MBAD 821 Leadership Group assignment 2019 African Leadership

As a field of enquiry cross cultural and international management, like leadership studies, remains dominated by essentialist perspectives, "characterized by realist ontologies, positivistic epistemologies, and nomothetic methodologies" (Staber, 2006: 191). The work of Hofstede (1980a) and GLOBE (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004) have dominated the cultural research landscape and are prime examples of this approach, each of which reports empirical evidence comparing different societies against a range of cultural indices.

Hofstede proposed that "many of the differences in employee motivation, management styles, and organizational structures of companies throughout the world can be traced to differences in the collective mental programming of people in different national cultures" (Hofstede, 1980b, 42). His research used a predominantly quantitative approach to record the value orientations of participants from different countries across a number of dimensions *(power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity*), resulting in a country profile that could be used to determine appropriate management and leadership styles. Whilst the GLOBE researchers (and others) took issue with Hofstede's sampling and analysis procedures (e.g. Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001; Javidan, House, Dorfman, Hanges, & de Luque, 2006) their approach can be considered as comparable and, indeed, broadly utilized the same cultural dimensions, along with long- versus short-term orientation (Hofstede, 2001), humane orientation and assertiveness (House et al., 2004).

Whilst these studies constitute a substantial evidence basis for understanding cross-cultural leadership and management, through promoting a largely psychological approach, based upon the quantification of cultural values, they may inadvertently reinforce a rather functionalist approach that underestimates individual and contextual differences and imposes Western frameworks of analysis (Graen, 2006; Scandura & Dorfman, 2004). The dimensionalization of national culture, however, is not the only or necessarily most productive approach to understanding cultural differences. As Tayeb (2001: 93) argues "by putting culture into neat, sometimes unconnected, little boxes we are in danger of losing sight of the big picture". The relatively static nature of such scales largely neglects the fluctuating, multi-layered and sometimes paradoxical nature of culture whereby, for example, individualistic nations such as the UK and Germany demonstrate collectivism under certain circumstances and collectivist cultures, such as China, demonstrate individualism under others. If, indeed, dimensions such as those identified by Hofstede et al. do exist then perhaps they should be considered as a dualism rather than a unitary scale (Lowe, 2001; Fang, 1998) - as with the co-existence of 'yin' and 'yang' in Chinese philosophy.

By reducing the study of leadership across cultures to comparison of cultural value indices we run a very real risk of oversimplifying cultural variations and neglecting other significant factors such as the influence of history, geography, demographics, religion, and individual differences. Even where relationships have been identified between cultural values and leadership preferences (e.g. Zagoršek, 2004; Ergeneli et al., 2007) the effect is invariably small and somewhat partial: insufficient to predict or explain likely leadership behaviors or outcomes.

Instruction

Given the information provided above, your group members are requested to each conduct interviews with 5 individuals with employment experience, using the follow questions:

Irrespective of the diverse Western theories on leadership, ***what would you describe as the three (3) ideal leadership characteristics that will promote and facilitate growth and progress in South Africa. Explain, using concrete examples, the role that leaders (direct supervisor or manager)*** *could played that would enable companies / institutions to succeed in South Africa,* ***through their interactions with staff.***

Using a qualitative research approach, it is expected from you to record, with the permission of the respondent, the response to the question above, to transcribe the responses and to identify themes and super themes, to look for similarities and differences in responses between various demographic groups and to report the results.

Your report

You report, of not more than 10 pages including references should adhere to the following structure

- Introduction
- Literature review (African leadership notions - characteristics)
- Research method (research approach; sample characteristics such as gender; age; race; economic sector where employed – therefore this should be part of the demographic section of your interview; data gathering method; data analysis)
- Results
- Managerial implications
- Limitations of the study
- Recommendations

MAFIKENG STUDENTS SUBMIT: **on eFundi by ……**

Mafikeng students check with Prof Yvonne for submission date

POTCHEFSROOM/VAAL students. Please submit your report (and e-mail your transcribes of the interview to Leon.Jackson@nwu.ac.za with the heading data for group assignment MBAD 821) on or before the due date in study guide for your campus.

Useful literature, also see your study guide and do own searches

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