

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

It is all in the Mind of the Manager –
Using Cognitive Complexity to Explore the Global Mindset – A Comparative Case Study

This study was designed to determine whether or not cognitive complexity differences existed between domestic and global management consultants. The study sample included eight domestic and eight global management consultants from the Institute of Management Consultants located in Washington, D.C. The global mindset literature suggests that organizations are recognizing that domestic managers differ significantly from global managers in their mindsets. Researchers in this field are responding to implications of this difference by measuring up to 250 traits or characteristics to identify candidates with a global mindset for overseas management roles. Determining if the global mindset can be better understood by focusing on cognitive complexity may result in the identification of a more effective means of selecting candidates for overseas assignments and provide a narrower focus to future global mindset research.

The research conducted in this study followed a case study format, using qualitative techniques. The primary method of data collection was to interview domestic and global management consultants. Data from the interview transcripts were captured using a novel technique of cognitive mapping with the aid of specialized computer software. The output of the cognitive mapping technique showed visible thinking by illustrating the number of links and nodes connecting responses to a series of interview questions. Domestic and global management consultants' cognitive maps were aggregated to establish two cases for comparison. Study results indicated evidence of a weak relationship between cognitive complexity and the global mindset. The analysis supports a conclusion that, from a cognitive perspective, managing either domestic or global organizations is equally complex, partially because both entail having to manage people—who are complex in nature regardless of their nationality.