### THE GLOBAL VILLAGE IN A LOCAL CONTEXT

### Implementing Global Awareness as a Managerial Competency within South Africa's Multicultural Mainstream Media Newsrooms<sup>1</sup>

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**Purpose:** As part of a national research survey into the importance and implementation of six managerial competencies, this article aims to investigate the importance a national sample of reporters and first-line newsroom managers in South Africa's mainstream media attach to global awareness as a managerial competency. It also aims to establish gaps between the importance attached to and current implementation thereof by the latter.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Qualitative and quantitative research designs were combined to obtain the most comprehensive view on the research problem. Quantitative data was compiled through self-administered questionnaires among first-line newsroom managers and reporters employed by the country's mainstream media. Qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews and observational research. These sets of data were combined triangularly to improve validity and reliability. Quantitative data was analysed through factor analysis and effect size analysis, while qualitative data was analysed through qualitative content analysis.

**Findings:** It was found that both respondent groups perceive first-line newsroom managers unable to implement the skills associated with the global awareness competency (given the importance they attach to it). While in some cases first-line newsroom managers themselves were more aware of their shortcomings, reporters highlighted other instances where they perceive their superiors unable to perform as expected.

**Implications:** Given the challenges associated with globalisation, media managers need skills to identify and realise the impact of national and international changes on their business activities. South African media managers must also identify and address the challenges associated with the multilingual and multicultural backgrounds of their newsroom staff.

**Originality/Value**: The dimensions of global awareness as a managerial competency are rooted in general management theory. In this article, these dimensions were applied in a media newsroom management context. The research thus investigated ways in which the effective and efficient implementation of these dimensions could contribute towards professional media output by South Africa's mainstream media.

Key words and phrases: global awareness, globalisation, South Africa, mainstream media, newsroom management.

### INTRODUCTION

Similar to other industries, a number of internal and external challenges (resulting from globalisation) also confront media enterprises. Internally, workforces become increasingly socially and culturally diverse. Externally, media enterprises are expected to satisfy the diverse needs and expectations of audiences in different geographical locations. These audiences expect to receive information on breaking news events in different markets (Ranchod, 2003:8). The media is also required to entertain audiences in a variety of areas. These issues inevitably affect the way in which media enterprises operate, are staffed and managed (Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006:464 and Shrikhande, 2001:147-168).

To effectively and efficiently manage newsrooms in a global context, managers need skills encompassed by the global awareness competency. This competency refers to managers' ability to draw resources from multiple countries and serve markets across multiple cultures (Hellriegel, Jackson & Slocum, 2005:22 and Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Louw & Oosthuizen, 2004:21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This article is based on a refereed research paper read in the International Communication Division (ICD) of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) at its annual convention in San Francisco, USA, 2-5 August 2006.

Global awareness evidently also applies to newsroom management in South Africa. However, challenges associated with this competency present themselves differently in the South African media. South African media enterprises are obliged to employ a workforce that represents ethnic, language and other minorities in the country (Berger, 2004:36 and Kupe, 2004:38). It also needs to serve a culturally and linguistically diverse audience (Addison, 2003b:21) despite increasing exposure to global news, information and entertainment (Anon, 2004:15).

As a result, newsroom managers need to adjust their interpretation of the global awareness competency to focus on the realities of the South African landscape. This article touches on aspects related to improved newsroom management by implementing the global awareness competency in a micro-management environment.

### BACKGROUND

Globalisation might affect media enterprises differently than other industries. Chan-Olmsted and Chang (2003:217) ascribe this to:

- Media products being complementary in nature (e.g. television news highlights current news events, while the weekly press focuses more on in-depth coverage thereof);
- Media enterprises often relying on diverse sources of revenue. These include owners, (often from different industries in different countries and with different cultural backgrounds than the target market), consumers and advertisers;
- Millions of people having simultaneous access to media products without it being depleted or unavailable to others. In fact, increased consumption often improves economies of scale;
- Media products (such as television programmes or movies) often being distributed via different channels and at different times. Movies are, for instance, screened at movie theatres, while also being available on television (at other times); and
- The nature (and acceptance) of media products often being influenced by the target market's cultural preferences (Reca, 2006:185).

Despite the above differences, media and other business enterprises face similar challenges in a globalised business context. These relate to cultural imperialism (Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006:471); concentration of media ownership (Singer, 2004:839; Angwin, 2004:B1 and Herrick, 2003:305); and technological innovation (Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006:471 and Herrick, 2003:308).

Knowledge and insight into the dimensions of the global awareness competency is thus critical for a media enterprise's success. These dimensions are subsequently discussed, and specifically applied to the South African newsroom environment.

### DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL AWARENESS AS A MANAGERIAL COMPETENCY

To implement global awareness, managers need skills in the dimensions explored below.

### Cultural Knowledge and Understanding

Hellriegel *et al.* (2005:22) indicate how growing up in a certain country equips individuals with knowledge and understanding of social/cultural norms and traditions applicable to that country. This equips them with knowledge and experience on the geography, climate, politics and economic history of their surroundings. Values are similarly inculcated, becoming second nature. Foreigners, however, who lack this insight, often struggle to attain business success.

Managers should subsequently improve their skills and expertise to (DuBrin, 2003:46; Oosthuizen, De Bruyn, Jacobs & Kruger, 2002:31 and Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Ivancevich, Lorenzi, Skinner & Crosby, 2001:21-24):

- Recognise political, social and economic trends and the impact thereof. Thill and Bovée (2002:48) describe globalisation as the tendency for various international markets to operate similarly. Political, social and economic events thus similarly affect cross-border business activities, leaving business owners and managers with little choice but to remain informed of these events. This enables them to strategically position their businesses given changing environments; and
- Command more than one language fluently. Language is paramount to facilitate effective global business communication (Kennedy, 2002:99). Multilingual skills seem even more important in South Africa (Farr, 2005:48 and Von Bormann, 2004:34). Recent newsroom studies (Steyn, De Beer & Steyn, 2005:32 and Steyn & De Beer, 2002:37) indicate that South African newsroom staff communicate predominantly in English. For many, however, English is not their mother tongue (Steyn, 2006:314). Moreover, research by the Pan African Language Board found that more than 40% of South Africans do not understand messages communicated to them in English (Anon, 2004:14). While this results in professional lapses (e.g. logically compile a news story), it also threatens effective interpersonal newsroom communication.

### Cultural Openness and Sensitivity

Global awareness also requires openness to cultural diversity and managers being sensitive to cultural differences. Managers should subsequently cultivate the following skills (DuBrin, 2003:46; Oosthuizen *et al.*, 2002:31 and Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:21-24).

## Insight into ethnic and cultural differences and the ability to examine these openly and objectively

Growing up in a particular environment equips people with symbols, beliefs and norms that guide their behaviour (Andrews, 2003:236). These people also share "assumptions" about behaviour and communication and act similarly on those assumptions (Thill & Bovée, 2002:50).

However, cultural differences in South Africa abound. In a business environment, parties should be sensitive towards these differences, understand it and react appropriately to it. This cultivates mutual trust and respect. It also facilitates cooperation and ultimately improves organisational output (Badenhorst, 2003:62).

Probably one of the most important research studies on cultural diversity was performed by the Dutch engineer and psychologist Geert Hofstede (Kennedy, 2002:97). By researching IBM staff in more than 70 countries in the 1980s, Hofstede developed a framework to explain cultural diversity through four dimensions. South African managers also participated in Hofstede's research. However, at that time, cultural diversity was not as prominent in the South African management environment as is currently the case. The majority of South African respondents would thus have been white and male. Nevertheless, Hofstede's framework remains useful to understand workplace diversity in South African enterprises (also the media) and the extent to which it relates to global awareness. According to Hofstede, the following aspects explain cultural diversity in the workplace (Cole, 2004:129 and Kennedy, 2002:98):

 Uncertainty avoidance: This refers to people's level of comfort in ambiguous or uncertain situations. People in low avoidance cultures tolerate uncertainty and adjust their behaviour accordingly. However, people in high avoidance cultures perceive uncertainty as a threat and subsequently avoid it (Hill, 2001:99).

South African respondents in Hofstede's research were typified with low uncertainty avoidance characteristics (Johansson, 2003:72 and Ball & McCulloch, 1999:294). At the time (due to apartheid), white male employees, for instance, enjoyed high levels of job security. However, the post-1994 dispensation implied uncertainty for the same group through affirmative action, gender equity and Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) programmes. As a result, they might now display high avoidance characteristics, necessitating an adjustment in management approaches (Von Bormann, 2004:34; Berger, 2004:36 and Addison, 2003a:25).

Power distance: This relates to people's ability to accept that social, business or interpersonal
power is distributed unequally between groups or individuals. High power distance cultures accept
power imbalances easier than low power distance cultures (Keegan & Green, 2003:149). The
former often "let inequalities (in physical and intellectual capabilities) grow ... into inequalities of
power and wealth" (Hill, 2001:99).

In Hofstede's study, South African respondents displayed typical high power distance characteristics (Doole & Lowe, 2001:82). However, BBBEE policies and changes in media management styles potentially affect this dimension. This, in turn, challenges effective newsroom management.

• *Masculinity-femininity:* This dimension refers to different expectations about gender roles. Whereas masculine cultures prefer assertiveness, feminine cultures focus on flexibility and sound relationships (Hollensen, 2001:173).

South African respondents in Hofstede's study predominantly displayed masculine traits (Johansson, 2003:72) as displayed in top-down management styles (also in newsrooms). However, a post-apartheid society brought about more participative management approaches. This shift is also prevalent among different generations of staff (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:56). While older employees often prefer masculine (highly structured and assertive) approaches, younger employees display a more feminine approach. As a result, they are more flexible towards work responsibilities and focus on relationships rather than being too task-oriented.

Individualism-collectivism: The final dimension of Hofstede's framework refers to whether people
prefer individual or collective action. The former group focuses on themselves and their
immediate family. The latter, however, are loyal towards and responsible for a wider group of
dependents (Cateora & Graham, 2002:109).

South African managers in Hofstede's study were predominantly individualistic (Doole & Lowe, 2001:82). The stronger emphasis on collectivism in some African cultures, however, directly contrasts individualism and often confronts individuals with unrealistic financial and social obligations. Events such as weddings or funerals could result in long periods of absenteeism from work, leaving members of individualistic cultures frustrated and with an additional workload. Newsroom managers must thus be sensitive to these differences without compromising professional quality or causing newsroom tension (Frense, 2003:28).

### Sensitivity towards cultural cues and skills to avoid stereotyping

Mere understanding of cultural differences is not enough. Individuals should also be sensitive towards cues signalling these differences, e.g. facial expression, eye contact and physical proximity. Insensitivity could result in ethnocentrism or stereotyping, resulting in misunderstanding and poor performance (Arumugam, 2001:25).

#### Ability to adjust behaviour during intercultural communication

Because culture affects behaviour and attitudes, intercultural communication requires flexibility from all parties involved. Communicators should thus seek common ground; take responsibility for effective communication; demonstrate respect, empathy and tolerance for different cultures; and give sufficient feedback to verify communication (Thill & Bovée, 2002:60-62).

Given multiculturalism in South African newsrooms, successful implementation of the above skills could unify rather than divide newsroom staff (More, 2002; Katopodis, 2002 and Omar, 1999:3).

In light of the above theoretical framework, the next section of the article focuses on the research methodology used to measure the importance and implementation of the global awareness competency by first-line newsroom managers in South Africa's mainstream media newsrooms.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Results of this article flow from two research studies on the importance and implementation of managerial competencies among a sample of first-line news manager and reporter respondents in South Africa's mainstream media. Firstly, baseline data was compiled for the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) Journalism Skills Audit Phase 2 (Steyn *et al.*, 2005).<sup>2</sup> Following permission from Sanef, more in-depth analysis and interpretation was done on the baseline data for the purposes of a Ph.D-thesis (Steyn, 2006). The research methodology for this article thus corresponds with the methodology followed for Audit 2 and comprised of the following elements (Steyn *et al.*, 2005:2-23).

#### Research Objectives

Given the broader research objectives for Audit 2, the research objectives for this article were:

- To establish the importance a sample of reporters and first-line newsroom managers attach to global awareness as a managerial competency;
- To determine these respondents' view on the current implementation thereof by first-line newsroom managers; and
- To identify gaps between the importance and implementation thereof from the perspective of respondents. This is also compared across media types and media ownership structures.

### Research Design

Qualitative and quantitative research designs were combined to capitalise on the advantages of a combined research focus (Janesick, 1994:214-215). Data obtained through quantitative and qualitative research instruments was combined triangularly in order to increase the validity and reliability thereof (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275-276; Du Plooy, 2002:39 and Janesick, 1994:214-215).

#### Sample Frame and Sampling Considerations

A sample frame of South African mainstream media (N=106) was compiled for Audit 2 (Steyn *et al.*, 2005:4) based on two fixed variables, namely media types and media ownership structures.

### Sampling Procedure

Sampling entailed the following:

- Compiling the above-mentioned sample frame (N=106) by consulting South African media experts (academics and practitioners) and members of the Sanef Education and Training Committee (ETC) (Steyn, 2006:89-90);
- Calculating a proportional sample per media type and media ownership structure. Sanef set a
  sample size of 47 media titles (n=47) for Audit 2. These were proportionally allocated to media
  types (as the first fixed variable) as they were represented in the sample frame. As the sample
  also had to reflect media ownership structure (as the second fixed variable), the number of each
  media type represented in each ownership category was also calculated and included in the
  sample;
- Drawing a systematic random sample from the sample frame. Starting from a random position on the sample frame, the required number of cases satisfying the requirements of both fixed variables was calculated through a systematic random sampling procedure (Hocking *et al.*, 2003:232 and Steyn, 2006:96-97);

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Hereafter Audit 2.

- Categorising the sample into geographical areas, enabling the researchers to set up fieldwork
  meetings with the relevant contact people. Meetings were scheduled telephonically and/or by email with newspaper and magazine editors, and peers in broadcasting, on-line media and news
  agencies. These contacts were to inform newsroom mangers and reporters of the proposed
  research; and
- Drawing a volunteer and availability sample of first-line newsroom managers and reporters. As
  fieldwork was conducted in real time, newsroom managers and reporters who were present in the
  newsroom at the time of the researchers' visit and able to participate in the study were included in
  the respective samples.

### Sample

Given the requirements for a systematic random sample (Tustin, Lighthelm, Martins & Van Wyk, 2005:350-353) and the two fixed variables outlined above, the sample (n=47) constituted:

- Sample of media types, including daily (n=8) and weekly newspapers (n=6); consumer magazines (n=4); radio stations (n=16) and television channel newsrooms (n=7); on-line media (n=4) focusing on news distribution, including those affiliated with print or electronic media outlets; and mainstream news agencies (n=2);
- Sample of media ownership structures, including companies listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange South Africa (JSE) (n=18); unlisted companies (n=10); enterprises with a public service mandate (n=13); and companies with a majority of foreign shareholding (although local shareholders could also be involved) (n=6); and
- Sample of geographical distribution, including media sites in Cape Town (n=10); Johannesburg/Pretoria (n=25); Durban (n=6); Port Elizabeth (n=2); Bloemfontein (n=2); and Nelspruit (n=2). This sample was obtained through purposeful sampling (Neuman, 2004:138), focusing on areas with the largest concentration of mainstream media in order to reach "information-rich" respondents (Struwig & Stead, 2001:122). Comparisons were, however, not made on the basis of geographical distribution.

### Research Instruments

The following three research instruments were employed:

- Self-administered questionnaires for first-line newsroom managers (n=79) aimed to determine the importance they attach to the six managerial competencies and the extent to which they implement these in newsroom management;
- Self-administered questionnaires for reporters (n=207) aimed to determine the importance they attach to the six managerial competencies and the extent to which they perceive first-line managers to implement these competencies in newsroom management.

Questionnaires comprised of closed questions as well as Likert scale type questions. The latter comprised of a 5-point scale (where 1 represented the lowest and 5 the highest ends of the scale) and were used to measure respondents' perceptions of the importance and implementation of the six competencies. Questionnaires were distributed among respondents at the start of interviews and collected afterwards. Respondents were assured of anonymity to encourage frank responses.

 Semi-structured interviews (n=43) were scheduled with the editorial person in charge of the media site, although some interviews were delegated to a second in charge. Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes.

Qualitative impressions (obtained through observational research) (Adler & Adler, 1994:378) were also incorporated to understand newsroom management approaches, as well as the implementation of the six managerial competencies.

#### Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed through SAS software (SAS Institute Inc., 2005). Both questionnaires were tested for validity and reliability through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and calculating Cronbach's Alpha (CA) coefficients respectively. The EFA indicated both questionnaires to be valid (Steyn, 2006:80;83). According to Kaiser's criterion, 2 factors were retained for the global awareness construct. This explains at least 70.10% of the variance (see Table 1).

### Table 1: Rotated factor patterns on the importance and implementation of global awareness from the perspective of reporters as retained by Kaiser's criterion<sup>3</sup>

Importance					
Management task	Factor 1 Cultural knowledge and understanding	Factor 2 Cognisance of national and international changes and its impact on the media			
Informed about social, political changes in SA	0.370	0.818			
Informed about international social, political changes		0.900			
Recognizing the impact thereof on the media	0.340	0.842			
Developing multilingual skills	0.418	0.549			
Handling ethnic/cultural differences	0.685	0.521			
Understanding ethnic/cultural differences	0.862	0.377			
Sensitivity to ethnic/cultural cues	0.908				
Adapting to ethnic/cultural cues	0.894	0.324			
Adjusting behaviour during intercultural	0.828	0.314			
communication					
Implementation					
Management task					
Informed about social, political changes in SA	0.373	0.862			
Informed about international social, political changes	0.334	0.902			
Recognizing the impact thereof on the media	0.369	0.873			
Developing multilingual skills	0.668	0.341			
Handling ethnic/cultural differences	0.824	0.413			
Understanding ethnic/cultural differences	0.882	0.340			
Sensitivity to ethnic/cultural cues	0.860	0.337			
Adapting to ethnic/cultural cues	0.906	0.311			
Adjusting behaviour during intercultural communication	0.833	0.328			

The CA coefficients indicated the questionnaire for first-line managers to be reliable by ranging between 0.91 (importance) and 0.90 (implementation) for the global awareness construct (Steyn, 2006:83). These coefficients also indicated that the questionnaire for reporters was reliable, ranging between 0.94 (importance) and 0.95 (implementation) for this construct (Steyn, 2006:81). Effect sizes (Ellis & Steyn, 2003:52 and Cohen, 1988:20-27)<sup>4</sup> were calculated to test for practical significant

$$d = \frac{\left|\overline{x}_1 - \overline{x}_2\right|}{\left|\overline{x}_1 - \overline{x}_2\right|}$$

 $S_{\rm max}$  where:

- d = effect size;
- $\overline{x_1} \overline{x_2}$  is the difference between means of the two respondent groups; and
- $s_{\max}$  is the maximum standard deviation of the two respondent groups.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Values smaller than 0.3 are not reported.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The following formula applied (Cohen, 1988: 20-27):

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differences between reporters' opinion on the importance and implementation of the identified managerial competencies as well as between managers' opinion thereof (see Table 2). Effect sizes were also calculated to test for practical significant differences between the opinion of reporters and that of managers on the implementation of the managerial competencies by managers (see Table 3). This was also done across media types (see Tables 4 & 5) and media ownership structures (see Tables 6 & 7).

Qualitative data was analysed through qualitative content analysis (Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, 2003:172).

### RESULTS

Tables 2 and 3 display quantitative results on:

- The difference between the importance first-line newsroom managers attach to the management tasks related to the global awareness competency and their perception of the current implementation thereof. This is compared with the difference between the importance reporters attach to the same management tasks and their perception of first-line managers' implementation thereof; and
- The difference between the implementation of these management tasks from the perspective of reporters and first-line newsroom managers respectively.

	First-	line news	room manage	ers	R	eporter	s		
Management task	N	$\frac{\text{Mean}}{\overline{x}_1 - \overline{x}_2}$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)		n	$\frac{\text{Mean}}{\overline{x}_1 - \overline{x}_2}$	Std deviation	Effect size (d)
Informed about changes in SA	71	0.45	0.71	0.63		170	0.61	1.16	0.53
Informed about international changes	71	0.54	0.86	0.69		170	0.61	1.12	0.55
Recognizing impact on the media	69	0.61	0.86	0.71		165	0.62	1.15	0.54
Developing multilingual skills	67	1.10	1.10	1.00		165	0.95	1.51	0.63
Handling ethnic/cultural differences	70	0.79	0.96	0.82		167	0.87	1.41	0.62
Understanding these differences	69	0.48	0.74	0.65		167	0.92	1.31	0.70
Sensitivity to ethnic/cultural cues	71	0.56	0.77	0.73		167	0.79	1.29	0.61
Adapting to these cues	71	0.58	0.89	0.65		168	0.89	1.35	0.66
Adjusting intercultural communication	70	0.49	0.76	0.64		169	0.78	1.34	0.58

# Table 2: Comparing the importance and implementation of the global awareness competency between first-line newsroom managers and reporters

The aggregate effect size shows that:

- First-line managers highlighted a practically significant difference (d=0.96) between the importance of this competency and their current implementation thereof; and
- Reporters indicated a moderately significant difference (d=0.73) between the importance and first-line mangers' current implementation thereof.

First-line newsroom managers thus perceive themselves unable to optimally perform the management tasks associated with the global awareness competency. Given the multicultural and multilingual nature of South African newsrooms, this finding deserves further investigation.

d ≈ 0.5 indicating a moderate effect; and

Effect sizes were interpreted as follows (Ellis & Steyn, 2003:52; Cohen, 1988:20-27):

d ≈ 0.2 indicating a small effect with no practical significance;

<sup>•</sup> d ≈ 0.8 or larger indicating a practically significant effect.

# Table 3: Comparing the implementation of the global awareness competency between first-line newsroom managers and reporters

	First-line newsroom managers				Report	ers	
Management task	n	Mean (x <sub>2</sub> )	Std deviation	n	Mean (x <sub>2</sub> )	Std deviation	Effect size (d)
Informed about changes in SA	76	4.09	0.77	191	3.87	1.10	0.20
Informed about international changes	76	3.86	0.91	190	3.67	1.19	0.16
Recognizing impact on the media	74	3.76	0.79	184	3.72	1.19	0.03
Developing multilingual skills	74	2.80	1.22	184	2.95	1.23	0.12
Handling ethnic/cultural differences	75	3.63	1.04	188	3.36	1.24	0.21
Understanding these differences	76	4.08	0.86	187	3.45	1.26	0.50
Sensitivity to ethnic/cultural cues	76	3.91	0.96	189	3.51	1.21	0.33
Adapting to these cues	76	3.86	0.92	189	3.40	1.22	0.37
Adjusting intercultural communication	75	3.91	0.90	191	3.51	1.22	0.33

# The Importance of Management Tasks Related to the Global Awareness Competency Compared to the Implementation Thereof

The following findings are deduced from Table 2:

• Being informed about social, political and economic changes in South Africa and internationally. Both first-line managers (n=71) and reporters (n=170) are aware that this management task is currently not implemented optimally, given the importance thereof. Moderately significant effect sizes were calculated for first-line managers (d=0.63) as well as reporters (d=0.53).

However, both respondent groups value the importance of being informed about local and national changes and reflecting these to target audiences. Changes relate to cultural and language issues; economic activity; issues related to infrastructure; as well as social issues such as HIV/Aids and poverty (Steyn, 2006:307).

Qualitative data confirmed this finding. For instance, interviewees at the SABC's regional offices described efforts to cooperate across regions when covering a news event in order to provide audiences with a more accurate and representative news story (Nsidi, 2002).

However, both first-line managers (n=71; d=0.69) and reporters (n=170; d=0.55) acknowledge that the former group is not sufficiently informed about international changes;

- Recognising the impact of social, political and economic changes on the media. Because first-line managers are ill-informed about changes in the above-mentioned news contexts, they seem unable to recognise the impact thereof on the media. As such, managers themselves (n=69) highlighted a moderately significant difference (d=0.71) between the importance of this management task and their implementation thereof. Reporters (n=165) again seem less aware of this gap, as a smaller effect size (d=0.54) was calculated;
- Developing multilingual skills. South African newsrooms are increasingly multilingual and multicultural (Steyn, 2006:319-320). Quantitative results, however, indicate that newsrooms are not yet reaping the full benefits thereof. Whereas the majority of interviewees consider multilingualism a strength in newsrooms, respondents disagree. First-line managers (n=67) indicated a practically significant difference (d=1.00) between the importance thereof and their current skills in this area. Reporters (n=165) perceive this gap as less significant (d=0.63);
- Confidence in handling ethnic/cultural differences. First-line managers (n=70) highlighted a practically significant difference (d=0.82) between the importance of this management task and their implementation thereof. Reporters (n=167) again do not perceive it such a significant shortcoming among newsroom managers given the importance they attach to it (d=0.62);

- Gaining understanding in ethnic/cultural differences. Both groups of respondents highlighted a
  moderately significant difference between the importance they attach to this management task
  and first-line managers' implementation thereof. In this case, reporters (n=167; d=0.70), however,
  perceive a bigger gap than first-line managers (n=69; d=0.65);
- Being sensitive and adapting to ethnic/cultural cues. First-line managers (n=71; d=0.73) and reporters (n=167; d=0.71) also experience a moderately significant difference between the importance of this management task and managers' skills in this area. First-line managers (n=71; d=0.65) and reporters (n=168; d=0.66) also seem equally aware of the moderately significant difference between the importance of adapting to ethnic/cultural cues and the former group's ability to do so; and
- Adjusting behaviour during intercultural interaction. First-line managers (n=70) again indicated a bigger gap (d=0.64) than reporters (n=169; d=0.58) between the importance of this management task and their current implementation thereof.

### Implementing Management Tasks Related to the Global Awareness Competency

Mean scores from Table 3 indicate that first-line managers in general perceive themselves better at implementing the global awareness competency than reporters do. A practically insignificant difference (d=0.14), however, exists between the two groups of respondents with regard to first-line managers' implementation thereof.

When considering individual management tasks related to global awareness, only one displays a moderately significant difference (d=0.50) between managers' and reporters' view on the implementation thereof. The former group (n=76) perceive themselves better at gaining an understanding of ethnic/cultural differences ( $x_2$ =4.08) than the latter (n=187) experience it to be the case ( $x_2$ =3.45).

### Comparing the Importance and Implementation of the Global Awareness Competency Across Media Types

Media types and media ownership structures were set as two fixed variables in the study (see above). Quantitative results on the importance and implementation of the global awareness competency were subsequently compared according to these two variables. Tables 4 and 5 report on the results across media types.

Media type		Reporters													
		Importance – Global awareness Effect size (d)													
	n	Mean (x1)	Std deviation	Daily news paper	Weekly newspaper	Maga-zine	тν	Radio	On-line media	News agency					
Daily newspaper	41	4.14	0.75		0.00	0.38	0.26	0.11	0.31	0.70					
Weekly newspaper	48	4.14	0.96			0.29	0.20	0.09	0.24	0.55					
Magazine	9	4.42	0.65				0.12	0.24	0.08	0.38					
Television	17	4.33	0.75					0.13	0.05	0.45					
Radio	44	4.22	0.83						0.17	0.53					
On-line media	10	4.37	0.59							0.51					
News agency	8	4.67	0.36												
				In	plementation	– Global awar	eness								
						Effe	ct size (	(d)							
	n	Mean (x <sub>2</sub> )	Std deviation	Daily news paper	Weekly newspaper	Maga-zine	тν	Radio	On-line media	News agency					
Daily	46	3.56	0.77		0.29	0.05	0.10	0.10	0.31	0.23					

### Table 4: Importance and implementation of the global awareness competency across media types from the perspective of reporters

newspaper									
Weekly newspaper	51	3.20	1.25		0.33	0.22	0.37	0.50	0.09
Magazine	9	3.62	1.09			0.14	0.04	0.19	0.27
Television	18	3.47	0.90				0.19	0.40	0.14
Radio	51	3.66	1.01					0.17	0.31
On-line media	11	3.83	0.84						0.47
News agency	8	3.32	1.10						

Table 5: Importance and implementation of the global awareness competency across media types from the perspective of first-line newsroom managers

Media type				Fir	st-line newsro	om managers				
				Imp	ortance – Glo	bal awareness				
						Effect size				
	n	Mean (x1)	Std deviation	Daily news- paper	Weekly news- paper	Magazine	тν	Radio	On- line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	24	4.47	0.65		0.23	0.21	0.30	0.06	0.75	0.14
Weekly newspaper	21	4.28	0.82			0.06	0.47	0.28	0.36	0.12
Magazine	2	4.33	0.47				0.71	0.30	0.54	0.09
Television	3	4.67	0.33					0.28	1.05	0.58
Radio	8	4.51	0.57						0.80	0.22
On-line media	8	3.98	0.65							0.61
News agency	5	4.38	0.49							
				Imple	mentation – G	lobal awarene	SS			
						Effect size (	,			
	n	Mean (x <sub>2</sub> )	Std deviation	Daily news- paper	Weekly news- paper	Magazine	тν	Radio	On- line media	News agency
Daily newspaper	25	3.98	0.59		0.52	1.11	0.54	0.22	0.94	0.38
Weekly newspaper	22	3.59	0.76			0.33	0.21	0.69	0.20	0.13
Magazine	2	3.33	0.31				0.00	1.75	0.18	0.45
Television	3	3.33	1.20					0.65	0.08	0.30
Radio	11	4.11	0.44						1.27	0.54
On-line media	8	3.43	0.54							0.33
News agency	5	3.69	0.78							

The following was found across media types:

• Importance of global awareness from the perspective of reporters. A moderately significant difference (d=0.70) on the importance of this competency exists between reporters at news agencies (n=8) and those at daily newspapers (n=41). The former group considers it more important ( $x_1$ =4.67) than the latter ( $x_1$ =4.14). Reporters at news agencies (n=8) also consider global awareness more important ( $x_1$ =4.67) than those at weekly newspapers (n=48;  $x_1$ =4.14). A moderately significant difference thus exists between these groups (d=0.55).

Reporters at news agencies (n=8) also consider this competency more important ( $x_1$ =4.67) than those at television (n=17;  $x_1$ =4.33), radio (n=44;  $x_1$ =4.22) and on-line media (n=10;  $x_1$ =4.37). Moderately significant differences were subsequently calculated between news agencies and television (d=0.45); radio (d=0.53); and on-line media (d=0.51);

 Implementation of global awareness from the perspective of reporters. Reporters at on-line media (n=11) consider the implementation of global awareness better (x<sub>2</sub>=3.83) than any other reporters included in the study. Those at weekly newspapers (n=51) regard their first-line managers as the worst at implementing this competency (x<sub>2</sub>=3.20). Moderately significant differences (d=0.50) were thus calculated between these two groups, as well as between reporters at on-line media (n=11) and news agencies (n=8) (d=0.47);

Importance of global awareness from the perspective of first-line newsroom managers. First-line managers at television (n=3) regard this competency as the most important (x<sub>1</sub>=4.67) of all first-line managers participating in the study. Those at on-line media (n=8) consider it least important (x<sub>1</sub>=3.98). Practically significant differences thus exist between first-line managers at on-line media and their colleagues at daily newspapers (n=24; x<sub>1</sub>=4.47; d=0.75); television (n=3; x<sub>1</sub>=4.67; d=1.05) and radio (n=8; x<sub>1</sub>=4.51; d=0.80).

A moderately significant difference also exists between first-line managers at television (n=3;  $x_1$ =4.67) and those at weekly newspapers (n=21;  $x_1$ =4.28; d=0.47). This is repeated between first-line managers at television and those at magazines (n=2;  $x_1$ =4.33; d=0.71) as well as between first-line managers at television and those at news agencies (n=5;  $x_1$ =4.38; d=0.58). Finally, moderately significant differences exist between first-line managers at magazines (n=2) and those at on-line media (n=8; d=0.54); and first-line managers at on-line media and their colleagues at news agencies (n=5; d=0.61);

• Implementation of global awareness from the perspective of first-line newsroom managers. First-line managers employed by radio stations (n=11) perceive themselves best at implementing the global awareness competency ( $x_2$ =4.11). Their colleagues at magazines (n=2) and television (n=3), however, consider themselves worst ( $x_2$ =3.33 respectively). Results above, however, indicate that first-line managers at television regard this competency as the most important of all managers who participated in the research.

Although first-line newsroom managers at television channels thus regard this important (probably due to a more multicultural newsroom environment), they struggle to implement it properly. Multiculturalism could, in fact, contribute to this struggle.

Moderately significant differences exist between first-line managers at daily newspapers (n=25;  $x_2$ =3.98) and those at weekly newspapers (n=22;  $x_2$ =3.59; d=0.52) and between daily newspapers and those at television channels (n=3;  $x_2$ =3.33; d=0.54).

First-line managers at daily newspapers also consider themselves better at implementing this competency ( $x_2$ =3.98) than those at on-line media ( $x_2$ =3.43). As a result, a practically significant difference (d=0.94) exists between these two groups. Because first-line managers at radio stations perceive themselves good at implementing this competency ( $x_2$ =4.11) compared to those at weekly newspapers (n=22;  $x_2$ =3.59), a moderately significant difference (d=0.69) was calculated between these two groups.

A practically significant difference (d=1.75) in implementation of global awareness exists between managers at magazines (n=2) and those at radio stations. As such, the latter perceive themselves significantly better implementers of this competency ( $x_2$ =4.11) than the former ( $x_2$ =3.33). They also consider themselves practically significantly better (d=1.27) at implementing the competency than managers at on-line media (n=8;  $x_2$ =3.43).

A moderately significant difference (d=0.45) on the implementation of global awareness was calculated between managers at magazines (n=2;  $x_2$ =3.33) and those at news agencies (n=5;  $x_2$ =3.69). Different perspectives on the implementation of global awareness between managers at television channels (n=3;  $x_2$ =3.33) and radio stations (n=11;  $x_2$ =4.11) resulted in a moderately significant effect size (d=0.65). Finally, a moderately significant difference (d=0.54) on the implementation of global awareness exists between managers at radio stations and those at news agencies. This is due to the perception among the former group that they are better implementers of this competency ( $x_2$ =4.11) than the latter (n=5;  $x_2$ =3.69).

## Comparing the Importance and Implementation of the Global Awareness Competency Across Media Ownership Structures

Tables 6 and 7 report on the results across media ownership structures.

## Table 6: Importance and implementation of the global awareness competency across media ownership structures from the perspective of reporters

Media ownership structure		Reporters											
		Importance – Global awareness											
		Effect size (d)											
	n	Mean ( <i>x₁</i> )	Std deviation	Listed orgs	Unlisted orgs	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership						
Listed companies	73	4.37	0.69		0.26	0.33	0.19						
Unlisted companies	46	4.07	0.89			0.03	0.13						
Public service mandate	30	4.07	0.89				0.19						
Foreign ownership	28	4.24	0.61										
			Imple	ementatio	n – Global a	wareness							
					Effe	ect size (d)							
	n	Mean (x <sub>2</sub> )	Std deviation	Listed orgs	Unlisted orgs	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership						
Listed companies	79	3.68	0.96		0.28	0.40	0.20						
Unlisted companies	48	3.36	1.15			0.08	0.12						
Public service mandate	38	3.27	1.04				0.22						
Foreign ownership	29	3.49	0.90										

 Table 7: Importance and implementation of the global awareness competency across media

 ownership structures from the perspective of first-line newsroom managers

Media ownership structure		First-line newsroom managers										
			Impor	tance – G	lobal aware							
					Effec	t size (d)						
	n	Mean (x1)	Std deviation	Listed orgs	Unlisted orgs	Public service mandate	Foreign ownership					
Listed companies	37	4.38	0.71		0.24	0.41	0.22					
Unlisted companies	12	4.21	0.63			0.74	0.02					
Public service mandate	9	4.68	0.44				0.63					
Foreign ownership	13	4.22	0.72									
			Impleme	entation -	- Global awa	areness						
		Effect size (d)										
	n	Mean	Std	Listed	Unlisted	Public	Foreig					

		(x <sub>2</sub> )	deviation	orgs	orgs	service mandate	n owners hip
Listed companies	38	3.76	0.69		0.07	0.24	0.10
Unlisted companies	13	3.71	0.73			0.30	0.02
Public service mandate	12	3.94	0.74				0.33
Foreign ownership	13	3.69	0.62				

The following was found across media ownership structures:

- Importance of global awareness from the perspective of reporters. No practically significant difference was found on the importance reporters at different ownership structures attach to this competency. Reporters overall regard global awareness as important ( $x_1$ =4.19), with those at listed companies (n=73) regarding most important ( $x_1$ =4.37) and those at unlisted companies (n=46) and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) (n=30) perceiving it least important ( $x_1$ =4.07 respectively);
- Implementation of global awareness from the perspective of reporters. No practical significant difference on the implementation of global awareness exists between reporters at media operating on different ownership structures. Reporters generally rated the implementation thereof worse ( $x_2$ =3.45) than the importance they attach to it ( $x_1$ =4.19). Reporters are thus of the opinion that first-line managers should improve their global awareness skills, given the importance they attach to it.

Reporters at the SABC perceive their superiors worst at implementing this competency, specifically in terms of:

- Multilingual skills (n=36;  $x_2$ =3.06);
- Handling ethnic/cultural differences (n=37; *x*<sub>2</sub>=3.11); and
- Adapting to ethnic and cultural cues (n=37; x<sub>2</sub>=3.16);
- Importance of global awareness from the perspective of first-line managers. Overall, first-line managers (irrespective of the applicable ownership structure) consider global awareness an important managerial competency ( $x_1$ =4.37). They also consider it slightly more important than reporters indicated above ( $x_1$ =4.19).

First-line managers at the SABC (n=9) perceive this competency most important ( $x_1$ =4.68), in contrast with subordinates who perceive it least important (see above). Moderately significant differences thus exist between themselves and colleagues at unlisted companies (n=12;  $x_1$ =4.21; d=0.74) as well as those employed by companies with a majority of foreign ownership (n=13;  $x_1$ =4.22; d=0.63);

- Implementation of global awareness from the perspective of first-line managers. This group generally indicated that they perceive their implementation of global awareness better ( $x_2$ =3.78) than reporters consider it to be the case ( $x_2$ =3.45). Those at the SABC (n=12) again consider themselves best at implementing this competency ( $x_2$ =3.94), despite subordinates' indication to the contrary. However, they only consider themselves slightly better at this competency than colleagues elsewhere in the industry. As such, they perceive themselves best at:
  - Adjusting behaviour during intercultural interaction (n=12; x<sub>2</sub>=4.25);
  - Being informed about local social/political changes (n=12;  $x_2$ =4.17);
  - Being sensitive to ethnic/cultural cues (n=12; x<sub>2</sub>=4.08);
  - Gaining understanding in ethnic/cultural differences (n=12;  $x_2$ =4.08); and
  - Being able to adapt to ethnic/cultural cues (n=12;  $x_2$ =4.08).

The above indicates that first-line managers and reporters at the SABC more or less agree on the global awareness tasks first-line managers perform well. Reporters indicated that managers fail to address difficult situations or intercultural differences. However, both groups agree that first-line managers are skilled in intercultural interaction. Interviewees confirmed this by emphasising sound intercultural staff relations.

First-line managers employed by companies with a majority of foreign ownership (n=13), perceive themselves worst at implementing the global awareness competency ( $x_2$ =3.69), despite the importance they attach to it (see above).

### IMPLICATIONS

Globalisation demands media enterprises to stay competitive. To achieve this, employees must be informed of changes in micro and macro management environments. Ignorance thereof could see media audiences choosing alternative sources of information, leaving media enterprises with a smaller competitive advantage in an already competitive market.

Media managers should thus recognise the impact of social, political and economic changes on business activity. Inability to do so could detrimentally affect media enterprises' success, as they would be unable to adjust their news agenda or story angles accordingly. Conversely, media titles might deem it unnecessary to adjust their coverage of events, as they are unaware of the impact these changes have on their market position.

Qualitative data highlighted ways in which media enterprises attempt to keep staff abreast of the above changes. These include: giving staff access to national and international news events via complimentary newspapers and television news channels; encouraging them to visit on-line news sites; and having research offices/libraries at their disposal. Interviewees, however, highlighted that many employees are reluctant to use these opportunities. Some attributed it to a lack of time, tight deadlines, or a lack of interest among staff. As a result, many news stories lack context, especially given many reporters' poor general knowledge (Steyn & De Beer, 2002:12-20).

As far as multilingualism is concerned, first-line managers acknowledge that they do not yet possess skills to effectively interact with all newsroom staff, hampering effective communication. Media enterprises should address this weakness, given the importance of multilingualism in facilitating communication (Addison, 2003b:21).

Interviewees seem ignorant about newsroom managers' ability to handle ethnic/cultural differences. Few interviewees mentioned newsroom conflict due to these differences, underscoring the ease with which staff go about cultural and ethnic differences. Quantitative results, however, indicate that respondents (especially reporters) differ. Multiculturalism is likely to become even more prevalent in future South African working environments given BBBEE initiatives. This necessitates that staff (especially managers) are equipped to address ethnic and cultural differences satisfactorily.

Qualitative data also provided a different view on managers' ability to gain an understanding of these differences compared to quantitative results. Interviewees emphasised that these differences do not hamper newsroom activity, as younger employees are less concerned about it and make a deliberate effort to understand and accommodate it. Both groups of respondents, however, indicated that they consider this skill more important than managers' ability to implement it. A lack of these skills might convey a negative message to staff from other cultures.

### ORIGINALITY / VALUE

This article outlines the dimensions of global awareness as a managerial competency. It is argued that the global nature of business activity necessitates managers to have insight into and openness towards ethnic and cultural differences. These differences do not only apply to external stakeholder groups, but particularly also to internal ones. While newsroom managers need these skills to effectively operate in a global media environment, South African newsroom managers face an additional challenge. Given the multicultural and multilingual nature of South African mainstream media newsrooms, it is argued in this article that local newsroom managers first and foremost need to

apply these skills in their micro-management environment. The article thus investigates the importance first-line newsroom managers and reporters in South Africa's mainstream media attach to the global awareness competency. This was measured against the former group's current implementation thereof.

#### CONCLUSION

Findings indicated that, while reporters seem aware of some differences between the importance and current implementation of the management tasks related to global awareness, their superiors seem more aware thereof.

When comparing the importance and implementation of this competency across media types, reporters at news agencies consider it most important. However, they perceive their first-line managers second worst at implementing it. In contrast, reporters at on-line media experience their managers best at implementing this competency. First-line managers at television channels perceive this competency as most important. However, they perceive themselves worst at implementing it. Their colleagues at radio stations perceive themselves best at implementing these tasks.

When similar comparisons were made across media ownership structures, reporters at listed companies were found to perceive global awareness most important. They also perceive their first-line managers as the best implementers thereof. SABC reporters consider this competency least important, and also perceive their managers worst at implementing it. First-line managers' perspective, however, differs, as those at the SABC perceive this competency most important and also perceive themselves best at implementing it.

Research results thus indicate that first-line newsroom managers in South Africa's mainstream media need to improve their global awareness skills to optimally manage human resources in diverse media newsrooms. If this is the case, the country's media might see improved professional output to South Africa's (equally diverse) media audiences. As Ranchod (2003:10) puts it: "(South Africans) come from different experiences, and newsroom cultures and values need to reflect this difference and diversity, not silence it ... Our journeys, routes and roots (are) different. Our experiences (are) different. And we need to bridge that gap."

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