

## **Global Management Skills and Attributes for International Business**

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### **Abstract**

*With the continuing growth of globalization, companies need to pay particular attention when selecting, and subsequently managing those who may become their “Global Managers”. The need for developing a cadre of global managers, who are capable of working in key international positions wherever the companies require them, has been on the rise but widely debated and documented. The most advantageous way to achieve this is by coming up with a clear and concise concept as to what constitutes such a manager. Therefore, using a qualitative methodology with 13 global managers, this study provides an examination of a wide set of possible characteristics that are used by successful global managers. The qualitative study of expatriates concludes with significant findings and characteristics that are common to all successful international managers. At a minimum, we find that global managers should possess the desire for continuous learning and the ability to effectively deal with whatever obstacles may arise within the organization, while functioning with intense competition in order to attain the common goals of the firm. The findings, suggestions, limitations of the study, and recommendations for effective international management are provided.*

**Keywords:** *Global manager, management skills, management functions, international management.*

### **Introduction**

The modern working environment has changed dramatically over the past decade and this has major implications for global and international managers. The environment for most organizations today are global, complex, dynamic, highly competitive and extremely volatile, and is likely to remain so for years to come. The globalization of business has arguably resulted from the demand for new markets, cost imperatives, increased competition, and a series of governmental initiatives facilitated by new information and communication technologies (Sealy, Wehrmeyer, France, & Leach, 2010). Such pressures and opportunities have created significant challenges for multinational corporations.

In addition to these external conditions, most organizations are also facing several global challenges including those related to talent flow, management of diverse employees and a shortage of specific competencies (Bucker & Poustma, 2010). If organizations would like to succeed in today's volatile global economy in a sustainable manner, they must be prepared to do business all around the world and not be limited to one domain. If an organization's operation spans the globe, it needs managers who possess a set of skills and attributes that will be beneficial to the organization in order to work across regional, national and international boundaries to steer the business forward. The key problem that needs to be addressed is identifying the best pathway forward to ensure careful attention is paid when selecting and managing people who could potentially become their "global manager". In addition to this, we need to establish what a global manager is, and how global managers will lead, in order to unite an organization and succeed in diverse international markets. Overall there are a lot of qualities which need to be addressed and the dynamics which align or readjust the requirements of global managers.

### **Global Manager Roles**

A manager is a person who is responsible for the work performance of group members and employees in the department. A manager holds the formal authority of committed organizational resources, even if approval of others is required (Matison, 2012).

The concept of management and manager are interdependent. The term management refers to the process of achieving organizational goals with and through people by the effective and efficient utilization of available resources (Mujtaba, 2014). The functions of management include planning, organizing, leading and controlling (PLOC). Planning means defining an organization's goals, establishing an overall strategy of achieving these goals, and developing comprehensive plans to integrate and coordinate activities. Furthermore, planning aims to provide the organization with both short and long term success.

Organizing includes determining what tasks must be done, who will do them, allocation of tasks, how the tasks will be grouped, and an organizational structure to identify reporting roles, communication channels and the overall decision hierarchy. Organizing typically is a mechanism to put in place what has been determined in the planning phase. Leading includes motivating and directing employees, and communicating and resolving conflicts. Leading can often be aligned with influencing and motivating so organizational objectives can be met by guiding and rewarding everyone with the overall aim of increasing productivity. Controlling, on the other hand, means monitoring performance, comparing results and goals, and making corrections and adjustments as needed in a timely manner. Controlling is an ongoing process for managerial activities as it sets a baseline for future developments based on past and current performance.

Henri Mintzberg (1990) identified the roles of managers as interpersonal, information and decisional (see Table 1). Through interpersonal roles, the manager can coordinate and interact with employees, while providing direction and instruction. Managers can, for example, play the role of a figurehead to perform ceremonial and symbolic activities for the organization. Another one of managers' role is to motivate their subordinates.

The informational role relates to the necessity to obtain and transmit information from inside and outside organizations, as the manager acts as a disseminator. The manager transmits the information to other members of the organization. This information is used to influence their attitude and behavior, and the manager can play the role of a spokesperson. Managers access information to promote the organization.

The decisional role is a very important aspect of a manager within the organization. The manager can, and has to make many decisions, likely multiple times with differing scenarios. The manager plans to use decisions as a strategy for the effective management of resources and organizational needs.

**Table 1: Categories& Roles**

Category	Roles
Interpersonal	Figurehead Leader Liaison
Informational	Monitor Disseminator Spokesperson
Decisional	Entrepreneur Disturbance Handler Resource Allocator Negotiator
Source: "Mintzberg, 1989 on <i>Management: Inside our Strange World of Organizations</i> ".	

**What Is a Global Manager?**

Modern organizations are becoming more global by nature. Many organizations require their managers to spend considerable amounts of time managing overseas businesses. Barlett and Ghoshal (2003) presented a model of management structure that balances the local, regional, and global demands placed on companies operating across the world’s many borders. In the volatile world of transnational corporations, there is no such thing as a “universal” global manager. There appears to be no consensus towards a unified definition. It is through the roles and functions of the incumbent that competencies are derived from.

However, due to the divergence of the definition of the global manager, the roles and functions that set them apart from domestic managers have not been clearly clarified and agreed upon. Some of the different roles ascribed to the global managers are offered in Table 2.

**Table 2: Roles of Global Managers**

Roles			
The Business Manager (Strategist + Architect +Coordinator)	Country Manager (Sensor + Builder + Contributor)	Functional Manager (Scanner + Cross- Pollinator+ Champion)	Corporate Manager (Leader + Talent Scout + Developer)
<b>Strategies</b> for the organization. <b>Architects</b> its worldwide asset and resource configuration. <b>Coordinator</b> of transactions across national border.	<b>Senses</b> and interprets local opportunities and threats. <b>Builds</b> local resources and capabilities <b>Contributes</b> to an active participant in global strategy	<b>Scans</b> for specialized information worldwide. <b>“Cross-pollinates”</b> leading-edge knowledge and best practice <b>Champions</b> innovations that may offer transnational opportunities and applications	<b>Leads</b> in the broadest sense. Identifies and develops talented business, country and functional managers – and balances the negotiations among three.
Source: "Clever Workarounds, 2008.			

Contrary to popular perception, some controversially argue that the universal global manager does not exist. Bartlett and Ghoshal (2003) instead identified three groups of specialists (business managers, country managers, and functional managers) each with different organizational goals and roles, whilst working together in the global market, and being lead and integrated by corporate management. The authors accepted that these roles are not practiced by the traditional managers.

Baruch (2002) reports that there are no common traits or qualities that can assist in identifying the global manager. Baruch (2002) concluded that the mindset, the “right frame of mind” (characterized by, for example, openness, awareness, and genuine appreciation of culture and customs) coupled with the basic qualities essential to successful managers will enable them to manage successfully abroad. This distinction contradicts the argument of non-existence of the global manager. According to Jokinen(2005), these differentiations do indeed characterize the widely accepted term of the global manager.

Amongst the numerous definitions, global managers are those who understand the nature of different cultures and can effectively lead mixed-nationality teams (Kanter, 1994), and are able to unleash human potential both individually and in groups while leveraging the richness that lies in cultural diversity (Whitfield, 2003; Cleverworkarounds, 2008). They are expected to fulfill critical roles such as integrator, coordinator, innovator, coach, and strategist (Abbas & Robert, 1996; Aycan, 2001;CleverWorkarounds, 2008). To implement these roles effectively, it is critical for the global managers to possess a global perspective consisting of a global mindset which is supported by certain knowledge and skills (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999) (Cleverworkarounds, 2008). These essential skills and competencies will assist in maintaining a competitive advantage thus ensuring their continual success in a complex and dynamic global market.

### **Research Methodology**

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, (2008) defined two main philosophical positions in management research – positivism and social constructionism. The latter is also referred to as constructivism, interpretivism or phenomenological paradigm(Bryman, 1984;Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Collis & Hussey, 2009). To identify the appropriate research method, it is imperative to discuss the key issues of these two contrasting concepts, because no inquirer should go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his/her approach (Guba & Lincoln, *Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research*, 1994).

Positivism has been the predominant paradigm for the last one and a half centuries, whereas interpretivism evolved during the last half century as a critical response to the positivist stance (Guba & Lincoln, 1994;Collis & Hussey, 2009; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2008). Positivists regard the world as objective and draw on external empirical data to build knowledge, because only measurable data is valid in their understanding. In contrast, interpretivists put the focus on peoples’ internal perceptions, assuming that reality is subjective and interaction with “that being researched” is compulsory (Collis & Hussey, *Business research: a practical guide for undergraduate & postgraduate students*, 2009). These ontological and epistemological assumptions explain why natural scientists are predominantly positivists, while social scientists tend to be interpretivists based on their objective to study human behavior. The positivist paradigm is correspondingly referred to as quantitative approach, whereas the interpretivists research process is considered qualitative (Bryman, 1984);(Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

### **Research Approach**

Qualitative researchers usually derive their concepts and theories from an inductive approach (Bryan & Bell, *Business Research Methods*, 2007). Deductive researchers move from the general to the specific, beginning with a universal theory and narrowing it down by empirical observation. Inductive research is the antipode of the deductive method, moving from specific observations to general theories by identifying patterns and regularities and developing general principles (Collis & Hussey, *Business research: a practical guide for undergraduate & postgraduate students*, 2009). The qualitative research approach complies with this study’s aim of understanding to develop the skills required by global managers which address the needs of corporate in the dynamic global economic world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Qualitative research’s strength is to understand the process within the context settings. The building of conceptual understanding, development of the hypothesis through observing and analyzing the situation are the objectives of the current study (Strauss & Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 1998); (Partington, 2000). The forenamed attributes are associated with grounded theory, which best suits the research design to focus on gaining in-depth knowledge and to understand about the fairly unexplored subject matter. The analysis of people in their social context and from their point of view is an advantage of the phenomenological paradigm.

On the other hand, the qualitative researcher cannot remain objective, because s/he is immersed in the observation (Firestone, 1987). Qualitative research's strength is to understand the process within the context of validity, reliability and generalization (Gill, Johnson, & Clark, 2010). To further raise the validity of the outcome, this research will apply data triangulation by evaluating different sources such as interviews, literature and corporate policies (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). The term "method" refers to the way or technique of collecting data (Bryman, 1984; Collis & Hussey, 2009). According to experts (Bryan & Bell, Business Research Methods, 2007), qualitative research can be conducted through various differing methods such as participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups or collection and analysis of texts and documents. This research intends to use qualitative interviewing as well as analysis of additional texts and documents. Due to the researchers' constraints in time and accessibility of resources, participant observation and focus groups are not an option and, thus, are apparent limitations.

### ***Interview Preparations***

Considering the nature of the topic and the limited previous investigation on the subject matter, the researchers take an exploratory stance with a "planned-systematic" approach (Bryan & Bell, Business Research Methods, 2007). Our perception is not exclusively inductive as deeper insight into the subject matter has been provided through the literature review. For this reason, semi-structured interviews will be most appropriate. Having a loose agenda of questions enables the researchers to cover the relevant themes and at the same time minimizes the risk of deviation, which is crucial for the quality of the collected data (Flick, et al., The Sage Qualitative Research Kit, 2007). As demanded by (Bryan & Bell, Business Research Methods, 2007), reliability will be ensured by proper interview protocols. We are aware of bias issues, either through interviews or interpretation of the data, which can lower the findings' validity. As such, additional data / proof will be provided by triangulation using a variety of sources (Bryan & Bell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

### ***Interview Settings***

The proper setting ensures a high participation rate and creates an atmosphere of trust, which is crucial to the reliability of the collected data (Flick, et al., The Sage Qualitative Research Kit, 2007). Therefore, the manager's own office or meeting room can be most appropriate as it is familiar to the interviewees in the workplace. The researchers will forgo any assistance since the presence of a third person runs the risk of changing the dynamics of the interview (Gill, Johnson & Clark, 2010). Because of reliability issues the interviews will be recorded on audio with the interviewee's permission sought previously in the consent form.

### ***Semi-structured Interviews***

The semi-structured interview method is used to ensure participants could share information regarding their experiences in the dynamic global economic world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A semi-structured interview is defined as an open, loose and two-way research method that provides each participant general questions in a similar topical format (Biklen & Bogdan, 2007; Patton, 1990). In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer and interviewee are conversational, rather than rigid and controlled. An interview guide is used to help the interviewer focus on the agreed research topic (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) while providing flexibility and openness.

### ***Reliability and Validity***

Validity of the findings is characteristically high in qualitative research because of the way and type of data collection, which is rich in detail and descriptive (Collis & Hussey, Business research: a practical guide for undergraduate & postgraduate students, 2009). Validity is ensured due to the direct interaction of researchers and participants in the course of in-depth-interviews and the possibility to clarify any misunderstandings immediately. The researchers are aware that bias will remain due to personal interpretation of the interview responses and that one's own style can affect the outcome.

The accuracy of results will be reinforced by only including themes supported by more than six different sources. Additionally, the researchers apply data triangulation by using different types of data sources to verify the findings (Bryan & Bell, Business Research Methods, 2007). The interview questions for this study are as follows:

1. As a global manager, what do you see as the main differences between you and that of a country or functional manager?

2. As a global manager do you still have a large reliance on local teams to understand specific markets or requirements?
3. What are the key factors which contribute to the continuous development of a global manager?
4. As a global manager, what might your greatest challenges be over the long term?
5. What is the biggest challenge facing you today, as a global manager?
6. What is the one characteristic all Global Managers should possess?
7. What advice would you give to someone who is going into the role of a global manager for the first time?
8. What are the main resources you would recommend to someone if they required advice or further insight in becoming a global manager?

**Analysis and the Findings**

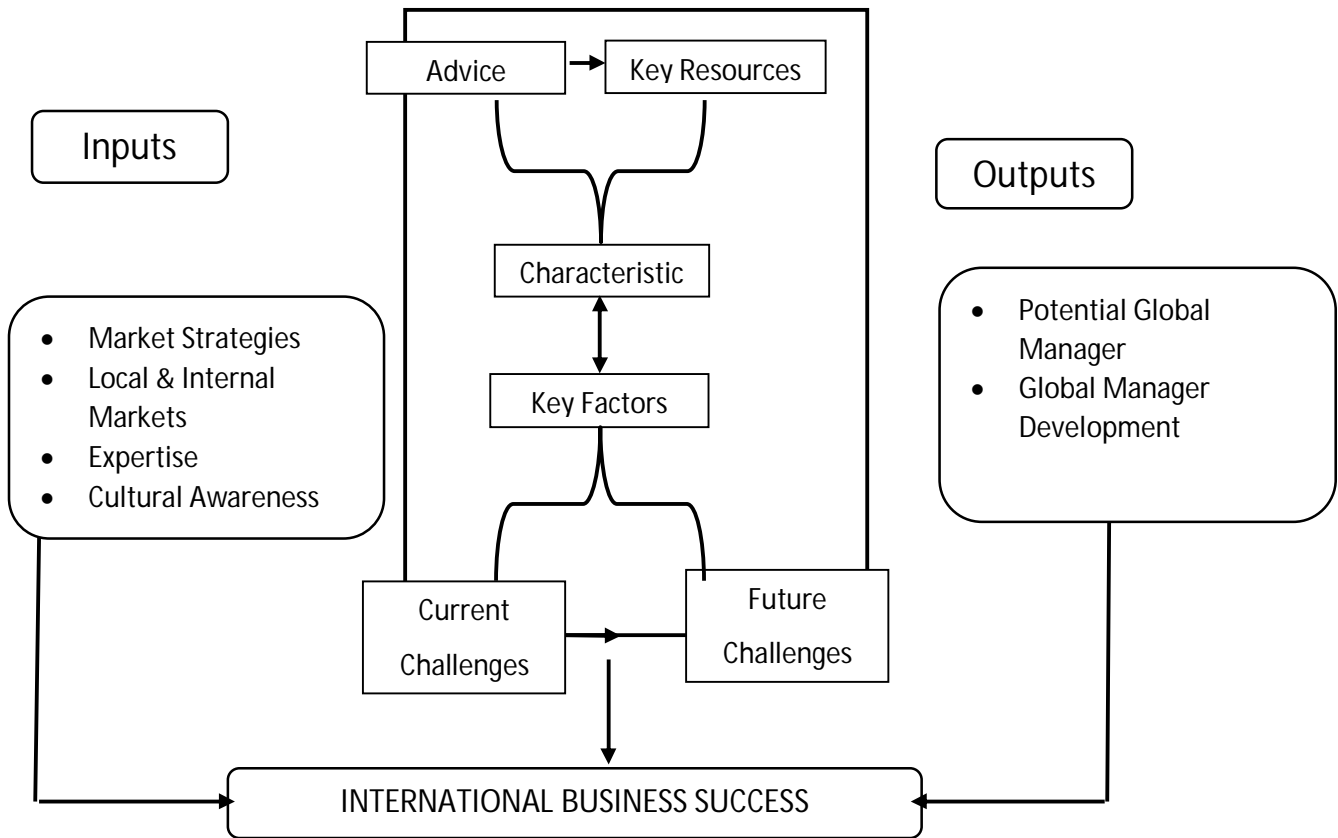
As part of the interview data collection, the 13 interviewees were asked to explain the most critical skills, and competencies that they propose are required in order to survive in a dynamic global business. Table 3 provides a review of the interviewee demographics for this study and all of them, who came from different countries and continents, were currently working as expatriates, managers and professionals in Thailand.

**Table 3: Interview Demographics**

No	Face to face/ Telephone	Position	Industry	Gender	Country
1	Face to face	Lecturer	Thammasat University	Female	Spain
2	Face to face	Consul General of Spain	Embassy of Spain	Male	Spain
3	Face to face	Lecturer	International Institutes of Ramkhamhaeng University	Male	United Kingdom
4	Face to face	Sales Manager	Construction (Industrial Flooring)	Male	United States of America
5	Face to face	Manager	Bombardier Transportation Signal (Thailand)Ltd	Male	Australia
6	Face to face	Overseas	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services	Male	United States of America
7	Face to face	Consultant	International Organizational for Migration	Female	Canada
8	Face to face	Consultant	International Organizational for Migration	Male	Africa
9	Face to face	Officer	International Organizational for Migration	Female	Canada
10	Face to face	Chief Operating Officer	International Organizational for Migration	Male	United Kingdom
11	Face to face	Chief Executive Officer	International Organizational for Migration	Female	United States of America
12	Face to face	Human Resource Assistant	United Nations (UNESCAP)	Female	France
13	Face to face	Manager Corporate Intelligence	Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC)	Male	Canada

The framework model (Figure 1) looks at the key inputs which are required to drive the organizational processes and how these in turn become essential for a global manager, both new and developing. Inputs which also drive processes and global manager characteristics can also have a direct impact on international business success, but the combination of all the above elements increase the chance of global success. Inputs are typically generic and form the basis of the minimum needs for a global manager and the organization to have a greater chance of success.

**Figure 1: Global Management Framework**



Based on the qualitative interviews with the expatriates, the essential characteristics which a global manager should possess and agreed upon based upon the “Advice of Key Resources” in this study are presented in Table 4. In the following sections, each of the characteristics are discussed in more detail.

**Table 4: Global Manager Characteristics**

Global Manager Characteristics	Interviewee													Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Analytical thinking with Empathy mind	✓	✓			✓					✓				4
Flexibility		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	7
Adaptability						✓					✓	✓	✓	4
Patience	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓							5
Open-minded	✓		✓	✓					✓		✓		✓	6
Observant									✓		✓		✓	3
Learn as much as you can	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	13
Go through a couple of networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	13
Talk to the people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	13
Local people are good resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	13

### ***Analytical thinking with Empathy in Mind***

The global manager should have an in-depth understanding of research, and the business function he/she will be managing. How this fits into the overall organization and understand the environment of the role. The global manager should try to breakdown the organization to understand how it functions before actually moving into the position. Understanding how, why or the way things occur before moving to that position, will allow a smooth transition and the global manager will have more resources to make effective changes by identifying problems and giving constructive criticism. The global manager can use techniques such as SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat) to analyze and solve the problems related to the core objectives of the organization. The global manager through analytical thinking can provide justification to resources whilst also understanding their feelings. The global manager needs to balance change with the local resources and listen to their views in order to gain a level of trust, listening can be a powerful way of integrating into an organization and taking on-board the view point of others. For this characteristic, 4 out of 13 interviewees proposed that every manager should possess it (Interviewees no. 1, 2, 5 and 10).

### ***Flexibility***

The world is full of surprises and changes over time; as such, the global manager needs to be prepared for them. Almost nothing is likely to go as imagined. If the global manager assumes that they are going to go a certain way, and then it does not, then being prepared for a different outcome helps. The global manager may believe things might be similar on the surface, but when analyzing deeper there can be a greater level of variables to contend with. “Don’t make assumptions” because it will be different, often people believe it will be the same, but in reality, there can be a lot of differences.

Being flexible (to meet the target of global needs) and having common sense (good level of knowledge and understanding) is the fastest, legal and most practical way to get what you want, and besides that, it can easily cross cultural barriers. Flexibility is needed for both the global manager and the team, learning to compromise with each other to reach a common target often achieves greater results in a shorter time. For this characteristic, 7 out of 13 interviewees propose that every manager should possess it (Interviewees no. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, and 13).

### ***Adaptability***

The global manager should be aware of differences and understand how to manage the differences. Trying to change normal practices, local practices and cultural barriers, it is a process that takes time. For example, Thai people typically respond softly and Americans can be more perceived as more aggressive in comparison; the question is how to break down the bridge between them and align, or ‘break the shell’ and make the change. The best option is to have a level of adaptability as either one maybe appropriate depending on the variables of the scenario.

Taking time, and not pushing too much aggressively, along with trying to fit and being adaptive means the global manager should have good emotional intelligence, understanding people and using different leadership approaches is an important part of global management. Those who cannot adapt, or recognize the need to, often do not succeed on a global level as they might become shut out by others. For this characteristic, 4 out of 13 interviewees propose that every manager should possess it (Interviewees no. 6, 11, 12 and 13).

### ***Patience***

Being patient because things are different is something a good global manager must possess. Just because it maybe the way Europeans do things, or the way Asians do things does not mean either approach is correct. Mind-sets have been developed over a long time, and the global manager can’t expect them to change overnight, when a paradigm is totally different, a lot of times it can create conflict and resistance. The global manager can’t get frustrated, but has to be very patient with people and work through this, and in some cases the change may be impossible, and this is where adaptability and flexibility become important alongside patience. As is often said ‘patience is a virtue’ and the global manager needs to recognize this, and if this is to be achieved then often a compromise can be reached to get a win-win situation for all. For this characteristic, 5 out of 13 interviewees propose that every manager should possess it (Interviewees no.1, 2, 4, 5 and 7).



### ***Open-Minded***

The global manager should go into all aspects of the business being “very open-minded”; don’t just think the way you think, try to see the way others think, be prepared to look at things very differently, and hear different people’s thoughts and opinions. If the global manager can be open-minded and look with a new pair of eyes then a whole new world will open up, more than could be expected. If the global manager can adopt an open-minded approach then people will listen and become closer, thereby a greater level of respect will be earned. A good example could be a person who has charisma and confidence, they accept things as they are and often fit in easily, and such people tend to have a greater network of friends and can be very open with each other.

Being open-minded in business will give the global manager far more insight into the business as doors will open and resources will openly give feedback, in particular negative aspects of what is happening and these can be rectified and improved. For this characteristic, 6 out of 13 interviewees propose that every manager should possess it (Interviewees no.2, 3, 4, 9, 11 and 13).

### ***Observant***

Being observant and a good listener (need to be curious) of the people around will allow the global manager to take social cues that will automatically support a successful business. If there is no interest in the cultural side of the country that they are located or not interested in understanding and meeting new people, then the global manager will be somewhat lost (a disadvantage to the organization). Global managers need to be high in cultural intelligence (CQ). Although cultural awareness is important, being socially aware of how resources interact both inside and outside of the business can help the global manager become more integrated. For example being invited to the home of an employee can be a little stressful, but if the global manager understands the traditional ways of the locals in these situations then it can be a rewarding experience and can bring people closer together. For this characteristic, 3 out of 13 interviewees propose that every manager should possess it (Interviewees no. 9, 11 and 13).

### ***Common Characteristics***

There are some characteristics which are common to all global managers and these have been categorized as “*Learn as much as you can*”, “*Go through a couple of networks*”, “*Talk to the people*,” and “*Local people are good resources*”. There are areas where the global manager can do some self-learning or gain a greater insight into the various aspects of the organization, be it locally or globally. Read literature such as economic magazines, international journals such as the New York Times, and watch conferences and debates, all of these can provide good information about local business, as well as what is occurring locally and internationally.

Being up-to-date and also getting the opinion of different networks can give insights into who has been in that position, or was a predecessor to the role. Having networks allows the global manager to ask questions, and have the opportunity to learn about the location and environment where the businesses are located. Also using these channels can give the global manager an understanding as to the “inner” workings of the team and also the larger communities regarding specific demographics.

Furthermore, the global manager can target individuals within the business who may understand the location and its operations, and a simple 15 minute chat over a cup of coffee can reap rewards such as understanding the difficulties that have previously existed, and those who are the key resources that may have some influence; essentially ‘knowledge is power’. For these common characteristic, 13 out of 13 interviewees propose that every manager should possess them.

### ***Local and Global Differences***

The global manager has a wider perspective and a greater scope of the company and also needs to manage multiple variables which must align across international boundaries, which are very important resources. Organizational needs can be completely different and vary in differing directions as business needs fluctuate. A local manager has a single perspective of the country they operate in, and only focuses on the needs of that country. To some extent a local manager can lose the perspective of the global organization due to limited visibility of the larger picture, particularly when corporate decisions need to flow throughout the entirety of the business.

All the process (setting rules, principles and the limits for the organization) typically come from corporate headquarters to the global manager and then he/she will deliver to local resources. Also of importance is that the world is not a uniform or common platform, since different local laws or governmental policies apply. Therefore, the country manager has the local experience to offer the global manager the particularities of that specific country. The global manager must incorporate local specifics, such as laws, into the global policy of the organization whilst still ensuring corporate outputs and business objectives are met. Therefore, the organization can adapt and maintain the business requirements as per the needs of the local resources.

For a global manager, the main challenge will be cultural, typically these will include differences in communication, use of different languages, cultural instability, behaviors, local ways of doing things, and also specific areas such as management norms. Other aspects can also be administrative, bureaucratic and governmental. For example, the way Europeans work is not always the way Asian's work. However, if the organization is European, the benefits and results that you are expecting are European, but you may be working with Asian people and you are asking Asian people to get European results, and of course the vice versa scenario exists.

So managers who are working in a global environment are subjected to, and impacted more, with regard to multiculturalism, regional and global market changes and to a higher level of organizational dynamics than that which would be experienced by local managers. Local managers tend to be somewhat isolated from external influences, although they can be impacted by market changes but they have the advantage that they can focus on just one culture. Additionally global managers will often have to make decisions and changes which impact the business on a global scale and may be seen as negative or positive by the local manager depending on what changes such decisions may bring.

### ***Reliance between Local and Global Managers***

Typically, a global manager has a role and working environment which can be more challenging than that of a country specific manager. The global manager has a reduced understanding of local specifics than someone who is localized and used to local issues, local ways of doing and operating businesses, and formal/informal ways of local communication methods. The global manager has the challenge of understanding multiple business methodologies across multiple regions and having to bring them all under the control of a global business, while still allowing the local teams to function to their highest potential. A balance and in some cases a compromise will need to be maintained to ensure business synergies are met across all international boundaries.

Global managers take a more informal approach to businesses in regions they are not located, although they need to have an understanding of cultural behaviors, business and sales techniques, and in general an overall perspective on how business is conducted. There is a need to understand the local environments and how these can fit into the global business due to the need to follow corporate practices and policies, although regional specific directives will be applied to ensure operations can still occur within the overall organizational umbrella. One of the key aspects of the global manager is to manage, without being seen as implementing global organization requirements; there is a need to retain that local feel, especially when entering new markets.

On a global scale markets change from one country to another, even overnight, so business operations can be quite fluid. Given these continuous changes a global manager would be expected to take inputs from local managers who have greater visibility on what is happening in the specific region, and can give a clearer forecast and what the organization can expect over the short, medium and long term. Given the changes that can occur, and the need to understand local requirements and operations the global manager has a reliance on local managers or local business partners and should take their knowledge to feed into the global business as a whole. Another aspect is that the local manager will also have a reliance on the global manager to understand how global traits or changes are expected to impact operations on a regional level, this is particularly applicable in manufacturing and production operations as the global manager may be expected to change product lines or even resourcing levels.

Supposing that a global manager is working in a private or governmental organization, it is more difficult to operate in a country if you don't have a local team or business partner because they are going to have a greater understanding of the key skills, such as culture, ways of doing things locally, specific deals, legal frameworks and contacts who can effectively open doors and give greater access to people such a government officials.

Local managers have often gained the trust and respect of businesses and customers in the region and in many cases it is often easier to deal at a local level as sometimes working on a global level can have more challenges and restrictions. To understand the detailed context and complexities in every country, it is highly important to remain close to local resources, as a global manager may be new to the country and has a limited understanding of its practices and needs. The global manager should be largely reliant on local teams, especially in the early days of operating in a new region, and try to understand and learn local practices from them because each area can have specific ways of conducting business. The global manager would use this knowledge before implementing the key objectives of the global business to ensure both are aligned and can work in parallel. However, the reliance on local resources can be a problem and creates a level of dependency.

Dependency means having a high reliance on someone, or something, and having the need to manage and maintain that reliance. Typically the global manager needs someone who can be trusted to run the local business and have a high level of responsibility, which again can be an issue as the resource may become more demanding since they understand their value to the business. Often local managers have more expertise than the global manager on how to make local business deals to keep the operation more successful, and how to interact in a way that is productive and can bring success to the organization. Overall the dependency needs to be managed and balanced to ensure that local operations remain aligned to the key global business needs and organization direction. The local operations need to have a high level of reporting and transparency to meet organizational policies and governance.

Although there is a level of dependency between local and global managers these can both complement each other to benefit the needs of a global organization. While a local manager brings specific regional visibility, a global manager has an outlook on a global basis which can bring benefits to local environments, particularly as markets change this can affect regional needs and the global manager will have observed this through the daily management of the organization. Furthermore the global manager will understand the best practices within the organization and these can be passed to a regional level, vice versa. The global manager may notice that the local manager has a specific practice which may benefit the organization in other regions.

As a typical example, if we consider an Asian company investing and wanting to open opportunities in Europe, they have to rely on a European partner, vice versa, the European partner will have reliance on the Asian parent company to give direction on business needs and operational directives. Local and global practices need to align; otherwise they will negatively impact each other. It will take time for both the local and global operations to become uniformly aligned and both will need to engage in effective communications to make it a success, but success can only be guaranteed through the resources being fully engaged and understanding each other's needs.

As the first author of this research, one of the things that I have observed during my work was a case where a managing director, who is quite subjective and self-focused, did not want to have a reliance on local resources and tried to push certain rules on them and in general did not pay attention to how the local operations were functioning. The key area the managing director was not focusing on was how local Thai cultural and working practices operate and differ from other countries. Not having this focus meant the managing director did not gain the respect of the local team, and consequentially the business was not successful. It would have been quite simple for the managing director to put in a little extra effort and give more responsibility to the local team, rather than simply believing it would just work, sometimes investing in the local team and adapting to their needs would have given the business a greater chance of succeeding.

Overall, it is a win-win situation if global managers and local managers can adapt to each other's needs and use each other's best practices to achieve their goals. A global manager is there to help the local manager access wider opportunities and have availability of the global organizations resources and business experience, whilst the local manager can bring regional success and ensure continued growth. Whilst the global and local manager may have different functions and responsibilities within the organization, having good interaction and ensuring they can share their skills can bring wider success to the business.

### ***Continuous Development of a Global Manager***

With the globalization of business, organizations and industries are becoming more competitive to gain a greater market share and increase their presence. Having the need to be more competitive there is a greater need for global managers to perform and ensure they become a key market player on a global level.

The global manager needs to be adaptive and continuously learning, in particular about changes at global and regional levels. Globalization is creating an environment where organizations are needing to move managers, or even parts of their organization to differing locations around the world. It has the advantage that managers take on board a global perspective and their overall knowledge increases as they begin to understand different operating practices and new outlooks on how to achieve business success. Global managers need the ability to readily adapt to different scenarios, negotiate with different cultures, and manage political regulations, laws and also economic situations so that the company remains or becomes more competitive. As the career of global manager progresses they tend to be more aware of different scenarios and environments and adapt more quickly, especially with the support of local representatives.

The global manager needs to recognize his/her limited understanding with regards to local context. One aspect maybe how to be aligned with being open to giving and receiving feedback to and from local staff, and being responsive to the feedback. This is particularly relevant when working with different cultures. Through open communications, the global manager need to constantly think about ways to create transparency and improve the working environment for all. In general, if a global manager can integrate into the local team and gain their respect then there will be an increased sense of loyalty. As a result, local staff will become more comfortable and can accept change as they see the global manager doing this for their benefit and also the organization. A global manager continuously learns from these experiences, and can often use such learning at different locations.

The global manager needs to develop an understanding that what works well in one location may not work well in another. For example, processes may move quickly in certain areas and approvals can be obtained quickly, while in another area bureaucracy maybe an issue and simple approvals can take several months. In this case this is where the global manager develops an understanding of local practices and needs to work with them, or seek help from local managers as to how such restrictions can be speeded up.

Another example of continuous development can be associated with market changes. One scenario is how technology changes so quickly and what people want. For example, an organization maybe developing a new application for ordering fast food from a mobile device, but in reality people are becoming more health-conscious and are seeking healthy alternatives. Therefore, a global manager has to be aware of future trends and plan forward. The global manager needs to continually develop an understanding of market needs, which maybe via traditional research methods, it can often be local and may not be useful from a global outlook. The global manager must understand how fluid markets can be, and be prepared to adapt quickly, which maybe expensive, therefore they need to have a good level of decision making and be prepared to take some risks.

One of the greatest challenges a global manager may face is ensuring that resources have a desire to make an impact on the organization, with that there are several supporting factors, such as recruiting and keeping the best possible team members, and ensuring employees not only understand the local market but also to keep on top of trends that are happening internationally. The global manager must be able to successfully compromise between local needs and priorities that are aligned with the organization at a corporate level.

The key predictor of a successful, or potential global manager might be experience that someone has been a local manager before, has been trained, and tries to understand how global issues and needs fit into a local level. A global manager should be able to inspire teams by using developed leadership practices, such as sharing knowledge, good communications and accepting feedback both positive and negative in order to make necessary adjustment to develop the business. The global manager also needs to have good parallel vision, like observing competitors and planning ahead of them to gain advantages for the organization. One aspect which is often overlooked is that a global manager should be aware of "The rise of tension in certain regions" (threats of war, government uncertainty, economic uncertainty), as this can have a severe impact on the business and result in quick change. The continuous development of a global manager is the need to always be learning and adapting, and using these lessons to improve the working environment of the business and its resources, as doing so are essential for success.

## **Discussion**

This research was devoted to an in-depth investigation as to the nature of global management, and in particular the global manager. The key factors targeted were related to the various aspects of management skills and attributes that are drivers of success in international business. As the research findings suggest, the study revealed that there are more similarities than differences in the perspectives of global managers who are currently employed in some aspect of international business.

During the interviews, and following a review of the interview data, it was quite conclusive that all the interviewees had a common assessment to the nature of the questions which were presented. In response to the first research question, the global manager has the ability to arrange dynamic strategies to conquer the complexity of business that are organized across cultures and time zones, while the local manager deals with specific areas and has a greater understanding about that specific region. With respect to the second research question, the global manager has a large reliance on local teams to understand specific markets or requirements which can be wide ranging. Having this common alignment from the interviewee responses is interesting given their diverse range of occupations and their countries of origin. The result of the analysis is deemed conclusive as the responses showed little deviation from the interviewees which ensures the findings were accurate. Regarding the third, fourth and fifth questions, the interview participants identified that both short and long term challenges are aligned with the continuous development of the global manager, and there could also be learning opportunities for employees who are looking to move into global management roles. The global manager should have the capability and capacity to deal with the various complexities of business when spread across multiple countries. Firstly, the global manager needs to recognize and understand the location and environment where business is administered. He or she should be aware that what works well in one situation may not work well in another, this is driven principally because local contexts are different and can be wide ranging. In order to overcome this, the global manager needs to have a strong connection with local teams, local managers or partners by having open communications and a degree of transparency. Furthermore, having such communications and building relationships will allow the global manager to make adjustments, whether it be resourcing, products lines or implementing global initiatives, which may be the consequence of areas such as market changes or corporate needs. The output of a close relationship will give inspiration to the team members and encourage positive behaviors and polish their individual characteristics, resulting in potential growth and increased retention. Besides, in order to gain and retain market share, the global manager will need to have good parallel vision, a focus on both business management and opportunities and in some cases, be able to take risks.

The interviewee responses explained that the global manager should embrace change. Failing to change, or implementing change in line with environmental and organizational requirements may result in poor performance or even severe organizational damages. Regarding to the sixth, seventh and eighth research questions, the interviewees also highlighted that the character traits of a global manager can be an economic asset, and the organization's future can somewhat depend on the type of managers they have. The characteristics of the global manager can be considered to include, analytical thinking with an empathic mindset, flexibility, adaptability, patience, open-minded, observant, and possessing a self-learning approach. Such characteristics are key for potential global managers, and also development goals for existing global managers seeking continual improvement, all of which are beneficial to the organization as a whole.

Overall, the diverse requirements and needs of international businesses is determined by effective global management and how various inputs and outputs can contribute to success, or as at times can be the case, failure. There is a need for the management of inputs, such as market strategies, cultural awareness and effectively absorbing information from local managers and partners. Having an understanding of these inputs, and knowing the adaptations required will form the core of global management success. Furthermore, the development and identification of processes, such as preparing for multiple challenges, changing environments and possessing a range of good adaptable characteristics will allow for organizational outputs, such as the continual development of the global manager or the progression of potential managers. Cumulatively being able to effectively manage inputs, outputs and incorporate change can ultimately have a profound impact on business success in today's dynamic and ever changing business environment; therefore having the right resources in place can be of high importance.

## **Recommendations and Limitations**

The researchers are aware that the analyses of the findings are based on a limited number of interviews, using only a qualitative methodology. Due to time constraints, the researcher had only an opportunity to interview global managers who are located in Thailand. Furthermore, we recognize that because the interviewees are located in the same country, it might affect the responses received. We deliberately took this risk since the aim was to create a collaboration of general manager qualities along the diverse requirements of global businesses. The outcomes of this study thus specifically illustrate the perception of managers who work as expatriates in one East Asian country, Thailand.

Future research studies can be conducted for comparative quantitative and qualitative studies on the criteria for global managerial skill sets in a broader global context involving more Western and Asian countries and perhaps more diverse industry sectors. They might also utilize more comprehensive research methodologies, including surveys, detailed case studies and interviews with multiple stakeholders, in particular those at more experienced global levels and those who are planning to embark on a global management career.

International organizations analyzing the research will benefit from a greater understanding as to the complexities of global management and the intricacies it brings when selecting the right candidates to manage on a global level. Furthermore the research paper will enable organizations to have a more justifiable approach to global expansion and the demands such expansion will bring, not only to the selection of the right global manager or management team, but also to key considerations that must be given, in particular cultural awareness, local business operations and the reliance on local teams.

From a resource perspective, organizations will see the research finds that often there is not a 'one size fits all' individual that can take up the role of a global manager. As such careful selection needs to be undertaken, and likely investment and research embarked upon to offer a greater chance of such an individual succeeding and the organization realizing the overall benefits. The research indicates that the individuals themselves need to be adaptable and willing to accept change and compromise. Overall, there are requirements placed on both the organization and individuals wishing to be successful global managers.

The research also indicates to organizations that external influences and global volatility bring risk when expanding globally, and subsequently managers undertaking global roles need to have a wider understanding of the impact of such matters and how these need to align or adapt with corporate requirements. The findings of the research not only gives an insight to organizations and the global challenges they may face, but also details the characteristics observed that individuals may need, or develop when planning or working in global management environments. The finding will be of benefits to individuals given the interviewees have worked in such organizations and understand the traits and characteristics required. Of particular note to individuals is the suggestion that a high level of adaptability to local conditions, and also the need for continuous development are of particular importance.

## **Summary**

The economic growth demand for skilled global managers within multinational businesses was the initial interest which prompted this study. The most advantageous way to achieve this is by developing a clear and concise framework as to what constitutes such a manager and to develop the skills required by global managers which address the needs of corporations. A global manager has to deal with and practice effective human resources management, cultural diversity, changing economic systems, differing political systems, and diverse educational requirements. The global manager can only manage when he or she has self-awareness, reliance on local people through strong networks of relationships, and have a good understanding of the surroundings. Along with this, and somewhat hand-in-hand, the global manager needs to be able to be adaptive, flexible and open minded, which when coming together will open doors, networks and gain the trust and confidence of the local teams and partners. These essential skills and attributes will assist in maintaining a competitive advantage, thus ensuring global managers' continual success in a complex, dynamic and fluid global market.

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