

# Exploration of the Cultivation Path for Intercultural Communication Competence of Hotel Management Talents with International Perspectives

Wenhui Wang\*

China University of Labor Relations, Beijing 100048, China

*\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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**Abstract:** With the acceleration of globalization, the global layout of hotel groups has continued to deepen, leading to an increasingly urgent demand for hotel management talents with international perspectives and intercultural communication competence. Currently, in the talent training of hotel management majors in China, there are problems such as an imperfect intercultural curriculum system, traditional and single teaching methods, a disconnection between practical links and international scenarios, insufficient intercultural experience and competence of teachers, and an incomplete evaluation system. These issues result in graduates struggling to meet the work requirements of the international hotel industry. Based on intercultural communication theory and the characteristics of hotel management majors, this paper defines the core dimensions of intercultural communication competence for talents with international perspectives, analyzes the current training status and bottlenecks, and explores the cultivation path from five aspects: curriculum system reconstruction, teaching method innovation, practical platform construction, teacher team development, and evaluation system optimization. The aim is to assist the industry in cultivating high-quality talents that meet international standards.

**Keywords:** Hotel management major; International perspective; Intercultural communication competence; Cultivation path

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## 1. Introduction

In the process of globalization, the hotel industry has demonstrated distinct characteristics of “transnational operation and cultural integration”, with an increasing number of international hotel groups expanding their presence in China. Faced with the increasingly complex and diverse overseas source markets, the hotel

industry must attach importance to integrating standardized services with different cultural backgrounds to provide personalized and high-quality services for guests. Excellent hotel employees should not only accumulate sufficient intercultural knowledge but also develop sensitive intercultural communication awareness and effective intercultural communication competence. In the process of interacting with guests from different cultural backgrounds, they can provide appropriate and efficient hotel services; meanwhile, when communicating with foreign employees, both parties can feel understanding, tolerance, and respect <sup>[1]</sup>. However, graduates of hotel management majors in China often encounter communication misunderstandings when responding to the needs of multicultural customer groups and collaborating with foreign colleagues. This highlights the lag in the cultivation of intercultural communication competence in China's hotel management education, making teaching reform imperative.

## **2. Definition of intercultural communication competence for hotel management talents with international perspectives**

An international perspective requires individuals to proactively acquire information about countries around the world, examine and view global development and national conditions from an objective perspective through comparisons between domestic and international contexts, and transform the world with such thinking <sup>[2]</sup>. Talents with an international perspective need to possess a global outlook, intercultural communication skills, and the ability to handle international affairs. The operational characteristics of the hotel industry demand that hotel management talents must have an international perspective to cope with complex situations in international reception and business interactions. Intercultural communication competence refers to the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively with people who hold different emotional, cognitive, and behavioral orientations toward the world, and its core dimensions mainly include the following four categories <sup>[3]</sup>.

### **2.1. Intercultural cognitive competence**

As the foundation of intercultural communication, intercultural cognitive competence involves the understanding, cognition, and respect for the cultures of source countries, as well as reflection on one's own national culture. Students need to understand values, communication norms, social customs, etc., under different cultural backgrounds, thereby developing intercultural awareness and avoiding cultural prejudices and misunderstandings <sup>[4]</sup>. Intercultural cognitive competence includes the cognition of cultural differences and cultural taboos. The former refers to identifying differences between different cultures in dimensions such as individualism/collectivism, power distance, and time perception, helping staff understand others and eliminate misunderstandings; the latter requires understanding the consumption taboos of different cultures to optimize customer service.

### **2.2. Intercultural language communication competence**

Intercultural language communication competence not only includes the mastery of linguistic knowledge, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, but also language application abilities, such as linguistic knowledge, discourse analysis skills, and the use of language strategies <sup>[5]</sup>. In hotel work scenarios, intercultural language communication competence consists of basic language ability, contextual adaptation ability, and professional terminology conversion ability. Basic language ability refers to the proficient use of professional foreign languages to handle foreign guest reception scenarios; adaptation ability requires staff to adjust their

language style according to cultural backgrounds—for example, emphasizing euphemistic expressions and non-verbal signals when communicating with guests from high-context cultures, and conveying information directly and clearly to those from low-context cultures; conversion ability refers to translating professional hotel terminology into popular expressions to avoid service deviations.

### **2.3. Intercultural collaboration and adaptability competence**

Intercultural collaboration and adaptability competence is a core requirement for international hotel management positions, encompassing teamwork ability, cultural conflict resolution ability, and cultural adaptability. Collaboration ability requires building trust with foreign colleagues and understanding their work styles; resolution ability refers to quickly identifying and resolving conflicts arising from cultural differences, such as balancing the service rhythm needs of different customer groups; adaptability requires adjusting service strategies according to cultural scenarios—for example, providing independent choice services for Western guests and proactive recommendation services for East Asian guests.

### **2.4. Intercultural emotional and attitudinal competence**

Intercultural emotional and attitudinal competence serves as the “soft support” for intercultural communication. A positive intercultural emotional experience enables individuals to accurately perceive cultural differences, adopt a proactive attitude toward them, enhance communication pleasure, and thereby promote intercultural communication behaviors <sup>[6]</sup>. From the perspective of the time progression of acceptance, intercultural emotional attitudes include four levels: understanding, respect, appreciation, and affection <sup>[7]</sup>. In hotel scenarios, intercultural emotional and attitudinal competence includes the ability to respect and tolerate different cultures, intercultural empathy ability, and cultural confidence.

## **3. Current status and problems of intercultural communication competence cultivation for hotel management talents with international perspectives**

At present, universities offering hotel management majors in China have made numerous explorations in cultivating the intercultural communication competence of talents with international perspectives. In particular, they have strengthened the design of intercultural communication content in English curriculum settings and the development of Chinese and foreign etiquette and cultural content. However, on the whole, there are still the following problems in the cultivation of intercultural communication competence for hotel management talents:

### **3.1. Problems in the curriculum system**

Curriculum design serves as the core carrier for competence cultivation. Currently, universities still face the issue of “prioritizing language over culture and theory over professionalism” in their curriculum setup. Specifically, intercultural content is disconnected from professional studies: most universities only offer foreign language courses, such as “College English” and “Hotel English”, with intercultural elements mostly embedded in these language courses, lacking specialized intercultural communication courses integrated with hotel management, for example, highly professional courses like Case Analysis of Intercultural Services in International Hotels. Additionally, the depth of curriculum content is insufficient: among the few universities that offer Introduction to Intercultural Communication, the course content primarily focuses on intercultural communication in general scenarios, without covering specific applications in hotel settings, making it

difficult for students to translate theory into practical abilities. Furthermore, there is a lack of courses fostering an international perspective: only a small number of universities provide courses such as Development of the International Hotel Industry, leading to students' inadequate understanding of the rules and trends of the international hotel industry and their struggle to develop an international perspective.

### **3.2. Problems in teaching methods**

Currently, universities employ simplistic teaching methods for cultivating hotel management professionals, with instruction primarily relying on traditional lectures supplemented by task-based teaching. This approach emphasizes knowledge input over output, resulting in limited practical opportunities for students, which fails to effectively stimulate their intercultural communication awareness and competence<sup>[8]</sup>. Specifically, in intercultural-related courses, teachers adopt the traditional "PPT + case study" lecture model, lacking interactive elements such as role-playing and group discussions. As a result, students passively receive knowledge and struggle to actively reflect on the impact of cultural differences. Although some universities conduct "hotel service simulation" training, most scenarios are designed for "local guests" and do not involve multicultural contexts. Moreover, in practical sessions, simulation tools like multilingual service manuals and cultural taboo reminder cards are absent, making it difficult for students to accumulate hands-on experience. Due to resource constraints, few universities currently utilize "intercultural communication virtual simulation platforms", preventing students from accessing real international hotel work scenarios through digital means.

### **3.3. Problems in practical sessions**

Practice is the testing ground for intercultural communication competence, but there are obvious shortcomings in the practical teaching links of intercultural communication competence cultivation in current universities. Most universities' practical teaching is "locally oriented", with a serious phenomenon of localized internship bases and a scarcity of international practical opportunities. Universities have limited cooperation with international hotel groups, and such cooperation is mostly concentrated on "grassroots service positions", making it difficult for students to access intercultural management roles. Additionally, during internships, students receive little targeted guidance on intercultural communication. Furthermore, many universities offer relatively few programs, such as "international exchange students" and "short-term overseas studies", resulting in students' lack of "immersive" intercultural experiences and difficulty in truly understanding the necessity and key points of intercultural communication.

### **3.4. Problems in the teaching staff**

Teachers are the key to ensuring the quality of talent cultivation, yet the teaching staff of hotel management majors in Chinese universities currently face prominent issues of "insufficient intercultural experience and lack of industry practice." Most professional teachers have no overseas study or work experience, resulting in an inadequate understanding of the cultural scenarios and management models in the international hotel industry, which makes it difficult for them to integrate real intercultural cases into their teaching. Additionally, universities provide few training programs for teachers on intercultural communication competence and offer limited opportunities for inspections and studies in international hotels, leading to slow improvement in teachers' intercultural teaching capabilities.



## **4. Cultivation paths for intercultural communication competence of hotel management talents with international perspectives**

In response to the aforementioned bottlenecks, combined with intercultural communication theory and the practical needs of the hotel industry, this paper constructs a systematic cultivation path from four dimensions: “curriculum, teaching, practice, and teaching staff.”

### **4.1. Reconstruct the curriculum system**

Universities should vigorously promote the development of intercultural courses, offering programs covering the cultures, histories, social systems, and values of various countries. These courses aim to foster students’ ability to understand and tolerate diverse cultures, and enhance their intercultural communication and collaboration literacy<sup>[9]</sup>. Adhering to the principle of “integrating professionalism and covering competencies”, universities should deeply integrate intercultural content with hotel management professional courses to build a three-tier intercultural curriculum module: “foundation-profession-expansion.”

In the first year, foundational courses such as Introduction to Intercultural Communication in Hotels, Chinese and Foreign Cultures and Etiquette, and International Hotel English (Listening and Speaking) are offered to impart intercultural communication theories, hotel scenario etiquette, and professional English dialogue, cultivating students’ intercultural cognition and basic language skills.

In the second and third years, professional courses including Case Analysis of Intercultural Services in International Hotels and International Hotel Operation Standards are provided. These courses cover international hotel service cases (e.g., resolving cultural conflicts), intercultural customer complaint handling, and the application of ISO service standards, developing students’ intercultural collaboration and professional communication capabilities.

In the fourth year, expansion courses such as Management Models of Global Hotel Groups, Intercultural Leadership in Hotels, and Laws and Regulations of the International Hotel Industry can be set up. They teach content related to the intercultural management experience of groups, transnational hotel team management, and hotel industry policies in different countries, expanding students’ international perspectives and enhancing their intercultural management abilities.

### **4.2. Innovate Teaching Methods**

Teachers of hotel management majors should break through the traditional lecture-based model and adopt “scenario-based and interactive” teaching methods to stimulate students’ active practice, enabling them to enhance their abilities through “simulation-experience-reflection.” For example, real cases from international hotels can be selected, which present intercultural communication scenarios that students may encounter in their future hotel work. When students realize that such scenarios they might face later could bring embarrassment, or even misunderstandings and conflicts, they will take the initiative to consider solutions and explore the causes of the problems, while urgently wanting to know the optimal solutions, thereby stimulating their learning enthusiasm<sup>[10]</sup>. In addition, schools can use on-campus hotel training centers to build “international scenarios” and adopt situational simulation teaching, where students play roles such as “waiters/guests/foreign colleagues” to simulate scenarios like “receiving European and American business guests”, “handling the dietary needs of Muslim guests”, and “handing over shifts with foreign colleagues”, with teachers providing on-site comments; introduce “intercultural communication virtual simulation platforms” that allow students

to experience different cultural scenarios through VR equipment, with the system automatically feeding back problems in communication; and launch “online joint projects” with foreign universities, where students from different countries work in groups to complete “transnational hotel service scheme design” and improve their intercultural communication abilities through online collaboration.

### **4.3. Build practical platforms**

Schools need to construct a three-level practical system of “on-campus, off-campus, and international”: on campus, introduce successful overseas teaching systems and hotel management systems, optimize the local internationalization software environment for hotel management majors, and establish unified domestic and international teaching standards as well as a consistent teaching quality system <sup>[11]</sup>; meanwhile, relying on the on-campus “simulated international hotel”, organize “intercultural service week” activities, invite foreign teachers and international students to act as “guests”, let students provide full-process services under teachers’ whole-process guidance; establish “targeted internship bases” with international hotel groups, arrange “intercultural mentors” during internships to conduct regular intercultural guidance for students; expand the scale of “overseas internship/exchange” programs, establish cooperation with top hotel management universities in countries such as Switzerland and the United States, and provide students with “3–6 months of overseas internships” to help them understand the intercultural management models of international hotels.

### **4.4. Enhance teachers’ intercultural teaching capabilities**

Teachers must enhance their own intercultural awareness; through case analysis, they can help students perceive the differences between diverse cultures, improve their intercultural communication competence, and cultivate students’ abilities to observe, analyze, understand, and evaluate different cultural phenomena from multiple perspectives <sup>[12]</sup>. Schools should broaden teacher recruitment channels to achieve diversification in the teaching staff’s national origins, cultural backgrounds, qualifications, and educational backgrounds. They may recruit teachers with “a master’s degree in overseas hotel management plus more than 5 years of work experience in international hotels”, emphasizing the “comprehensiveness” of the teaching team to form a complementary and sustainable team system <sup>[13]</sup>; encourage teachers to visit renowned foreign universities or research institutions, participate in international academic conferences and cooperative research projects to gain an in-depth understanding of the academic frontier trends in international hotel management and learn advanced teaching models and research methods <sup>[14]</sup>; arrange for teachers to attend “international hotel intercultural management training” and conduct study visits to international hotel groups every year, while supporting teachers to pursue overseas further studies for degrees related to hotel management; invite foreign managers from international hotel groups to serve as “visiting professors” who regularly give lectures and guide students’ practical projects, thereby enhancing students’ intercultural communication sensitivity and self-confidence <sup>[15]</sup>.

## **5. Conclusions and prospects**

Combined with the needs of the globalized hotel industry, this paper defines the four core dimensions of intercultural communication competence for hotel management talents with international perspectives, points out the five major problems in the cultivation of such competence, and proposes a five-dimensional cultivation path. Through the closed loop of “theory-practice-evaluation”, students’ abilities are improved to meet industry

demands. In the future, further exploration can be made into the application of digital technologies such as AI virtual assistants in the teaching of intercultural communication competence. In addition, research can be carried out from the perspective of “the international communication of Chinese hotel culture” to explore the cultivation path of compound talents who “understand international rules and promote Chinese culture.”

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