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FEATURE

**Perceived Global Trends Cognition and
Management Competencies of Master
in Business Administration Students**

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Abstract. *Today's successful manager must stay abreast with important global trends and should possess the needed managerial competence in information technology, cross-functional abilities, leadership, emotional intelligence, finance, quantitative techniques, communication, interpersonal relationship, and cross-cultural transactions. This correlation study investigated if the students of Master in Business Administration in various graduate schools in Davao City have been upholding these competencies. A self-assessment questionnaire was used to measure perceived global trends cognition and management competencies of the students. This study that included students who were holding supervisory positions in their respective companies evaluated their self-perceived global trends cognition as only adequate or satisfactory and so with their self-perceived managerial competence. The data indicated a strong association between variables ($r=0.79$). Squaring the correlation coefficient denoted that 62 percent of the variation in managerial competence was explained by global trends cognition. The satisfactory level of the participants for both variables pointed out that they had not yet attained the highest level in their cognition of global trends and competence in the management of their respective organizations.*

Keywords: Global trends, correlation, management competence, MBA students, function, Davao City

Introduction

Companies around the world are frantically learning the major differences and subtleties involved in conducting business from the new global perspective. Today's modern managers are expected to develop knowledge and understanding with newly emerging markets that can help sustain the company's future growth. Managers are moving from country to country as never before, meeting the challenges of international competition. Carrying out an organization's managerial work in today's global trade requires leaders with sharp minds (Davenport & Beck, 2013; Freeman, 2010; Hill & Jones, 2007; Nonaka & Konno, 2005). Lifelong learning and development of management skills attuned to the needs of the current millennium is a virtual reality. The need is quite strong from both the domestic and international fronts as the field of global management continues to change. Those organizations and managers willing to continually develop their competencies based on emerging trends will be the big winners in global business (DiMaggio, 2009)

How to develop the kind of business leaders today is an explicit concern of the academe, according to Kreitner (2007). He further states that managers learn 50% of what they know about managing from job assignments or from the school of hard knocks while the remaining 50% of their management knowledge comes from relationships (30%) and formal training and education (20%). A good foundation in management theory, which may be obtained from education, can give management graduates a running start. With this impetus, business schools around the globe position their graduate programs to make their graduates effective leaders in the business world (Kreitner, 2007). Researchers have discovered, however, that business employers' expectations for competent graduates have yet to be achieved (Bowers & Metcalf, 2008; Green, 2007; Robinson, 2006; Wilder & Stocks, 2004).

A perusal of literature regarding management competence (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Hellriegel, Jackson, & Slocum, 2005; Minkin, 1995; Schejbal & Irvine, 2009) helps appreciate the importance of global trends cognition in shaping the competencies of a business manager. There is a need, therefore, to examine the present crop of masters' of business administration (MBA) students whether their present perceptions on cognition on global issues are substantial enough to contribute to their own perceived management competencies. Is there still a need to develop further these competencies to approximate, if not fully complement the 20% formal training and education component of their management knowledge? This study is based on this premise. It describes the level of self-perceived global trends cognition and self-perceived management competencies of MBA students. Importantly, it determines the significance of relationship between these two variables. It aimed to find whether one's managerial competence is shaped by their trends cognition

by proving or disproving the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between global trends cognition and management competencies of MBA students.

Review of the Literature

The model of Landvater (1997) was used as the framework of this inquiry. He posits that successful managers must stay abreast with important global trends and should possess combinations of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attributes that contribute to personal effectiveness, collectively termed as managerial competence. These are abilities and practices that further top-quality performance in information technology, cross-functional activities, leadership, emotional intelligence, finance, quantitative techniques, communication, interpersonal relations, and cross-cultural awareness (Brownwell, 2006; Society for Human Resource Management, 2008). On the other hand, global trends cognition is the knowledge of a person on worldwide issues in terms of economic and business perspectives. Cognition as explained by Mukhopadhyay (2013) pertains to knowledge, awareness or concerns of a person, while global trends (Leiserowitz, Kates, & Parris, 2006) are worldwide issues in fad or presume to happen in the future.

In this study, self-perceived global trends cognition are indicated by new marketing trends, growth in business trends, financial and legal trends, trends to shape the new century, demographic and lifestyle trends, technological trends, trends in management of organization, trends on rethinking roles and resources, economic trends, and political trends patterned after Minkin's (1995) work. Notable among the global trends in economics and business are on technology. Technological knowledge is advancing at a stunning rate such that by 2045 computerized acumen will surpass the aggregate intellectual capacity of humans (Grossman, 2011). The central power is moving drastically as well (Howard & Wellins, 2009). The world in the coming decade will turn around, with China and India economies to represent more than 60% of the world's riches (Bourguignon & Morrisson, 2002; Timmer, Inklaar, O'Mahony, & Van Ark, 2010).

Another important factor in this study is management competency, which is also self-perceived by the respondents themselves. A number of authors define management competency as pertaining to the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that a manager needs to be effective (Hogan & Warrenfeltz, 2003; Mangan & Christopher, 2005; Whetten, 2005). Associated with this concept are information technology skills, cross-functional skills, leadership skills, emotional intelligence, financial skills, quantitative skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and cross-cultural skills.

The combination of the two variables above can be equated to an important concept which is global competence. It illuminates routes in which it can sway individuals to interrelate with and expand their capabilities for particular jobs or functions applicable to any part of the globe (Hunter, 2004; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002).

Globalization will generate considerable changes in business governance. It is essential to take into account the future global trends in honing the managerial capabilities of people managing the organization (Furuya, Stevens, Bird, Oddou, & Mendenhall, 2009; Society for Human Resource Management, 2008; Yenyurt, Cavusgil, & Hult, 2005). In fact, business failures in the international setting have been attributed to a shortage of overall competency among practitioners in business sectors (Earley & Peterson, 2004; Stanek, 2000; Suutari, 2002). This fact brings to the fore the importance of global trends cognition in enhancing the management competencies of business leaders.

Practitioners advocate that managers who have developed a global mindset are better equipped to handle business complexities. Knowing the different features of globalization helps leaders of organizations in honing their management competencies. Global cognition is a critical move in our drive to value the function of education, especially in the field of business administration. Our graduates for this particular course are the very people who deserve the opportunity to succeed in their management endeavors in the contemporary milieu (McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002). This study, therefore, is timely in this particular context.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed the correlation design. Since the aim of this study is to determine the significance of relationship between global trends cognition and management competence, the correlation design is considered as the appropriate method. Notwithstanding its restrictions for causality, the importance of this kind of research in the educational setting cannot be discounted. Since the aim of this study is to prove or disprove the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between global trends cognition and management competence, the correlation design was considered appropriate.

Participants, Sampling, and Setting

There were four graduate schools in Davao City offering MBA programs. One graduate school, however, expressed hesitation to participate in the study for discretionary reasons; hence, only three schools were included in the study. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the proper authorities

of the concerned schools. MBA students in their final year and not included in the pretesting of the questionnaire were involved as respondents. The respondents' personal profile formed part of the initial section. Further, only those MBA students occupying managerial positions were considered in the study. A total of 50 respondents participated in this study, among whom 16 or 32% were male and 34 or 68% were female; 12 or 24% were single while 38 or 76% were married; 19 or 38% were government employees while 31 or 62% were private office employees.

Data Collection

The formulation of the self-assessment questionnaire on global trends cognition by the researcher was greatly influenced by Minkin (1995). Other books on global trends (Disbury, 2003; Sigala, & Christou, 2006) were also made as references in the formulation of the questionnaire. The survey questionnaire contained three parts. The first part covered the respondents' profile. Part 2 included the items on global trends cognition and Part 3 probed on the self-perceived management competencies of the respondents patterned from the outcomes of MBA curriculum of the three respondent schools. The respondents evaluated each item in the questionnaire by using a 5-point Likert scale. The highest is 5 if the respondent was extremely satisfied on the adequacy of his or her self-perceived cognition and competence for a particular item, while the rating of 1 is the lowest indicating that the respondent was not satisfied.

In the administration of the questionnaire, the respondents were made to understand that it was a perception study, and honesty in their responses was earnestly solicited. It was emphasized to them that the results of the study could be an important document for schools in the enhancement of MBA curriculum.

Prior to the administration of the survey questionnaire to the 50 respondents, it was pretested to 30 MBA students who were not the identified samples of the study. The aim was to maintain the legitimacy of the survey questionnaire. Result of pretest obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .83; hence, considered reliable. Four experts in the field of business administration were requested to validate the instrument and they had rated it as very good. With the completion of the two processes, the researcher was confident on the trustworthiness of the survey questionnaire before final administration.

During actual survey, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire and explained to the respondents all the queries raised during the activity. Informal interviews were conducted by the researcher to a small number of respondents from among those who responded to the questionnaire. The interview was made to supplement the questionnaire and to clarify the responses.

Data Analysis

The mean, standard deviation and Pearson product moment correlation were used as the statistical strategies in analyzing the data. To measure the level of the respondents' perceived global trends cognition and managerial competence, the range of means for the data gathered were classified into range of values in a scale as follows: 4.20 -5.00 extremely adequate, 3.40 -4.19 very adequate, 2.60-3.39 adequate, 1.80-2.59 poor, 1.00-1.79 very poor. Pearson product moment was utilized in determining the significance of relationship between global trends cognition and management competence.

Results and Discussion**Self-perceived Global Trends Cognition**

The eight indicators under global trends cognition included new marketing trends, growth business trends, financial and legal trends, trends to shape the next century, demographic and lifestyle trends, technological trends, trends in management of organizations, trends on rethinking roles and resources, economic trends, and political trends. The overall self-perceived cognition of MBA graduates on global trends was 3.42 or very adequate. This was the result of having eight indicators with adequate to very adequate mean scores ranging from 3.25 to 3.48.

On the specific issues under new marketing trends, the respondents claimed very adequate awareness (3.47) on the megaton impact of television on the lifestyles of Filipinos, aspects of fashion, and foods. On the financial and legal trends, the respondents had only adequate knowledge (3.25) on global banking and awareness on direct foreign exchange around the globe. Deterioration of family values, population explosion, the need for post-secondary education, and the shrinking of homes under demographic and lifestyle trends were the aspects in which the respondents were fully aware of (3.48).

Under technology trends (3.45), the respondents had very adequate awareness on smart drugs, industrial robotics, software, and genetic engineering which they came across through television and the movies. On the several issues under trends in management of organizations, the respondents contended that they had adequate knowledge (3.39) about thinking roles and resources. On the issues under economic trends, the respondents claimed very adequate knowledge (3.48) on the aspect of business mergers, underemployment, and downsizing of businesses, while at a limited extent with the rest of the issues. On political trends, the respondents had very adequate knowledge (3.45) in almost all aspects and exhibited a considerable interest in on-line instantaneous voting and on-line political discussion. The respondents were hoping for a change in the political framework of the country. The standard deviation of the indicators ranged from

0.12 to .22, less than 1.0 which is the typical standard deviation for a 5-point Likert scale, indicating consistency of responses. This was also true to the standard deviation of management competencies which ranged from 0.29 to 0.35.

Self-Perceived Management Competencies

Management competency of MBA students was indicated by their own perception of their skills in information technology, cross functional skills, leadership skills, emotional intelligence, financial skills, quantitative skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and cross-cultural awareness. The overall mean of the respondents' perceived management competencies was 3.32 or adequate level. It means that the management competencies of the respondents were generally adequate or satisfactory. Interpersonal skills had a mean of 3.98, with a very adequate or very satisfactory level, with leadership skill (3.48), and emotional intelligence (3.42). All the rest were in the adequate or satisfactory category. Interpersonal skills are important for the competence of a manager necessary to get the job done with favorable support from subordinates. The very satisfactory level of respondents in interpersonal skills was probably due to the fact that the respondents assumed supervisory positions.

One management competence which was perceived by the respondents that they possessed in a very adequate level (3.42) was emotional intelligence. Generally, mature people have the wealth of experiences in life. Experience can lead to emotional maturity (Akerjordet & Severinsson, 2007). It should be noted however that if the emotional intelligence of the respondents in this study is very satisfactory, it does not mean that it will hold true in the coming months or years. The nature of emotional intelligence is not constant (Dulewicz, Higgs, & Slaski, 2003; Goleman, 2006; Roberts, Zeidner, & Matthews, 2001; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). One's present emotion may not be the same as his or her emotions in the past or at some future time. This factor is governed by the individual's environment and other surrounding factors at the time the evaluation on emotional skill is being administered. Individuals vary regarding the degree to which they recognize just how and why they are feeling a particular emotion. Emotional intelligence is vital for chiefs and individuals in administrative positions who must see how others feel and deal with them.

Two competencies, information technology and quantitative skills, had relatively low ratings compared to other skills. Through inquiries, it became clear that the respondents, mostly middle-aged, did not have the passion for computers. Those with leadership positions had their respective young staff do the computer tasks. Quantitative skill is the competency where the respondents had the lowest rating (3.05) though the descriptive level was still adequate or satisfactory. It covers the knowledge in linear programming and other mathematical models.

Relationship Between Global Trends Cognition and Management Competencies

The correlation between global trends cognition and each of the management competencies as perceived by the respondents themselves bared significant relationship ($0.79, p < 0.05$; see Table 1).

Table 1
Correlation Between Variables

Variable X	Variable Y	Correlation Coefficients	Decision on Ho
Global Trends Cognition	Management Competencies		
	Information Technology	0.50*	
	Cross-Functional	0.46*	
	Leadership	0.53*	
	Emotional Intelligence	0.71*	R
	Financial	0.64*	E
	Quantitative	0.67*	J
	Communication	0.49*	E
	Interpersonal	0.51*	C
	Cross-Cultural	0.50*	T
	Overall	0.79*	
	(Square of 0.79 = 62%)		

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

In determining the significance of relationship between variables, the table of critical values of Pearson product moment correlation was utilized. The critical value for a sample of 50 is .273 at a 0.05 significance level; hence, Table 1 bears only one probability value which is 0.05. The correlation coefficient of each of the management competencies when associated with global trends cognition ranged from 0.46 to 0.71 (very much higher than the critical value of .273)

with probability values less than 0.05 significance level, hence the rejection of the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis was *there is no significant relationship between global trends cognition and management competencies of MBA students*.

The rejection of the null hypothesis therefore led to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between global trends cognition and management competencies. This means that the more globally aware the person is on what is going on with the economic and industrial environment, the higher is that person's management skills. The study therefore is a confirmation of a number of literature (Gaynier, 2004; Hellriegel et al., 2005; Reimers, 2009), accentuating the link between cognizance of globalization and competency in managing an organization. Reversing the statement, it can be said that a competent manager must be globally aware to make his or her organization globally competitive. It was, however, revealed in this inquiry that MBA students have not yet reached the superlative level of management competency and global awareness; hence, there is still enough room for improvement.

Among the nine management competencies, it could be noted that emotional intelligence had the highest correlation coefficient (0.71) when correlated with global trends cognition. The high correlation values of quantitative skills (0.67) and financial skills (0.64) when correlated with global cognition imply that these two skills are shaped by one's global awareness. It means that when the global trends cognition of a person is wanting of enhancement, it follows that that person's quantitative skills and financial skills will have similar result. Low ratings in quantitative skills and financial skills may mean also low ratings in global trends cognition, which is true in this study. This would explain the relatively higher correlation values of these two competencies compared to the other correlations.

Another important correlation is effective interpersonal relationships as shaped by global awareness since it will affect a number of interrelated competencies. This particular competence requires that managers practice effective communication skills daily. The communication skill is brought about by several factors; one of which is to understand the local and global culture of organization or cross-cultural awareness. It means that these three management competencies, communication skill, interpersonal skill, and cross-cultural awareness, are interrelated. Cross-cultural awareness is significantly related to global trends cognition since its components are dominantly global. The interrelationship between the three skills explains their significant relationship with global trends cognition.

In its entirety, the data indicated a strong association between variables (correlation coefficient of 0.79). It means that an increase in self-perceived global trends cognition implies an increase in self-perceived management competency.

According to Dancey and Reidy (2004), a correlation coefficient of 0.70-0.90 signifies strong correlation. Squaring the correlation coefficient denoted that 62% of the variation in management competence was explained by global trends cognition.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The strong correlation between global trends cognition and management competencies of MBA students implies that the greater one's awareness on global trends, the more enhanced are the competencies. The result of this study finds parallelism with the view.

This study may serve as an eye opener to curriculum planners in business administration that the global features of the course should be intensified to produce more MBA graduates who are more than competent to manage their respective organizations. Since globalization is the call of the time, a regular formal training on global trends could be designed by organizations for their own management staff to elicit their competence in running a globally competitive organization.

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