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Mindfulness: Nurturing Global Mind-set and Leadership

By

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In this article, we attempt to explore global leadership and global mind-set from the perspective of mindfulness. Through a synthesis of the literature on mindfulness and scholarship on global mind-set and global leadership, this article explicates the importance of mindfulness in developing a global mind-set and, thereby, acquiring global leadership competencies. Taking a task-analytic approach to global leadership, we attempt to elaborate on how mindfulness can act as an important antecedent for global mind-set and hence for global leadership. Implications for future research and managerial practice are highlighted. © 2015 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

Introduction

Globalization and the communication revolution have transformed the business world into a complex, dynamic, and boundary-less environment (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2003). Increasingly, firms, both small and large, have their suppliers, buyers, customers, shareholders, and employees from different parts of the world, which are geographically, socially, and culturally distinct (Gammelgaard, Kumar, & Worm, 2013). Transnational firms span across foreign markets, conceive global strategies and deal with diverse and virtual teams (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1998). Not surprisingly, developing

global competence has been shown to be positively related to firm performance (Caliguiri, 2006). According to Lane, Maznevski, and Mendenhall (2004), four aspects of the contemporary world have crucial implications in the sphere of business: (1) multiplicity across different dimensions adding to the complexity; (2) interdependence between diverse and multiple stakeholders; (3) ambiguity about the causal relationships, goals, values, and cues; and (4) flux of quick transitioning of cultures, values, and practices.

Contemporary firms look for a new breed of leaders: global leaders, who have a global mind-set (Ananthram & Nankervis, 2014; Beechler & Javidan, 2007). A global

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mind-set is characterized by (1) tolerating, accepting, and understanding diversity with an inclusive mind-set; (2) a broad and universal perspective of business; and (3) thinking openly, free from cognitive cobwebs (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). While the concept of a “global mind-set” has been explained by various researchers, scholars posit that “few theory-driven models of global mindset have been formulated” (Story, Barbuto, Luthans, & Bovaird, 2014, p. 147). Similarly, it is also proffered that there is a need to further explore the antecedents of global leadership as it has both theoretical and practical implications (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013; Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, & Osland, 2012). In this article, we contribute to the literature on global mind-set and global leadership by exploring the issue from the perspective of “mindfulness.” The global mind-set, as is described in the literature, shares a lot of ground with the concept of mindfulness, which primarily originated from Buddhist philosophy. Mindfulness has only recently attracted attention in the domain of psychology (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007a), and is conceptualized as a multifaceted construct with five constituents: observing, describing, acting with awareness, nonjudging of experience, and nonreactivity to inner experience (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). Application of mindfulness in organizational science has largely been limited to the domain of high-reliability organizations (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). In this study, we link mindfulness to the concept of global mind-set and fostering global leadership. Taking a task-analytic approach to global leadership, we argue that mindfulness enhances the global mind-set, and in turn global mind-set is important for performance of global leaders.

The article is structured as follows. In the following section, we examine the concepts of global leadership and global mind-set. Then we describe the concept of mindfulness and its five constituents. Further, we argue the role of mindfulness in nurturing global mind-set and global leadership in organizations. We juxtapose and compare the concept of “mindfulness” with the task analysis of global leaders. The article concludes by identifying potential research areas arising out of our theory-building efforts in the article.

Global Leaders, Global Mind-set, and Mindfulness

The construct of “global leadership” was born out of an organization’s need to perform in the contemporary global business environment (Mendenhall, 2008). Traditionally, global leadership has been defined as “executives who are in jobs with some international scope” (Spreitzer,

McCall, & Mahoney, 1997). Contemporarily, however, the scope of global leadership has broadened. According to Osland, Bird, Mendenhall, and Osland (2006), global leadership is “the process of influencing the thinking, attitudes, and behaviors of a global community to work together synergistically toward a common vision and common goals” (p. 204). Bird and Osland (2004) posit that moving from domestic to global leadership involves a “quantum leap” (p. 4) in perspective, and dealing with the complexity arising due to greater need of (1) cultural understanding; (2) knowledge and boundary, spanning functions across national frontiers; (3) dealing with multiple stakeholders; and (4) dealing with greater ambiguity, stress, and ethical dilemmas. Global leadership involves a move beyond “geographical reach,” to encompass “cultural reach” and “intellectual reach” (Osland et al., 2006, p. 197). According to Cappellen and Janssens (2010), global leaders need to face three types of tensions, namely, *distance versus closeness*, *hierarchy versus culture*, and *work flexibility versus family equilibrium*. In other words, to become global leaders, it is essential to change one’s worldview or mind-set.

Global Mind-set

Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) describe mind-set as how people and firms make sense of the world around and within (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). Mind-set is a “cognitive filter” (p. 116), through which we screen information from the complex, dynamic, and ambiguous environment in and around us, thus creating biases in our interpretations (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). Ananthram and Nankervis (2014, pp. 196–197) explain that global mind-set *encompasses personal philosophies or qualities, knowledge and skills, and behaviors, or a combination of these*.

The concept of a global mind-set was first introduced by Perlmutter (1969) when he described geocentric mind-set (whole-world mind-set), and differentiated it from ethnocentric (home-country) and polycentric (host-country) mind-sets. A geocentric mind-set involves tolerance, understanding, and acceptance of the differences between the cultures and the ability to integrate with them: “*Within legal and political limits, they seek the best men (sic), regardless of nationality, to solve the company’s problems anywhere in the world*” (Perlmutter, 1969, p. 13). Bartlett and Ghoshal (1998) called it a “transnational mind-set.” As per Rhinesmith (1993), “*A global mindset means the ability to scan the world from a broad perspective, always looking for unexpected trends or opportunities that may constitute a threat or an opportunity to achieve personal, professional or organizational objectives.*”

For this article we adopt the description of global mind-set as conceptualized by Levy, Beechler, Taylor and

Boyacigiller (2007). They posit that global mind-set is a “*cognitive structure that is composed of two constructs: Cosmopolitanism (an enthusiastic appreciation of other cultures) and cognitive complexity (the ability to perceive situations as highly differentiated and to integrate these differentiated constructs).*” According to them, a global mind-set involves a combination of high differentiation and high integration; that is, the individual should have a broad base of knowledge enabling him to understand the nuances of diverse perspectives (differentiation) and to integrate those diverse viewpoints (integration) (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002).

Global mind-set refers to being open to diverse cultural perspectives and articulate strategic realities after considering the nuances at both the global and local levels (Levy et al., 2007). According to Mendenhall and Bird (2013, p. 172), cosmopolitanism and cognitive complexity form an attitude and orientation that facilitates the specific skills required for global leadership, namely, system skills and interpersonal skills. Cosmopolitanism and cognitive complexity are important dimensions of the construct of global mind-set (Levy et al., 2007). In other words, while global leadership refers to the competencies of a leader to deal with complex dilemmas as discussed above, global mind-set refers to the baseline orientation on which those competencies can be built (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013).

The literature on global mind-set and global leadership is still in the emerging phase, driven by consultants and practitioners, and theoretical development of this domain requires more empirical and conceptual work (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013; Story et al., 2014). There is a lack of processual understanding of global mind-set and global leadership, and there is a need for inclusion of diverse philosophical schools of thought (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013; Osland et al., 2006).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers to a state of mind characterized by heightened awareness of self and the surrounding environment, and to be nonevaluative and nonjudgmental in experiencing the present (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007b). Mindfulness has been understood as the “process of drawing novel distinctions” (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). Langer (1997) defined mindfulness as multidimensional construct consisting of five components, namely, (1) openness to novelty, (2) alertness to distinction, (3) sensitivity to different contexts, (4) awareness about multiple perspectives, and (5) orientation in the present.

Mindfulness as a concept is distinct from a related concept of emotional intelligence (EI). EI refers to the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge;

and to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). However, mindfulness refers to experiencing the present without being judgmental or evaluative. Indeed, scholars have suggested that EI moderates the relationship between mindfulness and its outcome variables such as stress (Bao, Xue, & Kong, 2015).

The measures of mindfulness as a construct are also diverse as are the conceptualizations by various scholars. Several self-report measures have been developed to assess dispositional mindfulness, like the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI; Walach, Buchheld, Buttenmüller, Kleinknecht, & Schmidt, 2006), the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS; Baer, Smith, & Allen, 2004), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003), and the Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006). The FFMQ was derived from a comprehensive analysis, based on an exploratory factor analysis of a combination of items from all available mindfulness questionnaires. Baer et al. (2006) found that mindfulness consists of five dimensions: *observing*, *describing*, *acting with awareness*, *nonjudging of inner experience*, and *nonreactivity to inner experience*, and they came up with a Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006). The description, and sample items of the five dimensions of FFMQ, based on Baer et al. (2006) and Baer et al. (2008) are listed in Table 1. As the analysis of mindfulness by Baer et al. (2006) involved a comprehensive examination of all the existing inventories of mindfulness, in this article, we conceptualize mindfulness as a multidimensional concept with five dimensions, as described by them.

Studies have shown that the benefits of mindfulness training or induction have considerable benefits in the personal, social, and work spheres of life (Leary & Tate, 2007). While the literature has recognized the importance of global mind-set in the contemporary business environment (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Levy, Beechler, Taylor, & Boyacigiller, 2007), there have been few attempts to analyze the attributes that foster global mind-set. In this study, we examine the hitherto unexplored linkage between mindfulness, global mind-set, and global leadership. We propose that the attribute of mindfulness facilitates the development of global mind-set, which in turn is required for effective leadership in contemporary organizations. Taking a processual perspective, adopting a task-analytic approach, we elaborate on how mindfulness enhances the global mind-set, and why and how it is important for developing competencies required for performance of global leaders. The concept of global mind-set resonates with that of mindfulness.

TABLE 1 The Facets of Mindfulness and Their Organizational Implications (Based on Baer et al., 2006; Baer et al., 2008)

Factor	Example Items	Psychological/Organizational Implications for Global Mind-set and Global Leadership
Factor 1: Observing/noticing/attending to thoughts. Perceptions and feelings (tendency to notice internal and external experiences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face. • I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing. • I notice the smells and aromas of things. • I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colors, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow. • I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behavior. 	Strongly related to openness to experience (Baer, 2007). Important for creativity and innovative thinking (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000).
Factor 2: Describing, articulating (labeling with words) (to recognize and articulate feelings and emotions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words. • I'm good at thinking of words to express my perceptions, such as how things taste, smell, or sound. • My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words. • I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail. 	Ability to recognize and label emotional states is important for "emotional intelligence" and self-control (Brown et al., 2007b), which in turn facilitates decision making in crises, managing stress (Langer, 1997), and ability to communicate with others (Burgoon, Berger, & Waldron, 2000).
Factor 3: Acting with awareness (to avoid distractions and be conscious of the activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted.* • I am easily distracted.* • It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.* • I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.* • I find myself doing things without paying attention.* 	Acting with awareness decreases dissociation and absent-mindedness during tasks (Baer, 2007). The person is thus more vigilant toward minor deviations from the "routines." This aspect also improves the individual's capability to adapt to various situations (Leary & Tate, 2007).
Factor 4: Nonjudging of experience (taking a nonevaluative stand toward one's feelings and thoughts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.* • I tell myself that I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.* • I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.* • I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas.* 	Strongly correlated to emotional regulation (enhances tolerance, team work) and open thought processes (Baer, 2007; Leary & Tate, 2007). Enhances experiential avoidance and self-compassion, which facilitates novel thinking to solve problems and refrain from resorting to stereotypes (Baer, 2007). Moreover, this facet improves the social behavior of a person (Leary & Tate, 2007), facilitating team participation and discouraging hubris (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006).
Factor 5: Nonreactivity to inner experience (allowing feelings and thoughts to come and go without reacting to them)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them. • I watch my feelings without getting lost in them. • In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting. 	Enhances experiential avoidance and self-compassion (Baer, 2007), and augments self-regulatory processes (Masicampo & Baumeister, 2007).

Note: Items marked * are negatively scored.

In the next subsection, we explore the importance of mindfulness in fostering global mind-set and hence enhancing the competencies as a global leader (Caligiuri, 2006). Table 1 presents the findings from various studies on mindfulness in contemporary organization that can be related to global mind-set and global leadership. For the sake of clarity, the five facets of mindfulness (observing, describing, acting with awareness, nonjudging of inner experience, and nonreactivity to inner experience) are related separately to the specific outcomes, as highlighted in various studies.

Based on the above discussion, we propose that:

Proposition 1: *Mindfulness acts as an antecedent to global mind-set, which in turn fosters global leadership.*

Mindfulness and Global Mind-set

We know the world by processing the stimuli present around us. The stimuli are perceived and processed according to our mental schemas, which in turn are developed on the basis of our knowledge and experience.

These schemas help us to process information quickly. However, these very schemas are the source of bias and subjectivity in perception and assessment of the stimuli, and thus restrict our worldview and our capacity to appreciate and understand the nuances of diverse stimuli. To be mindful is to experience the moment in its pure form as a liberated individual, free from emotions, impulses, habits, and biases (Leary & Tate, 2007; Rosch, 2007). Mindfulness thus entails freedom from rigid mind-sets and mental schemas, from illusionary restrictions and from a false sense of “ego”; these aspects can be directly related to the conceptualization of the global mind-set (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Thomas, 2006).

In dealing with diverse cultures, leaders need to actively seek to observe, learn about, and understand their perspectives (Jokinen, 2005). A leader must be a keen observer of the surrounding environment and realize the gap between foreign culture and one’s own, and also be aware of the philosophical bases that create the gap. Thus, observing can be regarded as the first step of learning. “Discovering” has been regarded as a key process for developing and nurturing a global mind-set (Lane, Maznevski, & Mendenhall, 2004). Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) recognize the importance of curiosity about the world and Osland et al. (2006) consider pattern recognition as important aspects to foster global mind-set. Cseh et al. (2013, p. 489) recognize *plasticity of the mind (flexible, thinking differently; rebalancing; open; multiple frames)* as important to developing a global mind-set. They further state that leaders rely on informal learning processes to seek knowledge about different cultural dimensions that are encountered. Mindfulness, especially the “observing” and “acting with awareness” dimensions, are arguably important for developing an open and flexible mind, which in turn enables learning and helps in creating a global mind-set.

Mindfulness improves creativity (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000) and enhances attention (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). Mindfulness entails active thinking, enhancing participation rather than just the passive reception of information (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000), thus preventing a person from resorting to absentminded “automatic pilot” behavior (Baer et al., 2006). This clears the cobwebs of rigid mind-sets that restrict thought processes and inhibit openness from illusionary restrictions and from a false sense of “ego” (Lieberman & Langer, 1997). The above aspects of mindfulness enhance the capability to understand diverse perspectives, accept contradictions, and come up with innovative solutions to complex issues, thus augmenting the differentiating and integrating abilities in leaders, fostering a global mind-set.

Global mind-set requires openness of communication and interpretation. Perceptions should be communicated explicitly and swiftly among colleagues, superiors, and subordinates from different cultures, so that it fosters an open environment (Jokinen, 2005). Explicating one’s viewpoints is the first step to making others aware about oneself and to seeking feedback about one’s assumptions and perceptions, which in turn will facilitate understanding of others’ worldview. Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) proffer that explicit and self-conscious articulation of the current mind-set is an important part of the process of developing a global mind-set. Mindfulness, especially its “describing” dimension, which represents the ability to articulate one’s thoughts and feelings, thus facilitates global mind-set.

Global mind-set involves dealing with complex interactions between multiple stakeholders and viewing business as a social system. Researchers have identified “systems thinking” (Lane et al., 2004), seeing the big picture (Jokinen, 2005), and cognitive complexity (Caligiuri, 2006) as key attributes that foster global mind-set. According to Jokinen (2005), self-awareness is an important aspect of global mind-set, creating insight about ego and self-concept, and enabling the leader to develop listening skills and to understand the viewpoints of others. Mindfulness prevents tunnel vision and dissociation and helps in creating a universal perspective (Baer, 2007). Mindfulness tends to broaden the scope of cognitive attention to the whole, with the interaction of parts within the context, including the context itself (Brown et al., 2007a; Heppner & Kernis, 2007). Langer (2002) put this forth metaphorically by stating that walls, ceilings, and floors of one’s life become transparent like glass, enabling a larger and clearer picture. Mindfulness thus fosters a global mind-set, which requires an inclusive consideration of multiple stakeholders (Bird & Osland, 2004), systems thinking (Lane et al., 2004) and high differentiation and high integration of knowledge base (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002).

Juxtaposing conflicting view-points may create situations that are emotionally disturbing and stressful. A global mind-set involves understanding and accepting complexities and contradictions (Jokinen, 2005). An emotionally charged response to any stressful stimulus can blunt rational thinking (Brown et al., 2007a), activate stereotypes and judgmental evaluation based on prior schemas (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006), thus inhibiting the cognitive processing of information. Mindfulness suspends judgmental blunting of stimuli and knee-jerk reactions to complex situations without getting into its nuances, thus enabling nonevaluatory experience of thought processes

(allowing the feelings to come and go). Mindfulness has been shown to decrease aggressive behavior to negative feedbacks (Heppner & Kernis, 2007) and reduce the automatic stereotype-activated behavior (Djikic, Langer, & Stapleton, 2008). The less aggressive reactions of highly mindful people have been attributed to better self-control (Brown et al., 2007b) and a decreased tendency to perceive other's ambiguous behavior as malevolent (Heppner & Kernis, 2007). Therefore, mindfulness can reduce cross-cultural misunderstandings, enhance interpersonal relationships (Burgoon et al., 2000), and improve social behavior (Leary & Tate, 2007) as well as the capability to manage interpersonal conflicts (Burgoon et al., 2000). Mindfulness nurtures a global mind-set by promoting teamwork and collaboration (Lane et al., 2004); enhancing sensitivity to others' viewpoint, thus enabling an understanding of diverse perspectives and developing an integrated view (Bird & Osland, 2004; Lane et al., 2004); and augmenting emotional intelligence and self-regulation (Baer et al., 2006; Masicampo & Baumeister, 2007). This in turn improves social skills (Leary & Tate, 2007; Burgoon et al., 2000) and enhances tolerance (Kabat-Zinn, 2003), thereby facilitating an understanding of, and adaptation to, diverse cultures, the key aspect of leading globally (Thomas, 2006). Further, mindfulness also enhances the ability to develop criteria without being bound by the assumptions of one's culture or context (Jokinen, 2005) and to implement plans appropriately in diverse cultures (Jokinen, 2005). Disentangling of thought process from judgmental and reactive behavior enables proper cognitive processes even in a potentially threatening environment (Brown et al., 2007b).

On the basis of preceding arguments, we propose that:

Proposition 2: *Leaders who are more mindful are more likely to develop a global mind-set.*

Global Mind-set and Global Leadership

Global leaders have to deal with diversities across various dimensions: national, geographic, cultural, social, and economic (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999). They must interact continually with colleagues, subordinates, vendors, and internal and external customers, from diverse cultures, seeking to engage in a meaningful, positive dialogue.

Four processes are important for global leaders: collaborating, discovering, architecting, and systems thinking (Lane et al., 2004). Holt and Seki (2012, p. 196) proffer that global leaders have to deal with multicultural and paradoxical complexities, which requires developing

multicultural effectiveness, becoming adept at managing paradoxes, cultivating the "being" dimension of human experience, and appreciating individual uniqueness in the context of cultural differences. At a more specific level, we can analyze global leadership using the job analytic approach (Sandberg, 2000), which considers certain sets of KSAOs (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other personality characteristics) to be important for tasks involved in a particular job. Caligiuri (2006) described the following specific KSAOs as essential for performance as a global leader: (a) *knowledge*—culture-general knowledge, culture-specific knowledge, and international business knowledge; (b) *skills and abilities*—intercultural interaction skills, foreign language skills; and (c) *personality*—extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness.

A global leader's task requires working with colleagues and subordinates from different countries, from contrasting value and belief systems (Caligiuri, 2006). These situations make them face multiple conflicting worldviews and a need to make sense out of the complexity (Brown et al., 2007b). Global leaders ought to work efficiently under ambiguity, stress and anxiety, and ethical dilemmas (Bird & Osland, 2004). Further, as a global leader has to interact with diverse colleagues, clients, and subordinates, good intercultural interaction skills and foreign language skills form an important repertoire of his KSAOs (Caligiuri, 2006). Bücken and Poutsma (2010) propose that global leadership requires cultural intelligence, multicultural knowledge, and intercultural sensitivity. Cosmopolitanism, a crucial dimension of global mind-set, enables global leaders to appreciate various dimensions of diversity and to develop intercultural intelligence and sensitivity, enhancing the multicultural interaction skills. Cognitive complexity facilitates them to apprehend the nuances of the diversities and to innovatively integrate along conflicting worldviews. Thus, a global mind-set facilitates competencies required for global leadership.

Global leaders must view business as an embedded social system. As the firm expands into global markets and paradoxical circumstances, managers' philosophy and values may conflict with the local social systems, values, and philosophy. Smith and Lewis (2012) posit that one of the important skills for global leadership is to effectively deal with these paradoxes. Researchers have identified "systems thinking" (Lane et al., 2004) and seeing the big picture (Jokinen, 2005) as key attributes of global leaders, which can enable them to deal with paradoxes (Smith & Lewis, 2012). A combination of differentiating and integrating capabilities, which are characteristic of a global mind-set, enables leaders to digest complexity and

visualize the bigger picture. Bonnstetter (2000) likens a global leader to a master craftsman, when he highlights the importance of differentiating and integrating capabilities. According to him a global leader, as a master craftsman, can *connect the brightest colors of diverse cultures, seamlessly, in a complementary design, capturing and preserving the best traditions of each* (Bonnstetter, 2000, p. 144).

According to Rhinesmith (1995, p. 34), an important aspect of global leadership entails the “*ability to scan the world ... always looking for unexpected trends and opportunities. ...*” Global leaders may face unexpected and novel surprises anytime in the process, requiring innovative and creative ways to solve problems. Appropriate action in these situations may require openness to interpretations and suggestions of team members, irrespective of their hierarchy (Caligiuri, 2006), and a creative and innovative thought process (Jokinen, 2005) for developing a common understanding (Beechler & Javidan, 2007). Cosmopolitanism and cognitive complexity facilitates the leader to free him/herself from the rigid mind-sets that constrain the creative thought processes and generation of new ideas (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). A global mind-set sensitizes the global leader to diversity and enhances the creative and innovative thought processes. Thus, mindfulness enables leaders to develop a global mind-set, which in turn enhances the competencies required for global leadership as illustrated in Figure 1.

Hence, we propose that:

Proposition 3: *Leaders who have more of a global mind-set are more likely to develop global leadership competencies.*

Discussion and Conclusion

Leadership in contemporary organizations involves understanding of, and dealing with, multiple stakeholders. The multiple stakeholders may involve diversity along various dimensions such as geographic or national, ethnicity, cultural, economic, and social. Effective leadership in such organizations entails effective dealing with the complexities arising from these diversities, which in turn requires developing a global mind-set. Global mind-set refers to a cognitive structure that is characterized by

broad knowledge base and alertness to the nuances in diverse perspectives (differentiation) and an integrative perspective on cultural and strategic dimensions (integration) (Levy et al., 2007). The attribute of “mindfulness,” as described in the Oriental philosophies and studied in psychology literature, enhances the capability to actively engage with diverse and conflicting viewpoints, to understand and accept the diverse viewpoints, and to visualize and create a “bigger” picture. Extant literature on global leadership proffers attributes required for effective performance in the globalized era (Cseh, Davis, & Khilji, 2013; Holt & Seki, 2012). Bayraktar and Oly Ndubisi (2014) suggest that mindfulness plays a significant role in internationalization and global expansion of the firm and its performance in the global market.

Our study contributes to the existing literature by drawing upon the concepts of mindfulness and global mind-set to develop a framework for explicating the antecedents for global leadership competencies. The article emphasizes the importance of the concept of mindfulness in contemporary organizations, in fostering global mind-set and global leadership. Though global mind-set and global leadership are commonly used terminologies in organizations, scholars posit that there is a need to explicate the antecedents of these popular concepts to enhance the understanding of both academicians and managers (Story et al., 2014; Wilhelm & Bort, 2013).

The synthesis of the literature on mindfulness highlighted a few areas that need further attention and exploration. Can the training in mindfulness enhance performance in the organizational settings for the tasks, which require global leadership skills and global mind-set? If so, to what extent does it help? Should the training in mindfulness involve the metaphysical attention and spirituality, from which it derives its origin? How does one explicate the construct of mindfulness, and will it vary from situation to situation, such as from clinical to organizational and spiritual settings? Mindfulness is always preferred over mindlessness, as is presented by scholars like Langer (Sternberg, 2002). However, in the contemporary business world, which is highly complex and ambiguous (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2003), it may be better to filter out some environmental stimuli, or act

FIGURE 1 Mindfulness as Implicated in Development of Global Mind-set and Performance of Global Leaders



according to protocols to complete that part of the task that requires repetitive inputs, and have more time dedicated to the “variable” part of work (Levinthal & Rerup, 2006). It seems this flexibility to switch from mindless to mindful state, and to be selectively mindful, may be more important than the average level of mindfulness. Future research may explore the optimal balance between the two and how to achieve it. Future empirical research may also look at the multiple dimensions of mindfulness and how each dimension relates to specific aspects of global mind-set and global leadership.

The concepts of global leadership, global mind-set, and mindfulness are in the emerging phase in organization literature. The managerial implications of the study of mindfulness in global leadership skills are significant. It can especially help in designing more effective training and development programs to foster global mind-set. This article is one step forward in the direction of understanding the processual part of global leadership, an area hitherto unexplored. Empirical studies to link mindfulness and global leadership could provide more clarity on the relation between the two.



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