: Despite the provision of pertinent courses and resources, there exists considerable variation in students' foreign language proficiency levels, and they might encounter difficulties in cross-cultural adaptation and independent living, which can impact their learning experiences and daily lives while abroad.

4.Barriers to Curriculum and Credit Recognition: The discrepancies in education systems and curriculum configurations across different countries and regions render credit recognition a complex undertaking. Addressing how to harmonize international curricula and achieve a seamless integration represents a significant challenge.

5.The Stability and Sustainability of International Cooperation: Owing to factors such as international politics and economics, ensuring the stability and continuity of international cooperation projects can occasionally prove challenging, potentially affecting students' long-term training schemes and the university's strategic planning.

6.Student Psychological and Emotional Support During Internationalization: Novice international students often face significant emotional challenges, including coping with cultural shock and homesickness upon leaving familiar surroundings. Adequate provision of psychological counseling services and the establishment of a supportive emotional climate within internationalization programs are vital to ensure their well-being and success. Therefore, it is essential that academic institutions provide comprehensive psychological consultations and implement a structured emotional support system to mitigate potential negative impacts of this transition period.

2.2 Countermeasures

To tackle these challenges, extensive work is required, encompassing at least the following points:

1.Optimizing Resource Allocation: Conduct scientific planning and precise allocation of educational resources, leveraging Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models, seeking multi-party sponsorship, and other means to secure sufficient financial backing for the implementation of internationalization strategies.

2.Strengthening Faculty Development: Intensify the internationalization efforts in cultivating teachers, providing opportunities for overseas study tours, visiting scholar programs, and exchanges, while also encouraging the recruitment of foreign faculty members to enhance the international profile of the teaching staff.

3.Improving Language Teaching and Intercultural Education: Bolster reforms in foreign language instruction, complemented by adding intercultural communication courses tailored to practical needs, and pre-departure training for students in overseas living skills and psychological counseling.

4.Innovating International Cooperation Models: Actively promote the establishment of credit transfer mechanisms and explore flexible and diverse collaborative modes, such as online joint courses, short-term study abroad programs, aiming to lower barriers to cross-border educational partnerships.

5. Enhancing Student Support Systems: Establish and refine a comprehensive student service system that spans from pre-departure preparation to post-departure follow-up, including assistance with visa procedures, guidance on overseas living, and mental health counseling, thereby ensuring students receive timely and effective help and support during their time abroad.

3. Assessment of Expected Outcomes for Implementing Student Internationalization Strategies

The anticipated effects of implementing student internationalization strategies can be examined across multiple dimensions, primarily involving the following aspects:

Enhanced Talent Quality: By adopting internationalization strategies, students gain exposure to and understanding of diverse cultures, broaden their global perspectives, strengthen their cross-cultural communication skills and adaptability, thereby improving their professional competencies and overall qualities, culminating in the cultivation of internationally competitive talents.

Elevated Academic Standards: Aligning with advanced international educational concepts and premium resources enhances students' research capabilities and innovation, facilitating their publication of scholarly works on the global stage, thereby boosting the academic influence of the institution.

Improved Job Market Competitiveness: With globalization accelerating, there is an increasing demand from enterprises and organizations for individuals with an international outlook and cross-cultural communication skills. Through internationalized education, students not only expand their employment prospects globally but also better adapt to the multifaceted working environments of multinational corporations and international organizations.

Expanded Network of International Collaboration: Engaging in a variety of international exchange programs enables the establishment and deepening of cooperative relationships between the institution and higher education institutions and research bodies worldwide, creating a solid network of international partners that lays the groundwork for future long-term collaborations and development.

Enrichment of Campus Cultural Diversity: The introduction of international faculty and the inclusion of international students foster cultural exchange and interaction within the campus, nurturing an inclusive and open atmosphere where all students and faculty members can benefit and grow together.

Heightened National and Regional Influence: By producing a stream of internationally proficient graduates, local universities can contribute to enhancing, to some extent, the soft power and global influence of their respective regions and even the entire nation.

In conclusion, the execution of student internationalization strategies carries profound and constructive implications. It transcends the mere enhancement of individual students' competencies and worth by fostering a cadre of globally-minded professionals adept at navigating multicultural landscapes. This strategic approach not only serves to elevate the academic standing and employability of graduates but also enriches the campus culture and diversifies its intellectual milieu. Moreover, it fortifies international partnerships among institutions, which in turn paves the way for sustained collaborative growth. Ultimately, these concerted efforts contribute to amplifying the international clout and soft power of both the university itself and the broader national or regional context within which it operates.

Ⅶ .Further Research on Strategies for Internationalizing Student Development by Surveys and Questionnaires

1.Questionnaires

To substantiate the viability of the suggested strategies for the internationalization of students at local non-elite Chinese universities, we have designed a series of six surveys(questionnaires) to investigate various dimensions. These include the necessity for such universities to undertake internationalized education practices, the inclusion of international exchange and cooperation metrics within the top three world university rankings, the expectations of companies engaged in international business regarding students' experience and background, the strategies implemented for the internationalization of students, and approaches to assessing the outcomes of these internationalization initiatives among students. The author has been working at International Office, Liaocheng University for 26 years, and is very familiar with all the directors and most deans of international education in other regional undergraduate institutes, which makes it a comparatively easy and possible job to finish. I'd like to show great thanks to all my friends in the other 41 regional colleges and universities who work in international office and helped me to collect data. Of course, I will to the survey at Liaocheng University where I work.

The following are the main questions of our questionnaires:

Question #1:Is it important and necessary for a Chinese regional undergraduate institution to be internationalized in higher education?

Question #2:What are the Factors/Points of Different World University Rankings?

Question #3:What are international companies' employment requirements on graduates in the field of international experience and background?

Question #4:What are the useful and effective ways and methods of internationalization of student development?

Question #5:How to evaluate the internationalization status of student development at regional undergraduate

institutions in China?

Question #6:What is(are) the most important factor(s) that affect(s) your decision and choice to take part in an international student program?

2 .Research Design

Research methods and procedures are described in this part. As we mentioned earlier, the researcher makes use of a mixed research method that combines population sampling techniques in the form of survey questionnaires and interview with literature research method, by which collection processes, statistical treatment and analysis processes of data are conducted.

In earlier parts of this article, the research has done literature research on the topic of internationalization of higher education which includes the relevant theories all over the world and practice in some typical countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, EU countries, Japan, Singapore, and other countries and regions. Of course, China is also one of the subjects investigated. In this way, the research tries to make trial research about internationalization of higher education:

Is it a popular trend for higher learning institutes to be internationalized in the field of higher education, generally speaking?

Is the practice of internationalization of higher education necessary?

What are the most important elements or factors of internationalization of higher learning on the basis of the existing practice?

What are the situations in China as far as the internationalization of higher learning is concerned?

Is there any mature and successful mode of the internationalization of student cultivation in regional colleges and universities in China?

According to the literature research, the preliminary conclusion is that it is necessary for Chinese colleges and universities to internationalized, including regional colleges and universities, of course. Moreover, a supposed mature and successful model of the internationalization of student cultivation for regional colleges and universities in China has been developed. Then it comes to the problem: is the proposed model of internationalization of student cultivation in regional colleges and universities in China really an ideal and mature one? To solve the problem, further investigation is needed. Therefore, the author will do a series of survey by 6 questionnaires.

3. Respondents/ Participants and Sample Size of the Study

At least the following participants of different questionnaires will be included:

a) Managers of international companies (100 samples);

b) Presidents or vice-presidents of regional universities plus several internationalized universities (42 samples);

c) Deans and directors of regional universities (200 samples);

d) Faculties (lectures only) of regional universities (500 samples);

e) Parents of College Students (100 samples);

f) Students (including graduates sometimes) of regional universities (1000 samples);

g) Percentage of Factors concerning internationalization of higher education of three most popular university

rankings: QS World University Rankings, U.S. News & World Report Best Global Universities Rankings, and Times Higher Education World University Rankings; and

h) Other groups (100 samples, the respondents must be out of Shandong Province, and that they could not have worked or studied or lived in Shandong Province)

A further explanation to the sample size:

a) There are only 42 regional undergraduate colleges and universities, so we choose only 42 Presidents or Vice Presidents for international affairs to do the survey or investigation.

b) We do have quite a lot of foreign companies or Chinese companies which are doing international trade and business. We call them international business-related companies in China. However, it is very difficult to get these companies involved into the investigation. Many managers neglected or refused to answer these questionnaires, or even refused to answer a call. Many just hung up whenever they heard that we were doing an investigation. That's why we only choose 100 companies in this survey, which is a great limitation to our research.

c) As for the sample size of faculty and student, there are plenty of resources for the author to take advantage of. Therefore, I'd like to expand the sample size to 500 for faculties and 1000 for students.

d) As for parents and other groups, out of the same reason as investigating international business-related companies, I only choose 100 samples at random, which is another limitation to the research.

4. Research Instrument

The researcher will utilize 6 surveys(questionnaires) to collect data for the investigation. At the very beginning, a four-point Likert Scale is developed and used in describing how the participants agree or not agree on the importance or necessity of internationalization of education in these questionnaires, which is as follows and the scale and meaning were also listed below, As shown in table 1:

Table 1. Original Four-point Likert Scale

Scale	Range of Means (Percentage)	Verbal Interpretation	Descriptive Interpretation
4	80%-100%	Strongly Agree (SA)	The respondents strongly agree that it describes the situation about the internationalization of higher education.
3	60%-79%	Agree (A)	The respondents agree that it describes the situation about the internationalization of higher education.
2	40%-59%	Disagree (D)	The respondents disagree that it describes the situation about the internationalization of higher education.
1	39% and below	Strongly Disagree (SD)	The respondents strongly disagree that it describes the situation about the internationalization of higher education.

However, in China, when people are evaluating something by giving a score, they usually prefer using a five-point scale, or a ten-point scale, or a 100-pint scale, almost nobody would like to use a 1-4 scale. Therefore, the author would like to take the risk to develop a five-point scale by adding a neutral point in the middle to the original four-point Likert Scale which looks like this:

Table 2. Revised Five-point Likert Scale

Scale	Range of Means (Percentage)	Verbal Interpretation	Descriptive Interpretation
5	86%-100%	Strongly Agree (SA)	The respondents strongly agree that it describes the situation about the internationalization of higher education.
4	71%-85%	Agree (A)	The respondents agree that it describes the situation about the internationalization of higher education.
3	56%-70%	Neutral (N)	The respondents think there's nothing to do with it, or there's no inherent correlation.
2	41%-55%	Disagree (D)	The respondents disagree that it describes the situation about the internationalization of higher education.
1	40% and below	Strongly Disagree (SD)	The respondents strongly disagree that it describes the situation about the internationalization of higher education.

5. Data Gathering Procedure

1. The researcher will design a survey questionnaire for each problem, seeks advice from the adviser, distributes the questionnaire to different groups of people, gathers the data; and then analyze and interpret the data.

2. For the interviews by calls or letters or E-mails, the research will directly ask the relevant questions, and the interviewee will answer them freely according to their own understandings. Then the researcher will collect and induce their answers, and then gives an interpretation of the data. This practice is adoptable to both interviews if any and open questions in the questionnaires.

6. Statistical Treatment of Data

When all the data are gathered, the researcher will analyze or interpret them by percentage and frequency or weighed mean.

Percentage and frequency: Number of indicators per data point or collection of data points is displayed visually in a percentage frequency distribution.

Weighed Mean: Presidents, vice-presidents, deans and directors play a more important role in executing internationalization policies and strategies of student cultivation, so they are given a greater weight. We give a weighed mean of 1.5 to Presidents and Vice-Presidents, 1.25 to deans and directors, 1.0 to the other groups. Yet we don't use weighed mean each time. Only when it comes to policy-making affairs or important events concerning internationalization which are decided by institution authorities.

7.Interpretation and Data Analysis

We handed out 2042 pieces of questionnaires in all, in various forms including but not limited to online mini apps, E-mails, calls, WeChat chatroom, posters, or even face-to-face interview, to all the respondents we could reach, which include all the participants we listed in 6.4.3.

The above-mentioned sample size in 6.4.3 is supposed to be the maximum samples we can obtain. Considering that many respondents will most probably refuse or neglect the investigation, we stipulate that as long as 80% of the predetermined samples are valid, the survey is considered to be valid and effective. If a questionnaire doesn't come back and disappear, it is considered to be invalid. If over 3 choices on a questionnaire are neglected or the participant's group type is left blank, or a questionnaire is ruined or not clearly enough to identify, it's invalid.

The specific feedback information is as follows:

Table 3. Samples and Feedback

Type of Group	Questionnaires handed out	Total Feedback	Invalid Feedback	Valid Feedback	Validity	Final Conclusion: Yes or No
Presidents or VP	42	38	0	38	90.48%	Yes
Deans and Directors	200	175	3	172	86.00%	Yes
Faculties	500	427	15	412	82.40%	Yes
Students	1000	918	55	863	86.30%	Yes
Managers	100	84	1	83	83%	Yes
Alumina	100	99	1	99	99.00%	Yes
Parents	100	81	0	81	81.00%	Yes
Others	100	99	0	99	99.00%	Yes
Total	2142	1921	75	1847	86.23%	Yes

The table below provides a detailed analysis of 1847 samples of valid questionnaires. It can be seen that the gender ratio is moderate. Most people are relatively young because they are mostly students, with students and faculty accounting for more than 50% of the survey sample, and have a certain educational background. The vast majority of people's income is also around 1000-5000 yuan. Therefore, the sample size of the questionnaire survey is reasonable and has certain representative significance for the research in this article.

Table 4. Basic sample demographic indicators (N=1847)

Sample characteristics	Feature Description	frequency	Mode	percentage %
Gender	A. male	1004	A	54.36
	B. female	843		45.64
Age	A. Under 18 years old	242	B	13.10
	B.19-25 years old	547		29.61
	C.26-30 years old	371		20.09
	D.31-40 years old	378		20.47
	E.41 years old and above	309		16.73
Profession	A. Presidents or VP	38	D	2.057
	B. Deans and Directors	172		9.312
	C. Faculties	412		22.306
	D. Students	863		46.724
	E. Managers	83		4.493
	F. Alumina	99		5.360
	G. Parents	81		4.385
	H. Others	99		5.360
Monthly income	A. 1000 yuan and below	447	C	24.20
	B.1001—3000 yuan	413		22.36
	C.3001 —5000 yuan	471		25.50
	D.5001 -8000 yuan	191		10.34
	E.8001-10000 yuan	213		11.53
	F.10001 yuan and above	112		6.06
	total	1847		100.0

Question #1: Is it important and necessary for a Chinese regional undergraduate institution to be internationalized in higher education?

When asked if it is important and necessary for a regional undergraduate institution to develop its higher education in an international way, among the 1847 valid feedback, there are 832 Strongly Agree (SA), accounting for 45.05%; 955 Agree, 51.65%; 38 Neutral, 2.06%; 18 Disagree, 0.97%; and 4 Strongly Disagree, 0.22%, which is as follows:

Table 5. Feedback of Questionnaire 1

Response	Votes	Percentage
Strongly Agree (SA)	832	45.05%
Agree (A)	955	51.65%
Neutral (N)	38	2.06%
Disagree (D)	18	0.97%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	4	0.22%

SA plus A occupies a total percentage of 96.70%. Obviously, the absolute majority of the respondents will choose to support a policy of internationalization in Chinese regional universities.

Table 6. Detailed Analysis of Feeback of Question #1

Group	Total Number of Respondents	SA+A	Percentage	Weighted Coefficient	Revised
Presidents	38	38	100%	1.5	150%
Deans/Directors	172	148	86.05%	1.25	107.56%
Faculties	412	386	93.69%	1.0	93.69%
Students	863	610	70.68%	1.0	70.68%
Managers	83	74	89.16%	1.0	89.16%
Alumni	99	80	88.89%	1.0	88.89%
Parents	81	69	85.19%	1.0	85.19%
Other	99	66	66.67%	1.0	66.67%

If we look into the votes in different groups, the data of votes will be like this:The simple average percentage is 85.04% (100% + 86.05% + 93.69% + 70.68% + 89.16% + 88.89% + 85.19% + 66.67%) ÷ 8= 85.04%).

And the weighted average percentage is 93.98%: (150% + 107.56% + 93.69% + 70.68% + 89.16% + 88.89% + 85.19% + 66.67%) ÷8 = 93.98%.

Obviously, no matter how you look at it, the basic conclusion is that it is IMPORTANT and NECESSARY for a regional undergraduate institution in China to develop itself in an international way. According to the revised 5-point Likert Scale, the result strongly agrees with the subject.

Following the same analysis method, it is not difficult to figure out all the answers to the other questions. And we will only keep the last weighted average percentage. When asked "How significant an impact do you think higher education internationalization has on your organization/school/personal development", 83.41% of the respondents say YES with the A or SA opinion. Moreover, 91.80% of the respondents think that internationalization of higher education will improve teaching quality, expand academic exchange and collaboration, be helpful to development of talents with a global perspective and to introduce high-quality educational resources, and be able to increase international rankings and reputation of regional colleges and universities.

As for the biggest challenge, 73.41% of the respondents chose "High Financial Investment Requirements", which means regional institutions are not financially sufficient; 37.77% of the participants chose other, which is quite unusually because it's an open choice and they should write something different from the other choices. Surprisingly, what they filled in the blank share the same main idea --financial conditions of students' family. Obviously, the real problem and challenge is MONEY! And 27.4% chose "Difficulty in Integrating International Courses with Domestic Educational Systems"; 21.7% chose "Insufficient Internationalization Capacity among Faculty Members"; 19.54% chose "Students' Adaptability and Employment Pressure"; and 11.1% chose "Cultural Differences and Integration Issues". A few argued that internationalization of higher education is definitely necessary and important, but owing to the limitations of financial fund, academic performances of faculties and students, etc., it's really very difficult to be fully involved in internationalization. Someone even insists that regional colleges and universities should give up any tempt to do so. It's useless. Internationalization of higher education is a natural and historic process, and usually it happens first at first-class universities.

Question # 2: Factors/Points of Different World University Ranking

The result of this question does not need any questionnaire. We just need to look at the most popular world university rankings. There are many world university rankings of all kinds, but the three world university rankings recognized as the biggest influence are QS World University rankings, U.S. News World University rankings, and Thames Higher Education World University rankings. The indicators and weights of the university internationalization in the three rankings are as follows:

Table 7. Questionnaire 2

UNIVERSITY RANKINGS	RANKING INDICATOR ABOUT INTERNATIONALIZATION	WEIGHT (100%)		
QS World University Rankings	International Faculty Ratio	5%		
	International Student Ratio	5%		
U.S. News & World Report Best Global Universities Rankings	International collaboration–relative to country	5% (Hard Sciences)	5% (Soft Sciences)	2.5% (Arts and Humanities)
	International collaboration	5%(Hard Sciences)	5% (Soft Sciences)	2.5% (Arts and Humanities)
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	Internationalization (staff, students, and research)	7.5%		

It is easy to find out that all three charts include an important indicator, namely internationalization which accounts for 5% at least and 12.5% at most, which shows at least that the internationalization index occupies a certain position.

Question # 3: What are international companies' employment requirements on graduates as far as their international experience and background is concerned?

When asked about what are the most important thing in seeking a job (hiring a job-seeker), managers who stand for employers and job-seekers (students) or the employees in their first year after college (alumni) have some slightly different choices. Here's their choices:

Table 8. Questionnaire 3

Items	Managers		Students		Alumni		Average	Ranking
	Votes	Proportion	Votes	Proportion	Votes	Proportion		
Overseas experience of study or training	73	87.95%	530	61.41%	60	60.60%	69.99%	2
Internationally recognized professional certificates	72	86.75%	129	14.95%	84	84.85%	62.18%	3
Internship Experience at Foreign-Invested or Foreign-Related Enterprises	66	79.52%	256	29.66%	73	73.74%	60.97%	4
Foreign Language Proficiency	60	72.29%	610	70.68%	70	70.71%	71.23%	1
Overseas degree or diploma	58	69.88%	412	47.74%	64	64.65%	60.76%	5
Other	1	1.20%	0	0%	0	0%	0.4%	6

Note: For managers, we took back 83 pieces of questionnaires out of 100; for students, 863 out of 1000; and for alumni, 99 out of 100.

Obviously, different groups' concerns are different. Managers' most concern is students' overseas experience of study or training; students' concern is their foreign language proficiency; and first-year employees' concern is their internationally recognized professional certificates. Proficiency of foreign language ranks the first. Most probably it is because language proficiency is the basis of all the other items and also the most important preparatory factor. Meanwhile, all the five items we listed occupies a proportion of over 60%, which at least indicates that they are all important factors.

Question # 4: What are the useful and effective ways and methods of internationalization of student development?

The original data collected is as follows (number in the table are the votes for the item):

Table 9. Questionnaire 4

Group\Item	VNR	P	MM	F	TM	IRA	QQSMP	ICU	IDP	ITIP	O
Presidents	38	38	38	31	19	11	38	12	8	10	27
Deans/Directors	172	169	158	120	31	35	153	49	71	45	21
Faculties	412	399	386	369	48	31	366	99	88	81	129
Students	863	842	678	530	86	63	780	538	229	188	99
Managers	83	83	81	72	69	58	83	78	42	80	7
Alumni	99	83	83	83	58	71	83	63	60	73	5
Parents	81	81	79	56	45	49	66	48	55	58	3
Other	99	99	99	88	81	76	95	13	38	25	1
Total	1847	1794	1602	1349	437	394	1664	900	591	560	292
Portion	100%	97.13%	86.74%	73.04%	23.66%	21.33%	90.09%	48.73%	31.00%	30.32%	N/A
Ranking	N/A	1	3	4	8	9	2	5	6	7	N/A

Note:
VNS=Valid Number of Respondents
P=Philosophy=Institution's Philosophy on Internationalized Education;
MM=Management Mechanisms=Management Mechanisms for Internationalized Education (including Working Team);
F=Facility=Internationalization of Faculty;
TM=Teaching Materials;
IRA=Internationalization of Research Activities;
QQSMP=Quantity and Quality of Student Mobility Programs;
ICU= Internationalization of Campus Culture;
IDP= International Dual-degree Programs;
ITIP=International Training and Internship Programs;
O=Other

a) Basic and primary analysis: If we just simply add all the votes for each item, it is easy to find out that in the eyes of these interviewee, the importance order of these items is BD>QQSMP>MM>F>ICU>DP>ITIP>TM>IRA.

b) Further investigation: Obviously, it is necessary to find out the hidden reasons behind the data for some item which is apparently lower than normal or expected. We underlined these figures which are connected with IRA, TM, ITIP, IDP and ICU.

Based on further interviewing some respondents whom I'm familiar with, by calls or E-mails or WeChat, as well as my experience since 1997 as a manager and deputy director of the International Office of Liaocheng University, I present here a simple and rough interpretation:

IRA ranks the last. Actually, IRA is closely connected with international cooperation between institution of higher learning. However, up to now, in many regional higher institutions, they are still on the beginning period of their internationalization. They don't have that many international joint research programs. And in the eyes of undergraduate students, they don't participant too much in scientific research. That's why it is considered to be less related to the internationalization of student development especially by both faculties and students.

TM, that is, textbooks, or in a broader meaning, it may involve internationalization of curriculum. On one hand, internationalization of curriculum depends on internationalization of faculties (foreign teachers and Chinese teachers with foreign experience of study, work or visiting). Besides, foreign language proficiency of both faculties and students is another challenge. Under this circumstance, few people would feel interested to promote internationalization of curriculum. And teaching materials including textbooks are just a little part of it. In short, it is a difficult task or goal to realize in the nearest coming days. One the other hand, it is politically sensitive in China to adopt foreign textbooks, particularly when it has something to do with ideology in social sciences.

ITIP, actually are more and more popular among students. However, in public universities, safety of students is regarded as the most important things. ITIP programs usually last for 1-4 weeks only, at most 2-3 months. In a comparatively short period of time, it's hard for students to adjust themselves to a foreign environment. Thus, many problems might arise. As a result, international offices in many public colleges and universities are reluctant to promote ITIP programs.

IDP programs in China will bring a lot of money to higher institutions. Students enrolled in international IDP programs will have to pay 1-5 times more of the average tuition compared with other students in the same institution. And it is becoming more and more difficult to get approval from the Ministry of Education in China.

As for ICU, there are two most important reasons: one is in recent years, more and more problems have appeared when it comes to status and policies of recruiting international students to China. Many citizens are complaining. It is more and more sensitive now. But, without international students, internationalization of campus culture, or an internationalized campus culture, or multi-cultural campus culture, is no way to develop. Moreover, less and less educators, scholars and researchers in China would like to talk about establishing a multi-cultural campus nowadays.

c) Besides the above-mentions 9 factors, many respondents proposed some advice that we neglected or should be revised. For example, many presidents suggested that we should add Leadership Mechanism and Policies related to internationalization of higher education; many deans and directors, especially directors of international office and deans of international education, emphasized that special fund must be established to support students' international exchange and cooperation and that specific policies concerning international development of students should be revised or implemented, simply because there are still a lot of obstacles

when they try to promote student international mobility programs. Many faculties, students and managers mentioned that Foreign Language Proficiency must be added to the list. Improvement of language proficiency is the first step to promote any international student programs among Chinese students.

Question # 5: How to evaluate the internationalization status of student development at regional undergraduate institutions in China?

Though we designed a questionnaire to seek for opinions from the respondents. However, it is basically a survey for a general investigation in this area. Our purpose is not at present to develop a detailed and scientific evaluation scale for regional higher institutions in China. Rather, we just want to learn something about how related groups of people would comment a university as far as its internationalization of education, especially student internationalization, is concerned, based on its general status of internationalization of higher education, which is something like the fame of a university in the field of students' internationalized development. In short, in this part, the author will only focus on one thing: when you start to comment on internationalization status of student development, what element(s) or factor(s) do you think are most influencing your judgement and decision?

Table 10. Questionnaire 5

ID	Valid Votes	Votes for the Most Important Evaluation Index and Portion			Votes for the Second Most Important Evaluation Index and Portion			Votes for the Third Most Important Evaluation Index and Portion		
		Choice	Votes for	Portion	Choice	Votes for	Portion	Choice	Votes for	Portion
Presidents	38	PI	14	36.84%	LMOS	13	34,21%	SPRP	11	28.95%
Deans/ Directors	172	LMOS	64	37.21%	SPRP	53	30.81%	ISP	45	21.16%
Faculties	412	ISP	129	31.31%	LMOS	110	26.70%	SPRP	88	21.36
Students	863	ISP	463	53,65%	LMOS	269	31.17%	ELTL	119	13,79%
Managers	83	PI	33	39.76%	LMOD	23	27.71%	ELTL	15	18.07%
Alumni	99	LMOS	36	36.36%	ISP	31	31.31%	SPRP	30	30.30%
Parents	81	PI	32	39.51%	LMOS	20	24.69%	ELTL	18	22.22%
Other	99	LMOS	29	29.29%	ISP	25	25.25%	PI	22	22.22%

Note: PI= Philosophy of Internationalization
LMOS= Leadership Mechanism and Operational System
SPRP=Strategic Planning and Related Policies
ISP= International Student Programs
FLTL=Foreign Language Training and Learning

As we mentioned earlier, Presidents (including other school leaders), deans and directors are playing a more important role in making policies, therefore, we give a different weighed mean: for Presidents, the coefficient is 1.5, for deans and directors, it is 1.25. If we adjust the data concerning presidents, deans and directors with a different coefficient, the data will be like this:

Table 11. Revised Results of Question # 5

ID	Valid Votes	Votes for the Most Important Evaluation Index and Portion			Votes for the Second Most Important Evaluation Index and Portion			Votes for the Third Most Important Evaluation Index and Portion		
		Choice	Votes for	Portion	Choice	Votes for	Portion	Choice	Votes for	Portion
Presidents	38	PI	14	36.84% x 1.5= 55.26%	LMOS	13	34,21% x 1.5=51.32%	SPRP	11	28.95%x 1.5 =43.43%
Deans/ Directors	172	LMOS	64	37.21% x 1.25= 46.51%	SPRP	53	30.81% x 1.25=38.51%	ISP	45	21.16%x 1.25=26.45
Faculties	412	ISP	129	31.31%	LMOS	110	26.70%	SPRP	88	21.36%
Students	863	ISP	463	53.65%	LMOS	269	31.17%	ELTL	119	13.79%
Managers	83	PI	33	39.76%	LMOS	23	27.71%	ELTL	15	18.07%
Alumni	99	LMOS	36	36.36%	ISP	31	31.31%	SPRP	30	30.30%
Parents	81	PI	32	39.51%	LMOS	20	24.69%	ELTL	18	22.22%
Other	99	LMOS	29	29.29%	ISP	25	25.25%	PI	22	22.22%

Then we can easily figure out the average proportion for each item.

Table 12. Average proportion for each item

Item	Calculation Process	Result	Ranking
ISP	(0+26.45+31.31+53.65+0+31.31+0+25.25) % ÷ 6	28.00%	2
LMOS	(51.32+46.51+26.70+31.17+27.71+36.36+24.69+29.29) % ÷ 6	45.63%	1
PI	(55.26+0+0+0+39.76+39.51) % ÷ 6	22.42%	3
SPRP	(43.43+38.51+21.36+30.30+0+0) ÷ 6	22.27%	4

Note: in the calculation process, wherever there is a zero (0), it only means the proportion of that factor is neglected, simply because its numerical value is too low and is disregarded.

Now we can clearly find that the most important factor which influences internationalization of student development is LMOS, namely, Leadership Mechanism and Operational System of an institution. We want to stress that the rule is suitable only in China where CPC leadership always ranks the first. The logic is that if leaders(authorities) of an institution attach much importance to internationalization of higher education (internationalization of student development is part of it), they will organize a group of professional faculties to implement international exchange and cooperation (including student international mobility programs). As a result, various measures will be taken to promote international exchange and cooperation. And when it comes to internationalization of student development, a lot of international student programs will be development (ISP). Under this circumstance, PI (Philosophy of Internationalization) will be widely spread on campus, and SPRP (Strategic Planning and Related Policies) will be made accordingly.

Question # 6: What is(are) the most important factor(s) that affect(s) your decision and choice to take part in an international student program?

All together 863 students returned their valid feedback. Here's the data:

Table 13. Data of 863 students

Factor\ Grade	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Average	Proportion
Family's economic condition	719	823	626	386	638.5	73.99%
Academic performance	462	629	423	325	459.75	53.27%
Foreign language proficiency	763	706	527	326	580.5	67.27%
School policies	116	649	663	135	390.75	45.28%
School funding/support	392	443	315	211	340.25	39.43%
Quality of student international exchange programs	286	619	303	109	329.25	38.15%
Professional plan	63	451	556	613	420.75	48.75%
Other or having no idea	35	25	19	11	22.5	2.61%

Note: Number in the table is the votes saying YES to the related factor.

If we rearrange and adjust the data in the above table from a higher proportion to a lower proportion, it will be like this:

Table 14. The data in the above table from a higher proportion to a lower proportion

Factor\ Grade	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total/4	Proportion
Family's economic condition	719	823	626	386	638.5	73.99%
Foreign language proficiency	763	706	527	326	580.5	67.27%
Academic performance	462	629	423	325	459.75	53.27%
Professional plan	63	451	556	613	420.75	48.75%
School policies	116	649	663	135	390.75	45.28%
School funding/support	392	443	315	211	340.25	39.43%
Quality of student international exchange programs	286	619	303	109	329.25	38.15%
Other or having no idea	35	25	19	11	22.5	2.61%

According to the statistical data above, we know that students' family economic situation, foreign language proficiency and academic performance is are the three most important factors which influence students' choice and decision of whether participating in an international student program. What surprised us is that students' professional plan also plays an important role in it. Moreover, school policies, school funding and international student programs, all of which are closely connected to school efforts, rank among the least important factors! We cannot help doubting the authenticity of the data. At the same time, we are eager to probe into the reasons hidden behind the choices.

After analyzing the answers of those who chose Professional Plan, we can easily work out that in regional undergraduate institutions in China (most are second or third class of colleges and universities in China), it is hard for graduates to find a satisfying job, and many students are from rural areas or ordinary citizen families, which means the majority of students in these institutions are economically week when they face the great challenge and difficulty that much more expenses are needed to cover their study and life abroad. Therefore, it's quite popular among regional undergraduate institutions in China that students are much earlier ready to prepare for their Postgraduate Entrance Examination than students in other types of colleges and universities. Once a student has made up his or her mind to prepare for the examination, he or she will choose to give up many things which are not closely connected to their ultimate goal.

As for institutional efforts, such as funding or policies, the students commented that funding is just a very small part of the expenses needed for studying abroad, not sufficient at all, and policies do help solving many problems such as transferring credits or improving foreign language proficiency, however, these benefits are more useful to those who hopes to study abroad and whose family can afford for expenses necessary for studying abroad.

When we asked students which resources or policies provided by their current school offer significant support for their participation in international exchange programs, they answered differently. As shown in table 15. Here's the basic data:

Table 15. Basic data

Factor	No. of Participants	Votes for	Proportion	Ranking
A	863	356	41.25%	1
B	863	72	8.34%	4
C	863	110	12.75%	3
D	863	299	34.65%	2
E	863	26	3.01%	5

Note:

A.Scholarships or financial aid specifically for international exchanges offered by the school

B.International exchange events organized by the school

C.Collaboration projects between your school and overseas universities

D.Foreign language training courses provided by the school

E.Other(please specify)_____

It can be easily seen that the first two most important factors among the factors that are connected with school are A and D. That is, financial support and support of foreign language improvement play important roles. Compared with the last survey above, the two factors are actually consistent with the conclusion we made earlier.

When asked of reason for their choice, most students' answers (701 out of 863, namely 81.23%) also covered two similar points: one is that they seriously need financial aid so as to reduce the burden to their parents if they go to study abroad; the other is that they are not confident with their foreign language proficiency so that if the school can offer foreign language training programs which are designated for students who hope to study abroad, they would appreciate it.

Among "Other" reasons, most students (21 out of 26) added that school policies which support students to study abroad are also important.

In summary, factors that influence students' participation in international mobility programs include at least family financial support and school funding (MONEY) and foreign language proficiency (LANGUAGE). Besides, the school's partnership and relationship with foreign institutions and the mutual cooperative programs and activities are also considered important in the eyes of students (RELATIONSHIP).

Ⅷ .Conclusions and Prospects

1. Summary of Findings

In the context of globalization and internationalization, the internationalization of higher education is both important and necessary in all the countries. It is the same in China. The main body of students who

are suitable to be involved in internationalization are from 725 regional universities out of a total of 1270. Shandong Province is a good sample which is qualified as a representative in China as far as higher education is concerned and when it comes to the internationalization of student cultivation. At the same time, the current research on how to promote the internationalization of student cultivation in China is not sufficient at all. Besides, there's no a mature mode for these regional universities to follow in this point. Therefore, it is necessary and of vital importance to change and promote the current situation.

2. Conclusions

On the basis of literature research and survey of different groups of people from regional universities or those who are concerned about the internationalization of student cultivation as well as the existing practices of promoting the internationalization of student cultivation in regional universities in China, the author summarizes and proposes an ideal and practical mode of the internationalization of student cultivation. The proposed mode consists of 10 strategies which are logically connected to the ultimate aim of the internationalization of student cultivation. We strongly believe that this proposed mode will greatly help and promote the current situation as far as the internationalization of student cultivation is concerned. Besides, it is believed that this is the first systematic mode of strategies in China in the field of the internationalization of student cultivation in regional universities. All the regional universities are strongly supposed to think about these strategies seriously and to try these strategies in practice on their way to promote their internationalization of higher education, so as to cultivate more qualified talents with international visions and abilities.

In short, according to the author's preliminary research, we believe that regional Chinese universities, as the most important group part of ordinary Chinese universities, also need to carry out education internationalization. The core task of their internationalization is talent cultivation, which also can be understood as the internationalization of student cultivation.

As we mentioned earlier, the following 10 strategies are considered an ideal mode for regional universities to follow to carry out the internationalization of their students' development:

1. Establish and cultivate the concept of international running, and provide ideological and understanding foundation for the internationalization of student cultivation;

2. Formulate incentive policies and evaluation systems for the international running of schools to provide institutional guarantee for the internationalization of students' training;

3. Establish a management organization and system responsible for international school running, to provide organizational guarantee for the internationalization of students' training;

4. Promote the internationalization of regional teachers' training, increase the intensity of overseas wisdom introduction, and provide talent guarantee for the internationalization of student training;

5. Introduce high-level overseas textbooks in a prudent and orderly manner to provide intellectual support for the internationalization of students trained by students;

6. Vigorously promote the development of international joint research to provide ability support for the internationalization of students trained;

7. Actively carry out Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools, and provide regionalization practice for the internationalization of students' training;

8. Encourage students to study abroad, enter higher education, practice and practical training, to provide overseas samples for the internationalization of students;

9.Recruit foreign students, build an international and diversified campus, and create a cultural atmosphere for students; and

10.Closely track the career development of graduates who receive international training to provide practical proof for the internationalization of student training.

Obviously, these 10 strategies are all closely connected with the international cultivation of students at regional universities. However, it is also easier to find out that these 10 items sound more like some specific measures rather than an organic entirety. Moreover, these 10 items are not at the same layer when we take into account the logic and relationship to the final goal, namely, the internationalization of student development. Besides, the original pattern neglects foreign language proficiency which is a must for students to be internationally developed. Therefore, we would like to revise the earlier proposed mode into a new one so that they are more logically connected and sound more like strategies.

Measures concerning internationalization of student development can be divided into three levels:

1.The first level should be the base or foundation level, which is the basis, premise and guarantee in some sense. They are leadership mechanism, working team system, strategic planning of internationalization and International Relationship Network or Platform concerning internationalization of higher education. Leadership mechanism refers to leadership organization which is more than often called something like "Committee (Leading Group/Steering Group, etc.) of Internationalization of Higher Education" at the university level. At least one university leader such as President or Vice President for international affairs will serve as the committee director or the group leader. The working faculty team refers to those who are responsible to specifically carry out all kinds of international exchange and cooperation programs. At the university level, it is usually staff of the International Office and/or the School of International Education. At the faculty level, the responsible persons can be full-time or part-time. If they are full-time faculties who are responsible for international affairs at some college, school or institute under the university, it's better and preferred, of course. If they are only part-time, let's say, a young teacher or a secretary responsible for teaching affairs or scientific research will take the role as a part-time or temporary secretary for international affairs, it's OK. But the university authorities should make it clear that they are the very group of persons who take the responsibility of internationalization of higher education. As for the strategic planning, usually, it is a special planning of internationalization of higher learning which covers a span of five years. In China, just like the government, all public units, including colleges and universities, will make a Five-Year Plan which is consistent with the Five-Year Plan of the Central Government. If internationalization of higher learning is attached importance at an institution of higher learning, especially after 2017 since when international exchanges and cooperation has been taken as the "fifth important mission" of institutions of higher learning, a special plan of internationalization of higher learning will most probably be proposed and developed. Last but not least, a reasonable and scientific international relationship network (platforms) should be well developed and established, without which any international exchange and cooperation will going nowhere. The network is made up of various institutions of higher learning, companies which offer service to faculty and student when they join in international programs. Platforms such as joint scientific research institutes, international organizations, joint collaboration mechanism such as holding joint international academic conferences, joint publication programs, faculty and student exchange programs, etc. are all part of the network or platforms which play the role of a stage if faculties and students involved are actors/ actresses, players and dancers.

2.Measures at the second level consist of a series of specific policies concerning internationalization of higher education including internationalization of student development, which contain at least:

a) policies encouraging students to be involved in international programs such as Student Study Abroad Management Regulations, Student Study Abroad Financial Aid Measures, etc.;

b) policies to encourage faculties to be internationalized such as Regulations on the Appointment and Management of Foreign Teachers, Management Regulations for Publicly Funded Overseas Study, Visiting Scholarships, and Work Assignments for Faculty Members, etc.;

c) policies concerning credits or development of foreign-language-taught courses such as Student Study Abroad Credit Recognition and Transfer Policies, Bilingual Course Management Measures, Implementation Plan for the Development and Delivery of Purely Foreign-Language-Taught Specialized Courses, etc.;

d) policy concerning Sino-foreign cooperative educational projects or institutions, let's say, Management and Evaluation Measures for Sino-foreign Cooperation in Running Educational Projects or Institutions;

e) policies of evaluation such as Evaluation and Assessment Methods for Internationalization in Higher Learning.

3.Ten Specific Measures to promote internationalization of student development are on the third level:

ⅰ) Global Citizenship Education (embedding values of global citizenship such as empathy, tolerance, and ethical responsibility, into the educational process so as to enable students to own an international mind);

ⅱ) Student International Mobility Programs (double degree programs like2+2, 3+1, 4+0 for on-campus students, 1-2 semester exchange programs, shot-term study + tour programs such as summer or winter camps, internship and training projects or employment practice projects, Bachelor to Master [B2M] programs, Master to Ph.D. [M2PhD] Programs, etc., all of which are specific programs to develop students in an international way and context);

ⅲ) International Internship Opportunities (developing international internship and work-study programs to provide practical, real-world experience in diverse global settings)

ⅳ) Curriculum and Textbook Internationalization (integrating global perspectives into the curriculum through course content, textbooks, teaching materials and teaching methods, encouraging comparative and cross-cultural learning)

ⅴ) International Faculty Development (supporting faculty members to engage in international conferences, training, and collaborative research to improve their global competence and bring back innovative teaching methods, etc.)

ⅵ) Sino-foreign Cooperative Projects or Institutions (practices of locally developing students in an international way, namely, localization of institutionalization)

ⅶ) Recruitment of International Students (diversifying the campus community and enhancing intercultural communication skills among domestic students by enrolling international students to study in China)

ⅷ) Cultural Immersion Activities (organizing cultural events, seminars, and workshops to foster intercultural understanding and sensitivity among students)

ⅸ) Language Proficiency Enhancement (especially relevant teaching and training activities to help students pass exams like TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, TestDaf, JLPT, TOPIK, etc.)

ⅹ) Technology-Enabled Global Learning (Leveraging digital tools and platforms to facilitate virtual exchanges, online collaborations, and access to global resources)

The ten points mentioned above outline a set of coherent and interconnected strategies that together form a comprehensive approach to fostering student internationalization in higher education institutions. Each strategy contributes uniquely and synergistically to the overall goal of equipping students with the knowledge, skills,

and competencies required to succeed in an increasingly globalized environment.

Here's how they relate logically to the broader theme of student internationalization:

1.Global Citizenship Education instills the values necessary for responsible global engagement.

2.Student International Mobility Programs offer firsthand experience in different academic and cultural environments, enhancing students' adaptability and cross-cultural understanding.

3.International Internship Opportunities provide practical application of international knowledge and skills, further developing employability and global readiness.

4.Curriculum and Textbook Internationalization lay the groundwork by ensuring that the learning content is globally relevant and culturally diverse.

5.International Faculty Development supports teachers to become more globally competent, which in turn enriches the learning environment and helps transfer global perspectives to students.

6.Sino-foreign Cooperative Projects or Institutes are successful practices of developing students in an international way inside China.

7.Recruitment of International Students brings diversity to the campus, promoting daily interaction and exposure to varied cultures among all students.

8.Language Proficiency Enhancement ensures that students can communicate effectively across linguistic barriers, a vital skill in today's global context.

9.Cultural Immersion Activities deepen intercultural understanding and respect through experiential learning.

10.Technology-Enabled Global Learning bridges distances and expands opportunities for international collaboration and learning beyond physical borders.

Overall, these strategies are complementary and interdependent, each contributing to a multi-dimensional process that holistically develops students into global citizens equipped for success in a wide range of international contexts. Finally,As shown in Figure 2. on the basis of existing research and our survey, we are able to get a revised and improved version of strategies of internationalization of student development at regional undergraduate colleges and universities in China:
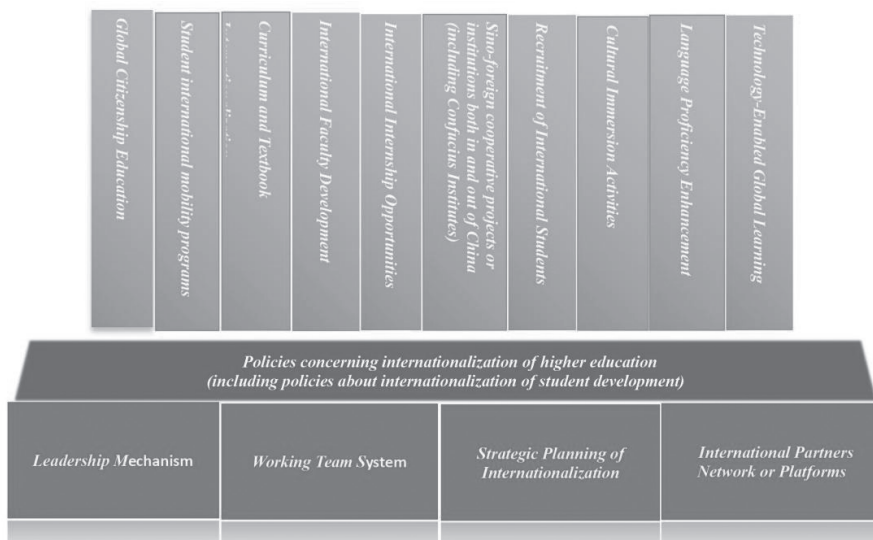
Figure 2. Improved version of strategies of internationalization

2.Limitations and Future Research Directions

3.1 Limitations

This study, in exploring the strategies for internationalization of students at local Chinese universities, inevitably encounters several limitations:

1) Sample Selection: The current research may predominantly focus on a subset of local institutions, raising concerns about the breadth of representation. China's higher education system is vast and characterized by significant regional disparities; thus, different local universities can vary greatly in terms of resources, policy implementation intensity, and international collaboration opportunities. Consequently, more diverse and comprehensive data are needed to accurately reflect the overall situation.

2) Strategy Applicability: The proposed internationalization strategies might not fully consider the specific conditions and needs of each local university, such as faculty capacity, teaching facilities, and financial support. This could lead to difficulties in implementing certain strategies or reduced effectiveness when applied in practice.

3) Balance between International Standards and Local Needs: The research potentially overemphasizes alignment with international standards while inadequately discussing how to integrate international education with the local economic and social development demands of China. This could result in a lack of strategies that cultivate high-quality talents with both an international perspective and the ability to serve local development.

4) Evaluation System: The assessment of the outcomes of internationalization efforts might be constrained by existing evaluation indicators and methods, which may not delve deeply into multiple dimensions such as individual student growth, employment competitiveness, and innovation capability.

5) Dynamic Factors: Factors like the progression of globalization, changes in the international educational environment, and shifts in China's education policies could all influence the effectiveness of internationalization strategies at local universities. However, these dynamic factors may not have been sufficiently addressed or considered within this research.

In summary, future studies should prioritize expanding sample coverage, devising more targeted and feasible internationalization strategies tailored to the actual situations of local universities, and exploring the establishment of an international talent cultivation evaluation system that conforms to the demands of the times.

3.2 Future Research Directions

Given the aforementioned limitations, future research can deepen and expand along the following avenues:

1.Broadening the Research Sample: Efforts should be made to incorporate a wider range of regional undergraduate institutions from various regions and tiers, thereby enhancing the universality and representativeness of research findings, providing a more accurate reflection of the overall state and characteristics of internationalization efforts in Chinese local universities.

2.Developing Differentiated Strategies: For different types and levels of local universities, detailed analyses should be conducted to identify their specific circumstances and requirements, culminating in the formulation of more targeted internationalization strategies that effectively balance international best practices with local realities.

3.Strengthening Integration of Localization and Internationalization: Further investigation should be

undertaken to explore how local elements can be infused into the process of international education, ensuring that graduates develop both a global perspective and cross-cultural communication skills, while also deeply understanding and actively engaging in local and national socio-economic development.

4.Establishing a Comprehensive Evaluation System: A scientific evaluation framework for international talent cultivation should be developed, one that encompasses traditional academic achievements as well as multidimensional aspects such as overall competence, innovation capabilities, and a sense of social responsibility. This would provide effective feedback to optimize the cultivation strategies.

5.Monitoring Dynamic Factors: Keeping a close watch on evolving trends in the international educational environment under globalization and adjustments to national education policies, it is essential to timely update and modify research content and strategy recommendations to maintain the foresight and practical relevance of the research.

6.Conducting In-depth Case Studies and Summarizing Practical Experiences: By means of in-depth interviews, field investigations, and other methods, successful cases and challenges encountered during the internationalization process in various local universities should be collected and analyzed, extracting replicable and scalable models of good practice.

4. Recommendations

For Chinese regional universities, they should attach much importance to the internationalization of higher education in the context of globalization, internationalization and/or regionalization. One of most important tasks, or the core task of internationalization of higher education is to cultivate qualified talents with international vision, experience and competence, which we call the internationalization of student cultivation. In order to promote or change the current situation in the field of the internationalization of student cultivation, Chinese regional universities are strongly recommended to follow or choose the 10 great strategies we suggest. If they do so, we are confident that their internationalization of student cultivation, or even their internationalization of higher education will reach to a new era.

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