A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Joana S. P. Story

NOVA School of Business and Economics, Portugal

Global leadership development has received increased attention in recent years from practitioners and researchers. Drawing from global mindset, constructive development, and intercultural sensitivity literatures, this article proposes a model for developing global leaders. While developmental activities are challenging for most individuals, it is proposed that training domestic leaders to develop psychological capital will facilitate their growth into global leaders.

Leadership is extremely important for organizational success in this globalized economy. The majority of leaders deal with the reality of the global economy every day. Despite this fact, most leaders have not been trained, educated, and prepared to deal with the complexity of this environment (Black & Mendenhall, 2007). Also, very little research has looked into what it takes to develop a “global leader” (Smith & Peterson, 2002).

The literature on global leadership provides many articles that state traits, characteristics, and attitudes of successful global leaders; but few attempt to lay a foundation on how to actually develop individuals into global leaders (Hall, Zhu, & Yan, 2001). The lack of research in this area is apparent and it mirrors the void of organizations, as 85% of Fortune 500 executives believe that their organization lacks capable global leaders (Gregersen, Morrison, & Black, 1998; Morrison, 2000). With the increasingly global environment, leaders are exposed to many complex challenges and what we know about leadership theory and development may no longer be effective in this global context (Robinson & Harvey, 2008). Sloan, Hazucha, and Van Katwyk (2003) asserted that global leadership development should be part of the strategic plan of any organization that wants to flourish in the global market.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a model for global leadership development. The model indicates that there are three steps necessary for a leader to become a global leader. Leaders need to develop a global mindset, develop a self-authored identity, and develop an adaptation worldview. Given that these are challenging developmental activities, it is also proposed that individuals develop psychological capital to facilitate their global leadership
development process. Thus, psychological capital was added as a moderating variable in the model, which means that individuals who have hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism will be more likely develop a global mindset, a self-authored identity, and cultural sensitivity. Figure 1 depicts a summary of the model proposed in this paper.

![Figure 1. A Developmental Model for Global Leaders.](image)

This paper is organized into five sections. The first reports a brief review of the literature on global leadership. The second explores the role of a global mindset in developing global leaders. The third explores the role of constructive development theory, specifically self-authored identity, and how that contributes to the development of a global leader. The fourth examines the role of intercultural sensitivity, specifically an adaptation worldview, in the development of a global leader. The fifth investigates the role of psychological capital in the process of global leadership development.

**Global Leadership**

Global leadership has been defined as “being capable of operating effectively in a global environment while being respectful of cultural diversity” (Harris, Moran, & Moran, 2004, p. 25). While setting a single definition of global leadership is key in order to study it, the phenomenon it is still hard to understand. The global leadership literature draws from many different fields that don’t seem to communicate efficiently. In a review of the literature, Hollenbeck (2001) argued that there are six perspectives scholars have taken when studying global leadership: viewing global leaders as working across cultural and national boundaries; viewing global leadership as cross-cultural leadership; viewing global leadership as expatriate leadership; examining the traits, motivators, attitudes, skills, and personal background to build a profile of what an ideal global leader would look like; arguing that leadership literature doesn’t differentiate between global and domestic leaders; and finally, looking at adult learning literatures.

These theoretical and construct problems contribute to the global leadership development gap, which continues to become a constraint on growth and effectiveness in organizations.
(Zahra, 1998). According to Sloan et al. (2003), there is a shortage of globally developed talent. Graen and Hui (1999) argued that there are many difficulties in developing global leaders; however, it is a necessary endeavor if organizations are to succeed in this global environment. Beyond the difficulties already listed, McCall (2001) stated that “developing global perspective is a decidedly unnatural act. You have to be forced” (p. 304). McCall added it should be part of the organization’s business strategy. Many argue that global mindset development is related to the development of a global leader (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999).

Global Mindset

Global mindset is one of those terms that many scholars and practitioners in management can, for the most part, understand, define, and talk about. In global leadership literature, global mindset has been used to describe many things from skills, attitudes, competencies, behaviors, strategies, and practices (Levy, Beechler, Taylor, & Boyacigiller, 2007). One thing that scholars seem to agree on is that having a global mindset is necessary to be an effective leader in the global environment (Levy et al., 2007).

The seminal work on global mindset is the work of Perlmutter (1969), which made the distinction between three orientations managers have used while managing a multinational corporation: ethnocentric (home country orientation), polycentric (host country orientation), and geocentric (world orientation). His work on geocentrism became the foundation of the construct of global mindset.

While Perlmutter (1969) looked at global mindset at the organizational level, Rhinesmith (1992) described global mindset at the individual level. He defined a global mindset as an individual’s state of being that allows him or her to look at the world with a broad perspective, analyzing its trends and opportunities. Kefalas (1998) proposed a framework of global mindset that included two variables, conceptualization and contextualization. Conceptualization describes a person who has a global view of the world. Contextualization describes a person’s capacity to adapt to the local environment. A person’s high score in both dimensions was considered as most global and a person’s low score on both dimensions was considered as least global. Arora, Jaju, Kefalas, and Perenich (2004) tested Kefalas’ (1998) framework in the textile industry and concluded that two different skills seem to be the most relevant for developing a global mindset: intercultural sensitivity and global business knowledge.

Kedia and Mukherji (1999) stated that managers, in order to become global, need to change their paradigm and mindset to think globally, which is more complex. Murtha, Lenway, and Bagozzi (1998) operationalized global mindset in terms of managers’ cognitive process of international strategy and organization.

Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) proposed a conceptual framework of global mindset that has been described individually and organizationally. They defined global mindset as a combination of an awareness and openness to cultures and markets and the ability to make sense of its complexities. Their framework included two variables, integration and differentiation. Integration was described as the ability to integrate diversity across cultures and markets. Differentiation was described as openness to diversity across cultures and markets. Gupta and Govindarajan proposed that scores high in integration and differentiation mean that an organization or a person has a global mindset.

Bouquet (2005) reported that there are three overarching behaviors related to a global mindset. One is the capacity to process and analyze global business information. The second is
the capacity to develop relationships with key stakeholders around the world. The third is the capacity to use globally relevant information while making decisions for the organization. Beechler and Javidan (2007) proposed that global mindset is a combination of an individual’s knowledge and cognitive and psychological characteristics that make him/her able to influence diverse stakeholders. Levy, Taylor, Boyacigiller, and Beechler (2007) defined global mindset “as a highly complex cognitive structure characterized by an openness to and articulation of multiple cultural and strategic realities on both global and local levels, and the cognitive ability to mediate and integrate across this multiplicity” (p. 27). This is the operational definition used in this article.

It is apparent that global mindset development should be a key central focus for global leadership development. International experience (Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall, & Stroh, 1999; Hall et al., 2001), international management development, and cross-cultural training programs (Stahl, 2001) play a role in the development of global mindset. However, Black et al. (1999) argued that international assignment by itself may not lead to global mindset development. Boyacigiller, Beechler, Taylor, and Levy (2004) stated that expatriate assignments must be carefully managed, with tasks or assignments that build on the difficulty of the job to impact the global mindset. They also proposed that international business trips at the beginning of managers’ career could potentially help them develop a global mindset. Trigger events also contribute to the development of a global mindset (Clapp-Smith, Luthans, & Avolio, 2007).

Cultivating curiosity has also been proposed for the development of global mindset (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). Estienne (1997) proposed that cross-cultural trainings have not achieved the desirable results because of the lack of focus on an individual’s mindset. According to Estienne, cultivating a global mindset is much more relevant and challenging than a simple set of skills as it has to do with how individuals make sense of the world. Estienne (1997) proposed that development should focus on changing from a domestic to a global mindset, working through a model of cross-cultural reconciliation (understanding similarity and difference) and emphasizing strong relational skills. Without these, cross-cultural training will continue to disappoint (Estienne). Clapp-Smith and Hughes (2007) set out to investigate how global mindset is developed by using a grounded theory approach. They reported that boundary testing, cognitive shifts, curiosity, relationship building, organizational mindset, language skills, personal history, and authenticity have been proposed to be determinants of a global mindset.

Proposition 1: Global mindset will mediate the relationship between domestic leadership and global leadership.

**Constructive Development**

Based on constructive theory, Kegan (1982) argued that the method by which individuals understand reality develops over time. Kegan proposed that the development of an individual occurs in 5 measurable qualitative shifts in perceptions, or “orders of consciousness.” Each order of consciousness is subject to specific rules, which direct how a person makes meaning; however, the person is unaware of this system. At the moment individuals become aware of their meaning-making system, they become able to think critically about it, which leads them to shift to another stage. These shifts occur because of life experiences, crises, or other precipitated events (Kegan). A development does not occur because an individual becomes more knowledgeable, but because he or she makes sense of the world differently (Kegan). According
to Kegan, these stages of development are sequential and hierarchical, with each stage being more complex than the one before and representing a qualitative change in understanding.

Kegan’s (1982) first two stages are related to infancy and childhood; as such, they are not applicable to global leadership development and will be only described briefly. The first stage (Impulsive) is associated with meaning making based on immediate impulses (Kegan). The second stage (Instrumental) is characterized by the sense of self-concept and a private world. This occurs between the ages of 5 and 7 as a child becomes aware of others and their needs but has no sense of being responsible for others’ needs (Kegan). Their own needs become the way they make meaning of the world. While this occurs at a young age, many people do not advance through the next stage (Taylor & Marienau, 1997).

The third stage (Socialized) is characterized by the shift from individuals being narcissistic to being able to demonstrate empathy (Kegan, 1982). Thus, in this stage, individuals become able to understand another’s point of view, even when it might be different from their own. Individuals at this stage are capable of mutuality and reciprocal social obligation, but are incapable of having an identity that is not rooted in others. Furthermore, they value others intrinsically (for the connection they represent) instead of extrinsically (what can that person do for their need—2nd stage) (Taylor & Marienau, 1997). Individuals at this stage need societal approval as they operate on the basis of values, ideals, and beliefs with which they were raised (e.g., school, religion, and political party) (Kegan). Thus, individuals justify their behaviors in order to please a person, a group, or an institution. Since people that achieve this order of consciousness may function successfully in our society, some do not develop further, encompassing the majority of adults in the United States (Taylor & Marienau).

The fourth stage (Self-Authorizing) is characterized by the emergence of a true self-authored identity. Thus, individuals at this stage define who they are and have internal rules that they utilize to make decisions. They regulate their roles and relationships. Their self becomes a system of personal standards and values that create consistency across many situations (Kegan, 1982). Individuals at this stage are able to make highly complex decisions. These decisions are not necessarily rooted within institutional values, but within their own created value system. Only 20-30% of the population ever reaches this stage (Eriksen, 2006).

The fifth stage (Self-Transformation) is characterized by an individual’s awareness of his or her own self-system. This causes individuals to find themselves no longer synonymous with their ideological self-system. Thus, individuals at this stage realize that there are limits to their own inner meaning-making system and also identify the limits of having a system. They see the world as full of limitations and in various shades of gray. They are capable of recognizing not just the existence but also the validity of multiple perspectives (Kegan, 1982). Individuals that reach this stage may encounter some alienation, as people from other stages are not capable of understanding what their belief system is.

Lewis and Jacobs (1992) along with Jaques and Clement (1991) argued that the complexity of the leadership position has implications for who should hold these positions. Leaders in complex positions such as global leaders need to have the capacity to generate an independent perspective on the strategic environment, especially a global environment. This independence seems to be possible only at the fourth stage where individuals construe their own value system, which helps them make decisions. Lewis and Jacobs also proposed that selection methodologies should seek to match the employee’s constructive capacity to the complexity of the job, while leadership development programs should focus on stretching individuals beyond their constructive capacity with the help of a mentor, who can assist in the transition to a new
way of viewing the world. McCauley, Drath, Palus, O’Connor, and Baker (2006) stated that individuals who operate under the 4th stage or have a self-authored identity are more likely be more effective leaders in modern organizations because they are more accountable, use appropriate influence tactics, embrace change, and are more comfortable with complexity.

Thus, individuals who make decisions based on their own created value system will be most likely capable of effectively taking the role of a global leader. Accordingly, organizations should either select individuals that have self-authored identities, or should select activities that are appropriately matched to the developmental level of the individuals. Many developmental activities can be proposed; however, the Subject-Object Interview should be used to track an individual’s order of consciousness (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988). Based on the results of this interview, individuals can have targeted developmental activities for their continuous development. For example, creating situations that are ambiguous and challenging have been proposed to make individuals shift from one stage to the other (Kegan, 1982). Promoting them to jobs that are highly complex may also provide development; however, individuals that are not ready (2nd stage) could act immorally and without thinking about consequences because their meaning making system is rooted within their own needs. This leads to the following proposition:

Proposition 2: A self-authored identity (as defined by Kegan) will mediate the relationship between domestic leadership and global leadership.

Intercultural Sensitivity

Within the globalized economy, increased attention has been placed on cross-cultural studies of leadership (studies that compare two or more cultures), especially with the boost of multinational organizations (see Bass, 1990 for a review). Furthermore, the emergence of supranational corporations as a response to the globalization efforts has posed a big challenge to the prevalent culture and governance practices of nations (Bhasa, 2004). Many reviews have been conducted looking at the literature of cross-cultural leadership (Bass; House, Wright, & Aditya, 1997; Peterson & Hunt, 1997; Smith & Peterson, 2002; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, Gupta, & GLOBE Associates, 2004), demonstrating how important this research segment is for organizational studies. Groundbreaking research has been also been conducted primarily with the GLOBE project (House et al.). However, most of that research focused on middle management characteristics, cultural characteristics, and leadership styles. Studies have found that cultural characteristics impact leadership in organizations, but it is relatively unexplored how global leaders acquire the capacity to lead in extremely diverse environments (Oddou, Mendenhall, & Ritchie, 2000). While cross-cultural skills are necessary for a global leader to be effective, global leaders need to have a stronger understanding of how multiple differing cultures can impact global business decisions and relations (Adler, 2001; Estienne, 1997). For instance, a global leader living in Brazil has to negotiate with executives in South Africa and Japan. This global leader needs to be culturally sensitive in order to be successful. However, if that leader only receives culture-specific trainings, he or she is more likely to miss nuances of each culture, which can lead to many problems (Estienne, 1997).

Bennett (1993) proposed a model that describes the development of intercultural sensitivity ranging from ethnocentric to ethnorelative experience of cultural differences. According to Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003), intercultural sensitivity refers to the
ability to distinguish and experience relevant cultural differences. Hammer et al. stated that the greater the intercultural sensitivity, the greater the potential for exercising intercultural competence. Intercultural competence was described as the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways, which is the ability to act appropriately in a variety of cultural settings. This means that individuals who are interculturally competent not only understand cross-cultural differences, but also cultural nuances that are often hard to pick out. These skills seem particularly central for global leaders. Bennett’s model is developmental in nature, which means that training opportunities for global leaders can be developed.

Bennett’s (1993) model was created to explain how people interpret cultural differences. Bennett identified six stages that people move through in their acquisition of intercultural competence. Bennett’s model is similar to Kegan’s (1982) model, as it also adopts a constructivist approach wherein experience is a function of how one makes meaning of events. In other words, the extent to which culture differences will be experienced is a function of how complexity can be construed. Each stage in this worldview structure generates new and more complicated issues to be resolved in intercultural encounters. The model describes three stages that are conceptualized as ethnocentric (one’s own culture is experienced as central to reality), and three stages that are conceptualized as ethnorelative (one’s own culture is experienced in the context of others).

The first stage (Denial) is characterized by individuals experiencing their own culture as the only authentic one. Thus, there is denial that cultural differences even exist. When individuals in the denial phase experience culture differences, they associate this with a categorization such as “foreign” or “immigrant” (Hammer et al., 2003). People with a denial worldview are not interested in different cultures, and if exposed they may act in a hostile way to eliminate the differences (Bennett, 1993). Thus, leaders at this stage could be very effective in leading a group from a homogeneous cultural background, but when exposed to another cultural group they cannot make sense of the cultural differences and will try everything to “fix the problem.”

The second stage (Defense) is characterized by individuals experiencing their own culture as the only realistic one. Thus, while they do not deny that differences exist, individuals at this stage are more threatened by differences than individuals in the denial condition. In this stage, the world is organized into “us” versus “them,” where one culture is perceived to be better than another (Bennett, 1993). A variation form of defense is reversal, where an adopted culture is experienced as superior to the culture that one grew up in (e.g., Peace Corps Syndrome). Thus, reversal still holds a defense worldview by maintaining the divergence between “us” and “them.” However, it does not hold the other culture as a threat (unlike the defense worldview) (Bennett). Thus, leaders at this stage feel threatened by individuals from a different cultural background and possibly will alienate those individuals or that particular group. At this stage, discrimination is more likely to occur and there is potential for behaviors that are very culturally inappropriate.

The third stage (Minimization) is characterized by individuals experiencing their own culture as universal. Thus, the threat associated with denial and defense is neutralized by projecting these differences into familiar categories. Cultural differences may be subordinated by the idea that people have the same needs. This similarity may also be experienced as assuming that there is a cross-cultural applicability of certain concepts (i.e., business norms, where good business should be good business everywhere) (Bennett, 1993). Thus, leaders at this stage will most likely treat individuals the same, despite their cultural differences (treat individuals as you would like to be treated). However, this form of treatment is based on the leader’s own cultural
biases, which may cause problems in forming and sustaining relationships. These first three stages are comprised of the ethnocentric views.

The fourth stage (Acceptance) is characterized by individuals that experience their own culture as just one of many. People with this worldview are capable of experiencing others as different from themselves. Thus, individuals are not experts in one or more cultures; rather, they are skilled at identifying how cultural differences operate in a wide range of human interaction. It is important to point out that acceptance does not mean agreement as some cultural differences may be judged negatively (Bennett, 1993). For example, a culturally sensitive person could believe that female circumcision is cruel and should not be done, despite the fact that it is culturally based. Thus, leaders at this stage can understand behaviors of others and make meaning of why conflict may be happening with individuals of different cultural groups. While working abroad, leaders can identify cultural patterns that make them understand the experience as a whole.

The fifth stage (Adaptation) is characterized by individuals that experience another culture and from this experience are able to behave in appropriate ways in that culture. People at this stage can engage in empathy and they are able to express their alternative cultural experience with culturally appropriate feelings and behaviors. If this process becomes habitual, it can become the basis of biculturality or multiculturality (Bennett, 1993). Thus, leaders with this worldview can become easily adaptable and can be respectful and sensitive of the culture of the host country and can lead diverse groups effectively.

The sixth stage (Integration) is characterized by individuals that experience their selves as expanded to include the movement in and out of worldviews. Individuals at this stage are dealing with issues related to their own “cultural marginality,” as they construe their identity at the margins of two or more cultures and central to none. Bennett (1993) proposed that there are two forms of this marginality: encapsulated marginality, where the separation from culture is experienced as alienation, and constructive marginality, where movements in and out of cultures are necessary and positive parts of one’s identity. Thus, leaders at this stage may have become confused about their own cultural identity because they can assimilate and understand many cultures. It is important to point out that integration is not necessarily better than adaptation in situations demanding intercultural competence, it just describes different characteristics (Hammer et al., 2003). These last three stages are comprised of the ethnorelative views.

Leaders that are required to work in this globalized world are effective only if they are capable of understanding cultural differences and behave in ways that are appropriate in each experienced culture. An effective global leader must be culturally aware and adaptable. This means that they need to be grounded in how different cultures operate and accomplish organizational objectives (Fulkerson, 1999).

This means that when developing global leaders, it is necessary for individuals to develop an adaptation worldview, or that individuals with an adaptation worldview should be developed into global leaders. This can be done by first using the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Hammer et al., 2003), which measures what a person’s worldview is with regards to their intercultural sensitivity. For example, if an individual is at denial/defense stage, there are many more challenges this person will need to overcome and many issues will need to be resolved before they are close to achieving an ethnorelative view of the world. On the other hand, if an individual has an acceptance worldview, it is less challenging to move to a cultural adaptation worldview. Thus, human resources could use the Intercultural Development Inventory as a tool with which to train and develop individuals to become effective global leaders (Lokkesmoe, 2008) by first
recognizing how they view the world in terms of cultural differences and then designing individual programs that will help them shift from one stage to another. This leads to the following proposition:

Proposition 3: A culture adaptation worldview will mediate the relationship between domestic leadership and global leadership.

**Psychological Capital**

Drawing from positive psychology, positive organizational behavior (POB) emerged to apply positive oriented strengths and psychological capacities in the workplace. These strengths and capacities can be measured and developed (Luthans, 2002). Four distinct variables have been proposed to represent these strengths and capacities: hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism.

Snyder et al. (1991) defined hope as “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-oriented energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (p. 287). According to this definition, hope has three major conceptual foundations: agency, pathways, and goals. Snyder, Sympon, Michael, and Cheavens (2000) have demonstrated the development of hope across multiple studies.

Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) defined self-efficacy as the “individual’s conviction about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context.” This definition was based on the extensive research on efficacy by Bandura (1997). Bandura argued task mastery, vicarious learning or modeling, social persuasion, and psychological or physiological arousal could develop efficacy.

Resiliency is defined as the ability of an individual to bounce back from hardship, failure, and setback (Luthans & Youssef, 2004).

Seligman (1998) described an optimistic person as one who makes internal, stable, and global attributions regarding positive events, but attributes external, unstable, and specific reasons for negative events.

**PsyCap as a Core Construct**

Taken together these four variables describe Psychological Capital (PsyCap) as a distinct higher-order construct. All PsyCap variables meet the criteria for inclusion in POB by including variables that are “state-like” (malleable and open to development) as opposed to “trait-like” (relatively stable and difficult to change), because the variables are based on positive capacities, are theoretical, and have a valid measurement (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Thus, Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007) defined PsyCap as:

An individual’s positive psychological state of development that is characterized by (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset any problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success. (p. 3)

As a higher order construct, there is an underlying theme between the variables that represent a positive assessment of situations and the resources available along with the prosperity one can
achieve based on personal effort, perseverance, and striving to achieve excellence (Luthans et al.).

PsyCap has been proposed to increase competitive advantage and performance (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Li (2005) reported PsyCap to be correlated with performance in an international environment. Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs (2006) developed and demonstrated a psychological capital intervention to increase PsyCap in the participants. Luthans et al. (2007) reported a significant relationship between PsyCap with performance and satisfaction. Luthans, Norman, Avolio, and Avey (2008) reported employee’s PsyCap sharing a positive relationship with performance, satisfaction, and commitment. Furthermore, they reported that PsyCap mediated the relationship between supportive climate and performance. Youssef and Luthans (2007) reported that PsyCap was related to performance, satisfaction, work happiness, and organizational commitment. Clapp-Smith, Luthans, and Avolio (2007) argued that PsyCap mediates the relationship between cognitive capacity and cultural intelligence in the development of a global mindset. In accordance, it is argued that PsyCap will aid the development of an effective global leader, as individuals will have hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism when faced with challenging developmental characteristics such as development of a global mindset, a self-authored identity, and a cultural adaptation worldview. Furthermore, as the other variables proposed in the model, PsyCap is open to training and development (Luthans et al., 2006).

Proposition 4: Psychological Capital will moderate the relationship between domestic leadership and global mindset, self-authored identity, and cultural adaptation worldviews.

Discussion

In this paper, a developmental model for global leaders was articulated. This model includes global mindset, constructive development, intercultural sensitivity, and psychological capital theories. Research behind the model was drawn from many fields, including global leadership, expatriate leadership, cross-cultural leadership, adult learning, developmental models, and positive organizational behavior theory.

While much of the literature on development of global leaders emphasizes that global leaders have some traits such as openness (Hall et al., 2001), cultural awareness (Adler, 1997), and cognitive capacity (Dalton, 1998), they do not offer theoretical developmental strategies that can be measured and researched. The aim of this paper is to argue for further development of a potential global leader. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to clarify technical skills that global leaders need to do their job, it is argued that without development of a global mindset, a self-authored identity, and cultural adaptation worldview, individuals will not be developed into global leaders. Many organizations are setting up individuals for failure by not paying attention to the developmental strategies listed above.

One important contribution of this paper is the ability to actually apply existing measures to the development of global leaders. Thus, we can measure the current stages in intercultural sensitivity and constructive development theory that potential global leaders are currently at and target training, trips, and other relevant programs to meet these individuals’ developmental needs. For example, individuals that already have an ethnorelative worldview will not benefit from training that emphasizes differences between cultures. However, they may benefit more by going abroad for an assignment and starting to prepare for the necessary job roles. On the other hand, if an individual is in denial of cultural differences, the in-house training may be
If individuals in the denial stage go abroad, they may be unsuccessful and could be unable to cope with the complexity of the environment. This may lead them to become frustrated and act in a way that could hinder various stakeholders. Furthermore, we can measure leaders’ global mindset and PsyCap. Few instruments have been published that measure global mindset (Levy et al., 2007), and more research is needed to establish a strong validity and reliability. A PsyCap instrument that measures the four constructs of PsyCap has been validated for the workplace and has been shown to be reliable (Luthans et al., 2007).

Another important contribution of this paper is examining the effect of Psychological Capital on global leadership development. It was proposed that an individual who has hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism will take advantage of developmental activities and will be more successful in their development journey. Furthermore, global leaders that have high PsyCap will be more successful than global leaders that have a low PsyCap. Thus, PsyCap trainings should be in place for individuals that are striving to be global leaders or are global leaders.

Finally, this paper makes a potent contribution by extending the literature on global leadership using developmental theories. The global leadership field should move away from trait-like research to a more developmental approach (Hollenbeck, 2001). This paper argues that for some individuals the development may take a lifetime, for others not so long. Some of the developmental activities for the three proposed key constructs for global leadership development may overlap. For example, someone who has a global mindset will most likely have or be close to having a cultural adaptation worldview. The same is true that an individual who has a cultural adaptation worldview will most likely also have a self-authored identity. Thus, while developing developmental activities, it is important to take the connections between the variables into consideration to make sure the programs are truly individualized and effective. Organizations should invest time and money in the proper training and development of global leaders. Future research should test the propositions argued in this manuscript. If effective global leaders have a global mindset, a self-authored identity, and a cultural adaptation worldview and domestic leaders do not, we can assert that the developmental model proposed in this paper should be used as a guide for developing effective global leaders.

About the Author

Joana S. P. Story is an assistant professor at NOVA School of Business and Economics in Lisbon, Portugal. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Her research interests include global leadership, global mindset, cross-cultural management, international business, organizational behavior, and leadership theory. She has published in International Journal of Leadership Studies, Journal of Leadership Education, Psychological Reports, Perceptual and Motor Skills, and Leadership and Organizational Management Journal.

Email: joanastory@novasbe.pt

References


