

# Current Situation, Challenges and Optimization Path of Chinese Language Education in Russia in the Post-pandemic Era

Hui Yang \*

Faculty of Chinese Language and Literature, Northwest Minzu University, Lanzhou, China

\* Corresponding Author Email: 3014627038@qq.com

**Abstract.** The post-pandemic era has brought to the forefront the pressing matter of the development trajectory of Chinese language education in Russia, which warrants attention from the international Chinese language education community. Strengthening the research on Chinese language education in Russia in the post-pandemic era can help enrich the cases of the development of Chinese language education in the post-pandemic era, and provide references for the development of Chinese language education in other countries. The study finds that Chinese language education in Russia has shown a dynamic development trend as a whole, but there are still challenges such as lack of top-level design planning, lack of local teachers, and unfair distribution of educational resources. Therefore, this paper proposes an optimization path from the aspects of top-level design planning, training local teachers and balanced allocation of educational resources, to achieve the sustainable development of Chinese language education in Russia.

**Keywords:** Russia; Chinese Language Education; Post-pandemic Era; Challenges and Optimization Path.

## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, as a global public health crisis, has had a cascading impact on the world's economy, geopolitics, world pattern, and even international Chinese language education. The world pattern is transforming rapidly due to the uncertain nature of the globalization process, as well as the shifting balance of power among different nations [1]. How to achieve sustainable development of Chinese language education in Russia in the post-pandemic era has emerged as one of the most crucial issues in international Chinese language education research. The tumultuous context of the pandemic has posed various challenges to Chinese language education in Russia. Many studies have been conducted on the current development of Chinese language education in Russia. For instance, some studies have looked at the motivations and difficulties of integrating Chinese language education into the Russian national education system, and offered some corresponding countermeasures to address the difficulties; others have responded to the characteristics and difficulties of integrating Chinese language education along the Belt and Road. In order to demonstrate the current status quo of Chinese language education in Russia, some studies have also examined such development at the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Moscow University, Far Eastern Federal University, St Petersburg State University, Irkutsk State Linguistic University, ect. However, few studies have specifically addressed the Chinese language instruction in Russia in the wake of the post-pandemic time. Therefore, this paper aims to bridge this research gap by classifying the development stages, analyzing the factors influencing the growth of Chinese language education in Russia from the perspectives of political, economic, and foreign language education policies.

## 2. Factors Influencing the Development of Chinese Language Education in Russia

### 2.1. Political Factors

From the perspective of bilateral diplomatic relations, the vibrant and robust development of Chinese language education in Russia is inseparable from the efforts made by both China and Russia at the political level. China and Russia have a long history of friendly exchanges, and their bilateral relations



have reached their best era in recent years. In 1996, China and Russia established a strategic partnership. In 2001, the two countries signed the *Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between China and Russia*. In 2011, they established a comprehensive strategic partnership of equality, trust, mutual support, common prosperity, and long-term friendship. In 2012, China and Russia issued *Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Further Deepening the China-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination for a New Era*. In 2013, *Joint Declaration of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Cooperation for Win-Win Outcomes and Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (Full Text)* was announced. In 2015, *Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation and Advocating Win-Win Cooperation (Full Text)* was released. In 2017, China and Russia issued *Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Further Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation and Advancing the Counterattack (Full Text)*. In June 2019, the relationship between China and Russia was elevated to a "new era of comprehensive strategic partnership." This marked a new phase of major development in bilateral relations. On February 4, 2022, China and Russia issued a joint statement on international relations and global sustainable development, affirming their commitment to developing bilateral relations based on the principles and spirit outlined in the document [2]. In today's world, which is undergoing unprecedented major changes, international relations between many countries are tense. However, the relationship between China and Russia continues to develop positively. For example, in June 2021, China and Russia officially announced the extension of the *Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between China and Russia*, Friendship, and Cooperation, indicating that the level of interaction and cooperation between the two countries continues to improve. On March 22, 2023, the Joint Statement on Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of the New Era was released, demonstrating that the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership has reached its highest level in history and continues to move forward [3]. As an important component of bilateral and international multilateral cooperation, China-Russia educational cooperation has ushered in new development opportunities [4].

From a national strategic perspective, since the proposal of the "Belt and Road" initiative in 2013, it has not only promoted political cooperation and economic exchanges between China and Russia but also facilitated educational cooperation between the two countries. In terms of the achievements in educational cooperation, the number of Chinese students studying in Russia has shown the most significant changes. Prior to the proposal of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the overall number of Chinese students studying in Russia was increasing but with some fluctuations, and in certain years, there was even a decrease. After the proposal of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the number of Chinese students studying in Russia grew rapidly. In 2015, the number reached 28,000, and in 2017, it further increased to around 30,000. The mobility of Chinese students to Russia has directly contributed to the spread of the Chinese language and expanded its influence. At the same time, the Russian government has also provided certain scholarships and financial support to Chinese students studying in Russia. For example, in the 2017-2018 academic year, Russia awarded approximately 1,000 scholarships to Chinese students. In the 2021-2022 academic year, there were 1,011 budget-supported study positions granted to Chinese students in Russia, which increased by 71 compared to 2020. Therefore, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions on international exchanges, there were still over 42,000 Chinese students studying in Russia in 2020 [5]. The Chinese student exchange program to Russia served as a carrier for language dissemination, directly promoting the international spread of the Chinese language. Both China and Russia are willing to continue promoting the parallel development of the "Belt and Road" initiative and the "Greater Eurasian Partnership," coordinating their progress, and advancing regional organization development and the process of bilateral and multilateral economic integration for the benefit of the people of Eurasian countries [6]. The Chinese language will spread to more regions within Russia through the "Belt and Road" initiative, contributing to the construction and development of the country.

## 2.2. Economic Factors

Economic and trade development serves as a catalyst for language dissemination [7]. China and Russia, neighboring countries, have closely connected economic and trade cooperation. Therefore, the scope of Chinese language dissemination has expanded due to the economic and trade cooperation between China and Russia. Scholars from the academic community have explored the relationship between language dissemination and economic and trade cooperation from different perspectives and have published relevant literature, confirming the correlation between language dissemination and economic and trade cooperation.

Ning Jiming (2006) analyzed and explained the value of language from an economic perspective, as well as the multiple benefits, including economic benefits, created by language promotion, with the aim of providing theoretical support for the international promotion of the Chinese language [8]. Lankhuizen (2011) argued that cultural differences can increase the variety of products produced, expand consumer choice, and have a positive impact on export trade. Jin Feng (2016) proposed that strengthening the depth and breadth of Chinese language dissemination is beneficial for diplomacy and trade and can contribute to the construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative [9]. Xie Mengjun (2016) empirically studied statistical data from countries along the "Belt and Road" using the difference-in-differences estimation method, pointing out that the international promotion of the Chinese language can effectively reduce transaction costs between China and its trading partners, and Chinese language learning can facilitate communication and exchange between trading countries and China [10]. Xie Mengjun (2017) collected and organized data from 1,326 Confucius Institutes in China and conducted empirical research using the System GMM method, demonstrating that Confucius Institutes, as carriers of China's cultural "going global" strategy, significantly boost China's export benefits [11]. Li Baogui (2018) proposed that the deepening economic and trade cooperation among countries along the "Belt and Road" provides new opportunities for the international dissemination of the Chinese language. Li Baogui and Yu Fang (2019) analyzed the correlation between the quantitative indicators of Chinese language dissemination in Russia and indicators of China-Russia economic and trade cooperation, revealing a significant correlation between the development status of Chinese language dissemination in Russia and the scale of China-Russia economic and trade cooperation [12]. Kang Jijun, Zhang Mengke, and Li Jing (2019) explored the significant promoting role of Confucius Institutes in cross-cultural communication from the perspective of new economic geography in China's export trade with countries along the "Belt and Road." [13] Su Jian (2020) indicated, based on empirical results, that there is a significant negative correlation between language distance and bilateral trade, and Confucius Institutes and language distance have a greater positive synergistic effect on international trade [14], suggesting that Confucius Institutes should be established primarily in countries with a smaller language distance from Chinese.

## 2.3. Foreign Language Education Policies

Foreign language education policy is an important component of the national education policy of the Russian Federation, which recognizes the importance of all languages and creates necessary conditions for the development of bilingualism and multilingualism within the country [15]. Russia has successively issued various documents, including "Letter on Providing Foreign Language Education in General Education Institutions" (1994), "Letter on Studying Foreign Languages in General Education Institutions" (2000), "Federal State Educational Standard for General Education" (2004), "Letter on Studying Minority Languages in the General Education System" (2007), "Federal State Basic Education Standard" (2010), "Letter on Making the Second Foreign Language a Compulsory Course in General Basic Education" (2018), "Letter on Studying the Second Foreign Language" (2019), and others. Additionally, in recent years, the elevated international status of China and the increasingly close relationship between China and Russia have increased the possibility of learning Chinese as a foreign language in Russia. Furthermore, the "Opinions of the National Language Commission on Further Enhancing the Internationalization of Language and Writing

Work" issued by the Chinese National Language Commission in 2021 also indicates China's intention to promote the integration of Chinese into the Russian national education system.

At the same time, Russian scholars and educators have also put forward suggestions regarding foreign language education. In 2021, Yegor Vasilyev, the director of the "China Education Contact Development Center" project in St. Petersburg, proposed to the Minister of Education Sergei Kravtsov that Chinese should be designated as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools, pointing out that this would help strengthen the connection between China and Russia. In 2022, Professor Baksansky from Moscow State Pedagogical University stated that Chinese businessmen can be found all over the world, and therefore, learning Chinese is an ideal gateway to the rapidly developing world, providing people with tremendous help in the business world [16]. In addition, prominent figures in Russia have personally studied Chinese and expressed their views in public using the Chinese language. On the occasion of the opening of the Beijing Winter Olympics, Maria Zakharova, the spokesperson for the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, once again sent Chinese New Year greetings to the Chinese people in Chinese, and she also wished for the complete success of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

## **2.4. Other Factors**

The friendship between nations lies in the affinity between their people, and this affinity is based on understanding each other's hearts [17]. Cultural exchange activities enhance cultural communication and emotional connections between the people of China and Russia, laying a popular foundation for the dissemination of Chinese education in Russia. China and Russia have organized National Years, Language Years, and Tourism Years in 2006 and 2007, 2009 and 2010, 2012 and 2013 respectively. They held the Youth Friendly Exchange Year in 2014-2015, the China-Russia Media Exchange Year in 2016-2017, the China-Russia Local Cooperation Exchange Year in 2018-2019, the China-Russia Science and Technology Innovation Year in 2020-2021, and the China-Russia Sports Exchange Year in 2022-2023. The organization of these themed annual events has promoted mutual understanding of each other's cultures among the citizens of China and Russia, effectively increased the acceptance of each other's cultures, and facilitated the smooth dissemination of Chinese culture and the Chinese language in Russia, thereby expanding the number of people learning Chinese in Russia. The deepening of China-Russia cultural exchange activities has sparked a strong desire and enthusiasm among Russian citizens to learn Chinese.

## **3. Current Status of Chinese Education in Russia**

### **3.1. Current Status of Chinese Education in Primary and Secondary Schools**

The enthusiasm for learning Chinese, known as the "Chinese language fever," has been steadily increasing in Russia. The number of Russian learners of Chinese has been growing year by year, with a particular focus on a younger demographic, including students in primary and secondary schools. Since the establishment of the first modern Chinese school in Moscow in 1998, known as the 1948 Education Center, Chinese language courses have been offered in more than 168 primary and secondary schools across 40 cities in 24 regions of Russia. There are over 200 Chinese language teachers in these schools, and the number of students learning Chinese exceeds 17,000, with more than 3,000 of them being in higher grades [18]. The number of students learning Chinese varies across different regions of Russia, with economically developed regions like the Far East and Siberia having a significantly higher number of students studying Chinese compared to other regions. However, overall, the number of students learning Chinese in primary and secondary schools in Russia has shown a continuous growth trend (see Table 1). As of 2021, there are nearly 170 primary and secondary schools in Russia that offer Chinese language courses, with over 17,000 school-age children learning Chinese [19].

**Table 1.** The number of primary and secondary school students learning Chinese in major regions of Russia from 2007 to 2017

Region Population	Far Eastern region	Siberian region	Central region	Northwest region	Baltic region	Ural region
2007-2008	4843	3252	2292	508	87	12
2012-2013	5339	3566	2363	766	90	0
2016-2017	7562	5063	3245	1091	134	93

### 3.2. Current Status of Chinese Education in Higher Education Institutions

In 1837, the Oriental Department of Kazan University in Russia established a Chinese language research office. The establishment of the first Chinese language research office marked a shift in the center of Chinese studies in Russia from specialized schools to the university system [20]. The cultivation of Chinese language talents thus became an important part of Russian universities' efforts to train high-quality professionals. In recent years, the direct promotion of Sino-Russian trade cooperation has led to an increase in the number of Russian talents with a combination of Chinese language skills and other expertise. Therefore, Russian universities have been actively cultivating Chinese language talents to meet the needs of the job market, which has become a trend in their education models.

In the year 2000, there were 3,000 individuals proficient in Chinese in Russian universities. By 2010, the number of university students and postgraduates studying Chinese reached around 15,000. In 2017, the number increased to 22,000. As of 2022, the number of university students studying Chinese in Russian universities alone has reached 22,000. At the same time, the number of Russian universities offering Chinese language courses has significantly increased. In 1997, only 18 universities offered Chinese courses, while in 2017, the number reached 179 [21]. Currently, there are nearly 60 universities in Russia with Chinese language research offices. Alongside the optimization of Chinese language learning and research departments, Russian universities have also been continuously improving their Chinese language talent cultivation models, particularly in terms of curriculum design (refer to Table 2).

**Table 2.** Chinese language courses in Russian universities

University	Courses
The Oriental Department of Saint Petersburg University in Russia	Chinese Linguistics, Chinese History
Chita State University, International Information in Law Studies.	Chita State University, International Relations, Chinese History, Chinese Geography.
Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO)	History of International Relations, Foreign Trade, International Law, Geography of the Asian Region, Introduction to China.
Kaluga State Pedagogical University of Humanities.	Modern Chinese, New Practical Chinese, Chinese History and Culture, Chinese Grammar, Chinese Speaking, Chinese Listening, Business Chinese and Chinese-Russian Translation.
Far Eastern Federal University	Basic Chinese, Spoken Chinese, Chinese Listening and Speaking, Chinese Grammar, Chinese Vocabulary, Classical Chinese, Chinese-to-Russian Translation, Russian-to-Chinese Translation, Ancient Chinese Literature, Chinese History, Chinese Economy, Chinese Politics

In recent years, with the close development of Sino-Russian economic and trade cooperation, the demands of the era have also put forth different requirements for talents. "Chinese language + skills" and other composite talents have gradually become favorites in the job market. The talent cultivation model of "fundamental major + language skills" has become an important curriculum arrangement for cultivating Chinese language talents in Russian universities. Practical Chinese courses such as "Chinese language + business," "Chinese language + agricultural production technology," "Chinese language + Internet of Things," "Chinese language + medical care," and "Chinese language + tourism" are also gaining popularity. Russian universities' cultivation of composite talents with "Chinese language +" aligns with the needs of the era and enhances the market competitiveness of local talents. This talent cultivation model plays a promoting role in improving the employment rate of local young talents.

### 3.3. Current Status of Chinese Education in Confucius Institutes

**Table 3.** Overview of Confucius Institutes in the Russian Far East

Confucius Institutes	Establishment Date	Characteristics of the Educational Institutions
Far Eastern Federal University Confucius Institute	1899	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cooperative education program with Heilongjiang University.</li> <li>2. Diverse curriculum offering both regular Chinese language courses and a wide range of extracurricular cultural activities.</li> <li>3. Campus design with Chinese characteristics.</li> <li>4. Abundant Chinese language learning resources in the library, including foundational textbooks, specialized practice materials, and books introducing Chinese culture and history.</li> <li>5. Sufficient faculty.</li> </ol>
Blagoveshchensk State Pedagogical University Confucius Institute	1930	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Emphasis on conducive learning environment for Chinese language acquisition.</li> <li>7. Enrollment of students with zero prior knowledge of Chinese and high motivation to learn.</li> <li>8. Chinese Language Corner for students to learn and communicate in Chinese.</li> <li>9. Strong faculty comprising both Chinese national teachers and local teachers.</li> <li>10. Strong teaching and research capacity as well as the ability to independently develop Chinese language learning materials;</li> </ol>
Amur State University of Humanities Confucius Institute	1955	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Active engagement in academic and teaching collaborations with Harbin Normal University, Peking University, and Beijing University of Technology. Long-term cooperation agreements with Yanbian University and Three Gorges University.</li> <li>8. Conduct demonstration classes to showcase Chinese language teaching methods and expand the influence of Chinese language instruction locally.</li> <li>9. Place emphasis on training for newly recruited teachers.</li> <li>10. Emphasize the design of Chinese language classrooms.</li> <li>11. Establish a research base for Chinese language teaching to explore effective teaching methods through experiments.</li> <li>12. Organize both on-campus and off-campus activities to attract students and enhance enrollment rates.</li> </ol>

Confucius Institutes are cultural exchange institutions established by the Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (Hanban) worldwide to promote the Chinese language, disseminate Chinese culture, and provide education in Chinese culture and classical studies. Confucius Institutes have greatly enhanced the understanding and learning of Chinese culture in countries around the world and facilitated China's international exchanges [22]

As of 2022, there are 22 Confucius Institutes established in Russia. The Far East region, as a strategic area for Russian politics, economy, culture, and military, is representative of the current status of Confucius Institutes in the country. In the Far East region, there are three Confucius Institutes: Far Eastern Federal University Confucius Institute, Blagoveshchensk State Pedagogical University Confucius Institute, and Amur State University of Humanities Confucius Institute. These Confucius Institutes in the Far East region have developed a unique educational model that is tailored to the local context, utilizing their own advantages and incorporating the characteristics of the Russian Far East region (see Table 3).

#### **4. Challenges Faced by Chinese Education in Russia**

##### **4.1. Lack of Top-level Design and Planning**

Firstly, there is insufficient transition and alignment between general education and vocational education in Russian Chinese language education. Although there has been a gradual emphasis on cultivating "Chinese language + skills" hybrid talents, the textbook reform in Russian Chinese language education has not adequately met the requirements of the changing times. The Russian Chinese language education textbooks are outdated and lack timely updates. Looking at the publication dates of local Chinese language textbooks in Russia, there were two peaks in the number of publications in 2007 and 2008 during the 30 years after the establishment of the Russian Federation. Although the number of local textbooks has been increasing from 2017 to 2020, by 2021, only six Chinese language textbooks were published locally in Russia [23]. Most of the textbooks written and published by the renowned Soviet sinologist and linguist Vladimir Ivanovich Gorodetsky, such as *Practical Chinese Grammar* (1957), *Chinese-Russian Translation Course* (1966), *Chinese Lexicology* (1984), and *Chinese Theoretical Grammar* (1989) [24], are still in use. The lack of timely updates to local Chinese language textbooks in Russia has resulted in Russian Chinese language teaching not keeping up with the trends of the times. Chinese language learning materials in Russia mainly consist of comprehensive textbooks, lacking specificity and practicality. Such materials cannot provide adequate support for Russia to cultivate hybrid talents.

##### **4.2. Insufficient Local Teaching Staff**

Firstly, the shortage of local teaching resources in Russian Chinese language education is reflected in the limited number of local Chinese language teachers. The development of Sino-Russian economic and trade cooperation has further intensified the demand for Chinese language teachers in Russia. However, the majority of Chinese language teachers in Russia are volunteers dispatched from China. Due to the short duration of their work, Chinese language volunteers cannot fundamentally address the shortage of Chinese language teachers in Russia.

Secondly, the teaching proficiency of local teachers in Russia is low, manifested in outdated teaching methods, monotonous teaching materials, simplistic and non-targeted teaching content. The number of teachers holding the "International Chinese Language Teacher Certificate" is small, and local teachers lack professional expertise. These phenomena not only highlight the high requirements of the Chinese language itself but also emphasize the urgent need to build a local Chinese language teacher workforce in Russia, cultivating teachers who can utilize advanced digital resources for teaching, employ diverse teaching methods, and adapt flexibly to classroom needs.

Lastly, the research capability of Russian local teachers in Chinese language education is not high, and there is a scarcity of academic research talents with Chinese language master's and doctoral

degrees. The insufficient research capacity of local teachers in Russia not only hinders their own in-depth exploration in the field of Chinese language but also fails to provide research support for the overall high-quality and sustainable development of Chinese language education in Russia. Therefore, the innovation of relevant Chinese language courses and the development of localized Chinese language teaching materials will continue to pose challenges on the path to achieving localization in Russian Chinese language education.

### **4.3. Unequal Distribution of Educational Resources**

Firstly, the uneven distribution of Chinese educational resources is reflected in regional disparities. For example, economically developed regions such as the Far East and Siberia have a significantly higher number of Chinese educational resources and learners compared to economically underdeveloped regions like the Baltic region and the Ural region. Moreover, Chinese education in economically developed regions of Russia has gradually expanded to include preschool children, while economically underdeveloped regions have struggled to keep up with the pace of the times. Consequently, the Chinese language proficiency in economically developed regions of Russia is also higher than that in economically underdeveloped regions. This situation can be likened to the disparities between China's southeastern coastal areas and the northwestern inland regions, remote mountainous areas, or areas with ethnic minority populations.

In addition, the shortcomings of Chinese educational resources in Russia are also evident in the development of Chinese textbooks in different regions. In economically underdeveloped regions of Russia, the majority of Chinese textbooks used in primary and secondary schools are locally produced, but their quality is low, the content is outdated, and there is a lack of coherence between textbooks. Moreover, these local Chinese textbooks have characteristics such as "more printed textbooks, fewer digital textbooks," "more elementary-level textbooks, fewer intermediate and advanced-level textbooks," and "lack of clear grading," which hinders the effectiveness of Chinese language teaching. The abundance of "general-purpose textbooks and a shortage of specialized textbooks" also hampers the cultivation of versatile talents. In the current era of informatization, emerging digital and informational phenomena such as the "Internet of Things," "Education Metaverse," and "Chat-GPT" are constantly emerging. The digitization and informatization of education are inevitable choices to deepen the integration of digital technology and education, and they are important paths to promote future educational innovation and transformation. Although economically developed regions of Russia have made significant progress compared to economically underdeveloped regions, with the use of digital textbooks, the level of digital application is not high, and the scope of usage is limited. Most notably, there is a scarcity of relevant Chinese educational e-books and digital materials.

At the same time, digital technology has not been well utilized in Chinese language classrooms in economically developed regions of Russia, and this is even more pronounced in economically underdeveloped regions. There is a lack of innovative use of multimedia technology to support classroom teaching, which makes it difficult to engage students' interest and hinders effective teaching, thereby widening the educational gap in digital application between economically developed and underdeveloped regions in Russia. In economically developed regions, where there are a higher number of Chinese language schools and students receive greater attention, there is a more widespread use of Chinese language textbooks developed by Confucius Institutes. However, in economically underdeveloped regions of Russia, limited opportunities exist to introduce high-quality Chinese language textbooks developed by Confucius Institutes due to economic factors. The current situation of relying on Chinese-language textbooks provided by Chinese Confucius Institutes does not support the realization of high-quality and sustainable development in Russian Chinese education. Strengthening the development of Chinese language textbooks is an urgent improvement needed by the Russian authorities.

## **5. Optimization Path for Sustainable Development of Chinese Education in Russia**

### **5.1. Developing Top-Level Design and Planning**

Establishment of a Sino-Russian Cooperative Think Tank. The sustainable development of Chinese education in Russia relies on effective top-level design. The Russian government should enhance the construction of top-level design by collaborating with Russian Chinese language experts, frontline Chinese language teachers in Russia, and Chinese professionals specialized in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. This collaboration will create a multi-party cooperative Chinese education think tank in Russia. By bringing together the wisdom of experts and educators from multiple perspectives, the think tank will provide scientific guidance and feasibility evaluations for the Russian government in formulating localized policies for the development of Chinese education. It will contribute to the advancement of Chinese education in Russia. Moreover, based on the foundation of the think tank, research institutions can be established to explore teaching methods suitable for the sustainable development of Chinese education in Russia, taking into account the current situation and demands of Chinese education in Russia. This will facilitate high-quality research outcomes that can support the high-quality development of Chinese education in Russia.

Improving curriculum development is an effective measure to address the deficiencies in the top-level design of Chinese education in Russia. The improvement of curriculum development requires collaboration between the Russian Ministry of Education and relevant departments, Chinese Sinology experts, and professionals in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Together, they can establish scientifically sound teaching guidelines that cover aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, Chinese characters, and grammar. These guidelines should be tailored to the local teaching context, providing teaching standards and regulating teaching practices to achieve educational goals in Russian Chinese education. Furthermore, the Russian Ministry of Education needs to integrate and optimize teaching resources based on the teaching guidelines. This includes designing Chinese language courses that are scientifically and reasonably adapted to different age groups and different types of Chinese language learners. The curriculum should strike a balance between foundational courses and specialized courses, theoretical courses and practical courses, as well as compulsory courses and elective courses in Chinese. This approach will facilitate effective continuity between courses at different grade levels and foster the development of "Chinese+" compound talents.

Increasing the participation of stakeholders is crucial for the positive development of Chinese education in Russia. It relies not only on the guidance of the Russian leadership but also requires the involvement of various non-governmental actors, such as enterprises, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations, to a certain extent. The inclusion of market forces in education can effectively mobilize various elements to support the high-quality development of education. In addition, involving enterprises, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations can mobilize social forces, increase public participation, attract attention and support from the public, and tap into grassroots wisdom, which is beneficial for the sustainable development of Chinese education in Russia. However, it is important to note that the government should maintain a leading role, while enterprises, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations play a complementary and supportive role. The government should guide and exercise macro-level control over the interaction between Chinese education in Russia and non-governmental forces through administrative, regulatory, and economic means.

### **5.2. Cultivating Local Teaching Staff**

Firstly, in terms of quantity, it is necessary to cultivate a large number of locally trained teachers with basic Chinese teaching abilities to fill the gap in the teaching staff, which is currently supplemented by Chinese volunteer teachers. Actively utilizing local universities, a training model for Chinese language teaching talents can be established through cooperation and joint programs with Chinese universities. This can involve establishing Chinese language education majors within domestic universities to train a batch of Chinese teaching professionals and collaborating with Chinese

universities for joint training programs. Local talents can be sent to China to study Chinese and enhance their Chinese teaching abilities. Additionally, a diverse scholarship system can be established. Russia can implement a "full scholarship" system to support local students studying Chinese in China and local Chinese language teachers pursuing advanced studies in Chinese. Chinese institutions such as the China Scholarship Council, the National Language and Writing Committee, the Office of the Leading Group for the Promotion of Chinese Language Internationalization, and the Center for Chinese and Foreign Language Exchange and Cooperation should actively engage in relevant cooperative exchange programs. They can dispatch professionals in relevant fields to Russia as Chinese language volunteers or send international Chinese language teachers to teach in Russia. These professionals should receive subsidies and benefits. Simultaneously, they can conduct promotional activities in cooperation with domestic universities to help students who are interested in teaching Chinese as a foreign language understand relevant policies, address their concerns, and encourage them to actively participate in Chinese language promotion in Russia. Moreover, the quotas for Chinese language volunteers and international Chinese language teachers going to Russia can be increased.

Secondly, it is important to establish Chinese teacher professional competence standards that align with the needs of Chinese language education in Russia. Teacher professional standards serve as an important basis for the professional development of the teaching staff, providing specific and measurable indicators for teachers' instructional activities and significantly enhancing the quality of Chinese language education [25]. Reference can be made to the "Chinese Language Proficiency Scales for Speakers of Other Languages" to develop specific Chinese teacher professional competence standards tailored to Russia's context and improve the teacher qualification certification system. Furthermore, training on multimedia technology should be provided to Russian Chinese language teachers to enhance their ability to incorporate multimedia tools into classroom instruction. Upgrading teaching hardware equipment and diversifying teaching aids are also crucial. Chinese language teaching experts can be engaged to provide guidance and assistance to Russian Chinese language teachers, focusing on classroom teaching methods and content, and fostering an awareness of using various teaching techniques such as audio, video, and images. Collaboration between Russian Chinese textbook authors and market software developers can be encouraged to develop educational apps that support Chinese language teaching. Additionally, the introduction of Chinese language teaching apps from China, such as the "JUZI Chinese" app developed by the Commercial Press and Professor Yang Yuling's team at Beijing Language and Culture University, could be considered.

Lastly, it is important to cultivate different types of local Chinese language education talents. These talents can be categorized into teaching-oriented Chinese language education talents, research-oriented Chinese language education talents, general Chinese language education talents, specialized Chinese language education talents, and interdisciplinary Chinese language education talents. Each type of talent should have its own training program to develop a diverse pool of Chinese language education teachers specialized in different fields.

### **5.3. Balanced Distribution of Educational Resources**

Firstly, in response to the shortcomings of Chinese teaching materials in Russia, a teaching resource repository should be established in collaboration with Chinese Confucius Institutes and the Center for Chinese-foreign Language Exchange. This repository should include high-quality electronic Chinese teaching materials, specialized teaching books, teaching references, literature, live teaching sessions by Chinese language experts, and online Chinese classrooms, enabling the sharing of quality Chinese teaching resources. Furthermore, it is necessary to call on local frontline educators to develop up-to-date, interesting, and targeted teaching materials that align with the specific conditions of Chinese language education in Russia. Chinese language education experts from China and local Chinese language experts should collaborate and provide guidance and suggestions for the development of these materials.

Secondly, it is necessary to strengthen the development of the local educational metaverse in Russia to narrow the gap in the distribution of educational resources across different regions. The metaverse, as described by Matthew Ball, is a vibrant internet ecosystem that combines software and hardware infrastructure to create highly immersive social networks (Kinsner, 2021) [26]. The breakthrough features of the metaverse can overcome objective factors that hinder education, such as spatial and temporal boundaries, relationships between educational stakeholders, and barriers to communication among learners. It can provide learners with virtual classrooms, immersive learning experiences, virtual learning platforms, and training that may be challenging to conduct offline, thus facilitating educational scenarios. For example, the joint development of the first Chinese international Chinese education metaverse in China by East China Normal University and Shanghai Sanda University allows for immersive Chinese language teaching through interactive gaming settings and virtual Chinese smart classrooms with features like PPT playback. Russia can consider introducing Chinese educational metaverses or develop its own metaverse specifically tailored to Chinese language education in Russia. However, when embracing this emerging concept of the metaverse, it is important to approach it critically, with a focus on realism, human-centeredness, and the exploration of the mutual promotion of education and the metaverse [27].

## 6. Summary

This article focuses on the research of the current development status of Chinese education in Russia in the post-pandemic era. By reviewing the development overview of Chinese education in different periods in Russia, analyzing the factors influencing the development of Chinese education in Russia, and exploring the current development status of Chinese education in primary and secondary schools, universities, and Confucius Institutes, this study aims to propose optimization measures in three aspects: improving top-level design and planning, cultivating local teaching personnel, and balancing the distribution of educational resources, in order to address the real challenges and development difficulties facing Chinese education in Russia. The goal is to provide references for resolving the conflicts between the increasing demand for Chinese language learning and the shortcomings of Chinese education in Russia. Furthermore, this paper can facilitate the integration of Chinese education into the Russian national education system, achieve sustainable development of Chinese education in Russia, and elevate the country's international status and influence.

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