

Cultivation of Cross-Cultural Competence of International Business Talents under the Background of New Normalcy

Aimei Yang

Wenzhou Vocational & Technical College, China.

334710101@qq.com

Abstract

To discuss the cultivation of cross-cultural competence of international business talents under the background of new normal, first of all, the connotation of cross-cultural competence is described. Then, the requirements for international business talents under the background of new normal are introduced. Moreover, in view of the problems, the measurements are put forward to promote the cultivation of international business talents under the background of new normal. The results show that to achieve the cultivation of international business talents, it is necessary to make efforts from several aspects, including cross-cultural awareness, modern information technology, teaching mode and cultural knowledge extension.

Keywords

Cross-cultural competence; New normalcy; International business; Talents.

1. Introduction

With the development of China's export-oriented economy, China's industrial structure has undergone tremendous changes. The proportion of the tertiary industry with the service industry as the core has increased rapidly. Especially, the international trade industry has risen rapidly in recent years and developed into an important strategic pillar of China's national economy, making China's economic development tends to be more global. At the same time, China's international business talents are even scarcer [1]. Through the report on China's foreign trade situation issued by the commercial department, it can be seen that China's current foreign trade situation is complex and severe, and international trade still faces enormous pressure and challenges. From this point of view, strengthening the cultivation of cross-cultural international business talents can promote trade between China and other countries, accelerate the transformation of China's economy into a talent-oriented technology kind, and ensure the long-term development of China's enterprises in international trade [2].

For students majoring in international business, the promotion of their cross-cultural competence is conducive to their better employment. In the traditional training mode of international business talents, although students can achieve excellent results, they often feel difficult after entering the society [3]. This is because students cannot give full play to their own language advantages and worse, cross-cultural competence is insufficient. In the practice of international trade, they are influenced by their own language and habits so that they cannot consider the habits of the other country when expressing their ideas, which leads to the rising failure rate of international trade. Therefore, one of the key points in the training of international business talents is the cultivation of students' cross-cultural competence.

In addition, the acquisition of professional knowledge should not be overemphasized in the cultivation of international business talents, and the study of soft cultural knowledge should be strengthened. International business is developing towards a complex and severe situation. In the process of development, some new influencing factors are constantly emerging [4].

Universities must pay attention to the cultivation of students' cross-cultural competence in talents training, so as to fully respond to various problems arising in future international trade. Based on the background of new normal, the connotation of cross-cultural competence is discussed firstly. Secondly, the requirements for international business talents put forward by new normal are expounded. At last, in order to solve the problems in the cultivation of international business talents, some measurements are proposed, which provide reference for the further exploration of cultivation of cross-cultural competence.

2. Connotation of Cross-Cultural Competence

In the study of the connotation of cross-cultural competence, cross-cultural awareness, cross-cultural business skills and international management competence have become the core.

(1) Cross-cultural awareness

Cross-cultural awareness refers to a kind of business awareness that business people understand and respond appropriately to cultural differences. In other words, the standards of conduct that reflect the values of the native culture of international traders can no longer meet the needs of the development of transnational corporations.

All links in the operation of internationalized enterprises, such as human resource management and incentive mechanism, international marketing, as well as communication and decision-making, all require a higher cross-cultural awareness. In the field of cultural studies, many researchers advocate the conceptualization of cultural differences in order to make learners realize the impact of cultural diversity on business and lay a foundation for the cultivation of cross-cultural awareness. Some scholars summarized the different stages of cross-cultural accomplishment and cross-cultural learning as shown in Table 1 and cultivation schemes for cross-cultural competence as shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Different stages of cross-cultural accomplishment and cross-cultural learning

Stages of development of cross-cultural competence	Content of cross-cultural skill development
Local expert	Primary skills.
Tourist	Realize the strength and shortcomings as well as the skill difference.
Curious sojourner	Understand the nature of skill development.
Bicultural expert	Develop the skill-based competence.
Integrator	Construct cross-cultural competence combined with skills and methods.
Leader	Use cross-cultural competence to manage projects.

Table 2. Cultivation schemes for cross-cultural competence

Teaching mode	Teaching method
Fact teaching	Based on many cases and information input.
Analysis teaching	Use comparison analysis to profoundly analyze and understand.
Practice teaching	Based on participating activities, strengthen the reflection.

Wang et al. (2014) proposed that regional, religious and historical factors were three important factors that influence culture. Wang et al. explained in depth the influence of cultural differences on individual behavior. They pointed out that under different cultural backgrounds, individuals' communicative behavior, aesthetic concept, time concept and personal achievement concept

would be different [5]. Hofstede's empirical research on cultural differences has the most influence in this field. He believed that individuals living in different cultures were greatly influenced by attitudes, values and cultural differences. In different cultural backgrounds, individuals differ from each other in four dimensions: power distance; uncertainty avoidance; quantity and quality of life; and individualism and collectivism. Hammer (2015) proposed that cultural awareness was not only a reflection of cultural differences in international trade. A good cross-cultural awareness was the primary condition for cross-cultural trade organizations to create competitive advantage [6].

Culture of different nationalities is an important factor affecting international business activities, and sometimes even plays a decisive role. The above literature review on cultural awareness aims to provide a framework for international business personnel trainers to better help students understand cultural diversity in depth and objectively. It should be noted that merely understanding cultural differences is not enough. At least, cross-cultural awareness must be translated into intercultural business skills so as to serve business activities.

(2) Cross-cultural business skills

Bigelow, an American scholar, has made a significant contribution to the study of the business competence of international business talents. Cross and Gilly (2014) proposed that business competence in a cross-cultural business environment should cover ten aspects: understanding of culture and organization, adaptability, relationship building competence, systematic and multi-perspective thinking competence, attitudes, sensitivity, linguistic competence, decision-making competence under cultural influence, diplomatic competence and cross-cultural competence [7].

Stahl and Tung (2015), after reviewing the urgent human resource capacity issues in the field of global international business strategy management and international marketing, emphasized that the competencies required for international business management talents should include the competence to develop and apply international business skills, the competence to manage change and transition, the competence to manage under multiculturalism, the competence to design and operate in organizational structures, the competence to cooperate with others, the competence to communicate with others, and the competence to learn and transfer knowledge in an organization [8]. Obviously, good cross-cultural business skills enable business traders to participate effectively in international trade matters.

In cross-cultural business communication, language, culture and business activities are closely related. In China, the research on this aspect focuses on revealing the importance and cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence. Mobula et al. (2015) explained the cross-cultural communication in enterprise management. They also put forward suggestions on the construction of cross-cultural communication system in Chinese enterprises from the cognitive level, values level, verbal level and non-verbal communication level [9]. Lokkesmoe et al. (2016) analyzed the performance, function and influence of cross-cultural economic communication in business discourse system from the aspects of speech act, non-speech act, ideology, value standard and politeness strategy, and put forward some suggestions for further understanding each other's culture and following the common rules of economic market [10]. Gersten held that cross-cultural competence could be divided into three dimensions: emotional dimension, cognitive dimension and communicative behavior dimension, as shown in Figure 1.

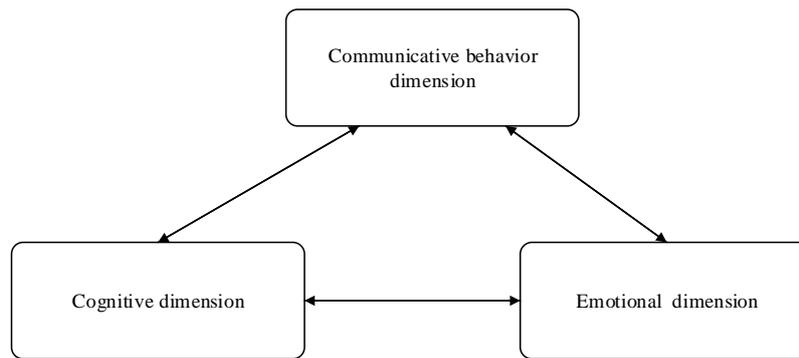


Figure 1. Gersten's structure dimensions of cross-cultural competence

Wang Yuhang summed up the five aspects of cross-cultural competence elements: positive attitude towards cross-culture, cross-cultural commercial knowledge, cross-cultural commercial skill, cross-cultural commercial accomplishment and cross-cultural commercial communication. He also concluded the links for cross-cultural generation into six steps of attitude cultivation, knowledge accumulation, competence exercise, accomplishment formation, commercial communication and personality achievement, as shown in Figure 2.

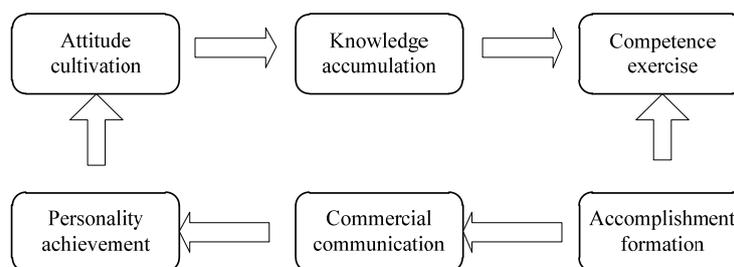


Figure 2. Six steps for cross-cultural competence generation

The development of cross-cultural business skills needs to be honed in the business environment. Practical experience and a large number of on-the-job training play a great role. However, it is incumbent upon higher education to cultivate students' cross-cultural business skills when it comes to training business talents. The increasingly accepted approach is to provide international business courses through cross-border cooperation. In this way, students have the opportunity to participate in multi-cultural group activities, and to cooperate and exchange with students from different cultures.

(3) Cross-cultural management competence

The difference between cross-cultural management competence and cross-cultural business skills is that the latter emphasizes the overall high-level management competence. When a transnational corporation invests and operates, it often needs to integrate three cultures: the culture of their own country, the culture of the target market country, and the culture of the enterprise. Cross-cultural management competence is very important in international operation and management. International management competence includes: business competence with an international perspective, competence to coordinate different cultures in international trade management and competence to effectively manage human resources in international trade. Qualified transnational managers should have the following qualities: a global perspective, rapid response to local conditions, collaborative learning, transformation and adaptation, cross-cultural communication, cooperation and foreign experience.

3. Requirements for International Business Talents

After the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, China's foreign trade is facing severe challenges because of the global economic recession, the shrinking demand of European and American markets, frequent trade frictions, continuous appreciation of the RMB, the rising prices of raw materials, and the rising cost of human resources. Against this background, the Chinese government has taken new initiatives to adjust its trade strategy and take the initiative to adapt to the changing economic situation at home and abroad. The following new highlights have emerged in international business: the proposal of strategic planning of "The Belt and Road Initiative", the vigorous development of cross-border e-commerce based on "Internet +", and the steady progress of the free trade area (FTA) strategy have injected new impetus to the development of Chinese foreign trade, and at the same time, it has brought many challenges to international business.

Firstly, "The Belt and Road Initiative" brings about blending and collision of Chinese and foreign cultures. The strategic objective of "The Belt and Road Initiative" is to deepen the economic and trade ties between China and other countries and regions under the premise of policy communication, road linking, trade flow, currency circulation and people's heart link. The huge potential for development in the countries and regions along "The Belt and Road Initiative" will be combined with the overseas development of China's manufacturing industry and become a key link to optimize Chinese economic structure and enhance international competitiveness.

"The Belt and Road Initiative" strategy brings enormous opportunities and also makes severe challenges to international business. On the one hand, "The Belt and Road Initiative" strategy enables Chinese culture to have an in-depth blend and reference platform with different cultures of the countries along the border. It is conducive to promoting the mutual tolerance and development of the world's multi-culturalism, and to enhancing mutual trust and mutually beneficial cooperation among all ethnic groups. On the other hand, due to historical, geographical and social changes, these countries have created civilizations with different forms and styles, which make the culture having national and different characteristics. These differences are often manifested through the political, economic, legal and other forms of the country. The blending and integration of Chinese and foreign cultures can lead to cultural conflicts and cause overseas investment risks.

Secondly, similar to domestic trade exchanges, disputes are likely to arise in international trade. However, unlike domestic trade, international consumers are in different cultures and habits, which have certain particularities. If there are trade disputes, consumers' conflicting feelings and disagreement will become more obvious. Therefore, business personnel engaged in international trade must flexibly use various communication skills and expressions to explain problems to different international consumers, actively collect opinions from different regions and countries, and establish information communication mechanism. If an enterprise engaged in international trade wants to gain long-term development in overseas markets and win the trust of overseas consumers, it must conquer consumers with product quality, strengthen management from the aspects of product development and sales, perfect the construction of international business talents, and play the role of cross-cultural exchanges.

Thirdly, China's foreign trade enterprises are facing the challenges from the fragmentation of the FTA and the low agreement level of the FTA. To promote the strategy of the FTA in China, it is necessary to focus on accelerating regional integration in the Asia-Pacific region and making reasonable arrangements for the various FTA mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region, so as to continuously reduce transaction costs and promote the success of international trade. It is supposed to strive to promote the formation of a global network of high-standard FTA so that it is possible to have more rights in future trade rules.

For these reasons, the international business talents under the new normal should do the following things.

First of all, international business talents should actively play a bridge role in cultural exchanges and cooperation, promote the common development of different civilizations, and strengthen effective communication channels. They also should foster a sense of social responsibility for sustainable development, enhance the image of Chinese enterprises abroad, and actively promote the realization of capacitive and sustainable development of China and countries along "The Belt and Road Initiative", giving consideration to economic benefits, environmental protection and social equity, and achieving mutual benefit and win-win results.

Second, like domestic e-commerce transactions, cross-border e-commerce transactions are prone to have trade disputes, such as returns and exchanges. Because of the differences in culture, values and religious beliefs of foreign consumers, consumer culture, psychology and behavior of consumers in different countries have their own particularities, and trade disputes will easily arouse consumers' resistance and disagree. Therefore, cross-border e-commerce practitioners should use flexible communication skills to answer questions for consumers around the world, collect customer feedback information, and build a good faith service system. In order to occupy the overseas market and win the overseas consumers, cross-border e-commerce enterprises need to improve their competitiveness in terms of product quality. They need to improve the supporting system construction and international business talents construction in product research and development, quality supervision, corporate culture and other aspects, and construct a credit production and honest management system.

Facing the open world and multi-culture, the decision-makers, managers, operators and practitioners of China's international business must actively and initiatively use a series of cross-cultural competence elements to promote effective communication and conduct effective business cooperation. International business talents should have the following skills: first, broad knowledge and solid cross-cultural knowledge, able to objectively understand and respect cultural differences, and be good at resolving cross-cultural conflicts; second, good command of international trade knowledge, competence of cross-cultural business operation and management skills, strong foreign trade practices operational competence and competence to open up international markets; third, be able to skillfully use one or more foreign languages for cross-cultural communication and cooperation, with good language and written expression competence.

4. Measurements for the Cultivation of Cross-Cultural Competence of Internation Business Talents

The practice and experience of international business show that good cross-cultural motivation, perfect cross-cultural cognition and appropriate cross-cultural behavior are the keys to the successful implementation of the strategy of cross-border e-commerce and FTA strategy. The cultivation of talents should be guided by market demand. At present, the training mode of international business talents only focuses on the cultivation of professional competence, and cross-cultural competence is neglected. To reverse this situation, it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of cross-cultural competence from the following ways.

(1) Cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness guided by teachers

In teaching activities, students' understanding of the world depends to a large extent on the guidance of teachers. A good teacher's leading role is the guarantee for the smooth development of teaching. Students' thirst for knowledge can also be stimulated, thus promoting students to actively explore knowledge. To this end, teachers must firmly grasp the knowledge of international business and cross-cultural differences, and guide students to learn with their own good business culture. In addition, teachers must adopt dynamic and developmental

attitudes towards cultural content of different backgrounds, fully integrate the actual situation of international trade to teach, and enhance the practicality of cultural teaching and cross-cultural sensitivity. In the classroom teaching design, from the students' cognitive ability, teachers should also effectively guide students to learn independently, enhance students' understanding and use of knowledge.

In order to enhance students' awareness of cross-cultural communication, it is necessary to add knowledge about different cultural backgrounds and their differences to the teaching content. In specific teaching activities, students' subjectivity should be emphasized. In order to enhance students' understanding of knowledge, it needs to be combined with actual cases, so that students can feel the differences between theory teaching and life and enhance students' use of cross-cultural competence in the face of cultural differences and conflicts.

(2) Give full play to the role of modern information technology

Today's society belongs to the era of information and network, which makes the international business classroom teaching in colleges and universities have new opportunities for development. Through the role of the Internet, students can obtain more abundant teaching resources and cultural resources. In addition to theoretical knowledge, there are many practical cases of international business, which are also necessary for students at school. Using these resources provided by the Internet, students can have a deeper understanding of cultural differences in different regions. In addition, in the teaching process, teachers can fully integrate the role of multimedia and network. Through the introduction of real and vivid cases in teaching, teachers can make students feel the cultural differences through daily life in different areas, and constantly enhance their cross-cultural awareness and competence.

(3) Reform teaching mode

Under the new normalcy, in the teaching practice of cultivation of international business talents, teachers should always pay attention to the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. They should not only pay attention to the teaching of traditional language knowledge, but also strengthen the cultivation of communicative competence of international business talents, and enhance students' intercultural communicative competence through the cultivation of students' cultural knowledge and competence. Therefore, teachers must enrich their teaching methods and introduce various teaching methods into teaching, such as situational teaching method and task-driven method, so that students can feel the use of cross-cultural communicative competence in real situations. Admittedly, the skill and competence of cross-cultural communication belong to comprehensive qualities, and it is necessary to train students extensively to ensure that they master different cross-cultural skills so that they can better master cross-cultural competence.

In the reform of teaching methods, it is necessary to ensure that the expansion of new knowledge is based on the existing knowledge of students, and must be combined with the practice of students' language communication. Attention should be paid to the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. If there are cultural factors affecting the progress of teaching, necessary cultural explanations should be given. It should be completed step by step, and the emphasis of teaching should be put on the cultivation of students' communicative competence, so as to enhance their competence to solve problems with cross-cultural knowledge. In daily learning, teachers should guide students to read more books on social culture, living habits, ideology, economy, and trade in Western countries, so that students can have a comprehensive understanding of the culture of the target country. In addition, in order to meet the students' desire for knowledge and requirements for cross-cultural competence, some special lectures can be organized to attract students' attention, so as to actively complete the exploration of knowledge in teaching.

(4) Introduce international business talents certification standard and promote cultivation standard internationalized

The developed countries attach great importance to the cultivation of cross-cultural competence of international business talents. Both Singapore and the United States have cross-cultural competence research centers, which engage in cross-cultural research and set up specialized agencies to promote the cultivation of cross-cultural competence. The Certificate of International Business (CIB) program, which includes cross-cultural competence module assessment, is available in almost all the business schools of leading American universities. At the present stage, China should strengthen the understanding of the qualification examination and certification standards for overseas international business talents, and study the introduction plan of the examination and certification qualifications for overseas international business talents in order to speed up the internationalization of the talents cultivation standards. In view of this, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Personnel and other relevant departments should, under the premise of joint supervision, unified standards and correct guidance, establish a coordination mechanism for mutual recognition of international business qualifications as soon as possible to promote the internationalization of international business talent certification standards. Relevant government departments should increase investment in education and adopt preferential policies to encourage well-known foreign school-running institutions to cooperate in running schools in China.

(5) Implement the strategy of "bringing in" and "going out" of talents

Internationalized enterprises should broaden their channels to select talents in an informal manner. In the process of recruitment and selection of international business talents, internationalized enterprises, regardless of their size, should abandon the traditional concept of region, family and human relations, broaden the scope of selection, increase the introduction of foreign talents in the decision-making of talents, and implement the strategy of "bringing in" while attaching importance to the cultivation of their own talents and implementing the "going out" strategy.

For example, enterprises should cooperate with well-known business schools in universities, and provide special funds for entrusted training, overseas dispatched study, attracting returnees and so on, so as to attract international business talents with high level of cross-cultural competence and strong professional versatility to join, and to supply fresh blood for international enterprises. In order to meet the new challenges of international business and the new needs of enterprise development, the process of recruitment and selection should comprehensively examine the level of cross-cultural cognitive and behavioral competence. At the same time, enterprises also need to create a learning atmosphere to promote international business talents to continuously improve the level of cross-cultural competence in their career.

5. Conclusion

Under the new normalcy, "The Belt and Road Initiative" strategy, cross-border e-commerce supplier development and FTA construction will inevitably compete with other enterprises, especially local enterprises, in various forms of interest competition, and form a certain competition mechanism and pattern.

International business talents' motivation factors, such as perfect cross-cultural cognition, strong cross-cultural social responsibility, enterprising spirit and desire for achievement, work together to decide whether they have the ability to cope with cross-cultural conflicts and challenges by adequate actions. At present, China's cross-cultural competence cultivation mechanism is still immature, government departments, universities and international enterprises do not attach enough importance and the lack of cross-cultural awareness of employees, are all not conducive to the healthy development of international business and the "going out" of Chinese enterprises. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness guided by teachers, give full play to the role of modern information

technology, reform teaching mode, introduce international business talents certification standard and promote cultivation standard internationalized and implement the strategy of "bringing in" and "going out" of talents, so as to ensure the realization of long-term goal of international business.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank A, B, C. This work was supported in part by a grant from XYZ.

References

- [1] M. Fisher-Borne, J.M. Cain, S.L. Martin, From mastery to accountability: Cultural humility as an alternative to cultural competence. *Social Work Education*, 2015, 34(2): 165-181.
- [2] Z. Shen, Cultural competence models and cultural competence assessment instruments in nursing: a literature review. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 2015, 26(3): 308-321.
- [3] A.M. Yamada, Applications of The Cultural Awareness, Skill, & Knowledge (C-ASK) Interview Tool: Cultivating Cultural Competence. *Hawai'i Journal of Medicine & Public Health*, 2015, 74(7 Suppl 1): 19.
- [4] K.T. Wang, P.P. Heppner, L. Wang, Cultural intelligence trajectories in new international students: Implications for the development of cross-cultural competence. *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*, 2015, 4(1): 51.
- [5] D. Wang, T. Feng, S. Freeman, Unpacking the "skill-cross-cultural competence" mechanisms: Empirical evidence from Chinese expatriate managers. *International Business Review*, 2014, 23(3): 530-541.
- [6] M.R. Hammer, The Developmental paradigm for intercultural competence research. *International journal of intercultural relations*, 2015, 48(1): 12-13.
- [7] S.N.N. Cross, M.C. Gilly, Cultural competence and cultural compensatory mechanisms in binational households. *Journal of Marketing*, 2014, 78(3): 121-139.
- [8] G.K. Stahl, R.L. Tung, Towards a more balanced treatment of culture in international business studies: The need for positive cross-cultural scholarship. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 2015, 46(4): 391-414.
- [9] [9] L.M. Mobula, M.T. Okoye, L.E. Boulware, Cultural competence and perceptions of community health workers' effectiveness for reducing health care disparities. *Journal of primary care & community health*, 2015, 6(1): 10-15.
- [10][10] K.J. Lokkesmoe, K.P. Kuchinke, A. Ardichvili, Developing cross-cultural awareness through foreign immersion programs: Implications of university study abroad research for global competency development. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 2016, 40(3): 155-170.