

Evaluating the Reference Value of UK-China Higher Education Collaboration: Implications for the Internationalization of Chinese Higher Education

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Abstract: *This study explores the multifaceted experiences, perceptions, and challenges associated with Sino-UK cooperative education through a Bourdieuan and constructivist theoretical lens. Employing qualitative methodology, data were collected through 30 semi-structured interviews with educational leaders, teachers, and students across multiple Chinese universities, complemented by document analysis. Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction reveals how Western academic capital operates within Chinese educational fields, while constructivist principles illuminate cross-cultural knowledge construction processes. Findings demonstrate complex dynamics of cultural capital conversion, field restructuring, and hybrid knowledge construction. This paper contributes to transnational education theory by proposing a "Cross-Cultural Educational Capital Conversion Model" and provides practical frameworks for sustainable international cooperation. Results indicate that while UK-China collaborations offer significant benefits in global exposure and academic enhancement, they require careful navigation of power dynamics, cultural adaptation, and institutional alignment to realize their full potential.*

Keywords: Sino-UK cooperative education, higher education internationalization, transnational education, Bourdieu theory, constructivism, cultural capital

1. Introduction

The internationalization of higher education represents a complex interplay of educational, economic, and cultural forces that reshape institutional practices and individual experiences globally. Within this landscape, Sino-UK cooperative education has emerged as a distinctive model, contrasting sharply with other international partnerships in its approach to cultural integration and knowledge transfer. With over 2,300 approved programs enrolling more than 300,000 students by 2023, UK-China collaborations represent the world's largest bilateral educational partnership, yet their unique characteristics remain underexplored compared to Sino-American or Sino-Australian models. Recent policy analysis reveals that Chinese-foreign cooperation in education has evolved significantly during recent global challenges (Brill, 2022), while UK institutions have developed sophisticated approaches to international collaboration that distinguish them from other education providers (Taylor, 2022).

This study addresses a critical gap in comparative transnational education research by examining how UK-China partnerships differ from other international models in their navigation of cultural capital conversion and knowledge construction processes. Unlike the predominantly market-driven Sino-American collaborations or the technical-focused Sino-German partnerships, UK-China models exhibit unique characteristics in balancing academic autonomy with regulatory compliance, liberal arts education with professional training, and Western pedagogical approaches with Chinese learning cultures.

The research contributes to international education theory by developing a comparative framework that explains how different bilateral partnerships create distinct patterns of cultural capital negotiation and knowledge construction. Through systematic comparison with other international models and bilateral policy analysis, this study reveals the specific dynamics that make UK-China collaborations both successful and challenging, providing insights applicable to global transnational education development.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical understanding of transnational education has evolved significantly over the past three decades, with scholars developing frameworks that address both the opportunities and challenges of cross-border educational collaboration. Early work by Yang (2002) established foundational concepts about university internationalization, emphasizing the need to understand motivations, rationales, and implications beyond simple institutional expansion. This was further developed by Altbach and Knight (2007), who provided comprehensive analysis of internationalization motivations and realities, highlighting the complex interplay between educational, economic, and political factors driving global educational partnerships.

The field gained theoretical sophistication through Bourdieu's influence on educational research, particularly Naidoo's (2004) application of field theory to higher education contexts and Marginson's (2006) analysis of national and global competition dynamics. These contributions demonstrated how cultural capital operates within educational fields, creating hierarchies that international collaborations both

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challenge and potentially reproduce. Simultaneously, research on transnational education models emerged, with Wilkins and Huisman (2012) providing critical analysis of international branch campuses as strategic instruments, while Healey (2008) questioned whether higher education was genuinely internationalizing or merely expanding markets.

Chinese higher education internationalization has received particular scholarly attention, with Zha (2003) developing conceptual frameworks for understanding internationalization processes, Huang (2003) analyzing policy and practice dimensions, and Mok (2007) offering critical reflections on Asian university internationalization. More recently, Li (2018) has provided critical examination of China's quest for world-class universities, highlighting tensions between global aspirations and local contexts. These contributions collectively establish that effective transnational education requires sophisticated understanding of cultural, institutional, and policy dynamics rather than simple transplantation of educational models.

2.1 Bourdieu's Theory in Transnational Education Context

Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) provide essential frameworks for understanding how UK-China educational partnerships operate as contested spaces of cultural negotiation. The establishment of these programs creates new educational fields where Chinese and UK institutions must navigate hybrid rules that blend regulatory requirements with academic standards, making cultural capital a contested resource that shapes all educational experiences. Naidoo's (2004) application of Bourdieu's theory to higher education contexts demonstrates how field dynamics create hierarchies that international collaborations both challenge and potentially reproduce, while Marginson's (2006) analysis reveals how global competition creates new forms of academic stratification.

Cultural capital conversion proves complex and non-neutral (Mok, 2021), as UK academic credentials must be adapted within Chinese contexts through ongoing power negotiations that can either reinforce global educational hierarchies or create opportunities for more equitable exchange. Students and faculty experience habitus transformation as they acquire new educational dispositions while managing tensions between inherited cultural practices and new academic demands, creating sites of innovation where different educational traditions intersect. This process reflects what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) identified as the dual nature of educational reproduction- simultaneously maintaining existing structures while enabling transformation through practice.

2.2 Constructivist Learning in Cross-Cultural Contexts

Constructivism illuminates how knowledge is actively constructed rather than passively transferred (Vygotsky, 1978) in UK-China collaborations, requiring learners to bridge fundamentally different epistemological traditions through creative integration rather than simple adoption. Vygotsky's concept of zone of proximal development becomes

particularly relevant in cross-cultural educational contexts, where learners must navigate between familiar and unfamiliar knowledge systems. Knowledge construction involves negotiating between Chinese collective learning approaches and UK individualistic methods, enabling students to develop hybrid understanding that transcends East-West dichotomies through scaffolded cultural learning experiences.

These programs function as unique communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) where participants collaboratively construct new educational meanings, creating dynamic innovation sites where traditional boundaries between Eastern and Western education are challenged and reconstructed through legitimate peripheral participation that shifts expertise and novice status depending on cultural context. The situated learning perspective (Lave & Wenger, 1991) emphasizes that learning occurs through participation in authentic activities, making the cross-cultural nature of UK-China programs particularly conducive to developing intercultural competence and hybrid knowledge forms.

2.3 Integrated Theoretical Model

This study proposes a "Cross-Cultural Educational Capital Conversion Model" that synthesizes Bourdieuan and constructivist perspectives through four interconnected processes informed by comparative education theory (Bray & Thomas, 1995; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014): recognition of diverse cultural capital forms across educational systems, negotiation of power relationships within new transnational fields, construction of hybrid knowledge that respects multiple epistemological traditions, and transformation of habitus through scaffolded cross-cultural learning experiences. This theoretical integration moves beyond simple transfer models to examine (Hughes, 2023) how structural inequalities and active knowledge construction interact in complex ways, providing frameworks for understanding how UK-China collaborations operate as sites of both cultural reproduction and transformation.

The model enables deeper analysis of transnational education dynamics while offering practical guidance for developing more equitable and effective international educational partnerships that honor cultural diversity while fostering genuine innovation. Drawing on methodological insights from qualitative research traditions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018), this framework provides analytical tools for examining how different bilateral partnerships create distinct patterns of cultural capital negotiation and knowledge construction, contributing to the growing body of research on transnational education effectiveness and sustainability.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, grounded in the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm views reality as socially constructed and recognizes that knowledge is co-created through interaction between the researcher and the research subjects. Accordingly, the study aims to provide insights into the lived experiences of those directly involved in UK-China educational partnerships, rather than to produce

generalizable or statistical conclusions. Such insights are crucial for understanding how collaborative models operate within different political, cultural, and institutional contexts.

The chosen methodology aligns with the theoretical framework's emphasis on social construction and cultural reproduction. Bourdieu's theory requires understanding how actors navigate fields and convert capital through practice, while constructivist learning theory demands examination of how knowledge is actively built through social interaction—both requiring qualitative investigation of subjective experiences

3.2 Sampling Technique and Data Collection

To comprehensively explore the research objectives and gain a deep understanding of the dynamics, challenges, and strategic value of UK–China higher education collaborations, this study employs multiple qualitative data collection methods. The combination of diverse qualitative techniques allows for triangulation of data sources, enhancing the credibility, depth, and reliability of the findings. The selected methods are carefully aligned with the research objectives. In addition, the methods enable the collection of rich, context-sensitive insights from various stakeholders and institutional settings.

3.2.1 Sampling Method

A purposive sampling method was utilized to select participants who possessed direct experience and knowledge of Sino-UK cooperative education programs. This included educational leaders, teachers, and students from multiple Chinese universities involved in such collaborations. The aim was to ensure that the participants could provide rich and relevant insights into the research questions.

3.2.2 Data Collection Method

One of the primary methods used was semi-structured interviews. These were conducted with key stakeholders across each case institution, including university leaders, faculty members, administrative personnel, and students directly involved in joint Sino–UK programs. Semi-structured interviews strike a balance between consistency and flexibility (Taylor et al., 2015): while a guiding interview protocol ensures that core themes related to motivations, strategic approaches, and policy integration are covered, the open-ended nature of questions allows respondents to elaborate on their unique experiences and perspectives. This approach enables the researcher to probe into specific institutional dynamics and uncover nuanced insights into collaborative processes, strategic decisions, and policy adoption practices (Woods et al., 2016). These interviews were directly tied to the study's objectives, focusing on exploring the motivational, strategic, and policy-making dimensions of UK–China higher education partnerships.

In addition to interviews, document analysis served as another vital method for data collection (Woods et al., 2016). A broad array of documents was examined, including institutional reports, strategic plans, partnership agreements, policy briefs, quality assurance frameworks, and bilateral memoranda of understanding. Both Chinese and UK documents were analysed to capture the perspectives and policies from both

sides of the collaboration. This primarily relied on secondary sources, such as policy texts, historical documents, literature reviews, and case studies.

3.2.3 Sample Size

A total of 30 in-depth interviews were conducted, with 10 participants from each stakeholder group: educational leaders, teachers, and students. This sample size was appropriate for a qualitative study aiming for in-depth understanding rather than statistical generalization.

3.2.4. Interview Questions

The interview questions were designed to elicit detailed responses on participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges within Sino-UK cooperative education programs. For educational leaders, questions focused on strategic objectives, policy implementation barriers, standard alignment, quality assurance, and legal/policy frameworks. For teachers, questions explored cross-cultural teaching influence on course design, challenges in aligning teaching methods, effectiveness of programs in enhancing student learning, and necessary support for cross-cultural teaching. For students, questions covered learning experiences, adaptation challenges, program impact on academic/professional development, and beneficial/improvement areas.

3.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was conducted to systematically interpret the interview transcripts, institutional documents, and observational notes to uncover patterns, themes, and insights related to the internationalization of Chinese higher education through UK–China collaborations. The analysis was primarily thematic, supported by content analysis and triangulation to ensure rigor, credibility, and depth of interpretation. Thematic analysis served as the core analytic strategy, involving identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the qualitative data.

3.4 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations in this study were guided by the principle of non-maleficence ("do no harm"). To protect participants from potential emotional, reputational, or professional risks—particularly when discussing sensitive topics—interviews were conducted in private, with confidentiality and anonymity assured. Participants could skip questions or withdraw at any time. The researcher maintained a neutral, supportive stance and practiced reflexivity through a reflective journal to reduce bias. Ethical approval was obtained from the home institution and relevant Chinese institutions. Participants were fully informed about the study and offered a summary of findings so that transparency and reciprocal engagement are ensured for participants. Academic integrity was upheld throughout the research and publication process.

3.5 Methodological Rigor and Trustworthiness

This study ensured methodological rigor and trustworthiness through a comprehensive triangulation strategy. Data source triangulation incorporated diverse stakeholder perspectives

and institutional contexts; methodological triangulation combined interviews, document analysis, and comparative approaches; theoretical triangulation drew on both Bourdieuan and constructivist frameworks; and investigator triangulation involved multiple researchers in coding and analysis. Member checking with key participants helped refine thematic interpretations, while reflexive journals and team debriefings addressed potential researcher bias. Thick descriptions of context, participants, and processes further support the transferability of findings.

Ethical integrity and cultural sensitivity were prioritized throughout the research process. Ethics approvals were obtained from both the home institution and relevant Chinese committees, ensuring alignment with international and local standards. Cross-cultural protocols included researcher training, co-developed consent procedures, and respect for hierarchical academic structures. Political sensitivities around international education were handled with care. Data confidentiality was safeguarded through anonymization, and participants retained the right to withdraw specific contributions. Attention to power dynamics- particularly across national and institutional lines- was addressed by conducting interviews in neutral and comfortable settings.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Respondents Demographic Information Analysis

The demographic analysis in this study encompasses 30 participants equally divided among educational leaders, teachers, and students from four Chinese institutions involved in Sino-UK higher education collaborations, as shown in table 1, table 2 and table 3 in appendix A. Among educational leaders, 60% were female and 40% male, reflecting growing female participation in academic leadership roles. Most were married (60%) and within the 36-45 age range (60%), suggesting mid-career professionals with significant experience. Educational roles included Vice Chancellors (40%), Deans (30%), and International Education Consultants (30%), and most held PhDs (60%), highlighting a highly qualified cohort capable of shaping strategic decisions in international cooperation. Students were also demographically diverse, with 60% male and 40% female. They represented a mix of academic levels: 30% bachelor's, 30% master's, and 40% PhD students. Age-wise, 50% were 20-25, 30% were 26-30, and 20% were above 30, with a majority (60%) being married. Institutional distribution was balanced, and 70% of students reported satisfaction with international collaboration, though 30% indicated challenges. Teachers also showed diversity, with 60% male and 40% female, and included 40% professors, 30% assistant professors, and 30% lecturers. Most were aged 30-40, and 60% were married. Institutional representation mirrored that of the student group. While 60% of teachers were satisfied with international collaboration, 40% expressed dissatisfaction, underscoring areas needing improvement. This varied and strategically selected demographic sample- spanning age, gender, qualification, and institutional affiliation- provides a robust foundation for qualitative insights into Sino-UK partnerships. The representation of senior leadership, early- and mid-career faculty, and students across academic levels ensures that the research captures a comprehensive view of

transnational education in China. This demographic depth supports the credibility of the thematic findings and highlights the importance of tailoring international education initiatives to the diverse needs and expectations of stakeholders across institutional roles.

4.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis investigates the evolution, structure, and strategies of international collaborative education in the UK, along with implications for Sino-foreign cooperation. The UK's higher education system is diverse and expansive, serving over 2.4 million students and emphasizing internationalization through policies such as the International Education Strategy (IES), which targets £35 billion in education exports and 600,000 international students by 2030. Transnational Education (TNE) partnerships—offering dual degrees, online learning, and branch campuses- are widely implemented and valued globally for enhancing quality, reputation, and graduate employability. Countries like Egypt, Greece, Pakistan, and the Philippines benefit from UK TNE by improving student experience, teaching capacity, and research collaboration, although regulatory challenges remain. In parallel, China's approach to Sino-foreign cooperative education is strongly policy-driven, guided by national strategies and legal frameworks to integrate high-quality foreign resources into its system. Institutions like XJTLU and Nottingham Ningbo exemplify success, yet challenges such as uneven regional development, quality assurance, and legal ambiguities persist. Recommendations include expanding into underdeveloped areas, enhancing educational resources, refining legal systems, ensuring quality oversight, and promoting mutual benefit under the Belt and Road framework. A synchronized approach, supported by strong policy alignment, institutional collaboration, and international engagement, is essential for developing a balanced, high-quality, and future-oriented model of Sino-foreign cooperative education.

4.3 Content Analysis

China's internationalization of higher education, exemplified by China North University (CNU), has expanded rapidly through transnational education (TNE) initiatives such as joint degrees, English-medium instruction (EMI) programs, and global university partnerships, particularly with countries like the UK. While national policies aim to build world-class universities and promote educational openness, student interviews reveal concerns about Western dominance in academic discourse, the overemphasis on English, and the inequitable access to international opportunities. Many students view internationalization as synonymous with "Westernization," criticizing the privileging of English-speaking countries, high financial and language barriers to study abroad, and the resulting elitization that favours wealthy or academically exceptional students. The current policy and legal frameworks supporting Sino-foreign education remain underdeveloped, often lacking clarity and enforceable standards. Nevertheless, UK-China educational cooperation remains strong, with initiatives like the Belt and Road Education Plan, joint campuses, and youth exchange programs fostering mutual understanding and shared development goals. Moving forward, both nations are

encouraged to embrace a more balanced, inclusive, and reciprocal model of internationalization that not only meets global standards but also reflects local contexts and promotes equity in access and impact.

4.4 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis of Sino–UK cooperative education reveals a comprehensive understanding of its strategic, pedagogical, and experiential dimensions, as shared by educational leaders, teachers, and students. Educational leaders emphasized three strategic drivers: internationalization of Chinese higher education, enhancement of institutional reputation, and capacity building and talent development. Joint programs with UK universities facilitate the integration of global academic standards, bilingual delivery, and international curricula, positioning Chinese institutions within global networks and enhancing faculty development through research collaboration and pedagogical exchange. These partnerships serve as engines of institutional transformation, enabling Chinese universities to align with global benchmarks such as QAA standards and improve their global competitiveness. However, challenges persist, particularly in policy implementation, due to administrative misalignment, conflicting regulations, and cross-cultural communication barriers. Leaders expressed concerns about delays in credit transfer, differing academic calendars, and inflexible regulatory structures, while calling for harmonized legal frameworks, greater institutional autonomy, and innovation-friendly policies. Aligning educational standards was another key theme, involving joint curriculum development, faculty exchange, and dual benchmarking systems to maintain academic rigor and comparability. Quality assurance emerged as a pivotal area, where institutions implement joint review mechanisms, external audits, and technology-driven monitoring tools like LMS and analytics dashboards to ensure continuous improvement and transparency. Teachers' perspectives echoed the complexity of delivering courses across cultures, highlighting the necessity to blend pedagogical traditions, adapt curriculum content, and respond to varied student learning styles. Teaching in a TNE context required shifting from lecture-based models to student-centered approaches, integrating localized case studies, and creating culturally responsive learning environments. Teachers struggled with aligning UK and Chinese assessment practices and noted institutional constraints on curricular flexibility, but they also recognized that student engagement and performance served as key indicators of success. They emphasized the importance of structured feedback mechanisms, tracking graduate outcomes, and fostering institutional support for faculty development, particularly through professional training in intercultural communication, pedagogical collaboration, and improved access to academic resources. From the student perspective, participation in Sino–UK programs provided transformative learning experiences, with benefits such as exposure to diverse instructional approaches, improved English proficiency, and enhanced global perspectives. Students valued cross-cultural collaboration and found that international faculty, interdisciplinary curricula, and access to global academic networks enriched their academic journey. Yet, they also encountered adaptation challenges, including language barriers, unfamiliar academic expectations, and heavy

workloads. Students requested more English language and academic writing support, greater curriculum localization to reflect Chinese contexts, and streamlined administrative coordination between Chinese and UK institutions. Despite these challenges, students overwhelmingly reported gains in academic skills, career readiness, confidence, and global competence, citing increased opportunities for further study and employment in international settings. They also noted that the program promoted open-mindedness and critical thinking—qualities that prepared them for leadership in a globalized world. Overall, this thematic analysis underscores that Sino–UK cooperative education is a multifaceted initiative shaped by shared strategic goals and operational complexities. Success depends on mutual commitment to quality, intercultural sensitivity, and responsive policy frameworks that align institutional, pedagogical, and student needs. With thoughtful refinement and sustained collaboration, these programs have the potential to redefine international education as both a catalyst for institutional innovation and a powerful mechanism for cultivating globally competent graduates.

These findings align with Knight's (2015) observation that international universities must navigate complex misunderstandings and develop emerging models that balance global standards with local needs, but extend previous research by revealing specific mechanisms through which cultural capital conversion occurs in bilateral partnerships. The institutional challenges identified echo Wilkins and Huisman's (2012) analysis of international branch campuses as transnational strategies, particularly regarding the difficulty of maintaining academic quality while adapting to regulatory and cultural contexts.

The student adaptation challenges reflect broader patterns identified in international education research, where Yang (2002) emphasized that university internationalization involves complex negotiations between global aspirations and local realities. However, the positive outcomes reported by students suggest that when properly supported, cross-cultural educational experiences can achieve the transformative potential that Healey (2008) argued was often missing from supposedly "internationalized" higher education.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented a document analysis, content analysis, and thematic analysis of data collected from educational leaders, teachers, and students participating in Sino–UK cooperative education programs. Overall, this chapter underscores the complex but rewarding nature of Sino–UK cooperative education programs. While these initiatives promote global learning and institutional development, they require continual adaptation and improvement to fully realize their potential. The voices of leaders, teachers, and students highlight both the achievements and the ongoing structural and pedagogical reforms needed to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of such transnational educational models.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study has thoroughly explored the experiences, perceptions, and challenges associated with Sino-UK cooperative education programs, providing a comprehensive evaluation of their reference value for the internationalization of Chinese higher education. The findings underscore that while these collaborations offer significant benefits in terms of global exposure, enhanced academic standards, and professional development, they also present complex challenges related to policy implementation, pedagogical alignment, and cultural integration.

Educational leaders consistently articulated a strategic vision for internationalization, yet acknowledged significant policy challenges, particularly in standard alignment and quality assurance. Their emphasis on the need for improved legal and policy frameworks highlights the ongoing evolution and refinement required in China's regulatory environment for cooperative education. Teachers, on the other hand, experienced a transformative influence on their course design due to cross-cultural teaching, but also grappled with the complexities of aligning divergent pedagogies and expressed a strong demand for professional development in intercultural contexts. This indicates a need for targeted support mechanisms to equip faculty with the necessary skills for effective transnational education.

Students, the ultimate beneficiaries, reported enriching global exposure and perceived academic and career benefits. However, their experiences also revealed critical areas for improvement, such as inadequate language support and administrative coordination. The student perspective on "developed country-ization" serves as a crucial reminder that true internationalization requires a broader, more inclusive approach that extends beyond engagement with traditionally dominant Western educational systems.

The document and content analyses further illuminated the policy landscape, highlighting the UK's well-established system for international education and China's evolving legal framework. The "Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools" provides a foundational structure, but its implementation faces challenges related to unclear responsibilities and management methods. The Bourdieuan framework provided valuable insights into the symbolic power dynamics at play, suggesting that unexamined collaborations risk reproducing inequities if Western academic norms are uncritically adopted. Conversely, constructivist-learning theory offered a pedagogical lens, emphasizing the potential for student-centred learning while acknowledging cross-cultural implementation hurdles.

In essence, Sino-UK cooperative education programs are a double-edged sword: they are powerful vehicles for internationalization and quality enhancement, but their full potential can only be realized through continuous adaptation, robust policy reform, and a deep, context-sensitive understanding of the cultural and pedagogical nuances involved. The study confirms that while the UK offers

valuable models and experiences, their successful adoption in China necessitates careful consideration and tailored implementation to address specific local challenges and ensure genuine mutual benefit.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The study's comparative perspective, building on the UK's extensive experience in developing transnational education frameworks (Hughes, 2023), generates specific policy recommendations for multiple stakeholder groups. Recent collaborative reports emphasize the importance of sustained partnership development through systematic policy alignment and institutional commitment (British Council, 2023), providing the foundation for the following recommendations:

- **Micro-level:** It sheds light on individual learning experiences and shifts in pedagogy within the classroom, particularly how students adapt to different instructional methods and how language proficiency impacts their engagement.
- **Meso-level:** It explores institutional cultures, teacher collaboration, and curricular design practices, providing insights into how universities navigate the complexities of cross-cultural partnerships.
- **Macro-level:** It analyzes regulatory policies, geopolitical influences, and the global dynamics of educational cooperation, highlighting the interplay between national strategies and international trends.

By integrating constructivist and Bourdieuan perspectives, the study highlights both the transformative potential and the embedded inequalities of transnational education, offering critical insights for future practice, policy, and research in this rapidly evolving field. It underscores the importance of critically examining the underlying power dynamics and cultural capital at play in international collaborations to ensure equitable and truly internationalized outcomes.

5.3 Contribution

This study contributes to transnational education scholarship at three levels. Theoretically, it develops the "Cross-Cultural Educational Capital Conversion Model" that integrates Bourdieu's field theory with constructivist principles, providing new analytical tools for understanding how cultural capital operates across national boundaries and challenging simple transfer models through illumination of complex power dynamics and knowledge construction processes. Practically, it offers the first systematic comparison of UK-China partnerships with other bilateral models, identifying unique characteristics in cultural integration and pedagogical innovation that provide concrete strategies for policymakers and educational leaders seeking to optimize international cooperation. Methodologically, it establishes a comparative framework for analyzing transnational educational partnerships that can be replicated in future bilateral cooperation studies, particularly regarding cultural sensitivity and power relationship analysis. These contributions advance both theoretical understanding and practical implementation of equitable international educational partnerships.

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Appendix A

Respondents Demographic Information Analysis

Table 1: Educational Administration Respondents Profile

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	6	60
	Male	4	40
Position	Voice Chancellor	4	40
	Dean	3	30
	Consultant	3	30
Marital Status	Single	4	40
	Married	6	60
Institutions	XJTU	4	40
	Wuhan Textile University	2	20
	Central South University	2	20
	China Medical University	2	20
Age	25-35	3	30
	36-45	6	60
	Above 45	1	10
Education Level	Master	4	40
	Ph.D. or equivalent	6	60
How many UK universities is your university currently collaborating with	1-5	5	50
	6-10	3	30
	More than 10	2	20

N=10

Table 2: Demographic Information of Student's Respondents

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	4	40
	Male	6	60
Qualification	Bachelor's	3	30
	Master	3	30
	P.H.D	4	40
Marital Status	Single	4	40
	Married	6	60
Age	20-25	5	50
	26-30	3	30
	Above 30	2	30
Institute	XJTU	3	30
	Central South University	2	20
	China Medical University	3	30
	Wuhan Textile University	2	20
Are you satisfied with international collaboration of this university?	Yes	7	70
	No	3	30

N=10

Table 3: Demographic Information of Teachers' Respondents

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	4	40
	Male	6	60
Qualification	Lecturer	3	30
	Assistant Professor	3	30
	Professor	4	40
Marital Status	Single	4	40
	Married	6	60
Age	30-35	5	50
	36-40	3	30
	Above 40	2	20
Institute	XJTU	3	30
	Central South University	3	30
	China Medical University	2	20
	Wuhan Textile University	2	20
Are you satisfied with international collaboration of this university?	Yes	6	60
	No	4	40

N=10