

## Defining and Assessing Global Competence: Recommendations from a Qualitative Instrumental Single Case Study at a Japanese University

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Japan's society is dealing with many compounding issues that are forcing the way in which businesses, government, and higher education coordinate and operate with each other. Businesses are demanding more from universities in the form of global human resources ready to compete in a vigorous international market. Universities are not entirely ready to make the changes necessary to push the students to excel in the needed areas. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MEXT) has been using various grant programs to encourage universities – small and large; national, private, and public – to innovate and respond to globalization with internationalization programs that meet the socioeconomic challenges Japan faces. In this paper, the author describes this landscape using the case of a single Japanese university that received grant money from MEXT so that it could create the necessary curriculum changes that would set it up for future program development. This case highlights the need to understand the idea of global competence and how to assess the skills and traits businesses have been demanding. An approach to assessing global competence will be presented as well as recommendations for how Japanese universities, government institutions, and businesses can move forward with the training of the *global jinzai* (global human resources) that the nation desperately needs at this pivotal time in its history.

**Key Words :** Global Competence, Case Study, Japanese Higher Education, Government, Business, Global Jinzai, Study Abroad

### 1. Introduction

Sometimes there is pressure to perform a certain way. This pressure yields a distinct reaction. The dynamic of this relationship causes situations of congruence and disconnection between integrated societal and economic (socioeconomic) systems. For the case study referenced in this paper, the identified socioeconomic systems were the central government, the business sector (the market, Japan, Inc., industry), and academia (higher education, universities). The choice of these particular socioeconomic systems was not random. Yonezawa (2007, 2014)<sup>(1)(2)</sup> identified the government, market, and academia as systems within Japan that have been instrumental in shaping society during this challenging age of globalization.

Universities do not exist in isolation even though they often have a life and culture all their own (Kezar, 2001)<sup>(3)</sup>. Businesses and government pressure university administrators into decisions that affect university communities, and society at large. In Japan, Mizuno (2011)<sup>(4)</sup> observed that businesses have been retooling their hiring practices, placing pressure on Japan's higher education system to find ways "to make Japanese students more knowledgeable and competent based on international standards" (p. 34). According to Amin (2012a)<sup>(5)</sup>, since the global financial crisis in 2008, corporate Japan has taken into account the global talent pool when planning recruitment activities. The situation "provided Japanese companies with the insight that overreliance on the domestic market would prove disastrous in the long term" (p. 1).

An intensified focus on the global talent pool has prompted Japan's central government to implement policies encouraging higher education institutions, primarily four-year colleges and universities, to innovate through internationalization of curricula (Asaoka & Yano, 2009; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology [MEXT], n.d.; Tsuneyoshi,

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2005; Yonezawa, 2003; Yonezawa, Akiba, & Hirouchi, 2009)<sup>(6)(7)(8)(9)(10)</sup>. Policies and programs developed by the central government and Japan, Inc. to build a globally-competent workforce through the internationalization of higher education were designed to overcome multiple socioeconomic challenges facing Japan. Current demographic trends that indicate a declining birthrate and rapidly aging population are anticipated to overburden Japan's economy and social welfare systems thus compounding a socioeconomic structure that is also weighed down by a national debt over 200% of the gross domestic product (GDP) (Chandler, Chhor, & Salsberg, 2011; Yonezawa et al., 2009)<sup>(11)(10)</sup>. Central to overcoming Japan's socioeconomic problems is a coordinated effort between industry, government, and academia (Funabashi, 2011; Reid, 2011)<sup>(12)(13)</sup>. However, the general nature of corporate Japan's rigid and formalized talent search—*shukatsu* (Amin, 2012a, b, & c)<sup>(5)(14)(15)</sup>, the government's internationalization policies for higher education, and the culture of Japanese higher education could be causing tension that limits the progress of a more coordinated and unified effort (Asaoka & Yano, 2009; Lee-Cunin, 2005; Murphey, 2011; Tabuchi, 2012; Tanikawa, 2011, 2012; Tsuruta, 2003)<sup>(6)(16)(17)(18)(19)(20)(21)</sup>. In a situation where there are serious and multi-faceted issues to deal with, the solution is never one-size-fits-all. In some cases, there may even be competing interests that cause certain groups to make independent decisions when through a certain lens an interdependent action plan should be the way forward; this makes for a confusing environment in which to work, and to analyse gathered data.

One aspect of this environment that does align all parties is the call for a more globally competent workforce. In this regard, government, higher education, and businesses agree that such a workforce would be beneficial to Japanese society. The divergence is how to assess global competence. Current literature is scattered with regards to an assessment measure which means this is a poignant time to propose such a method. If society wants its citizens to be more globally competent, then we have to figure out what we are looking for in such a person. Proposing a method of assessment is the primary focus of this paper, but first, it is important to understand what global competence is, where it came from, and how this study defined the concept as an operational term. The assessment idea and tool are based on this history.

## 2. Literature Review

This paper was derived from a larger qualitative case study that focused on how companies valued study abroad when recruiting students from a particular national university, and how students at that university understood the concept of global competence (Malcolm, 2018)<sup>(22)</sup>. The operational definition of *global competence* for that study was *to possess the knowledge, skills, experiences, and attitudes that allow one to have the dispositions to identify, comprehend, and act on issues of global, regional and local significance. In taking action, globally competent persons operate using creativity, innovation, empathy, and critically reflexive practices to remain cognizant of their local surroundings and personal places of origin* (Arden-Ogle, 2009; Baumgratz, 1995; Cunliffe, 2004; Hunter, 2004a, 2004b; Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006; Lambert, 1993; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011)<sup>(23)(24)(25)(26)(27)(28)(29)(30)</sup>. Important to this operational term are the concepts of *disposition* and *critically reflexive practice*. Simon and Ashworth (2012)<sup>(31)</sup> understood disposition to be a deeply internalized master set of attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and perceptions of one's social world. This is the filter through which one views one's world; one's values. Cunliffe (2004)<sup>(25)</sup> defined critically reflexive practice as, "Examining critically the assumptions underlying our actions, the impact of those actions, and from a broader perspective, what passes as good management practice" (p. 407). This requires a person to have the ability to ask oneself if what they are doing, in the moment, will improve or hinder the situation, and in the moment, be able to recognize how to act appropriately in order to bring beneficial outcomes. They take non-judgemental stances on issues so as to remain open minded and flexible (Hiratsuka & Malcolm, 2011)<sup>(32)</sup>. These two concepts support the idea of global competence as defined in this study. The term *global competence*, however, has history which is pertinent to the entire discussion taking place in this paper therefore adequate length was allocated to lay out the history behind the term.

### 2.1 History of Global Competence

In August of 1988 The Advisory Council for International Education Exchange, under the auspices of the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), penned a document entitled *Educating for Global Competence: The Report of*

*the Advisory Council for International Exchange*. This report surveyed the state of global education in the United States (U.S.) concluding the U.S. was not taking the necessary steps to create a globally-minded population capable of tackling transnational challenges (The Advisory Council for International Educational Exchange (The Advisory Council), 1988)<sup>(33)</sup>. In the report the authors foreshadowed the growing interdependence of the world due to advancements in “business, manufacturing, diplomacy, science and technology” (The Advisory Council, 1988, p. 1)<sup>(33)</sup>. The report continued saying, “Effectiveness in such a world requires a citizenry whose knowledge is sufficiently international in scope to cope with global interdependence” (p. 1). The United States needed to cultivate a global citizenry with an all-encompassing train of thought to advance the society.

In a solo article, subsequent dissertation study, and collaborative article, Hunter (2004a, 2004b)<sup>(26)(27)</sup> and Hunter, White and Godbey (2006)<sup>(28)</sup> described the above document as a seminal text in the history of defining the concept of global competence. Building off the report Hunter (2004a, 2004b)<sup>(26)(27)</sup> and Hunter, White and Godbey (2006)<sup>(28)</sup> reviewed definitions of global competence, and ones related to the concept. First among them was from a former member of The Advisory Council that penned the 1988 report, Richard Lambert, whom Hunter (2004a, 2004b)<sup>(26)(27)</sup> and Hunter, White and Godbey (2006)<sup>(28)</sup> labeled “the father of the global competence initiative” (p. 27). In 1996 Lambert identified a globally competent person as “one who has knowledge (of current events), can empathize with others, demonstrates approval (maintains a positive attitude), has an unspecified level of foreign language competence and task performance (ability to understand the value in something foreign)” (as cited in Hunter, 2004a, p. 10)<sup>(26)</sup>. This view of a globally competent person was consistent with his earlier work.

In a paper appearing in the *European Journal of Education*, Lambert (1993)<sup>(29)</sup> mentioned the term ‘global competence’ as a “more recently” (p. 309) used term that aligned with “global awareness” and “global perspective” (p. 309). Lambert posited that an internationalized education, where a student spends a lengthy period of time studying in a foreign country, should transform a person, creating a globally competent citizen of the world. The transformation from regular everyday individual to a globally competent person was not to be taken lightly as there was no going backwards once on the educational path. Lambert asserted:

This sea change, however vaguely described, is a view of a salubrious personal growth that is multi-faceted but unidimensional, cumulative, irreversible, recognizable and measurable. Above all it is subject to creation and nurture through the education process (pp. 309-310)<sup>(29)</sup>.

A globally competent individual has gone through a transformative experience where they become “individuals who understand, (empathy) find value in, and have positive sentiments towards (favourableness) both cultures. Such people are effective in interactions with people of both cultures (effective task performance)” (p. 311)<sup>(29)</sup>. This definition of a globally competent individual combines with the following objectives of international education as stated by Lambert:

1. the acquisition of factual information of knowledge;
2. cognitive style, particularly the development of empathy;
3. attitudinal change, particularly the development of favourableness;
4. and the ability to perform specific internationally focused tasks (p. 310)<sup>(29)</sup>.

According to Hunter (2004a)<sup>(26)</sup>, Lambert in 1996 specified his concept using the words and or phrases, “...knowledge...empathy...positive attitude...foreign language competence...understand the value in something foreign” (p. 10). These ideals also aligned with Lambert’s (1993)<sup>(29)</sup> earlier work. When Lambert (1993)<sup>(29)</sup> centered on the belief that studying abroad was central to the transformation into a globally competent individual he framed his belief using Bennett’s (1986, 1993)<sup>(34)(35)</sup> notions of ethnorelativism:

Fundamental to ethnorelativism is the assumption that cultures can only be understood relative to one another. There is no absolute standard of ‘rightness’ or ‘goodness’ that can be applied to cultural behaviour. Cultural difference is neither good nor bad; it is just different. One’s own culture is not any more central to reality than any other culture, although it may be preferable to a particular individual or group (Bennet as quoted in Lambert, 1993, p. 311)<sup>(29)</sup>.

Bennett's (1993)<sup>(35)</sup> *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) moves an individual along a continuum from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism going through six stages of transformation. An individual may start by denying cultural differences opting to impose his or her cultural beliefs. This means the person is openly judging the values of the foreign culture. Stage Two along the continuum finds the individual in defense mode. The individuals accept the differences of the surrounding foreign culture, but instead of harmonizing with them the individual demonizes the surrounding culture creating barriers towards effective communication. In essence the foreign culture is deemed inferior to the culture of the individual. Stage Three of the DMIS finds the individual minimizing the differences they come in contact with. Differences are not taken seriously. Instead, the individual focuses on similarities among his or her culture and the surrounding foreign culture. He or she knows there are differences but focusing on the similar behaviors both cultures share can lessen the effect of obvious differences. These first three stages are what Bennett (1993)<sup>(35)</sup> labeled ethnocentrism.

In Stage Four Bennett (1993)<sup>(35)</sup> saw an individual moving from ethnocentric to ethnorelative. The individual begins to accept the differences of the surrounding culture. There is indifference about difference. Particular behaviors might upset or be hard to accept, but the individual deals with them from the perspective that the difference is legitimate, even though full acceptance is not an option, yet. Stage Five sees the individual recognizing that difference is a good thing and thus adapting certain aspects of the surrounding culture to his or her own character. Personal values and beliefs are not eradicated, instead there is willingness to experiment with difference because there is acceptance and real understanding that difference is not negative. At this stage the individual also begins to experience notions of empathy towards the different culture. The final stage along the DMIS continuum finds the individual able to integrate into the different culture. Flowing back and forth between cultures, the individual finds a harmony between who he or she is and the surrounding culture. There is a seamless integration with what is different and what is similar. Bennett's (1986, 1993)<sup>(34)(35)</sup> transformative process of moving from ethnocentric to ethnorelative; moving from an alienating being to a harmonizing one greatly informed how Lambert (1993)<sup>(28)</sup> conceived his view of global competence, and a globally competent person.

The Advisory Council (1988)<sup>(33)</sup>, Lambert (1993)<sup>(29)</sup>, and more recently Hunter (2004b)<sup>(27)</sup> proposed conceptualizations of global competence from the viewpoint of the United States. And even though Bennett (1986, 1993)<sup>(34)(35)</sup> was developing ideas that should stretch across cultures, he was creating them while living in the United States, being influenced by the culture of the U.S. organizations he was a part of. Regardless of time period and location this always seems to be a problem (Ras, 2011; Hunter, 2004b)<sup>(36)(27)</sup>.

Baumgratz (1995)<sup>(24)</sup> added a Eurocentric perspective to the concept of global competence that differed from the U.S. American centered perceptions by Bennett (1986, 1993)<sup>(34)(35)</sup>, The Advisory Council (1988)<sup>(33)</sup> and Lambert (1993)<sup>(29)</sup>. According to Baumgratz (1995)<sup>(24)</sup>:

the qualifications to be acquired by individuals such as 'global competence' need to be contextualized and defined from the point of view of individuals or groups socialized in specific sociocultural and educational environments, and exposed to the social, educational and professional requirements which stem from these environments (p. 439).

From the perspective of Europe with a multitude of languages, cultures, and systems of government operating independent of each other, what defines global competence needed to be contextualized (Baumgratz, 1995)<sup>(24)</sup>. Responding to Lambert's query about global competence being about a person's "factual knowledge about other areas in the world" (p. 444), Baumgratz asserted what individuals "produce is not 'objective knowledge' but value judgments informed by their own knowledge, values and the perceived object" (p. 444). There was a distinction being made that when people make a decision it is not closed to interpretation. Reality according to Baumgratz has people producing knowledge based on past experiences and how current situations are informed by those experiences. How we are deemed globally competent depends on the level and activeness of two differing value judgments taking place in a particular cultural context.

Baumgratz places importance on the concept of negotiated meaning when it comes to global competence. There is "stress on negotiation because the process of integration into a foreign environment is not one-sided; it should be one of cross-cultural communication, negotiation of meaning and of values" (p. 444)<sup>(24)</sup>. With the variety of cultures that inhabit the European continent, those who work across borders cannot be indifferent towards each other (Baumgratz, 1995)<sup>(24)</sup>. There are a myriad of issues to face when discussing the unified European continent with its different nation states. Being empathetic



may not allow for critical thinking and critical action to be taken. People in positions where decisions have far reaching effects – politicians, CEOs, educators, etc. – have to make judgments (Baumgratz, 1995)<sup>(24)</sup> and that means sometimes stating ideologies others may not always agree with. During any decision-making process there is the possibility of divergent viewpoints causing challenges to the completion of a given agenda. No one culture can hold a position of omnipotence, while others yield their cultural values. In Europe, the globally competent negotiator is fully aware there always needs to be the understanding that useful decisions will come from communication where each side respectfully challenges each other using the cultural tools afforded them.

Baumratz's (1995)<sup>(24)</sup> view of negotiated meaning between cultures being central to global competence challenged Lambert's (1993)<sup>(29)</sup> U.S.-centered view of a person who does not say or do anything to challenge another culture. Baumgratz (1995)<sup>(24)</sup> described situations where a foreigner is strategically antagonistic towards the native culture because the provocation will allow both sides to gain information they would otherwise never gain. She found no agreement with Bennett's (1986, 1993)<sup>(34)(35)</sup> notions of ethnorelativism, specifically the feature of empathy, which underscore Lambert's (1993)<sup>(28)</sup> concept for global competence and globally competent individuals. For Lambert (1993)<sup>(29)</sup> and Bennett (1986, 1993)<sup>(34)(35)</sup> there should be indifference towards culture so an individual does not make value judgments that will alienate and or demean the surrounding culture. By finding harmony and balance, more can be gained than by accentuating the differences. Baumgratz (1995)<sup>(24)</sup> said, "Cultural difference is not indifferent" (p. 445) referring to the fact that Europe is not a single country with one rule of law, or cultural norm. She distinguished between the paradigm of U.S.-centered global competence focused largely on "the relationship between North America and especially North American companies with the other world regions as major competitors on the world market" (p. 445).

Europe, however, was more complicated because the continent was not a unified nation with one language, one rule of law or one historical lineage (Baumgratz, 1995)<sup>(24)</sup>. Europe was wholly different in the sum of its parts because each nation had different socio-political, socio-economic and socio-historical constructs. This means how one defines global competence and a globally competent individual needs to adjust with the cultural context. Baumgratz concluded, "There is a long way to go to global competence" (p. 446), which highlighted the difficulty in defining global competence.

## 2.2 Defining Global Competence

Years later, Hunter (2004a, 2004b)<sup>(26)(27)</sup> and Hunter, White and Godbey (2006)<sup>(28)</sup> focused on how to define global competence, and criteria for parties wanting to assess an individual's global competence. They assembled various definitions of global competence during the process of creating their own (see Table 1 for assembled definitions).

Table 1

Definitions of Global Competence in Hunter, 2004a and 2004b

<p>"The capacity of an individual or a team to parachute into any country and get the job done while respecting cultural pathways" (Swiss Consulting Group as quoted in Hunter, 2004b, p. 28)<sup>(27)</sup>.</p>	<p>Perceptual knowledge (open-mindedness, resistance to stereotyping, complexity of thinking, and perspective consciousness) and substantive knowledge (of cultures, languages, world issues, global dynamics, and human choices) (Wilson &amp; Dalton as cited in Hunter, 2004b, p. 30)<sup>(27)</sup>.</p>
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The ability to become familiar with an environment – being aware of one’s own personal characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, cultural biases and norms, motivations and concerns; ‘going with the flow’ – patience, tolerance for ambiguity and acceptance of not knowing all the details of a situation at any given time; and reflection upon completion of a particular activity within a new culture – mindfully consider the culture on its own merit, without judgmental comparison to what one may already believe (Curran as quoted in Hunter, 2004a, p. 30) <sup>(26)</sup> .	“An appreciation of complexity, conflict management, the inevitability of change, and the interconnectedness between and among humans and their environment. Globally competent citizens know they have an impact on the world and that the world influences them. They recognize their ability and responsibility to make choices that affect the future” (The Stanley Foundation as quoted in Hunter 2004b, p. 28) <sup>(27)</sup> .
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Hunter (2004a, 2004b)<sup>(26)(27)</sup> and Hunter, White and Godbey (2006)<sup>(28)</sup> put forth a definition arrived at during rounds of meetings facilitated by Professor Hunter himself. The Delphi study produced the following definition of global competence – “Having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment” (Hunter, 2004b, p. 101)<sup>(27)</sup>. Using the definition and comprehensive research Hunter (2004b)<sup>(27)</sup> also arrived at a checklist that could assist in ascertaining the knowledge, skills and experiences, and attitudes that make up a globally competent individual (See Table 2).

Table 2

Global Competency Check List

Knowledge	Skills/Experiences	Attitudes
An understanding of one’s own cultural norms and expectations	Successful participation on project-oriented academic or vocational experience with people from other cultures and traditions	Recognition that one’s own worldview is not universal
An understanding of cultural norms and expectations of others	Ability to assess intercultural performance in social or business settings	Willingness to step outside of one’s own culture and experience life as “the other”
An understanding of the concept of “globalization”	Ability to live outside one’s own culture	Willingness to take risks in pursuit of cross-cultural learning and personal development
Knowledge of current world events	Ability to identify cultural differences in order to compete globally	Coping with different cultures and attitudes
Knowledge of world history	Ability to collaborate across cultures	A non-judgmental reaction to cultural difference
	Effective participation in social and business settings anywhere in the world	Celebrating diversity

Note. Adapted from Hunter (2004b, p. 115)<sup>(27)</sup>. The original was in list format.

Hunter (2004a, 2004b)<sup>(26)(27)</sup> and Hunter, White and Godbey (2006)<sup>(28)</sup> grew out of Lambert’s (1993)<sup>(29)</sup> ideas of global competency. Baumgratz (1995)<sup>(24)</sup> marked a divergence away from Lambert (1993)<sup>(29)</sup>, placing the act of defining global competence in a contextual reality where cultures negotiate meaning instead of being indifferent towards them. The labels *U.S.-centric* (the Lambert lead camp) and *Euro-centric* (the Baumgratz camp) seem appropriate for the differing conceptualizations of global competence.

In an essay, the author Catherine Skroch (2009)<sup>(37)</sup> took a more creative approach in defining global competence and a globally competent person by invoking the muse of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*:

Global competence means more than just knowing about the world. Anyone can memorize the Encyclopedia Britannica. Essentially, global competence is adaptability; the ability to be at home anywhere in the world and with anyone from any culture...individuals with strong global competence are able to have substantive interactions with wise old village chiefs, student activists, and children from any cultural background. This skill goes beyond cultural sensitivity and politeness. Global competence is the ability to know *why* one society functions as it does, and *how* other societies interface with it (p. 1)<sup>(37)</sup>.

Baumgratz's (1995)<sup>(24)</sup> perception of global competence has similarities with Skroch's (2009)<sup>(37)</sup> view. Both perspectives call for the individual to go past being nice and polite. To be globally competent an individual needs to engage in substantive conversations that exchange and negotiate meaning and values. Skroch (2009)<sup>(37)</sup> emphasized this point stating:

This is not to say one must be value-less and indefinitely tolerant in order to be Globally-Competent. We must also be mindful that Global Competence takes great self-awareness. It is up to each individual to decide which hills they are willing to die on, and some things should never be compromised. Roots (if you have them) need not be forgotten. True Global Competence is the ability to represent yourself and your own culture, holding on to your own values and traditions, while at the same time being flexible and understanding towards another. It is NOT assimilation (p. 2).

Mansilla and Jackson (2011)<sup>(30)</sup>, working for The Asia Society and The Council of Chief State School Officers, facilitated a process much like Hunter's (2004b)<sup>(27)</sup> Delphi study and arrived at the following definition for global competence – "Global competence is the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance" (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011, p. xiii)<sup>(30)</sup>.

In describing a globally competent individual Mansilla and Jackson (2011)<sup>(30)</sup> said:

Globally competent individuals are aware, curious, and interested in learning about the world and how it works. They can use the big ideas, tools, methods, and languages that are central to any discipline (mathematics, literature, history, science, and the arts) to engage the pressing issues of our time. They deploy and develop this expertise as they investigate such issues, recognizing multiple perspectives, communicating their views effectively, and taking action to improve conditions (p. xiii).

The definition of global competence and description of a globally competent individual put forth by Mansilla and Jackson (2011)<sup>(30)</sup> was primarily to help K-12 teachers in the United States actively incorporate global competency into curricula making sure the concept runs throughout instructional plans. Young people growing up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be tasked with the challenge of negotiating with another culture, while negotiating with themselves. Teachers need to know how to comprehend such a reality and effectively prepare students with the skills to succeed (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011)<sup>(30)</sup>.

Baumgratz (1995)<sup>(24)</sup> used the European continent to show the definition of global competence needed cultural contextualization. Whatever the definition, it needed to reflect a person's individual cultural orientation, and an ability to negotiate meaning with another culture. Dealing with culture needs to be a cross-cultural communicative affair with both parties exerting values and beliefs (Baumgratz, 1995)<sup>(24)</sup>.

### 2.3 Global Competence in Japan

Carrying forth the understanding that defining global competence and a globally competent person needs to incorporate cultural contextualization, the discussion about global competence in this paper needed to include the viewpoint from Japan since the current study was carried out in Japan. One drawback with using the paradigm of global competence as a central concept for this study was that little research existed in the Japanese context. Instead, Japanese researchers and others in business, academia, and government seem to be focused on defining *global human resources* and or *global human resources development (global jinzai)*. Yonezawa (2014)<sup>(2)</sup> provided an extensive analysis of the policy debates and practices that have surrounded the term and concept of *global jinzai*. One major conclusion from the research was that the term has become a driving force in shaping tertiary education in Japan. Universities are seen as the place to develop global human resources who

are ready upon graduation to assist companies in realizing their global aspirations. What this term means however is a bit more difficult to pinpoint (Yonezawa, 2014)<sup>(2)</sup>.

There has been an active discussion within Japan's Ministries about what constitutes a globally competent person. The Global Human Resource Development Committee of the Industry-Academia Partnership for Human Resources Development (The Committee) (2010)<sup>(38)</sup>, under the auspices of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), defined "global human resources" (p. 6) as people who:

1. think independently;
2. make themselves easily understood by their colleagues, business;
3. acquaintances and customers having various backgrounds;
4. overcome differences in values and characteristics arising from cultural and historic backgrounds;
5. understand others and consider their standpoints;
6. further take advantage of their differences to build synergy and create new values (p. 6)<sup>(38)</sup>.

Furthermore, these global human resources should have the following three abilities:

1. To take actions while being aware of the existence of differences in values and communication methods on the basis of diversified backgrounds and histories (=cultural differences).
2. Not judge cultural differences as good or bad, but to be interested in and understand differences and take flexible actions.
3. To recognize strengths of diverse people with cultural differences and to use such strengths for the creation of new values through a synergetic effect (p. 7)<sup>(38)</sup>.

The language used by The Committee (2010)<sup>(38)</sup>, which advised METI, aligns with the *Global 30* (MEXT, 2009)<sup>(39)</sup> and *Global 30 Plus* (MEXT, n.d.)<sup>(7)</sup> policy initiatives designed by MEXT to encourage higher education to develop curricula that provide real opportunities for Japan's young people to become the globally competent human resources their nation needs. The next section will introduce assessment tools as well as criteria that could assist with measuring a person's global competence.

### 3. Methods of Assessment

#### 3.1 Assessment Tools

The assessment tools being proposed are qualitative in nature and are purposed to allow the respondent to access all that makes them who they are with the hope they will use their experiences to shape their responses (Malcolm, 2018)<sup>(22)</sup>. The reason quantitative measures were de-emphasized in the development of these assessment tools is because global competence encompasses more than linear objective understanding; it calls for deeper investigation. Sometimes a person will be called upon to make decisions based on variables they do not completely understand, that may run counter to their personal experiences, or are not in an operational manual. Sometimes people have to make decisions based on local contexts that may seem strange and out of place, but that will benefit a local community, and the overall bottom line of a company. Global competence is about understanding how to bridge gaps in knowledge and how people handle simply not knowing. The Global Competence Inquiry Questionnaire (GCIQ) was designed to make respondents think critically, access and process their experiences, and push them to articulate them (Malcolm, 2018)<sup>(22)</sup>. The Global Competence Checklist (GCC), which was designed to score the GCIQ, was designed as step 2 in a 3-step assessment process. Step 1 is taking the GCIQ; Step 2 is reviewing the GCIQ using the GCC; and Step 3 is reviewing both in a one-on-one interview session. In the end, a decision will be made based on in depth data gathering with the goal of presenting the person being assessed with a comprehensive portfolio that includes strengths and areas for improvement.

##### 3.1.1 Global Competence Inquiry Questionnaire (GCIQ)

The GCIQ is a five-item questionnaire (see Table 3), with the first three items based on the concept of dilemma analysis where a person is posed with a situation that has no right or wrong answer instead the objective is to gain insight into how a person thinks (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Talanquer, Tomanek, & Novodvorsky, 2007)<sup>(40)(41)</sup>. For the referenced study, items



one to three were researcher-generated situations based on the background literature that pertained to the case study these assessment tools were designed for (Marshall & Rossman, 2006)<sup>(40)</sup>. The fourth item is not based on dilemma analysis but is designed to elicit the participant's knowledge of global issues, as well as their thought process on how to address global issues. The eloquence of the answer is not the primary objective. Instead, how a person identifies an issue and the depth of critical thinking used to propose a solution should be the focus. The fifth item was an open-ended question inquiring about the participant's understanding of global competence. Item five went to the heart of what the participant views as global competence and was designed to provide the participant an opportunity to draw on his or her past responses, as well as their own personal experiences, especially their study abroad experience. The items can be adjusted but should follow the mentioned principles. For reference here are the five GCIQ items:

Table 3

Global Competence Inquiry Questionnaire Items (GCIQ)

1. You are with your boss meeting a long-time client at their office. The client is giving your boss information about a sales product. You notice the information is slightly outdated. Your boss is not interrupting the speaker. From your studies during your undergraduate study abroad experience, you know the updated-most recent information, and how to obtain it. What do you do? Justify your response.
2. A person you met while studying abroad wants to set up a business in Japan. In her home country, she has set up a few successful small businesses, and would like to start one in Japan. She wants advice about how to enter the Japanese marketplace. Give her your best advice. Justify your suggestions.
3. Explain why knowledge of local tribal poetry could be vital to negotiating peace agreements or business propositions.
4. Please identify a social, economic and or political challenge facing Japan. Explain how you would address it. What would the local, regional and global effects be?
5. What does the term "global competence" mean to you?

### 3.1.2 Global Competence Checklist (GCC)

The GCC was developed from the working definition referenced at the beginning of this paper's literature review, and based on Hunter's (2004b)<sup>(27)</sup> list (see Table 2 for Hunter's original words). The GCC being proposed in this paper is a modified version (see Table 4 for the modified version). Initial modifications included adding an item identification system – A1), A2), etc. This should help those using the GCC to review the GCIQ develop themes in more identifiable manner. This system could make the abstract concepts of knowledge, attitudes, experiences and skills more tangible and concrete (Yin, 2009; Hodson, 1999, Saldana, 2016)<sup>(42)(43)(44)</sup>. It also allows for more consistency when developing themes and patterns because they could be traced back to concrete ideas and not abstract singular terms. Additional items were added to reflect the breadth of research on global competence and other concepts that were used to develop this study's working definition of global competence. (For a wide-ranging view on global competence see Arden-Ogle, 2009; Baumgratz, 1995; Hunter, 2004a, 2004b; Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006; Lambert, 1993; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; critically reflexive practice see Cunliffe, 2004; and disposition see Simon & Ainsworth, 2012.)<sup>(23)(24)(26)(27)(28)(29)(30)(25)(31)</sup>.

Concerning the modifications that were made to the original checklist, the following explanations were rendered. Specifically, *K5) Knowledge and understanding of one's own dispositions*, *S6) Ability to effectively identify, access, use, reflect upon, and assess one's own dispositions*, and *E3) Successfully dealt with the internal and external struggles of living outside of one's normal environment* were added to incorporate the concept of dispositions as a prominent theme. The term was initially identified in *The Asia Society's* definition of global competence (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011)<sup>(30)</sup>, which states,

“global competence is the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (p. 102). Simon and Ainsworth’s (2012)<sup>(31)</sup> description of disposition as a “deeply internalized master set of attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and perceptions of one’s social world” (p. 3) added specific characteristics to the term disposition thus making the term necessary and relevant. For the purposes of this study it was necessary to understand what the term dispositions meant because the term was applied to the students’ responses. The term summed up many traits and characteristics but for the purposes of analyzing oneself needed to be broken down into more usable ideas. Ultimately these responses were used to help students develop an understanding and awareness of their global competence and themselves as globally competent people. Adequately defining this term to reduce any ambiguity and confusion about the term was necessary.

Item S5) *Ability to use linguistic forms outside of one’s own indigenous linguistic patterns* was added to align with some facets of Trooboff, Vande Berg, and Rayman’s (2008)<sup>(45)</sup> study of how employers in the United States valued study abroad. The survey those gentlemen used was the source document for the survey originally intended to be used in this study. Throughout the survey, references to communicating with other cultures using multiple languages was prominent. Hiring managers were asked to comment on the value of foreign language ability as it pertained to the goals of their companies. There should be no ambiguity in trying to identify this skill within the student participants. This idea of multilingual persons being globally competent was worth exploring because it would not be a wild assertion to say students study abroad to improve their language skills, which might be of value to companies wanting recruits with a global skill set, mentality, and competence.

The working definition in this paper of global competence says, “the knowledge, skills, experiences, and attitudes that allow one to have the dispositions to identify, comprehend, and act on issues of global, regional and local significance.” If students cannot communicate in another language outside their native tongue maybe they will not be as valuable to a business seeking to build a globally competent workforce. Adding this item in the context of university in this study was relevant because this study was designed to see if hiring managers really wanted such skills from the students.

Table 4

Modified Global Competency Checklist

Knowledge (K)	Skills (S)	Experiences (E)	Attitudes (A)
1) An understanding of one’s own cultural norms and exceptions	1) Ability to assess intercultural performance in social or business settings	1) Successful participation on project-oriented academic or vocational experience with people from other cultures and traditions	1) Recognition that one’s own worldview is not universal
2) An understanding of cultural norms and expectations of others	2) Ability to live outside one’s own culture	2) Effective participation in social and business settings anywhere in the world	2) Willingness to step outside one’s own culture and experience life as “the other.”
3) An understanding of the concept of “globalization”	3) Ability to identify cultural differences in order to compete globally	*3) Successfully deals with the internal and external struggles of living outside one’s own normal environment	3) Willingness to take risks in pursuit of cross-cultural learning and personal development
4) Knowledge of current world events	4) Ability to collaborate across cultures		4) Openness to new experiences, including those that could be emotionally challenging

*5) Knowledge and understanding of one's own dispositions	*5) Ability to use linguistic forms outside one's own indigenous linguistic patterns	5) Coping with different cultures and attitudes
	*6) Ability to effectively identify, access, use, reflect upon, and assess one's own dispositions	6) A non-judgmental reaction to cultural difference
		7) Celebrating diversity

Note: Items on the checklist marked with \* represent new items added after the modification and do not exist in Hunter's (2004b)<sup>(27)</sup> original.

To this point, information regarding the socioeconomic context of Japan, history of global competence, and assessing global competence has been presented. The following will present recommendations for implementing the assessment tools as well as policy proposals that could assist government, business, and higher education in reforming their systems and how they relate to each other in eras of crisis and stability.

## 4. Recommendations

Whether one is being reactive or proactive, what is important to remember is; what leads to success is how an idea or action plan is implemented. The following three recommendations/proposals are derived from the collective literature that has been researched for and presented in this paper.

### 4.1 Mandate Study Abroad

The first recommendation may be the most important. To be build authentic cross-cultural understanding that leads to a more globally competent person. Japanese people, from a young age, should be encouraged to travel to foreign countries. In high school, students should be required to do a homestay; create a generation with passports that have at least one stamp in them before university. University students should also be required to study abroad; having completed at least a one-month study abroad program within any two to four-year program. The study abroad programs would all have pre-destination and post-destination sessions that prepare them for studying abroad. Incorporated into these sessions would be the global competence assessment tools presented in this paper, as ways to structure and assess global competence development.

### 4.2 Corporations Value Study Abroad

Malcolm (2018)<sup>(22)</sup> completed a study that this paper is derived from where the central research question was how companies that recruit from a particular national university values study abroad as a means to make students more globally competent human resources. Based on a survey, interviews, and collected data the conclusion was that hiring managers do not place any particular emphasis on study abroad experience when recruiting or interviewing university students. What they did value, however, was the will and motivation to actually do something different. If the recruit could continue to work with that same mindset within the company structure, then a win-win situation would have been created.

Businesses could really make a positive paradigm shift if they changed their value calculation and assessment means to incorporate study abroad experience. Instead of not placing any particular emphasis on study abroad experience, businesses should place a strong emphasis on study abroad. Recruiters could easily ask significant questions about what a person gained from studying abroad and how that knowledge could be used to help the business. Whether that be linguistic proficiency or some other value-added skill, making this a definite recruitment priority would then force all universities (not just the ones who get grant money) to focus efforts on revamping outdated models of education. Such a move would also require primary education to shift curriculum to a more global competence based pedagogical model. The assessment tools developed and

used in the referenced study could be used at various stages of the recruitment/interview process to gather pertinent information about how a recruit actually thinks. They could be adapted to compliment the system already in place, but using them would send a clear signal that study abroad programs that incorporate a global competence dimension are valued and can lead to a job.

### 4.3 MEXT Focus on Study Abroad/Global Competence Research

One of Japan's weaknesses is that prefectural and municipal governments often wait for the central government to draft policy changes and tell others what to do, but usually not how to do it (until crisis implementation time). This could also be a great strength in that when the central government does draft a policy it sweeps the nation and people react quickly. In this situation, MEXT could draft education policy that implements a study abroad/global competence agenda. MEXT could focus research efforts to formulate a study abroad assessment that educational institutions could use to reform curricula across disciplines. This would actively incorporate the concept of global competence and how a person enhances this competency while studying abroad. Working with other Ministries MEXT could adapt any assessment for businesses and other organizations. This would be a massive effort, requiring human resources as well as financial capital, and that is why the central government would need to lead that effort. Prefectural and municipal governments do not have the resources, and with Japan's various centralized systems such a shift in policy would need to be implemented in a systematic way. This does not mean institutions have to wait for the government to research and experiment with study abroad/global competence assessment measures, but having government agencies and Ministries back and disseminate such research initiatives makes for a solid baseline of data, models, resources, etc. Models need to be developed and tested, it would just be that much easier and motivating to have government institutions specifically supporting such initiatives.

## 5. Conclusion/Future Research Efforts

This paper was derived from a larger qualitative case study that focused on how companies valued study abroad when recruiting students from a particular national university, and how students at that university understood the concept of global competence (Malcolm, 2018)<sup>(22)</sup>. The concept of global competence, in particular how to assess global competence was expanded upon in this paper. The history of global competence while recent has garnered enough attention where definitions have become numerous. This paper adds to the body of work trying to develop the concept as well as extend it to the Japanese cultural context. A detailed history as well as original assessment tools were presented and described in this paper with the objective to further the discussion on global competence. In the end, all of this led to three recommendations/proposals focused on bringing study abroad into the forefront because this a key tool in building a globally competent society. The recommendations also targeted the roles businesses, higher education, and government can play in producing a more globally competent society. Key to the future of these efforts is research in how to assess what is gained through study abroad, and more specifically, how global competence is affected through study abroad. Another key area for future research is incorporating a global competence perspective in current assessment measures like the CEFR, CEFR-J, TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS language assessment measures. This, however, goes further than language assessments. One could expand the global competence perspective to the CENTER SHIKEN (the standardized test that all high school students in Japan take before applying to universities). The proposals/recommendations are no doubt massive efforts, but considering the pace of globalization and the socioeconomic challenges Japan faces, this is the time to expend significant energy investing in the future leaders of the nation, and the World.

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