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## Important Components Needed in Today's Global Society From a Cross-Cultural Perspective

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Important Components Needed in Today's Global Society  
From a Cross-Cultural Perspective

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**Abstract**

This article reviews the extent to which individuals from different geocultural regions view and identify affective components perceived to be important in today's global society. Various regions of the world were categorized to ensure equivalent participation around the world. Eight geocultural regions were identified to compare responses by geographical regions to obtain information on possible differences. A questionnaire was administered to respondents in the eight geocultural regions to obtain their perceptions of important affective components needed in today's global society. Based on this study, there were at least nine different affective components perceived to be important in today's global society. All of the nine affective components were perceived to be important in all the geocultural regions. The component *adaptability* had the overall highest rating and *curiosity* the overall lowest rating.

## Global Competence and Culture

Numerous international educators (American Council on International Intercultural Education (ACIIE) and the Stanley Foundation, 1997; Bennett, 1993; Chen & Starosta, 2000, Dearthoff, 2004; Hett, 1993; Hunter, 2004; Merriam & Associates, 2007; Olson & Kroeger, 2001; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2003; Reimers, 2008; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1998; Wilkinson, 2006; Winn, 2003) have discussed the term "global competence" to determine what knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and experience are necessary to become globally competent. When comparing the definitions and descriptions proposed, there has been little commonality among the terms. In most cases, the assumptions and results have been American based. As a result, much of the research may have been confounded by ethnocentric influences with a Western perspective.

Research on the concept of global competence from a theoretical perspective shows little or no consensus and various arguments support a diversity of opinion (Hunter, 2004). Despite this, most of the researchers and theorists agree with the concept that knowledge of culture is a component of global competence. The range within the literature of global competence extends from a narrow perspective on citizenship to a more encompassing view of intercultural competence.

Focusing on this latter point, as Snyder, James, and Fredriksson (2008) mentioned, the skill sets needed by a global citizen have changed, "because of our interconnectedness we, as citizens, have the opportunity, power, and responsibility to use our connections in ways that bring about positive change and development globally, not just locally" (p.1).

Dearthoff (2004) demonstrated in her research that cross-cultural competence must include the ability to function according to the cultural rules of more than one cultural system and have the ability to respond in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways according to the cultural demands of the given situation. She also noted that intercultural competence includes the ability to successfully communicate and effectively collaborate with people of other cultures through a recognition of differences and a mutual respect for one another's points of view.

Hunter's (2004) research resulted in both a working definition of the term global competency, as well as a proposed curricular plan. The working definition proposed by Hunter (2004) for the term global competence, which he frequently mentions in his writings, includes an open mind actively seeking to understand the culture and expectations of others.

Olson and Kroeger's (2001) definition of the term *global competence* is "a globally competent person who has enough substantive knowledge, perceptual understanding, and intercultural communication skills to effectively interact in our globally interdependent world" (p. 117).

From a cross-cultural perspective there had been no defining research which had explicitly sought to identify the affective components needed in a global society as viewed across multiple cultural regions. Cross-cultural in this instance refers to responses from all of the identified geocultural regions. This study included the following research questions: (1) what affective components are perceived to be important from a cross-cultural perspective? (2) are there differences in these perceptions of affective

components from a cross-cultural perspective?

Global experts in the field of education collaborated and developed a data collection instrument to investigate individuals in eight world regions to identify affective components perceived to be important in today's global society.

According to this study, culture is a particular set of socially learned skills, ways of understanding, and modes of feeling, shared by relatively large numbers of individuals who share commonalities related to ethnicities, skills, attitudes, knowledge, heritage, language, and religion.

The impact of the American culture across the world can be seen in American-owned businesses found in most major cities in the world, dominating the market in their respective categories, as well as in American-made movies, television shows, and music videos being shown on a higher percentage of screens around the world than local film productions (Hunter, 2004). In addition, American colleges and universities are still seeing a surge in applications by international students from countries such as China (Steinburg, 2011) and many Middle-Eastern countries (Heavey, 2013).

Today, global cooperation is necessary due to the growing complexities and interdependencies in the world. The world is becoming smaller because of technological advances and ease of travel, as well as the impact of an internationally interdependent economy, unprecedented levels of migration, and a continuous stream of information between individuals of differing cultures circulating the planet (Friedman, 2005).

Living in an interconnected world and sharing global views has prompted some researchers to suggest a cautious path: West (1996) posits that the problem with the concept of a shared global view is that people too often accept that it means that all people share the same world but view it differently. In fact, people learn that there may be fundamentally different worlds to view. To be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992, p. 416).

Merriam and Associates (2007) suggested a number of reasons why citizens in today's global society should pay attention to systems of learning and knowing other than the Western perspective (in particular the Americanized system), and how knowledge of those systems might broaden one's understanding of important global components from a cross-cultural perspective. Cahill and Collard (2003) recount how they came to realize that Aboriginal people of Western Australia learned by watching and listening rather than asking questions. They suggest that not understanding another cultural perspective can lead to marginalization and oppressing others. Another example of how familiarity with other worldviews can impact today's life as a global citizen is having an understanding of how differently many Asians view aspects of learning. Their reticence to question or speak out in class is due to years of training that speaking out might cause someone to lose face. The accepted strategy is then to approach the teacher outside class. Confucius (551-479 BCE) wrote: "He who knows, does not speak; he who speaks, does not know" (Nisbett, 2003, p. 211). In Asia, silence is used as an indication of strength (Liu, 2001). Sharing something personal is seen as a sign of weakness. In contrast, the Western perspective is characterized more towards hierarchy, independence, and separation (Wang, 2006).

In the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Schwab (2014) stated: "The

reshaping of our world requires professionals to develop a transformational mindset and constantly update their knowledge. However, this knowledge is becoming increasingly difficult to attain through traditional means, precisely due to the growing complexity, velocity and uncertainty in the world" (p. 1).

According to Cohen (2007), the enemies of globalization, whether they denounce the exploitation of poor countries by rich ones or the imposition of Western values on traditional cultures, see the new world economy as forcing a system on people who do not want it. Cohen argues that the truth of the matter may be the reverse. "Globalization, thanks to the speed of twenty-first-century communications, shows people a world of material prosperity that they do want—a vivid world of promises that have yet to be fulfilled. For the most impoverished developing nations, globalization remains only an elusive image, a fleeting mirage" (p. 6). Cohen further argues that the means of communication, the media, never before have created such a global consciousness, and never have economic forces lagged so far behind expectations.

Cohen (2007) cautions not to consider globalization as an accomplished fact because of what has yet to happen. There are unfulfilled promises of prosperity because globalization has so many enemies in the contemporary world. For the poorest countries of the world, the problem is not so much that they are exploited by globalization as that they are forgotten and excluded (p. 166).

Reimers (2009) predicted, "Schools and universities around the world are not adequately preparing ordinary citizens to understand the nature of global challenges" (p. 24). According to Reimers, schools need to effectively develop tolerance, knowledge of global affairs and an understanding of these global challenges, and a commitment to peace. The failure to develop these skills will contribute to growing conflicts.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This research was grounded in the work of Bennett (1993) and his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and Bonnemaïson's (2005) views about culture. Bennett (2004) noted that one aspect of global education is having an understanding of the perspectives that have previously been unfamiliar or are not currently held by that person or culture. He asserted that growing up in a culture, individuals are conditioned to certain biases that allow them to share cultural harmony with their countrymen, but which simultaneously may be disharmonious with other cultures. It is those cultural sensitivities that are likely to have an effect on how individuals develop their sense of global competence. Bennett's model provides a broad outline of elements geared to helping individuals increase their sensitivity to cultural differences.

Also grounding the theoretical framework of this research was the position by Bonnemaïson (2005) that what actually constitutes culture diverges widely among the experts. Specifically, Bonnemaïson believes that "Culture is what remains when everything else has been explained . . . . This mysterious remnant is what motivates people, what makes them run; yet it cannot be measured" (p. 54). In Bonnemaïson's view, "Culture is an intangible factor related to human freedom and creativity. Although culture cannot be reduced entirely to rational analysis, this does not mean that one should disregard intelligent thinking in order to understand cultural phenomena" (p. 54).

### **Affective Components and Geocultural Regions and Subcategories**

To understand the result in this study, explanations for some of the terms used in the research are needed, specifically, affective component, geocultural region, and regional subcategories. The following terms were the operational definitions.

Since the intent in this research was to identify *affective components*, the emotional and affective areas within an individual, the research was especially sensitive to the views expressed by Gardner (1983), Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002), and Pink (2006). They and others espoused that social intelligence is a primary affective component needed for global competence from a cross-cultural perspective.

According to Gardner (1983), the capacity to know oneself and to know others is an inalienable part of the human condition and deserves to be investigated no less than other forms of intelligences and competencies. As previously noted, there has been little commonality among researchers when comparing definitions and terms of global competence, but various researchers are in agreement, as globalization continues to confront the world with new challenges, that each citizen will need a wide range of competencies in order to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world.

Goleman (2007) compared the basis of emotional intelligence to social intelligence. Whereas emotional intelligence includes self-awareness and self-regulation, social intelligence emphasizes social awareness and relationship to others. Rose (2013) asserts that an individual's emotion is a much more powerful influence on behaviour than was once recognized. "Contrary to what we've long believed, modern neuroscience has shown that there is no such thing as purely rational thought or behaviour" (p. 8). It ensures that having friends, or at least preventing complete isolation, will affect an individual's life in a positive way. Empathy, being one component, is very different when comparing feeling empathy and showing it.

Several researchers have considered *tolerance of ambiguity* as a major trait needed to function in the societal world. Ambiguous situations are perceived as desirable, challenging and interesting, usually by individuals who embrace less known situations, seeks sensations and risk-taking behaviour (McLain, 1993, 2009).

The concept of *tolerance of ambiguity* was originally developed by Frenkel-Brunswik (1948), and has since then attracted researchers from all over the world. Frenkel-Brunswik (1948) conducted a case study where she interviewed individuals high or low in their *tolerance for ambiguity*, which she concluded by defining as an "emotional and perceptual personality variable".

Subsequently, Budner (1962) studied intolerance for ambiguity as a personal variable, in which he defined *tolerance for ambiguity* as "tendency to perceive ambiguous situations as desirable," (p. 29), whereas intolerance for ambiguity was defined as a threat. According to Budner, an ambiguous situation is one in which the individual is provided with information that is too complex, inadequate, or apparently contradictory.

Norton (1975) defined *tolerance of ambiguity* as, "one in which the individual is provided with information that is too complex, inadequate, or apparently contradictory" (p. 607). Wilkinson (2006), a leading proponent of *tolerance for ambiguity* research,

believes that the way people think and perceive the world changes their relationship with ambiguity, risk, and uncertainty. To be *tolerant of ambiguity* is to embrace complexity, chaos, constant change, fuzzy boundaries, and risk-taking of the emerging world.

Francois (2010) suggested glocal education as a framework to nurture tolerance for ambiguity. He defined glocal education as “education policies and practices that provide students, faculty members, and higher education administrators a melding globalized and localized perspective of the world, through integration of global opportunities and the protection of local assets, traditions, values, and beliefs” (p. 252). Further, Francois (2012), asserted that transcultural integration can foster tolerance for ambiguity in modern society, because of its implications for transcultural competence, defined as “the ability to engage in intercultural interactions that transcend standards of cross-cultural differences and similarities through alternative space creation that is safer for both integration and questioning” (p. 10).

The *geocultural regions* consist of eight cultural areas of the world defined by geographical area with similar cultural attributes, which may include religion, language, cultural outlook, and other attributes.

For purposes of this research, eight geocultural regions were included: Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, North America, South/Latin America, Oceania, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the geocultural region map.

In two of the geocultural regions (Asia and Oceania), *subcategories* (or subcultures) were identified to determine whether these areas were similar or different based on culture, history, geography, and other related areas. Asia subcategories included: Indic, encompassing the countries of India, Pakistan, and Nepal; Sino-Japanese, encompassing China, Japan, and Korea; Slavic, encompassing Russia and many of the countries previously under the influence of the USSR; and Southeast Asia, encompassing Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Oceania subcategories included: Austral European (Australia, New Zealand), and Insular Oceanic (all of the islands formally located in the areas of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia). For additional information on the rationale behind the creation of these geocultural regions and subcategories, see Wallenberg-Lerner (2013a) and Wallenberg-Lerner and James (2012).



Figure 1. Geocultural region map.

## Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which individuals in different geocultural regions view and identify affective components perceived to be important in today's global society. It focused on the extent to which cross-cultural affective components exist, and how important they are to individuals around the world.

To obtain the list of affective components, various expert panels over several rounds of feedback were asked to provide validation. The panels represented individuals from the eight identified cultural regions of the world. They all had expertise in the field of cross-cultural education, adult education, educational measurement and research, and/or foreign relations. These experts all had higher education degrees and were working with cross-cultural issues. They had also lived in more than one culture for an extended period of time. The members were asked to help identify the needed affective components and to provide feedback on the appropriateness of each item and its wording. One of the initial panels suggested retaining only descriptions of the affective components, rather than including full definitions. The reason was that some of the non-Western panel members believed that the definitions represented a Western perspective and, therefore, might not be understood by individuals in all of the different geocultural regions and subcategories. Nine affective components were identified. See Table 1 for a final listing of affective components and their descriptions.

The list of affective components and a background information form for placing individuals in a geocultural region were subsequently sent to individuals who acted as intermediaries. The intermediaries were individuals in each region who were willing to send the list and background form to individuals that they knew personally who could speak/read English sufficiently to respond to the survey. More specifically, they were asked to send the survey link to as many individuals as possible in their own region as well as other regions.

The target population of this study was individuals with varying experiences from the eight geocultural regions. Possible respondents were identified through professional and personal contacts and convenient access to individuals from other cultures. Each geocultural region and subcategories included a minimum of  $n=20$  individuals.

All individuals participating had to be proficient enough in English and sufficiently educated to respond appropriately to the questionnaire. Four hundred twenty-three individuals responded to the request. All of the geocultural regions and subcategories were represented in the results. Although the majority of respondents were from Europe ( $n=108$ ) and North America ( $n=53$ ), each region and subcategory had a minimum of 20 responses.



Table 1.

*Affective Component Description List by the Final Panel*

Component	Description
Adaptability	Ability to handle change or be able to manage differences in diverse cultures and environments.
Connectedness	Ability to encourage understanding across different cultures
Cross-cultural social intelligence	Ability to understand the feelings, thoughts, actions, and perspectives of others from different cultures
Curiosity	Being interested in learning more about people and customs from different cultures
Empathy	Ability to understand the feelings and perceptions of others without having/wanting to adopt them personally
Non-ethnocentric	Willingness to objectively welcome different cultures and experience them without judgment
Self-assurance	Trust and confidence in yourself and your own ideas and values when getting involved with other cultures
Self-awareness	Ability to understand your own feelings and thoughts while involving yourself in different cultures
Tolerance for ambiguity	Ability to accept and practice differences in other cultures even if there is more than one interpretation

## Results

Based on the responses to the survey, all the geocultural regions and subcategories reported that the identified affective components were rated of high importance over all regions. All the mean scores were based on a six-point scale. The highest overall mean was 5.45 for Adaptability. The next highest means were Connectedness ( $M=5.20$ ) and Cross-cultural Social Intelligence ( $M=5.16$ ). Self-awareness ( $M=5.09$ ) was followed by Non-ethnocentric ( $M=5.04$ ). The Empathy mean was 5.02 while the Self-assurance mean was 4.99. The two lowest mean scores were Tolerance of Ambiguity ( $M=4.11$ ) and Curiosity ( $M=4.01$ )

Table 2

*Overall Mean Ratings of Affective Component Descriptions*

Affective Component	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Adaptability	5.45	0.76
Cross-cultural social intelligence	5.16	0.91
Connectedness	5.20	0.89
Curiosity	4.01	0.32
Empathy	5.02	0.96
Non-ethnocentric	5.04	0.96
Self-assurance	4.99	0.99
Self-awareness	5.09	0.95
Tolerance for Ambiguity	4.11	0.54

*Note.*  $N=423$ ; based on a 6-point scale

In order to identify the association between affective component (within-subjects factor) and geocultural region (between-subjects factor) and the main variable of importance rating for each affective component, an analysis was conducted using repeated measures ANOVA for main effects of both affective components and geocultural region subcategory and their interaction. The repeated measures ANOVA summary table for geocultural region and subcategory and affective component is provided in Table 3.

The result for the geocultural region main effect was significant,  $F(11, 411)=2.15$ ,  $p < .001$ . Similarly, the affective component main effect was significant,  $F(8, 3288)=176.62$ ,  $p < .001$ . Geocultural region and subcategory and affective component interaction was also found to be significant,  $F(88, 3288)=2.04$ ,  $p < .001$ . The effect size of these observed significant differences was measured. Several standardized measures of effect gauge the strength of the association between a predictor (or set of predictors) and the dependent variable. The effect size estimates facilitate the comparison of findings in

Table 3.

*Repeated Measures ANOVA Summary Table*

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>G-G</i>
Geocultural Region	11	62.45	5.68	2.15	0.02	
Error	411	1082.92	2.63			
Affective Component	8	740.30	92.53	176.62	0.0001	0.0001
GCRxAC	88	93.96	1.07	2.04	0.0001	0.0001
Error	3288	1722.60	0.52			

$N= 423$ , significance level = .05 GCR = Geocultural Region and subcategory; AC = Affective Component.

this study. Following the results, it was determined that the effect size,  $\eta^2$  (*eta-squared*), for the main effect for geocultural regions was 0.57. This was a large effect size. The *eta-squared* describes the ratio of variance explained in the dependent variable by geocultural region while controlling for other factors in the model. However, it is a biased estimate of the variance explained by the model in the population. It estimates only the effect size in the sample. The type II error associated with the study was estimated to be about 0.29. As such, the power for the geocultural regions and subcategories was about 0.71. This is considered a medium power.

Also, to determine if there were significant differences between the four subcategories of Asia (Indic, Sino-Japanese, Slavic, Southeast Asia) and the two subcategories of Oceania (Austral European and Insular Oceanic), repeated measures ANOVAs were used to test for differences between the subcategories of Asia and the subcategories of Oceania. There were no significant differences between the subcategories, but there were significant differences among the geocultural regions and subcategories. The results identified significant differences on three of the nine affective components: *empathy*, *self-assurance*, and *self-awareness*. Some of the observations evident in the Dunn's test results revealed that overall, the Caribbean as a geocultural region scored significantly lower on *empathy*, *self-assurance*, and *self-awareness*. On *empathy*, Sino-Japanese ( $M=5.23$ ), Europe ( $M=5.07$ ), and North America ( $M=5.21$ ) had significantly higher mean importance ratings than the Caribbean geocultural region ( $M=4.40$ ). On the *self-assurance* component, Europe ( $M=5.13$ ), North America ( $M=5.32$ ) and Sub-Saharan Africa ( $M=5.28$ ) had significantly higher importance ratings than the Caribbean geocultural region ( $M=4.20$ ). *Self-awareness* had the largest number of significant pairwise mean differences. The regions and subcategories of Austral European, Insular Oceanic, Indic, Sino-Japanese, Southeast Asia, Europe, North American and Sub-Saharan Africa all had means that were significantly higher than the Caribbean. The Caribbean respondents perceived several of the affective components to be of lower importance than the other geocultural regions and subcategories. In this sample ( $n=25$ ), the respondents had significantly lower mean ratings for the affective components: *empathy*, *self-assurance*, and *self-awareness*.

## Conclusions

All of the nine identified affective components were perceived to be important in all the geocultural regions and subcategories, meaning that they have some universal applicability. There were, however, differences found in several of the affective components, indicating some differences between geocultural regions and subcategories.

The data indicated that one of the groups of respondents had a demographic profile that differed somewhat from the profile of the respondents in general, as well as most of the other geocultural regions and subcategories. A majority of the respondents from the Caribbean region were men in their late 40s to late 50s who were businessmen. Whether the demographics of 40-50 year old Caribbean males impacted the results was not known. Another speculation about the reasons behind the lower means could be that the Caribbean region had a unique setting with boundaries based on water; however, the opinions of this group of people were not bounded just by water because of origin,

colonization, and backgrounds within region.

Asia subcategory responses were similar, which supported the notion that Asia can be considered a single region for purposes of affective component research. Oceania subcategory responses were similar, which also supported the notion that Oceania can be considered a single region for purposes of affective component research.

The component *tolerance for ambiguity* had a low rating overall. This was the component that respondents had the most difficulty in understanding in relation to the description and wording. It remains unknown if that impacted the importance rating.

Affective competence is a complex construct that appears to involve more than one component. For this research at least nine different affective components were needed in order for one to be a culturally competent individual in today's global society.

### **Implications**

It is possible that the research and the instrument developed may be used to better understand which cross-cultural affective components are perceived as necessary in today's global society from a cross-cultural perspective. The implications drawn from the findings of this study include suggestions for researchers, government agencies, policymakers, educators, and corporations. New programs from an affective level may be one possible outcome, as is discovering how these affective components can help educational policymakers and practitioners to create developmentally appropriate learning objectives, curriculum, and assessments. Identifying the components and their importance by individuals from a cross-cultural perspective might help with an understanding of a shared dimension. Ultimately, the exploration of affective components from a cross-cultural perspective raises the question of how they can be part of making global competence a policy priority for mass education systems.

Researchers conducting cross-cultural studies within the affective area might gain insight into how most cultures in the world share similar values related to the need for affective components in today's global society. This study might provide them with more insight into the identified affective components perceived to be important from a cross-cultural perspective.

Government agencies concerned with international policies when focusing and developing their own policies with the intent to foster greater levels of cooperation between nations may develop the policies with an expressed purpose to appeal to specific cultural differences as they relate to affective processes and to the leadership that they address in the specific culture. The preference for specific affective processes may influence their ability to define and guide their efforts at global relationship development. Given the finding that a general state of affective universal value does exist cross-culturally, with respect to how humans conduct interpersonal relationship building, one might naturally wonder why terrorist attacks and global conflicts in the last decade have taken more than three and a half million lives around the world and why so many of them were unarmed civilians.

Educators could focus on developing a curriculum that helps students with different cultural backgrounds to foster and develop similar values and priorities for specific affective processes. Their preferences for these specific affective processes might

impact their ability to maximize their human potential in respect to academic and/or career challenges. The importance of affective competence is still evolving and has increased over time, so it behooves educators to revisit institutional definitions and the importance of it on a regular basis to keep definitions current and relevant.

The terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008, Benghazi in 2012, the American drone attack on a Muslim cleric in Yemen 2011, and the bombing in Boston 2013 during the marathon, raise several questions. First, in what ways did the education of these perpetrators shape such hatred that brought them to take the lives of unarmed civilians? Second, how were the many individuals (parents, teachers, employers, etc.) who enabled these perpetrators educated? In which ways were those views shaped by teachings of history and geography that fostered limited and intolerant views towards their neighbors? Lastly, to what extent has the education of citizens worldwide prepared them to understand the sources of these attacks, their potential consequences and the likelihood of growing global instability resulting from these attacks, and to think about appropriate courses of action for the global community? "What may be viewed as terrorism to some individuals may be viewed as fighting for freedom to others, depending which part of the world they identify with" (Wallenberg-Lerner, 2013b, p. 1).

Another implication could be to create a global agenda for how to prepare future citizens to understand (a) what was behind these conflicts, (b) what the consequences were, and (c) how world peace or global stability could result from these conflicts by understanding each other better? According to Reimers (2009), the first dimension includes attitudes, values, and skills that reflect an openness, interest, and positive perception of the variations of human cultural differences.

Corporations may focus on (a) developing work assignments and career paths that help their employees foster and develop similar values and priorities across cultures for specific affective processes; (b) individual preferences for affective processes that impact the ability to maximize the human potential in respect to academic and/or job challenges; and (c) to what extent should employers attempt to modify the work setting to address cultural differences.

The implications from this study might include curricula development, policy development, and new research about the need for affective components as important competencies in today's global society. It could inform world leaders in different cultures of the importance of cross-cultural dialogue, understanding, and acceptance of different views about common challenges for humanity. Global strategies might address the development of affective components as an important competence in a variety of ways (i.e., course work, study abroad, on-campus interaction with students from different cultural backgrounds, etc.) as well as the actual process for acquiring affective competence.

### **Recommendations For Further Research**

A longitudinal study would complement this study's design by investigating changes over time and providing information about individual changes in the development of affective components in today's global society. Additional research based on the age of the individuals could be undertaken. As globalization continues and

new challenges arise, each individual will need a wide range of key competencies to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world where the age of participants might prove to be more relevant than in the past because of the rapid rate of technological change and innovation. The speed of 21<sup>st</sup> century communications tends to amplify the differences that occur in individual lives as a result of this accelerated rate of change. For example, the difference between individuals between 20-30 years old may have a greater impact than individuals between 70-80 years of age who may not embrace these changes readily. The world may not look the same for younger individuals as for those who are older, because youth tend to embrace change.

This research made no attempt to compare responses based on education level. Additional research on educational level may reveal whether there are cross-cultural differences based on this variable.

It is also recommended that future research examine if differences in the perceptions of affective components in education, government, and/or corporations exist.

Another area on which to focus the study of affective components would be to have a more equal distribution of respondents from the geocultural regions and subcategories in the sampling. The sample size could be increased for some geocultural regions.

The researcher in this study had a European and North American background, and these Geocultural regions had the largest number of respondents in this study. Additional respondents from the other regions might give a different perception.

Global competencies such as skills, knowledge, and behavior have been researched previously, primarily from an American perspective. However, this study only focused on cross-cultural affective components. Additional studies could be conducted on skills, knowledge or behaviors from the cross-cultural perspective.

Gender may have an effect on the ratings of affective components. Therefore, an exploration of the differences in gender is highly recommended.

Research studies based on socioeconomic status are also recommended. People who are struggling to make ends meet, in any country, may not have the opportunity to fully explore other cultures. When people are struggling for food, shelter, or education there may be differences in their perceptions of the importance of affective competence. Workers in the poorest countries are unlike the workers at the center of industrial capitalism.

This cross-cultural study was conducted electronically, which made it easier to reach the targeted individuals. A follow-up study might provide a deeper understanding of the respondents' views on affective components through personal in-depth interviews. It is, therefore, suggested that a comparative study be conducted where personal interviews might be possible to determine if the results would be similar or different.

Further investigation into why three affective components appeared to have significantly lower importance ratings in the Caribbean geocultural region compared to several other geocultural regions and subcategories might identify reasons for these differences that this study did not provide.

Finally, further investigation related to the subcategories of Asia and Oceania might identify whether the subcategories are each unique in other areas of global competence and should be treated as separate regions, since this study only focused on affective components as opposed to investigating differences in skills, knowledge, and

behaviors from a cross-cultural perspective.

### Summary

This article reviewed the findings of a research study investigating the perceptions of participants from geocultural regions and subcategories in relation to affective components needed in today's global society. The results indicated that affective components had high importance ratings across all geocultural regions and subcategories, although there was a range of differences in the importance ratings both for the affective components and geocultural regions and subcategories.

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