

CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the ability to influence others to pursue common goals. Evidence suggests that leadership is present in all cultures. However, what does appear to differ from country to country is the type of leadership that is most effective. Again these differences can be partially explained by differences in assumptions and values across cultures. This section will examine the following aspects of leadership that have been widely discussed in North American management textbooks: leadership philosophies, behaviors, and styles .

Leader philosophies reflect the implicit beliefs of a leader which influences the way s/he leads others. Perhaps one of the best known of these is Douglas McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Theory Y. Under Theory X the manager believes that people are lazy and unwilling to take responsibility, thus s/he leads by establishing goals and procedures for achieving them, and exercises close supervision to ensure the work is completed satisfactorily. Under Theory Y the manager believes that people are interested in work and willing to take responsibility as a result s/he leads by helping establish goals, providing the setting under which the subordinate can successfully complete their tasks.

Successful leaders engage in behaviors to influence their subordinates. Studies conducted at the University of Michigan and Ohio State (Bass, 1990) indicate that these leader behaviors fall into two categories *task* (initiating structure) and *people* (Consideration) behaviors. Task behaviors involve providing direction to the employees on the job such as goals, procedures, resources, allocating work, etc. People behaviors involve demonstrating concern for subordinates as people by developing trust, empowering them, doing favors, representing their interests to higher levels, explaining decisions etc. Leaders can range from high to low in using these behaviors as part of their influence process. More recent research (GLOBE study by House, et al. 2004) has examined additional leadership behaviors and their relationship to cultural values. We focus on these fewer behaviors for the sake of brevity and because a lot more work has been done with these behaviors so that we have more of a basis for comparison. One other notable finding of the GLOBE study is that while there are cultural preferences for certain leader behaviors, the study also found that there are certain behaviors that universally hindered leadership these were leaders who engaged in autonomous or individualistic behaviors and those who were self-protective or engaged in behaviors to enhance their personal status or to save face.

Finally, leadership research has tried to capture the overall way a manager exercises leadership by examining leadership styles. Perhaps the best known of these is Likert's (1967) "System 4". According to this view, leadership styles can be depicted into one of four styles which reflect varying degrees of trust leaders have in their subordinates. 1. Autocratic - relies on centralized decisions by the manager; 2. Paternalistic - most decisions are centralized but the leader demonstrates a concern for the subordinates' welfare; 3. Consultative - leaders consult subordinates prior to making decisions themselves; and 4. Participative - many decisions are delegated to subordinates who have the best knowledge; there is considerable interaction between subordinates and leader concerning the appropriate task and people behaviors to be used. Below the impact of culture on leadership philosophy, behaviors, and styles are examined.

Assumptions and Leadership

Assumptions about the environment do not appear to influence leader philosophy per se except that people who submit to the environment do not see leadership as being an important process; whereas, those who feel they can control their environment view leaders as being an important source of change when necessary.

Assumptions about the environment, human nature, time and context appear to have the most affect on leadership. Cultures who view human nature as evil favor a Theory X philosophy because both assume people are unwilling to work and must be closely supervised to do so. Those who believe that people are good or willing to take initiative tend to favor Theory Y which is based on similar assumptions. Given their respective philosophies, evil cultures place little trust in their subordinates and use an autocratic style which leaves little room for subordinates to decide how the work is to be completed. Good cultures place considerable trust in their subordinates since the latter are viewed as responsible. Consequently, they favor a participative style which provides subordinates with plenty of input into what and how their work is to be completed.

People from monochronic cultures tend to emphasize task behaviors because they lend themselves to sequential scheduling and make efficient use of time in terms of staying on task through to completion. One person making the key decisions simply saves time over involving subordinates. Polychronic leaders emphasize

people behaviors. Relationships are essential to being able to accomplish task simultaneously. Monochronic leaders tend to prefer a consultative style. This style balances their preference for task behaviors while recognizing that close supervision is not necessary because people can be controlled by schedules and deadlines. Polychronic leaders on the other hand often resort to paternalistic styles because it balances their preference for people behaviors with the need for more supervisory control because they do not use time to control subordinate activity given that it is not considered to be tangible/manageable.

Low context cultures favor efficiency in relationships; therefore, their leaders are likely to emphasize task behaviors getting work done through others by defining goals and the way to accomplish them.

Leaders in high context cultures tend to emphasize people behaviors because building a relationship of trust with subordinates is the key to all successful future interactions.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LEADERSHIP

<u>Assumptions</u>	<u>Leader Philosophy</u>	<u>Leader Behavior</u>	<u>Leadership Style</u>
<u>Environment</u> Submit Control	Leaders not important Leaders important	— —	— —
<u>Human Nature:</u> Evil Good	Theory X Theory Y	— —	Autocratic Participative
<u>Time:</u> _____ Mono Poly	— —	Task People	Consultative/Paternalistic Paternalistic
<u>Space:</u> _____ Private Public	— —	— —	— —
<u>Context:</u> _____ Low High	— —	Task People	— —

Values and Leadership

Low PD cultures seek to minimize the distance between the leaders and followers. Leaders are permitted to get personally closer to subordinates. They realize that subordinates have much to contribute to goal achievement and subscribe to a Theory Y philosophy which enables them to work with instead of over their subordinates. As a result, Low PD leaders emphasize people behaviors which are supportive of subordinates. In general then their style is consultative or participative which permits subordinate participation in how they are led. By contrast, cultures with high PD tend to maintain arms length between leaders and followers. Followers respect the leader by virtue of his/her position of leadership. Leaders are viewed as having the right to lead based on their higher position. The leader has not only the right but the duty to tell followers what to do. High PD leaders tend to believe in Theory X, the leader knows what is best. They also have a preference for task behaviors which focus on telling followers what and how to achieve the leader's goals. Such leadership leads to an autocratic or paternalistic style ,wherein , the leader by virtue of their position should direct his/her subordinates in accomplishing goals.

Low UA cultures are willing to accept a certain degree of risk; consequently, they subscribe to Theory Y which is optimistic about people's initiative and ambition. This belief leads them to emphasize people behaviors such as delegating more responsibility to subordinates. The latter is compatible with consultative or participative styles which are riskier because involving subordinates in decisions often leads to a very different decision than if the leader were to make it on his/her own. Leaders in high UA cultures are mindful of the need for security both for themselves and their subordinates. To be on the safe side they are more pessimistic about people's ambition and initiative, subscribing more to a Theory X philosophy. Followers prefer a leader who exhibits task behaviors that provide detail and clarity in their work, therefore, reducing their uncertainty. Thus, more autocratic styles are preferred because it permits the leader to retain control This control increases the leader's security and provides the necessary guidance to subordinates clarifying their uncertainties about what needs to be accomplished in their jobs.

In cultures espousing a collective self-orientation, employees expect leaders to look after them by clarifying goals and ways to achieve them (task behaviors) but also by paying attention to personal matters (people behaviors). This dual emphasis on task with some people behaviors usually results in a paternalistic style.

Leaders in individualist cultures must give each person his/her due by permitting their input into goals and goal achievement. Such leaders emphasize people behaviors in decision making and delegating responsibilities . The style most accepted by individualist subordinates is the participative style which gives all a chance to set goals and work toward them.

Leaders in feminine cultures are often optimistic about people's initiative (Theory Y) and view their role as one of creating a positive work environment where employees can grow and succeed. They emphasize people behaviors to support their subordinates. Their style tends to be consultative seeking consensus without the risk of complete delegation. Leaders in masculine cultures are more pessimistic about people's ambition; therefore, in an effort to produce the results they seek, masculine leaders emphasize task behaviors which enable them to track and reward achievement. Their style favors the autocratic because it is the most efficient (no bargaining with subordinates) in goal accomplishment.

The impact of cultural assumptions and values on leadership is two fold. First culture affects what philosophies leaders prefer to use, and second, culture affects the leader behaviors and the style their subordinates are willing to accept.

[References: 2, 4, 10, 11, 11a, 14 ,18, 19, 23, 31]

VALUES AND LEADERSHIP

Values	Leader Philosophy	Leader Behavior	Leadership Style

<u>Power Distance:</u> Low High	Theory Y Theory X	People Task	Consultative/Participative Autocratic/ Paternalistic
<u>Uncertainty Avoidance:</u> Low High	Theory Y Theory X	People Task	Consultative/Participative Autocratic
<u>Self-orientation</u> Collective Individual	– –	Task/people People	Paternalistic Participative
<u>Assertiveness</u> Feminine Masculine	Theory Y Theory X	People Task	Consultative Autocratic

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