ACCOUNTING FOR CULTURE IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper is devoted to exploring what global leadership is and how managers can develop the leadership skills needed in a dynamic, global environment. This examination of global leadership provides a foundation for developing leader effectiveness in a global and diverse organizational environment. The emphasis is on leadership in formal, global and diverse organizations and the leadership principles that can be practiced, applied and concluded with some guiding principles from the literature.

Keywords: global leadership, diversity, leader effectiveness, global organization, diverse organization

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership can broadly be defined as a process of social influence. Leadership, unlike management, is not dependent on position, title or privilege; instead it is an observable, understandable, and learnable set of skills that can be mastered by anyone that is willing to take the time and effort to learn them (Yukl, 1998). In organization's leadership is the indirect ability to influence people by setting an inspiring example. The example is one that inspires people to pursue goals that benefit the organization. Typically, leadership involves creating a vision of the organizations future, devising a strategy for achieving that vision, and communicating that vision to all people within the organization. When the vision is communicated, the leader must ensure that the vision is clear so that everyone understands it and believes in it. In this way effective leadership brings about successful organizational change. Global leadership also entails providing an atmosphere that will encourage and stimulate people to surmount obstacles and achieve the organization's goals (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Debate has been raging in the popular management literature concerning whether leading and managing are different behaviors. One view is that managers carry out responsibilities, exercise authority, and worry about how to get things accomplished. This view is contrasted with the view that a leader is concerned with understanding people's beliefs and gaining their commitment. In other words, managers and leaders differ in what they attend to and in how they think, work, and interact. A related argument contends that leadership is about coping with change, whereas management is about coping with complexity (Kotter, 1997).

Although the leader-manager debate has generated tremendous controversy in the literature, little research exists to support the notion that certain people can be classified as leaders rather than managers, or that managers cannot adopt visionary behaviors when they are required for success. This paper maintains that it is important for all managers to think of themselves as leaders, and consequently, the term leadership will be used to encompass both leadership and management functions (Hickman, 1990).

LITERATURE REVIEW

DEVELOPING A GLOBAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

Globalization has seemingly overwhelmed many organizations and leaders because of the rapid pace and the lack of training that many leaders have had in dealing with and understanding the various communities across the globe. This is due to the fact that until very recently, global business was considered the purview of a few large organizations and as a sideline for the few others that participated in this area. Morrison (2000) uses these reasons for developing a model of global leadership and the competencies that are required to successfully implement his leadership model.

Morrison (2000) points out that global leadership models must draw from many academic disciplines in order to understand and appreciate the business environment across the globe. He maintains that by using a multidisciplinary approach, leaders are able to understand the communities where the organization is present and will have the ability to work with and motivate people in the different cultures. Additionally, he noted that domestic leadership models that work in a particular country will not always work in the global environment (Morrison, 2000). In the United States the concept of long-term efficiencies are common in leadership. This exploitation of short-term inefficiencies is not always congruent with the culture and the realities in the global marketplace, so there must be new ways of looking at leadership within the context of organizational goals and global realities.

The central point of this paper is to develop a workable and realistic model for global leadership. The model should be structured to take into account the need for cultural under awareness, global strategy, and leadership competencies that are needed to move the organization forward (Morrison, 2000). To be able to train their leaders in the global leadership competencies for the future utilizing a generalized model of global leadership, organizations must ensure that there are people within the organization that have the knowledge, skills and abilities to teach and train on this multidisciplinary topic. Without having these trained people it will be impossible to imbue the organization with the required competencies because there will be no credibility within the organization for the trainer or the program.

While it is important that an organization have a global leadership model that works for them, they must also work together to develop a universally applicable leadership model that is separate and distinct from their internal model (Morrison, 2000). The existence of a global leadership model will allow all organizations to meet their needs on the global stage and help them integrate their organization into the global economy while at the same time meeting domestic organizational goals.

It is essential that there be a specific component within the leadership model that addresses the importance of culture and the unique elements of the global environment. By addressing the cultural component of leadership, leaders will be able to understand and apply difference leadership skills that are culturally relevant (Morrison, 2000). By understanding the cultural element organizations can determine if they are strong or weak in areas that deal with local and regional cultures throughout the globe. Once an organization achieves a suitable level of competence in dealing with other cultures they will be able to effect a seamless integration with strategic partners or communities throughout the world.

In their article "Exploring a Taxonomy of Global Leadership Competencies and Meta-competencies" Tubbs and Schultz (2006) make the argument that there is nothing more important than to define and describe the competencies that make up leadership within global organizations. These competencies need to be accurately defined and described to enable the organization to create effective training programs that will allow it to achieve its goals and move the forward in its economic sphere.

Of paramount importance in the area of the leader's personality is his/her self-confidence. Self-confidence coupled with the individual's locus of control form the basis of required competencies that enhance the leaders work performance and motivation while at the same time creating higher job expectations (Tubbs & Schulz, 2006). While these personality components are exceptionally important, they are characteristics that are permanently set in the formative years of the leader and cannot be easily changed when she/he enters the workforce (Tubbs & Schulz).

Conversely, Tubbs & Schulz, believe that ethics or values can be taught and refined as the leader grows. While they acknowledge that all organizations have different values and ethics that must be adhered to, they also note that these must be taught by each organization so that the leader can conform to the expectations of the organization and the industry. They also point out that organizations that have leaders who adhere to a strong set of ethics and values will succeed over the long-run in any environment. And , while ethics can be taught, it is easier for a leader to change their leadership behaviors than for them to change their ethics or values (Tubbs & Schulz 2006).

They also believe that leaders must also have competencies in areas that are essential for the survival and growth of the organization. Some of these competencies include innovation and creativity; communication skills; change management; and organization wide understanding (Tubbs & Schulz, 2006). While all of these are important competencies, the leader must understand his/her organization at both the strategic as well as tactical level. Without an understanding of what is going on at the macro and micro levels in her/his organization the leader does not have the ability to make the changes required to guide the organization into the future and move it in the direction it must move to compete in a global marketplace.

Tubbs and Schulz (2006) argue that practitioners and professors of leadership must understand and be able to teach and apply a well defined set of leadership competencies to their employees or students. Without this well defined set of competencies there can be only limited growth in the area of leadership, However, with the competencies there can be learning and growth among the leadership, which when applied in a systematic way will lead to meeting and exceeding organizational goals (Tubbs & Schulz).

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: A REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Jokinen (2005) believes that the organization will be able to meet any challenges facing it by increasing the understanding of globalization and the interconnectedness inherent therein. The competencies that should be taught and inculcated within the organization must be directly related to their global business strategy (Jokinen 2005)). Organizations need to have a framework to evaluate their organizational strategy so that leadership competencies can be taught throughout the organization. Without a meta-framework, no organization will have the ability to coherently analyze the strategies and then place the learning in the context of a holistic system for the teaching.

In the past competencies have been defined as either behavioral, personality, values and knowledge as the frameworks to teach and study the core global leadership competencies (Jokinen, 2005).

Jokinen sees the competencies as being "those universal qualities that allow individuals to perform their job outside their own national as well as organizational culture" (p. 201). By using this approach (what is the approach?) there is a synergy that results and allows the leader and the organization to focus on areas that are analogous across the competencies, thus allowing for a systematic integration of the competencies that allows for the implementation and training in these areas.

Jokinen (2005) identifies three areas of core global leadership competencies that must be addressed and studied: behavioral, cognitive and core competencies. The core competencies consists of self-awareness, inquisitiveness, and personal transformation (Jokinen 2005). He sees these core competencies as the forces that drive the other two competency areas of behavior and cognitive. The core competencies all stress the importance of continual learning and application of the knowledge that was learned.

When a leader has these core competencies it allows the her/him to build upon them (what?) and to go further in the global environment because they posses an integrative framework that views global leadership as a holistic experience that integrates more than just the competencies that are required for the position. Jokinen (2005) suggests that when utilizing this framework the leader or the organization needs to focus more on education and learning that helps to acquire the global leadership skills needed than to focus on quantitatively attempting to measure and assess the competencies as they are acquired.

IDENTIFYING GLOBAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Bueno and Tubbs (2004) discuss how global leadership competencies are acquired over the long-term, and the possibilities of identifying these competences. They also posit that the timeline for acquiring these competencies can be greatly reduced if they are taught and understood in a framework that is in a knowable progression. The global leadership competency areas that are described by Bueno and Tubbs are behavioral, cognitive and attitudinal.

The methodology used by Bueno and Tubbs to determine global leadership competencies were discussions and interviews held with executives in global organizations. This methodology allowed the authors to define the competencies that mattered and were of most importance to the organization's that allowed their executives to be interviewed. The authors discussed how their study could be of limited applicability within academe and the business world because of the small sample size. This limitation is only heightened by the fact that well over three-fourths of of the executives that were interviewed were from the same general geographic area of the world, which further limits the applicability of the study and possibly renders the finding moot.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY: AN ASIAN-PACIFIC PERSPECTIVE

Because leadership styles and actions differ across cultural and organizational boundaries and because of the huge differences that exist leaders need to have leadership knowledge and abilities that cuts across the cultural and organizational boundaries in order to grow their organizations. For these and other reasons Carey, Newman, and McDonough (2004) posit the idea that there needs to be a global leadership model that allows leaders to address the organizational situation in whatever culture they are operating at present. This global leadership capability is behaviorally based and is a mixture of varied cultural competencies as well as leadership skills (Carey et al.).

The changes that have occurred in technology and telecommunications and which have changed organizational and economic spatiality have also driven the need for a set of global leadership competencies. These changes allow an organization to have a span of control that covers the world and allow the organization to operate worldwide in real-time without the time lag that existed in previous decades. However, before a leader can operate in this environment they must first be able to understand the differences in the disparate community cultures and be able to adapt to those differences.

The authors discuss how the Asian culture is vastly different from the typical Western culture and leaders must be able to understand these differences before they can lead people in these regions (Carey et al., 2004). Because most cultures are far from simplistic many myths exist that can lead to misunderstandings and misperceptions when it comes to global leadership competencies. Different cultures are very dynamic and complicated and, at times, very contradictory in what they believe and the way they operate (Carey et al., 2004).

Carey et al. base their global leadership competencies on a more collaborative and flexible form of inclusive leadership while discounting the ideas of competence as it relates to a specific job. The authors make a distinction between leaders and managers and lead the reader to believe that the two areas are not compatible, thus fostering the assumption that a person can only be a leader or a manager instead of being both (Carey et al.). These authors base their global leadership competencies almost exclusively on trust and values and place all other competences in a secondary position. While there may be validity in this position, it does cause problems when looked at holistically from the point of view of a global organization. If the leader is perceived honest then the employees will trust him. However, if the leader is honest and does not have the knowledge, skills or abilities to make the necessary decisions or is unable to communicate effectively with the employees then the organization will be negatively impacted.

As the interconnectedness of global organizations amplify and the pace of change increases, the idea of flexibility comes to the fore and it becomes a very important part of the global leadership competencies. Without flexibility, the leader is unable to change and move into the future. When leaders and organization implement global leadership competencies the organization's ability to cross geographic and cultural boundaries increases exponentially while giving the organization and the leaders the flexibility to meet challenges as the occur (Carey et al., 2004). By having, understanding and utilizing global leadership competencies, the leader will be able to be more effective because of the comprehensive mindset that is endemic to all global leadership competencies.

LEADING ACROSS CULTURES: ATTACHMENT STYLE INFLUENCES

Leading across cultural divides requires that the leader and the organization possess specific knowledge, skills and abilities that include technical and organizational knowledge and particular interpersonal skills (Manning, 2003). According to Manning, the most important skill that leaders need in a global leadership environment is that skill termed relationship competence. This skill

of relationship competence is one where the best in people is brought out and where trust is built through connections (Manning 2003).

By employing attachment theory, the organization is able to utilize a manager's previous experiences to analyze the business environment with an optimism that allows the organization to grow (Manning, 2003). Attachment theory also allows an organization to ascertain which organizational leaders are secure, thus finding leaders that are able to be more relationship-oriented instead of the typical task-oriented leader (Manning 2003). Manning holds that organizations are too attached to sending leaders who are technical and organizational experts into a global environment instead of people that are experts in interpersonal relationships. By utilizing numerous assessments and tools an organization can evaluate the cultural sensitivity of leaders before they are sent on international assignments. In this way the organization would be able to give the selected leaders the needed training and education which would enable them to operate in and be sensitive to the local culture of the community and the employees (Morrison).

By an early identification of leaders that will be interacting with international communities and employees early, an organization will be able to provide training that keeps the leader from shutting themselves off from the rest of the employees and acting with a heavy hand (Morrison, 2000). Through the inculcation of behaviorally based training that allows the leader to understand the impact of actions in relation to the local culture of a community the organization will be able to have a direct and favorable impact on their international operations. Thus the leader will not only be able to successfully interact with the community but also be able to utilize relevant rewards to motivate the employees and not insult or frustrate them by trying to use motivation techniques that worked in the home country.

DISCUSSION

A NEW MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

Most of the leadership models that are discussed in the academic literature offer important knowledge about leadership. By combining many of the concepts, and including women as leaders, into a new framework or model, insights can be offered into successful global leadership. This model would need to be based on three very important areas that are endemic to leadership. Those areas are competence, character, and community.

In the area of competence, a leader needs to have knowledge about how organizations work. She must understand managerial skills such as budgeting and financial analysis. However, she also needs to know how to develop a vision and mission that are not only correct for the organization, but that will inspire her followers to see the future and work toward achieving goals that will move the organization in the direction of the vision. She must not only create a vision, but derive a strategy from that vision and insure that the organization can achieve the goals outlined in the strategy.

Leaders must also know how to interact with people in such a manner that followers know that the leader cares about them and that when decisions are made they will know that he/she has their best interests as well as those of the organization at heart (Canals, 2012). Leaders also must be able to communicate with the people on a level that both inspires and encourages them. They must also have a firm understanding as to what influences people. Since global organizations, by their very definition, are diverse, the leader must understand that motivation is culture specific.

Character refers to the values and behaviors that are exhibited by the leader which inspires trust, commitment and followership (Sosik & Megerian, 1999). These things are essential for any global organization to achieve its mission. Characteristics such as integrity, honesty, high ethical standards, courage, discipline, and persistence are the foundations for the leader's character. If a global leader has these characteristics combined with the previously discussed competencies, the leader has the opportunity to earn the trust of the people within the organization and will set a good example of the behaviors that are needed for the success of the organization (Hanson, 2002).

I think the result of the combination of character and competence will be a vibrant organizational community that is healthy and inspiring. The atmosphere within a healthy, vibrant organization community will instill in the people that work in the organization a sense of followership enabling them to work together to achieve the organization's goals and fulfill the mission and vision for the organization (Canals, 2012). When the organizational leaders apply this concept of community outside the organization, it will build strong and positive ties between the organization and the external community, upon which the organization depends for customers, employees, and healthy economic conditions.

CONCLUSION

With ever increasing globalization and change, leaders will be challenged to manage relationships more than in the past. This will include the ability to interact effectively with a diversity of partners and other businesses and within the larger context of differing cultures. Predictions are that the total trade between countries will exceed the total value of trade within countries by the year 2015 (Thaler-Carter, 2000). Success in this environment will require leaders have mastered the necessary skills to be effective in that environment.

As we have discussed above throughout the class and in this paper, the changing global environment is likely to continue to stimulate the transformation and revitalization of public and private institutions. Small as well as large U.S. corporations recognize that they will have to change in order to survive. They have embarked on programs of extensive change that must be accomplished in short periods of time. Such transformations require a new set of leadership skills.

It is clear that the successful leader of the twenty-first century will be one who promotes leadership development and encourages workers to assume his or her role as a leader in other words a leader of leaders. Individuals working in twenty-first century global organizations must be innovative and creative, practice continuous learning, have values that especially include integrity, have a personal vision, be in charge of their own careers, motivate from within, plan, communicate, and seek harmonious relationships with stakeholders.

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