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**Developing Positive Brand Image of Talents Mentor
Perspective from International Case Competition**

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to examine and explore the importance of gifted students' development pull in business schools and their influence on building strong brand image strategy of higher education institutions. The study is based on the primary data collected from 55 mentors from 18 leading business schools around the globe. The results indicate high leadership potential of talented students selected and mentored for global business case study competitions. The main benefits of talents mentor includes: leadership potential, practical knowledge and skills. The best companies attract best talents and it is also an opportunity for business school to create strong alumni network. Positive image of business school is important for local and international positioning in higher education arena.

Keywords: Brand image, business school, talents, mentor, international case competition

Introduction

The development of gifted teachers and their teaching style has become a favorite topic for analysis at many business schools in the world. (Mc Nergney et al, 1994, Kyriakides et al, 2009, Kheir, 2012). Today there are a lot of possibilities for teachers' mobility international programs abroad as a formal part of educational studies. To respond to dynamic job market need the business schools also need to transform their teaching strategy. Poor teacher quality in school systems and few education reform initiatives had education talent or its management as their central elements in US market. Having the best teachers who can support talent management in business schools in also recognize by study (Odden, 2013).

Research study by Bali and Forzani considers that teachers are key factors to student learning. Most initiatives, however, have focused on teacher recruitment and retention and on developing new pathways to teaching. They claim that practice must be at the core of teachers' preparation. To make practice the core of the curriculum of teacher education requires a shift from a focus on what teachers know and believe to a greater focus on what teachers do. A practice-based theory of knowledge for teaching is derived from the tasks and demands of practice and includes know-how as well as declarative knowledge. To view teaching as a highly skilled practice, one that requires close training, is to respect the professional demands of the work. Furthermore, the common resistance to the notion of detailed professional preparation, and even the need for training, stands in the way of improving teachers' preparation for the work of teaching. (Ball and Forzani, 2009). The paper presented by Sudzina (1994) explains a faculty mentor's experiences in coaching and preparing a team of five undergraduate pre-service teachers selected for the case team competition. In addition to fine-tuning professional research, writing, and oral presentation skills, the personal attributes and strengths of individual team members were acknowledged and developed. Team members were encouraged to develop individual areas of expertise. As a result of this process, teachers learned how to collaborate, strategically plan, problem-solve, and reach consensus on case solutions.

However, previous research in this field has focus on investigating student benefits attending international case competitions. Results from (Susilawati & Yam, 2013) at Property case competitions identified that students improve problem solving, time management, presentation, negotiation and teamwork skills and also networking opportunities. Findings by (Damnjanovic et al, 2017) from students' opinions that competed at international case competitions showed the most important benefits for students were: improvement (personal and professional) along with the development of managerial skills (presentation, work under pressure, problem solving and analytical skills). Many investigators have recently turned to finding the best teaching and learning methods for top talent students and teachers as mentors at case competitions. (Orlitzky, M., & Benjamin, J. D. 2003, Mena 2010). It would seem, therefore, that further investigation is needed in order to better

understand the role of extra curricula activities for mentors who attend international case competition as an innovative way for acquiring practical knowledge and skills, leadership potential and gaining international impact for their business school.

The aim of the present paper is to present results the primary data collected from 55 mentors from 18 leading business schools around the globe. The results indicate practical knowledge and skills and high leadership potential of talented mentors for global business case study competitions.

Benefits and Issues for Teachers and Students of using Case Methodology

According to (Correia and Mayall, 2012) teachers from South Africa and Western Australia, case studies have been found to create an interactive learning experience for students in corporate finance course. Case studies expose students to real world situations and students leave with the confidence that this represents learning that is useful and relevant to prepare them for what they can expect to face in practice. The effective teaching of a case should build empathy with the main decision-makers, focus on key issues and emphasize the dilemmas and consequences of alternative decisions. Case studies can also enable development of soft skills. This includes the use of real world scenarios at case competition, the use of unstructured problems, application of judgment, permitting a multiplicity of acceptable solutions, application of analytical reasoning, a questioning of conventional practice and consideration of multiple dimensions including marketing, financial, ethical, environmental, and social factors. Cases promote discussion, debate, group work and presentation. Case study approach at case competition enables teachers to require team discussion and organize project oriented extra curricula activities. Furthermore, case-based learning provides situations for teachers to analyze situations and make judgments in the world of practice. A key feature of this approach is the theoretical alignment of the case with the core concepts and learning outcomes of the case programme. The case-based approach has appeared to have had a positive effect on increasing levels of moral reasoning. It is the contention of the authors that the higher levels of moral reasoning observed in the experimental group is a result of exposure to the layered case-based learning activities. Through the use of these cases, students develop a heightened awareness of the complexity of classroom life and are equipped with the ability to apply a variety of perspectives to a single event. Among these perspectives are an awareness of the student perspective, a deeper understanding of adolescent development, an understanding of the socio-economic context, an understanding of the influence of teachers' beliefs and attitudes, and the influence of school culture. (O'Flaherty, & McGarr, 2014)

To understand more about faculty perceptions of the instructional benefits of using case studies, authors (Yadav et al, 2007) surveyed 101 science faculty at universities and colleges in the United States and Canada. Examples of poor

teaching in science at the undergraduate level include an emphasis on memorizing facts, lack of application of concepts, and failure to encourage connections among concepts. One effort to improve the teaching and learning of science involves instruction through the use of case based methods and problem-based learning. Case-based instructional methods use realistic or true narratives to provide opportunities for students to integrate multiple sources of information in an authentic context, often engaging students with ethical and societal problems. Students would extend their case-related research efforts beyond class requirements and even enrich discussions in other classes and also use knowledge for prepare for case competition. In this way, teachers have students who are engaged and ready to devote time and energy in learning process. Based on a research that has been conducted, it is reported that main benefits from using case study approach are that students are better able to view an issue from multiple perspectives, students retain less from class and students take a more active part in the learning process.

Some authors also recognized disadvantages of using case method. Case studies cannot substitute for learning that occurs from a direct, personal encounter with the phenomena being investigated. Experiential education integrates students' academic studies with opportunities for direct learning. Through experiential learning, the student must make decisions that are real rather than merely think about a situation or case. In this article, the authors make the case for mandatory experiential programs in all major areas within the business curriculum. The students found the job-shadowing experience to be more helpful than the case studies. This project was used in three classes with a total of 68 students participating. (Mccarthy & Mccarthy, 2006). Main obstacles that faculties from United States and Canada reported in using case studies (Yadav et al, 2007) are lack of preparation time required for use of cases in teaching, assessing student learning and lack of relevant case studies. Additionally, case method has other limitations. First, the economic, social, political, and technological context of the case are usually absent from the text and must be inferred from its date and location. Very often, students do not have this knowledge and they fail to notice subtleties in the story. Second, the teacher's knowledge of the case is often limited to what is presented in the text and in the teaching note, which can limit the depth of discussion. In addition, cases with heavy technological content tend to lose their relevance more rapidly than other type of cases. As the technological context evolves, the discussion proposed in the teaching notes becomes out of date and less realistic. (Cameron et al, 2012).

However, applying active case learning at the case competition described an opportunity for undergraduate students to apply concepts they have recently seen in their coursework to 'real world' business problems (Bale et al., 2013). Competitions enable students to deal with the challenge of delivering results under pressure, given an enigmatic real-world business problem. This paper presents one specific and seemingly growing form of case based- learning - the case competition. Case competitions provide business students with opportunities beyond the classroom setting to learn, network, and engage with complex

problems. In competition with other committed students, participants represent themselves, their teammates, and their institutions. Evidence-informed principles of teaching and learning recognize the importance of student motivation. (Gamble& Jelley, 2014). Additional student benefits that are derived from case competitions are memorable experiences, peer bonding, social capital development, and exposure to job opportunities. School-wide reputation is also enjoyed due to a student team's winning place in a case competition. Case competitions are considered important in developing a real life format to solve organizational or managerial problems in an intense competitive environment. The other benefits of the case competition are the monetary rewards, the possibility of networking, and opportunities such as student internships. Moreover, the host school of the winning team, also benefits from the annual bragging rights and the direct assessment and perception of the institution's quality. (Credle et al., 2009). To understand more about case competition we will explain the model of undergraduate business case competition in the next part of the paper.

Business Undergraduate International Case Competitions

The focus of this paper is explaining global business case competitions for coaches who select and prepare undergraduates for competitions. Before explaining data collected and main findings from research, we will briefly explain the structure and process of the business international case competition for undergraduate students. Each school provides a team of four students from a Faculty of Business who specializes in a different background: marketing, finance, accounting, economics, information technology, engineering and international business. Each team consists of students and a case advisor: university staff or a person from practice. The role of the case advisor is to select the team, create the student team and prepare them for case competitions. The team is invited by the Host University. These case competitions are invitation only usually based on results from previous years. Each team needs to make a case solution Power Point presentation in front of a jury consisting of people from the industry sector (top management level and consultants). The process of the case analysis and presentation consists of: students are given a case or cases that they had not seen before and are sequestered in a room for limited hours. A Jury panel evaluates team solutions for 20 minutes and the panel would have 15 minutes in total to ask questions. Jury panel evaluate: content, presentation skills and a question and answer part. All presentations are presented in the English language. Participants in all of the varying formats exercise skills and knowledge on a real world case from an actual organization, with support corporate representatives who can provide some facts and insights and possibly limited professional advice. Each case competition chooses the top three winning universities and the number of schools who participated varies from 12 to 20 schools. The Auckland University has compiled a list of results from past undergraduate international case competitions with an invitation only from 2011 to 2016. This list contains information on the host,

winner of the competition, as well as the universities that came second and third (or made it to the final). Statistics show that the number of global premier case competitions that are being organized yearly has increased from 13 in 2011 to 22 in 2016 (University of Auckland undergraduate international premier case competition list, see appendix 1).

Methodology

Research Questions

The proposed research questions (RQs) of this research paper can be framed as following:

RQ1: How do mentors who coach students at business undergraduate case competition, perceive benefits for improving practical knowledge and skills and leadership potential at international case competitions?

RQ2: What are the main sources where mentors select case studies for preparation phase for practicing cases for international case competitions?

Research Instrument

We based our study on primary data and employed a questionnaire as a research tool. The questionnaire had five sections: demographics of examinees, mentoring activities, leadership potentials and development, knowledge and skills development, and reverse mentoring activities. To ensure the construct validity relevant constructs from other studies were adapted. Some items were slightly modified to best fit the context of strategic management education of business case competitors. All the items were measured on a Likert-type scale (responds were coded from 1 – strongly disagree, to 7 – strongly agree).

The questionnaire was pretested by 8 faculty members to ensure question readability. Accordingly, we slightly modified and refined the questions resulting in the final questionnaire used for data collection.

Data Collection and Sampling Procedure

The question was distributed to mentors in an e-form via email. As the total population of case competition mentors is unknown (to the best of our knowledge there is no global database of case competitors' mentors), we based the study on a "snowball" sampling technique (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). This sampling relies on peer-to-peer recruitment of study participants and formation of a referral chain (Bodin, et al., 2016). Although it can be a subject of various biases (see Avrachenkov, Neglia & Tuholukova, 2016), the referral chain was actively controlled – particularly its initiation, progress and termination.

Using the coded questionnaires, the number of referrals was controlled to limit the clustering within countries. The final distribution of answers per country is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution of Examinees per Global Regions and Countries*

Region	Frequency	Percent	Countries
Asia-Pacific	12	22%	Singapore(4), Thailand (4), Hong Kong (3), Japan (1)
Australia & Oceania	8	15%	Australia (5), New Zealand (3)
Europe & Middle East	18	33%	Serbia (6), Denmark (3), Norway (2), The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Ireland, Hungary, Lebanon (1)
North America	17	31%	Canada (9), USA (8)
Total	55	100%	

The main field of expertise of examined case competitor mentors, was Management and Strategy (30.9%), followed by Finance and Accounting (21.8%), and Marketing and Communication (18.2%). Mentors had on average 7 years of experience in coaching case competitors (SD=5.85).

Several statistical methods belonging to descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. The obtained data were analysed using SPSS 22.0 statistical software.

Findings

Data analysis was performed to identify the benefits that mentors perceive the most important when the case study method is applied in international business case competitions.

Initial ideas for investigating perceived practical knowledge and skills for mentors were found in researches by (Jerrard, 2005 and Burke et al, 2013). Research results about practical knowledge and skills are presented in table 2.

Table 2. *Perceived Case Study Mentors Practical Knowledge & Skills*

Case study mentors practical knowledge and skills relative to other students as counterparts	Mean	Std.
Conceptual skills (Problem solving and decision-making)	6,44	0,718
Present material in a format appropriate to the role, the task, the audience	6,38	0,850
Interpersonal skills -Working with others (Team building)	6,31	0,696
Demonstrating appropriate communication skills with other team members	6,29	0,832
Critical and strategic thinking	6,22	0,917
Improving Learning and Performance	6,04	1,105
Functional skills (for example, strategic management)	5,78	0,984
Leadership skills	5,70	0,861
Analyzing the complex industrial and labor relations environment	5,27	1,162
Understanding specific roles in managerial practice	5,25	1,075
Demonstrating an understanding of theory covered in the subject	5,20	1,177
Systematic industrial and labor related thinking	5,11	1,239
Information Computer Technology (ICT) skills	4,69	1,153

Based on the respondents answers, the most important practical knowledge and skills that are gained during participation in case study competitions for mentors are: -), *Interpersonal skills -Working with others (Team building)* (\bar{x} =6.31) and *Demonstrating appropriate communication skills with other team members* (\bar{x} =6.29). The characteristics that mentors perceived to be the least beneficial were Information Computer Technology (ICT) skills (\bar{x} =4.69) and *Systematic industrial and labor related thinking* (\bar{x} =5.11).

We also investigated mentors' opinion about leadership potential at international case competition. The criteria that we took into consideration connecting with leadership potential for mentors we found in studies by author (Greenhalgh, 2015) and findings from Higgs & Aitken, 2003. The findings of our research are presented in table 3.

Table 3. *Perceived Case Study Mentors Leadership Potential*

Case study mentors leadership potentials in following fields	Mean	Std.
Building personal learning	6,18	1,065
Building relationships and reputation	6,06	0,834
Intellectual leadership	5,89	0,925
Leading capability building	5,87	0,953
Strategic leadership	5,74	1,136
Leading culture building	5,69	1,130
Leading change	5,46	0,964
Leading political/stakeholder interface	5,06	1,262

The most important leadership potential that are gained during participation in case study competitions for mentors are: *Building personal learning* (\bar{x} =6.18) and *Building relationships and reputation* (\bar{x} =6.06). The characteristics that mentors perceived to be the least beneficial were *Leading change* (\bar{x} =5.46) and *Leading political/stakeholder interface* (\bar{x} =5.06).

Refereeing to research question two, we ask our respondents about sources where they select cases for preparing students for case competitions. There are two sources for finding case study materials: primary and secondary. Using primary sources of data for case writing has its advantages and disadvantages. The greatest value is the direct contact with the company. Company representatives can be asked to introduce the case in the classroom and give valuable insights from the industry, market or everyday business. Ultimately, students receive information through this medium that would be difficult to retrieve from other data sources. The greatest downside to using primary data is the substantial amount of time necessary to properly structure the case and complete the company consultation and consent process.

As secondary sources are generally publically available, there is no need to get the permission from the company for publishing the case. Another advantage of using secondary data is that the authors can update the case with the latest information in a timely manner. The main obstacle of using secondary sources is the fact that sometimes it is hard to find relevant data that authors need to write a good case. The main source for cases based on secondary data is case databases. Table 4 presents a list of the most relevant and popular case databases worldwide.

Table 4. *Secondary source: Recommended case databases for locating cases in Business and Management*

Case database	Web page
The Case Centre (ECCH)	https://www.thecasecentre.org/main/
Harvard Business Publishing	https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/pages/home
Ivey Publishing	https://www.iveycases.com/PublishCases.aspx
Asian Business Case Centre	http://www.asiacase.com/
INSEAD	https://cases.insead.edu/publishing/
IBS Center for Management Research	http://www.icmrindia.org/
Asia Case Research Centre	http://www.acrc.hku.hk/casecompetition16/index.asp
Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies (EEMCS)	http://emeraldgroupublishing.com/products/case_studies/index.htm

We ask respondents to select where select case material for students preparation. It was multiple choice question.

Table 5. *The Main Sources where Mentors Select Case Studies for Preparation Phase for Practicing Cases for International Case Competitions*

Case selection for international case competition preparation	Percent
<u>Secondary source using databases:</u>	
The Case Centre (ECCH)	9.26
Harvard Business Publishing	25.93
Ivey Publishing	22.22
Asian Business Case Centre	6.17
INSEAD	6.79
IBS Center for Management Research	1.23
Asia Case Research Centre	7.41
Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies (EEMCS)	3.09
Your own Business School Case Database	12.35
Cases from the previous international case competitions	3.70
<u>Primary sources:</u>	
I do not use secondary cases, I write cases for student preparation	1.85

Findings showed that majority of mentors (98.15%) used cases from secondary sources or previous case competitions if there are available. The most popular database for searching case study is Harvard Business Publishing

(25.93%). Another interesting thing from results is that 12.35% respondents use their own business school case database.

Practical implication – QUT Business School Experience

International case competitions experience provides students with an industry skill set which makes them more employable. QUT Business School has developed its skills in the international case competitions arena over the last 10 years. QUT has participated in over 80 competitions and has performed at very high levels with at least 40 podium finishes. There has been a direct translation of this success into graduate employment from this group into much higher level positions. Companies such as Bain Consultancy, McKinsey Consulting, BCG, Loreal and many other, such as Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PWC now actively seeking out graduates from the international case groups to employ. The other excellent benefit for the QUT Business School has been the overall improvement of its reputation as a world class Business School. Its triple crown of accreditation, AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA plus the success of students internationally have put QUT Business School brand on a pedestal in the global arena.

Conclusions

There are lot for benefits from international case competitions for students - opportunity for students to integrate the acquisition of content and procedural knowledge, thereby promoting the bond between the “what” (declarative) and the “how” (procedural), mentors –developing managerial knowledge and leadership skills and business school – positive publicity and building strong brand image for the university at the global level. Success at case competitions demands intense preparation. Learning and transfer can be further improved by incorporating evidence-based principles of teaching and learning. (Gamble & Jelley, 2014.)

Based on the results of our research, we can conclude what practical knowledge and skills are the most important for mentors, leadership potential characteristics and the preferable sources for case material preparation of case competitions from the mentors opinions.

First of all, the most important practical knowledge and skills in case study competitions for mentors are primary conceptual skills (Problem solving and decision-making), managerial skills (team building and communication skills) and Presentation skills (Present material in a format appropriate to the role, the task, the audience).

Secondly, building personal learning, building relationships and reputation, intellectual leadership are the most perceived leadership potential characteristics for mentors at international case competitions.

Thirdly, majority of mentors use cases from previous case competitions for preparing students for international case competitions. The most frequently used secondary database sources are: Harvard Business Publishing and Ivey Publishing.

This research study has some limitations as well. The constraint is that this study only represents mentors' point of view. Future research studies will include the opinion of students as well, providing a clearer image of this relatively new innovative learning method through case study competitions.

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Appendix 1. *The list of 22 international undergraduate business case competitions (Auckland, 2017, Modified by authors)*

Number	Date	Competition	Venue	Country	Number of Teams
1.	Feb 2016	Champions Trophy Case Competition	University of Auckland	New Zealand	12
2.	Feb 2016	BI International Case Competition	BI Norwegian Business School	Norway	12
3.	Feb 2016	Heavener International Case Competition	University of Florida	USA	20
4.	Feb 2016	John Molson Undergraduate Case Competition	Concordia University	Canada	24
5.	Feb 2016	CBS Case Competition	Copenhagen Business School	Denmark	12
6.	Mar 2016	McGill Management International Case Competition	McGill University	Canada	12
7.	Mar 2016	Sauder Summit Global Case Competition	UBC Sauder School of Business	Canada	12
8.	Mar 2016	Scotiabank International Case Competition	Ivey Business School	Canada	12
9.	Mar 2016	University of Navarra International Case Competition	University of Navarra	Spain	16
10.	Apr 2016	International Case Competition@Maastricht	Maastricht University	Netherland	16
11.	Apr 2016	The Global Business Case Competition	University of Washington	USA	12
12.	Apr 2016	Belgrade Business International Case Competition	University of Belgrade	Serbia	16
13.	May 2016	Chulalongkorn International Business Case Competition	Chulalongkorn University	Thailand	12
14.	Jun 2016	HSBC/HKU Asia Pacific Business Case Competition 2016	Hong Kong University	Hong Kong	24
15.	Aug 2016	SDS Queenstown International Case Competition	University of Otago	New Zealand	12
16.	Aug 2016	Asian Business Case Competition	Nanyang Business School	Singapore	9
17.	Sep 2016	UOB-NUS Case Competition	National University of Singapore	Singapore	16
18.	Oct 2016	Thammasat Undergraduate Business Challenge	Thammasat University	Thailand	16
19.	Oct 2016	Citi- HKUST International Case Competition	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	Hong Kong	18
20.	Oct 2016	Global Business Case Challenge	Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University	Japan	13
21.	Nov 2016	FEP-U.Porto International Case Competition	Porto University	Portugal	12
22.	Nov 2016	Australian Undergraduate Business Case Competition	University of Melbourne	Australia	16