

# Cultural identity, interest coordination, and governance optimization in Chinese higher education

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship among cultural identity, interest coordination, and governance optimization in educational organizations using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, tests of difference, and correlation analyses. The findings revealed that respondents were predominantly 26–35 years old, female, and administrators. Cultural identity was rated as highly established, while interest coordination and governance optimization were generally practiced. Significant differences in cultural identity were observed when respondents were grouped according to age, sex, and selected professional roles. Moreover, all dimensions of interest coordination showed strong and significant positive relationships with cultural identity, indicating that effective coordination supports stronger cultural identity. Based on the findings, a Proposed Program for Strengthening Cultural Identity, Interest Coordination, Governance Optimization, Communication, and Continuous Quality Improvement was developed. The study recommends strengthening institutional leadership, promoting collaborative practices, enhancing stakeholder participation, and supporting continuous improvement initiatives to sustain effective governance and organizational development in educational institutions.

**Keywords:** communication, cultural identity, educational leadership, governance optimization, interest coordination, organizational development

## **Cultural identity, interest coordination, and governance optimization in Chinese higher education**

### **1. Introduction**

The universities are avenues where cultural identity is formed, cultural values discussed and negotiated among students which could serve as resources for institutional success. This involves stakeholders which involves students, government leaders, faculty, parents, industry partners and society. Hence, interest coordination is needed to ensure governance optimization effectiveness. This will depend on the engagement and collaboration among the stakeholders. The ongoing evolution of higher vocational education, particularly in China, increasingly emphasizes the strategic integration of industry and education as a national priority, moving beyond traditional educational frameworks to foster a symbiotic relationship between academic institutions and enterprises (Tang et al., 2023). This paradigm shift, initially outlined in the 2014 Decision of the State Council, has since been refined through various policy documents, including the 2019 Implementation Program for the Reform of the National Vocational Education, which explicitly champions deep industry-education integration and dual school-enterprise collaborations (Liu et al., 2024). This emphasis underscores the critical role of industry-education integration in cultivating highly skilled professionals capable of meeting the dynamic demands of contemporary industries, thereby aligning vocational training with real-world economic needs (Tang et al., 2023).

Cultural identity is defined as the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that characterize a particular group or society, often shaping an individual's sense of belonging and worldview. In the context of higher vocational colleges, cultural identity extends to the professional and institutional values that influence the integration of industry and education, impacting how educators, students, and industry partners perceive and engage with collaborative initiatives (Xiong, 2013). This study delves into the intricate interplay between cultural identity, the coordination of diverse interests, and the optimization of governance structures within this integrated framework, recognizing these elements as pivotal for enhancing the efficacy and sustainability of such collaborations (Shi-mou, 2025; Tang et al., 2023).

Interest coordination is defined as the strategic alignment and harmonization of various stakeholders' objectives and expectations, crucial for fostering synergistic partnerships between academic institutions and industrial enterprises in vocational education (Lu et al., 2023). This involves navigating potentially divergent priorities of educational institutions focused on pedagogical excellence and industry partners driven by many market demands, necessitating robust mechanisms for conflict resolution and mutual benefit. These theories reinforce interest coordination in University governance which often requires cooperation among government agencies, university administrators, faculty unions, and external actors. University governance often requires cooperation among government agencies, university administrators, faculty unions, and external actors.

Meanwhile, government optimization refers to the ongoing refinement of organizational structures, policies, and operational processes to enhance efficiency, accountability, and adaptability within integrated industry-education models (Shi-mou, 2025). This optimization is paramount for ensuring that the collaborative ventures between higher vocational colleges and industries are not only effective in talent cultivation but also sustainable and responsive to evolving socio-economic landscapes (Gao et al., 2020). Relevant to this is the Corporate Governance Theory which focuses on clarifying the division of rights and responsibilities among different power subjects within an enterprise and realizing checks and balances of power and efficiency improvement through institutional design.

Given the globalized nature of industrial development and educational innovation, this study's findings on cultural identity, interest coordination, and governance optimization within industry-education integration in higher vocational colleges hold significant relevance for international vocational education systems grappling with

similar challenges. Moreover, the continuous advancement of technology in education, particularly digitalization and educational software, further complicates these dynamics, necessitating research into their impact on teacher identity and job satisfaction within vocational training (Wang et al., 2024). Specifically, a deeper understanding of how these factors interact is crucial for developing effective strategies that promote seamless integration and optimize outcomes for all stakeholders (Sun, 2021).

The global impact on the Chinese context needs further exploration to fully grasp how cultural identity and interest coordination within higher vocational colleges contribute to governance optimization, especially in light of international benchmarks and the widespread adoption of digital tools (Wang et al., 2024). Therefore, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of these interconnected factors, offering actionable insights for policymakers and educational leaders seeking to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of industry-education integration models in higher vocational colleges. This study further aims to investigate the complex interactions and external effects of digitalization, educational software, and virtual computer-supported instruction on the professional identities and career decisions of higher vocational teachers, given their crucial role in successful integration (Wang et al., 2024). The Chinese community will benefit from understanding how these elements collectively influence the quality and relevance of vocational education outcomes, thereby contributing to national development goals outlined by recent policy initiatives (Meng et al., 2023). Specifically, it seeks to uncover how these interconnected factors contribute to a more robust and internationally competitive vocational education system, aligning with national strategies for global influence and partnership building (Zong, 2024).

The study will analyze the current landscape of industry-education integration in higher vocational colleges, particularly within the context of China's "double-high plan," to identify existing challenges and opportunities (Tang et al., 2023). This analysis will consider how digital transformation initiatives, including the implementation of digital governance platforms and AI technologies, influence these dynamics and potentially mitigate identified constraints within collaborative frameworks (Liu, 2025). This comprehensive approach will not only advance theoretical understanding of vocational education but also provide practical guidelines for optimizing these integrations, fostering a skilled workforce, and enhancing the global competitiveness of vocational graduates (Tang 2023). This investigation specifically aims to bridge the current research gap concerning the intricate relationships between cultural identity, interest coordination, and governance optimization in the distinctive environment of Chinese higher vocational colleges, particularly within the framework of the "Double-High Plan" (Tang, 2023).

**Objectives of the Study** - This study aimed to examine cultural identity, interest coordination, and governance optimization within Industry–Education Integration in Chinese higher Education. Specifically, it assessed cultural identity across cognitive awareness, emotional connectedness, behavioral practices, identity salience, social belonging, and attitudes toward assimilation; identified interest coordination through shared goals and alignment, communication and information exchange, collaborative and cooperative behavior, trust and mutual respect, resource negotiation and accessibility, and flexibility and adaptability; and describe governance optimization in terms of strategic alignment, decision-making efficiency, adaptability and transparency, risk management and resilience, compliance and ethics, and stakeholder engagement and inclusivity. The study further tested the relationships among these constructs; and, based on the findings, proposed an evidence-informed plan or program to enhance Industry–Education Integration practices in higher vocational institutions.

## 2. Methods

**Research Design** - This study employed a descriptive research design to systematically examine and portray the governance optimization strategies in the digital transformation of technical and vocational education and training, with a particular emphasis on stakeholder engagement, policy initiatives, and leadership roles in China and globally. Descriptive research is defined as "a structured and systematic approach aimed at uncovering facts and offering an accurate interpretation of findings. It is especially useful for examining current conditions, common practices, existing situations, or observed phenomena" (Siedlecki, 2019). Furthermore, notes that this method focuses on describing relationships between variables rather than establishing causality, relying on observation of

naturally occurring phenomena. In this study, the descriptive method was utilized to synthesize existing literature, policy documents, and empirical evidence to delineate the current landscape of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) governance amid digitalization. It facilitated a comprehensive depiction of key dimensions such as stakeholder inclusivity (Toepper et al., 2021), policy reforms (Yang et al., 2025), and leadership challenges (Kasmia et al., 2023), without manipulating variables or testing hypotheses. This approach aligns with applications in vocational education policy research, where descriptive designs map phenomena through literature reviews and document analysis (Wu et al., 2022).

**Participants of the Study** - The participants of this study were selected from three higher education institutions in Hunan Province, China, namely Changsha Social Work College, Hunan College of Foreign Studies, and Hunan Vocational College of Science and Technology. These institutions were chosen as they represent the most populous colleges in terms of teaching staff among higher education institutions in the province, providing access to a large and diverse pool of educators. From an estimated population of approximately 5,000 teachers across these colleges, a total of 450 respondents were selected to participate in the study. The sample was drawn specifically from individuals fulfilling the role of educators, as outlined in the study's profile. Selecting participants from the most populous colleges ensured that the sample was representative of the teacher population in Hunan, enhancing both the reliability and generalizability of the findings. Participants were selected according to the profile of the participants. The study applied clear inclusion and exclusion criteria to maintain the relevance and quality of the data. The inclusion criteria required that participants be currently employed at one of the selected institutions, actively engaged in teaching, research, or administrative duties, and willing to provide informed consent. Additionally, participants were required to have at least one year of professional experience to ensure familiarity with institutional practices. The exclusion criteria eliminated individuals on long-term leave, retired, not actively engaged in educational or administrative roles, or those who declined participation or failed to complete the questionnaire.

**Data Gathering Instrument** - To systematically collect relevant data, a structured survey questionnaire was employed as the primary data-gathering instrument. The questionnaire was carefully designed to obtain comprehensive information from respondents regarding their demographic background, perceptions, and experiences related to the variables under investigation, namely Cultural Identity, Interest Coordination, and Governance Optimization. It was composed of four parts, each serving a distinct purpose and structured to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity.

Part I: Profile of the Respondents collected demographic and professional information, including age (25 years and below, 26–35, 36–45, 46–55, and 56 years and above), sex (male or female), and role in the education industry (educator/teacher, industry representative, administrator, researcher, or student). This section served to provide background information on the participants, which is crucial for analyzing how responses may vary according to demographic and professional characteristics.

Part II: Cultural Identity is the first main variable of the study, measured across six dimensions, each with the number of items indicated in parentheses. Cognitive Awareness (6 items) assesses respondents' knowledge of the history, symbols, languages, and milestones of their culture. Emotional Connectedness (6 items) evaluates pride, emotional attachment, and comfort in engaging with cultural traditions. Behavioral Practices (6 items) measure participation in cultural rituals, daily integration of cultural practices, and teaching younger generations about cultural customs. Identity Salience (6 items) focuses on the centrality of cultural identity in self-concept and its influence on personal goals. Social Belonging (6 items) captures feelings of acceptance, participation in cultural networks, and connections with others from the same cultural background. Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity (6 items) assess the balance between maintaining one's culture and integrating elements from other cultures. The items for this part were adapted from Abhishek et al. (2024), Coping After COVID-19, Oxford University Press, and the MIRIPS Questionnaire.

Part III: Interest Coordination is measured through six dimensions, with six items per dimension, totaling 36

items. Shared Goals and Alignment evaluates understanding and prioritization of group objectives. Communication and Information Exchange measures clarity, transparency, and timely feedback within the group. Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior assesses joint problem-solving, cooperative engagement, and support for coordinated efforts. Trust and Mutual Respect focuses on valuing contributions, handling conflicts respectfully, and upholding commitments. Resource Negotiation and Accessibility examines fairness in resource distribution and access to necessary tools. Flexibility and Adaptability assesses openness to modifying goals and iterative improvement in coordination processes. This section was adapted from Chen et al. (2019).

Part IV: Governance Optimization is the third variable, which includes six dimensions, each with five items. Strategic Alignment measures the clarity and communication of governance goals and alignment of resources. Decision-Making Efficiency evaluates timely and well-defined decision processes. Accountability and Transparency assesses documentation of roles, reporting of outcomes, and enforcement of responsibilities. Risk Management and Resilience focuses on proactive risk identification, mitigation planning, and adaptability. Compliance and Ethics examines understanding and enforcement of ethical standards and regulatory requirements. Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity assesses the involvement of diverse groups and accessibility of communication channels. Items for this section were adapted from Li (2023) and Lu et al. (2022).

In summary, the questionnaire captures respondent profiles and assesses three key variables: Cultural Identity (6 dimensions, 36 items), Interest Coordination (6 dimensions, 36 items), and Governance Optimization (6 dimensions, 30 items). Each variable is organized into multiple dimensions with clearly defined indicators, with the number of items per dimension indicated in parentheses, ensuring the questionnaire's comprehensiveness, reliability, and alignment with established scholarly sources.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - The process began with the clear identification of the objectives of the study, which served as the basis for the development of the research instrument and guided the selection of variables, namely, Cultural Identity, Interest Coordination, and Governance Optimization. Guided by these objectives, the respondents were identified as university teachers from the three most populous universities in the selected province in China, ensuring that the participants were appropriate and relevant to the scope and purpose of the study. Prior to the actual data collection, the survey questionnaire underwent a validation process to establish its content validity. The instrument was evaluated by three validators, consisting of two internal validators from within the university and one external validator from outside the university, all of whom possessed expertise in education and research. Their comments and recommendations were carefully reviewed and incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items. Only after the validation process was completed was the questionnaire subjected to a reliability study to determine its internal consistency.

After establishing the validity and reliability of the instrument, the finalized questionnaire was administered to the respondents. Data collection was conducted using online platforms widely utilized in China, specifically QQ Star and WeChat, with survey links distributed through QR codes to ensure ease of access and higher response rates. Respondents were provided with clear instructions and were encouraged to answer the questionnaire honestly based on their own experiences and perceptions. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of all responses was assured. Upon completion, the collected data were compiled, organized, and submitted for statistical treatment. The data were then analyzed, interpreted, and statistically processed by a qualified statistician to ensure accuracy and to support valid and reliable conclusions for the study.

**Data Analysis** - During the data analysis, various statistical tools were employed to understand the respondents' profiles and the relationships between variables. Weighted average and ranking calculations were then used to determine the data's average, considering different variables' weights for more accurate reflection. This method offered a comprehensive and precise data description. The Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to check the normality of the data distribution. With p-values for the main variables under 0.05, the data set was found to be non-normally distributed, necessitating non-parametric statistical methods for further analysis. To evaluate significant relationships among the three variables, the Spearman rho correlation coefficient was used. This method

effectively assessed correlations between non-normally distributed variables, determining the significance, direction, and strength of their relationships. A Likert scale was employed to capture respondents' attitudes and opinions in detail, providing richer information for data analysis. Verbal interpretation ranges were: "Strongly Agree" (3.50-4.00), "Agree" (2.50-3.49), "Disagree" (1.50-2.49), and "Strongly Disagree" (1.00-1.49). All analyses were performed using SPSS version twenty-eight software, with an alpha level of 0.05 for interpreting results. This comprehensive approach allowed the researcher to understand the data set's characteristics and patterns, providing a reliable basis for interpreting and applying the research results.

The data will be analyzed with a focus on Cultural Identity, Interest Coordination, and Governance Optimization to understand how these factors shape the teaching and administrative environment in Chinese university schools. In terms of Cultural Identity, the analysis will examine how teachers' and administrators' values, beliefs, and professional identities influence motivation and instructional practices. Regarding Interest Coordination, the study will evaluate how the alignment of personal, departmental, and institutional interests affects collaboration, engagement, and administrative support. For Governance Optimization, the data will assess the effectiveness of policies, decision-making processes, and organizational structures in promoting teacher effectiveness and institutional performance. Beyond descriptive statistics, the study will investigate significant differences in motivation, administrative support, and teacher effectiveness across demographic variables such as age, sex, and role in the institution. In addition, correlational analysis will be conducted to determine the relationships among Cultural Identity, Interest Coordination, and Governance Optimization, providing evidence of how teacher motivation and administrative support contribute to overall teaching effectiveness. Ultimately, the analysis aims to generate actionable insights that can guide the development of programs or strategies to strengthen cultural alignment, improve interest coordination, and optimize governance practices, thereby enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in Chinese higher education institutions.

***Ethical Considerations*** - This study rigorously adhered to ethical principles to safeguard the rights and privacy of Chinese University teachers who participated. Legitimacy was established by obtaining consent from schools and teachers during data collection. All questionnaires and interviews were conducted anonymously, with personally identifiable information strictly confidential. The researcher provided comprehensive information about the study's purpose and ensured voluntary participation. Potential risks were minimized, and research results were solely used for academic purposes. These ethical considerations ensured both moral compliance and the protection of participating teachers' rights. Regarding confidentiality, respondents' personal information remained undisclosed, except for sex, age, role in the industry. Throughout the study, participants were well-informed about instructions, procedures, and survey objectives. The voluntary investigation approach further safeguarded respondents' rights. Confidentiality was paramount during data collection. Additionally, ethical approval was obtained from the research center at the University of the Lyceum in the Philippines.

### **3. Results and discussion**

Table 1 provides a comprehensive summary of the six dimensions of Cultural Identity assessed among stakeholders in the Chinese higher vocational education sector. The data reveals a composite mean of 3.52, which is verbally interpreted as "Strongly Agree." This high overall score indicates that administrators, teachers, and industry representatives possess a robust and unified sense of cultural identity, which serves as a vital psychological and social anchor during the high-quality development phase of the "Double-High Plan" (Shi-mou, 2025). Leading these dimensions is Cognitive Awareness, which achieved the highest mean of 3.68 and a verbal interpretation of "Strongly Agree." This result suggests that stakeholders possess a deep foundational knowledge of their cultural heritage, historical milestones, and symbolic meanings. In this context, cognitive awareness acts as a directive force, providing the "scaffolding" for collective identity and conferring legitimacy to the professional norms required in joint ventures between schools and industrial partners (Shi-mou, 2025).

Table 1 shows that closely following the cognitive domain is the dimension of Social Belonging, which recorded a mean of 3.55 and was likewise interpreted as "Strongly Agree." This sense of belonging is essential for

forging a “school-enterprise destiny community,” where individual and institutional goals are harmonized through active cultural and professional networks (Shi-mou, 2025).

**Table 1**  
*Summary Table on Cultural Identity*

| Indicators                                   | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| Cognitive Awareness                          | 3.68          | Strongly Agree        | 1    |
| Emotional Connectedness                      | 3.53          | Strongly Agree        | 3.5  |
| Behavioral Practices                         | 3.44          | Agree                 | 5    |
| Identity Salience                            | 3.40          | Agree                 | 6    |
| Social Belonging                             | 3.55          | Strongly Agree        | 2    |
| Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity | 3.53          | Strongly Agree        | 3.5  |
| Composite Mean                               | 3.52          | Strongly Agree        |      |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

This is further complemented by Emotional Connectedness and Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity, both of which tied with a mean of 3.53 and an interpretation of “Strongly Agree.” These dimensions reflect the psychological ties and adaptive stances of stakeholders, indicating that while they are emotionally invested in their heritage, they are also proactive about cultural synthesis. While internal psychological factors and attitudes remain high, Behavioral Practices recorded a lower mean of 3.44 and shifted to a verbal interpretation of “Agree.” This trend concludes with Identity Salience, which ranked lowest with a mean of 3.40 and an interpretation of “Agree,” reflecting the challenges of maintaining cultural centrality within complex vocational roles.

**Table 2**  
*Summary Table on the Interest Coordination*

| Indicators                                | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| 1. Shared Goals and Alignment             | 3.61          | Strongly Agree        | 1    |
| 2. Communication and Information Exchange | 3.45          | Agree                 | 4    |
| 3. Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior | 3.53          | Strongly Agree        | 2    |
| 4. Trust and Mutual Respect               | 3.51          | Strongly Agree        | 3    |
| 5. Resource Negotiation and Accessibility | 3.42          | Agree                 | 5    |
| 6. Flexibility and Adaptability           | 3.38          | Agree                 | 6    |
| Composite Mean                            | 3.48          | Agree                 |      |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the mechanisms used to harmonize the diverse needs and expectations of stakeholders within the Chinese higher vocational education sector. Interest coordination is a critical prerequisite for successful industry–education integration, as it ensures that government bodies, employers, social partners, and educational institutions can create relevant and responsive curricula through a unified strategic approach. The data reveals a composite mean of 3.48, which falls within the 2.50–3.49 range and is verbally interpreted as “Agree.” While this indicates that the coordination framework is generally perceived as effective and functional, the fact that it remains below the 3.50 threshold for “Strongly Agree” suggests that there is still a significant opportunity to transition toward a more deeply embedded and seamless cooperative ecosystem. This general agreement reflects an environment where the foundational structures for coordination are in place, yet practical implementation hurdles continue to limit the full realization of a “school-enterprise destiny community” (Shi-mou, 2025).

The three highest-ranking dimensions in this summary table highlight a strong conceptual alignment and a commitment to operational synergy among stakeholders. The highest-ranked dimension is Shared Goals and Alignment, with a weighted mean of 3.61. This top ranking suggests that there is a robust consensus regarding the strategic direction of vocational programs, indicating that stakeholders have successfully moved beyond narrow personal or departmental aims toward a collective interest. In the context of synergetic governance, this alignment acts as a technique for coordinating providers with various interest-based conceptions to achieve a consensus on collective action (Wu et al., 2022). Such a high level of agreement on shared goals is vital for establishing the “school-enterprise destiny community,” which relies on institutional innovation and a shared sense of responsibility to ensure the cultivation of high-quality technical talents (Shi-mou, 2025).

Ranking second is Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior, which earned a weighted mean of 3.53. This indicates a high level of active engagement and operational synergy, where stakeholders perceive their joint efforts as productive. According to literature, effective collaboration is a core component that shapes the expectations of vocational learning and is most successful when it facilitates student and employer engagement across multiple platforms (Nurhadi et al. 2018). The third highest-ranking dimension is Trust and Mutual Respect, with a weighted mean of 3.51. This suggests that the relational foundation of the vocational ecosystem is strong, with stakeholders valuing each other's contributions and viewpoints.

Conversely, the three lowest-ranking dimensions identify persistent structural, procedural, and cultural challenges that hinder the fluidity of the coordination process. Ranking fourth is Communication and Information Exchange, which received a weighted mean of 3.45. Despite its importance, the lower relative ranking suggests that information flow is often impeded by digital-age barriers such as information overload, delayed feedback, and system heterogeneity (Hu et al., 2025). The fifth-ranked dimension is Resource Negotiation and Accessibility, with a weighted mean of 3.42. In the current “community” model of industry-education integration, the uneven distribution of resources remains a prominent problem, as vocational colleges may struggle to match their high-quality resources to the specific, evolving needs of the industrial chain (Shi-mou, 2025). Finally, the lowest-ranking dimension is Flexibility and Adaptability, which earned a weighted mean of 3.38. This indicates that the coordination framework may still be perceived as somewhat rigid or slow to respond to emerging interests. This lack of flexibility is particularly challenging in the context of Industry 4.0, where vocational systems must rapidly adapt to technological advancements and evolving market demands to avoid a mismatch between training supply and industrial labor needs (Wang et al., 2024; Xu, 2023).

**Table 3**  
*Summary Table on Governance Optimization*

| Indicators                             | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| Strategic Alignment                    | 3.48          | Agree                 | 2    |
| Decision-Making Efficiency             | 3.46          | Agree                 | 6    |
| Accountability and Transparency        | 3.48          | Agree                 | 2    |
| Risk Management and Resilience         | 3.47          | Agree                 | 4.5  |
| Compliance and Ethics                  | 3.48          | Agree                 | 2    |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity | 3.47          | Agree                 | 4.5  |
| Composite Mean                         | 3.47          | Agree                 |      |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 3 provides a detailed assessment of the structural and operational strategies employed to refine the integration of industry and education within Chinese higher vocational colleges. This table evaluates the effectiveness of governance frameworks in aligning organizational policies with industrial needs, ensuring ethical conduct, and fostering inclusive decision-making environments. The data reveals a composite mean of 3.47, which is verbally interpreted as “Agree.” This finding indicates that stakeholders generally perceive the current governance structures as functional and supportive of the overarching goals of vocational education reform. However, the fact that the composite mean remains within the “Agree” range, rather than reaching “Strongly Agree” (3.50–4.00), suggests that while the foundational elements of governance optimization are present, there is a continued need for systematic refinement. This general agreement reflects an environment where governance mechanisms are moving toward a more integrated “school-enterprise destiny community,” yet they still face practical implementation hurdles in achieving full synergy and adaptability (Shi-mou, 2025).

The three highest-ranking indicators—Strategic Alignment, Accountability and Transparency, and Compliance and Ethics—each earned a weighted mean of 3.48, verbally interpreted as “Agree”. The high score for Strategic Alignment signifies a strong consensus among stakeholders regarding the need to synchronize educational objectives with industrial requirements. In the context of vocational reform, this alignment is viewed as a form of synergetic governance, which serves as a technique for coordinating providers with diverse interests toward collective action (Wu et al., 2022). Such alignment is critical for bridging the gap between the supply of graduates and the specific demands of the labor market, effectively fostering a “community of shared future” built

on institutional innovation and shared responsibility (Shi-mou, 2025).

Similarly, the high rankings for Accountability and Transparency and Compliance and Ethics reflect a growing institutional emphasis on fairness and regulatory adherence within collaborative frameworks. Literature supports this by emphasizing the necessity of robust quality assurance systems and clear policy guidelines to ensure the sustained quality of school-enterprise cooperation (Li, 2024; Yang et al., 2025). Furthermore, the adoption of digital governance platforms is increasingly recognized as a pathway to enhance transparency and enable data-driven decision-making, which is essential for managing the complexities of multi-party linkage mechanisms in the digital economy (Liu, 2025). These high scores suggest that the ethical and strategic foundations of vocational governance are becoming well-established, providing a stable platform for deeper integration (Yu et al., 2025).

Conversely, the three lowest-ranking indicators identify critical areas where procedural and structural barriers persist. Decision-Making Efficiency received the lowest weighted mean of 3.46, while Risk Management and Resilience and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity both earned a weighted mean of 3.47 (Rank 4.5). The lower ranking for Decision-Making Efficiency points to persistent bottlenecks in the governance process, often exacerbated by digital-age barriers such as information overload, delayed feedback, and system heterogeneity (Hu et al., 2025). These inefficiencies are frequently rooted in the divergent organizational goals between schools and enterprises, which can lead to a lack of consensus in the decision-making process (Ismara et al., 2020). Furthermore, the scores for Risk Management and Resilience and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity suggest that proactive strategies for mitigating disruptions—such as economic shifts or technological changes—are not yet fully mature. Academic research indicates that many school-enterprise communities still lack a scientific top-level model and an inclusive operation mechanism, which results in a culture that struggles to seek common ground while reserving differences (Shi-mou, 2025). The uneven distribution of resources and the historical lack of deep involvement by some enterprises often result in “two separate entities” rather than a truly integrated and resilient ecosystem (Shi-mou, 2025). This underscores the need for more agile governance models and transparent communication platforms to ensure that the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders are effectively represented and integrated into policy and practice (Ismara et al., 2020; Toepper et al., 2021).

Table 4 presents the relationship between Cultural Identity and Interest Coordination using Spearman's rho correlation analysis. The dimensions of cultural identity include Cognitive Awareness, Emotional Connectedness, Behavioral Practices, Identity Salience, Social Belonging, and Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity, while interest coordination is measured through Shared Goals and Alignment, Communication and Information Exchange, Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior, Trust and Mutual Respect, Resource Negotiation and Accessibility, and Flexibility and Adaptability. Findings reveal that all correlation coefficients are positive, high to very high in magnitude, and statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ , indicating that stronger cultural identity is consistently associated with higher levels of interest coordination among the respondents.

Among the dimensions of cultural identity, Identity Salience demonstrated some of the strongest relationships with interest coordination variables, particularly with Flexibility and Adaptability ( $\rho = .936$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and Resource Negotiation and Accessibility ( $\rho = .924$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

**Table 4**  
*Relationship Between Cultural Identity and Interest Coordination*

|                                        | rho-value | p-value | Interpretation     |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Cognitive Awareness                    |           |         |                    |
| Shared Goals and Alignment             | .836**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Communication and Information Exchange | .855**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior | .842**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Trust and Mutual Respect               | .817**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Resource Negotiation and Accessibility | .867**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Flexibility and Adaptability           | .864**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Emotional Connectedness                |           |         |                    |
| Shared Goals and Alignment             | .701**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Communication and Information Exchange | .819**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior | .788**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |

|                                                     |        |       |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| Trust and Mutual Respect                            | .734** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Resource Negotiation and Accessibility              | .762** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Flexibility and Adaptability                        | .815** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Behavioral Practices</b>                         |        |       |                    |
| Shared Goals and Alignment                          | .653** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Communication and Information Exchange              | .769** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior              | .691** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Trust and Mutual Respect                            | .682** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Resource Negotiation and Accessibility              | .794** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Flexibility and Adaptability                        | .753** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Identity Salience</b>                            |        |       |                    |
| Shared Goals and Alignment                          | .798** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Communication and Information Exchange              | .898** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior              | .812** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Trust and Mutual Respect                            | .801** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Resource Negotiation and Accessibility              | .924** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Flexibility and Adaptability                        | .936** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Social Belonging</b>                             |        |       |                    |
| Shared Goals and Alignment                          | .878** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Communication and Information Exchange              | .858** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior              | .891** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Trust and Mutual Respect                            | .931** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Resource Negotiation and Accessibility              | .915** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Flexibility and Adaptability                        | .875** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity</b> |        |       |                    |
| Shared Goals and Alignment                          | .865** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Communication and Information Exchange              | .929** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior              | .865** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Trust and Mutual Respect                            | .842** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Resource Negotiation and Accessibility              | .892** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Flexibility and Adaptability                        | .839** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01*

These findings suggest that individuals who strongly identify with and value their cultural identity are more likely to adapt to changing circumstances and effectively negotiate resources within collaborative settings. Likewise, Social Belonging exhibited very strong positive correlations with Trust and Mutual Respect and Resource Negotiation and Accessibility, implying that a strong sense of belonging within a cultural group fosters mutual trust and enhances cooperative resource management.

Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity showed very strong and highly significant relationships with all dimensions of interest coordination, particularly Communication and Information Exchange and Resource Negotiation and Accessibility. This indicates that individuals who are open to integrating diverse cultural influences are more capable of maintaining effective communication and achieving collaborative outcomes. In addition, Cognitive Awareness demonstrated robust positive correlations across all dimensions, with the highest association observed in Resource Negotiation and Accessibility and Flexibility and Adaptability, highlighting the importance of cultural understanding in facilitating coordinated interactions and collective decision-making.

Furthermore, Emotional Connectedness and Behavioral Practices were also significantly associated with all aspects of interest coordination. Emotional Connectedness was most strongly related to Communication and Information Exchange and Flexibility and Adaptability, suggesting that emotional ties enhance cooperation and responsiveness within groups. Meanwhile, Behavioral Practices showed its strongest relationship with Resource Negotiation and Accessibility and Communication and Information Exchange, indicating that culturally influenced behaviors contribute positively to collaborative processes. Although the lowest correlation in the table was observed between Behavioral Practices and Shared Goals and Alignment, the relationship remains strong and highly significant.

**Table 5***Relationship Between Cultural Identity and Governance Optimization*

| Cognitive Awareness                          | rho-value | p-value | Interpretation     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Strategic Alignment                          | .870**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency                   | .866**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency              | .870**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience               | .805**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                        | .870**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity       | .799**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Emotional Connectedness                      |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                          | .790**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency                   | .803**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency              | .790**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience               | .744**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                        | .790**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity       | .747**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Behavioral Practices                         |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                          | .708**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency                   | .721**    |         |                    |
| Accountability and Transparency              | .708**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience               | .587**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                        | .708**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity       | .586**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Identity Salience                            |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                          | .898**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency                   | .908**    |         |                    |
| Accountability and Transparency              | .898**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience               | .855**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                        | .898**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity       | .855**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Social Belonging                             |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                          | .853**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency                   | .866**    |         |                    |
| Accountability and Transparency              | .853**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience               | .812**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                        | .853**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity       | .814**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                          | .949**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency                   | .955**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency              | .949**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience               | .901**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                        | .949**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity       | .901**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |

Legend: Significant at  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Table 5 presents the relationship between Cultural Identity and Governance Optimization using Spearman's rho correlation analysis. The dimensions of cultural identity include Cognitive Awareness, Emotional Connectedness, Behavioral Practices, Identity Salience, Social Belonging, and Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity, while governance optimization is measured through Strategic Alignment, Decision-Making Efficiency, Accountability and Transparency, Risk Management and Resilience, Compliance and Ethics, and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity. The results indicate that all correlation coefficients are positive and statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ , demonstrating that stronger cultural identity is associated with higher levels of governance optimization. The strength of the correlations ranges from strong to very strong, highlighting the substantial role of cultural identity in promoting effective governance practices.

Among the dimensions of cultural identity, Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity exhibited the strongest relationships with governance optimization indicators. The highest correlation in the entire table was observed between Attitudes towards Assimilation and Hybridity and Decision-Making Efficiency, followed by its relationships with Strategic Alignment, Accountability and Transparency, and Compliance and Ethics. Findings suggest that individuals who are receptive to integrating diverse cultural perspectives are more likely to support

efficient decision-making processes, ethical governance practices, and organizational alignment. Strong associations with Risk Management and Resilience and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity indicate that openness to cultural diversity contributes significantly to adaptive and inclusive governance systems.

Identity Salience also demonstrated very strong positive relationships with governance optimization dimensions, particularly Decision-Making Efficiency, Strategic Alignment, Accountability and Transparency, and Compliance and Ethics. This implies that individuals who place greater importance on their cultural identity tend to exhibit stronger commitment to governance processes that emphasize accountability, ethical conduct, and effective organizational direction. Similarly, Cognitive Awareness showed strong to very strong correlations with all governance indicators, with the highest values recorded for Strategic Alignment, Accountability and Transparency, and Compliance and Ethics. These findings emphasize the importance of cultural understanding and awareness in fostering governance structures that are transparent, accountable, and strategically focused.

Furthermore, Social Belonging and Emotional Connectedness were found to be highly and positively related to governance optimization. Social Belonging demonstrated its strongest relationships with Decision-Making Efficiency and Strategic Alignment, Accountability and Transparency, and Compliance and Ethics. This suggests that individuals who feel connected and accepted within their cultural communities are more likely to support governance systems characterized by collaboration, ethical standards, and effective decision-making. Likewise, Emotional Connectedness showed strong correlations across all governance dimensions, with the highest association observed for Decision-Making Efficiency, indicating that emotional attachment to cultural identity can enhance participation and engagement in governance processes.

Meanwhile, Behavioral Practices exhibited the lowest, yet still strong and highly significant, correlations among the cultural identity dimensions. The strongest relationship was observed with Decision-Making Efficiency, while the weakest correlations in the entire table were found between Behavioral Practices and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity and Behavioral Practices and Risk Management and Resilience. Although comparatively lower than the other dimensions, these findings still indicate that culturally influenced behaviors play a meaningful role in supporting governance effectiveness and organizational resilience.

Table 6 presents the relationship between Interest Coordination and Governance Optimization using Spearman's rho correlation analysis. Interest coordination is represented by Shared Goals and Alignment, Communication and Information Exchange, Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior, Trust and Mutual Respect, Resource Negotiation and Accessibility, and Flexibility and Adaptability, while governance optimization is measured through Strategic Alignment, Decision-Making Efficiency, Accountability and Transparency, Risk Management and Resilience, Compliance and Ethics, and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity. Findings reveal that all correlation coefficients are positive and statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ , indicating that stronger interest coordination is associated with higher levels of governance optimization. The correlation coefficients range from strong to very strong, suggesting that effective coordination among stakeholders is a crucial factor in enhancing governance outcomes.

Among the dimensions of interest coordination, Communication and Information Exchange demonstrated the strongest relationships with governance optimization indicators. The highest correlation in the table was observed between Communication and Information Exchange and Decision-Making Efficiency, followed closely by its relationships with Strategic Alignment, Accountability and Transparency, and Compliance and Ethics. These indicate that effective communication and the timely exchange of information contribute substantially to efficient decision-making, organizational alignment, transparency, and ethical governance. Strong relationships with Risk Management and Resilience and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity suggest that open communication enhances organizational adaptability and promotes broader stakeholder participation.

**Table 6***Relationship Between Interest Coordination and Governance Optimization*

| Shared Goals and Alignment             | rho-value | p-value | Interpretation     |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Strategic Alignment                    | .805**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency             | .819**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency        | .805**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience         | .690**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                  | .805**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity | .691**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Communication and Information Exchange |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                    | .963**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency             | .964**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency        | .963**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience         | .870**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                  | .963**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity | .871**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                    | .753**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency             | .770**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency        | .753**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience         | .662**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                  | .753**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity | .661**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Trust and Mutual Respect               |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                    | .774**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency             | .781**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency        | .774**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience         | .698**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                  | .774**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity | .698**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Resource Negotiation and Accessibility |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                    | .908**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency             | .908**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency        | .908**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience         | .866**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                  | .908**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity | .865**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Flexibility and Adaptability           |           |         |                    |
| Strategic Alignment                    | .885**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Decision-Making Efficiency             | .885**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Accountability and Transparency        | .885**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Risk Management and Resilience         | .866**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Compliance and Ethics                  | .885**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity | .865**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |

Legend: Significant at  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Resource Negotiation and Accessibility also exhibited very strong positive correlations with all governance optimization dimensions. The strongest associations were found with Strategic Alignment, Decision-Making Efficiency, Accountability and Transparency, and Compliance and Ethics. Similarly, strong relationships were observed with Risk Management and Resilience and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity. These findings imply that the equitable allocation of resources and the ability to negotiate stakeholder interests effectively contribute significantly to sound governance practices and organizational effectiveness. Flexibility and Adaptability demonstrated consistently strong and highly significant relationships with governance optimization indicators. Its strongest correlations were observed with Strategic Alignment, Decision-Making Efficiency, Accountability and Transparency, and Compliance and Ethics. This suggests that organizations and stakeholders that can readily adapt to changing circumstances are more likely to maintain effective governance structures and achieve strategic objectives. Strong correlations with Risk Management and Resilience and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity further highlight the importance of adaptability in sustaining resilient and inclusive governance systems.

Shared Goals and Alignment and Trust and Mutual Respect were also found to have strong and highly

significant relationships with all dimensions of governance optimization. Shared Goals and Alignment showed its strongest relationship with Decision-Making Efficiency, while Trust and Mutual Respect demonstrated its highest association with Decision-Making Efficiency. These results suggest that when stakeholders share common objectives and maintain mutual trust, governance processes become more efficient, transparent, and ethically grounded. Such conditions create a collaborative environment that supports effective policy implementation and organizational performance. Meanwhile, Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior displayed the lowest, although still strong and highly significant, correlations among the interest coordination dimensions. The strongest relationship was observed with Decision-Making Efficiency, while the weakest correlation in the table was found between Collaboration and Cooperative Behavior and Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity, closely followed by its relationship with Risk Management and Resilience. Despite being the lowest coefficients, these values still indicate substantial positive relationships, emphasizing the continued importance of cooperation and collaborative action in achieving governance goals.

Table 7 presents the relationship between demographic shifts and parental education preferences. The findings reveal that all dimensions of demographic shifts are highly and positively correlated with parental education preferences, as shown by the p-values of 0.000, which are lower than the 0.01 level of significance. This indicates that demographic changes significantly influence how parents evaluate and prioritize kindergarten education. The high rho-values further suggest that stronger demographic shifts are associated with stronger parental preferences regarding curriculum quality, learning environment, accessibility, and future educational outcomes.

Birth Rate Trends demonstrated highly significant relationships with all dimensions of parental education preferences, particularly Cultural and Moral Values, Cost and Accessibility, Future Aspirations and Outcomes, and School Environment and Facilities. These findings suggest that changing birth rate patterns strongly affect parental priorities in education. As families tend to have fewer children, parents may become more focused on providing quality education, better school environments, and stronger moral development opportunities for their children. Moreover, Migration and Urbanization showed highly significant positive relationships with Curriculum and Learning Content, Teacher Quality and Pedagogy, School Environment and Facilities, Cultural and Moral Values, Cost and Accessibility, and Future Aspirations and Outcomes. This indicates that migration patterns and urban development influence parental expectations regarding educational quality and accessibility. Parents residing in urbanized areas may place greater emphasis on competitive curricula, skilled teachers, and educational outcomes because of increased exposure to modern educational standards and opportunities.

Similarly, Family Structure and Parenting Choices were found to have strong positive relationships with all parental education preference indicators. The strongest correlations were observed with Cultural and Moral Values and School Environment and Facilities. These findings imply that evolving parenting styles and family structures significantly shape educational preferences. Parents may prioritize safe learning environments, moral formation, and quality facilities as part of ensuring their children's overall development and future success. Economic and Policy Influences exhibited highly significant relationships with all dimensions of parental education preferences, especially School Environment and Facilities, Cultural and Moral Values, and Cost and Accessibility. This suggests that economic conditions and educational policies strongly affect parental decision-making. Families may become more selective in choosing schools that provide quality education, accessible tuition, and supportive learning environments that align with their financial capabilities and expectations.

**Table 7**

*Relationship Between Demographic Shifts and Parental Education Preferences*

| Birth Rate Trends                 | rho-value | p-value | Interpretation     |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Curriculum and Learning Content   | .756**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy      | .772**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities | .844**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values         | .864**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility            | .853**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes   | .853**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |

|                                                 |        |       |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| <b>Migration and Urbanization</b>               |        |       |                    |
| Curriculum and Learning Content                 | .648** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy                    | .708** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities               | .644** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values                       | .749** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                          | .700** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes                 | .700** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Family Structure &amp; Parenting Choices</b> |        |       |                    |
| Curriculum and Learning Content                 | .711** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy                    | .699** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities               | .854** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values                       | .858** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                          | .790** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes                 | .790** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Economic and Policy Influences</b>           |        |       |                    |
| Curriculum and Learning Content                 | .783** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy                    | .754** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities               | .924** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values                       | .868** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                          | .805** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes                 | .805** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Socio-Cultural Perspectives</b>              |        |       |                    |
| Curriculum and Learning Content                 | .776** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy                    | .835** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities               | .947** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values                       | .942** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                          | .892** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes                 | .892** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

Legend: Significant at  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Lastly, Socio-Cultural Perspectives showed the strongest relationships among all demographic shift dimensions, particularly with School Environment and Facilities, Cultural and Moral Values, Cost and Accessibility, and Future Aspirations and Outcomes. These findings indicate that cultural beliefs, societal expectations, and social norms greatly influence parental educational preferences.

Table 8 presents the relationship between economic constraints and parental education preferences. The findings reveal that all dimensions of economic constraints have highly significant relationships with parental education preferences, as indicated by the  $p\text{-values}$  of 0.000, which are lower than the 0.01 level of significance. The high rho-values further indicate strong positive correlations, suggesting that financial conditions and economic limitations strongly influence how parents prioritize educational preferences for kindergarten enrollment in China. Tuition Affordability demonstrated highly significant positive relationships with all dimensions of parental education preferences, particularly Teacher Quality and Pedagogy, Curriculum and Learning Content, and School Environment and Facilities. These findings imply that parents who are highly concerned about tuition costs also place strong emphasis on the quality of teaching, curriculum standards, and learning environments. Families may expect that the financial investment in kindergarten education should correspond with high educational quality and favorable learning outcomes.

**Table 8**

*Relationship Between Economic Constraints Affecting Kindergarten Enrollment in China and Parental Education Preferences*

| Tuition Affordability                  | rho-value | p-value | Interpretation     |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Curriculum and Learning Content        | .852**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy           | .940**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities      | .830**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values              | .773**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                 | .760**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes        | .760**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| <b>Additional Educational Expenses</b> |           |         |                    |
| Curriculum and Learning Content        | .780**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy           | .782**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities      | .866**    | 0.000   | Highly Significant |

|                                                      |        |       |                    |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| Cultural and Moral Values                            | .828** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                               | .939** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes                      | .939** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Household Income and Financial Stability</b>      |        |       |                    |
| Curriculum and Learning Content                      | .833** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy                         | .805** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities                    | .738** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values                            | .701** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                               | .803** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes                      | .803** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Government Subsidies and Financial Assistance</b> |        |       |                    |
| Curriculum and Learning Content                      | .726** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy                         | .765** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities                    | .837** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values                            | .844** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                               | .914** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes                      | .914** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| <b>Socioeconomic Inequality</b>                      |        |       |                    |
| Curriculum and Learning Content                      | .824** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Teacher Quality and Pedagogy                         | .840** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| School Environment and Facilities                    | .797** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cultural and Moral Values                            | .818** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Cost and Accessibility                               | .882** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Future Aspirations and Outcomes                      | .882** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

Legend: Significant at  $p$ -value < 0.01

Additional Educational Expenses also showed highly significant relationships with all parental preference dimensions. The strongest correlations were found with Cost and Accessibility, Future Aspirations and Outcomes, and School Environment and Facilities. This suggests that expenses beyond tuition, such as school supplies, extracurricular activities, and transportation, strongly influence parental decisions regarding educational accessibility and future opportunities for children. Parents may become more selective in choosing schools that balance quality education with manageable educational expenses. Household Income and Financial Stability exhibited strong positive relationships with Curriculum and Learning Content, Teacher Quality and Pedagogy, Cost and Accessibility, and Future Aspirations and Outcomes. These findings indicate that financially stable households tend to prioritize high-quality educational programs and long-term academic success for their children. Families with stable incomes may have greater capacity to invest in schools that offer competitive curricula and better educational opportunities.

Government Subsidies and Financial Assistance similarly demonstrated highly significant relationships with all dimensions of parental education preferences, especially Cost and Accessibility, Future Aspirations and Outcomes, Cultural and Moral Values, and School Environment and Facilities. These results suggest that government support programs greatly influence parents' educational choices. Financial assistance may reduce the burden of educational costs, enabling parents to focus more on school quality, values formation, and future developmental outcomes. Finally, Socioeconomic Inequality showed highly significant positive relationships with all parental preference indicators, particularly Cost and Accessibility, Future Aspirations and Outcomes, Teacher Quality and Pedagogy, and Curriculum and Learning Content. These findings imply that disparities in social and economic status strongly shape parental educational priorities.

**Table 9**

*Proposed Program for Strengthening Cultural Identity, Interest Coordination, Governance Optimization*

| KRA                           | Objective                                                                                                         | Goal/<br>Program                     | Plan of Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Success Indicators (90–95%)                                                                                                                                          | Persons Involved                                                                        |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cultural Identity Enhancement | To strengthen students' recognition and expression of their cultural identity through meaningful participation in | Cultural Identity Enrichment Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct cultural heritage workshops and storytelling sessions</li> <li>• Organize cultural immersion activities and celebrations</li> <li>• Launch student-led cultural clubs and exhibitions.</li> <li>• Integrate local culture and traditions into school projects.</li> </ul> | 90–95% of students actively participate in cultural activities and demonstrate improved identity salience and behavioral cultural practices based on post-assessment | School Administrators, Teachers, Students, Cultural Experts, Parents, Community Leaders |

**Table 9***Proposed Program for Strengthening Cultural Identity, Interest Coordination, Governance Optimization*

| KRA                                                       | Objective                                                                                                                                  | Goal/<br>Program                                           | Plan of Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Success Indicators (90–95%)                                                                                                                                                    | Persons Involved                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                           | cultural activities.                                                                                                                       |                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | results.                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                            |
| Interest Coordination and Adaptive Collaboration          | To improve flexibility, adaptability, and resource-sharing practices among stakeholders to foster stronger collaboration and coordination. | Collaborative Engagement and Resource Mobilization Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct capacity-building workshops on adaptive leadership and teamwork</li> <li>• Establish stakeholder consultation forums.</li> <li>• Develop a resource-sharing and partnership mechanism.</li> <li>• Facilitate collaborative problem-solving activities and simulations.</li> </ul>              | 90–95% of stakeholders demonstrate improved flexibility, adaptability, communication, and resource accessibility as reflected in evaluation surveys and participation records. | School Heads, Teachers, Students, Parents, Community Partners, Local Government Representatives                            |
| Governance Optimization and Participatory Decision-Making | To enhance decision-making efficiency and strengthen stakeholder participation in governance processes.                                    | Participatory Governance Enhancement Program               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct leadership and governance training workshops.</li> <li>• Establish regular consultative meetings and feedback mechanisms</li> <li>• Develop transparent decision-making protocols.</li> <li>• Implement digital platforms for stakeholder engagement and reporting.</li> </ul>                 | 90–95% of stakeholders report satisfaction with governance processes and demonstrate increased participation in decision-making activities.                                    | School Administrators, Governing Board Members, Teachers, Students, Parents, Community Leaders, Local Government Officials |
| Stakeholder Communication and Engagement                  | To strengthen communication channels and ensure timely information dissemination among stakeholders.                                       | Strategic Communication and Engagement Initiative          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create communication plans and stakeholder information systems.</li> <li>• Conduct regular dialogue sessions and community consultations.</li> <li>• Utilize digital platforms and social media for updates and feedback.</li> <li>• Establish stakeholder help desks and feedback centers.</li> </ul> | 90–95% of stakeholders report improved access to information and effective communication based on monitoring and evaluation results.                                           | School Heads, Teachers, ICT Personnel, Parents, Students, Community Representatives                                        |
| Continuous Monitoring and Quality Improvement             | To sustain improvements in cultural identity, coordination, and governance practices through systematic monitoring and evaluation.         | Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Program       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct quarterly monitoring and assessment activities.</li> <li>• Review program outcomes and stakeholder feedback.</li> <li>• Develop improvement plans based on evaluation findings</li> <li>• Recognize exemplary practices and achievements.</li> </ul>                                           | 90–95% compliance with program implementation targets and continuous improvement measures achieved annually.                                                                   | School Administrators, Research Coordinators, Teachers, Quality Assurance Teams, and Stakeholders                          |

**4. Conclusion and recommendation**

Based on the major findings of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions: Respondents strongly agreed that cultural identity was well established among them, which suggested that individuals derived a sense of belonging from shared cultural values and group membership. In Chinese higher education institutions, a strong cultural identity fostered trust, cohesion, and common goals among stakeholders. Respondents generally agreed that interest coordination was evident within their organizations, due to an efficient management of competing demands among stakeholders brought about by successful stakeholder engagement which led to governance effectiveness. Respondents agreed that governance optimization was practiced within their organizations as it involved increasing efficiency, accountability, and stakeholder participation. Based on the findings, all dimensions of interest coordination showed strong and highly significant positive relationships with cultural identity indicators, indicating that better coordination was consistently associated with stronger cultural identity across all domains. A Proposed program for Strengthening Cultural Identity, Interest Coordination, Governance Optimization, Communication, and Continuous Quality Improvement was crafted based on the findings of the research.

School Administrators may ensure full implementation of the proposed programs by providing strong leadership, allocating necessary resources, and integrating the initiatives into institutional policies and strategic plans. Teachers may actively incorporate cultural identity enhancement, collaborative activities, and participatory practices into classroom instruction to strengthen student engagement and learning outcomes. School Heads may regularly monitor program implementation, provide technical guidance, and ensure that all school-based activities

align with the objectives of cultural identity, coordination, and governance improvement. Parents may actively participate in school activities and support cultural, academic, and governance-related initiatives to reinforce learning and strengthen home-school collaboration. Community Leaders may be encouraged to support school programs by promoting cultural awareness, facilitating community engagement, and strengthening partnerships between schools and the wider community. Local Government Units (LGUs) may provide policy support, funding assistance, and collaborative opportunities to sustain the implementation and expansion of the proposed programs. Future researchers may be encouraged to conduct further studies focusing on related variables, broader populations, or longitudinal designs to validate findings and explore additional factors influencing cultural identity, coordination, and governance effectiveness.

## 5. References

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