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ABSTRACT

The goal of this paper is to recommend suitable competence assessment instruments and methods for assessing globalization competence in the Information Systems domain. This is done by matching globalization competences with suitable competence assessment methods. The results of the analysis indicate that the most applicable competence assessment methods for assessing globalization competences in the Information Systems domain are written format assessments (especially essays), candidate self-reports, live interactions (especially group work), and computer simulations. The validity of the outcome is confirmed through a mixed method of document analysis and expert interviews by analyzing and evaluating the assessment methods of Finnish higher education courses in the Information Systems field. Finally, a preliminary comparison between Finnish and Japanese assessment methods is conducted.

Keywords: Competence Assessment, Globalization Competence, Knowledge Management, Knowledge Management Competences

1. INTRODUCTION

Which methods can be used for assessing globalization competences in the Information Systems domain? This is the main question of this paper. We provide an overview of competence assessment methods and instruments, and recommend selected instruments for the Information Systems field. During the past two decades, the globalization phenomenon has been shaping the world. Not only has it affected attitudes towards foreign
cultures but also made working globally more and more common. An increasing amount of internationally competent professionals are needed for jobs beyond borders (Grant & Young, 2010); hence the need for international academic education (Deans & Loch, 1998). New studies on global issues have been introduced in other domains, such as international business in business education, yet the curriculum of the Information Systems domain in higher education institutions has remained the same (Deans & Loch, 1998; Pawlowski & Holtkamp, 2012).

In a work environment strongly influenced by outsourcing, offshoring and increasing global work relations, intercultural competence emerges as one of the most desired capabilities for graduates who are likely to work in an international setting (Krajewski, 2011). The education of academic professionals of the Information Systems field competent to work in an international environment requires a prior determining of the globalization competences. Identifying the key globalization competences and their assessment is pivotal to modernizing the Information Systems curriculum but also in general important to find and select the right staff in international projects.

In the following, we present the theoretical background for this study. First, the concept of competence required for working in a global setting is introduced. Then, we introduce the globalization competences (Pawlowski & Holtkamp, 2012) and present a framework for competence assessment for this problem. The feasibility and usefulness of our approach is shown using a case study method.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Skills and expertise in internationalization play a significant role for students and professionals of Information Systems who are working in a global environment. Several attempts at creating definitions, models and instruments for the competence required for operating in an international setting have been made throughout the past 30 years (Arasaratnam, 2006; Deardorff, 2006; Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud, 2006; Spitzberg, 2011; Ting-Toomey, 1999), yet a clear and universally accepted definition has not been achieved.

Ergo, what is intercultural competence? It has been suggested, that in order to be interculturally competent, one must have empathy, motivation, positive attitude toward other cultures, experience, and interaction involvement (Arasaratnam, 2006). At the same time, a definition for cross-cultural competence states that “Cross-cultural competence in international business is an individual’s effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad” (Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud, 2006). The definitions vary greatly across domains; intercultural competence in sociolinguistics, cross-cultural competence in international business and herein globalization competence in the field of Information Systems.

Furthermore, a recent study by Pawlowski and Holtkamp (2012) identified seven categories of key competences for working in international IT projects:

- Generic competences;
- IS competences;
- ICT competences;
- Project management and leadership competences;
- Collaboration and knowledge management competences;
- Communication competences;
- Intercultural competences.

The categories consists of core international competences, which in conjunction with IS specific competences form the globalization competence framework. The globalization competences are presented in Table 1. Only the latter five categories were used in this research.
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