

Good example of perception of leadership styles and trust across cultures and gen...

[Sociology](#), [Gender Studies](#)



Human character and attitude seems to be the defining attributes that people value in their leaders, pushing other classical leadership traits such as experience and technical skills on a secondary level. This is what the examined case study indicates, when comparing the leadership skills of Barak Obama and Hillary Clinton, suggesting that neither Obama's communication skills nor Clinton's political experience mattered as much as their human character and attitudes in their political confrontation from 2008. While this situation might be true for the political scene, the business environment acts on different principles. The examined study identified fairness and honesty as the leadership attributes that made Obama triumphant over Clinton. Human character, expressed through fairness and honesty is valued in a business environment, but organizations target to reach performances. Soft skills such as fairness and honesty are less significant than proven skills and abilities, experience and visionary approach. The examined case study revealed that fairness and honesty were the drivers of inspiration and motivation in the presidential race from United States in 2008. Moreover, authenticity and visionary approach were considered to make the difference between Barak Obama, who naturally possessed these features, and Hillary Clinton, who lack authenticity, although also expressed visionary approach. In relation to these aspects, in an organizational context, the employees or the followers are inspired and motivated by leaders who possess the following attributes:

- understand and show interest in their followers' career development;
- are honest and transparent with the followers;
- have vision and direction;

- know how to organize and to allow accountability and autonomy;
- recognize the followers' contributions.

Therefore, honesty, fairness and visionary approach are important leadership attributes, which engage followers into being inspired and motivated by their leader. The authenticity feature, however, a defining component of Obama's campaign as compared to Clinton's discourse, does not appear as a classical key driver of motivation. Nevertheless, in Obama's political campaign, the authenticity was correlated with the idea of change, of transformation, which also defined his leadership style as transformational. The examined case study states that one aspect that contributed to Obama's success was precisely its transformational leadership approach expressed through his authenticity, because Americans needed change, and this is exactly what Obama promised. The authenticity is, in fact, a defining driver of motivation in the case of transformational leadership, and there are worldly known examples to sustain this claim. As such, Bill Gates of Microsoft, Apple's Steve Jobs or Jack Welch from GE are just some examples of individuals who expressed their authenticity by applying changes in their organizations, using the transformational leadership style.

In fact, giving the success of the transformational leadership style in changing the organizations and the business environment, the authenticity is the number one engine of the motivation, because the employees tend to become fascinated with what their leaders promise in terms of innovation and change.

In relation with the case study that found that gender and cultural aspects did not influence the results of the confrontation between Barak Obama and

Hillary Clinton, in the real business world, gender and cultural aspects represents a significant factor that contributes to the selection of leaders. As such, it is commonly known that, in the worldwide organizational context, the leadership positions are mainly occupied by men. This indicates a perception according to which men are considered more likely than women to possess leadership traits and abilities. Developing this reasoning in relation with the examined case study and its identified key characteristics of leadership, there can be stated that the global society (Western and Eastern) consider men more trustworthy and fair, more visionary and more authentic than women. The study suggests that the voters were not influenced by their gender and cultural background in selecting either Obama or Clinton, but I consider that in reality, gender and cultural identity mattered, and they do matter in organizational contexts also. It is true that professionalism, human character, attitudes and skills begin to matter more than the cultural background or the gender of leaders. However, there are still traditionally enrooted opinions that are reluctant to women's participation in the public sphere. This hinders the increased presence of women in the top leadership positions within organizations.

Therefore, as related to the examined case study, although I agree that fairness and honesty are important decision-making factors in selecting leaders, in organizational context other aspects such as technical skills or experience prevail. I sustain the study's finding that visionary approach and authenticity are key drivers of motivation for transformational leadership. On the other hand, unlike the study which claims that the political confrontation between Obama and Clinton was not influenced by gender and cultural

believes, I consider that in organizational environment gender and culture strongly influence the selection of leaders.

Bibliography

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