

From Identification to Action: A Study on the Action Pathways of College Students Practising the Consciousness of the Chinese National Community

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Abstract: This study examines how college students move from identifying with the Chinese national community to acting on that identity. We integrate the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Technology Acceptance Model into one framework. A survey of 423 students in Hubei, China was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). Results show that a positive national identity attitude, perceived usefulness of national community education, high content quality, and institutional support significantly increase intention, while ethical cognition and subjective norms have no significant effect. The model explained about 39.8% of the variance ($R^2 \approx 0.398$) with acceptable fit (CFI/TLI > 0.90; RMSEA < 0.08). These findings extend TPB theory to national identity education and suggest that integrating national community themes into curricula and activities can help translate students' identification into practice.

1. Introduction

Strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community is a core policy goal^[1]. University students are key to this effort, but their diverse values and backgrounds make it challenging to foster these ideals. Existing studies have examined national community narratives in visual culture, television dramas, online audiovisual media, and educational texts^{[2][3][4][5][6]}, yet there is still limited empirical evidence on how students form intentions to act on these values. We therefore propose an integrated TPB–TAM model^{[7][8]}, with six antecedents (attitude, perceived usefulness, content quality, ethical cognition, subjective norms, and university support), to address this gap. Specifically, we address three questions:

- (1) Which factors significantly influence students' intention to practice national community values?
- (2) How do emotional (attitude), cognitive (usefulness, content quality, ethics), normative, and institutional support factors contribute?
- (3) Does perceived university support moderate the attitude–intention link?

2. Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)^[7], intention is driven by one's attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control over the behaviour. In the context of national identity education, a student's positive attitude toward the Chinese national community and encouragement from family, teachers, or peers should raise intention to act, as should their perceived ability to do so. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)^[8] adds that perceived usefulness of educational content is key: if students find national community education beneficial, they are more likely to engage. High-quality, credible content should reinforce this effect. Drawing on prior intention models in higher education contexts^[9], we integrate these ideas into an extended TPB–TAM framework with six predictors. We hypothesize:

H1: Positive national identity attitude predicts higher intention.

H2: Higher perceived usefulness predicts higher intention.

H3: Stronger ethical cognition predicts higher intention.

H4: Higher content quality predicts higher intention.

The proposed research framework is shown in Figure 1.

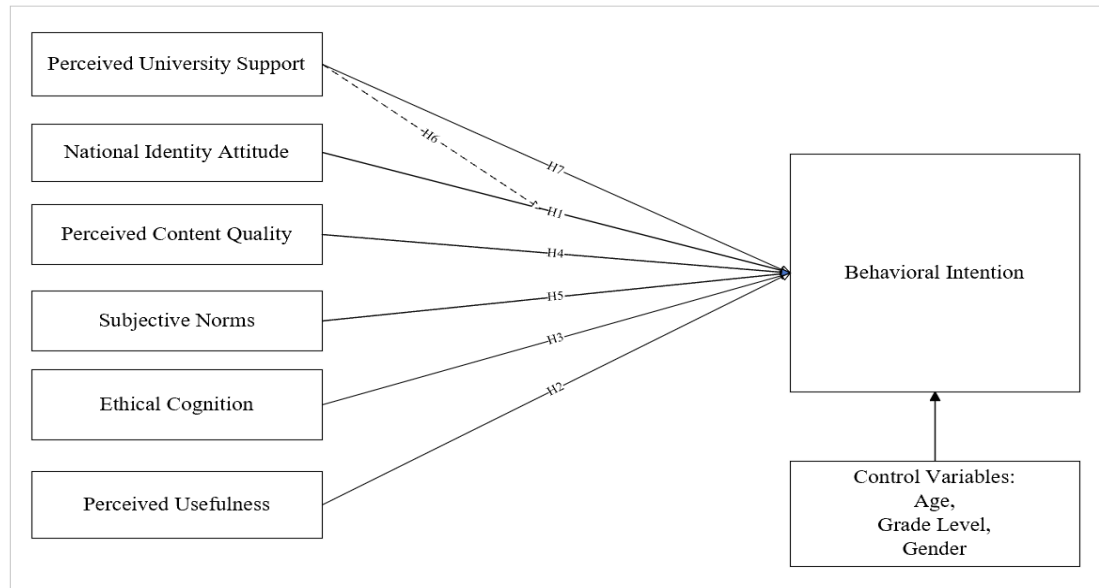


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Action Path for College Students to Practice the Consciousness of the Chinese National Community

H5: Stronger subjective norms predict higher intention.

H6: Greater perceived university support predicts higher intention.

H7: Perceived university support positively moderates the attitude–intention link.

3. Research Design

We surveyed 423 undergraduates (29.6% male; 70.4% female; ~90.8% Han) at a university in Hubei, China, using stratified cluster sampling. The questionnaire contained 21 items (3–4 per construct) on 7-point Likert scales. Each construct’s Cronbach’s α exceeded 0.80 (overall $\alpha = 0.910$), indicating high reliability. Exploratory factor analysis confirmed construct validity (KMO = 0.903; Bartlett’s $p < 0.001$). Confirmatory factor analysis showed good fit (CFI/TLI > 0.90; RMSEA < 0.08). We used SEM (SPSS 27, AMOS 24) to test the model, controlling for age, gender, and grade (none had significant effects). Reliability results are summarized in Table 1, and sample demographics are presented in Table 2 (See Table 1; See Table 2).

Table 1. Results of Cronbach’s α Reliability Analysis for Measurement Items

Variables	Items	CITC	α if Item Deleted	Cronbach’s α
National Identity Attitude	I am proud to be a member of the Chinese nation.	0.656	0.783	0.821
	I identify with the idea that all members of the Chinese nation are one family.	0.7	0.728	
	I am willing to actively promote the concept of national unity.	0.686	0.752	
Perceived Usefulness	Strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community helps me adapt to society.	0.681	0.76	0.824
	The idea of the Chinese national community has a positive impact on my future development.	0.712	0.733	
	Strengthening this consciousness can enhance my understanding of Chinese society.	0.656	0.78	
Perceived Content Quality	I think the content on the Chinese national community promoted by universities is credible.	0.667	0.753	0.818

	The content on university online platforms regarding the Chinese national community is authentic and reliable.	0.691	0.729	
	The information about the Chinese national community taught in relevant courses is of high quality.	0.653	0.767	
Ethical Cognition	Promoting the consciousness of the Chinese national community is a moral and necessary action.	0.667	0.744	0.814
	I believe that practicing this consciousness is legitimate and reasonable.	0.673	0.74	
	I believe that strengthening this consciousness is a rightful responsibility of education.	0.663	0.752	
Subjective Norms	My family expects me to strengthen my consciousness of the Chinese national community.	0.654	0.757	0.813
	My teachers encourage me to identify with this consciousness.	0.668	0.739	
	Among friends, there is general support for this form of education.	0.673	0.735	
Perceived University Support	Courses at my university incorporate education on the Chinese national community.	0.709	0.763	0.837
	I can participate in school-organized activities related to this consciousness.	0.7	0.772	
	The cultural atmosphere of my university helps strengthen my sense of belonging to the Chinese nation.	0.687	0.785	
Behavioral Intention	I am willing to practice the consciousness of the Chinese national community.	0.632	0.707	0.786
	I am willing to actively disseminate its values and concepts.	0.643	0.694	
	I integrate this consciousness into my study and daily life.	0.608	0.728	
Overall Cronbach's α				0.910

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	125	29.6
	Female	298	70.4
Age	< 19	87	20.6
	19–20	233	55.1
	21–22	83	19.6
	22–23	15	3.5
	> 25	5	1.2
Grade level	Year 1	200	47.3
	Year 2	54	12.8
	Year 3	77	18.2
	Year 4	89	21.0
	Year 5	3	0.7

4. Results

SEM analysis showed good fit, with the model explaining about 39.8% of the variance in intention ($R^2 \approx 0.398$). Construct validity tests are reported in Table 3 (See Table 3), and the standardized path

coefficients are shown in Table 4 (See Table 4).

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.903
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	4019.802
df	210
Sig.	0.000

Exploratory factor analysis (seven factors with eigenvalues > 1) explained 73.8% of variance; all items loaded > 0.70 on their intended factors (confirming construct validity).

Table 4. Standardized path coefficients for behavioral intention (N = 423)

Predictor	Model 1	Model 2
University Support	0.212***	0.222***
National Identity Attitude	0.167***	0.166***
Content Quality	0.113**	0.120**
Subjective Norms	0.048	0.047
Ethical Cognition	0.093*	0.088
Perceived Usefulness	0.199***	0.196***
Univ. Support × Attitude	–	-0.055
R ²	0.395	0.398
Adj. R ²	0.381	0.383
<i>p</i> < .05, <i>p</i> < .01, <i>p</i> < .001.		

The regression results indicate that national identity attitude ($\beta = 0.167$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted intention (H1 supported). Perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.199$, $p < .001$) and content quality ($\beta = 0.113$, $p < .01$) also significantly predicted intention (supporting H2 and H4). Perceived university support had a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.212$, $p < .001$; H6 supported). Ethical cognition was marginally significant ($\beta = 0.093$, $p < .05$; H3 not supported), and subjective norms had no effect (H5 not supported). The interaction of support × attitude was non-significant (H7 not supported). Thus, H1, H2, H4, and H6 were supported, while H3, H5, and H7 were not. These results indicate that internal attitudes and cognitive evaluations drive students' intentions more than social pressure or moral factors.

5. Conclusions

Stronger national identity attitude, perceived usefulness of education, high content quality, and perceived university support were the key drivers of students' intention to practice national community values. These findings highlight the importance of cognitive and institutional factors in the intention process and suggest practical steps for higher education. Universities should integrate emotional identity content with high-quality, engaging programs: for example, embedding national community themes in service-learning projects or cultural events to make identity education more relevant. Student organizations or clubs focused on national community topics could further bridge identity and action.

This study has limitations. The sample was from a single region (with ~70% female and ~90% Han participants), and the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Future research should use more diverse, longitudinal samples to examine how identity intentions translate into actual behavior. The influence of digital media also merits study: for instance, how social media, immersive learning, or AI-generated content might shape the cultivation of national community consciousness.

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