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INTERNATIONALIZATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PREPARATION OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL ART TEACHERS IN CHINA: A CASE STUDY OF DANCE TEACHERS' EDUCATION

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The processes of globalization and internationalization have become defining trends in contemporary education, significantly influencing teacher training systems worldwide. In China, the integration of international dimensions into higher education is recognized as a strategic priority, reflecting the nation's aim to prepare competitive, culturally competent, and globally oriented professionals. This is particularly relevant for the preparation of primary school art teachers, whose professional activities are deeply connected to intercultural communication, creativity, and the transmission of universal values through artistic expression. Thus, the study of internationalization opportunities within the training of future art teachers in Chinese universities represents an important and timely scientific issue.

This article analyzes the current pathways and institutional mechanisms through which internationalization is embedded in the preparation of future primary school art teachers using dance teacher education as a case study. The paper addresses challenges such as balancing national cultural heritage with global influences and ensuring the accessibility and effectiveness of internationalization initiatives across different regions and institutions.

The article aims to demonstrate practical pathways that enable prospective primary school dance teachers to gain international educational and professional experience during their university studies. Such pathways include participation in exchange programs, international workshops and festivals, collaborative research projects, and online global learning environments. These opportunities are considered as strategic tools in the Chinese higher education system for fostering innovative, adaptive, and internationally engaged teachers.

The findings emphasize that internationalization is not an optional add-on but an essential component of contemporary teacher education in China. It enriches the professional training of future art and dance teachers by expanding their cultural horizons, strengthening their creative potential, and equipping them with the competencies required for working in diverse and dynamic educational contexts. The study confirms that the systematic implementation of internationalization strategies within Chinese universities contributes to the development of a new generation of teachers capable of successfully navigating both national priorities and global educational challenges.

Keywords: internationalization; teacher education; primary school; organizational culture; art teachers; China / PR China; intercultural competence.



МОЖЛИВОСТІ ІНТЕРНАЦІОНАЛІЗАЦІЇ У ПІДГОТОВЦІ МАЙБУТНІХ ВЧИТЕЛІВ МИСТЕЦТВА ПОЧАТКОВОЇ ШКОЛИ В КИТАЇ: НА ПРИКЛАДІ ПІДГОТОВКИ ВЧИТЕЛІВ ТАНЦІВ

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Процеси глобалізації та інтернаціоналізації стали визначальними тенденціями сучасної освіти, суттєво впливаючи на системи підготовки вчителів у всьому світі. У Китаї інтеграція міжнародного виміру у сферу вищої освіти визнається стратегічним пріоритетом, що відображає прагнення держави готувати конкурентоспроможних, культурно компетентних та глобально орієнтованих фахівців. Це особливо актуально для підготовки вчителів мистецьких дисциплін у початковій школі, чия професійна діяльність тісно пов'язана з міжкультурною комунікацією, творчістю та передаванням універсальних цінностей через художнє вираження. Тому дослідження можливостей інтернаціоналізації у процесі підготовки майбутніх учителів мистецтва в університетах Китаю становить важливу й своєчасну наукову проблему.

У статті проаналізовано сучасні шляхи та інституційні механізми, за допомогою яких інтернаціоналізація інтегрується у підготовку майбутніх учителів мистецтва початкової школи, використовуючи як приклад кейс підготовки вчителів танцю. Розглянуто проблеми, пов'язані з необхідністю поєднання національної культурної спадщини та глобальних впливів, а також забезпечення доступності й ефективності ініціатив інтернаціоналізації у різних регіонах і закладах вищої освіти.

Метою статті є демонстрація практичних шляхів, що дають змогу майбутнім учителям танцю в початковій школі отримати міжнародний освітній та професійний досвід у процесі навчання в університеті. До таких шляхів належать участь у програмах академічної мобільності, міжнародних майстер-класах і фестивалях, спільних наукових проєктах, а також у глобальних онлайн-освітніх середовищах. Ці можливості розглядаються як стратегічні інструменти китайської системи вищої освіти для формування інноваційних, адаптивних та міжнародно залучених учителів.

Загальні висновки підкреслюють, що інтернаціоналізація є не додатковим елементом, а невід'ємною складовою сучасної підготовки вчителів у Китаї. Вона збагачує професійну підготовку майбутніх учителів мистецтва й танцю завдяки розширенню їхніх культурних горизонтів, зміцненню творчого потенціалу та формуванню компетентностей, необхідних для роботи в різноманітних і динамічних освітніх контекстах. Дослідження підтверджує, що системна реалізація стратегій інтернаціоналізації в університетах Китаю сприяє формуванню нового покоління педагогів, здатних успішно поєднувати національні пріоритети з глобальними освітніми викликами.

Ключові слова: інтернаціоналізація; педагогічна освіта; початкова школа; організаційна культура; вчителі мистецтва; Китай / КНР; міжкультурна компетентність

General statement of the problem and its connection with important scientific or practical tasks. Globalization and the intensification of intercultural exchange have significantly transformed the contemporary educational landscape, making internationalization a central priority in the development of higher education systems. For teacher education, this trend has profound implications, as future educators are required not only to master pedagogical and subject-specific knowledge, but also to acquire intercultural competence, flexibility, and the ability to navigate

global educational contexts. In the Chinese context, the state recognizes internationalization as a strategic dimension of university education, viewing it as a means of preparing highly qualified specialists who are competitive on both national and international levels.

This issue is particularly acute in the preparation of primary school art teachers, where professional practice is closely tied to intercultural communication, creative collaboration, and the promotion of both universal and national cultural values. The problem arises from the need to balance the preservation of national traditions in art education with the adoption of global standards, methods, and experiences. At the same time, ensuring equitable access to international opportunities for future primary school art teachers across different universities and regions of China remains a practical challenge due to the limited engagement of this specific audience in international programs and cooperation activities.

Thus, the problem addressed in this article is directly connected to broader scientific and practical tasks: improving the quality of teacher education, developing models of internationalization adapted to specific cultural and disciplinary contexts, and enhancing the professional competencies of prospective primary school art teachers in line with the educational demands of China.

This article aims to identify and demonstrate practical pathways through which future primary school art and dance teachers in China can obtain international educational and professional experience during their university studies, thereby contributing to their comprehensive preparation for contemporary educational challenges.

Analysis of recent studies and publications that have initiated solutions to this problem. The internationalization of higher education has become a defining research trend in the past decade, with a growing body of scholarship examining its role in shaping teacher preparation systems worldwide. A significant strand of research focuses on the policy dimension of internationalization in China and highlights the strategic role of government frameworks in steering the internationalization of higher education. Additionally, these publications provide a comparative perspective on emerging national rationales, underscoring the state-directed nature of internationalization processes in China and beyond. The aforementioned issues mentioned are reflected in the works of such researchers, as Rui Yang "China's internationalization of higher education: the barrier within" (2020); Wen Wen and Die Hu "International student education in China and its connections with local and global society" (2023); Zhang Jingke "Policy instrument preferences for higher education internationalization in China" (2022); Qi Zhanyong "Rise, local features and reflections on 'internationalization-at-home' in China" (2025); Gao Xueying "From internationalization to localization: the evolution of Sino-foreign cooperative education" (2022); Yuzhuo Cai, C. Pinna & M. van der Wende "Rethinking EU–China higher education cooperation in a dynamic global environment" (2025); Simon Marginson "UK universities and China" (2020); Ka Ho Mok "Critical reflections on the evolution of higher education in China in the last two decades" (2021), Chu Yin "Transnational higher education in China: goals, regulations, and organizational

foundations” (2021), Nataliia Avsheniuk “Problems of higher education internationalization in East Asia” (2023) and others.

Another major trend relates to the growth of transnational education and joint programs between Chinese and foreign institutions. The researchers explore teaching and learning practices in Sino-foreign transnational education, analyze collaboration in China-abroad joint educational institutions located in China, which demonstrate how institutional partnerships function as vehicles for knowledge exchange and intercultural engagement. Mainly, this issue is considered in publications made by the Chinese and China-origin researchers and is almost absent in the publications of Ukrainian and European researchers. In particular this concerns the publications of Bin Zou “The impact of Sino-foreign cooperative universities in China on Chinese postgraduate students’ learning performances in the UK and US” (2022); Mei Lai “Master’s programs at Sino-foreign cooperative universities in China: an analysis of the neoliberal practices” (2024); Youliang Zhang “Understanding the Chinese–foreign cooperation in running schools: From the perspective of loose coupling theory” (2024); Gaoming Zheng “Towards an analytical framework for understanding the development of a quality assurance system in an international joint programme” (2017); Jieming Ma “Transnational education in Sino-foreign cooperative universities: modes, benefits and concerns” (2019); Xiao Lu “Transnational education: Sino-Foreign cooperative universities in China” (2018); Zeng Nuolin “Exploration and practice of curriculum and teaching in early childhood education under the perspective of “Internationalization at home” in Sino-Foreign cooperative education” (2025); Chu Yin “Transnational higher education in China: current trends and features” (2021); Eryong Xue “Examining Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools during the epidemic period: a macro education policy analysis” (2023).

A strong current in recent scholarship is the promotion of intercultural competence in teacher education. In particular Chinese primary school teachers’ beliefs about integrating intercultural competence, a new scale for measuring intercultural abilities among Chinese learners, and curriculum internationalization as a way of embedding intercultural perspectives in education are considered. In contrast to the previous trend, this issue of the problem is mainly reflected in the multidisciplinary works of foreign scholars and the Chinese educators presenting the idea often use the foreign publications as the start point. The ideas related to intercultural education of primary school teachers are reflected in publications of Mike P. Fleming “Arts, language and intercultural education” (2023); Theresa Catalano “Dance as dialog: A metaphor analysis on the development of interculturality through arts and community-based learning with preservice teachers and a local refugee community” (2021); Bodine R. Romijn “Increasing teachers’ intercultural competences in teacher preparation programs and through professional development” (2021); G. J. Okken “The relationship between intercultural teaching competence and school and classroom level characteristics” (2022); Jennifer Padua “Intercultural Communicative Competence in Teacher Education” (2020); Weishan Liu “A systematic comparison of intercultural and indigenous cultural dance education from a global perspective”

(2024); Li Bijing “Cultivating primary pupils’ intercultural communicative competence: A China–Canada sister-school case” (2018); Olena M. Tishchenko “Pedagogical conditions for forming intercultural competence of future choreography (dance) teachers” (2021); Chen Zhui “Methodology for forming intercultural communication experience of future music teachers” (2023); Olena Homoniuk “Intercultural competence as an important personal characteristic of the future primary school teacher” (2024) and others.

With the expansion of digital education, virtual exchanges and collaborative online international learning have emerged as cost-effective mobility alternatives. Issues related to virtual exchanges in teacher education (both primary and arts-focused), China-abroad partnership in creating joint educational content for online and distance education projects are also reflected in contemporary professional education literature. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact and greatly influenced all aspects of education digitalization, including the education of primary school teachers as well, that not avoid reflecting in the publications on the topic. Currently, in China digitalization of education of all its forms and variant is a highly popular research field that is also presented in publications by Yidan Zhu “Crossing boundaries through collaborative online international learning during Covid-19: a participatory case study in China” (2023); Sara Ganassin “Virtual exchange for internationalization at home in China: staff perspectives” (2021); Zheng Li “Chinese learners’ engagement in a China-Mexico-U.S. COIL Project” (2024); Juan Chu “Exploring factors influencing pre-service teacher’s digital teaching competence and the mediating effects of data literacy: empirical evidence from China” (2023); Jing Yang “Integrating digital tools in art education: a study of TPACK development in Chinese pre-service teachers” (2024); Na Ma “A pre-service art teacher digital literacy framework for China” (2024); Siwen Ren “Micro-lesson strategies for primary school art under education digitalization” (2025); Mengting Gong “Applying AI robots in kindergarten art appreciation: a practice study” (2024); O. Nalyvaiko “Digitalization of the educational environment in Chinese HEIs” (2020); Chi Beibei “Fine art education in Chinese schools” (2023) and others.

Overall, the literature from 2015–2025 reveals several converging trends: the strategic centrality of state policies in shaping internationalization, the expansion of transnational education and joint programs, the centrality of EMI and international faculty, the focus on intercultural competence, and the exploration of innovative pathways such as virtual exchanges. Within art and dance education, scholars highlight both the challenges and opportunities of aligning national traditions with global practices. These studies collectively establish the relevance and timeliness of investigating internationalization opportunities in the preparation of future primary school art and dance teachers in Chinese universities.

Presentation of the main research material. China treats the internationalization of education as a lever for national development, talent competitiveness, and soft-power. A clear arc runs from the “Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020)” which pledged to expand inbound and outbound mobility and cultivate “world-class

talent” and up to the “China Education Modernization 2035 program” released in 2019, which makes “opening-up” and quality enhancement the organizing principles for the next stage of reform. At the level of higher education, the state’s “Double First-Class initiative” (adopted 2015) reorganized funding and evaluation around world-class universities and disciplines, explicitly aimed at “enhance international competitiveness”. This policy has steered universities toward deeper international partnerships, English-medium programs, and joint research platforms. In January 2025 the State Government released a “2024–2035 Plan” to build a “strong education nation”, scaling graduate education and doctoral training to move more institutions to the global frontier. This initiative be seen as an explicit recommitment to international benchmarking and openness. Parallel rules shape the transnational ecosystem: the Regulations on Chinese-Foreign Cooperative Education (State Council 2019 revision) and their implementing measures govern joint programs, joint institutes, and international branch campuses (including new provisions piloted in Hainan), ensuring that external cooperation aligns with national priorities and quality control.

Professional education has been pulled firmly into this opening-up strategy. The “Vocational Education Law” (2022 revision, effective May 1, 2022) elevates vocational education’s status to parity with general education and encourages international cooperation in curriculum, teaching, and skills standards and making it critical for aligning China’s workforce with global industrial chains (Bantugan, 2022). A second thread concerns digital internationalization and traces a pathway from “platforms and resources as instruments” to “digital pedagogy as a concept” (e.g., virtual exchange/COIL). The “Education Informatization 2.0 Action Plan” (adopted 2018) set targets for “Internet+ education”, smart campuses, and new modes of talent cultivation, laying the technical rails for cross-border online collaboration. During and after COVID-19 and after, ministries urged universities to expand the international reach of online education. The “Opinions on Accelerating and Expanding the Opening-up of Education in the New Era” (published 2020) explicitly encourage credit recognition, joint or double degrees, and the use of online modalities to extend quality resources and create a policy space that enables virtual exchanges and COIL at scale. Regionally, the “Education Action Plan for the BRI” (adopted 2016) anchors multilateral academic mobility and joint training with partner countries, further normalizing cross-border collaboration.

Within teacher education and especially the pipeline for primary school teachers, China couples an international outlook with national standards. The “Professional Standards for Primary School Teachers” (trial, 2012) define ethics, knowledge and competence baselines; the “Ability Standards for Teachers’ Application of Information Technology” (adopted 2014) and program-level accreditation measures (adopted 2017) push digital and pedagogical quality in initial teacher education. The “Action Plan for Revitalizing Teacher Education” (2018–2022) strengthened recruitment, practicum, and graduate pathways, aiming to produce teachers who can integrate technology, cross-cultural understanding, and evidence-informed practice. System-wide, the “Overall Plan for Deepening the Reform of Education Evaluation in the New Era”

(adopted 2020) reorients metrics toward teaching quality and student development, discouraging narrow paper-and-ranking incentives and indirectly rewarding genuine internationalized learning outcomes (Jian, Xue, 2023).

Taken together, these instruments form a coherent strategy: raise global standing (Double First-Class; 2024–2035 plan), governing transnational cooperation (Regulations on Chinese-Foreign Cooperative Education), integrating vocational tracks into international standards (2022 Law), and hard-wiring digital capacity for cross-border learning (Education Informatization 2.0; 2020 Opening-up Opinions). In primary teacher education, national standards and revitalization measures ensure that graduates can navigate digital pedagogy and intercultural learning while meeting Chinese curricular aims. The net effect is internationalization with Chinese characteristics: open to ideas and talent flows, protective of quality and sovereignty, and strategically aligned with the country's long-term development goals (China unveils 2024–2035 plan..., 2025).

China's education vision places the internationalization of future primary school teachers at the heart of its long-term strategy for modernization and national development. The state recognizes that in a globalized and digitally interconnected world, primary education is not only the foundation of individual learning but also the basis for cultivating citizens with intercultural competence, creativity, and adaptability. Thus, preparing teachers who are internationally minded has become a strategic priority.

At the level of professional preparation, China emphasizes blending a global outlook with national priorities. The "Professional Standards for Primary School Teachers" (adopted 2012) stress comprehensive subject knowledge, moral cultivation, and the ability to use information technology. These standards have increasingly been interpreted in light of internationalization, meaning that teachers are expected not only to master pedagogy but also to integrate global perspectives and digital tools into their lessons. Initiatives such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) projects and teacher exchanges support these aims by providing experiential platforms for pre-service teachers. The internationalization of primary teacher education in China is seen as a dual mission: to raise the quality of domestic schooling and to enhance China's voice in global educational dialogue. By preparing teachers who are technologically skilled, culturally open, and globally aware, China is investing in the capacity of its youngest citizens to thrive in an interconnected future (Shu, Tian, 2025).

For primary school art teachers, internationalization during university training is of particular importance. Art education is inherently intercultural: visual art, music, dance, and drama all draw on traditions that transcend national boundaries. In this context, exposing future teachers to global perspectives enriches their professional identity and enables them to inspire young children with creativity, curiosity, and respect for cultural diversity. Universities play a crucial role in embedding internationalization into teacher education programs viewing such experiences as opportunities to strengthen students' intercultural communication skills, digital competence, and the ability to design inclusive lessons that reflect a multiplicity of artistic traditions. For primary school art teachers, these capacities are invaluable

because art lessons often represent the first structured encounter children have with cultural expression beyond their immediate environment.

Mobility opportunities also play a significant role. Student exchanges, international summer schools, and joint workshops with foreign partner institutions allow future art teachers to observe firsthand how creativity is nurtured in diverse educational systems. This practical exposure helps them move beyond a narrow focus on national curriculum requirements and instead develop a broader pedagogical repertoire. A teacher who has studied, for instance, the role of community art in European primary schools or storytelling through visual arts in African contexts will return to their classroom with innovative strategies that enrich children's learning (Doncel-Abad, 2024).

At the same time, internationalization must be adapted to the realities of primary school teaching. Unlike secondary or university educators, primary art teachers work with children in their formative years, requiring sensitivity, patience, and the ability to translate complex cultural expressions into child-friendly activities. Internationalized teacher education, therefore, must integrate experiential learning, reflective practice, and exposure to authentic teaching contexts. Universities that invite international artists, arrange cross-cultural school-based practicums, or support community arts projects connected to global themes provide their students with robust preparation for this task (Guo, Guo, Yochim, Liu, 2021).

To illustrate these practices concretely, this article highlights the example of dance teachers. Dance, as a core component of art education, offers a vivid lens through which to examine internationalization in action. Through exchanges with foreign dance educators, participation in international festivals, and virtual collaborations in choreography, future primary school dance teachers gain exposure to a full spectrum of international opportunities: from mobility to online projects, from intercultural performance to joint research. One of the authors of this article is herself a practicing primary school dance teacher, with direct experience of such initiatives. This perspective ensures that the discussion of internationalization is not abstract but grounded in real classroom practices and professional development opportunities. By using dance teachers as an illustrative case, the authors of the article aim to highlight the opportunities that modern Chinese Universities offer their students to promote internationalization as an educational and developmental approach.

The training of future primary school dance teachers in China is increasingly shaped by internationalization activities that broaden their pedagogical vision, intercultural competence, and artistic repertoire. As art education responds to globalization, universities have adopted diverse approaches to ensure that dance teacher education programs combine strong national traditions with exposure to global practices. The approaches listed below here are among the most popular in the Chinese Universities and professional colleges for training future dance teachers for primary schools:

University mobility programs to partner universities abroad: Chinese universities maintain partnerships with institutions worldwide, offering exchange

semesters or short-term study visits. For dance education students, such mobility enables immersion in different choreographic traditions, rehearsal methods, and performance contexts. Experiencing how dance is integrated into primary education in countries such as France or the United States enriches their pedagogical strategies at home;

- ***Mobility through Chinese Council grants***: grants and scholarships provided by the China Scholarship Council (CSC) allow outstanding students to study abroad at leading institutions. These opportunities support dance teacher candidates not only financially but also academically, giving them access to structured programs where they can refine their professional skills and return as highly qualified specialists;

- ***Internationalization at home programs***: for dance teachers, this often means studying at universities serving ethnic minorities or undertaking teaching practice in minority regions. Exposure to diverse Chinese cultural heritages (Tibetan, Uighur, Mongolian, and others) prepares them to incorporate multicultural perspectives into lessons for primary pupils;

- ***Internationalization in diaspora***: dance and education programs in Asian countries, where Chinese diaspora communities actively preserve and adapt their traditions, offer further learning contexts. Future dance teachers can engage in collaborative projects in Southeast Asia, gaining insights into how Chinese culture interacts with local artistic environments;

- ***Studying alongside international students***: universities in China increasingly attract students from abroad. Sharing classes with international peers allows future dance teachers to explore different movement vocabularies and teaching philosophies, while developing intercultural communication skills essential for teaching in a globalized classroom;

- ***Classes with foreign teachers and specialists***: guest lectures, master classes, and workshops by international artists give students access to new techniques and perspectives without leaving China. Exposure to foreign teaching styles sharpens adaptability and widens their pedagogical toolkit;

- ***Participation in dance events abroad***: concerts, competitions, and festivals outside China provide authentic opportunities to perform, observe, and reflect. Participation in such events cultivates confidence, cross-cultural competence, and professional networks that can support future collaborations. These events primarily support the dancing and art component of a future primary school teachers, but students can also observe trainers and teachers from other countries working with their students and benefit from exploring their technologies and professional know-hows. Additionally, such events often include dance master classes and workshops, enabling Chinese future teachers to engage with varied pedagogical approaches and practices;

- ***Deep self-learning of foreign dance cultures***: many students undertake in-depth studies of a particular country's dance culture (Indian classical dance, African rhythmic traditions, Western ballet, Latin America dance, Spanish Flamenco etc.). This independent exploration encourages critical reflection and nurtures deeper respect for diversity in artistic expression and in future can be applied by the specialists in their professional activities (Doncel-Abad, 2024).

Chinese universities actively encourage and support students' internationalization efforts. Table 1 presents the common practical activities implemented by universities to ensure internationalization becomes a reality for their students, highlighting opportunities such as mobility programs, cultural exchanges, and collaborations that broaden perspectives and strengthen global competencies in teacher education.

Table 1

**Chinese Universities' efforts in supporting internationalization opportunities
of future primary school dance teachers**

Form of Internationalisation	Efforts Made by Chinese Universities	Support mechanisms	Challenges
Mobility to partner universities abroad	Exchange agreements with universities in Europe, North America, and Asia for semester-long or short-term dance study programs	Institutional offices of international cooperation; credit recognition; tuition waivers or reductions	Limited slots; high costs of living abroad; language barriers.
Mobility with CSC (China Scholarship Council) grants	Sending outstanding dance education students abroad for 6–12 months of study	Full or partial scholarships covering tuition, living expenses, and travel	Competitive selection process; pressure to achieve high outcomes; adaptation to different pedagogical styles
Internationalisation at home (ethnic minority universities and regions)	Placement of students in Minzu Universities (e.g., Minzu University of China) or practicum in Tibetan, Uighur, or other minority schools	State encouragement of multicultural education; university-organised practicum support	Remote locations, cultural adjustment, and sometimes limited resources in minority schools
Internationalisation in diaspora (Asian countries)	Collaboration with Confucius Institutes and Chinese diaspora dance schools in Southeast Asia	Bilateral cultural agreements; support from Chinese embassies and cultural centres	Short duration of projects; logistical complexity; need to adapt to hybrid cultural practices
Studying in mixed classes with international students	Enrolling foreign students into dance programs in Beijing, Shanghai, or Guangzhou universities	International student offices; bilingual teaching; joint workshops	Communication barriers; sometimes limited integration between local and foreign students
Classes with foreign teachers and specialists	Inviting guest professors, choreographers, and workshop leaders from abroad to deliver intensive training	University budgets for visiting faculty; partnerships with foreign institutions; translation support	High costs; occasional mismatch between local curriculum and visiting teachers' approaches

Participation in dance events abroad	Sending student groups to international festivals, competitions, or cultural exchange events	Funding from Ministry of Education, local governments, and arts foundations; professional mentorship	Financial constraints; time conflicts with academic schedules; obtaining visas
Deep self-learning of foreign dance cultures	Providing access to digital libraries, online courses, and archives of world dance traditions	University e-resources; encouragement of independent projects; faculty supervision	Self-motivation required; uneven quality of online resources; limited opportunities for embodied practice

It should be noted that Internationalization student office and other services of universities (such as International cooperation offices, Foreign affairs services etc.) are included in the organizational structure of every university in China and are considered one of the most important components of an educational institution. In most Chinese universities, the International Office (often called the Office of International Cooperation and Exchange, 国际交流合作处) is a core administrative department that reports directly to the university leadership, typically the President or a Vice-President responsible for external affairs. Its role is to plan, coordinate, and supervise all internationalization activities of the institution. Structurally, the office is usually parallel to academic affairs, student affairs, and research administration, but it often functions as a cross-cutting unit that supports all faculties, including colleges of education and arts. The core functions of the International Office in Chinese universities include:

- negotiates and manages agreements with foreign universities, dance academies, and cultural institutions;
- organizes student and staff exchange programs, including outbound placements for teacher education students and inbound hosting of international peers;
- supports applications for Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC) grants and other bilateral funding;
- facilitates guest lectures, visiting professors, and intercultural campus activities;
- coordinates international festivals, workshops, and cultural weeks where art and dance play a central role;
- provides visa support, pre-departure training, intercultural competence workshops, and practical advice for students engaging in international activities.

Through these functions, International Offices act as gateways to international opportunities. For students in dance education, their role is not abstract: they enable mobility (through agreements and visas), provide access to foreign teachers and festivals, and ensure that experiences abroad are recognized within degree programs. Without this structural support, participation in exchanges, joint performances, or multicultural practicums would remain fragmented or inaccessible. In sum, International Offices in Chinese universities make internationalization a systematic,

supported pathway for future primary school dance teachers, transforming individual ambitions into structured, accredited, and resource-backed opportunities (MOE press conference..., 2022). For example, the following cases of some Chinese universities illustrate these efforts. Beijing Normal University's Office of International Exchange collaborates with global partner universities to run short-term arts-focused exchanges. For students in primary art and dance education, BNU has facilitated overseas teaching practicums in Southeast Asia, where Chinese students teach dance workshops in local schools. The International Office provides logistical support, ensures that credits are recognized, and connects students with Confucius Institutes abroad for community engagement. Given its strong focus on minority cultures, Minzu University of China's International Cooperation Office actively hosts international art festivals and brings in visiting choreographers from Central Asia and Europe. For dance education students, this creates exposure to multicultural teaching methods and opportunities to integrate minority dance forms into primary school pedagogy. Shanghai Normal University's International Affairs Division has established agreements with institutions such as New York University and universities in South Korea for joint projects in performing arts education. Dance education students can join summer intensives abroad. The International Office supports applications, secures partial funding, and arranges orientation sessions. South China Normal University is widely recognized for its teacher training programs, has an International Office that manages online collaborative projects with partners in Europe. In these, pre-service dance teachers design lesson plans with international peers and share classroom recordings. The office provides digital platforms, interpretation, and recognition of participation as part of practicum requirements.

It should be noted that the personal initiative of teachers and students in internationalization processes is regarded not only as a manifestation of individual activity but also as a component of the nationwide strategy for integrating Chinese education into the global educational space. Its emergence and dynamic development are determined by a combination of two factors: first, the prevailing public opinion in the PRC that studying or undertaking internships abroad is prestigious, raises professional status, and creates broader career prospects within the country; second, a well-developed state support system, which provides concrete instruments and procedures for the implementation of international mobility.

For teachers, personal initiative is often realized through the development of individual programs of international academic cooperation, the creation of joint educational and creative projects with foreign partners, active participation in international conferences, seminars, creative competitions, and participation in bilateral cultural and artistic exchange programs. These exchanges may include the delivery of joint courses, master classes, and research projects. Quite often, Chinese teachers find such opportunities independently (through open online networks, by privately sending application letters to foreign universities, or via personal contacts abroad). Afterwards, the Chinese university and other relevant authorities assist the teacher with the necessary documentation and, at the same time, incorporate this new

actor part of their own internationalization strategy. If the institution abroad that the teacher has independently approached agrees to establish internationalization programs with the Chinese university where the teacher works, the teacher also receives financial remuneration from the university (usually amounting to 3–5 monthly salaries) for “contributing to the positive image of the PRC through exemplary work and conduct” (Xie, Rizvi, Peters, 2024)

For students in arts and pedagogy programs, initiative is expressed by choosing an individual learning trajectory with an emphasis on international opportunities: applying for participation in international scholarship schemes, competitions and festivals, joining summer schools and creative workshops abroad, pursuing dual-degree programs, inter-university exchanges, and joint creative laboratories with foreign universities; and enrolling in online courses and distance programs offered by leading global learning platforms, usually recommended by their home institution (Zhu, 2019).

In addition to the home University there is another authority in China that supports and promotes students' efforts to participate in internationalization programs. The China Scholarship Council (CSC), also referred to as the Chinese Government Scholarship Office, is a body under the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. It is responsible for administering state scholarships and managing national academic mobility programs. While its primary mandate is the financial and administrative coordination of scholarships, the CSC plays a much broader role in advancing the internationalization of Chinese higher education. The CSC's core function lies in directly financing opportunities for international mobility. On the one hand, it offers scholarships for foreign students to pursue degree and non-degree programs at Chinese universities. On the other hand, it supports Chinese students and teachers in studying abroad in master's and doctoral programs, undertaking internships, or attending short-term academic and cultural projects. The Council also promotes cooperation between Chinese and foreign universities by funding targeted exchanges, as well as cultural and artistic initiatives linked to state strategies such as the Belt and Road Scholarship Program. In addition, the CSC monitors the quality and outcomes of these activities to ensure that they serve China's priorities in education, industry, and culture (Wu, 2025).

For future primary school dance teachers, the CSC is an essential supportive unit that transforms individual initiative into structured and resourced opportunities. The CSC supports these students in several ways. For example, in 2024, 15 dance education majors from Beijing Normal University and Shanghai Normal University received CSC scholarships to study child-focused dance pedagogy in Europe, where they observed how creative movement is integrated into primary curricula. At Minzu University of China, 3 student groups supported by the CSC 2018, 2024 and 2025 travelled to Southeast Asia to participate in cultural festivals, combining performance with practical workshops on multicultural dance instruction. The CSC has also funded joint projects where Chinese pre-service dance teachers collaborated with peers from foreign universities to co-design teaching modules.

Access to these opportunities is facilitated through a transparent application process. Students first apply to their home university's International Office, which nominates suitable candidates. The application, including study plans, transcripts, and host institution invitations, is then submitted to the CSC. The Council evaluates each case based on academic merit, project relevance, and alignment with national development goals. Successful candidates receive comprehensive support, which may cover tuition, travel, accommodation, and living expenses, along with practical assistance in preparing documents and visas.

In this way, the CSC ensures that personal motivation (such as the desire of a dance education student to study abroad or participate in an international festival) is reinforced by state resources and institutional structures. For future primary school dance teachers, this support means that their internationalization efforts are not isolated individual attempts but part of a coherent national strategy. Ultimately, the CSC strengthens the capacity of teacher education to produce globally minded, culturally competent professionals who can inspire young learners through the art of dance.

State support that structures and strengthens personal initiative provides clear action pathways: from centralized dissemination of information on international opportunities through university International Offices and official government portals, to assistance in preparing documentation, and to financing of travel, study, and living expenses. This system creates conditions under which the personal interests and motivation of teachers and students are transformed into real steps towards integration into the global educational and artistic space.

Results: Internationalization in the preparation of future primary school dance teachers in China is regarded not as a purely academic endeavor, but as a multidimensional national strategy that connects education with broader goals of economic leadership, cultural influence, and sustainable development in the 21st century. The Chinese government views dance and other forms of art education as vital channels for intercultural communication and the cultivation of creativity among young learners. Therefore, training primary school dance teachers with an international outlook benefits not only the teachers themselves by providing them with broader pedagogical skills, intercultural awareness, and career opportunities, but also the country as a whole, by enhancing China's cultural presence and educational competitiveness worldwide. The strategic and regulatory framework that underpins this vision is both multi-level and systematic. It extends from long-term national plans to sectoral initiatives in teacher education and specialized legislative acts that regulate mobility and cooperation. This framework covers higher education and vocational training alike, embedding them within the paradigm of "openness in the new era." To translate these principles into practice, China has developed concrete mechanisms, including the China Scholarship Council (CSC), bilateral exchange agreements, support for international festivals and cultural projects, and policies for integrating visiting experts into domestic curricula. Such measures ensure that internationalization is not abstract, but a real and accessible pathway for future dance teachers. Through this structured support system, China ensures that the personal motivation of students

is transformed into tangible opportunities. In doing so, it strengthens both the quality of domestic teacher education and the country's active role in the global educational and cultural arena.

Future research in the field of internationalization of primary school dance teacher education in China could focus on several directions. One area is assessment of the impact of mobility programs and international exchanges on the pedagogical skills and intercultural competence of dance education students. Another is the role of digital internationalization, including virtual exchanges and online collaborations, in broadening access for those unable to travel. Comparative studies between China and other countries could also highlight best practices. Finally, exploring how internationalization influences children's cultural literacy through dance teaching would provide valuable insights.

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a case study of dance teachers' education**

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