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Cultivating Global Understanding: Enhancing Intercultural Communication at BFSU

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Abstract

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) is increasingly recognized as a vital skill in today's globalized world, particularly within diverse educational settings. This study focuses on Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), an institution with a multicultural student body, to examine the opportunities and challenges of fostering effective cross-cultural communication. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 110 participants to assess cultural awareness, language barriers, program participation, resource satisfaction, and intercultural sensitivity. The findings reveal several significant obstacles, including limited awareness of intercultural programs, language difficulties, and a neutral level of satisfaction with existing support services. Despite these challenges, 34.5% of respondents expressed interest in cultural events, and 40.9% reported a moderate improvement in their ICC skills. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions, such as enhanced communication platforms, multilingual resources, and improved intercultural programming. These initiatives can help both Chinese and international students better navigate cultural differences. Addressing these issues would enable BFSU to create a more inclusive and globally aware campus environment, contributing to the broader discourse on intercultural communication in higher education.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), Cross-cultural communication, Cultural awareness, Intercultural sensitivity, Multilingual resources, International students, Intercultural programming

Introduction

In today's globalized world, the ability to navigate cultural complexities has become an indispensable skill, particularly within the context of higher education. Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) is pivotal for fostering understanding and collaboration across diverse cultural landscapes. University campuses, as microcosms of global diversity, present unique challenges and opportunities for developing such competence. At Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), the convergence of varied cultural backgrounds underscores the pressing need for robust intercultural communication strategies to prepare students for global citizenship and professional collaboration (Deardorff, 2006)

This study investigates the state of ICC at BFSU, focusing on barriers such as language challenges, cultural stereotyping, and limited awareness of intercultural initiatives. By addressing these issues, the research contributes to ongoing efforts in promoting inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in higher education. The findings aim to inform actionable strategies that integrate ICC into both curricular and extracurricular frameworks, ensuring a holistic development of intercultural skills (Paige et al., 2009).

Previous research underscores the transformative role of ICC in academic environments. Deardorff (2006) defines ICC as the ability to interact effectively and appropriately across diverse cultural contexts, highlighting its role in fostering harmonious and meaningful interactions. This study adopts BFSU as a case study to evaluate how targeted interventions can enhance ICC, fostering an inclusive campus culture that prepares students for the complexities of a globalized workforce.

The research explores BFSU's diverse student body as a strength to be leveraged for academic and social enrichment. This diversity, while a source of vibrant cultural exchange, also demands strategic initiatives to mitigate barriers such as differing communication styles and linguistic challenges. Drawing from theoretical insights and empirical evidence, this study emphasizes the

importance of fostering a supportive environment and promoting cultural exchange programs. By addressing these dimensions, the research seeks to provide BFSU with innovative solutions to further cultivate a dynamic, inclusive, and globally competent student community (Wang & Wu, 2020; Jager & Steinke, 2021).

Literature review

Intercultural communication competence is increasingly recognized as a critical skill in the globalized higher education landscape. In a study by Deardorff (2006), the development of intercultural competence is framed as essential for fostering positive interactions among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Strategies such as intercultural training programs and immersive experiences are highlighted as effective means to enhance students' abilities to communicate across cultural boundaries. The work of Paige et al. (2009) further emphasizes the importance of internationalization efforts in universities, underscoring how exposure to diverse cultures contributes to the cultivation of intercultural competence. On the international front, the concept of the "Global Campus" is explored by Knight and de Wit (1997), emphasizing the need for universities to create environments that facilitate intercultural communication. The study suggests that intentional design of curricula, inclusive policies, and cross-cultural engagement opportunities are crucial in creating a truly globalized educational experience.

In the Chinese context, the importance of intercultural communication in higher education is evident. Huang and Gudykunst (1993) discuss the role of communication apprehension and uncertainty reduction strategies in intercultural interactions among Chinese students. The study emphasizes the need for targeted communication programs to alleviate anxiety and enhance cross-cultural communication skills. Building on this, Chen and Starosta (2000) delve into the Chinese communication style, particularly the concept of "face." Understanding and navigating "face" dynamics is considered vital for effective intercultural communication within Chinese university settings. Additionally, Li (2015) explores the influence of Confucian values on communication patterns in Chinese higher education, providing insights into the cultural nuances that shape interactions among students and faculty.

In the specific context of Beijing's university campuses, Li and Wang (2017) offer a case study on the integration of intercultural communication programs at a leading university. The study evaluates the impact of targeted initiatives, including language exchange programs and intercultural workshops, on students' intercultural competence. Findings suggest that active participation in such programs positively influences students' ability to navigate diverse cultural settings. Furthermore, Wang and Wu (2020) investigate the role of technology in fostering intercultural communication among international and Chinese students in Beijing. The study explores the use of online platforms and virtual collaboration tools, highlighting their potential to bridge cultural gaps and facilitate cross-cultural understanding.

Comprehending cultural variables such as individualism versus, power distance, and fear of uncertainty provides an understanding of how cultural values affect communication. These factors give insights into preferences for independence, order, and uncertainty, providing an easy overview of their impact on intercultural communication. Knowing the differences in communication styles, such as high/low context and direct/indirect techniques, is essential for successfully navigating international relationships, especially when cultures place importance on implicit or explicit communication standards. Contextualizing communication within cultural values, such as the Chinese concept of 'face,' improves comprehension of how these norms influence relationships. (Chen & Starosta, 2000)

Conscious recognition and proactive mitigation of stereotypes and biases individuals may harbor about other cultures are critical, given the significant impact these preconceived notions can exert on communication dynamics and relationship building. It is crucial to confront these biases in order to promote inclusive and courteous intercultural interactions. (Li, 2015) When engaging in intercultural communication, it is crucial to have a strong awareness of power dynamics, which involves understanding the hierarchical structures that have an impact on communication. It is crucial to acknowledge these power dynamics, as they have a central influence on the character of interactions and relationships in cross-cultural situations.

Beamer, L. (1992) address that communicating across cultures requires understanding and expressing the other's meaning presents five-level learning and training model: recognize variety, organize information using stereotypes, question and challenge stereotypes, analyses

communication episodes, and write messages for 'different cultures help in Understanding diverse cultures demands ongoing questioning of Thinking and Knowing, Doing and Achieving, the Self, Social Organization, and the Universe.

"International and Chinese literature converge on the significance of intercultural communication competence in higher education. The global discourse emphasizes exposure to diverse cultures, while Chinese perspectives highlight the importance of addressing cultural values and communication styles. The case studies within Beijing's university campuses demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of targeted intercultural communication programs. As Beijing continues to play a pivotal role in global education, these insights provide a foundation for fostering intercultural competence among students and faculty, contributing to a more inclusive and enriching educational environment.

Recent studies highlight the growing role of technology in fostering ICC. Virtual reality (VR) has been shown to enhance intercultural learning by creating immersive environments that simulate diverse cultural contexts. A quasi-experiment by Dooly and O'Dowd (2023) demonstrated that VR can significantly improve students' ability to navigate cross-cultural scenarios by fostering empathy and reducing cultural biases. Similarly, McCallum (2024) emphasized the use of AI-based telecollaboration tasks in higher education, which allow students to engage with peers from different cultural backgrounds, thereby improving their communicative competence and adaptive behaviors.

Intercultural communication in professional settings often involves navigating stressors related to cultural misfits. A study by Wilczewski et al. (2022) explored the relationship between job stress, burnout, and ICC in multinational corporations. Findings suggest that while enhanced ICC reduces job-related stress, a lack of cultural training exacerbates burnout among expatriates. These insights underline the importance of structured ICC training programs in workplace environments to mitigate such challenges.

Affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions remain central to ICC research. Recent findings by Jager and Steinke (2021) suggest that students with a higher behavioral dimension of ICC—manifested through adaptability and engagement—are better equipped to handle cultural conflicts. The study also notes the significance of affective empathy in fostering positive

intercultural relationships, particularly in university settings where diverse groups frequently interact.

Efforts to integrate ICC into university curricula have seen innovative approaches in recent years. Wang and Shen (2024) advocated for embedding intercultural modules in language programs to simultaneously develop linguistic proficiency and ICC. Their research highlights the dual benefit of such initiatives, preparing students for globalized professional landscapes while enriching their personal intercultural experiences.

Research questions

RQ1: What are the key cultural and communication challenges faced by individuals at BFSU when interacting with Chinese students?

RQ2: What can enhance intercultural communication competence within students at BFSU?

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to investigate intercultural communication competence among BFSU students. Quantitative research, characterized by its reliance on numerical data and statistical analysis, provides an objective framework for understanding phenomena (Creswell, 2014). By employing structured surveys, this study systematically examines students' perceptions, challenges, and experiences related to ICC.

The methodology draws on a cross-sectional research design, enabling the collection of data at a single point in time from a diverse sample of students. According to Babbie (2020), this design is particularly effective for identifying trends and associations within populations. Stratified random sampling ensures representation across various departments and cultural backgrounds, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Data collection utilizes a Likert-scale questionnaire, a widely used tool in social science research for capturing subjective experiences and attitudes (Bryman, 2015).

The survey includes items on cultural awareness, language barriers, and participation in intercultural programs, with responses analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, are prioritized to ensure the integrity of the research process. By employing this methodology, the study aims to provide actionable insights into the factors influencing ICC at BFSU, offering evidence-based recommendations for fostering a more inclusive and dynamic intercultural environment.

This study employs a cross-sectional research design to investigate the improvement of intercultural communication competence at Beijing Foreign Studies University. The target population comprises professionals working in this sector, with a stratified random sampling technique ensuring representation across diverse roles. A structured questionnaire, developed based on established scales, will be used to collect quantitative data. Participants will respond to items related to their demographic information, current intercultural communication competence, and experiences with training programs. The Likert scale will be employed to measure self-perceived competence, ranging from "1 - Extremely Low" to "5 - Extremely High." The survey, distributed electronically via online platforms (google forms), will be accompanied by a cover letter outlining the study's purpose and ensuring confidentiality and informed consent. Descriptive statistical analyses, including mean scores and frequency distributions, will summarize participants' responses, while inferential statistical analyses may identify significant differences based on demographic variables. Ethical considerations involve obtaining informed consent and maintaining participant confidentiality. Limitations include the sector-specific focus, potentially limiting generalizability, and the cross-sectional nature, providing a snapshot of competence. This quantitative survey methodology aims to provide a systematic understanding of intercultural communication competence among students at Beijing Foreign Studies University, offering insights for potential improvements.

Limitations of the Study:

Contextual Specificity: The study's findings and recommendations are contextually bound to the unique characteristics of Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU). The distinct cultural composition, academic structure, and international focus of BFSU may restrict the generalizability of the results to other Beijing university campuses with differing attributes.

Temporal Factors: The study provides a snapshot of intercultural communication dynamics at BFSU during a specific period. Changes in the university's demographics, policies, or global events in the future could affect the applicability and relevance of the study's insights over time.

Sample Size: Due to practical constraints, the study may focus on specific segments or groups within BFSU's diverse student population. This restricted sample size might impact the comprehensiveness of the findings, offering insights that may not fully represent the varied experiences and perspectives within the university.

Evolution of Communication Dynamics

Intercultural communication is dynamic and subject to change. The study may not capture future developments in communication dynamics at BFSU, limiting the long-term applicability of its recommendations. Despite these limitations, the study endeavors to provide valuable insights into the intercultural communication landscape at BFSU. The findings serve as a foundational exploration, offering a nuanced understanding within the specific conditions observed at BFSU during the study period. Interpretation of the results should be mindful of the contextual constraints and the potential for evolving dynamics in intercultural communication.

Statistical analysis

The data reflects the responses gathered from the questionnaire administered to 110 students at BFSU.

Aspect

Findings

Key Statistics

Aspect	Findings	Key Statistics
Cultural Awareness	Most respondents believe cultural awareness fosters harmony on campus.	48.2% said it significantly contributes; 20.9% emphasized extreme importance; 7.3% disagreed.
Language and Communication	Comfort levels vary; many face challenges communicating in non-native languages.	38.2% moderately comfortable; 34.5% uncomfortable; 27.3% very comfortable.
Intercultural Programs Awareness	Awareness of BFSU's intercultural programs is limited.	2.7% very aware; 41.8% moderately aware; 12.7% not aware.
Cross-Cultural Communication	Many students report improvements in their skills, but further development is needed.	40.9% moderately improved; 21.8% significantly improved; 10.0% extremely improved; 3.6% no improvement.
Satisfaction with Resources	Neutral satisfaction levels indicate the need for enhanced intercultural support services.	58.2% neutral; 23.6% satisfied; 6.4% very dissatisfied.
Participation in Intercultural Activities	Students perceive group projects in class as primary intercultural activities.	27.3% rarely engage outside class; notable events include Cultural Immersion Day, Deepavali, and language tutor programs.
Intercultural Sensitivity	Students recognize benefits of intercultural interactions but face challenges with communication styles.	58.2% neutral sensitivity; benefits include learning respect and improving language skills; challenges include miscommunication and cultural differences.
Technology Usage	High reliance on digital platforms for communication, though no mention of perpetuating stereotypes.	95% use communication channels for intercultural engagement.

Aspect	Findings	Key Statistics
Event Attendance	Mixed interest in cultural events based on timing, relevance, and other factors.	54.5% interested; 23.6% indecisive; 20% not interested.

We conducted a questionnaire sent online to 110 undergraduate and postgraduate students of Beijing Foreign Studies University. Students were defined as those who come from outside of China and have different cultural background and genders. We sent out the questionnaire to students from different departments including Arabic Language, Chinese Language, International Business School, International Economic & Trade, International Marketing, School of International Relations and Diplomacy and others. With students from different nationality including Brazilian, British, Vietnamese, Indian, Cambodian, Colombian, , Pakistani Indonesian, Japanese, Malaysian, Mongolian and student from Africa.

We designed one questionnaire that includes 18 questions surrounding (1) Cultural awareness (2) Language and communication (3) Intercultural programs awareness (4) Cross-cultural communication skills (5) Campus resources and support (6) Participation in Intercultural Activities (7) Intercultural sensitivity (8) Communication technology usage (9) Cultural events attendance (10) Recommendations for improvement.

Table 1: Cultural Awareness

Findings	Key Statistics
Majority believe cultural awareness fosters harmony.	- 48.2%: Significantly contributes. - 20.9%: Extreme importance.
Some respondents disagreed with its importance.	- 7.3%: Disagree. - 2.7%: Not important at all.

Based on the responses of 110 participants, it was found that a majority, comprising 53 respondents (48.2%), believe that cultural awareness significantly contributes to fostering a

harmonious campus environment at BFSU. Among these, 23 respondents (20.9%) emphasized the extreme importance of cultural awareness, while an additional 23 respondents (20.9%) also acknowledged it is very important role. Conversely, a smaller proportion of respondents, accounting for 8 individuals (7.3%), expressed a contrary view, indicating that they do not consider cultural awareness to be a factor in creating campus harmony. Furthermore, a minority of 3 respondents (2.7%) indicated that they perceive cultural awareness as not important at all in this context. This distribution suggests that the majority of participants recognize the significance of cultural awareness in promoting a cohesive and inclusive campus environment at BFSU.

Table 2: Language and Communication

Findings	Key Statistics
Comfort levels in non-native communication vary.	- 38.2%: Moderately comfortable. - 34.5%: Uncomfortable.
Few feel highly confident in non-native language usage.	- 27.3%: Very comfortable.

With 110 respondents, it was observed that 42 individuals (38.2%) reported feeling moderately comfortable when communicating in a language that is not their native tongue. This group represents a cumulative percentage of 38.2%. Additionally, 38 respondents (34.5%) expressed discomfort with communicating in a language other than their native language, contributing to a cumulative percentage of 72.7%. Furthermore, 30 respondents (27.3%) indicated feeling very comfortable communicating in a non-native language, accounting for 100.0% in cumulative percentage. These findings depict a similar distribution of comfort levels among the expanded respondent group, with a majority still falling into the moderate comfort category.

Table 3: Intercultural Programs Awareness

Findings	Key Statistics
Awareness of intercultural programs is limited.	- 2.7%: Very aware. - 41.8%: Moderately aware.
A significant portion lacks awareness.	- 12.7%: Not aware.

Findings

Key Statistics

- 28.2%: Somewhat aware.

When it comes to language challenges with students from different cultural backgrounds, it was found that only 26 respondents (23.6%) reported not having any challenges. Most of these respondents mentioned proficiency in English and Chinese as facilitating factors. However, a significant portion of respondents explained various reasons for encountering language-related challenges with students from different cultural backgrounds.

Struggling to find the words they want to use to convey their thoughts.

Chinese students try to communicate with them using Mandarin, meanwhile my Chinese level is not that proficient.

Different accents and pronunciation are the challenges since everyone comes from different countries. (E.g. talking to someone from different nationality such as India and Russia)

Communicate with students that speak very limited English or use a language which I am not proficient at.

It leads to miscommunication and ending up with conflicts and emotional situation.

Regarding the awareness of international students about intercultural programs at BFSU, only 3 respondents out of 110 (2.7%) indicated being very aware of existing intercultural programs. Additionally, 46 respondents (41.8%) reported being moderately aware. This suggests that a large number of foreign students lack information about ongoing intercultural programs. Moreover, 14 respondents (12.7%) stated being not aware at all, while another 14 respondents (12.7%) claimed to be extremely aware. Only 31 respondents (28.2%) indicated being somewhat aware. These results indicate that while there are intercultural programs hosted by various departments at BFSU, a significant proportion of foreign students remain unaware of these programs, with only a few having knowledge about specific programs.

Table 4: Cross-Cultural Communication Skills

Findings

Key Statistics

Moderate improvement in skills for most.	- 40.9%: Moderately improved.
	- 21.8%: Significantly improved.
Minimal improvement reported by some.	- 3.6%: No improvement.
	- 10.0%: Extreme improvement.

Improving cross-cultural communication skills is deemed crucial at BFSU. However, when this research sought to determine the extent to which foreign students had improved their cross-cultural communication skills since joining the university, it was found that out of 110 respondents, 45 respondents (40.9%) reported that their skills had moderately improved. Additionally, 24 respondents (21.8%) indicated a significant improvement, while only 11 respondents (10.0%) reported an extreme improvement. Conversely, a small percentage of respondents, totaling 4 individuals (3.6%), claimed that their cross-cultural communication skills had not improved at all. Furthermore, 19 respondents (17.3%) stated that their skills had slightly improved. These findings suggest that while a considerable proportion of foreign students have seen some improvement in their cross-cultural communication skills since joining BFSU, there are still areas where further enhancement is needed to fully develop these skills.

Table 5: Campus Resources and Support

Findings

Key Statistics

Satisfaction with intercultural resources is neutral.	- 58.2%: Neutral.
	- 23.6%: Satisfied.
Few are dissatisfied.	- 6.4%: Very dissatisfied.
	- 10.0%: Very satisfied.

When it comes to satisfaction with the current intercultural resources and support services offered by BFSU, it was found that 64 respondents (58.2%) expressed a neutral stance. Only 26 respondents (23.6%) indicated satisfaction with the current intercultural resources and support services at BFSU. This suggests that there is a need for BFSU to provide more resources and

support services that are helpful to foreign students in order to reach a satisfactory level. Specifically, out of 110 respondents, only 11 individuals (10.0%) reported being very satisfied, while 7 respondents (6.4%) expressed being very dissatisfied. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing intercultural resources and support services to better meet the needs of foreign students at BFSU.

Table 6: Participation in Intercultural Activities

Findings	Key Statistics
Group projects in class are key intercultural activities.	- 27.3%: Rarely engage outside class.
Students cited participation in various events.	Events include: Cultural Immersion Day, Deepavali, and Language Tutor Program.

In response to group activities or projects involving students from diverse cultural backgrounds, our questionnaire results indicate that 30 respondents (27.3%) do not engage in such activities or projects often. Interestingly, most students consider group projects during classes as intercultural activities, as expressed by several respondents. These findings highlight the significance of integrating intercultural elements into academic coursework and promoting diverse group collaborations as part of the learning experience for students at BFSU.

“Every group project”

“Pretty often, like for example the group project in class needs to have mixed nationality in the group.”

This shows that the students are more familiar with classes’ group projects as their intercultural activities rather than official initiatives from the student body or campus. But that does not mean they are not aware of those initiatives as stated by the students below:

“I have participated in Cultural Immersion Day during Orientation Day”

“Deepavali and Malaysian Day by SAM (Student Association of Malaysian)”

“Language Tutor Program by IBS Union”

Campus resources and support

Aspect	Details and Suggestions	Key Statistics
Event Preferences	- Cultural events outside exam seasons.	34.5%: Likely to attend cultural events.
	- Events not limited to Chinese culture.	
	- Cultural exchange fairs.	

In fact, 38 respondents (34.5%) expressed their likelihood to attend cultural events organized by BFSU. They also provided suggestions for services and activities they would like BFSU to implement, including resources and events such as:

“Cultural events outside the exam season and not limited to Chinese culture”

“Cultural Exchange fair”

“Program that facilitate both Chinese and International Students to interact”

“Language program that includes mentor and mentee”

“Dedicated cultural resources centers”

“More events that are accessible to more people”

“Staff who speak English”

“Have resource with different language other than Chinese especially when it comes to services such as clinic, technical support, dorms, and sport facilities”

“Make international students aware of what’s happening (Preventing the lack of communication)”

The statement above shows that they are interested in cultural events not limited to Chinese cultures, and the concern about the schedule of the event is also considered as a reason to join or not as some of the events held during students packed time such as exam season and in between classes. The size of the events could be one of the things BFSU consider in planning intercultural activities. Furthermore, the resources should be one of the elements that need to be considered especially when it comes to their needs as not all students can speak Chinese. Communication platforms are the bridge between students and BFSU, therefore BFSU needs to optimize the communication tool to promote their initiatives.

Table 7: Intercultural Sensitivity

Findings	Key Statistics
Neutral intercultural sensitivity levels dominate.	- 58.2%: Neutral sensitivity.
Benefits include learning respect and language improvement.	Challenges include miscommunication and cultural differences.

In the context of intercultural sensitivity, the majority of students (64 respondents, 58.2%) would rate theirs at a neutral level. Intercultural sensitivity, defined as "an individual's ability to develop emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication" (Chen & Starosta, 1997, p. 5), is reflected in the benefits and challenges associated with interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Challenges mentioned include:

“Understanding different perspectives and cultural backgrounds”

“Learning to respect and be considerate of each other”

“Improvement in language skills”

“Language barriers”

“Differences in culture”

“Miscommunication”

“Different communication styles”

Here, different cultures can lead to misunderstandings, particularly between students from high-context and low-context cultures, and differences in communication styles, including non-verbal gestures such as lack of eye contact, can exacerbate miscommunication.

Table 8: Technology Usage

Findings	Key Statistics
High reliance on communication channels.	- 95%: Use technology for intercultural engagement.
Limited mention of potential perpetuation of stereotypes.	

From the data collected, it was found that 105 out of 110 students (95%) use communication channels to engage in cultural communication with peers, indicating a high level of virtual interaction. However, 5% of students are inconsistent with their interactions. While communication technology facilitates intercultural communication, it's noteworthy that nobody mentioned how it can also perpetuate stereotypes.

Table 9: Event Attendance

Findings	Key Statistics
Mixed interest in cultural events based on timing and topic.	- 54.5%: Interested. - 23.6%: Indecisive. - 20%: Not interested.

Regarding attendance at cultural events organized by BFSU, approximately 60 respondents (54.5%) showed interest in attending, depending on factors such as the topic, time, and company. Meanwhile, 26 respondents (23.6%) were indecisive, and 22 respondents (20%) expressed no interest, possibly due to schedule conflicts or academic commitments.

Several recommendations were proposed by the student in survey to enhance intercultural communication at BFSU, emphasizing the need for inclusive and well-structured programs. One key suggestion is the development of an official communication platform to facilitate consistent information sharing about multicultural events, initiatives, and support services. This platform could include bilingual functionality to ensure accessibility and equity for both domestic and international students.

Additionally, targeted online marketing was recommended to increase awareness of intercultural projects. These efforts could leverage digital newsletters, university websites, and social media to reach a wider audience. Interactive content, such as student testimonials, event highlights, and cultural trivia, could further engage students and promote intercultural interaction.

By implementing these strategies, BFSU can improve awareness, bridge communication gaps, and create an inclusive environment where students from diverse backgrounds feel informed, supported, and actively involved.

Discussion and conclusion

The study's conclusions provide insightful information about the current state of intercultural communication at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), highlighting both its strengths and weaknesses. As a thriving melting pot of global diversity, BFSU hosts a varied student body that represents a wide range of cultures and perspectives. This diversity underscores the importance

of equipping students with strong intercultural communication skills to help them thrive in a globalized society (Arasaratnam-Smith & Deardorff, 2022).

The primary goals of this study were to identify obstacles to intercultural communication and propose strategies to enhance competence in this area. Key findings reveal a shared understanding among students of the crucial role cultural sensitivity plays in fostering a cohesive and harmonious campus community. However, several areas require improvement, including building linguistic confidence, increasing awareness of multicultural activities, and enhancing satisfaction with existing support services (Majewska, 2023).

Overcoming these obstacles requires a diversified strategy. The primary focus should be on enhancing the visibility of multicultural programs through improved communication channels and targeted marketing strategies. Initiatives such as peer mentorship programs and language assistance workshops can significantly boost students' confidence in using non-native languages. Additionally, thoughtfully designed cultural events that consider relevant themes, timing, and inclusivity can foster greater student participation and engagement.

To effectively disseminate information about multicultural opportunities, communication platforms must be optimized. Digital tools and technologies, such as multilingual portals and interactive platforms, can help bridge communication gaps and facilitate participation in cross-cultural activities (Saito, 2019). The level of satisfaction with existing resources and support services underscores the need for continuous evaluation and improvement. Establishing dedicated cultural resource centers and expanding language support programs could address many of these gaps effectively.

To effectively raise awareness about multicultural opportunities, communication platforms need to be optimized. Digital tools and technologies, such as multilingual portals and interactive platforms, can help bridge communication barriers and facilitate engagement in cross-cultural activities (Saito, 2019). The satisfaction levels with existing resources and support services highlight the importance of regular assessment and continuous improvement. Addressing many of these gaps could involve establishing dedicated cultural resource centers and expanding language support programs.

A diversified strategy is essential to address these issues effectively. The top priority should be enhancing the visibility of multicultural programs through improved communication channels and targeted marketing strategies. Peer mentorship programs and language support initiatives can play a vital role in boosting students' confidence when speaking non-native languages. Additionally, carefully planned cultural events that consider timing, relevant themes, and inclusivity are crucial for fostering widespread participation and engagement.

Future studies could explore how advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, can enhance cross-cultural communication. For instance, research might evaluate the impact of AI-driven language learning tools or immersive virtual environments on students' communication skills and cultural sensitivity and every cultural event, such as SICA (an intercultural program) or departmental gatherings, should be designed around a specific theme or motto. Additionally, the school should evaluate the outcomes of these events in terms of their impact on fostering intercultural relationships. This assessment could include measuring participant engagement, feedback on cultural exchange experiences, and identifying areas for improvement to enhance the effectiveness of future initiatives. Additionally, comparative analyses of intercultural programs at universities worldwide could provide valuable insights into innovative solutions and best practices (Arasaratnam-Smith & Deardorff, 2022; Majewska, 2023). Incorporating perspectives from administrators and academics on fostering intercultural competence would further enrich the discussion and inform institutional policy-making.

BFSU can establish itself as a pioneer in multicultural education by tackling the issues that have been highlighted and seizing chances for further innovation. The school's dedication to creating a vibrant and welcoming environment will give its pupils the abilities and know-how to successfully negotiate a variety of cultural contexts.

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