

LEADERSHIP IN THE ASIAN CENTURY: LESSONS FROM GLOBE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, based on the results of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) 61-nation study of culture and leadership, we present findings related to three 'clusters' of countries. These clusters are: (1) the 'Anglo culture' cluster (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, white South Africa, UK, and USA), the 'Southern Asia' cluster (Iran, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines), and the 'Confucian Asia' cluster (China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan). Data from the GLOBE study, reporting middle managers' perceptions of societal practices and values, and of the factors that facilitate and inhibit effective leadership will be compared across the three clusters. Results demonstrate that, despite differences in cultures, especially cultural values, perceptions of effective leadership vary substantially only in respect of the extent that participation is seen to facilitate leadership. In the Anglo cluster, participative leadership is seen as much more facilitative of leadership than in either of the Asian clusters. Results are discussed in terms of effective leadership styles suitable for management in the twenty-first century, where Asian economies are likely to play a more dominant role than they have in recent history.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite faltering in the latter stages of the twentieth century (see Lingle 1998), the economies of east and south Asia have been inexorably developing and expanding. In this respect, many of these economies are already challenging the developed economies of the west. Bergesen and Sonnett (2001), for example, recently illustrated this rise in an analysis of *Fortune* 'Global 500' firms. Manning (2001) notes: "Despite the 'Asian miracle' hype in recent years, despite the 1997 financial crash, the remarkably swift rise of Asia is for real. And it is one of the truly remarkable phenomena of the 20th century — and a burgeoning political fact that will reshape the contours of world power in the 21st century".

In this case, it is imperative for those of us in the Western world to understand societal culture in Asia and leadership models applicable in Asia. In this paper, we address this topic by dealing specifically with culture and leadership in three clusters of countries. The first is the 'Anglo culture' cluster, and comprises Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, white South Africa, UK, and USA (see Gupta, Hanges, & Dorfman 2002). The second and third clusters are both located geographically in Asia. The 'South Asia' cluster comprises Iran, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, while the 'Confucian Asia' cluster comprises China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan (Gupta, Hanges & Dorfman 2002).

This analysis is based on the results of quantitative data obtained in Phase II of the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) research program, led Professor Robert House of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Conceived in 1991, and under way since 1993, the GLOBE program eventually grew to involve a network of over 170 cross-cultural scholars, and samples from 62 national cultures (in 61 countries) around the world. The detailed reports of the GLOBE project are to be published in two books in 2002. Book 1 (House et al. [eds]. in press) presents the results of the quantitative component of the study, while Book 2 (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House [eds]. in press), presents qualitative analysis for of 27 of the 61 participating countries. The conceptual basis of the study has already been published in House et al. (1999), while den Hartog et al. (1999) have published a preliminary analysis of the leadership data collected in GLOBE.

The quantitative data from the GLOBE analysis were collected using questionnaires, developed in Phase I of the GLOBE project, and to be reported in detail in House et al. (in press) including analysis of psychometric properties. The questionnaires were designed to collect data on societal culture, organizational culture, and leadership; and were completed by middle-level managers in three industries: telecommunications, finance, and food processing. These industries were chosen in order to give a wide range of industries from the relatively stable (food processing) to the rapidly changing (telecommunications).

House et al. (1999, p. 188) note, "the attributes and entities that distinguish a given culture from other cultures are predictive of the practices of organisations of that culture, and predictive of leader attributes and behaviours that are most frequently enacted, acceptable, and effective in that culture". In this respect, culture in the GLOBE study is defined in terms of both the values and practices within a society. Thus, the culture questionnaires were worded in terms of 'Should Now' to represent the values of a society, and 'Is Now' (or 'As Is') to represent current behaviours and practices within organisations. Examples of typical

GLOBE questionnaire items relating to future orientation are: “The way to be successful in this society *is* to plan ahead” (Is Now) and “I believe that people who are successful *should* plan ahead” (Should Be). Respondents responded to the survey items using a 1-7 scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement, and 7 represented strong agreement. Nine dimensions of culture were eventually identified (see House et al. in press), and are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. GLOBE Culture Dimensions

Dimension	Description
Performance Orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.
Assertiveness	The degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational and aggressive in their relationships with others.
Collectivism I	The degree to which organisational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.
Gender Egalitarianism	The degree to which a collective minimises gender inequality.
Humane Orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring and kind to others.
Power Distance	The degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally.
Collectivism II	The degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organisations or families.
Uncertainty Avoidance	The extent to which a collective relies on social norms, rituals, and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of future events.
Future Orientation	The extent to which individuals engage in future-orientated behaviours such as delaying gratification, planning and investing in the future.

Turning now to organisational leadership, House, Hanges, and Ruiz-Quintanilla (1994, cited in House et al. 1997, p. 548) defined this as: “... the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members”. House et al. (1999, p. 188) noted subsequently that cultures are distinguished by “leader attributes and behaviours that are most frequently enacted, acceptable, and effective in that culture”. They refer to this as “Culturally-determined implicit Leadership Theory” or CLT (see also House et al. 1999). The GLOBE leadership questionnaires entailed respondents indicating on a 7-point scale the extent to which descriptives of leadership behavior facilitate or hinder leadership effectiveness. Based on these responses, the GLOBE project team found twenty-one leader attributes (see den Hartog

et al. 1999). A second-order factor analysis of these attributes subsequently produced the six dimensions of leadership listed in Table 2.

Table 2. GLOBE Leadership Dimensions

Leadership Dimension	Description and key findings from GLOBE (den Hartog et al. 1999)
Charismatic	Universally endorsed as contributing to a leader's effectiveness. A Charismatic/Value Based leader endorses a vision congruent with the values of followers, and which are also generally congruent with the values based on cultural norms.
Team Orientated	Endorsement of this dimension was found to vary between cultures. These behaviours represent a style of leadership focusing on the team and emphasising the relationships between the members of that team.
Self-Protective	This dimension was found universally to impede a leader's effectiveness. These behaviours represent a bossy yet self-interested and evasive leader, who relies on formalities and procedures.
Humane	The endorsement of this dimension was found to vary between cultures. This set of behaviours represents a leader who is generous, compassionate, patient, and modest.
Participative	This is another leadership style where endorsement was found to vary from culture to culture. A Participative leader works well with other people and actively participates in the task being undertaken.
Autonomous	This dimension was based on the single attribute of individualism, and encompasses an independent and autonomous approach. This was another dimension whose endorsement was found to vary between cultures.

Two of the dimensions of leadership were termed 'universal' by den Hartog et al. (1999). These are Charismatic (or Value-based), which was found universally to facilitate effective leadership; and Self-Protective, which was found universally to impede effective leadership. The remaining six dimensions were found to vary widely between countries in their impact on leadership effectiveness.

In summary, the GLOBE study identified nine dimensions of societal culture and six characteristics of effective leadership, as perceived by the middle management respondents across the 62 cultures included in the study. According to House and his associates (1999), societal culture determines each society's CLT that in turn underlies the perceptions of leadership held by the respondents. In this paper, we compare the cultures and leadership effectiveness attributes of three 'clusters' of countries as defined by Gupta, Hanges & Dorfman (2002), which include data from 19 of the 61 countries in the GLOBE study.

The Three Clusters

Gupta, Hanges & Dorfman (2002) found that the GLOBE data could be used to identify ten 'country clusters'. These were Anglo cultures, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Indigenous Africa, Arabic cultures, Southern Asia, and Confucian Asia. In this paper, we are concerned with three of these clusters: Anglo, Southern Asia, and Confucian (or East) Asia. These clusters actually reflect Huxley's (1997)

categorisation of ancient legal systems into three groups, originating from India, China, and the Hellenistic (Western) world. In particular, Gupta, Hanges, and Dorfman note that Asian culture is most appropriately subdivided into clusters based, respectively, on the Indian and Chinese spheres of influence.

The following is a summary of each cluster culture, based on Gupta and Hanges, and Dorfman (2002) and papers on each cluster to be published in 2002 in a Special Issue of the *Journal of World Business* (Vol 37, Issue 1; see Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts, Earnshaw et al., 2002; Li, Fu, Peng et al. 2001; Gupta, Surie, Javidan, Chhokar et al. 2002).

Anglo Cluster

This cluster comprises the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, together with the 'New World' components of the once-dominant British Empire: United States, Canada, South Africa (white sample), Australia, and New Zealand. Ashkanasy et al. (2002) note that the countries in this cluster are all principally English speaking, and are all developed 'First World' nations.¹ Cultural origins from this group can be found in the Anglo-Celtic history of England, a (mostly Protestant) Christian religious background, and the colonisation policies pursued by the British for much of the latter half of the Second Millennium. Today, these countries, and especially the United States, dominate the world's economy, accounting for 40 percent of the world's GNP, despite comprising only 7 percent of world population (see Ashkanasy et al. 2002). Ashkanasy et al. (2002) argue, based on the evolution of democratic government in England, and the rugged individuality of the colonists, that this cluster is characterised by values of individualism and egalitarianism.

Southern Asian Cluster

In contrast to the Anglo cluster, the Southern Asia cluster comprises some of the least developed countries in the world. Inhabited by 25 percent of the world's population, this sector accounts for only 3 percent of the world's economic output (see Gupta, Surie et al. 2002). Dominated by Islamic and Hindu belief systems, the countries of this cluster are little understood in the West. Gupta, Surie, et al. note that "no layer really dominates the others, so that the system appears irrational to the outsiders and one in which the modalities of development are highly challenging for the insiders". Gupta, Hanges and Dorfman (2002) note further that the countries in this cluster are characterised by a "community-centered spirit". Thus, while the region may be seen to be in turmoil to outsiders, its long-term history reflects peaceful co-existence of diverse cultures, founded on a historically shared Vedic (ancient Indian) culture. Thus, Islamic mosques in this region can often be found adjacent to Hindu temples, Buddhist pagodas, Christian churches, or Sikh Gurudwaras. Nonetheless, as Gupta, Hanges and Dorfman (2002) point out, society in Southern Asia remains strongly rooted in the social division of labor (e.g., the caste system in India) and hierarchical order.

Confucian Asia Cluster

Just as Southern Asia is historically dominated by Indian cultural values, the Confucian Asia cluster has historically been influenced by Chinese culture. Gupta, Hanges and Dorfman (2002) note that even Japan, despite its geographical separation from China, "has had rich cultural interactions with China". In this respect, the Confucian cultures are characterised by

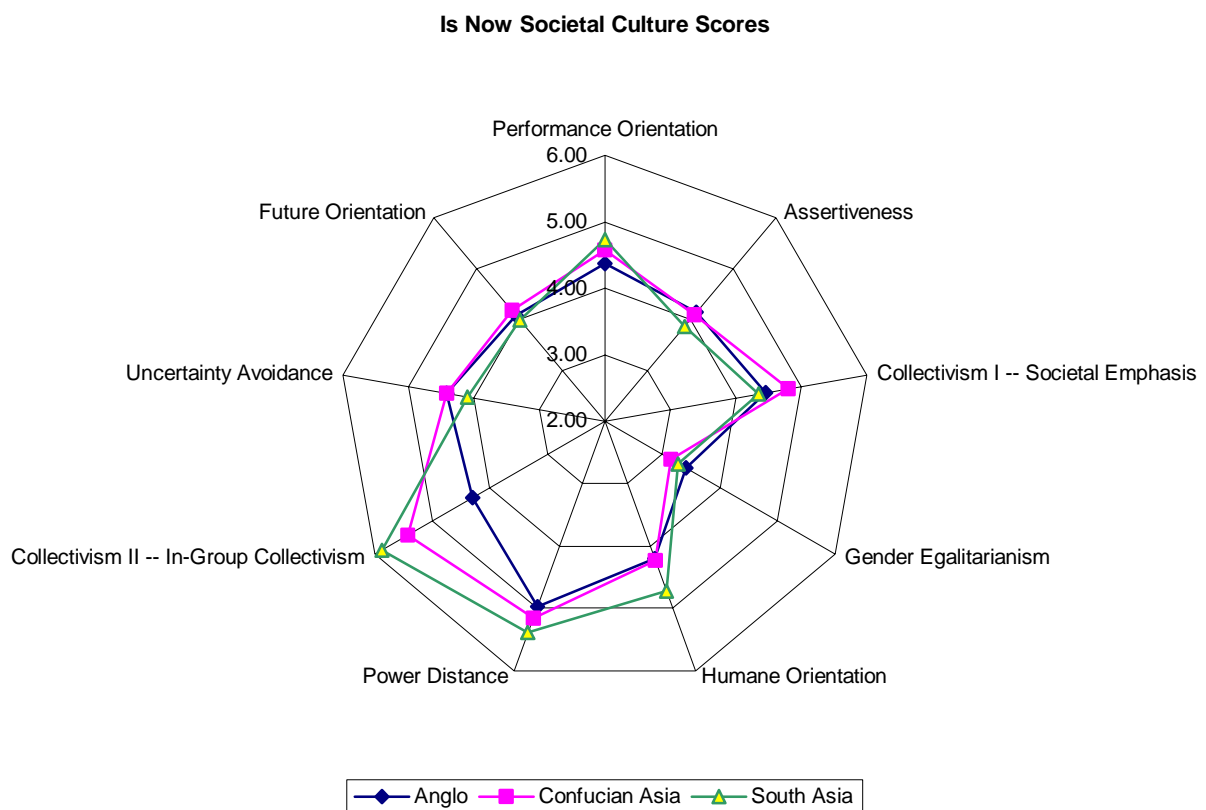
¹ Although South Africa is a developing nation, the white population has all the characteristics of developed economies — see Ashkanasy et al. in press, for discussion.

an emphasis on networks and trust (see Lowe 1998; Pyatt, Ashkanasy, Tamaschke & Grigg 2001). Li et al. (2001) note further that the Confucian Asia cultures differ from other cultures in their ‘malleability’. Thus, these cultures have shown a remarkable ability to adapt to a changing world. As a consequence, the cluster accounts for 25 percent of world population and 26 percent of world GNP. With the high rate of growth currently in progress, especially in Mainland China, however, this is likely to improve rapidly over the next century (see Li et al. 2001).

RESULTS FROM GLOBE

Results from the GLOBE study are presented here in the form of polar graphs, where the differences between the three clusters can be compared at a glance. Three graphs are presented, corresponding to As Now culture (Figure 1), Should Be culture (Figure 2), and the six second-order leadership attributes identified in GLOBE (Figure 3). In the following discussion, we will deal with each set of results in turn.²

Figure 1. Polar graph of Is Now Culture Perceptions in the Three Clusters



² For details of culture and leadership scores within the clusters, refer to Ashkanasy et al. (in press), Gupta, Surie, et al. (in press), and Li et al. (in press). Note also that, because of the large sample sizes, even small differences in scores are statistically significant. Consequently, these statistics are not quoted here. Instead, I take it that there is a “significant” difference if the cluster scores are differentially classified in Gupta, Hanges and Dorfman’s (in press) high-medium-low taxonomy.

Figure 2. Polar graph of Should Be Culture Perceptions in the Three Clusters

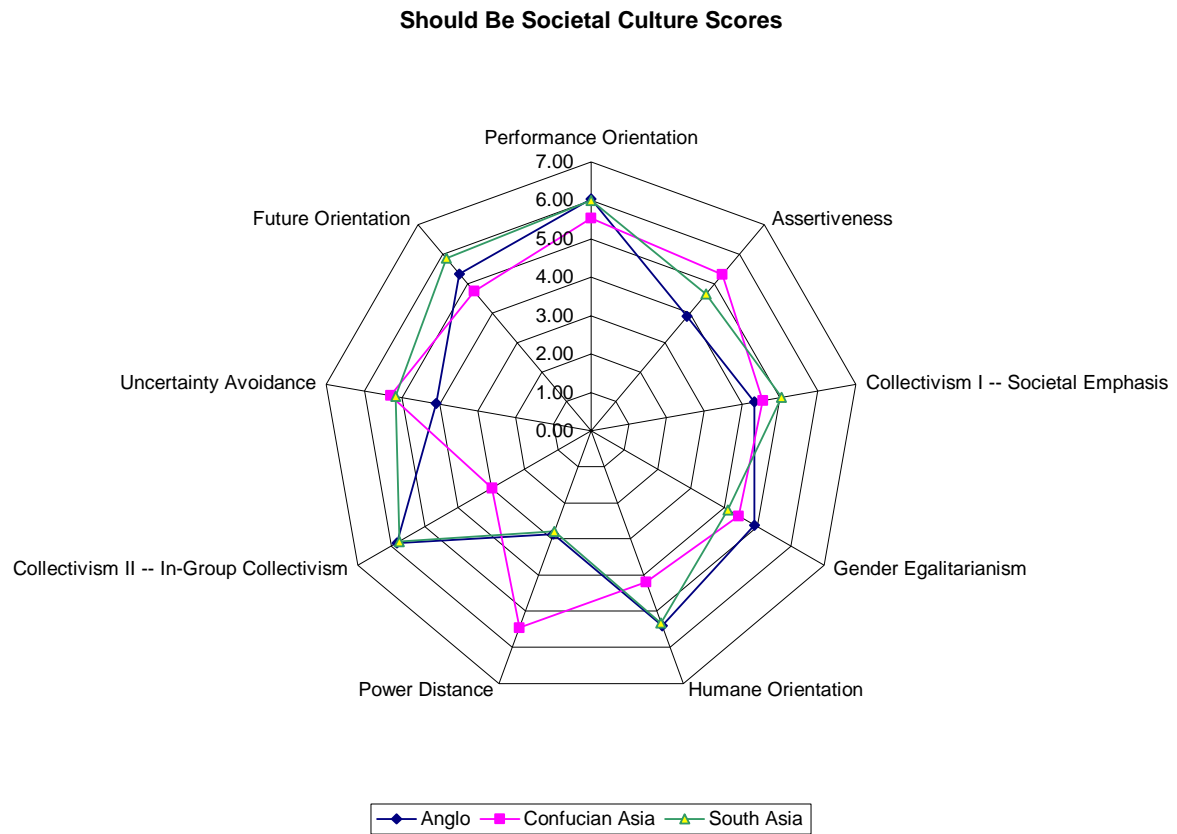
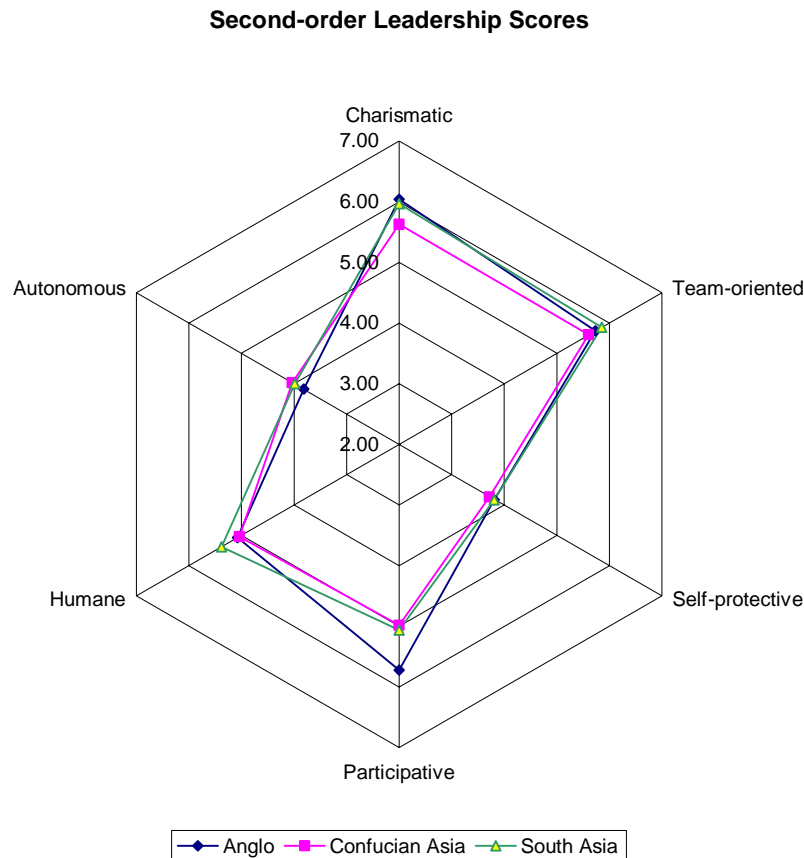


Figure 3. Polar graph of Effective Leadership Attribute Perceptions in the Three Clusters



Societal practices (Is Now Scores)

Figure 1 shows that differences in Is Now culture between the clusters are principally reflected in three dimensions: In group collectivism, power distance, and humane orientation. Lesser differences are reflected in societal emphasis on collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance.

The outstanding differentiation concerns in-group collectivism, where Gupta, Hanges, and Dorfman (2002) categorise South Asia, Confucian Asia, and Anglo cultures as, respectively, high, medium, and low on this dimension. This contrasts with societal emphasis on collectivism, where Confucian Asia is categorised as high, while Southern Asia and Anglo cultures are medium on this dimension. Taken together, these differences reflect a core differentiation in terms of cultural practices. Anglo cultures are individualistic; Southern Asia cultures reflect loyalty to the in-group (read social caste), while Confucian Asia is characterised by a societal collectivism, based on networks and trust (as observed by Li et al. 2001).

The differences in power distance and humane orientation result from Southern Asia's high classification in both these categories compared to the other two clusters, which are in the medium category. While the power distance difference reflects the emphasis on social class in Southern Asia, the results in respect of human orientation seem counter-intuitive. Gupta, Surie et al. (2002) note, however, that this is reflected as 'group-oriented humane approach'. Thus 'humane' refers in the context of these cultures to a humane approach within the in-group, not necessarily towards out groups who are expected to mind their own business. Combined with the results in respect of power distance, the picture that emerges is of a culture where members of societal groups are expected to be fiercely loyal within their groups, but to respect the right of other societal groups to maintain their independence (see also Gupta, Surie et al. 2002).

In summary of Is Now culture in these clusters, they are most strongly differentiated in terms of societal divisions and hierarchy, and loyalty within those divisions. The Anglo cultures are more individualistic, while Southern Asia cultures are more structured, and Confucian Asian cultures tend to have a greater sense of societal collectivism based on networks and trust (see also Pyatt et al. 2001).

Societal values (Should Be Scores)

The results in respect of societal values are shown in Figure 2. This reveals a much stronger differentiation between the three cultures than was reflected in the As Is scores, with inter-cluster differences evident on every dimension. The strongest effects, however, are on in-group collectivism and power distance. In respect of in-group collectivism, the results show that this culture dimension is valued in the Anglo cultures, despite the individuality reflected in these cultures. In Confucian Asian society, on the other hand, power distance is valued while in-group collectivism is seen to be not so important. Li et al. (2001) comment, "this quality (high value on power distance) is consistent with the Confucian teachings stressing the value of hierarchical structures in society". It seems, however, that such strong values may not be so evident in practice, perhaps reflecting the conclusion reached by Li et al. that the Confucian Asia cultures are malleable to external influences and customs.

In summary of the cultural values dimensions, the data indicate that the Anglo cultures value in-group collectivism and gender egalitarianism, and a humane orientation, and place relatively low value on uncertainty avoidance, societal collectivism, and power distance. Southern Asia cultures are shown to place a high value on all dimensions, with the exception of performance orientation, gender egalitarianism, and power distance. Finally, Confucian Asian culture values uncertainty avoidance, assertiveness, and power distance, and places relatively less value on performance orientation, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, and a human orientation.

Leadership effectiveness attributes

According to the theory underpinning the GLOBE study (e.g., see House et al. 1999), leadership effectiveness perceptions derive from Culturally-implicit Leadership Theories (CLTs) that are, in turn, based on the cultural values and practices extant in each society. Figure 3 reveals, however, a remarkably consistent picture of leadership effectiveness attribute perceptions across the three cultures. As den Hartog et al. (1999) note, the leadership attributes of Charisma and Self-Protective are universally endorsed across the 62 national nations in the GLOBE study: Charisma is positively endorsed, and Self-Protective is

negatively endorsed. This finding is reflected in the three clusters that are the subject of this analysis. The remaining four dimensions of leadership were found in the GLOBE study to vary between cultures. For the three clusters analysed here, however, there was remarkable agreement also in respect of Team-orientated, Humane, and Autonomous leadership; with Team-orientated and Humane positively endorsed in all three clusters, and Autonomous negatively endorsed. Only one of the leadership dimensions was found to be substantially different across the clusters. This was Participative leadership. While this dimension was not negatively endorsed in any of the cultures in the way that, for instance, Self-Protective leadership was, the Anglo cultures cluster endorsed Participative more positively than either of the other two clusters.

The finding that the three cultures are differentiated in their regard of participation as a characteristic of effective leadership reflects the differences in the cultures of the clusters, and can be interpreted in terms of CLTs. Participative leadership in GLOBE is defined in terms of subordinates actively participating with the leader in the tasks that the group is undertaking (see Table 2). The Southern Asia cluster is characterised in practice by high power distance and in-group loyalty and humanity. In this circumstance, leaders are representatives of the higher classes of society who are charged with looking after the interests of their (lower caste) subordinates. Confucian Asia values power distance and practices relatively high levels of societal collectivism. In this culture, a leader is trusted to get on with the job on behalf of (usually) his subordinates. By contrast, in Anglo cultures, where individualism is strongly valued, subordinates are more valued for their contributions at every level in society, and therefore are expected to take a more active role in leadership. This view also reflects the democratic tradition built into the cultures of the Anglo cluster countries (see Ashkanasy et al. 2002).

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In this analysis of three country clusters identified by Gupta, Hanges, and Dorfman (2002), we have considered societal cultural practices and values, together with perceptions of effective leadership attributes, based on data collected in the 61-country GLOBE study. The three clusters included in the analysis were the Anglo cultures, characterised by Ashkanasy et al. (2002) as the “legacy of the British Empire”; Southern Asia, described by Gupta, Surie et al. (2002) as ‘a blend of old and new culture’; and Confucian Asia, that Li et al. (2001) view as ‘malleable’ — a preparedness to adapt to the modern world. Results confirmed that the three country clusters vary in terms of their cultural values and practices. In particular, Southern Asian cultures are the most status conscious, Confucian Asia places emphasis on networks of relationships built on trust, and the Anglo cultures place a premium on individualism. In terms of effective leadership attributes, however, the three clusters vary substantially only in terms of the extent to which participation is seen as a desirable characteristic. While none of the clusters sees participation as an inhibitor of leadership, both of the Asian cultures endorse it less positively than the Anglo cultures, although for apparently different reasons.

These findings have two implications in terms of the title of this paper ‘Leadership in the Asian Century’. Given the rise of the Asian economies over the past century, and the anticipation that they will play an even more important role in the new century, this is clearly a critical issue. The first implication is that, despite a pattern of strong cultural differences, the Anglo and Asian cultural clusters endorse leadership that is charismatic (or values-based),

humane, and team orientated, and eschew leadership that is self-protective or autonomous (based on leader-orientated individualism). Clearly, the three clusters see leadership as a phenomenon that is based on team performance, rather than any notion of personal aggrandisement.

The second implication is that managers in the three cultures need to recognise that there are real differences in the extent to which leaders involve team members anticipatively in decision-making. Although there is agreement in terms of the other five leadership attributes, participation may well prove to be a critical sticking point for cross-cultural leadership in the Asian Century. As long as this issue remains unresolved, managers in the different clusters are going to have to be prepared to adjust their leadership styles in terms of participation if they are going to be recognised as leaders in the other clusters. Given the differences in cultural values across the clusters, however, this is not going to be easy. In particular, this result underscores the need for managers to take a contingency perspective on leadership, perhaps along the lines of the Vroom-Yetton-Jago Normative Model of leadership (see Vroom & Jago 1988). In this model, one of the determinants of whether to adopt an autocratic, consultative, or participative leadership style rests on the acceptance of the outcome by the decision stakeholders (or cluster members in the context of the present paper).

The analysis described in this paper is subject to four limitations. In the first instance, we have treated the three clusters as if they were internally homogeneous. While Gupta, Hanges and Dorfman (2002) have shown that the clusters are statistically discernable, this does not rule out scope for variation within the clusters. Indeed, it is hard to conceive that countries as diverse as Iran, India, and the Philippines can be considered as one. Similarly, there are clearly great differences between whites in South Africans and Catholics in Ireland. Taken in context with the world-level view (e.g. as presented in den Hartog et al. 1999), the within-cluster analyses to be published in the *Journal of World Business* (Ashkanasy et al. 2002; Gupta, Surie et al. 2002; Li et al. 2001), and the within-country analyses to be included in the GLOBE Anthology (Chokkar et al. in press), the GLOBE study may be leading us to a unique multi-level perspective of culture and organizational leadership.

A second limitation concerns the timeframe of the GLOBE data collection. Essentially, the GLOBE results present a snapshot of culture and leadership in the world — as it was in the latter half of the 1990s. Certainly, the calamity of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath will have a lasting effect that could ultimately result in some of our conclusions becoming dated in the future. Still, such snapshots help us to make sense of our world. Future researchers will continue to take similar snapshots, perhaps using the GLOBE instruments, which will enable us to understand better the dynamics of change in cultures and leadership models.

Thirdly, the GLOBE results were based on a narrow slice of the population in each country — middle managers in the food processing, telecommunications, and finance industries. House and his colleagues (in press) justify this selection within the context of leadership research, but validation of the results in other industries, and other populations, will be needed before the results can be generalised beyond the participant groups with confidence.

A final limitation is that the analysis presented here is based on an analysis of societal culture. In fact, the GLOBE results conclude separate measures of organisational culture. There have not been presented in this paper owing to space limitations.

CONCLUSION

This paper is one of a number of papers based on the GLOBE study that have been published or presented over the past five years, leading up to publication of the main books in 2002 (House et al. in press; Chokkar et al. in press). For example, papers published and forthcoming by Ashkanasy and his colleagues relating to leadership in Australia and New Zealand include Ashkanasy and Trevor-Roberts (2001) and Ashkanasy, Kennedy, and Trevor-Roberts, in press. For a more complete listing, refer to the GLOBE website <http://mgmt3.ucalgary.ca/web/globe.nsf/index/>.

In this paper, we have endeavoured to give a hint of the flavor of the GLOBE findings and their interpretation. The GLOBE study, by virtue of its comprehensiveness and methodological rigour, is sure to shape our knowledge of global leadership for at least the next decade, and perhaps even beyond. The essential message of this paper is that, despite great dissimilarity in cultural practices and beliefs, there is considerable synergy in the way that effective leadership is perceived across the three culture clusters that we have addressed. The principal difference in leadership in Anglo and Asian cultures concerns the issue of participation. Nonetheless, leadership researchers (e.g. Vroom & Jago 1988) have already provided us with models that enable the appropriate level of participation to be evaluated. In this case, guided by the GLOBE results, leadership in the Asian Century may be more straightforward than many anticipate.

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