

MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP IN A GLOBAL
WORLD:
Navigating through diversity
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Research in...
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Resumen

La presión competitiva está ocasionando que la concepción de liderazgo deba considerar elementos como la globalización de los mercados, la internacionalización de la gestión, los procesos de ajuste cultural y ante todo, su importancia como soporte a la consecución de resultados efectivos. Hoy en día no es posible definir un estilo de liderazgo que pueda aplicarse a todos los entornos y por ello se presenta una reflexión sobre el mismo dentro del marco de la diversidad, como un elemento de singular importancia para la administración de las organizaciones.

Palabras clave: Liderazgo, gestión, administración, cultura organizacional, internacionalización, gestión internacional.

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Abstract

Because of the competitive pressure, the leadership concept should include elements like market globalization, internationalization of management, cultural adjustment processes and most important, the leadership relevance as support for achieving effective results. Nowadays it is not possible to define a leadership style that can be applied to all the environments, and for that reason the author offers some reflections about it within the frame of the diversity. This is an element with a singular importance for the organizational management.

Keywords: Leadership, management, international management, organizational culture, internationalization.

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MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP IN A GLOBAL WORLD:

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1. Introduction

Using a metaphor by Gareth Morgan (1991) to understand the problems of modern administration, it could be agreed that the modern management position is not similar to a quiet lake or a river that peacefully finds its way to the sea. Rather, it is a turbulent and violent river filled with dangers and surprises that demands a great deal of courage, decision and strength of its executives, to successfully achieve its final destination.

Management today is variable because it is not a monolithic and original system (Theodore, 1991). The modern management must always take into account the changing situations that surrounds it, influences it and in turn influences the environment, finding itself with a hard reality of changing scenarios that old rules do not succeed as they once did.

The dynamic pressures of external factors, especially in a more and more global and international environment, have not received appropriate attention by either researchers or organizational theories (Theodore, 1991). This is surprising and opens a very interesting field that is worth exploring it in depth at organizational level. If organizations do not understand the impact of external factors, they may not survive.

The globalization of markets demands a global management development. Management does not use an indiscriminate application of concepts whenever managers want, but it takes into account specific circumstances of its environment. Like somebody affirmed, a good management

“thinks globally and acts locally”. Therefore, Hofstede (1993) clearly raised that it is impossible to talk about a “management culture” because it cannot find managerial practices with universal application.

In this context, a leader turns up like a vital actor of development. Some writers affirm that leaders are different from managers (Donnelly, Gibson, & Ivancevich 1994; Zaleznik, 1991), but both are dedicated to competitive development of companies. Both, leaders and managers or better leader-managers, have in front of them the challenge to manage diversity. The global village that McLuhan (1992) announced is made up of an incredible variety of components: races, languages, religions, beliefs, customs, etc. This is the panorama from which managerial decisions must be made. If managers have the ability to navigate through diversity, they will succeed from their efforts.

The big question is: should leadership styles change or must they change when they act in different cultures?

Seemingly the answer is yes, but some researches have demonstrated that this is an insufficiently explored field (Gibson & Marcoulides, 1995).

To understand the problem, we need to explore the development of leadership concepts and some issues about culture and its influence over leadership styles.

2. Different approaches to leadership

The leadership concept has been studied profusely during many years, but nonetheless, researchers feel that there is still a lot to learn about it (Hampton, 1989).

Definitions about this theme are varied and include diverse approaches. Some authors define leadership from the point of view of individual characteristics, like the ability to inspire and to influence people's means, attitudes and behaviors (Gibson & Marcoulides, 1995). In the same way,

Etzioni (1965) denotes that leadership involves “the capacity, based on leader's personal qualities, to induce the voluntary acceptance of followers to a wide range of aspects,” in which it involves the concept of power as inherent to leadership.

Other authors define leadership from the perspective of its action on the firm, as “the interpersonal process by virtue of which managers influence employees to carry out established goals of tasks” (Hampton, 1989), and therefore, leaders are who are able to “influence others and who have administrative authority” (Robbins & DeCenzo, 1996).

Equally, some authors link the leadership concept to power and authority (Etzioni, 1965; Katzenback & Smith, 1992) as having fundamental basis that leadership has importance when followers alter or change their own preferences or inclinations to align them with leader's preferences (Hall, 1983). This can be obtained with direct exercise of power defined as “the capacity to influence people or groups in order to accept our ideas or plans” (Greiner & Schein, 1990), or leader's voluntarily as result of the ability to “convince others in order that they enthusiastically find the achievement of defined goals” (Davis, 1967) because leader stimulates others to follow him (Gouldner, 1950). The leadership idea is linked to power, but it is much more than the assignment the organization gives to an individual due to his position in it.

In general, Barker (1997) is correct when he affirms that no definition of leadership is universally accepted even though it is understood that a leader's action is indispensable for successfully achieving the company's goals.

Different approaches have been developed to understand leadership and a clasification of them are not easy. However, the differences suggested by Gibson & Marcoulides (1996) offers a clearer picture, dividing leadership into theories about leader features, leadership behavior, situational contingency, transformational leadership, and, recently, cultural contingency.

2.1 The Trait approach

The first conception of leadership was first of all mentioned by Sir Francis Galton (1860). He believed that leader had genetic characteristics to differentiate himself from others, such as sex, height, weight, appearance, determination and wisdom. This search of physical and personality characteristics was not valid very often, because of the dramatic differences between leaders. However, it has continued, and recent researches have found that some traits are consistently associated with leadership action, for example: impulse, desire to manage, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, intelligence and knowledge about the position (Kirpatrick & Locke, 1991; Bennis, 1984).

But, one of the most obvious faults of the trait approach is that it repeatedly ignores factors inherent to situation, an individual can have some features that favour his capacity for leadership, but only when he acts in this way, he can be recognized as leader. What is correct and works in one specific moment, may not function in another.

2.2 The Behavioral approach

Due to insufficient clearness offered by the trait approach, much research was done in order to identify leaders' behaviors in action. The premise was very interesting: if leadership does not depend exclusively of leader's traits but behaviors, it could be possible to develop programs to train people as leaders (Robbins, 1996).

Different studies were realized between the 40s and 60s, and the most significant were the researches of Ohio State University, the University of Michigan and the conceptualization of managerial grid of Blake, Mouton & McCauley (1991).

The researchers of Ohio State University classified the leader's behavior in two dimensions: initiation of structure

and consideration. The first is when a leader defines his role and that of their followers, to achieve goals: directive, structuring and goal-oriented behavior. The second is the way that a leader interacts with his collaborators: concern for followers, participation, and interpersonal warmth (Gibson & Macauliffe, 1995; Robbins, 1996).

The University of Michigan's research, led by Rensis Likert, also used two dimensions of leader behavior: people oriented and work oriented behavior. The first emphasized the interaction with followers, the work-teams develop and a concern for human aspects of employees. The second focused aspects of activity, establishing specific controls to supervise the attainment of goals.

In the same way of the University of Michigan's studies, Blake and Mouton proposed another approach, using a two-dimension graph based on people concern and production concern: The Managerial Grid (Blake, Mouton & McCauley, 1991).

The Grid has nine possible positions along each axis and represents the dominant factors on leader's behavior in search of results. Despite existing 81 feasible positions, for Blake, Mouton and McCauley there are 5 key styles depending on his interests on people or production: 1.1 or impoverished management, 1.9 or "Country Club" management, 9.1 or autocratic management, 5.5 or businessman management and 9.9 or team management.

In spite of offering new perspectives in leadership conceptualization, the behavioral approach has had a lot of controversy because it does not establish consistent relationships between leadership behavior and organizational results. Some authors say that it does not consider the effect of situations on leadership.

2.3 Structural Leadership

In the 1960s, researchers searched for an approximation to leadership that included new elements, and the most significant was the Situational Contingency approach.

One of the most famous studies was the one developed by Fred Fiedler (1967). This study defined the effectiveness of leadership depended on three factors: leader-subordinate relationship (degree of confidence, honesty and respect that employees have for their leader and loyalty that he demonstrates), task structures (structure degree of work assignment), and power position (degree of leader's influence over elements associated with position like the authority and support that leader receives from the organization). Relationship between these factors may be positive or negative, which offer different situations or categories in which the leader carries them out.

Despite general criticism toward Fiedler's studies, his publications opened new ways for researchers on the scape of leadership.

Three other approaches have been considered of great importance on the structural approach: "path-goal", "decision-making", and the Tridimensional Theory.

The "path-goal" theory was developed by Robert House (1971), who linked the results obtained by the researchers of the University of Ohio and the theory of motivation expectations. The theory proposes that the leader's work is to make the follower's goals compatible with organizational goals. The leader is accepted by followers as a source of actual or future satisfactions on their own goals. The expected result is high performance (organization) and high satisfaction (employee). The "path-goal" theory implies that the same leader may have one or more styles: management, support, participation, and orientation to achieve goals (House & Mitchell, 1994).

The theory of "decision-making" was developed by Victor Vroom and Philip Yetton (1972) and it was supported by

Arthur Jago of the Houston University (Jago, 1977). This theory tallies in the conceptualization of "leadership styles". It suggests that five forms of leadership behavior exist ranging, from autocratic to group oriented, and seven contingencies or problems situational attributes (Donnelly, Gibson & Ivancevich, 1994; Robbins & DeCenzo, 1996).

A more recent work of Vroom and Jago (1988) extends contingencies to twelve. This is a great-value theory that recognizes that the leadership research must focus on situations and not on people.

The Tridimensional theory and the Situational model were developed by Paul Hershey and Kenneth Blanchard (1988) who based their studies on leadership behaviors similar to those which were used by the Ohio State University's researchers: task orientation and relationship orientation. These theories are based on the premise that leader behavior is closely bound to the subordinate's maturity degree, and adding dimensions of efficiency in the search of goals. This is a far-reaching theory that has received great popularity because its practical application in many companies. However, its conclusions have generated a big academic controversy.

2.4 Transformational Leadership

All these approaches are now referred to transactional leaders, who guide or motivate their followers to achieve results by making clearly specified activities.

However, the transformational leadership concept also exist, which typifies a leader who achieves that his followers transform their interests for the benefit of themselves and of the organization (Robbins & DeCenzo, 1996).

One of the most important promoters of this focus was Burns (1978), who, in defining leadership, included the beliefs, needs, and values of followers. Burns talked about a leader-hero, transformational leader who obtains results

in quickly changing situations. Other authors that have deepened this concept are Schein (1985), Bass (1985) and Khunert and Lewis (1987), who researched the relationship between leaders and their followers as an empirical approximation to organizational effectiveness.

2.5 Cultural Contingency

Founded in the Situational Contingency approach, researchers are considering that leadership is related with contingencies and situations as much as values and behaviors of the follower group. This typifies the cultural concept (Gibson & Marcoulides, 1995).

There are many studies about behavior and organizational culture, and this concept has explored the directive action to achieve effective results. Some examples of this are explained in the works of Peters and Watterman (1984), Morgan (1991) and Ouchi (1981) and others.

Due to the growth of globalization in business, today there is a great interest in the interaction management and the leadership action from countries and people.

Some studies in this area have been made, like Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966), Smith and Peterson (1988), and Hofstede (1980). However, the theme is considered insufficiently explored, and in agreement with Gibson and Marcoulides (1995), researchers are not sure if existing leadership styles should be used universally or if cultural elements of each country affect the leadership style that must be used.

3. What is Culture?

Generally speaking and in agreement with Kluckhohn (1951), culture can be defined as "patterned ways of thinking,

feeling, and reacting acquired within human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts". Another author that contributes significant elements is Harold Leavitt (1988) who defined culture as "the complete whole of beliefs, traditions, values, rules, expectations and habits, frequently unconscious and broadly shared, that characterize a specific group of people".

However, when culture is analyzed in its organizational context, it is possible to take the James Champy's definition "culture consists of beliefs and values deeply shared with its people (organization), that they become evident in the way of behaving in the company and its employees" (1995), or the Salvador Sanchez's definition: "culture is the whole of beliefs and values implicitly shared for an organization members, which influence their behavior" (1993). So, culture determines the way how an organization acts.

Included in this definition from the context of the countries, their national culture also includes specific aspects inherent to social elements like beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and norms. Therefore, it is logical to suppose that cultural differences affect the management and leadership style required in each country.

To achieve consistent success, the leadership exercise must understand three key principles of culture and specifically of organizational culture: culture is learned, culture changes, and culture influences people's behaviors (Donnelly, Gibson & Ivancevich, 1994).

It is logical to understand the first element, because by definition, culture is the sum of all that people learn and all behaviors with other people in society. This is important to leaders because it permits them to understand that culture may be modified introducing new knowledge elements.

Secondly, culture is not static. Not only does it have permanent adjustments in the same society due to constant change the environment, but also when changing from one society to another it finds important variations in people's

values, attitudes and behaviors of people. The leader must have an open mind to understand the differences and to act in the right way to making decisions.

Culture is the result of individual behaviors and, in turn, it influences this behavior. Organizational culture maintains a close cause-effect relationship with people behaviors. These are aspects of great relevance to leadership exercise.

An interesting approximation to the organizational culture dynamic was carried out by William Ouchi in 1990 in a conference in Bogota, Colombia, in which he specified that two levels of manifestation of organizational culture exist: visible and non-visible.

At the visible level there are the organizational members' behaviors, or rather, artifacts, rules, processes, procedures, work tools, interactions systems, and all of those that can be perceived explicitly. The visible elements are easily recognizable and facilitate to make an evaluation of the results obtained with the intervention of organizational leaders.

However, restricting leader actions only to visible aspects, does not assure a sustained behavior and a real cultural change.

The non-visible levels are divided fundamentally in two parts: mental models or intrinsic beliefs of organizational people that in turn generate behaviors, and individual and collective values that cause these mental models.

So, leaders action-intervention must be focused on values, in order to achieve coherent and consistent results.

This importance of cultural values is ratified by a lot of studies of organizational culture and they are the main elements to stabilizing the social system (Parsons, 1964).

4. Leadership and Culture

Indubitably, the leadership exercise is affected and many times conditioned by organizational cultures, and, by the

values shared for their members. The possibilities of success on management are linked to the capacity to understand and to intervene in those values and that culture.

An the international level, the problem is much more complex and the leader responsibility is increased in proportion that he must develop cross-cultural abilities to manage situationally the decision making.

4.1 International leadership vs. international management

Frequent discussions have been developed around the difference between leaders and managers. Some findings reject the possibility to find identity between leaders and managers because both have different attitudes, methods and motivations (Zaleznik, 1991).

Others maintain that managers develop their job as leaders without forgetting their own structure of values and behaviors (Hampton, 1982).

There are many papers about leader's characteristics and about managers' characteristics and roles, but in this time of competitive turbulence it is difficult to conceive the success in managers activities without assuming they have an active role of leadership.

Therefore, the leader-manager concept includes all of the elements of discussion around the problem of international management in the framework in that it can be denominated by international leadership-management.

4.2 Actual context

The turbulent modern world is generating big challenges to organizational management.

The changing markets and the huge volume of information, the clients' mobility and aggressive competition in all fields, are demanding more and more complex decisions in less time.

Old styles of management are being pressed by new realities. Administrative theories proliferate trying to offer answers that sometimes are only partial and appropriate to specific environment and circumstances: Total Quality Management (TQM), reengineering, rightsizing, downsizing, empowerment, outsourcing, outplacement, learning organizations, chaos theory, etc. In general, the management tendency points at organizations focused on people, with high capacity for self-learning, able to work on a team and with a global mind.

Managers are obliged to acquire new abilities, as Beamish and others (1994) suggest:

- Ability to develop and use global strategic skills
- Ability to manage change and transition
- Ability to manage cultural diversity
- Ability to design a function in flexible organization structures
- Ability to work with other and in teams
- Ability to communicate
- Ability to learn and transfer knowledge in an organization

Which is the most important ability? It is not easy to determine with precision because it depends on many circumstantial factors of time and environment, but one can be viewed as general imperative, the need of acquiring a flexible and global mind.

The prevailing reality is that to manage organizations successfully, in this turbulent world, it is not enough to be a good manager in the traditional concept. Reviewing the existing literature and some interviews made to leaders of world-size companies, five basic characteristics for leader-managers of twenty-first century are necessary:

- a. Vision: Definitely the visionary capacity is vital to achieve consistent organization development. Collins and Porras (1995) found that this quality is the motor that assures a consistent permanence over time.
- b. Strategy: The ability to design ways to reach the vision is also essential for a modern leader-manager. This characteristic must be linked to a great creative force and have a high capacity to confront risks.
- c. Orientation to people: Modern management recognizes the need to have personnel development as one of the most important goals, moreover for survival and profitability goals. Nowadays, it is talked more about collaborators and less about subordinates. It is a radical change that leader-manager must make in order to exploit the most of people's potential.
- d. Communication: Included as one of the vital abilities pointed out by Beamish and others (1994), the ability to communicate clearly and with sense, is perhaps one of the major challenges to leaders-manager. Some research has found that this ability is the catalyst that allows the real action of effective leadership (Flores, 1995; Chapel, 1996).
- e. Global Mind: A characteristic repeated by many authors as an actual imperative, includes understanding of culture and its impact on behavior, especially on organizational behaviors.

4.3 Leadership-management and cultural diversity

"If we seek to understand people, we have to try to put ourselves, as far as we can, in their particular historical and cultural background... It is not easy... because one fact that seems obvious to us is not immediately accepted by the other party or does not seem obvious to him at all... If we wish to convince them, we have to use their language as far as we

*can, not language in the narrow sense of the word,
but the language of the mind"*

Jawaharlal Nehru

The growing complexity of organizations has generated new scenarios of action for leader-managers, with new elements of intellectual demands. Organizations through countries have differences framed by their cultural environment, which must be understood and adapted by management action.

It is important to differentiate two elements inherent to understanding the cultural diversity (Beamish and others, 1994): a) Cultural awareness or how other people's culture influences and determines their behavior in different circumstances, and b) Self-awareness or how our culture affects our own behavior. The clarity of this differentiation is vital to develop an effective transcultural management.

Therefore, it is emphasized that success in leader-manager activities depends on their cultural sensitivity.

This point is particularly complex, overall when it has been found that the basic concepts of management change substantially between cultures, in spite of a long time, it has been considered that certain "universal values" in business administration exist.

Several detailed studies have demonstrated the differences between management concepts in different countries, in the works of Hofstede (1993) and Theodore (1991). These authors demonstrated with absolute clarity that administrative practices cannot be generalized, and that leader-managers have a great personal challenge in this point.

In general, there are four attitude groups used to clarify the leader-managers' practices (Beamish and others, 1994):

- a. Ethnocentrism (home-country orientation): Under this concept, companies prefer to assign personnel of their

home-country to develop key-positions around the world, with better compensation than local executives. Normally, this is the first step for multinational companies.

- b. Polycentrism (host-country orientation): This attitude recognizes that it is hard to understand foreign people, but it is necessary to do so. These companies hire local people to manage some important positions.
- c. Regiocentrism (regional orientation): In this phase, companies recognize the need to hire, develop and design managers with regional basis. It is a much more broad concept and allow it take advantage of strengths of national cultures.
- d. Geocentrism (world orientation): This is really the global mind concept. Just as John Theodore said in 1998 to a class at the University of Sarasota, this is simply a dream, because it demands a complete managerial open mind, and recognition of local capacity to participate actively in decisions and global strategic definitions.

The management of diversity and an effective leadership-management exercised in a globalized world, requires some basic elements (Laurent, 1986):

- An explicit recognition by managers that its own way of managing reflects the home culture, values, and assumptions.
- An explicit recognition by managers that foreign subsidiaries may have different ways of managing people, which may be more effective.
- A willingness to acknowledge cultural differences, and to take steps to make them discussible and, thus, usable.
- A commitment to the belief that more creative and effective ways of managing people can be developed as a result of cross-cultural learning.

5. Leadership styles toward cultures. Some reflections.

Definitively, the leadership and management themes through cultural diversity are exciting, and open an interesting field for research in organizational administration.

In agreement with existing literature and with accepted concepts of organizational culture, the seemingly logical answer is that leadership-management must adapt itself to the cultural environment, to assure its efficiency and effectiveness.

However, some studies like the very interesting one made by Gibson and Marcoulides (1995), offer different conclusions when they find that leadership styles are not different between the studied countries, outlining that they can be denominated "universal action styles" independent of cultures. The results are surprising and offer new questions for future researches.

And, what about organizations in developing countries especially in Latin America?

The global market tendency is carrying the conclusion of the block economic configuration is an inescapable reality of the future. European Union, Asian block, the quick development of the Chinese economy, the first results of NAFTA, and other agreements made at regional levels like Mercosur, Caricom, Pacto Andino, etc., in spite of all their problems, are making a world-wide statement. Using a popular proverb "United we stand," seems more correct than ever, today in the economic field.

In their meetings, the presidents of Latin American countries discuss more and more frequently the need to develop long-range agreements toward the future which can shape a great powered economic block linked with the USA and Canada.

Many political, economical and social difficulties are still to be solved, but they seem to be achievable goals in the future.

But, are the Latin American managers prepared to manage organizations in those complex scenarios? The answer can be discouraging and offers a huge field of development. This is a big challenge for business schools and for researchers.

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