

Original Article (Quantified)

Modeling the effect of competence development on the formation of global citizens in the higher education

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to model the effect of the competence development on the formation of global citizens in the higher education system. This correlational study was conducted on a sample of 317 postgraduate students at the University of Sistan and Baluchestan, selected through stratified random sampling. The research instruments were the Global Citizen and Global Competence Development questionnaires, both of which were found to have acceptable validity and reliability. The data were analyzed using the structural equation modeling method in LISREL software. The results showed that the global competence development has a direct effect on social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement. Additionally, the global competence development had an indirect effect on global civic engagement through global competence and social responsibility. Furthermore, global competence and social responsibility had a direct effect on global civic engagement. It can be said that the key components of global citizenship, such as social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement, are influenced by the global competence development in the higher education system. In other words, the knowledge development, skills, and attitudes play a significant role in the formation of global citizens.

Keywords:

Global competence development,
Global citizens,
Students,
Higher education

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Extended abstract

Introduction

Due to the diversity of the social system and the difference between Iran and its neighboring countries in terms of ethnicity, race, language, and religious and political aspects, as well as the lack of awareness about the social role of systems and the lack of sufficient information about social life, councils, the geographical characteristics of Iran's neighboring countries, environmental pollution, and the services of Islamic civilization; the formation of global citizens has been faced with challenges. On the other hand, the formation of global citizens can facilitate increasing understanding and peace in the Middle East by focusing on the commonalities of humans rather than exaggerating ethnic, linguistic, racial, cultural, religious, and political differences. Therefore, by considering the concepts of democracy, human rights, citizenship rights, global responsibility, equality, peace and empathy among students, higher education systems can accelerate and facilitate the formation of global citizens and the development of sustainability in society (Rezaee et al., 2022). It can be said that with the spread of social and economic gaps, climate change, terrorism, migration, pandemics, the occurrence of wars and conflicts, the weakening of democratic institutions and processes, and widespread and emerging changes in the economy, technology and culture, globalization; how can the higher education system respond to these changing realities and the complex, chaotic and uncertain future? Now is a very important time for the higher education community to emphasize the goal, vision and scope of developing global competence for the formation of global citizens. The global competence development to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes in creating social, civic and citizenship competence for flexible adaptation to the changing world of today is a necessity. Limited studies in the field of examining the factors affecting competence development in higher education institutions and the likelihood of not paying attention to the factors affecting the formation of global citizens and their components have led researchers to raise this research question: to what extent is the development of global competence effective on the components of the global citizen?

Theoretical Framework

Global Citizen: A citizen is someone whose behaviors are in accordance with the structure of civil society by internalizing the values of that society. Today, the continuation of the life, progress and development of societies depends on the existence of active, participatory, aware and engaged citizens (Lombardo, 2015). There are two main approaches to global citizenship; one being the overt approach of global competence goals aimed at providing individuals with the necessary skills to compete in the global society, and the other being the global awareness approach which aims to provide individuals with a global orientation, empathy and cultural sensitivity rooted in human assumptions and values (Dill, 2013). Studies perceive the dimensions of global citizenship as a multidimensional structure, and accordingly, the dimensions of global citizenship are considered in three areas of social responsibility, global competence, and civic engagement (Morais et al., 2011).

Global Competence Development: Global competence refers to the capacity and willingness to thrive in this world; and the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required for advancement in an interconnected world. Global competence has dimensions for examining issues of local, global and cultural significance, understanding and appreciating the perspectives and worldviews of others, the skill of engaging in open, appropriate and effective intercultural interactions, and acting for collective well-being and sustainable development (Jang et al., 2023; Giannina, 2020). Studies have focused on the dimensions of competence development in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills, and attitudes and values (Liu et al., 2020).

Research methodology

The present research method was a descriptive correlational study. The statistical population was approximately 3,000 postgraduate students at the University of Sistan and Baluchestan. Using stratified random sampling (in three groups of humanities, engineering and related sciences, and basic and related sciences), 384 students were selected according to the Morgan table, and 317 questionnaires were returned. The research instruments were two questionnaires: the Global Citizen Formation and Global Competence Development questionnaires. The Global Citizen Formation questionnaire was adapted from the Morais and Ogden (2011) model, which had three sections: social responsibility, global citizenship competence, and global civic engagement. The social responsibility section included 13 items and 3 sub-components: justice and equality, altruism and empathy, and global connectedness and personal responsibility. The global citizenship competence section included 13 items and 3 sub-components: self-awareness, intercultural communication, and global knowledge. The global civic engagement section included 15 items and 3 sub-components: participation in civil organizations, political discourse, and global civic activity. The Global Competence Development questionnaire was adapted from the Liu et al. (2020) model, which included 10 items on knowledge and understanding, 14 items on skills, and 11 items on attitudes and values. The data analysis method was structural equation modeling using the LISREL software.

Research Findings

The results showed that the direct effect of competence development on the fulfillment of global competence (0.61), social responsibility (0.58), and civic engagement (0.32) were significant at the 0.005 level. The effect of the fulfillment of social responsibility on the formation of civic engagement (0.38) and the effect of the fulfillment of global competence on civic engagement (0.34) were also significant at the 0.001 level.

Conclusion

According to the findings, it can be said that universities are the most important place for citizenship education and are also a suitable place for the formation of global citizens. If students study in a university with global competence, they can form appropriate global citizens for a society by acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes. By acquiring competence, responsibility, and civic engagement, students and graduates will play a role in shaping a sustainable global society, and in this sustainable society, with increased understanding, mutual understanding and respect, they will contribute to the sharing of international benefits. Universities play a role in increasing global awareness through education and student participation, improving interactions, developing communications, and strengthening adaptability in the community; which will lead to increased self-confidence, understanding, and respect for people from different cultures. Higher education institutions are constructive in the formation of a sustainable global society through the creation of critical thinking skills, motivation for participation, global activities, empathy, attention to justice and gender equality, and strengthening the responsibility of students. On the other hand, the global competence development through the improvement of knowledge and understanding, strengthening skills, and reforming the attitudes of students is one of the most important goals of the higher education system. In other words, competent students can use the acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact and communicate with others, and be constructive through direct and indirect relationships in universities in improving their own competence. Therefore, equal opportunities and the implementation of justice in education among students at the university are constructive in improving global competence; and by changing old and traditional teaching methods and creating educational innovations, higher education institutions can take a big step towards improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes. From



another perspective, it can be stated that the global competence development of citizens is more influenced by intercultural communications than by local government policies, and the important factors of global competence are often overlooked or minimized in educational systems, which will have consequences for education and the global competence development (Sakamoto, 2022).