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The relationship between subordinate cultural identity, leader cultural intelligence and empowering and directive leadership

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Abstract

Literature suggests that leadership is a function of culture. It would consequently be expected that empowering and directive leadership will be informed by staff members' cultural identity but will be guided by the leader's cultural intelligence. There is, however, a lack of empirical insight in this respect. This study, therefore, examined the part played by subordinate cultural identity in the display of empowering and directive leadership by leaders, given a leader's cultural intelligence.

A cross-sectional survey design was used on a sample of 1140 persons, working across 19 diverse South African organisations. Reliability and factorial validity of the measuring instruments were assessed and found to be satisfactory. Correlations between empowering and directive leadership with (a) subordinate cultural identity were small, but with (b) leader cultural intelligence were medium to large.

Leader cultural intelligence was found to be a better predictor of empowering and directive leadership than was subordinate cultural identity. The results suggest that leader cultural intelligence may be important in the display of empowering and directive leadership, but that the cultural identity of subordinates might not play a determining role in this regard. Organisational leaders are thus encouraged to develop their cultural intelligence.

Key phrases

cultural identity; cultural intelligence; culture; directive leadership; empowering leadership; leadership styles; South Africa

1. INTRODUCTION

Many scholars note the challenge of defining leadership (Northouse 2013:2; Penceliah 2011:46). The leadership concept has been referred to as complex (Bennett 2016:86) and complicated (Fisher 2016:16). Despite the difficulties associated with elucidating exactly what it is, most of the definitions of leadership suggest that it concerns the process of influencing persons towards the attainment of shared goals (Algahtani 2014:72; Esen 2015:161; Maggitti, Slay & Clark 2010:52; Yukl 2013:18).

A central theme in leadership research has been the investigation as to whether leadership is a universal construct or a function of culture. To this end, two schools of thought exist (Mustafa & Lines 2012:25). The realists assert that leadership is not influenced by culture whilst the relativist perspective argues that leadership is culturally bound (Mustafa & Lines 2012:25).

There have been various efforts to study the relationship between leadership and culture, with one of the largest research endeavours being that of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavioral Effectiveness (GLOBE) project (House, Quigley & De Luque 2010:113). Though the said project concluded that some behaviours demonstrated by leaders are universally effective (Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, Dastmalchian & House 2012:507), it found that societies differ both in terms of their evaluation of the varying facets of leadership and their accompanying effectiveness (Javidan & Dastmalchian 2009:49). In this regard, culture emerges as a key variable in moulding leaders as well as their effectiveness (Hanges, Aiken, Park & Su 2016:64). Apposite leader behaviours are also noted to differ considerably across cultures (Gehrke & Claes 2017:373).

Researchers (such as Du Plessis 2011:35; Kim & Van Dyne 2012:272; Kumar, Anjum & Sinha 2011:152; Ng, Van Dyne & Ang 2009:511) draw attention to the need for leaders to

become proficient in cross-cultural leadership. Successfully influencing culturally diverse followers might, however, be fraught with problems as cultural tenets underpin values and behaviours (Fu & Yukl 2000:251). Indeed, cultural identity is no less important than individual identity (Connerley & Pedersen 2005:6).

The influencing of followers, hence, necessitates not only a solid understanding of their cultures (that is their cultural identities) but also requires leaders to comprehend how they are viewed in these cultures and their (the leaders') attendant behaviours interpreted (Yukl 2009:455). Accordingly, leaders need to consider subordinate biases towards different leadership styles (Hwang, Quast, Center, Chung, Hahn & Wohkittel 2015:259). Research by Muna (2011:90) on the qualities of successful multicultural leaders established that a crucial competency is their ability to link cultures by means of exercising their cultural awareness.

As intelligence is a function of culture (Cocodia 2014:180; Triandis 2006:25), being culturally intelligent is important for the development of successful leaders in both cross- and multicultural contexts (Alon & Higgins 2005:510). Cultural intelligence (CQ) portrays the ability to successfully acclimate in circumstances of cultural heterogeneity (Earley & Ang 2003:3). It presents as a distinct intelligence type (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay & Chandrasekar 2007:339) that is located at both the individual and organisational levels (Moon 2010:457). As such, it allows for one to direct cultural knowledge in the pursuit of organisational objectives (Dutta & Dutta 2013:250). To this end, culturally intelligent leaders are able to adjust their respective style of leadership to suit multicultural conditions (Klenke 2009:14).

The foregoing discussion suggests that leaders, more than simply being guided by the cultural identities of their staff members, need to be culturally intelligent. The investigation of leadership and culture has covered areas such as global leadership, leadership across countries and in multicultural firms as well as multicultural settings (Alves, Lovelace, Manz, Matsypura, Toyasaki & Ke 2006:339).

However, considerably less effort has been devoted to examining leader CQ (Groves & Feyerherm 2011:536; Vanderpal 2014:124) and, in particular, to considering whether it is more instructive than subordinate cultural identity in explaining the display of a leadership

style. The authors are not aware of any study that has specifically explored whether the display of empowering and directive leadership by culturally intelligent leaders is dependent upon the cultural identities of their subordinates. This is alarming since many leaders accept that their style of leadership should be altered in line with the cultures of their subordinates (Klenke 2009:18). By conducting this research, the authors aimed to resolve this knowledge gap.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Culture

Although a common definition of culture does not exist (Rahimić 2013:130) most often culture is regarded in terms of bounds that distinguish human groupings from one another (House, Javidan, Hanges & Dorfman 2002:5). It is reflective of components that guide a society's behaviours (Targowski & Metwalli 2003:51). Culture may also be viewed as the attributes peculiar to a social cluster (Lebrón 2013:126). Whilst some commentators observe culture as a phenomenon common to persons who have matching ethnicities, nationalities or religions, others contend that it reflects the characteristic homogeneity that separates different human collectives (Hopkins & Scott 2016:365).

Culture, Jameson (2007:203-204) observes, has routinely been investigated at the country level (for example, Chaney & Martin 2007; Hofstede 1980). In this regard, 79% of the cross-cultural studies in the six years to 2001 equated culture with country (Schaffer & Riordan 2003:172).

The afore-mentioned equivalence of culture and country is, however, contested in that many nation states present robust internal cultural differences (Gurung & Prater 2006:33). Hence, paralleling culture with geographical boundaries may restrict the comprehension of challenges facing the business community and the associated methodologies for resolving them (Jameson 2007:204). Similarly, if one just emphasises national cultural differences the danger of giving birth to stereotypes increases (Poncini 2002:347). The impact of culture on leadership could be incomplete where country differences are exclusively concentrated on

(Lee, Scandura & Sharif 2014:692). Equally, in studying culture, analysis at the national level may be less than optimal (Kuchinke 1999:151). Hence, cultural identity is, in many respects, established at the individual level since persons embrace national cultural values with varying levels of gradation (Srite & Karahanna 2006:680). With this in mind, cultural identity consists of one's diverse convictions and related behaviours (Jensen 2003:190). The emphasis in the previous sentence might be placed on the individual, which represents a move away from the description of culture as a group specific phenomenon.

2.2 The dimensions of culture (cultural identity)

Cultural dimensions comprise the broad characteristics of cultures that can be quantified and which, therefore, allow for comparisons to be made between cultures (Hofstede 2011:7). The most well-known dimensions of culture are those formulated by Hofstede (1980) (Kumar *et al.* 2011:154; Rienties & Tempelaar 2013:190). A study by Taras, Rowney and Steel (2009:360) on 121 instruments used for measuring culture, found that 97.5% contained, in some part, dimensions that were conceptually congruent with those of Hofstede (1980).

Hofstede (1980) identified four cultural dimensions which were later expanded to six. These are: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, long-term orientation and indulgence (Hofstede 2011:8).

- **Power distance** - The manner in which power is shared between persons. Those cultures that are low in power distance accept that power usage should be genuine whilst in high power distance cultures the legitimacy of power is disregarded (Hofstede 2011:9); that is, persons are accepting of uneven power allocation (Newman & Nollen 1996:755-756). Cultures low in power distance believe leaders should be approachable and that decision-making must be distributed, whilst high power distance cultures accept the entitlement of leaders to privileges and that leaders take the decisions (Offermann & Phan 2008:193).
- **Uncertainty avoidance -** The extent to which members of a culture avoid or embrace unstructured and abstruse circumstances. Persons who are weak in uncertainty avoidance take uncertainties in their stride whilst those strong in such avoidance pursue

clearness and organisation (Hofstede 2011:10). Leaders are more concerned with the details in those cultures having a high degree of uncertainty avoidance whereas leaders in low uncertainty avoidance cultures are more interested in strategic matters (Offermann & Phan 2008:193).

- **Collectivism -** The level to which persons function collectively. Individualistic cultures promote the singular and, in work settings, autonomy (Newman & Nollen 1996:758). In contrast, collectivist cultures incorporate persons into groups, for example extended families (Hofstede 2011:11), and offer reduced support for subordinates' creativity (Wendt, Euwema & Van Emmerik 2009:360).
- **Masculinity -** The degree to which a culture endorses assertiveness. Masculine cultures admire strength and much differentiation between the genders whereas feminine cultures encourage modesty, compassion and work-family life equilibrium (Hofstede 2011:12).
- **Long-term orientation -** The way in which cultures position themselves for the future. Adaptation to changing conditions and believing the future is the time when key life happenings will occur are characteristic of cultures having a long-term orientation (Hofstede 2011:15). Those cultures exhibiting a short-term positioning accept that the present is most important and traditions are inviolable.
- **Indulgence -** The amount of satisfaction which a culture accepts. Indulgent cultures promote sports participation, leisure and open communications whilst restrained cultures reflect the opposite (Hofstede 2011:16).

The Hofstede (1980, 2011) cultural dimensions were conceptualised at the national level. Although some evidence suggests that national cultural values are associated with behaviours in the workplace (Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson 2006:285), the application of these cultural dimensions at an individual cultural metrics level is flawed (Brewer & Venaik 2012:673). To address this problem, Yoo, Donthu and Lenartowicz (2011:195) developed a scale that could specifically measure these dimensions at the level of the individual. Accordingly, this scale was used in this research.

2.3 Cultural intelligence

In seeking to comprehend why some persons are able to successfully navigate the many meanderings of inter- or cross-cultural interactions whilst others find it a challenge, Earley and Ang (2003) initially conceptualised CQ (Ang, Van Dyne & Rockstuhl 2015:274). With this in mind, CQ is the chief variable in one's success, given the globalised world of today, according to Livermore (2011:xiii). As an intelligence type, CQ is not central to any specific culture but is, rather, aligned to culturally varied situations (Ang, Van Dyne & Tan 2011:586).

Furthermore, it manifests as a set of skills rather than as personality characteristics or interests (Ang, Rockstuhl & Tan 2015:6). Although CQ shares some commonality with other forms of intelligence, such as general cognitive ability, and emotional and social intelligence (Ang *et al*. 2015:281-282), it is conceptually distinct in that these intelligences do not integrate capabilities of interacting with culturally dissimilar persons (Ng, Van Dyne & Ang 2012:34).

CQ comprises four components (Crowne 2009:150; Jonck & Swanepoel 2015:79). *Metacognitive CQ* entails the "control of cognition", that is, the mechanisms employed by persons both to source and to comprehend knowledge (Ng *et al*. 2012:32). It includes conscious questioning of cultural assumptions, consideration of cross-cultural experience and amendment of reasoning structures during inter-cultural exchanges (Rosenblatt, Worthley & MacNab 2013:359).

The second component, *cognitive CQ*, acts as the content repository of CQ (Morrell, Ravlin, Ramsey & Ward 2013:33). It reflects knowledge of cultures, both specific and in general (Ang *et al*. 2015:279). It may be developed through cross-cultural training and experiences (Ramsey, Barakat & Aad 2014:270). As such, it incorporates information on what culture is and what it is not (Rosenblatt *et al*. 2013:358).

Motivational CQ is the third of the components. It depicts the vigour exerted and attention displayed by individuals in learning about and operating in culturally heterogeneous conditions (Ang *et al*. 2011:585). It integrates both the inherent value persons ascribe to

cross-cultural interfaces as well as the extent of their self-efficacy in functioning successfully in such interactions (Li, Mobley & Kelly 2013:34).

The final component, *behavioural CQ*, portrays the physical indication of thoughts, that is, explicit actions (Ng *et al*. 2012:33). It may be both verbal and non-verbal (Fischer 2011:770). Motivational CQ is frequently viewed as the component that links metacognitive and cognitive CQ with the behavioural component (MacNab 2012:69). The four components operate as a unit in those persons high in CQ (Crowne 2008:392).

2.4 Leadership styles (empowering and directive)

Over time a number of separate leadership style theories have emerged (Tekleab, Sims, Yun, Tesluk & Cox 2008:186). Hassan, Asad and Hoshino (2016:164-165) identified no less than 39 styles and, through their work, arranged these into five theoretical groupings that depict a continuum ranging from centralised to distributed decision making. These groups are (a) autocratic (including the aversive, transactional and directive leadership styles), (b) participative (containing the democratic and supportive leadership styles), (c) transformational (including visionary, charismatic and empowering leadership), (d) servant (referencing ethical and authentic leadership, amongst others) and (e) laissez-faire (Hassan *et al*. 2016:166).

These groupings are mostly represented in a typology put forward by Pearce, Sims, Cox, Ball, Schnell, Smith and Trevino (2003:276). In this typology the transactional / transformational paradigm is extended to include empowering and directive leadership. Whereas the split between transformational and transactional leadership is not as clear-cut as initially theorised (Yukl 1999:287), it is argued that empowering and directive leadership are not only distinct but in fact are representative of contrasting elements (Hmieleski & Ensley 2007:867). Likewise, directive behaviours are considered the antithesis of empowerment (Yun, Cox & Sims 2006:378).

Empirical examination of leader CQ and leadership styles has tended to concentrate mostly on the transformational style (for example, Elenkov & Manev 2009; Ismail, Reza & Mahdi 2012; Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw 2013; Lee, Veasna & Wu 2013). Taking account of the

extended focus on transformational leadership and given the unique nature of empowering and directive leadership, this research focused exclusively on empowering and directive leadership.

Empowering leadership promotes subordinates' self-stimulus rather than top-down control practices (Houghton & Yoho 2005:69). Empowering leaders devolve much responsibility to subordinates whilst facilitating an enabling environment in which the latter may satisfy their need for autonomy and achieve growth (Tekleab *et al*. 2008:187). Such leadership draws subordinates' attention to the importance of the work and underscores confidence in staff members' performance and delivery whilst eradicating administrative impediments (Zhang & Gheibi 2015:369). In adopting this leadership style, leaders aim to develop a committed workforce (Park, Kim, Yoon & Joo 2017:11).

Empowering leadership is both related to yet distinct from each of participative leadership and delegation (Sharma & Kirkman 2015:197). Although participative leadership often results in employees feeling a sense of empowerment (Huang, Lun, Liu & Gong 2010:124) they do not, *per se*, make the decision – the leader does (Chen & Tjosvold 2006:1728). Conversely, the outcome of empowering leadership is that employees take their own decisions; thus it is more expansive than participative leadership (Sharma & Kirkman 2015:198). Initial research studies theorised empowerment as comprising the delegation of decision making authority to subordinates (Spreitzer, De Janasz & Quinn 1999:3). Likewise, in practice, delegation is often considered to be empowerment (Enz & Fulford 1995:161).

Although delegation and empowering leadership include awarding decision-making independence to employees (Sharma & Kirkman 2015:197), they differ in that empowerment targets enablement as opposed to allocation (Conger & Kanungo 1988:474). Whilst delegation inclines primarily towards power transfer (Martin, Liao & Campbell 2013:1375), empowering leadership exercises wider motivational stimuli such as promoting their own goal setting by employees (Sharma & Kirkman 2015:197).

In directive leadership, the leader establishes employee direction by means of arranging and coordinating task accomplishment, allocating required activities, stipulating rules and

procedures to be complied with, explicating expectations and appraising outputs (Mehta, Dubinsky & Anderson 2003:54). Directive leaders subscribe to the notion that, to achieve outstanding delivery, goals must be unequivocal, stimulating and captivating (Fisher 2016:92).

Directive leaders' powers are sourced from their positional standing in the organisation (Yun *et al*. 2006:378) and are often employed to avoid organisational paralysis arising from excessive deliberation and enquiry (Fisher 2016:92). Although this leadership style routinely lacks the mutual or complementary exchange characteristic of empowering leadership (Clark & Waldron 2016:28), it is not disconnected nor disengaged leadership; that is, the leader maintains an active presence as opposed to inhabiting an uninvolved space (Fisher 2016:92). It assists subordinates in eliminating both task and role uncertainty, and enables faster execution of decisions (Lorinkova, Pearsall & Sims 2013:573).

2.5 Leadership styles and the dimensions of culture

The relationships of the empowering and directive leadership styles with the dimensions of culture have also evoked some discussion in the literature. Despite empowering leadership having been shown to positively influence work place achievements, it should not be indiscriminately adopted across diverse cultures, given the varying predispositions of individuals and collectives towards power distribution (Gibson & McDaniel 2010:455).

In particular, in those cultures which endorse hierarchical values, subordinates prefer a leadership style wherein directives are issued rather than a more empowering style (Mustafa & Lines 2016:168). In countries such as India and China, which are characterised by high power distance levels, empowering leadership may not be as successful as situations when such behaviours are displayed in countries such as the United States and Switzerland which are reflective of lower power distance levels (Raub & Robert 2012:143).

Notwithstanding these results, there is evidence to indicate that when exposed to empowering leadership, subordinates in high power distance cultures may in fact grasp the opportunity of autonomy (Martin *et al*. 2013:1388). Similarly, it has been shown that empowering leadership actually increased the work engagement mediated by

meaningfulness of staff members in the high power distance society of Malaysia (Lee, Idris & Delfabbro 2016:1).

Directive leadership is anticipated to be favoured in high power distance cultures (Mustafa & Lines 2016:166) as well as those cultures that are collectivist in nature (Wendt *et al*. 2009:360). It is usually observed as being consistent with a typical masculine perspective (Arnold & Loughlin 2013:68). It is also likely to be attractive in those cultures that have a long-term orientation outlook because short-term orientated cultures gravitate towards freedom and independence (Nikčević 2014:153).

Given the preceding discussion it appears that empowering leadership would be best suited to those cultures that are individualistic, have a small propensity for power distance, a short-term orientation and embrace (that is, are weak in) uncertainty avoidance. It follows that collectivist cultures which endorse high power distance and exhibit a high uncertainty avoidance would tend towards directive leadership.

Despite the above observation by Arnold and Loughlin (2013), masculine cultures idealise independence whilst valuing output and development (Offermann & Phan 2008:194). Hence, it is possible that empowering leadership could indeed be attractive in a masculine culture.

3. RESEARCH STATEMENT

The importance of leaders acquiring an understanding of culture (cultural identity) is well documented in the literature. In this respect, Schein (2004:23) points out that it is vital for leaders to comprehend culture. Dickson, Castaño, Magomaeva and Den Hartog (2012:490) emphasise that the leaders' knowledge of culture must include the native culture within which they lead.

However, in order to function optimally in culturally varied circumstances, it is crucial that leaders, in addition to such knowledge, possess the competence to effect connections between cultural dissimilarities (Ang *et al*. 2015:274). To this end, Livermore (2015:228) comments that leader CQ is imperative in the world of leadership.

It is apparent that a divide prevails in the literature in that some scholars accept a leader's cultural knowledge or understanding of cultural identity as being sufficient to inform multicultural leadership whilst others contend that leader CQ is a requisite competence in this regard. With this in mind, there do not appear to be any studies that have examined whether the cultural identity of subordinates plays a role in guiding the empowering and directive styles of culturally intelligent leaders.

4. RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this research was to investigate the part, if any that subordinate cultural identity played in the display of empowering and directive leadership by leaders, given leader CQ.

5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses investigated were:

- **$H1_0$:** Subordinate cultural identity does not play a part in the display of empowering leadership, given leader CQ, and
- **$H2_0$:** Subordinate cultural identity does not play a part in the display of directive leadership, given leader CQ.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research paradigm and design

This research was conducted within the positivist paradigm. A paradigm is a general perspective on something (Taylor, Kermode & Roberts 2006:5). The positivist paradigm is concerned with the discovery of a universal truth (O'Neil & Koekemoer 2016:3). As such, it assumes that reality is organised and that the acquisition of knowledge may be obtained objectively (Ling 2017:25).

A cross-sectional design was adopted in carrying out this study. Such a design may be defined as the gathering of quantitative or quantifiable data at one point in time that is then studied with a view to identifying relationships within the data (Bryman 2012:58). These designs most often involve the use of a sample survey (Zheng 2015:67).

6.2 Population and sampling

The population comprised all leaders at all organisations carrying on operations in South Africa. No restrictions as to leader level or organisation size and industry type were imposed. The use of observer-based ratings to measure leadership style is superior to self-reports (Schaveling, Blaauw & Van Montfort 2017:5). Thus, the sample was drawn from the subordinates of leaders. It consisted of 1140 respondents across 19 South African organisations. The organisations included both private and public entities representing, amongst others, the telecommunication, financial services, media, manufacturing and electronics industries.

Eighteen of the 19 organisations were identified through each of them having an employee who was a registered master's level student at the Graduate School of Business Leadership of the University of South Africa (GSBL). The 19th organisation was the employer of the corresponding author. Entrance to the 18 organisations, and thus access to the respondents, was achieved by leveraging the respective students as fellow researchers.

The perceptions of subordinates as to the CQ and leadership styles of their leaders comprised the first unit of analysis. The second unit of analysis covered the cultural identity of the respondents themselves (based upon the cultural dimensions).

6.3 Data collection

Data was collected through the use of a questionnaire incorporating various instruments selected on the basis of their ability to measure subordinate cultural identity, leader CQ and empowering and directive leadership. Approval to use the instruments was obtained from the respective authors. Applicable details are:

- The Cultural Values Scale (CVS) (Yoo *et al.* 2011) was used to assess subordinate cultural identity. This scale is reliable and valid (Mazanec, Crotts, Gursoy & Lu 2015:303; Yoo *et al*. 2011:193) and consistent across sample types (Yoo *et al*. 2011:193). The CVS may be utilised to compare persons at the country level as well as cross-culturally (Jakubczak & Rakowska 2014:534), but does not, as yet, include measures for indulgence.

  The instrument consists of 26 statements. Five statements address power distance (for example, "People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions"). Five statements cover uncertainty avoidance (for example, "Standardised work procedures are helpful"). Six statements deal with collectivism (for example, "Group success is more important than individual success") while four measure masculinity (for example "It is more important for men to have a professional career than it is for women") and six statements consider long-term orientation (for example, "Giving up today's fun for success in the future").

- The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) (Van Dyne, Ang & Koh 2008) was used to gauge leader CQ. The CQS is reliable, may be used across time, samples and cultures (Rockstuhl, Seiler, Ang, Van Dyne & Annen 2011:830). The observer report version was used.

  The CQS comprises four statements that measure metacognitive CQ (for example, "My leader is conscious of the cultural knowledge he / she applies to cross-cultural interactions"), six that cover cognitive CQ (for example, "My leader knows the arts and crafts of other cultures"), five on motivational CQ (for example, "My leader enjoys interacting with people from different cultures") and five that assess behavioural CQ (for example, "My leader changes his / her non-verbal behaviour when a cross-cultural situation requires it"). For the purposes of this study, CQ was measured at a composite level.

- Ten statements by Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005) were utilised to measure empowering leadership. Examples include "My leader allows me to do my job my way" and "My leader allows me to make important decisions quickly to satisfy customer

needs". The reliability of these items has been validated by Yoon (2012:58) and they have been observed to capture the uniqueness of empowering leadership (Zhang & Bartol 2010:114).

- Ten statements, six of which were formulated by Pearce and Sims (2002) and four by Hwang *et al.* (2015), were employed to evaluate directive leadership. "My leader gives me instructions about how to do my work" and "My leader identifies specific action steps and accountabilities for me" are examples of these statements. Hinrichs (2011:79) confirmed the reliability of the items devised by Pearce and Sims (2002). The reliability of the Hwang *et al*. (2015) items was confirmed by Hwang *et al*. (2015:268).

The 18 students assisting in the data collection were briefed on the necessity of obtaining written consent from the chief executive officer of their employer for the research to be conducted therein and the manner in which potential respondents should be selected. Each student obtained a list of staff members' names from their employer's human resource department after the afore-mentioned permission was secured. The students allocated a number to each name and selected potential respondents using a random number generator.

The potential respondents were then contacted and invited to a meeting at which background information on the research was provided. It was emphasised at the meeting that participation would be both voluntary and anonymous. Those staff members who agreed to complete the questionnaire did so on a hard copy at the meeting without including any personal details. The completed questionnaires were handed back to the student at the end of the meeting. The students subsequently captured the inputs on an Excel based template that had previously been provided to them by the authors. The electronic data was then sent to the second named author who consolidated the spreadsheets. The corresponding author followed the same process in administering the questionnaire at his employer.

6.4 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted through IBM SPSS. Respondent demographic frequencies were generated as were descriptive statistics for each of the variables. Instruments with

Cronbach coefficient alphas greater than 0.70 were considered reliable (Pallent 2011:100). Principal axis factor analysis was run to assess factorial validity. Rotation was effected via the direct Oblimin technique.

Only those factors with eigenvalues exceeding one were retained (Coovert & McNelis 1988:689). Scree plots were examined to confirm these findings (Costello & Osborne 2005:3) on the basis that the number of factors to retain would equal the number of eigenvalues appearing prior to the slope tending towards zero (Floyd & Widaman 1995:292).

It was decided that a factor would be accepted as valid where a minimum of 80% of the respective measurement items loaded onto it with a loading each of 0.50 or higher. This decision was informed by scholarly recommendations as well as pragmatism. In this regard, whilst loadings above 0.40 are acceptable, those above 0.50 are preferable (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson 2010:116). Furthermore, a factor comprising less than three items is most often considered weak, whereas a factor with at least five items, each having a loading of 0.50 or greater, is best (Osborne & Costello 2009:138). As there does not appear to be much guidance in the literature regarding the percentage of items that should load satisfactorily onto a factor given the length of the respective measurement scale, the requirement was set at no less than 80%.

Relationships between the variables were determined via Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Statistical significance was set at 5% (Lazaraton 1991:760). To establish the practical significance of any identified statistically significant correlations, the recommendations of Cohen (1992:157) were followed, that is correlations greater than 0.50 were taken as large, whereas those locating between 0.30 and 0.50 were assessed as medium in strength whilst anything below 0.10 was considered unimportant.

Stepwise regression was made use of to assess the ability of leader CQ and the dimensions of culture (cultural identity) to predict empowering and directive leadership. The focus was directed at those variables with betas that indicated distinctive and autonomous contributions to the variance in the respective leadership styles (bearing in mind that the stepwise procedure in SPSS only adds those variables that contribute accordingly).

To assess the practical significance of the stepwise regression results, the f^2 statistic was calculated. In terms of the Cohen (1988) guidelines, R^2 is not significant where f^2 is less than 0.15 and the effect size may thus be taken as small, while it is significant where f^2 lies between 0.15 and 0.35, the effect size of which is moderate, and furthermore is significant, with a large effect size that is of practical importance, where f^2 exceeds 0.35 (Ellis & Steyn 2003:53). These guidelines were followed in this study

7. RESULTS

7.1 Respondent demographics

The genders were evenly represented in the sample with males comprising 50.27% (573) and females 49.73% (567) of the respondents. These results indicated a slight under-representation of males and a slight over-representation of females when compared against the labour force survey outcomes for quarter 1 2016 (Statistics South Africa 2016). This survey reflected males as comprising 56.36% and females 43.64% of employed persons.

On average, the respondents were 38.62 years of age with the youngest being 20 and the oldest 64. The median age was 37. These averages compared favourably with the split of employed persons per age category in the labour force survey for quarter 1 2016 (Statistics South Africa 2016) which showed that the age category with the second largest number of employed persons was 35 - 44 years.

Blacks made up 66.84% of the respondents (762). The second largest group, 18.07%, was composed of Whites (206) whilst 10.18% or 116 of the respondents were Coloureds. Members of the Asian community comprised 4.91% (56) of the sample. The racial composition of employed persons per the quarter 1 2016 labour force survey (Statistics South Africa 2016) revealed that Blacks comprised 73.82%, Whites 12.42%, Coloureds 10.56% and Asians 3.21% of such persons. It follows that the racial mix of the sample largely matched that of the quarter 1 2016 labour force survey (Statistics South Africa 2016) for Coloureds and Asians, but with a bias towards Whites when compared to Blacks.

7.2 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics for subordinate cultural identity (as measured by the dimensions of culture), leader CQ and empowering and directive leadership are presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: Central statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std deviation
Power distance	1.00	5.00	1.98	0.78
Uncertainty avoidance	1.00	5.00	4.08	0.67
Collectivism	1.00	5.00	3.38	0.82
Masculinity	1.00	5.00	2.26	0.90
Long-term orientation	1.00	5.00	4.35	0.59
Leader CQ	1.00	7.00	4.53	1.17
Empowering leadership	1.00	7.00	5.12	1.37
Directive leadership	1.00	5.00	3.52	0.81

Source: Calculated from survey results

Long-term orientation was the highest scoring dimension of culture, followed by uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, masculinity and finally power distance. The average rating for leader CQ was 4.53. Empowering and directive leadership were rated at 5.12 and 3.52 respectively (bearing in mind that the scale used to measure directive leadership was 1 – 5).

The mean scores for subordinate cultural identity were taken as low if they were less than 2.00 and high if they exceeded 4.00. Scores ranging between 2.00 and 2.49 were considered to be moderately low whilst those between 2.50 and 3.99 were assessed as moderately high.

Hence, the average cultural profile of respondents was one in which they reject unequal power distribution (low score of 1.98), seek certainty (high score of 4.08), have a long-term outlook (high score of 4.35), are reasonably collectivist (moderately high score of 3.38) and marginally tend to favour femininity (moderately low score of 2.26 for masculinity).

7.3 Reliability

Reliability coefficients are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Reliabilities

Variable	Coefficient α
Power distance	0.78
Uncertainty avoidance	0.80
Collectivism	0.84
Masculinity	0.75
Long-term orientation	0.81
Leader CQ	0.95
Empowering leadership	0.93
Directive leadership	0.87

Source: Calculated from survey results

In accordance with the guidelines as per Pallent (2011:100), all of the reliability coefficients were accepted as satisfactory as they each exceeded 0.70. The respective measurement items thus demonstrated internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick 2011:53).

7.4 Factorial validity

As a precursor to examining factorial validity, sampling adequacy was considered. This was confirmed not only by acceptable Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin scores for each of the variables (cultural identity = 0.83, leader CQ = 0.95, empowering leadership = 0.92 and directive leadership = 0.84) (Dziuban & Shirkey 1974:359) but also by significance being achieved for the corresponding Bartlett's Tests of Sphericity ($p \leq 0.001$).

Although Hofstede (2011:8) identified six dimensions of culture, the CVS only measures the first five factors (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, masculinity and long-term orientation). This structure was revealed in this research, with 96% of the items loading with a value greater than 0.50 on the theorised factors. The declared variance of the five factor solution was 56.49%.

CQ was conceptualised as a four factor construct (metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ and behavioural CQ) (Ang et al. 2015:279). Making use of both the eigenvalue and elbow rules, this research reflected the given structure, with 95% of the items loading with a value exceeding 0.50 on the factors as theorised. The four factor solution declared 74.38% of the variance. Whereas CQ was used in this study as an aggregate score, the evidence regarding factorial validity contributes to the credibility of the CQS.

The declared variance for empowering leadership, as a unidimensional construct, was 62.15%. The percentage of items that loaded with a value exceeding 0.50 was 100. Whilst directive leadership was found to have three factors with a declared variance of 74.90% and 100% of items having loadings of 0.50 or greater, it was considered unidimensional for the purposes of this study.

7.5 Correlations

The correlations between the variables are presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3: Correlations

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Power distance	-							
2. Uncertainty avoidance	-0.01	-						
3. Collectivism	0.03	0.30*	-					
4. Masculinity	0.35*	0.05	0.19*	-				
5. Long-term orientation	-0.18*	0.22*	0.21*	-0.04	-			
6. Leader CQ	0.00	0.06*	0.09*	-0.04	0.12*	-		
7. Empowering leadership	-0.05	0.06*	0.07*	-0.11*	0.07*	0.64*	-	
8. Directive leadership	0.04	0.19*	0.19*	0.12*	0.17*	0.39*	0.45*	-

Note: * $p<0.05$

Source: Calculated from survey results

With the exception of power distance, all of the cultural dimensions used to measure subordinate cultural identity demonstrated statistically significant relationships with empowering leadership (Lazaraton 1991:760). The relationships between subordinate power distance and empowering leadership as well as that between subordinate masculinity and empowering leadership were negative in nature.

None of the aforementioned relationships carried any practical significance (Cohen 1992:157). The relationships between each of subordinate uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, masculinity and long-term orientation, with directive leadership, were also statistically significant (Lazaraton 1991:760). The practical significance of these relationships was low (Cohen 1992:157). As with empowering leadership, subordinate power distance was unrelated to directive leadership.

Subordinate power distance and masculinity were not related to leader CQ. Although subordinate uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and long-term orientation were statistically associated with leader CQ (Lazaraton 1991:760), just the relationship between subordinate

long-term orientation and leader CQ demonstrated any practical significance and, in this respect, it was low (Cohen 1992:157). The relationship between leader CQ and empowering leadership was statistically significant (Lazaraton 1991:760) as was that between leader CQ and directive leadership (Lazaraton 1991:760). The practical significance of the leader CQ and empowering leadership relationship was large (Cohen 1992:157) whilst it was medium for the leader CQ and directive leadership relationship (Cohen 1992:157).

7.6 Stepwise regression

Stepwise regression was used to assess whether subordinate cultural identity predicted empowering and directive leadership, given leader CQ. Tables 4 and 5 present these results.

Leader CQ and, to a lesser extent, subordinate masculinity were found to be statistically important predictors of empowering leadership (Lazaraton 1991:760). Model 1 accounted for 40.50 % of the variance in empowering leadership whilst model 2, reflecting the addition of subordinate masculinity, resulted in an R^2 increase of 0.60%.

TABLE 4: Empowering leadership

Model	R	R^2	R^2 change	β	t	Sig	f^2
1	0.636	0.405	0.405				0.681*
(Constant)					14.12	0.00	
Leader CQ				0.64	27.81	0.00	
2	0.641	0.411	0.006				0.698*
(Constant)					13.73	0.00	
Leader CQ				0.63	27.76	0.00	
Masculinity				-0.08	-3.51	0.00	

Note: * Effect size $(R^2)/(1 - R^2)$

Source: Calculated from survey results

The only dimension of subordinate cultural identity that improved the model was thus masculinity, and this was only by a very small margin. Subordinate power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and long-term orientation did not make any distinctive and autonomous contributions to the model. The f^2 of model 1 was 0.681 which indicates that the model had a large practical significance as the observed f^2 was larger than 0.35 (Ellis & Steyn 2003:53). The f^2 of model 2 was only marginally higher at 0.698. The first null hypothesis proposed was therefore not rejected.

TABLE 5: Directive leadership

Model	R	R^2	R^2 change	β	t	Sig	f^2
1	0.392	0.154	0.154				0.182*
(Constant)					26.028	0.00	
Leader CQ				0.392	14.372	0.00	
2	0.427	0.182	0.029				0.222*
(Constant)					9.716	0.00	
Leader CQ				0.381	14.187	0.00	
Uncertainty avoidance				0.170	6.320	0.00	
3	0.447	0.199	0.017				0.248*
(Constant)					7.729	0.00	
Leader CQ				0.387	14.549	0.00	
Uncertainty avoidance				0.163	6.125	0.00	
Masculinity				0.131	4.920	0.00	
4	0.457	0.209	0.009				0.264*
(Constant)					3.711	0.00	

Model	R	R^2	R^2 change	β	t	Sig	f^2
Leader CQ				0.377	14.179	0.00	
Uncertainty avoidance				0.142	5.234	0.00	
Masculinity				0.136	5.118	0.00	
Long-term orientation				0.100	3.679	0.00	
5	0.464	0.215	0.006				0.274*
(Constant)					3.446	0.00	
Leader CQ				0.372	14.009	0.00	
Uncertainty avoidance				0.121	4.326	0.00	
Masculinity				0.120	4.454	0.00	
Long-term orientation				0.087	3.165	0.00	
Collectivism				0.085	2.979	0.00	

Note: * Effect size $(R^2)/(1 - R^2)$

Source: Calculated from survey results

At the 5% significance level (Lazaraton 1991:760), leader CQ was the most important predictor of directive leadership and accounted for 15.40% of the variance therein. The inclusion of subordinate uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, long-term orientation and collectivism in the model, although statistically significant, merely led to a cumulative increase of 6.10% in the amount of directive leadership explained.

Subordinate power distance did not make a distinctive and autonomous contribution to the model. The effect size of model 1 was 0.182, of model 2 was 0.222, of model 3 was 0.248, of model 4 was 0.264 and finally of model 5 was 0.274. As all of these effect sizes fell between 0.15 and 0.35, the practical significance of each model was moderate (Ellis & Steyn 2003:53).

The cumulative increase in effect size pursuant to the inclusion of subordinate cultural identity was 0.092 (that is, 0.274 – 0.182). This change was of no practical significance (Ellis & Steyn 2003:53). The second null hypothesis proposed was, nevertheless, not rejected because power distance played no role.

8. DISCUSSION

This study sought to establish the part played by the cultural identity of subordinates in the display of empowering and directive leadership by their leaders, if the latter possess CQ. As a *first step*, the relationships between subordinate cultural identity with empowering and directive leadership were considered. It was suggested in the literature review that empowering leadership might be preferred in masculine cultures. As pointed out previously, the actual score for subordinate masculinity (2.26) indicated a slight bias towards femininity; consequently the negative association between empowering leadership and subordinate masculinity was expected. It was also argued that directive leadership would most likely be embraced by those staff members high in uncertainty avoidance, who are collectivist by nature and tend towards a long-term orientation. Hence, the observed relationships between subordinate uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and long-term orientation with directive leadership (see Table 3), given the scores presented in Table 1, relative to their observed relationships with empowering leadership, met expectations.

The absence of a relationship between subordinate power distance and empowering leadership, coupled with (a) the lack of practical significance in the relationships that subordinate uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and long-term orientation had with empowering leadership and (b) the low practical significance of the relationship between subordinate masculinity and empowering leadership, indicates that empowering leadership occurred mostly in isolation from subordinate cultural identity. In contrast though, directive leadership was displayed more often when subordinate cultural identity favoured uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and long-term orientation.

Secondly, the relationships between subordinate cultural identity and leader CQ were investigated. As cognitive CQ comprises cultural knowledge (Ang *et al*. 2015:279), it was

anticipated that subordinate cultural identity and leader CQ would share relationships of practical importance. The non-existence of such relationships (with the exception of that between subordinate long-term orientation and leader CQ) might indicate that the leaders were more focused on other components of their CQ (for example, metacognitive CQ and motivational CQ).

Thirdly, the relationships of leader CQ with empowering and directive leadership were explored. In this respect, empowering leaders were considered to be more culturally intelligent than were directive leaders.

Lastly, the ability of subordinate cultural identity to predict empowering and directive leadership, given leader CQ, was examined. The results show that empowering leaders were guided by their CQ rather than the cultural identity of their staff members. Although directive leaders did consider subordinate cultural identity they relied more on their CQ. It is suggested that the reason directive leaders took into account the cultural identity of their subordinates, in comparison to empowering leaders, could be that directive leaders have lower levels of CQ than their empowering colleagues.

Overall, these findings are in line with that of Kuchinke (1999:151) who concluded from his study of employees, working at a single company operating in the United States and Germany, that the cultural dimensions only explained a minor amount of leadership style variance. Kuchinke (1999:151) continued to posit that, although the cultural dimensions impacted leadership somewhat, different variables would most likely carry more weight.

In this study, leader CQ was the main driver of empowering and directive leadership.

9. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study offers valuable insights into African leadership which are especially important since most leadership literature is based upon a white male US-centric perspective (Lawler 2005:126). As such, it contains a number of important managerial implications.

Firstly, it is essential that leaders be sensitised towards and be made cognisant of the cultural profiles of their staff members. This is so because the preference for, and thus the

desirability of different leadership styles, varies across cultures. Managers are, however, alerted to the fact that a mere understanding of culture or cultural identity (forming part of the cognitive dimension of CQ) is insufficient to guide leaders, operating in culturally diverse environments, as regards the adoption and display of empowering and directive leadership. Rather, it is the leader's composite CQ that is the chief variable in this regard. This suggests that leaders must not only process (metacognitive CQ) and apply (behavioural CQ) such knowledge but should also embrace multicultural leadership (motivational CQ). To this end, it has been demonstrated that leaders with higher levels of CQ are associated with greater empowering behaviours and, to a lesser extent, directive actions. As leadership coaching and development ought to be a key strategic organisational imperative (Koohang, Paliszkiewicz & Goluchowski 2017:1), the enhancement of leader CQ should be pursued by all organisations. With this in mind, human resource managers are advised to work with training practitioners in order to ensure that leadership development programmes, specifically, upskill leaders beyond a comprehension of culture. The ultimate aim of these initiatives should be the stimulation and enhancement of leaders' overall CQ.

Secondly, managers are advised that they may use the CQS to assess leader CQ within the South African context as this instrument has been shown to be both valid and reliable. This result aligns with that of Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2014) who studied the construct validity of CQ within the context of a South African university.

Finally, the CVS has been assessed as valid and reliable in its South African application; thus South African managers may employ it to measure cultural identity. This supports the cross-national application of the CVS which has previously been used mostly in Brazil, Korea, Poland, Thailand and the USA (Prasongsukarn 2009:3) and contributes to satisfying the call by Mazanec *et al*. (2015:303) for additional testing on the CVS using samples from countries other than the USA.

10. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this study are subject to certain limitations. Despite the random selection of respondents within the participating organisations, it may not be possible to extend the

insights derived from this research across the population as the choice of organisations was not random. Accordingly, it would be valuable for future researchers to replicate this study not solely in South Africa but also in other African and non-African countries. This would provide opportunities to contextualise the findings within the African milieu and across regions.

Another limitation of this study was that subordinate cultural identity was based exclusively upon the Hofstede (1980, 2011) cultural dimensions. Prospective researchers should consider an expanded view of subordinate cultural identity through the inclusion of other cultural dimensions, such as those used by GLOBE (for example, performance and humane orientation).

11. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted with a view to establishing the part played by subordinates' cultural identity in the display of empowering and directive leadership by their leaders, assuming leader CQ. Leader CQ was found to be a more important predictor of both empowering and directive leadership than was cultural identity of subordinates. Despite the observed relationships between (a) masculinity and empowering leadership and (b) uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, long-term orientation and collectivism with directive leadership, subordinate cultural identity explained very little of the variance in empowering and directive leadership. Hence, whilst culturally attuned leaders may be displaying empowering and directive leadership in line with subordinates' expectations (based on their cultural identities), it is more probable that the display of these styles is guided by leader CQ. This study has, through the provision of empirical evidence, satisfied the purpose for which it was undertaken and thereby has contributed significantly to the body of knowledge.

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