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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Survey on the Intercultural Competence of Chinese Students Volunteers for the International Events at Private Colleges —Taking the Sixth China International Import Expo as an Example

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| ABSTRACT

With the continuous improvement of China's participation in globalization, more and more international competitions and events are held in China, which calls for the involvement of Chinese student volunteers with higher intercultural competence. Meanwhile, enhancing Chinese college students' intercultural competence is both an important component and a main goal of foreign language teaching and reform in higher education. This paper aims to deeply explore the current situation of intercultural competence of student volunteers for international events at private colleges. The study reports a survey of the intercultural competence of 140 student volunteers for the sixth China International Import Expo from private colleges in Shanghai, employing the Intercultural Competence Evaluation Scale for Chinese College Students as an instrument. The study shows the current intercultural competence of Chinese students who volunteer for International Events at private colleges is at a satisfactory level, with an overall average score of 3.699. Among the six dimensions of intercultural competence, Attitude gets the highest score (M=4.167), and Knowledge of Foreign Culture gets the lowest (M=2.987). Meanwhile, it reveals some differences between the students volunteers with different backgrounds and the dimensions of intercultural competence. Students with contact with people from different cultures, with intercultural events and experiences, and with the intention of studying abroad scored significantly higher than those without. Therefore, this study provides an important theoretical basis for deepening the reform of international talent cultivation and for effectively improving the intercultural competence of Chinese students volunteers and provides practical suggestions for improving the intercultural competence of college students.

| KEYWORDS

Intercultural competence; students volunteers; international events; private colleges.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

With the continuous improvement of China's participation in globalization, more and more international competitions and events are held in China, which calls for the involvement of Chinese students volunteers with higher intercultural competence (ICC). Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. With the intensification of globalization, communication, and integration between different cultures are becoming more and more frequent, and intercultural competence is becoming more and more important. As an important group of intercultural communication, the study on the intercultural competence of college volunteers is of great significance. Meanwhile, enhancing Chinese college students' inter-cultural competence is both an important component and a main goal of foreign language teaching and reform in higher education. However, there are few studies that examine the level of intercultural

competence of Chinese student volunteers for international events. Therefore, to bridge the gap, this study will conduct a survey of the intercultural competence of Chinese students volunteers for the Sixth China International Import Expo (CIIE).

Taking the example of the Sixth CIIE, the study aims to survey the current situation of intercultural competence of Chinese student volunteers for International Events at private colleges. The findings will reveal the differences between students from different backgrounds and the dimensions of intercultural competence. Therefore, this study seeks to provide an important theoretical basis for deepening the reform of international talent cultivation and for effectively improving the intercultural competence of Chinese college students. Meanwhile, it can also provide some insights for organizations that are involved in international events in recruiting Chinese student volunteers.

This study seeks to explore the following research questions:

1. What is the current level of the intercultural competence of Chinese student volunteers for International Events at private colleges?
2. What are the differences between the students with different backgrounds and the dimensions of intercultural competence?

The present study conducts an online survey because it has the advantage of easy access and quick responses. Taking advantage of our participation in CIIE, we distributed the Intercultural Competence Self-Evaluation Scale for Chinese College Students (Wu, 2013) to Chinese student volunteers for the 6th CIIE at private colleges. With a high reliability and validity, Wu's scale includes six major factors — Knowledge of Native Culture, Knowledge of Foreign Cultures, Attitudes, Intercultural Communication Skills, Intercultural Cognitive Skills, and Awareness. Participants for the study were recruited by sending a message to the WeChat group of the volunteers. Two hundred students who met the criteria were invited to participate in the study. The response rate was 70%.

2. Literature Review

Intercultural competence (ICC) is a vital skill for effective communication in today's globalized world, and it includes competence, communicative competence, and intercultural communicative competence (Wu, 2013). As scholars continue to explore and enhance the development of intercultural competence in various educational settings, there is a growing recognition of its significance in both academic and professional contexts. This section will review the literature on the conceptualization and the studies of intercultural competence.

2.1 The Conceptualization of Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Intercultural competence consists of three elements: communicative situation, effectiveness, and appropriateness (Byram, 1997; Peng & Wu, 2016). Intercultural scholars generally agree that awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills constitute the main dimensions of intercultural competence.

Wu Weiping (2013) proposed six major factors of intercultural competence — Knowledge of Native Culture, Knowledge of Foreign Cultures, Attitudes, Intercultural Communication skills, Intercultural Cognitive skills, and Awareness that help to assess Chinese college students. Knowledge of Native Culture encompasses knowledge of the country's history, geography, social politics, social etiquette to religion and culture, lifestyle and values; Knowledge of Foreign Cultures includes foreign knowledge of cultural taboos, intercultural communication strategies and techniques, basic norms and behaviour of different cultures, geography, social political, social etiquette to religious culture, lifestyle and values of foreign country's history; Attitude includes willingness to learn a foreign language and understand foreigners, to communicate and learn from foreigners from different cultures and try to be tolerant of foreigners' different values, eating habits, taboos and so on; Communication Skills are summarized as interpretation and comprehension skills, the ability to negotiate and explain in non-verbal ways when communication barriers arise, and the skills of relating and observing; Cognitive Skills is summarized as the ability to use methods, techniques and strategies to help learn foreign languages and cultures and to directly acquire knowledge related to intercultural communication; Awareness is the awareness of the impact of cultural similarities and differences in intercultural communication on social and work situations (Wu, 2013).

2.2 The Studies of Intercultural Competence at Home and Abroad

Many foreign scholars have researched more on the cultivation of intercultural competence and its application in the classroom. Alvarez Valencia and Michelson (2023) wrote that they questioned the current model of intercultural competence by tracing the development of the communicative competence model and its historical roots, arguing that communication is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs primarily in face-to-face communication. They mainly focus on the teaching and learning process of students becoming effective intercultural interpreters and meaning designers rather than just becoming effective intercultural

speakers. Luo and Chan (2023) also focus on the inquiry of engineering students as an example of judging intercultural competence. Zhang Jumin (2017) focuses on improving intercultural competence in a third space.

In recent years, the study of Intercultural Communicative Competence has become a hot spot in university teaching. The scholars focus on the teaching of English curriculum models with intercultural thinking. Chen Yiting and Pan Yu (2023) outlined the connotation of the relationship between English language and culture teaching in colleges and universities and discussed the importance of the cultivation of intercultural competence in English teaching based on analyzing the problems in the intercultural teaching of English in colleges and universities and putting forward the measures to cultivate the students' intercultural competence in English teaching in colleges and universities. Lin Jingjun (2023) believes that intercultural competence has become an indispensable and important goal in foreign language education with the increasing demand for high-level compound English talents in China. In teaching, great importance should be attached to the implementation of the goal of cultivating intercultural competence in the whole curriculum system.

In addition to the cultivation of intercultural competence, other scholars attempted to examine intercultural competence in relation to international programs and international organization talents. Xu Jia, Qi Dawei, and Jiang Linlin (2023) explored the effect of international programs on students' intercultural competence, and they found that students with international experiences scored higher than those without. Pang Chaowei, Zhang Tan, and Xiao Rong (2020) conducted a survey on the intercultural competence of UN peacekeepers and found that the overall competence is average and some shortcomings and weaknesses exist in each module of Attitudes, Knowledge, Skills, and Awareness.

2.3 Critical Review

It can be seen that there has been greater attention paid to the cultivation of students' intercultural competence both at home and abroad, and many such domestic studies have been conducted at public universities. Moreover, scholars have started to investigate intercultural competence regarding international programs and international organization talents. However, little research has been done to examine the current level of the intercultural competence of students volunteers for International Events. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature by examining the intercultural competence of students volunteers for International Events at private universities, shedding light on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by this particular group.

3. Methodology

The present study conducts an online survey because it has the advantage of easy access and quick responses. Taking advantage of my participation in the Sixth China International Import Expo (CIIE). We distributed the Intercultural Competence Self-Evaluation Scale for Chinese College Students (Wu, 2013) to Chinese student volunteers for the 6th CIIE at private colleges.

3.1 Participants

The population of this research is the volunteer students of private universities in the 6th Import Expo. The researcher of the current study was recruited as the interpreter of the booths of the 6th Import Expo and had easy access to the volunteers. Therefore, convenience sampling was employed. Participants were recruited by requesting 200 WeChat accounts of volunteers for the 6th CIIE at private colleges. A QR code and a hyperlink to the online survey to them via WeChat. A total of 142 participants responded to the survey; however, 2 were excluded due to their incompleteness, which resulted in 140 responses (70% response rate).

3.2 Data Collection

A text message was sent to the WeChat account to request his participation in the survey between November 5, 2023, and December 3, 2023. The message included an overview of the study with a QR code and a hyperlink to the online survey. Anonymous survey data were collected, and Internet Protocol addresses were not recorded. Text messages were sent to participants at the end of weeks two and three to thank participants who completed the survey and remind participants of the time remaining prior to the survey closing. Survey data were checked weekly for distribution of participant remuneration at the end of days 7, 14, 21, and 30.

3.3 Instruments

This study used the Intercultural Competence Evaluation Scale for Chinese College Students (Wu, 2013). Wu's scale consists of two parts. The first part was about personal information, including students' gender, academic background, academic performance, personal experience, and future plans. The second part included 28 items in four dimensions: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness. They were sub-divided into six major subdimensions: (1) Knowledge of Native Culture, (2) Knowledge of Foreign Cultures, (3) Attitudes, (4) Intercultural Communication Skills, (5) Intercultural Cognitive Skills, and (6) Awareness. It uses a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (strongly disagree / the weakest) to 5 (strongly agree / the strongest). The six scales and the corresponding Cronbach's alpha indices are shown in Table 1. As is shown in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha internal reliability indices

of the six scales that make up the ICC range from 0.734 to 0.910. The alpha of the full scale is 0.913. Therefore, the statistics indicate that, with high reliability, the ICC is internally consistent and can be used in research (Wu, 2013).

Table 1

Scales and their Cronbach's alpha indices (Wu, 2013)

Factors	Knowledge of Native Culture	Knowledge of Foreign Cultures	Attitudes	Intercultural Communication Skills	Intercultural Cognitive Skills	Awareness	Full scale
Cronbach's alpha indices	0.734	0.910	0.863	0.873	0.779	0.878	0.913
Number of items	3	7	3	9	3	3	28

3.4 Data Analysis

After the data collection was completed, data was imported into Microsoft Excel and analyzed using the SPSSAU webpage. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to determine the level of intercultural competence of Chinese students volunteers for the International Events at private colleges. Frequency counts, mean, standard deviation, and median were calculated for each survey item. T-tests were used to examine the differences between males and females, students who have intercultural events experience and students who have no intercultural events experience; the difference between students who have the intention of study abroad and students who have no intention of study abroad; the difference between students who have international event volunteer experience and students who have no international event volunteer experience. A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was used to examine the differences across four grades, three groups of CET-4 scores, and the frequency of connecting with foreign people.

4. Results and Discussion

This section mainly analyzes the data and conclusions of 140 valid questionnaires according to the six dimensions of intercultural competence. All the data were collected by the Questionnaire Star platform and analyzed by the SPSSAU web page, and the reliability and validity were tested. Sample analysis is mainly studied separately from individual differences and students' academic backgrounds. The conclusion includes the current level of Intercultural competence and the strengths and weaknesses of the student volunteers.

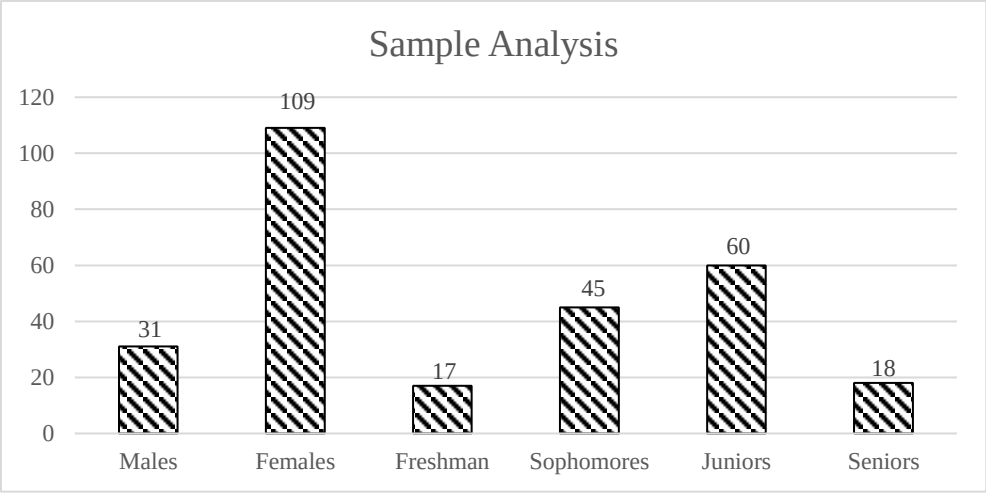
4.1 Data Analysis Description

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to determine the level of the ICC and analyze all closed-ended items. Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were used to summarize and present the basic features of the dataset. A t-test was conducted to measure: (1) the differences between male and female students, (2) the differences between students who have intercultural events experience and students who have no intercultural events experience, (3) the difference between students who have the intention of study abroad and students who have no intention of study abroad, and (4) the difference between students who have international event volunteer experience and students who have no international event volunteer experience. A one-way between-group analysis of variance was used to determine the differences across four grades, three groups of score of CET-4, and the frequency of connecting with foreign people.

4.2 General Summary of Sample Demographics

The sample size of this study is 140 volunteers, 31 males accounting for 22% and 109 females accounting for 78%, of which 17 were freshmen, 45 sophomores, 60 juniors, and 18 seniors, respectively accounting for 12%, 32%, 42%, and 12%.

Figure 1
Sample Analysis



Of the total of 140, 27 are foreign language majors, 82 are other liberal arts majors, and 31 are Engineering majors, respectively accounting for 19.29%, 58.57%, and 22.14%.

Figure 2
Disciplines

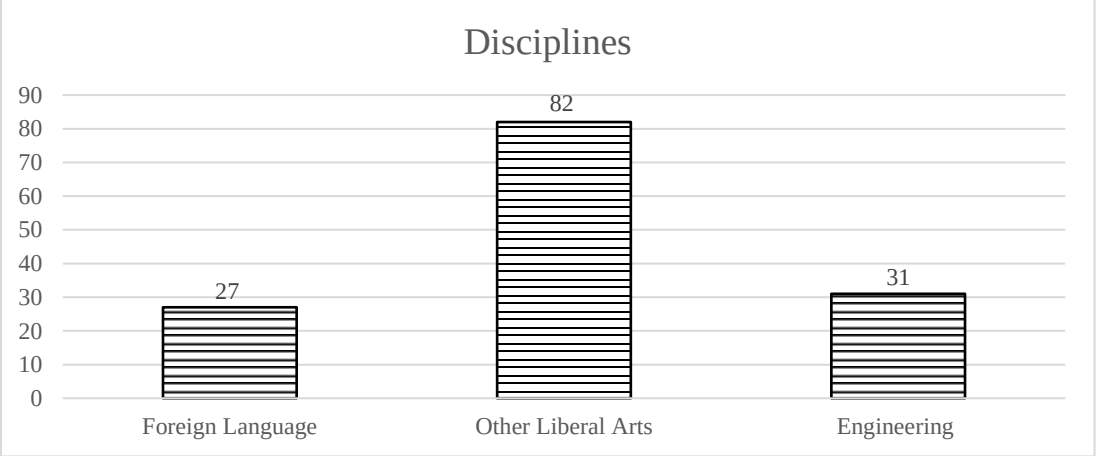


Figure 3 shows the statistics of students' personal experiences. The total number of students who have experience of going abroad is 69, and the proportion is 49%. The number of students who often communicate with foreigners totaled 22, accounting for 15%. The total number of students who have served as volunteers in international expositions or international events similar to the Fair is 30, accounting for 21%. The total number of students who have participated in intercultural communication activities, such as international academic conferences, Model United Nations, and exchange students from foreign universities is 28, accounting for 20%. The total number of students who have plans to go abroad in the future is 60, accounting for 43%.

Figure 3

Personal Experience

4.3 Results

Question 1: What is the current level of the intercultural competence of Chinese student volunteers for International Events at private colleges?

The mean scores for participants (N=140) in this data set are presented in Table 2. As can be seen in Table 2, the mean scores were 3.869 for the full scale. In terms of the four dimensions, the mean scores were 3.755 for Knowledge of Native Culture, 2.987 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture, 4.167 for Attitude, 4.022 for Communication Skills, 3.731 for Cognitive Skills, and 3.838 for Awareness.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to examine the differences among the six dimensions. As was shown in Table 2, a significant difference was found in the mean scores across the six dimensions: F (2, 140) = 55.285, p = 0.000. The mean scores for Attitudes were significantly higher than that for Knowledge of Foreign Culture, respectively ranking first and sixth. The mean scores for Communication skills, Awareness, Knowledge of Native Culture, and Cognitive Skills ranked 2 to 5.

Table 2

Statistics of the Overall Scale and the Six Dimensions

Dimension	**sample**	**min**	**max**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Median**	***F***	***p***	**Ranking**
Knowledge of Native Culture	140	1.000	5.000	3.755	0.937	4.000			4
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	140	1.000	5.000	2.987	0.955	3.000			6
Attitudes	140	1.000	5.000	4.167	0.981	4.333	24.82	0.000**	1
Communication Skills	140	1.000	5.000	4.022	0.946	4.111			2
Cognitive Skills	140	1.000	5.000	3.731	1.027	4.000			5
Awareness	140	0.000	5.000	3.838	1.013	4.000			3
Full Scale	140	0.000	5.000	3.699	0.961	4.000			

Question 2: What are the differences between the students with different backgrounds and the dimensions of intercultural competence?

This question seeks to find out whether there were any significant differences in the intercultural competence among students representing different demographic or academic groupings (i.e., gender, grade, discipline, CET 4, etc.).

The first variable examined was Gender. In terms of the mean scores on all six dimensions, the mean scores for Males (N=31) and Females (N=109) in this data set were 3.952 and 3.881 for the overall scale, as can be found in Table 3. The mean scores for Males and Females were 3. 946 and 3.700 for Knowledge of Native Culture, 3.442 and 2.857 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture, 4.118 and 4.180 for Attitude, 4.050 and 4.014 for Communication Skills, 3.817 and 3.706 for Cognitive Skills, and both 3.838 for Awareness.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics: Gender

Dimension	Male (N=31)	Female (N=109)
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.946	3.700
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	3.442	2.857
Attitude	4.118	4.180
Communication Skills	4.050	4.014
Cognitive Skills	3.817	3.706
Awareness	3.838	3.838
Full scale	3.952	3.881

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the overall scores for males and females on the overall scale. Table 4 shows the results of t-tests. There was no significant difference in the scores for Males (M = 3.85, SD = 0.94) and Females (M = 3.66, SD = 0.74; t (140) =1.030 p = 0.309, two-tailed).

T-tests were also conducted to compare the scores on the six dimensions for both groups. A significant difference was only found in the scores on the Knowledge of Foreign Culture for Males (M = 3.44, SD = 0.96) and Females (M = 2.86, SD = 0.92; t (140) =1.030, p = 0.002, two-tailed).

Table 4
Independent Samples Test: Gender

	1. Gender: (Mean±SD)			
	Male (N=31)	Female (N=109)	*t*	*p*
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.95±1.12	3.70±0.88	1.293	0.198
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	3.44±0.96	2.86±0.92	3.102	0.002**
Attitude	4.12±1.09	4.18±0.95	0.310	0.757
Communication Skills	4.05±1.04	4.01±0.92	0.186	0.853
Cognitive Skills	3.82±1.08	3.71±1.02	0.529	0.598
Awareness	3.84±1.10	3.84±0.99	0.004	0.997
Full Scale	3.85±0.94	3.66±0.74	1.030	0.309

The second variable is grade. In terms of the mean scores on all six dimensions, the mean scores for Freshmen (N=17), Sophomore (N=45), Junior (N=60), and Senior (N=18) in this data set were 3.569, 3.894, 3.620, and 3.599 for the overall scale, as can be found in Table 5. The mean scores for different grades were 3.649, 3.807, 3.811 and 3.630 for Knowledge of Native Culture, 2.992, 3.232, 2.819 and 2.929 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture, 4.039, 4.340, 4.022 and 4.333 for Attitude, 3.830, 4.249, 3.965 and 3.827 for

Communication Skill, 3.490, 3.933, 3.706 and 3.537 for Cognitive Skill, and 3.765, 3.977, 3.772 and 3.777 for Awareness. The mean scores for the four grades were 3.158, 3.404, 3.116, and 3.139 for Knowledge and 3.745, 4.170, 3.900, and 3.754 for Skill.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics: Grade

Dimension	Freshman (N=17)	Sophomore (N=45)	Junior (N=60)	Senior (N=18)
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.649	3.807	3.811	3.630
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	2.992	3.232	2.819	2.929
Attitude	4.039	4.340	4.022	4.333
Communication Skills	3.830	4.249	3.965	3.827
Cognitive Skills	3.490	3.933	3.706	3.537
Awareness	3.765	3.977	3.772	3.777
Full Scale	3.569	3.894	3.620	3.599

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to compare the scores of the overall scale for Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior. Table 6 shows the results of A one-way between-groups analysis of variance. There was no significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in scores for the four groups: $F= 0.507$, $p = 0.681$. Also, no significant differences were found in the scores on the six dimensions among the four groups.

Table 6

One-Way ANOVA Categorized by Grade

	2.Grade:(Mean±SD)				*F*	*p*
	Freshman (N=17)	Sophomore(N=45)	Junior (N=60)	Senior (N=18)		
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.55±1.15	3.81±1.03	3.81±0.88	3.63±0.66	0.495	0.686
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	2.99±0.88	3.23±1.06	2.82±0.90	2.93±0.88	1.648	0.181
Attitude	4.04±1.32	4.34±0.90	4.02±0.99	4.33±0.74	1.178	0.320
Communication Skills	3.83±1.21	4.25±0.94	3.96±0.94	3.83±0.62	1.441	0.234
Cognitive Skills	3.49±1.15	3.93±1.05	3.71±1.03	3.54±0.82	1.123	0.342
Awareness	3.76±1.09	3.98±1.04	3.77±1.06	3.78±0.72	0.416	0.742
Full Scale	3.61±0.15	3.51±0.69	3.48±0.98	4.23±0.38	0.507	0.681

The third variable examined is discipline. In terms of different disciplines, the mean scores for the dimensions are presented in Table 7. Foreign Language (N=27), Other Liberal Arts Students (N=82), and Engineering students (N=31) in this data set were 3.583, 3.794, and 3.548 for the overall scale, as can be found in Table 7. The mean scores for different disciplines were 3.226, 3.291, and 3.013 for Knowledge, 4.185, 4.216, and 4.022 for Attitude, 3.713, 4.058, and 3.868 for Skill, and 3.654, 3,996, and 3. for Awareness. The mean scores for different disciplines were 3.864, 3.785, and 3.581 for Knowledge of Native Culture and 2.952, 3.080, and 2.770 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture; 3.794, 4.141, and 3.907 for Communication Skills and 3.469, 3.809, and 3.753 for Cognitive Skill.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics: Disciplines

Dimension	Foreign Language (N=27)	Liberal Arts (N=82)	Engineering (N=31)
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.864	3.785	3.581
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	2.952	3.080	2.770
Attitude	4.185	4.216	4.022
Communication Skills	3.794	4.141	3.907
Cognitive Skills	3.469	3.809	3.753
Awareness	3.654	3.996	3.580
Full Scale	3.583	3.794	3.548

From the above analysis, it can be seen that among the private college students, volunteers of the sixth CIIE, liberal arts students account for the majority, while foreign language and science and engineering students are fewer. In terms of intercultural knowledge, other liberal arts students score the highest, foreign language students second, and science and engineering students score the lowest. Among them, other liberal arts students generally think that they know the most about their own lifestyle and values. And they know the least about foreign cultural taboos. Foreign language students and science and engineering students also know the most about their own lifestyles and values. And they know the least about foreign cultural taboos.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to compare the scores of the overall scale for Foreign Language, Other Liberal Arts, and Engineering students. Table 8 shows the results of A one-way between-groups analysis of variance. There was no significant difference in the scores for the overall scale across the three groups： F=1.454，p=0.237. Also， no significant differences were found in the scores for the dimensions.

Table 8
One-Way ANOVA Categorized by Disciplines

	5. Disciplines:(Mean±SD)			F	p
	Foreign Language (N=27)	Liberal Arts (N=82)	Engineering (N=31)		
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.86±0.82	3.78±0.98	3.58±0.92	0.759	0.470
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	2.95±0.91	3.08±1.02	2.77±0.81	1.214	0.300
Attitude	4.19±0.96	4.22±0.99	4.02±0.99	0.442	0.644
Communication Skills	3.79±0.84	4.14±0.96	3.91±0.96	1.676	0.191
Cognitive Skills	3.47±0.89	3.81±1.09	3.75±0.97	1.122	0.328
Awareness	3.65±0.91	4.00±0.97	3.58±1.15	2.495	0.086
Full Scale	3.58±0.75	3.79±0.80	3.55±0.80	1.454	0.237

The fourth variable examined is College English Test Band 4 (CET 4). Consistent with Wu Weiping (2013), the CET-4 scores in this study were grouped as follows: 490 and below, 490-599, and 600 points and above. The mean scores for the dimensions are presented in Table 9. Students scoring 600 points and above (N=4), those scoring 490-599 (N=47), and those scoring below 489 (N=88) in this data set were 4.259, 3.742, and 3.652 for the overall scale. The mean scores for different groups were 4.300, 3.138, and 3,212 for Knowledge, 4.500, 4.291, and 4.086 for Attitude, 4.166, 4.040 and 3.901for Skill, and4.250, 4.007 and 3.745 for

Awareness. The mean scores for different disciplines were 4.417,3.730 and 3,738 for Knowledge of Native Culture and 4.250, 2.884, and 2.984 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture; 4.250, 4.007and 3.745 for Communication Skill and 4.083, 3.823 and 3.667 for Cognitive Skill.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics: CET-4

Dimension	600 points and above (N=4)	490-599 (N=47)	490 points and below (N=88)
Knowledge of Native Culture	4.417	3.730	3.738
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	4.250	2.884	2.984
Attitude	4.500	4.291	4.086
Communication Skills	4.194	4.113	3.966
Cognitive Skills	4.083	3.823	3.667
Awareness	4.250	4.007	3.745
Full scale	4.259	3.742	3.652

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to compare the scores for the overall scale and the dimensions for 490-599, 490 points and below, and Scores of 600 points and above. Table 10 shows the results of A one-way between-groups analysis of variance. There was no significant difference in the scores for the full scale across the three groups: F=1.178, p=0.311. Significant differences were only found in the scores for Knowledge of Foreign Culture: F=3.925, p=0.022*.

Tables 10

Independent Samples Test: CET-4

	1)7. CET-4 (Mean±SD)			F	p
	600 points and above (N=4)	490 points and below(N=88)	490-599 (N=47)		
Knowledge of Native Culture	4.42±0.69	3.74±0.96	3.73±0.91	1.030	0.360
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	4.25±0.50	2.98±0.95	2.88±0.94	3.925	0.022*
Attitude	4.50±0.58	4.09±1.06	4.29±0.83	0.905	0.407
Communication Skills	4.19±0.55	3.97±1.03	4.11±0.80	0.437	0.647
Cognitive Skills	4.08±0.72	3.67±1.08	3.82±0.88	0.594	0.554
Awareness	4.25±0.50	3.74±1.11	4.01±0.81	1.412	0.247
Full Scale	4.26±0.50	3.66±0.85	3.74±0.69	1.178	0.311

The fifth variable examined is the frequency of contact with people from different cultures. The mean scores for the dimensions are presented in Table 11. Students always have connections with people who came from different cultures (N=6), those who usually have connections with people who came from different cultures (N=16), those who often have connect (N=56), those who sometimes have connect(N=44) and those who never have connect (N=18) in this data set were 4.429, 4.078, 3.705, 3.620 and 3.294for the overall scale. The mean scores for different groups were 4.667, 3.650, 3.354, 2.934 and 2.761 for Knowledge,4.556, 4.479, 4.036, 4.348 and 3.722 for Attitude,4.583, 4.344, 3.874, 3.975 and 3.560 for Skill, and 4.333, 4.042, 3.875, 3.758 and 3.574 for Awareness. The mean scores for different disciplines were 4.233, 4.104, 3.738, 3.652, and 3.444 for Knowledge of Native Culture and 4.048, 3.455, 3.189, 2.627 and 2.468 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture;4.563, 4.367, 3.944, 4.122 and 3.590 for Communication Skill and 4.611, 4.271, 3.685, 3.568 and 3.500 for Cognitive Skill.

Table 11
Descriptive Statistics: Frequency

Dimension	Always (N=6)	Usually (N=16)	Often (N=56)	Sometimes (N=44)	Never (N=18)
Knowledge of Native Culture	4.233	4.104	3.738	3.652	3.444
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	4.048	3.455	3.189	2.627	2.468
Attitude	4.556	4.479	4.036	4.348	3.722
Communication Skills	4.563	4.367	3.944	4.122	3.590
Cognitive Skills	4.611	4.271	3.685	3.568	3.500
Awareness	4.333	4.042	3.875	3.758	3.574
Full Scale	4.429	4.078	3.705	3.620	3.294

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to compare the scores overall for the five groups of different degrees of connection with people from different cultures. Table 12 shows the results of A one-way between-groups analysis of variance. There was a significant difference in the scores for the full scale across the five groups： F=3.757，p=0.006**.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was also conducted to compare the scores on the six dimensions among the five groups. Significant differences were found in the dimensions of Knowledge of Native Culture, Knowledge of Foreign Culture, and Intercultural Cognitive Skills.

Table 12
One-way ANOVA Categorized by Frequency

	10. Frequency of contact with people from different cultures (foreigners) in the country:(Mean±SD)					*F*·	*p*·
	Always (N=6)	Usually (N=16)	Often (N=56)	Sometimes (N=44)	Never (N=18)		
Knowledge of Native Culture	4.67±0.52	4.10±0.66	3.74±0.93	3.65±0.87	3.44±1.19	2.742	0.031*
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	4.05±0.84	3.46±0.94	3.19±0.79	2.63±0.79	2.47±1.24	7.513	0.000**
Attitude	4.56±1.09	4.48±0.81	4.04±1.02	4.35±0.65	3.72±1.41	2.271	0.065
Communication Skills	4.60±0.99	4.37±0.70	3.96±0.99	4.16±0.64	3.60±1.42	2.317	0.060
Cognitive Skills	4.63±0.92	4.30±0.87	3.73±0.94	3.68±0.79	3.50±1.43	2.815	0.028*
Awareness	4.33±1.03	4.04±0.83	3.88±0.96	3.76±0.93	3.57±1.43	0.912	0.459
Full Scale	4.43±0.79	4.08±0.68	3.71±0.79	3.62±0.51	3.29±0.51	3.757	0.006**

The sixth variable examined is the students' experience with international event volunteers before. The mean scores for the dimensions are presented in Table 13. Students who have this kind of experience (N=30) and those who didn't have this kind of experience (N=110) in this data set were 3.810 and 3.669 for the overall scale. The mean scores for different groups were 3.463 and 3.150 for Knowledge, 4.111 and 4.182 for Attitude, 3.997 and 3.936 for Skill, and 3.911 and 3.818 for Awareness. The mean scores for different disciplines were 3.911 and 3.712 for Knowledge of Native Culture, 3.271 and 2.909 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture, 4.058 and 4.022 for Communication Skill, and 3.856 and 3.697 for Cognitive Skill.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics: Volunteer Experience

Dimension	Yes (N=30)	No (N=110)
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.911	3.712
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	3.271	2.909
Attitude	4.111	4.182
Communication Skills	4.058	4.022
Cognitive Skills	3.856	3.697
Awareness	3.911	3.818
Full Scale	3.810	3.669

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the scores of the overall scale for the students who had international events experience and the students who didn't have international events experience. Table 14 shows the results of t-tests. There was no significant difference in the scores for Yes (M = 3.81, SD = 0.77) and No (M = 3.67, SD = 0.80; t (140) =0.860, p = 0.391, two-tailed).

T-tests were also conducted to compare the scores on the seven dimensions for both groups. No Significant difference was found in the scores on all dimensions.

Table 14

Independent Samples Test: Volunteer Experience

	11. Volunteer Experience:(Mean±SD)		t·	p·
	Yes (N=30)	No (N=110)		
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.91±0.83	3.71±0.96	1.032	0.304
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	3.27±0.94	2.91±0.95	1.858	0.065
Attitude	4.11±0.91	4.18±1.00	-0.349	0.728
Communication Skills	4.06±0.88	4.02±0.97	0.187	0.852
Cognitive Skills	3.86±0.89	3.70±1.06	0.748	0.455
Awareness	3.91±0.96	3.82±1.03	0.444	0.658
Full Scale	3.81±0.77	3.67±0.80	0.860	0.391

The seventh variable examined is the students' previous experience with intercultural events. The mean scores for the dimensions are presented in Table 15. Students have this kind of experience (N=28); those who didn't have this kind of experience (N=112) in this data set were 4.048 and 3.612 for the overall scale. The mean scores for different groups were 3.618 and 3.117 for Knowledge, 4.571 and 4.065 for Attitude, 4.295 and 3.863 for Skill, and 3.976 and 3.804 for Awareness. The mean scores for different disciplines were 4.179 and 3.649 for Knowledge of Native Culture, 3.378 and 2.889 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture, 4.379 and 3.942 for Communication Skills, and 4.119 and 3.634 for Cognitive Skills.

Table 15
Descriptive Statistics: Intercultural Events

Dimension	Yes (N=28)	No (N=112)
Knowledge of Native Culture	4.179	3.649
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	3.378	2.889
Attitude	4.571	4.065
Communication Skills	4.379	3.942
Cognitive Skills	4.119	3.634
Awareness	3.976	3.804
Full Scale	4.048	3.612

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the scores of the overall scale for the students with international events experience and the students without international events experience. Table 16 shows there was a significant difference in the scores for both groups: t=2.666, p=0.009**.

T-tests were also conducted to compare the scores on the six dimensions for both groups. There were significant differences in the scores on all dimensions except the Awareness.

Table 16
Independent Samples Test: Intercultural Events

	12. Intercultural Events (Mean±SD)		t·	p·
	Yes(N=28)	No(N=112)		
Knowledge of Native Culture	4.18±0.66	3.65±0.97	2.739	0.007**
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	3.38±0.94	2.89±0.94	2.464	0.015*
Attitude	4.57±0.66	4.07±1.02	3.206	0.002**
Communication Skills	4.38±0.65	3.94±0.99	2.214	0.028*
Cognitive Skills	4.12±0.93	3.63±1.03	2.268	0.025*
Awareness	3.98±0.87	3.80±1.05	0.806	0.422
Full Scale	4.05±0.64	3.61±0.81	2.666	0.009**

The eighth variable examined is students' intention to study abroad. The mean scores for the dimensions are presented in Table 17. Students have this kind of intention (N=60); those who didn't have this kind of experience (N=80) in this data set were 3.849 and 3.587 for the overall scale. The mean scores for different groups were 3.338 and 3.126 for Knowledge, 4.294 and 4.071 for Attitude, 4.115 and 3.825 for Skill, and 4.039 and 3.688 for Awareness. The mean scores for different disciplines were 3.889 and 3.654 for Knowledge of Native Culture, 3.102 and 2.900 for Knowledge of Foreign Culture, 4.198 and 3.903 for Communication Skills, and 3.911 and 3.596 for Cognitive Skills.

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics: Intention of Studying Abroad

Dimension	Yes (N=60)	No (N=80)
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.889	3.654
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	3.102	2.900
Attitude	4.294	4.071
Communication Skills	4.198	3.903
Cognitive Skills	3.911	3.596
Awareness	4.039	3.688
Full Scale	3.849	3.587

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the scores of the overall scale for the students who had the intention to study abroad and the students who didn't. Table 18 shows the results of t-tests. There was no significant difference in the scores for Yes (M = 3.85, SD = 0.71) and No (M = 3.59, SD = 0.84; t (140) = 1.955, p = 0.053, two-tailed).

T-tests were also conducted to compare the scores on the seven dimensions for both groups. A significant difference was only found in the scores on the dimension of Awareness: t=2.130, p=0.035*.

Table 18

Independent Samples Test: Intention of Study Abroad

	13. Intention of Study Abroad:(Mean±SD)		*t*·	*p*·
	Yes(N=60)	No(N=80)		
Knowledge of Native Culture	3.89±0.88	3.65±0.97	1.474	0.143
Knowledge of Foreign Culture	3.10±0.92	2.90±0.98	1.243	0.216
Attitude	4.29±0.88	4.07±1.05	1.338	0.183
Communication Skills	4.20±0.82	3.90±1.02	1.836	0.069
Cognitive Skills	3.91±0.91	3.60±1.09	1.812	0.072
Awareness	4.04±0.85	3.69±1.10	2.130	0.035*
Full Scale	3.85±0.71	3.59±0.84	1.955	0.053

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, the research results will be summarized and interpreted by comparing them with other previous studies. Then, the limitations of this study will be pointed out, and suggestions for future research will be provided consequently.

5.1 Summary and Interpretation of Results

In this section, I will summarize the major results, compare my findings with previous studies, and provide possible explanations for or speculation about my findings as to why my results are the way they are.

5.1.1 The Current Level of the Intercultural Competence of Chinese Students Volunteers for the International Events at Private Colleges

The intercultural competence (ICC) of Chinese student volunteers for the International Events at Private Colleges in this sample set was at a satisfactory level, consistent with Gao Yongchen (2016). The overall intercultural competence of college student volunteers

in private colleges is in an ideal state, with an average of 3.699. Regarding the six dimensions, students scored highest on Attitude (M=4.167) and the lowest on knowledge of Foreign Culture(M=2.987). Specifically, the mean scores on the dimensions were arranged in the order of Attitude > Communication Skills> Awareness> Knowledge of Native Culture > Cognitive Skills > Knowledge of Foreign Culture.

The results are partly consistent with Gao Yongchen (2016), in which Knowledge was significantly lower than the other dimensions, and Awareness and Attitude were the dimensions that scored the highest. Both studies indicate that Attitude and Awareness are the prerequisites for successful intercultural communication, and students currently attach great importance to intercultural competence. This finding indicates that college teaching reform at private colleges, which puts emphasis on practical ability, has taken effect and has promoted the formation of foreign language education from knowledge inculcation to competence cultivation and the transformation of education mode. In addition, volunteers in this current study showed their strongest willingness to learn foreign language and know foreigners, to communicate with people from different cultures, and to be lenient with different values, diet habits, and taboos.

In addition, this study found that although Knowledge of Foreign Cultures ranked the lowest, Knowledge of Native Cultures ranked fourth (M=3.755). This may be due to the fact that the native culture is more thoroughly and easily understood by the students than the foreign culture, and in learning the native culture, the students are active learners who intend to disseminate knowledge of the native culture. However, when learning foreign knowledge, the students are passive learners who play the role of receiving knowledge. In addition, foreign language teaching focuses on students' mastery of their own country's knowledge, which helps students to understand and compare Chinese and foreign cultures and improve their intercultural competence and their ability to express and disseminate Chinese culture in a foreign language (Peng & Wu, 2016). Therefore, students' knowledge of native culture is satisfactory.

5.1.2 The Differences between Students with Different Backgrounds and the Dimensions of Intercultural Competence

The study reveals some differences between the student volunteers with different backgrounds and the dimensions of intercultural competence.

Gender Differences. The current study found no significant difference between the overall scale and the six dimensions except the Knowledge of Foreign Cultures. The results were consistent with Zhang Fangliang (2012), who found volunteers' Attitudes and Awareness levels do not change because of gender factors, but they were inconsistent with Gao Yongchen (2016) in which the overall score of ICC of females was significantly higher than that of males. The reason might be that the participants in this study were all student volunteers who went through various English interviews and one-week training, in which they had the opportunity to be exposed to intercultural knowledge and experiences. The training not only helped to familiarize themselves with the work and atmosphere of the volunteers in advance but also helped the student volunteers to develop their ICC, which resulted in the similarity in their scores on the full scale and most dimensions. Liao Hongjing and Li Yanju (2017) proposed that students' gender does not have a significant impact on the level of intercultural competence, while students' educational background has a significant impact on intercultural competence. Therefore, the unified training experience will make the individual differences of students not significant.

Grade and Discipline Differences. In terms of grade and discipline, this paper found no significant difference between the overall scale and the six dimensions, inconsistent with Gao Yongchen (2016) and Wu Weiping (Wu, 2013). This could also be due to the fact that the volunteer group had been trained in uniformity during their training. Their individual differences cannot be a factor affecting the level of ICC after the unified education.

CET-4 Scores. Regarding the variable of CET 4, this study found no significant difference between the overall scale and the six dimensions, which was completely inconsistent with Gao Yongchen (2016) and Wu Weiping (Wu, 2013). One of the possible explanations could be that the sample size for the current study was small, and the grouping of students might not represent the difference in the levels of CET 4. Pang, Zhang, and Xiao (2020) indicated that the gap in ICC becomes smaller when the score of CET 4 is over 425, and the ICC is weaker only when the students score below 425 in CET 4. It is easy to find that 74% of the students in this study are in the range of 425-649 points in CET 4. Therefore, no significant differences were found across different groups of CET 4 scores.

Contact with People from Different Cultures. In terms of contact with people from different cultures, significant differences were found in the overall scale, both knowledge dimensions and cognitive skill dimensions, which were consistent with Gao Yongchen (2016) (2016). The results indicated that the combination of perceptual knowledge and rational knowledge is helpful to improve students' intercultural competence. Contact with People from Different Cultures can help students volunteers experience the differences in different cultures, from history, geography, social politics, social etiquette to religious culture, way of life, and

values. It can also improve the volunteers' ability to use various methods, techniques, and strategies to assist in the learning of foreign languages and cultures, as well as their ability to reflect and learn when intercultural conflicts and misunderstandings arise and to seek appropriate solutions.

Intercultural Events Experiences and Volunteer Experiences. With regard to the intercultural events experiences, only the Awareness dimension showed no significant difference. It also shows that students who have participated in intercultural events have a higher level of intercultural competence than students who have not participated in intercultural events. This was consistent with Gao Yongchen's findings (2016). International projects can improve students' ICC in different dimensions, and international projects of different natures can improve students' intercultural competence in different dimensions in different degrees (Xu & Jiang, 2023). On the whole, students who have participated in international projects have higher ICC than those who have not.

However, regarding volunteer experiences, there were no significant differences in the overall scale and all the dimensions, consistent with Zhang Fangliang (2012). One of the possible explanations could be that some of the volunteer work at international events does not allow for direct contact with foreigners, and some foreigners will bring their own interpreters with them when they come to China in order to avoid unsuccessful intercultural communication or language barriers. In other words, student volunteers are not able to fully develop their ICC in international events. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the overall scale and all dimensions in terms of volunteer experience.

Intention of Studying Abroad. This study found significant differences in the Awareness dimensions. This result shows that learning motivation has a significant impact on intercultural competence. Gao Yihong (2004) further summarized the seven types of motivation they studied, namely, intrinsic interest, achievement, learning situation, going abroad, social responsibility, personal development, and information media, into three types of motivation: instrumental, cultural, and situational. There is an instrumental component to the motivation to go abroad (seeking educational and job opportunities). In general, students who have clear plans to go abroad usually have higher Intercultural Awareness than those who have no plans to go abroad.

5.2 Implications

This study mainly examines the intercultural competence of student volunteers in private colleges. Intercultural competence refers to students' ability to adapt, communicate, and cooperate in different cultural contexts, which plays a very important role in the development of the globalization process and cultural diversity. The development of intercultural competence among private university students can improve their competitiveness in international communication. The results of this study provide the following implications for foreign language teaching. First, college foreign language teaching should attach importance to the cultivation of students' intercultural communication ability, especially the cultivation of their Knowledge of Foreign Culture. In addition to this, for students of different disciplines, there are different directions to focus on: for students of Foreign Languages, it is important to strengthen their' Cognitive Skills; for students of other Liberal Arts, it is more important to focus on the education of Knowledge of Native Culture; for students of Engineering, the teaching should focus on the Awareness and the education of Knowledge of Native Culture. Moreover, teachers should continue strengthening and mobilizing students' subjective initiative in cultivating intercultural competence.

Second, administrators should also create more conditions for intercultural contact and provide students with more real opportunities for intercultural communication, which is a low-cost and high-return way to improve students' intercultural competence in an all-around way. Intercultural lectures, intercultural activities, and contact with different cultures could be of help. Also, they should give students special training customized for the students volunteers, which is beneficial to the enhancement of students' intercultural competence.

5.3 Strengths and Limitations

The field research adopted in this paper provides an important guarantee for the credibility and validity of the research results. Researchers directly participated in the survey of the sixth CIIE, and the data collected can truly reflect the actual situation of the research object group, ensuring the accuracy of the research results. At the same time, field research also provides researchers with an opportunity to understand the participants deeply, which is conducive to a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the research questions.

However, one of the limitations of this study is that the data are all self-assessments of college students, which lacks objectivity and comparability. It should be pointed out that self-assessment has the influence of individual subjective factors, which may lead to the bias of research results. In order to improve the credibility and objectivity of the research results, objective ability testing tools can be introduced in the future to verify the actual ability level of college students. Through the introduction of objective

ability testing tools, the ability level of research objects can be more accurately assessed, and the credibility and validity of research results can be ensured. This will help improve the reliability of the study and make the findings more convincing.

5.4 Conclusion

Taking the example of the Sixth CIIE, the study seeks to survey the current situation of intercultural competence of Chinese students volunteers for International Events at private colleges by employing the Intercultural Competence Self-Evaluation Scale for Chinese College Students (Wu, 2013).

It can be concluded that the current intercultural competence of Chinese students volunteering for international events at private colleges is at a satisfactory level, with the overall average score being 3.699. The mean scores on the dimensions were arranged in the order of Attitude > Communication skills > Awareness > Knowledge of Native Culture > Cognitive Skills > Knowledge of Foreign Culture, with Attitude (M=4.167) the highest and Knowledge of Foreign Culture (M=2.987) the lowest.

Meanwhile, it reveals the differences between the students volunteers with different backgrounds and the dimensions of intercultural competence. Students with contact with people from different cultures, with intercultural events and experiences, and with the intention of studying abroad scored significantly higher than those without.

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