



Global Mindset – A Requirement for Global Corporate Leaders

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Abstract

Globalisation has created several changes to the corporate environment. The corporate decision whether or not to compete with global competitors has become limited and is in fact nearly impossible to avoid. Global corporate have to build strategies and staffing policies that are in alignment with the corporate goals. Due to the changing corporate environment, global mindset has become a phenomenon frequently regarded as a prerequisite for global corporate success in a globalised corporate world.

The literature on the global mindset is extensive, where the phenomenon is used to describe way of conceiving the world and behaving respectively. Derived from different types of literature, global mindset with a strong foot within cognitive psychology and global leadership from corporate leadership, strategic and intercultural management literature, makes the phenomenon theoretically different.

This research article has a social constructive approach towards understanding how knowledge is created and how reality is

perceived. Through using secondary data, an extensive understanding of how global mindset has been defined, what constructs it is made up of is reviewed. The discussion will build an understanding of the need for a global mindset and what the determinants for global mindset development is, for global leaders, corporate and employees.

Global mindset is used as an integrated phenomenon, with a cognitive, psychological, behavioural and interactional dimension, which provides a complete picture of the required global leadership competencies. The development of global mindset is a corporate and personal responsibility, where socialization is the crucial point for development of global mindset. The idea that a specific global mindset exists is rejected based on the notion that the requirements for global leaders will vary depending on the position in the corporate and that global leadership is a contextual term, making it impossible to characterize a specific mindset for global leaders.

Keywords: Globalisation, Global mindset, Global leader, Multicultural, Cognitive dimension

Introduction

The 20th century is characterized as the era of globalization. The advancement in information and communication technology and means of transportation has reduced physical boundaries for engaging in international corporate business. The increased mobility of goods and services has influenced national markets consumer goods options and expanded markets opportunities. Corporate have greater mobility of production factors and are able to acquire the best knowledge resources for their operations. Globalization has become a prime factor for obtaining a competitive edge and many corporate business strategies have a global scope. The ability to provide services and product development across borders is dependent on the market insights a corporate have. However, the presence in different markets will bring in valuable knowledge in order to survive (Hollensen, 2011).

Prior to globalization, societies have been able to develop without any influence or impact from other cultures. This enabled the creation of distinctive nationalities, cultures, norms, values etc. (House et al., 2003). Hence, globalization has led to an increase in interaction across

cultures. Communication and daily interaction with employees, corporate partners, customers and competitors are no longer centered in one country and one nationality. The corporate environment has become a multicultural arena (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2010). Cultures affect how people interact and interpret situations, which can create a barrier for international business (Child, 2005). To succeed in global corporate activities, it is important that the corporate is able to make cultural diversity an advantage for its operations. Developing cultural synergies where knowledge, values and experiences are transferred, towards international success (Soderberg & Holden, 2002).

Background to the Problem

Globalisation has made national markets small; the need to look beyond national borders becomes an integral part of business strategies. The reduction of physical distance is due to the enhanced and increased international trade, cultural exchanges and investment decisions (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2010). International trade, understood as the flows of information, technology, money and people (Leung et al, 2005) across countries, is a direct result of globalization. It is fostered through international trade agreements, international governmental institutions, multinational

enterprises and international mergers and acquisitions and joint ventures (Leung et al, 2005).

Small and medium sized enterprises and born global corporate are all representatives of a changing business environment, by their participation in international business. Where international business is a term used for describing businesses ability to more factors of production across countries in order to gain a competitive edge. International business opportunities illustrate the choices a business face today (Czinkota et al, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The corporate that operate on a global arena are called 'global corporate'. Global corporate exploit the geographical boundaries for obtaining and exploiting resources as best as possible. They use human capital, technology and raw materials, facilities etc. in the part of the world perceived as best practice. The ability to create synergies across geographical boundaries is perceived as the global corporate strength (Marquardt & Snyder, 1997). To be an effective global corporate, it needs to have a corporate culture that incorporates the diversity of market presences and have a leadership that reflects the multicultural perspective of the corporate (Harris, 2002). Hence, major concern for a global corporate becomes strategic

adaption, staffing, leadership and mindset development.

Purpose of the Study

As there is a larger need for understanding of cultures and surroundings different from the home-country corporate, the notion of a global mindset has become more prominent. Where global leadership uses global mindset as a necessary competence, global mindset literature use global leaders as a reference frame for explanation. Global mindset can be an individual, corporate or top management concern. To study the phenomenon global mindset, Levy et al., (2007) identifies two theoretical constructs – cognitive complexity and cosmopolitanism – that is frequently used to explain global mindset.

The creation of global mindset as a phenomenon is due to the impact globalization has had on corporate activities. The need to alter strategy and leadership practices due to an increasing international environment requires a mindset to go along with such changes. Literature describing global mindset has a clear focus on global competitiveness, leadership and corporate.

Review of Literature

The success of a global corporate is dependent on its ability to interpret and understand the assumptions for operation in a global setting. It

is no longer sufficient for businesses to base market knowledge on knowledge from a single country. There is an increasing necessity to understand the market dynamics within different cultures (Begley & Boyd, 2003). It is not only market knowledge a global corporate needs to display, it is also knowledge about how cultural backgrounds influence attitudes, beliefs, norms and values. The corporate stakeholders will influence the approach of corporate opportunities and interacts with people (Smith & Victorson, 2012). A term used for describing a corporate and personal attitude towards dealing with these challenges is global mindset. Global mindset is a concern due the increasing international business and without corporate the phenomena global mindset would not exist today.

Mindset

The Oxford Dictionaries defines a mindset as “The established set of attitudes held by someone.” Generally, a mindset will be a cognitive orientation held by the individual. A Cognitive orientation means an individual, or personal, way to perceive, behave and seek to achieve goals. Bayer and Gollwitzer (2005) argue that when a person gets involved in different mindset, or cognitive procedures, will be activated. This cognitive procedure will create a decision and evaluation bias concerning

interpretation of information. They added that a person’s self-view will affect the development of a mindset. Whether the person has a low or high self-view will determine how the individual will choose paths, evaluate means to reach goals, goal setting and interact with others. Additionally, mindset will be affected by personal motivation, social anxiety and goal commitment (Bayer & Gollwitzer, 2005).

Individual attitudes and beliefs create a cognitive map or procedure for how to act. This is called a mindset. A personal mindset is influenced by both nature and social environment and will influence goal achievement and decision-making. Personal mindset will affect individual attitudes and influence interaction between people. Personal mindset and corporate mindset will therefore be crucial in a global corporate world. As international business increases the complexity of business activities, it is important to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage to survive. A global mindset is a key for global corporate success in the global market (Levy et al, 2007; Massingham, 2013).

Global Mindset

Global mindset is a phenomenon humanly created due to globalization. The last three decades the phenomenon has gained increasing attention as an approach necessary for both

corporate and leaders in a globalised world. Levy et al., (2007) identifies three general approaches to define or interpret global mindset, either from a cultural, strategic or multidimensional perspective, in addition to an individualistic or corporate approach. Hence, the focus in defining the need for global mindset has been on the need to except diversity, have a 'glocal' adjustment to global operations or both have acceptance for diversity and strategic adaption.

Cultural Perspective

The earliest attempt to identifying the need for a specific mindset doing global operations is Perlmutter's (1969) explanation of a geocentric mindset. A geocentric mindset portrays a corporate ability to have a worldwide approach to business without favouring nationality. The cultural perspective emphasizes the understanding, acceptance of and interaction with diversity. The need to learn from different cultures, interact with people of different cultural backgrounds is of importance in order to display a global mindset (Alder and Bartholomew, 1992).

From a cultural perspective, global mindset can be characterized as the openness and awareness to diversity, where a global mindset is displayed in a person or corporate who is able to understand and accept diversity of cultures and

interact with multiple cultures simultaneously. The benefits of global mindset are the ability to enhance trust relationships, improve employee-leader communication and increase corporate commitment (Story & Barbuto, 2011). Global mindset becomes an outcome of the personal ability to adapt to cultural contexts, understand and create understanding across diversity. A keyword for global mindset is the acceptance of diversity. The display of global mindset from a cultural perspective requires a cosmopolitan attitude, e.g. the ability to enjoy learning new things and interact with people different from themselves (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992; Levy et al., 2007).

Strategic Perspective

A strategic perspective on global mindset moves away from the necessity to interact and accept diversity and rather focuses on an understanding of different markets competition and the evaluation of various market opportunities. From this perspective the corporate or individual requires a cognitive complexity in order to be able to generate relevant knowledge about the global mindset.

Whereas Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) have both a corporate and individual approach towards understanding global mindset, Begley and Boyd (2003) have a corporate approach towards the need for a global mindset. Focusing

on corporate performance they define global mindset as the ability to use knowledge as appropriate in different market contexts. Arora et al., (2004) and Nummela et al., (2004) pursue a strategic perspective towards understanding a global mindset, but then from an individualistic point of view. The ability to adapt to different contexts, be proactive against global competition and strategic thinking in order to succeed, where the ability to adjust the individual behavior becomes determinant for global mindset manifestation.

Global mindset from a strategic perspective focuses more on the mental capacity of the person or corporate, than on portrayed behavior or attitudes. The ability to adjust the strategic approach of a company, create a global business direction and initiate a commitment towards the global corporate.

Multidimensional Perspective

The multidimensional perspective includes both cultural and strategic perspectives in their attempts to define global mindset. The multidimensional perspective provides a more encompassing definition of what global mindset is. Levy et al., (2007) identifies Rhinesmith's (1992) work on global mindset as the basis for the multidimensional perspective on global mindset. The multidimensional perspective does not only include the cultural and strategic

perspectives in order to define global mindset, but also other constructs. Srinivas (1995) defines global mindset based on eight different components, which includes personal characteristics such as curiosity, opportunity seeking and risk taking, long-term perspectives and system thinking, as well as the appreciation for diversity and corporate processes.

From a corporate perspective, Paul (2000) applies a multidimensional approach to global mindset. A Global corporate mindset is the ability to have a balance between global standardization and local adaption as well as a top management aware of cultural predispositions. The multidimensional perspective on global mindset merge the need to understand how people from cultural backgrounds differ from each other and how knowledge about political, cultural, social and institutional factors can create a global mindset opening for successful business activities as well as other constructs such as time orientation (Levy et al., 2008). The definitions and constructs are many. However, with the general notion that a mindset is the way a person or corporate perceives and interacts in the social world, an understanding of what global mindset constitutes of is developed.

Corporate Mindsets Framework

Perlmutter (1969) is one of the earliest attempts to explaining the mindset of corporate working in a multinational arena. He proposes that businesses can show three types of mindset – ethnocentrism, polycentrism and geocentrism. These three profiles make up the EPG – profiles. The three mindsets show a weight on globalization and local adaption. An ethnocentric attitude favours the home-country culture and thinks it is superior to that of the host-country (Perlmutter, 1969; Kuada, 2010). Corporate will therefore apply home-country values in their venture abroad. A polycentric mindset values the difference among culture and appreciates local adaption. Corporate displaying a polycentric mindset will let host-country subsidiaries preserve their local identity (Perlmutter, 1969). A geocentric mindset shows a corporate that is able to have a worldwide approach, aligning cultural contexts with strategic decisions.

Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) and Begley and Boyd (2003) have developed frameworks that resemble the mindset thinking of Perlmutter (1969). These frameworks use different terminology in order to display that a global mindset is a ratio global standardization and local adaption.

Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) focused on global and local adaption is visible through their

focus on the balance between integration and differentiation. The balance between the ability to integrate different cultures versus being open to local diversity is their focus on development and display of corporate mindset. The three mindsets – parochial, diffused and global mindset – display of corporate mindset. Begley and Boyd's (2003) framework focused on managers' balance between global consistency and local responsiveness. There is no right and wrong answer to what the balance between global and local response should be, but the company need to take a stand in terms of the balance between these two in order to create a corporate mindset that is consistent throughout the corporate.

Global Mindset Capitals

The Thunderbird School of Global Management have focused on global mindset and explained global mindset in terms of three capitals – intellectual, psychological and social capital (Bowen & Inkpen, 2009; Smith & Victorson, 2012; Javidan & Bowen, 2013). Each of the capitals have three underlying building blocks, which will enforce the understanding of what it means having the intellectual, psychological and social capital needed in order to portray a global mindset (Jadivan & Bowen, 2013).

Intellectual Capital

The use of global mindset capitals instead of the interplay between the constructs cognitive complexity and cosmopolitanism bears resemblances to each other. In terms of the capitals, the intellectual capital represents the cognitive side of global mindset (Javidan & Bowen, 2013). This capital refers to the person's knowledge about his/her surroundings and how he/she interprets and analyses the information and knowledge obtained (Javidan & Walker, 2012).

The three underlying building blocks of intercultural capital are:

Global Business Savvy

Cosmopolitan Outlook

Cognitive Complexity

The three building blocks are interrelated. Being a cosmopolitan and having wide global business knowledge will increase cognitive complexity. Cognitive complexity can also increase curiosity, hence increasing the cosmopolitan outlook and business knowledge.

Psychological Capital

The second capital is psychological capital. Where the foregoing capital focused on the intellectual part of a person's behavior, psychological capital focuses on the willingness to understand and engage in cross-cultural interactions (Javidan & Walker, 2013). The psychological capital is the affective part of

global mindset (Javidan & Walker, 2012). Without extensive psychological capital the success of cross-cultural understanding and trust building is likely to fail.

The three building blocks that is a part of the psychological capital are:

Passion for Diversity

Quest for Adventure

Self-assurance

Quest for adventure goes hand in hand with having a passion for diversity. A global mindset means a wish to deal with challenging and unpredictable situations, take risks and test his/hers abilities (Javidan & Bowen, 2013). A person needs to have a high self-assurance to be able to master new and challenging situations. Self-assurance reflects on personal skills such as self-confidence and being energetic in order to be able to master a passion for diversity and to seek new adventures (Javidan & Walker, 2012).

Social Capital

The last capital used by the Thunderbird School of Global Management explaining global mindset is social capital. Social capital portrays the behavioural side of a global mindset. This shows that a global mindset is not only determined by a person's ability to gain and use knowledge, but also the personal ability to disseminate know-how. Social capital focuses on a person's ability to create trust relationship

across borders and cooperate with people and it is crucial for knowledge dissemination (Javidan & Walker, 2013).

The three building blocks of social capital are:

Intercultural Empathy

Interpersonal Impact

Diplomacy

Intercultural empathy reflects on the ability of the corporate leader to work well with people across cultures, understand non-verbal gestures different from his/her own, be able to emotionally connect with people and make across cultures collaborate (Javidan & Walker, 2013). The ability to emotionally connect with people will often enhance the interpersonal impact. Interpersonal impact is the personal ability to build an influential personal and professional network of people. It also reflects the ability to negotiate across borders. Diplomacy is connected with the personal ability to understand and be understood. A person with the ability to start a conversation, hold multiple viewpoints, be a good listener and be able and willing to collaborate shows a high diplomatic capability (Javidan & Walker, 2012).

Development of Global Mindset

Global mindset is something that can be acquired; it is a learned phenomenon (Arora et al., 2004). The development of global mindset however is a dynamic and iterative process

(Smith & Victorson, 2012). Experience is a crucial factor for global mindset development. Javidan and Bowen (2013) found that the amount of different countries a person has lived in, an international education and language proficiencies will be factors that will affect the display of global mindset. However, Lovvom and Chen (2011) postulated that experience will not be enough for development of global mindset. It is determined by the amount of experience and cultural intelligence the individual displays. Global mindset is an outcome of the amount of experience and how the individual is able to transfer information gained from the experience into knowledge.

According to Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) the development of global mindset focused on the need to cultivate the mindset, which is dependent on four variables: a). the curiosity and commitment towards gaining new knowledge, b). awareness of current mindset, c). exposure to new, diversified, settings and d). ability to integrate understanding across multicultural diversity. Global mindset becomes a corporate requirement in an increasingly global corporate world (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). Global mindset is the key factor for how corporate view business opportunities, create strategies and develop the corporate environment (Paul, 2000). Paul (2000) proposed that the corporate



ability to develop global mindset depends on a). top management composition, b). focus on vision, c). networking and d). employee selection and career path planning.

Global mindset development must have a balance between formalization Vs flexibility and standardization Vs customization (Begley & Boyd, 2003). Development of global mindset, resolving tension between global and local expectation, can be enhanced through development of forums. Opinions, decisions and other information can be shared through these settings, fighting of tensions (Begley and Boyd, 2003). A corporate vision that exerts global thinking will act as a glue for global mindset and trust building across the corporate. Top management is responsible for stimulating a global mindset, through the promotion of a corporate mindset distribution of decision responsibility and strategic market presences to capture relevant market knowledge (Begley & Boyd, 2003).

Methodology

The term global mindset is the phenomenon, which has been used in order to describe personal and corporate ability to succeed in a global environment. Deriving from corporate leadership and cognitive psychology, global mindset aims at describing personal skills and

attitudes towards understanding and creating a social reality.

Led by an aim of creating an integrated understanding of the phenomenon, this research article aims at building a theory based on previous research done on global mindset. Global mindset is widely used in organizational theory and like all other fields of inquiry, organizational study is paradigmatically anchored (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). The philosophical foundation within corporate studies has a focus on the creation of knowledge and how knowledge is interpreted differently across different paradigmatic presumptions. The paradigmatic presumptions are characterized by the distinction of fundamental assumptions about the nature of corporate phenomenon (ontology), the nature of knowledge about this phenomenon (Epistemology and the nature of ways of studying the phenomenon (methodology) (Gioia & Pietre, 1990).

The ontological presumption is concerned with the very essence of the phenomenon under investigation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The objective and subjective approach has two different views on how the social reality is to be investigated. Having an objective ontology means believing that reality is external to the individual. In contradiction, the subjective



ontology has a nominalist approach, believing that reality is socially constructed through interactions (Kuada, 2012). By postulating that global mindset is a result of corporate and personal concern, individuals will be able to influence their own realities. Global mindset is not determined by nature and a characteristic given by birth.

The epistemological presumption is concerned with the nature of knowledge about phenomenon. Whether knowledge is something that can be acquired or is something which has to be personally experienced (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Objective epistemology, positivism, search for knowledge through seeking causal relationships, explaining and predicting structures of the social world. Subjective epistemology, antipositivism, seeks to understand the world from an individual point of view. A subjective researcher will reject the possibility to seek generalizable patterns and objective knowledge (Kuada, 2012). Finding a general description or explanation of what global mindset is, will not determine how different persons and corporate will develop a global mindset. Global mindset is a phenomenon that is developed through interactions and experience, as well as personal competencies and the only true way global mindset can be visible is through understanding

the individual's point of view and interaction with others.

The debate concerning the presumption about human nature is distinguished by the free will of the individual. The objective approach pursues a deterministic viewpoint. A person's actions are determined by his/hers environment. The individual will be unable to break out of predictable patterns and structures (Kuada, 2012). In contradiction, the subjective voluntarism describes a human nature where the individual is completely autonomous and free-willed (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Global mindset is dependent on the interaction between individuals, this phenomenon that can be developed. Hence, global mindset is part of a socially constructed reality.

The methodological approach to research is where this research article is broken with the clear objective and subjective apexes. These two approaches is a continuum towards research and hence there is a range of positions that can be taken. The aim of this article is to build an understanding of how the phenomenon global mindset is related and whether there it is possible to develop a specific global leadership mindset. Hence, the aim is to provide a theoretical contribution to corporate and management literature towards the understanding of global mindset. The

methodological approach towards building this understanding will be built on presumptions about the social world, where literature on global mindset will be used in order to develop an understanding and an explanation of the phenomenon. Thus, a middle path on the objective-subjective continuum is applied to gain a conceptualization on the correlation between global mindset.

Theory Building

The aim of research article is to build knowledge and search for the truth, where the truth can either be universal or situational. Social constructivist holds a truth constructed by interaction, hence the observed truth is situational, e.g., contextual. Theory building is a way for researchers to be able to build knowledge (Zikmund et al., 2013). A theory explains a phenomenon, by describing how things are related to the phenomenon in question (Zikmund et al., 2013). Global mindset is such phenomenon theory is constructed based on the interpretation of data collection, where theory originates from the researcher's attempt to make sense of the observed facts (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

The development of a theory is about the creation of an understanding and explanation of an observed reality, where constructs can provide a helping hand. The identification of

constructs to aid the explanation of phenomenon is based on the researcher's previous knowledge. The theoretical foundation within a field of research will improve the choice of appropriate constructs (Benadasolli, 2013). It is only through building relationship between constructs and researchers can create an understanding between different constructs and how they affect the relevant phenomenon. Through developing propositions, e.g. statements explaining linkage between concepts, a relationship between constructs describing phenomenon is developed (Zikmund et al., 2012).

Global mindset is a corporate and management phenomenon. The extent to which it has been researched and theorized is extensive. However, the phenomenon and the construct used to explain it has similar characteristics. Through a theory building approach attempt to understand the correlation between phenomena, through past contribution to global mindset research would be made. Theory building will provide an overview of frameworks developed by past research, categorise and build a correlation between phenomenon and established theory (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989), which enables theorizing about the need for global mindset.

Data Collection

To provide an understanding and explanation of global mindset previous literature on the phenomenon is used. Meaning that this research article focuses on providing a theoretical contribution based on secondary data. Literature provides an understanding of what constructs are used to explain global mindset and aid article discussion. To use secondary data solely is not optimal being led by socially constructivist presumptions. It will restrict the content validity of this article, as the propositions made will not be tested out through primary data collection. The attempt not to find empirical verification of theoretical findings breaks with the subjective apex. However, this is necessary in order to provide a theoretical link with phenomenon.

The global mindset literature has a myriad of concepts explaining the phenomenon. Global mindset is also used as a construct explaining global leadership, adding to the confusion of what global mindset is. Hence, the need for a theoretical contribution, using existing literature is required.

Discussion

A global leader needs to understand more than a cultural context at the time, which will distinguish global leaders from expatriates. Global leaders are required to cope with a larger diversity and will be unable to acquire the same

in-depth knowledge about all cultures and nationalities he/she is interacting with. The ability to manage multiple cultures requires a mindset that is different from traditional leadership models and expatriates. The personal mindset can help global leaders to effectively perceive and interpret behavior in a multicultural context (Caliguiri, 2006). Based on the emphasis on global mindset in global leadership literature the following proposition is drawn:

Proposition 1: to become a successful global leader, the leader must develop a global mindset, which aids to understand global challenges.

Successful global leaders have a different predisposition to diversity than traditional leaders. The openness and awareness towards diversity becomes crucial elements towards a global leaders job to influence others unlike him/her. Discussing global leadership without mentioning anything about the leaders mindset, cognitive orientation, intelligence, etc seems impossible. Hence, the phenomenon of global mindset is a prerequisite of global leadership. This provides the following proposition –

Proposition 2: global mindset will either be an explicit part of the explanation of global leadership, represented through global mindset or construct development.

Based on the overview of global mindset constructs, it is either based on cognitive complexity and cosmopolitanism (Vogelgesang, Clapp-Smith & Osland, 2014) or as an outcome of intellectual, psychological and social characteristics (Javidan & Bowen, 2013; Javidan & Walker, 2013). Adding the situational, value and action capital (Sorensen, 2014) to the understanding of what a global mindset constitutes of, provides a more

complete picture of what global mindset is. Hence, It would be appropriate to propose an understanding of global mindset made up of four dimensions – cognitive, psychological, behavioural and interactional – integrating the perspective on global mindset as a phenomenon that constitutes more than just an approach to thinking and accepting, but also be able to participate in diversified settings.

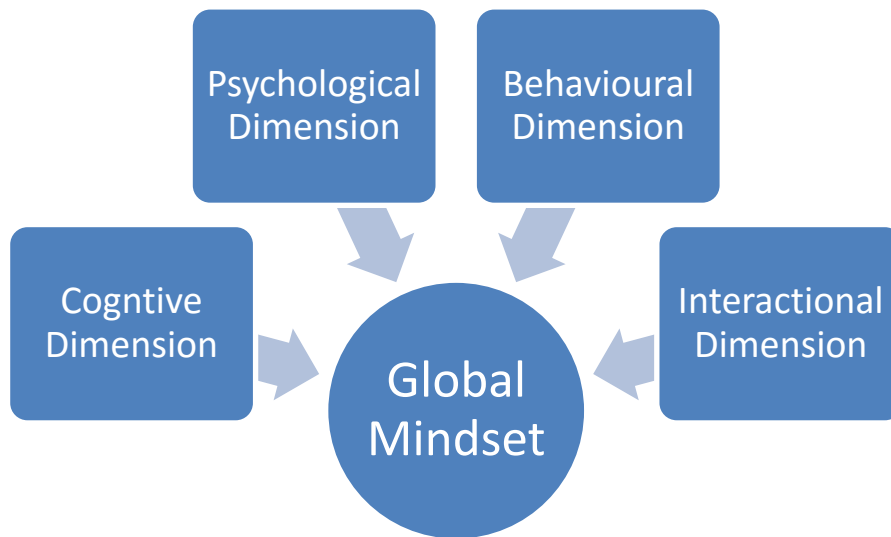


Figure: Global Mindset Dimensions

The four dimensions are equally important in the evolution of a global mindset. Lacking cognitive complexity and global knowledge will inhibit the development of personal inquisitiveness, self-awareness, emotional and cultural intelligence and the person will hesitate to participate in multicultural interactions. It

would be right to argue that global mindset is an outcome of the four dimensions and the dimensions will determine how an individual approaches multicultural context.

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