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TOWARDS COSMOPOLITAN OUTLOOK: DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL MINDSET IN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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Abstract

The paper explores the outcomes of development of global mindset in international management students in multicultural learning environment. A comparative analysis was conducted within four international programs, all of which offer international management education in English language for local and international students. The study applies the concepts of cultural knowledge development, global mindset and cosmopolitanism. It presents a typology model of four cultural learning approaches the students are likely to take in their cultural learning and the triggers for such learning. It also provides tentative recommendations for the steps that higher educational institutions (HEIs) and international organizations can take to promote cross-cultural exchange, cultural knowledge creation and individual and organizational global mindset development.

Keywords: global mindset, cosmopolitanism, cultural knowledge creation, international management education, multicultural learning environment

Topic Groups: Management education, training and development, International business, Human resource management and career development

INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty-five years, the comparative advantage of employing the managers and professionals, able to integrate operations over national and cultural borders, coordinate diverse work force and to serve customers with disparate requirements and needs has been recognized both for the global and national firms (Barlett & Ghoshal, 1990). Therefore, the need for the employees of the MNEs, and, thus, the business students, to develop skills to work successful in cross and multicultural environments has also been recognized - the global mindset, or the complex knowledge structure that 'combines an openness to and

awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this diversity' (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001, p. 111).

The international higher educational institutions (IHEIs) attempt to develop the graduates cognitive skills and the awareness of the cultural difference, however, the majority of international business students need practical abilities and skills that prepare them for future careers (Grisby, 2009) as '(t)he increasing globalization and the interconnectedness of multinational work environment have intensified the demand for graduates capable of operating in culturally diverse context' (Jones, 2013, p 95). Yet while international job experience and experience of living in a foreign country, or having a family member for a foreign country appears to relate positively to global mindset (Arora et al., 2004), the international education generally does not positively influence the development of the global mindset (Nummela et al., 2004). It could be due to the fact that IHEIs are more likely to support what Hayden and Thompson (1995) call ideological approach to internationalization of education that merely places the culturally diverse students in the same learning environment, instead of engaging them in meaningful interactions during the education process (Hayden & Thompson, 2000). This study examines the experience of international, local and exchange students in international management programs and describes the process of developing complex cognitive abilities to generate and share cultural knowledge, or a global mindset, as the students experienced and made sense of it. In addition, it presents a typology model, which presents intermediate stages of incomplete development.

THEORY

The terms of 'global mindset' (Rhinesmith, 1992, Levy et al., 2007a, Levy et al., 2007b), global (or globalized) manager (Black et al., 1999), 'transnational mentality' (Barlett & Ghoshal, 1989) or 'transnational manager' (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992) are used mostly in international management literature, and the term 'intercultural competencies' (e.g. Deadroff, 2006, Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) is more commonly applied to education. Maznevski and Lane (2004) define global mindset as the 'ability to develop and interpret criteria for personal and business performance that are independent from the assumptions of a single country, culture, or context; and to implement those criteria appropriately in different countries, cultures and contexts' (172) – while the second part of the implementation might be beyond the present ability of business students or even graduates, the developmental part is consistent with the objectives of the business education programs, as Gupta and Govindarajan (2002, p. 120) suggest that individual development of global mindset is fostered by (a) curiosity (b) explicit and self-conscious articulation of current mindsets (c) exposure to diversity and novelty and (d) a discipline attempt to develop an integrated perspective (120).

According to Beechler and Javidan's (2007) Global Mindset Framework, individuals with global mindset possess global intellectual capital, psychological capital and social capital. Javidan and Teagarden (2011) further elaborate that intellectual capital includes global business savviness, cognitive complexity and cosmopolitan outlook, the psychological capital - passion for diversity, quest for adventure and self-assurance, and social capital - intercultural empathy, interpersonal impact and diplomacy, with the social capital indicators highly correlating with the first two ones. Javidan et al. (2010) expressly state that global capital is the key to global managers' success. Levy et al. (2007) name two main themes - cosmopolitanism and cognitive complexity - in global mindset literature. The cosmopolitans are willing to engage with the others and have 'openness towards divergent cultural

experiences, as search for contrasts rather than uniformity' (Hannerz, 1996, p. 163). Therefore, cosmopolitanism is consistent with intercultural competence, and yet it is more than ability – it is mindset (Kanter, 1995), or an attitude.

The recent research questions the effectiveness of the study abroad programs (Forsey et al., 2012, Koskinen & Tossavainen, 2004), international educational experience (c.f., Ladd & Ruby, 1999, DeVita, 2005) and multicultural learning environments and interaction with international peers (Jon, 2013, Dunne, 2009) in development of global mindset or cultural competence, yet Arora et al. (2004) found that both training in international management and experience of foreign cultures are significant for development of managers' global mindset. It might be because the international experience is commonly used as a 'proxy for global mindset' (Levy et al., 2007b) without examining the process of its development, yet in a dynamic, intercultural environment the individuals come across many a variety of non-linear experiences that can trigger either functional or dysfunctional changes (Bird & Osland, 2004).

METHODS

Design

I used a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) to examine the experience of the international management students in the multicultural learning environments. During the study, I examined both the academic and the social experience of the students, including formal instructions, independent group work, and social events as they all contribute to the process of creating and sharing of cultural knowledge and to the development of the global mindset.

Study Setting

The data was collected from 2007 to 2009 at four undergraduate international business programs: at a University of Applied Science (UAS) in Finland, two business schools in the Czech Republic, and in a university in Ecuador. One of the Czech universities cooperated with a UK college, and the other university with a large US state university. I selected these cases based on the theoretical aspects to 'allow for theoretically interesting comparison' (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 122). English was not a native language for the majority of the enrolled students and the learning environments were multicultural. The national cultures of Finland, the Czech Republic and Ecuador are distant (c.f. Hofstede, 1980) from each other. All the programs were at small HEIs (the graduating class in each school was under 150 students at the time of the study), and all the students had to engage in everyday meaningful academic and social interactions with their cross-cultural peers and to take part in educational process conducted in English language by the mostly international faculty.

Participants

A total of 95 individuals (79 students, 12 faculty member and 4 academic administrators) from 23 countries participated in the semi-structured qualitative interviews. The students were undergraduate full-time degree-seeking international business/management majors.

Data Collection

I combined multiple data collection methods (Eisenhardt, 1989) at each location: semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews, review of organizational materials and the

participant observation. The participant observations took place during classes, social and formal academic events, and in everyday situations of academic life. During the interviews, I asked the students to describe their academic experience and the relationships with peers and faculty. I used the documents to clarify the organizational processes and procedures, as they influenced the students' experience and the academic environment.

Analysis procedures

I analyzed the data collected using the constructivist grounded theory method (GTM) (Charmaz, 2006): in particular, the dimensional analysis (Kools et al., 1996, Schatzman, 1991) – the on-going coding (at the initial, focused and theoretical levels), constant comparison analysis and inductive theory building - to describe and explain the students' experience of, and the approaches to, the development of global mindset. I considered the theoretical themes as the dimensions of the data and used the most salient dimensions for construction of the explanatory matrix, based on the symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). I selected the most prominent dimension is the underlining perspective, from which I analyzed the data. The other dimensions were placed in the matrix as the context, the conditions that influenced actions, process, resulted from the conditions and context, and outcomes, or the consequences.

Early in the analysis process, which took place simultaneously with the data collection, informed by the developing theoretical themes, the *in vivo* code of '*being in that for a long haul*' has emerged and this theoretical code was consistently re-visited in all four schools, although due to the language and cultural differences not in the exact, *in vivo*, phrase. The dimension of the students' attitude to a long term expertise development, a cultural knowledge development rather than a short term learning experience, was consistently present. In addition, the dimension of a socially connected learning community, where the participant engage in long term knowledge sharing has emerged strongly and it had the most explanatory power. The perspective of '*Doing It Our Way*' has the annotation of shared knowledge creation and cosmopolitan outlook, as opposed to adjusting to the school learning or the national culture of the setting. Next, I selected the dimensions that related to this perspective and organized them in the explanatory matrix, presented below. While four different universities addressed the issue of building their academic and social communities in different ways, the various angles were identified and illuminated, and eventually, the data was saturated in the fourth university.

I used Nvivo 10 CAQDAS software to assist me with coding and comparison analyses, as well for the development of the theoretical models. In the findings part below the explanatory matrix from the perspective of '*Doing It Our Way*' presents the contexts, conditions, process and the outcomes as they were experienced and perceived by the participants.

FINDINGS

The main process was identified as cultural knowledge creation, which is consistent with the process-oriented view to the cosmopolitan outlook (Harnerz, 1996) and the consolidation perspectives and knowledge across domains (Jeannet, 2000), as well as the definition of the global mindset as a knowledge structure (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001).

Figure 1: The explanatory matrix presented from the perspective of 'Doing it Our Way'

Context	Multicultural learning environment	
	Local cultural and social environment	
Conditions	Individual	Curiosity
		Motivation
		Social capital
		Trust
	Learning environment	Supportive
		Not supportive
Processes	Cultural knowledge creation	
Consequences	Developing strategies	Tourist
		Ambassador
		Chameleon
		Cosmopolitan

The process took place in the context of multicultural learning environment as well as in the local cultural and social environments, which in all four cases happened to be a multicultural large city, and a capital one in the first three cases (Helsinki, Prague and Guayaquil). In addition to the intense and constant interactions with their peers and instructors, the students mentioned that their social and private lives, outside the university, are also characterized by cross-cultural interactions and in turn, by cultural knowledge creation and sharing, even for the local students and residents. The most salient individual conditions that emerged from the data were curiosity, motivation, social capital and trust. The level of these qualities and abilities the students possess and the extent to which they are able to develop these qualities further, influence the final developing strategy, or the consequences/outcomes of the cultural knowledge development process.

In addition, the level to which the HEI administration supported the students' development, by creating the favorable condition for the social interaction inside and outside the class and thus the shared knowledge creation contributed to the strategy selected by the students: a long-term, consistent and socially shared knowledge development, or a cosmopolitan strategy was most likely to be attempted in a supportive social environment.

THE PERSONAL CONDITIONS

Curiosity

Not surprisingly, the curiosity, or an interest in other cultures (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002), was consistently mentioned by participants in all settings, as the desire to find out more of the way of life, doing business or the prevailing attitudes. Curiosity is consistent to the openness to experience, valuing diversity and respecting the other cultures. The students who decided to study international management in cross-cultural and multicultural learning environments, can be expected to possess curiosity in other cultures.

Motivation

The motivation as process of a goal directed voluntary behavior controlled by the individual (Vroom, 1964) is consistent with knowledge development. All the participants stated that one of the main goals of education was the preparation for international business and

management careers, for which cultural competence or global mindset is essential and expressed a desire to engage in such development (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). However, some of the participants, mostly, but not only, exchange students, found the entertainment value of the study abroad sojourn to be more important - they were more likely to visit tourist attractions and socialize within their own group rather than engage in building long-term networks in their academic environments.

Social Capital

The social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network' (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 248) is beneficial for knowledge creation and sharing (Beechler & Javidan, 2007); however, it is particularly challenging to access and develop in a new and foreign cultural environment. However, the excessive social capital, or closed 'bonding' networks (Putman, 2001) is not conducive for knowledge creation. Therefore, there is a delicate balance between the strength of one ties and the ability to create new ones and thus extend the knowledge sharing network – since '(w)weak ties provide people with access to information and resources beyond those available in their own social circle; but strong ties have greater motivation to be of assistance and are typically more easily available.' (Granovetter, 1983, p. 209). The participants who were able and willing to build networks, were expected to stay in touch with their classmates and faculty, were planning to access their academic networks for business and professional purposes were also more likely to develop and share cultural knowledge among their peers.

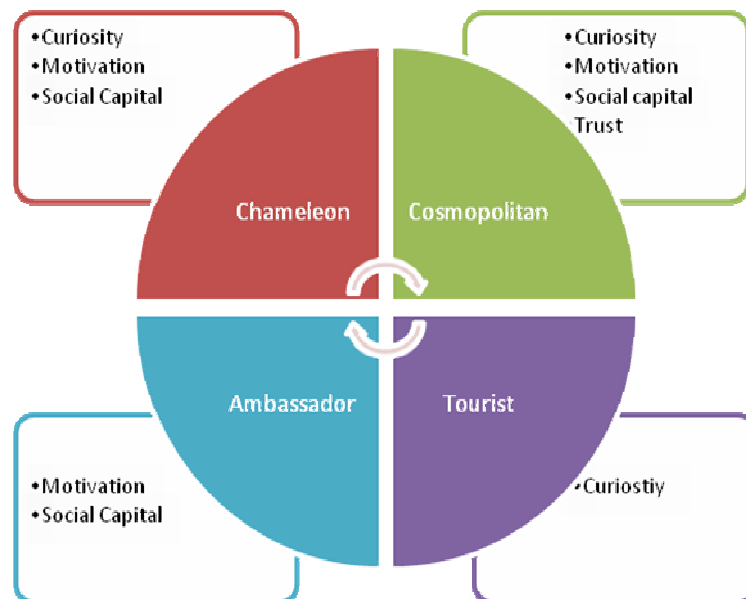
Trust

Trust, as an *in vivo* code of '*trusting teachers*', '*trusting students*', '*trusting each other*', '*trusting others*' and '*trusting the school administration*' was consistently used by the participants in the sense of 'the intention to accept willingness to be vulnerability based upon positive expectation of the intentions or behavior of another' (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). To develop social capital, one has to be willing and able to trust, yet of such intention can be can depend on the appropriateness of the decisions. 'Wise or prudent trust decisions enhance our reservoir of individual social capital; conversely, poor decisions deplete it' (Kramer, 2009, p. 69). The ability, the desire and the appropriateness of the decision to extend trust to their peers, the administration and the others was the main personal conditions that resulted in the successful adoption of the cosmopolitan learning strategy and subsequent development of the global mindset by the student participants.

Developing Strategy

The following model, presented in Figure 2, illustrates the four cultural knowledge development strategies and the personal conditions that were likely to lead to the adoption of the strategy.

Figure 2: Students' cultural knowledge developing strategies



Tourist

Tourists have a curiosity about a new culture, yet they are unlikely to engage in a long-term cultural knowledge creation and sharing process. They have little interest in adaptation to new cultural conditions: tourists look for thrills and exotic adventures and their reference group tends to consist of the members of their own culture, sometime those who stay at home and are connected through social media or other means of telecommunication. They are clear on their own values and use other cultures just as an adventure and experience, not an equal or valuable choice of values.

The most important thing is that I managed to visit Santa Claus in Finland. (Edite, exchange student, School A)

While such statement can be considered humorous and even cute, the fact that many of the exchange students in School A that participated in the interviews did not seem to form an opinion about the program, could not think how they could use the social networks created in the program in the future, and during the breaks in class discussed shopping trips and night clubs more often than anything else, seems to indicate that they perceive their time in School A as a vacation from the real studies back at home, not an opportunity to develop their cultural and business knowledge.

Some students even jeopardize their educational process and personal safety in order to gain such an experience, putting themselves in potentially dangerous situations of being attached or being exposed to hostile environment. They often refer to the local residents as 'real people', perceiving their classmates to be unreal – too privileged, too cosmopolitan, not exotic enough.

Ambassador

Ambassador strategy is used by participants that believed that it was their goal, or even a moral duty to promote their own culture, either as part of their professional duties (*Brian,*

international teacher, School D), or in their role as international exchange students (*Fang, Mai and Zhen, School A*) or as the hosts (*Luisa, School C*) who should educate visitors on the local culture. It should be pointed out that the forceful position of promoting their own cultural values did not necessarily seem to preclude ambassadors from learning about the other cultures and even applying such knowledge as appropriate, but it did take a back seat to the advocating the values of their cultures and they tend not to engage in collaborative learning and sharing. If they realize that there is little interest among their peers in their home culture, they can become withdrawn and upset (*Ken, international student, School B*), but still do not try to find a common ground or expend their knowledge.

'I don't understand why Finns are not interested in China more – it's the country of the future, it has so many opportunities!' (*Mai, international student, School A*) In such situation this strategy can become dysfunctional.

Chameleon

Chameleon is the strategy of a surface, shallow adjustment of their social behavior. In most locations it is possible for a foreigner to blend in and not to draw attention to one's otherness. The main characteristic of chameleon strategy is a blind mimicking of behavior or voicing an attitude without an attempt to reconcile it with one's personal values or adjust the behavior to one's personality and preferences.

Two students in School C while reporting feeling comfortable in the city and enjoying their studies, but they were bewildered by the attitude of their classmates toward peer evaluations – when asked to evaluate other students' presentations in class, these two students gave everyone an A *'because they wanted to be nice to their classmates'* and so they were upset that the classmates did not reciprocate and both of them ended up with an average of C. When asked whether the grade was fair, they both agreed that it might be, but that was not the point – if a teacher had given them such grade, they would not complain or even be surprised, but their own classmates! *'And we even went to lunch with them many times'* (*Dimitrios and Niko, international students, School C*). Their classmates actually put on their evaluations (group evaluation) that both of the students do the work well, easy to cooperate with, but cannot stand any critique and take it personally. So in short, the chameleons successfully intermingle with their social environment, however either cannot, or do not attempt, to understand the values that govern the behavior and to create a shared understanding and knowledge.

Cosmopolitan

This strategy is a long-term development strategy that utilizes expertise development with high intensity and collaborative learning. The learners that successfully employ this strategy often (but not always) come from cross-cultural family backgrounds or travelled a lot during their forming years, are often in relationships with partners from other cultures and have plans for moving on to new cultural challenges - *'I can move anywhere'* (*Goran, international student, School C*). Another important characteristic of successful cosmopolitans is their intention to share knowledge with other learners and to arrive to common understanding and cooperation. Student participants who use cosmopolitan strategy also recognize the need for collaboration and support, not only for students but for instructors and like to participate in support groups, social networks and other forms of cooperation (*Ana, local student, School D*). They are often proactive in arranging international activities on campus, like research seminar (*Alejandro, local student School D*) or student led enterprises (*Leah,*

international student, School B) to improve quality of their education and student life and are very clear on the need for long-term intense collaboration to further develop global mindset. A crucial factor that separates them from those who practice chameleon strategy is a large social capital. They have wide social networks and are actively involved in social and academic life; on the other hand, they often have specific and constructive suggestions of how the cultural learning experience of others can be improved and express willingness to participate in these improvement projects.

DISCUSSION

The main theoretical themes have emerged from the data by the process of compassion and dimensional: 'Doing it our way' – collaborative, social and gradual aspects of the knowledge sharing and creation.

The participants' attitudes to cultural knowledge creation are consistent with the practice of acquiring global mindsets in business environment (Rhinesmith 1992) and such development takes place in social networks, therefore, the contexts and social activities are central for the global mindset and knowledge creation (Holden & Glisby, 2010). In addition, it supports the construct of the cultural sense making process of building joint frames (Bird & Osland, 2006), where the learners gradually identify novel cultural situations, scan for conflicting interpretations, and reconcile the disparate explanations. In addition, such approach is consistent with the process of cultural knowledge creation in team, described by Skobleva (2008) – the team-members build on their shared knowledge to create new cultural and business knowledge in multicultural and cross-cultural environments. The students seem to possess the global mindset, as demonstrated by their consideration of the international opportunities both for educational purposes and for future careers and enterprises, and, although their attitudes were pragmatic, they did engage in cosmopolitan learning (Rizvi 2008) albeit on a limited scale. The process was similar in all four settings (schools): the differences were in the degree of the student development.

The main limitations of the study are consistent with qualitative constructivist approach to theory building, as it has a subjective, interpretive and explanatory nature of the inquiry. Neither causal relationship, nor generalization to a large context can be drawn from the findings, however, the study does provide a understanding and sense-making of the process as it was experienced by the participants.

CONCLUSIONS

The cosmopolitan strategy or the global mindset is consistent with Skobleva's (2008) model of knowledge development that stresses shared goals, symmetrical shared knowledge and novel solutions to common problems. While such team work is possible in a course group projects, the long terms approach to expertise development promoted by Ericsson and colleagues (Ericsson et al., 1993 and Ericsson, 2007) requires an embedded approach to development, faculty participation as mentors and advisors and a systematic commitment of the HEI to assist students in development of trust and building a social and professional networks.

IMPLICATIONS

The HEIs should pay more attention to the social aspects of educational process and assist the students in development of social networks. The global, embedded approach that

stresses the long-term expertise development is more likely to be more effective than one-on-one course or even a short term immersing cultural experience. The school should create positive conditions for social network in and outside the class, as organized social, academic and professional events, clubs, and activities. Faculty should act as mentors and advisors and to provide safe place where students can build trust, social capital and networks.

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