

REGULAR ARTICLE

Unpacking global consciousness: Identifying the psychological dimensions that foster awareness and action in an interconnected world

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Abstract

Global consciousness is a critical construct in an increasingly interconnected world, encompassing an awareness of the interconnectedness and diversity of humankind and a commitment to moral action on its behalf. However, its psychological dimensions remain underexplored, necessitating further understanding of the cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes that drive meaningful engagement with global challenges. A scoping review was conducted to address this gap, analysing literature from 1989 to 2024. Thirty-one studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods and reviews) were included to identify the key psychological dimensions underpinning global consciousness. The findings identified six interconnected dimensions of global consciousness: cognitive processes, encompassing reflective and integrative cognitive dispositions; core beliefs and values, including shared humanity, justice and cultural openness; social-relational dynamics, fostering cohesion, identity and collaboration; affective states, such as empathy and hope, driving emotional engagement; actions that translate awareness into behaviours like intercultural navigation and resource sharing; and motivational drives that energise efforts toward equity and well-being. Together, these dimensions demonstrate that global consciousness is a multidimensional construct, integrating cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for fostering global consciousness in individuals and communities, providing a foundation for addressing contemporary global challenges and promoting collective moral responsibility.

KEY WORDS

cognitive processes, emotional engagement, global consciousness, motivational drives, psychological dimensions

1 | INTRODUCTION

In an era of unprecedented global challenges, such as the escalating climate crisis, pandemics, political instability and systemic inequality, the interconnectedness of human societies has become unmistakably clear. These crises underscore the urgent need for global

consciousness, a construct defined as “a knowledge of both the interconnectedness and difference of humankind, and a will to take moral actions in a reflexive manner on its behalf” (Liu & Macdonald, 2016, p. 310). Global consciousness integrates cognitive insight, emotional engagement and behavioural mechanisms to enable individuals and communities to perceive,

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interpret and respond meaningfully to complex global issues. It fosters an awareness of humanity's shared destiny and cultural diversity, coupled with a commitment to collective well-being, equity and justice (Liu & Macdonald, 2016).

Contemporary events demonstrate the critical role of global consciousness in addressing worldwide challenges. Climate movements such as Fridays for Future (Spaiser et al., 2022) and international agreements like the Paris Agreement (Bodle et al., 2016; Falkner, 2016) exemplify global consciousness in action, combining shared environmental challenges with a collective moral commitment to address them (Marquardt, 2020). Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted both the power of global collaboration, seen in vaccine distribution initiatives like COVAX (Budish et al., 2022), and the pitfalls of vaccine nationalism (de Bengy Puyvallée & Storeng, 2022). These examples illustrate how global consciousness manifests in both institutional responses and individual actions.

The definition of global consciousness adopted here draws heavily from Liu and Macdonald (2016), however the broader literature on global consciousness intersects with several related constructs. These include cosmopolitanism, which emphasises moral obligations beyond national boundaries (Appiah, 2007; Nussbaum, 2008), identification with all humanity (McFarland et al., 2012), which focuses on psychological attachment to the global collective and global identity, which frames self-concept in relation to global belonging (Türken & Rudmin, 2013). Global awareness typically centres on knowledge acquisition and understanding of global systems and international issues (Hanvey, 1982), while global orientation captures individual differences in psychological responses to globalisation—ranging from proactive multicultural engagement to defensive reactions aimed at cultural preservation (Chen et al., 2016). Collective consciousness, rooted in sociological traditions, refers to the shared beliefs, values and moral norms that unite members of a society, shaping collective identity and fostering social cohesion (Schmaus, 1994).

These frameworks collectively reflect the multidimensional nature of global consciousness, yet they differ in scope and emphasis. Cosmopolitanism foregrounds ethical reasoning and universal moral concern, often rooted in philosophical discourse. In contrast, identification with all humanity and global identity are empirically grounded in social and personality psychology, highlighting individual differences in how people relate to the global collective. Global awareness and global orientation tend to prioritise cognitive and attitudinal development, whereas collective consciousness introduces a sociological lens focused on shared meaning-making and social cohesion. This diversity of conceptual approaches underscores the need for an integrated psychological framework—one that not only includes cognitive

and moral dimensions but also systematically incorporates the emotional, motivational, and behavioural elements underpinning sustained global engagement.

At its core, global consciousness is not merely an intellectual exercise but an emotional and motivational experience (Hudson et al., 2019; Liu & Macdonald, 2016). Beyond cognitive understanding, it encompasses a dynamic interplay of awareness, reflection, and action, enabling individuals to engage meaningfully with global challenges through informed perspectives, ethical responsibility and sustained commitment (ByBee, 2024; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022). However, the development and sustainability of such engagement may be shaped by contextual factors. Disparities in education, income, and access to information can influence opportunities for exposure to global issues and engagement with diverse perspectives. For instance, the World Economic Forum (2020) reported that while the top 1% of US earners saw a 158% income increase between 1979 and 2018, the bottom 90% saw only 24%—suggesting unequal access to developmental resources. Olcoñ et al. (2020) found that individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face barriers to developing global awareness due to limited exposure, yet Kraus et al. (2010) observed that such individuals often demonstrate heightened empathy and emotional attunement. These findings underscore that global consciousness does not arise uniformly from privilege, but through a complex interaction between structural contexts and individual psychological dispositions—particularly in relation to emotional engagement and motivational drives.

Empathy serves as a bridge to humanise distant issues, motivating individuals to act through donations, volunteering and advocacy in response to crises such as refugee displacements or natural disasters (Marjanovic et al., 2012; Yarris et al., 2020). However, empathy alone may not guarantee sustained or equitable engagement. Emotional responses are often shaped by psychological proximity, perceived similarity and cognitive framing (Batson, 2012; Cooley et al., 2017). For instance, individuals may empathise more readily with groups they identify with or those highlighted through emotionally salient narratives. Gregory (2023) illustrates this dynamic by comparing the extensive media coverage of the Ukraine–Russia conflict with the relative neglect of Ethiopia's Tigray crisis, despite comparable or greater humanitarian tolls. Such disparities suggest that the expression of empathy is not only psychologically mediated but also vulnerable to contextual influences that shape who we feel for and act on behalf of. These dynamics underscore the importance of examining the emotional and perceptual mechanisms within global consciousness, particularly how empathy interacts with cognitive processes and motivational drives to influence moral action.

Emotional resilience is equally important, enabling individuals to remain engaged with global issues despite the emotional weight of persistent crises (Figley

& Figley, 2017). Without it, prolonged exposure to large-scale suffering can lead to compassion fatigue—marked by emotional exhaustion and reduced capacity for care—which poses a barrier to sustained moral and behavioural engagement. While compassion fatigue has been extensively studied in clinical contexts, such as among healthcare workers (e.g. Zhang et al., 2023), its underlying psychological mechanisms—such as emotional regulation, perceived efficacy and motivational depletion—are also relevant to global consciousness. These mechanisms may determine whether individuals maintain long-term commitment to global causes or disengage when overwhelmed. As such, resilience should be considered not only as a protective factor, but as an affective capacity that interacts with cognitive and motivational processes to support ongoing global awareness and action.

Behaviourally, global consciousness manifests in intercultural dialogue, collaborative problem-solving and resource-sharing initiatives, as exemplified by student exchange programs or grassroots medical interventions by organisations like Doctors Without Borders (Duclos et al., 2019; Schnable, 2021). Efforts by organisations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Harman, 2016) and initiatives such as Fair Trade certification (Chomsky, 2023) demonstrate how both institutional and individual actions can address global health, education and economic disparities. These actions are often sustained by intrinsic motivational drives, including moral responsibility, social belonging and a desire for personal growth (Liu et al., 2020; Schiller et al., 2011). However, behavioural engagement is not always consistent, even among individuals who demonstrate high levels of global awareness or empathy. Barriers such as psychological fatigue, competing responsibilities or perceived inefficacy can inhibit sustained action. For instance, research on ego depletion suggests that mental fatigue can reduce self-regulatory capacity, leading to diminished feelings of guilt and lower prosocial behaviour (Xu et al., 2012). Similarly, the phenomenon of compassion fade demonstrates that empathy may decline as the scale of suffering increases, thereby weakening motivation to act in large-scale crises (Västfjäll et al., 2014). Even practical constraints, such as time pressure or competing priorities, have been shown to reduce helping behaviours (Darley & Batson, 1973). Understanding the conditions under which global consciousness translates into meaningful and ongoing behaviours—particularly through the interaction of motivational, emotional and contextual factors—remains a critical area of inquiry.

Motivational drives represent a foundational dimension of global consciousness, sustaining individuals' engagement with global issues over time. These drives include prosocial motivations—such as a desire to alleviate suffering or promote equity—as well as personal aspirations for growth, meaning or global mobility (Liu

& Macdonald, 2016; Schiller et al., 2011). Unlike affective states, which may fluctuate with emotional stimuli, motivational drives provide continuity and direction, shaping the intensity and persistence of globally conscious behaviours. However, motivation alone does not guarantee action; it interacts dynamically with contextual factors, self-efficacy beliefs and perceived impact. For instance, individuals may feel morally compelled to address global injustice yet disengage if they perceive their efforts as ineffective or unsupported (Sparkman & Hamer, 2020). This highlights the need to understand how motivational forces are activated, sustained or undermined within real-world settings—particularly in relation to emotional regulation, social belonging and value alignment. As such, motivation functions not only as an internal driver but also as a point of tension between idealistic engagement and practical constraints. Together, the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and motivational dimensions form an integrated psychological system that enables individuals to perceive global issues, feel compelled to act, translate awareness into concrete behaviours, and sustain engagement over time (ByBee, 2024; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu et al., 2020; McFarland et al., 2013).

Despite growing recognition of its importance, the psychological dimensions underpinning global consciousness remain underexplored. Existing research has often prioritised sociological or structural factors while overlooking how cognitive processes shape reasoning, how emotions like empathy and anger drive action, and how motivational drives sustain engagement (Liu & Macdonald, 2016). This gap limits the effectiveness of interventions in education, policy, and organisational practices.

Global consciousness also has important implications beyond individual behaviour. A globally conscious population is more likely to support sustainable policies, equitable resource distribution and intercultural understanding (Liu et al., 2020). Education plays a pivotal role in shaping these mindsets, with global citizenship curricula emphasising critical thinking, ethical responsibility and cross-cultural communication (ByBee, 2024; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015).

To be effective, however, such efforts require a shared psychological commitment to global responsibility. This review addresses the current knowledge gap by systematically identifying and mapping the psychological dimensions of global consciousness. These dimensions include not only cognitive, emotional, behavioural and motivational processes, but also social-relational mechanisms such as empathy-driven connection, intercultural trust and collective identity formation, which are essential for sustaining global engagement across diverse contexts. By integrating cognitive, emotional, behavioural, motivational and social-relational processes into a cohesive framework, the study aims to inform educational, organisational,

and policy interventions that foster global consciousness across diverse contexts.

2 | METHODS

This scoping review adhered to Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework, expanded by the Joanna Briggs Institute (Peters et al., 2015, 2020). Included were peer-reviewed articles, theses and dissertations employing various methodologies focused on global consciousness and related constructs. Theoretical reviews were included to capture conceptual developments in the field. Studies were included if they addressed both knowledge components (e.g. interconnectedness, cultural diversity) and actionable elements (e.g. moral action, reflexive engagement; Liu & Macdonald, 2016). Conversely, studies were excluded if they were not published in English, did not explicitly address global consciousness, or lacked discussion of psychological dimensions. The search was limited to post-1989 publications, reflecting a period of heightened globalisation and increased scholarly focus on global consciousness (Vanham, 2019).

Five online databases were searched (ERIC, Informit—Humanities & Social Sciences Collection, PsychInfo, Social Sciences Citation Index and Social Sciences) for articles published from 1989 to September 2024. Search terms included global conscious*, global aware*, collective conscious*, world conscious*, universal conscious*, global heterogeneity, global interconnect*, cosmopolitanism, identification with all humanity, bond with all humanity and global orientation. The full search strategy is presented in Table S1 of the Supplementary Materials.

MC, WL, JG and CH independently screened titles, abstracts and full texts. Disagreements during screening were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. Data extraction followed Peters et al.'s (2020) scoping review methodology, with MC, JG, CH and MS systematically charting data using a standardised form. Extracted information included study characteristics (authors, year, methodology), definitions of global consciousness and descriptions of psychological dimensions. Evidence was organised according to established psychological domains, including cognitive, emotional, behavioural, motivational, values and social-psychological dimensions. For quantitative studies, we focused on identifying measured dimensions rather than specific tools. Consistent with scoping review guidelines, no quality appraisal or bias assessment was conducted (Heward et al., 2024; Peters et al., 2020).

3 | RESULTS

As presented in the PRISMA chart (Figure 1), 31 studies were included in the scoping review.

3.1 | Summary of included studies

Of the included studies, most originated from the USA ($n=7$), followed by Australia ($n=5$), China ($n=3$) and Poland ($n=3$). Other contributing countries included the Netherlands ($n=2$), Singapore ($n=1$), Italy ($n=1$), the UK ($n=1$) and South Africa ($n=1$), with four studies involving cross-national data collection. The methodologies included 17 quantitative studies, 8 qualitative studies, 1 mixed-method study and 5 theoretical reviews.

Theoretical frameworks varied, with cosmopolitanism ($n=18$) being the most prominent, followed by identification with all humanity ($n=9$), global consciousness ($n=3$), and global awareness ($n=1$). The analysis revealed six core psychological domains underpinning global consciousness: cognitive processes (94%), core beliefs and values (65%), social-relational and group dynamics (61%), affective states (52%), actions (52%) and motivational drives (42%). Figure 2 illustrates the flow of data revealing six psychological domains. These domains, presented in order of prevalence, form the foundation for understanding how individuals cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally engage with global interconnectedness. Table 1 presents a summary of study characteristics and psychological dimensions.

A temporal analysis of the included studies revealed that the concept of global consciousness has gained increasing scholarly attention in recent years. The majority of included studies (over 80%) were published after 2017, with none predating 2007. Earlier work (e.g. Calcutt et al., 2009; Pichler, 2009) tended to focus on foundational cognitive or identity-based dimensions, such as global–local orientations and cosmopolitan identity. In contrast, more recent studies (e.g. ByBee, 2024; Lietz & Lenahan, 2022; Wu et al., 2022) have broadened the scope to include emotional, motivational and social-relational dimensions, reflecting a shift toward a more integrated psychological framework. This trend highlights the evolving complexity of global consciousness as a multidimensional construct.

3.2 | Cognitive processes

Cognitive processes were the most prevalent dimension (28 studies) encompassing cognitive mechanisms through which individuals perceive, interpret and respond to global interconnectedness, cultural diversity and moral dilemmas. Four interrelated categories were identified: cognitive dispositions and traits, active cognitive processes, global-cultural cognitive frameworks and moral-ethical cognitive processes.

Cognitive dispositions and traits refer to stable personality characteristics and mental tendencies that shape how individuals process information and

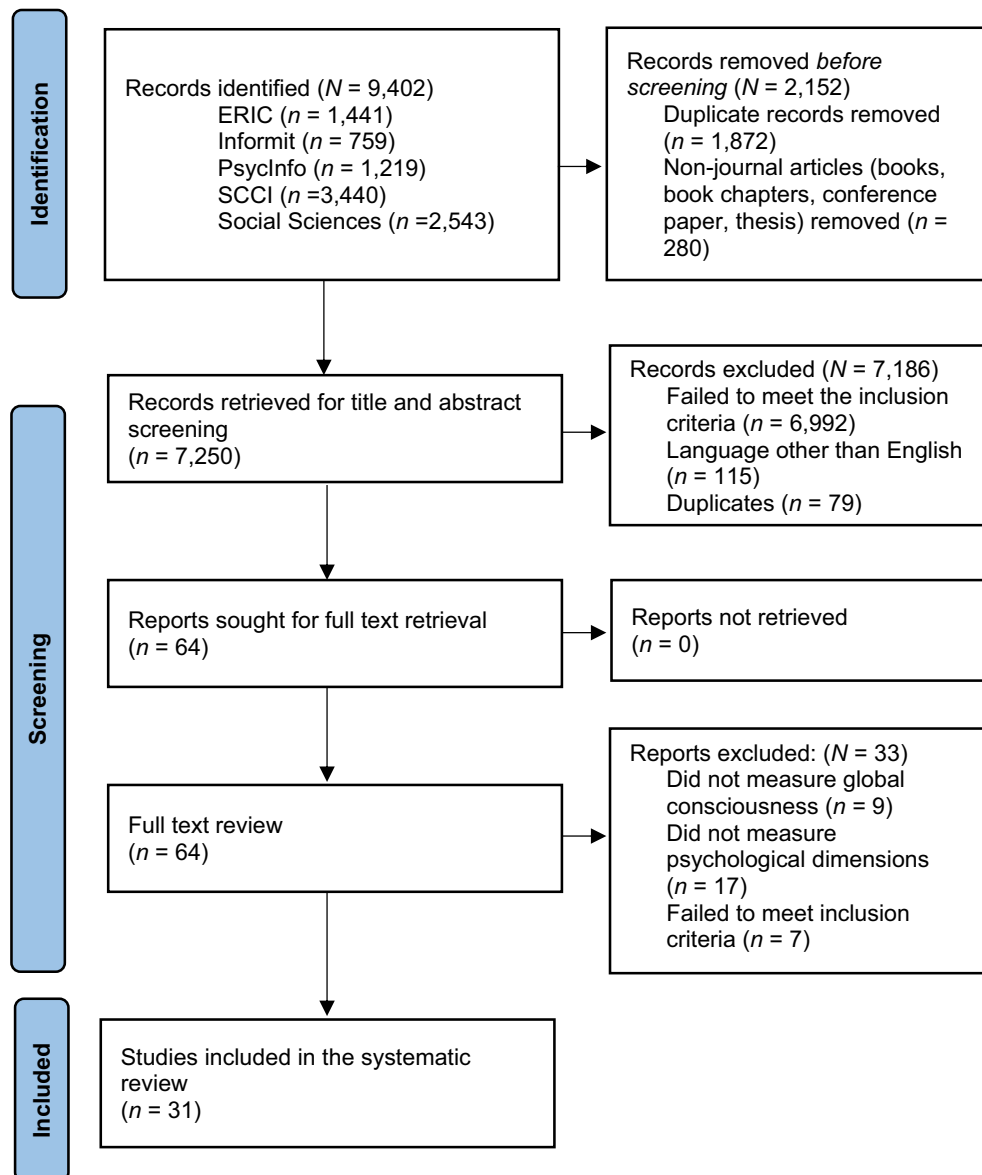


FIGURE 1 PRISMA flow diagram. PRISMA-ScR flow diagram illustrating the selection process for studies included in the scoping review.

engage with global issues. Traits identified were openness, which fosters curiosity and adaptability (Calcutt et al., 2009; Di Maggio et al., 2021; Hamer et al., 2019); agreeableness, which enhances cooperation (Liu et al., 2020; McFarland et al., 2012, 2013); and conscientiousness, which supports careful decision-making (Deng, 2021). Constructive pessimism emerged as a critical lens for questioning dominant narratives (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022). Cognitive receptivity, characterised by intellectual flexibility, curiosity and baseline trust in diverse perspectives, also played a significant role (Di Maggio et al., 2021; Pichler, 2012; Skovgaard-Smith & Poultfelt, 2018).

Active cognitive processes involve deliberate and reflective mental activities aimed at analysing, understanding and integrating global perspectives. These include

critical-analytical thinking, which enables individuals to evaluate complex information and identify systemic injustices (Jay et al., 2022; Savva & Stanfield, 2018; Wu et al., 2022). Social-perceptual engagement fosters empathy and attentiveness to diverse social dynamics (ByBee, 2024; Di Maggio et al., 2021; Diaz, 2012; Liu & Macdonald, 2016; Plage, Willing, Skrbis, & Woodward, 2017). Reflective-expansive processing emphasises abstraction, self-reflection and integration of multifaceted perspectives (Liu & Macdonald, 2016; Savva & Stanfield, 2018; Wu et al., 2022). Additionally, a unique cognitive mechanism emerged in three studies, relating to the absence of perceived threat, which enables individuals to approach cultural diversity with openness rather than fear (ByBee, 2024; Calcutt et al., 2009; Feng et al., 2023).

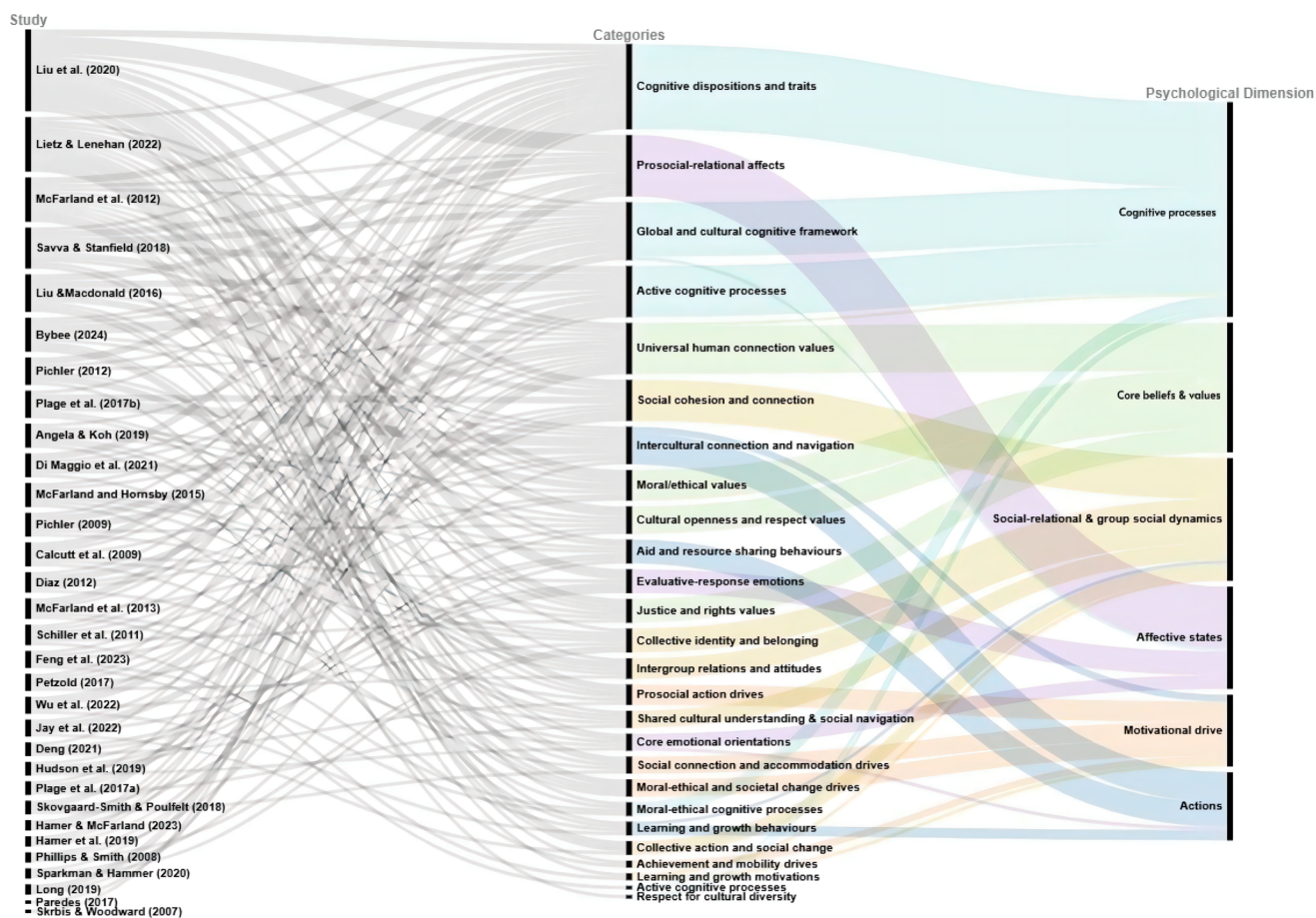


FIGURE 2 The flow of data across the six psychological domains. The thematic flow of data reveals six psychological domains that underpin global consciousness. Presented in order of prevalence, these domains reflect the key cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions through which individuals engage with global interconnectedness.

Global-cultural cognitive frameworks describe structured mental models for understanding global interconnectedness and cultural diversity. These frameworks include global-local integration, emphasising the reciprocal relationship between local actions and global outcomes (Di Maggio et al., 2021; Petzold, 2017; Savva & Stanfield, 2018). Cultural understanding and respect focus on valuing cultural diversity and fostering humility in cross-cultural engagements (Leung & Koh, 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Paredes, 2017; Pichler, 2012). Identity and connection explore how individuals situate themselves within a global collective, balancing personal and shared affiliations (Feng et al., 2023; Pichler, 2012; Schiller et al., 2011; Sparkman & Hamer, 2020; Wu et al., 2022). Knowledge and attitudes contribute to informed perspectives on global issues, reducing prejudices and fostering critical engagement (ByBee, 2024; McFarland et al., 2012; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015; Pichler, 2009). Dialectical reasoning enables individuals to balance local rootedness with global cosmopolitanism (Schiller et al., 2011).

Moral-ethical cognitive processes focus on ethical reasoning frameworks that guide responses to global dilemmas. These include moral judgement, principled

reasoning, philanthropic beliefs and intelligent humility, ensuring that cognitive engagement aligns with fairness, justice and moral responsibility (ByBee, 2024; Feng et al., 2023; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; McFarland et al., 2013).

3.3 | Core beliefs and values

Core beliefs and values were the second most prevalent dimension (20 studies). This dimension encompasses beliefs about universal human connection, moral-ethical principles, justice and rights, cultural openness and individual expression.

Beliefs about universal human connection emphasise shared humanity and global interconnectedness, fostering a sense of identification with a global community and emotional bonds across cultural boundaries (Petzold, 2017; Phillips & Smith, 2008; Pichler, 2009, 2012). These beliefs frame individuals as part of a collective global identity, encouraging empathy and solidarity while upholding universal principles of human equality and dignity (Calcutt et al., 2009; Hamer et al., 2019; Hamer & McFarland, 2023; Liu et al., 2020;

Liu & Macdonald, 2016; McFarland et al., 2012; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015; Schiller et al., 2011). They serve as motivational anchors for addressing systemic inequalities and fostering collective well-being (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Plage, Willing, Skrbis, & Woodward, 2017).

Moral-ethical values highlight internal frameworks that guide ethical reasoning and moral decision-making (Feng et al., 2023; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu et al., 2020; Liu & Macdonald, 2016; McFarland et al., 2012). These values include moral identity, interdependence and principled reasoning, driving individuals to act with fairness, compassion and altruism (Liu et al., 2020; McFarland et al., 2012). They also encompass an orientation toward helping others and advocating for non-dominant, equitable relationships across cultural divides (Leung & Koh, 2019).

Justice and rights values underscore a commitment to fairness, impartiality and human rights, prioritising global well-being over national self-interest (Jay et al., 2022; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu et al., 2020; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015). These values advocate for the application of justice principles to global decision-making (Pichler, 2012) and emphasise a cosmopolitan outlook rooted in moral responsibility and systemic equity (Schiller et al., 2011).

Beliefs about cultural openness and respect focus on valuing diversity, embracing cultural perspectives and rejecting prejudice (Petzold, 2017; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulsen, 2018). They encourage humility, curiosity and mutual respect in cross-cultural interactions, fostering constructive engagement and inclusivity (ByBee, 2024; Leung & Koh, 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Pichler, 2009). These values serve as essential foundations for building cross-cultural trust and collaboration.

Individual expression values, though less frequently studied, emphasise authenticity and the freedom to express one's identity and perspectives within a global context (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022). These values highlight the importance of aligning personal identity with moral integrity, fostering confidence and creativity in addressing global challenges.

3.4 | Social-relational and group dynamics

Social-relational and group dynamics (19 studies) included mechanisms for building trust, fostering social cohesion, and navigating cross-cultural relationships.

Social cohesion and connection emphasise solidarity, unity, and shared experiences as drivers of global connection. Mechanisms such as conviviality and collaboration create psychological safety and foster trust in cross-cultural interactions (Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2017; Savva & Stanfield, 2018).

Collective identity and belonging describe individuals' identification with humanity and their sense of

responsibility toward a global collective. This includes a shared sense of caring for humanity, belonging to a global community and prioritising collective well-being over individual interests (Calcutt et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2020; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015; Phillips & Smith, 2008; Pichler, 2009; Sparkman & Hamer, 2020; Wu et al., 2022).

Intergroup relations and attitudes focus on openness, trust, and non-dominance in cross-cultural relationships. Positive intergroup attitudes, including tolerance and a willingness to find common ground, reduce defensive reactions and promote equity in social exchanges (Leung & Koh, 2019; Petzold, 2017; Pichler, 2012; Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2017). Additionally, some individuals reported that a sense of exceptionality or outsider status enhanced their ability to understand and adapt to diverse cultural perspectives (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022).

Shared cultural understanding and social navigation emphasise the development of mutual frameworks for respectful and effective interaction across cultural boundaries. These include shared social norms, cultural reflexivity and sensitivity to social justice and equity issues (Diaz, 2012; Leung & Koh, 2019; Plage, Willing, Skrbis, & Woodward, 2017; Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2017; Savva & Stanfield, 2018). Effective cultural navigation fosters constructive engagement and reduces misunderstandings.

Collective action and social change highlight activism and broader societal engagement as behavioural outcomes of global consciousness. These actions include advocacy for human rights, policy change and sustained efforts to address global inequalities (Jay et al., 2022; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; McFarland et al., 2012).

3.5 | Affective states

Affective states (16 studies) represent the emotional dimension of global consciousness. Three interconnected categories emerged: prosocial-relational affects, core emotional orientations and evaluative-response emotions.

Prosocial-relational affects emerged as the most common, reflecting emotions that foster connection, empathy and shared humanity. These include empathy (ByBee, 2024; Calcutt et al., 2009; Diaz, 2012; Hamer et al., 2019; Hamer & McFarland, 2023; Liu et al., 2020; Liu & Macdonald, 2016; Long, 2009; McFarland et al., 2012, 2013; Savva & Stanfield, 2018), compassion (Long, 2009; Savva & Stanfield, 2018), and emotional bonds like love, attachment, human-heartedness and shared humanity (Liu et al., 2020; Liu & Macdonald, 2016).

Core emotional orientations reflect stable emotional dispositions that shape individuals' overarching emotional engagement with global issues. These include hope, which offers motivation in the face of global challenges

TABLE 1 Psychological dimensions of included studies.

Author	Country/ region of participants or data	Psychological dimensions			Actions	Core beliefs and values	Motivational drive	Social-relational and group dynamics
		Cognitive processes	Affective states					
Quantitative studies								
Deng (2021)	China	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• conscientiousness	Evaluative-response emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sympathy	Aid and resource sharing behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">• humanitarian help			Prosocial action drives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• willingness to help	
Di Maggio et al. (2021)	Italy	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• openness• curiosity Active cognitive processes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• awareness of others' needs Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">• transcend limits of single world view	Core emotional orientations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• confidence	Intercultural connection and navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• effective cross-cultural engagement			Learning and growth motivations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• curiosity	
Feng et al. (2023)	China	Active cognitive processes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lack of perceived threat Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">• connected to nature Moral-ethical cognitive processes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• moral judgement			Moral/ethical values <ul style="list-style-type: none">• moral judgement			Social cohesion & connection <ul style="list-style-type: none">• collectivism
Hamer and McFarland (2023)	USA Poland	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• openness	Prosocial-relational affects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• empathy		Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">• universalism			
Hamer et al. (2019)	Poland	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• openness	Prosocial-relational affects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• empathy		Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">• universalism			
Hudson et al. (2019)	UK		Core emotional orientations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• hope Evaluative-response emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• anger	Aid and resource sharing behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">• donation of money to others (in need/poverty)				Social cohesion & connection <ul style="list-style-type: none">• solidarity
Leung and Koh (2019)	Singapore	Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">• respect for cultural diversity		Aid and resource sharing behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">• global pro-sociality	Moral/ethical values <ul style="list-style-type: none">• non-dominance between social groups Cultural openness & respect values <ul style="list-style-type: none">• respect for cultural diversity	Achievement & mobility drives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• perceived social mobility	Intergroup relations & attitudes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• non-dominance between cultural groups Shared cultural understanding & social navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• perceived social fairness	

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Author	Country/ region of participants or data	Psychological dimensions				Social-relational and group dynamics	
		Cognitive processes	Affective states	Actions	Core beliefs and values		Motivational drive
Liu et al. (2020)	Global (19 countries)	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">opennessagreeableness Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">respect for cultural diversity	Evaluative-response emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none">angerpitysympathy Prosocial-relational affects <ul style="list-style-type: none">empathyloveattachment to othershuman heartednessshared humanity	Aid and resource sharing behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">global pro-sociality	Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">human-heartedness Moral/ethical values <ul style="list-style-type: none">moral/ethical foundationaltruistic Justice & rights values <ul style="list-style-type: none">justiceuniversal justice Cultural openness & respect values <ul style="list-style-type: none">respect for cultural diversity	Prosocial action drives <ul style="list-style-type: none">will to do goodwillingness to invest resources to defend human rights Social connection & accommodation drives <ul style="list-style-type: none">attachment to others	Collective identity & belonging <ul style="list-style-type: none">shared humanity Social cohesion & connection <ul style="list-style-type: none">solidarityattachment to others
McFarland and Hornsby (2015)	USA	Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">knowledge of other cultures		Aid and resource sharing behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">donation of money to others (in need/poverty) Learning and growth behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">desire to learn	Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">caring for all humanity Justice & rights values <ul style="list-style-type: none">justice	Prosocial action drives <ul style="list-style-type: none">behavioural intentions toward global inequality	Collective identity & belonging <ul style="list-style-type: none">caring for all humanity
McFarland et al. (2012)	USA	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">opennessagreeableness Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">knowledge regarding global humanitarian concerns	Core emotional orientations <ul style="list-style-type: none">neuroticism Prosocial-relational affects <ul style="list-style-type: none">empathy	Aid and resource sharing behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">humanitarian help Learning and growth behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">desire to learn	Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">universalism Moral/ethical values <ul style="list-style-type: none">moral identity Justice & rights values <ul style="list-style-type: none">universal justice	Prosocial action drives <ul style="list-style-type: none">willingness to invest resources to defend human rights Learning and growth motivations <ul style="list-style-type: none">desire to learn	Collective action & social change <ul style="list-style-type: none">priority to human rights over national self-interests
Paredes (2017)	USA	Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">respect					
Petzold (2017)	Europe	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">openness Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">global orientation			Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">global orientation Cultural openness & respect values <ul style="list-style-type: none">cultural openness		Intergroup relations & attitudes <ul style="list-style-type: none">cultural openness

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Author	Country/ region of participants or data	Psychological dimensions				Social-relational and group dynamics	
		Cognitive processes	Affective states	Actions	Core beliefs and values		Motivational drive
Phillips and Smith (2008)	Australia						
Pichler (2009)	Europe	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">openness Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">cosmopolitan orientationlack of prejudice		Intercultural connection and navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">effective cross-cultural engagement	Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">cosmopolitan outlook		Collective identity & belonging <ul style="list-style-type: none">cosmopolitan outlook
Pichler (2012)	Global (49 countries)	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">opennesstrust in people with different backgrounds			Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">global identityJustice & rights valuesglobal political decision making		Collective identity & belonging <ul style="list-style-type: none">belonging to the world
Sparkman and Hammer (2020)	Poland	Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">local and global view of realityrespect for cultural diversityglobal identity		Aid and resource sharing behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">humanitarian helping			Intergroup relations & attitudes <ul style="list-style-type: none">tolerance toward different peopletrust in people with different backgrounds
Wu et al. (2022)	China	Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">identification with all humanity Active Cognitive Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none">understandingabstract construal Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">identification with all humanity		Learning and growth behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none">active open-minded thinking			Collective identity & belonging <ul style="list-style-type: none">identification with all humanity

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Author	Country/ region of participants or data	Psychological dimensions				Social-relational and group dynamics
		Cognitive processes	Affective states	Actions	Core beliefs and values	
Long (2009)	-	Active Cognitive Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none">active open-minded thinking	Prosocial-relational affects <ul style="list-style-type: none">empathycompassion			
McFarland et al. (2013)	-	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">opennessagreeableness Moral-ethical cognitive processes <ul style="list-style-type: none">philanthropic beliefs	Core emotional orientations <ul style="list-style-type: none">neuroticism Prosocial-relational affects <ul style="list-style-type: none">empathy		Moral/ethical values <ul style="list-style-type: none">principled moral reasoning	
Savva and Stanfield (2018)	USA Netherlands	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">openness Active Cognitive Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none">critical thinkingreflexivity as action Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">local and global view of realitytolerance	Prosocial-relational affects <ul style="list-style-type: none">empathycompassion	Intercultural connection and navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">effective cross-cultural engagement	Moral-ethical & societal change drives <ul style="list-style-type: none">attitudes leading to action which will be conducive to intercultural understanding	Social cohesion & connection <ul style="list-style-type: none">collaborationsocialisation Shared cultural understanding & social navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">transcend the limits of a single world view
Schiller et al. (2011)	-	Cognitive dispositions and traits <ul style="list-style-type: none">openness Global and cultural cognitive framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">agency	Intercultural connection and navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">recognising and acting on shared humanity	Universal human connection values <ul style="list-style-type: none">common humanityJustice & rights valuescosmopolitanism with a moral mission	Learning and growth motivations <ul style="list-style-type: none">agency	

(Hudson et al., 2019); constructive pessimism, encouraging critical evaluation of complex problems (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022); and confidence in one's ability to make meaningful contributions (Di Maggio et al., 2021). Interestingly, neuroticism, often associated with worry and emotional sensitivity, was positively linked with global identification, suggesting heightened attunement to global injustices (McFarland et al., 2012, 2013).

Evaluative-response emotions are context-specific reactions triggered by perceived global injustices or suffering. Anger often arises in response to systemic inequalities or moral violations, serving as a catalyst for advocacy and action (Hudson et al., 2019; Jay et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2020). Pity involves emotional judgements about others' suffering, while sympathy fosters concern and a willingness to support others in challenging circumstances (Calcutt et al., 2009; Deng, 2021; Liu et al., 2020).

3.6 | Actions

The actions domain (16 studies) represents the behavioural dimension of global consciousness, including intercultural connection, resource sharing and learning-oriented behaviours.

Intercultural connection and navigation actions involve creating intentional spaces for positive cross-cultural interactions, fostering shared experiences and navigating cultural complexities with openness and adaptability (Di Maggio et al., 2021; Liu & Macdonald, 2016; Phillips & Smith, 2008; Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2017; Savva & Stanfield, 2018; Schiller et al., 2011). These behaviours rely on supportive communication and mutual respect, enabling individuals to bridge cultural divides constructively (ByBee, 2024; Diaz, 2012).

Aid and resource-sharing behaviours reflect tangible expressions of global responsibility, including monetary donations, volunteering and humanitarian support directed toward addressing global inequalities and crises (Deng, 2021; Hudson et al., 2019; McFarland et al., 2012; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015; Sparkman & Hamer, 2020). These prosocial behaviours extend beyond cultural or social proximity, driven by a commitment to collective well-being (Leung & Koh, 2019; Liu et al., 2020).

Learning and growth behaviours highlight active efforts to acquire knowledge, cultivate intellectual openness (Liu & Macdonald, 2016; McFarland et al., 2012; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015). These actions include attending educational workshops, engaging with cross-cultural narratives and participating in programs that promote global awareness. Reflexive self-examination plays a critical role, prompting individuals to assess their biases and assumptions while remaining adaptable and receptive to diverse perspectives (Wu et al., 2022). This ongoing process fosters behavioural adaptation and deeper engagement with global issues.

3.7 | Motivational drive

Motivational drives (13 studies) comprised internal psychological forces that energise and sustain individuals' engagement with global consciousness; prosocial action, social connection, moral-ethical imperatives, learning motivations and achievement-oriented goals.

Prosocial action drives reflect a commitment to contribute to global well-being through helping behaviours, resource investment and addressing systemic inequalities (Deng, 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Liu & Macdonald, 2016; McFarland et al., 2012; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015). Social connection and accommodation drives highlight motivations to form compassionate connections, strengthen social bonds and adapt to diverse cultural contexts with openness and respect (ByBee, 2024; Calcutt et al., 2009; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu et al., 2020; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulsen, 2018).

Moral-ethical and societal change drives underscore transformative motivations, emphasising equity, interdependence and altruism as guiding principles for addressing global challenges (ByBee, 2024; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu & Macdonald, 2016). Learning and growth motivations are driven by intellectual curiosity, a desire for self-improvement and agency in navigating complex global issues (Di Maggio et al., 2021; McFarland et al., 2012; Schiller et al., 2011). Finally, achievement and mobility drives focus on personal advancement, including aspirations for social mobility, reputation enhancement and meaningful contributions within global contexts (Leung & Koh, 2019; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022).

4 | DISCUSSION

This scoping review identified and synthesised six core psychological dimensions of global consciousness: cognitive processes, core beliefs and values, social-relational and group dynamics, affective states, actions and motivational drives. Rather than functioning independently, these dimensions form an interconnected system that shapes how individuals perceive, interpret and engage with global challenges. The findings illuminate how cognition, emotion, motivation, values, social context and behaviour interact to underpin a globally conscious mindset. Each dimension is examined in detail below, with attention to its distinct contribution and integration within the broader framework.

4.1 | Cognitive processes

The prominence of cognitive processes across 94% of studies points to cognition as the fundamental pillar of global consciousness. Research on perspective-taking and intercultural competence supports this centrality, demonstrating how cognitive flexibility enables

adaptation to diverse cultural contexts (Galinsky & Ku, 2004; Van der Horst & Albertyn, 2018; Wu & Keysar, 2007). However, the findings suggest that effective global consciousness requires more than intellectual understanding, it demands an integration of multiple cognitive mechanisms working in concert to navigate complex global realities. The emergence of four distinct but interrelated cognitive capacities (cognitive dispositions and traits, active cognitive processes, global and cultural cognitive frameworks, and moral-ethical cognitive processes), indicates that global consciousness is built on a sophisticated cognitive infrastructure (e.g. ByBee, 2024; Di Maggio et al., 2021; Feng et al., 2023).

The relationship between cognitive dispositions and active cognitive processes is particularly noteworthy. While traits such as openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness foster curiosity, cooperation, and deliberate decision-making and create the potential for global consciousness (Calcutt et al., 2009; Deng, 2021; Di Maggio et al., 2021; Hamer et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020; McFarland et al., 2013), it is the active engagement through critical thinking and reflective processing that actualises this potential (Jay et al., 2022; Long, 2009; Savva & Stanfield, 2018; Wu et al., 2022). Research on transformative learning supports this finding, showing how critical reflection can lead to deeper engagement with global issues (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009; Strumm, 2020).

The identification of perceived threat as a cognitive barrier has important implications. The finding that an absence of perceived threat fosters openness and reduces defensive reactions in cross-cultural contexts (ByBee, 2024; Calcutt et al., 2009; Feng et al., 2023) suggests that creating psychological safety may be a prerequisite for developing global consciousness. When individuals feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to approach diversity with curiosity, engage meaningfully and navigate global complexities without reverting to insular thinking (Harvey et al., 2019; Jutzi et al., 2023).

The prevalence of global and cultural cognitive frameworks highlights how individuals develop structured ways of thinking about global interconnections. These frameworks, particularly the integrations of global–local understanding (Di Maggio et al., 2021; Petzold, 2017; Savva & Stanfield, 2018) and cultural insight (Leung & Koh, 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Paredes, 2017; Pichler, 2012; Savva & Stanfield, 2018), suggest that global consciousness requires specific mental models for processing complex global relationships. The ability to balance local rootedness with global perspectives promotes a sense of belonging to both immediate and broader human collectives (Feng et al., 2023; Pichler, 2012; Schiller et al., 2011; Sparkman & Hamer, 2020; Wu et al., 2022). Dialectical reasoning enables individuals to further reconcile seemingly opposing ideas, such as tradition and universal human rights (Schiller et al., 2011). These frameworks provide

the cognitive scaffolding necessary for navigating global complexities thoughtfully and inclusively.

The emergence of moral-ethical cognitive processes as a distinct category suggests that global consciousness inherently involves ethical reasoning (ByBee, 2024; Feng et al., 2023; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; McFarland et al., 2013). Research on moral development adds depth to this finding, showing how engagement with diverse worldviews can enhance ethical reasoning capabilities (Hurtado et al., 2012; Mohamed & Hao, 2024; Narvaez & Hill, 2010). Our findings extend this work by showing how moral-ethical cognition specifically manifests in global consciousness through fairness orientation and principled thinking (ByBee, 2024; Feng et al., 2023; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022), indicating that global consciousness development must include explicit attention to ethical frameworks.

Collectively, these cognitive processes represent the cognitive underpinnings of global consciousness, allowing individuals to critically analyse, emotionally connect and morally reason through global challenges. They highlight the importance of fostering psychological safety, promoting openness to diverse perspectives and integrating cognitive, emotional and moral dimensions in educational, institutional and societal efforts to cultivate global consciousness.

4.2 | Core beliefs and values

The second most prevalent dimension in our findings reveals how core beliefs and values serve as both the ideological foundation and motivational fuel for global consciousness. Rather than existing as isolated beliefs, these values appear to operate as interconnected systems guiding how individuals interpret, emotionally engage with and ethically respond to global interconnectedness, cultural diversity and systemic injustice (e.g. Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu et al., 2020). These beliefs bridge cognitive understanding, emotional connection and moral responsibility, shaping both thought and action in global contexts.

The centrality of universal human connection beliefs suggests these act as a crucial bridge between cognitive understanding and emotional engagement. When individuals hold strong beliefs in shared humanity and interconnectedness (Liu & Macdonald, 2016; McFarland et al., 2012; Petzold, 2017; Phillips & Smith, 2008), they appear more likely to develop the emotional resonance necessary for sustained global engagement. These beliefs and values seem to inspire individuals to advocate for fairness and address systemic injustices with a sense of moral urgency (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Plage, Willing, Skrbis, & Woodward, 2017).

The interaction between moral and ethical values and justice orientations is particularly noteworthy. The findings suggest that moral identity and principles of fairness

(Feng et al., 2023; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; McFarland et al., 2013), work synergistically with justice values to reinforce equity and the protection of universal human rights (Jay et al., 2022; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; McFarland et al., 2012) to create a robust core ethical framework for global engagement. Research on moral identity development suggests this integration of personal values with universal principles may be crucial for sustained ethical action (Aquino & Reed II, 2002; McFerran et al., 2010; Peter et al., 2016).

The framework appears to be strengthened when combined with cultural openness and respect values. These values encourage individuals to embrace cultural diversity, engage respectfully with differing perspectives and reject prejudice or bias (Liu et al., 2020; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulfelt, 2018). They emphasise dialogue and mutual understanding, creating opportunities for constructive engagement across cultural divides (Leung & Koh, 2019; Petzold, 2017). By valuing diverse perspectives and challenging systemic inequities, these values play a crucial role in reducing cultural barriers and fostering equitable global relationships.

Individual expression values, though less frequently studied, emerge as potentially important mediators between personal and collective aspects of global consciousness. The emphasis on authenticity, freedom of expression and personal agency (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022) suggests that effective global consciousness must balance collective responsibility with individual integrity, pointing to a complex relationship between personal identity and global belonging.

Core beliefs and values are not abstract ideals but active principles that guide thought, emotion and behaviour in global contexts. They provide individuals with a sense of shared identity, moral clarity and cultural openness, creating a foundation for sustained engagement with global challenges. These values form an integrated framework that bridges personal reflection and collective action, equipping individuals to navigate complex global realities with empathy, resilience and a commitment to justice.

4.3 | Social-relational and group dynamics

Social-relational and group dynamics emerge as crucial mechanisms that transform individual awareness into collective action. The findings suggest these dynamics serve as essential bridges between personal consciousness and broader societal change (Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbiš, 2017; Savva & Stanfield, 2018).

The interplay between social cohesion and collective identity appears particularly significant for sustaining global consciousness. Strong social bonds and shared identity seem to create the psychological safety necessary for meaningful cross-cultural engagement (Phillips & Smith, 2008; Sparkman & Hamer, 2020; Wu et al., 2022).

This relationship appears bidirectional, positive intergroup interactions strengthen collective identity, which in turn facilitates more meaningful cross-cultural engagement, by reducing defensiveness and enhancing cooperation (Leung & Koh, 2019; Pichler, 2012). These relational attitudes highlight the importance of fostering environments that encourage mutual respect, trust, and collaboration.

The emergence of shared cultural understanding and social navigation as a distinct component suggests that effective global consciousness requires more than just awareness of cultural differences. Shared social norms and reflexivity, where individuals critically examine their biases and cultural assumptions, facilitate constructive engagement across cultural boundaries (Savva & Stanfield, 2018). Cultural transmission, the exchange of knowledge, traditions and social practices, also plays a key role in reducing cultural barriers and fostering collaborative problem-solving (Diaz, 2012; Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbiš, 2017). These dynamics provide the cognitive and relational tools necessary for building inclusive and culturally responsive global communities and have significant implications for how we approach intercultural education and training.

Collective action and social change emerge as outcomes of well-developed social-relational dynamics, emphasising collaboration, advocacy and sustained engagement in addressing systemic global challenges (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022). Activist engagement, resource mobilisation and systemic reforms are key expressions of collective action, driven by shared goals and mutual commitment (Jay et al., 2022). Effective collective action relies on sustained, adaptive engagement capable of withstanding setbacks and maintaining focus on long-term objectives (McFarland et al., 2012). These dynamics illustrate how social bonds, shared identities and collaborative structures collectively empower individuals and groups to drive meaningful and sustainable societal transformation. The progression from shared understanding to collaborative engagement to systemic change efforts (Jay et al., 2022; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022) suggests that social-relational processes may be the key mechanism through which global consciousness manifests as concrete action.

4.4 | Affective states

The findings reveal affective states as essential energising forces in global consciousness, suggesting that emotional engagement serves as a crucial bridge between cognitive understanding and behavioural commitment. These emotions act as powerful motivators, influencing how individuals perceive, interpret and respond to global challenges. The emergence of three key emotional dimensions: prosocial-relational affects, core emotional orientations and evaluative-response emotions, indicates

that global consciousness requires a sophisticated emotional infrastructure.

Prosocial-relational affects, particularly empathy and compassion, appear to function as emotional catalysts that transform abstract global awareness into felt human connection (ByBee, 2024; Calcutt et al., 2009; Liu & Macdonald, 2016). The prevalence of these emotions across studies suggests they may be necessary precursors for sustained engagement with global issues. Research on empathy and prosocial behaviour adds weight to this finding, showing how emotional connection often precedes meaningful action (Batson, 2012; Telle & Pfister, 2012; Yin & Wang, 2023). Notably, these affects appear to work synergistically with cognitive processes; empathy seems to enhance perspective-taking, while compassion appears to strengthen moral reasoning and action (Long, 2009; Savva & Stanfield, 2018). These emotions create a sense of shared responsibility and moral concern, motivating individuals to address systemic injustices and contribute to global well-being.

Core emotional orientations provide a stable emotional foundation in global consciousness. The interplay between hope and constructive pessimism (Hudson et al., 2019; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022) suggests that effective global consciousness requires emotional complexity—the ability to maintain optimism while engaging critically with challenging realities. Confidence, rooted in self-efficacy, empowers individuals to believe in their capacity to contribute meaningfully to global causes (Di Maggio et al., 2021). The unexpected positive relationship between neuroticism and global identification (McFarland et al., 2013) suggests that emotional sensitivity, often viewed as a liability, may actually enhance awareness of and engagement with global issues.

Evaluative-response emotions appear to serve as important moral barometers and motivational triggers. The findings suggest that emotions such as anger, often arising in response to perceived injustices or human suffering (Hamer & McFarland, 2023; Jay et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2020) can catalyse action when integrated with moral reasoning and strategic thinking (Jay et al., 2022). Evaluative emotional responses such as pity and sympathy, on the other hand, foster emotional concern and often prompt supportive actions aimed at addressing immediate human needs (Calcutt et al., 2009; Deng, 2021). The presence of both ‘hot’ (anger) and ‘cool’ (sympathy) evaluative emotions suggests that global consciousness benefits from a full range of emotional responses. Overall, affective states highlight the multifaceted role of emotions in shaping global consciousness. They provide the emotional energy and resilience needed to sustain engagement with complex global issues, bridging intellectual awareness and moral responsibility with deeply felt emotional connections. These emotional dimensions underscore that global consciousness is not solely a cognitive exercise but an inherently emotional and human-centred phenomenon.

4.5 | Actions

Actions represent the behavioural dimension of global consciousness, translating cognitive understanding, emotional engagement and moral responsibility into tangible practices. These actions encompass intercultural connection and navigation, aid and resource sharing, and learning and growth behaviours, each playing a vital role in fostering meaningful global engagement.

Intercultural connection and navigation behaviours appear to function as both expressions and developers of global consciousness. The intentional creation of cross-cultural dialogue spaces and shared experiences (Liu & Macdonald, 2016; Savva & Stanfield, 2018) seems to create a positive feedback loop, where engagement strengthens understanding and motivation (Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2017; Schiller et al., 2011). These behaviours appear particularly effective when they combine cognitive elements (cultural learning) with affective components (emotional connection) and practical skills (cultural navigation).

Aid and resource-sharing behaviours emerge as tangible manifestations of global consciousness, but importantly, their effectiveness appears linked to underlying motivations and approaches (Deng, 2021; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015; Sparkman & Hamer, 2020). The findings suggest that sustained, relationship-based support aimed at supporting vulnerable populations and fostering collective well-being has a greater impact than grand gestures, pointing to the importance of integrating behavioural expressions with deeper understanding and commitment (Leung & Koh, 2019; Liu et al., 2020).

Learning and growth behaviours appear to serve as crucial reinforcing mechanisms in global consciousness. The emphasis on reflexive self-examination and continuous learning (Liu & Macdonald, 2016; Wu et al., 2022) suggests that global consciousness requires ongoing cultivation rather than representing a static achievement. This aligns with broader research on transformative learning, which demonstrates how critical reflection on assumptions leads to perspective transformation (Christie et al., 2015; Kitchenham, 2008). This dynamic aspect appears particularly important for maintaining engagement in the face of complex global challenges.

Collectively, these actions illustrate how global consciousness extends beyond intellectual awareness and emotional connection into purposeful, sustained behaviours. Through intercultural engagement, resource sharing and ongoing learning, individuals contribute to building inclusive, resilient and globally aware communities capable of addressing shared challenges.

4.6 | Motivational drive

Motivational drives, while the least prevalent dimension, emerge as essential energising and sustaining forces in

global consciousness, bridging internal psychological forces with external action. These drives bridge cognitive awareness, emotional engagement and behavioural actions, transforming passive understanding into sustained commitment and meaningful contributions. The identification of five distinct but interconnected motivational dimensions suggests that sustained global consciousness requires multiple forms of motivation working in concert.

The relationship between prosocial and social connection drives appears particularly significant. While prosocial motivations fuel the desire to contribute to collective well-being (Deng, 2021; Liu & Macdonald, 2016), social connection drives appear to ensure these contributions build meaningful relationships rather than remaining transactional (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu et al., 2020). Emotional factors like empathy and compassion often fuel these behaviours, while moral reasoning ensures alignment with ethical principles (Deng, 2021; Liu & Macdonald, 2016; McFarland et al., 2012). These drives manifest through active participation in intercultural dialogues, collaborative projects and the cultivation of trust-based relationships (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu et al., 2020).

Learning and moral-ethical drives emerge as complementary forces that sustain engagement with global issues. The integration of intellectual curiosity with moral responsibility (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Liu & Macdonald, 2016; McFarland et al., 2012; Schiller et al., 2011) suggests that effective global consciousness requires both cognitive growth and ethical development. These drives propel individuals to advocate for systemic change, address societal inequities and prioritise the needs of marginalised communities, and appear particularly important for maintaining engagement with complex global challenges that resist simple solutions. Emotional catalysts such as compassion and moral indignation play a significant role in sustaining these commitments (ByBee, 2024; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022).

Finally, achievement and mobility drives add an important dimension to understanding global consciousness. These findings suggest that personal advancement and global responsibility need not conflict and may reinforce each other when properly aligned. While these drives often emphasise individual goals, they are frequently tied to broader social responsibilities. Aspirations for leadership, professional excellence and innovative problem-solving reflect a forward-looking mindset, where personal success aligns with meaningful contributions to collective global causes (Leung & Koh, 2019; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022). This has significant implications for how we frame and promote global consciousness in professional and educational contexts.

Collectively, these motivational drives form an interconnected framework that sustains global consciousness over time. They highlight how emotional commitment,

ethical clarity, relational trust, intellectual curiosity and personal ambition intersect to inspire individuals to act in ways that contribute meaningfully to global well-being and systemic change.

The findings highlight the interconnectedness of the dimensions of global consciousness, cognition, emotion, motivation, social dynamics and behaviour, demonstrating that they operate as an integrated system rather than isolated components. Social-relational dynamics often serve as a foundation for other components; studies consistently show that positive intercultural experiences strengthen both core beliefs and cognitive processes (Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2017; Savva & Stanfield, 2018). For instance, individuals who regularly engage in meaningful cross-cultural interactions demonstrate enhanced perspective-taking abilities and stronger beliefs in shared humanity (Liu et al., 2020; McFarland et al., 2012). Cognitive processes provide intellectual scaffolding for moral reasoning and ethical decision-making. When individuals hold strong beliefs about human interconnectedness, they show greater empathic responses to global challenges (Liu & Macdonald, 2016; McFarland et al., 2012), while affective states act as emotional catalysts that drive and sustain meaningful behavioural actions (Hamer & McFarland, 2023; Liu & Macdonald, 2016). Core beliefs and values ensure alignment between motivations, actions and ethical principles, while motivational drives provide the sustained energy required for long-term engagement with global challenges (Liu et al., 2020; McFarland & Hornsby, 2015).

This integrated perspective suggests that global consciousness is a dynamic and adaptive phenomenon capable of addressing evolving global challenges with intellectual clarity, emotional resilience and moral integrity. By addressing contextual, systemic and individual factors holistically, educational programs, institutional practices and policy frameworks can collectively nurture meaningful and contextually relevant expressions of global consciousness across diverse societal sectors (Liu & Macdonald, 2016; Phillips & Smith, 2008; Pichler, 2009).

4.7 | An integrative model of global consciousness

Drawing on the six dimensions identified in this review, we present a conceptual model that captures the dynamic interplay underlying global consciousness that synthesises the six psychological dimensions identified in this study: cognitive processes, core beliefs and values, affective states, motivational drives, social-relational and group dynamics, and actions (as shown in Figure 3). Rather than existing as discrete or linear components, these dimensions interact dynamically to shape an individual's capacity for sustained global engagement.



FIGURE 3 Psychological dimensions of global consciousness. This integrative model illustrates global consciousness as a dynamic psychological system composed of six interrelated dimensions: Cognitive processes, core beliefs and values, affective states, motivational drives, social-relational and group dynamics, and actions.

At the foundation of the model are cognitive processes and core beliefs and values. Cognitive processes encompass the cognitive capacities that enable individuals to perceive, interpret, and reason about global complexity, while core beliefs and values anchor these cognitive processes in ethical frameworks and worldviews. Together, they form the interpretive lens through which individuals make sense of global issues.

Building on this foundation are affective states and motivational drives, which act as the energising forces of global consciousness. Affective states such as empathy, hope and moral indignation create emotional resonance with distant others and global injustices. Motivational drives—including prosociality, moral commitment, intellectual curiosity and achievement orientation—translate this emotional energy into a sustained willingness to engage.

Social-relational and group dynamics serve as a contextual scaffold that both shapes and is shaped by the other dimensions. Social interactions, collective identities, intercultural trust and shared norms provide the social fabric through which global consciousness is expressed, reinforced and challenged. These dynamics often moderate the influence of affective

and motivational processes by providing the relational support or resistance that can amplify or inhibit engagement.

Finally, actions represent the behavioural manifestations of global consciousness. These include intercultural dialogue, resource sharing, advocacy and learning behaviours. Actions not only reflect internal states but also feed back into the system, strengthening or reshaping cognitive, emotional, motivational and relational dimensions through experiential learning and reflexivity.

The model is inherently cyclical and adaptive. For example, a global learning experience may enhance one's cognitive insight, evoke emotional connection, activate motivational drives, foster relational trust and lead to action—each of which subsequently informs future cognition, emotion and motivation. This feedback loop allows global consciousness to develop over time and remain responsive to evolving global conditions.

By framing global consciousness as a dynamic psychological system, this integrative model provides a conceptual foundation for future research and practice. It offers a structured yet flexible lens through which to examine how individuals cultivate, express and sustain

globally conscious mindsets across diverse cultural, educational and organisational settings.

4.8 | Implications

Building on this model, the following section outlines the key theoretical, educational, organisational and policy implications for advancing global consciousness across research and practice.

4.8.1 | Research implications

Liu and Macdonald (2016) identified psychological aspects of global consciousness, emphasising the importance of moral interdependence, the conception of self and the role of empathy in fostering a sense of shared humanity. Their work highlighted the cognitive and moral foundations necessary for understanding global interconnectedness and acting with ethical responsibility. Our review extends on this foundation by systematically mapping and extending the psychological dimensions of global consciousness, such as motivational drives and affective states, that deepen our understanding of how global consciousness operates. Specifically, we delineate nuanced elements within cognitive processes, including reflective-expansive reasoning and dialectical thinking, which enable individuals to integrate global and local perspectives (Schiller et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2022). Furthermore, our findings emphasise the importance of social-relational dynamics, such as collective identity and intergroup collaboration, and the role of motivational drives in sustaining long-term engagement with global challenges (Lietz & Lenehan, 2022; Sparkman & Hamer, 2020).

Existing scales partially addressed aspects of the six dimensions of global consciousness identified in our study. The Identification With All Humanity (IWAH; McFarland et al., 2012) and Global Identity (Türken, 2006) scales align with the cognitive aspects of global consciousness, such as global self-categorisation and shared humanity, but do not capture nuanced cognitive processes like reflective reasoning or dialectical thinking. Both scales touched on empathy but overlooked hope and evaluative emotions such as anger and sympathy. Similarly, while these scales acknowledged shared humanity as a core belief, they do not measure justice orientation, cultural openness or individual expression values. The Psychological Sense of Global Community (PSGC; Malsch, 2005) scale partially measures aspects of social-relational dynamics and emotional connection, emphasising global belonging but not intergroup collaboration, collective identity and nuanced emotional states. The Global Social Identification Scale (GSI; Buchan et al., 2011) focuses

on general behavioural engagement but does not differentiate specific actions like intercultural navigation or resource sharing. Moreover, these scales do not measure motivational drives, which are critical for sustained engagement. Future research could consider developing a scale that incorporates our six dimensions and their sub-dimensions to provide a more holistic tool for measuring global consciousness.

The role of perceived threat emerges as a crucial consideration for developing global consciousness. The findings indicate that psychological safety serves as a prerequisite for the cognitive flexibility and emotional openness needed for global engagement (Harvey et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020). This has significant implications for intervention design. Addressing perceived threats becomes a foundational step, requiring trust-building initiatives, intercultural exposure and the creation of psychologically safe spaces that encourage openness and curiosity. These strategies may need to precede other developmental efforts.

4.8.2 | Educational and Organisational implications

Educational implications emerge as key drivers in fostering global consciousness. Given that cognitive processes were the most prevalent dimension (94% of studies), with emphasis on both cognitive frameworks and active processing, educational approaches should combine the development of cognitive skills with opportunities for active engagement (Diaz, 2012; Jay et al., 2022; Phillips & Smith, 2008). The identified importance of social-relational dynamics further suggests that educational interventions should incorporate collaborative and cross-cultural learning experiences (Diaz, 2012; Plage, Willing, Woodward, & Skrbis, 2017).

Beyond education, organisational and institutional practices also play a crucial role. Embedding principles of cultural humility, moral reasoning and social responsibility into workplace frameworks can cultivate globally aware professional cultures (Hamer & McFarland, 2023; Liu & Macdonald, 2016). Initiatives such as cross-cultural collaboration programs and ethical decision-making training emerge as particularly promising approaches (Leung & Koh, 2019; Lietz & Lenehan, 2022).

Equally important are strategies aimed at individuals, promoting emotional resilience, encouraging self-reflection and fostering sustained motivation. These strategies help individuals navigate the emotional and psychological complexities of global engagement (Savva & Stanfield, 2018; Sparkman & Hamer, 2020).

Organisational leaders face the challenge of developing programs that address both individual development and collective culture change. Our findings indicate that successful global consciousness development in organisational settings requires environments that support

psychological safety while actively challenging existing mindsets. Programs should connect global consciousness development to both personal growth and organisational success, with particular emphasis on creating sustained opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and learning.

4.8.3 | Policy implications

Policy implications highlight the need for structural support of global consciousness. The findings indicate that individual development of global consciousness is enhanced when supported by policies promoting resource distribution, inclusive governance and international cooperation (Deng, 2021; Hudson et al., 2019).

Policy makers must consider how to support initiatives that address multiple dimensions of global consciousness simultaneously. This involves developing frameworks that facilitate cross-sector collaboration while addressing both structural barriers and individual development needs. Our findings suggest that policy makers should focus on creating mechanisms for measuring and evaluating impact that reflect the multidimensional nature of global consciousness rather than relying on simplified metrics.

4.9 | Limitations

While this review provides valuable insights into the dimensions of global consciousness, several limitations exist in both the included studies and our review. The broad scope, encompassing cognitive, emotional, values, motivational, social-relational and behavioural dimensions, offered a comprehensive overview but limited the depth of analysis within each dimension. Certain dimensions, such as achievement and mobility drives, were underrepresented in the literature, suggesting a need for focused reviews to provide more granular insights.

Although global consciousness comprises knowledge, cognition, feeling, and action, only half of the included studies referred explicitly to behaviour or actions. This limited behavioural examination suggests an incomplete understanding of how individuals act upon their awareness of interconnectedness and moral responsibility. The predominance of theoretical over practical examination indicates that the field remains more focused on conceptualising global consciousness than on applying it in real-world contexts. This lack of practical application risks missing opportunities to translate insights into education, policymaking, or community development.

Variability in how global consciousness and its related dimensions were conceptualised and operationalised across studies posed challenges for synthesis. Differences in definitions, particularly in dimensions

such as affective states and moral-ethical reasoning, made it difficult to establish a universally applicable framework. Clearer conceptual boundaries and standardised definitions would enhance future research comparability.

Geographically, most studies were conducted in Western, high-income contexts, with limited representation from non-Western, low- and middle-income regions. This imbalance may have shaped the identified dimensions and overlooked culturally specific expressions of global consciousness. Addressing this gap requires increased geographical and cultural diversity in future research efforts.

Methodologically, the predominance of cross-sectional studies limited insights into the developmental trajectories of global consciousness. Longitudinal studies are needed to understand how these dimensions evolve over time, particularly in response to significant life events, global crises or educational interventions.

Contextual interactions, such as how socio-economic status, education level and political environments shape dimensions of global consciousness, were not extensively explored. Similarly, the intersectionality between cognitive, emotional, moral and social dynamics remains underexamined. Future studies should adopt intersectional and context-sensitive approaches to capture these complexities more effectively.

Language bias may also have influenced the findings, as the review was restricted to studies published in English. This exclusion may have overlooked valuable region-specific insights available in non-English publications. Addressing this limitation in future reviews could provide a more globally representative understanding of global consciousness.

The synthesis of findings across diverse studies risks overgeneralisation, particularly in dimensions supported by limited evidence. While efforts were made to contextualize findings, cultural and individual variability may still affect how dimensions are expressed and experienced.

Finally, researcher perspectives and assumptions inevitably influenced the interpretation of findings. Although reflexivity and transparency were emphasised throughout the review process, bias cannot be entirely ruled out. Collaborative, multidisciplinary research teams could help diversify interpretative lenses in future reviews.

Despite these limitations, this scoping review serves as a foundational step in identifying and mapping the psychological dimensions of global consciousness. By addressing key challenges, such as enhancing geographic representation, refining conceptual clarity, and prioritising longitudinal research, future studies can build on this framework. This continued exploration is essential for advancing evidence-based education, policy, and practices that foster a more interconnected, compassionate and just world.

5 | CONCLUSION

This scoping review synthesised existing research on the key psychological dimensions of global consciousness, highlighting the cognitive, emotional, values, motivational, behavioural and social-relational processes that underpin individuals' engagement with global interconnectedness, cultural diversity and moral responsibility. The findings revealed the dynamic interplay between these dimensions, illustrating how they collectively contribute to a reflective, action-oriented and ethically grounded global mindset.

By recognising the interconnected nature of these dimensions and the contextual factors influencing them, this review provides a foundation for fostering global consciousness through education, policy and practice. Moving forward, interdisciplinary approaches that integrate insights from psychology, education, sociology and ethics will be essential in advancing our understanding and application of global consciousness in addressing the pressing challenges of an interconnected world.

Through sustained effort, reflective engagement and collective action, individuals and communities can contribute to building a more just, compassionate and globally conscious society.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Marc Chao: Conceptualization; investigation; methodology; data curation; formal analysis; writing – original draft; project administration; writing – review and editing. **Carolyn Heward:** Conceptualization; methodology; investigation; writing – original draft; formal analysis; data curation; writing – review and editing. **Jennifer Gaskin:** Conceptualization; methodology; data curation; writing – review and editing; visualization; formal analysis. **Margie Smith:** Formal analysis; writing – review and editing. **Wendy Wen Li:** Conceptualization; writing – review and editing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Open access publishing facilitated by James Cook University, as part of the Wiley - James Cook University agreement via the Council of Australian University Librarians.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

None of the authors have a conflict of interest to disclose.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that supports the findings of this study are available in the supplementary material of this article.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study is a scoping review of existing literature and did not involve the collection of primary data from human participants. As such, ethical approval was not required.

PRE- REGISTRATION STATEMENT

This scoping review was not pre-registered. Pre-registration is not typically required for scoping reviews, as they are exploratory in nature and aim to map existing literature rather than test specific hypotheses.

RESEARCH MATERIALS AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The research materials that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

How to cite this article: Chao, M., Heward, C., Gaskin, J., Smith, M., & Li, W. W. (2025). Unpacking global consciousness: Identifying the psychological dimensions that foster awareness and action in an interconnected world. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 28, e70031. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.70031>