FROM CULTURAL SELF-AWARENESS TO CONFIDENT COMMUNICATION: CONSTRUCTING AND PRACTICING AN IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION MODEL IN TOUR GUIDING COURSES

WenJie Yang[*], YiMin Han, FenFen Ma, Kai Qu
School of Management, Yulin University, Yulin 719000, Shaanxi, China.
[*]*Corresponding Author: WenJie Yang*

Abstract: In the context of China's educational reform emphasizing ideological and political education (IPE) across all disciplines, how to effectively integrate socialist core values and cultural confidence into professional courses remains a key challenge. This study, grounded in the course "Tour Guiding Business" at Yulin University, proposes and practices a localized IPE model titled "From Cultural Self-Awareness to Confident Communication." The model leverages regional cultural resources—such as Shaanbei folk songs, university revolutionary history, and local heritage—to construct a three-stage pedagogical path of "Infiltration-Internalization-Externalization." Through a blended "Three-Wheel Drive" instructional approach combining thematic embedding, situational experience, and project-driven practice, the course systematically cultivates students' cultural identity, professional ethics, and innovative communication skills. Based on a two-semester implementation with 45 undergraduate students, this paper analyzes the course design, teaching mechanisms, assessment strategies, and preliminary outcomes, while also addressing challenges such as resource integration, teacher capacity, and evaluation sustainability. The study concludes that a culturally grounded, practice-oriented IPE model can significantly enhance students' ideological belonging, cultural confidence, and professional competence, offering a replicable framework for similar regional universities engaged in curriculum-based ideological education.
Keywords: Ideological and political education; Tour guiding; Cultural confidence; Local cultural resources; Pedagogical innovation; Curriculum reform; Yulin University

1 INTRODUCTION

The integration of ideological and political education (IPE) into professional courses has become a central task in China's higher education reform, guided by national policies such as the "Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in All Courses" [1]. This initiative calls for a seamless fusion of socialist core values with discipline-specific knowledge, aiming to cultivate morally grounded, culturally confident, and professionally competent talents. In the field of tourism education—a discipline inherently linked to cultural interpretation, heritage communication, and national image projection—this task carries particular significance. Tour guides are not merely service providers; they serve as cultural ambassadors, storytellers of history, and interpreters of local identity [2]. Therefore, embedding IPE into tour guide training is not only an educational requirement but also a professional necessity.

However, the implementation of IPE in professional courses often faces challenges such as the "two-skin" problem (disconnection between ideological content and professional knowledge), insufficient teacher training, lack of localized teaching resources, and inadequate assessment mechanisms [3]. In response, this study proposes an innovative IPE model titled "From Cultural Self-Awareness to Confident Communication," implemented in the "Tour Guiding Business" course at Yulin University. The model is built on the unique cultural and historical resources of the Shaanbei region, including its revolutionary legacy, folk traditions, and local heritage, to create a culturally resonant, practice-driven, and value-based learning experience.

Yulin University, as a regional institution with a mission to serve local socio-economic and cultural development, provides an ideal context for this pedagogical experiment. The course redesign aligns with the national strategy of "cultural confidence" (wenhua zixin) and the university's commitment to cultivating "high-quality applied talents." By transforming the traditional tour guiding curriculum into a vehicle for cultural awakening and value internalization, this project contributes to both educational innovation and regional cultural revitalization.

This paper systematically presents the construction, implementation, and preliminary outcomes of the IPE model. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:
1. How can local cultural resources be systematically integrated into a tour guiding course to achieve IPE objectives?
2. What pedagogical mechanisms facilitate the transition from cultural awareness to confident communication?
3. What are the observable impacts of this model on students' cultural identity, professional competence, and ideological maturity?
4. What challenges remain in sustaining and scaling such a model?
Through a detailed case study, this research offers theoretical insights and practical references for educators seeking to implement IPE in tourism and related fields.

2 BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1 Policy Imperative and the Call for Holistic Education

The pedagogical reform undertaken in this study is fundamentally situated within a significant national educational policy context in China: the promotion of "All-Course Ideological and Political Education" (IPE) [1]. This directive marks a strategic shift from compartmentalized political instruction toward a model where moral, cultural, and political education is deeply embedded within the fabric of all disciplinary teaching. This evolution reflects a broader educational philosophy that prioritizes holistic student development, seeking to synergistically combine the acquisition of professional knowledge with the cultivation of character, ethics, and civic responsibility. In the specific domain of tourism education, this policy imperative acquires distinct professional relevance. It translates into the explicit goal of nurturing tour guides who transcend mere technical proficiency in service delivery to become cultural custodians and national representatives. The ideal graduate is envisioned not only as a skilled practitioner but as an individual deeply rooted in cultural heritage and consciously committed to the projection of national identity, thereby aligning professional competence with ideological purpose [4].

2.2 Cultural Confidence as a Core Educational and Professional Objective

Integral to achieving this holistic aim is the cultivation ofcultural confidence(wenhua zixin), a concept that has gained central prominence in contemporary Chinese socio-political and educational discourse. Cultural confidence denotes a deep-seated pride, assurance, and sense of ownership in one's cultural tradition, revolutionary legacy, and prevailing socialist values. Within the professional sphere of tourism, this concept transcends personal belief to become a critical professional competency and an implicit ideological requirement. A tour guide endowed with genuine cultural confidence is equipped to interpret and narrate local and national narratives with authenticity, persuasive passion, and respectful depth. This capability significantly enriches the tourist experience while simultaneously performing the subtle but powerful work of reinforcing collective identity and national cohesion. However, the development of such profound confidence cannot be effectively achieved through conventional, lecture-based theoretical instruction alone. Scholarly consensus and educational practice suggest that it necessitatesexperiential engagement—a pedagogical approach that immerses students directly and interactively within cultural content, facilitating emotional connection, personal reflection, and the construction of meaning [5]. This underscores the need for teaching methods that move beyond abstraction to embodied, situated learning.

2.3 The Strategic Advantage of Localized Curriculum Design

This need for experiential, meaningful engagement aligns powerfully with the distinct strategic advantage held by regional universities such as Yulin University: the capacity forlocalized curriculum design [6]. Unlike institutions with a more generic national focus, regional universities are uniquely positioned to develop curricula that intimately draw upon, integrate, and respond to local historical narratives, cultural practices, and specific socio-economic needs. This localization strategy offers multiple pedagogical benefits. Firstly, it dramatically increases therelevance and immediacyof learning content for students, who often possess pre-existing connections to the local context, thereby boosting engagement and motivation. Secondly, it directly strengthens the university's role as an active agent inregional development, as it prepares graduates with place-specific knowledge and skills that are directly applicable to local cultural and tourism industries. In the context of tour guide education, localization enables students to develop nuanced, place-specific knowledge and authentic storytelling skills. They learn to interpret and present not a generic national narrative, but the unique historical layers, folk traditions, and community values of their specific region, transforming them into knowledgeable and passionate ambassadors for their local cultural landscape.

2.4 Synthesizing Pedagogical Frameworks for Value Integration

The effective integration of IPE and the cultivation of cultural confidence through localized content necessitate deliberate and robust pedagogical frameworks. Research on value-based education highlights that effective integration relies on instructional models that actively connect abstract values with concrete practice, fostering internalization through action. Established pedagogical approaches such asexperiential learning [7], which emphasizes learning through direct experience and reflection;project-based learning [8], which centers on sustained inquiry into complex, authentic problems; andscenario-based teaching [9], which immerses learners in realistic simulated dilemmas, have been widely recognized for their capacity to foster deep learning and facilitate the internalization of values. The instructional model proposed in this study—the "Three-Wheel Drive" approach—is explicitly designed to synthesize and build upon these established frameworks. It aims to create a structured yet adaptable learning ecosystem that systematically bridges theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom with the complexities of real-world professional and cultural practice, thereby providing the necessary pedagogical engine to drive the proposed three-stage path from cultural awareness to confident communication.

3 COURSE DESIGN: THE "CULTURAL SELF-AWARENESS TO CONFIDENT COMMUNICATION" MODEL

3.1 Core Pedagogical Architecture: A Three-Stage Developmental Path

The structural foundation of the course redesign is a purposefully sequenced three-stage pedagogical path, designed to systematically guide students from initial exposure to cultural content toward the ultimate goal of confident professional expression and value-driven practice. This path provides a coherent conceptual framework for the entire learning journey, with each stage building upon the previous to facilitate progressive development.Stage 1: Infiltration (Cultural Self-Awareness)constitutes the foundational phase, where students are methodically introduced to local cultural resources. This is achieved through a combination of curated lectures, assigned readings, and organized field visits to sites of historical and cultural significance. The primary objective here is to build a substantive base of declarative knowledge and foster initial recognition, effectively planting the seeds of cultural understanding.Stage 2: Internalization (Cultural Reflection and Identity Formation)represents a critical transitional phase that moves beyond passive reception. Students engage in facilitated critical discussions, compose reflective journals, and participate in creative interpretation exercises. These activities are designed to prompt personal connection, critical analysis, and meaning-making, thereby transforming external cultural information into internalized values, emotional attachments, and a strengthened sense of identity. Stage 3: Externalization (Confident Communication and Creative Practice) is the culminating and application-oriented stage. Here, students are tasked with synthesizing and applying their accumulated knowledge and internalized values through tangible, practical outputs. These include delivering polished tour commentaries, designing original cultural products, and planning detailed thematic tour routes. This stage completes the pedagogical cycle by translating internalized cultural confidence and professional ethics into observable skills and creative actions, thereby demonstrating the integration of ideological maturity with vocational competence. This three-stage progression is visually mapped, illustrating the transformative journey of local cultural resources into professional capability and ideological grounding.

3.2 Modular Curriculum Reconstruction and Integrated Learning

To operationalize the three-stage path, the traditional "Tour Guiding Business" syllabus was deconstructed and reconstructed into three thematically coherent modules. Each module is explicitly aligned with a specific stage of the developmental path and is engineered to deliver an integrated blend of ideological focus, specialized knowledge, and practical activity. Module 1: Tour Guide Professionalism and Ethical Foundation scorresponds to the Infiltrationstage. Its Ideological and Political Education (IPE) focus centers on instilling patriotism, professional integrity, a service ethos, and love for one's alma mater and hometown. The content strategically weaves the university's own history and the revolutionary narratives of the Shaanbei region into the teaching of standard guide codes of conduct and ethics. Corresponding activities, such as immersive visits to the campus history museum and role-playing exercises where students serve as "campus guides," provide concrete, context-rich experiences that make abstract ethical principles tangible and personally relevant.Module 2: Cultural Interpretation and Narrative Skillsaligns with theInternalizationstage. The IPE focus shifts to fostering cultural pride, ethnic unity, and an appreciation for intangible heritage. The core content of this module elevates local cultural forms—including Shaanbei folk songs, dialects, folklore, and historical sites—from background context to primary teaching materials for commentary and narration. Instructional activities like folk song performance workshops and structured storytelling sessions at cultural sites are designed to move students from understanding cultural content to emotionally connecting with it and developing their own authentic narrative voice.Module 3: Tourism Innovation and Local Serviceembodies the Externalizationstage, with an IPE focus on social responsibility, creative contribution, and entrepreneurial spirit. The content expands to include principles of cultural product design, thematic tour planning, and community-based tourism development. The key activity is the "I Love Yulin" cultural and creative product design contest, coupled with red tourism route planning projects. These require students to synthesize all prior learning, engage in teamwork, and produce innovative, practical proposals that serve local cultural and economic development, thereby realizing the transition from learner to proactive creator and contributor.

3.3 Integrative Instructional Strategy: The "Three-Wheel Drive" Approach

The delivery of this reconstructed curriculum is facilitated by a blended and dynamic instructional strategy termed the "Three-Wheel Drive" approach. This strategy ensures that the learning experience is multidimensional, engaging, and consistently bridges theory with practice across all modules. The first component,Thematic Embedding in Theory Sessions, ensures that IPE elements are not treated as isolated add-ons but are seamlessly woven into the fabric of professional knowledge transmission. This is accomplished through the use of specially designed case studies that present ethical or cultural dilemmas, guest lectures from industry practitioners who exemplify value-based service, and curated multimedia resources that bring cultural narratives to life within the classroom context. The second component, Situational Experience in Field Settings, physically extends the learning environment beyond the classroom walls. Organized visits to museums, heritage sites, and cultural centers provide students with direct, immersive encounters with the subject of their study. This situational learning makes cultural and historical content visceral and memorable, providing a concrete reference point for theoretical concepts and fostering a deeper, more empathetic understanding. The third component,Project-Driven Practice in Creative Tasks, anchors the learning in application and creation. Students work collaboratively in teams to tackle real-world or realistically simulated projects, such as developing a full tour commentary for a specific site or creating a business plan for a cultural product. This practice fosters essential

professional skills including collaboration, innovative problem-solving, project management, and practical execution, ensuring that the knowledge and values cultivated throughout the course are pressure-tested and refined in a context that mirrors future professional demands.

4 IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

The operationalization of the "From Cultural Self-Awareness to Confident Communication" model was carried out through a meticulously designed and systematically executed methodology, encompassing four core components: team and resource preparation, blended learning environment construction, phased implementation, and a multi-dimensional assessment system. This structured approach ensured the model's theoretical integrity was translated into effective classroom and field practice.

4.1 Interdisciplinary Team Assembly and Localized Resource Development

The foundational step involved constituting a purpose-built, multidisciplinary teaching team. This team strategically integrated expertise from tourism management, history, ethnomusicology, cultural product design, and ideological education, thereby embodying the course's interdisciplinary ethos. The collaborative synergy of this team was instrumental in moving beyond a single-discipline perspective, enabling a holistic approach to curriculum design that could authentically bridge cultural content, professional skills, and value education. A critical concurrent task was the collaborative development of localized teaching resources. The team systematically compiled and pedagogically adapted a rich repository of materials, including a curated local cultural case featuring narratives from Yulin's revolutionary history and folk traditions, digital archives of Shaanbei folk song recordings and scores, historical documents from the university and regional archives, and a series of structured project briefs for the "I Love Yulin" creative tasks. This resource development phase was not merely logistical but a scholarly and pedagogical process of transforming raw cultural assets into teachable content that could effectively serve the dual aims of professional training and ideological cultivation.

4.2 Construction of a Blended and Extended Learning Ecosystem

To facilitate a flexible and continuous learning experience that extended beyond the confines of scheduled class hours, the course was embedded within a deliberately constructed blended learning environment. The primary digital hub was the university-adopted online platform "Learning Through". This platform served multiple integrated functions: a centralized repository for all developed teaching resources (readings, audio-visual materials, case studies), an asynchronous discussion forum for deepening thematic exchanges and peer feedback, and a submission portal for assignments including reflective journals and project drafts. This digital infrastructure strategically supported flipped classroom approaches, allowing students to engage with foundational knowledge and cultural content independently, thereby freeing in-person and field-based sessions for higher-order activities such as discussion, simulation, critique, and hands-on practice. The blended model thus created a seamless "online-offline" learning loop that catered to diverse learning paces and styles while promoting student autonomy and continuous engagement.

4.3 Phased and Iterative Implementation Timeline

The project adopted a clear, three-phase implementation timeline spanning a total of 12 months across two consecutive academic semesters (August–October 2024 and September–October 2025), involving a pilot cohort of 45 second-year Tourism Management undergraduates.Phase 1 (Months 1–3): Foundation and Preparationwas dedicated to finalizing the teaching team's internal training, completing the development and testing of all pedagogical resources, and conducting detailed instructional design for each module.Phase 2 (Months 4–9): Full-Scale Delivery and Active Monitoringconstituted the core teaching period. This phase saw the full rollout of the "Three-Wheel Drive" instructional strategy, incorporating thematic lectures, scheduled field visits to sites like the university history museum, and guided project-based learning sessions for the cultural and creative industries and tour route design tasks. Continuous formative feedback and adjustment were hallmarks of this phase.Phase 3 (Months 10–12): Consolidation, Evaluation, and Synthesisfocused on the systematic collection of student outputs, comprehensive analysis of learning outcome data, final assessment, and the synthesis of experiences into a structured project report and refined teaching materials for future iterations.

4.4 Multi-Dimensional and Value-Sensitive Assessment System

A critical and innovative aspect of the methodology was the design of an assessment system explicitly tailored to capture both professional competency development and the more nuanced progression in ideological and cultural understanding. Rejecting a sole reliance on final examinations, the system adopted a balanced, multi-source approach.Formative Assessment (weighted 60%)emphasized the learning process, evaluating consistent classroom and field participation, the depth and criticality of weekly reflective journals, and the quality of mid-term project presentations.Summative Assessment (40%)evaluated integrative learning outcomes through the final project portfolio—assessing the creativity, feasibility, and cultural depth of designs and plans—and a written examination that

employed scenario-based questions to test ethical reasoning and applied cultural knowledge in simulated professional dilemmas. Furthermore,peer- and self-assessment mechanismswere formally integrated into the evaluation of team projects, encouraging students to critically reflect on their own and their teammates' contributions to collaboration, problem-solving, and collective learning. This holistic system aimed to make the "invisible" processes of value internalization and skill development more visible, assessable, and therefore actionable for both students and instructors.

5 PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES AND OBSERVATIONS

5.1 Enhanced Student Engagement and Motivation

The implementation of the "From Cultural Self-Awareness to Confident Communication" model yielded marked improvements in student engagement across multiple dimensions. Notably, attendance and active participation in field-based activities—such as visits to the university history museum and local cultural sites—consistently surpassed those observed in traditional lecture-based instructional formats. This shift suggests that the experiential and situated nature of the learning activities resonated strongly with students, transforming them from passive recipients of information into active participants in their own learning process. Beyond structured class activities, students also demonstrated increased autonomous initiative, voluntarily conducting supplementary research on local cultural topics that extended beyond assigned coursework. This self-directed exploration indicates a genuine curiosity and sense of ownership over the learning content. Furthermore, engagement extended into the digital realm, with online discussion forums hosted on the "Learning Through" platform recording significantly higher levels of student interaction—measured by post frequency, reply depth, and peer feedback—compared to previous iterations of the course that relied more heavily on conventional teaching methods. This triangulation of evidence from attendance, self-directed study, and digital interaction underscores the model's capacity to foster a more dynamic and student-centered learning environment.

5.2 Cultivation of Cultural Confidence and Identity Formation

A central objective of the course was to foster cultural confidence, and preliminary evidence points toward meaningful progress in this domain. Analysis of student reflective essays revealed a perceptible deepening in their emotional and intellectual connection to local heritage. Narratives moved beyond factual description to express personal resonance, pride, and a sense of custodianship toward Shaanbei culture and the university's revolutionary history. This internalization was further manifested in observable student behaviors. Several students took the initiative to learn traditional folk songs or conduct oral history interviews with local elders, actions that signify a transition from academic requirement to personal interest and cultural agency. Perhaps most tellingly, during simulated tour guiding assessments, students exhibited a noticeable shift in their performative style. Their storytelling became more authentic, nuanced, and passionate, moving away from scripted recitation toward personalized interpretation. This evolution in narrative delivery suggests that students were not merely memorizing cultural content but were beginning to embody and confidently communicate its value, reflecting the core transition from "self-awareness" to "confident communication" that the model aims to achieve.

5.3 Advancement of Integrated Professional Competencies

The project-driven, practice-oriented approach of the course facilitated tangible enhancements in students' professional skills, particularly in integrating ethical and cultural dimensions with technical guiding competencies. Final project outputs demonstrated both creativity and practical feasibility. Examples included a thoughtfully designed souvenir series inspired by Yulin's ancient city wall, which incorporated cultural symbols with market considerations, and a detailed "Red Yulin" tour itinerary that strategically wove together revolutionary historical sites with narrative coherence. These outputs evidenced an ability to translate cultural understanding into concrete tourism products. Moreover, role-playing assessments and simulated service scenarios revealed improved student performance in integrating professional ethics and cultural sensitivity into their guide personas. Students more consistently considered issues such as respectful representation of cultural practices, accurate historical interpretation, and responsive communication with diverse tourist profiles. This indicates that the model's emphasis on value-based practice successfully bridged the gap between abstract ethical principles and their application in professional contexts, contributing to a more holistic skill set.

5.4 Challenges and Implementation Considerations

Despite these positive outcomes, the implementation process surfaced several challenges that are critical to acknowledge for future refinement and scalability. A recurring initial hurdle was that some students experienced difficulty in conceptually linking broad ideological themes—such as patriotism or cultural confidence—to the specific, practical tasks required in projects and simulations. This underscores the need for more scaffolded instructional design that explicitly maps the connections between macro-values and micro-actions. Logistically, resource constraints, particularly regarding transportation and coordination, limited the desired frequency and variety of off-campus field

visits, which are vital for immersive situational learning. This highlights a common tension between pedagogical ideals and institutional resource realities. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of the core project work occasionally presented challenges in team dynamics, including uneven participation or conflicts over creative direction. These instances necessitated careful facilitation by instructors to transform potential obstacles into teachable moments about professional teamwork and conflict resolution. Addressing these challenges—through clearer instructional scaffolding, strategic resource allocation, and proactive team management—will be essential for strengthening the model's efficacy and sustainability in future applications.

6 DISCUSSION: MECHANISMS AND SUSTAINABILITY

6.1 Why This Model Works: Key Success Factors

The effectiveness of the "From Cultural Self-Awareness to Confident Communication" model can be attributed to several interconnected factors that align with contemporary pedagogical and ideological education principles. Firstly, the cultural relevance of the curriculum plays a fundamental role. By grounding the course in tangible local resources such as Shaanbei folk songs, university revolutionary history, and regional heritage sites, ideological and political education (IPE) is transformed from abstract concepts into lived, meaningful experiences. This localization strategy resonates with students' intrinsic sense of place and identity, making value internalization more natural and profound [5]. Secondly, the model exhibits strong pedagogical coherence through its clearly defined three-stage path of "Infiltration-Internalization-Externalization." This structured progression ensures that learning evolves systematically from awareness to reflection, and finally to application, providing students with a comprehensible and achievable developmental trajectory [7]. Thirdly, the collaborative nature of the teaching team significantly enriches the learning ecosystem. The multidisciplinary composition—bringing together expertise in tourism, history, music, design, and ideological education—enables a holistic and nuanced exploration of cultural content, modeling the very interdisciplinary integration the course aims to foster [6]. Finally, the model's strong practice orientation ensures that learning is not confined to theoretical understanding. Through project-based tasks such as cultural product design and tour route planning, students actively bridge the gap between ideological values and professional practice. This application-driven approach not only consolidates learning but also cultivates a sense of agency and responsibility, key components of both professional competence and ideological maturity [8].

6.2 Theoretical Contributions to IPE and Professional Education

This study makes several significant contributions to the evolving literature on curriculum-based ideological and political education. Primarily, it proposes and validates a structured yet adaptable pedagogical model for integrating values education into professional training. By articulating the "three-stage path" and the "Three-Wheel Drive" instructional strategy, the research moves beyond general advocacy for IPE integration to offer a replicable operational framework. This framework demonstrates how value-based objectives can be systematically woven into the fabric of discipline-specific knowledge and skill development [3]. Furthermore, the research empirically underscores the power of localization in ideological education. It provides a compelling case study of how regional universities can leverage their unique cultural and historical assets to achieve national educational goals, thereby enriching the discourse on context-sensitive curriculum design [10]. The study also highlights the critical, yet often underemphasized, role of teacher collaboration in curriculum innovation. The success of the model is inextricably linked to the synergistic efforts of a multidisciplinary team, suggesting that effective IPE implementation requires moving beyond individual teacher efforts toward structured, cross-departmental teaching communities [4]. These contributions collectively advance the understanding of how to design professional education that is simultaneously technically robust, culturally grounded, and ideologically coherent.

6.3 Practical Implications for Educators and Institutions

The findings of this study offer actionable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and institutional leaders engaged in similar reforms. A central implication is that IPE must be conceived as an inherently integrated component of the curriculum, not as an appended or peripheral module. The design process should begin with identifying the natural synergies between professional competencies and ideological values, thereby avoiding the "two-skin" problem of forced or superficial integration [1]. In practical terms, educators are encouraged to systematically mine and pedagogically activate local cultural resources. These resources—from local history and folklore to contemporary community practices—serve as powerful, authentic teaching materials that can make ideological content more relatable and impactful. To operationalize such an approach, targeted teacher training and the fostering of collaborative teaching structures are essential. Institutions should invest in developing faculty capacity to design and deliver integrated content and create formal platforms for ongoing interdisciplinary dialogue and co-teaching arrangements [11]. These steps are crucial for translating curriculum models from paper into sustained, high-quality classroom practice.

6.4 Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

While this study provides valuable evidence for the proposed model, it is important to acknowledge its limitations, which in turn outline productive directions for future inquiry. The research is contextually bound to a single course implementation at one regional university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. To address this, future research could expand to multiple institutions across different regions for comparative analysis, examining how the model adapts to varied cultural and institutional contexts. Additionally, the study primarily captures short-term, course-level outcomes. Longitudinal tracking of graduates is needed to assess the enduring impact of such integrated education on students' professional careers, civic values, and long-term cultural identity. Finally, the rapid advancement of educational technology presents new opportunities for enhancing the model. Future explorations could integrate digital tools such as Virtual Reality (VR) for immersive cultural heritage experiences, or Artificial Intelligence (AI) for personalized learning pathways and automated feedback on narrative skills [9, 12]. Investigating how these technologies can deepen engagement, scale access, and provide new forms of assessment within a values-oriented curriculum remains a promising frontier for research and development [13-14].

7 CONCLUSION

The "From Cultural Self-Awareness to Confident Communication" model represents a meaningful attempt to integrate ideological and political education into professional tourism training. By leveraging local cultural resources and adopting a practice-oriented pedagogy, the course successfully fosters students' cultural confidence, ethical professionalism, and innovative competence. While challenges remain in resource allocation, teacher development, and assessment design, the model offers a replicable framework for other regional universities seeking to implement IPE in a culturally grounded and pedagogically coherent manner. Ultimately, this approach contributes not only to educational reform but also to the broader societal goal of cultivating culturally confident, morally responsible, and professionally capable citizens.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

FUNDING

REFERENCES

[1] Ministry of Education of China. Guidelines for ideological and political education in all courses. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2020.

[2] Chen L. Cultural confidence and ethical tourism: The role of tour guides in heritage interpretation. Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, 2019, 17(3): 245–260.

[3] Wang F, Zhao X. Integrating ideological education into professional courses: Approaches and challenges. Journal of Higher Education Policy, 2021, 34(4): 512–528.

[4] Xu H, Li M. Curriculum reform and political education in tourism programs: A case study from Northwest China. Tourism Management Perspectives, 2020, 41: 100–113.

[5] Zhang Y, Wang L. Fostering cultural confidence through tourism education: A case study of Guizhou province. Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 2020, 27: 100271.

[6] Liu Y. Localized curriculum design in Chinese higher education: Cases and reflections. Asian Education Studies, 2023, 8(2): 45–59.

[7] Kolb D A. Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Prentice Hall, 1984.

[8] Thomas J W. A review of research on project-based learning. The Autodesk Foundation, 2000.

[9] Lave J, Wenger E. Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge University Press, 1991.

[10] Yang R. The role of regional universities in China's cultural and economic development. International Journal of Educational Development, 2022, 89: 102534.

[11] Li J. The ideological and political education in Chinese higher education: Challenges and innovations. Chinese Education & Society, 2019, 52(3-4): 275–289.

[12] Barnett R. Knowing and becoming in the higher education curriculum. Studies in Higher Education, 2009, 34(4): 429–440.

[13] Noddings N. Education and democracy in the 21st century. Teachers College Press, 2013.

[14] Huang Q, Fu H, Wang Y. Research on innovative practical teaching models empowered by disciplinary competitions for multi-disciplinary collaboration. Education and Teaching Forum, 2022, 33: 41–44.