

Cross-cultural leadership: an analysis



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Introduction

I have lived, travelled and worked extensively overseas since 2003 in particular London, UK and Dubai, UAE this has sparked my interest in furthering my understanding of cross-cultural leadership issues.

I have experienced working in different organisations, cultural, customs, races, work ethic, languages, morals, ethics, beliefs, class / caste systems, education, etc. this is more evident in Dubai, UAE then it was in London, UK.

In this Leadership Research Project I will explore “ how cross-cultural issues might influence leadership approaches”, I will be looking at it from a Western Leadership Approach and Eastern Leadership Approach, which I will define later.

There are a lot of issues and factors that effect leadership approaches, styles, and effectiveness some of which are organisational culture, national culture which we will be exploring.

Yousef (1998) has highlighted that leaders and followers personal attributes such as national cultural, experience, education, age, tenure with present organisation and organisational factors such as ownership have a significant relationship with leadership effectiveness.

I will be looking at Western Leadership Approaches i. e. Anglo Saxon “ Australian and British” versus Eastern i. e. Arabic and Indian” and drawing on some of my experiences in the Middle East while working as a Construction Project Manager in Dubai, UAE from 2007 to 2009.

Please note that the terms / descriptions “ Australian, Indian, Arabic etc... Leaders and Managers are more Democratic, Authoritarian, Autocratic, Laissez-faire etc...” These are generalisations and I acknowledge that there are Leaders, Managers and Followers that fall outside of these generalisations, as in Leadership there is no one size that fits all approach, what works in one culture does not necessarily work in another.

From personal experience adopting an Australian, British, American i. e. Western Leadership Approach, Style, Characteristics, Traits etc. to the context of the Middle East i. e. Dubai, UAE working in an Arabic Cultural and leading and managing predominately Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sir Lankan, Chinese etc. work force does not necessarily work due to a cultural differences i. e. organisational and national, so you have to have a Situational / Contingency Leadership Approach & Style to be effective in cross-cultural.

Yousef (1998) suggest that leaders should adopt a leadership style that accommodates the followers personal attributes as well as organisational factors in order to achieve organisational goals and objectives effectively, this backs up my argument above.

The two organisations that I worked in we polar opposites in terms on organisational cultural the first one Dutco Balfour Beatty LLC was one of the largest and well established construction and engineering companies in the UAE operating across diverse fields.

The other Cliff Creek Building Contractors LLC was a relatively small company

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The first organisation was highly Authoritarian, Bureaucratic, over-centralised, authority and power is unequally distributed at the top and this is typical of most firms in the Middle East from my experiences.

The second organisation was

Brief Overview of the Industry

“ Insert Here”

Body

Definitions

There is no set definition of leadership and cultural, it has been defined in many ways by many people for the purposes of this Leadership Research Project we will use the following definition

Leadership Definition

The GLOBE Project defines leadership as “ the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organisation of which they are members” (Page 15 Culture, Leadership and Organisations The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies)

Cultural Definition

The GLOBE Project defines culture as “ shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations of meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members collectives that are transmitted across generations” (Page 15 Culture, Leadership and Organisations The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies)

Culture includes the organisation, country where you live or have lived in, social class, generation, gender, regional, ethnic, religious, linguistics,
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customs, race, work ethic, morals, ethics, beliefs, values, class / caste systems etc.

Western Leadership Style & Ideas Definition

I have limited my Leadership Style & Ideas to the UK and Australian, as this is where I have worked during my career and have experience in managing people, resources etc. in terms of

Eastern Leadership Style & Ideas Definition

I have limited my Leadership Style & Ideas to Indian as this is was the majority of the workforce in Dubai, UAE that I managed and lead i. e. Leader / Follower relationship.

Literature Review

A review of the Literature reveals that there has been much written on the topics of Leadership and Culture but there is not enough interaction of the topics and a lot of the literature is from a Western Perspective, more needs to be written from the prospective of the Arab and Indian and also the industry.

I have found from the Literature Review that there are many Leadership Theories i. e. Transformational, Transactional, Situational, Contingency, Leadership Member Exchange “ LMX”, Ethical, Authentic, Visionary, Cross-cultural, Military View “ Heroic” Leadership, Strategic, Charismatic, Spiritual, Less-ego, Liberating, Theory “ X, Y, Z”, Traits, etc. and that different researches call them different things and there is a lot of overlap between them.

There are of course other leadership theories that I have not listed above due to the limited space available.

The leadership styles, traits, characteristics and approaches that I have outlined below are a broad generalisation of leadership in terms of Australian / British i. e. Western Leadership and Arab / Indian i. e. Eastern Leadership.

The seminal work in the field of cross-cultural leadership was by Greet Hofstede 1980 which has been widely cited, he study 100, 000. 00 employees of IBM from 49 countries and cultures over a 6 year period from 1967 to 1973 and identified four leadership dimensions to compare leadership differences and similarities, these dimension are: -

1. Individualism / Collectivism (Refer Item 5 & 6 below);
2. Hierarchy, Status and Power Distance; (Refer Item 8 below);
3. Uncertainty Avoidance (Refer Item 9 below); and
4. Masculinity (Refer Item 2 below).

The study was of one organisation IBM and one industry, and as such these dimension are generalisations of organisational and national cultural.

This work has formed the bases for other researches, to replicate, extend and refute this, one such works was the GLOBE Study.

The Globe Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Program House 2004, from hear on will be referred to as the “ Globe Study” for the rest of Leadership Research Project.

The GLOBE Study examined 62 cultures across 3 industries (Financial Services, Food Processing and Telecommunications), how culture related to <https://assignbuster.com/cross-cultural-leadership-an-analysis/>

societal, organisational and leadership effectiveness. It studied 17, 300. 00 managers in 951 organisations and tested 27 hypotheses over a 5 year from 1992 to 1997.

The Globe Study examined leadership from the followers point of view and used Hofstede 1980 original four dimensions albeit renamed and added five new cultural dimensions listed below: -

1. Future Orientation;
2. Gender Egalitarianism (Refer Item above 4);
3. Assertiveness;
4. Humane Orientation;
5. In-Group Collectivism (Refer Item above 1);
6. Institutional Collectivism (Refer Item above 1);
7. Performance Orientation;
8. Power Concentration vs. Decentralisation (Refer Item above 2); and
9. Uncertainty Avoidance (Refer Item above 3).

Refer to Appendix A for Definitions of item 1 to 9 above.

The Global Study identified six major global leadership behaviours: -

1. Autonomous;
2. Charismatic / Value-Based;
3. Humane Oriented;
4. Participative;
5. Self-Protective; and
6. Team Oriented.

Refer to Appendix A for Definitions of item 1 to 6 above.

They also identified 22 attributes that are universally accepted across the 62 cultures for effective Leadership: –

1. Trustworthy;
2. Just;
3. Honest;
4. Foresight;
5. Plans ahead;
6. Encouraging;
7. Positive;
8. Dynamic;
9. Motive arousers;
10. Confidence Builder;
11. Motivational;
12. Dependable;
13. Intelligent;
14. Decisive;
15. Effective bargainer;
16. Win-win problems solver;
17. Administrative Skilled;
18. Communicative;
19. Informed;
20. Coordinator
21. Team Builder; and
22. Excellence oriented.

They also identified 8 attributes that are universally not accepted across the 62 cultures for effective Leadership: –

1. Loner;
2. Asocial;
3. Non-cooperative;
4. Irritable;
5. Non-explicit;
6. Egocentric;
7. Ruthless; and
8. Dictatorial.

Jacob 2005 suggests that there are shortcomings of global sweep studies as cultural and management are dynamic and constantly evolving where these studies are a static snapshot of a country orientation.

She then goes on to say cross-cultural managers should be able to gauge what types of leadership behaviour works in a particular culture and develop skills which enable them to assume the required leadership behaviour, this reinforces my argument above regarding Situational Leadership.

She cites Fiedler who suggests that leadership style used should match the situational requirements.

I think that the cultural dimensions and typologies that are outlined in this paper and that were identified by Hofstede (1980), Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (2000), House et al (2004) and others have their place, and are a good indicator for organisations and individual leaders who are

proposing or are already actively operating in a different culture and country to their own e. g. Australian / Middle East / Indian.

As this will give them an indicative guide to what attributes are universal across cultures, are considered good and bad and specific to a particular culture and what followers expect from their leader.

I will identify below the individual attributes of the Western & Eastern Leaders as identified by Hofstede 1980 and the Globe Study 2004.

Western Leadership Approaches

Australian and England “ Anglo”

Generally

According to House et al 2007 1 P297 Generally Leaders from Anglo Countries i. e. Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa (White Sample) and the USA are highly performance orientated, mildly assertiveness, future orientation, gender egalitarianism, humane orientation, institutional collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance but low on in-group collectivism.

Leaders from these countries generally support a charismatic / Value Based Leadership Approach, Style, Traits, Characteristics very strongly compared to other countries.

It also quite strongly supported Team Oriented Leadership and elements of participative leadership which enacted in humane oriented manner.

Self-Protective Behaviours were viewed negatively a “ Person Oriented”

Leadership is endorsed by all Anglo countries where results are expected to be delivered and achieved by the leader by operating in a team.

Australian

The Australian management and leadership style

I was born and bred in Australia which has influenced my leadership style, approach, characteristics, traits etc.

This was developed through cultural influences both organisational and societal i. e. values, beliefs, morals, ethics, customs, rituals, artefacts, language, social class, generation, gender,... which are learned and engrained in you from an early age.

The generalisation of Australian Leadership style, approach, characteristics, traits etc. are

Generally in Australia our culture and leadership is an enigma which is full of contradiction and change this has been developed over our relatively short history from European Settlement in 1788 by the British to present day, which has included the following: –

1. Pre- and Early Settlement;
2. Government and Politics;
3. Economy;
4. Australia as a Multicultural, Tolerant and Pluralist Society;
5. Relationship with Other Countries.

Values

- Egalitarianism “ Mateship” and “ A Fair Go”
- Inspirational not Charismatic
- Individual Rewards
- Performance Oriented “ One of the Boys”
- Distrust of Politics and Politicians
- National Identity with the Heroism of the Anzacs

Australia Continued

Refer to table 9. 1 P. 305

British

The British management and leadership style

General

Specific

Refer to Australia for details

Eastern Leadership Approaches

Arabic

We had to extrapolate the GLOBE Study data for the Middle East to Dubai, UAE as only Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Kuwait, Morocco were researched the Globe Study.

I will have to extrapolate the Middle East Data to Dubai, UAE as only Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Kuwait, Morocco were researched the Globe Study.

I acknowledge that there are differences between countries and industries.

General

Specific

Refer to Australia for details

Indian, Pakistani, etc.

General

Specific

Refer to Australia for details

Indian is a spiritual culture

Ethics and Social Responsibility

With regards to ethics and social responsibility within the context of Dubai, UAE and the construction industry / construction companies I worked with this issue does not exist it has been my experience.

Practical Implications

Conclusions and Recommendations

So as a Western Leader and Manager, who is managing Indians for example you should exhibit the following behaviours in the followers eyes if you do not already possess them.

Culture and Leadership are inextricably linked.

There is a need for further research in the area of cre

Due to the globalisation of business and the mix of cultures

References / Bibliography

I have used APA or Harvard citation in this Leadership Research Project.

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3. Jagdeep S. Chhokar, Felix C. Brodbeck, Robert J. House (2007). Culture and Leadership Across the World The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Cultures. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: ISBN 0-8058-5997-7

Journals

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2. Nina Jacob Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Post Bus, The Netherlands Cross-cultural investigations: emerging concepts Journal of Organisational Change Management Vol. 18 No. 5, 2005 pp. 514 – 528 Emerald Group Publishing Limited 0953-4814.

Appendices

Appendix A

Definitions

GLOBE Study 2004

Future Orientation;

Is the degree to which individuals in organisations or societies engage in future-oriented behaviours such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying individual or collective gratification.

Gender Egalitarianism;

Is the extent to which an organisations or societies minimises gender role differences while promoting gender equity and the equality of genders.

Assertiveness;

Is the degree to which individuals in organisations or societies are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships

Humane Orientation;

Is the degree to which individuals in organisations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, kind to others, and exhibiting and promoting altruistic ideals.

In-Group Collectivism (Collectivism II);

Reflects the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organisations, families, circle of close friends, or other such small groups.

Institutional Collectivism (Collectivism I);

Reflects the degree to which organisational and societal institutional practises encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.

Performance Orientation;

Refers to the extent to which high level members of organisations or societies encourage and reward group members for performance improvement and excellence.

Power Distance

Is the degree to which members of an organisation and society encourage and reward unequal distribution of power with greater power at higher levels.

Uncertainty Avoidance.

Is the extent to which members of an organisation or society strive to avoid uncertainty by relying on established social norms, rituals, and bureaucratic practices to decrease the probability of unpredictable future events that could adversely affect the operation of an organisation or society, and also remedy the potential adverse effects of such unpredictable future events.

Ch. 1 Introduction Culture Page 3 and 4 Jagdeep S. Chhokar, Felix C.

Brodbeck, Robert J. House (2007). Culture and Leadership Across the World The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Cultures. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: ISBN 0-8058-5997-7

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Leadership Characteristics

Australian England Arabic Indian Universal Differences

General Attributes

Specific Attributes

Game

Metaphor

Mateship

Work Ethic

Caution

Adversarial

One of Us

Tall Poppy

Underdog

Pragmatic

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Brainstorming / Ideas to be used or not

“ Leadership inexorably intertwined with Culture” P. 2 Cultural Methology and Global Leadership Edited by Eric H. Kessler and Diana J. Wong-Mingji”

“ Leadership is something that is co-produced within a specific context” and

“ Leadership is co-produced by leaders and followers” Ch. 4 Cultural Perspectives on Leadership Page 61 A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Studying Leadership Brad Jackson and Ken Parry.

“ Leadership is essentially a cultural activity it is suffused with values, beliefs, language, rituals and artefacts” Page 63 Culture & Leadership A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Studying Leadership Brad Jackson and Ken Parry.

“ Culture Shock” I want to mention this.

“ Cultural Intelligence”

Change management / leadership style and ideas to suit cultural context i. e. Situational Leadership.

Sarros & Santora leadership is embedded in social and cultural beliefs and values, and cannot be fully understood apart from the context in which it exists.