

Global Competition and Its Projected Impact on the Counseling Profession:

Searching for Peaceful Strategies

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Global competition can be like the weather. For some it can produce good opportunities with sunny days while for others, the experiences can be unfortunate. Since the consequences of global competition can vary just like the weather, those impacted by it can have different experiences whether positive or negative. At the National Governor's Association meeting in 2007, the familiar topic of globalization emerged. The Governors echoed the message that change will be driven by competitiveness and that the United States may be falling behind in its skills sets for employees. Given the amount of media attention that global competition has attracted, this paper seeks to define the concept of global competition, identify some of its consequences, project the impact of global competition upon the counseling profession through the use of a case study and explore the opportunity for peaceful approaches to global competition.

According to Thompson and Strickland (2006), global competition has been defined as a "competitive condition across national markets that are strongly linked enough to form a true international market and when leading competitors compete head to head in many different countries."

The definition has been further explained by Leppala, Kaariainen, Takalo and Savolainen (2006). They stated that industry has been involved in a transition phase whereby factories have transported to nations where the labor cost is low. In addition to the low cost of labor, technology has a place within the transition process.

Florida added that advances in technology, communications, trade and transport have- resulted in more businesses in operation. The businesses tend to cluster in one location which generates productivity and growth in economies. As talented people become mobile, businesses are left to recruit other talented individuals or grow the talent. As a result of the need for talent for businesses to grow, the competition for talented individuals increases.

The publication, Home Textiles Today (2006) in the September issue describes the effects of global competition. It points to the competition between China, India and Pakistan in securing contracts for each country's cheap labor.

In another example of global competition, Seltzer (1992), stated that the technological advances in communication have prompted more companies to compete globally for survival. Workers and companies are aware of the tensions created by global competition which focus on reducing costs which in turn lead to restructuring and downsizing. Survival translates into fewer workers performing more tasks for the business to survive. Seltzer projects that the tensions of global competition will increase and influence additional businesses.

Given the above factors related to global competition, it is important to examine the projected impact of global competition on the profession of counseling. Counseling

associations have been developed in several countries which seek to address issues of counselors in a particular country. Some of these have included the British Association of Counseling the Canadian Association of Counseling and the American Counseling Association in the United States.

Consider a case study in which global competition can develop in countries whereby the counseling presence has not been strong or understood. Counselors with extensive research in the area of school counseling have put together a proposal to bid for services in several countries. The budget for services is less than a contract for services for a number of school counselors with benefits packages that include health insurance and retirement. In addition the counselors participating within the bid for services hold the certifications appropriate for the school district.

The attractiveness of the proposal is not only its cost, but a research-based approach to enhance student test scores, an internet program to track student progress on a daily basis and group counseling sessions designed to address a number of student needs. The proposal has been successful with a number of student populations.

The impact of the proposal leads to fewer jobs for school counselors within the countries served by the proposal. It also influences like-minded counselor entrepreneurs to develop similar proposals for services. Over the long run, the effect of proposals for services for school counselors could lead to fewer jobs within the profession and the encouragement of entrepreneurs to compete for services.

As the competition intensifies in global competition, it has the potential to impact related helping professions. The counseling profession can take a proactive

approach by initiating discussions regarding the implications of global competition within its regions. It can also explore possible recommendations across regional and continental counseling associations. Other useful strategies can include the development of case studies that will explore the possible impact of global competition.

As professions take the time to explore the impact of global competition before it becomes a reality within the profession, the brainstorming activity enhances the possibility of weathering the storm of global competition. In addition, it lays the ground work for peaceful strategies for implementing global competition.

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Abstract

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Globalization and its projected impact on the counseling profession has been examined through the use of a case study. By studying the case study, the issue of competitiveness and its impact on the counseling profession internationally emerges. Recommendations were offered to encourage counseling professionals to focus on the possible outcomes that could take effect as a result of globalization. Counselors were encouraged to be proactive and to initiate discussions about the impact of globalization. The discussions could occur regionally within the United States and among international counseling associations.