

Successful Leadership in a Multi-Cultural Influenced Organization

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Abstract: “The increasing globalization of business has heightened the importance of understanding national cultural influences in interorganizational relationships from both a cross-cultural and an intercultural perspective.” Institutional, cultural, economic and organizational factors have led to a demographic shift across all organizational levels. Often, leadership within a multi-cultural organization is characterized by diversity in top management teams and multi-cultural working teams. Hawely (1968) noticed that “the diversity of organizational forms is isomorphic to the diversity environments. “With the industrial environment being affected by turbulences, industrial characteristics, and environmental factors. Moreover, group composition factors, such as team size, terms of team members or diversity and demographic factors are influencing behaviors and team decision-makings. Conventional leadership methods are unable to manage all the complexities and therefore, successful leadership in multi-culturally influenced organizations demands new leadership approaches.

Key words: leadership; multi-cultural; organization; culture

JEL codes: F23, F53, M16

1. Introduction

1.1 History and Characteristics of Leadership

Leadership theories are based on situational, personal, positions and interactions. Situational leadership theories are based on macro-approaches like system-theory, culture and crisis-theories, and micro-approaches such as contingency theories, and substitutional-theories (ETH, n.d., p. 5).

Personally oriented leadership theories are divided into leading-centred and emotional centred. Leading-centred theories are related to trait theories of leadership, charisma-theory, psychological depth-oriented theory and decision theories. Emotional centred theories are associated with attribution theory, the path-goal theory, the social learning theory, and theory of maturation. Position theories are divided in role-theories, power-theories and economic theories, whereas economic theories are subdivided into property rights, the principal agent and the transaction cost theory. While interaction theories are the leader-member exchange theory, idiosyncrasy-credit-theory and the theory of dyads (ETH, n.d., p. 5).

The impact of various interpretation patterns on managerial cognitions demand new competences, practices and attributed meanings (Lippuner, 2003, pp. 20-21). Explanations of structures and processes which precede strategic decision-making are analysed through cognition research (Lüer, 1998, p. 16), but whether neuropsychology (Roth 1992, p. 301) or psychology (Walsh, 1995, p. 285) are able to reveal the complex

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reflexions of intercultural questions continues to be a topic of debate. The adaptation of management models from one country to another is related to high costs and barriers, caused by significant differences in both informal and institutional cultural views (Delerue & Simon, 2009, p. 18). Thus, personal characteristics have an essential impact on the success or failure of a business (Fritz & Möllenberg, 2003, pp. 295-297).

Functional top-management (TMT) is responsible for one or more of the different fields and therefore, research in this area has seen increased attention recently (Menz, 2012, p. 45). Both management and leaders are responsible for organizational outcomes and performance, and leadership approaches are broadly discussed in economic and social sciences due to its important role in organizational success.

Thus, practical knowledge demonstrates that cooperation between acting persons and working teams can lead to high quality transformation (ARGO-Studie, 2009, p. 3). The following table gives a short overview of the existing research and literature focused on future leadership:

Table 1 Literature Focusing Leadership in Future

Title	Year	Source
Leadership in the 21 st Century	w.d.	(Strack, Linden von der, & Torres)
From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision	1990	(Bass)
Leadership and gender advantage	2002	(Vecchio)
Public Leadership in Times of Crisis: Mission Impossible?	2003	(Boin & Hart)
Leadership and Spirituality	2006	(Burke)
Integrating leadership development and succession planning best practices	2007	(Groves)
Shared Leadership: Is it Time for a Change?	2010	(Kocolowsky)
The New Leadership Genre. A Qualitative Study of the Practice of Transformational, Servant and Charismatic Leadership in a Danish Context	2011	(Hyldelund & Fogtmann)
Collaborative Leadership: New perspectives in Leadership development	2011	(De Meyer)
Leadership without Domination? Toward Restoring the Human and Natural World	2011	(Evans)
Shattering the Glass Ceiling. An Analytical Approach to Advancing Women into Leadership Roles	2012	(Dyrchs & Strack)
Future Trends in Leadership Development	2014	(Petrie)
Leadership Role in Certain Phases of Knowledge Management Processes	2015	(Micic)
The digital emperor has no clothes. Are business leaders ready for a world of radical transparency?	2016	(Lacy, Smith, & Cooper)

The terms leadership and management are often used interchangeable in research and practice, but there exists some significant differences, which are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Dichotomic Presentation of Management versus Leadership

Management	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • Control • Short-time orientation • Questioning why and when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Inspiration • Long-term orientation • Questioning what and why

Source: own illustration based on ARGO-Studie 2009, p. 6.

There is a variety of existing accesses to leadership styles: Characteristics of the leader, behavior of the leader, situational related leadership, power-oriented approach and the integrative approach (ARGO Studie, 2009, p. 13).

Characteristic approaches of leadership differ between personally characteristics of leaders and non-leaders, authoritarian, cooperative and laissez-faire leadership represent these approaches (ARGO Studie, 2009, p. 13).

Behavior oriented approaches of leadership are focused on how the leader acts in certain situations. Based on the Ohio-Study, there exists a differentiation between task-oriented and follower-oriented dimensions. A characteristic model of the behavioral approaches is the managerial Grid, from Blake & Mouton (AGRO Studie, 2009, p. 13).

Situational approaches are more focused on processes and contexts, and the impact these have on leadership. Based on certain behaviors exhibited by a leader, situational approaches can be exercised successfully in some organizations but may fail in others (AGRO Studie, 2009, p. 13).

Power related leadership approaches consider various types of power within the organization and its impact on leadership behaviour. Moreover, the research focuses on the differences between power and authority, how power can be achieved, and how power is lost (ARGO Studie, 2009, p. 13).

The integrative approach of leadership is based on a holistic view and focuses on the interrelation between influencing factors and their impact. An example of this is the St. Gallener Management Model (SGMM) (ARGO Studie, 2009, p. 13). Classical management approaches are shown in Table3.

Table 3 Classical Management Approaches

Classic Management Approaches		
Trait theories of leadership	Behavioral theories of leadership	Situational leadership theories
Great Man Theory (Stogdill, 1948)	Authoritarian vs. cooperative Leadership (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1985)	Contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967)
Charismatic Leadership (Weber, 1976)	Ohio State Leadership (Helpin & Winer, 1957)	Path-goal theory (House, 1971)
Transformational/transactional Leadership (Bass, 1985)	GRID-Modell (Blake & Mouton, 1986)	Decision-tree theory (Vroom & Yetton, 1973)
DISG Concept (Martson, 1928)		3D-Modell (Reddin, 1981)
Emotional Leadership (Goleman, 2007)		Degree of Maturity Leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988)

Source: own illustration based on Lippold 2015, p. 15.

New leadership trends are based on multidisciplinary approaches or attempt to find the best or ideal leadership style for a certain situation. Another trend is more focused on the measurement of effects like profits, staff-behavior and commitment (ARGO Studie, 2009, p. 14).

2. Literature Review

2.1 New Leadership Trends

New leadership concepts attempt to picture relational, strategical, social, complex and global dynamics to overcome traditional leadership approaches (Walenta, 2012, p. 496). “Leadership does not involve the use of force, coercion or domination and is not necessarily implied by the use of such titles as manager, supervisor, or superior” (Jago, 1982, p. 316).

Leadership processes are defined as processes of interaction and leaders and their followers influence each other based on a high relationship quality. Therefore, dominant leadership transitions to shared leadership, where it is essential to analyse interactions and information processes. Motivation can be described as an activity or behavior carried out by individuals as they attempt to achieve their objectives (Rheinberg, 2008, p. 13).

Heckhausen & Heckhausen (2010, pp. 105-107) define motivation as stimulus to act proactively to change the actual situation into future oriented objectives.

Modern leadership is based on the transformation of values and meanings, where future orientation and visions are focused. Internalized values, attitudes and behaviors of the leaders and the subjective perceptions of the followers are underlined. Leadership is described as dynamic, ambivalent, and complex, and structural elements are given greater focus than personal factors. The dynamic of the leadership system determines the self-organization, consequences and behaviors of the followers, and of the leaders. Therefore, comprehensive cultural aspects are attracting increased research focus (Walenta, 2012, p. 498).

2.2 Modern Models of Successful Leadership

In this chapter, prominent leadership models are presented and the empirical diagnostic findings of leadership research are outlined. Gentry et al. (2015, p. 2) analysed the challenges encountered by leaders and presented six main factors that leaders are constantly faced with:

- 1) Developing managerial effectiveness
- 2) Inspiring others
- 3) Developing employees
- 4) Leading a team
- 5) Guiding change
- 6) Managing internal stakeholder and politics.

Modern leadership should respect the characteristics that the development of personal skills, proficiency in languages and experiences in or exposure of multicultural environments affords. Thus, this demands the development of multidisciplinary perspectives which are connected to transformational leadership (Oppel, 2007, p. 8). Diversity and demographic variables follow the assumption that increased cognitive diversity impacts individual teams and organizational performance. The following illustration describes a multi-level framework for understanding the dynamic of diversity.

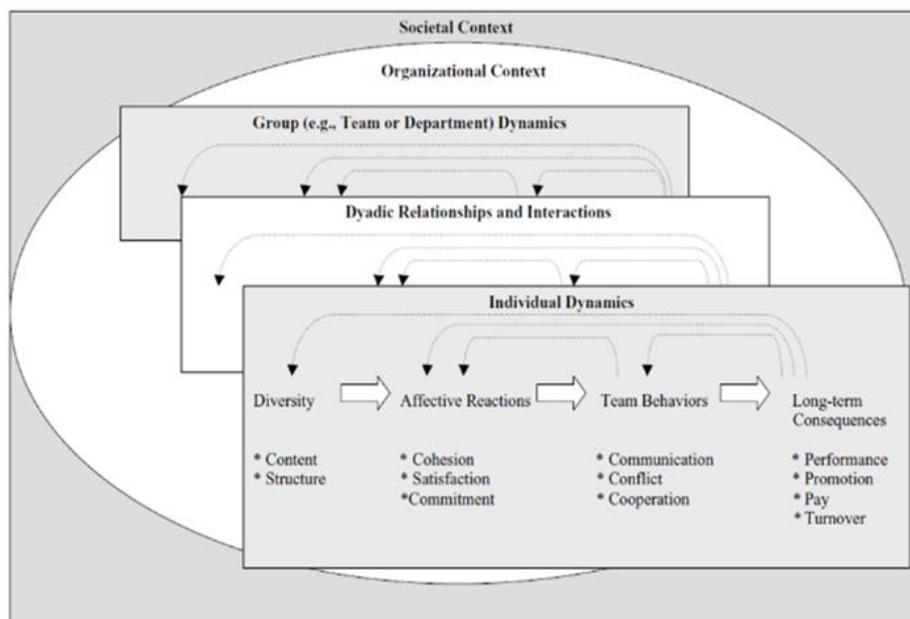


Fig. 1 A Multi-Level Framework for Understanding the Dynamics of Diversity

Source: Jackson et al., 2003, p. 803

Administrative, situational, behavioral, resourced based and power-oriented approaches represent a broad field of management theories as management can consequently be interpreted as various ways of abstraction degrees and complexity open spaces (Wolf, 2005, pp. 42-43). Management includes psychology, sociology, cognitive and conflict studies in its leadership decision analyses (Niklaus, 2015, p. 10). Western (2013, intro) argues that classic leadership theories are over-simplified and Neuberger (2002, p. 223) discusses the dilemma of leadership research and its simplification for understanding complexity. Thus, Gebhardt et al. (2015, p. 5) suggests new leadership methods which respond to the growing complexity of businesses. According to Carson (2007, pp. 1.218-1.219) leadership is more focused on single leaders executing a top-down process:

“[...] shared leadership originates with individual members of a team engaging in activities that influence the team and other team members of a team engaging in activities that influence the team and other team members in areas related to direction, motivation, and support”.

Modern future leadership approaches should recognize the changes in organizational qualities in regard to digitalization, consumer expectations and organizational staff.

Table 4 Comparison of Organizational Qualities Up to Now and Prospective

Organisational context	Up to now	Prospective
Context	Industrialisation and growth	Digitalisation, efficient decisions
Market	Proximity of site	Globally, volatile markets
Focus	Operating grad, efficiency	Customer expectations, flexible alliances
Structure	Hierarchical Organisation	Chaotic networks
Direction	Top-down	Content related, changing
Function	Allocation of tasks, dependency and authority	Merging synergies
Picture	Administration	Organism
Barriers	Bureaucracy and officials	Undefined structures and responsibilities
Risks	Stagnancy	Stress through ongoing responsibilities
Aims	Incorporation	Promotion of individual developments and emancipation

Source: own illustration based on Gebhardt, Hofmann & Roehl, 2016, p. 33.

Walenta (2012, pp. 499-507) proposes the following leadership approaches and styles for modern leadership: charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, full range model of leadership and authentic leadership, because these concepts are based on relational, strategic, social, complex and global dynamics (Walenta, 2012, p. 497).

2.3 Charismatic Leadership

This leadership style is based on the extraordinary skills and abilities of a leader. The focus of this neo-charismatic approach is based on relation-centered views, typical behaviors and a relationship between the leader and his followers, to achieve extraordinary performances (Walenta, 2012, p. 499).

2.4 Authentic Leadership

Authentic leaders “Continually commit to their own learning in order to understand themselves as a person and how they and others see the world.” (Robinson & O’Dea, 2014, p. 7).

Authentic leadership focuses on transparency, integrity, morality and self-reflection. Theoretical and

empirical research regarding authentic leadership and personnel management reveals that it strengthens organizational success (Haas, Fladerer & Nieberle, 2017, p. 20).

2.5 Transformational versus Transactional Leadership

Leadership is defined as an objective and result oriented activity, based on a cooperative influence which facilitates the success of a mutual working task. The result should be that the working tasks are related to achieving a high-value-added activity (Wunderer, 2007, p. 4), where the interaction between leader and followers plays a central role (Walenta & Kirchler, 2011, p. 72). Leadership represents a combination of various behaviors, within a framework of contexts and situated factors (Wunderer, 2007, p. 204).

“Transformational leaders transform the needs, values, preferences, and aspirations of followers from self-interests to collective interests.” (House & Samir, 1993, p. 82).

The transactional and transformational leadership styles are characterized as follows:

Table 5 Characteristics of Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership
<p><i>Conditioned reward</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear formulated expectations • Satisfaction is shown if expectations are fulfilled • Reward is promised if expectations are fulfilled • Counter drawn support is promised 	<p><i>Attributed Exertion of influence based on role patterns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbitration of respect, trust, and elation • Own concerns are withdrawn, group concerns are more significant <p><i>Behaviour oriented role model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical and moral principles • Demands and supports engagement • Convincing communication of objectives and values
<p><i>Management based on (active) exceptions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of practices and fixed standards are monitored • Consideration of failures • Consequent prosecution of failures 	<p><i>Inspiration and motivation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimistic future, forward facing • Charisma • Attractive future-oriented visions • Communicates trust and confidence to achieve objectives
<p><i>Management based on (passive) exceptions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention only if problems occur • Reaction to problems only if necessary 	<p><i>Intellectual stimulation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive of intellectual, rational and careful problem-solving • Questioning attitudes • Innovative proposals <p><i>Considerations of individual characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time for followers • Supports individual development • Followers are treated individually • Acts as coach and instructs and trains

Source: Felfe & Goihl, 2002, p. 4.

Transactional leadership is based on agreements between a leader and his followers (Bass & Avolio, 1997, p. 2; Walenta & Kirchler, 2011, p. 83), whereas transformational leadership is represented through the linkage and influence between the leader and his followers (Bass & Avolio, 1997, p. 3; Walenta & Kirchler, 2011, p. 81).

2.6 Academic Discussion and Practitioner’s Literature

Dramatic changes in the environmental, economic and social realities are the driving forces behind new methods of leadership. The reduction of complexity within classical leadership models cannot offer equally right answers for diverse teams, network-groups, distance-leadership and part-time employees, freelance workers,

culturally mixed societies, home office arrangements, sustainability, ethics, lifetime-values and changing consumer demands. Newer leadership styles are not fixed models of leader behaviors.

Based on the results of the Globe-Study, where the research focus was to reveal whether there exists a universal leadership style across all cultures, six leadership styles and connected behaviors were differentiated (AGRO Studie, 2009, p. 14):

- Charismatic/value-based leadership style, which is visionary, inspiring, devotional, upright, decision-making and performance oriented.
- Team-oriented leadership style, based on joint participation, diplomatic, supporting collaboration and focusing administration.
- Participant leadership style, which is participative and non-autocratic.
- Human oriented leadership style, which is humble and human-oriented.
- Autonomous leadership style, which is individualistic, independent, autonomous and unique.
- Self-protective leadership style, which is self-centered, status-conscious, provokes conflicts, makes excuses and is process-oriented.

Moreover, there is a discussion as to whether there are management competencies that exist which disburden multinational teamwork and collaboration. According to the Globe Study the following competences have been analyzed to reduce strains between leadership styles of differential regions:

Table 6 Acquisition of Multi-National Competencies

Leadership competencies for multinational collaboration	
Intercultural management competencies	Intercultural management competencies are based on inter-relational patterns of basic-competencies, intercultural knowledge and interculturally relevant competencies acquired in practice
Cross-cultural Leadership	Cross cultural management is focused on the development and synergies between cultural diversities based on country, organizational and business cultures
Global leadership	Global leadership focuses on leadership competencies, like thinking globally, value cultural diversities, technical cleverness, cooperations and alliances

Source: own illustration based on AGRO Studie, 2009, p. 33.

Intercultural competencies are defined by Thomas (2006, p. 118) as an essential requirement for a satisfying communication, relationship and cooperation between people of culturally different backgrounds, and intercultural competence is seen as a result of the learning and development processes which represent the ability to observe cultural differences, in decision-making, feeling and behavior of other persons and by themselves, to respect, value, and benefit from this ability. The following figure illustrates the development of international and intercultural competencies to act. Starting from personal and environmental factors, it is essential to experience intercultural confrontations, to make intercultural experiences, to learn about interculturality and to gain an intercultural understanding, to achieve intercultural competencies (Thomas, 2006, p. 119).

Arnold (2000, p. 69) differs between the qualifications and competencies of leaders. Competencies are comprised of the ability for self-organisation, they are subject related, holistic and related to unlimited and indefinite courses of action. Moreover, competences are close to classical learning and consistent with new methods. In contrast to this, qualifications are oriented on purposes and are externally organized. Qualifications are limited to fulfil precise requirements and demands and are directly related to skills and knowledge. Moreover, individual skills are based on classical learnings and on legitimation.

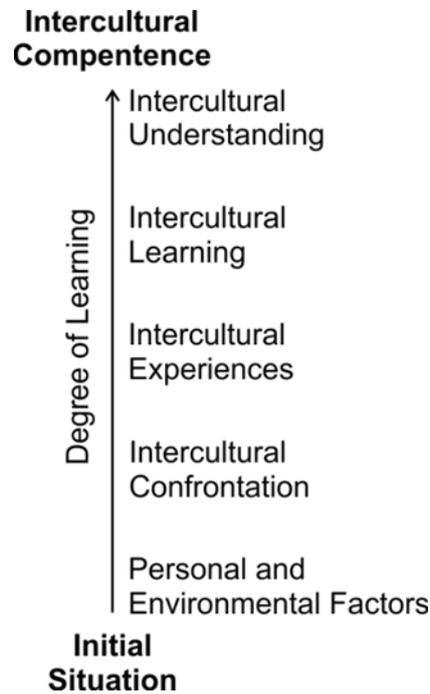


Figure 2 Development of Intercultural Competence

Source: own illustration based on Thomas, 2006, p. 119

3. Conclusion

Modern leadership is concerned with the connection of understanding organizational belongings, and the acceptance of the employees' values, expectations and lifestyle. Hence, new models are more concerned with creating networks between people. Mixed leadership teams are able to respond more efficiently to problems, people, sexes, cultures, situations, and finally, facilitates better communication between the TMT partners and the staff. Therefore, conventional leaders appear to be more and more outdated. As working teams also display increased cultural diversity, mixed leadership can provide the answer for reflecting necessary transformations of organizational requirements. Moreover, in negotiating between third parties, mixed leadership of the sexes can achieve better results because of their differences in understanding and acting, which allows the division of essential activities and negotiating tasks. Including societal, evolutionary and prejudicial factors, women in high leadership positions apply effective leader styles more often than men, but they face disadvantages caused by stereotypes and restricted role expectations (Day & Antonakis, n.d.). Mixed leadership teams make sense in organizations with mixed teams, be it with respect to culture, sex or age. Moreover, mixed leadership teams not only guarantee mediational mechanisms and correspond to critical team needs, they also produce positive team outcomes (Morgeson et al., 2010, 29). According to Morgeson et al. (2010, p. 30), mixed team leadership offers "potentially multiple team effectiveness criteria that spans the affective, behavioral, and cognitive domains."

Based on the analysis of the academic and practitioner's literature, the research question is answered and is concluded with the following remarks.

The increasing complexity and discontinuities evident in modern work realities are causing the occurrence of many new problems. Modern leadership is more suited to confront these situations because of delegation to others,

diverse foundation, talent seeking and development of personal skills and establishing of new missions (Bolden et al., 2003, p. 14). The transformation process from conventional leadership to modern leadership requires a transition period because to create a well-balanced team, it is vital to structure roles and responsibilities to ensure an adequate mix of people (Morgeson et al., 2010, p. 13).

New forms of leadership and leadership styles are indispensable due to environmental and technical changes. The mixed leadership style, which includes diverse sexes, enables a stronger sense of humanity and better decision making. Finally, it corresponds to Simon Western's demands for diversity in modern times, reflecting and mastering the complexity of future challenges.

New successful leadership styles are characterized through non-leading. The leader builds only the essential structures and frameworks, and the leader is seen as an enabler, who stimulates and inspires his followers, he supports networking, and information exchange and focuses on stability and the shaping of organizational identity (Gebhardt, Hofmann & Roehl, 2015, p. 33).

According to the results of the Globe-Study there exists no globally effective intercultural leadership style, because Europe and the world are too heterogenous. Moreover, societal-cultural differences are reflected in leadership expectations and behaviors (Brodbeck, n.d., p. 21).

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