Lead 902: The Transformation to Effective Global Leadership

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The Transformation to Effective Global Leadership

Global leadership has been and remains at the forefront of all businesses and institutions today (Torres, 2016). Torres' (2016), *The Transformation to Effective Global Leadership* emphasized the theoretical framework, methodology, and empirical evidence for the transformation of an effective global leader. Torres' provided cumulative evidence that many leaders, as well as international marketers, are not effectively prepared for leading in different international environments. The author established a solid basis for developing a cross-cultural training program for employees prior to engaging in foreign assignments.

The thesis of Torres work is that, although most organizations understand the need to be global, many organizations and institutions focus solely on building the infrastructure to do business globally and do not invest time an effort into identifying, selecting, and developing global leaders. Developing global leaders with cross-cultural skill sets has become a phenomenon amongst organizations and academic institutions. Torres (2016) makes a compelling case for determining the cross-cultural training that should be required for domestic leaders to transform into effective global leaders.

The author's extensive military and international business experience are evident throughout the book. Torres (2016) has been a domestic and global leader of multinational organizations for the past few decades leading business activities in the United States, Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Southeast Asia. Specific to China, Torres has over 20 years of direct business and higher educational teaching experience in China. Companies are entering the American economy at an unprecedented rate. Therefore, organizational leaders must be locally

and globally cross-culturally trained if they want to achieve optimal success in a new globalized economy.

Torres (2016) recognized that the global cultural evolution of business and technology calls for a new type of leader to combat the elements of change. The global economy requires a new set of leadership skills—imbued with a global mindset, multi-functional and effective across cultures and nationalities—that were not as critical a decade ago (Gundling, Hogan & Cvitkovich, 2011). According to Livermore (2015), leaders from around the world recognize that some of their greatest business opportunities lie in new cultural markets. The more a leader knows about the world the easier it is to navigate and function within it (Torres, 2016). Moreover, Torres' research provided experiential and applicable input into the discussion on global leadership and cross-cultural behavioral practices.

Torres (2016) used a systematic process to collect, analyze, and interpret data from domestic and global leaders working in a cross-cultural leadership environments. Cross-cultural leadership has developed as a way of understanding leaders who work in the newly globalized market (House, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2001). The psychology of cross-cultural leadership attempts to understand how individuals of different cultures interact with each other in society (Abbe, Gulick, & Herman, 2007). Gresham (2009) reported that there are core leadership dimensions that are universally effective regardless of the ethnicities, the culture, the economic environment, the structure of the firm, or the complexity of a project or program.

Conversely, Torres (2016) found that an "effective leader must learn emotional and cultural intelligence for each country that he or she leads prior to the assignment if they are to be an effective global leader or they will be faced with ineffectiveness during the initial stages" (pp. 62-63). Cultural intelligence is not acquired automatically based on where an individual has

worked, studied, or lived. It is an individual's capability and openness to learning outside of their cultural frame of reference. Some have it, some do not, but anyone can become more culturally intelligent. Furthermore, the author suggested that language plays a significant part in effective global leadership since the basis of verbal communication is language. This writer believes Torres successfully constituted an effective global leadership approach that aligns with other scholars published material on developing global leaders and the importance of cross-cultural training.

Effective leaders are also effective followers (Torres, 2016). The author's research can be used to mobilize followers of different cultures toward a common value to achieve extraordinary outcomes and produce sustainable long-term results. The lack of cross-cultural and country-specific training in patterns of cross-cultural behavior have provided ineffective short-term results that have not led to organizational effectiveness and long-term sustainability (Torres, 2016). Today's international organizations require leaders who can adjust to different environments quickly and work with partners and employees of other cultures (House et al., 2001). Although culture does not provide solutions for every business problem, culture is one of the driving factors in how to effectively negotiate, build trust, foster innovation and motivate people toward a shared organizational objective. It can no longer be assumed that a leader who is successful in one country will be successful in another (Javidan, Dorfman, de Luque, & House, 2006; Brodbeck et al., 2000) however, the innovation in technology has provided organizations and institutions with an advantage edge.

Torres (2016) and other scholars have stressed that advancements in technology have allowed leaders to conduct business nearly anywhere in the world. According to Halverson and Tirmizi (2008), the advent of globalization and recent advancement in technology have added

layers of complexity to the organization of work, making it necessary for people to depend on one another to develop their goals and missions successfully and effectively. Within the past few decades, globalization and technological advances, such as the internet, social media, and cell phones have dramatically changed the dynamics on what constitutes effective leadership in foreign countries. In agreement with Torres, Junfeng, Kinshuk, Huiju, Sue-Jen, and Ronghuai (2014) determined that technology has changed the landscape for global knowledge sharing, construction, and distribution across groups, countries, and cultures.

Kluckhohn and Kelly (as cited in Livermore, 2015) defined culture as the beliefs, values, behaviors, customs, and attitudes that distinguish one group from another In concord, Torres (2016) noted that organizational culture is a by-product of societal culture, which in turn affects the individual's values and ethics, attitudes, assumptions, and expectations. Torres maintained that as the world becomes more and more independent and interrelated, it has become the norm for a leader of one country to lead followers from another country—whose values and ethics may be different. Therefore, the author's research investigated the need for global leaders to learn about the different countries values, cultures, cultural intelligence, cross-cultural theories and how they influence people's behaviors and motivations in the workplace.

Torres argued in Chapter 4 that leadership principals, approaches and styles, from the United States, for example, are not effective in foreign countries and the urgency for leaders and followers to develop a mutual trust, and respect for cultural differences is a necessity for effective global leadership. Utilizing Kouzes and Posner's (2002) relational leadership model as an approach, Torres provided valuable information for the reader—on building and engaging intercultural relationships and transforming domestic leaders into effective global leaders. Based

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on this writers' understanding the significance of Torres book is for the development of cross-cultural leaders and the effectiveness of global leadership.

Scholars recognize that as the world evolves so must our understanding of effective global leadership on a diverse theatrical stage. The underlying rationale for Torres' (2016) research is that there is a link between developing effective global leaders and understanding the impact of cross-cultural behavior. According to Alves, Manz, and Butterfield (as cited in Torres, 2016), "…effective leadership today is dependent on an understanding of attitudes, expectations and behaviors of followers and is seen as a multidisciplinary field that is concerned with ethics and moral orientations" (p. 18). Salacuse (2006) argued that effective leadership is much more than merely showing the way—effective leadership implies the ability to persuade or cause persons to whom the way is shown to move willingly in that direction. Similarly, to Musamali and Martin's (2016) assertion that cross-cultural leadership is characterized as a process, in which members of a culturally diverse group are intentionally motivated, influenced and guided toward a goal by appealing to their shared knowledge and meaning-making systems.

To further the point, as it relates to the importance of culture, Torres (2016) maintained that when leaders lead in a foreign country the greatest challenge is understanding the foreign culture. The cross-cultural leadership challenge today is being able to understand how to lead in a different cultural environment. Specifically, Torres found without this understanding and cultural knowledge leaders would be ineffective and would not be able to achieve the organization's desired objectives. Torres' assessment agreed with Gresham's (2009) statement that, "To lead effectively in a cross-cultural environment requires the acquisition and cultivation of basic human (emotional, social, and cultural), business, and cultural skills" (p. 153). The

ability to think globally, embrace diversity, cultivate a shared vision, and be able to develop and

empower others are the pillars upon which transformational and cross-cultural leadership stand.

According to House et al. (2001), cross-cultural leadership focuses on leaders who lead

diverse organizational groups. Cross-cultural leadership has developed as a way of understanding

leaders who work in the newly globalized market (House et al., 2001). Torres (2016) highlighted

this throughout the book, "It is essential that leaders learn the origins of their global follower'

values and beliefs since followers from different countries will behave differently and therefore

have different motivations" (pp. 5-6). I concluded after reading Torres' book that cross-cultural

leaders are contentious learners and appreciate cultures different from their own.

Torres (2016) illustrated a clear understanding of globalization and its effects on leading

in different cultures and the leadership approach that should be taken. The author concluded that

globalization and technological advances were the major cause for the dramatic changes in

domestic and global political, economic and social societies that have transformed traditional

leadership approaches to a more relational and people-centered global leadership approach such

as the Relationship Leadership Model (RLM)—introduced by Kouzes and Posner (2002).

Kouzes and Posner suggest that collaboration is the critical competency for achieving and

sustaining high performance. On various occasions throughout the book, Torres asserted that

without trust leaders could not lead.

Torres (2016) argued that an understanding of cultural differences and cultural

dimensions in a general sense is not enough on its own to achieve cross-cultural leadership

effectiveness. Thomas, Deng, and Gibson (as cited in Torres, 2016) determined that cultural

intelligence is a key component of cross-cultural leadership capabilities and developing the

effectiveness of global leaders. Torres placed a heavy emphasis on cultural intelligence but neglected to define, describe and provide examples of the conceptual framework of the theory.

Cultural intelligence is an individual's capability to function effectively in intercultural contexts, including different national, ethnic, organizational, generational, and other contexts. Cultural intelligence is conceptualized as a type of intelligence, which reflects an individual's ability to deal effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. It is not to be confused or correlated with general intelligence but correlated with emotional intelligence. Jokinen, Kreitner, and Kinicki (as cited in Torres, 2016) indicated that before developing "cultural intelligence it is important to develop emotional intelligence, a major component of global leadership competency, and then practice in ambiguous cross-cultural situations" (p. 28).

Developing global leaders with cultural intelligence has become a goal for most leaders today. Universities and organizations today are multicultural. Universities approach to gaining new students has become an exercise in multiculturalism—especially within the last generation. In every aspect of life, it appears that we are competing in a global marketplace. Therefore, understanding leadership and its relationship to cultural intelligence is a fertile market for research.

There is enough circumstantial evidence to support that global leaders need to be culturally intelligent. Individuals who can lead with cultural intelligence are in great demand because cultural intelligence is a key factor in transitioning from a local leader into a global leader. As Torres (2016) eluded to—the development of new trends has definitely reshaped the landscape for leadership talent. The fastest growing companies are coming from outside the U.S. In view of that, developing global leaders with cultural intelligence for the workplace should take place first at the university level and work its way into the marketplace. Therefore,

researching the influence that cultural intelligence has on cross-cultural learning and global leadership development would have strengthened Torres argument and created an interesting topical discussion that would have contributed to the author's research.

The evaluation process Torres (2016) applied for the leadership study in Chapter 3 was action research. The author noted that action research entails a reflective, learning, collaborative and participative process of activities that "proposes to address and resolve a current issue within an organization by allowing data gathering and inquiry through surveys, with the intent of making a change from a traditional leadership to a global leadership approach utilizing the RLM" (Torres, 2016, p. 43). Torres exercised a holistic and dialectical approach, through a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information in understanding and learning the phenomenon of the transformation and elements required in transforming traditional leaders to global leaders.

Torres (2016) was extremely interested in ethics because ethics is a vital component to the process of transforming traditional leaders into global leaders. Based on the researcher's global experiences Torres suggested that ethics are very important for protecting human rights and conducting business globally. In doing so, Torres brilliantly presented a new way of wrestling with the nuances of developing global leaders. This writer found that Torres' research consistent with other recent scholarly and peer-reviewed published material on organizational leadership. The author's literature added value to the discipline, highlighted what constitutes an effective global leader and the importance of cross-cultural leadership training. This writer would recommend Torres' book as a tool for developing and transforming effective domestic leaders into effective global leaders. As a result, of Torres' book—this writer has discovered new opportunities and methodological approaches to research. Torres book renewed confidence in

this writer's chosen discipline. I discovered an enriching way to gain a competitive edge in

understanding the development of global leadership for ministry and the marketplace.

In order to compete in the twenty-first-century global marketplace—it is vital that an

organizational leader understands how to lead cross-culturally. Torres (2016) confirmed that

there is no doubt—that interest in cross-cultural leadership has exploded amongst governmental,

organizational, and academic institutional realms. For the nonce, leadership is an expanding field

of study that someday may join the high-ranking traditional disciplines of history, philosophy,

and the social sciences in scholarly recognition (Burns, 2003). The outlook for global leaders is

optimistic and the practice of global business is more prevalent than ever (Oppel, 2007).

Therefore, whether in business or personal life, strong leadership qualities are essential and a

global mindset is imperative.

For global leaders to succeed, they will need a strong global mindset, a multifaceted

construct that enables them to influence individuals from different cultural, political, and

institutional systems (Livermore, 2016; Torres, 2016). A large population of people in the world

grew up as unicultural individuals who learned how to live and work with people who are like

themselves. The global world of business today has brought many different unicultural

individuals together, expecting them to work in multi-cultural and cross-cultural environments

("GMI", 2017). Torres speaks to this pressing issue. Given the pace of globalization,

organizations and institutions need leaders who can work effectively and proficiently in global

roles (Javidan et al., 2015) utilizing cross-cultural organizational skill sets.

The author's purpose and focus were clearly defined and introduced the reader to

different aspects of the importance of multicultural leadership and its influences on behavior and

motivations that leaders must learn and understand in developing effective leadership and

organizational skill sets. Torres (2016) insisted that at the center of this multicultural leadership phenomenon is effective communication and cautions the reader about not learning the effectual cost of not learning about cross-cultural leadership. Torres research is an important read for academic professionals and organizational leaders. In addition, Torres made a compelling case as to why organizations should provide cross-cultural training prior to sending employees on an assignment in a foreign country.

The author's scholarly research proved that organizations that conduct cross-cultural training achieve better outcomes. Torres confirmed this writer notion that leadership is practiced differently across cultures and can create tremendous financial opportunities if an individual is willing to learn a new culture. Understanding the influence of culture on leadership is essential to developing and facilitating effective leaders (Kumar & Chokar, 2013; Marquardt, 2011). A leader can overcome the challenges of cultural diversity by learning how to become a skilled cross-cultural leader.

A good leader or a great leader in the twenty-first century must possess a host of indispensable qualities such as relationship building, character ethics, global vision, and willingness to collaborate with others locally and globally. The rapid development of today's global economy has critical implications for leadership development (Ivy, 2016). Thanks to scholar-practitioners, like Torres (2016) and a host of other scholars, "effectively leading across various cultures is a capability that can be measured and improved" (Livermore, 2014, p. 23). I look forward to reading more literature about developing global leaders with cross-cultural competencies. Moreover, I would encourage the use of Torres' work for the development of global leadership and cross-cultural training. I believe that as more and more organizations

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expand their diversity and international presence Torres' literature will become more significant

and noteworthy.

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