A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL CULTURE ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN THE MALDIVES

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งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาวัฒนธรรมของประเทศมัลดีฟ และผลกระทบต่อภาวะผู้นำการเปลี่ยนแปลง กรอบแนวคิด สังเคราะห์จาก 5 มิติวัฒนธรรมของ Hofstede และรูปแบบภาวะผู้นำการเปลี่ยนแปลงของ Kouzes และ Posner ตัวแปรอิสระ คือ วัฒนธรรม และ ตัวแปรตาม คือ แนวทางของภาวะผู้นำการเปลี่ยนแปลง ผู้วิจัยตั้งสมมุติฐาน 26 ข้อ ในการศึกษา โดยสมมุติฐานหลักคือการทดสอบผลกระทบของวัฒนธรรมของชาติต่อแนวทางของผู้นำการเปลี่ยนแปลง สมมุติฐานหลักนี้ถูกย่อยลงไปเป็นสมมุติฐานย่อย 25 ข้อ เพื่อทดสอบผลกระทบของแต่ละมิติทางวัฒนธรรมต่อ พฤติกรรมผู้นำการเปลี่ยนแปลง

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า วัฒนธรรมของมัลดีฟมีระดับ Power Distance ต่ำ Individualism Masculinity Uncertainty Avoidance และ Long-Term Orientation ปานกลาง ข้อมูลที่ได้สนับสนุนสมมุติฐานหลัก วัฒนธรรมของชาติมี ความสัมพันธ์กับแนวทางผู้นำการเปลี่ยนแปลง สมมุติฐานย่อย 17 ข้อ ได้รับการสนับสนุน งานวิจัยนี้ยืนยันว่า วัฒนธรรม ของชาติมีอิทธิพลต่อแนวทางภาวะผู้นำและเสนอแนวทางที่เหมาะสม

Abstract

This study investigates the national culture of Maldives and its impact on transformational leadership practices of individuals. Drawing from Hofstede's five national cultural dimensions and Kouzes and Posner's leadership model of the five practices of a transformational leader, a conceptual framework was developed with national cultural dimensions as the independent variables and transformational leadership practices as the dependent variables.

Twenty-six hypotheses were proposed, with the main hypothesis to test the significant impact of national cultural dimensions on transformational leadership practices simultaneously. The main hypothesis was further broken down into twenty-five sub-hypotheses to test each national cultural dimension effect and influence on transformational leadership practices.

The analyses revealed that Maldives' national cultural values being low on Power Distance, high on Individualism and moderate on Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance and Long-Term Orientation. The main hypothesis was supported, as there was significant correlation between national culture and transformational leadership practices. Out of the twenty-five sub hypotheses, seventeen were supported as results showed significant impact of cultural values on leadership practices. The study confirmed that culture influences leadership practices and provides insight into the kind of leadership practices that can be best utilized with the subordinates.

INTRODUCTION

With the onset of globalization and increasing number of multinational corporations, understanding differences in multiple cultures and work-related values is a crucial element for survival and competitive advantage. Black & Mendenhall (1989) highlighted that increased internationalization in the economic, political and social arenas have led to greater interpersonal cross-cultural contact.

Many prominent cross-cultural management and leadership researchers such as Hofstede (2001) have indicated the impact culture has on leadership style, concepts and behaviors. Leadership style plays a major role in the management and success of organizations in the existing dynamic business environment. Therefore, understanding the country's national culture to see how it influences the style and effectiveness of a leader is essential.

Inadequate awareness of national culture or international cross-cultural variations, including values can exacerbate failure of multinational corporations. Management practices and policies should be in alignment with the national culture values so that they are more likely to be adopted by individuals (Fernandez, Carlson, Stepina, & Nicholson, 1997). Clearly, national culture is an important aspect that has to be explored further and identification of the impact it has on business and management practices is crucial in order to be successful in a global environment. For the purpose of this study, Hofstede's framework was applied at the individual level to determine the impact of national culture on transformational leadership behaviors of individuals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

National Culture:

Hofstede (1997) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (p. 5). As such, culture is learned from the social environment one lives in and is not inherited.

A number of models have been developed by theorists to identify and evaluate the different cul-

tural aspects of a nation: Hofstede, 1997; Schwartz, 1994; Triandis, 1982; Trompenaars, 1994. The GLOBE study (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) is another well-known project initiated by Robert J. House in 1991.

Hofstede's framework is one of the most widely used approaches for analyzing variations among cultures and since the publication of his book *Culture's Consequences*, his culture value dimensions have been widely adopted and has had a great impact than any other cultural models (Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001). Hofstede's study commenced in 1980 and compromised of 116,000 questionnaires, from which over 60,000 people responded from over 50 countries. The employees of a multinational corporation served as a purpose of identifying differences in national value systems. They represented well-matched samples from the populations of their countries, similar in all respects except nationality (Hofstede, 1993).

The four dimensions under which each nation was classified were identified as Power Distance (PDI), Individualism/Collectivism (IDV), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) and Masculinity/Femininity (MAS) (Hofstede, 1997a, 2001). Power distance is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country except and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1997, p. 28).

Hofstede (1997) argues that individualism "pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose; everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family" (p. 51). Collectivism "pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (p. 51).

The third dimension Masculinity/Femininity refers to the extent to which a society predominately accept male or female values. Hofstede (1997) defines that masculinity "pertains to societies in while social gender roles are clearly distinct" (p. 82). For example, men are supposed to be assertive and tough and focus on material success while women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with quality of life. Femininity, on the other hand "pertains to societies in which social gender roles over-

lap" (Hofstede, 1997, p. 82). For example, both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. Hofstede (1997) defined uncertainty avoidance as "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations" (p. 113).

In a subsequent study conducted in 1988 by Hofstede and Bond, a fifth dimension was introduced known as the Long/Short- term orientation or 'Confucian Dynamism' (Hofstede 1997a). The fifth dimension was derived from a study of twenty-three countries in five continents using Chinese Value Survey (CVS) distributed to fifty male and fifty female students from each of the country (Hofstede, 1993). Long-term orientation (LTO) includes future-oriented values such persistence and thrift, whereas short-term orientation refers to past and present-oriented values (Hofstede, 1997).

Hofstede's model has been scrutinized greatly and subjected to both compliments and criticism. Hofstede's framework is widely recognized and is applied in different fields and disciplines. He has also become the most widely cited social scientist of all time. An analysis of citations (using the Social Sciences Citation Index - SSCI) showed that Hofstede's work is one of the most cited non-American in the SSCI. His work on culture has been cited in various discipline including psychology, marketing, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and political science amongst others (Bond, 2002; Hofstede, 1997; Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001).

Many other researchers and theorist expressed their disagreement with regard to Hofstede's model. Hofstede assumed that in IBM there exists uniformity on organizational culture indicating that there is a single worldwide IBM organizational culture. However, this is not the case as many literatures extensively argue for recognition of "multiple, dissenting, emergent, organic, counter, plural, resisting, incomplete, contradictory cultures" (McSweeney, 2002, p. 96) in organizations. Fang (2003) criticized Hofstede's work in relation to the fifth national culture dimension (long-term orientation) stating that it divides interrelated values into two opposing poles, hence violating the concept of Chinese philosophy Ying Yang. Furthermore, just having four or five dimensions is not sufficient enough to identify differences across national cultures (Jones, 1997).

Transformational Leadership:

Leadership has been a topic of interest to historians and philosophers since ancient times and yet scientific studies on it began only in the twentieth century. Leadership has been defined in terms of "individual traits, behavior, influence over other people, interaction patterns, role relationships, occupation of an administrative position, and perception by others regarding legitimacy of influence" (Yukl, 1989, p. 2). One of most widely used and influential theory is transformational leadership.

Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of transforming leadership in his book 'Leadership'. He defined it as a process in which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 2010, p. 69). Transforming leadership can be exhibited by anyone in the organization in any type of position. He also proposed that transforming leaders "shapes, alters, and elevates the motives, values and goals of followers achieving significant change in the process" (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, & Dennison, 2003).

Bass (1985) developed Burns' concept of transforming leaders into transformational leadership - where the leader transforms followers. Followers' response to transformational leadership is based on the commitment to a higher morale responsibility rather than self-interest. Bass (1990) explains that transformational leadership occurs "when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group" (p. 21).
In an attempt to uncover the fundamental practices that leaders manifest when performing at their personal best to get extraordinary things done, Kouzes & Posner developed the leadership practices model (Kouzes & Posner, 2001). This study focuses on Kouzes & Posner's leadership model as an approach to transformational leadership. According to the model there are five behaviours or practices of leaders: 1) challenging the process, 2) inspiring a shared vision, 3) enabling others to act, 4) modelling the way and 5) encouraging the heart.

Challenging the process consists of two components namely (1) search for opportunities by seek-

ing innovative ways to change, grow, and improve and (2) experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes (Kouzes & Posner: 2001, 2007).

The two commitments of inspiring a shared vision is through (1) Envision an uplifting and ennobling future and (2) Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to their values, hopes and dream (Kouzes & Posner: 2001, 2007).

Kouzes & Posner explained Enabling Others to Act with two components: (1) Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and (2) strengthen others by sharing power and discretion. When leaders foster collaboration and build trust, a sense of teamwork is developed in the organization thus engaging all those who must make a particular project to work (Kouzes & Posner: 2001, 2007).

Model the Way can be achieved by (1) finding your voice by clarifying your personal values and (2) setting the example by aligning actions with shared values. The last principle of Kouzes and Posner model is to encourage the heart by (1) recognizing contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence and (2) celebrating the values and victories by creating a spirit of community (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Previous Empirical Studies on National Culture and Transformational Leadership:

Different researchers and theorists adopted various kinds of leadership assessment tools and cultural models to conduct such studies. Matviuk (2010) conducted an empirical study on the correlation of cultural dimensions with leadership behavior expectations among a group of 122 managers of production plants in Mexico. The researcher utilized Kouzes and Posner's LPI instrument and Hofstede's VSM version 1994. The findings of canonical correlation analysis (CCA) showed that specific interactions among the dimensions of culture correlate with specific interactions of the dimensions of the leadership behavior expectations.

Others researchers have conducted cross-cultural studies on national culture and transformational leadership to gain an understanding on comparative leadership practices among cultures. Gooden's (2003) study on MBA students from Jamaica, Bahamas, Panama and Fort Lauderdale (USA) revealed that national culture correlates with transformational leaders' practices, thereby concluding that practices must be compatible within the culture in which each leader operates. Gooden (2003) used the Hofstede's VSM 1994 and Bass & Avolio's (1994) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

Zagorsel, Jaklic & Stough (2004) did a study on comparative leadership practices by using LPI-Self developed by Kouzes & Posner that was administered to 110 MBA students in the United States, 105 MBA students from Nigeria and 134 MBA students from Slovenia. Hofstede's model was also utilized to identify differences in terms of national cultural aspects. Their findings suggested that some practices such as Challenging the process, Inspired Shared Vision, and Encouraging the Heart may be universally practiced. However, other practices such as Enabling Others to Act and Modeling the Way, are culturally contingent. Their final conclusion is culture does have an impact but is not so strong in a 'global village'. Aimar & Stough (2007) conducted a similar cross-cultural study in United States and Argentina. They also utilized Kouzes & Posner's LPI instrument that was administered to MBA students of the two countries.

An analysis of the data obtained were studied with Hofstede's model to understand to what extent leadership practices were culturally contingent. Their study concluded that though leaders from culturally different countries use leadership practices in many similar ways, the perception of the extent to which one engage in these practices, varies significantly from culture to culture.

Muenjohn & Armstrong (2007) conducted a study of Thai subordinates who worked under Australian expatriates in Thailand to determine the relationship between work- related values of host-nation subordinates and the leadership behaviors exhibited by expatriate managers. The researchers used Hofstede model to determine cultural values of Thai subordinates while the MLQ was utilized to measure the leadership behaviors of Australian expatriates. Their findings revealed that the four cultural dimensions had no significant impact on transformational, transactional, and non-leadership behaviors. However, there was an exception of a small positive impact of power distance on transforma-

tional leadership. In general, their research found a limited influence of the cultural dimensions on the three major leadership behaviors. Similar to the findings of the study done by Zagorsel, Jaklic & Stough (2004), this study too showed that culture seemed to play a limited role.

Cultural values and leadership practices/styles have also been intensely studied with another important element, job satisfaction. A study to investigate an individual's self- assessed perspective about how work related cultural values and level of job satisfaction affect one's propensity towards transformational leadership behaviors was conducted by Macheno-Smoak (2008) and Mancheno-Smoak, Endres & Potal (2009). Though the researchers utilized the LPI scales for transformational leadership behaviors and Dorfman & Howell's (1988) cultural model. The findings suggested that the self-assessment were high on uncertainty avoidance, high of collectivism, low on power distance and low job satisfaction, to be high on transformational leadership behaviors. Their analysis also revealed that all cultural values correlated with LPI scale for transformational leadership behavior.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The research framework is based on Hofstede's model of cultural dimension and Kouzes & Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory for assessing leadership behavior. The conceptual framework is derived from the Literature Review discussed. The template of the conceptual framework is presented below:

The main hypotheses for the study is:

Ho1: There is no significant impact of national culture on transformational leadership behaviors of individuals.

H2 to H26 pertains to the impact of each national cultural dimension on each transformational leadership practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was approached in causal design, quantitative and descriptive manner. The nature of the sample for the study was non-probability convenience sampling. Primary data collection was carried out through the means of self-administered survey. Value Survey Model 1994 (VSM 94) developed by Hofstede (1994) and Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) for self-reporting developed by Kouzes and Posner (2001) were used for the study. The targeted population was the local people employed in managerial position at government offices, private and public companies in Male City. A total of 204 responses were received which was used for data analysis.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A breakdown of the respondents by sex showed that 43% of respondents were male and 57% were female. Data on age distribution revealed that the majority of the respondents were in the age group

Figure 1: National Cultural Dimensions and Transformational Leadership Practices

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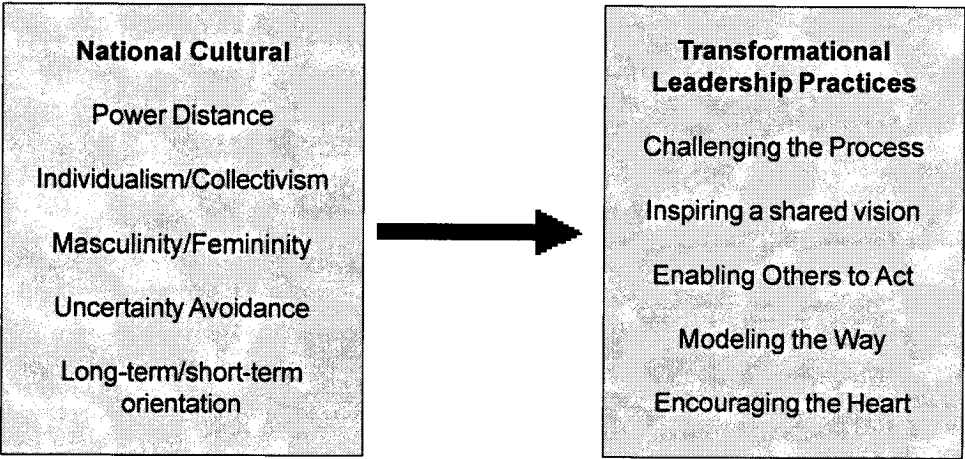
25-34 (61%). 13% belonged to the age group 18-24 years, 20% were in the age group 35-44 and 6% were in the age group 45-54. The data also showed that the majority of the respondents had 11 years to 14 years of formal school education starting from primary school, which constituted to 45%. A total of 20% of the respondents were in the category 10 years or less, 24% had formal school education of 15 years to 17 years while 11% had formal education of 18 years and above.

Reliability of the LPI in the Maldivian Context:

The overall LPI instrument was found to be highly reliable (30 items; = 0.963) and running the test with subscales also showed very high reliability with < = 0.917 for the 5 subscales.

National Cultural Dimensions:

Based on the sample size from Male city, the highest dimension was IDV at 77, higher than world average of 43. The second highest dimension was UAI at 56, compared to a world average of 64. The country scored 45 and 44 on MAS and LTO respectively, lower than the world average of 50 and 45. The lowest Hofstede dimension for Maldives was PDI at 25, significantly lower than world average of 55.

Hypotheses Testing:

A canonical correlation analysis was conducted using the national cultural dimensions as predictors for transformational leadership practices to evaluate the multivariate shared relationship between these two variable sets. Canonical correlation analysis yielded five functions with squared correlation of 0.1155, 0.4613, .02035, .00556 and .00271 for each successive function The multivariate tests of significance below show that $p < 0.05$ in all the tests suggesting that the model is statistically significant. This implies that there is an impact of national culture on transformational leadership practices. Therefore, the null hypothesis 1 can be rejected.

Table 1: Multivariate Test of Significance

Test Name	Value	Approx.F	Hypoth.DF	Error DF	Sig. of F
Pillais	0.19030	1.56685	25.00	990.00	0.038
Hotellings	0.20809	1.60149	25.00	962.00	0.031
Wilks	0.81966	1.58860	25.00	722.18	0.035
Roys	0.11555				

Table 2: Summarized Results of Regression Analysis

No	Hypothesis	R	R-Sq	F	Sig	T
1	LTO and Model the Way	0.252	0.064	13.727	0.000	-3.705
2	IDV and Model the Way	0.245	0.060	12.890	0.000	-3.590
3	IDV and Challenge the Process	0.186	0.035	7.261	0.008	-2.695
4	IDV and Enabling Others to Act	0.186	0.034	7.205	0.008	-2.684
5	LTO and Encourage the Heart	0.185	0.034	7.155	0.008	-2.675
6	LTO and Enabling Others to Act	0.179	0.032	6.654	0.011	-2.580
7	MAS and Model the Way	0.178	0.032	6.630	0.011	-2.575
8	LTO and Inspire a Shared Vision	0.174	0.030	6.303	0.013	-2.511
9	IDV and Inspire a Shared Vision	0.172	0.030	6.160	0.014	-2.482
10	UAI and Enabling Others to Act	0.166	0.027	5.689	0.018	2.385
11	UAI and Model the Way	0.166	0.028	5.730	0.018	2.394
12	IDV and Encourage the Heart	0.166	0.028	5.737	0.018	-2.395
13	MAS and Encourage the Heart	0.153	0.023	4.811	0.029	-2.193
14	UAI and Encourage the Heart	0.149	0.022	4.570	0.034	2.138
15	UAI and Challenge the Process	0.143	0.020	4.217	0.041	2.054
16	PDI and Model the Way	0.139	0.019	3.980	0.047	-1.995
17	LTO and Challenge the Process	0.125	0.016	3.125	0.074	-1.793
18	MAS and Inspire a Shared Vision	0.124	0.015	3.140	0.078	-1.772
19	UAI and Inspire a Shared Vision	0.115	0.013	2.718	0.101	1.649
20	MAS and Enabling Others to Act	0.092	0.008	1.725	0.191	-1.313
21	MAS and Challenge the Process	0.086	0.007	1.493	0.223	-1.222
22	PDI and Enabling Others to Act	0.081	0.007	1.349	0.247	-1.162
23	PDI and Challenge the Process	0.064	0.004	0.825	0.365	-0.908
24	PDI and Encourage the Heart	0.051	0.003	0.526	0.469	-0.725
25	PDI and Inspire a Shared Vision	0.012	0.000	0.027	0.869	-0.166

Results of H2 to H26 show that some of national cultural dimensions have impact on some of leadership practice inventory (Refer table no: 2).

As seen in the summarized Table 2, item numbers 1 through 16 are statistically significant where the independent variable have an impact on the dependent variable. R-sq indicates the percentage of variance on the dependent variable by the independent variable. The model is considered statistically significant where $p < 0.05$. The t-values greater than 2 are also considered significant and these values represent that there is a main effect from the independent variable. Results also showed the following findings:

1) LTO was inversely related to Model the Way, Encourage the Heart, Enable the Heart and Inspire a Shared Vision.

2) IDV was inversely related to all the five practices of transformation leadership practices.

3) MAS had a negative relationship with Model the Way and Encourage the Heart.

4) UAI had a positive relationship with Enable Others to Act, Model the Way, Encourage the Heart and Challenge the Process

5) Power Distance had an inverse relationship with Model the Way

DISCUSSION

Maldives score on Hofstede's first dimension PDI was 25, much lower than world average of 55. Maldives underwent a democratic reform in 2004, which led to the establishment of independent institutions such as Human Rights Commission of the

Maldives, the Civil Service Commission, and the ratification of a reform Constitution. The democratic reform gave rise to the first ever multi-party election in 2008 (Transparency Maldives, 2008). Since then the citizens are not intimidated by fear and are able to freely question authority through means of mass demonstration, media and public. The trend can be seen in both government and private institutions where employees are seen to be freely questioning authority. In light of these changes, Maldives has scored low on Power Distance.

Maldives score on the IDV index is 77 which is the highest Hofstede dimension overall, compared to a world average of 43. While Maldives is a close-knit society with extensive relationships within and between families, the remoteness of the islands has compelled individuals to rely on themselves. Smaller nuclear families are increasingly becoming common mainly as a result of lack of living space and economic self-reliance within families (Ahmed, 2007).

Maldives scored 45 on MAS index, compared to world average of 50. Traditionally, gender gaps were persistent and the role of men and women in Maldives were clearly distinct. Even though in the last few years, much have changed and women make a significant contribution to social, political and economic affairs, women continue to face discrimination in most walks of life.

Maldives scored 56 on UAI, comparatively lower than world average score of 64. Maldivians have a moderate tolerance level for uncertainty and change. Any major change within a corporation or country's policy tends to create uneasiness and is subjected to criticism and abuse. Maldivian culture has a fairly moderate level of tolerance for change and unambiguous situation as it takes time for the society to accept changes and learn to live with it.

In the last Hofstede's dimension LTO, Maldives scored 44 compared to world average 45. Maldivian society has a great respect for tradition and this is revived during festive holidays and special occasions. Traditional food, music, dance, events and other cultural events and ceremonies continue even to present day reflecting the short-term orientation of the Maldives.

The result showed that all five dimensions of culture correlated with the transformational leadership practices. The findings confirm what literature suggests about the relationship between culture and leadership practices. Findings by Gooden (2003), Matviuk (2010), and Macheno-Smoak (2008) that dimensions of national culture correlates with transformational leadership practices are thus confirmed.

On further examination of each cultural value dimension on the five leadership practices showed that power distance had a significant impact only on Model the Way. This result is in line with the study by Muenjohn & Armstrong (2007) where Power Distance overall had only a small significant impact on transformational leadership practices. A low power distance environment will make it easier for the manager to communicate effectively to his subordinates as the lack of emotional distance can facilitate the process.

On the individualism dimension, results showed that it had a significant impact on all the five practices of transformational leadership practices. In addition, IDV had a negative relationship with all the scales of LPI. Jung & Avolio (1999) argued that people from individualistic cultures are expected to be more motivated to satisfy their own self-interest and personal goals. As a result, individualists may be more motivated by short-term focused transactional leadership than transformational leadership. This statement is further affirmed by the study of Macheno- Smoak, Endres & Potak (2009) where the researchers found that collectivism were positively related to transformational leadership.

Masculinity value dimension had a significant impact on two practices of transformational practices, namely Encourage the Heart and Model the Way. With a moderate level of Masculinity, it is expected that most leaders practice the above two up to a certain level. The research also showed an inverse relationship between MAS index and both the transformational leadership practices of Encourage the Heart and Model the Way. This indicates that lower the level of masculinity the higher the chances of leaders practicing transformational leadership behaviors and vice versa. This result is therefore is consistent with the findings of Hartog et al. (1999).

On the uncertainty avoidance value dimension, the research showed significant impact on all transformational leadership practices except with Inspire a Shared Vision. This is parallel with the findings of Macheno- Smoak, Endres & Potak (2009), which

showed that uncertainty avoidance is positively related to transformational leadership practices.

Maldives was found to be moderate in LTO and had a negative relationship with transformational leadership practices. This result is in contradiction to what is found in most studies that show LTO has a positive relationship with transformational leadership practices (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011; Jung & Avolio, 1999; Lemma, 2007). It can be assumed that because of the short-term oriented culture of Maldives, leaders are more prone to satisfying employee's short-term goals by developing their skills, immediate rewards and celebrations, provide trainings which will ultimately maximize the long-term potential.

IMPLICATIONS

The study provides evidence and supports the literature reviewed that culture influences transformational leadership practices. Research also provides compelling evidence that transformational leadership best works in collectivist societies. An organizational culture where values like teamwork, cooperation and betterment of the whole company are emphasized can help to foster the desired working environment.

Transformational leadership can be practiced and successful in the Maldives given the low power distance, and moderate level of masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation. It also requires connecting with the employees, understanding their needs and building trust and appreciation that best fits an environment of low to moderate level of masculinity.

Experimenting and taking risks, looking for ways to improvise the work process and change requires leaders and subordinates that have high level tolerance for uncertainty. Moderate uncertainty avoidance level can help to achieve these practices but not to the full potential due to the possibility of leaders/subordinates being highly cautious. Maldives being short-term oriented will require leaders to fulfill the short-term needs of employees and gaining their confidence to build a successful future. A transformational leader should be able to convince his/her subordinates about the benefits of common future vision and planning for the same.

Understanding culture therefore provides insight into the kind of leadership practices that can be best utilized with the subordinates. Leadership styles that are aligned with cultural values have better chances for an organization's success.

LIMITATIONS

The questionnaire is still a tool that measures western concepts and therefore, there could be concerns that the results could be due to the influence of western concepts. There is also the possibility of bias due to self-reported leadership practices as it may contrast with the actual behaviors of leaders. Focusing only on managerial level employees may have resulted in bringing out cultural values that reflect the values of managers alone. So a better understanding on culture can be gained when several locations in Male are covered. For this study specifically, the results could be reflective of values and attitudes of managerial employees and not appropriate for generalization of the whole country.

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