

# Research on Psychological Crisis Intervention for Ethnic Minority Students in Yunnan Higher Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of National Unity and Progress Demonstration Zone: A Three-Dimensional Integrated Model Based on Cultural-Psychological Mutual Construction

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**Date:** 2025-06-04T15:10:37+00:00

## Abstract

Under the national strategy of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, psychological crisis intervention for ethnic minority students in Yunnan vocational colleges must transcend traditional psychological paradigms and shift toward the deep logic of mutual construction between culture and psychology. Based on empirical research of vocational education in Yunnan Province, this study integrates the “cultural ecological rupture” theory from psychological anthropology with the “bicultural competence” model from cross-cultural psychological counseling to construct a three-tiered dynamic intervention system of “prevention-intervention-consolidation,” and proposes practical pathways for culturally sensitive intervention in conjunction with policy orientations such as the “Opinions on Promoting High-Quality Development of Ethnic Work in the New Era with Forging a Strong Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation as the Main Thread.” Research demonstrates that through cultural cognitive reconstruction, identity integration, and systematic support network construction, the psychological resilience of ethnic minority students can be effectively enhanced, providing theoretical and methodological innovations for the practice of ethnic unity in vocational education in border regions.

## Full Text

# Psychological Crisis Intervention for Minority Students in Yunnan Higher Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of National Unity and Progress Demonstration Zones—A Three-Dimensional Integrated Model Based on the Mutual Construction of Culture and Psychology

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## Abstract

Under the national strategy of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, psychological crisis intervention for minority students in Yunnan's higher vocational colleges must transcend traditional psychological paradigms and shift toward the deeper logic of mutual construction between culture and psychology. Based on empirical research in Yunnan's higher vocational education, this study integrates psychological anthropology's theory of "cultural ecological disruption" with the "bicultural competence" model from cross-cultural psychological counseling to construct a three-tier dynamic intervention system of "prevention-intervention-consolidation." Guided by policies such as the *Guidelines on Promoting High-Quality Development of Ethnic Work with Forging a Strong Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation as the Core*, this study proposes practical pathways for culturally sensitive intervention. The findings demonstrate that through reconstructing cultural cognition, integrating identity, and building systematic support networks, the psychological resilience of minority students can be effectively enhanced, providing theoretical and methodological innovations for ethnic unity practices in vocational education in borderland regions.

**Keywords:** Demonstration Zone for National Unity and Progress; higher vocational education; psychological crisis; mutual construction of culture and psychology

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## 1. Research Subjects and Methods

This study employed an online questionnaire survey method, distributing a self-designed questionnaire along with the Symptom Checklist-90 (SCL-90) to students at three higher vocational colleges in Yunnan Province. Participation was voluntary. The sampling strategy aimed to maintain balanced proportions across grade levels, gender, and ethnic groups (Han and minority). A total of 1,106 students participated, yielding 928 valid responses covering 50 majors

including Materials Forming and Control Technology, Big Data and Accounting, Fashion Design and Technology, Construction Engineering Technology, and Preschool Education. The minority group comprised 376 students aged 17-22 years ( $M = 19.91$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ), including 170 males. The Han group comprised 552 students aged 17-26 years ( $M = 19.8$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ), including 240 males.

## 1.2 Data Analysis Results

We assessed and compared the mental health status of 376 minority students and 552 Han students across three higher vocational colleges in Yunnan Province. Chi-square tests comparing the symptom detection rates on SCL-90 subscales revealed that minority students had a significantly higher overall positive detection rate (38.3%) compared to their Han counterparts (31.7%),  $\chi^2(1, N = 928) = 4.312$ ,  $p = 0.038$ . T-tests comparing subscale scores between minority and Han students, as well as with national adult norms, showed no significant differences between the two student groups on any factor. However, minority students scored significantly higher than national adult norms on obsessive-compulsive symptoms and phobic anxiety. Additionally, seven key factors affecting minority students' mental health were identified: major satisfaction, recent distress, dietary changes, sleep pattern changes, parenting styles, campus bullying experiences, and irritability, with parenting style being particularly prominent.

Our preliminary questionnaire survey explored differences in mental health status and influencing factors between minority and Han students, which may reflect their distinct cultural backgrounds. The unique folk cultural traditions of minority groups have significantly shaped students' personality traits, thinking patterns, and lifestyle habits [5][6]. Building upon these preliminary findings and previous theoretical frameworks, and grounded in the perspective of national unity and progress demonstration zones, this study conducted an in-depth analysis of systematic changes arising from the interaction between Yunnan's minority cultural ecology and modern vocational education systems. We propose a "Three-Dimensional Integrated Model Based on the Mutual Construction of Culture and Psychology" to provide a new paradigm for psychological crisis early warning and intervention for minority students in higher education institutions.

## 2.1 Cultural Ecological Rupture: A Root Explanation for Psychological Crisis

From a psychological anthropology perspective, the psychological crisis among minority students in Yunnan's higher vocational colleges represents a systematic imbalance triggered by the collision between frontier multi-ethnic cultural ecology and modern vocational education systems, manifesting as a "triple rupture of cultural ecology." First, **cognitive paradigm conflict**: The "contextual" and "holistic" nature of traditional knowledge systems (such as the Wa ethnic group's use of the *Sigangli* myth to explain natural phenomena or the Dai's documentation of agricultural calendars on pattra leaves) clashes with the

“standardized” and “abstract” knowledge systems of vocational education (such as geometric logic in mechanical drawing or symbolic systems in big data algorithms), creating a deep cognitive gap. Our survey revealed that 19.2% of minority students experienced learning anxiety due to difficulty adapting to abstract theoretical courses—a proportion 8.7 percentage points higher than that of Han students—manifesting as both rejection of theoretical courses and apprehension toward practical operations. Second, **emotional expression discipline**: The “symbolic encoding” of emotions in minority cultures significantly influences the manifestation of psychological problems. For instance, the Yi ethnic group’s “tiger culture” norm of “men not showing weakness” subconsciously suppresses emotional expression, leading Yi male students to convert anxiety into somatic symptoms such as headaches and insomnia more frequently. The Dai’s value of “non-contention” derived from the *Payasangmidi* legend makes them more likely to adopt avoidance strategies in interpersonal conflicts. These culturally specific emotional rules create a “cultural filter” effect that increases the complexity of psychological crisis identification. Third, **social support deconstruction**: The transition from a “clan-village” support network to an “atomized” campus life leaves some students lacking culturally appropriate help-seeking channels when encountering psychological distress, forcing them to rely instead on the internet or self-isolation.

## 2.2 Theoretical Synergy in Cross-Cultural Psychological Intervention

Traditional psychological interventions exhibit a “deculturalization” tendency that fails to penetrate culturally specific barriers, necessitating the construction of a “tripartite theoretical synergy framework.” First, **psychological anthropology’s “cultural mind view”** (Geertz, 1973) [2] emphasizes that culture is not merely external symbols but a “web of meaning” that shapes cognition. Intervention must therefore begin by analyzing students’ “cultural-cognitive schemas,” such as assessing the strength of cultural identity and psychological resources through their participation in ethnic rituals (e.g., the Lahu’s *Kuota Festival*). Second, **cross-cultural counseling’s “dynamic adaptation model”** (Pedersen, 1999) [3] constructs a three-tier intervention pathway of “cultural self-awareness—adaptive strategy selection—bicultural competence cultivation.” Cultural self-awareness requires school counselors to understand basic cultural symbols of Yunnan’s 25 indigenous ethnic groups (such as the Naxi Dongba character for “harmony” or the Bai’s “three-course tea” metaphor) to avoid misinterpreting minority cultural symbols. Adaptive strategy selection involves incorporating minority reverence for nature by using “natural landscape healing” as an alternative to traditional relaxation training. Bicultural competence cultivation involves “ethnic language + professional terminology” bilingual training to enhance minority students’ cultural communication abilities in professional activities and improve their vocational adaptability. Third, **cultural psychology’s “psychological field theory”** (Yang Derui, 2020) [4] serves as a bridging theory, revealing how cultural ecology shapes psychological states through the

chain of “cognitive schema → emotional experience → behavioral pattern,” emphasizing that intervention must facilitate dialogue between traditional wisdom and modern psychological techniques within the “cultural-psychological field.” For example, conflicts between the Wa’ s “headhunting culture” legacy of “collective honor” and modern professional competition concepts can be resolved through “team collaboration projects” (such as simulating Wa tribal co-farming scenarios) to achieve smooth transitions in the cultural-psychological field and reduce psychological tearing caused by value conflicts.

### 3.1 Prevention Layer: Advancement Cultivation of Cultural Cognition and Identity

At the prevention level, we propose two key strategies. First, **cultural-psychological mapping during enrollment** involves implementing a dual-dimensional assessment system. Building upon universal SCL-90 screening for new students, we add cultural narrative interviews on “cultural conflict frequency” (e.g., “dietary taboo distress,” “language communication barriers” ) and “traditional ritual participation” (e.g., “ability to sing ethnic ancient songs,” “frequency of festival participation” ) to establish a “cultural-psychological profile” for each student and identify potential cognitive conflict types. Additionally, we recommend foundational bicultural competence courses offering electives on “ethnic culture and psychological adaptation” that integrate positive influences of minority culture on psychological adaptability, such as collective narratives from Yi “hearth culture” and emotional management wisdom from Dai “slow living” philosophy, thereby cultivating students’ metacognitive abilities regarding cultural differences. Second, **cultural embedding of professional identity** involves implementing “traditional craftsmanship + modern profession” integration projects. Majors such as mechanical and electrical engineering and tourism incorporate ethnic elements—for example, mechanical engineering offers workshops on “Yi iron forging techniques,” while tourism develops course modules on “Tea Horse Road cultural tour guiding”—creating synergistic effects between vocational skill learning and cultural root identity. Furthermore, a flexible cultural credit system integrates ethnic language learning (e.g., Lisu language) and folk activity organization (e.g., Bulang Mountain Kang Festival) into “second classroom” credits, thereby strengthening the positive role of culture in psychological resilience at the institutional level.

### 3.2 Intervention Layer: Culturally Specific Crisis Intervention Techniques

The intervention layer emphasizes transformation through nature and ritual for psychological healing. **Ecocultural therapy**, centered on the concept of “horticultural therapy,” establishes an “ethnic herb garden” on campus where students engage in planting, nurturing, and making sachets, thereby achieving connection with nature through labor and effectively improving anxiety. **Ritual**

**metaphor intervention** introduces “hearth dialogue” group therapy, guiding emotional expression in simulated hearth scenes, and organizes thematic psychological activities such as “water splashing blessings,” using the “fluidity of water” as a metaphor for pressure release combined with mindfulness training to cultivate positive emotions.

### 3.3 Consolidation Layer: “Education-Society-Family” Collaborative Network

To consolidate intervention effects, we propose two systemic innovations. First, a **culturally upgraded dual-mentor system** explores the allocation of “cultural mentors + professional mentors” across all departments in higher vocational colleges. Cultural mentors (such as ethnologists or intangible cultural heritage inheritors) are responsible for interpreting cultural confusion, while professional mentors (such as industry technicians) provide vocational guidance. Under this dual-mentor system, we anticipate improvements in students’ academic help-seeking rates and the accuracy of psychological crisis early warnings. Second, **culturally adaptive support from communities and enterprises** involves establishing bilingual psychological service stations in minority communities in borderland areas, inviting “cultural experts” (such as Dai “old mothers” or Yi “Bimos”) to share cultural stories and folk activity experiences, using localized approaches to channel emotions. Additionally, Yunnan is home to numerous small and medium-sized micro-cultural enterprises with ethnic characteristics, such as those centered on Jianshui purple pottery, Heqing silverware, Gejiu tinware, Jianchuan wood carving, and Kaiyuan root carving. Higher vocational colleges can collaborate with these distinctive ethnic enterprises to develop “intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education courses,” cultivating aesthetic taste and channeling emotions through the dissemination and experiential learning of intangible cultural heritage.

### 4.1 Upgrading the Intervention System to Align with National Strategy

Based on the national strategic deployment of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, we propose two recommendations. First, **integrate psychological crisis intervention into demonstration zone assessment indicators** by adding a special indicator for “cross-cultural mental health services” in Yunnan’s “National Unity and Progress Model School” evaluation, requiring higher vocational colleges to establish culturally sensitive intervention mechanisms. Second, **construct a “psychology-culture” collaborative policy toolbox** that integrates resources from education, ethnic affairs, and culture and tourism departments—for example, the education department leads curriculum development, the ethnic affairs department provides a talent pool of cultural mentors, and the culture and tourism department opens intangible cultural heritage inheritance bases as venues for psychological intervention.

## 4.2 Strengthening the Cultural Security Function of Vocational Education—Examining the Strategic Value of Psychological Crisis Intervention from a National Security Perspective

From a national security perspective, we propose two mechanisms. First, a **cultural identity risk prevention and control mechanism** integrates “a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation” into the objectives of psychological crisis intervention through courses on “borderland ethnic interaction history” and “Belt and Road” vocational experience activities, thereby enhancing minority students’ deep identification with Chinese culture. Second, **cultivating “cultural ferrymen”** involves incorporating psychological intervention capabilities into the “dual-skilled” teacher training system to develop a teaching workforce that understands both vocational education and cross-cultural communication, thereby facilitating cultural exchanges with countries along the Belt and Road.

## 5.1 Research Reflection

Although this study attempts to construct a culturally-psychologically interactive intervention model, several limitations remain. The preliminary questionnaire survey used self-designed questionnaires and the SCL-90 to assess and compare the mental health status of 376 minority and 552 Han students across three higher vocational colleges in Yunnan. However, the sample schools were primarily located in central Yunnan (Kunming), lacking data from other regions, which limits the explanatory power of our conclusions for complex cultural ecologies and results in insufficient regional coverage and ethnic diversity.

## 5.2 Research Outlook

Future research should pursue three directions. First, **develop localized assessment tools** covering dimensions such as cognitive conflict, emotional expression, and identity tension. This involves conducting sampling interviews with minority students to form an initial item pool for “cultural-psychological adaptation”; inviting experts in ethnology and psychology to conduct content validity reviews; conducting pilot tests in selected higher vocational colleges to optimize scale structure; and formally administering the scale and establishing norms to compile the “Cultural-Psychological Adaptation Scale for Minority Students in Higher Vocational Colleges.” Second, **conduct long-term longitudinal tracking studies** by sampling higher vocational students for a three-year “enrollment—graduation—employment” tracking study, collecting annual psychological and vocational adaptation data to analyze the long-term impact of cultural interventions on psychological development and generate tracking reports. Third, future research should further investigate the neural mechanisms of cultural interventions (e.g., using fMRI to analyze how cultural narratives affect the brain’s default mode network) and promote regional collaboration



in cross-border ethnic psychological services, potentially offering Chinese solutions for cross-cultural psychological governance in countries along the Belt and Road.

## Conclusion

Psychological crisis intervention for minority students in Yunnan's higher vocational colleges is essentially a process of reconstructing cultural-psychological order within the framework of the "Chinese national community." Through "bidirectional decoding of cultural cognition" (the mutual translation of traditional knowledge and modern education), "three-dimensional integration of identity" (the coordination of ethnic, vocational, and national identity), and "systematic allocation of policy resources" (the resonance of educational, cultural, and social policies), we can not only enhance individual psychological resilience but also cultivate "new borderland talents" who possess both cultural roots and modern perspectives, providing an innovative paradigm for micro-psychological governance in the construction of national unity and progress demonstration zones. This "culture-psychology mutual construction" research paradigm offers an upgrade path for educational practice in ethnic regions, shifting from "problem-solving" to "system construction," and is poised to play a foundational role in psychological governance within the national strategy of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation.

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