Global Leadership Skills – A New Configuration

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GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS – A NEW CONFIGURATION

Abstract

When the organizational leader operates in a global environment, which in current times is impossible to avoid, the changing face of leadership must be unquestionably radiant with knowledge of cross-cultural institutions and the rigors of corporate compliance with regard to legal and economic regulations. The Chief Executive must be comprehensively versant and thoroughly armed with appreciation and knowledge of institutions and regulation. Current scholarship in global leadership presents itself as an exhausted rehash of general management theory, offering trace frontiers of new knowledge or academic discovery for shaping executive competencies in a worldwide marketplace. The author challenges static paradigms and proposes new directions for greater global leadership competency by calling for a greater understanding of institutions and international regulatory compliance. In other words, the global executive is no longer merely a manager in a cross-cultural environment, but must regard him or herself as an international statesperson having mastery of institutions and the requirements of his or her organizational stakeholders.

Keywords: global leadership, cross-culture, institutions, international regulation

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS – A NEW CONFIGURATION

It is arguable that current theories purporting to focus on global leadership skills are generally undifferentiated from most other general management theories having no particular or explicit global focus or intention. Accepting this argument immediately raises a significant and unfortunate discrepancy in the evolution of scholarship in global leadership which potentially leaves these same leaders greatly disadvantaged and perilously ill-equipped to actually minister cross-cultural or cross-border relationships in a business context.

Problem Statement – Inherent Risk in Current Global Leadership Theory

A business leader about to embark on a global task for his or her multinational organization simply cannot rely upon the current body of academic writing purportedly addressing cross-cultural issues across geopolitical borders. In fact, such reliance may arguably present greater risks instead of helping to resolve important questions, not only in terms of how organizations maximize their resources in an international marketplace, but in certain cases, may unwittingly lead the global leader and his or her organization into legal and regulatory jeopardy which could entirely deprive the organization of future global opportunities. The genesis of this higher level of risk which comes about through a global leader's ineptness may be positively correlated to the leader's lack of awareness or appreciation for institutions that govern relationships within that leader's host country, as well as with that leader's regulatory environment in his or her sending offices.

International economic relationships and deal making in light of corporate compliance are extensively influenced by regulations such as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and international tax regulation, just to name two such regulatory guideposts; when if disregarded, can result in the organization being barred from further international transactions, as well as potentially finding otherwise responsible global leaders in undesirable possession of personal legal sanctions. It is

wholly inconceivable how any organizational leader would regard his or her credentials in global leadership as being well-informed using the yardstick of current academic scholarship which seems satisfied by merely constructing yet another conceptual framework for cross-cultural sensitivities or virtual teaming. These roads of investigation have been thoroughly traveled upon.

The significant research problem seemingly overlooked by current scholarship consists of raising the global leadership bar to not merely include or recognize, but to wholeheartedly embrace the concepts of host country institutions and corporate legal compliance imposed by the sending country so pertinent in a global workplace. The author challenges and re-conceptualizes conventional wisdom in the field of global leadership by not only encouraging an entirely new direction for future academic research in this area, but by also requesting significant funding to support this important new frontier in shifting the direction of global leadership in these areas. In fact, the author envisions an entirely new synthesis of scholarship to fill the gap so described in current models of global and multicultural leadership. A new proposed guidepost for the chief executive is hereby offered: that no executive is to be sent into a global marketplace without a thorough understanding of institutions and the regulatory environment. A new title emerges, that of the "Chief Institutions Officer."

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this paper is to provide a new configuration or model for the unique skills which should be held by leaders functioning in multicultural or cross-cultural economies. New insights into these required skills are provided, inasmuch as current literature fails to properly or more clearly differentiate between the unique cross-cultural skills necessary for executives to function in an international economy as compared to leadership skills generally. This paper builds awareness of leader competencies in the international economy whereby international

trade was thirty percent of global GDP in 2003, and by 2029, it is expected that eighty percent of world output will be cross-border. Globalization has not only arrived but will continue an exponentially increasing course of expansion. While the full extent of its impact on business is yet to be felt, a new configuration of leader skills is required which can respond to this rapidly growing international trade.

Literature Review

A review of literature relevant to global organizational leadership shows evidence of a real and present gap, as well as an opportunity for new directions in academic inquiry. As previously stated, current academic scholarship seems satisfied by merely constructing yet another conceptual framework for cross-cultural sensitivities or virtual teaming - roads of investigation which have been thoroughly traveled upon. Following are examples.

Alon and Higgins (2005) posited that the cultural environs of different countries and their various interpersonal work situations require the development of culturally attuned and emotionally sensitive leaders. The article conveys useful trade data to complement their case, stating that international trade comprised thirty percent of global GDP in 2003, and by 2029, eighty percent of world output will be cross-border. Arguing that globalization has arrived and will continue its course of expansion, the full extent of its impact on business is yet to be felt. Leading with this fact of growing international trade, the authors offered three emerging constructs especially relevant to the development of successful global leaders: cultural intelligence (CQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and analytical intelligence (IQ). The IQ construct involves traditional Intelligence Quotient measurements through individual testing whereby a global leader's rational and logic-based verbal and quantitative intelligence can be evaluated. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is crucial to the success of a global leader in work and

life in general, recognizing that emotions are the first screen for all information received. The CQ construct focusses on a person's capacity for successful adoption to new cultural settings, described as unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context. While the research appears to be well-framed and significant, it does not establish a clearly distinguishable contrast between strictly global leader traits versus general leader traits which would be incumbent of any leader regardless of where leadership is to be applied. While the article is somewhat well-related to the existing body of knowledge on global leadership, it does not advance new inquiry at the strictly global level of leadership capabilities. The theoretical framework is inadequate for global administrative functionality or literacy.

Bergiel, Bergiel, and Balsmeier (2008) aimed toward extending knowledge about virtual teams and their advantages and disadvantages in a global business environment. Organizations capable of rapidly creating virtual teams can respond quickly to changing business environments which can expand the organization's competitive advantage. According to the authors, teams are the primary unit of performance in any organization, and with the advancement of the appropriate supporting technology, virtual teams can be formed rapidly and robustly using teleconferencing. Another strength highlighted by the authors is that such virtual teams can call upon and draw upon a pool of high quality talent regardless of team member's locations, thus circumventing the problem of limited local talent. Virtual teams are especially suited to multinational enterprises having compressed time frames for product development and subcontracting. Virtual teaming also accords significant cost savings and greater resource utilization. The human dynamic of virtual teaming requires four key factors, at a minimum: (1) a high level of trust among the members; (2) clear communications skills by the members; (3) strong leadership; and (4) appropriate levels of technology. There are also at least three

significant barriers: (1) the challenge of working across multiple time zones; (2) language; and (3) different approaches to conflict resolution. The authors state that having clearly stated team goals is critical to keep the team unified, and that all members must contribute to the formation and enforcement of stated goals. This requirement becomes more acute as the team becomes more geographically dispersed. The central focus is on team building on a global basis by use of a technological platform that is accessible to all team members regardless of location. The authors offered extremely useful and comprehensive information concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the virtual team coupled with appropriate technology. The presentation was extremely well-balanced in terms of stressing the weaknesses or challenges of virtual teaming. For example, not all virtual team members will share compatible technology platforms or infrastructure; not all members will readily accept the virtual team approach, preferring more traditional methods of sharing information such as face-to-face. There may also be hesitancy by team members because of psychological makeup or other dispositions. Generally, the article is an extremely useful guide for creating such teams, and should be emailed to all present or potential members of such teams so that they are aware of virtual team cultural and interpersonal dynamics and potential problems.

Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, and Oddu (2010) indicated that social scientists have delineated over fifty competencies which influence global leadership but many of these overlap conceptually and are separated only by semantic differences. The authors proposed a Domain of Intercultural Competence in global leadership having three primary dimensions with various subcompetencies: (1) Perception Management with subcompetencies of nonjudgmentalness, inquisitiveness, tolerance for ambiguity, cosmopolitanism, and category inclusiveness; (2) Relationship Management with subcompetencies of relationship interest, interpersonal

engagement, emotional sensitivity, self-awareness, and social flexibility; and (3) Self-

Management with subcompetencies of optimism, self-confidence, self-identity, emotional

resilience, non-stress tendency, stress management, and interest flexibility. It is interesting to

note that the authors offered a criticism of current literature in global leadership which points out

the need for greater definition of intercultural competencies that would manifest themselves into

more effective global leadership. They posited a framework for such competencies consisting of

the three factors stated above and concede that there is conceivably an enormous list of

competencies which can become unwieldy, to the extent that the understanding of competencies

and global leadership cannot even be advanced or be of any use to practitioners. But the

framework offered by the authors, which incorporates factors of perception management,

nonjudgmentalness, inquisitiveness, tolerance for ambiguity, cosmopolitanism, category

inclusiveness, relationship management and interest, interpersonal engagement, emotional

sensitivity, self-awareness, social flexibility, self-management, optimism, self-confidence, self-

identity, emotional resilience, non-stress tendency, stress management, and interest flexibility,

are traits to which all leaders aspire, not only those leaders engaged in global organizations. It

may be useful to leave the critical assessment at this: global leaders should possess and strive to

master, at a minimum, those same traits relevant to all managers. The domain of intercultural

competencies to be possessed by global leaders, as proffered by the authors, is arguably the same

domain which should be shared by all managers.

Caligiuri (2006) proposed ten specific tasks of a global leader, and eleven knowledge-

skill-ability-personality competencies. The ten global leader tasks include (1) working with

colleagues from other countries; (2) interacting with external clients from other countries; (3)

interacting with internal clients from other countries; (4) language abilities; (5) must be capable

of supervising employees of different nationalities; (6) develop strategic plans on a worldwide

scope; (7) budget on a worldwide scope; (8) negotiate with people from other countries; (9)

manage foreign suppliers and vendors; and (10) manage risk on a worldwide basis. The eleven

knowledge-skill-ability-personality competencies include (1) Culture-general Knowledge; (2)

Culture-specific Knowledge; (3) International Business Knowledge; (4) Intercultural Interaction

Skills; (5) Foreign Language Skills; (6) Cognitive Ability; (7) Extroversion; (8) Agreeableness;

(9) Conscientiousness; (10) Emotional Stability; and (11) Openness or Intellect. The author

defines a global leader as one who occupies a job having some international scope, expands

business into foreign markets, conceives strategies on a global basis, and manages and motivates

geographically dispersed and diverse teams. In terms of making recommendations which an

organization can pick up and go with in terms of fostering and deploying global leaders as

defined, the author provides what is termed, knowledge, skills, abilities, and personality

characteristics, and a set of proposed developmental interventions that build global leaders over

time, in terms of learning opportunities, experiential programs, and intensive experiences. The

framework is only marginally useful because it appears as more descriptive rather than

prescriptive.

Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) specified that the predictors of dynamic cross-cultural

competencies include tolerance for ambiguity, cultural flexibility, and reduced ethnocentrism,

acquired through work- and non-work related activities. The authors cited a survey conducted by

the American Management Association whereby only half of 939 firms surveyed agree that their

global leadership development programs are highly effective. In a study conducted by IBM

which surveyed over 700 human resource executives, it was learned that while developing future

global leaders was among the highest rated business capabilities, it was also rated as one of their

firm's least effective actual capabilities. The authors conducted a two-survey study with a

sample comprised of global leaders from three large multinational conglomerates. There were

582 prospective participants identified across the three companies. From the results, the authors

identified eleven individual-level variables and tested their correlations: (1) non-work

experience; (2) organization-initiated experiences; (3) neuroticism; (4) extraversion; (5)

openness; (6) agreeableness; (7) conscientiousness; (8) tolerance for ambiguity; (9)

ethnocentrism; (10) cultural flexibility; and (11) global leadership effectiveness. The study

found that (1) dynamic cross-cultural competencies are related to global leadership effectiveness;

(2) non-work cross-cultural experiences are related to dynamic cross cultural competencies; (3)

high contact organization-initiated cross-cultural experiences are positively related to cultural

flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity; and (4) extroversion and openness to experience were

significantly related to dynamic cross-cultural competencies. The findings suggested that

significant intercultural experiences enable global leaders to learn the nuances of behavior that

are expected in another culture compared to our own.

   Cotae (2010) pointed to the complexities of leading a multinational enterprise and

emphasizes that the process of internationalization of one of organizational learning. The author

described the correlation between leadership, the organizational learning process, and the

international perspective in which these operate. The author stated that a firm's international

performance depends on organizational learning modalities. Firms unable to cope with demands

of continuous internationalization actually regress in their projected or anticipated results.

Internationalization is defined as a process by which firms increase their awareness of the

influence of international activities on their future and modify the conduct of their transactions

with other firms in other countries accordingly. There are three stages or phases in the

internationalization model proposed by the authors: (1) early internationalization involving initial costs; (2) later internationalization which fully takes into account actual performance against stated objectives and closely monitors cost recovery; and (3) excessive internationalization whereby increased internationalization efforts may reflect a state of counter-productivity, or where there is a negative return on invested resources – a state of being over-leveraged or over-extended.

Gabrielsson, Seristo, and Darling (2009) provided a framework consisting of seven cross-cultural leadership perspectives, but as in the case of the Mendenhall Competency Framework, there appears to be only minimal differentiation from competencies that would be required in an organization having no global outreach: (1) Paradoxical Thinking; (2) Controlled Reflexing; (3) Intentional Focusing; (4) Instinctive Responding; (5) Inclusive Behaving; (6) Purposeful Trusting; and (7) Relational Being. The authors pointed out the important difference between management and leadership in the global context, whereby management functions focus on day-to-day routine and may miss the larger picture of factors necessary for global-based success. While the authors provided a framework consisting of seven cross-cultural leadership perspectives – the Mendenhall Competency Framework - there appears to be only minimal differentiation from competencies that would be required in an organization having no global outreach. The authors referred to ideas and prescriptions in terms which are too overly-broad to be of immediate usefulness; for example they stated that the global business context comprises varying cultural, political and legal environments which shift management tasks. The authors stated that the challenges of management and leadership exist in almost all organizational settings, but in a global context, the challenges are difficult to address.

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Mendenhall (2006) delineated the competencies associated with global leadership and discusses available assessment tools that can measure these competencies. He noted that 85 percent of firms in a Fortune 500 survey did not have enough global leaders, and one-third of their existing leaders were deficient in global skills and knowledge. He stated that transnational corporations need managers with a global mindset in order for productivity to occur. He stated that the construct of global leadership was determined not from objective analysis but from in-house development sessions resulting in two problems. First, the constructs of global leadership tend to contain holistic vagueness; and second, if each company is devising its own construct from internally conducted sessions, there is no continuity in global leadership practices from one company to the next. To assist companies in developing underlying global leadership conceptual patterns, Mendenhall offered a taxonomy consisting of 53 competencies within six core dimensions: (1) Relationship Competencies; (2) Personal or Psychological Dispositions; (3) Business Expertise; (4) Organizing Expertise; (5) Cognition; and (6) Visioning. Mendenhall's 53 competencies framed by six core dimensions is minimally differentiated from competencies that would be required in an organization having no global ambitions. Further, he offered a triangular building block motif called the Pyramid Model of Leadership Global Competency Development that has four levels, starting at the base with Threshold Traits, then progressing upward through levels referred to as Attitudes and Orientations, then Interpersonal Skills, and finally Systems Skills. The Threshold Traits include such elements as integrity, humility, inquisitiveness, and hardiness. The Attitudes and Orientations level contains such concepts as having a global mindset and cosmopolitanism. Interpersonal Skills include the ability of the leader to conduct intercultural communication and the ability to create and build trust. Finally,

the System Skills include such elements as making ethical decisions, the ability to span

boundaries, and the ability to manage change, build community, and manage learning.

These leader traits are not differentiated from traits expected of any other manager

regardless of his or her location of assignment. While the research is relevant for leadership

generally and broadly, it offers no new insights for global leadership problems *per se*. To

become useful for the global manager, this research would become more useful by working in

issues of foreign language and communication skills, and factors that are explicitly within the

domain of specific foreign leader assignment within specific countries.

Robinson and Harvey (2008) directed their research efforts upon defining new skills

which should be adopted by business leaders to empower them to deal with multicultural

challenges in the midst of globalization. The authors stated that globalization has created a state

of chaos as businesses struggle to find new leadership paradigms. Chaos may be evident when a

US company relocates manufacturing to Mexico, or a European company wants to operate in

China. Such cases represent a clash of values which adversely will affect productivity. Leader

perspective needs to be adapted to these cases, as well as other culturally diverse situations. The

authors recommended what they referred to as a six step management decision process for

making ethical decisions in global organizations: (1) development of a corporate vision; (2)

assessment of how the organization adheres to that vision; (3) determination of which paradigms

are most appropriate for function and region; (4) articulation of values for each relevant area; (5)

education of managers/employees on values held in the organization; and (6) monitoring of value

performance of managers/leaders. The authors concluded by stating that organizations need to

adopt their leadership and thinking to be effective in culturally-diverse situations. The article is

extraordinarily useful for organizations wherever their operations may be located; however, their

six-step management decision process is not particularly unique for international organizations when compared to leader decision models shared by all organizations wherever they may operate such as those organizations which have no global presence whatsoever. Any organization can be confronted by multicultural challenges but never leave the boundaries of their own geopolitical location. The authors did not make this distinction.

Van Wachem (1994) considered global leadership in an economic context in terms of product and service trade, as well as stock and money markets. He emphasized that businesses organize themselves in a context which includes history, culture, the nature of products and markets, and the condition or progress of decentralization versus central control. The author places emphasis on environment, in the sense that industry underpins the standard of living to which most people aspire, and which provides finds needed to resolve environmental problems. An interesting claim made by the author is that while industry takes part in the environmental debate, it is not for industry to find the answers to environmental dilemmas. This is a role most suited to political leaders. The author provided more of a commentary on global business rather than making any useful contribution to increasing global leadership skills beyond environmental awareness. However, to the extent the author did chiefly focus on environmental concerns, the article proved useful in emphasizing that significant environmental issues must be recognized in global leader processes. The article is admittedly dated, and there have been significant strides in how the public and private sectors organize themselves into partnerships to address and resolve global issues. This is an important development during the ten years since this article was written, particularly when considering the positive strides many global organizations have made in social responsibility.

Javidian (2006) referred to the GLOBE project (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta, 2004), which pointed out that the perspective of leadership is not only relatively new in the English language, but the concept has a wide variety of perspectives across cultures; for example, House et al. (2004) in quoting Graumann & Moscovici (1986) mention that Europeans view "leadership as an unintended and undesirable consequence of democracy, or a perverse effect (Graumann & Moscovici, 1986, pp. 241-242). House, et al. (2006) indicated that in Holland, there is a strong egalitarian consensus, and other nations see leadership as overvalued. CEOs of large Japanese companies give credit to subordinates while downplaying their own leadership involvement. As we observe the concept of leadership across diverse cultural settings, its very definition may arguably become increasingly illusory. Leaders engaged in global leadership confront difficulty in finding appropriate behavioral models as part of their own personal-professional development, often to find that cultural and subcultural institutions may arguably nullify those preconceived models.

Why an Imperative Regard for Institutions

Berggren, Bergh and Bjornskov (2012) stated that political and economic uncertainty is correlated with unstable institutions or what they referred to as the "institutions rule." Institutions include relevant laws, customs, or social practices. The point is that global leaders must look at the nature and stability of relevant institutions, or "institutional quality," in evaluating their global setting. It may be useful to consider indigenous institutions as an exogenous variable in the global leadership framework, aside from the other leader qualities which arguably are undifferentiated from the set of leader competencies that are needed or called upon in any leadership setting. By implication, increased institutional quality and the knowledge or awareness thereof implies greater certainty with respect to the decision making processes for

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which global leaders are responsible, particularly in terms of resource allocation for maximized

benefits over costs and lower cross-border transaction costs. In their model, Florea, Cheung,

Herndon, and Neil (2013) expressed three sustainability dimensions in this context: (1) economic

prosperity; (2) environmental integrity; and (3) social sustainability. It would seem that these

three dimensions operate within a larger context, which would be the "institutions rule"

prevailing in the culture-at-hand. In global leadership roles, the manager may enter into a

particular socio-cultural setting well-endowed with all conceivable global leader traits well in

hand, but once immersed into that cultural setting, the "institutions rule" will tend to govern

adaptation to that setting.

Why an Imperative Regard for Corporate Legal Compliance

According to the United States Department of Justice (2014),

The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977, as amended, 15 U.S.C. §§ 78dd-1, et seq. ("FCPA"), was enacted for the purpose of making it unlawful for certain classes of persons and entities to make payments to foreign government officials to assist in obtaining or retaining business. The anti-bribery provisions of the FCPA prohibit the willful use of the mails or any means of instrumentality of interstate commerce corruptly in furtherance of any offer, payment, promise to pay, or authorization of the payment of money or anything of value to any person, while knowing that all or a portion of such money or thing of value will be offered, given or promised, directly or indirectly, to a foreign official to influence the foreign official in his or her official capacity, induce the foreign official to do or omit to do an act in violation of his or her lawful duty, or to secure any improper advantage in order to assist in obtaining or retaining business for or with, or directing business to, any person.

According to Baker Hostettler (2013), a major international law firm specializing in foreign

practices,

Since 2005, the United States Department has obtained nearly three dozen corporate guilty pleas in Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) cases. Since 2009, the Department has entered into over 40 corporate resolutions, including nine of the top 10 biggest resolutions ever in terms of penalties, resulting in approximately $2.5 billion in monetary fines. In that same period, the Department has successfully secured the convictions of over three dozen individuals for engaging in foreign bribery schemes. Beyond the implementation of comparable prosecution strategies, another major trend in FCPA enforcement is the use of

parallel or "carbon copy" prosecutions. With many countries passing their own anti-bribery statutes or choosing to aggressively enforce statutes already on the books, multi-national corporations are increasingly required to navigate and interact with multiple regulatory regimes while conducting business abroad. When companies violate these laws they can face prosecution by multiple countries for the same set of alleged bad acts. Moreover, where one country begins an investigation into alleged bribery, this investigation may in and of itself catalyze other countries' investigations or the commencement of other legal proceedings against the company.

Why Important

The global business leader must be acutely aware of these and other legal and regulatory pitfalls, not mentioned in the mainstream literature. Organizations operating in multiple countries are under increased pressure to implement compliance and ethics programs wherever they conduct business (Walker, 2005). Whether or not an organization conducts cross-border commerce, small- and medium-sized businesses are also subject to noncompliance prosecutions, especially after enactment of sentencing guidelines in 1991 (Earle, 2001).

Research Question

The proposed research question which is demonstrably linked to the problem statement is this: To what extent can a greater knowledge of institutions and the requirements of legal compliance improve an executive's capacity for global leadership?

Limitations

While the proposed new configuration or model is uniquely suited to an international economy, it may not adequately take into account how global leaders from other economies would interpret leader skills; for example, would an executive from the European Common Market or an executive from among the NAFTA states, or from the Pacific Rim economies agree with or share the same proposed cross-cultural model? There must be an appropriate focus on the BRIC economies: Brazil, Russia, India, and China. For example, does the new configuration

of global leader skills fit executives in these economies or does the proposed model tend to be

homogeneous?

Conclusion

A literature review across ten academic articles has found that current theories purporting to

focus on global leadership skills are generally undifferentiated from most other general

management theories having no particular or explicit global focus or intention. Accepting this

argument immediately underscores a discrepancy in the evolution of scholarship in global

leadership which potentially leaves these same leaders greatly disadvantaged and perilously ill-

equipped to actually minister cross-cultural or cross-border relationships in a business context. This

paper emphasized the need for more leader awareness of institutions, and within an institutional

framework, an emphasis upon corporate legal compliance was asserted.

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