Cross-Cultural Leadership: A Literature Review
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I have chosen cross-cultural leadership as my focus issue for this course and as my

leadership concentration for this program. I have great interest in researching about

characteristics of effective multicultural leaders and how they deal with cultural barriers, for

instance. More specifically, I want to research how teachers of multicultural classrooms can help

students from different backgrounds succeed in their learning process. I agree with Warren

(2016) who perceives teachers as classroom leaders as they share a vision and guide students to

achieve their goals. Teachers who understand and reflect on their own culture activate the

process of cross-cultural awareness. Research by Chin-Yin, Indiatsi and Wong (2016) shows that

the number of learners whose first language is not English and whose cultural backgrounds come

from different societies is on the rise. Cross-cultural leadership studies have contributed to the

understanding of how cultures around the world do businesses, negotiate, and perform. In order

to develop cross- cultural awareness, there is a need to integrate the early studies of

cross-cultural leadership with the most recent ones. Cross-cultural awareness is also constructed

through developing cultural competencies and cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence plays a

significant role in cross-cultural leadership as it contributes to an understanding of how people

from different cultures behave from a position of equality. Understanding and reflecting on one's

own culture is imperative to activate the process of cross-cultural awareness. Teachers are

leaders who share a vision, facilitate processes and guide students to achieve their goals.

Teachers of multicultural backgrounds, particularly Latin America, can benefit from the

acquisition of cultural awareness to contribute to a more effective teaching and learning

experience. This paper aims to review two important themes in cross-cultural leadership: cultural

dimensions and cross-cultural awareness. The review is based on six articles and two books.

**Cultural Dimensions**

Arevalo, So and McNaughton-Cassill (2016) argue that collectivism plays a big role

among Latin students. The authors conducted a study that revealed that Latino American college

students were more likely than non-Latinos to endorse situations that involve helping and

interacting; "data of revealed that Latino American college students are more inclined to meet

and/or help other individuals, such as neighbors, friends, and classmates, compared to

non-Latino students" (p. 8). Additionally, the authors concluded that Latin American students

perceived group studies as beneficial. "In collectivistic cultures, individuals are taught to

suppress their aggressive tendencies in order to avoid any type of arguments that may jeopardize

harmony" (Arevalo, So & McNaughton-Cassill, 2016, p. 8).

  The authors used a sample of 60 students from Introductory Psychology classes at a

4-year college in Southern Texas. The authors chose Introductory Psychology classes partly

because the majority of participants represented several majors; additionally, the authors chose

the specific school because of its high concentration of Latino students. It is important to say that

Latino and non- Latino students were recruited for the comparative study. The measure utilized

for the study was the Individualism–collectivism (INDCOL) scale.

  The study was part of a larger study that explored Latinos' attitudes toward mental health

issues. After all of the data had been collected and entered, the authors extracted the data from

the data set for the analysis. The authors utilized SPSS 19.0 for calculations. The analysis

indicated that some aspects of collectivistic societies were stronger among Latino students;

however, with the help of t-tests, the authors also noted that the sample did not show a significant

ethnic difference in kin collectivism: Latinos and non–Latino American college students were

equally committed to seeking out and helping biologically related relationships; the findings are

important to determine that a researcher should not count on generalizations. There are several

factors that contribute to different results, such as the need of establishing new relationships

that a non-latino student has when he or she first starts school.

  I agree with Arevalo, So and McNaughton-Cassill (2016) when they state that identifying

ethnic differences among Latino and non- Latino students open up the development of possible

approaches to increasing graduation rates among Latino college students. It is necessary that

school leaders become sensitive to the new wave of immigrants to the United States that is

coming from collectivistic societies.

Another article that explains about cultural dimensions is *Linking extreme response*

*style to response processes: A cross-cultural mixed methods approach* (Benítez, He, Van de

Vijver & Padilla, 2016). The article describes how cross-cultural researchers should pay attention

to nuances that a particular culture has. When a study compares two cultures, it is important to

enhance the understanding by utilizing different methodologies. The article emphasizes why one

should pay attention to nuances. For instance, I intend to compare how Latin America students

(collectivist society) and American students (individualistic society) perceive learning

process and the article in question helped me understand how important different methodologies

can be when one works with cross-cultural studies.

*The cultural dimension of global business* (Ferraro & Briody, 2013) is a book that

discusses challenges leaders face when they lead people from different cultural backgrounds. The

authors give the reader practical recommendations of how leaders can lead multicultural

scenarios in a more effective way. According to Ferraro and Briody (2013) there are many ways

to learn culture: through comparison with different scenarios, direct experience, discussions, case

studies, trainings, etc. Leaders who have a desire to learn about their own cultures and other

cultures gain an advantage to lead a cross-cultural setting successfully. Cross-cultural awareness

can take place when one views other cultural values in relation to his or her own. Hofstede (as

cited in Ferraro & Briody, 2013), conducted a large- scale study of IBM, which employed people

from different cultures. Through the use of extensive amounts of questionnaire data, Hofstede

was able to rank the cultures along 6 dimensions: individualism- collectivism, uncertainty

avoidance, power distance, masculinity- femininity, long-term vs. short- term orientation. Cross-

cultural researches on leadership were influenced by the early studies of Hofstede, but since then

several patterns of cultural values have been suggested (Yukl, 2013). One of the most recent studies was carried out by GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) researchers who collected data from managers representing 951 organizations in 62 national cultures (Ferraro & Briody, 2013). The study identified nine dimensions of national culture and six major leadership styles and it was conducted through a contrasting values approach that provides an understanding of "how cultures differ on a variety of key cultural attributes or dimensions" (Ferraro & Briody, 2013, p.30). The first dimension to understand cross-cultural interactions is the individual- collective dimension. Some cultures focus on the individual over the group, others focus on the interests of the group above their own. Understanding how individualism-collectivism play out in different cultures is important to understand cross-cultural leadership performance. Research by Gabriela, Edit, Daniela and Iona (2014) shows that "in individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only, named as an "I" society. In collectivist societies people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty, named as a "We" society. In collectivistic cultures individuals expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for loyalty" (p. 81). Individual- oriented cultures value task completion, autonomy and independence, success as an own ability and they perceive individuals as major units of social perception. Collective- oriented cultures value relationships, interdependence, group achievements and strong connections to a few groups. They perceive groups as units of social perception (Ferraro & Briody, 2013).

The second dimension to understand how cross-cultural interactions work is the equality-hierarchy dimension. Ferraro and Briody (2013) divide this dimension in two categories: egalitarian cultures and hierarchical cultures. The authors note that this dimension helps businesspeople understand about power, formality, delegation of authority, among others.

The decision- making process, for instance, takes longer in egalitarian cultures where all levels are asked for feedback.  Sweden, for instance, is considered to be one of the most gender-egalitarian countries where women and men share power and influence equally. A leader who belongs to a gender- egalitarian culture and is leading a cross-cultural setting with the presence of hierarchical cultures should understand how power and influence are perceived differently. The third dimension in cross- cultural interactions is the change orientation dimension. Hofstede and GLOBE researchers used the phrase *uncertainty avoidance* to "refer to the lack of tolerance for ambiguity and the need for formal rules and high-level organizational structure" (Ferraro & Briody, 2013, p. 41); this dimension focuses on change-embracing cultures and change-fearing cultures or low to high uncertainty avoidance. Characteristics of change-embracing cultures include: differences are tolerated, more risk taking, hope for success and willingness to change employer. Characteristics of change-fearing cultures include: differences are considered dangerous and initiative of subordinates is discouraged, less risk taking, loyalty to employer and fear of failure. As stated previously, globalization has created the need for cross-cultural awareness for leaders who have accepted the challenge of leading cross- cultural diversity. For instance, leaders at specific occasions will have to learn how to make decisions in a setting with risks and uncertainty (Ferraro & Briody, 2013).  It is important as stated by Northouse (2015) that leaders understand how different cultures do businesses and how their own culture does as well.

The last dimension explained by Ferraro and Briody (2013) is the time orientation dimension. Different cultures deal with time in different ways. Some cultures value punctuality and rigid schedules. Others value social relationships and flexibility. This dimension includes future orientation that "refers to the extent to which people engage in future- oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification" (Northouse, 2015). Different

cultures perceive benefits based on time orientation: "people from future oriented societies

believe that is far more important to trade off short-term gains in the present for more long-term

benefits in the future" (Ferraro & Briody, 2013, p. 34).

It is important to note that the dimensions above are some of the lenses for leaders to

comprehend differences and similarities across cultures and why it is important to recognize

them while working in a cross-cultural scenario. Despite the recognition that understanding those

dimensions is relevant for a successful leadership, Ferraro and Briody (2013) also state that

managers or leaders should avoid overreliance on cultural generalizations. The dimensions

should be analyzed, studied and considered. But other variables such as education, biology or

experience might affect behaviors as well.

**Cultural Awareness**

Different authors argue that cultural awareness is an important aspect in cross-cultural

leadership. People are becoming more interconnected. Cultural exchange, international trade and

use of worldwide telecommunication systems have increased. Globalization has been advancing

and it has created a need to understand how cultural differences and similarities impact

leadership performance (Northouse, 2013). According to Yukl (2013), studies on cross-cultural

leadership are increasing and they are important to assess different characteristics in global

organizations. Globalization has created the need for cross-cultural awareness for leaders who

have accepted the challenge of leading cross- cultural diversity. For the purposes of this paper,

the term culture is defined as "the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions

that are common to a group of people" (Northouse, 2015, p. 428).

A good article that explains the role of culture intelligence to enhance cross-cultural

awareness is *The role of cultural intelligence in cross-cultural leadership effectiveness: A*

*qualitative study in the hospitality industry* (Ersoy, 2014). According to Ersoy (2014), the

concept cultural intelligence, or simply CQ, was firstly introduced in 1986 with the Sternberg

and Detter- man's multiple intelligences framework. Ersoy (2014) conducted a qualitative study

on cross-cultural leadership through detailed and substantial interviews with six Western

expatriate managers (2 Spanish, 2 Dutch, 2 Italian) and thirteen local Turkish managers who

represent top and middle-level executives working in a hotel operating in Turkey.  Some of the

questions relating to the expatriate managers were: 1) Could you define some typical cultural

differences between Turkish culture and your own culture? 2) As an experienced administrator,

what do you suggest for young manager candidates about living and working in a foreign

culture? 3) What are the challenges that you faced in the process of cultural adaptation process?

(Ersoy, 2014). Some of the questions relating to the Turkish Department managers were: 1) Is

there any ease of working with an expatriate manager? 2) To what extent is the attitude of your

expatriate managers towards your culture important? 3) Do your expatriates managers

understand Turkish culture? The participants were asked to give as much detail as possible. The

study revealed that cultural intelligence played a significant role in cross-cultural leadership

effectiveness. Ersoy (2014) states that "most expatriate managers emphasized the importance of

a deep understanding of Turkish culture and cultural differences" (p. 6102); they demonstrated

cross-cultural awareness thorough the in-depth interviews. In the behavioral perspective, the

managers cited enthusiasm, balance and flexibility as relevant characteristics to adapt to new

cultures. Most of them were exposed to trainings and previous cross-cultural experiences that

allowed them to develop cross-cultural awareness.

It is important to notice that some local managers (Turkish) emphasized that working

with expatriates enhance their way of working because of the different approaches they are

exposed to. Each expatriate contributed to the success of the hotel. Additionally, some local

managers reported that expatriate managers helped them think in a more creative way. Another

important aspect of the qualitative research refers to the attitude of expatriate managers towards

Turkish culture. Local managers reported that the way expatriate managers show their attitude

towards their culture is crucial to stablish a good relationship. The Turkish managers also

emphasized how much they appreciated the expatriates' willingness to learn their language. With

regards to expatriate managers, most of them reported how important it was to understand major

differences between their cultures and the Turkish culture. Additionally, some of them were not

required to learn Turkish as they could speak their own language or English, however, they chose

to learn it so they could enhance their understanding of the culture.

The research of Xing and Spencer (2008) titled *Reducing cultural barriers via Internet*

*Courses* investigate Chinese students who study in the UK and are confronted by many cultural

barriers. The authors believe that online methodology can incorporate a number of approaches to

support learning, ranging from a simple text-based presentation to more active methods,

including opportunities to use search-based learning strategies. Through experimental results, the

research *Reducing cultural barriers via Internet Courses* (Xing & Spencer, 2008) aimed to

confirm or refute the given hypothesis that online environment could be a good tool to reduce

cultural barriers. I agree with Xing and Spencer (2008) when they state that foreign students in a

new cultural environment face several challenges and there is a need to learn tools that reduce

challenges and cultural barriers.

In *Reducing cultural barriers via Internet Courses* (Xing & Spencer, 2008), the authors

explain the hypothesis that a Web-based supplement course for English as a foreign language

could effectively guide international students in their new experience through supplementary

materials that deal with cultural knowledge such as academic life, accommodation, transport,

etc. There were two experiments for the main study of the research: cultural knowledge website

experiment and academic writing style e-learning course experiment. For the first experiment,

altogether 75 Chinese students were involved. There were 30 students in the experimental group

and 30 in the control group. The students shared similarities such as the fact they were all PhD

candidates in China. The remaining students of the experiment (15 students) were part of the

group that had newly arrived in the UK, to pursue the Diploma in Management and English.

Xing and Spencer (2008) used that group to see what extent they could acquire the defined

aspects of English culture by being present in the target culture (UK). For the academic writing

style e-learning course experiment, there were 90 Chinese students and 15 English university

lecturers. Each week during the semesters students in the experimental group had the opportunity

to access different materials in the website; the materials dealt with cultural knowledge and

differences between cultures. Different approaches were stablished to determine which one could

potentially help the participants by removing cultural barriers. Students from both the

experimental group (E1) and the control group had four hours of English in a traditional setting.

The experimental group had access to the website for cultural awareness and the UKE group

attended a regular course at Salford University. The UKE group did not receive any input for

cultural awareness. The assessment of performance (pre/ post-test) for the cultural knowledge

website was designed with the same proportion of questions for each approach for each unity

related to cultural awareness. As far as the essays, two assessments were used in the academic

writing style e-course: the analysis of the first and final essays. Xing and Spencer (2008)

confirmed the main hypothesis that electronic environment can help students from different

cultural backgrounds to reduce cultural barriers and succeed in their learning process.

Globalization has created a need to understand how cultural differences and similarities impact

leadership performance in business and educational contexts.

         In *Strategies for smooth and effective cross-cultural online collaborative learning*

(Junfeng, Kinshuk, Huiju, Sue-Jen & Ronghuai, 2014) propose a cross-cultural online

collaborative learning utilizing web 2.0 technologies to enhance cross- cultural competencies.

The authors designed a pilot study between the West and the East to assess if international

exposure could impact students' understanding of another culture. American and Chinese

students participated in the pilot study. The authors used a mixed method research approach

using questionnaire, interview and content analysis. Junfeng, Kinshuk, Huiju, Sue-Jen and

Ronghuai (2014) revealed that Chinese and American students were interested in each other's

culture, their attitudes to cross-cultural online collaborative learning were positive, and culture

had an influence on learning methods. Culture had an influence on learning methods because the

Chinese students reported problems in using the learning management system and the course

resources in a completely English environment. Social interaction played an important role, and

students preferred to have more prior knowledge of each other's cultures and backgrounds. The

authors identified important strategies for promoting the implementation of cross-cultural online

collaborative learning. One of the strategies refers to the topic setting model for cross-cultural

online collaborative learning. Junfeng, Kinshuk, Huiju, Sue-Jen and Ronghuai (2014) argue

that the collaborative learning topic should consider the learning content and what the group

members from both sides already know. Another strategy refers to teacher's task model for

implementing cross-cultural online collaborative learning. The authors explain that is very

important to identify what teacher should do for implementing cross- cultural online learning.

One of the aspects of the implementation is social lounge- the ability of participants to project

their personal characteristics into the community. A third strategy refers to the use of bilingual

language resources in the learning environment to overcome language barriers during

cross-cultural online collaborative learning. Another strategy refers to the importance of

understanding cultural differences. For instance, the pilot study revealed that the Chinese

students were not good at asking questions and always used a more gentle and indirect way to

express their different opinion; while the American students expressed their views directly. I

believe the article is relevant to my cross-cultural studies because it shows the importance of

cross-cultural awareness and how an online collaborative learning could potentially help students

to get ready for the global market.

     *Leading with cultural intelligence: The new secret to success* (Livermore, 2010) is a book

that discusses characteristics of cultural intelligence and how it impacts the way people lead.

Cultural intelligence is needed in different situations; it helps leaders, for instance, to address the

challenge of recruiting and retaining cross-cultural talent. Livermore (2010) also states that other

intercultural approaches are significant to address the theme cross-cultural leadership but cultural

intelligence presents several advantages over them, such as: 1) CQ is a meta-framework rooted

in strong research and it has been tested across multiple cultures, samples and times; 2) the

concept is aligned to the study of multiple intelligences research; 3) the approach also considers

a leader's personal interests, strategic thinking that aligned with sociological differences in

cultural behaviors and values from other approaches can successfully address cultural

interactions; 4) the approach emphasizes that any leader can enhance his or her cultural

dimensions through training and experience and 5) the approach focuses on developing an

overall repertoire of cultural understanding. I believe the book is an important resource for

leaders in a global context understand how to work with different cultures in a more effective

way. The book is also aligned with the growing trend of understanding other cultures and

civilizations with empathy. Livermore (2010) argues that cultural intelligence plays a significant

role in cross-cultural leadership as it contributes to an understanding of how people from

different cultures behave from a position of equality. *Leading with cultural intelligence: The new

secret to success* (Livermore, 2010) demonstrates the role of cultural intelligence in

cross-cultural leadership and why leading or managing a cross-cultural scenario requires

cross-cultural awareness. In the past three decades, many studies have focused on identifying

dimensions of culture such as the GLOBE studies and the studies of Hofstede. The GLOBE

studies offer a strong body of findings as they help leaders to understand how cultures around the

world view leadership and how the dimensions help leaders to change their behavior when

leading cross-culturally (Northouse, 2013). Cultural intelligence can be learned; when leaders

activate their CQ, they are able to better understand their own culture and other cultures. Leaders

become more adaptive as they use different strategies in different cultural situations. In

conclusion, understanding one's own culture, cross- culture dimensions, cross-culture

competencies and activating culture intelligence through different aspects (reading, planning,

engaging, learning, experiencing) can help leaders develop cross- cultural awareness- an

important characteristic in a globalized context. The integration of different aspects of cultural

awareness is the key to an effective leadership in a globalized context.

*The cultural dimension of global business* (Ferraro & Briody, 2013) also provides the

reader with important lessons on cultural awareness. According to Ferraro and Briody (2013)

there are many ways to learn culture: through comparison with different scenarios, direct

experience, discussions, case studies, trainings, etc. Leaders who have a desire to learn about

their own cultures and other cultures gain an advantage to lead a cross-cultural setting

successfully. Cross-cultural awareness can take place when one views other cultural values in

relation to his or her own. The book consists of eight chapters that discuss lenses for

understanding culture and cultural differences; the importance of understanding verbal and

nonverbal communication when communicating across cultures; lessons on how to negotiate and

partner across cultures; lessons on how to cope with culture shock and lessons for global firms

develop global leaders. The lessons help one enhance cultural awareness in order to compete in a

global market.

This paper aimed to provide the reader with a literature review on key issues related to cross-cultural leadership. Through the study of six articles and two books, the paper demonstrated the importance of enhancing the understanding of cross-cultural awareness (competencies, cultural intelligence) and cultural dimensions. Cross-cultural leadership studies have contributed to the understanding of how cultures around the world do businesses, negotiate, and perform. In order to develop cross- cultural awareness, there is a need to integrate the early studies of cross-cultural leadership with the most recent ones. Cross-cultural awareness is also constructed through developing cultural competencies and cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence plays a significant role in cross-cultural leadership as it contributes to an understanding of how people from different cultures behave from a position of equality. Understanding and reflecting on one's own culture is imperative to activate the process of cross-cultural awareness.

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