

A Brief Review of the Need for Globally Competent Local Government

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Abstract

Due to globalization, the global community is steadily interconnecting and codependent on creating the need for the American people to equip with significant features of global competency. It is the need of the hour and not a luxury for a culturally diverse country like America and its future success will depend on the globally competent people. In this regard, effective measures have been proposed for the state and local government officials to prepare the globally competent students, and make competitive workplaces so that they successfully compete in the international market. However, apart from citizens, there should be some work done to propose the strategies for local administrators on how they become internationally aware, become empathetic, and effectively interact with people from different cultures, languages and backgrounds.

Keywords: Global Competency; Interconnectedness; Cultural Diversity; Global Challenges; Local Government; Global Leadership; Cross-Cultural; Co-Dependent

1. Introduction

1.1. What is global competency

A globally competent person has the following attributes; has up-to-date knowledge, can understand others, uphold an optimistic approach, good level of foreign language skills, and is culturally competent; able to comprehend and respect other cultures (Lambert, 1996).

Brustein (2003) defined the concept of global competence as the capacity to efficiently interconnect with culturally and linguistically diverse communities across borders and concentrate on the problems beyond the cultural boundaries. Global competence is mainly the person's capability to effectively work in diverse global scenarios, knowledge of key global latest changes, their impacts, awareness of global institutes and economic activities, the ability to communicate well outside the cultural and linguistic borders, and individual's aptitude to compliance with varied cultures (Brustein, 2003).

According to a multinational management organization, a globally competent person should comprise the skills of good bilateral communication, diverse administration/management, multiculturalism, adaptive to a global approach, and can work internationally by understanding the cultural differences. The firm assumes global competency in terms of business strategy to provide the chance for globally competent workers to serve across the continents by acknowledging the cultural differences or based on multiculturalism. (Swiss Consulting Group, 2002).

Olson and Kroeger define global competency based on their study results as a globally competent person who possesses sufficient important knowledge, empathy, and skills to effectively communicate in today's globally diverse and codependent world (Olson and Kroeger, 2001).

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Globally competent is also viewed as having the cultural sensitivity, acknowledging and respecting cultural differences, and skills to communicate or connect in culturally diverse settings/environments. The vigorous skills of globally competent people are, the capability to learn new things from a different culture also known as cultural awareness, being inclined to interact with people across cultural boundaries, and developing the aptitude to effectively deal with conflicts (Curran, 2003).

Global competency means having international awareness, detailed information and understanding of global problems, skills or capacity to connect and work with culturally and linguistically diverse groups of people, acknowledge and respect the cultural differences, command of foreign language, and ability to efficiently perform in the current inter-reliant global world. (Roekel, 2010). Moreover, it also aligned with how the international community addresses and responds to different problems worldwide, such as Pakistan initiating a UNICEF-led health awareness program to reduce infant and maternal health issues in rural communities (Hureem & Davis, 2024). After the MDGs, the UN developed a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda to achieve social, economic, and environmental goals worldwide. The need to recognize female informal workers' substantial contribution to national GDP and issues of farmer community in developing countries (Hureem et al., 2020; Ihsan et al., 2021; Ashraf et al., 2019; 2022; Hureem & Butt, 2018).

2. Why we need it?

Due to globalization, the global community is steadily interconnecting and codependent on creating the need for the American people to equip with significant features of global competency. It is the need of the hour and not a luxury for a culturally diverse country like America and its future success will depend on the globally competent people. As education is the best avenue to prepare the globally competent students and future workers of the country, little effort has been put into student awareness of global problems or given them global exposure in public schools. Presently, America's economy is globally interconnected, the majority of the work is continuously related to international trade and business. Moreover, there is more cultural and linguistic diversity, global challenges such as COVID-19, and climate change that require global cooperation, which requires cross-cultural and multilinguistic skills to effectively communicate on global issues (Roekel, 2010).

3. A Three-Dimensional Framework of Global Competency

Global competency consists of in-depth knowledge and capabilities to learn and comprehend global issues, events, and the ability to connect with global communities. It is also accounted to develop the aptitude to connect effectively with people from diverse backgrounds by acknowledging, respecting, and understanding cultural and linguistic differences. It can be further described through three interconnected dimensions. The first dimension is based on ethics and focused on the development of a positive attitude to diverse cultures which needs empathetic behavior towards people with different backgrounds. In this way, an individual will conceive of differences as a chance to have a productive, passive, and reverent interaction across cultures and borders. It is also comprised of assurance of the basic rights, the fundamental principle of equality, and also emphasis to sustain these rights. as compared to the ethical dimension, the second dimension is prioritized having the capability of foreign language skills, it is a key tool to connect globally. The third dimension includes international/global awareness; a globally competent person should have detailed information on global affairs, issues, events, and history. Moreover, the ability to understand the global issues for instance pandemics, economic crises, climate change, technological advancement, war, and the like from a global perspective and the capability to effectively analyze the present global challenges and their impacts (Reimers, 2009).

4. Role of local government in global competency

There is a need for persons/citizens who respect and understand other cultures, people from different backgrounds and nations, and their response to American culture. Being one of the leading countries in the world, America must have globally competent people who have international awareness of economic, social, and political issues across the world, which will contribute to raising America's leadership status in the world. In this regard, education is a significant element to develop globally competent citizens and workers. For this purpose, schools and universities can design education programs, for instance, exchange programs, and global and multidisciplinary courses to give them global awareness and make them globally competent. So that people can be internationally competitive, have knowledge of global affairs and easily deal with cultural diversity at local and international levels and also have the ability to handle the fears or doubts of the new and diverse global world. It is the need of the hour due to fast and immense social, economic, and technological advancement in the world (ACE, 1998; Hunter, 2004).

The American council on education (1998) discussed the role of local government to develop globally competent citizens. According to (ACE), the local government must support and offer incentives to the educational institutes to encourage them to introduce international courses and include the global perspective in the academic syllabus at the school and university levels. As it will contribute to developing the current students and future workers as internationally aware and globally competent. Moreover, they will also be capable to perform in a diverse workplace and compete in a global environment.

Furthermore, the socio-economic growth of local societies is progressively linked with global engagement. There is a need to develop a good territorial relationship with other countries at the state, city, and community levels for the sake of regional interests. The economic/business activities across the countries and overseas trade in the USA give a persuasive motive for the local government system to initiate the educational program at a local level focusing on the international curriculum. ACE emphasizes that state and local government administrators should plan some rewards for schools and universities to encourage them to design academic curricula on a global dimension to prepare globally competent students, teachers, and future workers. Additionally, local government officials should closely work with higher education institutes as they can play a crucial role to develop globally competent workers that have in-depth knowledge of global issues, are proficient in a foreign language, and productively perform in the international market. For the specifically linguistic skills, local administrators may initiate more academic programs with schools by introducing the global curriculum, foreign language instructors, and exchange programs.

There is a need to plan the strategies for making the globally competent citizens and it should be done in all private, public educational institutes in collaboration with local government officials, schools and universities, and different agencies working in the state, city, and local communities at home and abroad. This kind of partnership with international educational institutes will help to learn from different cultures and gain knowledge of the global market. Ultimately, global awareness contributes to working on the latest and emerging ideas and appealing to the interest of foreign investors which will contribute to the local economic development.

As per the three-dimensional framework of global competency the American council of education (ACE) is on track to highlight the effective strategies that local government officials can adopt in preparing the globally competent US citizens such as empathetic behavior or respect for other cultures, and foreign languages proficiency, and international awareness. There should be an increase in research on globally competent local bodies that propose strategies to train both local administrators, students and workers to compete in the global market. For instance, there should be some exchange programs for the local administrators at the state and local community levels. These programs will help to give them international exposure, and global awareness and they learn how people from different cultures and continents deal with the same issues at the local level.

5. Conclusion

No one denies the need of having a globally competent citizen in the new era of interconnectedness, interdependent and technological advancement. It is not a luxury in fact necessary for US security, to compete in the global market, and maintain its world leadership role. Researchers have focused on defining the term "global competency", its need, and strategies to build globally competent US citizens. In this regard, effective measures have been proposed for the state and local government officials to prepare the globally competent students, and make competitive workplaces so that they successfully compete in the international market. However, apart from citizens, there should be some work done to propose strategies for local administrators on how they become internationally aware, become empathetic, and effectively interact with people from different cultures and languages.

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