Assignment 5- Ethnographical Study

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Abstract

The importance of having leaders at all levels of the educational experience to teach and train other leaders cannot be underestimated. Historically, there is an embedded relationship between culture and leadership. Today, understanding the influence of culture on leadership is essential to developing and facilitating global organizational leaders (Kumar & Chhokar, 2013; Marquardt, 2011). The purpose of this paper is to prepare a summary of how to use an ethnographical study to answer a proposed research question related to the significant characteristics that may allow cross-cultural leaders to be more effective. This summary also includes a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of an ethnographical study.

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A Qualitative Study on Cross-Cultural Leadership Utilizing an Ethnography Approach.

Summary Background

Leadership is practiced differently across cultures. According to Javidan, Teagarden, and Bowen's (2010), in order for global organizations to succeed, they would need a strong global mindset, a multifaceted construct that enables them to influence individuals from different cultural, political, and institutional systems. The purpose of this paper is to utilize the ethnographic research approach to examine the significant characteristics of cross-cultural leadership behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness. This paper demonstrates the writer's knowledge on the current state of cross-cultural leadership and organizational development. Addressing this issue may encourage institutional and organizational leaders to promote cross-cultural competencies to equip their workforce in achieving optimal success.

Proposed Research Question

The proposed research will address the following questions: What are the significant characteristics that may allow cross-cultural leaders to be more effective in the workplace? What behavioral process theory describes the characteristics of effective organizational cross-cultural leaders?

Methodology
Qualitative Method

In this study, a qualitative research design would be utilized to investigate the research questions. The qualitative research design is preferred because "it consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). According to Creswell (2013), the final written report or presentation of a qualitative study includes the voices of participants, the

reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its

contribution to the literature or a call for change. For the proposed research question, the

qualitative method will provide a better understanding of the behaviors of the participants, which

the researcher may not comprehend, using the quantitative method (Walliman, 2017) and its

approach to collecting data. Qualitative researchers gather data through various means including

observation, focus groups, and interviews.

Conducting a Qualitative Interview

The participants that will be interviewed and the interview questions depends on the

purpose of the study and the theoretic or conceptual framework guiding the study. According to

Creswell and Poth (2018), the procedure for preparing and conducting qualitative interviews are:

- Determine the research question that will be answered by interviews.
- Identify interviewees who can best answer these questions based on one of the purposeful

    sampling procedures.
- Distinguish the type of interview by determining what mode is practical and what

    interactions will net the most useful information to answer research questions.
- Collect data using adequate recording procedures when conducting one-on-one or focus

    group interviews.
- Design and use an interview protocol, or interview guide.
- Refine the interview questions and the procedures through pilot testing.
- Locate a distraction-free place for conducting the interview.
- Obtain consent from the interviewee to participate in the study by completing a consent

    form approved by the human relations review board.
- As an interviewer, follow good interview procedures.
- Decide transcription logistics ahead of time.

Research Design

Ethnography Defining Features

As with all qualitative inquiry, there is no single way to conduct ethnographic research. However, researchers who use this qualitative approach focus on an entire culture-sharing group. Ethnographers study the meaning of the behavior, the language, and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group (Croswell & Poth, 2018). An ethnographer is interested in examining these shared patterns, and the unit of analysis is typically larger than 20 or more individuals who interact as a group over a certain time-period.

Ethnographers describe a holistic perspective of the group's history, religion, politics, economy, and environment. According to Croswell and Poth (2018), "Ethnography involves extended observations of the group, most often through participant observation, in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people and observes and interviews the group participants" (p. 90). Wolcott (as cited in Croswell & Poth, 2018), emphasized that the key to ethnographic research is to focus on discernible working patterns, not the study of a culture. Therefore, ethnographers should be mindful that there is no one way to conduct ethnographic research.

Types of Ethnographies

There are many forms of ethnography: confessional ethnography, life history, autoethnography, ethnographic novels, and visual ethnography found in electronic media (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, Croswell and Poth highlighted two in particular: realist ethnography and the critical ethnography. Realist ethnography is typically written in third-person, contains objective reporting, and uses standard categories for cultural description (e.g., family, life, communication networks, work life, social networks, and status systems). In

contrast, Thomas (as cited in Creswell & Poth) states, "The critical ethnography is a type of ethnographic research in which the authors advocate for the emancipation of groups marginalized in society" (p. 92). A critical ethnographer will study issues of power, empowerment, inequality, inequity, dominance, repression hegemony, and victimization. In order to do so, an ethnographer should be familiar with the appropriate steps they would use to conduct the study.

Creswell and Poth (2018) outlined the following procedures for conducting an ethnography:

1. Determine if the ethnography is the most appropriate design for studying the research problem. Ethnography is appropriate if the needs are to describe how a cultural group works.
2. Identify and locate a culture-sharing group to study. Typically this should be a group that has been together for a long period of time.
3. Select cultural themes, issues, or theories to study about the group. The themes, issues, and theories should provide an orienting framework for the study of the culture-sharing group.
4. Determine which type of ethnography to use to study cultural concepts. A critical ethnographer could address an inequity in society.
5. Gather information in the text or setting where the group works or lives. This is called fieldwork.
6. Generate an overall cultural interpretation of the group from the analysis of patterns across many sources of data.
7. Present the patterns of the culture-sharing group in written or performance formats. This section would describe a working set of rules or generalizations as to how the culture-sharing group functions.

Strengths and Limitations of the Ethnographic Approach

Ethnography has a host of limitations and very few strengths. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted several reasons why ethnography is challenging. The researcher needs to have an understanding of cultural anthropology, the meaning of a social-cultural system, and the concepts typically explored by those studying cultures. The time to collect data is extensive, involving prolonged time in the field. In addition, there is the possibility that the researcher will "go native" and be unable to complete or be compromised in the study. Sensitivity to the needs of the participants being study can also pose a challenge to the researcher. Because the researcher must report their impact in conducting the study on the people and the places being explored. Lastly, the financial aspect of conducting an ethnography. According to Creswell and Poth, discussions abound about how funding often limits time for ethnographic fieldwork.

Despite the above limitations, Creswell and Poth (2018) noted ethnographic research process some advantages. Ethnographic research provides a rich source of visual data. Researchers who use ethnography are able to capture the behavior of the cultural group in different contexts of their everyday life. Ethnography also allows the researcher to place a human face on data through real-life stories; and most of all; ethnography provides understanding behind statistics (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Conclusion

This research paper included a summary of how the researcher would use an ethnographic approach to answer the proposed research questions related to the significant characteristics that may allow cross-cultural leaders to be more effective; and the behavioral process theory that describes the characteristics of effective organizational cross-cultural leaders. This paper discussed qualitative methodology, qualitative interviewing, ethnography defining

features, types of ethnographies, and the strengths and limitations of the ethnography approach.

Creswell and Poth (2018) did not provide an exhaustive summarization of the approach but

rather highlighted valuable information for an ethnographer to consider.

  Ethnography would not be the most suitable option for this researcher's proposed study

because the observation of a cultural group is not necessary to answer the research question. The

approach is too costly and time-consuming. Furthermore, the researcher has limited knowledge

of cultural anthropology, which is a prerequisite for anyone using this approach. An ethnographic

research approach is best used in a study that seeks to describe how a cultural group works.

Conversely, a case study approach would allow the researcher an in-depth understanding of the

participants and would be less costly and more efficient. It is, therefore, safe to assume that the

researcher would not use the ethnography approach to explore the cross-cultural leadership topic.

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