

A Systematic Review: Chinese Undergraduates' Learning Experience from 2012 to 2022

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Abstract

Chinese undergraduates were usually considered passive learners who preferred rote learning, rare faculty-student interactions, and rare peer learning during the course. This systematic review aims to help people discover a new profile of Chinese undergraduates, compared with former stereotypes. The method is based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). Then, the data extraction and analysis are done by coding. 871 articles were collected, and finally, 72 articles were included. Active learning, faculty-student interactions, and peer learning have been the new signals of the Chinese undergraduate's learning experience. Also, they were influenced by international faculty from English, culture, and more faculty-student interactions when they studied abroad. The explanations of these new points can be found in Confucian educational philosophy, which has an over 2000-year history, but they remain dynamic and will be emphasized again in the new era.

Background

Higher Education in China (C-HE)

In 2023, gross enrollment rate of C-HE is 59.6%, at 'Popularization' stage.

Features of C-HE

- Many students are in one classroom, so classroom instruction is typically faculty-centered.
- A harmonious atmosphere in the classroom, no arguments with faculty.
- Assessments measure students learning progress rather than help teachers enhance teaching.
- Students **review round the clock** for 'Pass' even high GPA at the end of the term.

The **reform** of C-HE is **in processing slowly**-- there are **19 million undergraduates** in campus and **1238 universities** (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022).

Review Purposes & Questions

Review Purposes

- Gradually update the profiles of Chinese Undergraduates (UG) and then offer theoretical support for future research.
- Illustrate Chinese UG's learning experience from 2012-2022 and displays the Chinese faculty's endeavor to reform instruction
- Illustrate the influence of non-Chinese teachers' teaching methods on Chinese UG and their corresponding adaption.

Review Questions

- What are the features of Chinese UG students' learning experience in disciplinary knowledge in Chinese universities?
- What strategies do Chinese universities (faculty and students) take to improve Chinese UG students' learning experience?
- How do international faculty influence Chinese students' learning experiences?
- When Chinese UG students study abroad, how do they adapt their learning strategy in a new learning context?

Method

① Eligibility Criteria Setting by the SPIDER

(Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type) Model

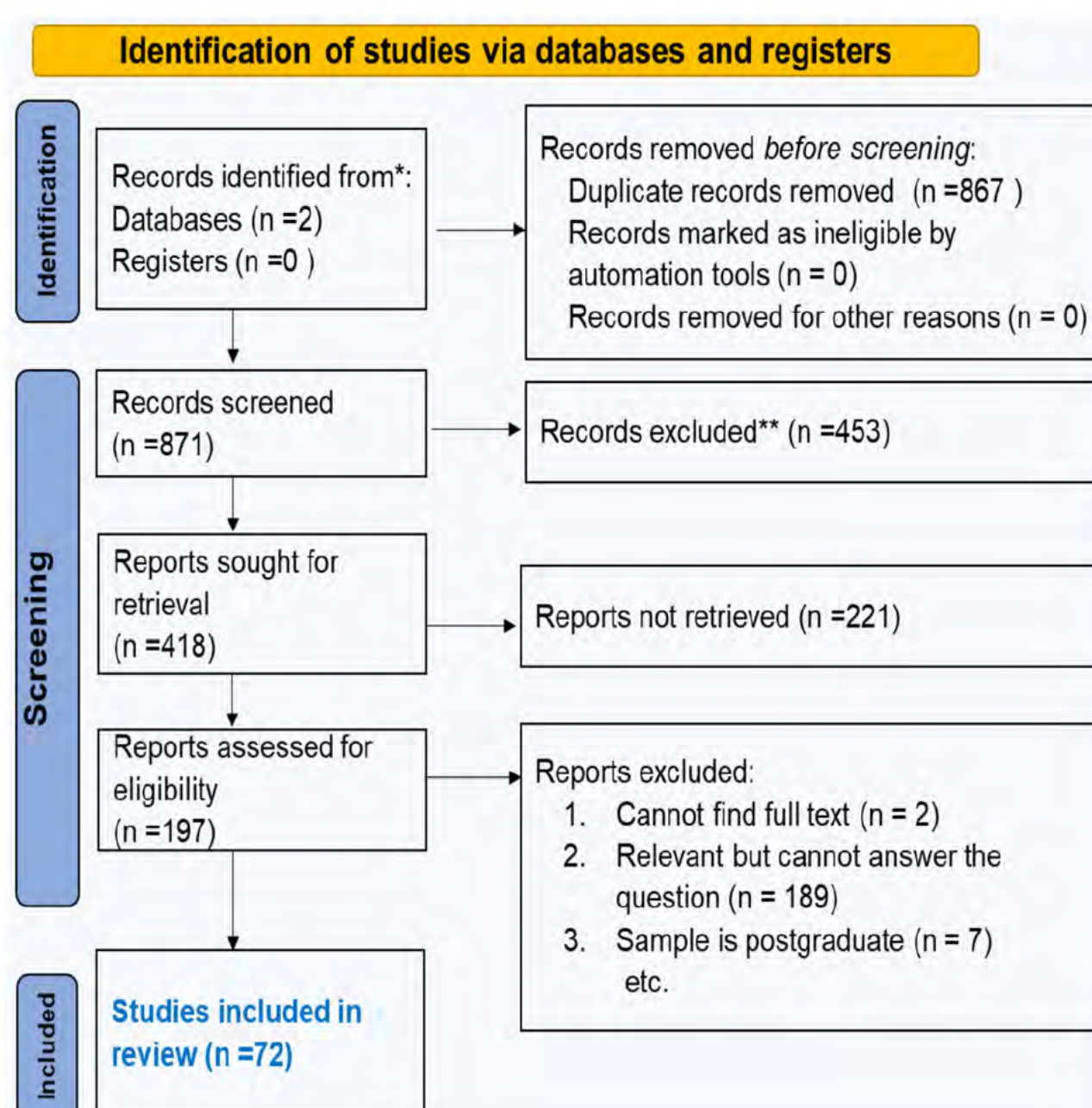
Details the Search Syntax Launched in Each Database

Database	Syntax
EBSCO host	TI (university students OR undergraduate students or college students or undergraduate) AND (learning OR teaching OR academic OR study) AND (preference OR style OR strategy OR habit OR experience) AND (Chinese or china)
Web of Science	(TI=((learning OR study OR academic OR teaching) AND (Chinese or China) AND (university students OR undergraduate students or college students or undergraduate))) AND (PY=("2022" OR "2021" OR "2020" OR "2019" OR "2018" OR "2017" OR "2016" OR "2015" OR "2014" OR "2013" OR "2012") AND LA=("ENGLISH" OR "CHINESE") AND DT=("ARTICLE"))

- Chinese undergraduates
 - Disciplinary knowledge
 - Interviews or questionnaires
 - Characteristics of students' learning, faculty's feedback, or institutions' strategies
 - Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed research methods
- For reducing bias:**
- Published from 2012 to 2022
 - English
 - Full-text accessed
 - Peer-reviewed academic journals

② Data Selection Process

PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram for New Systematic Reviews which Included Searches of Databases and Registers Only



Findings

Answering Review Question 1: (24 references)

- Passive to active learner
 - Ambitions to acquire and apply knowledge into practice
 - Educational technologies and educational policy reform
- More peer learning
 - Communications and collaborations: show their views and receive others' feedback
 - Finally improve learning outcome
- Emphasis on faculty-student interactions
 - Faculty arouse students' enthusiasm for deep-learning.

Answering Review Question 2: (20 references)

- Foster active learner
 - By mental encouragement
 - By promoting learning strategy transition, from a surface approach to a deep approach
- More learning resources
 - More Campus facilities and better environmental conditions
 - Offer online resources and online learning platforms
- More faculty-student interaction during the course
 - Offer more feedback
 - Promote students in collaborative learning

Answering Review Question 3: (14 references)

- By English
 - As instruction language, both on disciplinary knowledge and English language learning—academic and affective support
- By Cultural
 - Use experiences in social-cultural-political contexts which may completely different from Chinese culture, e.g. Individualism in learning (UK, USA, Canada)
 - More faculty-student interactions
 - Offer academic support and encourage students in classroom activities

Answering Review Question 4: (23 references)

- Some adaptation
 - Active participation in the community
 - Collaborative learning
 - Improve language proficiency
 - Attend the courses and speak English more frequently
- Learning Strategy Adjustment
 - Invest more time
 - Deep learning

Highlights

- Chinese undergraduates can be active learners by mastering social strategies and deep learning approaches.
- Both Chinese and international faculty support Chinese undergraduates to be active learners by constructing more faculty-student interactions.
- When Chinese undergraduates study abroad, English, new culture, and new faculty-student relationship pushes them to become 'active learners.'

③ Data Extraction

This table shows a template of the extracted data from the included articles.

A Template the Extracted Data from the Included Articles

Title	Author, Year	Location	Sample	Selected Research questions or Aims	Results	Codes	The subject disciplinary knowledge
The Influence of Learning Style on English Learning Achievement Among Undergraduates in Mainland China	Huang, F., Hou, C.K.W., & Tso, T. (2018)	Mainland China	329 Chinese students from a university in East China. The mean student age was 21.06 (SD = 1.87), and 173 (52.6%) of the students were female. Among the participants, 67 and 33% majored in Computer Science and Communication Studies, respectively.	RQ1. What are Chinese English learners' learning style preferences?	The results revealed that the Chinese university students preferred the visual learning style the most, followed by the auditory and kinesthetic styles.	visual learning style, auditory style, kinesthetic style	English
The role of learning approaches in explaining the distinct learning behaviors presented by American and Chinese undergraduates in the classroom	Hong, Yu, Cheng, & Shu-Yi Guan (2012)	Mainland China	Chinese participants were recruited at a public university located on the Southeastern part of China. After deleting 11 invalid cases, complete data were generated for 265 Chinese participants (172 females, 93 males). They were between the ages of 17 and 25 (Mean= 19.67, SD = 2.17), and were from multiple academic fields including educational technology, psychology, elementary education, and others.	1. Are there significant differences between the mean scores of American students and Chinese students on a self-report measure of learning behavior, indicating different learning behaviors in the classroom? 2. Are there significant differences between the mean scores of American students and Chinese students on a self-report learning approach measure? 3. Do regression slopes suggest that learning approach predicts learning behavior in the classroom across cultural groups?	Chinese students are inclined to be more structure-oriented in learning which in part explains their "quiet" or "passive" behavioral traits.; The results of this study suggest that Chinese students are less likely to raise questions, to indicate understanding, and to be independent of the teacher-student relationship; the Chinese group did not consider themselves as being reluctant to engage in classroom activities or independent thinking. Interestingly, Chinese students had slightly higher ratings on independent thinking than American students.	structure-oriented in learning, quiet but independent thinkers	N/A

*Please scan the QR code, if you want to access the reference list.

