

# A Study on Cultivating Intercultural Communication Competence of Students at Beijing Hospitality Institute Based on the Evaluation Standards of the Intercultural Competence Competition

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**Abstract:** This study examines the current state and challenges in cultivating intercultural communication competence among students at Beijing Hospitality Institute in the context of globalization, and proposes corresponding improvement strategies. With the advancement of economic globalization, intercultural communication competence has increasingly become crucial for international business and career development. As a base for nurturing international hospitality management talents, enhancing the intercultural communication competence of BHI students is particularly important. However, shortcomings in areas such as English proficiency, curriculum design, teaching materials, and faculty allocation have hindered the development of students' intercultural communication competence. By analyzing the evaluation standards of the "FLTRP Cup" Intercultural Competence Competition for university students, this article proposes a training plan that includes cultural knowledge, emotional attitude, and behavioral skills. It aims to comprehensively improve students' intercultural communication competence through curriculum reform, international exchange, and simulated practice, to meet the professional demands of the globalized hospitality industry.

**Keywords:** intercultural communication competence, intercultural competence competition, evaluation standards

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## Introduction

With the deepening of economic globalization and the widespread use of the internet, the frequency of communication between people from different countries and language backgrounds has gradually increased. Intercultural communication refers to the process of information exchange and interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds through verbal and non-verbal means<sup>[1]</sup>. In today's rapidly accelerating globalization, the importance of intercultural communication is increasingly evident. It is not only a key factor for success in international business, diplomacy, and tourism but also an essential core competency for university students' future career development. The *Guidelines for College English Teaching* clearly state that from the perspective of the humanistic nature of foreign language education and the core literacy of foreign language disciplines, the cultivation of intercultural competence is an important goal of foreign language education.<sup>[2]</sup> These guidelines provide direction and standards for foreign language teaching in universities, emphasizing the importance of intercultural competence in comprehensive quality education. The national Intercultural

Competence Competition for college students, organized by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, provides an excellent platform for enhancing students' practical application abilities in intercultural communication. As a cradle for cultivating international general service industry management talents, the intercultural communication competence of students at Beijing Hospitality Institute (BHI) is highly regarded in the industry. However, there are still some shortcomings in BHI students' intercultural communication competence, including a disconnect between theory and practice and insufficient practical application abilities. This paper will analyze the current state of intercultural communication competence cultivation among BHI students, explore existing problems, and propose feasible training programs to enhance students' intercultural communication competence, laying a solid foundation for their future career development.

## **1. Introduction to the "FLTRP Cup" National Intercultural Competence Contest for College Students**

The "FLTRP Cup" National Intercultural Competence Contest for College Students aims to enhance the effectiveness of English teaching in universities by creating a competitive platform. It also seeks to promote the development and improvement of English teaching practices. Guided by the principles of "competition for teaching, learning, and construction," the contest aims to strengthen students' intercultural awareness and cultivate their ability to analyze and solve problems from the perspective of cultural differences. The main competition events include sharing cultural stories, developing and analyzing cross-cultural conflict cases, cultural knowledge quizzes, situational commentaries, and narrating Chinese stories.

The evaluation criteria for the "FLTRP Cup" National Intercultural Competence Contest for College Students mainly include three aspects: cultural knowledge assessment, emotional attitude assessment, and behavioral skills assessment. Cultural knowledge assessment focuses on evaluating participants' understanding of foreign cultures and Chinese culture, including history, traditional culture, values, customs, philosophical thoughts, contemporary national conditions, and more. Emotional attitude assessment emphasizes participants' self-awareness in cross-cultural communication, as well as their expressions of national identity, global perspective, and international understanding. Behavioral skills assessment focuses on participants' performance in cross-cultural communication, including communication skills, conflict management, and reflective evaluation abilities. These evaluation criteria aim to comprehensively cultivate and assess participants' cross-cultural communication skills, supporting their career development in hotel management and other fields within the context of globalization<sup>[3]</sup>.

## **2. The current status of intercultural competence development at Beijing Hospitality Institute**

Students at Beijing Hospitality Institute show significant deficiencies in their English proficiency. This gap not only affects their language expression abilities but also limits their effectiveness in cross-cultural communication. English, as a globally recognized language, holds particular importance in the globalized hospitality industry. Many students enter the institute with low levels of English proficiency, making it difficult for them to engage in basic daily interactions and professional communication. This foundational gap is evident not only in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills but also in their understanding of English cultural backgrounds and norms. Such circumstances severely restrict the development and enhancement of students' intercultural communication abilities.

In terms of curriculum design, lower-level students at Beijing Hospitality Institute lack courses focused on cross-cultural communication. This results in a deficiency in cultivating cross-cultural awareness and skills during the early stages of their enrollment, hindering the establishment of necessary intercultural communication capabilities. English courses in the first and second years primarily emphasize foundational and industry-specific English, neglecting systematic development of cross-cultural communication skills. This curriculum flaw restricts students' growth in intercultural communication abilities, making it challenging for them to achieve satisfactory results in subsequent studies and practical applications. While some cross-cultural communication content has been added to advanced English courses in the fourth

year, the quantity and scheduling of these courses remain inadequate to meet students' needs for in-depth learning and practical application. This inadequacy in curriculum design results in students lacking essential cross-cultural communication skills as they prepare to enter internships and the job market, making it difficult for them to navigate complex international work environments effectively.

English communication skills and cross-cultural communication abilities are particularly crucial in the hotel industry. Modern hotel management demands that professionals possess not only solid professional skills but also excellent English communication and cross-cultural communication abilities<sup>[4]</sup>. Proficiency in English not only enhances service quality but also enables effective handling of guests' needs from diverse cultural backgrounds, thereby improving customer satisfaction. Therefore, Beijing Hospitality Institute places high importance on cultivating students' English proficiency and cross-cultural communication skills, striving to enhance their overall competence through various measures. To improve students' English proficiency and cross-cultural communication skills, Beijing Hospitality Institute has introduced advanced English courses taught by foreign teachers. These foreign instructors bring rich experience in language teaching and impart concepts and habits from different cultural backgrounds to students. This teaching approach not only enhances students' English proficiency but also strengthens their understanding of and adaptability to diverse cultures. Through real language environments and experiences in cross-cultural communication, foreign teachers help students master cross-cultural communication skills more effectively, providing crucial support for their future careers.

In general, Beijing Hospitality Institute faces certain shortcomings in cultivating cross-cultural competencies but is continually striving to improve. By optimizing curriculum design, bringing in foreign instructors, and enhancing practical experiences, the institute aims to provide students with comprehensive training in cross-cultural communication skills. These efforts are geared towards helping students excel in the globalized hotel industry.

### **3. Problems in cultivating intercultural communication competence at Beijing Hospitality Institute**

#### **3.1 Students generally lack sufficient awareness of intercultural communication**

At Beijing Hospitality Institute, students generally lack sufficient awareness of intercultural communication. This manifests primarily in two aspects: First, students have insufficient awareness of the importance of intercultural communication. Many students' understanding of intercultural communication is superficial, failing to delve into the behavior patterns and communication styles of different cultural backgrounds, thus making effective communication and cooperation difficult. Second, students lack proactivity and flexibility in actual communication. Many students focus too much on rote memorization of language knowledge rather than deeply understanding and applying intercultural communication skills. This results in poor performance in real intercultural communication, making it difficult to effectively resolve and prevent cultural misunderstandings and conflicts, thereby affecting the quality of communication. For example, during international hotel internships, students may inadvertently cause misunderstandings and conflicts with guests from different cultural backgrounds due to a lack of understanding of others' cultural customs, thereby affecting the smoothness of service.

#### **3.2 The existing textbooks lack sufficient coverage about intercultural communication**

The existing textbooks lack sufficient coverage in the area of intercultural communication, which is another major constraint on improving students' intercultural competence. Most textbook content focuses primarily on language skills and professional knowledge, with limited introduction to intercultural communication skills and cultural differences. They fail to delve deeply into the complexities and diversities of different cultural backgrounds. For example, the English word "undress" typically means "not wearing clothes," but in a hotel context, it could refer to a specific service request, such as a guest wanting to serve honey-glazed chicken breasts themselves might say, "Would you please serve the chicken undress?" If students are unaware of this specific meaning in different contexts, it can lead to misunderstandings and potentially embarrassing situations. Teachers should use specific examples in teaching to help students understand the multiple

meanings of such vocabulary in different cultural contexts, thereby enhancing their intercultural communication skills. This lack of coverage in textbooks makes it difficult for students to systematically learn and master relevant theories and practical skills in intercultural communication, hindering their ability to flexibly apply them in real-world scenarios. Furthermore, the cultural cases and background knowledge covered in existing textbooks are relatively narrow and do not fully reflect the diverse cultural characteristics in the context of globalization.

### **3.3 Challenges in faculty staffing**

The challenge in faculty staffing is also a significant issue faced by the Beijing Hospitality Institute in the cultivation of intercultural communication skills. Firstly, there is a limited number of teachers within the institute who possess rich experience and expertise in intercultural communication. Despite the introduction of foreign teachers, the overall strength of the faculty remains insufficient to comprehensively cover all courses related to intercultural communication. Secondly, some teachers lack sufficient training and practical experience in teaching intercultural communication. Currently, among the 8 teachers in the Foreign Languages Department, none have a background in intercultural communication, therefore they are unable to provide high-quality guidance and support to students. This deficiency in faculty resources directly impacts teaching effectiveness and the development of students' intercultural communication abilities.

## **4. Strategies for cultivating students' intercultural communication skills based on evaluation criteria from intercultural competence contests**

To enhance the cross-cultural communication skills of students at Beijing Hospitality Institute and help them achieve outstanding performance in competitions, improvements can be made based on the evaluation criteria of the "FLTRP Cup" National Intercultural Competence Contest for College Students. These improvements should focus on cultural knowledge assessment, emotional attitude evaluation, and behavioral skills assessment.

### **4.1 Cultural knowledge assessment**

In terms of cultural knowledge assessment, it is recommended to enhance the study of Chinese traditional and Western cultural foundations within advanced English courses at Beijing Hospitality Institute. The course content should include Chinese traditional festivals such as the Spring Festival and Western holidays like Christmas. Through authentic language materials such as relevant literary works or historical documents, students can gain insights into the latest developments in the hospitality industry both domestically and internationally. For instance, by analyzing the differences in wedding ceremonies between Chinese and Western cultures, students can understand varying cultural perspectives on celebratory events, thereby enabling them to offer more professional services to future international clients. This approach not only aids students in language mastery but also enhances their sensitivity and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **4.2 Emotional and attitudinal assessment**

In terms of emotional and attitudinal assessment, the institute should encourage students to actively participate in cross-cultural exchange activities to cultivate an open and inclusive attitude. It is beneficial to motivate students to engage in international study tours organized by the institute and collaborate on projects with foreign students. Through these activities, students can deeply experience cultures from different countries and regions, enhancing their understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures. For example, encouraging exchange students to participate in local international cultural festivals, where they can showcase Chinese traditional handicrafts or perform traditional Chinese music and dance, not only effectively promotes Chinese culture and fosters global recognition of Chinese cultural identity but also provides firsthand understanding and experience of different cultures worldwide. Such practical activities help students to develop themselves in authentic cross-cultural contexts, strengthening their cultural confidence and global perspectives.

### **4.3 Behavioral skills assessment**

In terms of behavioral skills assessment, it is recommended to introduce simulated practical training in the Hotel

Practical English course, allowing students to engage in role-playing in simulated international hotel environments. Through scenarios such as receiving foreign guests and managing cross-cultural conflicts, students can enhance their communication skills, conflict management abilities, and cross-cultural adaptation skills. For example, students can learn in simulated scenarios how to respect and accommodate guests' cultural customs through language and behavior, effectively improving service quality and customer satisfaction. Specific training may include students role-playing as hotel staff, facing guests from diverse cultural backgrounds, and learning how to handle communication challenges and potential conflicts between different cultures.

By comprehensively cultivating cultural knowledge, emotional attitudes, and behavioral skills, students at Beijing Hospitality Institute will significantly enhance their cross-cultural communication abilities. This not only lays a solid foundation for successfully addressing various cultural challenges in an internationalized hotel management environment but also provides strong assurance for cultivating hotel management professionals with international competitiveness.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, cross-cultural communication skills play a crucial role in the career development of students at Beijing Hospitality Institute. Through systematic course design and rich practical activities, students not only enhance their language skills but also gain in-depth understanding of values and behavioral patterns across different cultural backgrounds. The institute integrates Chinese and Western cultural knowledge into its curriculum, encourages student participation in international exchange activities, and fosters practical operational skills through simulation training, thereby comprehensively enhancing students' cross-cultural communication abilities.

## Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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