Why Does Not One Leadership Style Fit All Cultures

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IAEA Leadership Framework
Core assumptions

• The concept of “glo-cal” in cross-cultural leadership studies.

• Leadership is distributed. That is, leadership is not solely the purview of the CEO, but can and should permeate all levels of the firm.

• Leadership is personal and developmental. There is no single way to lead. The best way to create change is to work with the particular capabilities that you have, while constantly working to improve and expand those capabilities.

• Leadership is a process to create change. Leadership is about making things happen, contingent on a context. Leaders may create change by playing a central role in the actual change process, or by creating an environment in which others are empowered to act.

• Leadership develops over time. It is through practice, reflection, following role models, feedback, and theory that we learn leadership.
GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) research program

- Started in 1991 using quantitative methods to study 17,000 managers more than 950 organizations

- 62 different cultures were put in ten societal clusters each calling for different leadership

- Differences were identified based on: Performance orientation, Assertiveness orientation, Future orientation, Friendliness, Collectivism I: Institutional collectivism, Collectivism II: In-group collectivism, Gender egalitarianism, Power distance, and Uncertainty avoidance
Universally desirable leadership attributes

• Trustworthy
• Positive
• Confidence builder
• Foresight
• Intelligent
• Win-win problem solver
• Administrative skilled
• Excellence oriented
• Just
• Plans ahead
• Dynamic

• Motivational
• Decisive
• Communicative
• Coordinator
• Honest
• Encouraging
• Motive arouser
• Dependable
• Effective bargainer
• Informed
• Team builder
Universally undesirable leadership attributes

- Loner
- Irritable
- Ruthless
- Asocial
- Non-explicit
- Dictatorial
- Non-cooperative
- Egocentric
The Art of Framing

- Leadership has to be flexible and adaptive to people and context. Making or riding waves? Hidden internal balance

- A focus on what people bring or how they interact?

- A frame is a specific way to think about a process which interprets it in a specific way related to core values. The use of snowboarding helmets, for example, based on safety or individuality.

- Ownership is key at the level of hearts and souls not just minds.
Leadership and High Performance Organizations

- The identified organizational characteristics can be compared with research-identified characteristics of “high performance organizations.”

- In these comparisons not all organizations are equal. The growth of global management systems over traditional value systems is sometimes evident.

- Nonetheless, no leadership will be effective if the management system is not integrated with larger assumptions and social values. This usually requires framing processes.
High Performance Organizations

- They have a strong sense of mission and use operational goals to provide service and reliability using mission and goals over direct supervision.

- They have a tight coupling of technical and social relationships thinking of the organization in complex systems’ terms.

- High reliability and optimal performance is achieved through ready access of personnel to senior management to report problems and offer improvements. The reporting of errors is ready and visibly rewarded.
High Performance Organizations

- Continuous improvement through capacity building, goal setting, assessment, system understanding and dialogue is central to the organization. This is enhanced by the presence of groups who look for weaknesses and areas for improvement.

- People are trained to perform multiple functions and tasks enabling structural flexibility and redundancy.

- New and/or unanticipated events are met with re- and self-organizing to meet the new demands. Multiple forms of authority and expertise are recognized. Hierarchies are flexible and transform to meet new demands.
High Performance Organizations

- Decision-making is dispersed. And, decisions quickly move to actions without long approvals and rethinking.

- The combination of high technical knowledge and transparency enables an easy overview of the functioning of the system as a whole and the nature of the various interfaces.
So Which Leadership Style is Best

- The answer to this is always glo-cal.

- Positive leadership requires an invention of an integration of international best practices and larger social values and includes finding creative ways to ground these in the existing dispositions of the society.

- What preconditions in your organization must leadership adjust to, be creative about?