

RESPONDING TO GLOBALIZATION AND THE GROWTH OF PROJECT-BASED WORK: AN INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

Project management standards contribute to some of the most productive business capabilities for gaining organizational efficiencies and implementing strategic plans. These standards feature processes general to the overall discipline of project management and specialized knowledge areas such as program management, risk management, quality management, business analysis, and agile development. The growing global demand for project managers suggests a need to develop a curriculum that builds individual and organizational capacity to lead international projects. Human resource competency may be the most critical component for international capability development, and a vetted training and development curriculum may accelerate the international competencies of project managers. As companies invest in this manner, they empower project managers with the knowledge to understand their international business environments more effectively, thus providing organizational capabilities to reduce the liability of foreignness more quickly in their project operations. The exploratory study discussed here addressed this opportunity by investigating the applicability of established international business (IB) learning objectives as components of an international project management (IPM) instructional curriculum. The outcomes of this study identify a body of knowledge for international project management that may reduce an organization's liabilities of foreignness more effectively. Working project managers with at least three years of managing international projects were surveyed about the importance of international business concepts to successfully managing international projects. Results provide a framework that enables companies to develop the skills and knowledge of their project management talent and consequently gain needed capabilities for their success in international project management. Project managers wishing to strengthen their international project management competencies or organizations who desire to reduce the perceived liabilities of foreignness will find this research beneficial to enable them to deliver successful projects globally.

Keywords: project management, international business, graduate curriculum

INTRODUCTION

The Project Management Institute (www.PMI.org), a global body supporting the profession of project, program, and portfolio management, estimates accelerating demand for project managers that will exceed 88 million individuals globally by 2028 (Project Management Institute, 2017). To meet this demand, companies must invest in project personnel recruitment, training, and development to realize a competitive depth of capabilities and PM processes. Their managers today require skill sets for more agile, project-focused, and internationally oriented work than ever before. As globalization pressures strategic business priorities, decision-makers rely on project-management processes to internationalize their business capabilities more effectively (Luo, 2000; Schoemaker et al., 2018). Project managers develop necessary knowledge or skillsets from on-the-job experience coupled with continuing education often delivered through external providers such as universities, technical institutions, and contracted training providers. Employers frequently gauge individual project manager competencies by an individual's stock of professional certifications that reflect various domains of knowledge critical to the well-being of their organizations.

Currently, opportunities for acquiring international project management certification are limited (with one exception: the International Association of Project Managers has recently launched the Certified International Project Manager, (IAPM, 2020)). However, successful international business activities require understanding global and country-specific factors that reduce foreign exposure risk. Sapienza et al. (2006) demonstrate that success in multinational activities results from firms developing explicit international business capabilities that address their unique operational environments. Successful international expansion efforts include an organizational focus on possessing distinctive resources, allocating and deploying those resources as capabilities, and upgrading those capabilities through dynamic learning (Luo, 2000). One international capability comprises project management processes to develop and deliver products, services, or technologies across national boundaries (Midler, 1995). Effective international project management capabilities will likely require robust investment in the training, development, and certification of necessary human resources that draw upon external vendors to supply expert knowledge in this field.

Although PM standards have compensated for specific contexts such as health care or the agile principles of software development, international projects are a lesser-developed context that presents a further opportunity for growth. Despite this need, traditional PM training focuses on generalized processes of technical expertise in managing projects rather than on specialized contexts like international business (Berggren & Söderlund, 2008; Ewin et al., 2017; Khodeir, 2018). Further, standard PM textbooks or online consultant blogs include international project management as a single section or a chapter, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Cleland & Gareis, 2006; Köster, 2010). Additionally, most research on teaching PM focuses on building general PM knowledge and skills (Abushammala, 2019; Berggren & Söderlund, 2008; Khodeir, 2018; Law, 2019; Markham et al., 2017) rather than focusing specifically on the unique factors of international project management.

Therefore, this article explores the use of international business learning objectives to propose a similar body of knowledge for international project management. The concept of liability of foreignness will be introduced as the theoretical framework for the study, followed by a discussion of the methodological approach used. Data will be analyzed to investigate the usefulness of international business knowledge as a source for delivering successful international projects. Further, the authors propose a graduate certificate for international project management that may help project managers strengthen their ability to manage international projects effectively.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The need for internationalized project management capabilities can be explained theoretically through the liability of foreignness (LOF) framework (Hymer et al., 1976; Zaheer, 1995). This framework justifies learning investments as prerequisites for reducing the uncertainty and risk of organizations operating in foreign or international scenarios (Brady & Davies, 2004; Petersen & Pedersen, 2002). Liability of foreignness addresses the unique category risk newcomers face to internationalization as opposed to those more experienced in cross-border operations or those more familiar with the idiosyncrasies of native markets. Less internationally seasoned competitors are burdened with additional risk or production costs due to increased uncertainty or ambiguity of cross-border situations in which they operate. The burden is particularly intense for early movers to specific locations and the general internationalization process. Liability of foreignness points out the disadvantages to early movers vis-à-vis incumbents who enjoy familiarity, cultural likeness, and longer-term relationships within their native environments. LOF further argues that strategic information gathering and accelerated learning by newcomers can reduce this imbalance more quickly and effectively. Specific LOF risk factors noted by researchers include environmental unfamiliarity due to cultural, political, and economic differences, international coordination costs (Zaheer, 1995), disadvantages in host country capital markets (Aliber, 1970), and cultural differences and multinational enterprise spatial remoteness between parent and subsidiary (Matsuo, 2000). Johanson and Vahlne (1977, 2003) noted that LOF stemmed from a multinational enterprise's "psychic distance" between home and host country factors that elevate the uncertainty and ambiguity related to foreign operations. They also discussed the relational liability of foreignness costs due to a firm's "insider vs. outsider" disadvantage within foreign business networks.

These cited factors seem particularly challenging in the international project management context. Uncertainty is a primary contingency variable moderating the relationship between the structure and process of projects with their outcome success. Liability of foreignness poses greater uncertainty for organizations lacking mature capabilities for understanding foreign markets or internationalization in general. LOF may exist when bidding for international project contracts or resourcing, planning, and executing project activities. In addition, the nature of temporary, single-purpose projects using temporary project teams infers learning environments that are more difficult to articulate and code than ongoing operations. The complex challenges of

developing international project capabilities may benefit from applying international business knowledge to the project context.

Zaheer (1995) noted that reducing the liabilities of foreignness is particularly difficult when learning from existing competitors that may have an advantage in foreign markets or situations. Petersen and Pedersen (2002) demonstrated considerable variance in the learning approaches taken by foreign firms to reduce their disadvantage in native markets. However, they indicated a general frequency in their respondents who attempted to add pre-entry learning as an ingredient of capability building. Johnson and Vahlne (2003) also note the value of investments in indigenous knowledge creation and assets to reduce psychic distance and related risk-related costs. Indeed, uncertainty and ambiguity reduction increase the likelihood of project success in new or unfamiliar circumstances. For these reasons, international project capabilities should heavily emphasize international learning for its project managers focused on market-specific information and the general know-how of IPM that applies to internationalization in general.

These theoretical perspectives have been germane to international business knowledge, which has developed significantly in the past several decades, as evidenced by abundant academic literature and successful business practice. A much less developed domain of international project management inquiry has emerged, yet many principles from the IB field should benefit a body of knowledge for the latter. For this reason, the following research question guides the exploratory research described below: “To what degree do the learning objectives of international business hold significance for developing a similar body of knowledge for international project management?” Finally, a proposed set of learning modules will be derived from the answer to this question that may be used to develop a graduate certificate in international project management.

METHODOLOGY

The first step toward investigating the relationship between international business knowledge and international project management knowledge involved identifying learning objectives from several well-known and popular international business textbooks. These learning objectives are a proxy for a comprehensive set of international business competencies. The IB competencies were incorporated into a survey of project managers with international project management experience that asked them about the relevance of international business concepts to international projects. Finally, survey results were used to develop a recommended course progression for an international project management graduate certificate.

International Business Competencies

International business has an extensive knowledge base, including topics that focus on cultural awareness, international standards knowledge, and the ability to operate across varying political economies (Li et al., 2020). The first step in this study involved conducting a qualitative analysis of learning objectives from two popular international business textbooks widely used in the international business and management education discipline, collecting 162 learning objectives (Doh & Luthans, 2018; Hill & Hult, 2016). These textbooks were chosen for two

reasons: first, the authors were familiar with the textbooks, and both textbooks are best-sellers (as noted by the Amazon.com ranking as of 9/16/2022, in the top 35 international business books). Next, the research team removed duplicate and highly similar learning objectives, first by manually reviewing the objectives and second by asking practitioners familiar with IB and PM to review the list of learning objectives for clarity and potential duplication. After two rounds of review, the research team condensed the list of learning objectives to 44 items. Further qualitative analysis based on the similarity of context and concepts of the learning objectives allowed the research team to organize the 44 learning objectives into six broad themes: cultural intelligence and awareness, globalization, international strategic thinking, international trade and foreign exchange awareness, management and leadership skills and knowledge, and technical and operational proficiency.

The research team validated these themes as useful for international project managers by comparing them to the knowledge required for the Certified International Project Manager certification offered by the International Association of Project Managers (IAPM, 2020). The CIPM certification recognizes the unique characteristics of international projects and globalized project environments. The CIPM certification exam currently assesses knowledge related to international business competencies, cultural dimensions, and technical project management skills (IAPM, 2020), which align with the themes identified by the research team in their analysis of IB competencies.

Survey Development

The six themes and the underlying 44 learning objectives formed the primary content of a survey delivered to international project managers. The survey included questions about general and international project work experience. Work experience questions asked respondents to consider a specific international project they had recently completed or were currently working. The questions included the type of project, the respondent's role in the project, the project manager's primary work country while working on the project, the number of countries the project team represents, the project budget and duration, and project complexity. Project complexity was measured across four dimensions: urgency, novelty, uncertainty, and strategic value (Shenhar, 2001). The work experience and project questions data were used further to validate the international competence of the survey respondents.

The survey presented the 44 learning objectives grouped into the six themes identified earlier to reduce cognitive load. The survey prompted respondents to evaluate the items' relevance to international project management using a sliding scale (0-100), reflecting how each respondent felt the learning objective was relevant to international projects. The survey also prompted respondents to add any knowledge or topics not included in the list but that the respondents felt were necessary for successful international projects. To contextualize and characterize the panel, the respondents answered demographic questions (social desirability bias; Hays et al., 1989), age, nationality, gender, spoken languages, and education). The respondents answered several open-ended questions about various aspects of IB and its relevance to managing international projects. These questions provided a rich context for discussing findings and the proposed curriculum for international project management.

Sampling Approach

International project managers were chosen as research participants because of their experience working on international projects. The team felt it was important to study international project managers' perceptions of the importance of various international business competencies in managing international projects. The data collected were analyzed using a qualitative approach to design a relevant and appropriate graduate concentration in international project management.

Because this research focuses on understanding the relationship between IB competencies and the necessary knowledge for successfully managing international projects, the research team worked with international project experts who demonstrated proficiency in managing international projects. The research team contracted with an online survey company to select a panel of working project managers with at least three years of experience working on international projects, specifically holding project or program management roles. Respondents who met these criteria were deemed subject matter experts and suitable for participation in the survey.

The survey company compensated the qualified respondents for their time. Using compensated online survey panels raises concerns regarding the data's validity and reliability (Porter et al., 2018; Stanley et al., 2020; Walter et al., 2018). Porter et al. (2018) recommend that researchers consider how the participants are recruited and selected, an appropriate study design and sample size, testing for quality of responses, and informed consent, among others. One concern is that respondents provide data only to receive incentives, but that apprehension may be reduced by a recent analysis proving that incentives are not significantly correlated with response bias, or the quality of data obtained (Stanley et al., 2020). Further, Stanley et al. (2020) demonstrated both the online survey panels' internal consistency and external validity. However, they caution investigators to ensure that online survey samples are appropriate to the research question being investigated (Stanley et al., 2020; Walter et al., 2018).

The current study mitigated concerns about using a compensated online panel by considering the recommendations by Porter et al. (2018) in the research design. First, the research team recruited and selected qualified experts (experienced international project managers) using two qualifying questions included in the survey that confirmed the participants had at least three years of managing international projects as a project or program manager. Second, to ensure an adequate sample size for this study, the research team negotiated for a minimum of 160 valid responses (i.e., responses from participants who met the two qualifying questions and completed the survey with valid responses), which is more than sufficient sample size to reveal desired effect sizes. Finally, to ensure response quality, only respondents who met the qualification criteria and passed non-random tests conducted by the survey company were included in the analysis. As noted by Porter et al. (2018), other essential factors to consider that were addressed by the current study include posting informed consent, requiring respondent agreement, and collecting demographic data, including current country of residence.

Approach to Curriculum Development

The survey results contributed to a proposed graduate curriculum in international project management. Based on the importance assigned to the IB competencies, a series of learning modules were developed that covered the relevant IB topics. The modules grouped similar competencies so that each module could be taught as a stand-alone module or as a sequence of modules that could be used to develop a course or certificate in international project management.

RESULTS

The survey results addressed the first research question, “To what degree do the learning objectives of international business hold significance for developing a similar body of knowledge for international project management?” 247 respondents participated, with 168 responses meeting the required filters of three or more years of international PM experience and service in a project or program manager role. Respondents were predominantly males (88%) aged 35-44 (73%) who indicated the United States as their primary work country (83%). Table 1 summarizes the sample demographics.

Primary Work Country	#	International Project Experience (Years)					Age (Years)					Gender			
		3-6	7-10	11-15	16-20	20+	18 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 +	NS.	Male	Female	Not Provided	
Afghanistan	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Australia	6	3	2	1	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	-	5	1	-
Belgium	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Belize	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Brazil	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Canada	9	3	4	1	-	1	-	4	5	-	-	-	9	-	-
China	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Dominican Republic	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
France	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Guatemala	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
India	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Italy	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Japan	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Liberia	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Mexico	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
Switzerland	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
USA	138	37	62	28	7	4	0	115	17	2	4	-	119	15	4
Total by Category	168	50	70	35	7	6	0	121	26	2	4	-	146	18	4
% Category		30%	42%	21%	4%	4%	0%	81%	13%	1%	2%	-	87%	11%	2%

Analysis of International Business Competencies

All respondents rated the importance of the 44 learning objectives, and a mean relevance score was computed for each objective. The items were ranked in order of importance using the mean score, with the highest mean score given a rank of “1.” When item mean scores were equal, the item with the smallest standard error of the mean was given a higher rank. The rankings of the learning objectives are shown in Table 2.

#	Learning Objective	Mean	SE [95% CI]
1	Capacity to coordinate and control international project activities	87.80	1.01 [85.80-89.80]
2	Virtual team leadership and technology integration	87.58	1.05 [85.50-89.65]
3	The value and challenges of multiculturalism and diversity on project teams	87.22	1.00 [85.25-89.19]
4	Understanding country differences and location-specific advantages for structuring project activities	87.16	1.06 [85.07-89.25]
5	Ability to plan and execute international logistics	86.55	1.12 [84.35-88.76]
6	Evaluating benefits and costs of international project alliances	86.46	1.24 [84.01-88.91]
7	Business and economic implications of cultural differences	85.93	1.18 [83.59-88.27]
8	Policies or regulations used by governments to control international trade	85.91	1.08 [83.78-88.05]
9	The unique ethical dilemmas faced by international project managers	85.91	1.17 [83.61-88.21]
10	The impact of trade agreements such as NAFTA, European Union, ASEAN	85.91	1.25 [83.44-88.37]
11	Ability to manage international aspects of organizational structure and processes	85.80	1.23 [83.39-88.22]
12	Understanding the impact of exchange rates, trade barriers, and transportation costs on budget management	85.79	1.11 [83.60-87.99]
13	How knowledge management may differ between countries	85.71	1.23 [83.28-88.14]
14	Knowledge of the firm’s corporate strategies with respect to international projects	85.70	1.34 [83.06-88.34]
15	Understanding cultural intelligence and the problems of ethnocentric thinking	85.57	1.18 [83.24-87.91]
16	International aspects of personnel sourcing, selection, compensation, training, and development	85.43	1.21 [83.04-87.81]
17	Cross-cultural communication skills	85.38	1.20 [83.02-87.75]
18	Factors that determine national and organizational culture	85.36	1.13 [83.14-87.58]
19	Mitigation of foreign exchange risk on international projects	85.31	1.09 [83.17-87.46]
20	How performance appraisals differ across cultures	85.27	1.18 [82.94-87.61]
21	The overall dynamics of business globalization	85.27	1.33 [82.65-87.90]
22	Competency in cross-cultural negotiation	85.24	1.12 [83.04-87.45]
23	Impact of foreign exchange volatility on project risk management	85.20	1.13 [82.97-87.42]
24	Globalization’s opportunities and challenges for business managers	85.20	1.15 [82.92-87.47]
25	Differences of leadership effectiveness across cultures	85.11	1.24 [82.66-87.56]

Note: The complete list of learning objectives is available upon request.

Technical & Operational Proficiency, International Strategic Thinking, and Cultural Intelligence & Awareness were the three most important themes influencing international project success. Table 3 shows the six themes’ ranking and lists each theme’s three highest-rated

learning objectives. The relative importance of each of the six themes was computed from the mean ratings for the underlying learning objectives.

Theme	Overall Mean Score	Top Three Learning Objectives
Technical & Operational Proficiency	86.49	(1) Capacity to coordinate and control international project activities (5) Ability to plan and execute international logistics (11) Ability to manage international aspects of organizational structure and processes
International Strategic Thinking	86.00	(4) Understanding country differences and location-specific advantages for structuring project activities (6) Evaluating benefits and costs of international project alliances (14) Knowledge of the firm's corporate strategies with respect to international projects
Cultural Intelligence & Awareness	85.29	(3) The value and challenges of multiculturalism and diversity on project teams (7) Business and economic implications of cultural differences (15) Understanding cultural intelligence and the problems of ethnocentric thinking
Management & Leadership Skills & Knowledge	85.10	(2) Virtual team leadership and technology integration (9) The unique ethical dilemmas faced by international project managers (16) International aspects of personnel sourcing, selection, compensation, training, and development
International Trade & Foreign Exchange Awareness	84.91	(8) Policies or regulations used by governments to control international trade (10) The impact of trade agreements such as NAFTA, European Union, ASEAN (12) Understanding the impact of exchange rates, trade barriers, and transportation costs on budget management
Globalization	84.27	(13) How knowledge management may differ between countries (21) The overall dynamics of business globalization (24) Globalization's opportunities and challenges for business managers

The mean importance given to all the learning objectives ranged from 82.37 to 87.80, demonstrating the perceived importance of all aspects of international business to managing international projects successfully. The mean importance given to the six themes also demonstrates that experienced international project managers consider the IB competencies essential for international project success.

Proposed Curriculum

Based on the survey results, the following section describes a set of learning modules that should reduce project-level liabilities of foreignness to improve the chances of international project success (Table 4). The content presented here targets professional postgraduate students with varying levels of project management experience. Its design and scope of coverage are sufficient for a graduate certificate or MBA concentration. The following sections describe the

modules by summarizing the key topics covered in each module, how the topics reduce the potential liability of foreignness, and how these align with project management best practices. Initially, six modules were proposed based on the IB competency themes used in the survey. However, after a review of the proposed content, it was decided to split a few of the modules so that all modules were approximately similar in the amount of content covered. Doing so will make it easier to organize the modules into courses or certificates as desired.

Name	Description
Module 1. National Culture and Ethics	Theme: 3. Cultural Intelligence and Awareness National culture and the implications of cultural differences to project success; dimensions of national culture and values, team diversity and multiculturalism, cultural intelligence, ethical decision-making
Module 2. International Strategy and Operations	Theme: 2. International Strategic Thinking; 1. Technical and Operational Proficiency Organizational structure and processes that support an organization's strategic and operational goals, balancing organizational structure with global standards and location-specific project constraints
Module 3. Leading International Teams	Theme: 4. Management & Leadership Skills and Knowledge Approaches to leading and managing international teams, including team development, communication strategies across cultures, and virtual team leadership and technology integration
Module 4. International Project Planning	Theme: 1. Technical and Operational Proficiency; 6. Globalization Examination of how country differences in political, economic, cultural, ethical, and human resource practices may influence and constrain project planning
Module 5. International Human Resource Management	Theme: 4. Management & Leadership Skills & Knowledge Basic concepts of international human resource management (recruitment, selection, compensation, performance evaluation, training, and development); HR practices across different cultural contexts
Module 6. International Trade Regulation and Agreements	Theme: 5. International Trade & Foreign Exchange Awareness; 6. Globalization National differences in commercial statutes, economic policies, and regulatory agreements; the role of country-specific political, legal, and economic systems that may constrain business operations; foreign exchange, trade agreements, and wealth distribution; how these factors influence projects
Module 7. International Project Coordination	Theme: 1. Technical and Operational Proficiency; 2. International Strategic Thinking; 6. Globalization Project coordination functions to maximize efficiencies intra- and inter-organizationally complicated by cross-border activities; project controls for managing the global stakeholder network, nation-specific baselines, contingencies, and country-specific contract and risk plan administration
Module 8. International Project Alliances	Theme: 2. International Strategic Thinking; 6. Globalization Benefits and drawbacks of international alliances to complete project work; strategies to enable international project managers to identify potential partners and negotiate agreements
Module 9. International Project Logistics	Theme: 1. Technical and Operational Proficiency; 2. International Strategic Thinking; 5. International Trade & Foreign Exchange Awareness; 6. Globalization Project logistics, quality control, and distribution channels are affected by international constraints.

MODULE 1 NATIONAL CULTURE AND ETHICS

Cultural intelligence and awareness are critical for international project managers to reduce their potential liability of foreignness and improve project performance. Research and anecdotal evidence support the variety and impact of cultural values, norms, and behaviors worldwide (Chen et al., 2009; Javidan et al., 2006). Project managers working with teams representing multiple nations and cultures must recognize their team members' different values and norms, embrace the benefits of diversity, and minimize the challenges that arise. The international project managers surveyed in this study felt that cultural intelligence and awareness were critical success factors for international projects, rating highly the objectives relating to national culture, values, and challenges of multiculturalism, and unique ethical dilemmas the international project managers face. The information presented in this module will provide the international project manager with a toolkit to understand national cultural differences and maximize the benefits of working with a multicultural project team. This module explores theories of national culture and the implications of cultural differences to project success. Topics will include dimensions of national culture and values, opportunities and challenges of team diversity and multiculturalism, cultural intelligence, and ethical decision-making for international project managers.

MODULE 2 INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

Several Strategic and Business Management aspects surfaced as critical knowledge for international project managers. The competencies prioritized by the experts suggest international structure and process as necessary knowledge for successful international projects. Whether for continuous operations or discontinuous project work, structure, and processes are vital in implementing strategic actions. Strategy determines the overarching goals guiding organizations (Ansoff, 1965; Chandler, 1990; Guerras-Martín et al., 2014; Porter, 1997), and projects should align closely with a firm's strategic priorities (Morris & Jamieson, 2005). Indeed, projects should not only align with organizational strategy but may encompass unique project-level strategies and adjust project structure and processes to the transitioning environments in which they operate (Morris & Jamieson, 2005). Structure conceptually encompasses horizontal and vertical components, with the former depicting the configuration of work units and the latter reflecting optimal decision-making location in the organizational hierarchy. Projects are the building blocks of strategy implementation, and integrating mechanisms are the information processing that binds them intra- and inter-organizationally (Galbraith, 1974; Tushman & Nadler, 1978). A central theme of international strategies is how organizations must respond to global standardization and cost reduction pressures vs. pressures for local responsiveness (Prahalad & Doz, 1987). Understanding these competing demands would enhance a project manager's ability to translate these organizational priorities to determine project-level activities. Due to the increased uncertainty of internationalization, integrating processes become even more important

to project success and may be enhanced through best practice dissemination, incentive and control processes, and conscientious processes to orchestrate project or organizational culture.

MODULE 3 LEADING INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

Leading international teams requires understanding team development and communication best practices to ensure the project teams are effective and high-performing in face-to-face and virtual environments. This module explores approaches to leading and managing international teams, including team development, communication, and virtual team leadership to support international project success. The expert international project managers ranked virtual team leadership and technology integration as the second most important international business competency.

Because globalization has been strengthened through the technological advancements of the 20th and 21st centuries, international project managers must embrace technology to manage international teams. Since the 1990s, technology has moved from a mechanism to support group functioning to an integral part of team processes and performance (Larson & DeChurch, 2020). Technology both enables and limits communication in project teams (Azriel & Marcirio Silveira, 2018), and a digital divide still exists today (Pikhart, 2020). International project managers must utilize technology's benefits and minimize team functioning and performance limitations.

MODULE 4 INTERNATIONAL PROJECT PLANNING

Research has demonstrated the positive influence of planning competencies on project success (Dvir et al., 2003) and the value of coordinated approaches to project planning (Zwikael, 2009). To reduce LOF, international project planners should consider between-country differences regarding the political economy, culture, ethics, and location-specific advantages or disadvantages relevant to project success. Also, resource transactions among a project's global web of activities may differ in linkages and over time. These differences pose elevated uncertainty, opportunities, and risks for project planners. International planning effectiveness relies on how these international factors are assessed and accounted for during the project initiation and planning stages. Each component of the project management plan should include international contingencies. For example, cost planning should consider exchange rate volatility and compare resource pricing differentials for different sourcing locations. Scope and schedule might benefit from distributed activities located to leverage time zones for round-the-clock workflow and simultaneously capture country-specific resource advantages. Risk and quality plans must identify unique national and cross-national impacts stemming from controllable and uncontrollable factors such as weather patterns, volatility of political economies, real or intellectual property protection, corruption, and contract reliability, or a range of human resource factors native to the host economies.

Procurement planning should consider resource components' price/quality/availability, for which the cost/benefits formula may vary over time and source location. Stakeholder and communication planning complexity intensifies as more international participants escalate

culture-specific requirements and motivations to bear on project success. The deeper a project manager's comprehension of international environments, the more knowledge, experience, and project success factors can be applied to the project plans. The significance of international planning competency applies to more predictable waterfall contexts and the agile approaches characteristic of more ambiguous situations.

MODULE 5 INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Part of team performance includes identifying needed skill sets, recruiting qualified candidates, and providing training and development opportunities to encourage team cohesion and collaboration, which is valid for all project teams. The unique context of international project teams makes it even more critical to understand human resource management practice variations among nations. International human resource management focuses on recruitment and selection, compensation and performance evaluation, and training and development of employees in organizations, considering the differences among nations in how these practices are enacted. It is recognized that differences exist in human resource practices for different countries, and despite increasing globalization, these differences are likely to remain (Al Ariss & Sidani, 2016). The surveyed international project management experts ranked knowledge of international aspects of resource management in the top 20 competencies for international project success. Thus, the purpose of this module is to present the basic concepts of international human resource management and how human resource practices might change across different cultural contexts.

MODULE 6 INTERNATIONAL TRADE REGULATION AND AGREEMENTS

The second strategic and business knowledge module provides an understanding of international trade regulations and agreements. Country differences affect business activities in fundamental ways most relevant in culture, ethics, and political economy, reflecting the interactive effects of a country's political, economic, and legal systems. The political economy's influence on business actions constitutes a broad range of concerns, including political risk, regulatory and economic environments, and the prevailing norms and legal constraints that differ among countries. Country differences in culture and ethics are addressed in a separate module description. Political risk typically arises from government policy or administration, potentially influencing the ease and cost of conducting business, the nature of a country's trade barriers, or the level of corruption in a nation (Busse & Hefeker, 2007). Economic systems influence a country's inflation and interest rate environments, exchange rate fluctuation, financial growth, and wealth distribution (Erb et al., 1996). Legal systems are particularly impactful for projects such as use or business licenses, taxation, regulation, contract law, property protection, and consumer protection.

MODULE 7 INTERNATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATION AND CONTROL

Coordination and control are central themes within international business research (Edström & Galbraith, 1977; Martinez & Jarillo, 1989). Principles of coordination and control extend beyond the organization level to encompass the scope of international project-level operations. Coordination as a management function integrates organizational or project activities to ensure efficient resource utilization, both intra- and inter-organizationally. Coordination challenges are complicated when activities transcend national boundaries and consequently pressure management capabilities. Projects' dynamic and temporary nature requires even tighter coordination in the face of cross-border complexities such as time zone and language differentials, foreign exchange volatility, or international logistics. However, managers must comprehend and act on location-specific factor endowments such as geographical locality, labor rates, intellectual endowments, favorable government support, and industrial or educational infrastructure (Porter, 1997). (Ghemawat, 2007) describes relative distance based on cultural, administrative, geographic, and political differences as critical considerations in coordinating an organization's global web of activities. Appropriate cross-border controls enhance project predictability and harness international asset utilization benefits in concert with coordination mechanisms. Literature has examined antecedents and consequences of control strategies, characteristics of formal and informal controls, and portfolio control approaches (Ning, 2017). International project controls should be introduced in well-orchestrated plans that appropriately engage such considerations as the global stakeholder network, internationally vetted baselines, tolerances, contingency budgets, international contract enforceability, or country-specific risk triggers. International project managers should continuously hone their coordination and control skills to maintain the currency of their competency.

MODULE 8 INTERNATIONAL PROJECT ALLIANCES

An additional strategic and business knowledge suggested by our work is understanding the dynamics of international project alliances. Alliances entail sharing risks and assets and require proactive partnering as a requisite skill. International alliances offer benefits, including facilitating access to foreign assets, sharing costs for developing new or modified products and processes, and potentially merging complementary skills or resources. Strategic alliances have emerged as a compelling international business form in the last several decades because they help ease the uncertainty of foreign operations and mitigate the investment risks of "going it alone." Foreign partners help leverage location-specific knowledge and social capital assets that would be more difficult and take much longer to acquire as an individual effort.

An internationally competent project manager should understand the inherent and changing benefit/risk profile, know how to select appropriate partners, and contractually commit to mutually beneficial project parameters, positioning for equitable gain for various partners. To manage the partnership, project managers must know how to build and maintain productive relationships among the internationally diverse project stakeholders and navigate international

operations' increased volatility. Nevertheless, potential risks include knowledge appropriation, self-seeking behaviors, commitment inequality, or diverging goals and partners' priorities.

MODULE 9 INTERNATIONAL PROJECT LOGISTICS

A related competency to coordination and control is the project logistics function. Project logistics is a type of coordination and quality control extrapolated to the project supply and, in some cases, distribution channels. Logistics are driven by optimizing planning and execution specifications to maintain a constant flow of production resources for the project. International projects typically entail material, personnel, and knowledge contributions from distributed national sources. Maintaining work constrained by schedule, cost, and quality across national boundaries increases logistics uncertainty and complexity while offering efficiencies and cost savings opportunities. Competent project managers may leverage skills from their legal contracting, purchasing, or information systems departments to assist their logistical responsibilities but must maintain adequate international logistics execution competency. Like logistics in a multinational firm, the function can explain significant project performance and product quality variance.

TEACHING APPROACH

As the audience of these modules includes post-baccalaureate students with some work experience in project management, it is vital to create a learning environment that allows them to integrate their personal experiences with the material taught and take responsibility for their learning. Thus, it is recommended that a problem-centered approach be followed to enable mastery and internalization of the knowledge shared. Problem-centered or problem-based learning is not a new concept; it has been successfully used in many contexts. Problem-based learning (PBL) is a teaching method that focuses on the learner and requires students to apply knowledge to solve a real-world problem (Carriger, 2016; Garnjost & Brown, 2018; Savery, 2006; Winarno et al., 2017). PBL appears to be more effective with experienced students (e.g., those found in graduate programs) and when students are familiar with problem-based learning expectations (Garnjost & Brown, 2018). Direct problem-based learning (DPBL, Winarno et al., 2017) uses a combination of direct instruction and problem-based learning to mitigate the lack of student familiarity with the process. PBL is akin to case-based teaching, but cases usually have an expected solution, minimizing the incentive to direct their learning (Carriger, 2016).

One or more problem scenarios might be used to help students integrate knowledge. For example, for an activity within Module 3, Leading International Teams, the instructor would provide lectures or reading material that explored theories of leadership and how they might be reflected in various cultural contexts and offer a scenario, problem, or case for the students to analyze and offer possible solutions for the embedded issues. Winarno et al. (2017) provide an excellent outline for a typical problem-based learning session, shown in Table 5, with specific examples for this module.

Table 5
EXAMPLE LEARNING ACTIVITY

Associated Module: 3. Leading International Teams
Activity: Solving International Team Performance Through Effective Leadership
Instructional Time for Activity: 1-2 hours over two to three class periods, depending on class time.
Expected Student Effort: 4-6 hours (in-class and outside of class)
Learning Objective: Understand how cultural values influence the acceptance of various leadership styles.

Phase 1 Introduction and Identification

- Before the initial session, relevant reading materials and the problem are posted on the course learning management system. Students are expected to review the material before the session.
 - Suggested Reading: Leadership Styles (e.g., Gundersen et al., 2012; Jogulu, 2010; Kuchinke, 1999), Cultural Values Framework (e.g., Minkov et al., 2011; Morden, 1999)
- At the start of the session, the instructor reviews the new concepts in a short lecture and checks for understanding. The instructor presents the problem or scenario, provides guidelines for resolution, and organizes the class into groups of 4-6 students.
 - Suggested Problem: A project manager has trouble managing her project team, whose members represent three countries with different cultures. The team is not meeting project deadlines, and the project sponsor is unhappy. The project manager must consider the role of culture on team performance and determine the best leadership style to get her team to work together and meet project deadlines.

Phase 2 Application and Solution

- *This work may be conducted outside of a formal class meeting.* Each group reviews the problem scenario, identifies assumptions and options, conducts research to support their analysis, and prepares a class presentation based on their recommendation.
 - Suggested Analysis Approach: Each group should develop a recommendation for the most appropriate leadership style for the project manager to apply in this situation, considering the team members' different cultural value frameworks. It may be helpful to offer the team an analytical framework that guides them through problem identification, identification of assumptions and constraints, and identification and comparison of multiple options that may be selected.

Phase 3 Evaluation and Solution

- At a subsequent class meeting, each group presents its recommendation to the class. The class collectively evaluates each recommendation and discusses its strengths and challenges, focusing on its relation to the course material.
- The instructor reinforces the learning objectives and checks for understanding before completing the activity.

DISCUSSION

Our data indicate agreement by international PM practitioners that the existing PM knowledge base would benefit from the additional focus on relevant IB concepts. Open-ended survey questions asked respondents for additional IB topic suggestions beyond the included inventory but yielded few substantive additions. These findings identify a combination of preferred IB topics that constitute a reasonable framework of IPM learning modules to enable project organizations to build and execute their international operating capabilities more

effectively. The importance of these strategic capabilities escalates for project-oriented organizations as globalization intensifies their scope and frequency of cross-border activities.

Organizational learning provides a foundation for developing personal competencies and organizational capabilities focused on specific fields of knowledge or expertise. The strategic value of capabilities depends on the degree to which the capabilities incorporate personal or organizational experience, lessons learned, effective mentorship processes, and other learning activities. A beneficial resource directly geared to learning processes is specialized training and development deployment. However, the worth of such interventions relies on knowledge that reflects contemporary best practices and situational phenomena but is tempered by experiential validation. This study has drawn upon knowledge from the field of international business and has sought validation of those IB learning topics from practitioners within the field of project management. This approach is unique and creative for mapping a body of educational content that, to a substantive degree, has demonstrated support from working practitioners.

From a theoretical perspective, liability of foreignness suggests that lesser experienced, under-resourced, or knowledge-deficient projects would face disadvantages in internationalization due to these deficits. This study crafts a resource-based view of these disadvantages that project organizations should build capabilities to accelerate their international learning and thereby reduce their liabilities of foreignness. Human resource competencies may be the most critical resource for advancing international capabilities, and a vetted training and development curriculum would provide a tool for enabling such competencies. As companies invest in human resource development, they empower project managers with the knowledge to understand international business environments and the organizations to mature internationalization more effectively.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study is limited in at least a couple of regards mentioned below. It is exploratory and employs a more qualitative approach than empirically inclined methodologies. For this reason, its findings may evolve to incorporate new internationalization perspectives and avenues of learning. The sources of international business topics were derived from two academic textbooks that were both market leaders, one in international business and the other in international management. Although these are broad in scope, incorporating a macro perspective in one and more micro in the other, additional IB information sources are abundant, ranging from the scholarly research literature to popular and practitioner press and even to other academic textbooks that would undoubtedly reveal additional topics and understanding of IB phenomena. Another limitation stems from the narrow demographic of sample respondents that were solely US-based and gender-biased to the extent that less than 1% were female. Another limitation worthy of mention is the need to field test the proposed curriculum to discover gaps in the learning model and to work out unforeseen shortcomings in the topics to be delivered. Field observation and testing of the curriculum in actual situations will offer an extended avenue of validation and refinement by usage. In addition, field testing provides the opportunity to assess the effects of this curriculum on student learning or related performance outcomes.

This paper describes an education and training program that will help develop international business competencies for project managers, supporting their organization's capabilities to mitigate the potential liability of foreignness. This work intends to create visibility of a gap in project management education and offer a learning solution to narrow the gap in the associated body of knowledge. The rankings of our sample validate the proposed curriculum. The curriculum will benefit from field testing and should adjust its learning objectives as a continuous feedback cycle.

This study is exploratory at this stage, and the intended conclusions are neither descriptive of phenomena nor predictive regarding project or organizational outcomes. Instead, the study is in the scholarship of teaching and learning to narrow an existing project management knowledge gap. It aims to propose an interdisciplinary knowledge transfer for utilization within an underrepresented professional discipline. As such, research limitations do exist. The pool of international project management experts was limited in nationality to U.S.-based project and program managers, contributing to a potential loss of generalizability. The study lacks field observation and testing of the curriculum in actual situations. The curriculum needs validation and refinement by usage, as evaluation of the effect of this curriculum on student learning or performance outcomes did not occur.

The next step for this research will be pilot testing of the proposed curriculum. At this point, the curriculum presented herein is merely a suggestion but may be relevant for other graduate business programs to use as a starting point for developing their programs. Further research will be required if an international credentialing organization decides to pursue an international project management credential. Future work toward credential requirements would be generalizable, but the current exploratory study does not assume that characteristic. Pilot testing will offer additional content verification and observation of learning processes. Longitudinal assessment of outcomes may indicate the predictable outcomes of training effectiveness and areas of need for curriculum modification. Training content could be aligned more closely with professional standards to link more clearly to existing project management professional development standards. Collaboration with existing certification learning providers might leverage standard processes to reduce learning curves and liability of foreignness substantially.

This exploratory study is the groundwork for significant theoretical and empirical contributions and application to practice. An active and evolving body of IB theory has developed over 200 years, from Adam Smith's economic justification of free trade (Smith, 1910) to more recent work by Porter explaining the competitive advantage of nations (Porter, 1997). Literature has tested and empirically validated IB theories at the levels of nations, organizations, and individuals, yet the discussion of global activity at the project level is sparse. Project studies, however, is less developed as a theoretical research field but has drawn its applied concepts from operation science and organizational behavior and strategy. We envision a research area ripe for growth and productive outcomes like the evolution of international entrepreneurship that has grown substantially since its seminal work merging the younger field of entrepreneurship with more established IB theory (McDougall & Oviatt, 2003).

CONCLUSION

This study identified the most important international business competencies perceived to positively impact international project managers' performance. The highest priority competencies were used to formulate an international project management training program. Finally, an example approach was suggested to deliver this training to meet international project managers' needs. Project management training providers (in or out of higher education) may find this information helpful in building their international project management curriculum.

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