

Full Length Article

Transferring methods to teach business administration from one cultural context to another[☆]

Marie Catalo^a, Nicolas Antheaume^{b,*}, Howayda Ismail^c

^aFaculty of Sciences, LEMNA, Université de Nantes, France

^bSchool of Economics and Business, LEMNA, Université de Nantes, France

^cFaculty of Human Sciences, Al Azhar University, Egypt

Received 23 November 2014; received in revised form 22 June 2015; accepted 21 October 2015

Available online 2 December 2015

Abstract

What happens when a teaching method is transferred from one cultural context to another? In this article we investigate this question by looking at how Computer Based Simulations (CBS) were transposed from a French context to an Egyptian one. In this article we demonstrate, through the case of Egypt, how culture and the characteristics of the school system impact learning abilities. We describe what happens when Egyptian students are confronted with learning modes they have not encountered prior to University, in the context of an Egyptian-French dual-degree programme in business administration and business informatics. We show that the transfer of CBS as a teaching method revealed cultural differences between French and Egyptian students. As a consequence the teaching objectives of CBS were redefined in order to take the Egyptian context into account.

© 2015 Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration, Future University. Production and Hosting by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Keywords: Management education; Experiential learning; Learning modes; Culture; Computer-based business simulations; Egypt; France; Globalization of Business and Management Education

1. Introduction

This article stems from an collaboration between three colleagues, an Egyptian and two French ones, taking part in a dual-degree programme which involved a University in France, which had a partnership with an Egyptian one, for its faculty of business administration and business informatics. The curriculum for the students in Egypt was modelled on the one of the French partner, so as to enable Egyptian students to obtain a degree from the French partner. Also, in order for these students to obtain an Egyptian degree, the programme was accredited with the Egyptian Ministry of higher education. Reconciling the demands of the French partner with those of the Egyptian authorities was one of the challenges of this programme. Indeed the Egyptian and French academic partners operated in two very different environments, following different rules. Furthermore, the French teachers who took part in the

[☆]The case of Business Administration and Business Informatics Students in an Egyptian-French dual-degree programme.

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: nicolas.antheaume@univ-nantes.fr (N. Antheaume).

Peer review under responsibility of Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration, Future University.

programme also had to constantly question the content of what they taught. What was universal in their courses, what was specific to French culture that the Egyptian students would not find relevant? Confronted with problems in transposing their courses and methods from the French context to the Egyptian one, two French teachers partnered with an Egyptian colleague in order to turn this challenge into a learning experience for the students, the teaching faculty and, hopefully, for a wider audience potentially faced with similar cross-cultural challenges.

Some of the questions raised by the authors are in fact the subject of a growing interest among scholars. In the *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, Doe (2010) asked why business schools were not more global and what management educators could do about it. One of the avenues for future research identified by Doe was to study how management learning is influenced by serving populations from different cultural backgrounds. In 2012, *Management Learning* dedicated a special issue to the subject of management learning in a global context, with a special focus on universalist versus local practices (Örtenblad, Snell, Perrotta, & Akella, 2012). In their introduction to this special issue, and commenting on the contributions, the editors stated that further research was still needed to better tailor the teaching of management theories to local contexts and adapt them to the need of users. In the existing literature there are very few explanations as to how this can be done. Hong (2012) suggests that if the transfer of a model takes place from one country to another, it has to strike the right balance between the ideas introduced in the host country and the local values. Ideas should not be imposed as universal and superior models, but should rely on a culture sensitive process that seeks a compromise. However Lamb and Currie (2012) suggest that, in the case of American MBAs in China, no adaptation takes place. It even seems that this lack of adaptation is desired and welcomed despite its mismatch with local practices.

In this article we address this need for research on the transfer of teaching methods from one cultural context to another. We show how a widely used method (computer based simulations or CBS) was transposed to the context of an Egyptian French dual-degree programme in business administration and business informatics. We explain how this was made possible through the use of an exploratory research action methodology, to observe and analyse the cultural and learning differences between Egyptian and French students.

The first part of this article describes the teaching method involved: computer based simulation (CBS). It explains how the authors use it to teach business administration. Using the typology developed by Tilmans and Grootaers (2006) we investigate different learning modes and justify how three of them can be associated with our practice of CBS. We show that these three learning modes fall within the realm of what Kolb (1984), Kolb and Kolb (2008) define as experiential learning. The second part presents the Egyptian education system and its characteristic learning mode. We show how this mode is in opposition to the ones which correspond to the French practice of CBS. The third part presents what happens when CBS is used for experiential learning with Egyptian students who have no previous exposure to the learning modes needed for such situations, and what can be done, through CBS to close the gap. The impact of an education system on students' learning abilities thus becomes salient. As Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) suggested, cultural traits also impair learning abilities. Thus, we point out the ones we noticed and link them, whenever possible, to relevant authors. Finally, we present our conclusions and suggest leads for future research.

2. Part 1: The widespread use of Computer Based Business Simulations (CBS) and the learning modes to which they correspond

Computer-based business simulation (CBS) is one of the three simulation-based techniques, alongside with role games and physically based simulations, as defined by Salas, Wildman, and Piccolo (2009). They are widely used in management education (Faria & Wellington, 2004; Faria, Hutchinson, Wellington, & Gold, 2009). They provide a real life experience of the decision-result-adjustment feedback loop in a simplified and manageable way. So widespread is their use that they can easily be described as a universally practiced method. In a first section we describe what they are, how they can be compared to other teaching methods and how we use them. In a second section, we identify the learning modes to which these games are associated. This first part is based on the authors' experience as teachers in business administration, designers and users of business games. One of the authors has conceived business games and has used them for more than 25 years with French, Chinese, Egyptian and Moroccan students. The two others have used business games as part of their teaching activity over the past ten years, one of them with French, Egyptian and Chinese students, the other one with Egyptian students.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1025449>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1025449>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)