Integrating Fine Traditional Chinese Culture into Ideological and Political Education - A Scientometric and Visual Analysis Based on Citespace (2016–2025)

Du Ningning[12], *Mohd Syaubari Bin Othman[3]

[1]Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia

[2] Faculty of General Education, Shandong Huayu University of Technology, Dezhou, China

[3]Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Based on the Scopus database, this study conducts a systematic bibliometric and visual analysis of international research on the integration of fine Traditional Chinese Culture into ideological and political education from 2016 to 2025. Using CiteSpace and Microsoft Excel as analytical tools, the study explores annual publication trends, core authorship distribution, and keyword co-occurrence and clustering to reveal the intellectual structure and research evolution of this field. Results indicate a steady growth trend, with rapid expansion after 2021 due to the dual influence of national policy and academic attention. The author collaboration network shows that scholars such as Tan Charlene H.P.. and Wang Canglong have established an international research framework centered on Confucian education, cultural identity, and civic education. Keyword clustering reveals two major thematic lines: "national identity," representing cultural confidence and moral education, and "cosmopolitan citizen," representing global civic education. These reflect a transition from cultural identity to cultural symbiosis. Overall, the integration of traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education is evolving from theoretical exploration to educational practice and international dialogue. Future research should further advance theoretical construction, pedagogical innovation, and global dissemination to promote the creative transformation of Chinese culture and the modernization of ideological and political education.

Keywords: fine traditional Chinese culture, ideological and political education, visualized analysis

INTRODUCTION

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the terms "cultural confidence" and "ideological and political education integrated throughout curriculum" have frequently appeared in educational policies and practices, emphasizing the integration of traditional cultural elements into ideological and political courses, as well as general education courses to promote the combination of value guidance and cultural inheritance. This transformation not only endows ideological and political education with new cultural depth but also gives rise to a cross-disciplinary research boom, covering multiple fields such as education, philosophy, political science, sociology, and cultural studies. The research themes also focus on core issues such as cultural confidence, Confucian moral education, curriculum reform, and value formation.

Therefore, this study conducts an overall analysis of the basic situation of the research on integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education from 2016 to 2025, identifies the research hotspots and development trends in this field, and provides more solid academic support for promoting the integration of fine traditional Chinese culture and ideological and political education.

Core Concepts

In this study, two key concepts, cultural symbiosis and value synergy, are central to understanding the integration of fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education. These concepts are used to describe the evolving relationship between traditional cultural values and modern educational systems, and they serve as the theoretical foundation for analyzing the integration process in the research.

Cultural Symbiosis

Cultural symbiosis refers to the process in which different cultures interact and influence each other over time, creating a mutually beneficial relationship that respects the individuality of each culture. It goes beyond simple exchange or assimilation, aiming for a long-term coexistence that enriches both sides. In the context of educational theory, cultural symbiosis suggests that ideological and political education should create a space where traditional Chinese culture and modern educational frameworks can coexist, evolve, and influence each other without forcing one to dominate the other.

Value Synergy

Value synergy is a concept that emphasizes the collaboration between different value systems to create a complementary, mutually enriching outcome. In education, this means that the values derived from traditional Chinese culture and those found in global education systems can work together to form a stronger, more effective educational framework. This synergy does not result in the merging of values into one unified system, but rather the interaction between them leads to a new, richer value system that benefits from both perspectives.

Distinguishing from Dialogue and Integration

While dialogue in educational theory refers to the exchange of ideas and perspectives between different cultures or educational systems, and integration refers to the merging of different elements into one system, cultural symbiosis and value synergy focus on a deeper, ongoing process of mutual influence.

Dialogue involves an exchange, but does not necessarily require the cultures or values to evolve together. Integration involves blending cultures or values into one cohesive system, often leading to one culture or value dominating the other. In contrast, cultural symbiosis and value synergy focus on co-evolution, where cultures and values maintain their uniqueness while fostering a mutually enriching relationship that does not demand assimilation.

By distinguishing these concepts from dialogue and integration, we can better understand the complex, dynamic nature of cultural and value exchange in education and ensure a more accurate theoretical framework for analyzing the integration of fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Sample and Data Selection

This study mainly uses the data from Scopus as the data source. The publication time range is set from 2016 to 2025. To cover the core expressions of fine traditional Chinese culture and ideological and political education, the search method of TITLE-ABS-KEY retrieval is adopted, and the search formula is as follows: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("traditional Chinese culture" OR "Confucian" OR "Chinese classical culture") AND ("ideological and political education" OR "civic education" OR "moral education" OR "value education" OR "character education" OR "citizenship education" OR "curriculum ideology and politics") AND PUBYEAR > 2016 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "re")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))

The literature types were limited to Articles and Reviews (i.e., peer-reviewed journal papers and reviews), in order to ensure the academic quality and comparability of the data. The language was English, and a total of 361 documents were retrieved. After manual identification and screening, duplicate documents were removed, and

irrelevant documents (such as using Chinese classical culture in non-educational fields or directing moral education to completely different research contexts) were excluded. The remaining 99 documents constituted the paper sample for this study.

Because the dataset was drawn from Scopus and restricted to English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles and reviews, this study maps the English-language, internationally indexed discourse on the topic rather than the full universe of related scholarship.

Research Instruments and Analysis Methods

This study employed CiteSpace and Microsoft Excel as the main research tools to conduct a systematic analysis and visual research on the relevant literature in the field of integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education from 2016 to 2025. Excel was mainly used for data cleaning, deduplication, keyword standardization, and publication trend statistics; CiteSpace was used to reveal research hotspots and evolution trends.

The main contents of this study include the following aspects. Firstly, through the statistics of annual publication volumes and the analysis of their changing trends, the development stages and overall evolution characteristics of this research field are revealed. Secondly, by sorting out the distribution of authors' publications, the main research forces and academic contributors are identified, presenting the core group of academic research. Thirdly, based on the co-occurrence and clustering analysis of keywords, the core themes and main paths of the research are extracted, revealing the research hotspots and their internal logical structure. Finally, from an overall perspective, a comprehensive consideration and forward-looking outlook are provided for the research topic of integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education, in order to grasp the future evolution trend and potential development space of the research direction.

Through multi-dimensional analysis and visual presentation, this article aims to comprehensively reveal the knowledge structure, hot topics, and development trends of the integration research between fine traditional Chinese culture and ideological and political education, providing data support and theoretical references for subsequent research in this field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Annual Publication Statistics Analysis

As shown in Figure 1, from 2016 to 2025, research on integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education has generally shown a significant upward trend. The annual number of published papers was relatively low from 2016 to 2018, ranging between 2 and 3. In 2019, there was a slight increase to 6 papers, followed by a slight decline to 4 papers in 2020. Since 2021, the number of studies has continued to rise, reaching 26 in 2024. In 2025, there were already 25 articles, indicating that the overall trend remains at a high level.

Figure 1 clearly highlights this gradual increase in publication numbers, especially after 2022, which aligns with the national policy implementation of integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into educational curricula. The increasing number of publications shows the growing academic interest and recognition of this research direction, and this positive trend is expected to continue.

From the perspective of time distribution, this field can be roughly divided into three development stages: (1) The initial exploration period (2016–2019), where research mainly focused on policy interpretation and theoretical explanation; (2) The stable advancement period (2020–2021), with a slight increase in the number of studies as the concept of ideological and political education integrated throughout curriculum was further promoted; (3) The rapid growth period (2022–2025), where the number of studies significantly increased, indicating that this topic has gradually become an important direction in ideological and political education research. The overall trend shows that the academic community's attention to integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education in colleges and universities is continuously increasing.

The significant increase in the number of publications after 2022 is closely related to the systematic promotion of the policy of integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into classrooms at the national level. For instance, the Implementation Plan for Reform and Innovation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools in the New Era (Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee & Ministry of Education, 2020) proposed to incorporate education on fine traditional Chinese culture into the ideological and political education system of colleges and universities. This policy orientation directly contributed to the rise in academic research interest. Meanwhile, research topics have gradually shifted from macro policy analysis to studies on educational practices and teaching models, indicating a change in the research focus.

Therefore, from the perspective of annual publication trends, the integration of fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education has moved from the initial stage to a period of rapid development. The diversification of research topics and the trend of disciplinary integration will become important directions in the future.
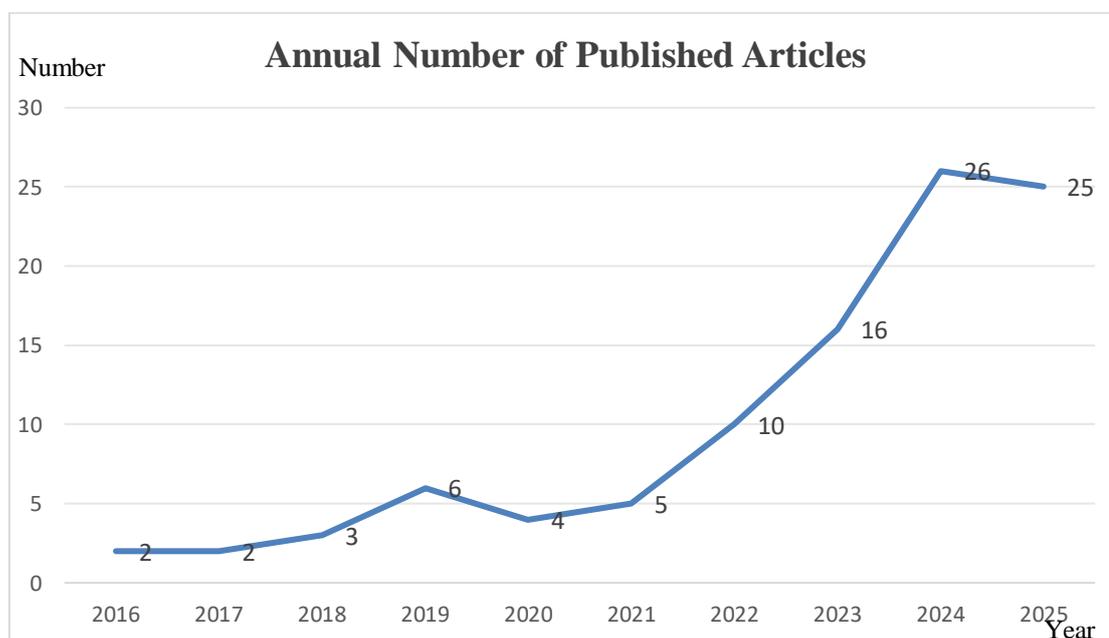

Figure 1 Annual Publication Trend of Studies on the Integration of Fine Traditional Chinese Culture into Ideological and Political Education (2016–2025)

Co-authorship Network Analysis

To further reveal the cooperation structure and cross-team connections within the research community in this field, a visual analysis was conducted on the author information of English-language Scopus literature from 2016 to 2025.

As shown in Figure 2, the overall author cooperation network exhibits a significant fragmentation characteristic. On one hand, there are a large number of scattered single points or small-scale cooperation clusters (mostly 2-4 person scale) in the network. And these clusters lack stable cross-cluster connections, indicating that in the international indexing discourse system, this field is still mainly advancing through local research groups, and has not yet formed a highly integrated global collaborative community. From this, we can conclude that while the field has gained visibility, there is still a lack of strong interconnectedness between research teams, and the field is not yet unified at the global level.

On the other hand, only a few relatively prominent core cooperation groups are shown in the figure, and the largest connected sub-group size is limited, suggesting that cross-institutional and cross-national continuous cooperation is still in the early development or local formation stage. The central area of Figure 2 highlights the authors who have maintained stable cooperation, such as Jiang, Sijia, Tai, Kentaro, Cynarski, Wojciech J., and others. Their cooperation links suggest they play a key role in disseminating the research themes and might act as hubs for international collaboration.

It is worth noting that in the central area of Figure 2, there is a group of authors with larger node sizes and richer time rings (such as Jiang, Sijia, Tai, Kentaro, Cynarski, Wojciech J., Ambroży, Tadeusz, Figueiredo, Abel A., Kulpinski, Jacek, etc.). Their collaboration links are relatively dense, indicating that these authors (and their teams) maintained a relatively stable cooperative relationship over a certain period of time and might play a hub role in the dissemination of topics and the diffusion of methods.

The existence of such core clusters suggests that the research topic on the international indexing platform has indeed developed a preliminary cooperative network capable of continuous output, providing structural evidence for the international research framework proposed in the paper. However, the scattered and isolated smaller clusters remind us that the international research framework is still fragmented, and caution is needed when claiming significantly enhanced internationalization. Increased international visibility does not necessarily equate to established global collaboration.

Therefore, Figure 2 illustrates both the potential and the limitations of the internationalization of this field. It shows that the research community is evolving and becoming more visible but remains fragmented. Moving forward, the international research community needs to strengthen cross-institutional and cross-border collaboration to create a truly integrated framework.
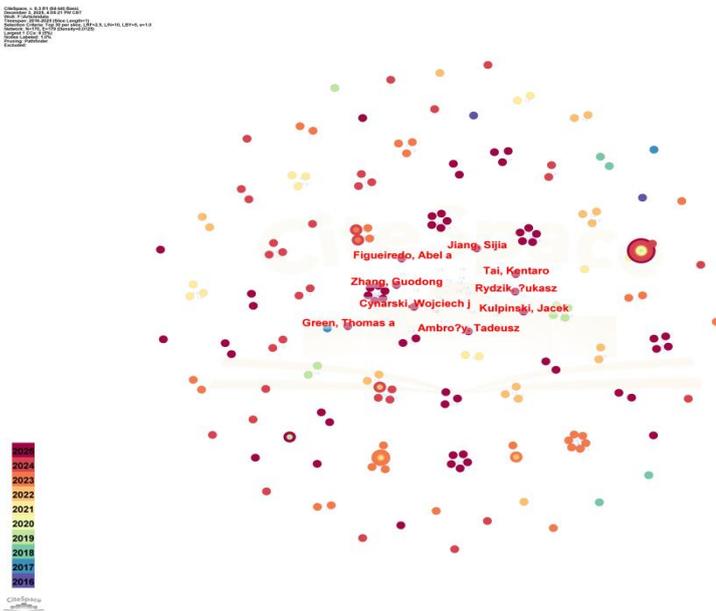

Figure 2 Author Collaboration Network for the Integration of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture into Ideological and Political Education (2016–2025)

Keyword Co-occurrence and Cluster Analysis

Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis

From the keyword co-occurrence graph (Figure 3), it can be observed that the research topics exhibit a multi-dimensional expansion feature. The keywords "Confucian education," "higher education," "corporate social responsibility," and "human rights" frequently co-occur, indicating that the research primarily focuses on integrating traditional culture with higher education, exploring the relationship between Confucianism and moral education, and expanding to broader social issues like corporate responsibility and citizenship.

This analysis indicates the growing trend of combining traditional Chinese culture with modern societal issues in education. The co-occurrence of these keywords suggests that researchers are increasingly concerned with the intersection of cultural education, social responsibility, and civic education, reflecting the expanding scope of the research field.

Figure 3 Keyword Co-occurrence of Integrating Fine Traditional Chinese Culture into Ideological and Political Education (2016–2025)

Keyword Cluster Analysis

Based on the cluster analysis of keywords from 2016 to 2025 conducted by CiteSpace, the system generated a total of 2 main clusters (Figure 4). Cluster #0 focuses on national identity, and Cluster #2 emphasizes cosmopolitan citizen. These clusters represent two major research directions: one based on national cultural confidence and ideological education, and the other focused on global cultural exchange and international education.

The clustering quality is excellent, with a Q value of 0.8796 and an average silhouette value of 0.9644, indicating that the keywords are well-defined and the thematic distinctions are clear. The presence of these two distinct clusters highlights the dual approach of the field—balancing national cultural identity with the demands of global cultural dialogue and international education..
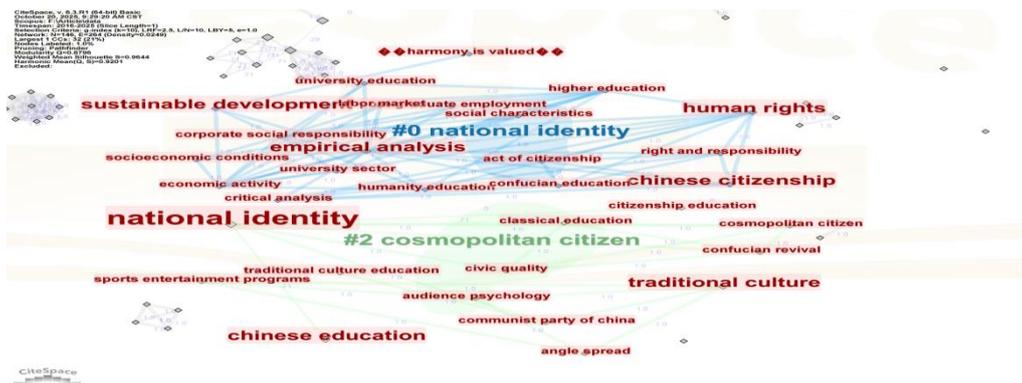

Figure 4 Keyword Clustering of Integrating Fine Traditional Chinese Culture into Ideological and Political Education (2016–2025)

In the temporal dimension, the research topics from 2016 to 2025 have shown a continuous evolution trajectory from theoretical exploration to educational practice and then to international dialogue. The overall process can be divided into three stages: the initial exploration period (2016–2019), the deepening development period (2020–2022), and the diversified integration period (2023–2025).

The period from 2016 to 2019 was the initial exploration stage for theoretical elaboration and the establishment of cultural identity. The research focused mainly on theoretical construction and policy interpretation. Scholars

mostly started from the theoretical perspectives of ideological and political education and traditional cultural philosophy, exploring the intrinsic connections between fine traditional Chinese culture and moral education and values education. For instance, Tan Charlene H.P. (2019) proposed the concept of Neo-Confucian educational ethics, advocating the use of Confucian thoughts such as benevolence, loyalty and forgiveness as the value foundation of modern education. During this period, the research had a clear theoretical orientation and mostly used literature analysis as the method, with core issues focusing on cultural confidence, moral education, and national identity, laying the foundation for subsequent practical research.

The period from 2020 to 2022 was a stage of concurrent development of the educational system and policy implementation. With the comprehensive promotion of the policy of integrating ideological and political education into the curriculum in China, research began to focus on the integration paths of ideological and political courses in higher education institutions and traditional Chinese culture education, emphasizing the educational application of traditional Chinese culture. For instance, Wang Canglong (2020-2022) explored the modern transformation paths of Confucian civic education, highlighting the strengthening of cultural identity and social responsibility among young students through the interaction of courses and classrooms. The research methods during this stage became more diverse, with the emergence of empirical investigations and comparative analyses, demonstrating the expansion of disciplinary methodologies. Overall, this stage marked a transition from macro-cultural discourse to the construction of an educational system, signifying a shift in the research paradigm from theorization to application.

From 2023 to 2025, the research entered a stage of expansion in international perspective and value symbiosis. After 2023, research showed a significant international trend, with themes extending from Chinese cultural education to global ethics and cross-cultural education. Tan Charmene H.P's (2023-2025) series of studies represented the characteristics of this stage, proposing a theoretical framework for the global ethics of education and new Confucian civic education, advocating for the construction of a world citizen education system based on Confucian philosophy. Additionally, cross-disciplinary research in fields such as education, ethics, and environmental science has increased, highlighting the practical significance of traditional Chinese culture in sustainable development and global citizen education. This stage marked a shift from cultural inheritance to cultural symbiosis, and from value confidence to educational globalization, reflecting the international frontier trends in this field.

Overall, the research on integrating traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education is undergoing a systematic evolution from theoretical exploration to educational practice and then to international dialogue, moving from the education of cultural inheritance to the globalization of educational values, presenting a multi-dimensional development pattern of theoretical innovation and practical application in parallel.

Analysis Of Research Trends And Directions

Based on the analysis of keyword co-occurrence, clustering and temporal evolution of relevant literature from 2016 to 2025, it can be seen that the research on integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education is undergoing a transformation process from theoretical exploration to system construction, and from macro policy to teaching practice. The research topics are constantly refined, the research methods are gradually diversified, and the internationalization trend is significantly enhanced. Overall, the future research development direction can be further explored and expanded from the following four aspects.

This scope implies that Chinese-domestic scholarship (e.g., CNKI-indexed work), which often centers on policy implementation, local curriculum design, teacher training, and classroom-level evaluation in the "curriculum ideology and politics" reform context, may provide complementary practice-oriented evidence and indigenous conceptual vocabularies that are less visible in international indexing systems. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as a map of internationally indexed discourse, and future work could extend the analysis through a parallel CNKI-based mapping and a bilingual comparative synthesis.

Theoretical Deepening and System Construction

Most existing research focuses on policy analysis, ideological exploration and experience summary, lacking a systematic theoretical framework and conceptual integration. Future research should aim to achieve breakthroughs in the systematic deepening and theoretical construction at the theoretical level.

First, it is necessary to explore the core essence of educational philosophy from the ideological traditions of Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, etc., especially the enlightenment of concepts such as self-cultivation, benevolence and righteousness, rites and music, and harmony without uniformity on the cultivation of individual virtue and the reconstruction of social order. Second, these traditional educational concepts should be systematically connected with the core theories of ideological and political education (such as Marxist theory of human beings and education on socialist core values), to construct an ideological and political education theoretical system with Chinese characteristics, contemporary value and global vision.

Theoretical research can further apply concept evolution analysis and cross-disciplinary bibliometric methods to reveal the derivative paths and discourse transformation mechanisms of traditional moral education ideas in the contemporary education theory system, thereby promoting the modern reconstruction of the disciplinary discourse system. In-depth exploration in this direction will provide a solid foundation for building an original, systematic and internationally influential Chinese education theory.

Innovation in Education Practice and Pathways

From the existing literature, it can be seen that there is a consensus on the integration of traditional culture and ideological and political education in terms of concept. However, there are still problems such as difficulty in implementation, weak evaluation, and insufficient innovation at the level of curriculum construction and teaching practice. Future research should strengthen the practical orientation and the characteristics of action research, and focus on the following aspects.

First, in the curriculum system, the ways of embedding traditional culture content in ideological and political education and general education courses should be explored to form a teaching goal system that integrates knowledge, culture, and values.

Second, in teaching strategies, a teaching model centered on experiential, situational, and problem-oriented teaching should be developed to enhance students' cultural identity and value empathy, and achieve a progressive educational path from cultural transmission to cultural experience and value internalization.

Third, in terms of teacher education, a teacher training mechanism that emphasizes both traditional culture literacy and ideological and political teaching ability should be established. At the same time, teacher training courses and teaching resource platforms should be developed. In terms of research methods, it is recommended to combine action research with mixed methods, and collect multi-dimensional data through classroom observation, interviews, and analysis of learning outcomes to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of integrating traditional culture into ideological and political education.

The in-depth advancement of this direction will enable research to truly move from theoretical advocacy to educational practice, and form a replicable and scalable cultural education model.

International Communication and Value Synergy of Traditional Culture

With the acceleration of global educational diversification and cultural integration, the international communication and value synergy of traditional culture education have become new research frontiers. Future research should focus on the re-interpretation and re-construction of traditional culture in the global educational context, and explore its adaptability and universal value in different cultural systems.

On the one hand, it is necessary to explore the value mapping and complementary role of fine traditional Chinese culture in global citizenship education (GCE), cross-cultural ethics education and education for sustainable development (ESD), and analyze its unique function in promoting global citizenship awareness and moral consensus.

On the other hand, starting from the teaching practice of Sino-foreign cooperative education, overseas Confucius Institutes and international courses, we can study the dissemination paths, teaching models and actual effects of traditional culture education in different countries and cultural environments. At the same time, we should also compare the similarities and differences between traditional culture and Western educational concepts in terms of educational goals, moral education and the cultivation of social responsibility, and reveal the interaction and balance mechanism of Chinese and Western educational values during the integration process.

In terms of methods, a combination of cross-cultural comparative research and narrative research can be adopted. Through text analysis, case studies and educational policy tracking, the international communication laws and value synergy paths of traditional culture education can be revealed. Through this research direction, it is expected to promote the transformation of fine traditional Chinese culture from being transmitted to being jointly constructed and shared, and to achieve a new global educational pattern from cultural identification to cultural mutual learning.

Diversification and Dataization of Research Methods

The integration of traditional culture and ideological and political education has long been mainly based on theoretical explanations and experience summaries, lacking visualization and data-based research support. Future research should conform to the trend of digitalization and intelligence in educational research, introduce data-driven and interdisciplinary integration research methods, and promote the scientific and dynamic nature of research.

Moreover, mixed-methods research could play a critical role in bridging the quantitative trends identified in this study with deeper, qualitative case studies of classroom practices or curriculum design. By combining quantitative analysis of trends with in-depth qualitative investigations, researchers can gain a richer understanding of how traditional culture is implemented and experienced in educational settings.

Researchers can use visualization tools such as CiteSpace and VOSviewer to regularly draw knowledge maps of research themes to monitor the evolution of hot topics and frontier trends. At the same time, combined with text mining and semantic network analysis techniques, conduct corpus analysis of teaching materials, policy texts, and academic achievements to identify the proportion of traditional culture elements embedded and the trajectory of discourse evolution. Further exploration can be conducted on the application of machine learning in educational text analysis and trend prediction, and an intelligent evolutionary model for the research can be constructed.

In addition, an open and shared database for traditional culture and ideological and political education research can be established to integrate literature, cases, and empirical data, providing academic circles with replicable research resources and data foundations. This methodological innovation will help push this field from theory-led to data-supported, achieving scientific, transparent, and internationalized research.

CONCLUSION

Based on the Scopus database, this paper conducts a systematic and visual analysis of the research on integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education from 2016 to 2025. The results show that the research in this field generally presents a trend of continuous growth and structural optimization. Especially since 2021, it has entered a stage of rapid development, reflecting the dual driving effect of policy guidance and academic attention.

From the perspective of the distribution of authors and academic forces, the regions in East Asia and the English academic circle have formed relatively concentrated research groups. Among them, scholars such as Tan Charlene H.P.. and Wang Canglong have constructed an international research network centered on Confucian education, cultural identity, and civic education, achieving strong academic influence and promoting the global discourse dissemination of traditional culture education. The results of keyword co-occurrence and clustering show that this field mainly focuses on two main lines. One is the research on cultural confidence and moral education centered on national identity, and the other is the research on global citizen education centered on

cosmopolitan citizens, demonstrating the universal significance and value potential of fine traditional Chinese culture in the international context. This theme evolution process indicates that the research paradigm is transforming from cultural identity to cultural symbiosis, and from domestic education focus to international education dialogue.

Overall, the research on integrating China's fine traditional culture into ideological and political education is forming a systematic evolution path from theoretical explanation to educational practice, to international dissemination, and then to method innovation. Future research can further expand in aspects such as theoretical system construction, teaching model innovation, international comparative research, and data analysis, to promote the modern transformation and international dissemination of traditional culture. Achieving the creative transformation and modernization development of fine traditional Chinese culture in ideological and political education, and provide lasting cultural support and theoretical basis for ideological and political education in the new era.

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