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Full Length Research Paper

A comparative study of educational leadership in Taiwan and the USA

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This research study employed a casual comparative approach to investigating transformational leadership practices of educational leaders in Taiwan and the USA. Convenient samples of 50 educational leaders from each culture were selected as two sample groups to draw cross-cultural comparisons. The instrument selected to measure exemplary leadership practices was Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practice Inventory-Self (LPI-Self). The ANOVA results revealed that significant differences existed on three components of leadership practices: Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision and Challenging the Process. Self-perceived leadership practices of educational leaders between the two cultures suggested culturally specific interpretations. The impact of culture on educational leadership practices was discussed. Findings of the study have implications for the body of research in a number of related disciplines, such as development, selections of educational leaders, and cross-cultural research on educational leadership.

Key words: Transformational leadership, exemplary leadership practices, Chinese paternalistic leadership, sampling comparability, normality assumption.

INTRODUCTION

While some researchers suggest that concepts of leadership attributes, behaviors or practices are found to vary from culture to culture, others have posited that there are leadership traits universally accepted as "good" and effective across cultures (Lam, 2002; Den Hartog and Dicken, 2004). Those who support the view that leadership is culturally specific argue that certain leadership behaviors are desired to lead in a given culture and definitions of leadership also vary across cultures (Cray and Mallory, 1998; Den Hartog and Dicken, 2004; Tasie, 2009). Studies have also shown that leadership concepts and behaviors in Chinese societies (including Taiwan) are strongly influenced by Chinese cultural traditions of Confucianism and Legalism, and are very different from Western concepts of leadership (Cheng et al., 2004; Wang, 2007; Wong, 2001).

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There is now a considerable literature concerning the significance of transformational leadership on organizational effectiveness and success (including schools) (for example, Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; Printy, 2003; Jandaghi, Zarei Matin, and Farjami, 2009). Within the cross-cultural leadership literature, much interest has been in to what extent cultural differences reflect in business leadership practices (Boehnke, Bontis, DiStefano, and DiStefano, 2003; Jung, Bass, and Sosik, 1995; Ergeneli, Gohar, and Temirbekova, 2007). Mounting evidence in the literature suggest that the effectiveness of transformational leadership has culturally specific meanings in its practices (Aimar and Stough, 2007; Slater, Boone, Price, Martinez, Alvarez, Topete, and Olea, 2002; Zagorsek, Jaklic and Stough, 2003; Zagoršek, 2005). Nevertheless, empirical studies on the applicability of transformational leadership to educational leaders across cultures are scarce. The purpose of the study, therefore, is to exa-mine the similarities and differences between educational leaders in Taiwan and the USA with regard to their self-perceptions of leadership practices.

Knowledge regarding exactly how educational leadership is practiced in different cultures might lead to significant advances in educational leadership training and development programs aiming at facilitating those engaged in cross-cultural assignments.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Whether the general idea of leadership is culturally specific or universal, or whether there are universally appreciable leadership attributes, has been an emphasis in cross-cultural leadership studies (Den Hartog and Dicken, 2004; Scandura and Dorfman, 2004; Spreitzer, Perttula and Xin, 2005). In exploring the nature of leadership across cultures, it is important to note that a significant range of cross-cultural leadership studies have followed Hofestede's framework of cultural dimensions to identify and evaluate culturally specific perceptions with respect to organizational effectiveness, time management, decision making, influence tactics, as well as transformational leadership behaviors (Ardlchille and Kuchinke, 2002; Chang, 2003; Leong, 2006; Nonis, Teng, and Ford, 2005; Redpath and Nielsen, 1997; Soares, Farhangmehr, and Shoham, 2007; Yukl, 2003). Despite the popularity of culturally specific view of leadership, theoretical discussions and empirical evidence have been presented to support that transformational leadership would be universally accepted and preferred. It has been claimed that transformational leadership behaviors would facilitate leaders in different cultures to lead effectively by inspiring shared visions and creating exceptional performance (Bass and Avolio, 1990; Boehnke, Bontis, DiStefano, and DiStefano 2003).

Accordingly, some attributes reflecting transformational leadership are universally endorsed as contributing to exceptional leadership behaviors, such as motive arouser, foresight, encouraging, communicative, trustworthy, dynamic, positive, confidence builder, and motivational. Culturally contingent charismatic attributes likewise have been identified to include enthusiasm, risk taking, ambition, uniqueness, sacrifice, sincerity, sensitivity, compassion, and willfulness (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, and Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1999; Den Hartog and Dicken, 2004; Scandura and Dorfman, 2004). Since 1993, the ongoing multinational study titled Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) program has served as a mainstream frame-work for cross-cultural leadership/management research community. Findings of the GLOBE program empirically confirmed that characteristics of transformational leadership, such as 'encouraging,' 'positive,' 'motivational,' 'confidence builder,' 'dynamic,' 'excellence-oriented' and 'foresight", appear to be generalizable across 61 cultures (Den Hartog et al., 2004; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Vipin, 2004; Javidan and House, 2001; Grachev, 2009). Nevertheless, none of the attributes or characteristics universally perceived as determinants of outstanding leadership described in transformational leadership literature has been empirically examined on educational leadership across cultures.

Contrary to the view of universalistic applicability of transformational leadership, a study by Shao and Webber (2006) revealed that certain personality traits positively correlated to behaviors of transformational leadership in the US context were not evident in the Chinese societies. Similarly, in a study examining the relationships between transformational leadership and Hofstede's cultural dimensions across cultures, some aspects of transformational leadership were found to be universal, whereas others were cultural-specific (Ergeneli et al., 2007).

Globalization is a desirable phenomenon in business sectors and educational institutions as well. Given the increased globalization of today's academic world, serious concerns have been raised about how to broaden leadership competencies of educational leaders in order to lead effectively in the increasing globalized academic context (Dimmock and Walker, 2000; Webber and Robertson, 2003). To date, there are relatively few published studies on cross-cultural leadership in educational settings, particularly from the perspective of transformational leadership practices. The only study found on educational administration students' transformational leadership practices indicate that US students scored significantly higher than their Mexican counterparts on all areas of leadership practices. Two interesting questions emerged from existing literature reviewed. First, weather the universal applicability of transformational leadership theory was empirically evident across cultures (Slater, Boone, Price, Martinez, Alvarez, Topete, and Olea, 2002)? Second, whether paternalistic leadership, rooted deeply from Chinese philosophical thinking, still played an influential role in educational leadership practices in Taiwan?

The present study attempted to make valid comparisons of educational leadership practices between Taiwan, a Chinese society, and the USA, aiming at testing the generalizability of a Western leadership theory by taking contextual factors into the methodological consideration (Child, 2008; Lam, 2002). In line with the study by Slater et al. (2002), the present study was intended to investigate the similarities and differences between educational leaders' leadership practices in Taiwan and the USA. Components in relation to perceptions of leadership practices addressed in the study included five exemplary leadership practices as determined by the self-reported assessment on Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) derived from the transformational leadership model. The five components of exemplary leadership practices are

Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, and Encouraging the Heart (Kouzes and Posner, 1995).

Taiwan and the USA were chosen as comparison cultures in this study because previous cross-cultural researchers found that Taiwan and the USA contrast greatly on Hofstede's dimensions of cultural differences, such as individualism-collectivism continuum and power distance scale (Campbell, Bommer, and Yee, 1993; Spector, Cooper, and Sparks, 2001). For example, a study by Ardichvili and Kuchinke (2002) showed that the Americans routinely ranked the highest on the dimension of individualism. In contrast, empirical evidences suggested that most East Asian societies, such as Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, adhere to the central theme of groupism or collectiveness (Campbell et al., 1993; Jung et al., 1995). More recently, a study comparing business leaders in Taiwan and the USA found that culture and traditional values moderate the relationships between transformational leadership and leadership effectiveness; it was concluded that the effectiveness of the four dimensions of transformational leadership (appropriate role model, intellectual stimulation, high performance expectations, and articulating a vision) is culturally specific (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Paternalistic leadership as a cultural tradition has been long practiced in Confucian societies, such as China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Paternalistic leadership and transformational leadership may share some common leadership attributes, and may have cultural-specific ideologies that are not easily transplanted to other cultural settings (Cheng et al., 2004; Pellegrini et al., 2008). Research studies further suggest that the relationship-oriented behaviors of transformational leadership would overlap with some concepts in Chinese paternalistic leadership, such as promoting cooperation, providing individual support, and acting as an exemplar to subordinates. These are also preferred behaviors in collectivistic cultures. In contrast, less relationship-oriented components (such as risk taking, vision building, and intellectual stimulation) are transformational leadership behaviors not seen in paternalistic leadership (Chen and Farh, 1999; Cheng et al., 2004). Prior research also offers theoretical arguments suggesting that cultural values of collectivism and low uncertainty avoidance matters more for relationship-oriented leadership behavior, whereas the values of individualism and high uncertainty avoidance matters more for task-oriented behavior leadership (Yeh, 2006).

Studies which have used LPI-Self to examine transformational leadership practices between the USA and collectivistic countries, such as Slovenia, Nigeria, Argentina and Mexico, reported conflicting findings. It was found that managers from Slovenia, Nigeria and Argentina scored significantly higher on the relationship-oriented leadership behaviors of Modeling the Way, and Enabling Others to Act. While overall, US managers had lower scores on all leadership practices, including the task-oriented behaviors of Challenging the Process, and Inspiring a Shared Vision, although the differences were not significant (Aimar and Stough, 2007; Zagoršek et al,. 2003). Differing from the above findings, Slater et al. (2002) found that U.S superiors scored significantly higher than Mexican superiors on all five of Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices.

This raises the question of the universality of transformational leadership across cultures. Although, there have been studies on cultural differences in Slovenia, Nigeria, Argentina and Mexico, unknown is whether leadership practices found to have significance in collectivist cultures (such as Modeling the Way, and Enabling Others to Act) would be important to Taiwanese educational leaders. Or if leadership practices less relevant to relationship-oriented behaviors (such as Challenging the Process, and Inspiring a Shared Vision) would be less important to Taiwanese educational leaders than their US counterparts. It is therefore the aim of this study to investigate cross-cultural differences and similarities between Taiwan and the USA in educational leaders' transformational leadership practices. To either support or reject the claim that educational leaders in the two comparison cultures would score differently on all five of Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices, the main research question was proposed thus.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Are there significant differences between the Taiwanese and the US educational leaders with regard to their total leadership practice scores and scores of the five LPI components in terms of Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, and Encouraging the Heart?

Recent studies of cultural evolution in Taiwan suggest that Taiwan's cultural transformation from deep-rooted traditional Confucius values to having its own cultural identity over the past 50 years is the result of its high level of exposure to the Western world, its political confrontation with China, democratization and continuous globalization. Taiwan has recently been characterized as having lower power distance, and relatively lower collectivistic culture than in Hofstede's findings (Wu, 2006). It was also suggested that Taiwan has developed a unique culture with attributes commonly seen in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as anxiety, insecurity, flexibility, a short-term focus and greater sensitivity (Fu, Peng, Kennedy, and Yukl, 2004). Culture is dynamic; it is therefore the aim of the present study to examine empirically whether the dynamic force of culture in Taiwan has likewise affected its educational leadership

practices. How educational leadership practices differ between the two comparison cultures and how cultural assumptions and beliefs interact with educational leadership practices in Taiwan and the USA might shield a light for further cross-cultural research interested in comparing educational leadership in different cultures.

METHODS

Samples

Convenience samples of educational leaders in Taiwan and the USA were selected from the two cultures. The population of the study included school principals, presidents, academic deans, student deans and department chairs at all levels of schooling. Since the samples were not randomly selected, any differences between the groups would be used for illustrative purposes only. A sample size of 50 from each educational setting was based on the recommendation by Gall, Gall and Brog (2003) and Gay and Airasian (2000). Accordingly, a minimum of 30 participants is needed to establish the existence or nonexistence of a relationship. Since convenience sampling strategy was employed in this study, sampling equivalence between the two comparison cultures was tested before concluding the data collection procedure (Gall et al., 2003; Gay and Airasian, 2000). Further, while small sample sizes were used, assumption tests on normal distributions of dependent variables must be satisfied in order to yield valid *p* values. This stage of the analyses was to ensure sampling comparability and to satisfy the assumptions of normality for cross-cultural comparisons (Green and Salkind, 2005).

Measures

In addition to a demographic questionnaire, the instrument selected to measure leadership practices was Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practice Inventory-Self (LPI-Self). The instrument was selected for two reasons: First, it is comprehensive in nature. Second, it has sound psychometric properties for conducting cross-cultural research. The instrument of LPI was developed based on transformational leadership theory. Through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research approaches, as well as in-depth interviews regarding individuals' best leadership experiences, Kouzes and Posner generated the conceptual framework of five practices for exemplary leaders: Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, Encouraging the Heart. The LPI was examined of having good internal reliability, test-retest reliability, concurrent validity and discriminate validity (Kouzes and Posner 1995). In addition, the high degree of structural equivalence of LPI suggests that the instrument is a reliable measurement for cross-cultural leadership studies (Zagorsek, Stough, and Jaklic, 2006).

Procedure and design

In addition to the selection of instruments, sampling equivalence and translation of the instruments are two critical issues that would result in incorrect data, finding and conclusions in cross-cultural leadership studies (Thomas, 2007). To avoid these potential faults, this current study adopted the most recommended translation procedure: forward and backward translations of the two instruments into Chinese language used in Taiwan (Peters and Passchier, 2006). In addition, Chi square analyses of demographic breakdowns and one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests used to check the normality assumption were conducted before concluding the data collection procedure (Green and Salkind, 2005).

In this paper, the US sample group and the Taiwanese sample group were investigated as two cultural groups in order to appropriately draw cross-cultural comparisons. To address the research question of the study, one-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to test if significant differences exist on the five leadership practices between the two cultures.

RESULTS

Chi square analyses of demographics

Since the issue of sampling equivalence was a primary concern in this study, similarity of demographic characteristics of the two convenience sample groups should be considered in order to result in useful data for cross-cultural comparisons (Thomas, 2007). According to Gall et al. (2003), in selecting comparison groups, one might take sampling comparability into consideration and recommended the use of inferential statistics to define conveniences samples. Chi square analyses were used to examine the sampling equivalence from populations of the two cultures on extraneous variables, such as gender, age, educational levels, supervising positions, etc. The purpose was to solve possible problems caused by lacking sampling comparability or sampling bias resulting from using convenience sampling strategies. Results of Chi square analyses are shown in Table 1. When setting a lower α at .01 to spotlight potentially important differences, results of Chi square analyses indicated that the two comparison samples were not significantly different from each other on a majority of extraneous variables.

One sample Kolmogorov-Smimov test of the normality assumption

Before conducting ANOVA analyses, one sample Kolmogorov-Smimov tests were run on the overall leadership practices to ensure that the dependent variables are normally distributed (Tables 2 and 3).

Results of the one sample Kolmogorov-Smimov tests proved that the distributions were normal ($p > 0.05$); thus, the normality assumption for ANOVA test was satisfied. In other words, results reported in Tables 2 and 3 indicated that the assumption of normal distributions of overall leadership practices among the Taiwanese and US samples was satisfied.

ANOVA based on two levels

In an attempt to understand the role played by cultural differences in self-perceived leadership practices, A General-Linear Model ANOVA was utilized to detect

Table 1. Chi Square result for demographic breakdowns by country.

	Pearson χ	P value (2-sided)	Cramer's V
Gender	1.051	0.305	0.103
Age	8.392	0.078	0.290
Education	2.845	0.241	0.169
Position	13.850	0.037*	0.415
School Level	8.682	0.034*	0.394
Years Supervising	4.599	0.100	0.214

*p ≤0.05; ** p ≤ 0.01

Table 2. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for overall LPI (the Taiwanese Sample).

		Total LPI
N		50
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	120.18
	Std. deviation	11.563
Most Extreme	Absolute	0.093
Differences	Positive	0.093
	Negative	-0.067
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		0.655
Asymp. Sig. (2-tails)		0.784

[a]. test distribution is Normal; [b]. Calculated from data.

Table 3. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for overall LPI (the U.S. Sample)

		Total LPI
N		50
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	126.30
	Std. deviation	10.068
Most Extreme	Absolute	0.083
Differences	Positive	0.062
	Negative	-0.083
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		0.590
Asymp. Sig. (2-tails)		0.878

[a]. test distribution is Normal; [b]. Calculated from data.

significant differences in distinct areas of leadership practices and the overall leadership practices between the Taiwanese and the US educational leaders. Results of ANOVAs were summarized in Table 4. Means and strand deviations for cross-cultural comparisons were presented in Table 5.

The first part of the research question was intended to compare overall leadership practice between the two comparison cultures. The US participants, on average, perceived themselves as more effective leaders than their Taiwanese counterparts. The result suggests that there existed significant difference in total LIP scores between the two cultures. The second part of the research question was to examine if there were sig-nificant differences between cultures in distinct areas of LPI. The ANOVA showed that the Taiwanese participants, on average, scored significantly higher on the component of modeling the way than the US educational leaders. Moreover, the US participants, on average, scored significantly higher on LPI components of Inspiring a Shared Vision and Challenging the Process than their Taiwanese counterparts. No significant differences were

Table 4. One-way ANOVA Summary for 5 LPI components between Cultures.

LPI components	F	Sig.	η^2
Total LPI	7.967	0.006**	0.75
Modeling the Way	4.480	0.037*	0.044
Inspiring a shared vision	15.400	0.000**	0.136
Challenging the process	80.367	0.000**	0.451
Enabling other to act	0.889	0.348	0.009
Encourage the heart	0.440	0.509	0.004

*p ≤ 0.05; ** p ≤ 0.01.

Table 5. Means and standard deviations for comparisons of 5 LPI components.

LPI components	Culture/Ranking	M	SD
Total LPI	Taiwan	120.18	11.563
	USA	126.30	10.068
Modeling the Way	Taiwan (2)	25.36	3.343
	USA (5)	23.82	3.911
Inspiring a shared vision	Taiwan (4)	22.96	3.481
	USA (2)	25.38	2.626
Challenging the process	Taiwan (5)	21.42	3.459
	USA (1)	26.76	2.404
Enabling other to act	Taiwan (1)	25.78	3.145
	USA (3)	25.20	3.003
Encourage the heart	Taiwan (3)	24.66	3.799
	USA (4)	25.14	3.429

differences were found between the two cultures with regard to Enabling Others to Act and Encouraging the Heart. It can be infer from the above results that transformational leadership has universally appreciable leadership attributes, as well as culturally specific components in it.

To further understand educational leaders' self-perceptions of their competencies in the five exemplary leadership practices, ranking orders of the five LPI components from the highest to the lowest means were detected for respective cultural groups in this study. Table 5 showed that Taiwanese educational leaders' LPI mean scores ranked from the highest to the lowest were (1) Enabling Others to Act (M= 25.78; SD= 3.15), (2) Modeling the Way (M= 25.36; SD= 3.34), (3) Encouraging the Heart (M= 24.66; SD=3.80), (4) Inspiring a Shared Vision (M= 22.96; SD= 3.48), and (5) Challenging the Process (M=21.42; SD=3.46). The US educational leaders' LPI mean scores ranked from the highest to the lowest were: (1) Challenging the Process (M= 26.76; SD= 2.40), (2) Inspiring a Shared Vision (M= 25.38; SD= 2.63), (3) Enabling Others to Act (M=25.20; SD=3.00), (4) Encouraging the Heart (M=25.14; SD=3.43), and (5) Modeling the Way (M=23.82; SD=3.91).

It is interesting to note that Challenging the Process, perceived by the US educational leaders as the most competent leadership practices, was found to be the least competent leadership practices for educational leaders in Taiwan. Enabling Others to Act was the most competent leadership practice for Taiwanese educational leaders and it was moderately competent leadership practice for the US educational leaders. Modeling the Way was the least competent leadership practice for the US educational leaders whereas it was the most competent LPI component for their Taiwanese counterparts.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

From a comparative cross-cultural perspective, several important results have emerged after answering the main

research question proposed in the present study. Shao and Webber (2006) suggested that the Chinese business leaders spend significant amount of time directing the subordinates towards the common vision, and exerting influence on subordinate's long-term contribution to the organizational goal. Differing from Shao and Webber's study (2006) on business leaders, this study found that the US educational leaders outperformed the Taiwanese educational leaders in the dimension of Inspiring a Shared Vision. One possible explanation is that leaders may have to balance multiple roles based on contextual and audience needs. Situational leadership and contingency leadership were leadership theories embracing such ideology. Likewise, there are three dimensions in Chinese Paternalistic leadership: (1) authoritarianism:-the leader resumes the role as a director, who asserts authority, and demands unquestionable obedience from subordinates; (2) benevolence:- the leader's role is to act as a family member, showing individualized, holistic concern for subordinates' personal or familial well being,

(3) moral leadership:- the leader resumes the role as a mentor, demonstrating superior personal virtues, self-discipline, and unselfishness (Farh and Cheng, 2000; Pellegrini et al., 2008). When a leader inclines more toward the dimension of authoritarianism leadership, he or she might have less reliance on subordinates; instead, asserting authority and control over subordinates, and demanding unquestionable obedience were emphasized while exercising authoritarian leadership. For authoritarian leaders, communication of a vision may not be preferable (Smith and Wang, 1996). The result may also lead to the assumption that authoritarianism leadership as a predominant leadership practice in Chinese society still remains significant in Taiwan's educational settings.

The results also indicated that the US educational leaders in the study outperformed Taiwanese participants in the LPI component of Challenging the Process. Taiwanese educational leaders in the study perceived Challenging the Process as their least competent leadership practice. One possible explanation for this is the role of uncertainty avoidance as a cultural dimension of Hofstede's framework for national differences (Hofstede, 1991). In both Hofstede's and the GLOBE studies, Taiwan obtained higher scores on the dimension of uncertainty avoidance than their US counterparts. Educational leaders in Taiwan may therefore have a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; thus, it is likely to be distrustful of challenging existing assumptions and values (Wang, Zhang, and Goodfellow, 1998). Violations of existing norms and regulations would be upsetting; followers would expect their leader to act according to the traditional accepted ways. Risk-taking decisions would tend to reduce followers' trust in the leadership. In contrast, low uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as the USA, are more tolerant of ambiguity and risk taking. People with low uncertainty characteristics place more importance on the outcomes of a behavior of decision rather than on confirming existing rules and norms.

In aggregate, the results of this study are consistent with previous studies differentiating leadership practices in collectivistic cultures from those in the USA (Aimar and Stough, 2007; Zagoršek et al*.,* 2003). The above mentioned findings also showed that the LPI-Self scores of educational leaders in the USA versus Taiwan differed significantly on task-oriented LPI components of Inspiring a Shared Vision and Challenging the Process. Modeling the Way*,* a leadership practices appeared to be more relationship-oriented and have significance in collectivist cultures, was found to be more important to Taiwanese educational leaders than their US counterparts. The dimension of moral leadership within the framework of paternalistic leadership requires that the leader plays the role of a mentor, demonstrating superior personal virtues, self-discipline, and unselfishness, which echoes the dimension of Modeling the Way in Western transformational leadership (Cheng et al*.*, 2004; Pellegrini et al., 2008). This explains why Taiwanese educational leaders in the study, with the traditional role norm as moral leaders, scored higher on the dimension of Modeling the Way than their US counterparts (Wong, 2001).

The LPI components of Enabling Others to Act and Modeling the Way were perceived by Taiwanese participants in the study as of primary importance in their leadership practice. Consistent with previous cross-cultural studies on business management students, the result indicated that fostering collaboration, empowering strengthening others, and setting moral examples for others to follow were leadership behaviors frequently used by educational leaders in collectivist cultures (including Taiwan); whereas task-oriented behaviors of Challenging the Process, and Inspiring a Shared Vision were of vital significance for educational leaders in the USA (Aimar and Stough, 2007; Zagoršek et al*,.* 2006).

When overall leadership practice was analyzed, the ANOVA result indicated that the U S participants scored significantly higher than their Taiwanese counterparts. The result provided support for studies suggesting that leadership may be culturally specific (Hofstede, 1991; Spreitzer et al*.*, 2005), or at least, key transformational leadership behaviors are universal; however, the applications of these behaviors appear to have cultural differences in it (Slater et al., 2002; Boehnke et al*.*, 2003).

Despite the claim that cultural evolution happened in Taiwan, the findings with respect to authoritarianism and moral leaderships valued by Taiwanese educational leaders in this study, as well as less value Taiwanese educational leaders placing on the leadership practices of Challenging the Process and Inspiring a Shared Vision, may imply that traditional cultural characteristics collectivism, high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance still remain significant in Taiwan's educational settings.

The results presented could certainly be improved upon. The sample size of 50 for each is relatively small and may not be generalizable to the population of Taiwanese and the US educational leaders. A larger sample sizes would allow for better generalization of the study results.

There are a number of research directions for future research as a result of findings of the study. First, further analyses undertaking the comparisons of self and other ratings on leadership practices will provide a deeper and objective understanding of leadership effectiveness in educational settings. Insights from a variety of followers interacting with the leader in various ways may allow more usability of the results, as they may be generalized more from others' perspectives (Atwater, Waldman, Ostroff, Robie, and Johnson, 2005).

Findings of the study support the view that leadership behaviors are culturally bound. Therefore, another opportunity for future research is in the development of cross-culturally accepted measurement of leadership performance, or measurements of leadership performance specifically for Chinese leaders. Without adequate and validated instrumentation for cross-cultural research on leadership or research developed based on Chinese theory of management, the lack of precision will not be resolved (Barney and Shujun, 2009).

It is also recommended that future cross-cultural research examine the impact of national cultures on educational leadership practices with larger samples of respondents from multiple levels of school settings in order to extend this research study and the generalizability of results. Additional investigations examining leaders from a particular school level or shouldering international assignments, such as higher education, elementary schools or an international student center, may yield new insights regarding the interplay between organizational culture and leadership practices in different cultural settings.

Research studies thus, far have made considerable contributions to support the notion that leadership behaviors and practices vary from culture to culture. The intent of the study was to extend scholarly research into educational leaders and into a non-western country in order to gain insights about leadership in educational contexts from a cross-cultural perspective. Results of the study contribute to the body of knowledge of cross-cultural leadership and management at school settings. Knowing that cultural differences do play a role in leadership practices in educational settings can help leadership recruitment and selections in different cultural contexts, as well as leadership selections for cross-cultural assignments and leading in culturally diverse communities.

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