

A Theoretical Model of Intercultural Legal Competence for Law Students in the Context of Higher Education in China

Chunyu Yao

Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, Shanghai 201701, China

Abstract

There has been an increasing recognition of the importance of intercultural competence development in legal profession and education in the era of globalization. By reviewing the extensive literature on studies of intercultural competence in general and legal setting, this article attempts to propose a model of intercultural legal competence for law students in the context of higher education in China. The model is composed of four domains: awareness, attitudes, knowledge and skills. Each of the four domains further includes corresponding components which reflect the integration of intercultural competence into legal setting. This model is developed to provide theoretical support for teaching intercultural legal competence to college students in Chinese context of higher education.

Keywords

Intercultural Competence; Legal Education; Theoretical Model.

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, legal professionals face the challenge of working with clients and colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds dealing with a wide variety of legal disputes and issues across cultures and borders. These interactions require a high level of intercultural competence that goes beyond mere knowledge of diverse cultures. Legal professionals need to understand and respect cultural differences, communicate effectively with people from different cultures, and navigate legal systems that may be vastly different from their own. Developing intercultural competence is therefore essential for legal professionals to effectively serve their clients and contributes to the legal profession [5,9,12,28,35,37].

In December of 2011, the Ministry of Education of China and the Central Committee of Political and Legislative Affairs of the Communist Party of China jointly issued the *Several Opinions on the Implementation of the Education and Training Plan for Outstanding Legal Talents (hereinafter referred to as the Opinions)*, which specified the overall objectives, main tasks and working plans for producing outstanding legal talents who must have international vision, be familiar with international rules, be able to engage in international legal practicing and safeguard the interests of China as a nation. In October of 2018, the Ministry of Education of China and the Central Committee of Political and Legislative Affairs of the Communist Party of China printed the *Several Opinions on the Implementation of the Education and Training Plan for Outstanding Legal Talents with Virtues and Professional Knowledge (Version 2.0)*, which asks for more requirements for the education and training of legal talents, and pointed out that outstanding international legal professionals must have the courage and competence to promote the reform of global governance. As is said in the two documents, a high level of intercultural competence, together with other knowledge and skills, makes all-round development of legal professionals [21-22].

As is known to all, higher education institutions play a main and critical role in producing legal professionals with high level of proficiency of intercultural competence. It goes without saying

that they should shoulder the responsibility for developing intercultural competence in college law students. However, there are many challenges arising in reality when it comes to the work in practice, which includes, for instance, institutional resistance to change in legal education, educational administrators' underestimation of the importance of intercultural legal competence in legal education, and more importantly, and lack of resources and support for intercultural legal competence development. Although a great number of studies of intercultural competence have been recorded in the literature, there is still the inadequacy of that in Chinese legal education. Therefore, this article attempts to propose a theoretical model of intercultural legal competence for law students in the context of higher education in China, which is expected to provide theoretical support for the practice of teaching intercultural legal competence to college students.

2. Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is a very complex and inclusive concept. It draws the attention of scholars from a wide variety of disciplines which include anthropology, cultural studies, linguistics, communications, intercultural communication and others. Starting from the 1960s, studies of intercultural competence range from the intercultural adaptation of expatriates (including multinational corporation employees and technicians, diplomats, international students), acculturation of immigrants, and the training and education of students from a variety of disciplines of education, business, engineering, social work, medical care, religion, tourism, military, law and others [2,6,8]. A comprehensive review of the literature indicates that intercultural competence research focus mainly includes concept defining, theory building, competence developing and outcome assessing and evaluating [6,15,30].

Defining intercultural competence is never an easy job. According to Deardorff's survey [7], Byram's definition of intercultural competence was the most popular among the administrators of colleges and universities. He defined intercultural competence as "knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one's self. Linguistic competence plays a key role" [5]. In other words, intercultural competence is the combination of intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness. On the other hand, the most popular definition of intercultural competence among intercultural scholars is "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" given by Deardorff. Of the two definitions of intercultural competence, the former tends to be specific whereas the latter tends to be general. Bennett developed a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to explain how individual's perceptions of cultural difference change with time. The underlying assumption of this model is that individual's intercultural sensibility develops progressively over time as one's experiences of cultural difference become increasingly complicated and sophisticated. Six orientations are identified as the stages that one progresses in the development of intercultural sensitivity. Denial, defense and minimization makes the first three stages of ethnocentrism; acceptance, adaptation and integration constitute the second three stages of ethnorelativism [2]. In order to measure individual's development of intercultural sensitivity, an Intercultural Development Inventory was created based on the DMIS [14].

From the perspective of foreign language education in Europe, Byram put forward a model of intercultural competence, which includes four core components: attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness. This model aims at producing global citizens who are supposed to interact effectively and appropriately with people from a variety of cultures and proactively take action in the global community. As one of those who differentiate intercultural competence from intercultural communicative competence, Byram claims that intercultural competence,

together with linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, constitutes intercultural communicative competence. Set in the context of foreign language education, Byram specifies the overall and concrete objectives for teaching intercultural competence to language learners in terms of attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness[5].

Deardorff proposed pyramid model and process model from the perspective of higher education in the American context. Both the two models cover the three dimensions of attitude, knowledge and skills, which are essential for successful intercultural communication, and desired internal and external outcome. In terms of the development level of intercultural competence, the pyramid model presents a bottom-up developmental structure. Attitudes are the premise of knowledge acquisition and skills improvement. Knowledge and skills are the basis for gaining the desired internal outcome and then achieving the desired external outcome[7]. The process model emphasizes that the development of intercultural competence is a complex and on-going process. In the two models, Deardorff does not include interactants' (foreign) language competence because she believes that (foreign) language competence does not have a great impact on individual's development of intercultural competence, which obviously does not meet the practical requirements of foreign language education in China.

The models of intercultural competence reviewed above-mentioned are developed mainly from western perspectives, which indeed sheds light on the complexity of intercultural competence. Drawing upon those studies of intercultural competence, Chinese scholars have also made many attempts to build models of intercultural competence from Chinese angle, particularly in the context of higher education.

Considering the development of intercultural competence in Chinese college students, Gao constructed a conceptual framework for assessing Chinese college students' intercultural communication competence by a combination of theory and practice. Borrowing the thinking of "unity of knowledge and action" from Wang Yangming and "Knowledge is virtue" from Socrates in ancient Chinese and western philosophy, the framework is composed of two mutually interactive dimensions of "knowing and doing". As a one of the two core dimensions of intercultural communication competence for Chinese college students, "knowing" refers to a set of intercultural knowledge made up of cultural values, which includes knowledge, awareness and critical thinking. "Doing" refers to a set of patterns of behaviors determined by cultural values, which contains attitudes, skills and tactics. "Knowing" dimension entails the attainment of "doing" in the process of intercultural interactions which in turn contribute to the development of "knowing" [10].

Positioning intercultural competence in the context of foreign language education in higher education in China, Gu proposed a framework that is composed of a theoretical model for intercultural communicative competence training compatible with Chinese context of foreign language teaching. The theoretical model includes the components of attitude, knowledge and skills, which further contains sub-components related to language, culture and communication. She claims that the development of intercultural communicative competence should not only focus on the increase of foreign cultures but also on native and world cultures by emphasizing the dynamics and diversity of culture. Moreover, the transformation of interactants' intracultural identity to intercultural identity is also highlighted through cooperation, negotiation and adaptation in intercultural interactions [13].

Taking into account of a needs analysis of intercultural competence development for Chinese students, Zhang and Yao constructed an Integrated Model for Chinese Students' Intercultural Competence Development based on the "4-3-2-1" theoretical framework which includes four perspectives, three dimensions, two contexts and one platform. Aiming at producing global citizens in the era of globalization, this model covers 19 elements under three dimensions: cognitive understanding, affective attitude and behavioral skills. Cognitive understanding

includes culture-general and culture-specific knowledge; affective attitudes contain respect, tolerance, understanding, appreciation, cultural self-awareness, national identity, global mindset and international understanding; behavioral skills consist of listening, observing, describing, comparing, communicating, conflict management, reflection and evaluation, and discovery [39].

The literature review above-mentioned revisits the studies of intercultural competence theories in terms of perspectives and contexts. Bennett and Deardorff conceptualize intercultural competence from American perspective, Byram from European perspective, while Gao and Gu and their colleagues theorize intercultural competence from Chinese perspective. Context also plays a role in theory building of intercultural competence. Byram, Gu and Zhang and Yao develop their models of intercultural competence in the context of foreign language education while Gao mainly focuses on the model of developing intercultural competence in college students, Deardorff positioning it in the context of internationalization of higher education.

3. Intercultural Competence in Legal Profession and Education

As early as the 1980s, the importance of cultivating the intercultural competence in legal professionals began attracting the attention of some scholars. With the progress of globalization, the topic has been increasingly discussed and studied among the American legal community. In 2011, 39 professors from all over the world gathered at California Pacific University in the United States and held a seminar on the theme of "Promoting Intercultural Legal Competence of Legal Talents". In the seminar, the importance and complexity of the cultivation of intercultural competence of legal talents were highlighted. The overall teaching objectives, school curriculum, program types, teaching methods for developing intercultural competence in legal talents were discussed and the existing challenges faced were also presented. Moreover, the professors clearly expounded the importance of integrating intercultural competence into the existing training objectives of legal talents, of improving the existing teaching methods to meet the needs of legal talents' development in the globalization era [12].

As far as the intercultural competence of transnational or international legal talents concerned, scholars [4,9,12,20,28,38] at home and abroad have carried out a lot of studies from multidimensional perspectives and made many achievements, including the necessity of training [24], training objectives, concept defining, theory building [3,35], teaching methods [23], curriculum design, curriculum evaluation, and the contribution of intercultural communicative competence to the competence of practicing lawyers [16,29].

3.1. Definitions of Intercultural Competence in Legal Profession and Education

In legal field, scholars use a variety of similar terminologies to refer to intercultural competence of law students or legal professionals such as intercultural legal sensibility, intercultural legal competence, intercultural legal competency, etc. Other terms include cultural competence in legal services practice, intercultural competence as a professional skill, cross-culture competence in Lawyers, cross-cultural lawyering competence, intercultural communication skills for lawyers, cross-cultural lawyering competence and the like. Although all of these terms can be used interchangeably, intercultural legal competence is the preferred one in this article. Many a scholar have addressed how to define intercultural competence in the context of the legal profession [3,23]. More often than not, intercultural legal competence was defined by borrowing from the definitions and theories of cross-cultural competence or intercultural competence in general or from other disciplines. Blumberg viewed intercultural competence as "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or

among professionals and enable the system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations." Seeing the development of intercultural competence in students as a type of transformational learning [3]. Aldnan argued that intercultural legal sensibility would seek to allow students to bring to consciousness their assumptions about the role of law and legal institutions and to reconsider their perceptions and rules of engagement as lawyers with other nations or other sub-cultural groups in the United States [1]. Sample defined intercultural competence as the ability to recognize real cultural differences, in contrast to observed individual quirks among people, and to appropriately adapt one's behavior to those differences in ways that are useful towards achieving one's goals, whatever they are [27].

According to the 2011 Pacific McGeorge Workshop on Promoting Intercultural Legal Competence (The "Tahoe II" Conference), intercultural legal competence, particularly from the standpoint of those operating with a utilitarian professional school frame, is simply defined as the ability of a lawyer to perform successfully the various functions that attorneys perform in society when dealing with persons from different nations and cultures and with transactions and disputes involving different legal systems [12].

In this article, intercultural legal competence is defined as a complex set of awareness, attitudes, knowledge and skills that enable law students to perform successfully the various functions that legal professionals perform in society when dealing with persons from different nations and cultures and with transactions and disputes involving different legal systems.

3.2. Components and Models of Intercultural Competence in Legal Profession and Education

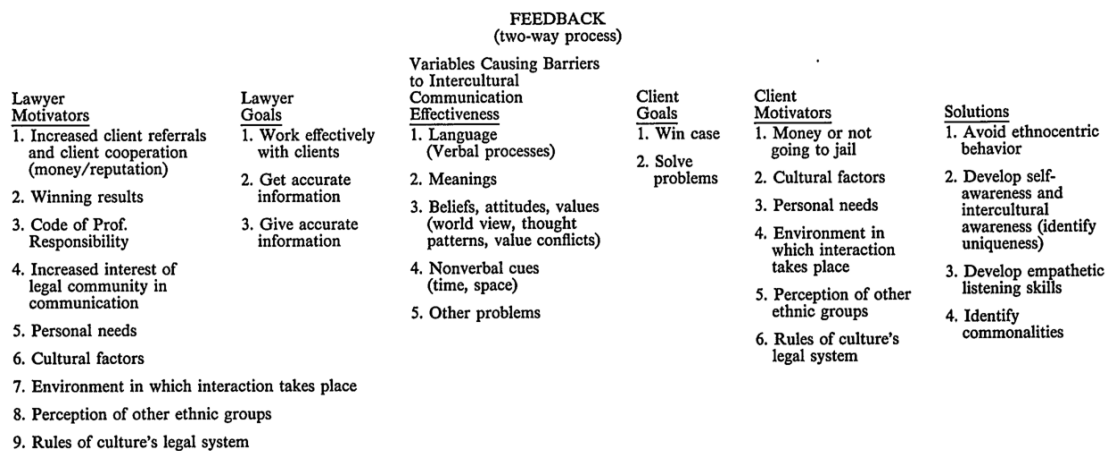


Fig 1. Model of Intercultural Communication in Legal Interviewing and Counseling

As early as in 1980s, drawing upon the empirical studies in the social sciences and law, Kessler developed a theoretical model of intercultural interviewing and counseling that can be applied in the legal setting. The model is entitled as the Model of Intercultural Communication in Legal Interviewing and Counseling (see Fig. 1). The Model is composed of lawyer motivators and goals, client motivators and goals, variables causing barriers to intercultural communication effectiveness and solutions. Lawyer motivators include increased client referrals and client cooperation (money/reputation), winning results, code of professional responsibility, increased interest of legal community in communication, personal needs, cultural factors, environment in which interaction takes place, perception of other ethnic groups, and rules of culture's legal system. Lawyer goals contain working effectively with clients, getting and giving accurate information. Client motivators include money or not going to jail, cultural factors, personal needs, environment in which interaction takes place, perception of other ethnic groups, and rules of culture's legal system. Client goals contain winning case and solving problems. Variables causing barriers to intercultural communication effectiveness refer to

language (verbal processes), meaning, beliefs, attitudes, values (world view, thought patterns, value conflicts), nonverbal cues (time, space) and other problems. Solutions include avoiding ethnocentric behavior, developing self-awareness and intercultural awareness (identifying uniqueness) and identifying commonalities [17].

As the components of the Model indicates, Kessler integrated the "laws" of human communication, intercultural communication, and legal interviewing and counseling into one theory, which is built on a robust basis and offers a panorama of the problems and variables that might arise in intercultural interactions for professionals in the contexts of legal interviewing and counseling. As Kessler noted, this model can be used to help lawyers evaluate intercultural client interactions, identify possible communication problems and reduce friction between themselves and their clients from diverse cultures so that they can improve the lawyering process.

Based on her rich teaching experience, Bryant and her colleague, Jean Koh Peters, jointly developed the "Five Habits of Cross-Cultural Lawyering" model to build cross-cultural competence in lawyers, which is regarded as a groundbreaking work in defining culturally competent practice in legal field and had a significant and extensive impact on subsequent scholars. According to Bryant, cross-cultural lawyering competence should include knowledge about cross-cultural theory, cross-cultural lawyering skills and the emotional needs of cross-cultural lawyer, as cross-cultural learning often takes place in three different spheres: the cognitive, behavioral and emotional [4].

Cross-cultural theory is supposed to cover culture-general and culture-specific knowledge, and cross-cultural awareness. Culture-general knowledge refers to key cross-cultural concepts and theories such as collectivism and individualism, direct and indirect communication styles, etc.; culture-specific knowledge refers to the politics, geography, and history, especially information that might shed light on the clients' legal issues; cross-cultural awareness means understanding the similarities and differences between different cultures and recognizing cultural-relativism. Cross-cultural lawyering skills refer to intercultural communication skills which include deep listening skills and capacities to focus on content rather than style, the ability to read verbal and non-verbal behavior, and the ability to adapt conversation management behaviors and style; cross-cultural analytical skills which require capacities to identify assumptions and to make judgments based on facts rather than stereotypes and bias. Emotional needs of cross-cultural lawyer refer to the motivation to learn cross-cultural competence, capacity to live with conflict, and coping skills to manage the stress that comes from intercultural interactions.

Thao and Tawatao notes that cultural competence in legal services means: being aware of the difference in culture between the advocate and the client and how representation and service are affected thereby; advocate's knowledge about his or her client's cultural backgrounds; adequate knowledge and skills for verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication; knowledge about a particular culture; awareness of the general public's attitude; intercultural awareness of differences between similar ethnic groups and so on [31].

Shi and Han believe that the intercultural legal competence of a qualified international legal professional should include: a good command of the sociocultural knowledge of one's own and his or her interactant's nation, the ability to apply those knowledge to the intercultural interactions, a high level of proficiency in foreign language skills and professional legal foreign language skills for effective communication in intercultural legal situations, curiosity about and openness to the social culture of his or her interactant's nation, and the ability to show cross-cultural empathy with his or her interactant when cultural differences arise so as to achieve effective intercultural communication [28].

Sample views intercultural competence as a professional skill for attorneys and illustrated what attorneys need to know to develop their intercultural competence. She believes that becoming

interculturally competent is really a complex process of cognitive learning-learning the theory, learning the diversity of variables on which cultures can be compared, and having a range of experiences. Moreover, the intercultural competence never develops naturally for anyone including attorneys. Therefore, a set of reflection and observation skills, awareness of cultural differences, knowledge about differences in communication styles and differences in conflict resolution, knowledge about intercultural theory and practice, and motivation to cross-cultural adaptation altogether make attorneys interculturally competent [27].

Schutte argues that cultural competence for attorneys should include three core elements: the ability to communicate and build relationships effectively across cultural barriers; respect for cultural differences, and includes efforts to reduce biased feelings toward other cultures; an awareness of one's own cultural lens and how that affects the other two competencies [29].

Lee developed a list of required cross-cultural competencies and objectives for legal profession. Lee's list focuses on three domains: a professional's awareness of one's own cultural values and biases; a professional's awareness of the client's worldview; and a professional's choice of culturally appropriate intervention strategies. In each of these domains, the necessary awareness, knowledge, and skills required were addressed [18].

In the first domain, professionals should be aware of their own cultural values and biases. As for the awareness, they are expected to examine their own attitudes and beliefs, become aware of and sensitive to their own cultural heritages, and value and respect cultural differences; they must know how their own cultural backgrounds, experiences, attitudes, values, and biases influence the processes they undertake professionally. In terms of knowledge, professionals must keep constant learning more about their own racial and cultural heritages and how they affect views of normality, abnormality, and the process of counseling; they must gain knowledge and understanding of how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping have affected them personally and in their work and must acknowledge their own attitudes, beliefs, and feelings; they must have knowledge about their social impact on others and about communication style differences that may foster or detract from the client counseling process. As for skills, professionals must constantly seek out educational and training opportunities and engage in consultation with experts.

The second domain is a professional's awareness of the client's worldview. Professionals must be aware of and identify their own attitudes and beliefs that might stand in the way of working with clients. They must gain the knowledge of the life experiences, cultural heritage, and historical backgrounds of their clients with different cultural background and how these might affect the counseling relationship. Furthermore, they must have a clear understanding of cultural attributes of clients through research and other educational experiences.

Culturally appropriate intervention strategies are the third domain which calls for an attitude of respect: respect for the clients' religious or spiritual beliefs and values; respect for indigenous helping practices; and respect for bilingualism. In terms of knowledge, professionals must understand the norms and processes of their particular profession and how they might clash with cultural values of others; they must accept the institutional barriers to systems and services that clients must access; they must be familiar with communities; they must acknowledge discriminatory practices at the societal and community level. As for skills, professionals must be able to engage in a variety of verbal and nonverbal responses and to adapt methods to the clients' culture; they must anticipate and improve negative impacts of their choices; they must be willing to manage to understand culturally different clients; they must endeavour to arrange for assistance from individuals familiar with the language requested by the client; and they must make efforts to educate clients in a client-centered manner.

As the review indicates, most of the theories of intercultural competence in legal setting were built from western perspective. As Dai Xiaodong advocates, more attention should be given to intercultural competence studies from the viewpoint of China, which can focus on three aspects: re-examination of the concept of intercultural competence; competence elements identification and model construction; validation and perfection of theoretical model [6]. Therefore, the author attempts to develop a theoretical model of intercultural legal competence set in the context of higher education in China in the following part.

4. A Theoretical Model of Intercultural Legal Competence for Law Students in the Context of Higher Education in China

A model is an excellent way to visually demonstrate the core components and the structure of intercultural legal competence and the interrelation and interaction between those components [17]. By reviewing the literature on intercultural competence in general contexts and in legal setting, the author comes to a conclusion that a consensus on the critical domains of intercultural competence in the legal context has been reached. Positioning intercultural legal competence in the context of higher education in China, a theoretical model of intercultural legal competence for Chinese college law students has thus been proposed (see Fig. 2 below), which is mainly composed of four domains: awareness, attitudes, knowledge and skills. The four domains are closely interrelated and benefit each other. An individual's intercultural legal competence can start to develop from any one of the four domains. All the components in the four domains reflect a combination of those of intercultural competence in general and those in legal profession.

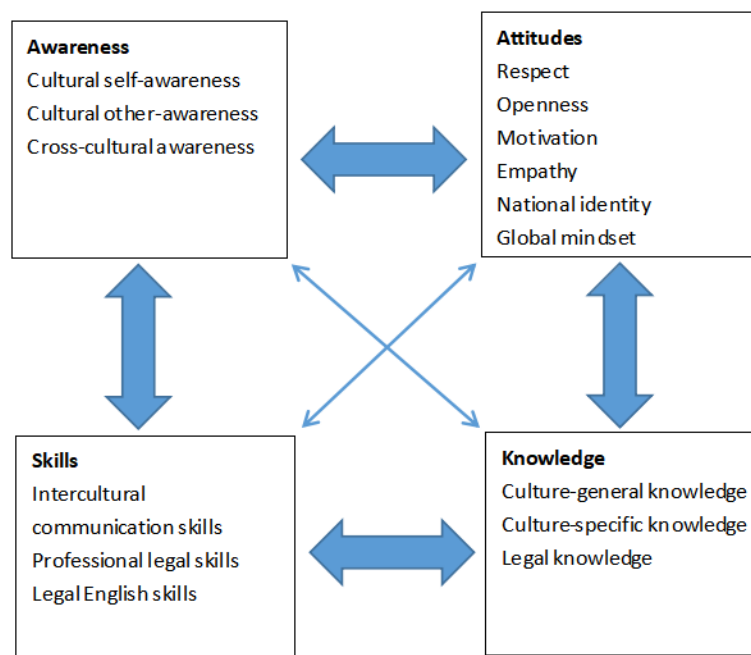


Fig 2. A Theoretical Model of Intercultural Legal Competence for Law Students in the Context of Higher Education in China

4.1. Awareness

The first domain is awareness which includes cultural self-awareness, cultural other-awareness and cross-cultural awareness. To promote intercultural competence for lawyers, Bryant advocated that teacher should increase students' awareness of the significant role culture plays in: giving meaning to behavior and words; developing values and judgments; forming relationships with others; and developing biases and stereotypes [4]. Cultural self-

awareness refers to “becoming aware of how the culture(s) we are raised in contribute to our individual identities, our preferred patterns of behavior, our values, and our ways of thinking[25]. Cultural other-awareness means becoming aware of how other culture(s) others are raised in contribute to their individual identities, their preferred patterns of behavior, their values, and their ways of thinking. To become good cross-cultural lawyers, students must first become aware of the significance of culture on themselves[4]. Professionals must examine their own attitudes and beliefs and move from being culturally unaware to aware of and sensitive to their own cultural heritages [28,35]. Cross-cultural awareness refers to the understanding of similarities and differences between different cultures, particularly in legal setting. For instance, similarities and differences between Chinese and American legal systems.

4.2. Attitudes

The components in the domain of attitudes include respect, openness, motivation, empathy, national identity and global mindset. Many scholars in the field of intercultural communication agree that attitudes play a vital part in the effective development of intercultural competence. Attitudes refer to a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviors toward a particular object, person, thing, or event. Respect means respect and value cultural differences and diversity, respect for the clients' religious or spiritual beliefs and values, respect for indigenous helping practices, and respect for bilingualism[35]. Openness means being open to cultural differences, nonjudgmental about other cultures, being open to exploring one's own culture, questioning one's own assumptions, and, at times, being willing to adapt or integrate[16,28].

Motivation means a desire to develop intercultural legal competence, which play a critical role in the outcomes of intercultural development. According to Samovar, empathy is the ability to have insight into and share the inner feelings of others[26]. Cultural Empathy could contribute greatly to effective intercultural communication. A lawyer's empathy in an intercultural interaction is usually represented as preventing prejudices and stereotypes from clouding his or her perceptions of the culturally diverse client. In other words, If lawyers can really empathize with culturally diverse clients, the interaction might be more productive [17]. National identity refers to having interest and faith in historical and contemporary Chinese legal culture and system and being able to make comments on and offer solutions to international affairs or global issues from the perspective of Chinese legal culture [19]. Global mindset means legal professionals should see themselves as members of the global community and have responsibility for upholding legal justice for all human beings across the world.

4.3. Knowledge

In this domain, knowledge is mainly comprised of culture-general knowledge, culture-specific knowledge and legal knowledge. Culture-general knowledge refers to the basic concepts and theories in intercultural communication studies. According to Byrant, cultural concepts and theories that reflecting culture-general knowledge related to legal work mainly include collective and individualistic cultures, time, direct and indirect communication, social role and hierarchy, insider-outsider, categorization, attribution and others [4]. knowledge about differences in communication styles and differences in conflict resolution, knowledge about intercultural theory and practice [27]. Culture-specific knowledge includes the politics, geography, and history, especially information that might shed light on the clients' legal issues. Legal knowledge refers to different legal systems and cultures across nations, which includes substantive Chinese law, foreign law, international, comparative and transnational law [12,34].

4.4. Skills

The skills domain of intercultural legal competence contains intercultural communication skills, legal English skills and professional legal skills. Intercultural communication skills include deep listening skills and capacities to focus on content rather than style, the ability to read verbal and

non-verbal behavior, and the ability to adapt conversation management behaviors and style [4]. In the context of lawyering, these skills are more needed for law students or legal professionals in intercultural interactions. Legal English skills refers to the ability to use English skillfully as a working language in carrying out legal work or handling legal issues across cultures or borders, for instance, foreign documents drafting, transnational negotiating, transnational litigation and arbitration, transnational legal issues resolving and the like [11,28,33,34]. As Zhang Falian says, legal English is an indispensable working language in the field of China's foreign-related legal services [38]. The level of legal professionals' foreign language proficiency often becomes an important indicator of whether they are professional legal elites or not [32]. Professional legal skills, also called lawyering skills, mainly refer to a set of skills in negotiating, court debating, analyzing and resolving legal disputes or issues in international or intercultural settings [23,33,36,37].

As a theoretical model of intercultural legal competence for Chinese college law students demonstrates, it is a complex set of awareness, attitudes knowledge, and skills drawing upon the consideration of the studies of intercultural competence in the extensive literature and the reality of legal education in China. This model is intended to help Chinese college students to improve their communication with clients and colleagues from different cultures, to increase their understanding of cultural norms and values in legal systems, to enhance their negotiation skills in cross-border transactions, and to have greater success in international legal practice.

5. Conclusion

As globalization expands, legal professionals who practice law will be more likely to encounter global clients and issues than ever before, which requires them to engage in multicultural lawyering in ways that demand intercultural engagement with foreign, international or global actors, laws, or legal systems across cultures or borders. Positioning intercultural competence in the context of legal setting and higher education in China, this article proposes a theoretical model of intercultural legal competence for Chinese college law students, which includes four domains and 16 core components. The model is constructed to provide theoretical support for developing intercultural competence in college law students who are, as legal professionals, expected to make contributions to our society and global community.

However, this article has its limitations. The study focuses on what to teach but not how to teach intercultural legal competence to college law students. Moreover, it does not deal with the tools of assessment and evaluation of intercultural legal competence. Therefore, further studies are expected focus on how to integrate the teaching of intercultural legal competence into school curriculum and how to assess learners' outcomes.

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