



**THE EXPLORATION AND PRACTICE OF INTEGRATING
"FOUR SELF-CONFIDENCES" INTO IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL
EDUCATION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH CURRICULUM
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19**

Yang Feng¹ⁱ,

Xiya Wang²

¹School of English Studies,
Zhejiang International Studies University,
P. R. of China

orcid.org/0000-0002-3095-4206

²School of Foreign Languages,
Guangdong University of Science and Technology
P. R. of China

Abstract:

Patriotic education for college students is an important task in the education of various countries. This study conducted a 16-week patriotic and ideal education for college students in the context of Covid-19 prevention and control, and an exploration of the education model by integrating big data comparison of Chinese and foreign prevention and control in college English courses. Students in the experimental group were introduced to short videos related to Chinese and foreign news reports on the prevention and treatment of Covid-19 in the course, and carried out in-class thoughtful discussions and post-class sharing and discussions; students in the control group maintained their original study and life status. Post-test questionnaires and interviews revealed that most of the students in the experimental group realized that the necessity and success of China's epidemic prevention and control stemmed from the Chinese government's people-oriented approach and the advantages of the Chinese system and Chinese culture, which enhanced their self-confidence and pride in being Chinese and strengthened their "four self-confidences" in socialism with Chinese characteristics. More students combined their career aspirations with the modernization of China, significantly changed their learning attitudes and improved their motivation and academic performance. In contrast, students in the control group had no significant changes in the relevant post-test indicators compared with the pre-test because they maintained their original study and life status.

ⁱ Correspondence: email yang.feng@zisu.edu.cn

Keywords: Covid-19 prevention and control; big data comparison; Chinese university students; four self-confidences; educational experiment

1. Introduction

The "four self-confidences" of Chinese people are confident in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics (Li & Fu, 2022). Since the founding of New China, especially over 40 years of reform and opening up, China's GDP has grown from \$150 billion in 1978, accounting for less than 2% of the world, to \$17.7 trillion in 2021, accounting for 18.5% of the world, making it the second largest economy in the world. The strong rise of China's rapid economic development proves that the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the sure way to modernize the country and create a better life for the people, the socialism theory system with Chinese characteristics is a scientific theory to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the socialism system with Chinese characteristics is an advanced system with distinctive Chinese characteristics and strong self-improvement ability, and the Chinese culture is an advanced culture with a long history of 5,000 years and these are the manifestations of the spirit of contemporary China (Fu, Li & Zhang, 2022).

In December 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping attended the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities and delivered an important speech. The speech mentioned that colleges and universities nationwide should promote ideological and political education in schools with education and teaching as the fundamental, comprehensively promote Xi Jinping's Thought of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era into teaching materials, classrooms, and students' minds, and ensure that the ideological and political foundation for young students to grow and become successful is firmly established. Colleges and universities bear the important mission of nurturing people and casting their souls (Wang, 2020).

In a symposium for teachers of ideological and political theory courses in schools held in 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed that the reform and innovation of ideological and political theory courses should adhere to "eight unities", including "to adhere to the unity of indoctrination and inspiration, focus on inspirational education, guide students to discover problems, analyze problems, and think about problems" and "to adhere to the unity of explicit and implicit education, tap the ideological and political education resources contained in other courses and teaching methods, and achieve all-round education for all staff." The first of these is "to adhere to the unity of the explicit and implicit education, to explore the ideological and political education resources contained in other courses and teaching methods, to achieve the full range of education for all staff". This is General Secretary Xi Jinping's emphasis again on promoting the ideological and political curriculum and the organic integration of "ideological education in curriculum".

However, the current ideological education in curriculum still faces the following problems: First, teachers' comprehensive ability of ideological education in the curriculum is weak. First, some teachers lack theoretical knowledge related to education.

Second, some teachers of comprehensive literacy courses and professional courses have not yet fully transformed the concept of ideological education in the curriculum. Third, some teachers lack the ability to tap into the elements of thinking and politics. Some teachers of other courses pay attention to professional knowledge education but not ideological and political education, and do not pay attention to the excavation and accumulation of ideological and political elements in teaching, and even some teachers do not know what ideological and political elements are, nor do they know how to excavate them, nor do they know how to effectively integrate them into the teaching process and what ways to lead students in value (Jiang & Sun, 2022).

For example, a recent questionnaire survey of more than three thousand college students in nearly 30 universities in China showed that many students currently worship foreigners, pursue money first, consume blindly and even take out online loans for high consumption, indulge in cell phone chatting, watching videos and playing video games every day, study inactively, and lack ambitious ideals and patriotic consciousness (Hou, 2022). Meanwhile, due to the strict Covid-19 prevention and control policy implemented by the Chinese government, many colleges and universities have experienced several closures at different times since 2020, and teachers and students are restricted from entering and leaving the campus freely, which has greatly affected students' part-time jobs, internships, examinations, editorial examinations, and job applications, resulting in some students' negative resistance, lack of proper understanding of the four self-confidences, and even psychological depression and lack of intention to study (Wang et al., 2022).

As a major global disaster, the Covid-19 epidemic has affected the economies and livelihoods of all countries for nearly three years since it began to spread, and the prevention and control measures taken by countries around the world have been different and effective.

Therefore, in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic, this study carries out an experiment of thinking and government education in the international comparative course of Covid-19 prevention and treatment with multimedia news reports as the core content, big data comparison of epidemic prevention and treatment as the main feature, short video sharing and discussion inside and outside the classroom as the main method, and conducts an innovative exploration of the path of patriotic education and ideal belief cultivation in Chinese universities, hoping to improve students' patriotic consciousness, the four self-confidences, and then improve their learning initiative and professional learning performance and achieve better career development.

2. Experimental Design

2.1 Experimental Sampling

A total of 299 students in 8 classes of English Education, English, Elementary Education, International Trade, and E-commerce majors in freshman and sophomore years of a Chinese university were selected as experimental subjects to carry out a one-semester

experiment on comparative patriotic education and ideal cultivation of Covid-19 Prevention and Control International. Among them, one class from each major was randomly selected as the experimental group with 147 students in 4 classes, and 152 students in the remaining 4 classes as the control group.

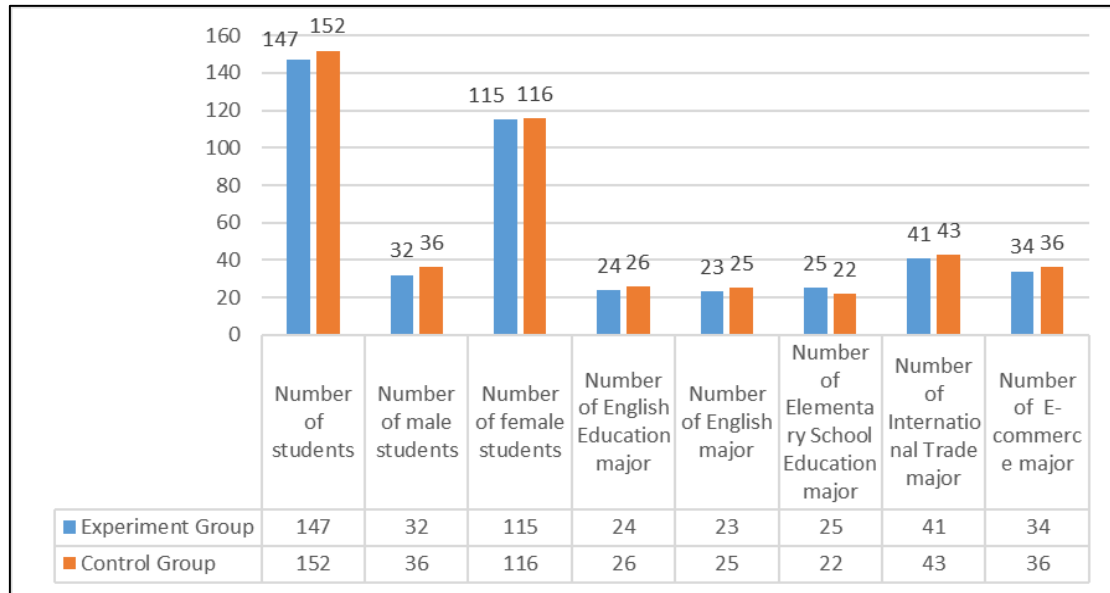


Figure 1: Statistics of student participants

2.2 Experimental Mode

a. Experimental Group

In the courses of "Comprehensive English", "English Writing", and "English Listening and Speaking" of English majors and "College English" for non-English majors, the course organically combines Chinese and foreign Covid-19 control big data news reports. Commentary and other related content to carry out the ideological education in the curriculum. Before the class, students are assigned the task of searching and organizing domestic and foreign reports on the prevention and treatment of the Covid-19 epidemic, and presenting them in the class in conjunction with the course unit. To really integrate the Covid-19 big data effectively into the college ideological education in the curriculum, teachers also used diverse interactive teaching methods to teach students in the teaching process, which not only improved the interactivity of classroom teaching, but also allowed students to better realize good communication between culture and culture in effective interaction, so that students can gradually improve their own cross-cultural communication awareness and ability when comparing prevention and control policies. In this way, students gradually improved their intercultural communication awareness and ability when comparing prevention and control policies, and really improved the effect of ideological and political education in college English courses. In the process of diversified interactive teaching, teachers guided students to analyze and communicate with each other about epidemic prevention and control by means of a flipped classroom, contextual teaching, case study, group discussion, individual report presentation, etc. For

example, students worked together in groups to discuss epidemic prevention and control, or students used English to introduce China's pandemic prevention and control policies, so that students communicated with each other in a diversified interactive classroom. In this way, students were able to communicate and converse with each other in a diverse and interactive classroom, and they could better understand the necessity of epidemic prevention and control in China, effectively laying the foundation for their cross-cultural communication awareness and ability.

After the class, the research team also organized and guided the students of the experimental group through WeChat and DingTalk group and together searched relevant short videos on the internet, and carry out a self-media sharing discussion on the theme of "Viewing National System from International Comparison of Covid-19 Prevention and Control Data" in the mode of "Micro- Participation". Students were also guided to participate in the after-school Seedling Project and the National Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program, which combined classroom content with students' academic innovation.

b. Control Group

The Control group maintains the original study and life status and did not participate in the big data sharing discussion on the above topics.

2.3 Purpose of the Experiment

Through the experimental subjects' first-hand international analysis and comparison of big data on the prevention and control of the Covid-19 epidemic in different countries, they can identify the deep reasons behind the system and cultural background of each country, so as to better understand whether Chinese people living under the Chinese system and culture have more superiority and happiness, and improve their patriotic awareness and "four self-confidences". This will lead to a better understanding of whether Chinese people living under the Chinese system and culture have a greater sense of superiority and happiness, and increase patriotic awareness and the "four self-confidences".

2.4 Experimental Group Large Data Comparison Sharing Materials

The researcher and the students of the experimental group selected more than 300 short videos, news reports, interviews, and other experimental sharing materials of domestic and foreign anti-epidemic hot news. The contents include both news reports from famous media at home and abroad, as well as short videos, vlogs, and other front-line materials recorded by netizens in China and abroad and uploaded to platforms such as Tiktok, Weibo, WeChat, mainly including.

- 1) Information on China's anti-epidemic data;
- 2) Information on foreign anti-epidemic big data;
- 3) Big data comparison of Covid-19 medical costs;
- 4) What would have happened if China had not adopted the "zero Covid-19" policy?

The specific research idea is shown in the following figure.

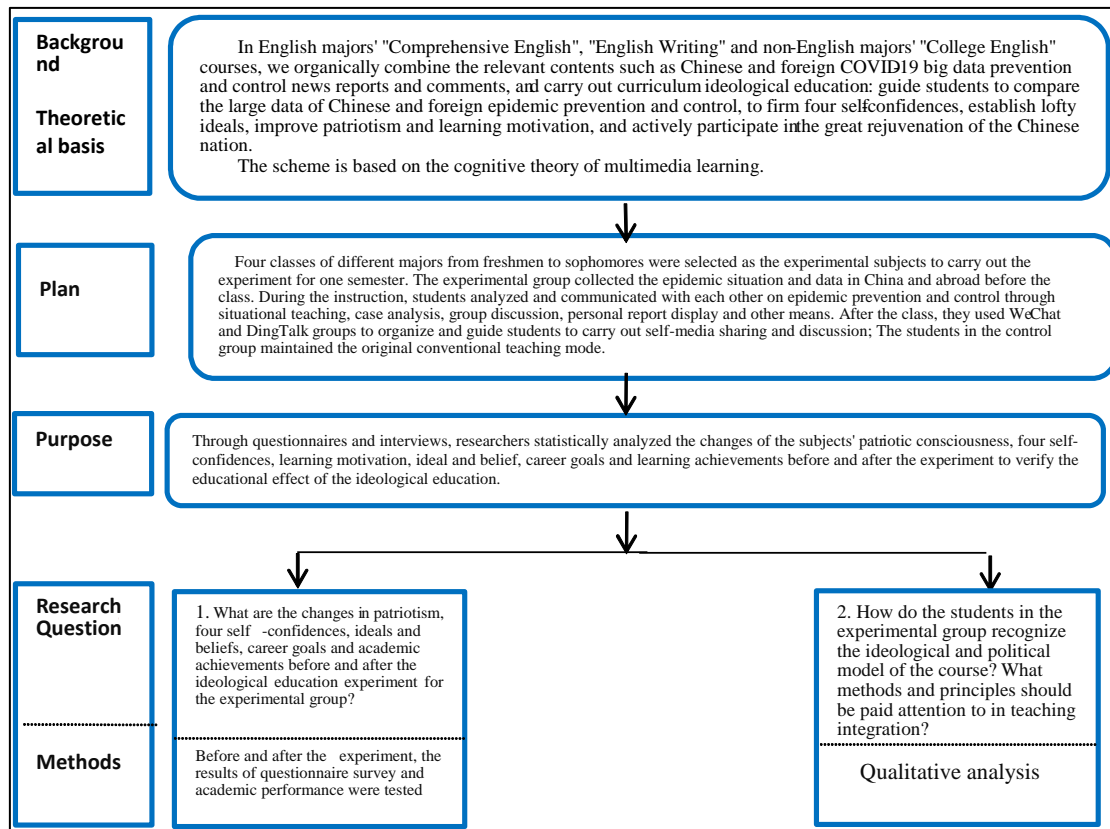


Figure 2: The Exploration and Practice of "Four Self-confidences" in Ideological Education of College English Curriculum in the Context of the COVID-19

2.5 Research Tools and Methods

Self-compiled "International Comparison of Covid-19 Prevention and Control Data: Questionnaire on the Four Self-Confidences of Chinese College Students", which tested the experimental subjects on the comparison of Chinese and foreign Covid-19 prevention and control, patriotic consciousness, and four self-confidences before and after conducting the experiment, the questionnaire includes basic information, understanding and background analysis of Chinese and foreign Covid-19 prevention and control, recognition of Chinese Covid-19 prevention and control policies, patriotic consciousness, four self-confidences, pride to be Chinese, ideal beliefs, 19 questions in 7 dimensions, such as learning attitude and academic performance, etc. The questionnaire referred to the relevant questionnaires of Ye (2019), Chen (2018), and Liu (2018), and was tried and modified with an overall Cronbach Alpha coefficient greater than 0.85.

At the same time, the research team prepared the "International Comparison of Covid-19 Prevention and Control Data: Interview Outline of the Four Self-Confidences Situations of Chinese College Students" based on the above 7 dimensions, and selected 10% of the experimental subjects to conduct individual and group interviews to deeply understand the above-related survey questions.

The survey data before and after the experiment will be counted by SPSS 22.0, while the interview results are transcribed into text for quantitative and qualitative analysis to produce the experimental results.

3. Experimental Results and Discussion

During a semester-long thematic experiment, the experimental group searched online for a large number of short videos and news reports on the prevention and control of Covid-19 in various countries around the world and fully carried out discussions on the theme of "seeing national systems from the international comparison of the Covid-19 data" during and after class. For example, in China, the wearing of masks was supported by the entire population, the temporary closure of a community or town for testing to prevent the spread of the epidemic, and the cooperation of local residents, the full support from all sides in a difficult situation, and the exchange of minimal losses for the lives and health of the entire population. The epidemic was repeatedly out of control, with more than 10% of the population diagnosed and more than 6.5 million deaths, which is 528 and 270 times higher than China's rate of diagnosis and death by population.

The pre-experimental test showed that the percentage of students in the experimental and control groups who *"supported China's strict epidemic prevention policy, were willing to actively participate in epidemic prevention and control, thought that the Chinese government put people's lives first, recognized the four self-confidences of socialism with Chinese characteristics, thought that Western democracy is flawed, and being Chinese was very happy and proud"* was around 48-57% ($P=0.055-0.137>0.05$), no significant difference between the two groups.

The control group maintained the original life study state during the experiment, and did not carry out a relevant discussion, the experimental post-test of the above index data increased by 1 to 3% compared with the pre-test ($P=0.073$ to $0.257>0.05$), and there was no very significant change. However, in the experimental group, through the discussion of a large number of Covid-19 prevention and control short videos and news feature reports from all over the world, the post-test of the above survey items increased by 30 to 40% of the number of recognition ($P=0.000<0.01$), a significant increase occurred, indicating that the experimental group of students recognized that unlimited freedom is actually extreme selfishness, and that human beings living together on the earth can only help each other, and jointly observe and maintain the rules, human beings can develop better. The detailed data are shown in Figure 3-8.

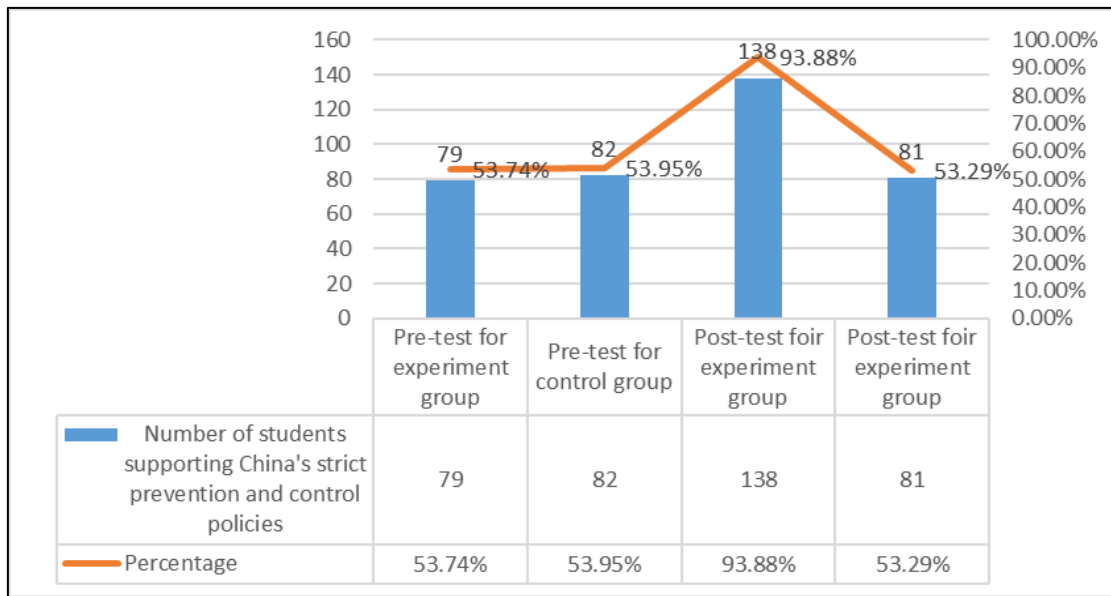


Figure 3: Changes in the number of students supporting China's strict epidemic prevention policy before and after the experiment

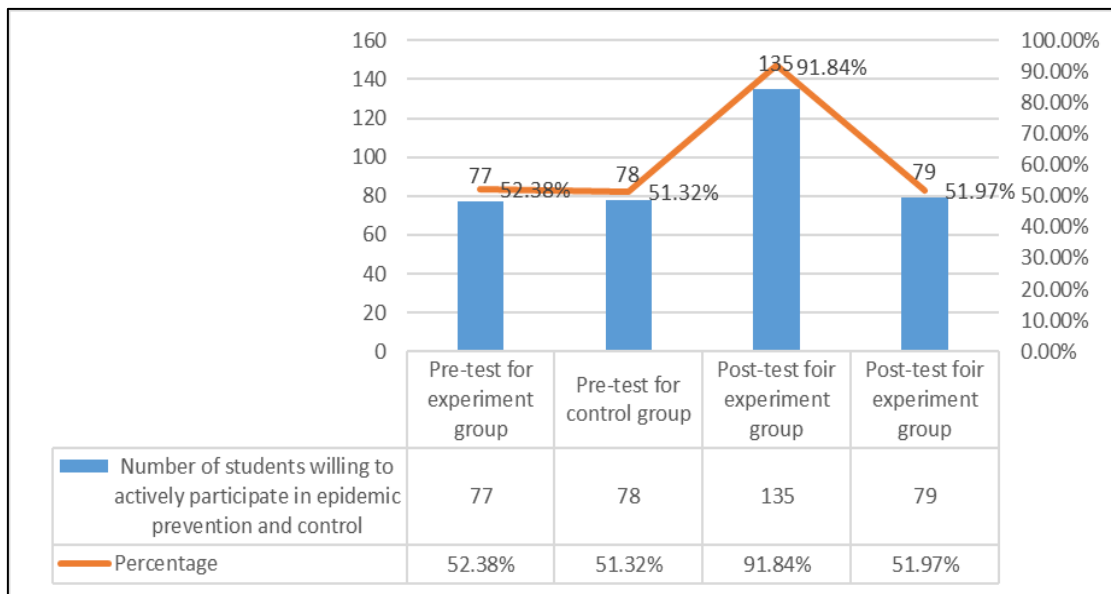


Figure 4: Number of students willing to actively participate in epidemic prevention and control before and after the experiment

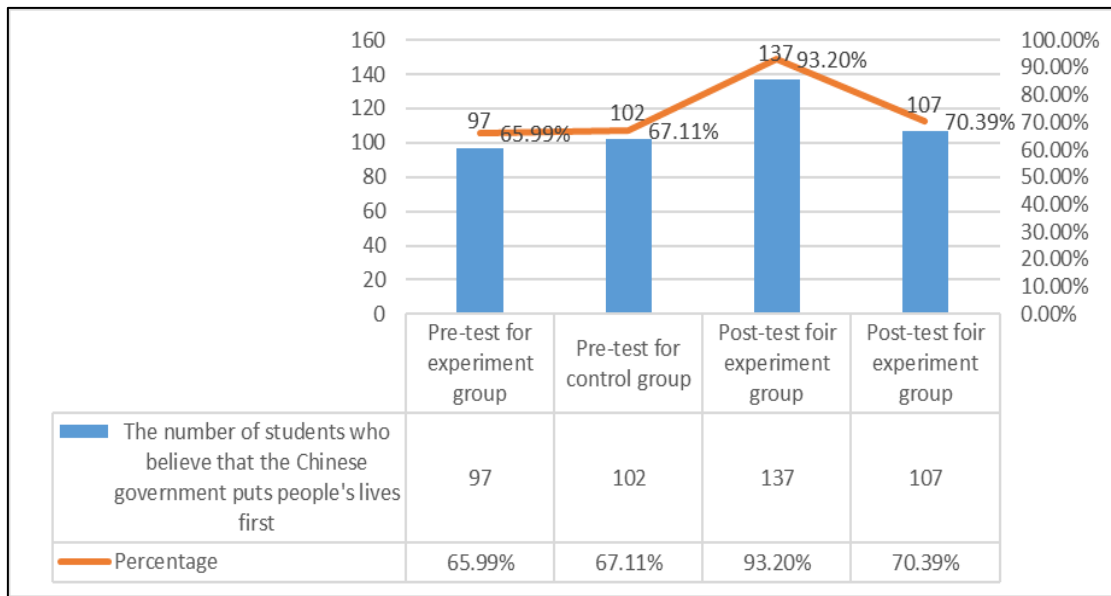


Figure 5: Number of students who believe that the Chinese government puts people's lives first before and after the experiment

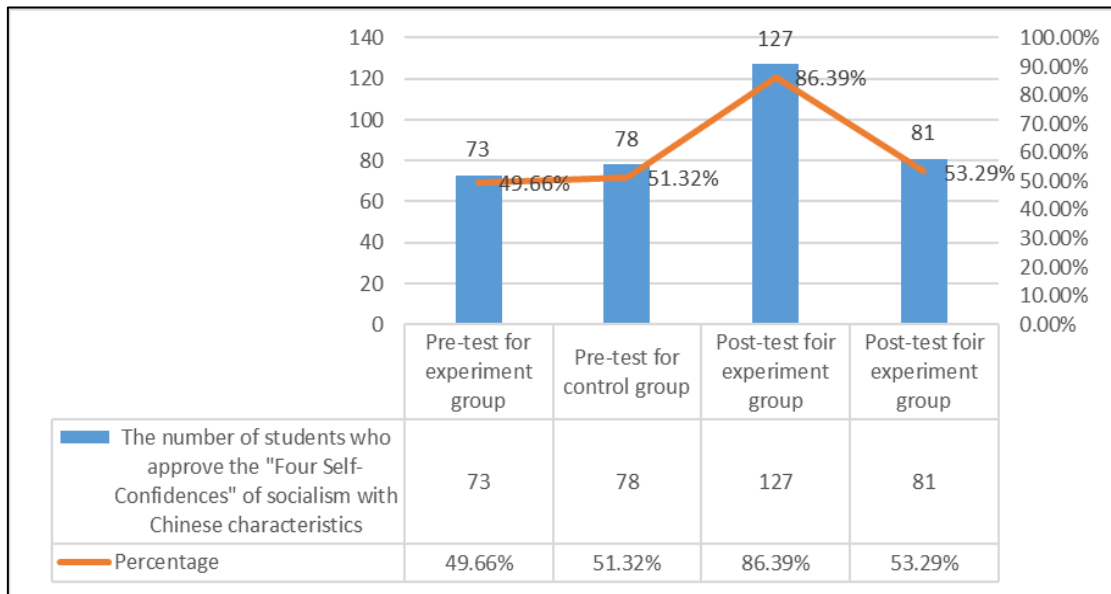


Figure 6: Changes in the number of students who approve the "four self-confidences" of socialism with Chinese characteristics before and after the experiment

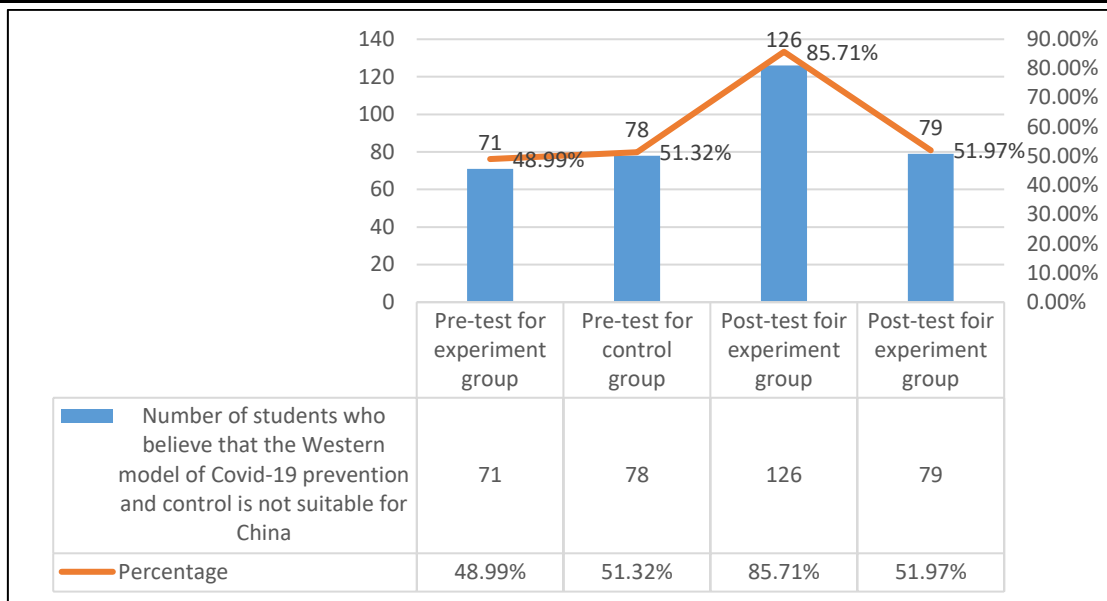


Figure 7: Number of students who believe that the Western model of Covid-19 prevention and control is not suitable for China

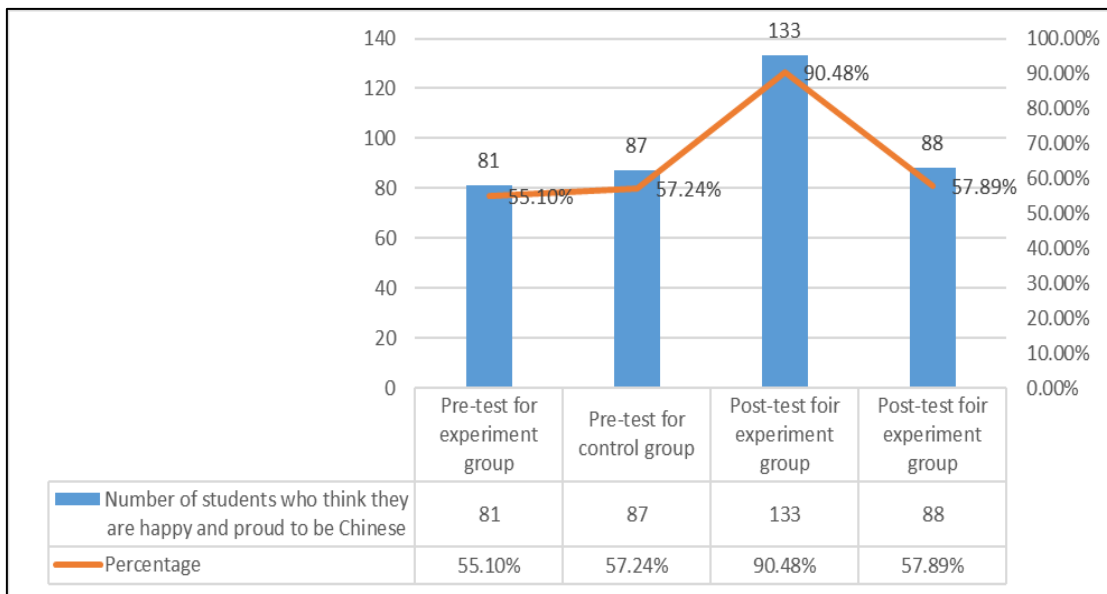


Figure 8: Changes in the number of students who think they are happy and proud to be Chinese before and after the experiment

The pre-test found that the proportion of students in the experimental and control groups who "study actively and seriously, have specific goals and career plans, and plan to enter graduate school" was not high, ranging from 30 to 35%, $p=0.047-0.093$, and the difference between the two groups was not significant, which should be related to the fact that many of these students are only children of the middle class, and with the rapid economic development in China, many of their families are financially well off. This should be related to the fact that many of these students are middle-class only children, and with China's rapid economic development, their families are financially well off, and

many students lack the sense of urgency to study hard, go on to graduate school or get a job.

However, the experimental group had a new understanding of the superiority of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the pride of being Chinese after a semester of media sharing and discussion on the theme of "looking at the national system from the Covid-19 prevention and control", and more students combined their career aspirations with the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and their learning attitudes had changed significantly and their learning motivation had increased. motivation increased, so the proportion of the post-test of the above survey items increased to 62-66%, an increase of about 30% (P=0.000), a very significant growth; but the post-test data of the control group that maintained the original study and life status increased by 0.65-1.31% with the pre-test nearly (P=0.054-0.093>0.05), no significant change, detailed data are shown in Figures 9-11.

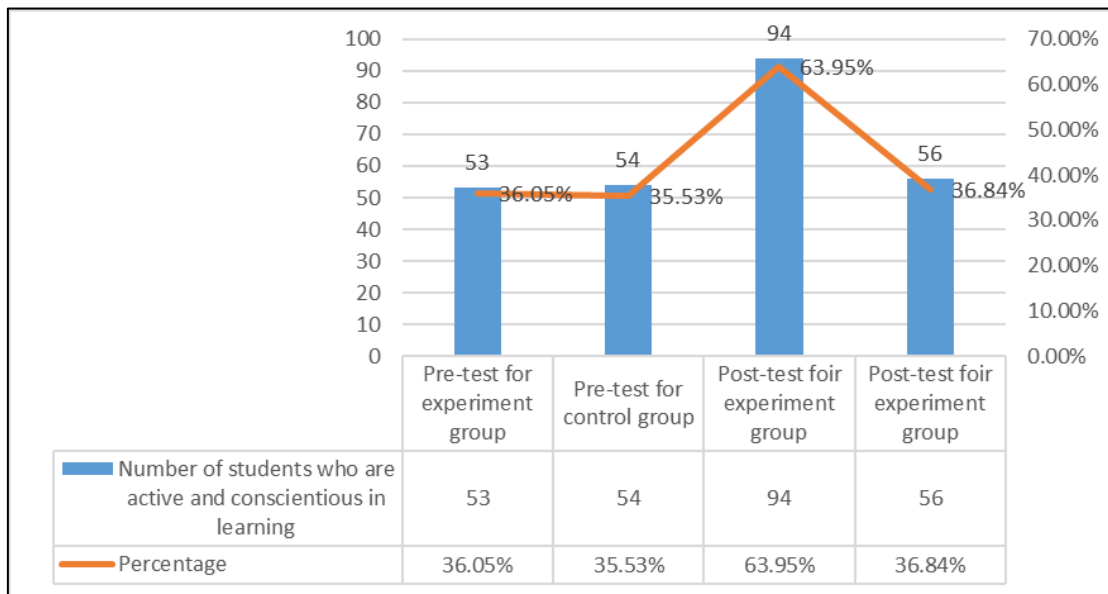


Figure 9: Changes in the number of active and serious learners before and after the experiment

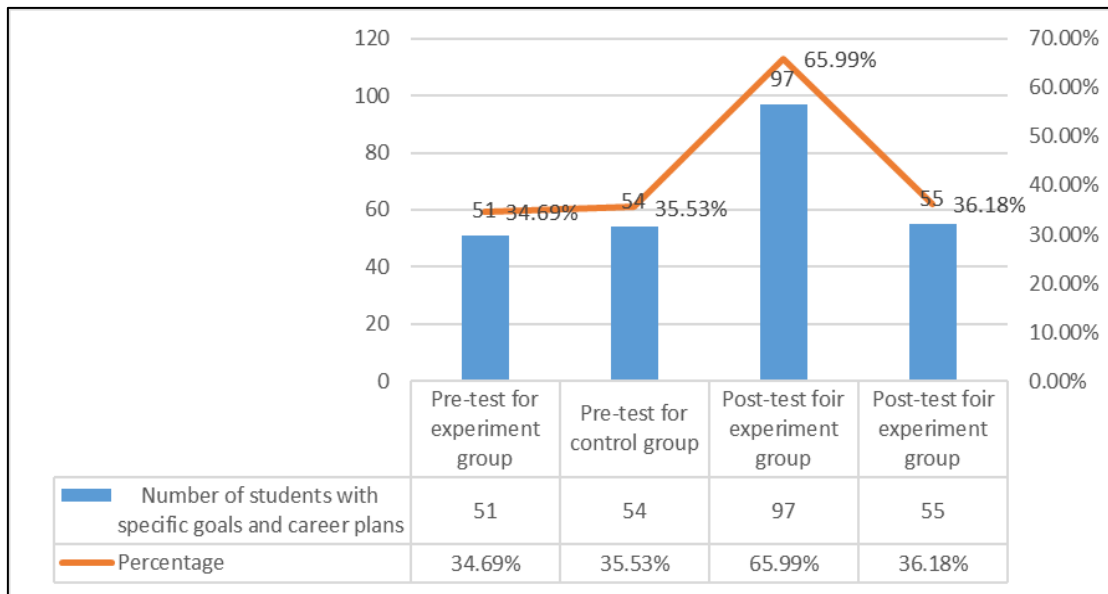


Figure 10: Number of students with specific goals and career plans before and after the experiment

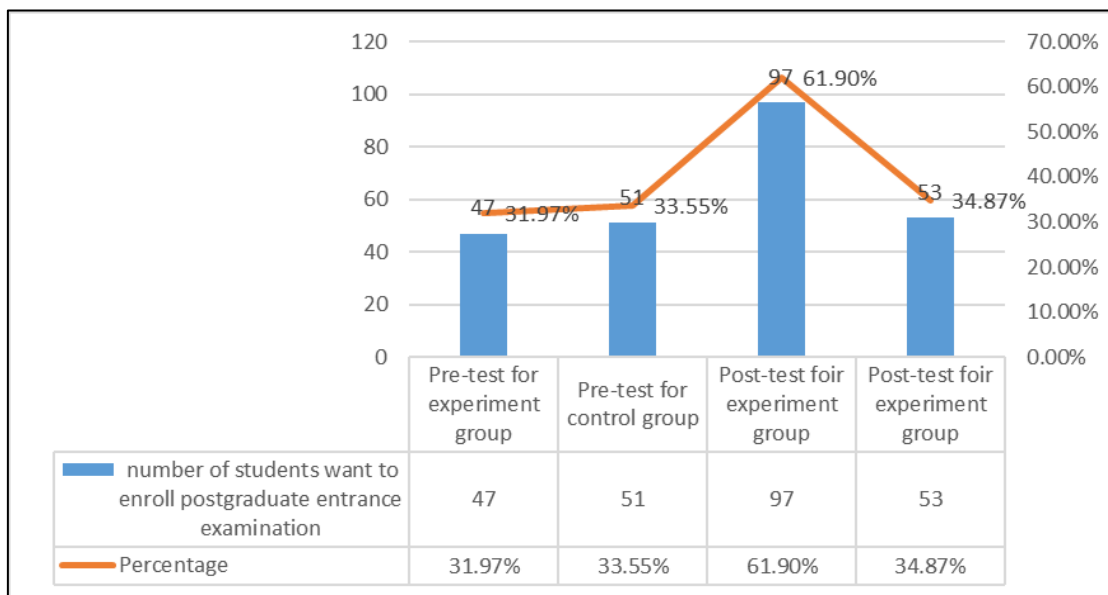


Figure 11: Number of students planning to go on to graduate school before and after the experiment

The final scores of the three main courses of the previous semester were investigated before the experiment, and the full score of each course was 100 points, and the average score of the pre-test was about 72 points after conversion ($P=0.063$), and there was no significant difference between the two groups. In the post-test, we found that the average final exam scores of the three main courses in the control group increased by only 0.79% compared with the pre-test ($P=0.074$), with no significant change; however, the average scores of the post-test in the experimental group increased by nearly 13% compared with the pre-test ($P=0.000$), a significant increase. We analyzed that the improvement of the experimental group students' course scores was due to the fact that

through the experiment, they realized that the development and strength of the country depended on the improvement of national quality, and college students were the backbone of the country's development, and they could make greater contributions to the country in the future by studying hard now, and more students clarified their career ideals and goals, and their learning enthusiasm was greatly improved, and the data are shown in Figure 12.

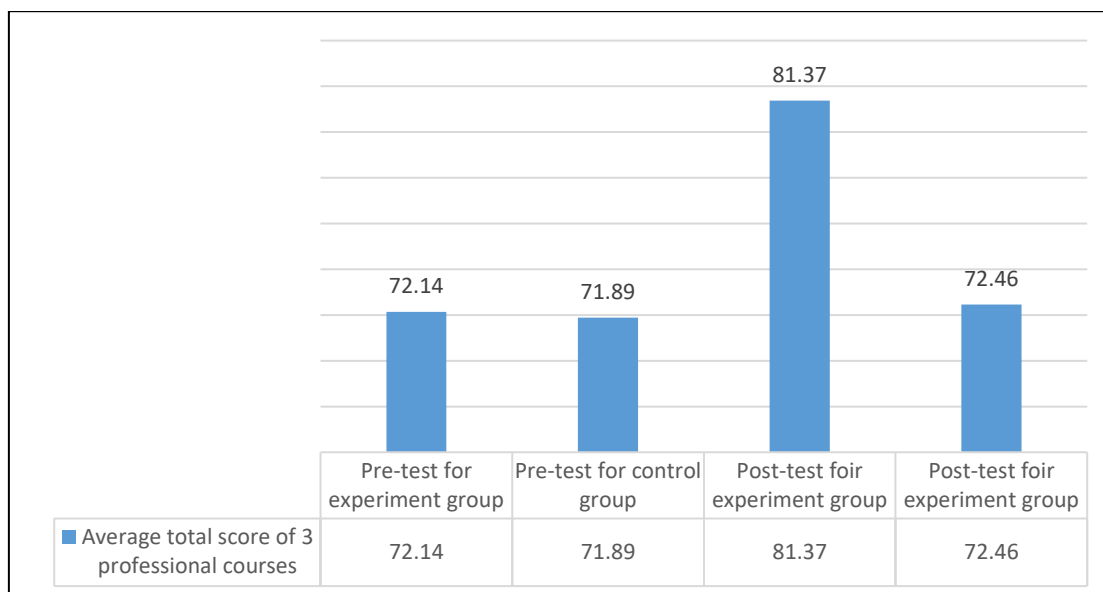


Figure 12: Comparison of the average total scores of 3 major courses before and after the experiment

Meanwhile, students revealed in the interviews that many of them had only heard about foreign epidemic control before, but did not have a deep understanding of it. This semester, however, the integration of ideological education into the curriculum has given them an in-depth understanding and comparison of the epidemic control situation in China and abroad. Many students reported *"Through collecting information on epidemic control in China and abroad, I learned about the severity of the epidemic abroad and the necessity of domestic epidemic policies. It has changed some of the previous views on anti-epidemic policies."* And the data collection before class and classroom presentations were helpful for students to improve their independent learning ability, *"The need to collect data before class exercised the ability to collect and analyze data, and I used to be afraid to speak in front of people, and through the exercise of several classroom presentations, I felt much better."* And some students also stated that through group work, they also strengthened their teamwork spirit.

Students also reported that their English reading skills and vocabulary have improved greatly through the mobile media discussions and sharing after class, *"I rarely used to watch short English videos or news after class, but now I can rely on myself to understand and translate English, and we have mastered a lot of (English) vocabulary"*. Many students said they spent 2-3 hours on weekends watching various media videos from the group, which

helped them improve their English skills significantly. They have also increased their confidence in China's future development, and more of them hope to improve their education by studying for graduate school or studying abroad after the class discussions.

Finally, there are also students who have obtained the projects of New Seedling Program and National Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program under the guidance of their instructors, combining the content of ideological education in the course with students' own research projects, improving themselves in practice and enhancing the four self-confidences. The following is a word cloud map of the interview content.



Figure 13: Word cloud map of student interviews

4. Conclusion

This experiment was analyzed by pre- and post-test statistics, and it was found that the students in the experimental group, through personal online big data search of short videos and news reports on the prevention and treatment of Covid-19 around the world, understood-analyzed-discussed the responses to the global major disaster of Covid-19 epidemic around the world, and experienced the success of the prevention and treatment of the epidemic in China and the aggravation of the epidemic abroad. They also gained a better understanding of the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, i.e., the four self-confidences. In the post-test, compared with the pre-test, students in the experimental group significantly strengthened their self-confidences and pride in being Chinese, and more students combined their career aspirations with the modernization of the country, with a significant change in their learning attitudes and a great improvement in their learning motivation and academic performance.

In contrast, the control group students had no significant changes in patriotic consciousness, four self-confidences, ideal beliefs, study motivation, and academic

performance from the previous test because they maintained their original study and life status.

Funding Statement

This article is one of the research results of the project of "Young Students Learn from Young Xi Jinping" of Zhejiang International Studies University: "International Comparison of Covid-19 Prevention and Control: Experimental Research on Innovation of Patriotic Education and Ideal Cultivation Path for College Students" (Project No. 2021QXQ2).

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Yang Feng (PhD) is an assistant professor at Zhejiang International Studies University, P. R. of China. His research interests include comparative education and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). orcid.org/0000-0002-3095-4206.

Xiya Wang is an assistant professor at Guangdong University of Science and Technology, P. R. of China. Her research interest is English education.

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