GLOBAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

A CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Edited by

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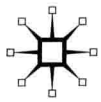

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INTRODUCTION

Global Leadership Practices: A Cross-Cultural Management Perspective

International management is the field most concerned with the influence of culture on business and there is no shortage of books that inform us about how cultural differences impact on international leadership. Likewise, there are innumerable books that tell us about the qualities needed to become a successful leader. Ever since the publication of the seminal work by Hofstede (1980), any international management book, be it about business deals, marketing or human resources, addresses the 'problem of culture' in management. Today, we possess a considerably increased amount of knowledge in the field of cross-cultural management; however, a general sensitivity is not sufficient: learning about cultural differences is just the first step. Experience tells us that managers confronted with cultural differences, while recognizing the problems, do not necessarily find the most effective solutions.

WHY A BOOK ON CULTURE AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP?

From our extensive experiences in dealing with the multicultural challenges faced by international students and multinational corporations, we felt the need to create a book that better reflects the realities of those who live and work in a global context: multilingual and multicultural people whose working life is determined by interacting across national boundaries, who are confronted with the global reach of their business and who are constantly adopting different ways of working across the globe.

Working with the generation of future leaders, we realize that they have become much more sophisticated in their attitudes towards their international

careers. They can refer to international management courses taken during their academic career, and they have often acquired intercultural experience through student exchange programmes, overseas study programmes or international internships. They have travelled widely and, increasingly, they have grown up in bilingual or bicultural homes, lived in different countries as children and speak several languages. These young managers already have an open, tolerant and knowledgeable view of other cultures, and they are striving for successful international leadership positions. Being internationally experienced and, sometimes, already familiar with cross-cultural management concepts they demand in-depth cross-cultural approaches. They are looking for multiple tools to respond to complex situations and not just lists of tips. They want to learn what the implications are for interaction and how to behave in a challenging intercultural context. This volume is designed to help those globally minded managers to further hone their leadership skills.

Our world is becoming ever more interdependent and complex. Hyperconnectedness, social media, a rapidly changing business environment and supranational organizations are among the phenomena that have created a global marketplace that has fundamentally transformed international collaboration. MNEs are in great need of people able to lead from a global perspective, while academia seeks to understand the implications of global leadership and how it differs from 'leadership in general'. Even though there is no commonly agreed definition, most scholars coincide in the view that the main difference lies in the number and complexity of lenses through which global leaders must view situations and decisions (Gundling *et al.*, 2011). In this text we focus on global leadership practices and invite the reader interested in theories of global leadership to refer to the relevant literature (e.g., Mendenhall *et al.*, 2013). However, in order to guide the reader's attention through this book, we think it is useful to share, right from the beginning, Mendenhall's definition of global leaders/leadership: 'Global leaders are individuals who effect significant positive change in organizations ... in a context involving multiple cross-boundary stake holders, multiple sources of external cross-boundary authority, and multiple cultures under conditions of temporal, geographical and cultural complexity' (Mendenhall *et al.*, 2013, p. 20).

OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH OF THIS BOOK

Professor Anne Tsui has termed the twenty-first century the golden age of cross-cultural management practices and research (Kawamura, 2013); however, traditional cross-cultural management books do not necessarily meet the standards of globally minded and experienced people.

The approach we have taken is, first of all, to present fresh perspectives on methodological issues in order to broaden and deepen our vision of culture and offer a variety of different views. Thus, we open our book with a strong chapter on cross-cultural theory, since the objective of this book is to deepen our level of analysis and to go beyond mere comparisons of management practices across national cultures.

A second important strand has been to involve scholars from a wide variety of cultures and countries. We engaged experts in their fields from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America; the authors' indigenous backgrounds are essential, in particular for the country chapters. Rather than presenting general overviews of leadership practices in different countries we opted for in-depth analyses of selected countries and regions. Since profound understanding means, first of all, understanding how people in other cultures think, the authors were asked to enrich our understanding of the essence of these cultures from an insider's point of view.

Our third intention is to offer a contribution to leadership development. The reader will be exposed to concepts of global leadership and is invited to use them in the development of real-life strategies. All chapters contain numerous activities, assessment tools, case studies, examples, narratives and reflection questions, illustrated in an interactive style intended to stimulate the self-development of the reader.

Before giving a brief overview of the different chapters, we would like to stress that when talking about global leaders we are assuming that today's global organizations need collaborative leadership competencies at all hierarchical levels, not just at the top level. Leaders can no longer simply rely on the hierarchical position for their power and people often have to lead without any formal authority: more than ever before leaders at all levels need to persuade, inspire and motivate. Successful companies have shown how to cultivate leadership capabilities and self-development at each level of the organization (Tichy, 1997; Ibarra and Hansen, 2011).

OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

The book deals with the complex cultural challenges for global leaders in four parts. The first, Cross-Cultural Management Theories and Applications (Chapter 1), sets the methodological and conceptual foundation of the book; the second part, Cross-Cultural Communication Strategies (Chapters 2 and 3), deals with the heart of any collaboration and leadership effort, namely communication. Part Three (Chapters 4 to 8) takes a look at the various facets of what it means to be a leader in a global context, starting from the psychological aspects

of identity, progressing through career development, collaborative and leadership competencies and finishing with ethical responsibilities. Finally, Part Four (Chapters 9 to 15) on Global Leadership in Practice provides in-depth insights into leadership in specific countries and regions.

We are assuming that our readers are familiar with fundamental cross-cultural concepts and business practices, and therefore refer little to previous studies and literature. This book is research grounded, but our focus is practical. Each chapter opens with a case or narrative, guides the reader through the concepts and practices, and invites personal reflection and application. A short chapter preface (section preface in the case of Part Four), chapter outline and applications overview organize the text. All chapters are relatively self-contained, but also interrelated.

PART ONE: CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT THEORIES AND APPLICATIONS

Part One is one chapter. As this chapter forms the basis for the approach of the whole book, we consider it essential reading in order to be able to fully use the subsequent chapters. Because it establishes the conceptual framework for the book, it is longer and more academic than the other chapters.

Chapter 1, There is Nothing so Practical as Four Good Theories, opens the book with an important and innovative critique of cross-cultural theories, starting with the conventional way of analysing and classifying cultures, and moving on to more sophisticated levels of analysis. Laurence Romani, Henriett Primecz and Roger Bell present different views on culture and demonstrate how each view has an impact on how cultural differences are addressed, interpreted and dealt with. They develop a practical model that serves as a guiding principle for the whole book. Multiple perspectives are mutually enriching and lead to a much more powerful analysis; consequently they are a potent tool, offering guidance in dealing with leadership situations.

PART TWO: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Part Two comprises two chapters, both of which relate to cognitive adaptation skills, the so-called 'frame-shifting' competency, communication, which is a common theme throughout this book. Effective communication skills are essential for leaders to be able to define, declare and demonstrate their vision and to create meaning for the people they are working with.

In Chapter 2, Language Management, Anne Kari Bjørge and Sunniva Whittaker deal with explicit and implicit strategies regarding the choice of functional language for international organizations and leadership. Very often the language in question is English used as a lingua franca, which has the advantage of

creating shared means of communication, but has also a number of implications that leaders should address, particularly in HR policies.

When individuals from different cultures interact they may or may not choose to adapt their communicative style to that of the other interactant(s). This issue is addressed in Chapter 3 Discourse Strategies for Cross-Cultural Communication. Anne Kari Bjørge illustrates how cultural differences challenge the communication process, even when English is used as a lingua franca, and the need to develop discourse strategies for different contexts. The issues of contexting and *face* are discussed, in addition to how to deal with accommodation and establish common ground for communication.

PART THREE: TO BE A LEADER IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Part Three explores what it is to be a leader in a global context. The nature of leadership is changing and requires one to be simultaneously adept at leading oneself, leading others and leading for a broader purpose. When we talk about 'leading oneself' we mean juggling multiple identities and developing one's career and competencies. 'Leading others' refers to leading teams and engaging collaborators. 'Leading for a broader purpose' means assuming responsibility for a more sustainable future.

Chapter 4, Identities in the Global World of Work, addresses the impact of increasing mobility and global and cultural flows on individuals' identity, and how this is changing work and careers. Hyun-Jung Lee discusses important concepts that affect global leaders' own lives and their international working environment, including biculturalism and multiculturalism. The author proposes a conceptual framework that helps the reader grasp the complexity of cosmopolitanism and is especially informative in its implications for multiculturally competent and globally responsible leadership.

Chapter 5, International Assignments for Global Leadership Development, emphasizes not only the strategic role of international assignments for organizations, but also the great developmental leadership value for employees. Betina Szkudlarek and Marian van Bakel draw a clear picture of how paying attention to all facets of the expatriate cycle (recruitment and selection, preparation, sojourn and re-entry) facilitates global careers. The chapter illustrates how well-managed international assignments are quite possibly the best approach to developing global leadership skills.

Chapter 6 reflects on Global Team Collaboration as the thrust of organizational output and learning. Effective global leadership is strongly linked to team collaboration since most knowledge work in organizations today takes place in teams. The global context adds new complexities to team collaboration such as cultural diversity and geographical dispersion of team members. Karsten Jonsen

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