



Research on the Path of Distance Education Empowering the Cultivation of Cultural Identity among Overseas Chinese Adolescents--Based on multi-dimensional questionnaire survey data from Qingtian, Zhejiang Province

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Abstract. As the process of globalization accelerates, cross-border population movements have given rise to an overseas Chinese community of more than 60 million. The Chinese Government is actively building cultural and spiritual bonds, and attaches great importance to rallying the Chinese diaspora with cultural identity. This study chose overseas Chinese teenagers in Qingtian County, Zhejiang Province, as the research object, and used 577 valid questionnaires as the research samples to analyze and summarize the problems and causes of Qingtian's overseas Chinese teenagers in the four areas of cultural identity, emotional belonging, distance education fit, and the level of collaborative education at home, school, and community. Based on this, this study puts forward optimization suggestions in four aspects: establishing a cultural symbol education system to strengthen microcultural cognitive ability, innovating a mechanism for participation in cultural practices to promote the concrete embodiment of emotional belonging, optimizing the content of distance education to enhance the efficacy of cultivation of cultural identity, and perfecting the synergy mechanism of home, school and community to achieve the in-depth integration of educational resources, so as to provide experience and reference for optimizing the path of cultivation of cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers by means of distance education.

Keywords: Distance education; Online Learning; Overseas Chinese Teenagers; Cultural identity; Information technology

1 Introduction

As the process of globalization accelerates, cross-border population movements have given rise to an overseas Chinese community of more than 60 million. The Chinese government actively builds cultural and spiritual bonds and attaches great importance to rallying the Chinese diaspora with cultural identity, which has been mentioned

many times in conference reports, for example, the 14th National People's Congress in 2023 stated, "Strengthening cultural and propaganda work in overseas Chinese affairs, actively passing on and promoting Chinese culture First, actively expand overseas Chinese language education work Second, vigorously promote the spread of Chinese culture overseas." ; in 2022, the report of the 20th Party Congress proposed, "Strengthening and improving the work of overseas Chinese affairs, and forming a strong force to work together for national rejuvenation."; since the 18th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping has proposed that "the united Chinese nation is the common root of Chinese people at home and abroad, and the profound Chinese culture is the common soul of Chinese people at home and abroad". These policies have given new impetus to the cultivation of cultural identity among overseas Chinese teenagers.

As the "First Hometown County of Overseas Chinese" in China, Qingtian County in Zhejiang Province has unique research value in terms of cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers. Meanwhile, Zhejiang Province, as the frontier of Internet development, provides technical support for the realization of distance education. The selection of Qingtian County as the research model for this study has the following advantages: First, Qingtian County has the advantage of sample typicality. Qingtian has more than 300 years of overseas Chinese history, with 381,000 overseas Chinese and 182,000 overseas Chinese families, accounting for 80% of the total number of overseas Chinese in Lishui City. Secondly, Qingtian County has the advantage of cultural heritage. Qingtian stone carving was honored to be listed in the "First National Intangible Cultural Heritage List", and Qingtian County was also named "Hometown of Chinese Folk Art" and "Hometown of Chinese Stone Carving" by the Ministry of Culture and China Light Industry Federation. Third, Qingtian County has a leading edge in digital infrastructure. Qingtian with "mountainous counties can also engage in industry, mountainous counties can also engage in innovation" concept to break the situation, take the lead in the layout of the metaverse track, promote the continuous development of the digital economy, and in 2025 to host the "digital Qingtian, Embracing the Future with Overseas Chinese" Digital Economy Development Conference.

However, with the deepening of the globalization process and changes in the international environment, Qingtian County has exposed some problems in the cultivation of the cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers. First, the short-term nature and fragmentation of cultural contact. Programs such as summer camps tend to have a 10-day cycle and lack ongoing follow-up education. Second, the intergenerational decay of homeschooling. Overseas Chinese parents, due to the pressure of life and limitations of education, only a part of the family can systematically carry out Chinese culture education, resulting in the widespread phenomenon of language disconnection. Third, there is an imbalance in the allocation of technological resources. Qingtian Metaverse Industry has gathered 36 eco-enterprises, of which 87% of the technological resources are invested in industrial manufacturing and commerce. The field of cultural communication received only 13% of the arithmetic support, and the field of distance education failed to receive attention. Based on this, this study innovatively constructs an index system including four dimensions: cultural identity, emo-

tional belonging, distance education fit, and home-school-society synergy, designs relevant questionnaires and conducts empirical analysis, explores the problems and causes of the process of cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers empowered by distance education, and provides practical references to optimize the path, so that the distance education can be more accurately docked to the cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers and help them to strengthen cultural confidence in a multicultural environment and inherit the Chinese cultural genes, thus effectively enhancing the global dissemination of Chinese culture.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Research Related to Distance Education

Distance education, which originated as correspondence education in England in the mid-19th century, is a long-distance educational activity that utilizes communication. Distance education has a history that spans almost two centuries, and this time period represents significant changes in how learning occurs and is communicated.[8] The term “distance education” was formally defined by scholar Michael Moore in 1972, and distance education became an internationally recognized concept in 1982.[7] In China, distance education also began with correspondence education, the origin of which can be traced back to the early twentieth century. With the continuous promotion of the national “Cross-century Modern Distance Education Project”, more and more institutions of higher education have begun to systematically build a modern distance education system, and promote the transformation and upgrading of the education model in the direction of digitalization and networking.[3]

Currently, the Internet is developing at a high speed, providing opportunities for the development of distance education. Online courses have several advantages over traditional settings. Web-based learning provides flexibility and accessibility for students whose schedule or location makes it difficult to attend a physical class.[1] However, at present, China's distance education still relies on traditional paths, with problems such as a single technology-driven model and insufficient innovation in the knowledge chain, resulting in a mismatch between the reputation of quality and the actual level. Therefore, while promoting the transformation of the education service supply model to the public service paradigm, different education fields and regions should combine their own characteristics to explore differentiated paths of change in order to adapt to the demand for educational innovation and development in the Internet environment.[2]

2.2 Research on Cultural Identity of Overseas Chinese Teenagers

Overseas Chinese are an integral part of the Chinese national community, and adolescence is a key stage for value reshaping, so the identity of the overseas Chinese teenagers group is especially worthy of attention. Overseas Chinese teenagers' identity not only involves intergenerational cultural inheritance, but also needs to cope with identity differences brought about by the collision of heterogeneous cultures, some

Chinese students complain that host country students want to talk with them about China but exhibit misinformed, prejudiced and offensive views of Chinese current events.[6] Compared to their domestic peers, overseas Chinese teenagers are more likely to face identity confusion and challenges due to their multicultural environment.[9]

Many scholars have put forward suggestions on how to deal with the problem of cultural identity among overseas Chinese teenagers: First, from the international level, overseas Chinese teenagers should actively overcome their cultural maladjustment and strive to be receptive to both Chinese and foreign cultures.[11] Second, at the governmental level, long-term development plans should be formulated, and social attention should be raised by organizing regular training and seminars for guardians and strengthening media publicity. Third, from the family level, there is a need to build a cooperative mechanism between home and school, and to use technology to compensate for the lack of parenting and create a supportive growth environment.[10]

2.3 Literature Review

To summarize, academics have conducted relatively rich research on distance education and the cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers, and have achieved certain results. Mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, the academic community on the development of China's distance education lagging behind in the top-level design, the lack of quality control, technology empowerment is insufficient and other cruxes have been fully revealed; Second, the cultivation of cultural identity among overseas Chinese teenagers is of great significance; Third, the academic community has developed a consensus at the level of the strategic value of distance education and has explored its application in various aspects.

However, research on distance education and cultural identity of Chinese teenagers still suffers from the following shortcomings: First, in online higher education, however, emphasis continues to be placed on summative assessment with formative assessment receiving little attention despite its crucial role in promoting learning;[5] Second, the current research results on the cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers mostly focus on the single dimension of overseas Chinese or domestic left-behind groups, with less systematic research combining the two; Third, focusing on the special needs of the overseas Chinese teenagers group, there are fewer studies on the adaptation mechanism of distance education in the cross-cultural education field. Fourth, the implications of transnationalization for citizenship and culture have not been systematically explored.[4]

Based on this, this study constructs an index system including four dimensions: cultural identity, emotional belonging, distance education fit, and home-school-society synergy, and explores the problems and causes of the process of distance education empowering the cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers through the design of questionnaires and empirical analyses, so as to provide practical references for the optimization of the path of distance education empowering the cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers.

3 Research Data

3.1 Selection of Indicators

In this study, the overseas Chinese teenagers at home and abroad in Qingtian County, Zhejiang Province, are the research objects, the first to construct a four-dimensional indicator system of distance education empowering the cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers, and the scientificity of the questionnaire indicators is determined through expert scoring, and a comprehensive empirical investigation is conducted, and the indicator system is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicator System of Cultural Identity of Overseas Chinese Teenagers Empowered by Distance Learning

objectives	guidelines	Measurement content
Evaluation of Cultural Identity and Distance Education Levels of Overseas Chinese Teenagers	cultural identity	Dialect and language proficiency, familiarity with traditional cultural symbols, mediation of cultural conflict
	Emotional belonging	Attachment to hometown, feelings for family, dual identities
	distance education fit	Willingness to learn online, exposure to online learning platforms, problems with online learning
	home-school-society synergy	Parental Involvement, Diaspora Support, Density of Inter-school Cooperation

3.2 Design Methodology

This study designed the main body of the questionnaire on the basis of ensuring scientific soundness, and in terms of the design methodology, it consisted of three main parts, namely, the cover letter, the demographic information statistics of the respondents, and the survey on the level of cultural identity and distance education of the Chinese teenagers. The first part is the cover letter, which focuses on the basic information about the questionnaire, including the purpose of distributing this questionnaire, the method that respondents should use to fill out the questionnaire, etc., and also emphasizes the attitude of respondents in answering the questionnaire and promises the privacy of the respondents; the second part of the survey is a demographic survey, which covers four main areas: gender, school attendance, place of residence, and whether or not one lives with one's parents, with a total of four questions; the third part is a survey on the cultural identity and distance learning level of Chinese teenagers. Before formally answering the questions, it was first determined whether the respondents were overseas Chinese teenagers between the ages of 18 and 25 within the territory of Qingtian, Zhejiang Province, as shown in Q1, to avoid the special case of not being able to grasp the truthfulness of their answers. Second, the

questions were set on a 1-5 scale, from Q6-Q8 to investigate the current status of cultural identity of Qingtian Chinese teenagers; investigating the current status of Qingtian Overseas Chinese Teenagers' Sense of Emotional Belonging from Q9-Q11; investigating the current status of distance learning fit among Qingtian Chinese teenagers from Q12-Q15; investigating the current status of the level of home-school-society collaborative education among Qingtian Chinese teenagers from Q16-Q18; finally, open-ended question 19 was set.

3.3 Method of Investigation

The survey was conducted from February 15, 2025 to May 1, 2025. Obtaining data related to the cultural identity and distance education level of overseas Chinese teenagers in Qingtian, Zhejiang Province, through field survey and questionnaire methods, the survey team innovatively designed a comprehensive questionnaire including 4 dimensions and 19 topics based on the pre-organization of literature. After manual screening to exclude incomplete and other invalid questionnaires, 577 valid questionnaires were finally obtained, and the validity rate of the questionnaires was 98.46%.

4 Empirical Analysis

In this study, a small pre-survey was conducted to determine whether the dimension setting was reasonable and scientific before the formal research, one hundred and eighteen questionnaires were returned. From the demographic characteristics of the interviewees, there are 55 men and 65 women, with a relatively balanced ratio. Most of the respondents are currently enrolled in domestic universities or studying abroad, and most of them live in the Qingtian area of Zhejiang Province and other parts of China, with about half of them living with at least one of their parents. In terms of the reliability of the results of the pre-survey, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each item is higher than 0.7, which proves that the results of the questionnaire are more credible; After KMO value and Bartlett's test, the questionnaire resulted in a KMO value of 0.6 or more and a p-value of 0.000, which passed the validity test. The questionnaire setup was proved to be reasonable, so the research was expanded to conduct a formal research.

4.1 Analysis of Basic Information

Analysis of the Survey Sample.

The demographics of the respondents are clearly characterized. In terms of gender ratio, the proportion of men and women among the respondents was 51.13% and 48.87% respectively, with a relatively balanced sample overall. In terms of enrollment, the respondents were generally college students, high school students and international students, with highly cognizant Chinese adolescents as the main study population. In terms of place of residence, respondents were concentrated among left-behind overseas Chinese adolescents in Qingtian, Zhejiang Province, and overseas Chinese

adolescents in Southeast Asia, making the coverage of this survey relatively broad. In terms of living with parents, the number of overseas Chinese adolescents left behind accounts for about half of the total.

Reliability Analysis.

Reliability test. In this study, the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was assessed by Cronbach alpha coefficient. The analysis results showed that the Cronbach alpha coefficient value of each item was above 0.7, and the overall reliability coefficient value was 0.736, which was higher than 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire had good internal consistency, the question set satisfied the reliability requirements, and the research data were credible.

Validity test. According to the criterion that the eigenroot value is greater than 1, this study extracted four public factors and the overall cumulative variance explained rate is 68.827%, the measurement items have relatively high validity impact on the questionnaire structural composition, and the topics are relatively independent, which indicates that each measurement item has a strong representativeness to its corresponding concept, and the questionnaire design validity is high. Meanwhile, the overall KMO value of the questionnaire was 0.697 and the p-value was 0.000, which passed the significance test and again verified the rationality of the questionnaire design.

In conclusion, the questionnaire of this study performed well in terms of both reliability and validity, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data. This provides a solid foundation for the subsequent empirical analysis and ensures the scientific validity and credibility of the findings.

4.2 Analysis of Results

Cultural Identity of Overseas Chinese Adolescents: Cognition of Cultural Symbols Becomes a Shortcoming.

In terms of cultural identity, the dual practice of macro-identity and micro-cultural cognition is characterized by a weak ability to recognize cultural symbols. As shown in Figure 1, 43.85% of the respondents had a low level of familiarity with traditional cultural symbols, such as Qingtian stone carvings and fish lantern dances, and 48.88% of the respondents had a negative evaluation of their ability to mediate cultural conflicts. This shows that there are problems with the microcultural practices of Qingtian overseas Chinese adolescents. Possible reasons include: first, limited cultural exposure, overseas Chinese adolescents have been exposed to overseas cultures for a long time, and their Chinese cultural acquisition mainly relies on family inheritance or short-term experience, lacking systematic learning of local cultural symbols; second, the existing distance education has shallow cultural content, and the existing courses may be biased in favor of language teaching or the transfer of general knowledge, with insufficient coverage of deeper content such as local culture and historical traditions.

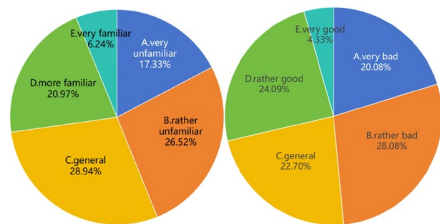


Fig. 1. Familiarity with traditional cultural symbols and ability to mediate cultural conflicts(Image courtesy of SPSSAU, below

Emotional Belonging of Overseas Chinese Adolescents: Weak Participation in Practice.

In terms of emotional belonging, there is a high level of attachment to family members, but insufficient participation in the cultural practices of the hometown.As shown in Figure 2, 47.14% of the respondents were weak in dialect communication and more than half of them did not live with at least one of their parents, which indicates that there is an imbalance between the emotional belonging and the daily cultural practices of Qingtian overseas Chinese adolescents.Possible reasons include:First, there is a break in intergenerational cultural transmission. In overseas Chinese families, it may be difficult for parents to systematically teach dialects or traditional customs, resulting in the offspring's knowledge of their home culture remaining at an emotional level;Second, the long-term effects of geographic isolation have made it difficult for overseas residents to participate deeply in the cultural activities of their hometowns due to long distances, weakening the practical basis of cultural belonging;Third, emotional compensation is difficult to realize. Family intimacy and diaspora support may serve as avenues for compensating for cultural alienation, but the lack of cultural practices to underpin a sense of belonging is abstract.

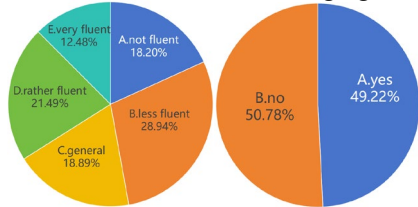


Fig. 2. Fluency in dialect and whether living with parents

Distance Learning Fit of Overseas Chinese Adolescents: Content Quality Needs to be Improved.

In terms of distance education fit, overseas Chinese adolescents are more receptive to distance education, but dissatisfaction with its content quality and interactivity constrains the effect of cultural identity cultivation.As shown in Figure 3, 80.41% of the respondents had a positive attitude toward online learning, but 37.78% of the respondents thought that there were serious problems with the content and methods of distance learning, indicating that the design of course content for fostering a sense of

cultural identity in distance education was a key shortcoming. Possible reasons include: First, course homogenization and lack of depth; existing distance education may be dominated by standardized courses and lack customized content tailored to the cultural needs of overseas Chinese groups; Second, the interactive mechanism is insufficient. One-way teaching modes such as recorded courses are difficult to meet the practical aspects required for the cultivation of cultural identity, reducing the sense of participation of learners; Third, the assessment system is off-target, with current curriculum requirements focusing on knowledge memorization rather than cultural understanding, and disparities in educational outcomes.

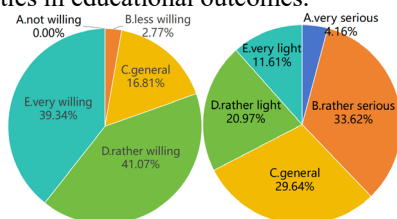


Fig. 3. Attitudes toward online learning and evaluation of the seriousness of problems with the content and approach of distance learning

Collaborative Education for Overseas Chinese Adolescents at Home, School and Society: Incomplete Support and Lack of Depth.

In terms of the level of home-school-society collaboration, there are problems with the allocation of resources and the depth of collaboration. Figures 3 and 4 show that distance education suffers from a certain degree of equipment problems and insufficient pedagogical content, indicating that the synergistic mechanism has not yet been fully translated into tangible results in terms of equity in educational resources and the enhancement of cultural identity. Possible reasons include: First, differences in learning hardware. Overseas Chinese organizations' support for the cultivation of the cultural identity of overseas Chinese adolescents may be more in the form of curricula and financial support, and less in the form of equipment support; Second, collaboration is fragmented. Home-school-society collaboration may focus on academic tutoring rather than on the systematic, practical activities needed to cultivate cultural identity.

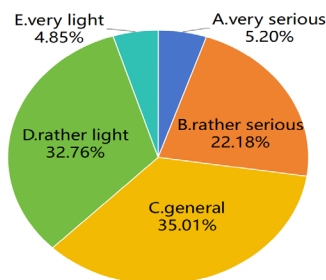


Fig. 4. Evaluation of the severity of problems with distance learning equipment

In summary, the process of overseas Chinese adolescent distance education empowering the cultivation of cultural identity may be characterized by weak cognitive ability of cultural symbols, insufficient participation in hometown cultural practices, lack of content quality and interactivity, and incomplete and insufficient depth of synergistic support from the home, school, and community.

5 Optimization Recommendations

5.1 Establishing a Cultural Symbol Education System to Strengthen Microcultural Cognitive Ability

Developing Immersive Education Platforms to Expand Cultural Awareness Channels.

Distance education enterprises can work with the Overseas Chinese Federation to integrate digital technology and local cultural resources to develop a cultural education platform with interactivity and depth, thereby enhancing the awareness of traditional cultural symbols among overseas Chinese adolescents. For example, build “Qingtian Culture Cloud Exhibition Hall”, through 3D modeling technology panoramic display of stone carving production process, dynamic interpretation of the fish lantern dance, and embed interactive cognitive module, so that the overseas Chinese adolescents involved in the study of remote participation in the virtual stone carving production, to expand the channels of cultural cognition.

Establishing a Tiered Curriculum System to Deepen the Teaching of Cultural Symbols.

The distance education platform can solve the problem of serious homogenization of distance education content by building a three-level curriculum system from basic learning to advanced learning to practical learning, and designing the teaching content by combining age and cultural foundation differentiation. For example, the curriculum for primary school students focuses on dialects and holiday customs, the curriculum for secondary school students introduces local history topics, and the curriculum for adult students introduces case studies on cultural conflicts to develop students' intercultural mediation skills.

5.2 Innovating a Mechanism for Participation in Cultural Practices to Promote the Concrete Embodiment of Emotional Belonging

Creating a Remote Cultural Community of Practice to Break the Limits of Geographic Isolation.

The distance learning platform can be used to simulate offline practice scenarios and build virtual modules using digital technology, thus increasing the participation of overseas Chinese adolescents in cultural practices and enhancing their dialect skills. For example, create a platform called “Overseas Chinese Culture Yuan Universe”, with features such as virtual ancestral hall ceremonies and real-time dialogues

in dialect corners. During traditional festivals such as the Ching Ming Festival, organize activities such as online ancestor worship ceremonies for overseas Chinese adolescents from all over the world to participate in via remote devices.

Implementing Intergenerational Cultural Transmission Projects to Repair Cultural Transmission Faults.

Governments and diaspora associations can strengthen family cultural ties by designing programs for intergenerational collaboration. For example, develop a “grandparent-grandchild cultural workshop”, which requires grandparents and grandchildren of overseas Chinese families to cooperate in completing cultural tasks and uploading them to a community platform. The government can provide publication funding or museum exhibition qualifications for outstanding works, forming a virtuous cycle from family creation to social dissemination and then to the feedback of honor.

5.3 Optimizing The Content of Distance Education to Enhance the Cultivating Effectiveness of Cultural Identity

Building Culturally Oriented Curriculum Development Standards to Break Through the Bottleneck of Homogenization.

Curriculum development companies can improve the effectiveness of cultural identity cultivation by establishing an evaluation system centered on cultural understanding. For example, develop the Curriculum Standards for Overseas Chinese Cultural Education, setting curriculum objectives for different stages of the program that focus on cultural understanding, and adding cultural awareness-related courses such as intensive reading of the texts of Overseas Chinese family letters.

Innovating Two-way Interactive Teaching Model to Enhance Learning Participation.

Distance education platforms can solve the problem of lack of learner engagement due to one-way recording mode by adding AI virtual tutor intelligent dialog module. For example, in the Fish Lantern Dance culture teaching program, learners can be corrected to mimic movements through motion capture technology.

5.4 perfecting the Synergy Mechanism of Home, School and Community to Achieve the In-Depth Integration of Educational Resources

Establishing a System of Standardization of Educational Hardware to Guarantee Equity of Resources.

The government can cooperate with overseas Chinese organizations and enterprises to establish a tripartite supply mechanism and develop unified standards for the configuration of hardware for overseas Chinese education. For example, the government and diaspora groups set up hardware donation funds, and enterprises provide trade-in services and pre-install dialect voice recognition systems and stone carving AR teaching software in their equipment.

Creating a Cultural Community of Practice and Deepening Collaboration.

Home-school-society can enhance the degree of cultural practice of overseas Chinese adolescents through the formation of a remote cultural practice alliance and the development of an annual synergistic program. For example, establish the Qingtian Overseas Chinese Cultural Alliance, with schools taking the lead in designing cultural study routes, overseas Chinese groups organizing overseas practices, and enterprises providing sponsorship.

6 Conclusion

This study focuses on the current situation of cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers, and systematically analyzes the empowering mechanism of distance education through a research path combining field research, questionnaire survey and data analysis. The empirical research was carried out by using expert scoring method, questionnaire SPSS analysis method and comparative analysis method to systematically sort out the existing problems and their influencing factors. The results of the analysis are as follows: (1) Cultural Identity of Overseas Chinese Teenagers: Cognition of Cultural Symbols Becomes a Shortcoming; (2) Emotional belonging of Chinese teenagers: weak participation in practice; (3) Overseas Chinese Teenagers Distance Education Fit: Quality of Content Needs to be Improved; (4) Home-school co-education for overseas Chinese teenagers: Incomplete support and insufficient depth.

This study reveals the facilitating effect of distance education on the cultural identity of overseas Chinese teenagers, but the following limitations remain: First, the research sample mainly focuses on the Qingtian area of Zhejiang Province, and there is a lack of cross-regional comparative studies with the major overseas Chinese residences in Europe, America, and Southeast Asia; Second, the data were collected over a short time span and lacked long-term tracking of the effects of educational interventions. The future research will expand the dimension of space and time, integrate new technologies such as AI virtual teachers into the distance education system, join hands with schools, Overseas Chinese Associations (OCAs) and enterprises, and set up a support platform from curriculum development to landing, so that the Chinese culture can really enter the life scenario of overseas Chinese teenagers.

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