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INTERNATIONALIZATION AS A COMPONENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS' ART DISCIPLINES TEACHERS IN CHINA

ІНТЕРНАЦІОНАЛІЗАЦІЯ ЯК СКЛАДОВА ПРОГРАМ ПІДГОТОВКИ ВЧИТЕЛІВ МИСТЕЦЬКИХ ДИСЦИПЛІН ДЛЯ ПОЧАТКОВИХ ШКІЛ В КНР

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ABSTRACT

Today, the People's Republic of China views internationalization as a strategic national priority aimed at attracting the most advanced educational technologies to improve the quality of education in the

Сьогодні Китайська Народна Республіка розглядає інтернаціоналізацію як стратегічний національний пріоритет, спрямований на залучення найсучасніших освітніх технологій для підвищення якості освіти в країні, а також

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country and showcasing its best pedagogical practices to the world.

The **article aims** to explore the role and significance of internationalization in the preparation of art discipline teachers for primary schools in China, examining how the objectives and scope of such programs vary depending on the partner country, with a focus on their impact on fostering global competencies and cultural awareness. Additionally, the study introduces the concept of “home internationalization” into the Ukrainian academic discourse and highlights examples of real cooperation programs between China and other countries.

Methodology. The research employs methods typical of general education and pedagogical comparative studies, including literature review, case studies, document analysis, and comparative analysis, which provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue under consideration.

Results. The study identifies two main types of internationalization program. Programs targeting developed countries (e.g. the United States, the EU, Australia, and others) focus on participants learning advanced pedagogical methods and engaging in high-impact research. Programs with Asian countries (e.g. Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan) and economically dependent regions (African countries, Vietnam, Laos, and others) emphasize cultural exchange, equipping Chinese educators with certificates required for career advancement and showcasing China's educational achievements.

The concept of “home internationalization” describes initiatives with Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau, aimed at studying locally adapted European practices while demonstrating the advantages of China's modern educational environment.

Conclusions. The study concludes that internationalization is a transformative tool in the training of art teachers for primary schools, equipping them with innovative methodologies. By adapting program goals to the partner country, China effectively leverages internationalization to raise educational standards and address both domestic and global challenges. The findings illustrate the diversity and scale of these initiatives, offering valuable insights into how internationalization can contribute to the professional development of art teachers, including those specializing

на представлення світу власних найкращих педагогічних практик.

Мета статті – дослідити роль і значення інтернаціоналізації у підготовці вчителів мистецьких дисциплін для початкових шкіл у КНР, зокрема, як цілі та обсяги таких програм змінюються залежно від країни-партнера, з акцентом на їхній вплив на формування глобальних компетенцій і культурної обізнаності. Крім того, дослідження вводить до наукового обігу України поняття “домашньої інтернаціоналізації” та висвітлює приклади реальних програм співпраці між КНР та іншими країнами.

Методологія. У дослідженні застосовано методи, типові для загальноосвітніх і педагогічних компаративних досліджень, зокрема: огляд літератури, кейс-стаді, аналіз документів і порівняльний аналіз, що дозволяють отримати всебічне розуміння розглянутої проблеми.

Результати. У результатах дослідження виокремлено два основних типи програм інтернаціоналізації. Програми, орієнтовані на розвинені країни (США, ЄС тощо), зосереджуються на вивченні учасниками програми передових педагогічних методів і їх участі у високоефективних дослідженнях. Програми з азійськими країнами (Сінгапур, Малайзія тощо) та економічно залежними регіонами акцентують увагу на культурному обміні, озброєнні китайських викладачів обов'язковими для просування за кар'єрними сходами документами (Сертифікатами) та демонстрації освітніх досягнень Китаю.

Поняття “домашньої інтернаціоналізації” використовується для опису ініціатив із Тайванем, Гонконгом і Макао, які мають на меті вивчення місцевого досвіду адаптованих під китайські реалії класичних європейських практик та демонстрацію переваг китайського сучасного освітнього простору.

Висновки. У дослідженні зроблено висновок, що інтернаціоналізація є трансформаційним інструментом у підготовці вчителів мистецтва для початкових шкіл, який забезпечує їх інноваційними методиками. Завдяки адаптації цілей програм до країни-партнера, Китай ефективно використовує інтернаціоналізацію для підвищення освітніх стандартів і вирішення власних та глобальних викликів. Результати ілюструють різноманітність і масштаб цих ініціатив, пропонуючи цінні ідеї щодо того, як інтернаціоналізація може сприяти професійному розвитку вчителів мистецтва

in primary school art disciplines, and promote cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: *art disciplines teachers, internationalization, primary school, PR China (China), professional competence, Singapore, Taiwan.*

(вчителів мистецьких дисциплін для молодшої школи) та просуванню культурної дипломатії.

Ключові слова: *вчителі мистецьких дисциплін, інтернаціоналізація, початкова школа, КНР (Китай), професійна компетентність, Сінгапур, Тайвань.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, internationalization in education serves as a cornerstone for fostering cross-cultural understanding, improving pedagogical practices, and preparing educators to succeed in diverse and interconnected environments. In the People's Republic of China, internationalization is not merely a response to globalization but a strategic national priority articulated in key policy documents. The incorporation of international perspectives into teacher training programs, particularly in art education for primary school students, highlights China's commitment to harmonizing traditional cultural values with global educational advancements.

Art education for primary school students holds special significance, as it intertwines the preservation of China's rich cultural heritage with the adoption of modern teaching methodologies. This dual approach enables young learners to cultivate creativity, cultural awareness, and emotional intelligence from an early age. Primary school art teachers play a pivotal role in fostering these skills, yet their training often falls outside the scope of internationalization initiatives, which tend to focus on secondary and higher education. This gap underscores the importance of studying how China integrates global trends, such as social-emotional learning, multicultural education, and innovative methodologies, into the preparation of primary art teachers.

For Ukraine, this topic is particularly relevant, as internationalization in teacher training has historically prioritized higher levels of education, often overlooking the primary school sector. By analysing China's approach, Ukrainian institutions can gain valuable insights into extending internationalization to primary school teacher training.

Integrating global methodologies, multicultural perspectives, and social-emotional learning into art education can help modernize Ukraine's teacher training programs, fostering global engagement and enhancing the quality of primary education. This research contributes to the broader understanding of how internationalization can serve as a transformative tool in shaping effective and inclusive educational systems.

The **article aims** examine the role and significance of internationalization in the training of art teachers for primary schools in the People's Republic of China and introduce the concept of the aim and subject of the program being dependent on the host country. Additionally, the article introduces the concept of "home internationalization" and provides real-world examples of internationalization programs involving various countries. Through this, the study aims to demonstrate the diversity and scope of these initiatives while highlighting their impact on fostering cultural awareness, equipping educators with innovative methodologies, and contributing to the PR China's goals of cultural diplomacy and global engagement.

METHODOLOGY

The research on China-abroad internationalization practices as a form of professional preparation for art disciplines teachers in primary schools used a combination of theoretical and empirical methods to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Specifically, the following research methods were employed:

- *Theoretical Analysis Method.* This method was used to identify and examine general trends and conceptual frameworks underlying internationalization in teacher preparation. A thorough review of academic literature, prior studies on internationalization in education, and theoretical approaches to the professional preparation of art teachers highlighted their relevance to primary school contexts;
- *Documentary Analysis Method.* By examining official state documents, including policies and action plans, the researchers identified key objectives and strategies for internationalization in education. Additionally, reviewing public speeches and declarations by Chinese leaders clarified the role of internationalization as a strategic priority for the nation's development;
- *Case Study Method.* The practical implementation of China-abroad internationalization activities was investigated through the selection and in-depth analysis of specific programs involving primary school art teachers. These analyses focused on program objectives, designs, and outcomes, allowing comparisons based on the host country (e.g. developed nations vs. developing regions) and highlighting how goals, aims, and expected results varied depending on the host country's status;
- *Comparative Analysis Method.* This method facilitated drawing conclusions about the relationship between program goals and host country characteristics. It involved comparing internationalization initiatives targeting different regions, such as western countries, Asian neighbours, and economically dependent nations;
- *Synthesis and Generalization Methods.* These methods were employed to derive actionable conclusions and formulate insights. The findings demonstrate how China views internationalization opportunities, including those for art teachers of primary schools, as a key tool for addressing internal educational challenges, aligning with state objectives to modernize the education system, and meeting globalization demands.

The combination of these methods provides a nuanced exploration of China-abroad internationalization practices. It offers a framework for understanding their role in preparing art disciplines teachers while aligning program goals with China's strategic educational priorities.

RESULTS

Internationalization has become a pivotal aspect of teacher training in China, reflecting the nation's commitment to enhancing educational quality and fostering global competencies among educators. This emphasis is evident in several policy documents and initiatives aimed at integrating international perspectives into the education system (Xi, 2024).

The Implementation of Teacher Training in China and Its Policy Implications report (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2016) highlighted the need for aligning teacher training programs with international standards to improve educational outcomes. Furthermore, Guidelines to Develop New Era Teachers (Official site of the China Teacher Platform, 2024), released by the State Council, underscored the importance of internationalization in teacher education. The guidelines advocate for training teachers who can meet global educational standards and emphasize the integration of international best practices into the curriculum.

The internationalization of art discipline teachers, particularly for primary schools, has also gained the attention of Chinese leaders and society. The Ministry of Education's National Teachers Training Program (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2019) emphasizes the need to enhance the quality of art teachers through exposure to international art education methodologies. This initiative aims to equip primary school art teachers with global perspectives, enabling them to foster creativity and cultural awareness among young learners (Wang et al., 2013). These policy directives underscore China's strategic focus on internationalization as a means to elevate its educational standards, promote cultural exchange, and prepare educators to thrive in a globalized world.

For our study, it is crucial to characterize the internationalization programs currently popular in China, particularly those designed for teachers. These programs play a significant role in shaping the professional development and global engagement of educators, including those teaching art disciplines in primary schools. The availability and structure of these internationalization programs are deeply rooted in the cultural and societal characteristics of Chinese society, which often perceives representatives of different countries through a hierarchical lens. This hierarchy influences the goals, focus areas, and outcomes of internationalization efforts (Yang, 2022). China's internationalization programs for teachers can be broadly divided into distinct categories based on the target countries and their perceived cultural and economic significance.

– *Internationalization programs* for teachers, particularly art disciplines teachers of primary schools, **focusing on developed nations**, such as the United States, European countries, Canada, Israel, and Australia, play a critical role in advancing the professional capacities of Chinese educators. These programs are strategically designed to enable Chinese teachers to adopt advanced pedagogical methods, participate in high-impact research collaborations, and integrate innovative technologies into their teaching practices.

Programs targeting developed nations emphasize exposure to cutting-edge educational frameworks and methodologies. Participants are introduced to concepts such as student-centered learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and the integration of digital tools and technologies in art education. Such exposure not only enhances their professional competence but also equips them with the skills necessary to modernize art education in China (Yang, 2022). Another key feature of these programs is their focus on research collaboration. Chinese educators have opportunities to engage with renowned researchers and institutions, contributing to joint projects that explore innovative teaching strategies and curriculum development. This

collaboration fosters an exchange of ideas and best practices, enriching the participants' professional expertise and expanding their global networks. These programs are also viewed as highly prestigious within China.

Participation in international training or research collaborations with developed nations often translates into professional prestige and career advancement upon the participant's return. Graduates of such programs are frequently entrusted with leadership roles in schools or involved in shaping educational policies (Li et al., 2024).

Internationalization programs with developed nations offer Chinese teachers a platform to enhance their pedagogical skills, gain global exposure, and achieve professional growth. These initiatives align with China's broader educational goals of integrating global best practices while addressing domestic challenges in modernizing its educational system. For art disciplines teachers of primary schools, such programs provide invaluable tools and insights to elevate the quality and relevance of art education.

- *Internationalization programs* for teachers **focusing on developed Asian countries**, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea, are an integral part of China's strategy to enhance educational quality while reinforcing its cultural and educational influence in the region. These programs are generally more accessible and less prestigious than those involving western nations, but they offer significant opportunities for professional development.
- Such programs are often more prolonged, allowing participants to engage in deeper collaboration with local researchers and educational institutions. They emphasize shared research and development opportunities, with Chinese teachers frequently serving as co-researchers and equal partners in collaborative projects (Li et al., 2024).

This approach fosters mutual learning and professional exchange, benefiting both Chinese educators and their host counterparts. Participation in these programs is highly valued within China, albeit with fewer challenges in terms of language barriers, cultural adjustments, and daily habits compared to programs in western countries. The shared cultural background and geographical proximity of these Asian nations make the experience more comfortable and relatable for Chinese teachers.

The Chinese Ministry of Education, along with state-supported NGOs, actively promotes and funds such programs. They are available for both future teachers and practicing educators seeking to upgrade their qualifications or pursue research activities. The focus of these programs often includes curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, and the integration of technology in education.

Not only do these programs contribute to the professional growth of Chinese teachers, they also serve to strengthen China's influence in the region. By engaging in these exchanges, China establishes itself as an educational partner and thought leader in Asia. For art disciplines teachers of primary schools, such programs provide valuable insights into innovative teaching practices while fostering regional collaboration and cultural exchange (Qiu, 2023).

- *Internationalization programs* for teachers focusing on **non-developed Asian countries** (e.g. Laos, Vietnam, and the Philippines) and African countries have gained prominence over the past decade, particularly as part of China's "One Belt, One Road"

initiative. These programs aim to strengthen cultural ties and expand China's influence in these regions, emphasizing a Chinese-dominant partnership model. Such programs are often framed as "abroad voluntary activities" and, while supported by the Chinese government and financially attractive, they are generally less popular among Chinese educators.

Participants are typically young researchers and specialists who seek international experience and certificates to enhance their career prospects within China. These credentials are valuable for meeting professional advancement criteria in teaching and research positions. Such programs are designed with a dual purpose: to provide Chinese educators with exposure to the educational realities of the host countries and to promote China's cultural and educational influence (Li et al., 2024).

The structure of these programs often includes educational tours, where participants observe schools and educational institutions in the host country, and one or two masterclasses conducted by the Chinese participants. These activities serve to showcase China's advanced pedagogical methods while subtly emphasizing its leadership role in education of the region as well.

Despite their limited popularity, such programs are strategically significant. They offer participants an opportunity to gain internationalization experience in a controlled and supportive environment while reinforcing China's presence in regions where it seeks stronger economic and cultural ties. For the host countries, these programs provide access to resources, expertise, and collaboration opportunities, further solidifying their relationships with China. These programs play a crucial role in China's broader strategy to extend its cultural and educational influence, particularly in regions aligned with its geopolitical interests.

- "*Home internationalization*" programs (with Taiwan, Macao, and Hong Kong, and work experience in international schools within mainland China) represent a unique aspect of China's internationalization initiatives for teachers of art disciplines for primary schools as well. These programs highlight the adoption of global practices adapted to local contexts, allowing participants to gain international experience without the challenges of overseas travel. Such programs typically focus on areas like social-emotional learning, psychological support for students, and innovative teaching methodologies.

These themes align with global educational priorities while being tailored to fit the cultural and educational needs of Chinese contexts (He & Liu, 2024). Participants gain valuable insights into globally influenced pedagogical practices and develop skills that enhance their professional competencies. In terms of prestige and professional impact, these programs rank alongside the second or even first category of internationalization initiatives.

Factors such as their longer duration, active involvement in educational processes (researching, steering, or teaching), and focus on advanced methodologies make them highly valued by both participants and employers. Participation in these programs is often perceived as equivalent to overseas work experience, providing significant career advancement opportunities. "Home internationalization" programs serve as a strategic tool for integrating global best practices into China's educational system while fostering professional growth and maintaining cultural relevance.

Below we present examples of specific programs and internationalization experiences designed for elementary school art teachers. These examples aim to provide a clearer understanding of the goals, objectives, and practical implementation of such initiatives.

China – Africa. China – Africa internationalization programs for elementary school art disciplines teachers have expanded significantly in recent years, especially following China’s “One Belt, One Road” initiative, which promotes cultural and educational exchange between China and African countries. These programs aim to enhance art education in Africa, promote Chinese cultural values, and strengthen bilateral ties. The China–Africa Educational Cooperation Framework, initiated in the early 2010s, focuses on training African teachers, including art educators.

Through workshops, masterclasses, and art exhibitions, Chinese experts introduce African teachers to Chinese art forms such as traditional painting, calligraphy, and design. The goal is to blend African and Chinese artistic traditions and offer innovative pedagogical practices (Zhao, 2024). The China – Africa Cultural Exchange Program offers opportunities for African art teachers to visit China, where they participate in professional development programs, observe teaching methods, and learn about China’s art education system. This program also includes collaborative research on art education, with an emphasis on cultural diplomacy.

In partnership with institutions like the University of Cape Town, Chinese universities organize teacher-exchange programs (Chen, 2024). These programs focus on enhancing art education through curriculum development, teaching strategies, and cross-cultural dialogues. Chinese universities, such as Beijing Normal University, offer workshops for African teachers in collaboration with African educational ministries, focusing on integrating modern Chinese art education techniques with local artistic traditions.

China – Australia: Australia’s proximity to China and its significant Chinese diaspora make it a favored destination for Chinese educators seeking international experience. The cultural familiarity and established Chinese communities in Australia create a supportive environment for visiting teachers, enabling Chinese elementary art educators to gain global exposure, enhance teaching methodologies, and meet professional development requirements essential for career growth in China.

Educational collaboration between China and Australia has a long history, marked by significant agreements like the Joint Work Plan on Education and Training, signed on June 14, 2011 by Australia’s DEEWR (The Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) and China’s Ministry of Education (Chen et al., 2024). This agreement strengthened cooperation in areas including teacher training and cultural exchange. Key initiatives include the Sino-Australia Culture & Education Exchange Association (SACEEA), a non-profit organisation under New South Wales’s government.

SACEEA promotes academic exchanges, teacher training, and cultural interactions by collaborating with Chinese universities and schools. Another notable program is the Australia–China Digital BRIDGE School Partnerships, funded by the National Foundation for Australia–China Relations and led by Asialink Education at the University of Melbourne. This program fosters digital collaboration and intercultural dialogue.

The Australia – China Community-Engaged Pedagogy for Teaching (ACCEPT) initiative engages academics, teachers, and students in integrating cross-curricular priorities, particularly in art education, enriching participants as artists, researchers, and educators (The Australia – China education relationship, 2019).

China – Japan: China and Japan have a longstanding history of educational collaboration, particularly in art education for elementary school teachers. Educational exchanges between China and Japan have been active for several decades, with both nations recognizing the mutual benefits of such collaborations. These programs often involve reciprocal visits, joint research, and shared educational practices, enriching the art education landscape in both countries (International Liaison Office, 2025).

Established in 2004 between Naruto University of Education (Japan) and Beijing Normal University (China), the Japan – China Teacher Education Conference convenes approximately every two years, alternating between the two universities. It serves as a platform for educators to discuss advancements and challenges in teacher education, including art disciplines at the elementary level (Huang, 2015).

Various schools in China and Japan engage in exchange programs that include art education components. These programs involve in-person and online exchanges, allowing students and teachers to participate in discussions, cultural experiences, and collaborative art projects. Such interactions promote cross-cultural communication and enrich art education curricula.

China – Laos and China – Vietnam. China – Laos and China – Vietnam internationalization programs for elementary school art disciplines teachers have gained momentum since the initiation of the “One Belt, One Road” initiative in 2013. These programs aim to strengthen educational and cultural ties, promote mutual learning in art education, and enhance China’s influence in Southeast Asia.

The China – ASEAN Educational Exchange Program is a state program supported by the Chinese Ministry of Education, which includes teacher training workshops and masterclasses focused on integrating traditional Chinese art techniques with local art forms. It provides Lao and Vietnamese teachers with exposure to innovative pedagogical practices and materials developed in China (Duan, 2024).

Through initiatives like the China Volunteers for Cultural Exchange, Chinese art teachers and university graduates conduct art workshops in elementary schools in Laos and Vietnam. These programs aim to introduce traditional Chinese art, such as calligraphy and painting, while fostering collaboration with local teachers.

Additionally, these countries have a wide range of direct cooperation and internationalization programs with some key Chinese universities. Beijing Normal University collaborates with educational institutions in Laos and Vietnam to deliver short-term teacher training programs. These include curriculum development and demonstrations of modern and traditional Chinese art methodologies. Leveraging its geographical proximity, Yunnan Normal University has launched exchange programs and art festivals that involve elementary school teachers from both countries, emphasizing cultural and artistic exchange (Lao, 2023).

China – Singapore: Educational collaboration between China and Singapore has been a cornerstone of their bilateral relations, emphasizing the importance of educational

exchanges to strengthen ties. Singapore's use of English as a medium of instruction and its willingness to offer opportunities to Chinese educators and students make it an attractive destination for internationalization.

Programs such as the Sino-Singapore Undergraduate Exchange (SSUE) Programme, established in 2002 and led by the ministries of education of both nations, exemplify these efforts. While primarily targeting undergraduates, this prestigious initiative fosters a culture of exchange that extends to various educational levels, including teacher training. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), implemented in both Singapore and Shanghai, promote teacher collaboration and professional development.

These PLCs encourage educators to engage in collective learning, sharing innovative teaching methodologies that enrich art education and other disciplines. Additionally, Singaporean schools, such as Jurong West Secondary School, maintain exchange programs with Chinese institutions, enabling teachers and students to attend overseas classes, network with peers, and experience diverse educational practices (Lee & Shutler, 2024).

Singapore's proximity to China, its significant Chinese diaspora, and the inclusion of Chinese as an official language create a culturally supportive environment for Chinese elementary art teachers. These shared cultural and linguistic ties further enhance the appeal of Singapore as a destination for internationalization and professional growth².

China – Taiwan: China and Taiwan have actively engaged in educational exchanges to strengthen their cultural and academic ties, particularly in art education for elementary school teachers. These initiatives aim to enhance teaching methodologies, promote cultural understanding, and foster professional development among educators.

The shared cultural heritage and linguistic similarities between China and Taiwan make these collaborations particularly effective, as Taiwanese educators bring perspectives and methodologies that align with Chinese cultural contexts. Educational exchanges have been ongoing for decades, with Taiwanese educators often visiting mainland China to share expertise and learn from their counterparts (Chan, 2011).

The National Taiwan Arts Education Center (NTAEC) organizes workshops, exhibitions, and seminars to enhance art education quality, collaborating with Chinese institutions to exchange ideas and practices. The Five-Year Aesthetic Education Program (2019–2023, extended to 2030), implemented by Taiwan's Ministry of Education, focuses on early-age aesthetic development, cross-field innovation, and international connections.

The program enhances students' creative literacy while fostering collaboration with Chinese educational institutions. Additionally, Taiwan's Ministry of Education offers an online platform to facilitate partnerships between Taiwanese and Chinese elementary and secondary schools (Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), 2025). This platform supports collaborative projects, enriching art education experiences and strengthening ties between educators on both sides.

² Wang Guangyan visits Singapore, signs educational cooperation action plans (15 November 2024). http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press_releases/202411/t20241115_1163159.html

China–Ukraine: Prior to February 2022, China and Ukraine engaged in active internationalization programs aimed at enhancing art education for elementary school teachers. Ukraine was a key destination for Chinese educators seeking advanced degrees and training, particularly at the doctoral level. Ukrainian institutions offered specialized programs that attracted Chinese teachers across various disciplines, including art education for elementary levels (Kiktenko, Drobotyuk, 2021).

H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University (KhNPU) played a pivotal role in hosting Chinese educators. It facilitated short-term educational visits and collaborative programs focused on art education for young learners. Chinese teachers participated in workshops, seminars, and practical training sessions, gaining insights into innovative teaching methodologies and Ukrainian cultural arts.

Established to strengthen educational cooperation, the China–Ukraine Education Union organized student and teacher exchange programs, academic seminars, and cultural activities. The union aimed to enhance mutual understanding and share best practices in education, including art disciplines at the elementary level (Embassy of Ukraine in the People’s Republic of China, 2021). The geopolitical situation of the Russian war against Ukraine since February 2022 has impacted these collaborative efforts. Many programs have been suspended or altered because of safety concerns and diplomatic challenges.

China – US: One of the earliest programs in China–US internationalization cooperation, the Arts Education Exchange, was launched in 1978 by the Center for US–China Arts Exchange at Columbia University. In 1980, following Vice Minister of Culture Lin Mohan’s visit to the US, a ten-year arts exchange program facilitated teacher and scholar exchanges, combining on-site experiences with research led by Howard Gardner and Harvard’s Project Zero.

This program emphasized creativity and leadership in arts education. Other significant initiatives include the Arts Education East and West Program (1980s), which enabled art teachers and scholars from both nations to participate in collaborative research and exchanges. The US–China Teachers Exchange Program (1996–2014), funded by the Freeman Foundation, focused on cultural exchanges for teachers, benefiting art educators alongside its primary emphasis on language instruction.

The Michigan 4-H Children’s Art Exchange with China (2015–present) connects students and teachers through visual letters and artworks, fostering cultural awareness and enriching art education. These programs have significantly advanced art education, enhanced teacher professional development, and strengthened cultural ties between China and the US (Dukuly, 2024).

Participation in internationalization programs has a great impact on the professional development of Chinese elementary school art disciplines teachers as it allows them to: enhance their pedagogical skills by exposure to innovative teaching methods and curricula; enrich their instructional practices through cultural exchange and engagement with abroad educators and students; foster a mutual understanding and appreciation of diverse artistic traditions; and gain professional growth, as international experience and certifications obtained through these programs contribute to career progression and recognition within China’s educational system.

DISCUSSION

In China, internationalization programs for teacher training, including those for elementary school art disciplines, depending on the host country, have the following key objectives:

- to adopt global best practices in teaching art and other disciplines;
- to establish connections with international research groups and, ideally, secure opportunities to join these groups;
- to integrate advanced knowledge and practices into China’s education system, enhancing the global competitiveness of Chinese teachers;
- to provide Chinese teachers, particularly in elementary school art disciplines, with opportunities to gain experience abroad;
- to obtain certification or documentation of international experience, which is a requirement for professional development programs and career advancement in China;
- to showcase China’s leadership in art education and foster cultural exchange in regions under its economic influence.

By offering these varied types of internationalization programs, China aims to enhance the professional competencies of its teachers, increase their global exposure, and further solidify its leadership role in the international educational landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

Modern Chinese art disciplines teachers have numerous opportunities to engage in internationalization programs that align with the strategic priorities of the country’s development. These initiatives aim not only to address key objectives of China’s education system (such as enhancing quality, modernizing pedagogical practices, and aligning with global standards), but also to bolster China’s presence on the global educational stage.

By facilitating widespread teacher participation in overseas training, research, and practical experiences, and attracting foreign professionals to Chinese schools, these programs contribute to the dual goals of educational improvement and international influence. Recognizing education and art as vital elements of its “soft power”, China actively promotes the participation of teachers, including those specializing in art disciplines for elementary schools, in internationalization initiatives. Participation in these programs is increasingly becoming a critical factor for career progression, integrating international exposure as a standard element of professional development for Chinese educators.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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