

Why Cross-cultural Motivation and International Career Orientation are at Cross Purposes in Undergraduate Student Behavior

1. Research Objective. Many universities in Japan are developing global human resources by encouraging students to develop cross-cultural motivation (curiosity in different cultures and a willingness to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds) and international career orientations (passion to pursue future careers abroad). Although these two factors are able to contribute to global human resource development, they seem to have fundamentally different effects on student behavior. Developing cross-cultural motivation can lead to more open and collaborative thinking, while developing an international career orientation can lead to an elitist, overbearing, and self-centric attitude. This study investigated the effects of cross-cultural motivation and international career orientation on student behavior in one of the most critical situations, i.e. in conflicts.

2. Method and Results. Data were collected by questionnaire from 162 Japanese undergraduate students (48.8% male; mean age = 20.49 years). The bootstrapping mediation analysis found that cross-cultural motivation significantly increased friend-satisfaction, which in turn increased collaborative conflict management behavior, and international career orientation significantly increased self-satisfaction, which in turn increased competitive conflict management behaviors.

3. Conclusion and Discussion. Students with international career orientations felt self-confident and satisfied with themselves; therefore, when faced with conflicts, they tended to coercively convince others. Conversely, students who had developed cross-cultural motivation were found to more easily accept the differences in others, which contributed to friend-satisfaction and led to more cooperative and collaborative conflict resolution. While universities are attempting to enhance both cross-cultural motivation and international career orientation, international career orientation gave rise to a problematic effect on student conflict management behavior. Therefore, less emphasis should be placed on international career orientation in global human resource development programs, and greater emphasis should be placed on cross-cultural motivation.