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Dimensions of Self-Leadership in a Cross-Cultural Context

Professor Padmakumar Ram, PhD.

Department of Human Resource Management,
Faculty of Economics and Administration, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Email: padma_ram87@yahoo.com

Abstract
In today's age of globalization, self-leadership skills are absolutely essential to improve the chances of successful goal achievement. This paper attempts to explore the need for culturally sensitive studies relating to self-leadership development in the light of existing differences between cultures. Until now most of the research on national cultures was limited to the West, particularly the USA. Hofstede's seminal work in this area is a major reference point for all researchers in this field. Globalization has made it imperative for organizations to conduct business beyond their national boundaries. The recent global economic crisis has taught us many lessons. Self -leadership strategies at the individual and team levels have varied dimensions. The intercultural and international aspects of self-leadership have not yet been fully explored. Given our interest in integrating self-leadership and culture, we discuss the levels of analysis of these concepts and explore ways to integrate them. Examining cross-level implications of self-leadership provides perhaps the most interesting and useful avenues for future research efforts.

Key words: Self-leadership, Cross-cultural

1. Introduction

The self-leadership concept first appeared in a 1983 practitioner-oriented book (i.e. Manz, 1983) that expanded upon the existing concept of self-management (e.g. Manz and Sims, 1980). The seminal academic work on self-leadership appeared three years later in the Academy of Management Review (i.e. Manz, 1986). This article laid the basic theoretical foundations of self-leadership and presented the basic self-leadership strategies. Self-leadership has been described as a process in which people direct and motivate themselves to behave and perform in a desired way (Houghton and Neck, 2002; Manz, 1986, 1992; Neck and Manz, 2006). Self-leadership is a self-influence process through which people achieve the self-direction and self-motivation necessary to perform (Manz, 1986; Manz and Neck, 2004). Self-leadership consists of specific behavioral and cognitive strategies designed to positively

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influence personal effectiveness. Generally speaking, self-leadership aims at the enhancement of personal effectiveness through three categories of individual-level strategies namely behavior-focused strategies; natural reward strategies; and constructive thought strategies (Houghton and Neck, 2002; Neck and Houghton, 2006).

Behavior-focused strategies strive to heighten an individual's self-awareness in order to facilitate behavioral management, especially the management of behaviors related to necessary but unpleasant tasks (Manz and Neck, 2004). According to Neck and Houghton (2006), behavioral-focused strategies aim at management of behaviors, and include:
. self-observation, or increase of one's awareness about when and why to act;
. self-goal setting, or the decision about what goals to pursue and how should be pursued;
. self-rewards, or compensations to energize oneself;
. self-punishment, or constructive self-feedback; and
. self-cueing, or external signaling

Natural reward strategies are intended to create situations in which a person is motivated or rewarded by inherently enjoyable aspects of the task or activity (Manz and Neck, 2004; Manz and Sims, 2001). There are two primary natural reward strategies. The first involves building more pleasant and enjoyable features into a given activity so that the task itself becomes naturally rewarding (Manz and Neck, 2004; Manz and Sims, 2001). The second strategy consists of shaping perceptions by focusing attention away from the unpleasant aspects of a task and refocusing it on the task's inherently rewarding aspects (Manz and Neck, 2004; Manz and Sims, 2001). To summarize, natural reward strategies are designed to help create feelings of competence and self-determination, which in turn energize performance-enhancing task-related behaviors.

Constructive thought pattern strategies are designed to facilitate the formation of constructive thought patterns and habitual ways of thinking that can positively impact performance (Manz and Neck, 2004; Neck and Manz, 1992). Constructive thought pattern strategies include identifying and replacing dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions, mental imagery and positive self-talk. Individuals should first examine their thought patterns, confronting and replacing dysfunctional irrational beliefs and assumptions with more constructive thought processes (Burns, 1980; Ellis, 1977; Manz and Neck, 2004; Neck and Manz, 1992). In addition, negative and destructive self-talk should be identified and replaced with more positive internal dialogues. Self-talk is defined as what people covertly tell themselves (Neck and Manz, 1992, 1996a) and involves mental self-evaluations and reactions (Ellis, 1977; Neck and Manz, 1992). By carefully analyzing self-talk patterns, negative or pessimistic self-talk can be suppressed or eliminated and replaced with more optimistic self-dialogues (Seligman, 1991). Finally, mental imagery is the symbolic and covert cognitive creation of an experience or task prior to actual overt physical muscular movement (see also Driskell et al., 1994; Finke, 1989; Neck and Manz, 1992, 1996a). Thus individuals who visualize successful performance of an activity in advance of actual performance are more likely to perform successfully when faced with the actual task

(Manz and Neck, 2004). In support of this argument, Driskell et al. (1994) performed a meta-analysis of 35 empirical studies and found a significant positive effect for mental imagery on individual performance. During the late 1980's and early 1990s, the self-leadership concept was applied to two primary areas:

(1) self-managing teams; and
(2) empowering leadership.

The emerging self-managing teams literature of the late 1980s often prescribed self-leadership among team members as an integral part of the self-managing process (e.g. Manz and Sims, 1986, 1987, 1994; Manz, 1990a). About this same time, leadership theorists were beginning to explore the concept of empowerment (e.g. Conger and Kanungo, 1988) as a possible alternative to the heroic leadership model of the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, the concept of Super Leadership, the process of leading others to lead themselves, was introduced as an effective means for empowering followers and creating self-leaders (e.g. Manz and Sims, 1989, 1991; Manz, 1990b, 1991, 1992a). The first empirical study to examine self-leadership in an organizational setting was published in Administrative Science Quarterly in 1987 and examined the role of self-leadership in the context of both self-managing teams and empowering leadership (Manz and Sims, 1987). This study suggested that the most effective external leaders of self-managing work teams are those that engage in behaviors that facilitate self-leadership strategies such as self-observation, self-goal setting and self-reward (Manz and Sims, 1987).Throughout the late 1990s and continuing into the 2000's, self-leadership theorists have studied the application of self-leadership concepts within a variety of contextual settings such as performance appraisals (Neck et al., 1995);organizational change (Neck, 1996); total quality management (Neck and Manz, 1996b); self-leading teams (Neck et al., 1996); entrepreneurship (Neck et al., 1997a); diversity management (Neck et al., 1997b); job satisfaction (Houghton and Jinkerson, 2004; Roberts and Foti, 1998);team performance (Stewart and Barrick, 2000);

2. Dimensions of self-leadership - Individual level and Team level

Despite a focus on the individual, it must be mentioned that various self-leadership scholars have recognized the importance of multilevel analysis in developing theoretical work (e.g. Bligh et al., 2006) as well as empirical work (e.g. Yun et al., 2006). Self-leadership is mostly concerned in explaining ways to enhance organizational performance through individual-dependent thinking and acting. Thus self-leadership can be considered as an entry point (at the individual level) for organizational analysis. Scales have been developed specifically to measure self-leadership at the individual level. Manz (1993a, 1993b, 1993c) developed a set of initial items designed to capture elements of both self-management and self-leadership. As mentioned above, self-management was conceptualized as strategies for getting oneself to complete difficult but necessary tasks and was assessed by scales capturing self-observation, cueing strategies, self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment, and practice. Self-leadership was conceptualized as more intrinsically motivated and included scales that captured distinguishing natural rewards, building natural rewards into work, choosing pleasant surroundings, building

naturally rewarding activities into work, focusing on pleasant aspects of work, and focusing on natural rewards rather than external rewards.

Self-leadership at the team level has been assessed broadly by capturing behaviors that are undertaken internally within the team rather than by an external supervisor. The notion of transferring leadership activities from external supervisors to teams themselves was advanced by Manz and Sims (1987) and is consistent with the substitutes for leadership perspective (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). Qualitative and quantitative work by Manz and Sims (1984, 1987) identified a number of behaviors that represent team self-leadership. Teams exhibit self-leadership when they apply self-control to production management activities by initiating behaviors such as repairing equipment, obtaining production materials, performing quality control inspections, preparing budgets, recommending engineering changes, and shutting down assembly processes if quality is wrong. In one of the few attempts to actually assess degree of self-leadership at the team level, Stewart and Barrick (2000) asked whether the team or an external leader completed 20 different tasks such as conducting meetings, changing work processes, and determining overall business strategy. They used responses to create a quantitative measure of team self-leadership and found the measure to adequately capture differences in team-level self-leadership. Teams performing more self-governing activities were assigned a higher level of collective self-leadership. However, very little work has been done to capture variation in self-leadership for teams. Teams are often simply described as self-managing, which, as described earlier, disregards the fact that the construct is continuous rather than discrete (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Kirkman et al., 2004). Additional work is thus needed to better capture where teams fall along a continuum from externally led to truly self-leading.

The general pattern of results related to outcomes suggests that self-leadership is generally beneficial at the individual level but context dependent at the team level. Having individuals regulate their own actions is consistently helpful both to them personally and to the organization. Team-level self-leadership appears to consistently improve creativity. Stewart and Barrick (2000), found relationships with team self-leadership to be positive for creative tasks but negative for mundane tasks, thus highlighting task differences. Self-leadership in teams seems to be most helpful when there is a need for adaptation and creativity (De Dreu & West, 2001; Gilson & Shalley, 2004). Scholars have drawn on self-leadership to propose ways to enhance various organizational processes and functions including, for example, empowering leadership in self-managing teams (Manz and Sims, 1987), team-based knowledge work (e.g. Bligh et al., 2006), or organizational innovation and creativity (DiLiello and Houghton, 2006).

3. Hofstede's approach to culture

According to Dickson et al. (2003) the most recognized (and criticized) culture dimensions in leadership research are those proposed by Geert Hofstede (1980, 2001). Other dimensions have also been used to study culture, namely by Schwartz (1999), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), and those in the GLOBE program (House et al., 2004). Yet in this paper we focus on Hofstede's framework, both because of its conceptual

clarity and its broad visibility in the literature. In this section we firstly present Hofstede's definition of culture and then discuss some of its premises that in our view are relevant for a cross cultural analysis of self-leadership. According to Hofstede culture is a "collective mental programming: it is that part of our conditioning that we share with other members of our nation, region or group but not with members of other nations, regions or groups" (1983, p. 76). This definition reveals Hofstede's humanistic view, which is supported by his critique of rational organization theories that fail to account for non-controllable political dimensions. Such viewpoint had been exposed in a prior article when he stated that "[i]n political situations, there is no consensus about goals, and replacing the organizational reality by a model which treats people as means is no longer allowed." (Hofstede, 1978, p. 460). Hofstede's definition of culture is based on various assumptions, three of which we consider relevant to this study because of their implications to theory, research, and practice of self-leadership in other cultures. These assumptions are:

(1) human behavior is to some extent predictable;
(2) culture is a multilevel phenomenon; and
(3) managerial practices are influenced by communication and cooperation.

It is important to note that firstly, Hofstede considers that culture, mind, values, and behavior predictability are all interrelated. Human behavior is to some extent predictable because it is based in culture, a "mental programming" that is extremely stable over time in the absence of radical social events such as trade, technological breakthroughs, and economic or political dominance (Hofstede, 2001). The mind is a major concept in Hofstede's concept of culture: "the mind stands for the head, heart, and hands – that is thinking, feeling, and acting, with consequences for beliefs, attitudes, and skills". In turn this implies that "systems of values are a core element of culture" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 10) where value is "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 5). Though values are invisible, Hofstede considers that culture as systems of values is manifested in symbols, heroes, rituals, and practices, and as such they can be observed, compared, and somehow predicted. Such predictability can be explored through cultural comparisons based on fundamental human problems common to most societies (nations). However, the identification of cultural differences does not mean that one can fully describe a culture since "there is no commonly accepted language to describe such a complex thing as 'culture'" (Hofstede, 1983, p. 77). Furthermore, culture does not correspond to the sum or combination of the five cultural dimensions. Instead, these dimensions merely constitute a tool to grasp the values that define the collective programming of the mind (Hofstede, 2001).

Second, though Hofstede defined culture as a group-level phenomenon, he is aware that it interacts with individual and societal level constructs. As a group-level phenomenon he stated that "culture determines the uniqueness of a human group in the same way personality

determines the uniqueness of an individual" (2001, p. 10). Furthermore, "culture as [collective] mental programming is also a crystallization of history in the minds, hearts, and hands of the present generation" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 12). Yet he recognizes that culture can be shaped by constructs operating at lower level (individual) and upper level (societal) constructs, since for him culture and people are mutually shaped over time, and just as people can move to new cultural spaces (social groups) they can also modify through practice (namely structure and functioning of institutions) their notion of culture. Regarding this mutual influence between people and culture, Hofstede mentioned that the institutions-versus-culture debate often seen among sociologists versus anthropologists/psychologists is a non-issue since in his view "institutions reflect minds and vice versa" (Hofstede, 2001,p. 20). This idea of levels of analysis is important for self-leadership to the extent that it gives us a way to link micro- to macro-level constructs.
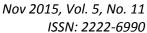
Thirdly, Hofstede (1998) was also interested in explaining the kind of managerial practices that may affect employees' attitudes and organizational culture. From his studies he concluded that there is no relationship between managerial practices and employee attitudes or organizational culture, except for practices in the area of communication and cooperation. This means that language (verbal or non-verbal) and social interaction are two important factors in changing employees' attitudes. This finding may have important implications for both the theory and practice of self-leadership. For self-leadership theory one cannot neglect the particularities of language and social relations, since people from different cultures may elicit distinct patterns between what they do, think, or say (thinking, feeling, and acting). For instance we may be able to understand better how to be a more effective self-leader depending on the levels of importance of language and social relations in different cultures. Having discussed Hofstede's definition of culture, we need to know the different dimensions of national culture as proposed by him.

4. Five dimensions of national culture
Hofstede proposes five independent dimensions of national culture that represent "fundamental problems of society" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 1). In this section we describe each of these and raise questions regarding their relevance to a cross-cultural analysis of self-leadership. These dimensions are:
(1) power distance;
(2) uncertainty avoidance;
(3) individualism (collectivism);
(4) masculinity (femininity); and
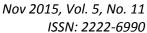(5) future orientation (long-term versus short-term).

Leadership is associated with power and status. Thus, the way in which power and status are divided in society is obviously relevant to the leadership role. Hofstede (1980, 2001) defines *Power Distance* (PD) as the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. In cultures with large differences in power between

individuals, organizations will typically have more layers and the chain of command is felt to be more important. Power distance in society is also directly related to leadership. For example, subordinates in high (rather than low) power distance societies are more reluctant to challenge their supervisors and more fearful in expressing disagreement with their managers (Adsit, London, Crom, & Jones, 1997). According to Hofstede (1980), inequality is generally related to the weights and status that societies put in matters such as prestige, wealth and power. Self-leadership assumes that individuals have some autonomy and decision-making capacity to set and perform towards their own goals. However, this cultural dimension raises concerns about the extent that is really possible, namely in countries with power distance higher than the USA. Power distance has an impact on subordinates' expectations and preferences regarding leadership (e.g., people want and expect more guidance in societies with more power distance) as well as on acceptable or typical patterns of leader behavior (e.g., autocratic leadership is more acceptable and effective in high PD societies).

Uncertainty avoidance (UA) is another dimension identified by Hofstede. UA refers to the degree to which members in a society feel uncomfortable with ambiguous and uncertain situations, and take steps to avoid them. It describes a society's reliance on social norms and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of the future. Hofstede (1980) defined uncertainty avoidance as the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations by believing in absolute truths and the attainment of expertise, providing greater (career) stability, establishing more formal rules, and rejecting deviant ideas and behaviors. UA in society is not only reflected in leader attributes but also in ways in which future leaders are prepared for the leadership role. In societies high on UA, such things as career stability, formal rules and the development of expertise tend to be valued, whereas in low UA cultures, more flexibility in roles and jobs, an emphasis on general rather than specialized skills and more job mobility is more typical. For instance, Stewart, Barsoux, Kieser, Ganter, and Walgenbach (1994) compared career management activities for young managers in Germany (high on UA) and the United Kingdom (low on UA) and found that the British managers typically placed more emphasis on career mobility and generalization, while the German managers spent more time in a single job and valued the development of specialized, task-related expertise. Everyone perceives uncertainty but the ways people use to cope with it are different. In organizations, uncertainty is often related to the environment (not controlled by the organization) and common coping mechanisms include technology, rules, and rituals (Hofstede, 1980). Another characteristic of uncertainty that we also consider relevant for self-leadership is about how we measure it. Hofstede suggests that we look at three indicators: rule orientation; stress; and employment stability. Regarding employment stability, Hofstede observed that individuals rely on both rational (logical and normative) and non-rational (sense-making and descriptive) mechanisms. Since self-leadership today consists essentially of rational strategies (behavioral and cognitive) one may also consider non-rational, intuition-based strategies in cultures with higher uncertainty avoidance than that of the USA.

Another well-known culture dimension is *individualism versus collectivism* (IC). Cultures characterized by individualism can be seen as loosely knit social frameworks in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and look after their own interests and those of their close family only. A tight social framework with strong and cohesive in-groups that are opposed to out-groups is a key characteristic of high collectivism. People expect their in-group to look after them and are loyal to it in return (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). Schwartz (1999) takes a slightly different approach to this issue, describing it in general as the extent to which people in societies are autonomous versus embedded in the group. Individuals in autonomous cultures are perceived as autonomous entities that find meaning in life through their uniqueness. High embeddedness means that people are perceived as part of the collective and find meaning and direction in life through participating in the group and identifying with its goals. Organizations tend to take responsibility for their members in all domains of life and in exchange, loyalty and identification are expected. Individualism versus collectivism is about the "integration of individuals into primary groups" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 29). It is manifested in the ways people from different societies live together, for example nuclear families, extended families, or tribes. Moreover, it reflects people's expectations to take care of themselves or receive care from their peers (Hofstede, 1980). These societal values are transferred to organizations in different ways. In individualist societies, employees and managers are expected to work and decide for themselves and they are rewarded on an individual basis. In collective societies, workers tend to cooperate more, make more collective decisions, and perform better in groups. Thus the individualism/collectivism dimension is based on the degree of reliance on social relationships to perform organizational work. Considering that self-leadership assumes individuals to have degrees of autonomy in setting their own goals, this cultural dimension questions the extent that self-leadership is likely to happen in cultures that are high in collectivism.

Masculinity versus femininity refers to the "division of emotional roles between men and women" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 29). According to Hofstede, masculinity implies dominant values in a society that stress assertiveness and being tough, the acquisition of money and material objects, and not caring for others, the quality of life or people. In feminine cultures, values such as warm social relationships, quality of life, and care of the weak are stressed. .Masculinity and femininity result from socialization processes and should be viewed as poles of a continuum. Masculinity refers to societies that value assertiveness, toughness, material and economic aspects of life. Femininity represents cultures that emphasize nurturing, care for others, social relationships, and quality of life. In other words, masculinity emphasizes tasks whereas femininity focuses on relations. In masculine cultures, men and women tend to have distinct roles; men are expected to focus on performance while women are expected to focus on relationships. Hofstede (1980) mentions that in masculine societies business organizations tend to have masculine goals and promote men, whereas hospitals tend to have feminine goals and promote more women to nurturing-type positions. In feminine societies men and women are expected to have similar roles, promotion is merit-based, quality of life and people are important, and both men and women are expected to care about job performance and relationships. Furthermore, in feminine cultures, women have less resistance in accessing jobs,
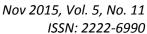
getting promotions, and balancing career and family life (Hofstede, 2001). As a concept developed in the USA, a masculine society, it is not surprising that self-leadership emphasizes the enhancement of personal effectiveness that is mostly based on tasks. However, this cultural dimension raises the question of whether self-leadership in more feminine cultures should consider personal effectiveness also based on relationships.

As regards *long-term versus short-term orientation*, it is related to "the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 29). This dimension was found from a Chinese Values Survey that included items about personal stability and respect for tradition, values that are common in Asian cultures and Confucianism. It refers to whether people's time focus is long-term or short-term oriented. Hofstede (2001) suggests that people working in settings with long-term orientation emphasize the development of social relationships and market positions, link up business and family issues, and draw high levels of satisfaction from daily human relations. In contrast, employees in organizations with a short-term orientation draw less satisfaction from daily human relations, tend to separate family and business issues, and usually focus on short-term results. Self-leadership studies have already considered time as a control factor, namely in studies about self-leadership development (e.g. Neck et al., 1997). However, because self-leadership is originated in a short-term, masculine culture it may not fully represent values that are based on social relationships.

5. A cross-cultural perspective of self-leadership

Before doing a cross-cultural analysis of self-leadership, we need to know more about this concept, its theoretical foundations and components. Following Geert Hofstede's (2001) observation that to avoid ethnocentrism, researchers should not use their discretion to reduce theoretical frameworks, it was important to include in this study all five dimensions of culture. Otherwise it is possible that we may overlook parts of self-leadership in non-US cultures. In developing cross-cultural perspectives of management and organization theories one has to consider two related issues. On the one hand we have to minimize our cultural biases (ethnocentrism), and on the other hand we have to think whether theories can be applied to other contexts, and if so how. To avoid ethnocentrism at the empirical level, researchers can draw on multiple local theories, methods, and research. At the theoretical level, this may be even more difficult because researchers have necessarily to make choices in function of their knowledge and resources available (Hofstede, 2001).Considering self-leadership as a self-influencing process and a set of strategies aiming at the enhancement of one's performance, we have to believe that this theory may be applied to most societies. Some notions, such as self-influence and individual performance, will need to be discussed by non-Western scholars, but the essence of self-leadership remains: individuals can positively shape their own practices. As mentioned above, self-leadership model functions as a loose coupling system, with few common variables or weak common variables, depending on the context and situation. Thus, in looking at the components of self-leadership from a cross-cultural perspective it is important to know what variables would be strengthened or weakened when the model is dislocated to non-
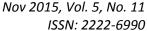
US cultures. It is important to stress that self-leadership is a US-originated model and thus it is grounded in the US cultural values that have been defined by Hofstede.

An analysis of self-leadership by geographical regions, as Hofstede found, neighboring countries may have similarities regarding two or three dimensions but never for all dimensions. This happens because national cultures have unique historical roots (Hofstede, 2001). Self-leadership has not been applied to higher organizational levels, in particular national culture. One possible reason for this is the non-existence of a universal measurement scale. In this regard, Neubert and Wu (2006) have made a first step to develop a self-leadership scale for the Chinese context. At first glance, one might think that self-leadership and national culture operate at different levels of analysis – the individual and the nation, respectively. However, as discussed above, both concepts draw on theoretical frameworks that cross multiple levels. Our view here is that, traditionally, each concept has preferred a certain level as a starting point of organization analysis: individual level for self-leadership and nation level for national culture. Yet both concepts have drawn on theories and borrowed ideas situated at other levels. Self-leadership draws on self-management and self-regulation theories, more focused at the group and organizational levels respectively. National culture accepts that individuals and societies may influence national culture, respectively personal and societal levels. Thus a cross-cultural analysis of self-leadership is necessarily a multi-level analysis with entry points at micro and/or macro levels. To illustrate this we explore the theoretical relationship between self-leadership and culture by considering two supporting theories of self-leadership: intrinsic motivation theory; and social cognitive theory.

First, according to Remedios and Boreham (2004) individuals are said to be intrinsically motivated, as opposed to externally motivated, when they feel that they have an effect on the environment (White, 1959); are authors of their own actions (deCharms, 1968); or have autonomy (Deci, 1975).Therefore, intrinsic motivation is based on one's opportunity to act with purpose. The implied notion of purpose suggests that people assign values to thinking, feeling, and acting, which as mentioned before is seen by Hofstede as the foundation of culture, a "collective mental programming". Second, social cognitive theory explains human behavior as a system of interrelationships among internal influences, external influences, and behavior that alternates the production with reduction of dysfunctions, and vice versa, tending towards equilibrium (Bandura, 1986). As such it accounts for the interrelation among cognitive, social, and behavioral dimensions of self-leadership. Since a "collective mental program" is a system of values that results from the interrelation between thinking, feeling, and acting, we could infer that culture refers also to an interaction between social, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. The overlap of these theories indicates a strong link between self-leadership theory and national culture. Thus it is not only possible but also desirable that a cross-cultural analysis of self-leadership is developed, since there are significant links between both theoretical streams.

In short, the application of self-management techniques tends to allow employees significant self-influence regarding how to complete a task to meet a standard (as defined by the system), whereas self-leadership addresses what should be done and why, in addition to how to do it.

The concept of self-leadership consists of a variety of interwoven strategies that address individuals' self-awareness, volition, motivation, cognition, and behavior (Manz and Neck, 1991; Mu¨ller, 2006; Neck and Manz, 2006; Prussia et al., 1998). Self-leadership is a normative constellation of behavioral and cognitive strategies derived from descriptive theories such as self-regulation, social cognition, and motivation. These strategies that determine individuals' self-lead behavior and performance have inspired self-leadership theory and research over the last two decades (Neck and Houghton, 2006). These findings, while significant, are not universally applicable: The research that generated these findings was conducted in countries with Western European cultural legacies (e.g. Europe, North America, Australia). 70 percent of humankind that live in non-Western cultures (Triandis, 1995) have not had the benefit of such research. Non-Western cultures undergo dramatic changes in the globalization process as predominantly Western cultures impact them through trade, immigration, and the spread of information technologies (Jensen Arnett, 2002). Western corporations that expand to non-Western societies experience significant cultural challenges in terms of communication styles (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2003), use of informational power (Tjosvold et al., 2003), learning (Li, 2003) and goal setting (Tjosvold and Yu, 2004). The management of non-Western employees by Western managers brings unique challenges (Chao and Moon, 2005). This area of study is ripe for application to non-Western cultures, and, in fact, would seem to be crucial for the success of Western enterprises. There is a growing body of research on goal setting and self-leadership in non-Western cultures. Such studies have already yielded important results. Research supports the notion that pursuing achievement goals that agree with one's personal values is important across cultures. (Sheldon et al., 2004). Alves et al. (2006) address the question how self-leadership may be understood and practiced in other cultures by drawing on Hofstede's (1980) distinction of cultural characteristics. Studies in the People's Republic of China examined whether measurements of self-leadership developed in a Western culture could be applied across cultures (Georgianna, 2005; Neubert and Wu, 2006). The assessment of self-leadership strategies used by a sample of Chinese students is compared to the strategies used by a sample of US students for the purpose of exploring the possible influences of culture on, and differences between the respective strategies.

6. Cultural characteristics and the strategies used to measure self-leadership

The construct of culture, or cultural "syndromes," consists of specific characteristics shared by a set of people. These cultural characteristics are the result of common denominators of a society, such as region, language, generation, religion or political experience. Cultural characteristics provide the context for standards of perception, evaluation, communication, and behavior in use by individuals. Examples of such cultural syndromes are: tightness (i.e. the amount of norms applicable across situations); power distance; vertical vs. horizontal relationships (i.e. the importance of hierarchies) (Triandis, 1994); or individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995). The characteristic of "individualism", for example,

was found to be most prevalent in Western cultures (e.g. among Europeans and North Americans). Of the cultural characteristics that have been identified, individualism and collectivism have attracted the most research (Robert et al., 2006; Triandis, 1995). In Western cultures individuals define and assess their behavior independently of any group to which they belong. Occupational categories, social class, religious affiliation, for examples, do not seem to play important roles in the decisions and actions of Westerners, especially when compared to non-Westerners. In this sense, the concept of "collectivism" as it applies to Asian cultures usually implies that individuals assess and define themselves in relationship to group membership of collectivist cultures. The group or "in-group" entails a high degree of interrelatedness among group members. Maintaining harmony with the in-group in such cultures is important to the in-group members (Triandis, 1989). Self-concepts, goals, and desires tend to be interpreted within the context of the group (Markus and Kitayama, 1994; Triandis, 1995).

Applying effective self-leadership strategies produces performance improvement, higher levels of mental performance, job satisfaction, and expectations of success (Neck and Houghton, 2006). Thus, the question emerges: whether there is a difference in performance between individuals in cultures that emphasize strong independence from others (i.e. individualist or Western cultures) and individuals in cultures that emphasize the importance of group membership (i.e. collectivist or non-Western cultures) due to the self-leadership strategies found in the respective cultures. To answer this question, the current study reviews the aforementioned self-leadership strategies from the perspective of Hofstedes' (1980) individualist and collectivist cultural characteristics.

The study and comparison of persons from "individualist" countries (individualists) and those from "collectivist" countries (collectivists) reveal that these two groups use different strategies to increase self-awareness. That is, individualists use internal information such as emotions when observing themselves, while collectivists use external information provided by their in-group when observing themselves (Oettingen et al., 1994). For collectivists it is important to avoid threatening the in-group's harmonious relationships through the display of personal emotions (Smith et al., 1996). Individualists should display their talents to advantage to convey an impression of self-efficacy. In contrast, collectivists should not display their talents as much as individualists so as to avoid offending other group members and putting interpersonal harmony at risk (Neck and Manz, 2006). Systematic observation of one's own behavior has been suggested as one possible self-leadership strategy designed to increase self-awareness and subsequently strengthen the self-lead behavior of goal-setting and goal attainment (Manz and Sims, 1992). It might be expected that this strategy is more prevalent in individualists, because they use internal standards as their point of reference for personal evaluations. In contrast, the systematic behavioral observation of other people may be hypothesized to be more frequent for collectivists, because they tend to choose external information as an anchor for self-awareness (e.g. behavioral expectations of their in-group).

7. Conclusion

This study investigates the extent to which self-leadership dimensions are generalizable across cultures, as well as the existence and development of self-leadership practices across cultures. Current trends in self-leadership research include intercultural/international issues, self-leadership contingency factors, executive health/fitness and shared leadership. The intercultural and international aspects of self-leadership have not been fully explored to date. Self-leadership has developed largely within the context of the culture of the USA. As a result, the usefulness and applicability of self-leadership should be examined across a variety of international settings, particularly in the emerging economies. In particular, future empirical research effort should be focused on further examinations of the intercultural aspects of self-leadership, self-leadership contingency and outcome factors, and the role of self-leadership within the shared leadership process. Future self-leadership research should also empirically investigate the way in which self-leadership processes operate within the larger theoretical contexts of self-regulation, social cognitive, intrinsic motivation and self-control theories.

Reviewing differences in outcomes at the individual and team levels also reveals some areas for future study. Future work should thus explore creativity for individuals. Future work is thus needed to determine if increased self-leadership reduces organizational commitment and increases employee turnover. Findings like this would be interesting given that the research on individual self-leadership has so far proven to be overwhelmingly positive. Another observation is that even though the distinction between self-management and self-leadership has been advanced theoretically, research does not appear to have explored questions about the optimal level of self-leadership at either the individual or team level. More studies are needed to determine whether relationships with self-leadership are linear. Is more self-leadership always better, or can too much internal control eventually become problematic? Can some of the inconsistent findings at the team level be explained by differences in level of self-leadership? More empirical work is needed to clarify the form of relationships between self-leadership and outcomes.

Research on self-leadership so far, in particular, the cross-level nature of self-leadership as a construct provides a multifaceted lens through which insights from micro and macro perspectives can be combined. This integrative review of the literature allows findings to be highlighted that may not be apparent when focusing only on a single level. Perhaps more importantly, it provides guidance for future research needed to achieve a more complete understanding of self-leadership for individuals, teams, and the organizations they make up. Our review suggests that self-leadership at the individual level is consistently related to improvement in both work attitudes and performance. Self-leadership does not appear to be so universally beneficial at the team level. Researchers should thus continue to focus on the contextual factors that influence relationships with team-level self-leadership. Another conclusion that emerges from our review of the literature is the critical interplay between self-leadership and external leadership. Empowering and shared leadership have been shown to be critical forces that influence internal self-leadership. Thus, self-leadership should not be

considered as a complete substitute for external leadership. The nature of what the external leader does may change, but external support and help continue to be necessary. We suggest that examining cross-level implications of self-leadership provides perhaps the most interesting and useful avenues for future research efforts. We hope that research designed to address these questions will advance our understanding of self-leadership.

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