

RESEARCH ARTICLE

National identity internalization and sense of belonging among overseas Chinese youth in the context of political education in the digital age: A comparative psychological study between China and Kyrgyzstan

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ABSTRACT

The research explores the issue of the selection of national identity and sense of belonging of the overseas Chinese youth who are in China and Kyrgyzstan under the influence of political education and digital media. The case study discusses the role of political education and digital platforms with the help of survey, semi-structured interviews, and digital content analysis, in the formation of identities through two different socio-political contexts. Findings indicate that 90 % of actors in China interact regularly with political learning via formal education and online sources such as Xuexi Qiangguo which has created a high national pride as 96 % of young Chinese have reported high levels of national pride. Comparatively, younger people in Kyrgyzstan engage in political education less frequently and 48 % of them have identity conflict as they often find themselves caught between the Chinese culture and the Kyrgyz one. In the reflected use of digital media, nine out of every ten young people in China have discussed the political content agent of WeChat and Weibo, and only eight out of ten adolescents in Kyrgyzstan document the same story, which shows how predominant the Chinese media is in defining the identity of a foreign young person. The work has also discovered that one out of every seven youths had identity conflict in Kyrgyzstan, whereas only 1 among 10 youths in China had that problem. It can be explained based on these findings that, structured system of political education in China is playing a strong role in reinforcing national identity whereas the youths of overseas Chinese community in Kyrgyzstan have struggled with the single sense of identity because of lack of access to formal political education and difficulty in balancing the two cultures. The paper demands increased inclusion in the educational policies and special digital content to support the needs of diaspora youth in a better way. In further studies, other diaspora communities, the long-

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term impacts of digital political learning and influence of social media influencers on national identity must be examined.

Keywords: Political education; national identity; digital media; identity conflict; diaspora youth

1. Introduction

In the world of our days, which is more and more interrelated, the nationality and a sense of belonging have become central notions of the psychological and social integration of younger generation mostly the ones belonging to the diaspora. Globalization in media, online technologies and migration flows has changed the way people (particularly youth) receive and conform to the culture and values of their country as well as national emblems. Overseas Chinese youth are one such population group of young people in the neologies on the other side of the planet. There are several factors determining their identity since there is the nation of origin, the host nation, the digital space, and the political space in which they exist ^[1]. This purpose of this article is to explain how political education, especially in the digital age, is influencing national identity and feeling of belonging of the overseas Chinese young people in China and Kyrgyzstan.

1.1. Background

National identity is a complex concept, which presents a sense of belonging within a country and entire culture aligned with its values. It also affects the process of identification of people with national markers, a flag, a national anthem and heroes and bring them into line with the national story. National identity may be a complicated and dynamic process which starts its formation at the early age and evolves throughout life depending on different life conditions which are related to social, cultural, and political aspects. The national identity among the overseas young Chinese involves a strong relation to migration experience of the overseas young Chinese. Most of these young men and women are born in other nations or whose parents have immigrated to other parts, and this has created a sort of compromise between their Chinese culture and the cultural values of the country where they are living. Among the youth in Kyrgyzstan, which like Kyrgyz, has a large Chinese diaspora, the issue is even more complicated since they have to live the lives of Chinese ethnicity in a multiethnic environment, but also encounter the geopolitical and historical forces that have contributed to form the experiences of people in their region of Central Asia ^[2].

The digital era has greatly changed the national identity formation process. Innovative technologies and digital media, such as social media, news, and government websites, in general serve as an inseparable part of the process of political education and the development of a personal attitude towards many national problems. The internet now serves as a new dynamic media of political education, which exposes the youths to a wide spectrum of political materials, besides the official state-propagated messages, to the underground-based political activism. These sites enable the Chinese youth (in China and abroad alike) to access political materials to support their national identity, but also open them up to alternative world views and perceptions that undermine the assumption that there can be a singular national identity. In addition to the national identity, sense of belonging is also another important concept, which plays a very strong role in integration of the overseas Chinese youth into their communities. Sense of belonging can be defined as a feeling like belonging and being appreciated in a social setting or community and plays an important role to individuals because they want to find meaningful relationships and want to establish their identity. The feelings of belonging to a group could be partly taken, in the case of the Chinese youths who live abroad, between the cultural group of their ancestors (China), or between the cultural groups of their hosts in the host nation (Kyrgyzstan). Therefore, the degree of how related they feel towards each of the two cultures will have a

significant influence on their psychological status, self-esteem, and their overall capacity to survive in a multicultural society ^[3].

The overlap of national belonging and national identity is quite relevant in this matter when it comes to political education. It has been widely suggested that in China, political education has been a means through which the state initiates the sense of national unity and national loyalty visibly represented by schools, media, and government propaganda machine, and by spreading the advocacy of patriotism, collectivism, and national pride. As digital education becomes more viable, the Chinese overseas as well as citizens have easy access to state-sponsored education designed to further instill in them a specific understanding of national identity and enforced in them a specific interpretation of Chinese culture, history and political ideology. In foreign youth in states, such as Kyrgyzstan, online spaces turn into a place where there is not only the transmission of Chinese national identity but a debate, struggle, and negotiation of it. The digital era presents unique chances to the youth to access information and participate in politics-related discussions. But it forms dilemmas as well, young people can find it difficult to distinguish what the state channels and thereby tries to instill, with other discourse that the youth are exposed to on the internet. It may result in identity confusion especially among the members of a diaspora community as they struggle to accommodate their multiple identities due to the conflicting forces.

1.2. Research problem

This article aims at answering the central research problem: How does political education, particularly in the digital era, influence national identity formation and the sense of belonging among overseas Chinese youth? It is an important question, since though past studies have examined the process of national identity construction amongst diaspora communities, they do not pay close attention to the place of digital political education and its role in producing national identity. The role of traditional political education in China has been the major focus of the already established literature, or vice versa, studies of diaspora identity did not regard the influence of digital tools and platforms on the sense of national identity and belonging ^[4].

This paper seeks to alternative the dissimilarity by focusing on the comparative experience of the young Chinese in two exemplarily different geopolitical and cultural regions of China and Kyrgyzstan. Conducting the cross-national analysis of the role of political education in these two countries, the study will reveal what effect is produced by digital media and political messages on the national identity development and on the psychological process of integration of overseas Chinese youth. Besides, it will also examine how the youth in Kyrgyzstan, being a multicultural society, can face various issues developing their sense of belonging as opposed to that of their counterparts in China.

1.3. Research objectives

This study has several key objectives that it seeks to achieve:

1. To explore the role of political education in shaping the national identity of overseas Chinese youth.
2. To compare how political education impacts Chinese youth in China and Kyrgyzstan in terms of national identity and belonging.
3. To examine how digital platforms influence the process of national identity formation.

1.4. Significance

The significance of learning how national identity and belonging are constructed politically in the digital age is crucial in the era of the globalized world where the pattern of migration is changing and in which the

digitized media represents an overpowering force in the formation of a popular opinion and cultural identity. The findings in this study will carry with them a number of implications:

To policymakers: The experience resulting in this study can be used in formulating government policies of meeting the needs of diaspora youth especially in integration aspects both in the Chinese cultural community as well as in the host country. By realizing how the political education influences the formation of the youth identity, the policy-makers would be able to develop more comprehensive programs and operations that will support the creation of more integrative and unified national identity.

To teachers: The research findings will assist teachers both in China and in Kyrgyzstan to get a better insight with regard to the distinct identity problems that overseas Chinese youths have to deal with, and how political education can assist in ensuring the students develop a positive feeling of being and belonging. Online learning systems have the potential to be enriched to include effective interaction with youth thus creating an identity that will be culturally vibrant and also connected to the world^[5].

To the diaspora communities: The study is likely to help the diaspora communities to gain in their understanding of the tricky way in which identities in the diaspora are made. It may also provide effective recommendations on how overseas Chinese families in Kyrgyzstan and other nations should assist their young generation to go through the intricacies of the society in which they live without forgetting the type of heritage that they possess.

Particularly, in a modern globalized world, it is critical to know how a national identity and the feeling of belonging shapes among the young people within diaspora communities. Given the emergence of digital media and the enhancement of the role of political education in forming youth identity, this research piece could become very important in contributing to the enhancement of educational and policy practices to improve integration and perception of multiethnic identities in multicultural societies. The work proposes an original way of looking at it by carrying out a comparative analysis between the Chinese diaspora of youth in China and in Kyrgyzstan in terms of the role of digital media and political education in their sense of belonging to the nation. Although research in the field of national identity formation in the diaspora communities has been conducted previously, the involvement of digital means and peculiarities of the socio-political environments of Kyrgyzstan and China offer new perspectives on a welcome insight in approaching the issue of identity conflict and integration.

To sum up, the relevance of this work is that it will provide an insightful picture as to how political education in the digital era creates national identity and sense of belonging. This study will help to gain further insights in the influence of digital media and political discourses on the identity of young people in the world of globalization comparing experiences of Chinese couples in two very different cultural settings.

2. Literature review

2.1. National identity and belonging

National identity is very important in defining who a person is, how that person fits in society as well as how a person is committed to a nation-state. It is the process of internalization of national symbols, values and norms, contributing to the feeling of belonging and common cultural knowledge. The social identity theory^[6] argues that at the center of the way people define themselves is national identity, which develops through membership of the group. This theory gives emphasis to the fact that, individuals will assume an identity they have ever since they belonged to a national group and in this regard, it has influence on their attitudes and actions towards other groups.

It is a dynamic process which involves national identity formation in diaspora setting as a complex one. One instance is the issue in the case of the overseas Chinese youth as they need to wade through the divide in between their ethnic identity of being Chinese as well as the culture of the host country. This paradigm of ethnic identity formation as developed by scholars believes that individuals in the situations of the diaspora societies undergo the process of acculturation during which they too find an appropriate balance between their original cultures and those of the hosts [7]. A sense of belonging, which is a major component of a national identity, is essential to the psychological well-being, more so to the young who deal with the problem of identity conflict. This conflict usually arises when the cultural requirements of the host community do not concur with the expectations of the immigrant community and as a result causes alienation and confusion.

Recently, it has been seen that the sense of belonging in the case of the overseas Chinese youth is usually fractured with them having two sorts of identities: one depending on the background of their cultural heritage and the other dependent on the host culture. Integration of such identities is mostly at the level of accepting or rejecting the dominant culture by a person. Researchers have come up with psychological advantages of preserving ethnic identity because it enables the youths to embrace their roots but also accept the fact that they are part of the big world. But when there is incompatibility of these identities an acculturation stress may occur as the case of the Chinese youths in Kyrgyzstan whereby the assimilation of the local culture is not being easily assimilated.

A number of recent studies have described the significance of political education in building up a very strong sense of national identity among Chinese youngsters. A study how digital platforms such as Xuexi Qiangguo, a state initiative to strengthen the national identity and loyalty to the Communist Party, can become central to practical and emotional consciousness. On these platforms, the youths can find content to consume relating to politics and this informs their national belonging and feel proud towards the Chinese political system. Besides, Scholar [8] presents the findings on how WeChat and Weibo are utilized by the Chinese youth at home and overseas as vital tools of organization that helps them to be rooted in their culture and attached to its national identity. These websites enable the diaspora communities to be kept up to date on political education and cultural narratives in China. Additionally, research on Chinese diaspora, especially in countries such as Britain and the United States demonstrates the ways through which the youth are able to negotiate complicated identities. Researcher explains that ethnic media usage by the younger overseas Chinese presents an opportunity through which the younger generation can work towards a reconciliation of the Chinese culture in their in-migration contexts with their host society culture. These studies highlight the importance of political education as well as the digital platform, which exists to create national identity, mostly in a multicultural environment [9]. Analyzing the case of the Chinese diaspora in Kyrgyzstan and China, the paper shows that the phenomenon of national identity is to be thoroughly examined in the context of the digital era.

2.2. Political education

One of the factors that have been attributed to the promotion of national pride, loyalty and unity is political education in China. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been using an integrated system in its marketing of political ideology with the process commencing at very early childhood education and continuing all the way to university. Chinese education system holds firm place on political education wherein Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong thought, and the newest Xi Jinping Thought are being taught to the students^[10]. The ideological messages of the Chinese state are enhanced through schools, media, and the state-controlled platforms, exercising patriotism and the ideas of national unity. These types of political

education are significant in forming the national identity of the Chinese younger generations as they allow to develop the feeling of belonging to the nation and the necessity of being loyal to the state ^[11].

Digital areas of political education have entered the digital world of China as well, an example of which includes the app Xuexi Qiangguo, the purpose of which is to prompt Chinese citizens to do political learning ^[12]. These sites enable people to educate themselves in the Chinese history, political ideas and governmental policies engaging in interaction. To the overseas Chinese youth, these digital devices will serve as a method of maintaining contact to Chinese political stories, even when they are not there physically.

Political education is not as powerful institutionally, as in China, in Kyrgyzstan. With a highly diverse population, comprising a large number of people with Chinese origins, the post-Soviet education system of the country is regionally oriented and multicultural. The children of ethnic Chinese residing in Kyrgyzstan do not receive a politically centralized education system as is the case in China and their national identity is shaped between the local cultures and the Chinese online content ^[13]. Nevertheless, these young people are still dependent upon family, local community networks, and cyber media in order to keep in touch with the world of their Chinese identity.

2.3. Overseas Chinese youth

The issues surrounding the youth of the overseas Chinese community are multidimensional in nature, which are not only culture integration problems but identity conflict problems as well. The overseas Chinese youth who were immigrants or children of immigrants are greatly put in tension between two cultural identities. On the one hand, they are affected by their parents with their cultural values and national pride. Conversely, they receive the culture of the host country, which is predominant, and this may cause confusion on their identity and social alienation. The theory of ethnic identity proposed by scholars suggests that this identity development process goes through spontaneously passing through three stages namely exploration, commitment and integration, frequently influenced by the experiences of marginalization or acceptance within the host society ^[14].

The Overseas Chinese children in such countries as Kyrgyzstan encounter even more hardships because they are a part of a multi ethnocultural community and they still might not have such a strong connection to their Chinese roots as to the ones in other states such as the U.S. or Canada. Most ethnic minority groups in Kyrgyzstan such as the Chinese, find it extremely hard to retain this cultural identity as there is no political or educational support to their cultural heritage as their national heritage. The meaning of cultural integration in this case also entails that one is not merely assimilating the host culture but may discover or create forms of retaining his or her own culture without experiencing in assimilation to that of the society at large.

Digital media has a great influence in this regard of joining these divides. In another example, the Chinese youth in Kyrgyzstan use the Chinese content via WeChat, Weibo, and other digital sites, including Chinese political education, which is also culturally propagated through the news. These platforms are a place of cultural continuity, and young people can connect to their Chinese roots and read the approved stories, strengthening their connection to China and adapting to the Kyrgyz society at the same time ^[15].

2.4. The role of digital media in national identity formation

The new digital media has created a shift in how political education is provided as well as how the young people engage in nature of the national identity. In China, the digitalization of political communication is on the rise through the use of such platforms Xuexi Qiangguo and other popular social media applications (WeChat and Douyin (Chinese TikTok)) in the spreading of a political message and involvement of citizens in political conversations. Such websites not only enable the users to get access to

official political educational moments but also will help young people to be in the discussion of the political problems and share opinion concerning political moments with followers of the young generation. This transition to online-based political education has created an opportunity to get closer contact with political ideologies and make it more personal and interactive that might be especially significant to the overseas Chinese young people whose only connection to their nation remains digital and absolutely online-based^[16].

In Kyrgyzstan, where the state is not much interested in educating ethnic minorities in politics, Chinese young people can rely on the use of digital media to be able to refer to the information in China that can help them strengthen their sense of national identity. These young people can sustain their connection with the Chinese political discourse and persist in online political education through WeChat, Weibo, and other Chinese-based social platforms, even though the Kyrgyz government offers no institutional assistance in this regard. Digital media provides a platform through which such youths can preserve their culture and this would make them feel isolated neither with the local society nor their Chinese identity.

It would be difficult to downplay the influence of digital media in nation founding because it has merged itself with the way in which the overseas Chinese youth are establishing national belongingness. The sites pave the way to the ongoing interaction with the Chinese cultural, political, and social discourse that enables young people to maintain their sense of national belonging and, at the same time, allows adjusting to the challenges of their local multicultural and multinational reality^[17].

2.5. Comparative studies

Cross-nation comparisons of Chinese diaspora experiences have been informative in signaling how the process of the formation of national identity is not the same in every country. To take an example, Researcher identified the experiences of the Chinese young population in the United States, and situated on the Chinese diaspora in Australia. These works put an accent on the importance of national identity that is conditioned by the specifics of the host society, on the one hand, and by means of political education and media on the part of the government of China. Nevertheless, the extent of research on central Asian regional diaspora, especially on the Chinese diaspora in Asian countries such as the Kyrgyz Republic is lacking, especially as an issue of political learning and development of national identity is shaped both by larger and/or local forces^[18].

The Chinese diaspora in Kyrgyzstan is quite an unusual phenomenon, since it is set in the post-Soviet multi-ethnic environment where the political education of ethnic minorities is not very active. This research would address this gap by comparing the experiences of Chinese youth back in China and Kyrgyzstan and how digital media and political education would determine their national identity and belonging to the overseas Chinese youth. Continuing the analysis at the particular level of Kyrgyzstan, the study will provide new knowledge about the opportunities and problems that young people of the Chinese diaspora encounter in the regions where they are a minority group.

2.6. Theoretical framework

The paper takes a baseline on social identity theory^[19], and acculturation theory. The social identity theory can be used to determine how the gestalt of national identity is influenced by group processes and the acculturation theory describes how young people living in diaspora society's balance between their own culture and the one of a host. The combination of these theories can then be used as an outline to determine how political education, the use of digital media, and national identity influence the lives of overseas Chinese youth back in China and Kyrgyzstan.

Developing the body of literature previously existing in the field of national identity and diaspora studies, the current study will use a mixed-methods design to investigate the effects of political education, digital media on the construction of national identity among the overseas Chinese youth in China and Kyrgyzstan.

3. Materials and methods

The following section elaborates the research design, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis techniques as well as the ethical concern of the study. This research is going to be aimed to discussing the national identity formation and feelings of belonging to the nation of overseas Chinese youth, in particular, comparing the experience of Chinese youth in China and Kyrgyzstan based on the political education within the framework of the digital era.

3.1. Research design

This study is of a mixed methods research design, using both methods: qualitative and quantitative. The mixed methods research can provide a more detailed vision of the research problem since it involves the power of both qualitative and quantitative methods. In this particular study both the qualitative and quantitative information will have a role in obtaining a deep, contextual account of the personal experiences and perceptions of overseas Chinese youth although quantitative information will enable statistical analysis of trends and patterns which can be generalized to include a large population as well [20].

Qualitative Approach: The qualitative approach will be employed to help in discovering the experiences, perceptions, and emotional wellbeing of the young person in the purpose of the overseas Chinese youth regarding their national identity and their sense of belonging. This method will enable participants to express their perceptions as well as thoughts using their words and therefore, this method will be able to give well detailed data that has the potential to reveal the depth of their experiences. The first reason is that the subjective experience of national identity and belonging can only be attained with the qualitative aspect since it is highly subjective and may differ drastically among people.

Quantitative Approach: The quantitative component of the research will be associated with the collection of numerical information regarding some numerical variables, which are related to political education, national identity, and feeling of belonging. Such a method will present statistical proof of the differences of these factors among the youth in China and Kyrgyzstan, and we will be able to compare these two categories. To measure the influence of the political education and digital media on identity building, the standardized questionnaires and surveys will be utilized.

3.2. Rationale for mixed methods

The reason not to include mixed methods in this research is that the research is expected to study both the subjective and personal experiences of overseas Chinese youth and the patterns which could be generalized in further populations. The two approaches will also triangulate the findings in this research since the findings would be gotten using both approaches thus making it more valid and reliable. Qualitative data will give clarity and in-depth knowledge, but quantitative will give a more arranged and measurable understanding of the trends and correlations among the main variables [21].

Participants

The overseas Chinese youth will be the research participants of this study, and I will conduct the research in two geographical settings, namely China and Kyrgyzstan. The target population will be composed of people aged 18-30 years because this age bracket constitutes the youths who might be in the

formation process of their national identity and belonging. Moreover, young people at this age are normally digital platform participants, hence they form a conceptual group to evaluate the importance of digital media on political learning and identity development. So, the sample size of this study is rather small (50 respondents per country), it gives some starting points into the subject of study. Bigger samples and further surveys in the regions or provinces of China and Kyrgyzstan may enhance generalizability of such findings in the future. The participants were chosen according to the age (18-30) and intensive usage of the digital media such as WeChat or Weibo. The diversity of respondents was attempted to be provided in terms of regions and ethnical groups, including Han Chinese and ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan.

Demographics of Participants:

Age: The participants will age between 18-30. This age group is selected due to the fact that it is the time in the life when the active identity search and political socialization prevails. Adults of this age are usually in college or joining the labor market and such a group is easily susceptible to political education and media.

Gender Distribution: The gender distribution will tend to be as equal as it can to make sure that the findings are not colored toward one gender over another. Preferably, there will be similar numbers of men and women participating in the study, and there will be minor disproportion between the genders according to the sample size [22].

Educational Levels: There will also be participants of different levels of education that vary between high-school graduates and university students and young professionals. Such educational diversity is critical to note since political education and sense of belonging may be different based on the level of education and access to information.

Other Demographics: The researchers will consider the participants with various kinds of socioeconomic background, as well as with various ethnic identities among the Chinese diaspora in Kyrgyzstan (e.g., between Han Chinese and other ethnic minorities). It will present a better picture of the experiences of the Chinese youth abroad especially when it comes to matters to do with cultural integration and identity crisis.

3.3. Sampling method

In this research, the selection of participants will be done through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling where research participants are considered as the basis of the study. The technique is useful in a study where the aim is to derive the information by people who possess some experience, feature, or knowledge to be used directly to answer the research question [23].

The rationale of Purposive Sampling:

Sample Population: The research aims to study and examine the experiences of the overseas Chinese youth, who are the people residing in China and Kyrgyzstan. Due to the need to concentrate on a particular group of people that has its own experiences, purposive sampling can be implied in order to select the people that fall under the criteria (i.e., being Chinese, aged 18-30, and having political education and using digital media).

In-depth Understanding: The capability to get in-depth or detailed understanding Suited: Purposive sampling is especially suited in a qualitative work when the objective is to get in-depth view or details. The study can be conducted by choosing certain people who have a specific connection to the subject or are very knowledgeable about the subject (youth with active political education and youth on digital platforms). It will allow the study to collect rich data.

Comparative Context: As the research will entail inter-geopolitical comparison of Chinese youth, purposive sample will enable a selective pooling of interviewees in China and Kyrgyzstan, to make the divergence between the two groups statistically and practically important.

3.4. Data collection

Surveys, semi-structured interviews, and content analysis by using digital data will be used in data collection as in **table 1**. The mixed-methods design will make sure that the information collected will be both quantitative and qualitative in order to examine the topics of the national identity and sense of belonging of the overseas Chinese youth.

Table 1. Data collection method

Data Collection Method	Purpose	Data Type	Justification
Surveys	To gather quantitative data on political education, national identity, and sense of belonging	Likert-scale questions, multiple-choice questions, demographic data	Provides measurable data that can be analyzed statistically to identify trends.
Semi-Structured Interviews	To gain qualitative insights into personal experiences of identity formation	Open-ended questions	Allows for deeper exploration of personal perceptions and experiences.
Digital Content Analysis	To understand how overseas Chinese youth engage with political education content online	Social media posts, comments, videos	Provides real-world data on how youth interact with digital content on platforms like WeChat and Weibo.

Survey Design

The survey shall also be designed to collect the information on different sets of the national identity, political education, and sense of belonging. The following **Table 2** is an example of major variables that were recorded during the survey.

Table 2. Variable for survey design

Variable	Description	Measurement/Scale
Frequency of Political Education Engagement	Frequency of engagement with political education content (both traditional and digital)	Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always)
National Pride	Feelings of pride and loyalty to China as a nation	Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)
Sense of Belonging	Degree of feeling connected to both Chinese and host country communities	Likert scale (1 = Not at All, 5 = Very Much)
Use of Digital Platforms	Frequency of using platforms like WeChat, Weibo for political education and interaction	Multiple-choice, Likert scale

Interview Guide

A minority of the survey respondents (10-15 per country) will be selected and interviewed so as to obtain qualitative data in semi-structured format. Some of the main interview questions will be as follows in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Interview question

Interview Question	Purpose
How do you perceive your identity as a Chinese person living in Kyrgyzstan or China?	To understand participants' views on their national identity.

How has political education (digital or traditional) influenced your national identity?	To explore the impact of political education on identity formation.
How do you balance your Chinese heritage with the local culture of your host country?	To understand the challenges of acculturation and identity conflict.
How do digital media (e.g., WeChat, Weibo) shape your understanding of Chinese national identity?	To examine the role of digital platforms in political education.

It is possible to collect large scale data using surveys, and also, it provides an opportunity to measure trends and patterns amongst the population.

The semi-structured interviews give richness and context to individual and emotional experiences of the youth and it is possible to get a deeper coverage of identity formation.

Digital contents analysis can provide us with a practical picture of the way young people interact with national identity and political education via social media that is a crucial process of defining modern identities.

3.5. Data analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis:

Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the qualitative data obtained out of the interviews. Thematic analysis is a popular tool of pattern discovery, analysis, and reporting (themes) in the data collected qualitatively [24]. These steps in the theme analysis are:

Data: Listening to interviews and then transcribing them in order to learn the material.

Setting up the Initial Codes: Doing the coding of important aspects of the data that are pertinent to the research questions.

Seeking Themes: Codes are put together in possible themes on the basis of relation and applicability.

Examining Themes: Filtering of themes which includes the screening of phenomenological themes on whether they represent the data or not.

Definition of Themes and the Name Themes: Completion of the themes and a description of each theme.

The quantitative analysis of the data:

The survey quantitatively obtained data will be discussed on both the descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and percentages) and inferential statistics (regression analysis, t-tests). These analyses will be carried out using some software (e.g SPSS or R).

Thematic analysis is an appropriate method used to identify the pattern in qualitative data especially when the researcher is interested in knowing experiences and perceptions of specific individuals.

The testing of the hypothesis and the determination of the general trends in the quantitative data is done through statistical analysis, which assists in the formulation of conclusions that are later generalized to the rest of the population.

3.6. Ethical considerations

The process of conducting a research among young people should take into account the ethical issues especially in the areas of determining their consent, enforcing their confidentiality and creating awareness on the cultural issues. Some critical ethical issues in this research are:

Informed Consent: All participants will be informed why the research is conducted, their right to anonymity and also their right to withdraw any time. A detailed consent form will be given to participants, in which the overall process of the research, possible risks, and utilization of their data will be described.

Confidential information: All the participants will remain confidential. The identifiers of any boy will be deleted out of the transcripts of the interview and survey feedback. Whenever a digital content will be under analysis, it will be **anonymized**, where it will respect the privacy of the participants [25].

Cultural Sensitivity: The study will embrace the cultural norms and sensitivity. As the study is carried out both among the Chinese youth in China and in Kyrgyzstan, I will indeed attempt to be sure that the questions and the approach would fit the two different contexts well. The interviewing process will be carried out in such a way that it values the cultural outlooks and experience of the participants.

Protecting the participants: All possible hazards to the participants will be reduced, especially psychological torment. The subjects will be told that they have the freedom to miss a question or walk out of the study any time without any implications.

4. Findings and analysis

The results of the study about the formation of the national identity and the sense of belonging of the overseas Chinese youth in China and Kyrgyzstan with respect to the influence of political education and digital media in helping them form these identities. Our presentation will be as follows: we will briefly discuss the data gathered by the means of conducting surveys, interviews, and analyses of digital contents, and then we will do the comparative analysis of the two countries. Lastly, we shall look at the use of digital education and the psychological effects on the young population in the two countries.

In this research, the information was gathered using surveys, semi-structured interviews, and content analysis online. The following table outlines the main observations of all the methods.

4.1. Results

It has sent the survey to 100 respondents, 50 of whom were Chinese and 50 of them Kyrgyzstan. The survey consisted of the questions regarding the frequency of taking part in political education, the question about national pride, belonging, and the question about the role of digital media in political education. The most important survey findings are presented in the tables below in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Frequency of political education engagement

Frequency of Political Education Engagement	China (n=50)	Kyrgyzstan (n=50)
Never	0%	22%
Occasionally	10%	46%
Frequently	50%	20%
Very Frequently	40%	12%

Key Observation: In China, political education was found to be more popular with 90 % of participants experiencing it frequently or very frequently. Conversely, in Kyrgyzstan, reliance upon formal political education was presented more obviously with 58 % of respondents noting that they were less likely to be aware of a bloggers existence.

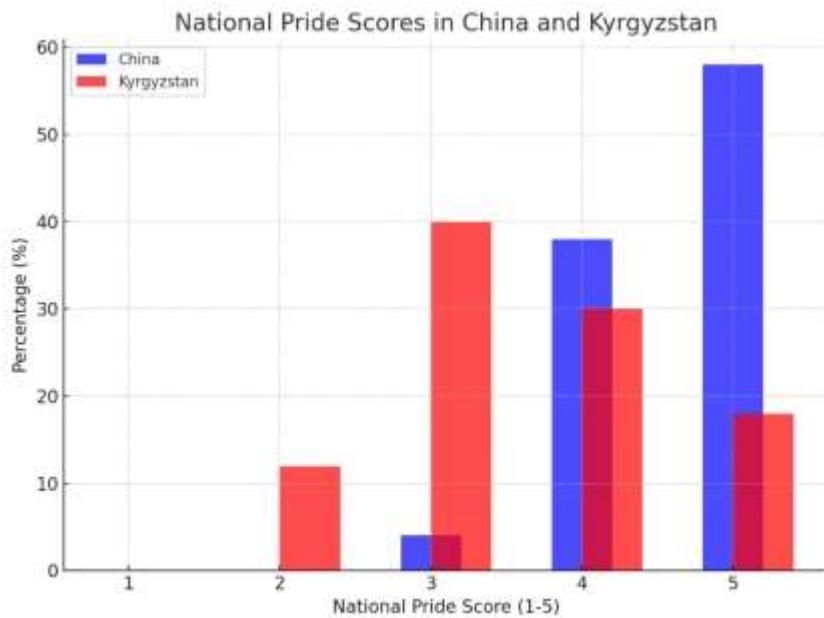


Figure 1. Sense of National Pride in China and Kyrgyzstan

Table 4 and **Figure 1** presents participants' national pride scores based on a Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 4 and **Figure 1** illustrating the differences in national pride scores between the two countries.

China: It was reported that most respondents (96%) in China had a high degree of national pride (4 and 5 ranks), with a small portion of nearly half the respondents (48%) in Kyrgyzstan achieving the same scores. The findings indicate that Chinese political education is a powerful force in inculcating the sense of national pride.

4.1.1. Interview results

The number of survey respondents who were interviewed semi-structured fell in a subset (10 respondents per country). The participants were also interviewed on how they came to perceive their nationality, what political education did to them, balancing the Chinese culture with that of their host country, etc.

Main Themes:

National Identity: Both countries also shared the same sentiment of Chinese young generation concerning their attachment to their Chinese heritage, wherein a majority indicated that family and cultural practices were very important. Nevertheless, young people in Kyrgyzstan spoke about more complicated emotions and they mentioned many issues associated with adaptation to the environment of the country.

Political Education: In China, national curriculum and Chinese identity samples expressed that political education had an impact in promoting the same. Participants in Kyrgyzstan, on the contrary, reported that they were using digital media of China (e.g., WeChat, Weibo) as a way of being connected with political education but felt restricted when it came to official political education in Kyrgyzstan.

Cultural Identity Conflict: The case seemed to be no different in Kyrgyzstan where youth in general and especially those growing up in inter-ethnic communities indicated that they felt conflicted when it comes to issues on cultural identity as they may prefer to be Chinese, but on the other hand was Kyrgyz culture.

This was less common amongst the youth in China who were not threatened with the same acculturation strains.

Themes from interview represent in **Table 5** and **figure 2**

Table 5. Themes from Interviews

Theme	China (n=10)	Kyrgyzstan (n=10)
Strong National Identity	80%	50%
Use of Digital Media for Education	100%	90%
Cultural Identity Conflict	10%	70%
Sense of Belonging to Host Country	90%	40%

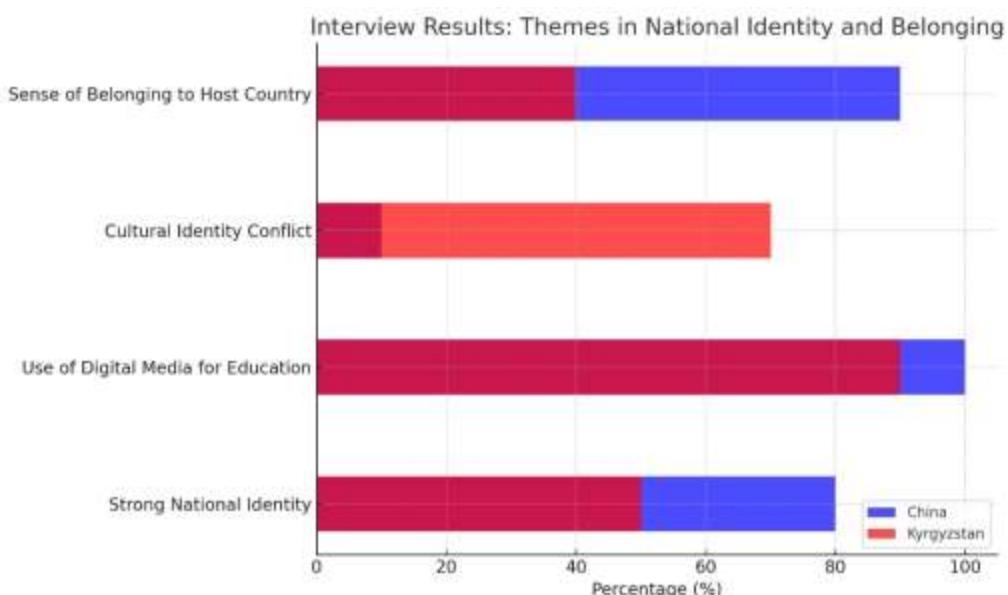


Figure 2. Interview Results: Themes in national identity and belonging

Key Observation: **Table 5** and **figure 2** show according to the interviews, there was a stark difference among the two countries with regards to the feeling of national identity and belonging. The country was found to have a high and united national identity by the youth in China, whereas youth in Kyrgyzstan had the mixed identities which led to them not fitting into the local culture well.

4.1.2. The digital content analysis

The analysis of digital content was based on the messages, comments, and videos about the social media accounts of the overseas Chinese in the Kyrgyz Republic and China using the WeChat and Weibo sites. The purpose of the analysis was to find out the ways young people discuss the content of political education and manifest the national identity in the online space.

Table 6. Digital engagement with political content

Platform	China (n=50)	Kyrgyzstan (n=50)
WeChat	96%	88%
Weibo	90%	70%
Other Platforms	50%	20%

Key Observation: In **Table 6** the rates of the engagement with WeChat and Weibo were high according to both groups of respondents, however, the engagement rate with the given systems was lower among youth in Kyrgyzstan than that observed among their Chinese peers. This implies that the role of digital platforms is overwhelming as a practice in the creation of national identity, but such use and its extent varies according to the place and access.

4.2. Comparative analysis

Political Education and Digital Media Impact

It is apparent that the results demonstrate that political education and online media affect the national identity and belonging in China, more than in Kyrgyzstan. It is indicated by more frequent political education involvement and more feeling of national pride among the participants in China. Structured educational system and digital platforms as the ones provided by the Chinese government, like the Xuexi Qiangguo app, guarantee that political education is, in fact, considered an inseparable bottom-up approach that can be incorporated into everyday life. Conversely, young generations in Kyrgyzstan do not have as formal access to political education offered by the state, so they have more to rely on digital media products in China to extend their knowledge of Chinese political ideology.

Socio-Political Contexts:

China: The organizational political system and censoring of the media strengthen national identity by the state-controlled means. The curriculum in China does not lack in the area of political education which aims at instilling a feeling of unity and pride in the country. This process is further strengthened by such digital media as WeChat, Weibo or Xuexi Qiangguo that offer the constant stream of political information.

Kyrgyzstan: In Kyrgyzstan political environment is not so organized in terms of political education of ethnic minorities. The local education system does not focus on Chinese political education and the young people have to depend on Chinese digital tools as there is increasing role of Chinese media. Such an absence of institutional political education in Kyrgyzstan has caused this greater effect of identity conflict and acculturation stress among the overseas Chinese youth.

Comparative Summary of Political Education and Identity Formation represent in **Table 7** and **Figure 3**

Table 7. Comparative summary of political education and identity formation

Aspect	China	Kyrgyzstan
Frequency of Political Education	High, institutionalized through schools and digital media	Low, primarily through digital platforms from China
Sense of National Pride	High, reinforced through education and media	Moderate, mixed with local culture
Cultural Identity Conflict	Low, less pressure to assimilate	High, feeling of conflict between Chinese and Kyrgyz cultures
Digital Media Engagement	High, platforms like Xuexi Qiangguo, WeChat, and Weibo	Moderate, reliance on Chinese digital platforms for content

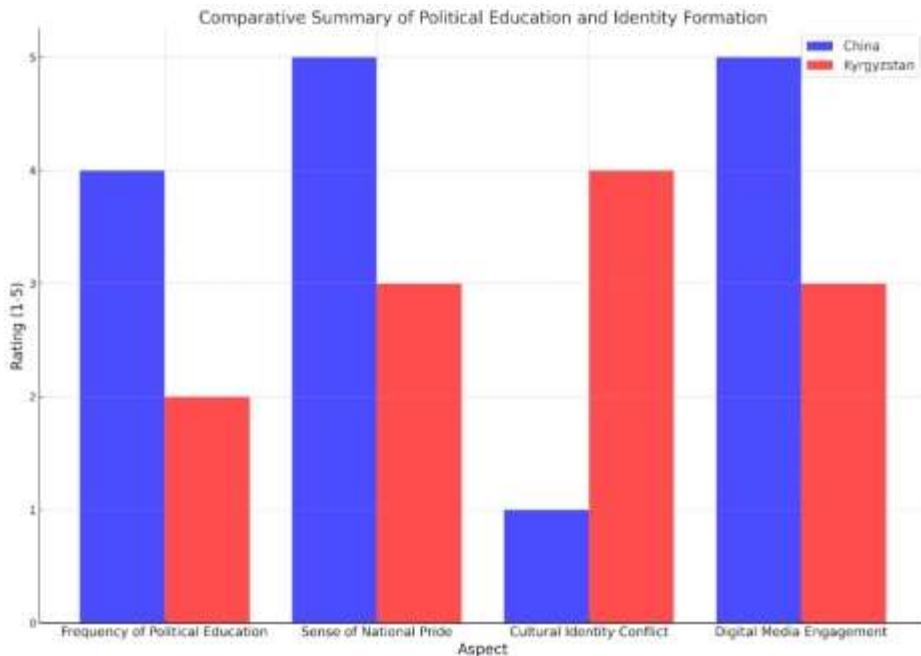


Figure 3. Comparative Analysis: Political Education and identify information

4.3. The role of digital education

Digital tools and media have been critical in the process of involving the young Carting Chinese, residing abroad in political education. In the case of China, digital platforms are inseparable parts of the formal political education sector, which makes them a helpful method of strengthening national identity. The Xuexi Qiangguo app is another illustration of this trend that includes the political content and educational material that is designed to promote loyalty to the state.

So, in Kyrgyzstan digital tools such as WeChat and Weibo have become crucial in political learning networks of overseas Chinese young people, and this is particularly true in instances where formal systems of political learning are in non-existence. Digital media usage enables them to remain attached to Chinese political ideologies and have their national identity even when their physical bodies are separated by the homeland.

Some important findings of digital education:

The Chinese young people have a higher chance at indulging in state controlled digital device activities than youth in Kyrgyzstan where the digital media is used in socializing and cultural affiliation to China.

Digital media also plays a great role in the internationalization of national identity among both groups, yet it is more planned and regulated in China, but in Kyrgyzstan, it is more self-guided and unregulated.

Psychological Impacts

Political education and digital media interaction have serious psychological impacts on the lives of the Chinese youth living overseas. Due to the institutionalized education system in China and the use of digital media, there has been a lot of national pride and unity on national identity. But the same group of these youth even though they have less trouble in resolving the conflict they are having about their identity; as it is being fitted into the society at large; they might encounter a problem with the lack of flexibility on the nationalistic principles that fail to take into consideration the possibility of alternative approaches or identities.

The psychological impacts are more complicated in the case of young people in Kyrgyzstan. The experience of many of the participants involved the sense of identity conflict as they tried to find the right balance between the Chinese heritage and the Kyrgyz culture represent in **table 8**. Acculturation stress was generally noted wherein the youths attempted to conform to the host society without giving up their Chinese identity. Such alienation was worsened by the absence of formal political education by the Kyrgyz state to make it more difficult to youths to feel at home in the local society. New technologies of communication via digital platform served as the outlet of relating to their Chinese heritage as well as impeded in harmonizing their local and national identity.

Table 8. Psychological effects of political education and digital media

Psychological Effect	China	Kyrgyzstan
National Pride	High, reinforced by political education	Moderate, mixed with local culture
Identity Conflict	Low, clear national identity	High, conflict between Chinese and Kyrgyz culture
Acculturation Stress	Low, cultural assimilation is less pressured	High, struggle to adapt while preserving heritage
Sense of Belonging	Strong, high sense of belonging to China	Mixed, struggles to feel connected to both cultures

Key Psychological Insights: **Table 8** show the Psychological Effects of Political Education and Digital Media

Youths in China experienced less psychological problems concerning national identity because the state offers a consolidated story that matches the sense of identity in the youth.

Youth of the Chinese in Kyrgyzstan felt more conflicting about their identities, and had greater stress about the acculturation process because they were struggling with having a dual identity in a multicultural society setting.

5. Discussion

The results of this research can be regarded as valuable data on the effect of political education and digital media on the definition of the national identity and sense of belonging in overseas Chinese youth in China and Kyrgyzstan. This part will discuss these findings in the context of the literature and will make connections with the theories that were discussed in the previous sections, information about the cultural and political backgrounds of the two nations, speculate on the role of digital media, and provide the practical implications of those results.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The outcomes of the present research can be applied to and contradict current theories of identity formation, national identity, and belonging, especially when considered in the conditions of diaspora societies. According to social identity theory, people get their self-identity that comes with membership of groups. National identity an example of a primary group affiliation is applied in the case of the overseas Chinese youth. Our results confirm the fact that national identity can be viewed as an important factor to the formation of the sense of self, particularly in the cases when the individuals are subjected to alternative cultural backgrounds and political ideologies.

Though, our results also disabuse certain hypothesis of classical social identity theory when it comes to diaspora people. The Kyrgyz who were juveniles stated that there was an increased level of identity conflict and acculturation stress as against those of the juveniles in the Chinese, and this implies that their mechanism of identity formation is more complicated. Their dual identity consists in having a strong connection to the Chinese culture and the need to accommodate to the Kyrgyz situation, which demonstrates the limitation of a

type of framework that heavily implies there is only one national identity. Rather, the results refer to the bicultural identity theory according to which, people in multicultural situations can develop and cope with more than one and separate cultural identity.

With regard to national identification, the research affirms the validity of the acculturation theory, especially the proposition that the outcome of acculturation may vary depending on how the members in the diaspora deal with acculturation. To take one instance, in China the youth were more apt to present assimilation into a single Chinese national identity whereas in Kyrgyzstan the juvenile had to face a more complicated assimilation procedure and refer to both Chinese and Kyrgyz identities. This is compared to the model described by Berry wherein the different degrees of integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization of the youths in the diaspora contexts is emphasized.

Moreover, in the present study the construct of sense of belonging was addressed, which underlies the theory about the power of having a strong sense of belonging related to the psychological well-being. The fact that people who feel strongly attached to their heritage culture are likely to achieve greater self-esteem and cohesion backed by the higher sense of belonging to the community in China. On the other hand, in Kyrgyzstan, where the young people had less attachment to their Chinese identity and the host nation, they experienced the feeling of belonging on a fragmented basis resulting in the alienation and mental symptoms.

5.2. Political and cultural context

The Chinese and the Kyrgyz political and cultural backgrounds have enormous contributions to the identity building of the overseas Chinese youth. The role of government in ensuring national unity by introducing politics education is much recorded in China. A key instrument of instilling the Chinese national identity in the citizens is the Chinese education system, including digital platforms and state-owned media, including Xuexi Qiangguo. These media provide the same political message that upholds patriotism, allegiance to the state, and pride towards the Chinese and their culture and history. As observed in the results, the Chinese youth have a tight and strong sense of national belongingness, most of which is a result of institutionalized political education they undergo at school and through digital media.

The case is different in Kyrgyzstan. The situation with Chinese diaspora is a case of multi-ethnic society like Kyrgyzstan, where a minority is not directly involved in the political education market. These results tend to support the idea according to which although Chinese youth living in Kyrgyzstan have access to digital media to consume Chinese political content, they do not receive any formal political education in their host state. This leads to having a disintegrated national identity whereby the Chinese youths in Kyrgyzstan are affiliated to their own identity yet they are unable to bounce back into the bigger social reality. This case expresses the role of political educational work by the state in strengthening the national identity and the absence of some institutional support of ethnic minorities in host societies which may fuel identity conflicts and alienation.

Besides, we cannot overestimate the influence of the Chinese government on the pursuit of political education and national identity within other nations, particularly with the use of digital means. The websites have become a lifeline to the youthful overseas Chinese and they use these sites to remain in touch with their roots and value system and the same is with the political ideologies of China. Nevertheless, there is also a concern of the monolithic nature of the national identity being propagated considering the reliance on the digital media. Especially in Kyrgyzstan when the young people are exposed to various national narratives, the Chinese online content that they watch might not suit the complexity of experiences and identities that these young people encounter in their lives in their everyday life because there is a gap between an ideal

national identity portrayed by the Chinese government and the real type of realities about these issues that the Chinese youths see in their host nation.

5.3. Digital media's influence

These implications of the involvement of the digital media in nation identification and political education are deep-seated especially in the digital era where the thought of borders is getting diminished. This study identifies and reveals its findings about both the positive and the negative impacts of digital media on the identity creation among the youth of overseas Chinese.

Positive Implications:

Digital media provides the youth of overseas Chinese with an avenue of a linkage with the heritage culture, political ideologies, and national sense. The platforms (such as WeChat and Weibo) that allow the consumption of political messages, cultural discourse, and the Chinese news position young people as members of the Chinese nationality.

The digital media can also facilitate the creation of diaspora networks, within which the young people have an opportunity to contact each other based on similar cultural backgrounds; share expertise and also feel proud of their nation. As an example, the Chinese youth of Kyrgyzstan tend to resort to the online environment to communicate about themselves, politics and experiences, and find a common language and purpose.

Negative Implications:

Although the digital media contribute to strengthening of national identity, it has introduced difficulties to the overseas Chinese youth in Kyrgyzstan since they experience identity fragmentation. Chinese digital content eventuates homogeneous national identity without which can lack correspondence with the actual life of living in the multi-ethnic post-Soviet world. The result of being in the situation where we have over-reliance on a top-down state-controlled story is that we might find ourselves entirely leaving out stories to the extent that it creates psychological dissonance where young people are having to come to terms with what they are seeing on online platforms and what is happening in their real lives.

The globalized aspect of the digital media also subjects the young people to variety of identities and perspectives of the world. Although this exposure leads to diversity, it may result in stress of acculturation as the youth struggle to keep up with conflicting culture expectations. The Kyrgyz youth, in this specific case, might perceive themselves as detached individuals regarding their Chinese roots and the local culture as well, since their online interaction with digital platforms cannot be the most effective method of uniting both of these identities.

To recap the presentation, to a twofold extent the role of digital media in developing the national identity of overseas Chinese youth can be evaluated as double agent. On the one hand it helps to keep in touch with the homeland and its form of political thoughts, but on the other it will create identity issues and cultural discordancy especially in a situation where young people are entrapped by two different cultures and nations.

5.4. Practical implications

There are multiple implications of the findings of this research concerning the policy relevant in the field of education and governmental policies to be realized in order to mold national identity and enhance integration prospects of the youth diaspora. Important recommendations are given below:

Educational Policy:

In the case of China, the results indicate that the state would not only need to maintain but further expand its influence in political instruction so as to mesh with the needs of the overseas youth in China. Chinese government ought to think of offering more interactive and diversified political education materials online and also representing the experiences of the different Chinese children living abroad, besides propagating and establishing a more inclusive national identity.

In the case of Kyrgyzstan, there should be all-inclusive educational programs that do not merely concentrate on multiculturalism but also propagate the acknowledgment of the Chinese diaspora youth who experience distinct concerns with identity. The curriculum of schools might include the elements which help young people of the countries learn to live with two different identities, the one related to local cultural heritage and basic national identity based on Chinese culture.

Governmental Strategies:

Digital media give China a more effective opportunity to interact with the diaspora to encourage a national identity that can be considered more responsive to the experiences of overseas young people. This may involve development of locally based content that depicts the situations of living in different surroundings such as Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan can also add the cultural exchange programs that would make the local people and the Chinese diaspora interact more closely. This would assist in integrating and establishing possibilities of common national pride and formations of identity.

Digital Platforms:

In order to accommodate the diversities of being a member of an ethnic minority in a multi-ethnic society, the digital content created both by China and the diaspora community may be diversified. The promotion of a broad range of views on politics and culture through online communication by young people can be found to suppress the possibility of creating monodimensional national identities and help obtain a more nuanced perception of belonging.

Although political education and online media play an important part in forming the national pride, it is necessary to note that the national pride depends on the bigger societal-related factors, political stability, and economic progression. Political education and digital media influence on the development of national pride cannot be considered in a vacuum and such relationships deserve to be examined in future studies in order to better understand the building block of national identity.

6. Conclusion

This paper has discussed how political education or the digital media affects national identity as well as a sense of belonging of overseas Chinese youth in China and Kyrgyzstan. It uncovered that young people in China are lucky to be having a systematic and comprehensive political education system, which has the digital platforms such as Xuexi Qiangguo, WeChat, and Weibo. Establishment of these stages creates a singular picture of the Chinese identity as a nation, and instigates sturdy national pride and a united feeling of identity. Conversely, it is found that the youth of the overseas Chinese community, in Kyrgyzstan, do not have access to formal political education and depend largely on the digital platforms of China to keep themselves abreast with the political ideologies. Such dependence on digital media has resulted in a disjointed identity since young people tend to be divided between their Chinese identity and the native Kyrgyz culture. Identity conflict and its related stress of acculturation were also identified as the key

psychological issues that face Chinese youth in Kyrgyzstan due to the problems of negotiating the existence of dual identities within a multi-cultural environment. The research highlights the value of digital media in nation-making. Although it provides a channel to familiarize itself to the Chinese culture, it also further increases the psychological dissonance of the youths who are based overseas and particularly in nations that have under-developed institutional training in the political system. Such division of personhood may cause a sense of alienation, disorientation, and their emotional suffering, which affects their socialization and mental health.

The size of the sample (the participants involved) is a weakness (100), and the fact that only two countries are examined also leads to bias (thus making it difficult to generalize the findings). Future studies might consider extending the research to take in other diaspora communities, delve deeper into the differences that social media-based identity changers have, and understand the lasting effects of this digital means of political edification on the identity that people form. These findings have implications on policymakers and teachers. In the case of China, the production of more diverse and localized digital product to diaspora youths might assist them in managing their multiple identities better. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, such programs as enhancing cultural exchange and integrating the Chinese communities into the host culture even further may serve as the bridge between the Chinese identity and the one of the host. Knowledge of such dynamics can provide a path on how to implement strategies that will encourage integration, cultural knowledge, and emotional prosperity among the young people in diaspora communities all over the world. Although this study defines some of the factors that impact on national identity concerning political education and digital media, future studies ought to identify other factors, which also contribute to national identity, including social-economic background of the participants, influence of family dynamics, and local political environments of an individual that contribute to national identity creation. Further, this will be validated by increasing the sample and geographical spread.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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