INDONESIAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE MANAGERS PERCEPTIONS ON MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study was to explore Indonesian international relations office managers perspectives on management competencies. The study was conducted utilizing constructivist grounded theory methods and a constructivist viewpoint. To help with data organizing and analysis, Office Word was used as a qualitative research software application. The following were some of the research questions that were used as a guide: (a) How do (IOM) perceive competency; (b) How do (IOM) measure their performance? What performance indicators do they use; (c) what is the position of the international relation office in the management hierarchy; and (d) What makes a competent international relation office managerIn order to uncover emergent categories and produce substantive theory, this qualitative study employed interviews based on Active interviewing theory and followed a Straussan grounded-theory design to guide the collection and coding of interview data. The participants in this study were current managers of foreign offices in Indonesian universities; the sample comprised of international office managers both from public and private universities, as well as small and large universities in terms of student population. Results also shows that; what makes a competent international office manager is a mix of core and professional competences that can make a manager standout "relativity similar to (Pham et al., 2019)". meritocracy and nepotism are in balance when it comes to the nomination and selection of the IOMs, plus managed to create a job description that emerged from the participants' experiences, the international relations office in Indonesian HEIs is considered a middle unit below vice rectors, a model was created to perceive the competencies ought to be in a competent international office manager. The author urges a review of the internationalization strategy on the national level; the current one is just a general guideline and does not cover or manage the complexity of the current scene.

Keywords: Internationalization, middle managers, HEIs, International Office manager, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Universities all over the world are finding it necessary to pay close attention to their international presence and reputation these days, thanks to globalization and the connectedness of today's world. Part of this new realization is the establishment of an international relation office or office of international relations (IRO). (de Wit, 2020). The foreign relations office is unique in that it must operate on two fronts: first, as the university's worldwide public relations and

communication officer, while also managing local initiatives. Another distinguishing aspect of international office division directors is that they represent middle management (especially in higher education). The heads of international office departments play a key role in executing work in various organizations (Currie & Procter, 2005)

Internalization's relevance and function on today's campuses has become generally recognized and addressed in the literature

(Yemini & Sagie, 2016). What's absent is the role of those in charge of administering these efforts, which are represented by international office personnel and management; the literature on this subject is severely lacking.

Objectives & Benefits

This study is an attempt to find out what International office managers believe good international office managers need to be good at' by highlighting the competencies that are necessary for an (IOM) heads in chosen universities in Indonesia and try to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do (IOM) perceive competency?
- 2) How do (IOM) measure their performance? What performance indicators do they use?
- 3) What makes a competent international office manager?

Main concepts:

The paucity of literature on this topic, whether in Indonesian or worldwide contexts, the complicated nature of the position and the ambiguity surrounding the specific tasks and duties plus the jurisdiction makes the procedure more difficult. To that end, the following pages introduces several key terms that are addressed in this study.

The Competency Concept

Because it is utilized in a variety of sectors, the term competency has no single clear definition; the Cambridge dictionary defines it as: an important skill required to perform a job. (Terrence, 1999) conducted one of the most comprehensive studies on the definition and applications of the term; He defined the phrase in two ways, one relating to the products, or results, of training, notably competent performance, and the other referring to the outputs, or results, of training, namely competent performance. The alternate definition relates to the inputs, or basic qualities, that a person must have in order to work successfully.

Each criteria has been used to characterize individual and organizational abilities.

(Webb, 2008) is another example of utilizing the word to express the fundamental characteristics that a person must possess in order to function competently. She examined leadership abilities and presidential leadership in Christian Institutions of higher learning in her study. The word is frequently used in higher education literature to investigate certain characteristics in students or graduates as a result of their education, as well as to assess the quality of teaching techniques (Warn & Tranter, 2010)

administration, program Department administration, personnel management, budgets, and resource planning are among the six primary types of tasks that academic heads must be proficient of (Pham, Nghiem, Nguyen, Mai, & Tran, 2019). The outer communication world's the office's management. They include both of the word's definitions as stated by (Terrence, 1999).

Competency In Relation to Performance

Every organization or institute has a function and a reason for existing, and performance is the sum of all the activities and efforts made in order to achieve and fulfill that function. The term Performance has often been used intertwined with competence to describe the ability and how well the employee is able to perform and produce results and handle the tasks that are assigned to him. (Muhamad Ekhsan, 2019) defines it as: the outcome of someone's effort in completing duties allocated to him based on abilities, experience, honesty, and time. Job quality, quantity of work, job knowledge. cooperation, initiative. creativity, interdependence, and self-quality are all elements of employee performance, according to him.

Research has long shown the positive correlation and effect between individuals

and departmental competencies and the higher organizational performance, the more competent an induvial the better the performance. (Mangkunegara, 2005 as cited in Muhamad Ekhsan, 2019) defined several internal and external factors that influence performance:

a. Internal variables: These elements that are connected to a person's psychological traits and personality; normal a healthy balance of people have psychological (spiritual) and physical (physical) functioning, and they have a positive self-perception. Potential talents, such as intellect and emotional quotient, impact an individual's focus. Individuals with a low degree of intellect and a high level of emotional intelligence will, on average, work with complete attention.

b. External factors: these are the external variables that have an impact on someone's performance. Clear job descriptions, competent authority, demanding work, effective work communication patterns, pleasant work relations, respectful and dynamic work possibilities, atmosphere, career and generally appropriate work facilities are among the environmental variables in consideration.

Beside these factors, the effect of national culture is one of the widely overlooked variables when researching the characteristics of performance and out Performing Managers The practical effect of this factor is that researchers must account for the variations in characteristics when studying performance in various contexts. (André A. de Waal, Béatrice I.J.M. van der Heijden, Denny Meyer, 2019).

Performance Measurement & Indicators

Universities are under growing pressure to generate results and demonstrate a return on investment for a variety of stakeholders, including governments, communities, and parents, who all want different feedback and outcomes. Performance indicators and measurements are created to meet that demand, but they also create their own set of problems.

The process of obtaining, analyzing, and/or reporting data on the performance of an individual, group, organization, system, or component is known as performance measurement. To assess, regulate, budget, motivate, promote, celebrate, learn, and develop, performance measurements are employed. Unfortunately, no one performance indicator is suitable for all eight objectives (Behn, 2003).

It is originally adopted from the business world and most of the current systems today have difficulty in measuring the whole aspect of management in universities, It is stated that the creation of performance-driven, market-oriented university systems has produced an environment in which fiscal and economic performance indicators have become the main means of assessing higher education institutes' and individual universities' operations. Guthrie, James Neumann (Guthrie, James Neumann, 2007). Some believe that key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance management are harmful in the higher education sector because they generate unnecessary stress, which has a negative influence on an important criterion of academia, cognitive thinking (Kairuz et al., 2016).

Internationalization in Higher Education:

Internationalization in higher education is characterized by Knight (2008) as:"the process of incorporating an international, intercultural, or global component into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education." The internationalization process may be broken down into three levels: national, sectoral, and institutional efforts. International student recruitment, student and staff exchange programs, international teaching collaborations, collaborative research partnerships, and curricular internationalization are just a few

examples. (Maringe in Maringe and Foskett, 2010: 28).

(Wende, 2001) The focus of internationalization has shifted away from traditional interchange and cooperation, as well broad speeches about the need of understanding various cultures and languages, to a more competitive internationalization. This shift in paradigm from cooperation to competition was also noted by (de Wit, 2020). Competition for students, academics, and knowledge economy talents, as well as financing for complicated research, access to the top 500 in worldwide rankings, and access to high-impact publications.

Internationalization is a long-standing trend in east and southeast Asia; it dates back to the late 1800s, when several Asian countries sought to build contemporary higher education institutions by sending students and staff members overseas for further studies or research. They began by replicating and importing western academic practices and elaborating on them, with the following examples: (Japan, China). 2007 (Huang)

(Huang 2007) identified two common driving factors among east and southeast Asian countries endeavors in seeking to introduce foreign higher education activities which are: in the context of a worldwide market, the improvement of competitiveness and academic quality As a result, the primary issues in this region about transnational higher education are how to ensure the quality of (TNHE) and how to preserve national identity and character, that are recognized by so many nations in the region.

Indonesia began its planned internationalization efforts in the early 2000 with vision to increase country competitiveness placing Indonesian by universities among the top-ranking universities, The Long-term Framework of Development of Higher Education (KPPTJP) was presented by the Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI) under the title (Higher Education Long Term Strategy) (HELTS) 2003-2010. The goal is to improve the nation's competitiveness, autonomy and decentralization, and organizational health through three key strategies. (2018, Dewi)

HELTS 2003-2010 outlined a number of measures to strengthen universities' role in fostering a knowledge-based economy and improving the country's competitiveness. Internationalization of academic programs is one of these techniques. Other government laws were created to promote the objective of increasing Indonesia's global competitiveness level, one of which was to build World Class Universities, based on the strategic framework in HELTS 2003-2010. (WCU). Universities are supposed to enhance their worldwide reputations (among other things), attract foreign students and faculty, innovate, and collaborate in order to build WCU. The goal was to get institutions included Indonesian top worldwide university rankings produced by organizations such as Times Higher Education (THE), Quacquarelli Simonds (QS), and Shanghai Jiao Tao Ranking (SJT). (Indonesia Republic, 2016).

Increased international collaboration and partnership is another stage in internationalization process, thus institutions urged create to an International Office/International Cooperation Office under Ministry of Education Regulation No. 26/2007 and Government Regulation No. 17/2010. These university offices were the driving force behind internationalization efforts. institutions have also taken the initiative of holding seminars and socializations on university internationalization.

Universities developed their strategic plans at different times in order to attain the objective of worldwide recognition. Several leading universities in Indonesia, including Universitas Indonesia Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), and Universitas Brawijaya (UB), are now offering joint degree programs with universities abroad, as well as international student programs.(Republik Indonesia, 2016) So we can see that internationalization is a

government-led process with a clear goal and strategy, and we can see a commitment and awareness from the Indonesian government and academic community of the importance and need for an international presence and relations, but the author noticed a lack of literature regarding the international relation office or (IRO) and the corresponding.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY Population

The population of this study consisted of (11) existing managers of international offices in universes across Indonesia, the sample included international office managers of both public and private universities, small and large universities in terms of student population.

Table 3.1 Participants Backgrounds

Participant (Pt)	City	Sex	Age	Educational Level	Major	Years on The Position	University Size (Number of Students 2019)	Office Size
Pt1	Purwokerto	Male	44	Ph.D	English	1	13,476 1	4 Employees
Pt2	Purworeio	Male	39	Ph.D	English	3.5	4,0071	1 Employee
Pt3	Bandung	Male	46	Ph.D.	English	1	33,928 ¹	11 Employees
Pt4	Surabaya	Male	37	Ph.D.	Accounting	5 months	37,547 ¹	22 Employees
Pt5	Yogyakarta	Male	38	Masters	Law	4	36,078 ¹	12 Employees
Pt6	Semarang	Male	37	Masters	Law	4	56,544 ¹	5
Pt7	Solo	Male	40	Ph.D.	Management	4 months	43.677	11
Pt8	Makassar	Female	44	Ph.D	English	3	34,815 ¹	4 Employees
Pt9	Samarinda	Male	48	Ph.D	Agribusiness	5	29015 ¹	1 Employees
Pt10	Gorontalo	Female	26	Masters	International Relations	3	15003 (Anstazia, 2021)	2 Employees
Pt11	Malang	Female	40 - 45	Ph.D	Asian Studies	3	29.548	10 Employees

Sampling

A deliberate sampling approach was employed to recruit participants for this study. Purposeful sampling is defined as choosing "certain themes to include because they are thought to aid the extension of the emergent theory." (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 65) the initial study sample consisted of the IOMs from

the universities that are part of the KNB program (Kemitraan Negara Berkembang), due to their size and their familiarity with the internationalization subject, but it turned out that t's not a representative sample of the community cause all of the universities in the KNB program were government owned universities which excluded private universities, the researcher caught early to this bias and managed to add several IOMs from several private universities across Indonesia by doing an online search about the universities in each region both public and private.

Data Saturation

while doing qualitative research the sample size cannot be determined using a formula. When categories are saturated and no new qualities disclose theoretical categories, the researcher can cease collecting data, according to grounded theory standards (Charmaz) (, n.d.).

Data Collection Procedures

The primary data collection method was participant interviews. An initial contact letter (see appendix A) introducing the researcher and the study was sent to all members of the population, after the approval of the subjects an online interview was conducted based on the managers schedule and timing. Participants were required to complete one interview, which lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The interviews were taped and then transcribed. The major research questions were used to develop the interview questions. The current study employed a semistructured approach, which gave participants and the researcher the freedom to elaborate on the particular topics given in the interview procedure.

Data Analyses

all during the data analysis, existing literature, including empirical research, was consulted, and the literature was reviewed, in accordance with the direction to develop new theory that was as compatible as feasible with

the grounded theory method. The coding method included open and selective coding stages, comparable to (Chen and Boore's, 2009) substantive and theoretical coding, although perhaps not as thorough, as mentioned above, due to time constraints affecting the Throughout the data analyses, the existing literature, including empirical research, was consulted, and the literature review was written, in accordance with the direction to develop new theory that was as compatible as feasible with the grounded theory method. The coding method included open and selective coding stages, comparable to (Chen and Boore's, 2009) substantive and theoretical coding, although perhaps not as thorough, as mentioned above, due to time constraints affecting the study.

Within individual sets of data (each interview), however, a two-tier or stage coding and analyses took place, with initial codes assigned in text, followed by shortening of codes and creating categories, before they were compared with other sets of data and additional linkages were formed. These connections were updated as more data was acquired and coded, and new ones were formed, all with the help of memo writing and theoretical sensitivity (the researcher referred to existing empirical studies on the topics such as middle managers n HE and internationalization in higher education themes, which had been identified, while not being guided by them for data collection).

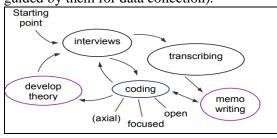


Figure 1 Development Steps of Grounded Theory. (Gorra, A. 2007)

This method of inquiry and analyses was chosen because it can be used to explore a research topic where few empirical studies have been conducted, especially in the Indonesian context, and this inductive method of enquiry

and analyses would be an excellent place to start for more research within the IOM field., by providing an outline of the competences required to perform in this position based on the experiences of this particular sample population

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The author questioned about competency as a term covers a wide variety of angels to determine what competences are necessary for an IOM to succeed in his job. I inquired about competency in a number of ways, depending on each interviewee's ability to grasp, I selected a question style that I believed was appropriate for delivering the meaning in the interview context.

The survey shown that three factors have a high influence on (IOM) competency:

- 1) Workload
- 2) Age
- 3) Educational level

the workload:

The major duty of most academic managers at Indonesian higher academic establishments is teaching, followed administrative tasks and community engagement activities. As a result, managing time and effort between administrative and teaching obligations, such as overseeing under and postgraduate students, became a challenge. Majority of the IOMs I've talked to have this problem, they're still working as teachers and professors, at the same time they're also still in charge of students. This led to a bit of conflict in allocating time between the two duties.

When asked if they want a devoted Manager as the IOM or someone who is also a professor, they said they prefer a dedicated Manager. The vast majority of those polled agreed. To be effective in this role, an IOM needs the expertise of a professor. Professors have a greater understanding of parts of the job that a dedicated administrator does not, and they can bargain more effectively as a result of this knowledge and experience. They understand what the institution requires, yet the burden of

academics may be overwhelming at times. Conflicting with their responsibilities as IOMs.

I come back from the office at, uh, seven or 8:00 PM, because I have to finish all the work after teaching in the classroom sometimes, Pt5

This conflict in roles and the high workload can lead to stress, University staff have been proven to endure high levels of stress and psychological discomfort across the world, according to studies. (JOHN Francis Connolly, 2013) (Meng & Wang, 2018) (Kabito, G. G., Wami, S. D., Chercos, D. H., & Mekonnen, T. H. 2020) There have been demands to look into stress over time and include coping and personality characteristics.

(Safaria, 2013) found Seven stressors' categories those were; (1) insufficient role occupation, (2) rising work expectations, (3) inadequate role preparation, (4) inadequate role support, (5) role ambiguity, (6) role conflict, (7) work - life conflict. I can affirm that (2, 4, 6, 7) exists based on my interviews and contacts with IOM for this study. the risk these stress factors pose if goes unchecked that; it can lead to burn out syndrome and can shorten the productive lifespan of the employee.

Age:

According to research, management styles differ with age; although younger managers choose narrower, more technical methods, older managers prefer to work through people and focus on the larger picture (Julian Birkinshaw, 2019). Age is a big factor is the competency of IOM,, in Indonesian universities academic managers have tow duties teaching plus administration duties; this lead to a high workload and high stress, this where age comes as a factor; the higher the age the less tolerance individual have to the pressure and the stress factors and it can lead to health deterioration, when I asked about the most suitable age range for an IOM majority of the interviewee stated that an individual between the age 35 - 55 is the most suitable to operate in this position whether it's a male or a female, the logic behind that range is that; staff under 35 lack the necessary experience to deal with the various stakeholders involved in the job description of Indonesian IOM, on the other hand according to the managers interviewed; staff over 55 lack the creativity and the physical stamina required to operate in the position which research has shown that it's not always the case and this believe is just a stereotype (Posthuma, R. A., & Campion, M. A. 2007) . the only exception to this opinion came from the youngest participant in and this is study Pt10, as she stated when asked about the suitable age for IOM:

Educational Level:

Research has shown that managers education has a big influence on their performance and success (Queiró, F. 2016). Education's benefits extend beyond basic task performance to encompass citizenship and counterproductive performance as well. Highly educated employees are also more likely to contribute more successfully to noncore tasks at work (Ng, T. W., & Feldman, D. C. 2009) Based on my interviews, I have come to know that the majority of academic managers were either master's degree holders or Ph.D holders, from (Table 1) we can see that the majority of the participants in this study were Ph.D holders in fact when asked about the preferred academic level or educational level of the IOM, majority of the interviewed chose Ph.D; holder the main reason they gave was related to whom the IOMs needed to interact with. They stated that the majority of their counterparts in foreign universities were Ph.D holders and renowned professors and that the degree give you a certain kind of prestige or gain you a certain level of respect of their counterparts, which help and conducting communications initiate and hopefully relationships which other universities

How IOMs Get Evaluated, Based on What?

the age does not matter to me, what matter is; what you can offer, and what you can deliver.

Performance measures, according to Pritchard et al. (1990), are "the numerical or quantitative indicators that indicate how well each goal is achieved." Neely et al. (2002, p. xiii) defined a performance measure as "a metric used to assess the efficiency and/or efficacy of past action." As a consequence of this necessity, governments and universities have attempted to put in place rules and processes to assess, promote, and reward academic staff performance in areas such as teaching, supervising, research, and publishing (Masron, T. A., Ahmad, Z., & Rahim, N. B. (2012).

The notion of performance indicators (PIs) comes from educational economic models that describe education as a process within a wider economic system that converts inputs such as academic salaries into outputs such as research articles (Cave, Hanney, Kogan, & Trevett, 1988), as stated by (Masron, T. A., Ahmad, Z., & Rahim, N. B. 2012). Almost all the respondents indicated that they get evaluated based on key performance indicators and how much they accomplished from them, these key performance indicators include University ranking and international publishing beside what is called MOU between universities and other high education institutes, each institution judge itself in relation to its potential and not to promote a comparison of institutions, since some are extremely small, and others are the size of small towns. The key targets for the managers include the programs they run, these programs can vary from scholarship programs, summer courses programs, internships programs.

What makes a competent international office manager:

The answer to this question produced a valuable framework where the author was able to identity five domains on which managers competencies can be assessed; these five domains ae:

a) Character competency

are the essential pillars of long-term and effective leadership, according to Hannah and Avolio (2011). Several philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle, thought that the function of character in leadership is important for effective ruling, as well as achieving well-being and enjoyment in life (Wright & Goodstein, 2007). (Rowe & Broadie, 2002). In other words, the leader's character (virtues) determines the leader's ability to retain leadership competency (capacity to accomplish) (Mabbu, Tarun. 2019). This domain encompasses a wide range of skills, from ethical standards such as integrity and professionalism to knowledge sharing and learning. Being a professor or educator in a higher education institution necessitates a high level of patience, as well as the ability to multitask while lecturing and supervising students, between lecturing and supervising the students, the administrative load, beside the community work required from professors here in Indonesia, an instructor can find him/her self in a maze of responsibilities.

b) External/Internal Communication

One of the key points most managers in the study agreed on, is the ability to communicate with the internal and external stakeholders, internal communication can include other units managers or other vice rectors plus heads of other departments & units, professors and lectures, for every day operations, to convey the message and the goals of the organization or the institute to the staff, to keep the motivation on, as well as solving internal conflict and issues that rises on daily basis for the above mentioned reasons a competent IOM need to have good communication skills that can help him navigate the difficulties of the job this seem to agree with the result obtained by (Thi, 2012) in an attempt to identify the training requirements of departments heads at a newly created university in Vietnam, that the most important training needs for Heads of Department are in generic management knowledge and abilities, Heads of Department duties. English language competency, research methodology skills and practice They must also improve their communication and planning skills. These

findings both confirm and contradict earlier studies from respected Western universities on the training needs of Department Heads.

As for external communication we're talking about other stakeholders whether it's other universities, government bodies or even companies and local businesses, the ability to start, maintain and establishing a relationship with these stakeholders and entities require a high-level communicator with a good negotiation skill and a diplomatic mindset.

c) Programme Management

The responsibilities of international office leaders do not quite match those described in the literature. Specific task items for department chairs, according to the literature, include creating training programs (curriculum frameworks and teaching contents) monitoring academic staff in carrying out these programs to guarantee that the programs are implemented as intended (Thi, 2013), but we see it goes beyond these duties when we discuss IOMs. major portion of the IOM obligations is to arrange, organize, make programs, these programs come in two distinctive sorts; inside the campus in coordination with the other divisions which more often than not cover advancing staff inquire about or high quality teaching for the requirements of the ranking, the other kind is usually directed to the external world or external parties whether it's other universities the national public, or international students and international audience, these programs include cultural programs, Academic conferences in coordination with departments or even scholarships programs. the ability to manage, create, and coordinate whether inside the office unit or with other department is highly valuable and extremely critical for the success in an IOM position.

d) Human Resource Management

Employees are every organization's most valuable asset; they are what allow organizations to function, and their success or failure is dependent on them. For these reasons, being able to recruit, manage, and operate this human resource in the most effective way to meet unit or department goals and achievement is a vital

competence and a critical function in and of itself for an IOM's success. This comes in alignment with (Pham et al., 2019), (Nguyen, 2012), in their studies on middle level academic managers key competencies

e) Budget & Resources Management Most of the IROs within the study are middle units, they get their budget doled out and endorsed by upper administration, the skill here is to know what's office require and how to oversee to get it done with the budget on hand, how to retain the budget within the most useful and commonsense way to reach the objectives or targets of the office. it requires pragmatic manager with a strategic mindset who can prioritize between tasks. Academic middle managers roles are varies based on the institutions they belong to and operate within, but the burden of managing the budget or spending is always present (Gleeson, D., 2001)

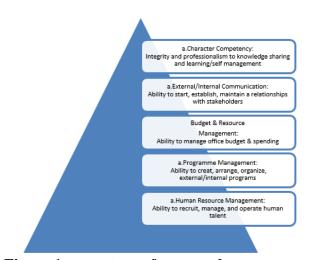


Figure 1 competency framework

CONCLUSION

The above findings illustrate the results and the analysis of the data surveyed and the interviews analyzed, the author tried to come up with a framework for the competencies required for international office managers in Indonesian higher education institutes based on the opinions of the interviewed international office managers in the sample, the results show a similarity to (Pham et al., 2019) perception of competences required for middle managers in higher education institutes in Vietnam.

The managers surveyed had different views on the concept of competency and what does it mean to be competent in their current positions, the common emphasis was on: communication, marketing skills, diplomatic skills, and general how to communicate, how to convince, how to establish a presence and relationship eventually with international or national partners or parties of interest for the institution, to some other managers the lack of competency is represented in the lack of understanding or misunderstanding internationalization, some others considered the inability to speak English as a major incompetency sign, in Indonesian HEIs international office managers get evaluated based on key performance indicators assigned by upper management, these key performance indicators vary from institution to institution and are always subject to the institutions goals and demands from the IRO and that in turn reflect the institution internationalization strategy. Rich measurement data will improve the quality of management choices, which is a good thing (Geert & Edwin, 2004). There are five areas of abilities that a manager may be tested on in order to be competent and high performing in his/her role. These domains are: character competency, external/internal communication, program management, human management, budget and resource management.

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