

Acculturation and Global Mindsponge

Quan Hoang Vuong and Nancy K. Napier

Much research on acculturation around global experiences has focused on the “type” of overseas experience—e.g., expatriate, repatriate, inpatriate, flexpatriate. The experiences of people in those categories and across various demographics (single/married/divorced; gender; sexual orientation) can differ dramatically. In addition, given the explosion of people working in global business, some global business citizens could well fit into several of those various types of experiences over the course of their careers. In this paper, we propose to push in a somewhat different direction and explore something that for us would be quite new. Rather than focusing on the various categories and their resulting experiences, we take a step back to consider what attributes and ways of thinking a global citizen may need to become better as a global business citizen, regardless of type of experience. The question is less one of “Who am I” than “How can I become better?”. Essentially, we would like to explore what might be required in moving the global citizen from thinking about “global mindset” to “global mindsponge.” When we hear the term mindset, we think of a certain way of thinking that stays rather fixed. So part of the challenge of the paper will be to define and examine what mindsponge might mean in the global context—what does it take to unlearn or squeeze out certain ways of thinking or behaving before absorbing and reshaping new ways of thinking and behaving? Moreover, how might that become part of a natural and regular way of operating, especially in a rapidly changing developing country like Vietnam, in particular?

At this early stage, we think of mind sponge as a mechanism that encourages flexibility and receptiveness through a process of using multiple filters and more focus on creativity, or doing things differently to improve an organization or individual performance. Our goal is to develop a basic conceptual framework for “mindsponge,” drawing upon a broad literature review as well as several unstructured interviews, to assess whether the idea of mindsponge helps people perceive that they are more culturally versatile and culturally mobile, regardless of whether they work in or outside of their “home environment.” We hope this would enhance their ability to shape an emerging set of cultural values that erases the divide between “foreign” and “local” cultural differences that so often dominates in emerging economies.

Keywords: Mindset, Global Mindset, Mindsponge, Innovation, Change Management, Acculturation

JEL Classifications: O31, J53, M12, M14

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1. Introduction

No matter whether the world is flat (Friedman, 2005) or rough, its globalizing process has passed the point of no return. Nowadays, it is hard to find an economy operating with only relations to home market. Every nation is securing membership in global institutions from the well-established United Nations and World Trade Organization to regional trade negotiations such as Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) or Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). A fast-changing world has no longer a 'prediction' but a reality, to both organizations and individuals living in a much more interconnected world. Therefore, overseas experiences, cross-cultural issues, and even clashes of civilizations are no longer textbook or academic essays' topics, something to which people have to learn how to adapt more efficiently, and hopefully more beneficially. To this end, constructing a global mindset is likely a prerequisite for successful careers for individuals, innovative performance for organizations and corporations, and sustainable development of nations. A mechanism that explains how mindset integrates emerging values and ejects existing values, therefore, is of interest to a great many of people living in today's world.

In order to create a level playing field, economic globalization promotes free market principles, trade liberalization, and competition (Seita, 1997). Thus, being innovative, efficient, and excellent at risk management is, *inter alia*, essential to stay ahead of the tough games of global trade. The three features seem to refer and relevant to the key cultural value of entrepreneurship. These have for centuries now been advocated by thinkers in the developed world, and increasingly been welcome by emerging economies, especially when the world economy is facing stagnation and entering an uncharted territory. That's why it is predictable that corporate leaders, managers, professionals, and also policy-makers, may be interested in the process of integrating the entrepreneurial values into the mindset at work as globalization and economic integration have at varying degrees influenced various socio-economic dimensions in different corners of today's world. The more open and integrated an emerging economy is the more recognized it becomes by the international community based on increasing cross-border trade and investment. Much of the international recognition for an emerging economy also rests with its cultural relevance to its economic partners worldwide. Active participation by emerging markets into the global world has made acculturation more apparent and faster today, especially for managers when they work in a global environment of diverse cultures. This cultural heterogeneity is so important that "ignoring such heterogeneity can be a costly mistake for any company trying to build and successfully exploit a presence across borders" (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). Thus, "global managers have exceptionally open mind" (Taylor, 1991).

Globalization also affects social life. Globalized products are not only iPhones which are designed by Apple in California and assembled in China but also American expatriates spending years on living and working with Chinese then perhaps making themselves aliens when returning to the States. From another angle, there has been such issue as

what a Vietnamese graduate from an American university who finds it difficult to come back to the daily obedience at work and home to the Confucian hierarchy would usually be faced when returning home. The novel concept of "mindsponge mechanism" that will be developed and discussed in this conceptual paper will offer an explanation of why professionals and managers in today's world could replace the cultural values that they had been grown up with by those that they have absorbed following education and work in "foreign" settings. In fact, as Arora (2004) shows with empirical evidence, "demographic characteristics, training in international management, manager's age, foreign country living experience, family member from a foreign country, and job experience in a foreign country have statistically significant impacts on managers' global mindset." Therefore, not only managers but also expatriate, repatriate, inpatriate, flexpatriate must be acculturated to various cultures encountered in their professional environments. A global mindset will help them in such acculturation process. This global mindset can be changed, adjusted, or developed in a positive manner by a well-functioning mindsponge.

This paper is to explore what attributes and ways of thinking one may need to become better as a global business citizen. Regardless of type of experience - such as expatriate, repatriate, inpatriate, and flexpatriate - the question is less one of "*Who am I*" than "*How can I become better?*" Essentially, the paper will conceptually examine what would be required in moving the global citizen from thinking about "global mindset" - a more or less an attribute - to "global mindsponge," a dynamic process.

The paper consists of three main sections. The next section provides an thorough review of related literature on cultural values and acculturation, mindset and global mindset, and the development and improvement of global mindset. Then a conceptual development of mindsponge is presented with its working mechanism, underlying theme of 3D multiple-filter information process of creativity, and the two drivers of inductive attitude and trust evaluator. Then, a detailed discussion is provided aiming at further explaining the dynamics of cultural values and acculturation, the working of induction and trust guard in decision making process, proposal of emerging values in global context, and suggestions of interrelations between entrepreneurship, innovation, and mindsponge as well as globalization, global mindset, and internal changes.

2. A literature review

The following discussion of literature focuses on the connections between cultural values, acculturation, and development of mindset. It will also spot 'likely disconnections' that gives rise to the need for a useful mechanism for attaining the so-called 'global mindset.'

2.1. Cultural values and acculturation

Acculturation has been drawing many attentions of world-renowned scholars in various academic disciplines. From the first modern works Hall (1904) and Thomas & Znaniecki (1918) at the beginning of the 20th century, to Mandenhall & Oddou (1985) and Nahavandi & Malekzadeh (1988) in 1980s, and the most recent publications of Juang, Syed, Cookston, Wang & Kim (2012) and Liu, Lieverman & Selker (2013), the interests

have spanned a wide range of dimensions – i.e., cultural effects on expatriates and immigrants – and explanations of how acculturation works.

Cultural values and acculturation were discussed as early as in ancient times of those dominating Greek philosophers such as Plato. In his discussion on the psychology of intercultural adaptation, Plato postulated that a society has "repulsive and intractable character" (Plato, 1969) if it favors cultural separation (Rudmin, 2003). In more recent writings, due to a faster process of globalization and the world's trend of increasing mobility, acculturation has become even more critical as it deals directly with various types of cultural experiences of expatriates, immigrants, merged firms, etc. Naturally, policy-making also requires knowledge on how to make acculturation process adaptable for people in the majority and minority groups in different parts of the changing world. Berry (1983) has become a pioneering and seminal work regarding acculturation in the modern times.

Mendenhall & Oddou (1985) discuss the dimensions of expatriate acculturation. They reveal four dimensions of successful expatriate acculturation from looking at empirical studies in relation to different fields of anthropology, social psychology, cross-cultural psychology, and sociology. The four are self-oriented, others-oriented, perceptual, and cultural-toughness. Expatriate acculturation, therefore, is a multi-dimensional process.

Nahavandi & Malekzadeh (1988) propose a model of acculturation in mergers and acquisitions and point out that acculturative stress is affected by the congruence between the acquirer and acquiree's preferred modes and *vice versa*. Based on Berry (1983)'s model on mode of acculturation, the authors develop a model of acculturative interpretation by managers for successful implementation of mergers (Fig. 1).

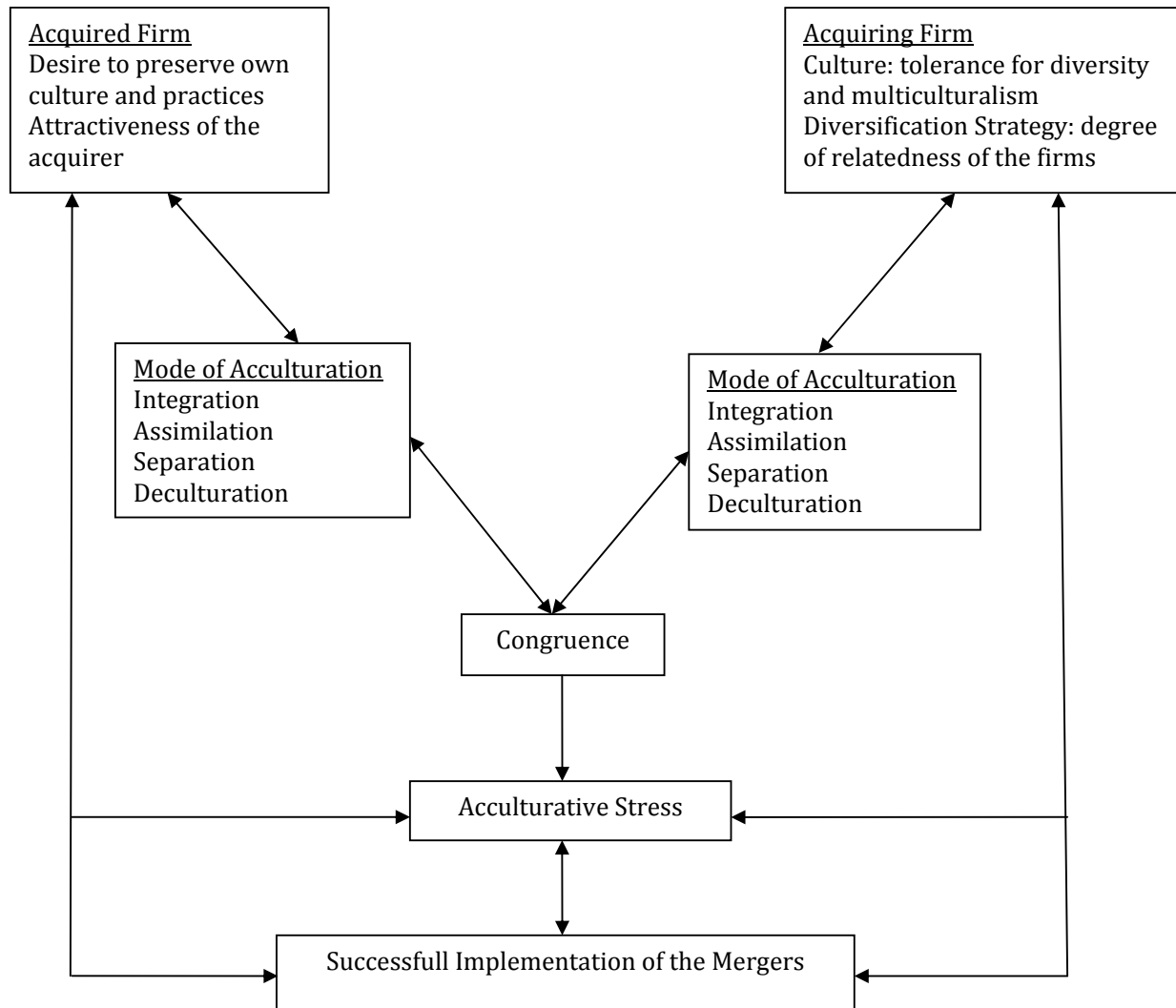


Figure 1: Acculturative model for the implementation of mergers; adapted from Nahavandi & Malekzadeh (1988)

As discussed by Nahavandi & Malekzadeh (1988), the combination of the acquirer’s mode of acculturation and that of the acquiree is congruence, which in turn generates acculturative stress. The stress is light when the two partners are able to reach an agreement on the modes of acculturation. A dynamic nature is noted since over time, the partners may shift from one mode to the other. Thus, the congruence itself is subject to change.

Berry is one of the most reputable authors on acculturation with influential papers introduced in 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. One of Berry’s most cited models is probably the 1997 model of four acculturation strategies for the majority and minority groups. Berry’s (1997) model consists of *Assimilation* ("from the point of non-dominant group, when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures"), *Separation* ("when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others"), *Integration* ("when there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained"), and

Marginalization ("when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance, and little interest in having relations with others").

Using Berry's framework, Ward & Rana-Deuba (1999) examine two dimensions (host and co-national identification) and four modes (integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization) of acculturation in relation to psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of international aid workers in Nepal. The empirical results show that "strong co-national identity was associated with a decrement in psychological distress, whereas strong host national identification was linked to fewer social difficulties." Ward & Rana-Deuba also corroborate Berry's (1997) contention that integration is associated with the lowest levels of acculturative stress.

Despite the appealing concept of four types of acculturation that has seen the popularity in academia, Rudmin (2003) points out "obvious and dramatic" faults in the resulting research. Indeed, Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh (2001) find that earlier and independent from Berry's works, there were seven early versions of fourfold acculturation typologies, which were those of Aellen & Lambert (1969), Cohen (1956), Gaarder (1972), Ichheiser (1949), Saruk & Gulutsan (1970), Taft (1963), and Zak (1973). Rudmin (2003) uses Euler and Boolean logics to prove that two cultures in contact define four logical spaces so that there are 16 possible combinations of these spaces, including the null condition. In light of this, "to conceive only four types, requires two implicit but false presumptions: (a) the universe of cultures is limited to two cultures, and (b) the intersection of two cultures is an empty set."

The model of four acculturation strategies, however, was used again by Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder (2006) to investigate acculturation of the young and the degree they wish to maintain their heritage culture and to involve in larger society. The authors also focus on understanding of youth adaptation and engagement in intercultural relations. In another attempt, Ryder, Alden & Paulbus (2000) explore acculturation by comparing the uni-dimensional model (which posits that heritage and mainstream culture identifications have a strong inverse relation) and bi-dimensional model (which posits that the two are independent) in the contexts of personality, self-identity, and adjustment. The authors point out the incomplete picture of uni-dimensional approach that will be unable to distinguish a bi-cultural individual who strongly identifies with both reference groups from one who does not strongly identify with either group; thus, both of them will fall at the midpoint of a uni-dimensional scale. The bi-dimensional approach was also used in Berry (1997)'s framework of four acculturation strategies. Ryder *et al.* show that the bi-dimensional model constitutes a broader and more valid framework for understanding acculturation. The results are consistent with Berry's two underlying dimensions of acculturation.

More recently, a large body of acculturation researches has been focusing on the impact of acculturation attitude on the well-being of people in minority group, e.g. immigrants. Some notable works are as follows. Roccas, Horenczyk & Schwartz (2000) examine associations of immigrants' well-being with the discrepancies they perceive between their own acculturation attitudes and the acculturation expectations of members of the host society. Nesdale & Mak (2000) discuss the factors that contribute to the development of immigrants' host country identification. Arends-Toth & Van De Vijver (2003) explore different views of Dutch and Turkish-Dutch on the most preferred

acculturation strategy of Turkish migrants. Colic-Peisker and Walker (2003) study the process of acculturation and identity among refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina who resettled in the Australian cities of Perth and Sydney during the 1990s. Juang, Syed, Cookston, Wang & Kim (2012) study acculturation-based and everyday conflicts in Chinese American Families - for instance, between children and parents over minor issues, as well as some major issues related to perceived cultural values.

2.2. Mindset and global mindset

Dweck (2006) argues that human qualities can be cultivated. He thus divides mindset -- which Goldstein & Brooks (2007) defines as “the assumptions and expectations we have for ourselves and others” -- into fixed and growth. Obviously, a growth mindset is highly attractive since not many are happy with a fixed intelligence. In light of this, the Stanford University psychologist suggests people who are pursuing success to build a belief that they have the capability to cultivate their intelligence and grow their abilities.

People who possess a fixed mindset have a “certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character.” They evaluate every situation with self-questions such as “will I success or fail?” “will I look smart or dumb?” “will I be accepted or rejected?” and “will I feel like a winner or a loser?” Therefore, it is possible to predict behavior of a fixed mind person. Meanwhile, such person has a low risk-preference that perhaps implies a weak entrepreneurship. Growth mindset people, on the other hand, believe that their basic qualities can be improved through their efforts.

Dweck considers the development of growth mindset a lifelong process, of which “accepting risk and a certain amount of failure” is an integral part. His growth mindset description, in comparison to fixed mindset, is adequately reflected in methods of creativity proposed by Napier & Nilsson (2008), Napier (2010), and Napier & Vuong (2013b). In Dweck’s opinion, a growth mindset person feels smart “when it is really hard, and I try hard, and I can do something I couldn’t before” (that is following a disciplined process) and “when I work on something a long time and finally figure it out” (that is an Aha! Moment). These illustrations pose a question that whether Vuong & Napier (2013)’s 3D multiple-filter process facilitates such problem-solving efforts efficiently.

Although Dweck does not mention it explicitly one should not separate a mindset from the other. In other words, there are always both fixed and growth mindsets in one person. The stronger one – no matter if it is the former or the latter – defines the meanings of success and failure of a person as well as attitude to learning opportunity, for instance, proving certain ability (fixed mindsetter) or developing oneself (growth mindsetter).

It is noteworthy that Dweck introduces some training practices to improve growth mindset while he does not discuss how the two mindsets interact with and affect each other. There can be a learning process in which the growth mindset becomes larger, gradually encroaches on, and then replaces the fixed mindset. Such process will be discussed in the next section.

Gupta & Govindarajan (2002) regard global mindset as a crucial factor, even determining, to a company’s success in “exploiting opportunities” and “tackling challenges” in a dynamic world of globalization where “heterogeneity across cultures and markets is a pervasive feature.” People interpret the same information in various ways because they have different mindsets. A person’s mindset, however, is not fixed. The existing mindset interprets new information as consistent and inconsistent. Consistent information reinforces the mindset. Moreover, Boyd & Richerson (1985) suggest that confidence in a particular belief may grow if many others with whom the individual has come into contact also share such belief. Inconsistent information is either rejected or perceived to make corresponding changes in mindset. As people are selective in what they absorb, through a process of filtration or by using cognitive filters, the two authors note that the likelihood of a changed mindset depends largely on self-conscious level.

Viewing mindsets as knowledge structures with two primary attributes of differentiation and integration, Gupta & Govindarajan propose a conceptual framework of alternative mindsets (see Figure 2). Differentiation is the openness to diversity across cultures and markets while integration is the ability to integrate diversity. Pairing differentiation and integration results in three types of mindset. Therefore, a global mindset can be regarded as combination of high differentiation and high integration. Specifically, a global mindset combines “an openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this diversity.”

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Integration | <i>High</i> | <i>Parochial Mindset</i> | <i>Global Mindset</i> |
| | <i>Low</i> | <i>Not Applicable</i> | <i>Diffused Mindset</i> |
| | | <i>Low</i> | <i>High</i> |
| | | Differentiation | |

Figure 2: Gupta & Govindarajan (2002)’s Conceptual Framework of Alternative Mindsets

The authors do not explain how to move from a parochial or diffused mindset. Nevertheless, they stress that shifting to a global mindset is the key to success. Gupta & Govindarajan (2002) define four factors that drive the cultivation of a global mindset as follows.

- (i) Curiosity about the world as a commitment to becoming smarter about how the world works.
- (ii) An explicit and self-conscious articulation of current mindsets that “requires accepting the possibility that our view of the world is just one of many alternative interpretations of reality.
- (iii) Exposure to diversity and novelty.

- (iv) A disciplined attempt to develop an integrated perspective that weaves together diverse strands of knowledge about cultures and markets.

Hales (1998) computationally investigates process of replication, reinforcement, and repelling of memes – ideas capable of transmitting itself from one person to another – held by grazers who can “move, feed (accumulate energy), die and communicate with others in their territory.” The investigation results in “the vast diversity of meme distributions that produced optimal stabilities and hence the easy coexistence of different views (memes) of reality.” Such result suggests, “an open mind is not an empty mind.” An open-minded or global-minded person is one who believes in or contains the value of cost-benefit analysis, being reasonable, and capable of accepting differences. To this end, cultivating a global or growth mindset does not make one non-identity.

In addition, Thunderbird’s Global Mindset Institute has developed *Global Mindset Inventory* (GMI) - “a psychometric assessment tool that measures and predicts performance of global leadership positions.” Moreover, Javidan, Hough & Bullough (2010) regard GMI as the first and only measurement in the world. GMI is an Internet-based survey, which is designed to measure individual and organizational global mindsets in terms of Psychological Capital (PC), Social Capital (SC), and Intellectual Capital (IC). Responses from more than 6,500 individuals and managers from more than 200 organizations confirm that “global mindset can be developed and improved”.

As people often resist information that conflicts with their personal views or existing beliefs, close-mindedness stems, at least in part, from concern over self-regard (Correll, Spencer & Zanna, 2004), self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988; Steele, Spencer & Lynch, 1993) suggests, “diminished concern for the self allows an affirmed individual to dispassionately evaluate persuasive communication.” In light of this, Correll *et al.* argue that affirmation may reduce bias in two plausible situations – for instance, “if it renders an individual generally more agreeable to any persuasive communication” and “if it leads the individual to trivialize the issue.” They also note that beliefs that are central to an individual’s identity should evoke greater defensive reactions when facing conflict information. Correll *et al.* examine how three mechanisms of agreeableness, objectivity, and trivialization should affect an affirmed person’s reactions to counter-attitudinal and pro-attitudinal arguments. Empirical results show that affirmed participants “were more critical of proattitudinal views” and “more sensitive than controls to arguments strength for both proattitudinal and counteradttitudinal messages.” The two findings suggest “attitudes can serve as bases of self-worth” and “the individual will often strive to protect them.”

It is noteworthy that global mindset often stands for “everything that is supposedly global or transnational”, thus the diversity and pervasive use of the concept result in “conceptual ambiguities” and “contradictory empirical findings” (Levy, Taylor, & Boyacigiller, 2007). Levy *et al.* note two major approaches to conceptualization of global mindset. They are (i) *cultural perspective* that focuses on cultural diversity and distance, and (ii) *strategic perspective* that focuses on [business] environmental complexity and strategic variety. ‘Cosmopolitanism’ is the underlying theme of the former while cognitive complexity is of the latter. A third approach, the *multi-dimensional perspective*, is likely a combination of the two.

In the cultural perspective, a global mindset consists of “self-awareness, openness to and understanding of other cultures, and selective incorporation of foreign values and practice.” Its underlying theme – i.e., cosmopolitanism – was first introduced in 1957, then fell out of favor, and returned to the spotlight in 1990s. Although the meaning of cosmopolitanism has been “evolved considerably over time,” Vertovec & Cohen (2002) suggest it is something that simultaneously: “(i) transcends the nation-state model; (ii) mediates actions and ideals that are oriented both to the universal and the particular, the global and the local; (iii) is against cultural essentialism, and (iv) represents variously complex repertoires of allegiance, identity, and interest.” Levy *et al.* consider cosmopolitanism a state of mind “that is manifested as an orientation toward the outside” and “seeks to reconcile the global with local and mediate between the familiar and the foreign.” In addition, cosmopolitanism is “openness, a willingness to explore and learn from alternative systems of meaning held by others.”

Present globalization is so complex that structural means and adequate administrative mechanisms – which used to be of help (Chandler, 1962) - are insufficient for multinational corporations (MNCs) to mitigate environmental and organizational complexity (Prahalad & Bettis, 1986; Doz & Prahalad, 1991; Evans, Pucik & Barsoux, 2002). In light of this, the strategic perspective suggests, “the critical determinant of the strategic capabilities of MNCs lies in developing a complex managerial mindset” (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989; Caproni, Lenway & Murtha, 1992). This perspective is served by the underlying notions of cognitive complexity and the associated cognitive capabilities. Many – including Weick (1979), Kiesler & Sproull (1982), Bartunek, Gordon & Weathersby (1983), Schwenk (1984), Duhaime & Schwenk (1985), Ginsberg (1990), and Miller (1993) – have long recognized the complexity of managerial cognition as “a significant factor affecting decision making, strategic choice, and organizational performance.” Bartunek *et al.*, like Weick & Bougon (1986), consider that “cognitive complexity represents the degree of differentiation, articulation, and integration with a cognitive structure.” Levy *et al.* thus very much agree with Vuong & Napier (2013) on the critical role of the permanent bank of knowledge when arguing, “without adequate knowledge, an individual cannot form a complex representation of the information domain.” Levy and her colleagues also note that “cognitively complex individuals have superior information processing capabilities.”

Rhinesmith (1992, 1993, and 1996) heavily influences our present day’s multi-dimensional perspective. He defines a global mindset as scanning the world from a broad perspective, always looking for unexpected trends and opportunities to achieve personal, professional, or organizational objectives. Such definition incorporates not only the cultural and strategic perspective but also individual characteristics. Rhinesmith (1992) argues that “people with global mindsets tend to drive for the broader picture, accept life as a balance of contradictory forces, trust organizational processes rather than structure, value diversity, are comfortable with surprises and ambiguity, and seek to be open to themselves and others.” Kedia & Mukherji (1999) add that “in order to be globally effective, managers need not only a global mindset but also a certain set of supportive knowledge and skills.” Vuong & Napier (2013), moreover, introduce a multi-filter information process where hard knowledge and soft skills work together in a disciplined manner to produce novel and useful insights, most probably ready for coming innovative changes.

Following an intensive literature review on global mindset, Levy *et al.* (2007) introduce an information process model as follows.

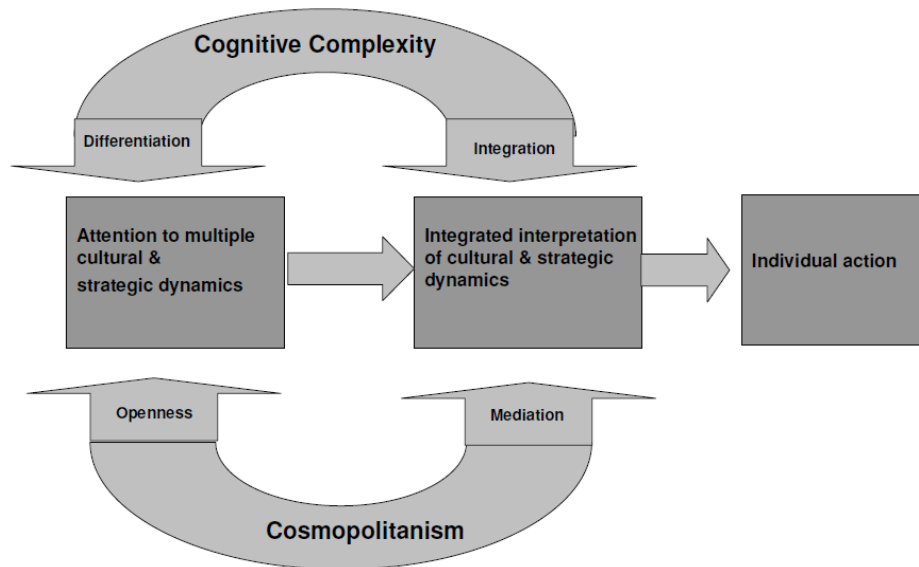


Figure 3: Levy *et al.* (2007)'s Information Processing Model of Global Mindset

Levy *et al.* (2007) view global mindset as “an individual-level cognitive structure or, more generally, a knowledge structure,” for instance, “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.”

If processing information for building such a mindset is spoken of as a dynamic process, its important stages can be summarized as follows. At the first stage of information gathering, cognitive structures shape attention patterns by “directing attention toward certain aspects of the environment while ‘blocking’ others.” Cosmopolitanism prevents people from subjectively perceiving information, thus enabling individuals to acquire information from different sources and arenas regardless national and cultural origin. Cognitive complexity, meanwhile, “enables individuals to perceive and finely articulate more information elements and integrate them into more complex schemas.” Then at the interpretation stage, cognitive structures influence how information is perceived, interpreted, assimilated, and understood (Daft & Weick, 1984). A global mindset “not only perceives but also evaluates information without regard to its national or cultural origin.” High integrative people are even able to “synthesize information from varied and unlikely sources and incorporate diverse interpretative frameworks into the decision-making process.” Finally, reflexive interpretative processes likely produce “a new and more complex understanding of the environment” (Barr, Stimpert, & Huff, 1992). Global-mindset people, thus, potentially arrive at “complex, innovative, and nonconventional interpretations that do not simplify global realities, but rather represent them in all their complexity, ambiguity, and indeterminacy.”

Levy *et al.* (2007)'s information processing model proposes “a clear theoretically-based link between global mindset and effective global management.” However, explaining

how a local mindset captures new values and washes existing but inappropriate [to the world of globalization] properties out in order to become a global mindset is beyond the scope of this model.

2.3. On development and improvement of global mindset

Given the inherent role of global mindset in deciding a company and individual's success in today fast-changing environment, many stress on the great importance to develop and improve one's global mindset.

Pisapia, Reyes-Guerra & Coukos-Semmel (2005) believe that modern leaders must possess a strategic mindset, which can be developed by advanced cognitive processes. The authors define three processes of system thinking, reframing and reflection that enable leaders to be successful in times of complexity, and then specify how these processes can be measured. Pisapia *et al.* describe a process used for designing, testing, and validating an instrument to measure the cognitive processes of leaders. The final product is the PSLQ, which is an instrument consisting of 38 items organized into three scales: reflection, reframing and system thinking. They raise some issues that if overcome can make it possible for PSLQ to be able to predict potential leader effectiveness - a useful tool for leadership development.

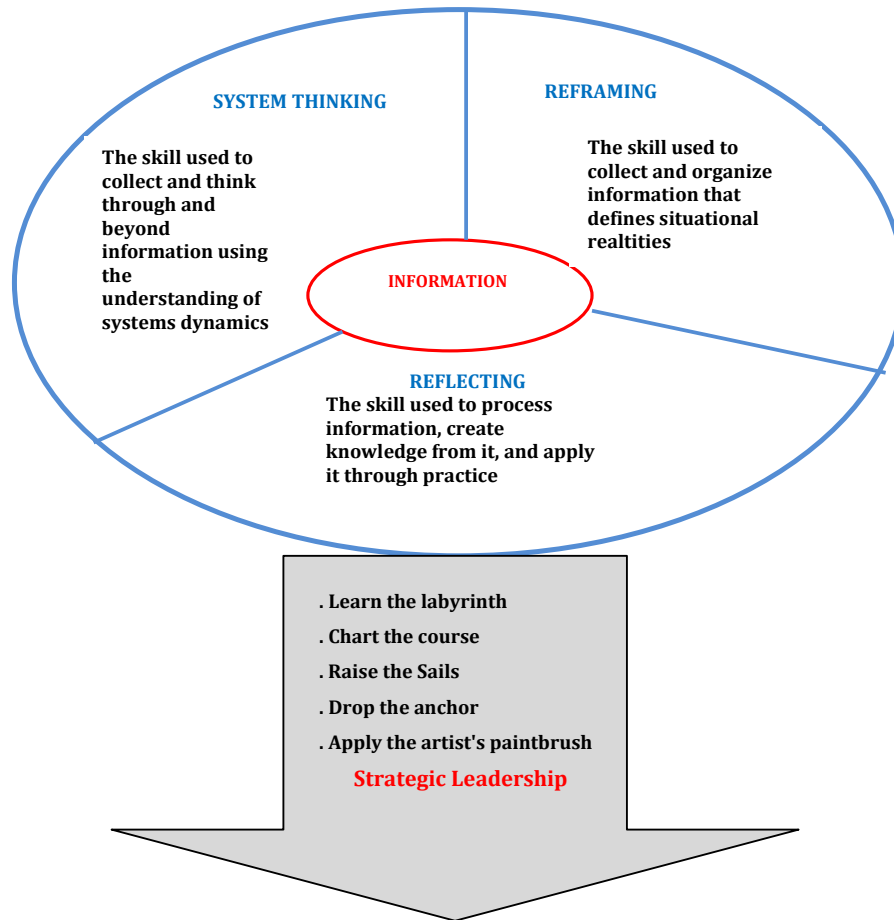


Figure 4: Pisapia *et al.* (2005)'s Cognitive Processes Needed to Practice Strategic Leadership.

In addition to developing the advanced cognitive processes, a global mindset can be improved by education. According to Maznevski & Lane (2004), in response to globalization by developing the global mindset, apart from knowledge and skills acquisition, development of a global mindset incorporates: (i) building a comprehensive cognitive structure that guides the process of information selection and processing, and (ii) building a capability for constantly updating this cognitive structure once exposed to new experiences. They also suggest that a global mindset can be learned through a formal education that help entrepreneurs develop competencies in order to cope with challenges and exploit opportunities presented by globalization (Muzychenko, 2007).

The application of REALs - Rich Environments for Active Learning - could be effective to educate entrepreneurship. Although Grabinger & Dunlap (1995) describe and organize the elements of REALs in general educational environment, there is no doubt that such learning environments will help entrepreneurs to learn and develop their global mindset through active learning as well. Five main attributes of REALs that support the goals of constructivism are (i) student responsibility and initiative, (ii) generative learning activities, (iii) authentic learning contexts, (iv) authentic assessment strategies, and (v) co-operative support. Thus, REALs will:

- promote study and investigation within authentic contexts;
- encourage the growth of student responsibility, initiative, decision making, and intentional learning;
- cultivate collaboration among students and teachers;
- utilize dynamic, interdisciplinary, generative learning activities that promote higher-order thinking processes to help students develop rich and complex knowledge structures; and,
- assess student progress in content and learning-to-learn within authentic contexts using realistic tasks and performances.

These authentic learning and interactive environments will help entrepreneurial practices and apply them well in real business world.

Another way to improve the global mindset can be the ‘practice of mindfulness,’ which is described as a process of bringing a certain quality of attention to moment-by-moment experience (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Mindfulness has gained popularity as a Buddhist practice for increasing awareness and responding skillfully to mental process that contributes to emotional distress and maladaptive behavior (Bishop, Lau, Shapiro, Carlson, Anderson, Carmody & Devins, 2004), thus it is believed to become a helpful practice to develop the cognitive structure or the global mindset. Mindfulness consists of two components as proposed by Bishop *et al.* The first component involves the self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on immediate experience, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment. The second component deals with adoption of a particular orientation toward one’s experiences in the present moment - an orientation that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance. Thus, the latter resembles factors that drive the cultivation of a global mindset.

In early 2000s, Open Mind Common Sense (OMCS) was introduced as a knowledge acquisition system designed to acquire commonsense knowledge from the public over the web (Singh, 2002; Singh, Lin, Mueller, Lim, Perkins & Zhu, 2002; Speer, 2007). The system acquires facts, descriptions, and stories by allowing participants to construct and fill in natural language templates. It employs word-sense disambiguation and methods of clarifying entered knowledge, analogical inference to provide feedback, and allows participants to validate knowledge and in turn each other. Although it may take many years to develop machines and softwares that are capable of doing sophisticated human works – for instance, looking at a photograph then describe what are in it – OMCS is noticeable effort as it is an attempt to mimic the human thinking process.

2.4. Other related issues

While observing the surge of “sciences of complexity,” which is “the investigation of how complex phenomena can arise from simple interactions among simple parts,” Resnick (1996) discusses why centralized mindset has influenced human thinking to a great degree and how to make people move beyond the centralized mindset to a decentralized. To this end, the author suggests that an individual mindset can be improved intentionally and actively.

At group level, an open mind or openness is also of great importance to team performance (Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson & Jundt, 2005). According to Homan, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, Van Knippenberg, Ilgen & Van Kleef (2008), openness of team members contributes greatly to high team performance, whereas low openness impairs team results. These arguments suggest a comfort zone should be created in order to encourage team members in being more open.

Open mind is not only needed in entrepreneurial and daily life experiences but also might be applied in administrative, legislative and political situations. Openmindedness is discussed in Levin (1992)'s work regarding the interpretation and enforcement of nonlegislative rules that agents, courts, and public encounter. Levin discusses the cases to illustrate different situations where there could be different interpretations and enforcement of a stated rule. The author concludes, "when an agency undertakes to communicate with the public by rule, but does not utilize its power to act with the force of law, the resulting rule might be characterized as either an interpretive rule or a general statement of policy, or possibly both. Which label the agency uses should have little effect on the public's right to be heard, because roughly the same procedural requirement comes into play either way." The conclusion suggests that openness may allow individuals and entities to think and interpret things in a more comprehensive and constructive manner.

3. Mindsponge: a conceptual development

This section proposes a conceptual development of 'mindsponge.' Broadly speaking, mindsponge is a mechanism explaining how an individual absorbs and integrates new cultural values into her/his own set of core values, while differentiating and extracting inappropriate core values, which define one's identity, from existing mindset.

3.1. Mindsponge: how it works

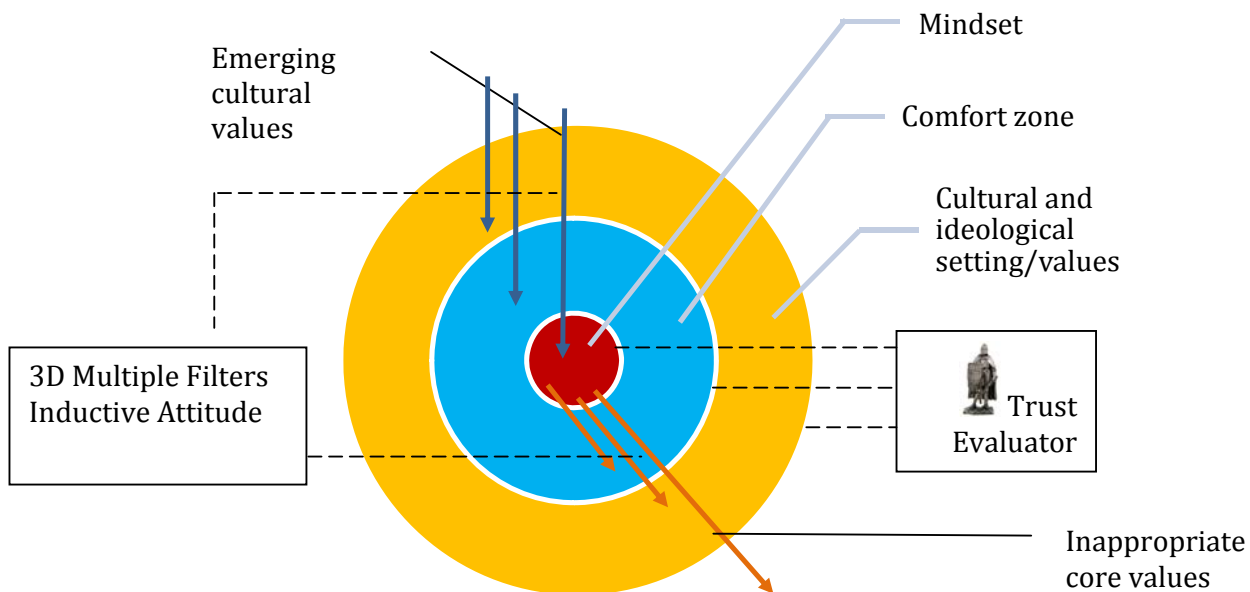


Figure 5: Mindsponge

Every person has a mindset, which is a non-empty set of core cultural values, or beliefs that are central to individual identity (Corell *et al.*, 2004). That is the red nucleus in the above figure. People use the core values as benchmarks explicitly and implicitly, especially when they need judgment on usefulness and appropriateness of arriving information and when they need to make decisions and responses. What are in line with the core values will be accepted or else rejected. Despite being rigid core, values can be changed by attacks of emerging values and clashes with other core values.

The mindset is 'enclosed' by a blue circle, hereby called the comfort zone. Values that are close and supportive to the core are constituting this zone. Comfort zone is a buffer playing two functions. First, the comfort zone prevents mindset from external shocks – for instance, cultural shocks. Second, the comfort zone helps filter and digest information regarding appropriateness and usefulness of any emerging value.

Such digestion consists of both integration and differentiation of Levy *et al.* (2007)'s cognitive complexity. When information or cultural signal enters the comfort zone, cognitive structures shape one's response to information and cultural signal that is delivered to the comfort zone by Vuong & Napier (2013)'s 3D multi-filter information process. (The next subsection is to describe further how the filtration process works.) Integration synthesizes and incorporates information and value that are appropriate to the core values. Meanwhile, differentiation measures the difference between the emerging and existing values by cost-benefit consideration – that is, what are costs and benefits if accept or reject a value. Whether the new comers will be kick out of or accepted to enter the comfort zone depends on how large the difference is. A trust evaluator defines the critical level of such difference. Although following subsection is to elaborate on the trust evaluation, right now, it is noteworthy that the closer to the red nucleus it is the more decisive and stricter the evaluator becomes.

Being in the comfort zone provides an emerging value with opportunity to enter the mindset. Polya (1954)'s inductive attitude, in collaboration with the underlying 3D multi-filter process, facilitates trust-building exercises for comfort zone values. By reaching the critical mass, the emerging value is allowed to enter the core mindset by the trust evaluator. In reverse, a core value can lose its trust level then the evaluator forces it out of the nucleus. It is highly likely that while entering the mindset is a time-consuming and tedious endeavor, the reverse seems to be much faster.

While the core mindset distinguishes from the comfort zone by its rigidity, limited values, and the strictest trust guards, it seems to be hard for an observer to determine where a value is, in the core mindset or the comfort zone. It is because not only the core values are able to be adjusted and replaced but also such replacement and adjustment are internal – in other words, inside individual's mind.

The separation between the comfort zone and peripheral yellow circle, on the other hand, are quite apparent. An individual's behaviors and responses to external cultural and ideological settings are likely observable. The outermost circle is not necessary to

consist of an individual's beliefs. Cultural and ideological values, which are widely accepted and believed by the community and society that the individual is a member of, move in the circle. In order to stay in the community, the individual has to acknowledge to these values and beliefs no matter what being comfortable with or not. For instance, a Catholic, capitalist American working in Vietnam has to respect Buddhist or socialist beliefs of his Vietnamese colleagues, partners, and authorities.

One may be interested in observing how individuals adapt to new environment. Some are more adaptive and receptive. Some may be conservative or simply ignore the differences. Here the 3D multiple-filter shows its value in making the mindsponge work.

First, a desire for becoming better person and improving individual intellectual is prerequisite to turn on the radar for new and emerging cultural values. Such radar also scans the core mindset for waning values. Today's globalization and Internet revolution really create a 'flat' world of information about both cultural and ideological values. One does not have to move physically and geographically in order to touch different cultures and ideologies.

Then a proactive, disciplined process of gathering '*foreign*' information and values, comparing them to the benchmarks, which are existing values of the comfort zone and the mindset, mitigating and differentiating them, and accepting or rejecting them to integrate into the comfort zone. In this process, three methods of creativity – for instance, the three-discipline creativity (Napier & Nilson, 2008), insight or Aha!Moment (Napier, 2010), and serendipity (Napier & Vuong, 2013b) – conduct cost-benefit analysis, measuring the difference between outside and inside values. The process results in innovative outputs of novel and appropriate values that are able to incorporate with or even replace existing values. In light of this, an efficient mindsponge can make people likely expatriates in their *home* country. For example, local staff members at MNCs prefer speaking English – which is regarded as a global language - to their mother tongue languages.

In Figure 5, the arrows represent flows of information and values. The arrows heading to the nucleolus are emerging values trying to get into the core values. The ones going out from the core are waning values eliminated by the mindsponge. Both are non-stop flows motivated by 3D multi-filter information process and inductive attitude. The former is prominent in transition from environment to cultural and ideological settings (the yellow circle) then to comfort zone while the latter in transition from comfort zone to mindset. Trust evaluator plays the guarding role in the whole process, at any place and any time, as well as keeps raising rigorous level as emerging values approaching the nucleus. Such rigor prevents individuals from fast changing to others. Especially, the strongest rigor of the red circle strengthens the rigidity of core values that defines individual identity.

A mindsponge may result in two extremes. On one end, an individual totally ignores emerging values of the environment. This is likely because the 3D multi-filter process does not work. No radar turns on. Information gets in touch but there is no interaction. Even when the 3D filtration works but the cost of incorporating a new value is so much expensive, then the existing set of values is unchanged.

On the other end, an individual may be so eager to replace existing values and beliefs by new ones making the individual easily and quickly change to another. This situation, perhaps, is caused by a negligent trust evaluator - i.e., lack of rigor. Mindset's core values are likely eroded, rusty and even depraved by such a feeble "cultural spirit capability" likely makes the core values (Napier & Vuong, 2013). This certainly makes manager worried as Bouquet (2005) asserts that "too much global mindset" may lead to ineffectiveness.

Also an effective mindsponge may not always result in positive results. Ideally, mindsponge introduces new and advanced core values that, in turn, improve efficiency of all 3D multi-filter process, inductive attitude, and trust evaluator. Then the desire for being better becomes stronger leading to an improved mindsponge. This spiral improvement continuously promotes the mindset to higher level of civilization.

On the other hand, mindsponge may gradually destroy mindset by replacing core values by worse ones. This happens, perhaps, when the 3D filtration functions wrongly and the trust evaluator works carelessly. Therefore, bad cultural values are allowed to integrate with hidden, evil core values.

Last but not least, we suggest that mindsponge is highly likely functioning better in an entrepreneurial environment promoting trading activities where the practices of cost-benefit analysis are popular, and fluent.

3.2. The 3D multi-filter information process of creativity

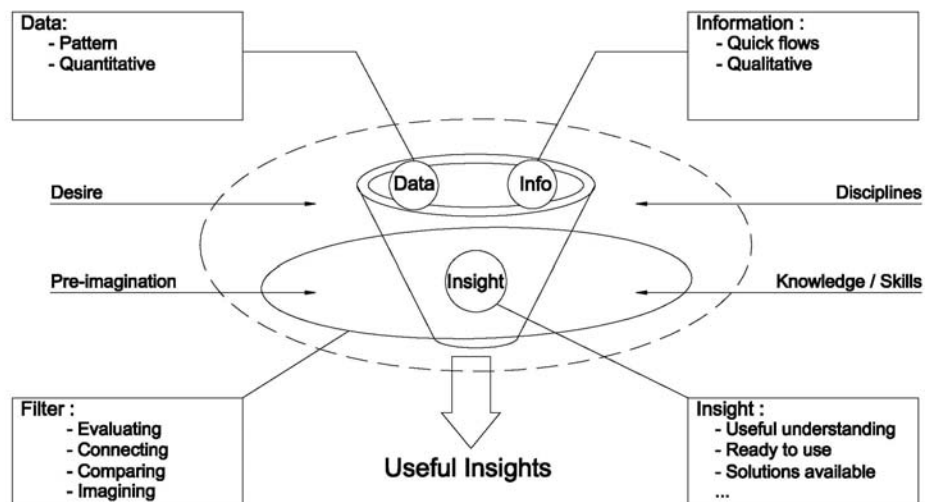


Figure 6: 3D Multiple-filter Information Process

Vuong & Napier (2013) constructs a multi-filter information process that employs Napier & Nilsson (2008)'s three disciplines – i.e., out of discipline thinking, within discipline best expertise, and a disciplined process- to transform random information

and even primitive insights into creative quanta of useful insights (see Figure 6). The process also incorporates desire for pursuing creative outcomes and banks of knowledge and skills. In mindsponge mechanism, the 3D multiple-filter process plays the role of a river that delivers new, emerging cultural and ideological values from environment to the core nucleus as well as transports waning core value out of the mindset. In light of this, flows of both emerging and waning values keep moving in and out.

When an individual enters a new environment, the desire for becoming better turns the multiple-filter process on. New values first are filtered by a permanent bank of cultural and ideological understanding and experience, which is a reflection of the individual's mindset. Then a soft bank of analytical skills analyzes the filtered values in order to support the decision on if the new values are able to integrate with those in the comfort zone. The filtration includes evaluating the values, connecting separate values, comparing different values, and even imagining new values.

The 3D filtration also works inside the nucleus. The mindset's rigid values and beliefs have to go through a disciplined process of filtering. Clashes of values that are largely different from the others may modify values or even make values disappeared. Meanwhile, connecting and integrating with other values may create new ones.

3.3. The inductive attitude and induction workhorse

In collaboration with the 3D Multiple-filter process, inductive attitude – which Pólya (1954) considers “moral quantities” of intellects – detects values that are emerging or waning and supply “daring conclusions” to the trust evaluator for making decision on the appropriateness of a value.

What Euler said about the nature of numbers in Pure Mathematics is likely right for the mechanism of developing and improving mindset: “There are many properties of the numbers with which we are well acquainted, but which we are not yet able to prove; only observations have led us to their knowledge... they [observations] will lead us continually to new properties which we shall endeavor to prove afterwards.” (Polya, 1954). The way to gain knowledge by observations is induction, which Euler also alerted that “must be carefully distinguished from the truth.”

An inductive procedure starts with “noticing some similarity.” The next is “generalizing.” Then “tentative conjecture” arrives. The conjecture, however, has “suggestive points of contact” with experience, the facts, and the reality (Polya, 1954). The conjecture, therefore, should be tested and proved. It is noteworthy that if the test results in “favorable sign” then the conjecture is “more credible.” With induction, there is never an absolute truth. The more favorable signs arrive the more credible the conjecture is. That is all. Polya thus introduces a principle: “A conjectural general statement becomes more credible if it is verified in a new particular case.”

Inductive attitude is to examine certain beliefs without fear of being easily contradicted by experience. The aim of the attitude is to “adapt beliefs to experience as efficiently as possible” (Polya, 1954). Thus, the core beliefs in individual's mindset are subjected to frequent tests and re-tests. In addition, the testing results are going to be submitted to

the guard of trust that makes judgments on validity and appropriateness of the beliefs in question.

The attitude also requires individual readiness for changes and improvements and three “unusual qualities” of (i) intellectual courage to revise existing beliefs, (ii) intellectual honesty to the matter of fact, and (iii) wise restraint that prevents one from foolish changes of belief. For the mindsponge to work effectively, Polya suggests, “do not believe anything, but question only what is worth questioning.”

Polya (1954) argues that inductive procedure starts from observing the analogy, then generalizes conjecture, and finally specializes in specific context to test the conjecture. Generalization is likely reverse to specialization. The former is “passing from the consideration of a given set of objects to that of a larger set, containing the given one” while the latter is “passing from the consideration of a given set of objects to that of a smaller set, contained in the given one.” Analogy, in Polya’s opinion, is “a sort of similarity” which is “on a more definite and more conceptual level.” What makes analogy different from other kinds of similarity is “the intention of the thinker.” An intention to “reduce the aspects of agreeing on a definite concept” results in analogy. A success in “getting down to a clear concept” clarifies the analogy.

It is noteworthy that analogy may narrow the gap between existing and emerging values. Then while generalization likely pushes an emerging value, which is accepted to enter the comfort zone into the nucleus, specialization brings evidence to the guard of trust for continuously judging on the appropriateness of the value in question.

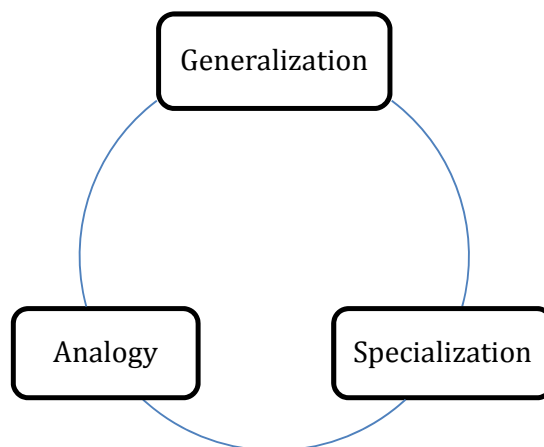


Figure 7: Three underlying logical techniques of induction

For example, Leonhard Euler (1707-1783)’s way of finding the sum of the reciprocals of the squares posed by Jaques Bernoulli (1654-1705) shows how induction changes or improves mathematicians’ mindset in his time, including Euler’s own mindset.

Bernoulli discovered the sum of several infinite series but did not succeed in:

$$1 + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{9} + \frac{1}{25} + \frac{1}{36} + \frac{1}{49} + \dots$$

Euler found various expressions for the desired sum (i.e., definite integrals, other series). Nevertheless, none of them satisfied him. Euler used one of these expressions to

compute the sum numerically to seven places (1.644934) which is just an approximate value and not his goal of finding an exact value (Polya, 1954, p. 18). Euler finally discovered such value. In light of this, Polya suggests, “analogy led him to an extremely daring conjecture.” By analogy, Euler concludes that:

$$1 + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{9} + \frac{1}{25} + \frac{1}{36} + \frac{1}{49} + \dots = \frac{\pi^2}{6}$$

Since Euler knew his conclusion was daring. He indeed saw objections himself and by his mathematical friends. Therefore, after generalizing, Euler kept specializing in finding the sum of other remarkable series, employing the analogy, such as the following:

$$1 + \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{81} + \frac{1}{256} + \frac{1}{625} + \dots = \frac{\pi^4}{90}$$

and Leibnitz’s celebrated series:

$$\frac{\pi}{4} = 1 - \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{5} - \frac{1}{7} + \frac{1}{9} - \frac{1}{11}$$

Euler’s solution can be regarded as a new value that in order to enter the mathematicians’ mindset has to be observed as analogy, then generalized to conjecture, and finally tested by specialization.

3.4. “Trust evaluator” – The guard for core values

The guard of core values or the trust evaluator, in collaboration with inductive attitude, modifies not only individual behaviors but also core beliefs. When considering acculturation in a globalization context, it is noted that the efficiency of the two largely effects on individual adaptability. In light of this, the “home vs. foreign” problems refer to not only geographical position of individuals or groups of expatriate, inpartriate but also the inside of an individual (who I was vs. who I am).

Trust evaluators patrol the mindsponge to enforce rigid beliefs of the mindset. These guards decide which values are allowed to go inward and which should be ejected. The closer to the nucleus a cultural/ideological value is, the more rigorous the guards are. In addition, while getting into the core the evaluators prefer finding unqualified values that will be washed away to testing those that are emerging.

Cost-benefit consideration underlies much of the evaluation, no matter what the individual is rational or irrational. An irrational person simply considers cost and benefit in abnormal ways. In light of this, there are four levels of trust evaluation:

- (i) Personal qualities and properties: An individual has to reach a certain level of quality in order to be regarded as “reliable.”
- (ii) Expectation of future costs and benefits in both short and long terms.
- (iii) Ability to institutionalize/formalize a value and verify its adaptability to the existing mindset. This is exactly cost-benefit considerations but involves more agents, more aspects, and longer visions.
- (iv) Suitability of generalized values at philosophical level, such as definition of what is good and what is bad, ability of self-improvement, and ideological

statements. This level refers to how corporate leaders understand core values of their corporations, not the statement of corporate values.

Despite a wide consensus on pivotal role of trust in corporate life and human society there is a lack of conceptual and methodological frameworks to understand the concept as well as trust building mechanism (Paliszkievicz, 2011). Extensive inter-discipline studies on trust result in various definitions that even make the concept more complex. In general, trust is regarded as a state, belief or positive expectation that the other people or institutions will act in ways that bring benefits or at least cause no harm. Since the future is always uncertain trust may be a bet.

Paliszkievicz (2011) notes that a few researchers consider trust a dynamic process. For instance, Zand (1972) proposes a model where two people interact with each other and a low-trust start leads to a lower-trust relation. Creed and Miles (1996) even introduce a trust function as follows.

$$Trust = f \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{embbbed predisposition to trust, characteristic similarity,} \\ \text{experiences of reciprocity} \end{array} \right)$$

Lewicki and Bunker (1996) develop a three-stage process of trust. The first stage is calculus-based where cost-benefit consideration is underlying. The second is knowledge-based trust that relies on “information rather than deterrence,” and is developed over time “in the permanent contact between participants.” The highest stage is identification-based when “trust is based on identification with the other’s desires and intentions.” Paliszkievicz (2011) also notes that while there is significant overlap between the stages, an expectation of continuous relationship suggests a high level of trust.

While globalization is creating a diverse workspace, the role of trust increases. A conceptual framework that illuminates the complex process of trust building thus is badly needed. Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, as early as in 1995, propose a model of trust that makes a clear differentiation among three factors – for instance, ability, benevolence, and integrity – that contribute to trust, trust itself and outcomes of trust. The model, in addition, clarifies “the role of interpersonal trust in risk taking.” It is noteworthy that in the model, trust is not static but a process. That is, trust carries a special property of being both “a value” and “a catalyst” that helps in turning ‘foreign’ values to become ‘home’ values. 12 years later, when revisiting the issue, the authors affirm that trust as risk taking in relationship is widely accepted by many scholars. Shoorman, Mayer & Davis (2007) also add the important role of time - which concretes the assertion that trust is a process – as well as the implication of cross-cultural issues for trust since various cultural settings defines trustworthiness’s factors in different ways.

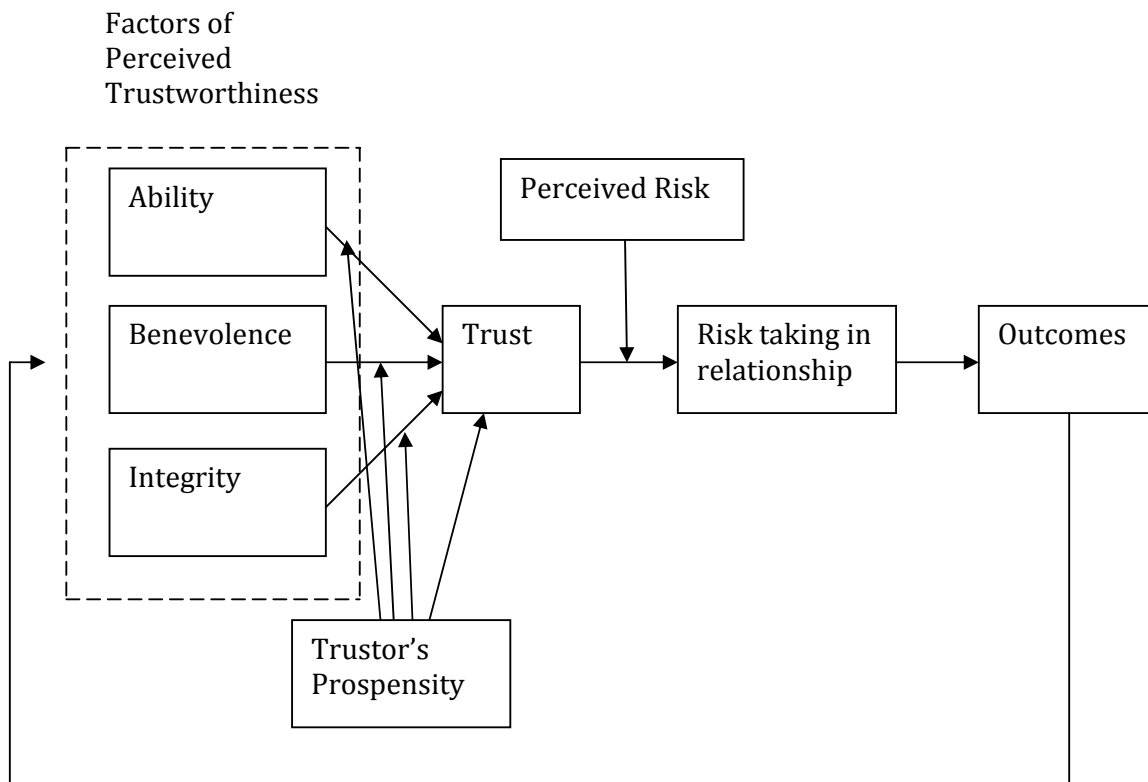


Figure 8: Mayer, Davis & Schoorman (1995)'s Integrative Model of Trust

There are two parties in Mayer, Davis & Schoorman (1995)'s model of trust: a trusting party (the trustor) and a party to be trusted (the trustee). The authors stress that trust is not taking risk, but “rather it is a *willingness* to take risk.” That is, the trustor is willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of the trustee, whose three distinguished characteristics are ability, benevolence, and integrity. The outcome of the model is “risk taking in relationship” that differentiates general risk-taking behaviors. In light of this, Mayer *et al.* argues that trust is different from cooperation, confidence, and predictability.

The willingness to take risk is also critical to an efficient mindsponge. Without a willingness to investigate whether a different, even contradict, value can enter the peripheral circle and the comfort zone, an individual's mindset becomes rigid and closed. In other words, the individual's mindsponge does not work. Risk-taking approach also explains why the trust evaluator has to be stricter while getting into inner circle. It is because the level of risk is getting higher – i.e., the cost of accepting a wrong value is more expensive.

While core values of mindset define individual and organizational identity, Puusa and Tolvanen (2006) examine the interrelation between organizational identity and trust. The authors argue that trust “is the key in creating greater commitment [of members of an organization] to an organization” but “does not create [individual] identification.” Organizational identity, instead, “affects the level of identification” that creates trust.

The relationship between identification and identity is reciprocal. For instance, organizational identity influences individual behaviors while such behaviors shape not only individual identification but also organizational identity. Puusa and Tolvanen (2006)'s statement that "strong identification results in stronger commitment to the organization and its goals" implies a high level of trust between individuals in an organization and the organization as well as among the individuals. For instance, "trust exists because the parties effectively understand and appreciate the other's wants." In light of this, the clearer the answer that an emerging value delivers the question of "how can I become better?" is the easier the value convinces the guard for core values to allow it to enter the circles.

4. Discussion

It is expected that the proposed mindsponge offer a novel and useful mechanism for improving mindset, considering the increasingly complex acculturation delivered by globalization. The following discussions are to examine how mindsponge works and what it delivers in multi-culture settings.

4.1. Cultural values and acculturation become 'dynamic' under the light of 3D multi-filter mindsponge mechanism

Traditionally, studies on acculturation refer to geographical immigration where mitigation with and adaption to new cultural values are likely compulsory, especially in alien environments. Nowadays, internet and globalization make a revolution that creates a flat world of information. In light of this, the 3D multiple filters process move cultural and ideological values around the spiky Earth. An individual, therefore, does not need to go out of his/her territory to access to new cultures and ideologies. To this end, absorption and integration seem to be voluntary.

The interrelation of three circles of mindset's core values, comfort zone, and community's widely respected socio-cultural, economic, political, and ideological values offers an explanatory mechanism for individual acceptance and ejection of the values. Mindsponge, on the one hand, removes the separation between 'home' and 'foreign.' When an individual goes to work in a foreign country, he leaves his home country for being expatriate. Years of working with 'foreign' colleagues and partners, he possibly learns about new cultural values, which gradually enter his comfort zone and patiently convince the rigid guard for core values to open the door of the nucleus. Then the existing core values - that he brings from home country - incorporate the new comers into his mindset. For instance, a non-religious European goes to Vietnam and becomes a Buddhism follower after years in the South East Asian country. When the individual returns home, he brings the new mindset including the new values that are regarded as 'foreign' values by many of his home fellows. In this situation, it is hard to consider which country is home or foreign.

In addition, one who does not have opportunity to get out of the home country is still able to absorb 'foreign' values. For instance, young Vietnamese love Starbucks coffee, follow Korean fashions, and speak localized English. There are also substantial changes. Vietnamese are more open to social values that used to be considered sensitive -

implying the topics should not be mentioned – from social aspects like sex, gender equality, children’s independence from parents to ideological aspects such as growing roles of entrepreneurs and privately-run economic sector given the fact that the Vietnam Communist Party is ruling the country toward a socialism achievement.

While the trust evaluator makes decision on whether a new value should be incorporated or not based on cost-benefit consideration, it is not necessary to see such benefits apparently, especially in short-term horizon. A mindset with new foreign values can even create trouble when the values are contradicted to the community’s popular values. So why does the evaluator accept such trouble-making values, especially when the trouble is predictable? Maslow’s hierarchy of need (1943) suggests an answer. Although the five needs of physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, self-actualization and self-transcendence are represented as a pyramid with the more basic needs at the bottom, they all present simultaneously in an individual. More important, all the needs need to be satisfied at the same time with various priorities by different people.

On the other hand, mindsponge distinguishes the difference between ‘home’ and ‘foreign’ when focusing on how ‘who I was’ is different from ‘who I am.’ Within the three circles, comfort zone – which is critical to expatriate, repatriate, inpartriate, and flexpatriate – can vary considerably. While the separation between comfort zone and the peripheral environment’s values – for instance, home vs. foreign – is much more apparent than that between comfort zone and the nucleus of mindset’s core values. It is because the former can be observed by individual behaviors and responses to the environment while the latter is within the individual’s mind.

For example, mindsponge provides an explanation as to why Western capitalists go to China for doing business, building factories and even getting married with Chinese. At the beginning, the Western capitalists have to respect social values of Chinese, such as Confucianism and Taoism, as well as ideological values introduced by the Communist Party of China. When being in China, the Westerners are getting accustomed to and become comfortable with other Chinese values including foods and teas, social ranking hierarchy where the young must respect the old and men are privileged to women. That is when the comfort zone is established. Then some Westerners may incorporate Chinese value into their mindsets that lead them to love with the Chinese.

It is noteworthy that it is hard to change a mindset. Even with an effective mindsponge, mindset changes are time consuming since core values/beliefs in mindset are rigorous. Hollywood’s famous romantic comedy movie “50 first dates” is an interesting example. A serious car accident leaves Lucy, the girl, with Goldfield Syndrome (shorter memory loss). She wakes up every morning thinking it is the beginning of the accident day. Henry, the guy, and Lucy fall in love at the first sight on the first day they meet. But since Lucy forgets everything at the end of the day, every new day, Henry has to conquer Lucy’s heart again as if they meet for the first time. Henry always succeeds. At the end of the film, Lucy wakes up and plays a tape marked “Good Morning Lucy” - which reminds her of the accident and ends with her and Henry’s wedding – then meets Henry (now her husband) and Nicole (their little daughter). This is a fictional story but as Dr. Peter Nestor, a neuroscience specialist at Cambridge University, said, “It is reasonably rare to

have this kind of amnesia but it does exist” (Levy, 2010), it suggests that the rigorousness of mindset’s core values.

4.2. The working of induction of new core values and functioning of “trust evaluator” in value inducting/ejecting process

While 3D multiple filters process is underlying theme, inductive attitude and trust evaluator play more apparent roles in mindsponge – the mechanism for inducting new values into and expelling existing values from mindset.

An individual or a mindset that has inductive attitude tries to find analogy in surrounded environment. As the thinker intends to construct conjecture, further observations and evidences then are employed to test the validity of the conjecture. A proved conjecture is regarded as an emerging value that the trust evaluator should consider the costs and the benefits of allowing the value to go inward the nucleus of the mindset’s core values. Since inductive attitude does not believe in an absolute truth, generalization is followed by the reverse procedure of specialization. In light of this, an absorbed value is going to be tested in various contexts. Positive test results improve the value’s creditability that convinces the trust evaluator to let the value go deeper into the mindset. On the other hand, the guard for core values decide if an existing value should be expelled based on negative results. Since the risk of containing a negative value is getting higher in the inner circles deciding an exile becomes easier. Although it is hard to expel a core value, it is expected that a mindset enforce the deportation immediately and decisively.

The entrepreneurial process of Vietnam’s economic renovation in the last thirty years provides an example where new value of market economy, even ideological value of capitalism, is absorbed and integrated into communist mindset while value of centrally-planned economy is being rejected.

With a desire to find solution to serious economic problems – i.e., high underemployment, high inflation, permanent inadequacy of long-term credit and foreign exchange, food insecurity, and heavy reliance on foreign aids - resulted from the Soviet-style economy, the political leaders of Vietnam started looking to alternative with relaxations of adopted principles of the centrally planned economic management in 1981 (Vuong, Dam, Van Houtte & Tran, 2011). Commodities were possible to circulated and traded with more freedom. Enterprises were allowed to purchase and exchange production materials as well as productive capital goods, for instance, machinery and equipment. Then the critical point came in 1986 when the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam’s Central Committee endorsed “an utter shift to a market-oriented *modus operandi* of the socioeconomic system and political leadership’s determination to gradually replace the centrally planned model with market principles” (Vuong *et al.*, 2011). Such bold move did not come easily.

As early as in late 1960s, under collectivization where “the State required collectives buy inputs and consumers good from the state-authorized distribution channels, and sell crops at state-governed prices,” there were efforts to allow voluntary exchange of commodities and provide farmers with choices of what and how they should produce on the fields by some provincial party cell leaders, such as Kim Ngoc (party secretary of

the northern province of Vinh Phuc, 1966-68). In his province, Kim Ngoc conducted an experiment of contractual quota system. The experiment resulted in improved efficiency of agriculture production and positive responses from farmers who used to work at low productivity in rigid rural cooperatives. Despite clear positive results, Kim Ngoc's effort was condemned for being against the communism ideology's value that everything should be collective. The experiment in Vinh Phuc therefore was stopped in 1968. However, Kim Ngoc's idea continued to spread to many other provinces in Vietnam under different forms (Vuong *et al.*, 2011). As Vuong *et al.* (2011) argue that Kim Ngoc risked losing his political carrier as he tried to introduce his innovation of contractual system, such risk taking decision can be also regarded as an effort to introduce a new ideological value of economic freedom to the mindset of communism values.

Following the 1986 Economic Renovation (usually referred to as "*Doi Moi*"), more market values have been incorporated into the transition economy of Vietnam in four periods (Napier & Vuong, 2013a). In 1987-1994, *the period of entrepreneurial policy makers*, official acknowledgement of private economic sector led to a surge of the number of startup firms to over 17,400 in 1994. *The period of trade and diplomat normalization* was from 1995 to 1999 when foreign trade and FDI inflows increased dramatically. Then Vietnam enjoyed a *boom time* in 2000-2006 period with the debut of Ho Chi Minh city Stock Trading Center in July 2000 and average GDP growth of 7.5% per annum. But *the little tiger of Vietnam did not roar* as since 2007, the Vietnamese economy has been struggled with stagflation, misallocation of resources along with crony capitalist and quasi-entrepreneurs, and loss-making state-run conglomerates which are regarded as the 'iron blows' of the market socialist-oriented economy.

It is noteworthy that the concept of market socialist-oriented economy represents the rigidity of a mindset. Despite enjoying sweet fruits of market economy, Vietnamese political leaders remain strongly committed to socialism, which is, in the country's context, another way of expression of communism. In addition, while the country is pursuing international recognition of its full market economy status, the National Assembly of Vietnam, on 28 November 2011, has approved an amended Constitution that affirms the leading role of state-run economic sectors (Vietnam's 2013 Constitution, Article 51, Item 1).

4.3. A proposed set of emerging cultural values

When considering mindsponge a mechanism for absorbing and integrating new values into and differentiating and expelling inappropriate core values from mindset, it is reasonable to pose the question of what are emerging values in this globalization context. The following discuss about such values.

Novelty vs. Usefulness. The history of human being on the Earth is just a very long journey of innovation, from fire to language, from Galileo's heliocentrism to Einstein's theory of relativity, from Gutenberg's printer to today staple internet. As the world economy is facing a stagnation that includes serial collapses of well-established financial institutions, manufacturing conglomerates, even industrial cities and national economies, the role of innovation has been critical than ever.

There are two distinct characteristics of innovation: novelty (i.e., original and unexpected) and usefulness (i.e., adaptive concerning task constraints). The former provides long-term visions while the latter focuses on solving facing problems. Therefore, a balance between the two values is necessary since they both are needed for an innovative performance but a 'skewed' innovation may result in negative outcomes. For instance, if so many registered patents are not possible to become real life application then they may be a huge waste of resources – considering how many people have involved in the invention, how much money has been spent, and how long the process of making a new thing has taken. Maddock (2013) even argues that being invention is the curse making quite a number of entrepreneurs go out of business. On the other hand, a solution to a problem may create a bigger problem or sometimes an efficient solution is just not the right thing. That is, in order to reduce the use of coals in thermal power plants, people try to develop nuclear power - which is a great source of both energy and disaster.

Here we refer to the concept of 'responsible creativity' proposed by Dang Le Nguyen Vu – a charismatic entrepreneur who is regarded as Vietnam's Coffee King by *National Geographic* and *Forbes* (Napier & Vuong, 2013a). When mentioning "responsible" a focus on collective benefits should be noted. A creativity or an innovative output should produce positive results and effects. Responsible innovators should not only make up new ideas but also find huge needs of community and society and create ways to solve them.

Induction and trust guard, therefore, play critical roles in balancing novelty and usefulness. Induction – both generalization and specialization – tends to investigate the differences between similarities, in other words, trying to find something new. Meanwhile, the guard for core values is a tough reviewer who prefers refusing to accepting new things.

Mobility vs. Inertia. Globalization makes, or perhaps forces, people to be mobile. Being busy at traveling increases the volume of information that one can touch. A hard-working 3D multiple-filter process, therefore, has more inputs to digest and opportunity for meeting new cultural values as well as novel ideas is getting higher. The old Vietnamese proverbs say, "the more you travel the wiser you are."

In addition, today internet revolution provides cosmopolitans with just too much information that make them over memory and unable to handle the information properly. The same situation is computers and hand devices run slower, even stop working, when being given multi tasks. Here it comes the famous quote of Einstein, "information is not knowledge." And again 3D filtration and the trust guard present their values.

On the other hand, mindset is inertia. A high-frequent Vietnamese traveler is still a Vietnamese. Much traveling cannot improve the quality of the traveler without a turn-on radar for primitive insights and a well-functioning mindsponge. The openness of frequent travelers may be resulted from accumulated experience in meeting different people, seeing many new things, and living in various cultural and social settings. One may also note that veteran travelers are often highly ready for uncertainties, from flight

delay to passport loss. Being certain that uncertainties will come is likely a value in the travelers' comfort zone.

Degree of rationality about cost-benefit consideration (low to high). People very often make decision based on the difference between cost they pay and benefit they gain. It is noteworthy that the level of seriousness of cost-benefit consideration varies considerably. Some may argue that such variations depend on pecuniary value of the decision. For instance, buying a car should take more consideration than a smartphone. This is reasonable as the price of a car is substantial different to that of a phone. However, this is uni-dimensional.

Why people are willing to pay more for organic vegetables and non-child-labor products? It is because consumers concern ethical value of what they are going to purchase. Since ethical value is somewhat deeper in the mindset than pecuniary value it is likely that people are more serious for the former. This is in line with the above-mentioned mindsponge as the guard for mindset's core values becomes stricter while getting closer to the nucleus.

The distortion of, or sometimes obsession with, pecuniary value may mislead people about over reliance on physical and financial resources that causes unsustainable performance of business operation. With the absence of creative discipline, such reliance is defined as resource curse or destructive creation by Vuong & Napier (2013b).

5. Concluding remarks

How to make a success? There is possibly no success formula despite people's desperate desire to learn about it. There are, however, generalized principles to and method of pursuing success (Dweck, 2006), including those help people improve intelligence capability. The mindsponge suggests a mechanism that explains how individuals, and perhaps organizations as a well-organized group of individuals, absorb new cultural and ideological values in a multi-dimension environment, then adapt to and integrate the new values that are closest to their existing mindset's core values - that identify an individual and distinguish one from the others. Those, who are able to improve their natural ability of observing, adapting and integrating into a well-trained and high-performance mindsponge, have more chances of getting wise ideas beyond their fields (Napier, 2013).

Entrepreneurship, innovation, and mindsponge. As the world economy is entering an uncharted stage of stagnation and uncertainties, entrepreneurship and innovation are regarded as the most important drivers of human being's sustainable development (Napier, Dang & Vuong, 2012). In light of this, political leaders, corporate managers, professors, mentors, even professionals and entrepreneurs have been paying vast attention to changing mindset toward entrepreneurial spirit and (what we would love to say) responsible creativity. Although the need for improving quality of individuals is so apparent, there is a lack of methodology of making such improvement happened. It is expected that mindsponge may offer proper ways to develop a growth mindset as the mechanism explains how individual mindset integrate new and positive values into as well as expel existing and negative values from mindset.

Globalization, global mindset, and internal changes. Globalization has passed the point of no return and a global mindset is nowadays just a must. The concept of global mindset, however, is an oxymoron that likely makes confused. While “global” refers to fast changing, it is hard to change a “mindset”. Such confusion probably prevents people in globalized context from developing a proper mindset, which consists of readiness to changes, risk tolerance, self-awareness, openness to, and understanding of other cultures and many others listed in Levy *et al.* (2007). A correct definition of global concept perhaps is a growth mindset that is able to absorb new values that emerge from globalization and eject existing values that are inappropriate to globalized context.

Mindsponge is not only a mechanism that explains the process of development of growth mindset and improvement of individual quality but also suggests strategy for managing human resource in multi-national corporations. The strategy includes detecting personnel who are able to adapt for changes, creating a comfort zone for staff members from various cultures, and building capability of employing 3D multi-filter process, inductive attitude and trust guard to make mindsponge work efficiently.

Last but not least, mindsponge offers an explanation for complicated distinguishes between “foreign” and “home” as well as “expatriate” and “repatriate” as it is a mechanism that enables us to explain internal changes of individual mindset. In today fast changing world where uncertainties are popular and crashes of civilization become apparently than ever, developing mindsponge is one way of meeting human being’s elusive desire and demand.

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