

INTRODUCING INTERNATIONAL ISSUES INTO OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT CURRICULA*

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As the world moves toward a global economy, it is increasingly important that operations management courses prepare students to address globalization issues. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the dialog concerning how international topics are best incorporated into operations management curricula. On the basis of the results of a survey of operations management academicians worldwide, current course offerings are cataloged and topic areas critical to the globalization of operations are identified. Four major reasons for studying international operations management are proposed, which provide the basis for recommendations on how international topics can be introduced into established operations courses and for the design of an elective course in global operations. Finally, teaching materials relevant to international operations are surveyed.

(INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS; CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT; COURSE SURVEY)

1. Introduction

Problems of operating across political borders are as old as human history, but only in recent years has international operations begun to emerge as a topic distinct from other operations management issues. In informal discussions with both academicians and practitioners, it is clear that there exists a genuine interest in international operations, but to date no paradigm or model of international operations has emerged. Scholarly and pedagogical materials addressing global operations are scattered and disjointed. Indeed, there is far from universal agreement that international operations has content distinct from the usual topics that comprise traditional operations and production management.

Nonetheless, as the world moves toward an international economy, it is increasingly important that operations management courses prepare students to address globalization issues. In particular, there are growing efforts to "internationalize" operations management curricula. These efforts are driven by observation of current economic trends and in part are motivated by the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business, which is encouraging the introduction of international topics into all facets of business education. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the dialog concerning how international topics are best incorporated into operations management curricula.

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