

How Can Curriculum Design Foster Global Competence in Management Education? Strategic Approaches and Best Practices

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ABSTRACT

In the context of an increasingly globalized world, the integration of global competence into management education has become essential for preparing students to lead in diverse and interconnected environments. This study explores how curriculum design can effectively foster global competence within management education, focusing on strategies such as curriculum integration, experiential learning, intercultural pedagogies, faculty development, and technology integration. A systematic review of the literature and case studies from leading institutions was conducted to identify best practices and challenges in embedding global competence in management programs. The findings highlight the importance of embedding global learning outcomes into core management courses, providing hands-on international learning experiences, and adopting teaching methods that promote intercultural understanding. Additionally, the study identifies challenges such as faculty readiness, curriculum rigidity, and the lack of standardized assessment tools for measuring global competence. The paper concludes with recommendations for institutions to strategically prioritize curriculum internationalization, invest in faculty development, and expand access to global learning opportunities through technology. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on curriculum innovation and provides actionable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance global competence in management education.

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Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected global landscape, the necessity for higher education institutions to cultivate graduates equipped with not only technical expertise but also the ability to function effectively in cross-cultural and international contexts has become a central concern. Global competence, defined as the ability to understand, communicate, and collaborate with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, is now recognized as a crucial skill for future leaders, managers, and professionals operating within a globalized economy [1], [2], [3]. As the complexity

and interdependence of the global business environment continue to increase, management education must evolve to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in a multicultural and multifaceted world.

Historically, management education has been predominantly locally focused, often neglecting the need to prepare students for the demands of a globalized marketplace. This shortcoming is particularly evident as industries across the world require professionals who can navigate the complexities of working with diverse teams, understanding global markets, and responding to international business challenges. Consequently, the integration of global competence into the curriculum has emerged as an essential element in modern management education. It is now widely acknowledged that curriculum design in higher education must reflect the imperatives of globalization, thereby equipping students with the competencies, knowledge, and attitudes required to effectively engage in cross-cultural settings [4], [5].

One of the primary facets of global competence is intercultural communication, which involves the ability to work effectively and respectfully with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The development of intercultural competence is integral to the formation of global leaders, as it facilitates not only better collaboration but also ethical decision-making in diverse settings [6], [7]. The importance of global competence extends beyond mere communication skills; it also encompasses the ability to critically engage with global issues, understand the ethical implications of decisions, and lead in a manner that respects cultural diversity while upholding universal ethical standards [8], [9]. Thus, embedding global competence into management curricula is not merely a response to external demands but a vital strategy for preparing future leaders to navigate the complexities of a multicultural world.

Despite its growing significance, the integration of global competence into management education presents several challenges. These include balancing the inclusion of international content with local relevance, preparing faculty to teach global-oriented material, and developing effective assessment mechanisms to gauge students' proficiency in global and intercultural competencies. Furthermore, institutions must manage various forms of international engagement, such as study abroad programs, international internships, online learning opportunities, and collaborative partnerships with foreign universities. Ensuring that these diverse engagement mechanisms align with broader educational goals remains a complex task for many institutions [10], [11].

This paper explores the role of curriculum design in fostering global competence within management education. It examines how various strategies such as integrating international perspectives, promoting experiential learning, and incorporating ethical decision-making frameworks can be embedded into management programs. By synthesizing recent literature and examining case studies from leading institutions, this study seeks to identify best practices in curriculum design that can effectively cultivate global competence in management students. The findings aim to provide actionable recommendations for academic leaders and curriculum designers to enhance the global preparedness of future managers and leaders, ensuring that they are equipped to succeed in an interconnected, multicultural world.

Methods

This study utilizes a qualitative research approach to explore how curriculum design can foster global competence in management education. The study is grounded in a systematic review of literature and case-based analysis to identify best practices, challenges, and strategies for integrating global competence into management programs. Below is a comprehensive overview of the research design, data sources, selection criteria, and analytical approach used in this study.

Research Design

A qualitative, exploratory design was chosen to provide in-depth insights into the practices and strategies that promote global competence in management education. This design allows for the synthesis of diverse perspectives from the academic literature, institutional case studies, and policy documents, enabling the study to provide rich, descriptive insights into curriculum development for global competence. The research involves gathering and analyzing data from academic sources and case studies of leading universities with established global competence initiatives. Through thematic analysis, recurring themes and patterns in the data were identified to provide actionable recommendations for institutions aiming to integrate global competence into their curricula.

Data Sources

Data for this study were collected from a range of reputable and contemporary sources. These sources include academic journal articles, institutional case studies, and policy reports. A comprehensive table summarizing these sources is presented below:

Table 1. Summary of Data Sources for the Study

Source Type	Description	Rationale for Inclusion
Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles	Articles published in academic journals focusing on global competence, curriculum design, and management education.	Provides the foundation of theoretical and empirical studies related to the integration of global competence into curricula [12], [13].
Case Studies	Real-world case studies from universities known for their internationalization efforts in education.	Offers practical examples and evidence of curriculum design practices that successfully integrate global competence in management education.
Institutional Reports	Documents and reports from universities and organizations like AACSB, UNESCO, and OECD.	Provides insights into the institutional-level policies, frameworks, and strategies that support global competence development in higher education.
Policy Papers & Frameworks	Official documents from global education bodies (UNESCO, OECD, AACSB) on curriculum internationalization.	Offers policy-level recommendations and frameworks to guide the integration of global competence into curriculum design and pedagogy.

Selection Criteria

The study followed specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that only the most relevant and high-quality sources were selected for analysis. These criteria ensured the data collected aligns with the study’s research objectives. The criteria are summarized in the table 2 below:

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Source Selection

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Focus on Curriculum Design	Studies that specifically address curriculum design in higher education, particularly related to global competence.	Studies that focus on K-12 education or disciplines unrelated to management education.
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, case studies, and institutional reports from credible sources (e.g., AACSB, UNESCO, OECD).	Non-peer-reviewed articles, opinion pieces, or sources lacking academic rigor.
Timeframe	Articles and case studies published between 2013 and 2025 to reflect contemporary trends in global education.	Studies published before 2013, as these may not reflect the current trends or innovations in global competence integration.
Language	Sources published in English.	Sources published in languages other than English.

Analytical Approach

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which allowed the identification of key themes and patterns across the selected literature. Thematic analysis is particularly suited for this research as it enables the exploration of complex qualitative data, helping to uncover recurring strategies, challenges, and best practices in curriculum design for global competence. The steps followed in the thematic analysis are summarized below:

Table 3. Steps in the Thematic Analysis Process

Step	Description
Familiarization with Data	Each source was thoroughly reviewed to ensure a deep understanding of its contents, focusing on relevant findings and arguments.
Coding	Initial codes were generated to capture key concepts related to global competence, intercultural learning, and curriculum design.
Theme Development	Codes were grouped into broader themes, which were refined through constant comparison across the data to ensure consistency.
Cross-case Comparisons	A comparative analysis of case studies was conducted to identify successful patterns and contextual variations in the implementation of global competence initiatives.

The use of cross-case comparisons provided insights into the effectiveness of various strategies across different educational contexts, while the identification of recurring themes helped highlight common challenges and opportunities in integrating global competence into management curricula.

Results and Discussion

The findings from the systematic review and case study analysis reveal several key insights into the integration of global competence within management education. These results highlight the primary strategies employed by institutions, the challenges they face, and the best practices identified from global examples. Below is a descriptive presentation, supported by a table summarizing the key strategies, challenges, and institutional practices.

Table 4. Key Strategies for Integrating Global Competence in Management Education

Strategy	Description	Examples/Implementation
Curriculum Integration	Embedding global competence learning outcomes into core management courses.	Integration of global themes in courses such as ethics, leadership, and international business.
Experiential Learning	Providing students with hands-on, real-world experiences to enhance intercultural understanding.	Study abroad programs, international internships, virtual exchange programs, and service learning in multicultural contexts.
Intercultural Pedagogies	Utilizing teaching methods that promote cultural awareness and communication skills across diverse contexts.	Collaborative group projects with international teams, case studies with global perspectives, role-playing exercises.
Faculty Development	Preparing faculty to teach global competence content effectively.	Training programs focused on intercultural teaching methods, creating global course materials, and incorporating diverse perspectives into teaching.
Technology Integration	Leveraging digital tools to support international learning without the need for travel.	Use of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), virtual internships, and global classroom projects.

Curriculum Integration

A prominent strategy identified in this study was curriculum integration, where global competence learning outcomes are embedded into core management courses. By embedding global perspectives in key subjects such as international business, leadership, and cross-cultural management, institutions ensure that students develop global competencies throughout their academic journey. This integration ensures that students acquire not only technical management knowledge but also the intercultural skills needed to thrive in a globalized world. A study by Munna [14] emphasized that incorporating global learning outcomes into the curriculum early on is crucial for preparing students for leadership roles in multinational organizations.

Experiential Learning

The importance of experiential learning emerged as another significant strategy. Experiential learning offers students hands-on, real-world experiences that enhance their ability to interact effectively with people from diverse cultures. Programs such as study abroad, international internships, and virtual exchange programs provide students with the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge in international contexts. For example, Lei et al. [15] found that students who participated in study-abroad programs exhibited a greater understanding of international

business practices and a higher level of cultural empathy. The inclusion of virtual exchange programs has also allowed students who cannot participate in traditional study abroad opportunities to engage with peers from other cultures.

Intercultural Pedagogies

The study also highlighted the value of intercultural pedagogies. These teaching strategies aim to develop students' cultural awareness and communication skills across different cultural contexts. Institutions that adopt intercultural pedagogies often incorporate collaborative group projects, where students from various cultural backgrounds work together on shared goals. Additionally, global case studies and role-playing exercises are frequently used to simulate international business scenarios. These pedagogies help students develop critical skills in intercultural communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution. According to Hossain [16], these approaches are particularly effective in fostering global leadership skills by providing students with opportunities to navigate complex cultural dynamics.

Faculty Development

Effective faculty development is also crucial for successfully integrating global competence into management curricula. Faculty members must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to teach content that fosters global competence. Many institutions have implemented faculty development programs aimed at enhancing instructors' abilities to teach global and intercultural topics. These programs typically focus on strategies for integrating global content into courses, using intercultural teaching methods, and addressing the needs of a culturally diverse student body. As highlighted by Pinna Pintor and Premazzi [3], faculty members who undergo intercultural competence training are more likely to effectively integrate global perspectives into their teaching, thereby improving students' global competence outcomes.

Technology Integration

Technology integration was identified as a critical enabler of global learning. With the rise of digital learning tools, institutions have increasingly turned to Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), virtual internships, and global classroom projects to create international learning opportunities without the need for travel. These platforms allow students to collaborate with peers from other countries, participate in virtual internships with global companies, and attend online lectures from international experts. The integration of technology not only expands access to global learning experiences but also fosters digital literacy, which is essential for modern global leaders. According to Ika sari et al. [17], leveraging digital tools for international collaboration can bridge the gap between students from different socio-economic backgrounds and ensure more inclusive access to global education.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite the promising strategies identified, several challenges persist. A significant issue is faculty readiness to teach global competence-related content. Not all faculty members are adequately prepared to integrate intercultural learning into their courses, and many require additional training and resources to do so effectively. Additionally, curriculum rigidity remains a barrier,

particularly in institutions with strict accreditation requirements or predefined course structures that limit flexibility in incorporating global themes. Furthermore, the lack of standardized assessment tools for measuring global competence is a challenge for many institutions, making it difficult to gauge the effectiveness of global competence initiatives.

Another notable challenge is access to experiential learning opportunities. While these opportunities are highly effective in fostering global competence, financial constraints and limited institutional partnerships often prevent many students from participating in programs like study abroad or international internships. As institutions increasingly turn to virtual exchanges, technology barriers, such as unequal access to digital resources, also pose a challenge to ensuring equitable participation.

Institutional Practices and Strategic Recommendations

To overcome these challenges, institutions must adopt a strategic approach to integrating global competence into management education. A critical recommendation is to treat curriculum internationalization as a strategic priority at the institutional level, ensuring that resources and policies are aligned to support global competence development. Faculty development programs should be prioritized to equip instructors with the tools and knowledge to teach global and intercultural topics effectively. Additionally, institutions should explore innovative solutions such as virtual exchanges and online global classrooms to expand access to global learning experiences for all students, regardless of financial constraints.

Discussion

The integration of global competence into management education represents a critical step toward preparing students for leadership roles in an increasingly interconnected world. As globalization continues to reshape the economic, social, and political landscape, higher education institutions must equip students with the skills necessary to navigate complex international environments. This study's findings underscore the importance of integrating global competence into the management curriculum and highlight both the strategies and challenges involved in achieving this goal.

One of the primary strategies identified is the integration of global competence into the core curriculum. Embedding global perspectives within existing management courses ensures that global competence is not treated as an isolated component but as a fundamental aspect of the broader educational experience. This approach aligns with the findings of previous studies, which emphasize the value of embedding global learning outcomes in foundational courses like business ethics, leadership, and international business [18], [19], [20]. By doing so, institutions can create a curriculum that promotes the development of intercultural skills alongside technical expertise. Moreover, integrating global themes into core subjects ensures that students from diverse backgrounds are exposed to global perspectives, fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

The role of experiential learning in developing global competence cannot be overstated. As the findings suggest, providing students with real-world, cross-cultural experiences is essential in helping them develop the practical skills necessary for international leadership. Study abroad programs, international internships, and virtual exchange initiatives offer invaluable opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge in global contexts. These experiences

enable students to build empathy, adaptability, and intercultural communication skills qualities essential for success in the global business world. Furthermore, as institutions face financial constraints that limit access to traditional study abroad opportunities, virtual exchanges provide an alternative that allows students to engage with peers and professionals from around the world without leaving their home country. This technological innovation is particularly important in addressing issues of accessibility and equity in global education, ensuring that all students, regardless of financial or geographical constraints, have the opportunity to develop global competence.

Another significant finding is the importance of intercultural pedagogies in fostering global competence. The integration of diverse cultural perspectives into teaching methods helps students navigate cultural differences, enhances their understanding of global issues, and equips them with the skills necessary to lead in multicultural environments. By using collaborative projects, role-playing exercises, and global case studies, educators can provide students with opportunities to engage in critical thinking about cultural dynamics and global challenges. These pedagogies align with the principles of experiential learning by placing students in situations where they must interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, thus preparing them for the complexities of international leadership. Furthermore, intercultural pedagogies foster a learning environment that encourages collaboration and respect for cultural differences, promoting greater empathy and understanding among students.

The findings also reveal the critical role of faculty development in successfully integrating global competence into management education. Faculty members are central to the successful implementation of global competence initiatives, as they are responsible for designing and delivering the curriculum. However, as the study highlights, many faculty members lack the training and resources necessary to teach global competence effectively. Faculty development programs focused on intercultural teaching methods, global course content, and the incorporation of diverse cultural perspectives into teaching materials are essential for ensuring that educators are prepared to teach in a multicultural and globalized context. Institutions must invest in faculty development to ensure that teaching practices align with the institution's global competence goals and that faculty members are equipped to support students in their global learning journeys.

Despite the promising strategies identified, the study also highlights several challenges that institutions face when attempting to integrate global competence into the curriculum. Faculty readiness remains a significant obstacle, as not all instructors are equipped to teach global and intercultural content. While some faculty members may have the knowledge and experience to incorporate global perspectives into their courses, others may require additional support and training. Additionally, curriculum rigidity in some institutions, driven by accreditation requirements or rigid course structures, limits the flexibility needed to incorporate global themes into existing programs. To address these challenges, institutions must create flexible curricula that allow for the integration of global competence across multiple disciplines and provide faculty with the necessary resources and training to teach global content effectively.

The lack of standardized assessment tools to measure global competence is another challenge that institutions must address. While many institutions have developed innovative methods for assessing global competence, including reflective journals, cross-cultural group

projects, and industry feedback, there is still a lack of universally accepted standards for evaluating students' global learning outcomes. The absence of clear assessment metrics makes it difficult to determine whether global competence initiatives are meeting their objectives and how to improve them. Therefore, it is essential for academic bodies and accrediting organizations to develop standardized tools for assessing global competence in higher education, ensuring that institutions can effectively measure and track the development of students' global skills.

Access to experiential learning opportunities, particularly study abroad programs, remains a barrier for many students due to financial constraints, lack of institutional partnerships, or logistical challenges. This is a critical issue, as experiential learning is one of the most effective ways to foster global competence. To overcome these barriers, institutions should explore alternative models, such as virtual exchanges and global online classrooms, which can provide students with cross-cultural experiences without the financial and logistical challenges associated with traditional study abroad programs. These virtual models also promote inclusivity by ensuring that all students, regardless of their financial situation, have access to global learning opportunities.

In conclusion, the integration of global competence into management education is essential for preparing students to navigate and lead in an interconnected world. The findings from this study underscore the importance of embedding global competence into core curricula, leveraging experiential learning opportunities, adopting intercultural pedagogies, and investing in faculty development. However, the challenges of faculty readiness, curriculum rigidity, and the lack of standardized assessment tools must be addressed to ensure the success of these initiatives. By adopting a strategic and holistic approach to curriculum internationalization, institutions can better prepare their students for the demands of the global business environment and ensure that they possess the skills necessary to lead in a complex, multicultural world.

Conclusion

This study highlights the essential role of integrating global competence into management education, emphasizing that the ability to navigate cross-cultural and international contexts is no longer optional but a necessity for future leaders. The findings underscore that the design of curricula, coupled with strategic institutional efforts, can significantly enhance students' preparedness for the global business environment. Through curriculum integration, experiential learning opportunities, and intercultural pedagogies, institutions can cultivate the competencies necessary for effective global leadership. However, the successful implementation of global competence initiatives presents several challenges. Faculty readiness, curriculum rigidity, and the lack of standardized assessment tools remain significant obstacles to achieving comprehensive global learning outcomes. Despite these challenges, the study shows that institutions that strategically align their curricula with global competence goals, invest in faculty development, and adopt innovative approaches such as virtual exchanges and technology integration, are better positioned to prepare students for leadership roles in a multicultural world.

The study's recommendations highlight the need for institutions to prioritize curriculum internationalization, ensure faculty are equipped to teach global content, and provide students with diverse and accessible global learning experiences. Additionally, the development of

standardized tools to assess global competence is crucial to ensuring the effectiveness and impact of these initiatives. Ultimately, embedding global competence into management education is essential for equipping future leaders with the skills required to navigate the complexities of an interconnected world. By fostering a global perspective, institutions can produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also adaptable, empathetic, and ready to lead in diverse, international settings. The successful integration of global competence into higher education will contribute significantly to the development of responsible and effective global leaders, prepared to face the challenges of a rapidly changing global landscape.

Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the integration of global competence into management education, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. Firstly, the research relies on secondary data, including published literature and case studies, which may be influenced by the scope and depth of available material. Additionally, the focus on management education limits the generalizability of the findings to other academic disciplines, as global competence integration may vary across fields. Regional and cultural differences in the implementation of global competence initiatives also present challenges in terms of applicability, as strategies that work in one context may not be directly transferrable to others. Lastly, the lack of longitudinal data on the long-term impact of global competence programs means that the study's findings are constrained to the current state of curriculum design and implementation. Despite these limitations, the study offers meaningful recommendations for institutions seeking to enhance their global competence initiatives.

Author Contribution

R. conceptualized the study, developed the methodology, and supervised the research process. R.F. conducted the literature search, data collection, and analysis. S.A. contributed to data interpretation, writing the discussion, and editing the manuscript. M.G.V.J. contributed to the synthesis of the case studies and provided critical feedback on the manuscript. T.S. contributed to the overall research design and provided support in the data screening and selection process. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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