

Freshman and Sophomore Business Students' Perception of Global Forces

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to describe the perception on global forces of business major freshman and sophomore undergraduate students in the United States. As global forces deeply impact business life around the world, educators are looking for ways to provide necessary knowledge and skills in business education curricula to develop competitive and competent students who are prepared for the global economy. Although such efforts focus on the end result in education, understanding students' initial perceptions can help educators better shape their curricula and courses. The findings in this article are categorized into individual impacts, organizational impacts, and personal solutions. Emerging themes in individual impacts of globalization include increasing individual competition around the world, loss of individuality and new lifestyle with technology, and the Internet and social networks. Students identified organizations as winners of global forces and described organizational impacts more positively. Meanwhile, emerging themes in organizational impacts of globalization included more, cheaper, and better qualified employees as well as off shoring American jobs to developing countries, more customers, and new business practices on the Internet and social networking sites. Personal solutions to cope with global trends were focused on improving qualifications through education to stand out among global competition.

Keywords: Perception of global forces, globalization, educational strategies, student perception

INTRODUCTION

Educators have identified the close relationship among rapidly developing technology, increasing globalization, and cultural diversity as an important shift in today's world (Borsheim, Merritt, & Reed, 2008; Case, 1993; Richardson, 2010). Parallel to this recognition, educators have been suggesting changes in educational curriculum in the United States (U.S.) and around the world to provide students with the core knowledge and skills needed to compete in a global economy and develop competitive and competent citizens (Palacios, 2007, p. 24; Parker, Ninomiya, & Cogan, 1999). Standards have been adapted in business higher education to face the challenges coming from strong and growing economic forces and cultural diversity among employees and customers (AACSB, 2011).

All these efforts focus on outputs or results of higher education in business and management. However, students join higher education programs in business with an initial perception of global forces. All their previous education, experience gained in family and society, daily news, and daily interactions on the globally connected Internet and social networking sites such as Facebook shape students' perceptions toward global forces before joining a higher education institution (Collins, 1996). Understanding this initial perception is critical in successfully reshaping students' understanding of global forces in business education (Case, 1993; Peng & Shin, 2008). Having acknowledged the limited research on students' perceptions of globalization in literature (Peng & Shin, 2008, p. 176), this article presents the findings of a study that explores students' initial perception of global forces as an input into higher education in business.

Freshman and sophomore students were specifically selected to explore their initial perceptions during their undergraduate education. As students take more courses related to the global context, their perceptions are expected to change over time. Understanding students' initial perceptions is critical for teachers to be able to comprehend their knowledge map of global forces and their related concerns, thereby enabling teachers to discuss these issues and effectively address them during their courses.

Seven interesting facts from a popular YouTube video were provided to students (*Did you know? 3.0*, 2008). Three open-ended questions were subsequently asked of students to explore each message's impact on individuals and organizations as well as to develop personal solutions to deal with these concerns.

This research contributes the literature by focusing on students' initial perceptions of global forces as an input to higher education in business. Students' perceptions are studied to understand impacts on individuals, organizations, and personal solutions related to global trends. Emerging findings in students' perceptions of global forces as a result of a qualitative analysis in this research provide new factors for other researchers to study in their quantitative studies among larger participant pools.

Literature Review

Students' PerceptionS of Global Forces

Peng and Shin (2008, p. 179) replicated an influential survey conducted by *Business Week* (Bernstein, 2000) to study students' attitudes toward globalization. Although the *Business Week* survey studied perceptions of the American public, Peng and Shin's survey studied perceptions of undergraduate juniors and seniors, approximately 90% of whom were majoring in business. The *Business Week* survey found a deep divide on globalization among American people. On the other hand, Peng and Shin's study found a more favorable perception of globalization among undergraduate students. Selling goods and services produced in one country in another was the main focus of globalization in the survey. Students rated globalization as good for American consumers (96%), American companies (77%), the American economy (88%), the creation of jobs in the U.S. (43%), and the strengthening of poor countries' economies (82%).

Business majors' attitudes toward globalization were explained using the Heckscher-Ohlin theory that business majors' perceptions of globalization were influenced by their education (Janavaras, Kuzma, & Thiewes, 2008). The same study concluded that, although participants (juniors and seniors) majoring in business have a more favorable view of globalization than liberal arts students, no significant difference exists among different business disciplines (finance, international business, management, and marketing).

In a more focused study on offshoring, the Harvard MBA class of 2009 replicated a previous study (Blinder, 2009) on American jobs' offshorability (Smith & Rivkin, 2008). Although the findings paralleled the previous study, students estimated that 21% to 42% of American jobs were potentially offshorable. Another important finding from this research was the positive correlation between offshorability and wage level according to students' perceptions. Among so many global forces, high school students' perceptions of global environmental effects have also been studied (Boyes & Stanisstreet, 1998; Boyes, Chuckran, & Stanisstreet, 1993).

EDUCATION AND GLOBAL FORCES

Educators have acknowledged the role of global forces in today's economy and the importance of educating the youth to face the challenges of global effects (Borsheim et al., 2008; Case, 1993; Richardson, 2010). The Association to Advance Colligate Schools of Business (AACSB) determined that strong and growing global economic forces and cultural diversity among employees and customers are core challenges (AACSB, 2011). In light of this recognition, educators have been suggesting changes in education curriculum in the U.S. and around the world to provide students with the core knowledge and skills needed to compete in a global economy and develop competitive and competent citizens (Palacios, 2007, p. 24; Parker et al., 1999).

In an attempt to generate school curriculum recommendations from a global perspective, Parker, Ninomiya, and Cogan (1999) explored global trends, described global citizens'

characteristics, and developed the relevant educational strategies by analyzing the feedback from a multinational panel of informants composed of 182 scholars, practitioners, and policy leaders. Many of the educational strategies listed in Parker, Ninomiya, and Cogan's (1999, p. 125) study were examined by researchers, including teaching critical thinking (Paul, 1992), teaching information literacy, teaching information technology literacy (Johnston & Webber, 2003; Leu Jr., 2000), establishing international links among institutions to foster international studies, research, and curriculum development (Altbach & Knight, 2007), cultivating a cross-cultural student body (Ryan & Twibell, 2000), implementing international student exchange programs (Hansel & Grove, 1986; Messer & Wolter, 2007; Sowa, 2002), and focusing on global issues and international studies in curriculum (McCarthy, Giardina, Harewood, & Park, 2003). One of the most important factors in a successful education is prepared teachers. Merryfield (2000) indicated that teachers are not ready to teach equity, diversity, and global interconnectedness. Teachers growing up in an environment that lacks multicultural and global experiences are one major factor in this unpreparedness at all levels of education. This same factor plays a crucial role in higher education in producing teachers without the necessary skills and knowledge to teach in the global world. Educators with the necessary skills make critical instructional decisions that influence students' understanding of other cultures and global issues. Merryfield (2002) identified the strategies of 'global educators' to include addressing stereotypes and exotic images, exploring multiple perspectives, examining how power shapes worldviews, and increasing students' experience of cross-cultural learning.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was adopted to capture and discover the meaning of global trends for students. In order to attract students and motivate them to provide rich data, a popular YouTube video (*Did you know? 3.0*, 2008) was presented to students during the first class of the semester. This timing was specifically selected to minimize students' exposure to related concepts in the global context. Students were asked to express their thoughts about the nineteen facts on global, informational, and technological forces.

Data were collected through a questionnaire. Students commented on facts by answering three generic questions to discuss individual and organizational impacts of these facts as well as personal solutions for these trends. A total of 2,938 (3,021 minus 83 who provided no comments) comments were collected; 1,079 comments (53 students x 7 global trend facts x 3 generic questions = 1,113 minus 34 no comments) were analyzed as part of this research to study students' perceptions on global forces. The questionnaire was provided as homework for students, who were informed that detailed answers would be rewarded with extra points.

The collected data were analyzed based on the data analysis techniques in Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the first step, the open coding technique (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101) was used to code each comment to identify concepts and their properties and dimensions. Analyst triangulation (Patton, 1999, p. 1193) was also used to test the reliability and validity of the coding process. Three researchers coded the comments separately and then compared their results to establish a common understanding among them. As the categories were

emerging, an axial coding process was used to relate categories to subcategories. In the final data analysis steps, selective coding was adapted to integrate and refine the relationships among categories. These relationships are depicted in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Since theoretical saturation—“the point in category development at which no new properties, dimensions, or relationships emerge during analysis” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143)—is key in determining the sample size in qualitative studies (Mason, 2010; Sandelowski, 1995), data collected from 53 students were satisfactory for researchers to apply deep analysis to understand students’ perceptions of global forces.

Population and Sample

The research setting is a private university located in the northeast U.S., with a student enrollment averaging 4,000. Freshman and sophomore students were selected in order to understand undergraduate students’ initial perceptions of global forces. In total, 53 freshman (21) and sophomore (32) students answered the questionnaire. Approximately 10% of the students were international or minority students.

FACTS AND QUESTIONS

Students were provided with nineteen facts on global forces selected from a YouTube video (*Did you know? 3.0*, 2008). Having already attracted approximately 15 million views, the ‘Did you know 3.0?’ video presents interesting facts about global forces, demographics, information, and technology. This video has the ideal characteristics of a class presentation in terms of its length and its informative, interesting, and original content to facilitate an effective class discussion on the relevant issues (Lin, Michko, Bonk, Bonk, & Teng, 2009). The video’s content has also proven to be an effective discussion starter in education-related settings (Borsheim et al., 2008), and it was referred to in discussions on change in education (Seidel, 2007). Based on class discussions after watching the video and the assignments related to the video’s content, one of the researchers as the course instructor noticed interesting emerging themes in students’ perceptions of global forces. The researchers decided to explore these themes in the subsequent semester by asking students open-ended questions at the beginning of the semester.

The researchers categorized seven facts as global forces. Selected facts from the video are:

1. If you’re one in a million in China.....there are 1,300 people just like you. [1]
2. China will soon become the NUMBER ONE English speaking country in the world. [2]
3. The 25% of India’s population with the highest IQ’s is GREATER than the total population of the United States. TRANSLATION: India has more honors kids than America has kids [3]
4. There are over 200 million register users on MySpace. If MySpace were a country, it would be the 5th-largest in the world (between Indonesia and Brazil) [7]
5. The #1 ranked country in Broadband Internet Penetration is Bermuda. #19 The United States. #22 Japan. [8]

6. NTT Japan has successfully tested a fiber optic cable that pushes 14 trillion bits per second down a single strand of fiber. That is 2,660 CDs or 210 million phone calls every second. It is currently tripling every six months and is expected to do so for the next 20 years. [17]
7. During the course of this presentation: 67 babies were born in the US. 274 babies were born in China. 395 babies were born in India. And 694,000 songs were downloaded illegally. [19]

Three generic open-ended questions were selected to give students sufficient flexibility to answer questions about individual impacts, organizational impacts, and personal solutions contexts:

1. What does it mean for you? Evaluate this message in terms of its impact on individuals.
2. What does it mean for organizations? Evaluate this message in terms of its impact on organizations.
3. What are your personal solutions for this trend/message? P.S.: Give advice to yourself, not others.

The global trends listed in this video and students' reactions to these trends are actually very relevant to the research in business education in this area. A multinational panel of informants composed of 182 scholars, practitioners, and policy leaders identified similar trends as major ones likely to have a significant impact on people's lives during the next 25 years (in 1999) (Parker et al., 1999). Population growth, economic growth fueled by knowledge (ideas, innovations, and inventions), information technology use and privacy, inequalities between accessing information technology, and economic gaps among countries were discussed as major trends in this study (Parker et al., 1999, p. 124). In two quantitative studies, similar topics were also analyzed. Peng and Shin (2008) analyzed students' perceptions of globalization on American consumers, American companies, American economy, the creation of jobs in the U.S., and the strengthening of poor countries' economies. Janavaras, Kuzma, and Thiewes (2008) analyzed students' perceptions of globalization on the American economy, American consumers, American workers, the creation of jobs in the U.S., American companies' investments in foreign countries, foreign companies' investments in the U.S., profitability of U.S.-based and foreign companies, the image of the U.S., countries, developed countries, the world, global warming, environmental degradation, terrorism, corruption, exploitation of the natural resources of less developed countries, trade and investment barriers, prices on goods and services, travel and communication, and economic gap between countries.

ANALYSIS: PERCEPTION OF GLOBAL FORCES

Emerging findings from analysis were categorized into three main areas: individual impact, organizational impact, and personal solutions against the trends. Students had a closely related view of individual and organizational impacts, which was why findings on these topics are described together in Figure 1. Findings on personal solutions are described in Figure 2. Discussion topics given to students are included in gray boxes in the figures. Since the last discussion topic is mostly about the population, six messages were listed in the figures.

Personal solutions offered by students are placed in white boxes. Other findings are listed as text in the figures.

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

Competition between Individuals

“For me, this means that I am nowhere near as smart as I thought I was. I am aware that job competition these days is not only nationally but worldwide. This statistic scares me and makes me realize how many more intelligent people there are in the world than me. Not even just adults, but kids my age and even younger. I wish I could make all of America realize this so that they are too aware of our reality.”

Competition between individuals is the most emerging finding. Increasing population in other parts of the worlds (specifically in eastern world populations), massive populations with more qualifications such as bilingual English-speaking Chinese people, and the number of intelligent people in the world (as in India’s example) were the critical factors for increasing individual competitions according to most students.

Students specifically focused on the job market and indicated that these factors lead to a tough job market for everybody in the world. Although students perceived this trend to be applicable to their situation in the U.S., some students explained the impact of these trends in the international job market context. Very few students indicated that increasing competition among individuals is only China’s or India’s problem.

“...people in the United States will soon be competing with people from all over the world especially China for English speaking jobs. This will make the competition for an individual looking for a job incredibly steep.”

The increasing population in China and India offers cheaper and better qualified employees to American businesses. Students discussed two trends: the off shoring of American jobs and the movement of the Chinese or Indian workforce to the U.S. Although most students saw a threat to Americans in these trends, some students found opportunities for themselves. The enormous English-speaking Chinese population creates an opportunity for native English speakers to get a job in countries like China.

Students saw this trend as a long-term one applicable to current employees too. More and better-qualified prospective employees would motivate organizations to replace their current workforce with better ones. Students put themselves in an employed person’s situation and discussed ways to keep themselves ahead of most employees.

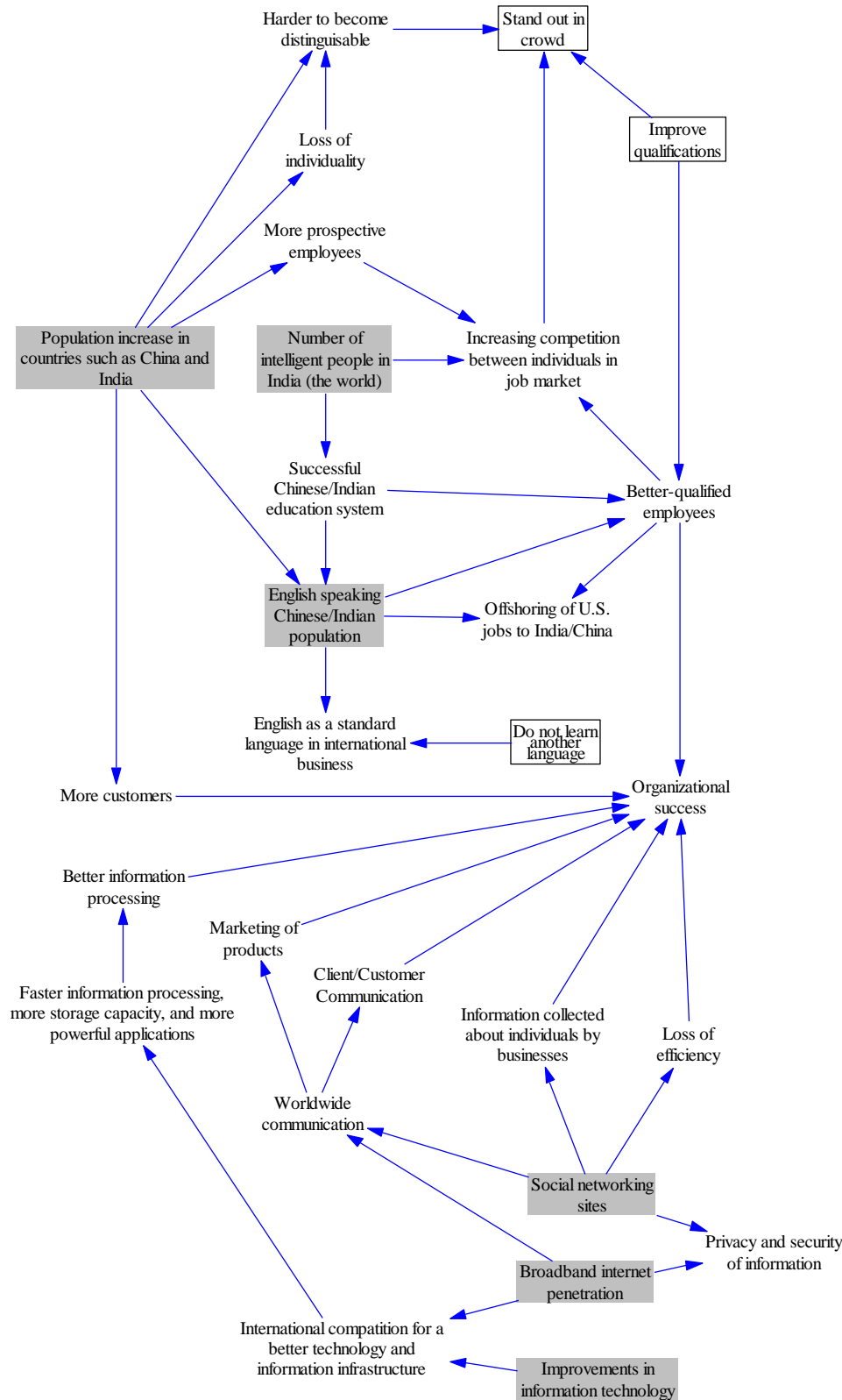


FIGURE 1 - INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS

“...I am not an individual in this world anymore. The population around the world has grown so much and people are conforming and becoming more and more alike. There needs to be a way from me to stand out over other people. The importance of the average person is at an all time low.”

The “one in a million” phrase in the first message made a strong impact on students. The second strongest reaction among students related to the loss of individuality. Students expressed their disappointment about how population size decreases the individuality or uniqueness of a person. A few students refused the common understanding of the message and insisted that everybody was unique in this world.

Lifestyle with Technology, the Internet, and Social Networks

“...social network sites like Myspace have become a huge part of my culture and lifestyle. I check my Facebook almost every day, as well as millions and millions of others, and use it as a way to communicate with friends and express my opinions.”

Information technologies—specifically, the Internet and social networking sites—were seen as part of the culture and lifestyle factors. Students were aware of the growing trend in technology, the Internet, and social networking sites. Although some students observed this growing trend as part of a worldwide connection and communication, others discussed it as a risk in terms of taking control of their lives, becoming a time-consuming activity, and being dependent on technology.

“...the entire world is connected to the internet and that the world's knowledge is fair game for anyone. This shows that people in Bermuda can know as much information as those in the US. This impacts me on the individual level as it may mean I am not learning as much as the internet has to offer.”

Students emphasized the importance of the Internet in terms of accessing information, communicating, and reaching a variety of services. Students also acknowledged the worldwide access to the Internet from different countries. Some indicated security and privacy issues related to the international access and suggested some precautions. Their reaction might stem from misinterpreting the concept of “penetration” in the Bermuda example. The Bermuda example in broadband Internet penetration was a surprising fact for students in terms of technological development in Bermuda. Students acknowledged the role of the internet in accessing information and discussed the limited access for some people, even in developed countries. Some students became confused about the broadband penetration concept and did

not express any ideas about the individual impact of this message. Finally, most students recognized the main goal of social networking sites as communicating, staying in contact with people, connecting with friends, meeting new people, and even sharing a public profile to get jobs.

Organizational Impact

Organizations as Winners of Global Forces

“It means that they have a huge pool of potential employees to choose from which will, in the end, help the organization's overall effectiveness.”

Organizations (specifically, American companies) were the clear winners of global forces according to most students. All the changes consistently offered better opportunities to organizations, which were taking advantage of the increasing population by having more customers and more prospective employees. The increasing qualifications of people in China or India meant better-qualified employees for organizations. New technologies were offering better information-processing capabilities and a growing Internet and social networking sites were offering more marketing and communication capabilities.

Few students discussed an increasing business competition as a negative trend for American organizations. Some students referred to the intelligent Indian population as a source for more competitive Indian companies compared to American companies. Some students indicated the role of time-consuming social networking as a loss of efficiency in organizations.

More, Cheaper, and Better-Qualified Employees

“This is a very good thing for organizations. They have a whole new target market of potential employees that they may be able to tap into. Plus India is becoming a very intelligent country and are making great strides towards the advancements of several fields of science, academics, technology, etc!”

Capabilities of the rising workforce in countries like China and India were among the most emerging findings in the evaluations of the first three discussion topics. The massive population of China and India automatically led the discussions to more and cheaper workforce offered in these countries. Already having some idea about American companies' offshoring trend, students were not surprised by the cheaper workforce ideas. However, when the massive population developed better qualifications, such as bilingual Chinese and the intelligent Indian workforce, students started to focus on the importance of developing their own qualifications. Students specifically emphasized the organizations' approach to more, cheaper, and better-qualified workforce from the hiring process perspective. By returning to the “one in a million” point in the first message, students discussed the challenges of hiring among so many employees available worldwide with similar qualifications. This twofold discussion focused on

the qualifications of employees from both the employer and employee perspective. Students emphasized that this massive workforce with better qualifications motivates organizations to look for ways to replace their existing employees with better ones. Very few students discussed the value, uniqueness, and irreplaceability of each employee.

Offshoring American Jobs

“...a good sign for American businesses in China but a bad sign for American employees. Because the Chinese are fluent in English, businesses are more likely to move to China because not only is it cheaper, but now their future employees also speak the same language.”

Students frequently referred to the off shoring trend in American jobs, which were moving to developing countries such as China and India. In addition, to lower labor costs in developing countries, English-speaking Chinese and the smart Indian populations were also seen as important motivators for American companies to take advantage of these workforces.

Although students describe the improving employee qualifications abroad, their recommendations also focused on improving themselves, which creates two competing trends in off shoring. The increasing quality in the American workforce was expected to impact the off shoring decisions of American companies.

More Customers

“While this may a detriment to individuals it could potentially be a source for prosperity. Each and everyone of these Chinese people could be a future customer to them. Having more customers equals more money, and in a business mindset that equals success. In addition to being just customers these people could be prospective employees. Having a large amount of people means that organizations can be more selective when they hire their employees. They can then choose the characteristics they want and probably the best in their field. Having the elite employees will most likely lead to better products and more success.”

Although most students initially perceived the Chinese population as prospective employees for American companies, many students indicated that the same population can be prospective customers for these companies. English-speaking Chinese customers were seen as an advantage for organizations, enabling them to do business more easily.

Business on Internet and Social Networking

“This means for organizations that there is one central place that they can advertise towards others. On such social networks, companies can list one advertisement on the webpage and will reach millions of users. Companies can also list a profile for themselves which loyal customers can befriend and keep up with the company’s involvement.”

Social networking sites, broadband Internet penetration, and developments in information technology bring more capabilities to organizations. Students perceived all these factors as contributions to worldwide communication. They indicated that international competition existed for developing better technologies and information infrastructures. Developments in information technology led to faster information processing, more storage, and more powerful applications. Eventually all these changes improve organizational tasks and bring about organizational success.

Social networking sites and broadband internet penetration providing access to organizations worldwide, including better marketing capability, increased customer communication, and the ability to collect information about customers as well as prospective and current employees. Some students also expressed their intention to use social networking sites to share information with employers.

In this information age, students saw the lack of broadband Internet infrastructure as a disadvantage for companies. While some students called upon American companies to improve the infrastructure, others suggested that companies move their businesses to broadband-capable locations.

The loss of employee efficiency due to the inappropriate use of Internet or social networking sites was the only negative organizational impact identified, and only a few students mentioned this factor.

Personal Solutions

Individual competition motivated students to improve their qualifications. While describing this improvement, students frequently referred to generic actions such as work harder, study more, become the best, get one step ahead, and stay ahead. However, they did not provide a clear action plan.

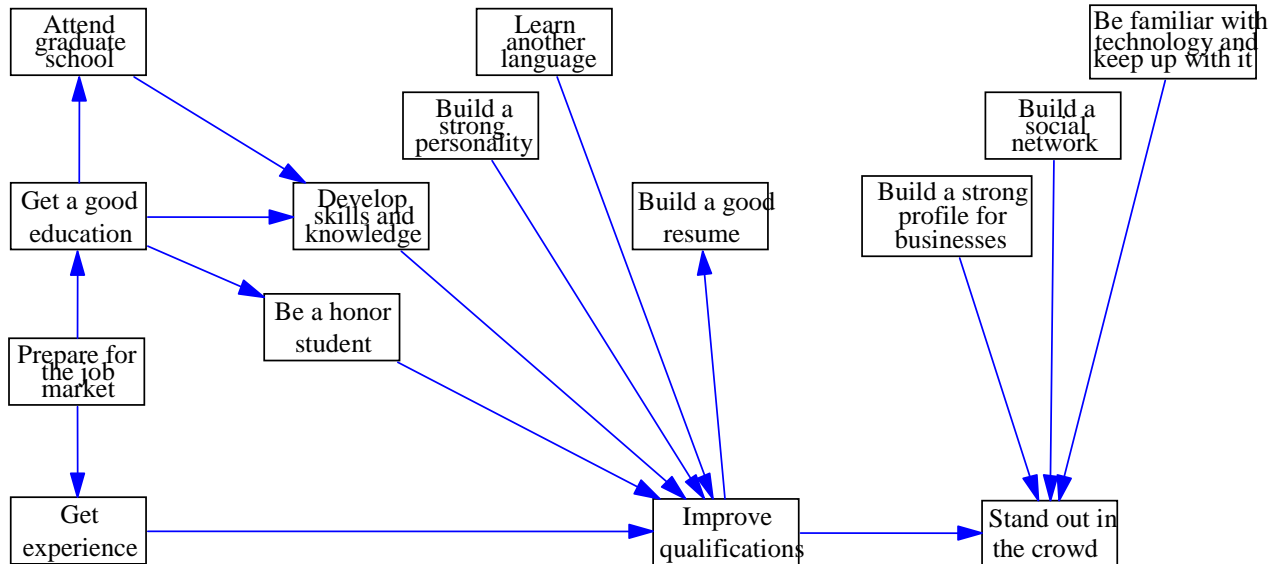


FIGURE 2 - INDIVIDUAL SOLUTIONS

Standing Out in the Crowd

“If there are 1,300 people out there in the world that are just like me, I need to find away to stand out in the crowd. I need to ask myself questions and see what needs to be done that will help me be one step ahead of the game. It would be helpful to brainstorm some personality traits that set me apart from others.”

The “one in a million” point of the first message, growing populations, and massive populations with better qualifications led students to identify the need to find ways to stand out in a crowd. Some students clearly indicated that these trends would motivate employers to choose Chinese or Indian people over Americans. Distinguishing themselves from their competitors, becoming unique, doing things differently, and being original were the common descriptions about their goals in improving themselves.

Education: Gaining Skills and Knowledge

“I need to keep working hard and make academics a priority, as just being a solid student at this college would not guarantee me a job, knowing the massive populations of honor kids in other countries.”

When it came to specific tactics of standing out in a crowd, education was the main solution. Students wanted to prepare themselves for the job market; getting a good education was the key to developing the necessary skills and knowledge. However, when it came to detailing the necessary skills and knowledge, few students indicated the details of skills and knowledge

types, such as communication, learning, and technology skills. Developing necessary skills and knowledge resulted in improving their qualifications, making them more competitive.

Students made personal promises to be more involved in their education, take it seriously, and do their best in studying. Some students emphasized the importance of getting good grades, participating in campus activities, taking extra classes, and attending graduate school. Being an honor student was a critical indicator of a successful educational achievement according to some students.

Many students also frequently referred to technology education, specifically when discussing the role of social networking, broadband Internet penetration, and developments in fiber optic cables. Students indicated the importance of becoming familiar and keeping up with growing technologies, such as the Internet and social networking sites.

Having acknowledged the global competition, a few students indicated the need to prepare for the global job market. As the Chinese and Indian educational systems seemed successful, a few students offered to learn about these educational systems and other cultures and a few students offered to go to these countries to get similar trainings and compete with the people living in those countries.

Some students saw their résumés as a product of their effort to advertise their uniqueness. Although they did not give a lot of details on the properties of an effective résumé, a few of them emphasized diversity in their résumés.

Work Experience

“I need to be able to distinguish myself as much as I can from others in the best way possible. ... Another thing that I should do is get involved as much as I can on campus and in extracurricular activities. This will help to give me more experience in different situations, teach me many things, and help distinguish me from others I will be competing against for a job.”

Real-life work experience was also seen an important factor in improving qualifications. Students referred to volunteer work or campus activities as the main sources of acquiring experience during their education.

Learning another Language

“What I would do is diversify myself more and jump in to multiple languages and other cultures. That seems to be the desired trend these days so I'd want to make myself better and more knowledgeable to stand out from the rest.”

Language education was also an important discussion. Most students agreed that learning another language was critical to their success. A few students specified the language they

wanted to learn to be Chinese/Mandarin/Cantonese or Spanish as a second language; even fewer students indicated French and German. Some students emphasized the importance of learning about other cultures in their discussions of language education.

Doing nothing to change this language trend was another emerging solution. Students claimed that their native language was becoming increasingly common in the world. While very few of them referred to the inherent challenge of learning another language, several suggested accelerating the trend by teaching English in other countries and refusing to learn another language to make English become the dominant language more quickly.

Given their lack of interest or motivation in learning another language, some students focused on qualifications other than second language and becoming better candidates for job positions through those qualifications. They indicated the importance of education, skills and knowledge development, experience gain, and personality development.

Build a Social Network and Use Social Networking Sites

“To me, especially as a marketing major, this message shows how important it is to stay up to date on currently popular websites such as MySpace. I realize that these sites are a good way to reach out to people and I know that in order to find employment it is important to be familiar and comfortable with such sites. Even in my current process of searching for internships I have found that companies are looking for applicants comfortable using websites such as Facebook and Twitter.”

The value of social networks was acknowledged by the students, and many suggested using social networking sites to promote themselves to employers. Students recommended using the sites parallel to their core features, such as social networking, and keeping themselves up to date with their social networks. Having already recognized the sites’ impact on businesses, some students wanted to better understand these sites to use them for business in the future. On the other side, privacy and security issues related to the use of social networks were also identified by students. Some students clearly indicated the limits of sharing information by not putting any sensitive information on such sites, thereby avoiding trouble in their future business lives.

Personality

“It is important to show that I am hardworking as well as intelligent. Because personality also has a major impact on getting a job, it is important to show that I have that type of personality that makes me appear as an unstoppable force of some sorts.”

Some students referred strong personality as an important qualification for getting a job. A hardworking and intelligent person with a strong work ethic was the image of a strong personality.

No Action/No Idea

In many cases, students engaged in no action. Having no idea about the message was one of the reasons for not taking any action. For example, many students were confused about the broadband Internet penetration concept and clearly indicated their lack of understanding of the concept.

Doing nothing was the best action in some cases. In the broadband Internet service case, many students were satisfied with their current Internet service and did not offer any change. The fiber optic technology example was also another case that students did not see any reasons to take an action.

Language was an important topic on which many students did not offer to take action. Although a few students acknowledged the challenge of learning another language or being late in starting to learn one, some students indicated greater comfort in seeing their native language becoming a global one. Some students even specifically stated that they would not learn another language or would teach English to more people to contribute to the spread of English in the world.

CONCLUSION

Students' reactions to the global trends were organized into three categories. In individual impacts, the most emerging finding of the analysis was the increasing job competition among individuals. The growing qualified population in other countries was seen as a critical factor contributing to this job competition. Students approached these trends globally and specifically discussed the impacts on their lives. Globalization was an accepted fact for these students. Internet and social networking sites were global tools seen to be part of their lifestyles. Very few discussions explored reversing or stopping these global trends. Students mostly focused on identifying strategies for coping with these trends.

In organizational impacts, organizations were the clear winners of the global forces. Global trends were bringing large quantities of qualified employees, more customers, more information-processing capabilities, and more marketing opportunities. Organizations were changing their locations based on the opportunities available in the world. For example, an American company can easily go and operate a business in China or India to take advantage of local employees and customers or to Japan or Bermuda to take advantage of the technological development and infrastructure.

Personal solutions specifically focused on improving qualifications to stand out in a crowd to deal with increasing population size and the increasing number of qualified employees

throughout the world. Although education was seen as key to the development of necessary knowledge and skills, the American educational system was perceived as not so successful in preparing students for the future considering the bilingual Chinese and smart Indian population.

All these findings were gathered from responses to some interesting facts presented to students. The first contribution of this research is to understand the initial perception of business students. Previous studies (Janavaras et al., 2008; Peng & Shin, 2008) have reported students' favorable perceptions toward globalization; however, our study explains students' concerns from a global trends perspective. Students see and understand the obvious impact of globalization, such as off shoring, and the movement of goods, services, and employees around the world. Yet they do not see the complete picture, simply taking the most obvious and simple explanations for granted. Very few students discussed the role of population size in having qualified or smart population or the capability of those countries to take advantage of these populations. Instead, the facts were taken for granted by students. For example, many students linked the number of intelligent people in India to the success of India's educational system. They did not question the quality or availability of quality education to that intelligent population in India or even the size of the country.

Many students were not aware of the organizational perspective of these trends. Although organizations were the clear winners of these trends, many students did not refer to the risks or negative issues for American businesses.

Offering personal solutions without a detailed or clear set of actions may be expectable from freshman and sophomore students. Many students relied heavily on the educational system to help them gain the necessary skills and knowledge without being aware of their needs. Many students expressed their intention to be more involved in their education after learning about the global trends. Students should act proactively to better understand what types of knowledge and skills are needed for them to succeed and then take actions to acquire them.

A second important contribution of this study was the identification of the emerging findings in students' perceptions of global forces as a result of a qualitative analysis. These emerging findings provide new factors to enable other researchers to study in their quantitative studies using larger participant pools. Unlike the findings of various quantitative studies on this topic (Janavaras et al., 2008; Peng & Shin, 2008), several factors emerged from this research for use in future studies to understand students' perceptions, such as individual competition, individuality, growing populations, growing qualified populations, lifestyle in the digital age, expanding English language, technology (including the Internet and social networking sites), educational systems (both in the U.S. and other countries), availability of information worldwide, information technology infrastructures in different countries, and privacy and information security issues.

Studying students' personal solutions in this research brought interesting findings that are closely related to students' reactions toward globalization. Given the fact that solutions focused

on qualification improvement through education, students wanted to prepare themselves for the global competition.

Complementing Parker et al.'s (1999, p. 125) recommendations, our recommendations for educators focus on the importance of understanding students' initial perceptions and developing appropriate strategies to address their concerns and satisfy their needs. Understanding students' view of globalization and their personal strategies to cope with the global forces provides important input for course activities. Students' lack of understanding of the complete picture of globalization leads us to agree with the previous research that students should be encouraged to think critically. Fields such as systems thinking (Senge, 1993; Weinberg, 1975) and system dynamics (Forrester, 1995) can offer new strategies that require fundamental changes in education (Richmond, 1993) to help students to see the complete picture.

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