Leadership in Context of Culture

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Abstract

There is enough theory to take the view that leaders shape culture, and culture shape leadership behavior. Leadership exists in all societies and is essential to the functioning of organizations within societies. And also, there are several ways to identify how culture influences leadership. Primarily, culture shapes the image of the ideal of a particular nation or organization. Culture influences the personality traits and work values of leaders and followers in a country or organization. This article has done to express a different perspective of leadership in context of a culture. For this purpose, we explained leadership, Leadership style, Culture, and its relationship. Findings show that the literature of leadership and culture can be concluded Culture relationship.

Keywords: Culture, Leadership, Leadership Style.

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1-Introduction

Nowadays the organizations and community atmosphere is a cultural one. In fact employees and citizens have developed due to the cultural development. The requisite of leadership such communities is presence of an inspiring and helping leaders and managers with cultural based leadership model. Managers should be trained in the ground of these necessities. This is the request of all the scientists, because to do any reform, cultural grounding is needed (Rahimi et al, 2010: 67).

Since the late 1980s, much of the leadership research has concentrated on characteristics and specific effects of charismatic and transformational leadership (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002). Leaders shape the way people think and behave—leaders are viewed by others as role models, and employees look around to see if their behavior is consistent with the organization’s espoused values and philosophy.

Over the years the philosophical terminology of "management" and "leadership" have, in the organizational context, been used both as synonyms and with clearly differentiated meanings. Debate is fairly common about whether the use of these terms should be restricted, and generally reflects an awareness of the distinction made by Burns (1978) between "transactional" leadership (characterized by e.g. emphasis on procedures, contingent reward, management by exception) and "transformational" leadership (characterized by e.g. charisma, personal relationships, creativity) (Burns, 1978).

Now in a community in which people have brought up with culture and formed the organizations, the authors of this article, using an established theoretical framework for measuring leadership style in context of culture.

2-Leadership and Leadership Style

Studies of leadership have produced theories involving traits, situational interaction, function, behavior, power, vision and values, charisma, and intelligence, among others.

Chemers (1997) express that leadership has been described as "a process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task".

According to Alagheband (2002) the definition of leadership is “the process of affecting on employees behavior for assisting and guiding them in performing their supposed duties” (p, 217). In fact leadership is the process of penetrating in specialized and organized group for determining the goals and achieving to them (Hui & Myskl, 2003: 510). Oliva defines leadership as the process of affecting on the functions of a group with organized attempts for goal determination and achieving to those goals (Oliva, 2000: 318).

There have been too investigations about leadership. All these investigation can be placed in three groups. It is a categorization and description of method and ways the leader conduct in real life of themselves. It is an approach more especial than a model or a philosophy. In fact there is much leadership style inside the leadership models as their institution. Style is a distinguished method of behavior. Leadership style is strongly influenced by the leader goals. Leadership style can be influenced by leader personality, followers’ ability or a position in which the leader leads his followers. Leadership style is a set of attitudes, traits and abilities of managers which is formed by four factors of value systems, confidence to the
employees, leader tendencies and sense of secure in intricate positions (Mosaddeghrad, 2003).

Leadership style is a set of skills and behaviors that leaders use as interference and persuade (Lussier & Achua, 2004).

**Transformational Leadership**: leader changes the organizational culture and dimensions like; trust, inspiration, personal creativity and growth are included. This kind of leadership is originated from servant leadership, trusted leadership, and ethic leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). Goal determination for organization, exploitation and maintaining the crucial qualifications, human resource development, support and maintaining an effective organizational culture and creating balanced organizational controls are of functions of transformational leadership (Miller, 1997: 99).

**Transactional Leadership**: this type of leaders do work with existing culture of organization (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985).

**Charismatic Leadership**: this type is placed in the domain of theories indicating cause and effect relations and shoes that if followers do observe a especial behavior from the leadership, assign a exaggerated hero traits to him (Miner, 2005). Charismatic leaders should have high self-confidence, idealist regarding to the goals, high speech ability, strong believe to the goals, high attraction to the followers, laborer followers and realistic knowledge from environment (Tittemore, 2003).

**Narcissistic Leadership**: (Maccoby & Vries, 2000) leaders of this style have high level of pride and are eager to be admiration. In fact, narcissist leadership is leadership of self-narcissism and closest ring of followers (Ibid, 2000). In a research has shown the positive and negative aspects of narcissist leadership which are as follows;

- Confidence – potentially useful and unreal
- Power/admiration seeking – potentially has sound energy and is also regardless
- Relationship –potentially worrying for others and cruelly exploiting them
- Consistency/direction – potentially are valuable or value less.

Other than these styles there are other styles which are in the leadership models and are not independent, like leadership model of Hersey and Blanchard which four style of leadership namely imperative, presenting, cooperative and delegation of authority and also one of the famous researches about leadership is done by Lewin, Lipet and Wight in 1939 and divided the leadership style to three type of democratic, imperative and Promiscuous (Fidler and Shmerz, 1993).

3-Culture

Culture encompasses all aspects of life, involving beliefs, thought, customs, behavior, production, art and institutions. To delve into all of this requires a major investment in both formal and informal education. Book learning, either in school or self-initiated, is a good start but in itself is not wholly adequate. To understand the real dynamic and deep meanings of a certain culture, one has to observe and experience it first-hand—the longer, the better. Thus, immersion in the target culture is an indispensable part of the education (or training) process. Most readers will probably agree on this point without further elaboration; however, the related issues of where the training occurs, who gets training and how much training they get
present considerable challenges. The question of where must assess the security implications of cultural immersion training in overseas environments; simply put, it may not be safe for U.S. military personnel to be in certain societies under certain conditions of regional tensioner conflict. As for the questions of who and how much, they apply to the domestic environment rather than to foreign ones (Jandora, 2006: 2).

Culture is the most important need of human society and basic factor of activeness, joy and continuity of life and societies. Nowadays, cultural issues are regarded as the most important factors in economic, social, political and humanistic and ethic development are on the focus of all the scholars and scientists and effective role of culture in all domains including theoretic and biologic one, has created a new perspective in subjective and objective domains. Culture in recent world, is the ground of definition, recycle and development of all abilities, values, identities, believes, norms, traditions, myths and human symbols. It is regarding to this culture that from ancient times culture and cultural issues are in focal position of humanistic and social studies and it led to creating new Interdisciplinary sciences and most of scholars put cultural issues parallel to the political, social, economic, and psychological and psychiatry issues. Regarding the culture presence in every minimal aspect of our lives as Philip Smith (1964) cited this ability has become of the main symbols of active and qualified citizenship. Now in such an occasion cultural theory is one the most important resources of reaching to this ability. Cultural theory present us paradigms, samples, patterns and concepts which can be used in different personal, public and thought aspects of life. Cultural theory is not merely a mysterious literature of universities but is a resource by which we knowingly can react to the world and choose the best choices and reach to the supreme levels (Smith, 1999; 18-19).

As illustrated in Table 1, culture has been defined in a number of different ways. Culture is a system of shared knowledge, beliefs, procedures, attitudes and artifacts that exists among a group of humans (Gill, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>the set of individual attributes that are subject to social influence</td>
<td>Axelrod (1997, p. 204)</td>
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<td>those customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social</td>
<td>Guiso, Sapienza &amp; Zingales (2006, p. 23)</td>
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<td>groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation</td>
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<td>complex rule-like structures that constitute resources that can be put</td>
<td>DiMaggio (1997, p. 265)</td>
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<td>to strategic use</td>
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<td>Organizational culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that a given</td>
<td>Schein (1984, p. 3)</td>
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<td>group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with</td>
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<td>its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that</td>
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<td>have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be</td>
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<td>taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel</td>
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<td>in relation to those problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a set of cognitions shared by members of a social unit</td>
<td>O’Reilly, Chatman, &amp; Cald-well (1991,</td>
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a system of shared values (defining what is important) and norms (defining appropriate attitudes and behaviors).

Chatman & Cha (2003, p. 21)

consists of symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual prac-tices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life.

Swindler (1986, p. 273)

Conceptions of culture from anthropology:

1- Culture is an instrument serving human biological and culture needs, e.g., Malinowski's (1944) functionalism.
2- Culture functions as an adaptive-regulatory mechanism. It unites indi-viduals into social structures, e.g., Radcliffe-Brown’s (1952) struc-tural-functionalism.
3- Culture is a system of shared cognitions. The human mind generates culture by means of a finite number of rules. E.g., Goodenough’s (1971) ethnoscience.
4- Culture is a system of shared symbols and meanings. Symbolic action needs to be interpreted, read or deciphered in order to be understood, e.g., Geertz’s (1973) symbolic anthropology.
5- Culture is a project of mind’s universal unconscious infrastructure, e.g., Levi-Strauss’ (1973) structuralism.

As cited in Smircich (1983, p. 342)

Culture is the system of shared beliefs; values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the of society embrace. Culture is transmitted from generation to generation through learning, a process known as enculturation.

Sue & Sue, (2003)

Table 1: Selected Definitions of Culture (Gill, 2013)

The literature used in cultural domain is astonishingly vast and broad. But we can mention three pivotal subjects of these discussions;

1) Content; theories, provide tools for understanding the structure of culture. Different traditions have understood culture as values, rules, narrations, ideologies, pathologies, talks and too many other procedures.

2) Social Implications; the theory in this section has focused on the impact of culture on social structure and social patterns. Theorists attempt to explain culture role to provide stability, solidarity and opportunity to maintain or remove conflict, power and injustice. Cultural theories provide divergent mechanisms that this influence is channeled through it. These mechanisms range covers from micro-level of individual socialization and institution-building and social systems.

3) Action, the agency, the ego (self); the main issue here is the relationship between the individual and the culture. The most serious problem is finding a way by which the culture forms human action (Smith & Riley 2008: 19).
Durkheim argues that the culture is the reason of social solidarity or social cohesion, therefore, based on him, perpetuate social exclusion and conflict cannot be put into account of the role of culture. He differentiates two type of correlation regarding to society being traditional or industrial and believes that in traditional society mechanical correlation and in industrial society organic correlation is common. In simple societies people are more similar to each other and do the same duties and minimum personal differences exists which lead to mechanical correlation, in such a correlation similarity in thinking exists and have less flexibility and tendency to harshness and violence is more among them. In such a society there is no forgiveness and compensation for any deviance and dominant norm is sameness with other people. But in industrial societies, it is opposite, and correlation not from sameness of people but from their differences is created. In this type of correlation duty division and controversy is seen and not like mechanical correlation, there is tendency to violence and harshness in punishments. Durkheim believe that even though personal elements have less similarity in such a system but since they have accepted life style and especial activities by correlation, as a result their dependence is more and possibility of expanding the correlation increased (Cosser, 2008; 19,190).

Weber like Durkheim emphasizes the role of religion in the culture and assumes religion as a pivotal dimension of culture. The only difference is the emphasis of Weber on the mental content of abstract belief systems, while Durkheim set priority to instincts and internal emotions. There is a remarkable difference between these two approaches to the role of religion in modern societies. Durkheim believe that spiritual ties and divine goals have vital role in modern world but Weber says that by starting modernity, world is going to be empty of meaning and human main regard is toward efficiency and rationality and the action based on goal which in his thoughts is the key of modernism, is replacing with the action based on value (Smith & Riley, 2008; 35). Note that the Weber rationality is a particular rationality that he speaks of it as the official rationality.

This kind of rationality is based on experience, and by it the simplest and cheapest way to achieve the target is chosen. And practical goals are replaced instead of values and substances like sacrifice, mysticism, virtue and etc. (Azdanloo, 2009: 426).

From Marx point of view, culture is the product of upper class of the society actions and deeds. Basically in industrial society, culture acts like dominant ideology and its main job is to justify the profits of those classes and legitimating them. From Marxist view culture is the product of ideology and understanding Marxism id through the framework of culture of modern society and common concepts is achievable. In other words, elites of every dominant class, in every era have produced dominant ideas and these ideas were of the main tools for domination over others. Ideology and culture are accounted superstructure compared to the economy which is infrastructure. So requisite of understanding culture is to understand the benefits of dominant class and finally understanding production relation and economic infrastructure. This kind of stance of Marx to the culture and seeing culture a superstructure compared to economy which is assumed as infrastructure, and assuming culture as a dependent phenomenon to the economy is originated from the idea that productive action and activity is the reason of identification of humanity substance. But Marx in capitalistic society assumes it as the reason of human strangeness. It is noteworthy that Marx have another believe that human is not basically free unless when he is out of work and humanity of human would be identified when his work time be reduced to the enough time so that he can pay to other works too (Salehiamiri, 2007: 197).
Culture from Simmel view is education of all the personality. He investigates culture from subjective and objective point of views; mental culture or soul, is the residue of people education level and is the goal of all the cultural processes and objective culture which indicates outer domain and consisting of sophisticated things. From his views, objective culture is things that culture has produced and individual has no effect on it (Salehiamiri, 2007: 101).

Parsons in his systemic theory, society structure, has emphasized on the culture role on maintaining this structure and relations of social system's variables. Parsons clearly emphasizes the culture role in social system. He said that culture as an independent module, separates the cultural and social institution s and mentioning to the independence of culture from society tentatively, believes that common value system, provides necessary prerequisites for social solidarity (Salehiamiri, 2007: 106-107). Parsons culture theory is related to its action theory. Unique action in Parsons View has some elements a follows;

- Doer
- Action goal
- Circumstances; things which are over doer control
- Tools; thing which are under doer control and supervision
- Norms; understanding this issue that what are the acceptable goals and tools. norms play role in selecting tools for reaching to the goals
- Attempt; what a doer does in order to complete an action (Ritzer, 2009; 529-530).

Parsons believe that cultural system permit people to have relation with each other and coordinate their actions. As he emphasizes there are three domains in cultural system;

1) Domain of cognitive institution s; which is in relation with outside world believes and thoughts
2) Expressive institutions; arts and music and etc. which are used in emotional relations
3) Criteria and ethic norms; relates to the issue of correctness or incorrectness of anything

Meanwhile, Parsons facing with social union, mentions third domain. As he said there is agreement in the heart of system on the common values which lead to union. In his thoughts, values and norms are more useful than suppressive commands in maintaining social order. This Parsonsian thought is a unique advantage for culture (Smith, 2008; 52-53).

4- Leadership and Culture

There is enough in current theory to take the view that leaders shape culture, and culture shape leadership behavior. Leadership exists in all societies and is essential to the functioning of organizations within societies. However, the attributes that are seen as characteristic for leaders may vary across cultures. House (1995) noted that prevailing theories of leadership are North American in character, and are based on the assumptions of individualism as opposed to collectivism, rationality rather than ascetics, hedonistic rather than altruistic motivation, centrality of work, and democratic value orientation (House,1995). Den Hartog et al. (1999) Cross-cultural psychology and sociology research shows that many cultures do not share these assumptions ‘As a result there is a growing awareness of the need for a better understanding of the way the leadership is enacted in various cultures’ (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002).
Shchein (1992) identifies these primary mechanisms for embedding culture:

- What leaders pay attention to measure, control
- Leaders' reaction to critical incidents
- Criteria for resource allocation
- Role modeling, teaching, coaching
- Observed way of allocating rewards and status
- Observed criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement, and excommunication

For people interacting within organizations, culture assumes a multi-focal role that combines personal, national, ethnic, professional, religious, and corporate characteristics. Since cultural influences derive from individual cultural values, people often experience difficulty defining their cultural influences. Not only is culture manifested externally, but also resides within the person; it is not separate from other learned experiences (Wibbeke & McArthur, 2014: 201).

There are several ways to identify how culture influences leadership. Primarily, culture shapes the image of the ideal of a particular nation or organization. Cultural groups vary in their conceptions of what is important for effective leadership. Culture influences the personality traits and work values of leaders and followers in a country or organization.

Traditions and cultural values play an important role in leadership style (Duggan and Media, 2013). GLOBE (1999) in a research on worldwide differences and culture based in understood leadership traits which was concentrated on middle level managers, wanted to study that whether certain conducts of leaders are important to change them to the outstanding managers or not. There is contradiction in leadership. Connections in this world are so easy and available, but distinguished and separated cultures will be forever and will exist in all of the world economy. The most successful careers would be those which not only understand the minimal cultural differences, but also inform their managers about these issues.

5-Conclusion

Culture is a requiring concept which consists the supreme meanings of growth, development, proliferation, achieving to idealism and cleanliness, because traditions and behavioral habits are in the domain of culture (Rafiei, 2006: 98).

Gindnez believes that human transfers knowledge and attitudes by cultural system and inherited meaning which is manifested in symbols to the others. And by this method he helps them to survive and or register or maintain them. He believes that a merging prone culture is a normative and comprehensive one (Talebi, 2006; 194-195). Zareimatin (2006; 300) counted the cultural traits as transferable, social structural, providing main needs and changeable.

We can conclude that culture based leadership, is a leadership which by emphasis on confidence, value, ethics, rationality, justice, independence, cultural interactions, creativity, relations, identity, stability, inspiration, believes, symbols, attitudes and signs lead the organization. Culture helps to shape and influence our perceptions and behaviors.
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