

# Multiple Intelligences for Global Leadership Development

**Julie Breithaupt**

*Global Consulting Ltd, USA*

**Regina Durante**

*Greystone International Leadership Group, USA*

## INTRODUCTION

Globalization has led to cultural change and convergence, due to the rise of multinational organizations and a need for leaders to work effectively across nations (Cohen, 2010). Today's global leaders face increased complexity due to the need for cultural sensitivity, knowledge of other countries, and organizational boundaries (House et al., 2004). Conducting international business requires global leaders to be equipped with effective leadership skills to navigate through cross-cultural boundaries (Osland, 2008a).

Flexibility and adaptability are key characteristics for global leaders who must oversee processes aligned with cultural demands (Walumbwa, Lawler, and Avolio, 2007). Understanding how things are done in other cultures and why differences exist is also important. "Corporations need a new and different breed of global leaders who can take decisions and actions that facilitate the development of a complex network of internal and external connections with individuals, teams, and organizations from many different political, social, and cultural systems" (Beechler & Javidan, 2007, p. 134).

It has become quite common for leaders in multinational organizations to manage and influence teams that are geographically dispersed (Gentry et. al, 2008). Technological advances, increased communication, and lower costs of travel have made physical distances less relevant while enabling global leadership to emerge without expatriation (Caligiuri, 2006). These global leaders must be effective at cross-cultural work and possessing knowledge of international business, yet rely on technology to work across temporal and relational boundaries to motivate and influence others to accomplish organizational goals (Marquardt & Berger, 2003).

Competent global leaders are more vital to the success of multinational organizations than in previous decades (Ang & Inkpen, 2008). However, organizations continue to struggle with determining what knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed to develop competent global leaders (Caligiuri, 2006; Brownell, 2006) for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many organizations recognize that competent global leadership confer a competitive business advantage and have begun focusing leadership programs on developing competencies of global leadership (Bird, 2008) and/or a global mindset (Beechler & Javidan, 2007).

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL LEADERS

Global leadership researchers sought to identify personality characteristics and competencies essential for effective global leadership and explore how these capabilities could be developed (Jokinen, 2005). Over

the past decade, many traits and competencies attributed to effective global leadership have been identified (Osland, 2008b). The Big Five personality traits deemed most important for global leaders include:

1. Extroversion;
2. Agreeableness;
3. Conscientiousness;
4. Emotional stability, and
5. Openness to experience (Bird, 2008).

Leveraging personality traits could be important to organizations in selection of leaders for global leadership development program (Gills Jr., 2012). However, personality and individual identity is largely shaped by hereditary, familial, social and cultural interactions (Tubbs & Schulz, 2006). Thus, personality traits are culturally specific, not generalized across nations, and are almost impossible for global leaders to develop (Tubbs & Schulz, 2006),

Global leadership competencies can be categorized into six groups:

1. Traits and values;
2. Vision;
3. Cognition;
4. Cross-cultural relationship skills;
5. Global business expertise; and
6. Global organizing expertise (Mendenhall, 2011).

Of all these competencies, Mendenhall (2011) deems that cross-cultural relationship skills are the most important as these skills facilitate enactment of other global leadership competencies. However, researchers have not empirically identified if individual traits contribute to effective global leadership or which competencies, if any, are universal (Beechler & Javidan, 2007; Osland, 2008b).

An individual's intelligence quotient (IQ) is an important leadership trait. However, a meta-analysis of 151 studies examining leadership and intelligence found that this relationship is less important than previously believed (Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004). These researchers propose that a high IQ must be combined with other leadership competencies to obtain effective leadership. Gardner (1983) proposed a theory of multiple intelligences, believing that human intelligence is a competence of multiple intelligences derived from a combination of one's abilities, talents and mental skills. Seven independent intelligences were initially proposed and to date there is no consensus on how many types of intelligence exist (Gardner, 2006). Scholars suggest that multiple intelligences are essential competencies for global leaders (Riggio, 2002). Leadership competencies of emotional, social, and cultural intelligences may be important for global leaders to effectively engage and communicate with others to build social capital in multicultural contexts (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Boyatzis, 2008).

## Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is deemed an important global leadership competency (Boyatzis, 2008; Emmerling & Boyatzis, 2012; Jokinen, 2005). Introduced more than two decades ago (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) this multidimensional construct, popularized by Daniel Goleman, has been of interest to researchers. Goleman (1998) defined EQ as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others,

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