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# Exploring Global Competence with Managers in India, Japan, and the Netherlands: A qualitative study

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EXPLORING GLOBAL COMPETENCE WITH MANAGERS IN INDIA,  
JAPAN, AND THE NETHERLANDS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

by

Gerard J.M. Ras

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate College

At the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Educational Studies

(Educational Leadership and Higher Education)

Under the Supervision of Professor Richard J. Torraco

Lincoln, Nebraska

November, 2011

EXPLORING GLOBAL COMPETENCE WITH MANAGERS IN INDIA, JAPAN,  
AND THE NETHERLANDS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Gerard J.M. Ras, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2011

Adviser: Richard J. Torraco

This qualitative study explores the meaning of global competence for global managers in three different countries. Thirty interviews were conducted with global managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands through Skype, an internet based software. Findings are reported by country in five major categories: country background, personal characteristics, experience in and adaptation to global business, developing global competence, and global competence. Themes were identified per country for each of these five major categories. The study's findings were compared to the existing literature on global competence. Based on the findings and existing literature the study proposes a model of global competence that defines global competence as rising to the challenge of succeeding anywhere in a complex world with resource constraints. The model consists of three major competencies (building relationships across the globe, communicating for results across the globe, and managing expectations across the globe), five basic building blocks (organizational, cultural, language, and global understanding as well as professional global passion), and two methods for global competence development (social learning and experiential learning). The study further demonstrates how this universal model can be adjusted for the cultural and national background of managers. The study concludes that there is a need to customize global development programs

based on national and cultural background. It provides specific suggestions for the customization of these programs for Indian, Japanese, and Dutch participants as well general suggestions for customization applicable to other countries. Five suggestions for future research complete the study.

*“Ik ben een wereldburger, mijn vaderland is overal.”*

*“I am a world citizen, my home country is everywhere.”*

*Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, humanist (1468-1536).*

To:

My parents who fueled my passion for global issues,

My wife, Ronda for her endless support, and

My children, Suzanne, Aaron, and Maria for their energy and inspiration,

That we may all live in a world of peace and mutual understanding.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

Technology continues to make the world a smaller place. A few decades ago the airplane brought people closer together. Today, distances vanish virtually and a global village is created through technologies such as smart phones in mobile technology, Facebook in social networking and Skype in video conferencing. In business globalization has expanded markets, increased competition and complicated operations.

Due to technological advancements in today's global, competitive economy managers often collaborate at short notice with people across the globe who are conversant in different native languages and come from different cultural backgrounds. These collaborative processes often take place virtually rather than face-to-face. This new reality described by Nardon and Steers (2008) can lead to misunderstandings and confusion that takes time from the task at hand and wastes valuable resources. Rather than spending time on task the global managers may find themselves solving conflicts between people with different cultural backgrounds as well as rectifying mistakes that were caused by communication problems. Managers must also deal with increased complexity due to the extra geographic dimension (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1998).

How do we develop competence in managers today to deal with the impact of globalization? To deal with the added complexity in managing global operations managers need global competence. The job of the global manager has been described and defined (e.g. Adler & Bartholomew, 1992; Barhem, 2008; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1998; Capellen & Janssens, 2008; Olson & Kroeger, 2001; Pucik & Saba, 1998). Comparisons have been made between global managers

and the traditional international assignment of the expatriate business professional (Capellen & Janssens, 2008; Pucik & Saba, 1998). Global management has not been studied as a new type of international work beyond theoretical discussions (Capellen & Janssens, 2008; Pucik & Saba, 1998).

These global managers need global competence. The need for global competence in general has been addressed by the literature (e.g. Hunter, 2004; Hunter, White and Godbey, 2006; Reimers, 2009a & b). To train and develop their global competence, we need to define the phenomenon of global competence. While various attempts have been made to define global competence (Hunter, 2004; Hunter et al., 2006; Levy, Beechler, Taylor, Boyacigiller, 2007; Wilson, 1996), Hunter (2004) admits that most of the definitions are derived by Americans. The phenomenon of global competence has not been studied significantly in the context of cultures, languages and geographical settings other than the American context. The question that needs to be researched is: What is global competence for managers in different countries? We especially need studies of a qualitative nature to hear firsthand the experiences of individual managers across the globe.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the meaning of global competence for thirty managers with global responsibilities in the three countries of India, Japan and the Netherlands. At this stage in the research, competence was defined as “a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior patterns that affects a major part of one’s job, that can be improved via training and development, and that the person needs to bring to a job to perform

its task and functions well.” This definition was adapted from Lee (2009). Participants were given this definition in the introduction of this study. Global referred to the competence needed to collaborate either face-to-face or virtually with people across the globe who have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The central question for this study was: What is global competence for managers in different countries?

The findings of this study were intended to have a great impact on the design of training and development programs for managers with global responsibilities. Research was needed to determine ways to adopt training and development programs for global managers to reflect the uniqueness of each manager’s cultural and national background. How can global competence be developed without examining it on a global scale?

### Research Questions

The central question for this study was: What is global competence for managers in different countries? The research questions are:

1. How do global business managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands describe global business competence?
2. How do the qualitative descriptions of global business competence of managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands compare with prior studies that focused on US-based participants?

The sub questions used in interviews are shown in Appendix A. They consisted of eight open-ended questions, starting with an ice-breaker question.

## Current Environment and Context of the Problem

### Knowledge Economy

Schell and Solomon (2009) link the demand for global competence training and development programs to the switch from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge economy. Productivity no longer is measured by the number of units produced but by innovation and intellectual contribution. In a global environment innovation and intellectual contribution are maximized by cross cultural communication.

Recent commentary on the shift from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge economy (Florida, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Murray, 2007) has emphasized that what a business sells today is not just a tangible or physical product, but oftentimes the intangibles of the human mind: knowledge, information, know-how. Businesses might sell accumulated knowledge from databases about a variety of issues, such as: credit histories, customer preferences, charitable giving potential, tax regulations, economic predictions, and a myriad of other possibilities. Such services or products likely are available from more than one vendor, so a consumer has options. To differentiate a service or product necessitates that a purveyor provide something different, an intangible. Oftentimes the intangible is something special or distinct to a given vendor; probably knowledge in one form or another. This shift from physical products to intangible products has changed the role of people in the production process. According to Florida (2002) the most important input in the production process is not a traditional resource such as labor or capital, but rather the resource of human creativity.

Armed with their knowledge of the economy and competencies in the areas of finance, marketing, business operations, information technology and management, business managers

must scour the business landscape and stay in touch with their customers to identify new needs of customers and changes in their customers' preferences and use their knowledge and creativity to design business solutions to meet those customer needs. Being conversant with a changing cutting-edge technology is a requirement to effectively scan the business landscape. Business managers use multiple forms of technology, ranging from the simplest (email or teleconferencing equipment to communicate with clients and coworkers across the globe) to search engines or online databases to research business conditions, and computer hardware and software to capture and process transactions, model businesses processes, or test their assumptions. Not to be overlooked is that a person engaged in such work must be knowledgeable about all such options for communicating and securing requisite information. Thus justification exists for a business manager to be current on relevant rules and regulations (knowledge base), but also to be cognizant of relevant information, of how to secure necessary information, and, most importantly, know how to communicate it efficiently and effectively. Undergirding all such actions is the necessity for knowledge, which presumably can be parlayed into creativity-- the quintessential aspect of the human contributions.

The knowledge economy has shifted from a focus on tangible products to intellectual capital. According to Reed, Lubatkin, and Srinivasan (2006) intellectual capital consists of three factors: human capital, social capital, and organizational capital. They define human capital as knowledge possessed by employees. The social capital component of intellectual capital is represented by interpersonal relationships and organizational dynamics that enable the transfer of the human capital within organizations (internal social capital) and then between an organization and its customers and suppliers (external social capital). Cohen and Prusak (2001) defined social



capital as consisting of “the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind the members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible” (p.4). The third component of intellectual capital, organizational capital, consists of an organization’s structure: its processes, infrastructure, and information technology. When coalesced effectively, organizational capital provides a platform that enables deployment of knowledge (human capital) across relationships (social capital).

#### Need for Intellectual Capital

Intellectual capital is complex because it is often situation specific and therefore not transferable. Human capital theory recognizes both situation specific (specific to the employer) knowledge as well as general knowledge as topics of training with the terms specific human capital and general human capital. In making this distinction human capital theory discusses the higher compensation for specific human capital over general human capital (Becker, 1993). Quantification of intellectual capital is difficult or impossible because of its abstractness, but in the knowledge society intellectual capital is the engine driving the market system (Dean & Kretschmer, 2007). Intellectual capital is necessary for managers to perform a job effectively and efficiently. Importantly, the corpus of intellectual capital undergoes constant transformation brought on by experiences, education, training, and development. At the global scale Bartlett and Ghoshal (1998) address the need for training and development of intellectual capital as the capability for worldwide learning necessary to compete effectively.

In today's knowledge economy intellectual capital is needed for competitive advantage (Howell, 2006). If knowledge is the most important production factor, then such knowledge needs to be developed in people (human capital) and organizations should focus on how the knowledge can be transferred effectively among people (social capital) and through organizational structures (organizational capital), so the three factors (human capital, social capital, and organizational capital) can be blended and used competitively.

Florida (2002) stressed the importance of creativity to the American economy by identifying creativity as an economic force of paramount importance in an environment fueled by global competition. Intellectual capital is the primary and often only tool of production for business managers, and arguably intellectual capital is most important in a global environment that is shifting rapidly to a knowledge economy. The question arises: what are the core competencies of business managers in a global knowledge economy? To address this issue requires reflection upon what is entailed in the concept of globalization and a technology-driven society predicated upon knowledge.

## Globalization

Technological advances (e.g. air travel, telecommunications, and the internet) have cultivated acceptance of the belief that 'it is a small world after all'. Technology facilitates almost instant communication and sharing of ideas and even values, but it also begs answering whether it fosters increased diversity or encourages standardization. In the context of globalization, Currie (1998) mentioned "McDonaldization," and "Toyotism" as illustrative of economic practices across all countries. When an entity finds a successful way to do business it tends to replicate

that practice with a “cookie cutter” or “one size fits all” approach. Ostensibly the goal is to expand its success across the globe and reap the benefits at an ever-increasing economy of scale. As an example, Currie commented upon how through “Toyotism,” Japanese organizational practices became global practices.

De Wit (1999) identified a different dimension to globalization when he claimed it was “the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension” (p.1), which also includes local elements, referred to as “localized differentiation.” By adding the “localized differentiation,” it allowed a world-wide entity to present an international image as it became integrated with other locales. Thus localized differentiation leads to a more diverse world instead of one that is homogenized.

De Wit’s (1999) approach to globalization is comparable to the progress shown by the European Union. Economically, the integration has made progress with a standard currency and free flow of goods and capital. But countries within the European Monetary Union have retained their history through a differentiated Euro, with its graphics depicting local cultures. Importantly, the European culture has not been homogenized. Europe is integrating but with a model that allows for local differentiation and that enables countries to maintain their own identity.

Deployment of expatriates across continents has been a practice of multi-national corporations for a long time, and technologies now enable people to cross borders and oceans and meet virtually at little to no monetary or time investment. Technology also impacts people by facilitating the spread of cultures via websites and international TV broadcasts.

The integration and mixing of immigration, expatriates, and technology enhances the dispersion of cultures and languages across the world, but it also serves to reinforce cultures and languages. These factors increase exposure to other cultures and create a wealth of opportunities for learning. As new cultures are explored, it tends to cause people to reflect on their own cultures. This reflection in light of new developments can lead to a strengthening of one's own identity and sense of belonging to the native culture. The outcome of such co-mingling tends to be a differentiated global work environment; one that mirrors the way cultures spread across the United States since the early 1600s. The result becomes a reflection of amalgamated customs and practices that lead to changes and subsequently the establishment of new standards.

#### Theoretical Framework of Globalization

To research manager's global competence and related competencies a theoretical framework of globalization must first be established. This framework will picture the global environment in which management seeks to compete in a competent manner. Kanter (1995) defined globalization as "a process of change stemming from a combination of increasing cross-border activity and information technology enabling virtually instantaneous communication worldwide" (p. 41). With this definition Kanter immediately draws the link between globalization and technological advances. The two are undoubtedly connected as can be seen in the models of globalization presented by Kanter and Friedman.

First, Kanter (1995) viewed globalization as driven by four factors: mobility, simultaneity, bypass, and pluralism. Mobility of capital, labor and ideas across country borders has greatly been improved by technological advances and government policies on free trade.

Important technological advances in this respect in the last two decades include the development and spread of the internet and mobile technology. Technology has also enabled people and companies to bypass traditional systems in global transactions. Often this bypass occurs in various places across the world simultaneously with the use of internet technology. The processes of mobility, simultaneity and bypass have led to pluralism. Pluralism can be seen in terms of diversity of cultures among global citizens who are now instantly connected through information and communication technology.

Friedman (2007) highlights the importance of technological advances in the process of globalization and describes the influence of technological advances on the way business is done. His stories provide numerous examples of mobility, simultaneity, bypass, and pluralism. Friedman sees a flattening of the world or creation of a more horizontal playing field caused by the convergence of ten flatteners that changed the way business is done. With the ten flatteners Friedman also highlights the importance of political events in globalization, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of China's markets.

Friedman's discussion of globalization raises the topic of e-commerce as a new form of doing business. E-commerce applies technology to assist businesses in bypassing traditional country borders into global markets. Laudon and Guercio Traver (2009) list eight unique features of e-commerce technology (p.13). Three of these eight factors relate to globalization: First, ubiquity describes the availability of internet and web technology everywhere. Second, global reach emphasizes how the technology reaches across the globe. Third, the technology is based on universal blocks (client-server architecture, the TCP IP transmission protocol, and packet switching technology) that provide businesses the ability to cross borders. It is imperative

that business managers have global competencies that address the factors in the works of Kanter (1995) and Friedman (2007).

### Paradigm

This study was based on a constructivist paradigm. Multiple realities exist regarding the phenomenon of global competence based on the individual and his or her national, cultural, and linguistic background. The answers to the problems of global competence are known by managers who are actively engaged in business across the globe every day. Therefore, the theory regarding global competence must be build inductively from the bottom up based on rich data. This study sought to obtain rich descriptions of the phenomenon of global competence through the eyes of managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands to determine the meaning of global competence in those countries. Therefore, the phenomenon of global competence was studied using a qualitative, non-experimental phenomenological design.

### Method

This qualitative study explored the meaning of global competence for managers in three different countries through interviews with ten managers in each of the following countries: India, Japan, and the Netherlands. Two other sources of data were used in addition to interviews: observations during the interviews and the personal experiences of the researcher. These interviews, observations, and personal experiences explored the meaning of global competence for managers and generated rich descriptions of this phenomenon as well as a list of global competencies. In the analysis phase the qualitative data were analyzed to determine

codes. Five codes were elevated to themes that were identical for all three countries. Then for each of those themes a label was identified that focused on the individual country.

The participants of this study were purposefully selected. The selected participants were business managers who competed in the global setting. For this study global business managers were defined as employees of companies in the private sector of the global economy. These companies had international manufacturing, distribution or sales operations in multiple locations on at least two continents. The employees were at the management level and their job required at least the equivalent of a bachelor's degree. As part of their daily duties these employees managed, supervised, negotiated, or maintained relationships with coworkers, vendors, consultants, or customers in foreign countries. These coworkers, vendors, consultants, or customers represented a variety of national backgrounds and languages.

### Delimitations

The participants for this study were business managers from three different countries who were employed by a limited number of companies. Therefore, findings of this study cannot be generalized for managers in other sectors of the global economy. The sector of the economy or the industry may also have an influence on the meaning ascribed to global competence. Findings of this study can also not be generalized to be true for all countries across the globe.

Another delimitation of the study was that the participants of this study worked for a limited number of companies in each country. The organizational culture of the companies in which the participants in this study are employed might have influenced the findings of this study.

### Limitations

The sample size for this study was thirty. These thirty global managers were purposefully selected rather than randomly. This small sample size and the lack of random sampling limited the ability to generalize the findings of this study to all global managers. By the nature of their work these global managers are extremely busy. That made it hard to find participants for this study.

All ten Japanese managers and all ten Dutch managers who participated in the study were male. Of the Indian managers who participated seven were male. The findings of the study might have been different, if there would have been an equal representation of female and male participants in the study.

In all phases of the study communication took place in English. Though English is arguably the language of global business, none of the participants nor the researcher had a native command of the English language. The translation process in the minds of the global managers between English, Dutch, Indian and Japanese might have complicated the study as some terms might have been culturally sensitive or determined by cultural context.

### Significance of the Study

Technological advances have changed the way people work. Technological advancements have made traveling more convenient and much faster. Through the invention of cars and airplanes distances have been bridged. The spread of the use of and the access to the internet has eliminated the need for physical travel to work at the international level. Business



managers now may travel virtually to meet people from other cultures and countries who converse in various native languages somewhere in between the geographical locations in cyberspace or digital land. As people are brought closer together through the advances of technology global markets open up. The interconnectivity of financial markets as well as the instant access to global markets has transformed many businesses, not only the larger ones. International business assignments have progressed from long term assignments as expatriates in foreign countries to assignments in the office abroad as well as assignments in the company's office in the employee's hometown or even in the employee's home office. In virtually any position in any location at any time today's business manager may be in contact with a coworker, a consultant, a vendor or a customer abroad via email, telephone, teleconferencing, as opposed to a face-to-face meeting abroad or at their own turf.

To access foreign markets, labor, and capital effectively business managers must have the competencies to compete globally. These issues brought on by globalization include dealing with pluralism through foreign cultures and languages, but also more general issues such as dealing with change caused by simultaneity, bypass, and mobility. For businesses to be competitive they must have global competencies. Businesses must know what those global competencies are in order to select, retain, train and develop these competencies within the business. These global competencies may not be defined by people from one country. Globalization demands global competencies. The list of competencies must be developed from the viewpoint of all nations and cultures. If global competencies are mostly determined by one or only a few countries, by the very nature of globalization they cannot be called global competencies. Therefore, it is important that we determine what global competencies are

perceived to be in various countries. This study started the research on a global view of global competence and explored customized strategies for global competence development. Follow up studies may expand this exploration to more countries across the globe, determine first the critical levels of these global competencies, then the effectiveness of strategies for training and development of such competencies for business managers to better equip businesses with core competencies in a globally competitive world.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review first examined the impact of globalization on competencies for global managers, the global business environment, as well as the role of global managers in general. Then, the literature review identified global mindset and cultural intelligence as keys to global competence. Finally, definitions of global competence were reviewed.

### Influence of Globalization on Competencies for Managers

Globalization has had a profound impact on managers. The impact on their daily activities can be summarized in four different categories: cultural and strategic complexity, time, technology, and managing the conflict between localization versus globalization.

#### Cultural and Strategic Complexity

The global environment has increased the level of complexity in business today. Kedia and Mukherji (1999) describe Lane, DiStefano and Maznevski's (1997) view of global complexity by stating that thinking at a global scale requires a manager to move from thinking in one-to-one relationships to keeping in mind multiple realities and relationships simultaneously. Senge (2006) refers to this added complexity as a change from linear thinking to systems thinking. With the term "systems thinking" Senge points out the interdependence of events in the world. In the past a problem had a certain solution. Now this solution is valid under certain circumstances, but not under all circumstances.

The complexity in the global business environment has at least two dimensions (Levy, Beechler, Taylor, and Boyacigiller 2007). First, it has added the complexity of dealing with multiple cultures and nationalities. Second, it has increased strategic complexity for the business manager. Business managers now have to consider not only strategies at the national level, but also whether or not they should differentiate or standardize at the global level. Bartlett and Ghoshal (1998) expand on the ideas of cultural and strategic complexity and suggest global companies “create a matrix in the minds of managers” (p.299) that considers the product, functional and geographic implications of strategic capabilities. Over time these three dimensions are in competition with each other and are dynamic. Instead of being bound by a rigid organizational structure, managers should be given the flexibility based on their understanding of the organizational purpose to apply their own judgment through a mind matrix of these three dimensions. This mind matrix provides global managers a framework for balancing the need for efficiency, a force for globalization and standardization, with responsiveness to local markets and the need for learning in order to develop and diffuse innovations worldwide. The global manager’s challenge is to simultaneously enhance effectiveness of central innovations, improve efficiency of local innovations, and coordinate globally linked innovations.

## Time

In the global environment the concept of time has also taken on a role of increased importance. Harvey and Novicevic (2001) discuss time as a strategic variable in the managerial decision making process. They refer to time in the context of strategy as “timescapes.” Harvey and

Novicevic discuss five key elements of timescapes. The role of time in strategy relates to the strategy of being a first mover in the global environment. Harvey and Novicevic relate time to the cultural complexity of global business as well by pointing out the differences in how time can be experienced and differences in temporal reference points of past, current or future perspectives in the decision making process. In this context the work of Harvey and Novicevic relates to the cultural dimension of long term versus short term orientation in Hofstede's framework of cultural dimensions. However, the concept of timescapes is clearly influenced by Kanter's process of simultaneity and has thus gained greater strategic importance. Harvey and Novicevic deem the importance of time as critical as knowledge is becoming the most important competitive resource in the knowledge society.

Rather than using the term "timescapes" Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) describe management of the time factor and its complexity in global strategy development as a process of competing on the edge of chaos. The term "chaos" expresses the uncertainty and unpredictability in the global business environment. Brown and Eisenhardt integrate the three temporal reference points of past, present and future by stating that the presence is the most important time frame, but that companies must learn from their past to be successful in the present and reach into the future to sustain the success. Brown and Eisenhardt challenge companies to "compete on the edge" and use time as a strategic weapon as Harvey and Novicevic (2007) advocated. Brown and Eisenhardt take the additional step of advising companies to set the pace of change and create their own internal time clock.

Technology

Technology was introduced as a driver of globalization in various models of globalization that resulted in new ways of doing business. Besides its role as driver of globalization and influencer of how business is transacted, technology is also an important tool that influences the work of business managers daily. The power of technology has caused a high speed of change. Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) suggested that businesses compete by setting the pace of change. This requires the global manager to be proficient in the use of information and communication technology in order to know how to use technology to obtain and analyze relevant information and to communicate with people across the globe.

#### Local Differentiation versus Standardization

Global companies engage in business operations across country borders. In this process they encounter a wealth of diversity in terms of the various backgrounds of employees, differing tastes and preferences of consumers, differences and exceptions in business rules and regulations and a multitude of languages. How should a business and its managers react to this? One solution to the challenge of diversity is a one-size fits all approach of standardization. Franchises have been established across the world to guarantee the similarity in products and quality standards. However, can one product fit the tastes, preferences and needs of any customer, regardless of location, language or cultural background? Standardization is the easiest approach to apply and provides the benefit of economies of scale. However, often global companies choose local differentiation, an option that allows for different options, models or ingredients depending on the location on the globe. This dilemma of local differentiation versus

standardization permeates the practice of global business (Engle, Mendenhall, Powers and Stedham , 2001; Levy et al., 2007).

### Business Environment Across the Globe

Global managers work in very different business environments in countries across the globe. These different business environments influence the development of and the need for certain management capabilities. The differences in government involvement, employment systems, and cultures in the countries in which global managers operate are discussed in this section. Examples are included regarding the impact of the development of and the need for certain management capabilities.

#### Government Involvement

Government is a major factor in the business environment. The choice of economic systems determines the level of government influence. The two extremes in economic systems for a country are communism and capitalism. In communism the government controls all production resources and the production is centrally planned. In this situation the global manager is a government employee who is charged with the execution of a plan. According to Dlabay and Scott (2011) managing consists of the four components of planning and decision making, organizing, staffing, and communicating, motivating and leading, and controlling. Managing in a communist environment focuses more on controlling and less on planning. In capitalist countries there is no government involvement in the planning of economic activity. Competition in the market place is the driving force in business decisions. In such a setting managers need to

understand market forces and develop plans based on their understanding of what is happening in the market place. In recent decades a number of countries have shifted away from a government controlled economy to a free market economy. With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain in the early nineties, China's move towards a free market economy, and economic liberalization in India, managers in formerly socialist or communist countries have had to learn to be successful under the rules of free market competition, whereas managers in existing free market economies have had to deal with increased levels of competition.

Even though there appears to have been a shift towards capitalism across the globe, these countries still have different levels of government involvement in the business environment. Government may regulate financial markets, safety standards in business, and labor relations among many other things. Such laws and regulations may vary widely from country to country. Global managers must have knowledge of government regulations as they pertain to their job. In global business a key area of regulation is foreign trade. Governments may use trade policy and regulations to restrict global business (protectionism) or to encourage global business through free trade agreements. Trade regulations can have a strong impact on the global manager's job. Global managers may be restricted in their actions in foreign trade through government restrictions in the form of tariffs and duties on imports and exports, quotas on import products, economic boycotts, and licensing requirements (Dlabay & Scott, 2011).

### Employment Systems

Delery and Doty (1996) proposed two employment systems based on seven employment practices: the market-type system and the internal system. The market-type employment system



hires employees from outside of the company. Performance based compensation, low employment security, and few opportunities for promotion and training are associated with this type of employment system. Companies with an internal system hire employees from an internal pool of candidates. High employment security or lifelong employment, opportunities for training and promotion through a well defined career ladder, and tight job descriptions are characteristics of an internal employment system. Garcia-Castro, Arino, Rodriguez, and Ayuso (2008) distinguished the bigger opportunity for training in companies with internal employment systems as an opportunity for more company-specific training. Employment systems in countries across the globe fit onto a continuum of employment systems with the market-type system and the internal system at each extreme.

Okabe (2002) selected managers from the United Kingdom and Japan for a study that argues that the different employment systems account for differences in attitudes between managers in the United Kingdom and Japan. The description of the two employment systems in the two countries falls largely in line with the theory of market-type (United Kingdom) and internal (Japan) employment systems. Thus, it can be argued that the type of employment system present in countries across the globe rather than cultural differences has a stronger influence on managers' attitudes. Similarly, Quinn and Rivoli (1991) used a comparison between U.S. and Japanese employment practices to argue that employment systems impact innovation in a company.

Cultural Dimensions

In the global environment global managers deal with multiple cultures often at the same time. Therefore, it is helpful for them to learn more than just specific knowledge about individual cultures. Giving them ways to categorize various cultures improves their ability to understand new cultures, to sort through the specifics of individual cultures and to place new knowledge with existing knowledge in their daily challenge of working with people from different cultures. Such categories are offered by various researchers as cultural dimensions and such categories are used by those researchers to explain matters such as communication styles, effective leadership styles, as well as organizational structures in different countries. The theories of Hall regarding context, as well as Hofstede's and Project GLOBE's regarding cultural dimensions will be discussed in this section.

Hall (1996) initiated the discussion of cultural dimensions with his discussion of high and low context in intercultural communication. In a high context communication the majority of the content of a message is coded not in the verbal communication itself, but it is included in the physical context or internalized in the messenger. In such communication verbal communication is only a small part of communication. More important are body language, the historical and cultural background, and the physical surroundings. One must not only read between the lines, but also read into the physical context. In low context interaction, most of the message is transmitted literally in words. There is little need to read between the lines.

The observations of Hall (1996) on context emphasize, that communication in a high context situation is complex. It requires a shift from linear thinking (p. 9) in terms of "yes" and "no" and "right" and "wrong" to situational thinking. Hall (p. 124) refers to the difference between linear and situational thinking as Apollonian (low context) and Dionysian (high

context). One must understand the culture, history, the importance of cultural artifacts that may be present, organizational or social hierarchy, etc. Next, one must have the ability to put all these clues together to come up with the true meaning of the few spoken words. This requires integrative thinking (Hall, 1996).

The work of Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) develops six other cultural dimensions. They build their work on Hall's observations on context and in some instances specifically link their findings to Hall's theory (e.g. p.89 high context and collectivist cultures or p.190 low context and uncertainty avoidance.). Based on a survey of IBM employees worldwide around 1970 Geert Hofstede identified the four cultural dimensions of power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Around 1980 Geert Hofstede identified the fifth cultural dimension, long term versus short term orientation. In 2010 the sixth dimension of indulgence versus restraint was introduced (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2011). Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, for example, use the dimensions of power distance and uncertainty avoidance to explain organizational models across the globe.

Project GLOBE is another example of cultural value research. The Project's cultural value research is focused on the development of culturally effective leadership profiles. The research efforts of Project GLOBE (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002) involve over one hundred-and-fifty researchers across the world. GLOBE stands for Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness. The project's meta-goal is "to develop an empirically based theory to describe, understand, and predict the impact of specific cultural variables on leadership and organizational processes and the effectiveness of these processes" (page 4). GLOBE research addresses cultural dimensions in connection with leadership theory. Here Project

GLOBE is concerned with the extent to which leadership theories are universally endorsed as essential to effective leadership as well as the extent to which the effective leadership is tied to cultural dimensions. This study identified twenty-one primary and six global leadership attributes (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, & House, 2006).

The Project's name, meta-goal and the major research questions show that GLOBE's main focus is on global leadership. However, Project GLOBE has also identified nine cultural dimensions. These cultural dimensions are partially linked to Hofstede's dimensions. Javidan and House (2001) describe these nine cultural dimensions as well as the implications of cultural similarities and differences. Project GLOBE's nine cultural dimensions are: assertiveness, future orientation, gender differentiation, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional emphasis on collectivism versus individualism, ingroup collectivism, performance orientation, and humane orientation. Some of these dimensions are taken directly from Hofstede's cultural dimensions: uncertainty avoidance, and power distance. Project GLOBE also took some cultural dimensions and split them into two slightly different variables (House et al., 2002). These dimensions are masculinity (Project GLOBE: assertiveness and gender differentiation) and collectivism (Project GLOBE: institutional emphasis on collectivism versus individualism and ingroup collectivism). One might argue that even the two dimensions that are labeled as new, performance and human orientation, have some similarity to Hofstede's masculinity versus femininity dimension, since performance orientation is similar to the competitiveness associated with Hofstede's masculinity and humane orientation is similar to the caring attitude that can be associated with Hofstede's femininity. These nine cultural dimensions were used to divide the world into ten culture clusters (Javidan et al., 2006). With the use of these culture clusters effective leadership profiles

can be developed that provide guidance to a global manager for adjusting his or her leadership according to location.

### The Global Manager

Bartlett and Ghoshal (1998) state that companies can no longer delegate international issues to a select group of international managers. Managers must have the competence to deal with these issues as they arise. Thus, they maintain that all managers need global business competence. Traditionally, the focus of research in global competencies has been the preparation of expatriate managers (Caligiuri, 2006). However, due to technological advances a manager can now be truly globally active from a desk in the company's headquarters located in the manager's home country (Barhem, 2008). The research, however, regarding the global manager is still at a conceptual stage. Global management has not been studied as a new type of international work beyond theoretical discussions (Pucik & Saba, 1998; Capellen & Janssens, 2008). The global manager is typically located in the company's global headquarters, has a responsibility of worldwide coordination, must balance local demands with potentially contradictory global demands (Capellen & Janssens, 2008), and is defined by his or her ability to go back and forth smoothly between cultures and countries (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992). Typically, the person managing at the global level has developed intercultural communications skills developed through living abroad for an extensive period of time or by socializing with people from other cultures (Olson & Kroeger, 2001). However, the global manager needs more skills than just intercultural communication skills to be effective.

The global company has locations in multiple countries. The global manager is in charge of transferring organization specific knowledge from headquarters to the foreign subsidiaries and vice versa. To achieve this transfer across a global network the global manager needs human capital in terms of general business competencies, political capital to give legitimacy to the knowledge transferred by the manager, social capital to provide the trust needed and cultural capital to be socially included and accepted as part of the knowledge transfer process (Harvey & Novicevic, 2004). The global manager must build trust within the organization to transfer knowledge, but the global manager must also have trust in the organizational processes (Engle et al., 2001). The organizational processes take on great importance in a global company, because bureaucratic control through organizational structure is typically not successful in the global company. The complexity of globalization limits the effectiveness of bureaucratic, structural administrative solutions (Levy et al., 2007). Barham (2008) identifies the inability to rely on organizational structure in global companies as a source of stress for the global manager. Other sources of stress are role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict. When organizational structures and controls fail to provide comfort to the global manager, the global manager's role ambiguity and role conflict increase.

How is the global manager different from the expatriate manager? The expatriate manager is given a foreign assignment to work for a subsidiary in a foreign country within a certain company hierarchy (Cappellen & Janssens, 2008). The global manager is defined by his or her frame of mind rather than by work location and may not physically work in a foreign country at all, but yet will still have contact with foreign cultures and languages (Pucik & Saba, 1998). The global manager works simultaneously with people from multiple countries and

cultures and must thus deal with multiple languages. The global manager does not have the luxury the expatriate manager has to be able to focus on one foreign country, culture or language. Instead, the global manager must deal with the pluralism of numerous cultures and languages all in the same day and sometimes even simultaneously. Therefore, the global manager needs general cultural knowledge and sensitivity. The processes of simultaneity and pluralism (Kanter, 1995) are a daily occurrence for the global manager. At the same time the global manager must understand the worldwide business environment and balance local responsiveness against global integration.

In addition the global manager faces three new realities caused by technology and the process of simultaneity (Nardon & Steers, 2008). First, the global manager has encounters with foreign cultures and languages on a short notice. The short notice eliminates the solution of learning that specific language or culture. Second, in global project teams numerous cultures, nationalities and languages may be represented based on the subjects' individual backgrounds and office locations. What is the group's culture that the global manager needs to adapt to in such a scenario? Often these groups form their own cultures. Third, many of the global manager's meetings are not face-to-face meetings, but virtual meetings using the internet or other conferencing technology. Virtual communications bring their own set of challenges to multicultural communications (Holtbrugge & Schillo, 2008).

Nardon and Steers (2008) focus on the cultural aspects of global management. They state that global managers must learn how to learn to deal with other cultures rather than learning individual cultures specifically. Nardon and Steers propose that managers learn to deal with other cultures through experiential learning and an interdependent learning process that enables

social learning. Their intercultural interaction learning model encourages global partners to learn about the other's culture and their group's identity, behavior, the meaning of concrete topics and rules of conduct in a way that may lead to the development of a new shared culture.

### Defining Global Competence

The global environment is turbulent and complex. This constantly changes the global manager's job. Therefore, not the job of global manager, but the global manager's competency is the appropriate unit of analysis (Engle et al., 2001). Lee (2009) uses the following definition of competency based on Woodruffe (1993) and Parry (2006): "a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior patterns that affects a major part of one's job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, that can be improved via training and development, and that the incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform its task and functions with competence" (p. 109). The use of global competencies affords the opportunity for direct linking with core competencies in global companies' strategic plans. The exact nature of global competencies then depends on the company's strategy (Engle et al., 2001).

Hunter et al. (2006) claim there is little commonality in the definitions of global competence in the literature. Furthermore, Hunter (2004) notes, that these definitions are mostly derived by American scholars and organizations with American membership. Hunter used a Delphi panel of experts to define the term global competence. Most of the panel members, however, were American. Hunter's definition of global competence derived from this Delphi panel is "Having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work



effectively outside one's environment" (p.101). Hunter's (2004) research also led to the development of a survey tool to measure global competence called "Determining Global Competence."

Hunter et al.'s (2006) quote of Swiss Consulting Group's definition of global competence stressed the importance of time and the simultaneity of cultures in the assignment of the global manager by expressing global competency as "the capacity of a team or individual to parachute into any country and get the job done, while respecting cultural pathways" (p. 274).

In the area of knowledge necessary for global competence Wilson (1996) makes the distinction between substantive knowledge and perceptual knowledge. Substantive knowledge in global competence includes knowledge of cultures, languages, world issues, global dynamics and personal choices, whereas perceptual knowledge includes open-mindedness, resistance to stereotyping, complexity of thinking and perspective consciousness.

Caligiuri (2006) dissects global competencies into the separate components of knowledge, skills/abilities and personality characteristics. In terms of designing global competence programs ability and personality would be the most challenging to improve. Businesses may be well advised to focus their efforts in this area on selecting rather than training and developing these abilities and personality characteristics. Caligiuri does not make the distinction between perceptual and substantive knowledge. Under knowledge Caligiuri identifies three subject areas: culture general, culture specific and functional knowledge in the area of international business (e.g. finance, law, and marketing). Since the intercultural contacts of global managers are not limited to a small number of countries, culture general knowledge is more important than culture specific knowledge. The functional knowledge of international

business would depend on the global manager's specific duties within the company. The skills and abilities Caliguiri identified are intercultural interaction, foreign language and cognitive ability. The intercultural interaction skills can be either specific to a culture or general in nature. Again, the latter would be the most important skill for the global manager. Due to the increased complexity in the global business environment cognitive ability is also a skill of utmost importance. Finally, under personality characteristics Caliguiri discusses the need for all Big Five personality characteristics in global business: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness.

A method of analyzing global competencies along three dimensions of global competencies is encompassed in the global competency cube proposed by Engle et al. (2001). The global competency cube has three dimensions that can be examined in terms of breadth and depth: culture, function and product. These three dimensions are based on the global manager's matrix mindset discussed by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1998). Rather than including functional knowledge within the category of international business knowledge as Caliguiri (2006) proposes, Engle et al. viewed it as a separate dimension. How much breadth and depth of functional, cultural, and product competencies a global manager needs depends on the organization's strategic intent. The breadth of the cultural dimension of the global competency cube refers to the extent to which the home culture of the global company differs from the host culture in the location of the local operations. The cultural depth refers to the length and complexity of the global task and the closeness in the collaboration with individuals from foreign countries. The expatriate assignment usually has more cultural depth than the assignment of the global manager, since the expatriate is isolated in a host country for a long period of time. The global manager's

challenge, however, is typically in the breadth of the assignment, having to work with people from various cultures simultaneously. The functional dimension of the global competency cube refers to the global manager's area of expertise within business and whether the global manager's daily activities require the knowledge of various functions (breadth) or of fewer functions to a greater extent (depth). Global companies typically have more products than domestic companies in order to differentiate to accommodate for local preferences. Global managers must be competent with this breadth of the product dimension. However, they must also be competent with the understanding of the various products and how they respond to local preferences (product depth). As the company moves toward global operations, both product breadth and depth gain importance on the global competency cube. Depending on their situation global managers must balance their competencies across these three dimensions of global competence.

### Global Mindset

When a manager first arrives on the scene of global business, the manager may wonder: How can we do business with partners, when we know so little about them (Nardon & Steers, 2008)? This is the reaction of a global manager overwhelmed by pluralism. Learning a foreign language and culture can be helpful in this situation, but how many foreign languages or cultures can one learn? Moreover, in the position of global manager time is of the essence and issues arise simultaneously in various locations across the globe. Global managers need to be competent in adapting to other cultures rapidly. They need to understand the dimensions of the cultures they are dealing with and how the cultural dimensions impact behavior. With that

competency global managers can effectively leverage diversity as a strategic advantage. More importantly, Nardon and Steers state, that global managers need a global mindset.

#### Definition of Global Mindset

Global mindset impacts a company's international performance (Nummela, Saarenketo & Puumalainen, 2004). Mindset itself is not a competency, until it is an applied behavior (Rhinesmith, 1992). Yet, it appears to be the foundation for global competence. Rhinesmith refers to mindset as way of being, a predisposition to how you see the world. People with a global mindset are comfortable with ambiguity, see things in context, and continuously rethink boundaries. Global mindset refers to more than just intercultural communications skills. Global mindset includes a broader perspective in general as well as integrative thinking.

The research regarding mindsets is summarized by Gupta and Govindarajan (2002). People are limited in their ability to absorb and process information. People address this challenge by the process of filtering available information. The cognitive filters form mindset. Our mindsets constantly evolve through our experiences. At times we receive information that is not consistent with our mindset. We either reject this information or accept it by altering our mindset. Mindsets can be viewed as knowledge structures consisting of two dimensions: integration and differentiation.

In business global mindsets equip global managers to deal better with the increased complexity of organizational environments, structural indeterminacy typical of global companies, and cultural diversity (Levy et al., 2007). Levy et al. determined that global mindset research has two perspectives: cultural and strategic.

### Perspectives of Global Mindset

First, the cultural perspective recognizes the cultural diversity of worldwide markets and operations. The foundation of the cultural perspective of global mindset is a geocentric mindset rather than an ethnocentric mindset (Levy et al., 2007). This perspective involves cultural self awareness as well as openness to and understanding of other cultures. Global managers with a geocentric attitude display a supra national, universalistic attitude and downplay the significance of nationality and culture. Such cosmopolitan global managers transcend nationalities and cultures and mediate between global and local interests. Similarly, Benett and Hammer (1998) developed an Intercultural Development Inventory that ranges from denial and ethnocentric on one extreme to integration and ethnorelative on the other extreme.

The second perspective is the strategic perspective and relates to increased strategic complexity due to globalization. This increased complexity cannot be solved through the modification of the organizational structure. Therefore, strategic capabilities are determined by a complex managerial mindset, the global mindset. This complex managerial mindset requires high cognitive and information processing abilities to assist managers in conceptualizing complex, global dynamics and dealing with the tension between local and global needs. The global mindset also requires the ability to simultaneously consider global cultures, markets and dynamics to choose between integration across domains, such as countries, markets and perhaps functional domains or responsiveness to local needs. The choice between local responsiveness and global integration must be made in ambiguous settings (Levy et al, 2007). Dealing with these ambiguous settings requires a low score on Hofstede's scale of uncertainty avoidance.

### Balancing Local Responsiveness with Global Integration

A recurring theme in the discussion of global mindset is the balancing of responsiveness to local needs with global integration. Integration is a critical attribute of mindsets, when differentiation is high. In the global context of differing markets and cultures Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) describe global mindset in terms of the two dimensions differentiation and integration: high differentiation with high integration. Their definition of global mindset is a mindset “that combines an openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this diversity” (p.117). The value of the global mindset, according to Gupta and Govindarajan, is the ability to combine speed with accurate response. It is easy in a global environment to be fast and simplistic in decision making and to be held prisoner by global diversity. The global mindset builds cognitive bridges between local needs and global integration. Different strategic stereotypes of managerial mindsets can be developed to indicate the level of global mindset or lack of global mindset. These stereotypes have been developed based on the continuum from ethnocentrism to geo-centrism (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999) and on the dimensions of differentiation and integration (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002).

### Cultural Intelligence

In addition to global mindset cultural intelligence (CQ) has also been discussed extensively in the literature regarding global competence for managers. Early and Peterson (2004) describe the importance of CQ by stating that success in multinational work depends on

CQ. Earley, Ang and Tan (2006) define CQ as “a person’s capability for successful adaptation to new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context” (p.5).

Early, Ang and Tan build on Gardner’s (1983) work on multiple intelligences. Though some have listed social intelligence (Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Hunter, 2004) as well as political intelligence (Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999) as competencies for global managers, Early, Ang, and Tan argue that this type of competence is a separate intelligence.

Whereas the phenomenon of global mindset has two perspectives, a strategic and a cultural perspective, cultural intelligence focuses on the cultural perspective. Though CQ appears to be a narrower construct than global mindset because of its focus on culture only, in many ways it is a broader construct in the cultural sense. Where global mindset is only a filter without knowledge content, the literature regarding CQ includes cultural knowledge as a component of CQ as well. Thus, in the cultural dimension, CQ is a broader construct than global mindset.

Within this cultural dimension CQ consists of three key parts: cultural strategic thinking, motivation and behavior (Early, Ang & Tan, 2006). Cultural strategic thinking includes knowledge about cultures. The term “strategic thinking” is used to include higher order thinking in this first component of CQ. Strategic thinking here refers to higher order thinking that allows people to learn from their situation as well as metacognition through which people learn how to learn about intercultural interaction. In the case of metacognition people must develop new mental models. This is where CQ touches on the theory on global mindset. The global mindset represents the filters that accept or reject new mental models produced by cultural strategic

thinking or the filters that allow existing models to be adjusted. According to Early, Ang & Tan (2006) cultural backgrounds and experiences form personal filters through which people channel their current experiences. Besides filters of the mind and mental models CQ's cultural strategic thinking also includes factual knowledge about cultures. Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005) are a way of organizing factual knowledge about cultures in categories.

Besides cultural strategic thinking CQ also identifies motivation and behavior as key parts to succeeding in intercultural interactions (Early, Ang & Tan, 2006). These two parts are not addressed by global mindset. Besides making the right decisions on how and why people act in certain cultures (the cultural strategic thinking component of CQ), people must also have the motivation to act and have the ability to act in an appropriate manner in intercultural settings (behavior). Together these three parts form CQ, a key competency needed for succeeding in intercultural interaction.

### Global Competencies

The literature review noted several definitions of global competence. The literature review identified a definition of global competence from Hunter's (2004) Delphi study. Hunter's Delphi panel's definition of global competence focuses on three factors: The first two factors are an open mind and seeking understanding of others. These first two factors focus on perceptual skills, not substantive knowledge and they leverage the third factor: collaboration outside one's own environment. Wilson (1996) in defining global competence focused on the difference between substantive and perceptual knowledge. Traditionally, the training of expatriates has



focused on substantive knowledge: learning the language and culture of the country the manager was assigned to. The assignment of global managers, however, is typically not to one specific foreign country. Instead, global managers deal with numerous cultures and languages simultaneously (Pucik & Saba, 1998). Therefore, global managers need more general cultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity. General knowledge and cultural sensitivity will assist them in recognizing cultural differences, when these differences manifest themselves. In their communications they will assist global managers in knowing which issues may cause conflicts and misunderstandings in other cultures, so they can be avoided. For example, in some cultures it is undesirable to be questioned in front of others. The subjects may experience this as losing face in the group. Rather than knowing each participant's background and whom not to question during group video conferencing, a global manager may make it a point not to question people directly, when others are present. Cultural sensitivity is a form of perceptual knowledge. Most of the items given by Wilson (1996) as examples of perceptual knowledge relate to personality traits.

The concept of global mindset presented itself as a foundation for all global competencies. Cultures and languages often differ in their values and their perspectives on life. Learning about different cultures and languages often does not fit prior experiences, basic values or schema. The global mindset determines whether the new experiences and knowledge will be accepted, rejected or altered. Argyris (1982) described double loop learning as learning that requires learners to shift to a new schema, because the learning does not suit prior experiences and basic assumptions. Learning about different cultures and languages, therefore, can be associated with double loop learning. The mindset can be an asset or a barrier to double loop

learning. It can perform single loop learning, but it may resist double loop learning, if it rejects the change in the mindset. The global environment often involves cultural and strategic change that requires differing views on values or a different frame of mind altogether. Modifying an example by Swanson and Holton (2009, p. 313) beta change occurs, when an organization changes its notion of high performance, when the organization realizes that globalization has increased competition tremendously. Gamma change would result if the company changed its business model or the way it does business because of the intense global competition. Change caused by globalization mostly takes place at the beta or gamma levels of change. For double loop learning to occur in the global company, the global company must have open-mindedness as part of a global mindset. This open-mindedness is the foundation of the global company's double loop learning and its management of change at the levels of beta and gamma change. Therefore, open-mindedness appears to be a key factor for company effectiveness in a global business environment.

Higher order learning is a key component of the capacity to successfully adjust to new cultures or Cultural Intelligence (CQ). CQ encompasses more than the filtering function of the global mindset. First, CQ adds cultural specific knowledge to this perceptual filter. Second, CQ expands the global mindset into an intelligence with a motivational and behavioral component. Thus, CQ is a much larger construct than global mindset that appears to combine the ideas expressed by Hunter (2004) regarding cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity, and global mindset. CQ seems to relate to many items listed in Table 2.1 in the categories of substantive knowledge, skills/abilities and personal characteristics/perceptual knowledge. However, CQ

does fall short in describing the competencies listed for global managers, since it mostly address cultural components rather than specific business competencies.

The global competencies found in the literature review were summarized in Table 2.1. The global competencies were divided into four categories: substantive knowledge, skills and abilities, personal characteristics or perceptual knowledge, and competencies. These four categories are described as follows for use of this table: Knowledge consists of facts that one is aware of. These facts can be established in writing in books, journals, etc. They can also be facts as perceived by someone. The first type of knowledge is substantive knowledge. The latter is perceptual knowledge. Skills and abilities are the capability to apply knowledge. Abilities are different from skills, because they can hardly be improved through training. Competencies are any combination of substantive knowledge, skills, abilities and perceptual knowledge or personal characteristics that are needed to perform the job of global manager.

Table 2.1: Global Competence: Knowledge, Skills/Abilities, Personal Characteristics and Competencies Derived from Existing Literature

**SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE (Olson & Kroeger, 2001)**

General (Caliguiri, 2006; Wilson, 1996):

Cultural Dimensions (Wilson, 1996)

World Issues (Wilson, 1996)

Global Dynamics (Wilson, 1996)

Human Choices (Wilson, 1996)

Specific (Caliguiri, 2006):

Culture (Caliguiri, 2006)

Functional Business (Caliguiri, 2006)

## SKILLS/ABILITIES

### General:

Intercultural Communications (Caliguiri, 2006)

Cultural and Organizational Understanding (Hunter, 2004)

Adaptability (Levy et al, 2007; Hunter, 2004)

System and Multiple Perspective Thinking (Senge, 2006; Lane, DiStefano,  
Maznevski, 1997; Hunter, 2004)

Sensitivity (Hunter, 2004)

Tolerance (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999)

Culturally Influenced Decision Making

Diplomacy (Hunter, 2004)

Cross-cultural Understanding (Hunter, 2004)

Social Intelligence (Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Hunter,  
2004)

Political Intelligence (Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999)

Trust of Organizational Processes over Structure (Barhem, 2008)

### Specific:

Language (Caliguiri, 2006)

## PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS/PERCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE (Wilson, 1996)

### Big Five Personality Traits:

Extroversion (Caliguiri, 2006)

Agreeableness (Caliguiri, 2006)

Emotional Stability (Caliguiri, 2006)

Openness (Wilson, 1997; Caliguiri, 2006)

Conscientiousness (Caliguiri, 2006)

## COMPETENCIES

Managing Conflict between Local Differentiation and Global Integration (Levy et al., 2007; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002)

Managing Uncertainty and Ambiguity (Barhem, 2008; Rhinesmith, 1992)

Managing Time Strategically (Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1999)

Managing in Structural Indeterminacy (Levy et al., 2007)

Managing Complexity (Wilson, 1996; Levy et al, 2007; Rhinesmith, 1992)

Managing Competitiveness (Rhinesmith, 1992)

Managing Adaptability (Rhinesmith, 1992)

Managing Teams (Rhinesmith, 1992)

Managing Learning Through Reflection (Rhinesmith, 1992)

Managing Diversity (Barhem, 2008; Levy et al., 2007; Hunter, 2004)

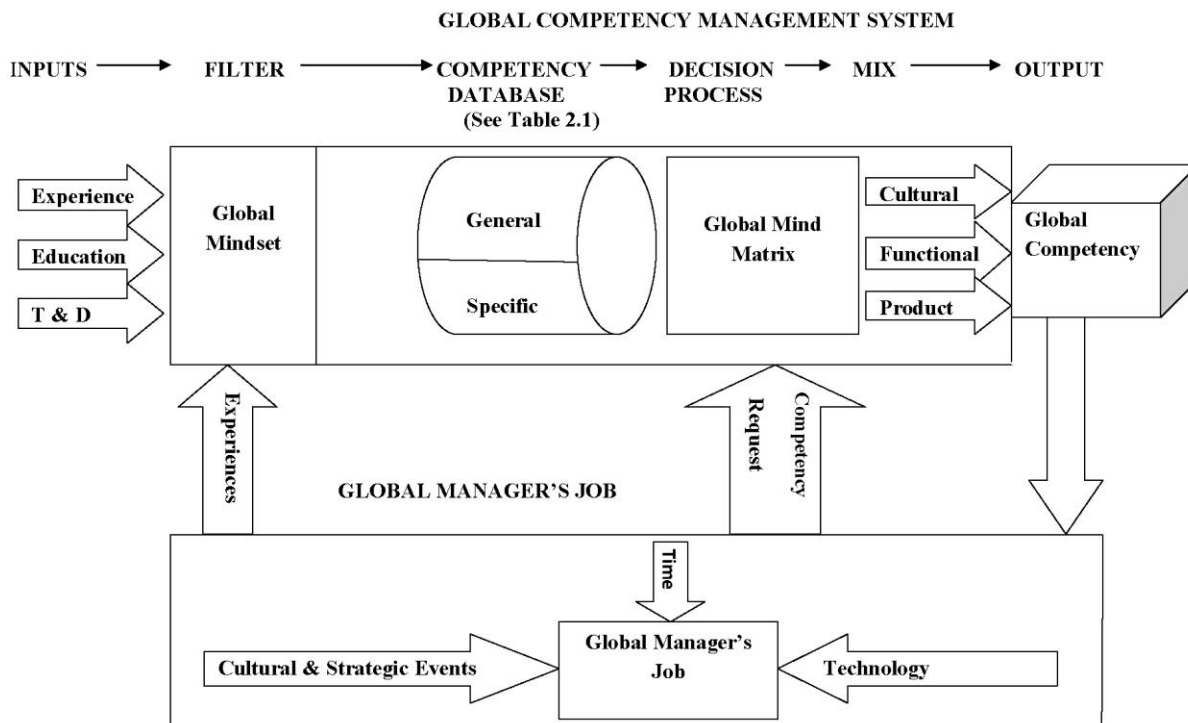
## A Theoretical Framework for Global Competence

The results of this literature review were summarized in a model in Figure 2.1. This Framework for Global Competence illustrates the process of obtaining and applying global competencies in a manager's job. It consists of two major parts: the global competency

management system and the global manager's job. The two parts are connected in three ways: through the exchange of experience between the global competency management system and the global manager's job, through requests for global competencies from the global manager's job, and through the delivery of global competencies by the global competency management system. Experiences, education, and training and development interventions enter the global competency management system through the manager's global mindset. The mindset filters the information to determine whether to accept, reject or differentiate the information. Based on this process of reflection and synthesis the manager develops a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors. This set may include general/perceptual as well as specific/substantive knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors. The general/perceptual share of the database is larger than the specific/substantive box to show the proper emphasis in today's rapidly changing environment on general/perceptual knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors. This set can be mixed and matched in various ways to obtain global competencies. The mind matrix with its understanding of the organizational purpose then sorts through this database of global competencies to determine the appropriate mix including depth and breadth of production, functional, and cultural competencies. The determination of this competency by the global competency management system is done upon a request from the global manager's job based on circumstances and the dilemma whether to differentiate at the local level or standardize globally. Whether or not the global competency will be deployed effectively depends on motivational and behavioral factors. These two factors are key components in CQ. Together with the input, the filter and the competency database in the model, the motivational and behavioral factors form CQ. The impact of the global environment of mobility, bypass, simultaneity and pluralism on the global

manager's job is illustrated by the arrows for technology, strategic and cultural complexity, and time. Changes in this environment prompt the need and the request for a global competency.

FIGURE 2.1: FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL COMPETENCE



### Deficiencies in Existing Literature

This review of literature addressed the challenges of global managers, defined global competence and identified global competencies. Four deficiencies were found in the current literature: lack of agreement on the definitions of global competence (Hunter et al., 2006) and global mindset, lack of international input in these definitions of global competence (Hunter, 2004), a lack of research regarding the efficiency of training and developing for global mindset versus selecting for global mindset, and a lack of empirical studies on the work of global manager (Capellen & Janssens, 2008). First, global managers and researchers must agree upon the definitions of global competence and global mindset. Global competencies are needed in

today's competitive global environment. A global mindset is an important asset in this environment. Commonly agreed-upon definitions of global competence and global mindset are the basis of the analysis and design of any training and development program for global competencies. Without common definitions objectives of such training and development programs cannot be written. Besides definitions rich descriptions are needed to describe global competence. Second, most of these definitions of global competencies have been derived by American scholars or organizations with an American membership base. Universal global competencies must be defined, identified and agreed upon by business managers and researchers across the globe, not just in the United States. Third, research is needed to determine the efficiency of training and developing global mindset. Before companies spend valuable resources on training and developing perceptual traits, such as global mindset, they must be given tools to determine the efficiency of such efforts versus incorporating in the hiring process the assessment of the global mindset of candidates for global management positions. Fourth, most of the existing literature focuses on the expatriate manager. Though there is a considerable body of literature regarding the expatriate manager, less is known about the global manager. Advances in telecommunications and information technology as well as globalization have complicated the job of global managers beyond the complications of intercultural communication and (re)adjustment in expatriate management. This poses unique challenges on the global manager in terms of strategic complexity and time management. It is important that research is done on these unique challenges of global managers.

Reason for this Study



Future research on global competence must build on the work of Cappellen and Janssens (2008), Pucik and Saba (1998), Levy et al. (2007), Nardon and Steers (2008), Kedia and Mukherji (1999), Engle et al. (2001), and Bartlett and Ghoshal (1998) by expanding beyond examination of cultural adjustment in international assignments to management in a global setting with new strategic and technological complexity as well as greater cultural complexity. Future research can be based on the Global Competence Framework presented in Figure 2.1. Such research would reflect the impact of mobility, bypass, simultaneity, and pluralism on global management. This research would sharpen the focus on the strategic perspective of global competence, but would also change the cultural perspective from substantive, culture specific knowledge to general and perceptual knowledge that builds capacity to understand multiple cultures simultaneously.

To know how to train and develop future global managers, we must redefine global competence to ensure it reflects a pluralistic view of global competence. Global competence must be determined in a manner that transcends national preferences.

The picture of global competence cannot be completed without examining global competence through the lens of different cultures, languages and national backgrounds as well as through a lens that considers the complexity of technological advances and strategy. Once a multidimensional, transnational view of global competence has been developed, implications for training and development of business managers can be determined to better equip businesses with core competencies in a globally competitive world. The results of future research will guide HRD professionals through the dilemma of whether global competence programs can be standardized across the globe or whether and how much local differentiation is required.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Rationale and Design of the Qualitative Study

This study explored the meaning global managers in different countries ascribe to global competence. The purpose of this study was to examine the central phenomenon of global competence from multiple cultural and national perspectives. These multinational perspectives of global competencies impact the need for global competence development. Rather than examining the workforce in all countries in the world, this study was limited to managers from companies in India, Japan and the Netherlands.

The literature has defined global competence and identified global competencies, though they have been mostly derived by American researchers or organizations with American membership (Hunter et al., 2006). Hunter (2004) explored global competence in the qualitative phase of his exploratory mixed methods design dissertation, but he did not consider cross cultural views of global competence in either phase. This study used a qualitative approach towards exploring the phenomenon of global competence with participants from various countries other than the United States.

Qualitative methodology is based on the belief that multiple realities exist in participant's perspectives (McMillan, 2008). This study examined the potential of multiple realities of global competence based on country and cultural backgrounds. The answers to the problems of global competence are known by managers who are actively engaged in business across the globe every day. Therefore, the theory regarding global competence must be build inductively from the bottom up based on rich data obtained from these managers. This study employed a

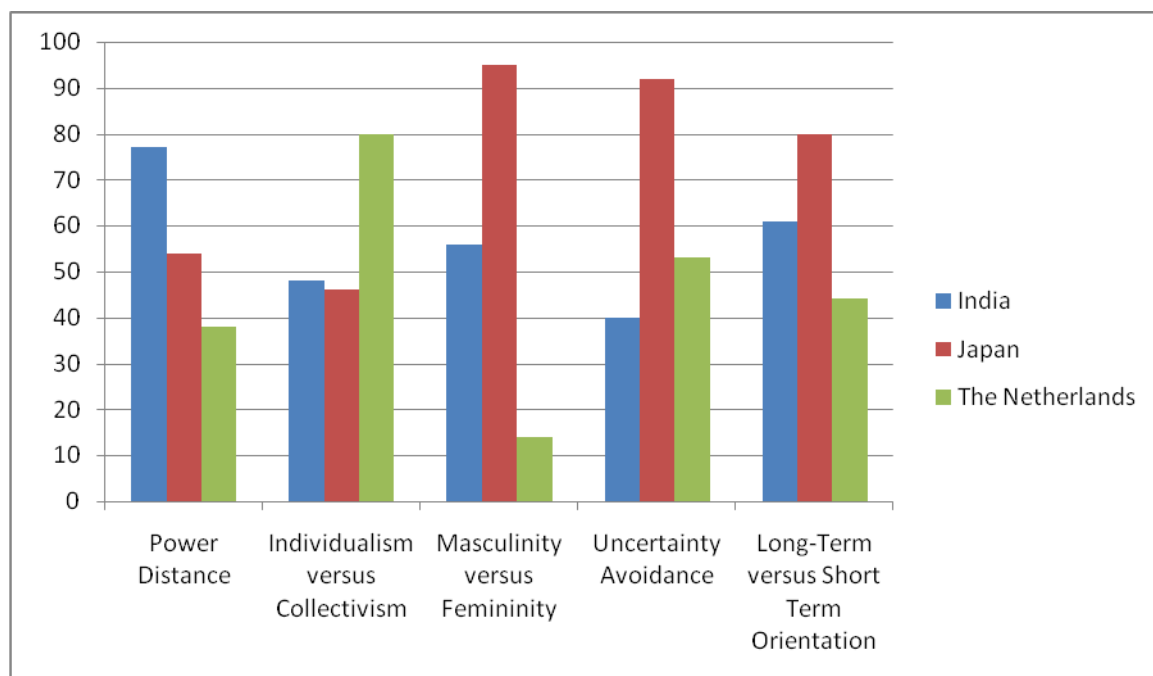
constructivist paradigm and sought to obtain rich descriptions of the phenomenon of global competence through the eyes of managers in India, Japan, and the Netherlands to determine the meaning of global competence in those countries. Most qualitative research studies behavior as it occurs naturally (McMillan, 2008, p. 11). The interviews in this study were based open ended questions to allow participants the opportunity to describe the phenomenon of global competence in their own words, while they are at their place of work in their own country. Overall, the phenomenon of global competence was studied using a qualitative, non-experimental phenomenological design.

#### Selection of Countries

The study focused on three countries with different cultural dimensions, geographic locations and histories. The participants in this study were business managers located in India, Japan and the Netherlands. From the cultural perspective, this selection covered a broad range in scores on all five of the Hofstede dimensions (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Table 3.1 is a graphical representation of the Hofstede dimensions of these three countries. Japan scored the highest on the masculinity index. The Netherlands was on the other extreme of this range. The Netherlands scored much lower on the masculinity index and was a distant last among these countries on this scale. In terms of uncertainty avoidance the range had India on one extreme, then moved gradually towards the Netherlands and closed with Japan on the other extreme. Regarding the dimensions of power distance and individualism versus collectivism India and the Netherlands were on opposite ends of both spectra. Regarding the final cultural dimension, time orientation, Japan's time orientation was strongly long term, whereas the Dutch culture focused

on the short term. India's time orientation was approximately in the middle of the Japanese and Dutch orientations.

Table 3.1: Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Scores for India, Japan and the Netherlands



India, Japan and the Netherlands also have different geographic locations and landscapes as well as diverse historic backgrounds. The Netherlands represents the old world. Its culture is based on the Christian tradition. The Dutch have had a tradition of global commerce dating back to the sixteen hundreds. In a time in history labeled by Friedman (2007) as "Globalization 1.0" the Dutch established colonies in South America, the Caribbean, Africa and Indonesia. The Dutch were also key players in Globalization 2.0 from 1800 to 2000. Early on the ships of their joint stock companies traveled the globe to participate in trade. Today, Dutch companies are still active in global commerce.

The second country, Japan is located in the Far East and is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan. At the end of Friedman's Globalization 2.0 period Japan's industrial companies set the tone on the global scene for how business was done. Japanese companies changed the way manufacturing was done in the seventies and eighties through their Total Quality Management practices. This quality-focused manufacturing philosophy became a global model for success. Christianity has little influence on Japanese culture. The main religions in Japan are Shinto and Buddhism.

Finally, India's culture is based on Hindu tradition. Yet, India's large workforce is familiar with the English language as well as Anglo-Saxon culture because of its years as a British colony. Most recently during Friedman's Globalization 3.0 India has enjoyed a rapidly growing economy that attracts business from across the globe especially in the area of technology. India's companies deployed its relatively cheap and educated workforce with the use of new communication technologies to seize the opportunities provided by outsourcing. Thus, India represents a group of countries that play a key role in Friedman's Globalization 3.0.

#### Selection of Participants

Since qualitative studies do not use probability sampling (McMillan, 2008) and the population of global managers cannot be determined, non-probability sampling was used. A purposeful sample of participants was selected until the number of participants in each country reached ten. The purposeful sample was a maximal variation sample. Through the selection of participants from various countries with different languages and national history as well as different scores on the Hofstede scales this study aimed to collect various views on the

phenomenon of global competence. The following describes the criteria used for inclusion in this purposeful sample.

A small number of companies with multinational operations was selected for this study in the countries of India, Japan, and the Netherlands through a convenience sample. The researcher had made contacts at conferences in the previous year with managers at global companies. These managers had volunteered to assist in obtaining the necessary approval from company executives for this study and in recruiting participants for the study. The private sector is subject to the demands of free trade and open markets. The private sector is also driven by a profit motive, whereas the public sector depends on governmental planning and control. Therefore, the private sector has a stronger impetus to engage in global business and a stronger need to react to globalization than the public sector.

The study identified experienced global business managers with multinational private sector corporations in India, Japan and the Netherlands. The participants were at the management level and their jobs required at least the equivalent of a bachelor's degree. As part of their daily duties these employees managed, supervised, negotiated, or maintained relationships with coworkers, vendors, consultants, or customers in foreign countries. These coworkers, vendors, consultants, or customers represented a variety of national backgrounds and languages. The employees had at least two years of experience in such a position. Thus, the global managers selected for this study met the four characteristics listed by Cappellen and Janssens (2008) in their review of definitions of global managers: worldwide coordination responsibility, worldwide business perspective, ability to work with people from multiple cultures, and balancing local demands in a global environment.

Some potential participants were significantly influenced by other cultures or countries in a direct way to the point that this influence had caused their cultural values to significantly deviate from those of their native country. If the participant responded to a question of the researcher that the participant did not consider him or herself Indian, Japanese, or Dutch because of an extended stay abroad or a marriage to a foreign national, the participants were disqualified for participation in this study. However, the researcher recognized the importance of international assignments in the career of global managers. Therefore, during their career as global managers, the participants may have worked abroad for an extended period of time. Such career moves did not disqualify the potential participants from participation in the study.

#### Data Collection

The study applied the qualitative methods of interviews, observations and personal experiences to explore potential differences in the description of the phenomenon of global competence and to explore differences in global competencies among participants in three different countries. Three sources of data were used. First, participants were interviewed with the use of Skype, an internet based software. Second, the researcher made his own observations of the communications, such as the time and style of communications, participants' environment, and the communication style, during the interview process. The researcher's own personal experiences in his international travels served as a third source of data. The researcher grew up in the Netherlands and left for the U.S. to attend college at the age of eighteen. Although he does not have global business experience, he does have experience traveling as a child in Europe and twenty years of experience moving back and forth between different cultures and languages.

Participants were supplied with a modified version of Lee's (2009) definition of competence: a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior patterns that affects a major part of one's job, that can be measured against a set of standards that are well-accepted by a group of people anywhere in the world, that can be improved via training and development, and that the incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform its task and functions with competence. Rather than using Lee's term of "well-accepted standards," this study used a definition of competency using the term "set of standards that are well-accepted by a group of people anywhere in the world" to indicate that these standards can be different based on cultural values. Participants were also supplied with the central question and the interview questions in advance of the interview. This allowed participants to consider the questions and prepare for the interview in advance and might mitigate the language barrier. The interviews were semi-structured and consisted of eight open-ended questions. Additional follow up questions, however, were asked to gain a deeper understanding, additional background or to further probe into the matter. Though the interviews were done with the use of audio as well as video in some instances with Skype, only the audio part was recorded digitally with the use of additional, Skype compatible, software called Pamela Voice Recorder. Observations were captured by the researcher on paper with the use of the interview observation protocol in Appendix B. The thirty interviews took place between November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011. Approximately two hundred and twenty pages of data were transcribed from the interviews.

Common Language



The interviews took place in one common language, English. All documents submitted to the participants were also in the English language. It should be noted that English was not the native language of the participants, nor the researcher. However, in the Netherlands and India English is the language of global business. A recent pilot study with Japanese participants also showed that they considered English the language of global business. However, it was a challenge to find Japanese participants with sufficient command of the English language to participate in the study. To address this challenge the recruitment of Japanese participants focused on contacts at global companies and global professional and academic organizations that used English as their common language. Consequently, ten English speaking Japanese participants were found for the study.

### Data Analysis

The audio part of the interviews was recorded digitally with the use of additional, Skype compatible, software. The audio files were transcribed into Word files as soon as possible following each interview by two people who were not otherwise involved in the research. These Word files containing the transcriptions were read by the researcher while listening to the audio recordings to determine their accuracy in accordance with the researcher's recollection and the digital recordings.

At this point it was also determined whether any responses required any follow up for clarification or to obtain a more detailed understanding and whether or not the responses warranted a change in the questionnaire. After a large number of interviews it appeared that participants had some ideas about their cultural or national backgrounds as either hurdles or

advantages towards achieving global competence. So some of the participants from that point on were asked: How does your national background help you or not help you in a global environment? The purpose was to discuss the advantages or disadvantages of their national backgrounds.

If follow up questions were deemed necessary, they were emailed to the participant immediately following the initial review of the transcribed data. Follow up questions were deemed necessary for two of the interviews. Once the transcribed data were deemed complete and accurate, the participants were given an alphanumeric code to maintain confidentiality.

Then the data files were imported into MAXQDA+ Version 10, a qualitative data analysis software package. In MAXQDA+ the researcher set up three text groups that correspond with each of the three qualitative data sources: personal experiences, observations, and interviews. Text sets were also assigned to each of the three countries in the study. These latter text groups facilitated the cross country analysis of the qualitative data. Attributes for gender as well as years of experience were also set up for each participant text.

Once all data were imported into MAXQDA+, the data were printed out from the software and read again. The researcher then reflected upon the data. The researcher identified five main categories in which the responses of all participants in the three countries could be classified. These five categories that were universal across the three countries were: country background, personal characteristics, experience in and adaptation to global business, developing global competence, and global competence. The researcher identified a logical order for the five categories. First, the researcher assumed that one's country background influences the participant's personal background. Then, the researcher assumed that one's personal

characteristics and country background influence a participant's experiences and adaptation to global business. Having talked about the global experience and adaptation participants discussed the methodology and content of the learning necessary to develop global competence. Finally, the participants discussed global competence based on their thoughts on the previous four categories. These five universal categories were set up in the software.

The researcher then read the data and coded the data. The data were coded country by country in the following order: India, Japan, and the Netherlands. The researcher wanted the order in which the country data were coded to be random, but at the same time he wanted the Netherlands to be the last country to be coded. A random unbiased order appeared to be an alphabetic order, which automatically lead for the Netherlands to be coded last. The researcher insisted on the Netherlands being last, because of his own Dutch background. Coding the other two countries first reduced or eliminated bias because of the researcher's familiarity with the country and the culture of the Netherlands.

To maintain an open-ended design the codes were not predetermined, but determined during a thorough reading of the participant responses. The researcher attempted to use in vivo codes as much as possible to preserve the meaning ascribed by the participants. If no good in vivo word was found, the researcher assigned a code based on his own interpretation of the participant's response. The researcher assigned the codes to the categories as sub codes to each "group level code" category code in MAXQDA+.

Once the data were coded in MAXQDA+ Version 10, the researcher wrote a country-by-country summary comparison in table format of the codes found. This comparison was written using the five categories identified after the second reading of the data immediately following the

import into MAXQDA+. The researcher started writing down some themes for each of the countries based on this summary. Then the researcher read all data by code to review the coding and the country-by-country summary comparison.

Once the researcher was satisfied with the codes, the five categories, and the summary comparison he started identifying themes that could be elevated from the codes. The themes were selected separately by country for each category. For each country an overall theme was identified that was the common thread in the themes of the particular country. This process of analysis resulted in five universal categories that covered all three countries, for each of the three countries five themes that were paired with the universal categories, as well as one title theme per country that captured the key elements of the five themes for that country. The categories and themes are fully described in Chapter 4.

The following section provides an example of the previously described analysis process based on a quote from a participant in India. At this point the data had been transcribed by a transcriptionist and read and compared to the original interview recording for accuracy by the researcher. All data had been imported into the MAXQDA+ software at that point. A reading of all the data had determined “Country Background” as a universal category. In this universal category participants from all three countries discussed specifics about their country such as historical events, demographics, reputation and attitude towards globalization. Then the researcher read the data again by country for purposes of coding.

Quote from Participant: *“See in India in 1991 the Liberalization started and slowly the Americans started coming in. And in ‘94 the shipping company started its operations in India in earlier operations with agents, but they started setting up shop and with that they started to*

*operate the company in India and we were fortunate to work with global managers closely in the program shoulder to shoulder...they had a really good leadership skills and we learned a lot from them as well as they learned certain things which is actually cultural or maybe, you know, things that we were really strong in domestically. So it's sort of a two way mutual beneficial thing for us."*

During the reading the researcher noted that the description of the Liberalization Period in India indicated by year provided some important background to the Indian participant's view of globalization. The participant described how in the process of economic liberalization and globalization both Americans and Indians benefitted. So the participant described his mood regarding liberalization and globalization at the time. This piece was coded in the universal category "Country Background" with the code "Mood." In response to the previous question this same participant shared excitedly how he learned about processes and had the opportunity to travel abroad, when he started working for a global company in 1994. When writing the country by country summary the researcher noted that other Indian participants talked excitedly about the youth of their company's management and about how the status of Indian managers had improved significantly in the hierarchy of global companies. Based on this data the theme for India for the universal category of country background was selected to be "Excitement about Change."

Based on the coding and Table 2.1: Global Competence: Knowledge, Skills/Abilities, Personal Characteristics and Competencies Derived from Existing Literature a table was prepared providing a comprehensive list of knowledge, skills/abilities, personal characteristics and competencies from this study and previous literature.

The table with the lists of global competencies was analyzed by country to determine if any elements of global competence were universal to all three countries. Similarly, the same table was analyzed to determine whether any of the elements of global competence were not universal to all three countries. Non universal global competencies were those global competencies that only got mentioned by participants in one or two of the countries. Universal global competencies were those global competencies that did only get mentioned by participants in all three of the countries. Those non universal global competencies were examined in relation to the culture, history and geographic location of that particular country to search for an explanation. The table was also analyzed to determine if all elements of global competence identified in existing literature were confirmed by the data from this study and if any new elements of global competence were identified through this study.

Data were validated first through triangulation of the three data sources used in this study: interviews with participants, observations of the interview process, and the researcher's personal experiences. Second, data were also validated through member checking. Three participants, one from each country read the theme passages and provided feedback. Feedback provided by the three participants was reflected in the data analysis and subsequent chapters of this study. Due to the inclusion of the researcher's personal experiences and observations in this study, this validation process of outsider feedback was important to the credibility of the study. Credibility was also added to this study by reporting of conflicting findings. For example, this study reported the conflicting opinions of Dutch participants regarding the level of knowledge a global manager must have of foreign languages.

### Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role was to review the collected data, identify themes in the data, code the data as well as summarize the data as feedback to the participants. The researcher, who is both a native of the Netherlands as well as an American citizen, also used his own observations as well as experiences as data source. The researcher had to be constantly aware that personal bias of the researcher may impact the findings of the study, especially when it concerned the Dutch part of the study. This subjective role of the researcher required the application of multiple validation methods to ensure the quality of the study.

### Permissions

Since this study involved human subjects the researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Boards of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Permission was also obtained from the appropriate levels of management at the companies where contact people of the researcher were employed who had agreed to assist in the recruiting of the participants for this study. In one instance a confidentiality agreement was signed between the company and the researcher. Consent forms were emailed to all participants to obtain their permission to participate in this study. The IRB application is shown in Appendix C and a sample of the consent forms is shown in Appendix D.

The transcription of data was performed for compensation by two people who were otherwise not involved with the study. The two transcriptionists signed confidentiality agreements to protect the confidentiality of participants. A sample of these confidentiality agreements is shown in Appendix E.

## Challenges

This study posed a number of challenges for the researcher. The qualitative design required an intensive data collection process of thirty interviews. These data for all interviews had to be transcribed and analyzed. This process of data collection and analysis were the most time intensive part of the study.

A second challenge was to find participants for this study. Due to the nature of their work global managers have little time available to volunteer for a study. In Japan managers also found the use of English a barrier to participation. Once companies were identified permission needed to be obtained from the appropriate levels of management. In one case a confidentiality agreement was signed between the researcher, the University of Nebraska, the researcher's committee chair and the company. It took a lot of time to work through the necessary channels to process these approvals.



## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

### General Organization of Presentation of Findings

The findings in relation to the central question “What is global competence for managers in different countries?” are first organized by research questions, then by country. The presentation of findings for each country is preceded by a brief description of the participants. The real names of participants were replaced with pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. The findings by country are presented in the following order: India, Japan, and the Netherlands.

First, global competence will be described in response to the first research question: How do global business managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands describe global business competence? Second, the findings are presented in response to research question two: How do the qualitative descriptions of global business competence of managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands compare with prior studies that focused on US-based participants?

### Research Question One

#### Five Universal Themes among Countries

The descriptions of global competence in response to the first research question are presented separately by country with the following five universal themes: country background, personal characteristics, experience in and adaptation to global business, developing global competence, and global competencies. For this study competence is defined based on an adaptation from Lee (2009) as “a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior patterns that affects a major part of one’s job, that can be improved via training and development, and that the person

needs to bring to a job to perform its task and functions well.” The competencies discussed in the fifth universal theme therefore, are much broader than any of the characteristics or skills that are mentioned in the first four theme sections. The five themes serve as the common story line between the three countries. Subtitles have been added to these universal themes to indicate the local differentiation of the theme. The presentation of findings for each country is preceded by a brief description of the participants. The findings by country are presented in the following order: India, Japan, and the Netherlands.

#### India: The Opportunities and Challenges of People versus Process Orientations

The ten global managers in India included seven males and three females. Their global experience ranged from three to seventeen years. The managers averaged more than nine years of global experience. All of the managers were employed in broad range of service industries.

Amit is a senior consultant with a global consulting firm. He has three years of experience in consulting with global clients in strategic management. Veena is the head of learning and development at a global bioresearch services company headquartered in India. She currently coaches managers in various countries and has eleven years of global experience. Sayed is a human resource and training manager with a global chain of hotels and resorts. In her current position she frequently works with colleagues at the European headquarters and across the globe as well as with local personnel from various countries across the globe. She is currently stationed in the United Arab Emirates and has three years of global experience. Gita is employed with a financial services provider in India. As a senior manager she is in charge of the planning and execution of changes in and integration of business processes across the globe. She

has twelve years of experience in global management. Biren is a project manager of a learning and development team for a global consulting firm. He manages a virtual, global team of consultants and facilitates courses with participants across the globe. He has five years of global experience. Kamal is a country operations manager with a global logistics firm. He functions as the liaison with global customers for their transportation to and from India and has eight years of global experience. Sujit is a senior human resource manager with a global logistics firm. He works with managers in the Southeast Asia region and is involved with a global project within the company. He has seventeen years of global experience. Raj is a director with a global professional services firm. He manages teams across the globe which provide services to multinational clients. Raj has five years of global experience. Suman is also a consulting director with a global professional services firm. He manages projects with global companies and manages global consulting teams. He has ten years of global experience. Dilip is a human resource director at the country level for a global consulting firm. He is involved in the global management of his firm as well and has fourteen years of global experience.

#### Country Background: Excitement about Change

Change is taking place in India. Participants such as Sujit and Dilip refer to Liberalization in India in the nineties as the end of protectionism and the start of prosperity and the era when India opened its minds and its borders to global business. Economic change seems related to generational change in India. The younger generation received some credit for the economic improvements. According to Gita the younger generation of Indians is college educated, has disposable income to spend, inspires the technology that drives India's growth and has obtained

leadership positions in its young, open, and growing economy. Gita refers to “remnants in our culture” in describing generational change in the “young country” of India.

The general mood about global change among the participants in India can be described with the word excitement. Participants are excited about new career opportunities that bring opportunities to travel and meet people across the globe. Sujit says:”When you actually traveled for work you also got a lot of chances to get trained outside and also you got opportunities to meet people from other countries and share some best practices...” There is also excitement among the Indian participants that India’s voice is gaining strength across the globe. Traditional major markets cannot ignore India’s voice anymore. Dilip said:”The views used to be dominated by the major markets.” He continued to explain that today global companies in their decision processes listen to managers in developing markets and include them in high leadership positions.

Many of the participants mentioned that India is a very diverse country within its borders. There are big variations between its regions in terms of regulations, but also in terms of local languages. This provides Indians the advantage of the opportunity to experience diversity before they manage at the global level. Indians also have an advantage in their relatively good command of the English language, which is often referred to as the language of global business by participants. This may be one situation where India’s history with the British empire is advantageous. Besides that Sujit mentioned, India has “a good reputation of hard working people.”

Despite these advantages participants did report disadvantages in the form of racial discrimination at times. Participants did not always see globalization in a positive light, but were

reluctant to show this negative sentiment in interviews. While India has opened its minds and borders, the major markets at times still have to adjust to the new players in global business. People in Western countries at times refer to India as a third world country or are perceived to undermine decisions of Indian managers. Sayed reported that especially initially Western counterparts “undermine me, because I’m from a different part of the world.”

#### Personal Characteristics: Risk Takers with a Drive to Excel in a Challenging Environment

In describing global competence the Indian managers described a number of desirable personal characteristics for a global manager. Global competence required that you first excel in your domain, have a drive for professional achievements, a genuine global interest, and are willing to take risks. These items were all connected through the word “challenge.”

The first challenge for global managers was to excel in their own functions or fields at the local level. Proper domain or technical knowledge is a starting point. Kamal referred to this starting point as “command of your subject.” According to Sayed, “Your job will speak for itself.” Not everyone achieves global status, according to Dilip, only those with good local performance that shows potential. The potential for global roles included the ownership of some personal characteristics, such as assertiveness, being a risk taker, and a genuine global interest.

The second challenge for global managers was the broad and tough competition at the global level. The world never sleeps. Somewhere a competitor is working, producing, developing new products, and entering new markets. This same level of competition is present internally within the companies. Within this context one global manager in India discussed the sense of professional accomplishment as an insider in global business. Gita referred to it as “the

sense of acceptance of being a professional.” Such an environment also requires you to be assertive in the sense of being self-driven and having self-discipline in your strife to excel. Another participant, Biren, described it as self management that requires prioritization of tasks to succeed in this setting. In a competitive global environment self efficacy seems to be the foundation of professional accomplishment, self-driven attitude, and self management.

Self-efficacy for a manager is certainly supported by a genuine global interest. Five of the ten participants in India clearly expressed a genuine interest in global issues in their answers during the interviews. When asked to describe a memorable experience, they showed excitement in their stories about traveling across the globe, meeting people from such a large variety of countries all in one meeting, and getting a diverse perspective from such a variety of countries. The genuine interest supports high levels of self-efficacy, which improves their drive to excel in their domain and succeed in a competitive, global environment.

The foundation of excellence in the manager’s domain in combination with self-efficacy prepares the global manager to rise to the challenges of the global environment. This challenging environment required that a manager takes risks. The advice of Raj was: “Take on risks and challenges and to be adventurous.” Dilip agreed that “to be part of the global company, you should take all of the risk associated with being part of a global company. You cannot be immune.”

Experience in and Adaptation to Global Business: Being Flexible for Global Opportunities,  
Challenges and Processes while Being Yourself

When talking about the global environment Indian participants displayed their excitement about the opportunities afforded due to India's growing role in global business. They noted the experience of adjusting to different ways of doing business including a different regulatory environment, different communication styles, and time zone differences. A major adjustment for them was the adjustment to structured processes. In his responses Suman described these structured processes as "habits of planning, reporting, following a certain cycle that has been established." He further described his strict reporting regimen in terms of when certain status and financial reports get sent out and to whom. Biren discussed structured processes in place for communication in a globally dispersed team and explained when and how you communicate differences and exceptions based on the importance of the matter and location of the team member. Examples of cultural differences were also provided. Besides dealing with these differences global managers must also understand how global events impact you locally and they must be prepared for a high pace of change in the global environment. Interestingly, the topic of different communication styles is broader than the fact that different languages are spoken across the world. Even though in global business English is often used as common language, participants reported differences in communication even with a common global business language. Veena mentioned differences in accents, tone, and speed across the globe, whereas Biren and Kamal mentioned differences in English dialect across the globe. Global communication extends beyond the formal, written word to the real time spoken word due to video conferencing, mobile technology and voice-over-IP technology. Even written communication can be instant and less formal using email. Global communication often takes place in written form (email) or by voice only. These global communication methods are

challenging the participants, because they do not allow them to see the facial expressions or body language. Therefore, Sujit added, “you must be a very good captive listener.” In global communication you cannot have the people in front of you one hundred percent of the time, or speak to them immediately, added Suman.

The reason for the inability to communicate instantly was the difference in time zones. This meant that a manager of a global project at any point in time is not “one hundred percent aware of the latest status” of his or her project according to Suman. The differences in time zones led to long and flexible work hours for Indian managers, so they can be prepared to deal with calls with people in other time zones. A number of participants reported taking calls early in the morning, late at night and on weekends.

Besides diverse experiences the participants in India also described a common global culture in their responses. They described a common global culture as a structured environment, not just in terms of organizational structure which in India is more accessible according to Sujit, but mostly in terms of structured work methods. Participants such as Suman referred to it as a “process oriented approach.” Indian managers must make the shift from a more informal environment based on personal relationships and word of mouth to a process oriented approach that is perceived by them as result driven with a regimen of daily, weekly and monthly routines. Globally agreements must be documented on paper by contracts and the emphasis is on following a rigid process. Raj summed it up by saying that in India “there is no need for documentation or a letter for everything that you do, but there are a lot of things which are done by word of mouth.”



In the adjustment to the global environment the words mentioned by participants span a wide spectrum of levels of adjustment. Participants mentioned the need for humility, awareness, flexibility, openness, understanding, being positive and adapting. “You must demonstrate a deep respect for and sensitivity to the cultural difference,” stated Sujit. “You need to understand the sensitivity around some of these factors in the local geography,” added Suman. These comments did not come from the same managers who reported instances of discrimination and disrespect as a hurdle to their achievement of global competence. To what extent must the global manager adjust to the local differences? You blend in and adapt, but you keep true to yourself. Gita provided the following solution: “It’s not like I adopt a new country, but I adapt to the culture that I’m working with . . . It’s the ability to blend and yet hold your own identity.” Sujit referred to it as remaining grounded in your own culture and national identity rather than going native. Empathy was also briefly mentioned by Veena and Suman. Empathy required understanding by placing yourself in their situation, but empathy did not imply that you actually try to imitate them.

#### Developing Global Competence: Eager to Learn from Others, Take on the Challenge of the Process Orientation

With the excitement of growing markets and increased career opportunities in India the participants were eager to develop their global competence. The participants were looking to adjust to the global way: a more structured and process oriented approach. The participants stressed that developing global competence cannot be achieved overnight. Raj stated: “All that will take time. And of course you can have global managers at different rates, but eventually if a

person really feels a part of it, it takes time, it could not be done in six months, one year.” The time investment really never stops. According to Veena global managers should invest at least twenty percent of their time and compensation package on developing themselves. Thus, in a complex global environment, where technology connects people and processes across the globe, it is a process of lifelong learning. Dilip described this environment as follows: “I think the biggest challenge we all face is the pace of change today. And whatever happens in the U.S., I am just saying for example, has an impact on India next day . . . So I think the biggest challenge today is that how can you take all the pressures of not only working in the local, you are not immune to what is happening in the global world.” Preparing to work in such an environment required a comprehensive approach with education at the graduate level. According to Raj “You need to have picked up all the skills from teenager to post-grad to finally fit over there, because it is not something you can learn overnight. It is very essential to pick up everything. To me it was not limited to a training or a course or a particular experience, but it was all the years, all the pieces that happened.” The two questions left unanswered then are: What must be learned? And how does the learning take place?

#### *Learning Content: Focus on People Skills*

The learning content mentioned by Indian participants included the following areas: current global environment, country specific knowledge, organizational learning, as well as soft skills. Participants must have an awareness of the global environment. One must be familiar with current economic, social, and political events as well as the ways business is done across the globe. This familiarity will assist a global manager in communicating with counterparts across

the globe. In terms of awareness of the global environment, Kamal gave the examples of sports and politics, when he stated that Indians don't care to talk about baseball and that when talking to an American, you should be sensitive to political differences, such as whether one votes Democrat or Republican.

Kamal's comments directed the focus to country specific knowledge. Biren admitted that it is helpful to understand the country or region that you are dealing with. However, interestingly, the participants in India mentioned little about learning the local language. They mention the need to speak English as the common language. For them, however, this does not appear to be a big challenge. This may not be a big surprise, when hearing from Veena that due to India's diverse background "on average an Indian would know four to six languages." Only Raj mentioned briefly that "If you know Japanese, German or French, it makes it so much easier for you to work well in those environments."

In contrast learning content that was important to Indian participants included learning process methodology of how things are done at the global level as well as soft skills. In a country where participants stressed the importance of relationships and describe the development of global competence as mostly focusing on learning a process oriented approach, this emphasis on processes and soft skills is not surprising. Suman described soft skills with a focus on clearly articulating your business case in a different cultural environment, a virtual environment or by phone. Suman emphasized that in a global environment these soft skills are more important than analytical skills. He also mentioned that soft skills are about checking expectations with counterparts. Raj discussed these expectations in the context of negotiating timelines and fees

with clients across the globe. According to him you need to be able to convince your counterpart of your business case.

### *Learning Methodology: Learning from Others*

The learning methodology proposed by Indian participants focused on social learning. Participants stressed the importance of academics suggesting a comprehensive graduate education. Amit suggested a specific book *Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands* by Morrison and Conaway (2006) that describes specific cultural nuances. However, Indian participants spent a lot of time recommending forms of social learning. They discussed social networking through face-to-face networking or through virtual networking. Veena suggested that a lot can be learned from industry-based or function-based forums using either the face-to-face or the virtual delivery method. These forums allow managers to post practical questions and scenarios and learn from the experiences of others in their professions or industry.

A second form of learning described often focused on experiential learning. Experiential learning in this case means workplace learning from either your own experiences or from the experience of your superiors and mentors in the organization. You may learn from mentors or by observation of top performers in your company, but in the end you must experience the work yourself and learn from your mistakes. Biren described the importance of experience: “I would say that you would learn only with experience. There’s no canned solution. You need to spend time – nobody will get it right for the first time.” In the context of learning from work experiences Amit, Dilip, and Sayed emphasized the importance of having opportunities within your company to take on challenging assignments. Sayed stated “But folks who don’t get a

chance to try, I think their learning will go to waste.” While paying attention to your environment the opportunities will present themselves to learn by observing superior performers in the company. Dilip recommended finding key decision makers as mentors and observing top performers as critical ways of developing your global competence. Gita, Amit, and Biren recommend mentoring and observation as well. It is important that you do not have the attitude that you already know everything and the way it worked in other countries will work in this location as well. Sayed lists being humble, modest, confident, and open minded as key prerequisites to developing global competence in experiential learning.

An important issue in need of mentioning in the context of learning and global competence is that self-efficacy and taking on challenges are a part of this process. Believing that you can do it and tackling tough challenges in order to learn are important in the development of global competence. In this context Dilip mentioned that he starts preparation for the next assignment as soon as he starts a new assignment. Both Gita and Dilip mentioned that they preferred to be thrown into the pool at the deep end with the assignment “sink or swim.”

#### Global Competence: Seeing and Communicating Opportunities in a Complex World through More than Written Words

This part discussed the competencies that participants found important to work as a global manager. In general participants in India stressed the importance of the competence of having vision and seeing opportunities in a complex and challenging global environment. Through this additional complexity of communication differences, cultural differences, and geographical and time zone differences, global managers must have vision and the ability to see opportunities.

Sujit mentioned the need for leadership competencies specifically a number of times. Raj referred to the leadership competencies as vision and the ability to visualize what can be done in a global market, “What you can get as a global manager is something you should be able to visualize and so it is that dream which you see which you are able to visualize what you are able to do in the global marketplace which will really fuel up the passion and take you forward and do something great. But if you aren’t able to visualize what the global marketplace can offer then you will be contained within the physical boundaries.” Amit illustrated this need for vision with a story about a shoe company: “They go and say that there is a big market out there. That’s because no one wears a shoe there. Then there is another marketing guy that goes in and says there is no market out there, because nobody one wears shoes.”

Global competence for a manager means that you have the vision and leadership skills to succeed anywhere, according to the participants in India. It is the competency, according to Sujit, “to fit yourself or adapt your service in any marketplace, in any environment.” Dilip added to this the challenge of succeeding in any environment with limited financial resources, time or market data. He saw this competency as very challenging and illustrated it with the comparison to a commando: “So what happens to a commando is basically, here is the situation we are going, we have this much ammunition or guns for you to do this exercise. So I think global managers are also at times like look here is the business challenge, this is what is needed, we don’t have much time, just go in and do it.” Within this framework of vision, leadership and succeeding anywhere with tough challenges the participants identify three major global competencies: Building relationships, communicating for results, and managing expectations. These three major competencies will be described next.

*Building Relationships: Investing in People Relationships*

Having the competence to succeed anywhere meant that global managers need to collaborate with people across the globe. Global managers needed to be able to understand the people from different cultures and the different regulatory environments that they operate in. Rather than shying away from those differences, Veena said that global managers must appreciate conflicts, confront them and resolve them. Dilip referred to this as the number one competency to “Collaborate with people across the globe, multi culture, multi levels of people in terms of hierarchy and all. And work with all these people to produce a particular result, whatever is expected out of you.”

Working to produce a particular result required a common understanding and common ground. Geographical distance and the related communication challenges made it hard to build trust. There was always a need for good communication and a personal touch in global business according to the participants in India. However, this was challenging to achieve in a global environment, where people often do not meet face-to-face and have different cultural backgrounds. “Building trust is another big challenge,” said Amit.

Yet trust is extremely important. You need to have trust to succeed according to Dilip. Building trust requires a personal investment. Sayed said you must work to gain that trust. Sujit provided the following comparison “Building trust is like building a monument. It’s easy to break, it but it’s very difficult to create it.” A characteristic that can assist the global manager in building trust fast is empathy. You can learn to understand others by imagining you are in their shoes, according to Sayed.

*Communicating for Results: Managing People across the Globe Takes More than Written Words*

Communication was an important part of global competence according to Indian participants. Good communication is necessary to build relationships. Communication was also important in combination with the leadership competencies. Global managers are often asked to lead change processes and they need to communicate with people “to influence them in that direction of change,” according to Dilip. In a confusing, unknown environment managers need to navigate the way. Dilip stated that managers “Need to be able to bring the level of noise and resistance down, because you are able to communicate with impact.”

Communication for impact required a common language. When Indian managers discussed language, they talked about more than the basics of speaking a language. In fact, they hardly discussed the need to speak different languages because, as Veena stated, on average Indians speak four to six languages indigenous to India. Indian participants acknowledged that speaking the local language gives the advantage of earning acceptance locally. So it was important, when going abroad, to know some basics of the language, according to Sujit. However, Indian participants go beyond language basics. Veena discussed the importance of the choice of words, speed of talking, body language and the difference in tone, when speaking a common language. People needed to connect and build relationships through this common language. When the researcher started the phone conversation with Veena in the middle of a Midwestern winter, he offered to send her some snow. This turned out to be a good way to connect our worlds. She used this icebreaker comment later as an example of how people can connect in their communication across long distances.



As pointed out it is often challenging to communicate across the globe. Though technology provided various ways to communicate across long distances even in a mobile way, the Indian participants strongly expressed a need for face-to-face communication. As Suman observed, face-to-face communication seems to be especially desirable at the start of a team building process, or at the start of a business relationship in general. Even when creating a virtual team, Biren recommended that the team initially meet face-to-face.

Geographic differences also brought about the complications of time zone differences between different locations. The time zone differences required many of the Indian participants to have flexible work hours. This need for flexibility in work hours could be noted in the times at which some of the interviews took place: around midnight in India or around one a.m. Central Standard Time in the United States. Participants and researcher connected at all hours of the day. Sometimes interviews had to be rescheduled at the last moment, when participants were traveling unexpectedly. At times emails arrived through second parties with a request to have an interview tomorrow, because the participant had just scheduled several weeks of business travel. Veena, Gita, Biren, and Suman specifically mentioned this time adjustment during the interviews. They may take calls from abroad early in the morning, late at night or on weekends. At times this creates a work-life conflict. They adjust their work time in general, so it partially overlaps with office hours in other parts in the world. Suman referred to the IT companies in India, saying that many had gone to a shift system to adjust to the time zones.

The time zone differences also led some managers to establish a formal communication schedule, because you cannot at every point in time just pick up the phone and communicate with everyone. Even with such a schedule, Suman mentioned, he was never up to date on the

status of projects at any point in time. Time zone differences also impact the choice of mode of communication. If the matter was not urgent, you could email your counterpart. Otherwise, you needed to stay up late and make the phone call, according to Biren.

When people speak a foreign language, communicate orally by phone or in writing by email across a number of time zones, how do they make sure they understand each other? Understanding required direct communication. You could not avoid a direct answer, according to Veena. According to Gita, this was a challenge to Indians, because they often do not like to say “no.” Other tools mentioned by the Indian participants that could assist in understanding the communication were: asking people questions, and paraphrasing what you understood was said.

### *Managing Expectations: Educating People about Different Environments and the Meaning of Expectations*

Besides making sure that both parties understood each other it was also important that expectations are checked. Both the competencies of communicating and building relationships are needed to manage expectations. Participants managed at the global level with certain expectations on how things are done, what is done and what results are to be achieved in terms of goals and objectives. The complications with expectations in the global setting were twofold. First, expectations in general had different meanings to people. Suman pointed out that Indian managers set higher expectations, but they may not necessarily be achieved. At the global level, according to Suman, managers set more realistic expectations that are expected to be achieved. Second, these expectations were based on the business environment of each local situation, but also on the cultural background of people involved in the business. Amit stated that “there has to

be clear expectations of what is needed out of that particular unit. This is something that . . . everyone needs to know.” At the local level the expectations did not present a problem.

According to Suman locally “the expectations have been set.” However, at the international level they were harder to understand due to differences in culture and the way business is done.

At times expectations of global standards may also need to be adjusted at the local level. In India regulations vary from region to region. Even if the regulations are not different local officials may interpret them differently. Dealing with the regulations and regulators’ interpretational differences takes time and people skills. So Kamal pointed out that when product gets transported through different regions it requires different paperwork to comply with regulations. A person foreign to this environment may not expect any paperwork or change in regulations within a country. Kamal also pointed out that local differences may mean that the local infrastructure is such that delivery of goods may take longer than based on the expectations of a person from a different country. Raj referred to local differences in purchase power parity that he says leads to different expectations about product price in different locations. The changes in regulatory, geographic, and economic environment require that the global manager educate his or her external and internal clients. All together expectations may have to be adjusted based on the local environment.

Cultural differences also led to conflicting expectations among those active in global business. Differences in cultures and especially religions lead to different holidays. These holidays may be in conflict with deadlines set in other parts of the world. Raj mentioned “If you have a deadline that you have to report which is in the middle of the holidays, then all these parties are on holiday and you still have to achieve the deadline. You have to get into a

discussion, negotiate, find a way out by which the parties or the countries who are going on holiday actually finish their work before.” Cultural differences also led to differences in expectations in power distance between the local and global levels. At the local level you are in closer proximity to management, stated Dilip. This makes management more accessible locally. Biren talked about how it is universal in the IT world to address each other by first name. Gita, however, stated that in India you do not necessarily call your superior by his or her first name. She remembered a situation in which she was told to her surprise by a manager that she may address him with “Mr.”

Interestingly, Gita pointed at a generational difference in India in power distance, when she said “what’s interesting also is that India is right now a very young country. For example, in my own company we have a very young management, we have a young CEO, we’re a fairly young team. You know the age factor . . . So in that sense, it’s interesting, but you still find you know the remnants of our culture intact how we would interact with authority.”

#### Japan: The Search for Balance in the Conflicts in Opening Up to Globalization

The ten participants in Japan averaged more than sixteen years of experience in global business at the time of this research. The participants’ individual years of global experience ranged from two to forty years. The ten participants are currently employed with service, logistics and manufacturing companies. None of the ten participants were female. Kazuki has twenty years of experience in global business. He has worked in various countries across the globe and is currently employed as international sales director with a food processing company. Taiki is the group leader of environmental testing at a global technology manufacturing company

headquartered in Japan. He has five years of experience working with team members and other coworkers across the globe. Kento is the human resource director of a global manufacturer at the headquarters in Japan. He has more than twenty years of experience working in foreign countries and working with employees across the globe. Recently, he has been involved in the change management process of a global merger between two companies with different national backgrounds. Shohei has eight years of experience as a human resource director with a global logistics firm. In his position he works with his counterparts at the company headquarters in the United States as well as in the Asian region and in other parts of the world. Takafumi just completed a two year term as a chief scientific officer at a pharmaceutical company. The company is part of a global network of related companies with headquarters in Japan. Hideki is a vice president with a global financial services institution with headquarters in Japan. In his position he serves clients across the globe. He has more than twenty years of global experience in various industries. Masato is the president of a logistics consulting firm in Chicago, Illinois. This native of Japan has over forty years of experience in the international freight business and is known for creating new gateways between the United States and Japan. Ichiro is a business development manager for a global logistics firm with seven years of global experience. His territory spans numerous countries in Asia, where he serves global clients. Hiroyuki is a vice president with a global airline with ten years of experience. He is currently stationed in Chicago, Illinois where he is responsible for the daily transportation of customers and goods across the globe from the Chicago hub. Hisanori has thirty years of experience as an executive in the airline industry and with manufacturing companies. He is currently the president of an international business consulting firm that assists American clients with business development in

Asian countries. All ten participants are Japanese and were raised in Japan, though some of these participants have traveled the globe and worked or currently work in other countries.

#### Country Background: Some Reluctance to Going Global

The discussion with participants regarding the country of Japan focused on historic government policy, geography and language barriers. Japan has traditionally been closed for business with other countries. Both Masato and Hiroyuki referred to government policies that were obstacles to foreign trade. Masato reminded the researcher that for centuries Japan was closed to foreign trade. Interestingly, he mentioned, that the only countries that were allowed to trade with Japan were the Netherlands and China. He attributed this to the diplomatic skills of the Dutch. Kento noted that though Japan's government barriers to foreign trade impacted its culture during the Edo Era (1603-1868), during the Meiji Era (1868-1912) the Japanese people were more interested in learning from foreign countries. Kento saw awareness of economic necessity as the strongest impetus for Japan to open up to global business today. Such a reaction to the awareness of economic necessity today would be similar to the way Japan reacted to its awareness of the gap between Japan and Western European countries in the Meiji Era. Kento noted that the problem today is that the current economic recession in Japan is spread out over such a long period without an immediate crisis that people do not realize that they are in a crisis. Thus, they may not feel the threat that would force them to embrace global business in a way their ancestors did in the Meiji Era. In the discussion of openness to foreign trade Ichiro focused on geography in noting that Japan is an island nation. It is geographically surrounded by ocean and that may be a reason for the country being "closed" to trade and immigration over the centuries.

When traveling the globe, the Japanese managers at times also fell prey to forms of closed mindedness of business counterparts in Western countries. When Japanese managers traveled abroad they reported instances of discrimination against them. Both Masato and Ichiro reported that racial discrimination had been a hurdle to their global business careers at some point in their lives. Language barriers may have contributed to misunderstandings and the perception of racial discrimination by the Japanese participants, according to Kento. Discrimination may be perceived to work in either direction in companies with a glass ceiling based on the company's original country background.

The Japanese participants mentioned English as the language of global business. A number of them admitted that this language is hard to learn for the Japanese and that many Japanese business men are not fluent enough in the English language. Taiki said: "Because Japan is almost homogenous nation, it is very rare to meet, it is very rare that people communicate. It is very rare that Japanese people communicate with people from other nations." Some of the participants are shy about speaking English during the interview or they view it as an opportunity to practice communicating in English. Ichiro mentioned during the interview: "Please, correct me if I'm using a wrong word in English. This is an opportunity for me for speaking English." Another participant warned that he would need time to think during the interview. It appears that one participant used translation software during the interview.

However, despite historical government policies against international trade, geographical barriers and the hurdle of speaking English, globalization had its impact on business in Japan as well. The participants were employees of companies with headquarters in both the U.S. as well as in Japan. They served clients in Japan as well as other countries in the world. Some of them

have been involved in international mergers with their companies as well. Hiroyuki described the change process as follows: “There are some global companies of course in Japan. And those companies have dispatched a lot of people who are starting a business, getting an MBA, at a university, and some are dispatching staff to foreign countries. So Japan became a global country, I think.” Hideki discussed a change in the Japanese mindset in decision making in global business: “. . . they are starting to see it is not functioning. You can’t make all the decisions in Tokyo. You have to think locally. You have to globally function as an entity.” Ichiro saw globalization in Japan as an economic necessity. He was happy to see more Japanese students study abroad and open their mind to global business, so Japan can be “competitive in a global market, because our domestic market is, you know, we can’t expect huge growth like China or India.”

Though change was happening in Japan, participants reported that many Japanese employees are still reluctant to the change. “I think they know they have to learn English, because they are working in a global organization. But if they are asked do you want to study English, they will not say clearly yes. They have mixed feelings,” said Taiki. He continued to explain this as a generational issue. “The new graduates are highly motivated to learn English. So there is a generation gap. Probably the first reason is they have a longer term, longer time to learn more. If you ask the Japanese people in fifties that less of the work life is maybe within ten years, so it is easier to give up learning English. But if I ask some colleagues in their twenties, so they have a longer work life. They are more relaxed. They can dream a lot.”

Personal Characteristics: Persistent, Accomplished Professionals with Self Efficacy



Prior to developing global competence you must establish yourself as a specialist in your field according to Kazuki and Hideki. With pride the Japanese participants talked about their professional accomplishments in their fields. Hiroyuki discussed how he cut costs and time by integrating distribution centers in Tokyo. Hisanori talked about his innovative work early in his career as an airline manager. Masato's career took off globally through his development of a new gateway between the United States and Japan.

To achieve such professional accomplishments and to continue your career as a global manager you must have a lot of energy and a strong will. You cannot be passive according to Hisanori. You can never give up and must see the silver lining in the clouds. Hisanori illustrated it with the following: "Once you're flying in a cloud, someday you could get out of a cloud, nice blue sky is waiting for you. Therefore, never give up for your life. You have to be always positive." A career in global business was certainly seen as challenging by the Japanese participants. Besides having self efficacy in the form of energy and persistence, Kento mentioned strong will and other characteristics that are based on energy as very important ingredients to a career in global business: "That is especially passion for diversity, curiosity, and self assurance." Self assertiveness was especially needed in meetings with global counterparts. In global business meetings you are expected to speak your mind and speak up. This type of self assertiveness in meetings is found to be very challenging by the Japanese participants.

Taiki cherished the opportunity to meet people face-to-face across the globe. This assisted him in the process of global communication by "being able to know what people were actually thinking." Hisanori is passionate about meeting people in different countries. Such

genuine global interest can counteract the anxiety of globalization and speaking a foreign language for those who grew up in a closed country.

### Experience in and Adaptation to Global Business: Fitting into the System or Changing to Adjust to a Common Global Management Style

The Japanese participants discussed having to adjust to a different working environment. They are looking to see how they can fit best in the new environment. This new working environment consists of adjustments to communication methods and language, cultural differences, geographical distances and time zones, and a whole new way of doing business, the common global business culture.

In terms of communication the hurdle of speaking English for the Japanese participants has been discussed. In addition here Japanese participants mentioned, that the global primary communication modes of phone calls and email formed barriers to them as well. Hideki reported that he detested emails and phone calls. They were cold media that did not provide the opportunity to read expressions and body language. Hideki stated it as follows: "I like more face-to-face interaction and, you know, if I'm negotiating with somebody or talking to somebody, I like to look them in the eye and kind of feel you know how their thinking, how they're, you know, dealing with it. With international work those are things that have become a challenge." Such cold media for communication as email especially create a barrier for the Japanese participants, because they struggle with assertiveness and direct communication in the global business environment. Ichiro told the following anecdote to describe the assertiveness and direct communication in global business for Japanese participants: "When I went to the U.S. or

U.K., I had opportunity to have a meeting and then there were so many discussions there. They speak of self expression. They expressed a lot of their opinions, exchanging their opinions and so I didn't even have a chance to speak, you know in a meeting, because one issue was the language barrier. However, even when I'd like to speak my opinion, someone said my opinion first. Then I lost a chance to speak out my opinions. Then after the meeting my boss called me and said, 'You didn't participate in the meeting.' The Japanese culture . . . we are more like . . . being polite means like [being] distant . . . like be quiet." Virtual meetings including video feed may give the opportunity to read body language. However, the added video feed did not appear to fix the problem of having to participate in meetings with direct and assertive communication. For the one-on-one interviews in this research, the Japanese participants were typically not willing to include video feed. Kazuki explained that he can think better by turning off his camera.

The Japanese participants did not discuss many cultural differences in particular. However, they did mention the influence of religion on culture as well as the fact that the language gap complicated dealing with cultural differences. Instead, the participants did talk about the geographical distances and the difference in time zones. Taiki was especially concerned with how you manage people across a large distance and a number of time zones. Hideki emphasized that global projects with geographically dispersed teams and clients caused a delay in response, which he referred to as a bit of a "jet lag" effect, as well as a need for product adjustment. Developing products across these regions and time zones also meant that you have to adjust to the local language and differentiate the product to the local flavor. You have to network within the geographic regions to gain a flavor for those markets.

### *Fitting into a System*

In general, the Japanese participants discussed the adjustment to a specific, different working environment as a challenge to find a way to fit into the system. They did not necessarily look at this adjustment process as a requiring them to change themselves. First of all, you must be genuine or otherwise “people will see you as an actor” or a “puppet,” according to Kazuki. He stressed that you have to show your value to the counterpart. He did not talk of changing yourself. To be genuine you must also understand your own identity and background. Besides understanding the foreign culture, you must also understand your own background, said Masato. This assists you in understanding how your counterpart sees you.

Finding a way to fit into the system required sensitivity and respect for people. Masato expressed this sentiment very strongly: “Respect for humanity and dignity is a foundation of global business. In global business parent company must not act superior, but show respect for the cultures in the countries of subsidiaries.” Ichiro discussed respect as well and reminded me about his struggles with discrimination that he had mentioned earlier in the conversation.

Another piece to fitting into the system was having an open mind. Knowing the background of other cultures gave you the familiar mind needed to get into contact with people from other cultures, according to Hisanori. You had to be neutral and non aggressive, according to Kazuki. Hisanori added another step to this process of fitting into a system. In his opinion you had to have a flexible mind that works like a sponge: it always soaks up more understanding of the other culture’s way of thinking or doing business. To gain this understanding in an environment

that is constantly changing, Shohei said “We cannot be stubborn, we must be very receptive to change.”

### *Adjusting from a Uni-Culture to the Common Global Culture*

It was not until the Japanese participants discussed what they perceived as parts of a common global culture that they talked about having to change individually in order to fit into a system. Masato stated: “There is a move towards a common culture.” A closer look at how they perceived this common global culture reveals why they must change themselves to fit into this common culture and succeed. According to Kento, Japanese managers may hesitate to fit into this common culture, because “they believe they need to change themselves to do so.” When Japanese global managers in global companies with headquarters in the U.S. discussed a common global business culture they talked about participatory management. To the Japanese participants the key characteristics of participatory management were grounded in individualism, which was counter to the Japanese culture. In participatory management you are empowered to have your individual opinion, speak your own mind at meetings, and be direct in your communication. Both the communication style and management style are based on a different logic, according to Shohei. Japanese logic, according to him, is that you do not state direct objection, because it is considered an attack on the person. However, Shohei stated that in the global setting it is logical to express your opinion straight forward and stating objection is not considered bad. In the Japanese setting, problems requiring objections to plans are not expected to arise, because the planning was done with extensive preconsideration and prediscussion. Shohei described the Japanese system in contrast to the common global culture as follows: “We

are accustomed to the environment in which we do not speak so much, because we have same understanding on how to do the work and we have the same mind set.” The understanding of how to do the work was referred to by Shohei as the Japanese uni-culture, which the Japanese are trained in after being hired by a Japanese company after graduation.

Furthermore, the Japanese participants perceived this management style to be affiliated with a meritocratic reward system. Kento described the traditional Japanese system as collectivist and seniority based. He described how Japanese managers who are hired at the same time get promoted at the same time based on seniority rather than merit. Kento described the traditional Japanese company as hierarchical. Instead, the global company is flatter and has responsibilities and various levels: product as well as geographically. This matrix organization, according to Kento, required Japanese managers to be dual citizens in their companies.

Dual citizenship requires that Japanese managers are not only loyal to their own country. They must have empathy for coworkers in other countries as well, according to Ichiro. Employment with global companies encouraged you to be a dual citizen or perhaps a global citizen. The lines between countries were disappearing. Therefore, the Japanese may need to be global citizens rather than dual citizens. Hideki pointed out that it is hard to make distinctions among countries anymore. You cannot look at a product anymore and determine where it was made, because the parts came from different parts of the world or the production is done in varying locations across the globe.

Developing Global Competence: Finding Purpose, Role and Global Harmony through Learning from Senior Managers and Experience

The Japanese participants were focused on how to fit into the system as an individual, while they had to fit into a common global culture that was very different than the Japanese culture. Their ideas on learning appeared more holistic and systematic as well. Hisanori put things in a very holistic perspective. He wanted to focus on more than business through questions about purpose. What is the reason for working? What is people's lifestyle? What is the purpose of the company? Two of the participants, Kazuki and Hisanori, discussed the purpose of doing business. They pointed out that it is the same across the globe. With the purpose of the system identified Kazuki listed three skill sets to learn: business skills, people skills, and balance of judgment. With balance of judgment he stated that you need to make sure both parties in business are in a win-win situation. It is important to maintain that balance or fairness, so that both parties achieve the purpose of making money. About the three skill sets that he listed, Kazuki stated "You know all those are really combined. You need to have all in harmony."

*Learning Content: Language, Country Background, American Management Style and Role and Purpose within the Company*

Specifically, what should the learning content be for a Japanese manager to develop global competence? The Japanese participants discussed the need to learn languages, country specific knowledge, American management style, and learning about their roles and the company policies and purpose. To understand people better you should know the language. Masato stated that you need to be at least trilingual, not bilingual in global business. You should know your own language, English as the global language of business and a third language, based on the countries you deal with most. "Communication is the foundation," he commented. Hideki agreed that

knowing languages definitely helps. However, he admitted that he has solved the problem of language with the use of simple technology such as Google Translate in contract negotiations before. Hideki had excellent language skills, but yet he wanted to be known as more than just a translator. He found global management to involve more than just language skills.

Besides through the knowledge of languages harmony could also be maintained with country specific knowledge. Takafumi strongly advocated the knowledge of country specific cultural knowledge. Hisanori also recommended knowledge of the country's history to better understand the counterparts.

Ichiro saw global management as an American style management. Therefore rather than focusing on cultural differences he recommended that you took training in American management and leadership styles and philosophy. With that recommendation it appeared that Ichiro preferred to focus his training on the company ways of doing business, which he determined to be American.

In the Japanese tradition new hires are trained in the way the company does business, referred to by Shohei as the company uni-culture. In global business Japanese managers still appeared to be looking for their purpose, their role in the company. In examples of training Shohei mentioned that he preferred to train people about company policy and their role by sending them to training in other countries and have them discuss the value of the company and their roles within the company with foreigners. When he was hired he followed this process himself and he found "So I could know the policy, I could know the system, I could know the ideas in the different function, so that opportunity gave me the time to think and figure out how and to know what I was requested [to do], what is my role." Hiroyuki worked for a global



company headquartered in Japan. His favorite training was learning from the company chairman himself and hear from him what philosophies and methods would make the company successful. He can almost recite the chairman's philosophy statements. Both Shohei and Hiroyuki are looking for ways that they can find their role and purpose within the company that allows them to work in harmony towards the company's purpose. How can a Japanese manager in his or her strife for global competence learn his role and purpose within the company?

*Learning Methodology: Learn from Experience and from Senior Managers*

In terms of learning methodology the Japanese participants discussed the need for a graduate level education in the form of a Master's of Business Administration. Masato stated "Global competence requires at least an MBA to understand global business..." Hideki agreed with him. Reading was also recommended on the topic of cultures. Kento recommended reading Hofstede's book to gain general cultural knowledge. Hideki recommended reading to stay abreast of the developments across the globe. He read local newspapers for local news across metropolitan areas across the globe. Another method used by the Japanese participants was the use of their network. Know people who are familiar with the local situation and ask them for assistance. Ichiro explained: "Of course, global network is one of the very important things for me. For example, if I have some difficulty in the United States I need someone's help to understand what is going on. You know, what we should do next and what, who we should reach out to. So if I live in a big organization, you know, sometimes I feel I need to know as many people as possible to do the business smoothly." Takafumi described a similar method indicating at times he may network with people using the internet.

The most important way of developing global competence was by experience. The Japanese participants found exposure to global business important to the development of global competence. Hiroyuki stated “Seeing is believing.” Kento described the balance between formal learning and learning from experiences as a learning system in which experience supports the formal learning and vice versa: “Cross cultural training like Hofstede or Japanese culture consulting is somewhat effective, but those types of training are not as powerful as real experience. So I always feel that people attended such cross cultural training and there are large gaps between people who have experienced overseas assignments and people that never worked outside Japan. So if you have more real experiences the more you can understand what that type of cross cultural training is saying. So I always need to make a balance between such cross training and real experiences and obviously real experiences are more powerful.”

The participants pointed out that the experiences may come from personal travel or from work assignments. Kento emphasized: “Get out of your home country, have curiosity.” Hideki loved to travel for leisure. Takafumi pointed out the need for challenging assignments at work and Kento discussed the complications of a global merger. Face the challenges and dare to make decisions was Takafumi’s advice. Global managers have to make tough decisions. The only way you can learn to make to those is by doing it. This can be a lonesome process. The only person you have for advice is your supervisor, according to Takafumi.

Hiroyuki also suggested that you can learn from the experience of your seniors. He saw the case study as an opportunity for senior managers to share learning experiences with less experienced managers. In the Japanese view learning is a continuous process where you manage

a balance between formal learning and experience seeking the knowledge of experienced superiors and others in your network. Every moment of my life is learning, according to Kazuki.

### Global Competence: Balancing the Challenge of Participatory Management with Playing Your Role

Hisanori, Masato and Taiki stressed the importance of leadership skills for global managers.

Hisanori said global managers needed to lead and inspire people through people skills.

According to Masato global managers needed more scope and vision than their local counterparts. Next, global competence findings were presented in the framework of three major competencies: Building relationships, communicating for results, and managing expectations.

#### *Building Relationships: Maintaining a Profitable Balance and Harmony*

To be able to work with people around the globe on a daily basis the Japanese participants discussed the need for people skills besides being skilled in your functional area. In the Japanese view at the global level you need to work with people without having authority over them. How does a manager accomplish that? With the words of Kazuki the manager needed good balance of judgment. As manager you need to sell your skills. People will do business with you or hire your services, if they see that it is profitable for them. So you need to have good balance of judgment or fairness in order to find the middle point, where both parties profit from the transaction. So good balance of judgment, along with people skills and functional skills are the foundation of building relationships. “You need to have all in harmony,” said Kazuki.

The relationships needed to take on the form of partnerships. Partnerships can be formed on an individual basis informally, such as the ones Ichiro established with people who could guide them through foreign cultures and environments and adapt product development to local preferences. You can partner with people with different opinions as long as you have common goals, according to Shohei, but you must value partnerships. In a more formal sense of developing business partnerships, Hiroyuki found this to be a challenge in foreign operations, where local contractors were not part of the same corporate ownership network as the contractors typically are in Japan or where the company has no market power to get the balanced partnership it needs. He mentioned not having the same authority over them as at home in Japan. Said Hiroyuki: “So we are just foreign carrier. So, it is hard to deal with our customers other than Japanese. Also especially in the airport, it is not easy to keep teamwork between us and our service companies.”

In terms of people management within the company, it takes a lot of energy to gain the trust of the employees, when you are managing across cultures. About this point Takafumi said: “What was difficult or the hardest thing is, I spent a lot of time and effort and energy on how to get the believe and credit from the employees here of the current companies, because they looked at me as kind of a cunning guy from the parent company. From then maybe they have thought that I wish to control and to manage based on the parent company basis, but I don’t think I wish to do that.” The Japanese manager aimed to maintain the local harmony, when he was assigned to manage people in a foreign subsidiary after the subsidiary was acquired. Empathy for people outside of Japan is also a good tool for building relationships across cultures.

*Communicating for Results: The Challenges of Maintaining Harmony and Relationships in Global Communications*

Communication was a very important skill in global business, according to the Japanese participants. Good communication required that you respect people. Good communication is necessary to fill the gap between people from different cultures, according to Kento. Good communication was also necessary to negotiate for better results or to influence people in the direction you desire. In global business communication may require that you speak the common global business language, English. You need to have a strategy of how to talk and respond to each person, according to Takafumi. Thus communicating for impact was important to build relationships and to maintain harmony.

The communication with different parts of the world happens at different times in the day. Communication with Western Europe happens around five p.m. in Japan and communication with the U.S. around ten p.m. typically according to Kento. The interviews typically took place around five p.m. Central Standard Time in the U.S., which converted to 8 a.m. the next morning in Japan. However, Hideki warned, “the world is running 24-7 and you know you could have a crisis, you could have a problem occurring any time, any day, any moment. It becomes a drain on the management because you kind of have to be alert 24-7.” Communication across twenty-four time zones certainly is challenging to the participants.

The Japanese participants reported four challenges they had with communication across the globe. First, they were often not able to communicate face-to-face in a global setting. That meant that they will not be able to read gestures and body language in general. That’s why Taiki was always excited to meet his counterparts face-to-face. Second, the Japanese participants

reported that the directness and assertiveness with which global participants often speak their minds in global communications was a challenge to them. The Japanese participants were instead used to a uni-culture, where people do not speak up, at least not immediately. Shohei directly mentioned the uni-culture, whereas Hisanori mentioned the virtue of waiting before speaking up. It may also be the explanation for why Shohei mentioned the need to listen carefully, withhold judgment and wait for the counterpart to finish talking to be sure one got a good understanding of what the other was saying. Third, Takafumi warned that you needed to be aware in the global setting of the messages that your actions may send to participants. Do you spend equal time communicating? How many presents did you bring for your counterparts during a visit? These are issues that may get interpreted differently than the message was intended, warned Takafumi. Fourth, socializing after work is what some Japanese participants missed in the global environment as part of the communication process. It was common in Japan to socialize after work. For example, you may go out to drink with your boss. Even when Americans have a work related party at times, it does not serve the same purpose as the Japanese way of socializing after work. This socialization was an important part of the communication process, according to Takafumi, because it builds rapport that is needed at times, when the boss needs to communicate tough messages. At the same time, however, Taiki labeled this type of socializing with the boss after work as a Chinese way of working. He stated that this was the way things used to be done in Japan as well. With his comments Taiki pointed at a potential instance of change in Japan.

Communicating for results was important to the Japanese participants in order to build relationships in harmony. It was important that the Japanese participants therefore addressed the

four challenges listed above to have an impact in a global environment, where authority was not as clear as in the local Japanese environment.

*Managing Expectations: Balancing Expectations between Collectivists and Individualists with Different Levels of Power Distance through a Common Purpose*

Different expectations exist in global business. These differences in expectations appear based on the specific culture's level of collectivism/individualism or the culture's level of power distance. Managing these different expectations can be done with the use of a common purpose. According to the Japanese participants it was important that all parts, employees, headquarters and subsidiaries were connected through a common purpose. The common purpose assisted all involved in knowing their roles within the global company. Parties had different goals. Kazuki saw making money as the common ground and in that context said that it is important to find the middle point as a common goal. That way both parties profit from the transaction or employment. Creating such a win-win situation was important to him in maintaining balance. Hisanori portrayed a more holistic view. He examined the purpose of work, the company and the owners. He agreed with one, that in the end business comes down to money and profit. Hisanori emphasized the holistic view as follows: "You need to understand society . . . You need a much broader understanding." Hiroyuki stated that in global business it is important to set high goals and develop a feasible action plan to achieve the goals.

With the common purpose in mind Ichiro and Takafumi focused on the understanding of your role within the company. They saw themselves as managers with the task of educating their staff about the goal, purpose and strategy of the global company. The managers came from

headquarters with their knowledge of the business plan. It was then their purpose to transfer this knowledge across the company globally, according to Takafumi. They could transfer this knowledge of goals and strategy, but in the end the real challenge in managing Japanese staff in global situations was to communicate the way of thinking. Ichiro expressed this as follows: “I have to explain, you know, company’s goal, company’s strategy but they understand the goals. However, why [do] they come back to me [asking] “why [do] they feel so, they [do] think so?” You know very different big barriers between Japanese mentality and American mentality and their way of thinking or process management is different. So those types of things I need more time managing Japanese domestic people versus international staff.”

Expectations are based on cultural factors. For the Japanese participants the cultural factors presented conflicts between collectivist and individualist dimensions of culture as well as in levels of power distance. Japan traditionally had a collectivist culture and is higher in power distance. The global way appeared more Western and individualist to the Japanese participants.

The conflicts of collectivist versus individualist as well as the conflict in low versus high power distance converged in the global business environment into a large hurdle of different cultural expectations for the Japanese participants. In the Japanese uni-culture Japanese managers do not wish to stand out by speaking their mind too quickly. The Japanese were also used to a more authoritative or power distant way of management that is based on seniority versus meritocracy. In such an environment Japanese managers are more patient to speak their mind, more aware of the opinion of their senior superior and less pressed to be direct and assertive with their opinions.



The cultural expectations can be very opposite across the globe. “Sometimes everything is upside down, one hundred and eighty degrees different,” said Hisanori. He explained that due to the demographics and geography of Japan, having so many people on such a small piece of land, the Japanese are forced to think in a more collectivist way. He said: “Therefore, we have to always think of other people first . . . Your people are always advanced and pushy . . . We have to be well coordinated with our neighbor. This is very important.” He continued with a comparison to the Japanese martial arts. He described sports such as Karate as being very passive, not pushy. You are always waiting, so you can protect yourself.

Kento described this passive style for Japanese in meetings: “For Japanese people to contribute in the discussion is a very big challenge because of our culture. The meeting in Japan is not really discussion. Discussion is not the thing you can see in the Japanese meeting. And so people do not express their opinion in the meeting in that phone conference or in face-to-face meetings with other people from other countries. If you do not say something, you are not a part of the meeting. That is a big challenge.” This challenge only increases, when you manage people from a variety of national backgrounds.

Hiroyuki attested that it is a major challenge to balance the cultural expectations in the global business setting. In a holistic way the Japanese participants seemed to seek this balance through a common purpose and the understanding of the common goals and strategies.

#### The Netherlands: The Historic Global Trait of Expanding Comfort Zones across Cultural Distances

The ten participants in the Netherlands were all male. Their years of global experience ranged from two to the more than thirty years. They averaged over eleven years of global

experience each. The participants were employed in manufacturing and services. Geert recently left the communications industry after a three year stint as a business director in China. In his work he was in contact with headquarters in Europe as well as other countries in China's region. Pieter is a managing director for a global manufacturing company. His responsibilities span across the United Kingdom and Ireland. He is involved at the global level as well within the company. Kees is a business director with a marketing solution provider to major media agencies. His responsibilities span across Russia and the Ukraine. He frequently works with business directors within his company as well as global clients in various locations across the globe. Kees has fourteen years of global experience. Jan is a managing director of the Swiss operations of a global pharmaceutical company. He has worked in various countries, currently supervises people with very diverse backgrounds and works with business units around the globe. Jan has twenty years of global business experience. Hans is a business development manager for a technology solution provider with ten years of global business experience. As development manager he is responsible for the European region. Ruud is the human resource manager for Western Europe for a global logistics firm. He has three years of global business experience. Thijs is the director of distribution in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East for a global logistics firm. He has thirteen years of global experience. Robert is a human resource programme manager for a global professional services firm. He has three years of global experience. In his position he spends a lot of time coordinating human resource services among member firms in various countries. Thomas is the international mobility manager with a global professional services firm. His responsibilities include supporting the movement of professionals across the globe between member firms for collaboration on global teams and other

international assignments. He has three years of global experience. Henk is an executive vice-president at the headquarters of a global oil company. He has more than thirty years of global experience.

#### Country Background: Global Trade Has Been a Fact for Centuries

The Dutch have traveled the globe literally for centuries. It did not come as a surprise to see that the participants see globalization and the need for global trade as a long established fact. They were not looking for the purpose of global trade. They treated globalization as a matter of fact and the purpose of global trade as self explanatory. Thijs talked about the importance of global trade in Dutch history: “We talked about the Netherlands, a small country in a big world. The only way to survive for Dutch people was to do business. The last five, six, seven hundred years we did business with other cultures. So we were used to it. We are a trading nation.” Henk discussed the Dutch trade as the advantage of a global reputation: “. . . being Dutch is quite an advantage in today’s world, because we have the reputation of being global in our activity, entrepreneurship.” He added “I don’t think we have a reputation for being overly subtle or sensitive.” Thomas also discussed the diversity of the country’s demographics currently. He found this diversity to be advantageous in the current global environment.

The history of the Netherlands as a trading nation over the centuries was symbolized during this study by the location and employment of the Dutch participants. The Dutch managers participated in the interviews from the Netherlands, England, Germany, Switzerland and China. They were employed by companies headquartered in the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United States. Participants in each of the other two

countries were employed only by American companies besides companies headquartered in their home countries.

The Dutch participants acknowledged English as the language of global business. When discussing the language barrier, they did not see it as an issue for Dutch managers. Instead, Robert saw it as a problem for managers from Southern European countries or even for managers from Germany. He stated that sometimes you have to talk German to them instead, because “in English you are not getting any progress, because of the language barrier.” Having to speak other languages besides Dutch and English seemed common to these managers from the small country of the Netherlands whose native tongue is spoken in hardly any other country across the globe. In the Netherlands high school students often take three foreign languages. Typically, these languages are English, French and German. At times it may include Spanish.

**Personal Characteristics: Genuine Global Interest and Being Invested in Your Global Career.**

The Dutch participants showed a genuine global interest as well as pride in professional achievements in their global careers. Some Dutch participants excitedly shared some stories that focus on getting to know people from across the globe during meetings and learning about ways of doing business abroad. Both Kees and Thomas were excited to share how they gathered at meetings with people from countries all over the world. Then you keep running into these people you met during later company travels. Thomas reflected that “it is such a small world, the global environment actually.” Kees said it was such a pleasure to talk to people from other countries at these meetings. He noted that you cannot learn this in school, but that it takes curiosity and strong social skills.

Stronger than just “curiosity,” Henk stated you needed more than just an interest in a “nice variation.” Instead, you needed to be invested in your global career. The investment required a lot of energy and a “can do” mentality, according to Jan. He advised that you have good coping strategies and that you surround yourself with a good support system in case you bump into difficulties. With these personal characteristics of curiosity, the commitment of self investment, a “can do” attitude and a strong support system, the Dutch participants reported several professional accomplishments. They reported challenges of mergers and business realignment processes that were sometimes even unknown or unexpected at the start of the assignment.

#### Experience in and Adaptation to Global Business: Expanding Comfort Zones

The Dutch participants experienced global business in terms of a different business environment, cultural differences and communication issues. They presented differences in the business environments around the globe in a very factual manner with little emotion attached. They saw these differences often in a black and white manner. They hardly made any mention of a global common culture other than one comment from Thijs. He recommended an open, democratic leadership style as being most likely to succeed in the global environment.

Regarding the different business environments the Dutch participants described general differences in legal and tax regulations as well as in currency. Pieter mentioned “how the devil is always in the detail” of the regulations. As an example he mentioned how easy it is to fire someone in Belgium or in England, though in the Netherlands, he considered it impossible. One participant described the different way of doing business in other countries. Thijs was sent

around in circles in his search for a custom's license in an Eastern European town in a former communist country. He did not get a response from the local mayor. The local mayor kept only mentioning the need for a new piano in his church. The piano was presented as the ticket to obtaining the custom's license. Thijs reflected on these types of experiences as follows: "Things are different in different cultures and in a different environment. Sometimes it goes faster, but most of the time it goes slower. So you need to be patient . . . That was for me the hardest thing to learn: to be patient and not to lose your temper, to remain friendly, even if you get negative answers and you are trapped in bureaucratic procedures, and keep friendly."

The Dutch participants described cultural differences specific to business in individual countries in their stories. For example, Hans described how you cannot do business during dinner with French or Spanish counterparts, and how you can be very direct in your communication in the Netherlands, but not in Denmark. Henk described how you cannot talk about family in Arabic cultures, unless you have known each other for a very long time.

The Dutch managers discussed how the size of the cultural gap between countries was often not directly related to the geographical distance. As an example of the disconnection between geographical distance and cultural distance Pieter, Robert and Thomas mentioned the cultural distance of the Netherlands with Germany, Belgium and France. Each of these geographical distances can be traveled by car in a manner of a few hours, but yet there are large cultural differences between these geographical differences according to these three Dutch participants. In a more indirect manner Henk found that people from other continents "are always amazed there are very big differences which we have on the European continent."

Geert talked about the distance between locations and the impact on global communications. The distance made informal communications impossible. There were no meetings at the water cooler, where information informally was shared. This issue of communicating at a distance in combination with the jet lag effect could put especially the management of a foreign subsidiary on an island. To Kees distance in locations meant communications across the clock with countries in different parts of the world. He spends a lot of time on the phone during a typical week.

Communication across the globe through a common language had its advantages and disadvantages for the Dutch participants. They mentioned the importance of speaking foreign languages in this context, but most importantly they discussed the impact of speaking a common, foreign language on managing people. Even if you speak a common language, “you still miss a lot of things,” according to Kees. “You don’t really understand what people are thinking, feeling, talking about.” So it helped him to learn some basics of the local language. Geert commented on the disconnection between language and emotions that takes place when people speak a foreign language. However, in the context of a common language Pieter mentioned that the advantage of learning words from the same dictionary in a common language. “That helps a lot, because we are all using more like the same set of words.” The complication in this scenario, according to Pieter, is when the communication involves native English speakers who have a broader vocabulary.

How does a Dutch manager need to adjust to these differences in business environment, culture, and communication? For Dutch managers who tended to describe the global differences in a factual, black and white manner, the key was to withhold judgment. The process was

described in a clear, direct manner as follows. Jan described the first step: “Be humble and modest and try to understand, try to listen and not have a typical big Dutch mouth.” Listen and ask questions. Accept that things are different in different countries. Thijs said: “You need to accept that in a different culture, there are different values.” Jan said: “When you’re for the first time sent out to a different country, then you use your own background, values and cultures as a measuring stick and the longer you are abroad, the more you learn not to do that, but to accept the new environment, new culture, the new people as they are. In fact, appreciate the differences and withhold your judgment.” Thijs stated: “Acceptance can be positive. Appreciate the experience, that you are there and that you have the opportunity to see it and to make up your mind . . . whether things are right or wrong. Well, the one thing I learned is, that nothing is truly right or nothing is truly wrong. It is more grey.” Have an open mindset is the advice of Thomas. “You cannot be a black and white person. You have to see all the colors to understand what’s going on elsewhere.” In a global environment with a variety of cultures, you must adapt. Jan compared the adaptation in the global scenario to a chameleon. However, the question is whether “adapt” is really the right choice of words in this situation.

When the Dutch participants discussed how far they should go in adapting to different environments and cultures, they talked about keeping your own identity rather than changing yourself like a chameleon. You kept your own identity by first being conscious of your own background. As Jan described it: “I’m still reacting in a Dutch way to situations, but I’m applying that in a conscious way and I’m trying to apply that in a way that is not hindering the collaboration and communication.” The response to the question how far to go in adapting might also depend on the time that you are to spend in a foreign location. For a traveling, global



manager this is often not long. In that situation, Thijs stated: “It stops with acceptance,” indicating that he would not change himself. Henk talked about the importance of keeping your own identity at length. He noted that you are expected by your counterparts to be different, to fit a certain stereotype of a Dutch man or an American. Often they may not like it, when you are changing too much, because it does not appear genuine. They may also not be comfortable with your ability to speak their language, because they do not know to what extent you understand the counterpart’s internal communications. When you make mistakes on a trip abroad they know where you are from and “they will forgive you for that,” noted Henk. The counterparts may actually be quite familiar with your background, even when you travel to non Western countries. Due to the change in global dynamics, the counterparts have traveled as well and may have even been educated in Western countries, according to Henk. The Dutch participants referred to this process of acceptance, withholding judgment and remaining true to yourself as expanding your comfort zone.

### Developing Global Competence: The Facts on How to Expand Comfort Zones Through Experiential Learning

According to the Dutch participants developing global competence required an investment of time. Global competence was to be developed for managers over time. Henk said: “It takes a long time before you start to see and to understand.” The prerequisite characteristics for a successful investment in the development of global competence are curiosity and an open mind. Kees talked about the need for an open mind: “You need to be very curious and open minded, because you hear weird things . . . they think differently about topics and issues and if you are

very narrow minded and think, OK, this is how it should be, then it's difficult to actually work and talk to these people." Thijs added "There is not one holy way of doing business." You have to be open to other ways.

The open mind required that you let go of your preconceived notions and your own Dutch ways. According to Ruud the hardest thing to learn was to stop looking at things from the Dutch perspective. You have to let go of being Dutch and appreciate other cultures. The Dutch discussed being open minded in terms of comfort zones. Geert described comfort zones as follows: "The ability to work in cultural and emotional zones of comfort . . . you must be aware of where everybody feels comfort. So it's unique training there for the specific country . . . and you need to find out where are these zones of comfort."

Within those comfort zones was the complication of the extra global dimension, because according to Thijs: "Domestically, you know exactly how things work. You are in your own comfort zone." Pieter said that globally you need "to give yourself some time to really get comfortable with what are the "do's" and "don'ts" here in this particular environment." He expanded the term comfort zone later to not only include cultural and emotional zones, but also small differences between countries in the business environment, such as legal environment, taxation and currency differences. What needs to be learned to expand your comfort zones? How can you expand your comfort zones?

*Learning Content: Factual and Country Specific Knowledge.*

When it came down to learning content for global competence the Dutch focused on black and white, factual, specific differences between countries. They did not discuss a common global

culture. Instead, Pieter stated matter-of-factly: “In fact, there is no global business, there is no global world. I mean there are all different countries. So that means you have to be as specific as possible and try to understand in each and every country what are the rules and regulations and who are the people working in this environment.” In all his comments Hans showed a solid knowledge of many cultural nuances of doing business in a large variety of countries. He did not discuss common cultural issues. Even when Ruud discussed soft skills, he talked about them in the context of talking to people from specific countries rather than talking about soft skills as general skills to build relationships across cultures.

What specifics do you need to know about each country? You need to know the background and history of countries. This helps you understand what drives people. Robert explained: “If you talk about award and recognition from the interest of HR professionals, there are slight differences in the way people achieve. And sometimes it’s just because people look at it from the way they have grown up in their own firm and professional life. In the Netherlands stability is a big theme . . . but if I call and say stability from an environmental perspective, it doesn’t always ring a bell with people from other countries. It’s being influenced by the news, the work environment I work in, and so on.”

Besides country specific knowledge of culture, history and the business environment, knowledge of the local language was also raised by the Dutch participants. Learning the language is the first way to start learning a culture, according to Jan. Geert was outspoken about investing time in local languages. He spent a lot of time in China and still studies Chinese, though he worked with other countries in the region there as well. Besides his native Dutch Geert also reported speaking English, French, and German. Jan agreed that “You should have

well developed language skills . . . any country I've gone, I've spoken the language.” His knowledge of foreign languages includes Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and French. Jan did admit that it is impossible to learn every language fluently. He did not speak all languages extremely well, but he can have a casual conversation in these languages. Thijs lowered the bar of foreign language skills a little further. According to Thijs you need to “Learn some basic words of the language. Very simple things, like “thank you,” “good morning,” “good evening,” and how to order food in a restaurant.” This required a knowledge of about two to three hundred words, according to Thijs. As mentioned earlier, Henk said that sometimes your counterparts do not want you to speak their language at all, because they don't know what you understand of their private conversations.

For a global manager learning about so many cultures and countries could appear overwhelming. The Dutch proposed a systematic way of sorting through the country differences based on the research of their fellow Dutch man Geert Hofstede. Pieter preferred training based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions. He reported that when he starts working with a new country, he looks up the countries rankings in each of Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

#### *Learning Methodology: Trial and Error, Observation and Reflection*

How do the Dutch managers develop their global competence? Ruud, Robert and Thijs talked about reading books about global management, cultures and country backgrounds. The Dutch participants also talked about learning from others. In their case it did not necessarily mean learning from your superiors through mentoring or coaching. The Dutch looked at social networking in a less hierarchical way. Thijs provided this advice: “Travel with other people.

Then if something happens that you don't understand, then you can learn from others how to do it." For similar reasons Henk recommended that you never go alone. "There's more pairs of eyes seeing the same situation. So you test it on each other," was Henk's explanation.

Henk also talked about how he prepared for his travel abroad. He found that often people who have lived in that particular country are excited to talk about it and transfer their knowledge. He found those people to be a great source outside of the traditional institutions of cultural knowledge and training.

The most common method of learning global competence mentioned by the Dutch participants is learning based on experience. Henk said that over time you will learn from your experiences that in Asia "the assistant does not talk back. There is no in-your-face feedback. People always say nice things." And that in Western Africa you work in a country and think everybody here is a national of the country. Then you find out, of course, that people are very different in the tribal sense. They can see those differences, but you can't. You can learn most by doing. Even problem based learning or participating in workshops are methods of learning that are far removed from the actual experience, according to Henk.

Participants also described a trial and error learning process through which you learn from your mistakes. Kees recalled the tough and lonely time of his early global experiences: "I was completely unprepared and basically they said, "You go out and do it." And nobody really helped me. And in the beginning that was very tough, because, to be honest, I didn't know what I was doing. But I was lucky. I was allowed to make a lot of mistakes. And I learned very, very quickly from those mistakes." Henk agreed that making mistakes is OK. He even stated that

“the host environments are also quite tolerant in that sense.” But first of all, Kees commented, you should understand that what works in the Netherlands will not work everywhere else.

Kees’s response also revealed a challenge. Robert talked about challenging yourself with learning assignments. He talked about taking on an international project, when the opportunity came up. He was not just involved as a participant in the project. Instead, he carried the responsibility for the project. That responsibility put pressure on him to find a way to make the project succeed. Robert deemed that a great learning experience.

A good addition to the process of learning from experience was coaching. Jan recommended coaching with a feedback process. Adding formal learning through, for example, workshops can also add to that experiential learning process. The experiential learning process would not be complete without some form of reflection by the learner. To learn from your mistakes you must look in the mirror and reflect on your actions, while talking to and observing others. Thijs explained the use of reflection, observation and social learning: “I have made my mistakes. And then you need to realize after a while looking in the mirror that you have not been effective in certain situations. You need to ask yourself “Why have I not been successful? Why do I not get the things done as I should have done . . .” That also combined with sometimes you share your experiences with other people . . . then you may think, wait a minute, A or B is more effective. What is the big secret?”

In the end the Dutch wanted to talk to others to gather knowledge, experience the global setting and capitalize on their experiences and mistakes by reflection and observation. The Dutch participants wanted to combine this experiential learning process with reading and formal learning about the specifics of the local culture, language and environment. They preferred to

categorize cultures to organize the rich variety of differences across the globe. Their obstacle was to withhold judgment and see, that the world of global business is not black and white. Through this learning process they aimed to expand their comfort zones.

#### Global Competence: Bridging Cultural Distance through Strategic Relationships, Direct Messaging, and Common Vision and Values

The Dutch participants talked briefly about leadership in their discussions on global competence. One of the Dutch participants, Pieter, talked about leadership in terms of vision and direction. Then there is the need to communicate what needs to be done based on that vision. They did not talk about the need to be able to lead or work with people everywhere specifically. Instead, they talked about it in terms of very culture specific examples. Hans pointed out numerous examples of specific cultural knowledge you need to be able to work with people everywhere. Specific global competencies are presented in the three categories of building relationships, communicating for results, and managing expectations.

#### *Building Relationships: Investing Strategically in Relationships Based on Business Judgment*

Relationships are important in global business. The Dutch participants talked about relationships in a strategic sense, more than in terms of soft skills. When you are navigating the unknown global markets, relationships can play a strategic role. Hans pointed out how the strategic choice of people and companies in local markets or with experience and knowledge of global markets can be of major importance in global business to navigate the unknown culture and business

environment, as well as to gain the required knowledge and competencies, especially when your company is expanding into new markets.

To build those relationships you needed first to be humble, respectful of others, curious and seek common ground and understanding. Henk talked about respect and being humble in the context of seeking common ground: “It is all about respect, it is all about understanding that you don’t have sort of the God given latitude to tell the world how it is, but picking up the signals and finding the common ground on which you want to develop the success for both parties.” In the process of relationship building speed as well an understanding of people is of the essence for a global manager. In adapting to a local situation and understanding people quickly you need to “find a common language” was the opinion of Kees. “So the skill is to very quickly be on the same level as the other person, make the other person feel comfortable and basically understand who the other person is and what motivates him.” Empathy was a useful competency, when trying to understand what drives a person from another culture. Thomas described empathy as “the competence to place yourself in somebody else’s shoes.” Empathy could certainly be built on the genuine global interest that the Dutch managers displayed throughout the interviews.

A complication of global leadership and building relationships within your organization was related to understanding people within the context of hiring the right people. Judgment was raised again in the selection of people. Pieter said: “Now working in an international environment getting good people in the organization is a bit tougher. I noticed that when you have interviews with someone coming from a different country with a different cultural background. Sometimes it is more difficult to judge, if this is a good person or not for the job.”



Finally, there was a strong connection between building relationships in global business and effective communication. Humble and empathetic behavior was needed to build relationships. How can one find out what drives the person from the other country? The answer is by listening. The incentives for listening and building relationships must be present for both parties in global business in the form of win-win situations. Henk described the process of investing in relationship building and linked it to effective communication. The following is his summary of the competency of building relationships: “It’s about effectiveness of communication. Two ways: it’s talking and listening. The talking is engaging. The corresponding behavior is about low ego, low status and trying to be intrinsically rich in terms of what you want to achieve or what you want to learn. The realization that a successful engagement, a success liaison always has two people who win and not one wins and the other one loses and it’s the continuous awareness that what you are trying to achieve has a long term dimension . . . I mean in our business we deeply invest in these relationships . . . So I think it’s all about genuine relationship building and then gradually create trust based on integrity.”

*Communicating for Results: Direct Ways of Conveying and Verifying the Message*

The importance of communications in building relationships was established in the discussion of the first competency. The obvious complication of global communication was the fact that those communicating with each other do not all have the same native language. This variety in languages could be solved only partially through the use of a common language. The Dutch participants saw English as a common language in global business. However, many of them were prepared to speak other languages as common languages. Even when using a common

language, the emotions are disconnected, things get lost in translation and communication is influenced by cultural differences. This makes it hard to get the right message across.

The Dutch participants in their discussion of global communication talked about messaging. The message needed to be adjusted to the culture to have impact. Ruud described it as follows: “Doing business globally? It means that you have to interest yourself for the cultures of others, because if you don’t adjust your message to the appropriate culture, the message will not have the same meaning and also will not have the same impact.” Henk listed three things the message needed to convey: intentions, actions, and things you will deliver to the community, when he stated: “. . . messaging, let’s say your intentions and your actions and the things you need for deliver in a community which is really, let’s say, which has contributors from all cultures so and then messaging in such a way that everybody understands it is very important. We do that in English obviously and that means that a lot gets lost in the translation.”

What are other complications in global communications besides the lack of a common native language? Email was a convenient mode of communication for global managers who face the hurdle of communicating across different time zones. “Email closes a lot of gaps,” said Ruud. However, email caused problems of miscommunication as well. “So we try to prevent too much email.” Email also does not allow in depth discussion. This was the reason for regular face-to-face meetings, according to Robert. Thomas agreed. He always tried to meet people in person.

How does a manager avoid losing the message in the translation process? The Dutch participants offered some advice for effective communication across the globe. They recommend four proven methods: Listen for common ground, be clear, verify, and diplomacy.

First, with a humble attitude you must listen for common ground. The common ground establishes the foundation for your communications. Ruud explained: “Most of the time working with others and to work with other countries, it’s not about telling them what to do, but it’s about listening, what they need. If you find that you have a common ground, then it’s far [more] easier to work together.” One place where global managers can find common ground was in human emotions, according to Pieter, because they can be recognized easier. “It’s interesting, what I have noticed is that, even if you don’t speak all the languages and different backgrounds, whatever the basic human being emotions, once you bring them in you start to talk on this level when you’re angry with someone or you have a good laugh or some fun together, the basic human emotions I think that people pick up very easily. And that’s what I try to do as a leader in international contexts, to make use of these dimensions.” Besides human emotions body language can also be read in face-to-face meetings. Thijs said that you can read things such as agreement and disagreement from body language.

Second, you must be very clear in your communications. You must be clear about your purpose and show that you are genuine in doing the right thing. One method of ensuring that your communication is clear is by keeping the communication simple and direct. Pieter advised that you be direct by “putting the dead fish on the table.” In contrast, Thomas recommended that you are careful with what you say and consider how your words may be interpreted. He admitted your message must be clear: “So it’s also try not to be blunt to some cultures, but it’s also, there’s also a kind of danger if you, for example, are trying to get to a deal with each other and then in the most crazy way is when they all say “yes,” but they mean “no.” It is an approach

in different cultures, how you come to a deal, sorry I'm trying to figure out, how to say what I mean." It is clear that the Dutch struggle with the right level of directness in communicating.

Third, you must verify the understanding of the message with the receiver. The Dutch participants recommended that you verify the understanding of the message by repeating things, checking back for understanding, and through written confirmation of the results of the communication.

The fourth method was ensuring that the message is understood is through diplomatic behaviors. Diplomacy here focused on the ability to keep the communication going. It meant that you could build the conversation by setting the right tone and seeing a red line in the conversation.

#### *Managing Expectations: Bridging Cultural Distances through Common Vision and Values*

The Dutch participants talked about the need for common ground in terms of strategy: common vision and values, while bringing people together in business from a broad variety of national and cultural backgrounds. Jan described a strategic planning process as part of a merger. The process was done at a retreat and focused on common ground strategically. Based on the common vision and values, common objectives were determined at the top management level. How do you bring all people together then in the next step? It starts with respect and acceptance that those from other cultures do things differently. Jan explained that the parties at the retreat also agreed on specific behaviors, for example, in solving problems. Interestingly, their first preference was to solve issues face-to-face. In the context of a company with facilities and

business activities across the globe, Ruud talked about aligning the expectations at the global level with the local level and vice versa.

Robert discussed the complication in managing expectations at various geographic levels of the organization, when the organizational structure is loose, such as in the setting of a global network of professional services firms, where country member firms often stand on their own. This network type of structure tends to have a lack of hierarchy. This lack of hierarchy “puts a lot of pressure on meeting deadlines and pursuing goals, persuading people to go along with you and have the same objectives and also work with the same timelines,” according to Robert. Kees pointed at a similar lack of hierarchy issues in his company and the related complications in aligning expectations across the geographical locations without having proper incentives.

The alignment of expectations across geographical locations put the global manager into the role of a bridge function. Especially, the manager at the foreign location takes on this bridge function in the global company. This manager becomes the person who must translate the local situation to management at the company headquarters. Kees described this bridge function: “I believe that one of the key aspects of being able to work in a global environment is for a manager to understand that she is playing a pivotal role in ‘translating’ the local situation (economy, political situation, market/industry specific and legal/accounting issues, customs, habits, etc) into a language that is understandable for the head office staff/major decision makers. It also works the other way around, people (be it clients, suppliers, partners, employees) in foreign markets will have to adjust and understand how things work in corporate head offices where the corporate culture significantly differ from their own.” Ruud agreed that this translation or bridge function worked in both directions between headquarters and other locations

within the global company. The global managers at headquarters must be open minded and understand the need for adjustment of expectations for different locations. In this context it was important that managers understand that cultural expectations do not only differ based on geographical distance. Cultural distance may be significant between neighboring countries as well, such as, for example, between the Netherlands and Belgium.

This process of translating and bridging was complicated by differences in power distance orientation as well as time orientation. First, the country management's level of authority may be viewed differently. Such an instance of difference in power distance was encountered by Hans between the Netherlands and Germany. Though the geographical distance between the residence of Hans in the Netherlands and the company's office in Germany was only thirty kilometers away, the Germans showed more respect for management than the Dutch. Second, the expectations may be different in terms of time horizon. Some countries are less stable than others. It is harder to set expectations in such unstable settings. The Dutch have more of a long term planning orientation, according to Kees. This agrees with the comment from Robert: "In the Netherlands stability is a big theme." He also linked stability to time dimension. Geert recommended that you deal with instability and unknown factors by getting agreements black on white with contractual agreements. This black on white approach spells out the expectations clearly and takes away uncertainty.

One specific expectation that was raised by the Dutch participants was that of global mobility. The global client may have the expectation that your personnel has the mobility to cross country borders. However, there are numerous hurdles to mobility across country borders.

Robert pointed out that even within the European Union there are compliance issues that make the expectation of mobility of labor within the European Union not a complete reality yet.

Robert had the expectation that mobility within the U.S. labor market was a fact. However, even in the United States state laws complicate the interstate mobility of licensed professionals. State licensing boards, such as the state boards of public accountancy are heavily involved with streamlining licensing requirements among states to facilitate interstate mobility of Certified Public Accountants in the United States. Ironically, business counterparts in the United States on their part have a view of a unified Europe with free movement of labor across country borders.

Right now, the mobility of professionals across the globe is mostly a reality technically through the internet and its related cloud computing, as well as mobile communication technology, such as smart phones equipped with Skype. This research process demonstrated the mobility of technology in its current state. A miscommunication took place between the researcher and Hans about the date of an interview. Thanks to the mobility provided by smart phones and internet technology the researcher and Hans connected through a Skype call from the researcher's desk to Hans' smart phone, while Hans was traveling down the highway in the Netherlands.

### Research Question Two

The findings for the second research question are presented in Tables 4.1 through 4.3. The second research question was: How do the qualitative descriptions of global business competence of managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands compare with prior studies that

focused on US-based participants? Tables 4.1 and 4.2 are based on Table 2.1. From Table 2.1 Table 4.1 shows only those elements with citations that were found directly in this study. Table 4.2 shows only those elements that were indirectly found in this study. Finally, Table 4.3 shows only elements found by this study that were not found in the existing literature.

Table 4.1: Elements of Global Competence in Existing Literature Directly Confirmed by  
This Study

Cultural Dimensions (Wilson, 1996)
World Issues (Wilson, 1996) or Global Awareness
Global Dynamics (Wilson, 1996) or System/Holistic
Culture (Caliguiri, 2006) or Country Specific
Functional Business (Caliguiri, 2006)
Intercultural Communications (Caliguiri, 2006)
Adaptability (Levy et al, 2007; Hunter, 2004)
System and Multiple Perspective Thinking (Senge, 2006; Lane, DiStefano, Maznevski, 1997; Hunter, 2004)
Sensitivity (Hunter, 2004)
Culturally Influenced Decision Making
Diplomacy (Hunter, 2004)
Cross-cultural Understanding (Hunter, 2004)
Social Intelligence (Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Hunter, 2004)



Political Intelligence (Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999)
Language (Caliguiri, 2006)
Extroversion (Caliguiri, 2006)
Emotional Stability (Caliguiri, 2006)
Openness (Wilson, 1997; Caliguiri, 2006)
Conscientiousness (Caliguiri, 2006)
Managing Conflict between Local Differentiation and Global Integration (Levy et al., 2007; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002)
Managing Uncertainty and Ambiguity (Barhem, 2008; Rhinesmith, 1992)
Managing Time Strategically (Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1999)
Managing Complexity (Wilson, 1996; Levy et al, 2007; Rhinesmith, 1992) or Seeing the Big Picture and Opportunities in Complex Environment
Managing Competitiveness (Rhinesmith, 1992)
Managing Adaptability (Rhinesmith, 1992)
Managing Teams (Rhinesmith, 1992)
Managing Learning Through Reflection (Rhinesmith, 1992)

Global Knowledge, Skills/Abilities, Personal Characteristics and Competencies from Previous Literature not Confirmed by this Study

Comparisons between the descriptions found in this study to the previous literature are at times complicated to make. There are three reasons why it was complicated to compare the

knowledge, skills, abilities, characteristics and competencies. First, the meanings of some of the items in the table may overlap with other items. Second, some elements of one item may be included in other items as well. Especially, in the case of competencies, a number of items under knowledge, skills or abilities may combine into one of the competencies listed. The reader is reminded that the definition of competencies used for this study is “a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior patterns that affects a major part of one’s job, that can be improved via training and development, and that the person needs to bring to a job to perform its task and functions well.” Third, participants may also describe part of the knowledge, skill, ability, characteristic or competency or use different words than others to describe the same item. The current study did not directly confirm seven of the items found in the previous literature. These items are listed in Table 4.2: Elements of Global Competence in Existing Literature Indirectly Confirmed by This Study. These seven items, found in previous literature, were not directly found in this study. However, they were mentioned indirectly by participants as part of larger concepts or with the use of different words. Table 4.2 shows each of the seven elements of global competence that were indirectly confirmed by this study including citations from existing literature. Then directly below each of the seven elements indented words were listed that related to the element of global competence. The words listed were either used literally by participants or were words that described the feelings expressed by or stories told by participants. These words separately or combined appeared to describe that specific element of global competence found in the existing literature. Overall, all elements of global competence in existing literature were either confirmed directly or indirectly by this study.

Table 4.2: Elements of Global Competence in Existing Literature Indirectly Confirmed  
by This Study

Human Choices (Wilson, 1996)
Choices managers must make regarding hiring host nationals, level of
adaptation to the foreign setting, level of acceptance of foreign values,
level of empathy towards foreign connections.
Cultural and Organizational Understanding (Hunter, 2004)
Cultural Understanding
Organizational Knowledge
Tolerance (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999)
Respect
Open mindedness
nonjudgmental
empathy
Trust of Organizational Process over Structure (Barhem, 2008)
Lack of accessibility of top management
Lack of structure
Process mindset
Agreeableness (Caliguiri, 2006)
Acceptance
Open mindedness
Flexible attitude

Level of acceptance of foreign values
Managing in Structural Indeterminacy (Levy et al., 2007)
Additional geographical dimension of responsibility
Influencing people without hierarchical power
Accessibility of top management
Structure
Managing Diversity (Barhem, 2008; Hunter, 2004; Levy et al., 2007)
Linguistic differences
Managing Cultural expectations and differences

#### New Knowledge, Skills/Abilities, Personal Characteristics and Competencies in This Study

Table 4.3 New Elements of Global Competence Found by This Study lists seventeen new elements of global competence. Many of the items that appear to be newly identified by this study are part of other existing items from previous studies. This study e.g. identified the general ability of Non Judgmental as important for global competence, while prior studies summarized listed abilities such as Sensitivity, Respect, and Tolerance. Not being judgmental is part of being sensitive and having tolerance toward other cultures in that withholding judgment helps a person in being tolerant towards other cultures. Therefore, Non Judgmental was not considered a completely new ability found by this study.

Table 4.3: New Elements of Global Competence Found by This Study

Organizational Knowledge and Understanding
Non Judgmental
Respect
Process Orientation as Opposed to Trust in People Relationships
Participatory Management
Assertiveness
Empathy
Genuine Global Interest
Professional Pride and Accomplishment
Being a Risk Taker
Self Driven
Managing Communications across the Globe
Managing Relationships across the Globe
Managing Expectations across the Globe
Managing Social Learning Through Networking, Coaching, and Mentoring
Managing Experiential Learning
Rising to the Challenge of Succeeding Anywhere in a Complex World with Resource Constraints

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings presented in chapter four. The findings are discussed in three major sections: two based on research questions, one based on an overall view of the data. In the first section for research question one the descriptions of global competence by the participants are discussed for each of the three countries India, Japan, and the Netherlands. In the second section, based on research question two confirmation by this study of elements of global competence from the existing literature is examined as well as the presence of new elements of global competence found by this study. In the third section, universal and non universal elements in the descriptions of global competence among the three countries are discussed.

### Research Question One

The first research question was: How do global business managers in India, Japan, and the Netherlands describe global business competence? In response to this first research question global competence was described for each country in separate parts of this section. Each section is concluded by defining global competence through the eyes of the participants in that country.

To facilitate the discussion of the first research question Table 5.1: Overview of Titles, Themes, and Sub Themes by Country and (Sub) Category was prepared. This table was prepared based on the findings presented in chapter four. The findings in chapter four were presented by country. Table 5.1 shows one column for each of the three countries. Horizontally the table is first divided into six rows that list the five universal categories as well as the title

theme identified during the data analysis. The five universal categories are country background, personal characteristics, experience in and adaptation to global business, developing global competence, and global competencies and are labeled with the Roman numerals I through V. The category of developing global competence was further broken down into the subcategories of content and methodology in chapter four. These two subcategories are labeled IV.a. and IV.b. in Table 5.1. Similarly, the theme of global competence was further broken down into three subcategories or global competencies in chapter four. These subcategories or global competencies are labeled V.a. through V.c. in the table. Each of these subcategories is shown as a separate row under the themes in the table. In each of the boxes created in this manner the table then lists the corresponding title, theme and subtheme for each of the countries.

Table 5.1: Overview of Titles, Themes, and Sub Themes by Country and (Sub) Category

	India	Japan	The Netherlands
Title Theme	The Opportunities and Challenges of People versus Process Orientations	The Search for Balance in the Conflicts in Opening Up to Globalization	The Historic Global Trait of Expanding Comfort Zones across Cultural Distances
I. Country Background	Excitement about Change	Some Reluctance to Going Global	Global Trade has been a Fact for Centuries
II. Personal	Risk Takers with a	Persistent,	Genuine Global

Characteristics	Drive to Excel in a Challenging Environment	Accomplished Professionals with Self Efficacy	Interest and Being Invested in your Global Career
III. Experience in and Adaptation to Global Business	Being Flexible for Global Opportunities, Challenges and Processes while Being Yourself	Fitting into the System or Changing to Adjust to a Common Global Management Style	Expanding Comfort Zones
IV. Developing Global Competence:	Eager to Learn from Others, Take on the Challenge of the Process Orientation	Finding Purpose, Role, and Global Harmony through Learning from Senior Managers and Experience	The Facts on How to Expand Comfort Zones through Experiential Learning
a. Content	Focus on People Skills	Language, Country Background, American Management Style and Role and Purpose within the Company	Factual and Country Specific Knowledge



b. Methodology	Learning from Others	Learn from Experience and Senior Managers	Trial and Error, Observation and Reflection
V. Global Competence:	Seeing and Communicating Opportunities in a Complex World Through More than Written Words	Balancing the Challenge of Participatory Management with Playing Your Role	Bridging Cultural Distance through Strategic Relationships, Direct Messaging, and Common Vision and Values
a. Building Relationships	Investing in People Relationships	Maintaining a Profitable Balance and Harmony	Investing Strategically in Relationships Based on Business Judgment
b. Communicating for Results	Managing People across the Globe takes more than Written Words	The Challenges of Maintaining Harmony and Relationships in Global Communications	Direct Ways of Conveying and Verifying the Message
c. Managing	Educating People	Balancing	Bridging Cultural

Expectations	about Different Environments and the Meaning of Expectations	Expectations between Collectivists and Individualists with Different Levels of Power Distance through a Common Purpose	Distances through Common Vision and Values
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#### Global Competence Described by Indian Participants

Participants in India were excited about the results of the Liberalization in India. India is a growing market and as such its importance in global business is increasing in significance. The economic change has provided exciting career opportunities to participants. Especially young professionals are taking advantage of the opportunities. The Indian participants reported the cultural and linguistic diversity of India as good training ground for the diversity of the global environment. Though participants feel on one side that India has a reputation of hard working people, participants do report that racial discrimination was a hurdle in their global careers.

Indian participants described the following as personal characteristics that are important in the achievement of global competence: Excel in your domain, have a drive for professional achievements, a genuine global interest and be willing to take risks. Indian participants were aware of the tough competition in the global environment. They perceived it as a challenge and showed strife to succeed.

In experiencing the global environment Indian participants stressed the need to be flexible to succeed. Participants discussed flexibility in working with and adjusting to different ways of doing business, different time zones across the globe, and in communication style. The key challenge perceived by the Indian participants in adjusting to different ways of doing business is the change from a people oriented approach to a more bureaucratic, structured, stringent process orientation. The traditional Indian people oriented approach is built on people relationships, word of mouth and trust. Indian participants perceived the global method to be relying on processes instead that are more structured, supported by documentation and focused on results and on how things are done rather than whether things got done. The different time zones required Indian participants to be flexible in work hours. For some of them this resulted in a work-life conflict. In terms of communication differences, the Indian participants did not have issues with speaking foreign languages such as English. Instead, their concern is body language, word choice, speed, and intonation. To them communication is seen as a key tool in establishing the relationships that Indian business is built on. The adjustments in global business required Indian participants to be humble, respectful of others, flexible, open and positive in attitude and adaptable. However, some participants stressed the need to keep your own identity by adapting, not adopting to different environments across the globe.

Indian participants were eager to develop their global competence and reap the benefits of a fulfilling career in a growing market. In this development process they are looking to invest in adjusting to the global process orientation as well as investing in people skills. The Indian participants were still hungry for relationships in global business despite the process oriented

global approach. The soft skills were needed to be able to connect with people across the globe, negotiate with people, and convince them of your business case.

Indian participants were eager to develop global competence as part of a lifelong process of learning. This process required more than just formal education. Some participants mentioned the need for a Master's of Business Administration degree. However, due to their people orientation it was not a surprise that most of them emphasized learning methods that focused on learning from others through social networking. The Indian participants also discussed experiential learning methods through which they learned from their own experiences, at times even through a "sink or swim" approach, and those of mentors and superiors in the organization in official mentor relationships or through keen observance.

The way Indian participants learned from others appeared to show a generational difference. Older or more experienced participants focused on finding a mentor, preferably a well recognized superior, whereas younger participants used less formal ways such as through observation or through social networking technology. The divisions of responses among levels of age and experience seemed to reveal a change in level of power distance from higher (older and more experienced Indian participants) to lower power distance (younger, less experienced Indian participants). One participant, Gita, strikingly referred to India as a young country and her company as having a young CEO, while she talked about a struggle with power distance and seniority. She seemed to refer to high levels of power distance with the words "remnants in our culture." Such generational change may be linked to a global style of participatory management that is more open, democratic, and less reliant on hierarchical power structures.

Indian participants described global competence as seeing and communicating opportunities in a complex world through people skills. They emphasized that the global environment is complex due to its variation in business environments, cultures, languages as well as the distances in time zones. Managers should use people skills and communication skills to build relationships based on trust to overcome these differences and find common ground. As part of global competence Indian participants see the ability to rise up to the global challenge even with a lack of resources, such as time, funds, and information.

The communication skills must also be used to influence people and achieve business impact in a process oriented, results driven global environment. Communication therefore required more than the ability to speak a language. One must be able to connect with people through body language, intonation, choice of words, and speed. Besides bridging the cultural gap the communication element of global competence must also bridge the geographical distance that limits the ability of face-to-face communication or virtual forms of visual communication.

Finally, the communication and relationship building competency elements are also needed to manage expectation gaps. Towards foreign counterparts managers in India felt that they needed to educate their business relations about India's diversity in terms of regulations, infrastructure, and geography. The Indian participants also felt that there was a need to build a common understanding about the meaning of expectations to ensure that all parties involved had the same level of expectations.

In summary, global competence was described by Indian participants as being flexible in seeing and communicating opportunities and complications in a challenging world while

adjusting to a results-driven process orientation through investing in relationships and through impactful communication.

### Global Competence Described by Japanese Participants

The island nation of Japan has traditionally been a closed country. However, its economic situation may have shifted the focus towards more openness to global business. Japanese participants described the reluctance of their fellow Japanese citizens to embrace openness to globalization. However, younger generations of Japanese citizens appear more accepting of globalization. Thus, similar to India, Japan showed some issues of generational change as well.

Other obstacles to the Japanese participants to achieving global competence mentioned by them include command of the English language and discrimination. The hurdle of discrimination relates to the lack of openness by the Western world to other non Caucasian races. The issue of discrimination was raised by Japanese as well as Indian participants, but not by the Dutch participants. The Indian participants seemed more willing to put the issue aside lured by the incentives of their growing roles in the global environment. The Japanese seemed still hurt by this negative behavior. They seemed to address it indirectly through advocating respect for human dignity. Despite the discouragement of discrimination the Japanese participants showed strong professional pride in their accomplishments. They emphasized the need for persistence and self efficacy in a tough, global environment.

The Japanese participants regarded English as the language of global business. Their discussion of communication issues focused more on mastering the English language in a

technical sense rather than the ability to go beyond translation and build relationships through communication skills.

In their experiences with global business the Japanese participants discussed communication issues, cultural differences, geographical distances and time zones, and a common global business culture. The main issue experienced by the Japanese participants is a common global business culture. They described their global experiences as an encounter with a culture that is direct in its communication, encourages individual expression, and values performance over seniority as well as a democratic style over a more authoritarian style of management. The Japanese participants were used to what they referred to as a “uni-culture” in which individuals do not stand out from the group through individual expression of opinions, professionals perform in harmony with the organizational culture and planning, and language is indirect. Japanese participants discussed their problems with speaking up in meetings especially in addition to the hurdle of speaking English.

In this context they discussed their adjustments from a uni-culture to the common global culture of participatory management. The Japanese participants seemed to focus on adopting this method of less authoritarian, more individual participatory management in which you have to influence people without having direct authority over them.

The level of adjustment by Japanese participants, however, in general raised a conflict of adaptation versus adoption. Adaptation required some adjustment, but adoption suggested a more dramatic change. Participants talked about fitting in to the global company or global system by understanding the company purpose and their roles within the company. They examined the purpose of people, the company, and society. Then they sought a way to fit their

skill set into the system, while maintaining its balance and harmony. In the Japanese organizational culture Japanese participants often fit into the system by changing themselves, so they fit their roles. Especially a change towards a participatory management style in global business may require a lot of personal change. The Japanese in this change process “believe they need to change themselves to do so,” according to Kento, because “they tend to identify themselves with the company.” This change of identity raised a conflict. Another Japanese participant, Kazuki, felt that changing your own identity would not be genuine. Both Kento and Kazuki, however, identified this problem of a need for changing your identity as an obstacle in your quest for global competence.

The topic of process orientation raised by the Indian participants seemed to briefly arise in the Japanese interviews as well. Shohei mentioned the difference in logic as part of the cultural differences as well. With their uni-culture background Japanese managers did not question the process or the system, nor did they raise objections in a direct manner. In a more collectivist manner they were looking to understand the purpose and their roles, so they could fit into the existing system. Shohei emphasized the difference in logic between Japan and western cultures in management processes and communication.

Not surprisingly based on their holistic experiences Japanese participants focused on the importance of understanding the purpose of their environment and their company, as well as their roles within the company, to the development of global competence. Their ideas on the development of global competence had a stronger company focus than those of the Indian and Dutch participants. Thus, Japanese participants mentioned learning about their roles, the company purpose and strategy besides country specific knowledge and the need to learn a



language (English). Country specific knowledge and language skills were also needed to maintain harmonious relationships in global business. Such relationships required that there was a win-win situation between both parties: buyer and seller or company and employee. To maintain such harmonious relationships between employer and employees, you learn from others about the company purpose and how they were successful, preferably your seniors and superiors in a culture with a higher level of power distance.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) ranked the Japanese culture high in collectivism. Alston and Takei (2005) argued that the search for harmony “wa” in Japanese business culture is so important that it dominates all business decisions. In their descriptions of global competence the Japanese participants showed their cultural values of harmony and collectivism. The global manager was to understand his or her role in the global company. At the same time the Japanese participants discussed the need to adopt a participatory management style “western style” and the need to develop the ability to be more assertive, direct and outspoken in the global setting. For the Japanese participants this was a balancing act which required relationship and communication competencies as well as the competency to manage expectations.

Successful employment is about a balanced relationship that provides a win-win situation for both parties. Therefore, global managers must excel in their functional skills. The managers must have good balance of judgment to make this situation profitable and maintain good balance. Such harmonious relationships must be maintained within the company among fellow employees as well as outside the company with contractors, suppliers, and customers. People skills are needed to build trust across cultures and distances, especially in the global setting where hierarchical relationships and authority are less prevalent than in the Japanese domestic

management setting. Building relationships and trust requires good communication skills. Good communication skills included the ability to speak English and express yourself in a direct and self assertive way across long distances.

The Japanese participants deal with both the Japanese culture and the global culture. On one hand, the Japanese culture is a collectivist uni-culture with higher levels of power distance and higher importance given to seniority. On the other hand, the global culture has a more democratic style of management and an individualistic approach. Dealing with both cultures in their jobs meant for the Japanese global managers that they had to manage different expectations. Therefore, it is important to the Japanese participants that the company has a unifying, common purpose and goal. As managers of expectations the Japanese managers then have to function as a bridge between global and local by explaining the company's purpose, goal and strategy to their employees.

In summary global competence was described by Japanese managers as bridging expectation gaps between the global and local levels in terms of level of collectivism and power distance through a systematic approach that involves harmonious relationships, a unifying, common purpose, and effective communication.

#### Global Competence Described by Dutch Participants

The fact that the Dutch have traded across the globe for centuries was obvious from the attitudes of the Dutch participants. The Dutch treated globalization and the need for global competence as an undisputed fact. As members of a Western culture they were also very open to global trade. They did not report facing obstacles of discrimination and were thus unrestrained

in their interest in global matters. In the eyes of Dutch participants global competence required a whole hearted commitment to a global career.

The Dutch participants experienced global business in a black-and-white, matter of fact way. They were very factual and the most detailed of all participants in their discussion of differences in the cultural and business environment. They gave the most examples about cultural differences for specific countries. As participants of the smallest country of the three they noted the large cultural distance between geographically close countries. This is perhaps not a surprising comment from citizens of a country from which Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg, and France can be reached within two hours. However, the idea of a difference between cultural distance and geographic distance is not a new idea raised by this study. Cultural distance has been discussed in the existing literature (e.g., Holtbrugge & Schillo, 2008; Kogut & Singh, 1988; Shenkar, 2001). The Dutch participants saw a world divided into many pieces that were culturally and linguistically diverse.

The key for the Dutch participants to adjust to such a culturally and linguistically complex world was to withhold your judgment and be open and accepting of differences. Thus, they identified their black-and-white, matter-of-fact approach as their main hurdle in achieving global competence. To what extent do the Dutch participants suggest you adapt to different cultures? The Dutch suggest that you be open, humble and accept other cultures and other ways of doing things. However, it stops with acceptance of the other culture and does not include that you change your own identity. The Dutch did not find such an identity change to fit a different culture even useful, because your business counterparts expect you to be different and fit a certain profile or stereotype. The Dutch participants proposed that participants in global business

have their comfort zones and learn to expand those. They did not propose that you change yourself within that zone.

The expansion of comfort zones required a specific knowledge about country backgrounds in terms of history, culture and language. The extent to which a global manager needed to speak a foreign language was disputed among participants. Some said that knowledge of a foreign language was a must. Others pointed out that you do not want to appear as understanding everything that is said privately by the other party in the setting of negotiations. However, the ability to speak a foreign language was not a problem for the Dutch participants. Many of them spoke multiple languages. Through their experience with foreign languages some of the Dutch participants noted that even foreign language skills cannot overcome the emotional disconnect, when foreign languages are spoken by the parties in business. To sort through the immense number of cultures across the globe the Dutch grab on to the concept of cultural dimensions based on the research of Hofstede (2005), a Dutch researcher. Such direct thinking about cultural differences and categories appeared to fit a judgmental mindset.

How did Dutch participants with their factual approach and the hurdle of being judgmental propose you developed global competence? The proposed methodology by the Dutch participants was rather direct. You learn by reading about countries, but more importantly, the Dutch participants proposed that you learn from experience in a trial-and-error type of approach with critical self examination and reflection about what worked, what did not work and how performance can be improved. Direct feedback is also welcome in this experiential learning process. Ironically, the first thing a Dutch participant may learn was that such direct feedback is often not a possibility in other cultures.

In global competence the Dutch participants sought the leadership to bridge cultural distances. This can be done through finding common ground between the people as proposed by the Japanese participants as well. However, in contrast with the Japanese, the Dutch proposed a more participatory approach in determining common ground. Rather than being taught the roles and purpose in the form of uni-culture training, the Dutch proposed a democratic process of determining common values and vision.

The Dutch proposed that you invest in relationships to bridge cultural distances. They proposed these relationships as strategic tools or partnerships to address specific business needs. Choosing the right partners requires good people judgment. Furthermore, to build relationships you must also be humble, respectful, open, and curious. The word “empathy” used by the Dutch participants described well how you can be open and respectful without changing your own identity. Relationship building was related to communication skills in the minds of the Dutch participants. Despite the use of a common language a lot of things can get lost in the translation process. Therefore, the message must be adjusted to the culture of the receiver, the message must be direct and clear, and the message must be verified.

How did the Dutch participants connect the communication skills, relationship skills and differences in expectations? With the assistance of good communication skills and relationships built on common ground expectation gaps between the local and global culture can be bridged across cultural distances. Cultural distances may especially play a role in global business in the area of different levels of power distance, time orientation, and collectivism versus individualism. Management may have limited authority. Participants in the planning process may have long term or short term time orientations. People from collectivist cultures may have a

tendency to be less direct and outspoken in meetings. Relationships are built on common ground and understanding. Understanding requires clarity in communication. The competency of bridging expectation gaps requires communication and relationship skills.

In summary, global competence was described by the Dutch participants as expanding your comfort zone to bridge cultural distances through strategic investments in relationships, direct messaging, and common vision and values.

### Research Question Two

The second research question for this study was: How do the qualitative descriptions of global business competence of managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands compare with prior studies that focused on US based participants? In response to this research question the findings presented in tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 were reviewed. Then, the discussion of the second research question focused on two issues: First, did the current study confirm the findings of the previous studies described in the second research question? And, secondly: What new elements of global competence did the study reveal?

#### Confirmation of Global Competence Described in Existing Literature

The current study did not directly confirm seven of the items on the list of global knowledge, skills/abilities, personal characteristics and competencies from previous literature. These items are presented in Table 4.2. Elements of all seven of the items were found in the data of this study. However, categorizing the data and labeling them in accordance with the results of prior studies may be biased because of the researcher's prior knowledge and may be subject to too

much interpretation. To err on the side of caution these seven items were listed as confirmed indirectly by this study in Table 4.2..

Elements of all of these seven items were found in the study to some extent. However, participants in the current study only described the items in part or it seemed that they may have been hinting at the same item. For example, it is clear that overall in the discussions of global competence participants mentioned at least elements of Managing Diversity (Barhem, 2008; Levy et al., 2007; Hunter, 2004). However, none of the participants mentioned it specifically. In a similar manner Human Choices (Wilson, 1996) may have been the issue underlying some of the participants' discussions.

Some of the items were mentioned by different names that appear to be similar to other items. For example, Tolerance (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999) certainly relates to respect, open mindedness, nonjudgmental, and empathy. Tolerance appears to be one word on a scale of acceptance of other cultures on which respect, open mindedness, nonjudgmental, and empathy would fall as well. In a similar manner Agreeableness (Caliguiri, 2006) may be linked with Diplomacy.

Cultural and Organizational Understanding (Hunter, 2004) were both discussed by the participants. In the current study cultural understanding and organizational understanding were always discussed separately by participants.

Both Managing in Structural Indeterminacy (Levy, et al., 2007) and Trust of Organizational Processes over Structure (Barhem, 2008) were discussed from different view points in the current study than in the previous literature. Global managers must deal with the additional dimension of global geography in their work. This complicates organizational

structure. This means that especially in the global environment in addition to functional or product reporting lines managers also have to deal with geographic reporting lines that span across numerous country borders. This complicates organizational structure and at times may leave business professionals wondering who they report to or who they are responsible to. Thus, the existing literature lists Managing in Structural Indeterminacy as element of global competence. In the current study in Japan Kento referred to the matrix structure of organization and the need for Japanese managers to become dual citizens in this type of global company. His discussion appeared to be headed in the direction of structural indeterminacy or the need to trust the organizational processes instead of the corporate hierarchy. However, his later description of the need for Japanese managers to care for their foreign coworkers in the same manner as they would for Japanese coworkers fit the discussion of empathy instead. However, Japanese participants did clearly describe the need to influence people without hierarchical power. Such comments appeared to hint at Managing in Structural Indeterminacy as well. In India Sujit discussed the complication of the organizational structure of global companies, but seemed to advocate for a strong structure: “But because of the proximity and accessibility it is easy for them to reach out to top management and talk, but in case of a multinational organization, there are certain levels of regional reporting, profit reporting, actually it is a second level, you have to actually follow that . . . I’ve seen some global organizations, they have survived only because of the strong structures.”

In the area of organizational processes, especially, it must be pointed out that the Indian participants discussed the need to learn processes. They discussed this process orientation in terms of structure and regimen in your daily processes. This structure and regimen required a



result driven process approach rather than an approach based on people relationships. The item Process Orientation as Opposed to Trusting People Relationships therefore may have captured some of the item Trust of Organizational Processes over Structure. Managing in Structural Determinacy may have also been hinted at during participants discussions of global competence.

In the grand scheme of a discussion of elements of global competence it can be stated that these elements were part of the descriptions of global competence given by participants in this study.

#### New Elements of Global Competence

At first the current study appeared to provide a long list of new elements of global competence. However, a review of the elements considerably narrowed this list down to some key new elements of global competence. The list of new elements shown in Table 4.3 originally included: Organizational Knowledge and Understanding, Non Judgmental, Respect, Process Orientation as Opposed to Trust in People Relationships, Participatory Management, Assertiveness, Empathy, Genuine Global Interest, Professional Pride and Accomplishment, Being a Risk Taker, Self Driven, Communicating for Results across the Globe, Building Relationships across the Globe, Managing Expectations across the Globe, Managing Social Learning Through Networking, Coaching, and Mentoring, and Managing Experiential Learning.

A review of the original list in Table 4.3 New Elements of Global Competence Found by This Study reduced this list in two ways. First, Organizational Knowledge and Understanding is part of Cultural and Organizational understanding. This study, however, listed this element as a

separate item. Second, Non Judgmental, Respect, and Empathy are part of Sensitivity, Respect and Tolerance. They may be seen as different levels on the same scale of cultural acceptance.

Next, a review of the original list of new elements of global competence broadened the concept of managing learning rather than adding a new element to global competence.

Managing Experiential Learning is a broader competency of which Managing Learning Through Reflection is a part, because Reflection is a part of the experiential learning process as described by Kolb (1984). Therefore, this study expanded Managing Learning Through Reflection to a broader concept. Then it added to that broader concept the notion that learning in the context of global competence is not only important in the form of experiential learning, but also in the form of social learning. Thus, the concept of Managing Learning was greatly expanded by this study.

Based on the above the following are new elements of the description of global competence: Process Orientation as Opposed to Trust in People Relationships, Participatory Management, Assertiveness, Self Driven, Genuine Global Interest, Professional Pride and Accomplishment, Being a Risk Taker, Communicating for Results across the Globe, Building Relationships across the Globe, Managing Expectations across the Globe, Managing Social Learning Through Networking, Coaching, and Mentoring, Managing Experiential Learning, and Rising to the Challenge of Succeeding Anywhere in a Complex World with Resource Constraints. These new elements of global competence have been described in the response to research question one.

The following factors were related to the challenge that participants found to be present in the global environment. These items may be combined into Professional Global Passion: Self

Driven, Genuine Global Interest, Professional Pride and Accomplishment, Being a Risk Taker.

This professional global passion is needed to thrive in a challenging global environment.

Three items are left in the discussion of new elements of global competence. These three elements are: Communicating for Results across the Globe, Building Relationships across the Globe, and Managing Expectations across the Globe. Rising to the challenge of succeeding anywhere in a complex world with resource constraints was the core competency identified by this study that overarches the other three individual competencies.

Rising to the challenge of succeeding anywhere pointed out the challenge in the complex global environment. This challenge required more than just functional knowledge. In fact, functional excellence is only the foundation of global competence. The word “anywhere” pointed out the different environments, cultures, languages, customs, preferences and historical backgrounds that can be encountered across the globe. It must be pointed out that this is a complex world. The words “resource constraints” in the name of the core competency indicate the complexity and challenge in global business. In general, the resource constraints pointed at the competitive global environment. With such tough competition you never have a complete understanding or information about all environments that you are operating in. Time is always of the essence, because with twenty-four time zones there is always someone working, producing, designing, or inventing new products. The geographical distances impact how you communicate with other people in the company in other locations. These distances are a drain on the company resources. You deal with these challenges and complications by managing relationships, communications and the expectations among all the involved parties. This core competency as well as the three competencies identified here consist of clusters of “related

knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior patterns that affects a major part of one's job, that can be improved via training and development, and that the person needs to bring to a job to perform its task and functions well" (Lee, 2009).

#### Descriptions of Global Competence: Universal and Non Universal Elements

Both a universal picture of global competence as well as local variations of global competence were described in the following section. The universal elements of global competence were grouped into four categories: The core global competence, three competencies that form global competence, five foundational elements of the global competencies and two pillars that connect global competence with the three global competencies and the five foundational elements of global competence. Each of the four categories is described next. A discussion of the variations among the descriptions of global competence among the three countries was included in these sections.

#### *Five Foundational Elements: Organizational Knowledge and Understanding, Professional Global Passion, Language, Culture, and Global Understanding.*

First, this study identified five foundational elements of the three global competencies: organizational knowledge and understanding, professional global passion, language, culture, and global understanding. Organizational knowledge and understanding in terms of understanding your role within the company, understanding the role of the company and its strategy, and understanding the relationships between different parts of the organization, such as headquarters and local subsidiary were discussed by the participants.

Participants among the three countries expressed a different emphasis within the category of organizational knowledge and understanding. In India participants focused on a shift in approach. Here the Indian participants raised the non universal element of global competence of Process Orientation as Opposed to Trusting People Relationships. They noted that the global arena required a process oriented approach focused on processes, results, and a strict regimen of reporting routines. Instead of focusing on process the Japanese participants were more holistic in their view of the company. They focused on understanding the company's purpose in society and their role as managers within the company. As part of understanding their roles as managers participants needed an understanding of the company strategy as well. The Japanese participants also talked about the lack of authority and seniority, the democratic management style and the direct ways of communicating in a global setting. Thus, they talked about political intelligence, but also about the non universal elements of global competence of Participatory Management and System and Multiple Perspective Thinking. The Dutch were the most result driven. In their discussion of organizational knowledge they focused on Managing the Conflict between Local Differentiation and Global Integration with their discussion of the impact of geographic and cultural distance on decision processes and the role of the manager as a bridge between the local subsidiaries and the global headquarters. They discussed the impact of organizational structure, such as the network structure of a global professional services firm and how it impacted the authority and decision making processes within the firm. The discussion of organizational knowledge by Dutch participants could often be related to the non universal element of Political Intelligence.

Professional global passion derived from Table 4.3 included Professional Pride and Accomplishment, Self Driven and Being Assertive. Together these characteristics provide the elements necessary to work hard, tackle problems in a complex society, and survive in a challenging career. According to the Indian and Japanese participants such professional global passion started off with excellence in business or functional skills. The Dutch participants talked with pride about their professional accomplishments, but did not talk about the need for professional excellence directly. The Indian participants had the strongest focus on the challenging environment here. They talked about learning by the “sink or swim” method. They viewed global assignments as those of a commando, who may be dropped anywhere on the globe with limited time, information and financial resources as well as the assignment to just get it done. The element of Being a Risk Taker was non universal, because only the Indian participants mentioned it.

The knowledge of language was needed to some extent for global managers to be able to communicate across borders and cultures. The extent to which languages needed to be learned was disputed among participants. The Japanese participants were very adamant about the need to have a strong command of the English language. For them the English language was the hardest to learn. One Japanese participant suggested that a manager needed to know as many as three languages. Indian participants due to their historic connections with England and the need to speak English due to the diversity of languages in their own country were very comfortable speaking English. The Dutch participants were geographically close to England and had the need to learn foreign languages for centuries, since few of their global trading partners spoke Dutch. Some of the participants across the three countries noted that you needed to speak only a

few hundred words of various foreign languages. One Dutch participant suggested that, at times, you might be better off not knowing any foreign language except for a common global business language. Knowing the local language may not be appreciated as much by your business counterparts, according to Henk.

Clearly, the participants in both India and the Netherlands were not only talking about language from the perspective of translating words from one language to another. They referred to another, deeper dimension of language. This deeper dimension assisted them in communicating in a way that allowed them to connect with people in other countries and build relationships across the globe. In this context a Dutch participant complained about the emotional disconnect, when people communicate in a language that is not native to them. Indian participants talked about the importance of intonation, speed, and choice of words. It seemed that Japanese participants were very concerned about the basic translation aspect of a foreign language. They also seemed to point, at least indirectly, at a deeper meaning of language to influence people, when you do not have direct authority as a global manager or to negotiate in global trade. In general communicating was important to the Japanese participants in order to build harmonious relationships.

Knowledge and understanding of culture assists managers in working with people from various cultures and national backgrounds. This knowledge may be culture specific, include social intelligence to allow for the ability to work and socialize with people from around the globe, and lead to cross-cultural understanding. Only two Dutch participants and one Japanese participant talked about the use of cultural dimensions as means to organize the cultural differences in terms of clusters of countries that are based on cultural dimensions. The levels of

cross-cultural understanding were indicated through various words including: adaptability, empathy, and openness. The participants in all three countries talked about the need to adjust to different cultures. Yet participants in all countries warned that managers should not adopt new cultures and attempt to change their own identity. It is important that you remain true to yourself and your background. Otherwise, managers could not be perceived as genuine. This raises a conflict for Japanese managers who are focused on fitting into the system. Fitting into the system may require changing your identity, which in turn would not be genuine.

Despite the need to be open to other cultures, adapt to other cultures and be empathic to people from other cultures managers should keep their own identity. To keep their own identity it is important that the managers understood their own background in a manner suggested by Hunter (2004). Though managers keep their own identity, they learned that their views are based on the values they grew up with. This was noted by a few of the Dutch managers. Thus, they learned to respect other cultures, accept them, but did not adopt them. In this context of cross cultural understanding the terms respect and sensitivity were mentioned by participants from India and Japan. These were two countries from where some participants mentioned issues of racial discrimination as a hurdle in their global work.

Though participants from all three countries talked about adjusting without changing your own identity, there were some nuances in this adjustment process between the three countries. For the Indian participants adjustment meant that they had good relationships with people. They were very personal about relationships and working with people across the globe. For the Japanese participants in their systematic and holistic view their adjustment involved fitting into the larger system. Finding out how you fit into the global system of your company



meant that you determined the skills you needed to display and put to work to achieve the company's purpose and strategic goals. At the same time, the Dutch participants talked about being non judgmental. The Dutch were also well aware of the need to withhold judgment and not see the world as "black and white." The Dutch explained their level of adjustment as expanding a comfort zone. Such a comfort zone does not seem to require a person to change at all. They must simply expand their understanding of cultures, so that they can feel comfortable with the cultures they get involved with as global managers.

It appeared that the link between identity and career was established again in this study. Hall (2002) listed identity as the most important one of four dimensions of career development and describes career development as "a continuing quest for what one truly is and wants to do" (p.171). This connection between career and identity was shown in the way managers kept, developed and learned more about their own identity in their global careers. They discussed their careers in light of professional accomplishments, personal challenges and their genuine global interest. The connection between career and identity was also shown in the identity conflict Japanese managers described in the change to a different management style and the need to fit into the global company's system.

In terms of culture, participants in all three countries pointed at the need to know specific cultural facts about countries. The Japanese participants talked more about the knowledge of history and background of countries in order to establish a connection and build harmonious relationships. However, participants in all three countries discussed the importance of having culture specific knowledge. The Dutch were the most detailed in their descriptions of cultural differences. Both the Dutch and the Indian participants pointed out the diversity of their cultures

today and how this helped them understand cultures better in their global work. The Japanese participants may have a bigger hurdle here. Two participants talked in this context about the historically protective trade policies of the Japanese government over the centuries and Japan's geographic location as an island in the ocean. Such culture specific knowledge should lead to higher levels of cross cultural understanding.

With global understanding it was also pointed out that managers needed knowledge of world issues, an understanding of global dynamics, and a genuine global interest. This provided them with the understanding of the global environment in general. Participants in all three countries pointed out how the world is changing today. Indian participants were foremost excited about the changes in the form of economic growth that Liberalization and globalization had brought to India. Japanese participants talked about the economic need for global trade and global competence. Participants in all three countries talked about how world events impact the work in their own countries today.

These five elements formed the foundation of three global competencies listed in Table 4.3.: Building Relationships across the Globe, Communicating for Results across the Globe, and Managing Expectations across the Globe. Global competence for managers is built upon this foundation.

*Global Competence: Rising to the Challenge of Succeeding Anywhere in a Complex World with Resource Constraints*

The participants stated in different ways that global managers needed leadership skills in the form of vision to manage the additional geographic dimension that global brings to their job as

managers. The participants talked about the need to see opportunities in a complex global environment, provide leadership, and manage in complex situations. Thus they also referred to Managing Complexity (Levy, et al., 2007, Rhinesmith, 1992, Wilson, 1996). In different ways the participants also talked about Managing the Conflict between Local Differentiation and Global Integration (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Levy, et al., 2007;).

Participants in India described the conflict of local versus global and complexity of the global environment in the most challenging way. They talked about the challenge of managing in a complex situation with limited resources. One participant talked specifically about the challenge to succeed anywhere and compared global management to a commando style operation to emphasize the challenges a global manager is presented with. For the Japanese participants the need for leadership also meant balancing the challenges they face in participatory management through its direct, self assertive and self expressive communication style with knowing your role within the organization and fitting in the global system. The Dutch participants talked about the need to bridge gaps between cultural and geographic distances. However, they saw this as a process of translating the facts between the two parties. Their focus was on understanding and bringing comfort zones together. They did not focus on maintaining balance between local and global and attempting to harmoniously integrate systems in a variety of different countries. Bridging the geographic and cultural gap left open the possibility of more independent and autonomous operations for foreign subsidiaries.

How do participants propose that managers apply their leadership to manage the complexity in a global environment and the conflict between global and local? The next section discusses three competencies aimed at achieving this goal.

### *Three Global Competencies*

To achieve global competence the participants described three specific global competencies: Building relationships across the globe, communicating for results across the globe, and managing expectations across the globe. The words “across the globe” are intended to include the idea of conflict between the locations across the globe, i.e. the conflict between local and global. These three global competencies are built on the foundational elements of global competence. Each of three global competencies consists of multiple elements of global competence in the form of knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics. These individual elements of the three global competencies were discussed earlier. Each of the three global competencies exists in business in general. However, they take on a specific role in the global setting. Each of them also has a different emphasis in each of the three countries in this study. The three combined in harmony form global competence.

First, building relationships across the globe is important in the global environment to deal with the global complexity of different and often unknown cultures. The competency of building relationships across the globe is used by global managers to connect and bring together employees across the globe, build trust and establish rapport, so they can collaborate despite all differences in culture, language, and environment. Employees and customers are often scattered across the globe. Strong relationships build connections and bridge geographic as well as cultural distances.

The importance of building relationships and how they are viewed must be considered for each of the three countries. The Indian managers in this study regarded relationships as the

foundation of the way they were used to doing business as opposed to the global focus on process. Therefore, building relationships is especially important for them in building rapport as part of the collaboration process and as means to achieve your goals by influencing people. For the Japanese participants in this study, the core of relationships is maintaining harmony and balance between the parts of the organizational system. When they discussed relationships, they usually did not talk about personal relationships, as the Indian participants did. However, relationships formed the connections among the elements of the system of the global company in the systematic view of the Japanese participants. It was important to connect with others in this system, so that a win-win balance could be established in the connection upon which harmonious relationships can be built. The Japanese participants also saw the need for relationship building as a tool to overcome the lack of power through the company's global hierarchical structure and the lack of seniority. They often viewed the lack of power and seniority as part of the global setting and the participatory management style the Japanese participants connected with it. The Dutch in turn saw the importance of relationships more in a strategic light. They were the least personal about relationships and most driven by the results to be obtained from good relationships across the globe.

Next, communicating for results as a competency was strongly related to relationship building. Relationships are built partially through good communications. The first problem that arises in global communication is establishing a common language. The Japanese were the most outspoken about the need to speak English as a common language. Participants in the other two countries were more used to having to speak English or other languages in the global environment. Participants in India and the Netherlands therefore took the opportunity to stress

the complications of speaking a common language. They mentioned the importance of word choice, intonation, pronunciation, speed of speaking as well as body language in using communications to build relationships, to influence people, and to obtain results.

A major challenge to all participants in the global environment was the need to communicate across long distances and time zones. They found it hard to establish rapport and build relationships via long distance methods of communication. Whether it be for their need for personal relations in a result driven environment (Indian participants), the need for balance in their relationships (Japanese participants), or their focus on getting things done effectively (Dutch participants), participants in all three countries talked about the need for face-to-face communication to some extent in global communications. Even virtual video conferencing by itself was not considered a complete, good substitute for face-to-face communication in real space. Holtbrugge and Schillo (2008) discussed these complications between communication methods, communication styles, and cross cultural communications.

In the area of communications the Japanese participants had to adjust to the direct, self expressive way of communicating in the global setting. Their more collectivist background inhibited them from standing out individually during meetings. On the other side, the Dutch participants struggled with indirect communications of some of their global counterparts. They expressed the strongest desire for clarity and directness in global communications. In communicating across culture and country barriers the Dutch expressed the need to adjust the message to the culture, be very direct and clear in messaging, and verifying the exact meaning of messages by repeating their understanding and asking questions. The Indian and Japanese managers may be less receptive to such a direct solution to global communication issues.

Finally, managing expectations is a necessary competence in a global environment marked by many differences in terms of culture, history, language, regulations, and geography. These differences led to different expectations among participants. Communication and relationships competencies were needed to manage these differences in expectations. The participants explained that expectations could be managed with the use of the other two competencies by establishing common ground. The establishing of common ground was explained in three different ways by participants.

In India participants talked about establishing common ground in terms of educating their business relations about India's diversity in terms of regulations, infrastructure, and geography. They also talked about ensuring that all participants had understood the level of importance given to expectations. In this context Indian participants mentioned that expectations in India compared to expectations in global business were sometimes set unrealistically high, but there was less stress about meeting the expectations. In Japan participants stressed the importance of a unifying, common purpose and goal. The focus was more on system and strategy for the Japanese. The Dutch were also focused on strategy. However, their way of establishing the strategic purpose, goals and values differed from the Japanese. The Dutch participants discussed the participatory way in which the strategy was determined, whereas the Japanese participants were less interested in establishing the strategy than they were in being informed about the strategy.

When applied together in the global environment the competencies of relationship building, communicating for results, and managing of expectations form global competence. The three competencies were clearly connected and interdependent. Across the three countries

they were focused on the end result. However, the application of global competence and the three competencies meant different things to participants. Based on their country background participants saw different hurdles in achieving the competencies.

### *Two Pillars to Connect the Parts: Developing Global Capacity*

Global competence at the highest level means rising to the challenge of succeeding anywhere in a complex world with resource constraints. At this top level global competence can be further broken down into three competencies: Building relationships across the globe, communicating for results across the globe, and managing expectations across the globe. In turn each of these three competencies is built on the five foundational elements: organizational knowledge and understanding, professional global passion, language, culture, and global understanding. How are competencies and foundational elements developed to achieve global competence? The development of global competence connects all the pieces to the puzzle of global competence, including the three global competencies and their five foundational elements. The development of global competence consists of two parts, referred to here as pillars that determine the level of global competence achieved. The two pillars are: managing social learning and managing experiential learning. The relationships among the three competencies, the foundational elements, and the two pillars of managing social learning and managing experiential learning are shown in Figure 6.1. *A Model of Global Competence*, shown in Figure 6.1, will be discussed further in chapter six.

Key methods of developing global competence, the three global competencies, or any of the five foundational elements in particular were identified by the participants in all three



countries. These key methods centered around two words: others and experience. Participants identified different ways of how the knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies as well as experiences of others can be accessed and used to develop your own global competence. Participants also identified different ways of using their own experiences as a source for developing global competence. Individuals must manage how they learn from others and from their own experience. In an organizational context the organization must manage this process of learning from others and from experiences by providing the infrastructure and opportunities to allow experiential and social learning to occur. The amount of social and experiential learning that takes place determines the development of the five foundational elements and the level of the three competencies. Therefore, the pillars that raise the level of global competence are managing social learning and managing experiential learning.

#### *Variations among the Three Countries in Descriptions of Global Competence*

The need for country or culture specific knowledge was undisputed in all three countries. However, participants in India focused on people skills and process knowledge. Thus, they were hanging on to their need for relationships and recognized the need to adjust to a process oriented global setting. Participants in Japan focused on the company and learning about the company purpose, strategy, and the roles as managers within this global system. The Dutch had a strong focus on culture and country specific knowledge in the development of global competence.

The participants discussed the traditional methods of learning about cultures, languages and history by reading books and academic degree programs. Both participants in India as well as Japan talked about the importance of a Master's Degree in Business Administration.

However, all participants seemed to agree on the need for two workplace learning methods in the development of global competence: social learning and experiential learning.

Participants stressed the importance of developing global competence by learning from the experiences and insights of others. Participants learned from informal relationships, such as professional networks. These networks may be virtual with the use of the internet or face-to-face. Indian participants stressed this people based method. Dutch participants also talked about finding people with experience in a particular country and meeting with them to learn from their experiences. Participants in India talked about observing successful managers. In a more formal manner a participant in India suggested mentoring relationships and recommended managers find successful managers to learn from them. Japanese participants preferred to learn from superiors by observing and listening to them. Both Indian as well as Japanese participants showed a traditionally higher level of power distance with their emphasis on learning from superiors.

Participants also stressed the importance of developing global competence by learning from their own experiences. They appeared to be describing a process of experiential learning.

Learning from experience required the employer to provide the opportunity for learning experiences. A Dutch participant emphasized that it is important that you have responsibility for the project that provides you with global experience. The Indian participants liked the idea of an extreme challenge. They referred to it as “sink or swim.” Again, challenge showed to be an important part of the career of Indian global managers. The Dutch participants described the needed experience with less challenge. They talked of experiential learning of global competence as a trial-and-error approach where you learn from your mistakes. A key ingredient

to one of the Dutch participants was the use of self reflection and critical self examination. You have to ask yourself why you were not successful, while others were successful. The Dutch approach to experiential learning seemed to be more direct. Such a direct, self critical method may not have been feasible for Japanese participants. In their culture directness would be connected with the potential to lose face, which the Japanese would typically prefer to avoid. Instead, the Japanese participants had a preference to observe and listen to their superiors in both formal and informal settings to learn in a more passive way about the development of their global competence. Neither the responses of the Indian nor those of the Japanese participants emphasized the need for critical reflection in the experiential learning process. However, there appeared to be a consensus among participants in all three countries on two things: First, you learn by doing. Second, the development of global competence is a lifelong learning experience.

## CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study explored the meaning of global competence for thirty managers with global responsibilities in India, Japan and the Netherlands through semi structured interviews with eight open ended questions, interview observations and experiences of the researcher. The study examined the phenomenon of global competence in different countries across the globe rather than just in the United States. Referring to management development programs in general, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) stated: “There is no single formula for developing successful managers that can be used in all cultures” (p. 336). The findings of this study agreed with the statement and concluded that there is a need to develop global competence development programs based on the cultural and national background of the managers involved. Thus it had an impact on the design of training and development programs for managers with global responsibilities by adding to the literature knowledge of ways of adopting such training and development programs to reflect the uniqueness of each manager’s cultural and national background. The central question for this study was: What is global competence for managers in different countries? The research questions were:

1. How do global business managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands describe global business competence?
2. How do the qualitative descriptions of global business competence of managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands compare with prior studies that focused on US-based participants?

### Lessons Learned from the Study

The findings of this study presented in chapter four as well as the discussion of the findings in chapter five described global competence as understood by managers in each of the three countries. This section will review the lessons learned from this study by discussing elements of global competence from prior studies confirmed by this study, new elements of global competence found by this study, a universal description of global competence, and variations in global competence descriptions among the three countries.

#### Confirmation of Elements of Global Competence from Prior Studies

The review of literature presented in chapter two summarized the elements of global competence found in the existing literature from U.S. based studies. These elements of global competence were presented in Table 2.1 Global Competence: Knowledge, Skills/Abilities, Personal Characteristics and Competencies Derived from Existing Literature. Between this study and prior studies at time different names were used for certain sets of knowledge, skills, abilities, personal characteristics, or competencies. At times these elements of global competence were also grouped differently. Some aspects of elements were described by other elements on this list. However, in conclusion this study confirmed the findings of the prior studies. All elements of global competence from prior studies were also found to some extent in this study.

#### New Elements of Global Competence Found by this Study

The comparison of the findings of this study to the prior studies expanded the concept of managing learning found in prior studies, it added the professional global passion as a personal

characteristic, and it added three global competencies related to communications, relations, and expectations. Together the three competencies formed global competence.

In the area of managing learning to facilitate the development of global competence the study found that managing learning through reflection should be expanded to experiential learning. Experiential learning includes the reflection component identified by prior studies, but experiential learning as described by participants in this study also includes learning by observation of successful global managers, learning from your own mistakes and learning from challenging assignments. Thus, in their own way, the participants in this study described experiential learning in a way that is consistent with Kolb's (1984) concept of experiential learning.

This study identified a second way of developing global competence. In addition to experiential learning, participants discussed the need for social learning in either a face-to-face format or virtually through company and social networking sites to discuss professional issues, industries, and country specific issues. These media can be used by global managers to share their experiences, post their questions, and reply to the questions of other global managers. Both experiential learning and social learning need to be facilitated by company policies, culture, infrastructure, and budgets. These two learning methods must be actively managed to provide global managers the opportunity to develop global competence.

Participants in this study also showed a professional global passion. In their stories they talked passionately about the opportunity and excitement of meeting people from various countries across the world and learning about their background and their way of thinking. Participants also talked with pride about their accomplishments as managers. As part of a

professional global passion the participants had a genuine interest in people and cultures from across the globe and awareness of events around the globe, pride in their professional accomplishments and a drive to succeed in a challenging global environment. Participants from India in this context also advocated risk taking as part of this professional global passion. These elements of professional global passion are a motivational and behavioral component of importance to the development of global competence. In a similar way Early, Ang, and Tan (2006) argued in their description of cultural intelligence (CQ) that motivation and behavior plays a key role in succeeding in intercultural interactions.

Three other new elements of global competence found by this study were the main additions to the meaning of global competence. This study described these three global competencies as major competencies that, in harmony, form global competence. These three global competencies were: building relationships, communicating for results, and managing expectations. They are part of the Model of Global Competence that is discussed next.

### A Model of Global Competence

The discussion in chapter five of descriptions of global competence can portray global competence in the form of a house. This model of global competence is shown in Figure 6.1: A Model of Global Competence. The model consists of four parts: a foundation of five elements, three global competencies, a roof representing global competence, and two pillars of developmental importance that connect the three other parts.

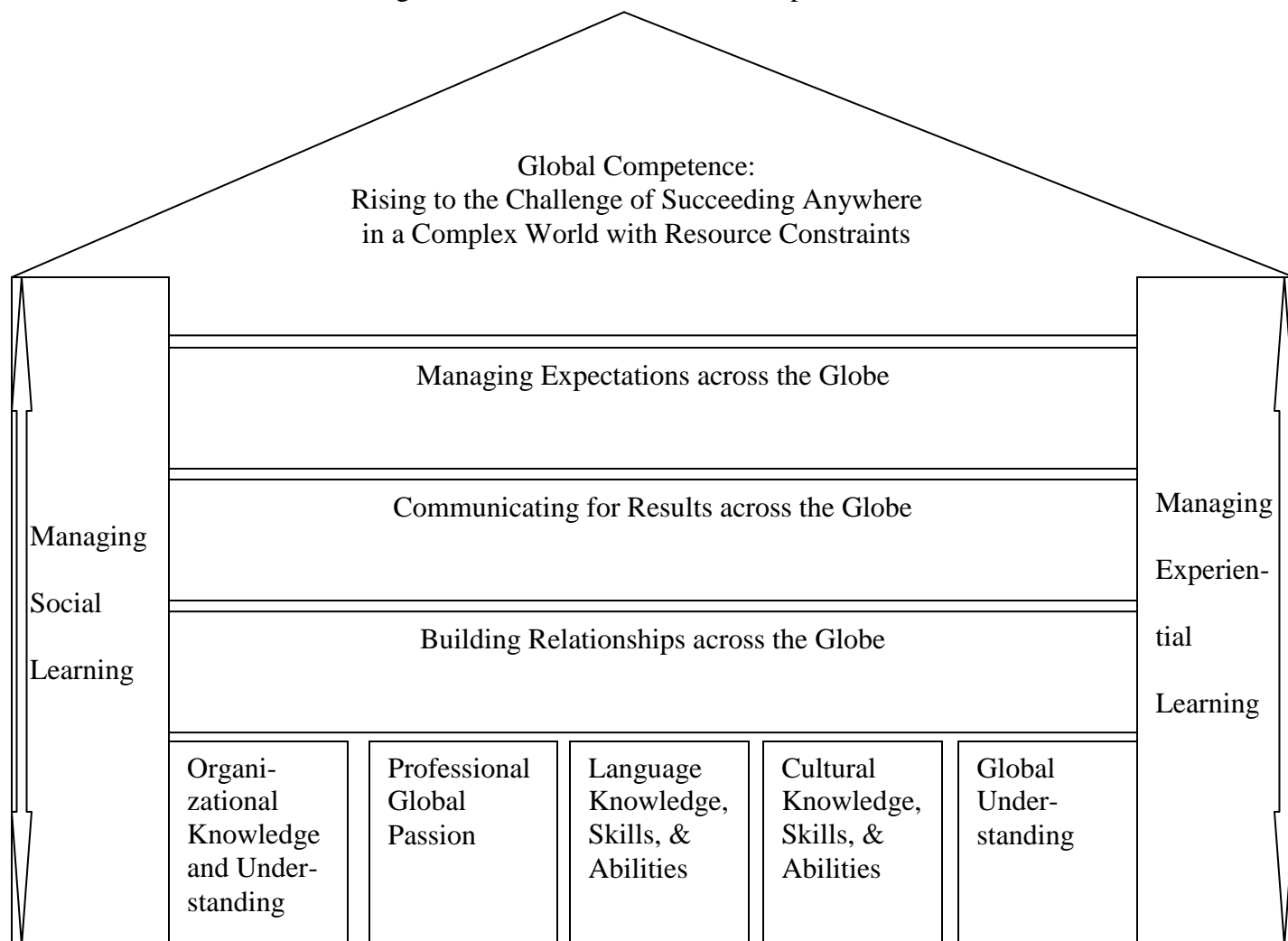
The three global competencies of building relationships across the globe, communicating for impact across the globe, and managing expectations across the globe rest on the five

foundational elements of knowledge, skills, abilities, personal characteristics, and competencies in organizational knowledge and understanding, professional global passion, language, culture, and global understanding. The roof spans across these three global competencies. The interplay of the three global competencies based on the five elements forms global competence. The roof of global competence represents the end result or goal. How much global competence is achieved depends on how well the three competencies and five elements have been developed as symbolized by the two pillars of the house. The two pillars represent the two key methods of global competence development: Social learning through virtual and face-to-face professional networks and experiential learning based on challenging assignments, trial-and-error learning, observation, and reflection.

The model of global competence describes a common framework of global competence among the participants in three countries. However, within this common framework there is significant differentiation in the contents of the five elements as well as the application of the three competencies and the development strategies for global competence.



Figure 6.1: A Model of Global Competence



### Variations in Descriptions of Global Competence

From the common framework of the Model of Global Competence views diverged between participants in the three countries regarding the content and application of each part of the House. The variations are based on different historic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of the three countries and their experiences with globalization. Table 5.1: Overview of Titles, Categories, Themes, and Sub Themes by Country summarized the themes for each country.

These themes highlighted some clear differences among the three countries in their views of global competence. The approaches for the individual countries can be summarized as follows: participants in India showed a people orientation, participants in Japan had a more systematic approach, and the Dutch participants had the most factual, direct “black-and-white” approach.

The Indian focus in global competence is based on people versus process. Business in India was based on people relationships. Indian participants stressed the importance of investing in relationships over the need for structural work processes. They perceived the global business culture as more cold, less relationship oriented, and more focused on process. This result driven process orientation puts less trust in people’s word and more trust in documentation, and reporting systems. They saw the need to learn about processes in their search for global competence. Due to recent economic growth from globalization Indian participants were excited about global opportunities and appeared the most willing to make adjustments to be globally competent. The diverse cultural and linguistic background of their country is a great asset for global managers who need to learn to work with people from various cultures across the globe. Only an attitude of superiority by their Western counterparts may slow the enthusiasm of Indian managers for achieving global competence.

The orientation of Japanese participants was more systematic. They were accustomed to a strong organizational culture based on seniority and collectivist decision making processes. The Japanese participants in their quest for global competence were searching for purpose and ways to fit into the global organizational system. In this quest to fit into the system they felt they had to adjust to a more individualistic style of management, participatory management, in which people were direct and outspoken in communicating their views. They wondered how they

would manage people with less authority in a merit based reward system and how they would manage partnerships without organizational relationships or market power. Such change in management style may require so much individual change that it becomes an obstacle for Japanese managers in the form of an identity conflict. Though Japan has been relatively closed to global business in its governmental policies in the past, economic progress has provided incentives to the Japanese participants to open their minds further to global trade. The barrier of learning foreign languages like English and discrimination by Western counterparts may stand in the way of the Japanese quest for global competence.

The approach of Dutch participants towards global competence is very matter-of-fact. This small country's centuries of global trade has provided the evidence for the need for global competence. This reputation in global trade as well as their current diverse population served the Dutch participants well in their quest for global competence. The Dutch participants were very factual in their view of the global environment. They saw many differences and few commonalities across the globe. The commonalities described by Japanese and Indian participants were perceived by those participants as Western style. The Dutch participants may not have recognized such commonalities, since they do not appear different to them than their domestic management style. The Dutch participants' more black-and-white view of the cultural differences created a very complex world. They saw much cultural distance even with their neighboring countries. The Dutch participants often sorted through this overwhelming sea of cultural differences with the use of cultural dimensions provided to them by their own Dutch researchers, such as Geert Hofstede. Adjusting to this variety of cultural differences for them meant to increase their comfort with other cultures through the expansion of their comfort zones.

The challenge for the Dutch participants in expanding their comfort zones is to be able to withhold their judgment about cultures in order to gain a deeper understanding of the cultures. They may also have to exercise patience in global communications, when dealing with people from cultures where communications take place in a less direct manner and involve more context. The Dutch participants generally prefer the communications to be focused on the facts with little room for interpretation.

### Implications of this Study

This study confirmed elements of global competence identified by previous studies. It also identified a new personal characteristic that is an ingredient to global competence: global professional passion. This is a personal characteristic that may be developed, but mostly may be a characteristic useful in the selection process of future global managers. The study organized a plethora of elements of global competence into a model consisting of four main parts that described global competence in three main competencies and showed how these competencies are based on five different areas of knowledge, skills, abilities, personal characteristics, and competencies. The model shows how two development strategies support the development of the foundational elements as well as the three global competencies in order to achieve global competence. The elements in this model can guide the design of programs for developing global competence in managers.

More importantly, the study set out to define global competence through the eyes of managers from a variety of countries rather than from the U.S. alone. Through the analysis of global competence descriptions from three different countries the study should generate a

discussion on how global competence development programs may need to be customized to the cultural and national background of global managers. The findings of this study point to the need to customize these development programs and indicate areas of attention that may require the adjustment of global competence development programs based on cultural or country background.

The following section describes how global competence development programs may be customized to reflect the cultural and national background of participants. It should be noted that this section only contains ideas based on general characteristics of country populations. In applying these ideas it should not be assumed that all people from each country are identical in their background and characteristics and, thus, their needs for global competence development. For the application of these ideas practitioners should base their professional judgment upon a thorough understanding of each individual's background and views rather than characterizing them on the basis of some type of cultural profile.

#### Developing Global Competence with Indian Participants

Participants with a cultural background that focuses on the importance of people relationships may need to customize their global competence development programs by focusing on the transition to a more process oriented approach. They may have a need to become accustomed to this process oriented approach that puts less value on the trust between people and oral agreements and instead puts higher value on established processes for performing tasks and reporting. In a global environment they may need to get comfortable with the emphasis on paper

documentation methods as well as the importance of expectations and goals and the value that the global environment puts on them.

Indian participants had seen the opportunities afforded to them in global business through the expansion of the Indian economy since the Liberalization in India. They appeared highly motivated to be involved in global management and develop their competencies. They did not appear to require much explanation in the form of the necessity and purpose for global competence development. Instead, they were interested in a challenging career already without much need for motivation or incentives.

Though Indian participants recognized the need to develop their process competencies, they still appeared to prefer personal relationships in business. Human resource development professionals may take advantage of the desire of Indian participants for good relationships by careful selection of development strategies. In the case of global competence development for managers with a strong desire for people relationships the application of social learning strategies in combination with challenging assignments appears to be a good match. This social learning strategy can be applied through virtual or face-to-face professional networks. These professional networks may focus on functional areas, industry, or general management competencies. These social learning strategies can further be implemented by observation of superior performers and creating awareness of the possibilities of learning by observation. Observation methods may further be personalized and formalized through mentoring relationships. Managers in India can develop personal relationships with other global managers within the company.

### Developing Global Competence with Japanese Participants

Japanese participants displayed a systematic view of global competence. They needed to know the purpose of the system or global company and the role they were to play in this system.

Based on their understanding of the system, its purpose, and their role within the system many of the participants were looking how they could fit into the system and maintain its win-win balance by seeing which of their skills and competencies could best contribute to the system.

Some participants in Japan also reported some reluctance towards globalization and openness to foreign countries. Such reluctance may be the result of a personal conflict. The Japanese participant may be overwhelmed by the amount of adjustments to be made to fit into the global system. They may feel that this requires them to change their identity. A change in identity may not feel genuine, which would cause the personal conflict.

In situations where human resource development professionals encounter some reluctance to global competence development as well as a systematic view of global business it is important that at the start of development program sufficient time is devoted to the clarification of the purpose of the program and the need for global competence. In the Japanese company culture, there is typically a high respect for seniority and executive leadership. Support for the global competence development program by top management is of utmost importance in the establishment of purpose and need for the development program. Economic necessity may also be used as motivation for the global competence development program.

Japanese participants often mentioned the hurdle of speaking English in global business as a major obstacle to global competence. Therefore, it seems that intensive training in the English language is of utmost importance in the development of their global competence. This

language training must take place as early as possible in the developmental process and can be done as part of the formal education. Another element of the communication component of the global competence development program for Japanese managers would be to address their wariness of direct communication and individualism and outspokenness in the global business environment. Japanese participants described their struggles with such direct, open, and outspoken communication. In combination with some reluctance to globalization the importance of self-efficacy must not be ignored in the development program. Self-efficacy is important to the trainee's motivation to learn (Chiaburu & Lindsay, 2008). Self-efficacy may be a selection component for the development program. Self-efficacy development may also be a focus of the training design at the start of the program.

Besides communication issues a number of Japanese participants also discussed their adjustment to the participatory management style often encountered by them in global business. This style focuses on meritocracy over seniority. Japanese managers will have to rely less on their seniority and power derived from their place in the company hierarchy. Instead, they must often become more accustomed to influencing people based on merit of the proposal without position power.

In terms of strategies for global development in the Japanese setting the traditionally higher levels of respect for seniority, the pride in professional accomplishments, and the importance of learning about the purpose of the company and the role of the manager should focus the development strategy on learning from experience and through formal mentoring relationships. Learning from experience will build the pride in professional accomplishments and build the self-efficacy necessary for Japanese participants to get accustomed to speaking



English as well as communicating in a direct and outspoken manner. Through formal mentoring relationships or workshops Japanese participants can learn about the company purpose and strategy as well as successful strategies in global management.

In traditional Japanese companies top management has established a strong corporate culture. Values, norms, and expected behaviors have been the subject of training of new hires according to some of the Japanese participants. In such traditional organizational cultures, organizational culture may be a major hurdle to clear in the company's transition to becoming a global company. Such transition is a collective process that cannot be dealt with through individual training and development strategies. Instead, it requires a process of organization wide change that must be addressed through organization development strategies prior to the initiation of individual global competence development programs. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) argued that country culture is stronger than organizational culture. They stated that organizational culture is based on shared practices and not on values. Based on that argument organization development efforts should be effective in a company's transition to becoming a global company by focusing on the desired shared, global practices.

#### Developing Global Competence with Dutch Participants

The establishment of need and purpose for a global competence program in the Dutch setting should require only minimal attention. The Dutch tradition of global trade over the centuries has minimized the need to discuss the purpose and need. The Dutch participants seemed accustomed to it. The Indian and Japanese managers appeared to describe the global business culture as a Western style of management. As members of a Western culture the global competence

development for the Dutch managers therefore should require little investment in such Western style methods. On the contrary, Indian and Japanese participants seemed to ask for a deeper respect for their non Western style from managers in Western countries.

The Dutch participants did not see much commonality in cultures across the globe. They saw the need to learn specifics of numerous cultures and seemed to prefer the need to organize this plethora of cultures through categorization, e.g. using Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

The Dutch participants seemed to express a strong preference for a direct presentation of the facts of differences in cultural and business environments. They sought ways to cope with indirect communication methods, such as the use of confirmation or posing of direct questions. Some of the Dutch participants also seemed to report a struggle with a tendency to be judgmental. To build a mutual understanding in global business the development of global competence in such an environment should focus on more than just a presentation of the cultural facts and specifically, the importance of patience and withholding of judgment in the development of one's comfort zone. The global competence development for Dutch participants may need to focus on building an understanding and appreciation for indirect and high context communication.

As strategy for global competence development Dutch participants expressed a preference for experiential learning. Challenging global assignments in combination with observation and critical self reflection seems a good fit with a culture that is more direct in its communications, more confident in the global setting, and more individualistic in its approach than the Japanese and Indian cultures. Their directness seemed to allow for the Dutch to be open minded and critical about their errors.

### Customizing Global Competence Development Programs in General Terms

These specific suggestions about the application of the lessons learned from this study to the customization of global competence development programs for the participant's national and cultural background focused on the basics of learning foreign languages and knowledge about specific cultures as well as personal characteristics in the form of self efficacy, differences in communication styles, three dimensions of cultures, and levels of personal adjustment.

The differences in communication styles related to Hall's (1996) theory of high and low context communication. Those used to low context communication, e.g. the Dutch participants in this study, seek directness in communication style. Those used to high context communication style, such as some of the Japanese participants in the study, struggled with their participation in direct and outspoken communications. This required a customization of the global competence development programs based on high and low context communication preferences.

The three dimensions of culture addressed in the study were time orientation (e.g., Indian participants and the importance of managing expectations), power distance (e.g., Japanese participants and their adjustment to participatory management), as well as collectivism versus individualism (e.g., Japanese and Dutch participants and the directness and outspokenness in communications, and Japanese participants and the importance of organizational culture). In the development of global competence, it is also important not to ignore the difference between a people/relationship oriented way of doing business and the result driven process approach.

The level of adjustment participants in the global competence program are willing to make may also be an issue for the customization of global competence development programs. Some participants are looking to merely extend their comfort zones, while others may struggle with the amount of adjustment they need to make to fit into the global system. An overwhelming level of adjustment may create a personal conflict for the participant which in turn may lead to resistance to the development of global competence.

### Opportunities for Future Research

This study explored the importance of cultural backgrounds in the development of global competence. The findings were discussed in relation to the cultural and national background in terms of each country's economic progress based on global trade, its historical openness to global trade, its communication style in terms of directness and context, its emphasis on personal relationships and the cultural dimensions of time orientation, power distance, and collectivism versus individualism. This study only explored the importance of cultural backgrounds in global competence development in a limited number of countries. The qualitative design of the study did not allow for generalizations to be made. How can the results of this study be used to further the cause of global competence development? Five suggestions for future research opportunities are described next. These five suggestions focus on expanding the exploration to more countries, the effective implementation of global competence development programs, a link between global competence development and positive psychology, global virtual team development, and generational change.

Future research can be done to explore the importance of cultural backgrounds in the development of global competence in more countries across the globe. Such expansion of this exploration across countries may confirm findings of this study, but it may also lead to the finding of many other issues of cultural and national background in the description of global competence. Prior studies focused on the U.S. This current study focused on the Netherlands as another Western country. The study also focused on the Eastern and Asian countries. Obviously, this leaves out Latin American Countries, Africa, as well as the Middle East. Participants in this study as well as the pilot study pointed out that even within Europe and Asia cultures can be very different. This highlights the fact that this study did not give a broad, general, and conclusive worldwide view of global competence. However, it did explore global competence in a context much broader than just the U.S.

This study suggested different strategies for global competence development based on its exploration. These strategies were not implemented during the study. Future research can be done in an action research format to learn about the implementation of global competence development strategies and their effectiveness.

This study discussed professional global passion as an element of global competence. This element has both motivational and behavioral components in the form of drive, professional pride, assertiveness and, in some cases, a need for challenge. Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007) advocated a new approach based on positive psychology towards the development of human capital. They introduced PsyCap as antecedent to performance. PsyCap includes four components: efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency. These factors seem intuitively related to the element of professional global passion. Future research may establish a clearer relationship

between PsyCap and professional global passion in particular, or between PsyCap and global competence in general, so that a link between positive psychology and global competence development can be examined.

Some of the participants in this study discussed their global work in virtual teams across the globe. During the recruitment process in talks with global organizations the issue of working in global teams also came up in various ways. Participants in this study mentioned the complexity of global communications without being able to talk face-to-face at short notice. Participants gave some initial suggestions for building virtual teams. Some of the participants in the study suggested future research could be done to determine effective ways of building global virtual teams.

#### A Wave of Global Change?

This study also brought forward the issue of generational change across the globe. Participants in India as well as Japan discussed generational change issues. A participant in India referred to generational change in her view on seniority and power distance among managers and employees. Participants in Japan discussed a difference in the willingness of generations to learn a foreign language and their openness to global business and participatory management in particular. One participant in Japan talked about his adjustment to a more democratic management style with its open and direct form of communication and explained how it had changed his personal life. He had implemented this form of communication and decision making within his own family. So global change was not restricted to only the business setting. It also impacted the personal life of a participant.

At the 2011 Academy of Human Resource Development International Research Conference of the Americas a very interesting discussion took place. Carlos Ruiz (2011) during the discussion of his presentation disagreed with the dimension of power distance assigned by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) to the country of Mexico. He insisted that desired levels of power distance in Mexico were much lower than indicated by Hofstede and his son. Ruiz questioned whether the Hofstede cultural dimensions were out of date. Has cultural change around the globe outdated the idea of global dimensions? Do younger generations have different preferences in terms of cultural dimensions than older generations within their countries? Hofstede has updated his work by adding more cultural dimensions over the years. Do these categories not only depend on country but also on the age of the citizens in each country? Interesting research must be done to determine if the theory of cultural dimensions is slowly being replaced by a global culture. Is our planet really becoming a small world or a global village?

In global events today, since the Academy of Human Resource Development's 2011 Research Conference, protestors in Africa and the Middle East express their desire for more democratic forms of country governance. They oppose forms of governance with extreme levels of power distance and lack of citizen participation. They express their desires to participate in governance and have their voice be heard as citizens. Are they proving Ruiz's point? Are citizens across the globe desiring participation in governance and lower levels of power distance? Future research will further explore the notion of the global citizen by Desiderius Erasmus. The emergence of the global citizen will influence business practices, which in turn will influence the need for global business competence. This study started the discussion.





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## Appendix A Interview Protocol

Upon receipt of the informed consent the following email will be sent the participant.

Dear [Name of Participant]

Thank you for agreeing to participate! I have attached the interview questions to this email. The central question I am exploring through your responses is: What is global competence for managers in different countries? You will find some definitions to clarify what we mean with competence. Then there are the eight questions to you. You will find that they are open-ended. I am exploring a topic and recognize that you are an expert on this topic. Therefore, I am interested to see, how you respond to these general questions. Do not feel limited to address only cultural or language issues. Please, feel free to add any insights you have regarding your global work.

When you are ready, please, email me to set up a time to meet with me using Skype. If you have any questions, please, let me know. Your support for this research is greatly appreciated! I hope the findings will ultimately support your work in the future.

I look forward to hearing from you again,

Gerard Ras

### Interview Questions:

1. What is the most memorable experience you have about working in a global environment?
2. What was the hardest thing to learn, when you first started working in a global environment?
3. What are your biggest challenges in your international work?
4. What are the biggest differences for a manager between doing business domestically and globally?
5. What are some of the key skills, abilities and competencies needed to work in a global setting?
6. What does global competence mean to you?
7. What course, experience or training exercise has helped you most in your development as a manager in a global environment?
8. What do you recommend a new manager should do, so that he or she can develop global management skills?



Appendix B Interview Observation Protocol

Date:

Time (CST):

Participant Name:

Participant Country:

Participant Company:

Descriptive Notes of the Researcher:

Reflective Notes of the Researcher:

## Appendix C IRB Application Form

The IRB Application form and related approved change request forms are shown on the following twenty pages.

<b>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</b> <b>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</b> <b>312 N. 14th St., 209 Alex West</b> <b>Lincoln, NE 68588-0408(402) 472-6965</b> <b>Fax (402) 472-6048</b> <b>irb@unl.edu</b>	<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>  <b>IRB #:</b> <b>IRB Decision Date:</b> <b>Date Received:</b> <b>Code #:</b> <b>NUgrant Project ID: 11261</b>
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### 1. General Project Information

#### 1. Project Title:

Exploring Global Competence with Managers in India, Japan, and the Netherlands: a Qualitative Study

#### 2. Principal Investigator and 3. Secondary Investigator:

Principal Investigator:	Gerard Ras geras1@wsc.edu 402-375-7464	Secondary Investigator:	Richard Torraco rtorraco1@unl.edu 4024723853
Department:	Department of Educational Administration	Department:	Department of Educational Administration

#### 4. Type of Project:

Research

#### 5. Does the research involve an outside institution/agency other than UNL?

No

#### 6. Where will participation take place (e.g., UNL, at home, in a community building, schools, hospitals, clinics, prisons, unions, etc)? Please specify and give location if not already listed above.

Participation will take place at the offices of the participants or any other location they may choose. Interviews will be conducted over the internet. So participants have the choice of where they want to be during the interview as long as they have a computer and an internet connection.

#### 7. Briefly describe the facilities available for the research (e.g., there will be a quiet room in the school to conduct interviews, a secure lab space is available, etc).

The interviews will be performed over the internet. Participants may choose their own location to connect with the use of a computer with the researcher for the interview.

8. Present / Proposed Funding Source:

Personal funds

9. Study Start Date

10/18/2010

10. Study End Date

06/30/2012

11. Is this a multi-institutional study?

No

## 2. Project Information Continued

1. Does the research involve Prisoners?

No

2. Will the research only be conducted in schools or educational settings?

No

3. Does the research involve only the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior?

Yes

3.a. Does the research involve children (under 19 years of age)?

No

4. Does the research involve only the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens?

No

5. Does the research involve only studying, evaluating or examining public benefit or service programs?

No

6. Does the research involve only a taste and food quality evaluation or food consumer acceptance study?

No

7. Does the research present more than minimal risk to human subjects?

No

- Clinical studies of drugs and/or medical devices.
- Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture.
- Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means.
- Collection of data through noninvasive procedures routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves.
- Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis).

- 
- ✓ Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
  - ✓ Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior).
  - ✓ Research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

7.a. Does the research involve only procedures included in the previous 8 categories?

Yes

7.b. Could identification of subjects put them at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be socially or economically damaging?

No

### 3. Description of Participants:

1. In the table below, please the estimated number of participants per category:

	Male	Female	Unspecified	Total
Adults	0	0	30	30
Children	0	0	0	0
Totals	0	0	30	30

2. Please indicate which special groups will be utilized/recruited for your study. Check all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults, Non Students       | <input type="checkbox"/> UNL Students                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children (under age 19)               | <input type="checkbox"/> Decisionally Impaired                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalized Persons             | <input type="checkbox"/> Students                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses/Neonates       | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Neurological Impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Limited Civil Freedom    | <input type="checkbox"/> Language Impaired                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with HIV/AIDS                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Psychological Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Mental Retardation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adults w/ Legal Representatives       | <input type="checkbox"/> Handicapped                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employees                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                |

3. Will participants of both sexes/genders be recruited?

Yes

4. Will participation be limited to certain racial or ethnic groups?

Yes

If YES, please provide justification/rationale.

The study examines global competence for managers in different countries. To determine how global competence is viewed by people in different countries with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds participants with different backgrounds are needed. This study selected three geographically, culturally, linguistically and historically different countries: India, Japan and the Netherlands. Participants are natives of these countries and will be interviewed in their own countries.

5. Describe the participant population to be included in this research and how they are selected, including any special characteristics targeted for inclusion.

Global managers work for multinational organizations. Their characteristics include: worldwide coordination responsibility, worldwide business perspective, ability to work with people from multiple cultures, and balancing local demands in a global environment.

6. Describe your access to the population that will allow recruitment of the necessary number of participants.

Over the years I have built a network of managers at multinational corporations. These connections work for companies that employ global managers and have networks that include global managers. I will ask them to assist me by identifying potential participants.

7. The research plan should have adequate provisions to protect the privacy interests of participants. Explain provisions to protect privacy interests of participants. This refers to how investigators will access private information from or about participants during and after their involvement in the research (e.g., time, place, etc of research procedures)

The data collection will take place using Skype. Skype is software that allows people to communicate using audio and video over the internet. Participants will choose the time and place of this web based interview. So they will pick the time and location that they are comfortable with. The interview questions do not ask for sensitive personal or corporate information. Yet, the participants' responses will be treated as confidential.

8. Describe your process to ensure that all persons assisting with the research are adequately informed about the protocol and their research-related duties and functions.

The only possible assistance in this research process may come from those who may assist in the transcription of data. They will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Prior to signing this agreement, they will be explained the importance of keeping these data confidential.

9. If not already described above, will any groups or categories of participants be excluded from this research?

No

10. Will some or all subjects likely be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence?

No



#### 4. Unique Research Methodology or Data Sources

1. Will your project involve audio taping?

Yes

1.a. How long will tapes be kept? Where will they be stored? Who will have access to the tapes? If transcriptions are required, how will transcriptions be handled? Who is doing the transcriptions? Please attach a copy of the confidentiality agreement that transcriptionist will sign.

The tapes will be kept in digital format on a password protected network at Wayne State College, where the researcher is employed. The data will be kept for two years.

2. Is this project web-based research?

Yes

2.a. For web-based studies, how will the data be handled? Will the data be sent to a secure server? Will the data be encrypted while in transit? Will you be collecting IP addresses?

The questions will be emailed to participants in advance. Then the participant and researcher will agree on a time to meet virtually with the use of internet based technology, Skype. Skype will allow audio and video communication over the internet. The audio portion of the interview will be recorded digitally. However, no data will be stored on the internet, even though the data are transported over the internet. IP addresses will not be collected. Data will not be encrypted while in transit. The digital data will be stored on a secure server on the campus of Wayne State College.

3. Is this study utilizing Protected Health Information (PHI; e.g., information obtained from a hospital, clinic, or treatment facility)?

No

4. Does this project involve genetic data, sampling, or analysis?

No

5. Does this project ask questions about illegal drug use or criminal activity that places the participant at risk for legal action?

No

6. Does this project involve photography?

No

7. Does this project involve videotaping?

No

8. Does this project involve archival or secondary data analysis?

No

9. Does this project involve biological samples?

No

10. Does this project ask participants to perform physical tasks?

No

## 5. Purpose, Methods, & Procedures

### Describe the research purpose of the project

1. What is the significance/purpose of the study? (Please provide a brief 1-2 paragraph explanation in lay terms, to include a brief literature justification.)

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the meaning of global competence for thirty managers with global responsibilities in the three countries of India, Japan and the Netherlands. At this stage in the research, competence is defined as "a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior patterns that affects a major part of one's job, that can be improved via training and development, and that the person needs to bring to a job to perform its task and functions well." This definition is adapted from Lee (2009). Participants will be given this definition in the introduction of this study. Global refers to the competence needed to collaborate either face-to-face or virtually with people across the globe who have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The central question for this study is: What is global competence for managers in different countries?

The findings of this study will have a great impact on the design of training and development programs for managers with global responsibilities. Research is needed to determine ways to adopt training and development programs for global managers to reflect the uniqueness of each manager's cultural and national background. How can global competence be developed without examining it on a global scale?

### Description of the Methods and Procedures

2. Describe the data collection procedures and what participants will have to do.

The study will apply the qualitative methods of interviews, observations and personal experiences to explore potential differences in the description of the phenomenon of global competence and to explore differences in global competencies among participants in three different countries. Three sources of data will be used. First, participants will be interviewed with the use of Skype, an internet based software. Second, the researcher will make his own observations of the communications, such as the time and style of communications, participants' environment, and the communication style, during the interview process. The researcher's own personal experiences in his international travels served as a third source of data. The researcher grew up in the Netherlands and left for the U.S. to attend college there at the age of eighteen. Though he does not have global business experience, he does have experience traveling as a child in Europe and twenty years of experience moving back and forth between different cultures and languages.

Participants will be supplied with a modified version of Lee's (2009) definition of competence: a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior patterns that affects a major part of one's job, that can be measured against a set of standards that are well-accepted by a group of people anywhere in the world, that can be improved via training and development, and that the incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform its task and functions with competence. Rather than using Lee's term of "well-accepted standards," this study will use a definition of competency using the term "set of standards that are well-accepted by a group of people anywhere in the world" to indicate that these standards can be different based on cultural values. Participants will also be supplied with the central question and the interview questions in advance of the interview. This allows participants to consider the questions and prepare for the interview in advance and might mitigate the language barrier. The

interviews will be semi-structured and consist of eight open-ended questions. Additional follow up questions, however, may be asked to gain a deeper understanding, additional background or to further probe into the matter. Though the interviews will be done with the use of audio as well as video on Skype, only the audio will be recorded digitally with the use of additional, Skype compatible, software. Observations will be captured by the researcher on paper with the use of the interview observation protocol.

3. How long will these procedures take the participants to complete? Please describe the duration of the session, the number of sessions, over what period of time, etc.

There will be one interview session of approximately half an hour in length with each participant.

4. Will there be any follow-up or will reminders be sent?

Yes

4.a. Please explain:

Once the collected data have been reviewed the researcher may deem it necessary to ask follow up questions by email to clarify answers and gain a better understanding of the data.

5. Differentiate any procedure being done solely for research purposes from procedures being done anyway.

None.

6. Describe the time you have available to conduct and complete the research (ex. the time from initiation of the research to completion of data analysis).

I expect that the collection and analysis of the data will take approximately one year.

#### 6. Description of Recruiting Procedures

1. How will the names and contact information for participants be obtained?

Names and contact information will be obtained from people in my personal network.

2. How will participants be approached about participating in the study?

I will email them and ask for their participation.

#### Description of Benefits and Risks

3. Explain the benefits to participants or to others.

The results of this study will assist in the development of improved training and development programs for those involved in the study, global managers.

4. Explain the risks to participants. What will be done to minimize the risks? If there are no known risks, this should be stated.

There are no known risks.

5. Describe the availability of medical or psychological resources that participants might require as a consequence of the research.

The participants will not require medical or psychological resources as a consequence of this research.

6. Will compensation (including money, gift certificates, extra credit, etc.) be provided to participants?

No

### 7. Informed Consent Process

#### 1. How will informed consent/assent be obtained?

A consent form will be emailed to the participants. Participants will be asked to read the form. They will be asked to reply by email with either their consent or their refusal.

#### 2. Who will conduct the consent interview?

The principal investigator.

#### 3. Who will provide consent or permission?

The participants will provide consent as well as employers, when required.

#### 4. What is the waiting period, if any, between informing the prospective participant and obtaining consent?

The waiting period is determined by the participant. They will be provided with the consent form and email. Then they have the option to respond, when they are ready to respond.

#### 5. What steps will be taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence?

Participants will be explained that their participation is voluntary and that they have the option to change their mind and discontinue their participation at any time.

#### 6. What is the spoken language used by those obtaining consent?

English

#### 7. What is the language understood by the prospective participant or the legally authorized representative?

Participants will have various native languages, but they will all have a command of the English language that is sufficient to participate in the research and respond to questions in English.

#### 8. Will any subjects be decisionally impaired so that they may not have the capacity to give consent?

No

#### 9. In certain cases for children over the age of 14, such as UNL students who are 17 or 18, waivers of informed consent can be granted. Would you like to request a waiver of consent?

No

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## 8. Confidentiality & Data

### Description of How Confidentiality will be Maintained

1. The research plan should make adequate provisions to maintain the confidentiality of the data. How will confidentiality of records be maintained?

Confidentiality will be maintained as follows: data will only be kept by the primary investigator at a secure server at his place of employment. Data will be coded and names will be removed from the data. A list of names with code names will be kept at a separate location in the primary investigator's office separate from the collected data. Interview notes will kept in the home of the primary investigator in a secure box.

2. Will individuals be identified during data collection or in the results?

No

3. How long will records be kept?

Records will be kept for two years.

4. Where will records be stored?

Digital data will be stored on the Wayne State College network. This network is password protected.

5. Who has access to the records/data?

The researcher will have access to the records.

6. How will data be reported?

The data will be reported in the form of a dissertation. Parts of the dissertation may be published in academic journals and conference proceedings. The final report may include quotes from participants. However, participant quotes will be kept anonymous through the use of code names.

### Monitoring of data to ensure safety

7. Does this research involve more than minimal risk to participants?

No

## 9. Attachments and Comments

### Copies of questionnaires, survey, or testing instruments:

Interview Protocol  
Interview Observation Protocol  
Informed Consent  
Consent Email  
Invitation Email  
Transcriptionist Confidentiality Statement

### Uploaded Attachments:

Appendix A Interview Protocol.pdf  
Appendix B Interview Observation Protocol.pdf  
ConsentEmail.pdf  
Invitation.pdf  
InformedConsent.pdf  
Transcriptionist Confidentiality Statement.pdf  
Ras Original Protocol.pdf  
InformedConsent-Approved.pdf

### General Comments:

Reviewer: Gerard Ras

Date: 09/25/2010 05:21 pm

Comment: The participants in this study will all be educated and experienced adults. The study focuses on the nature of the work, as well as the necessary skills and abilities, and the general experiences of the participants in this work. This study does not focus on personal behavior and emotions. Neither, does this study ask for confidential information regarding the participant or his or her employer.

Reviewer: Becky Freeman

Date: 10/27/2010 01:03 pm

Comment: Mr. Ras and Dr. Torraco,

Your project has been reviewed as Exempt Category 2 according to the Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Prior to final approval, Dr. Torraco needs to complete the CITI training Refresher course. As soon as this is completed, I can approve your project.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Becky Freeman

472-8127

bfreeman2@unl.edu



## IRB Change Request Form

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (IRB) 312 N. 14th St., 209 Alex West Lincoln, NE 68588-0408(402) 472-6965 Fax (402) 472-6048 irb@unl.edu	<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>  IRB #: IRB Decision Date: Date Received: Code #:
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Project ID: 11261

Project Title: Exploring Global Competence with Managers in India, Japan, and the Netherlands: a Qualitative Study

Principal and Secondary Investigators:

Principal Investigator:	Gerard Ras geras1@wsc.edu 402-375-7464	Secondary Investigator:	Richard Torracco rtorraco1@unl.edu 4024723853
Department:	Department of Educational Administration	Department:	Department of Educational Administration

### 3. Type of Change

MinorChanges

### 4. Description of Proposed Changes:

I will add one method of recruiting participants. This method will consist of an email to UNL students from Japan to be emailed out by the international affairs office of UNL. This method may also be used in the same way with Indian or Dutch students at UNL. If the method is repeated with Indian or Dutch UNL students, the mail would be exactly the same except that the references to the countries would be changed to match the students' backgrounds.

### 5. Justification of Proposed Changes:

The connection of the Japanese students to UNL would make it easier to recruit participants for the study. I had not clearly indicated the method in the initial application, but the opportunity came up to do this. I want to make sure it is OK.

### 6. Are there required Informed Consent form changes?

No

7. Additional Information.

Please upload any additional pertinent information regarding the changes to this project.

Note: If the informed consent form requires revision, a copy of the revised form with the changes highlighted must be attached. Please submit a clean copy on UNL letterhead. If an electronic version is available it can be uploaded as an attachment to this form.

Please upload documents as PDFs.

StudentEmail.pdf

## IRB Change Request Form

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (IRB) 312 N. 14th St., 209 Alex West Lincoln, NE 68588-0408(402) 472-6965 Fax (402) 472-6048 irb@unl.edu	<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>  IRB #: IRB Decision Date: Date Received: Code #:
---	---

Project ID: 11261

Project Title: Exploring Global Competence with Managers in India, Japan, and the Netherlands: a Qualitative Study

### Principal and Secondary Investigators:

Principal Investigator:	Gerard Ras geras1@wsc.edu 402-375-7464	Secondary Investigator:	Richard Torracco rtorraco1@unl.edu 4024723853
Department:	Department of Educational Administration	Department:	Department of Educational Administration

### 3. Type of Change

MinorChanges

### 4. Description of Proposed Changes:

The interview process in the original proposal was accomplished through the use of Skype software over the internet using both video and audio. This change adds a second and simpler method of interviewing. I have found that many companies do not allow Skype software to be installed on their computers. In those cases I would simply interview managers by calling their regular "traditional" phones using Skype myself. This means that everything stays the same on my end of the conversation except that in some interviews I would not have any video contact, only audio contact. On my end I would still call them with Skype. However, on the participant's end they would answer with a regular phone or cell phone without a video component.

### 5. Justification of Proposed Changes:

I have found that many companies do not allow Skype software to be installed on their computers. Often especially Japanese managers prefer to talk without video or they do not have the time to install Skype or connect through Skype. This change is for the convenience of the participants only.

6. Are there required Informed Consent form changes?

Yes

7. Additional Information.

Please upload any additional pertinent information regarding the changes to this project.

Note: If the informed consent form requires revision, a copy of the revised form with the changes highlighted must be attached. Please submit a clean copy on UNL letterhead. If an electronic version is available it can be uploaded as an attachment to this form.

Please upload documents as PDFs.

InformedConsent.pdf



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Reviewer: Becky Freeman  
Date: 11/01/2010 10:14 am  
Comment: SI completed the CITI Refresher. This was only requirement for approval.

Becky

Reviewer: Becky Freeman  
Date: 11/01/2010 10:14 am  
Comment: SI completed CITI refresher. This was the only requirement for approval.

Becky

Reviewer: Becky Freeman  
Date: 11/01/2010 10:17 am  
Comment: Mr. Ras and Dr. Torraco,

Your project has been approved. You are authorized to begin data collection.

1. The approved informed consent form has been uploaded to NUgrant (file with -Approved.pdf in the file name). Please use this form to distribute to participants. If you need to make changes to the informed consent form, please submit the revised form to the IRB for review and approval prior to using it.

Your official approval letter will be emailed to you and uploaded to NUgrant shortly.

Good luck with your research!

Becky Freeman  
472-8127  
bfreeman2@unl.edu

## Appendix D ConsentForm

This form is shown on the following two pages.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IRB# 11261

**Identification of Project:**

Exploring Global Competence with Managers in India, Japan, and the Netherlands

**Purpose of the Research:**

This research project is a qualitative study that will explore the meaning of global competence for managers with global responsibilities in the three countries of India, Japan and the Netherlands. You are invited to participate in this study, because of your work as a global business manager.

**Procedures:**

You will receive an email with eight questions about your experience as a global business professional. You are asked to reply to these questions during a telephone conversation or during a video meeting over the internet using Skype software. You may choose how to do the interview. You will not be asked about company or client confidential information. Your participation will require approximately half an hour of your time. The audio portion of the interview will be recorded digitally.

**Risks and/or Discomforts:**

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

**Benefits:**

The findings of this study can have an impact on the design of training and development programs for managers with global responsibilities. Research is needed to determine ways to adopt training and development programs for global managers to reflect the uniqueness of each manager's cultural and national background. How can we develop global competence without examining it on a global scale? Improvement of global competence education programs is needed to prepare the employees for the continuing process of globalization.

**Confidentiality:**

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the primary investigator's home and will only be seen by the investigator during the study and for three years after the study is complete. Digital data will be stored on a secure server. The information obtained in this study will become part of a dissertation and may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as aggregated data.

**Compensation:**

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

**Opportunity to Ask Questions:**

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. Or you may call the investigator at any time, office phone, (402) 375-7464, or after hours (402) 648-7828. You may also email him at [geras1@wsc.edu](mailto:geras1@wsc.edu). You may also contact Dr. Richard Torracco, office phone (402) 472-3853 or by email at [rtorraco@unlserve.unl.edu](mailto:rtorraco@unlserve.unl.edu).

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or to report any concerns about the study, please contact the UNL Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 or [irb@unl.edu](mailto:irb@unl.edu).



***Freedom to Withdraw:***

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

***Consent:***

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your reply of "Yes" by email certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented.

***Name and Phone number of investigator(s)***

*Gerard J.M. Ras, MBA, Principal Investigator*  
*Richard J. Torracco, Ph.D., Secondary Investigator*

*Office: (402) 375-7464*  
*Office (402) 472-3853*

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## Appendix E Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement

**Transcriptionist Confidentiality Statement**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name of transcriptionist) agree to hold all information contained on audio recorded tapes/ and in interviews received from Gerard Ras primary investigator for Exploring Global Competence with Managers in India, Japan and the Netherlands: a Qualitative Study in confidence with regard to the individual and institutions involved in the research study. I understand that to violate this agreement would constitute a serious and unethical infringement on the informant's right to privacy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Transcriptionist Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator Date