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Ethical Leadership: Need for Cross-Cultural Examinations

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Ethical Leadership: Relevance and Need for Cross-Cultural Examinations

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In

Industrial-Organizational Psychology

Minnesota State University, Mankato

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Abstract

The study, “Ethical Leadership: Need for Cross-Cultural Examinations” was conducted by Shuo (Tony) Tian and PI Andi Lassiter. This study was in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Minnesota State University, Mankato in the year 2013. This study examined the difference in perceptions among college students on ethical leadership. Ethical leadership has become an increasingly important business issue as corruptions and scandals grow in the 21st century. Unethical leadership has been known to cause major embarrassment for institutions from government to business, and is not a well-researched area among leadership researchers. The procedure included creating an online survey based on the GLOBE study, which examined the *Character/Integrity*, *Altruism*, *Collective Motivation*, and *Encouragement* aspects of ethical leadership. This online survey was then assessed to students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Students were recruited from a large mid-western university. Findings suggest that ethical leadership is perceived differently by certain cultural groups, showing how viewpoints may conflict on what is considered ethical or not by various peoples around the world. Major findings support that students of European heritage differed in their viewpoints on *Character/Integrity* and *Encouragement* from non-European students. Latin students did not differ significantly from non-Latin students on *Collective Motivation*. Students of Asian heritage differed in viewpoints on *Altruism* from non-Asian students.

Introduction

Ethical leadership has become an increasingly important topic within the business world, as scandals such as Enron and WorldCom cost people around the globe billions of dollars in lost livelihood and savings (Bratton, 2002). The globalized nature of business has created a need aimed at discovering the various perspectives of ethical leadership (Carroll, 2004). Data on worldwide economies by Melloan (2004), suggest that of the world's 100 largest economies, over 50% of them include companies with multinational connections. Therefore, it has become imperative for business leaders to increasingly think in global terms and consider the methods and best practices that lead to a path of business success (Miroshnik, 2002).

Organizations and corporations have become concerned with presenting a clean and ethical image to their clients and business partners due to globalization and the rapid spread of information in today's hi-tech world. Presenting the public with an image of ethical leadership has become critical for firms, as the political and social landscape changes in the 20th century have increased pressure and competition for workers, customers, and resources (Javidan & House, 2001). As the world becomes more interconnected, it is critical for businesses to understand cultural similarities and differences when it comes to establishing ethical leaders.

Known and unknowns about ethical leadership

Ethical leadership is a topic that, although growing in importance, has not caught the attention of most leadership researchers. With ethics as its core, ethical leadership fundamentally involves leading in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of another

human being (Ciulla, 2004). Furthermore, ethical leadership focuses on how leaders use their social power in different ways to motivate, engage, and influence their followers (Gini, 1997). Even with these conceptual definitions, there are aspects of emotions, perceptions and moral judgments that researchers have yet to fully discover. Given these existing definitions and the still growing theoretical work on the topic, very few empirical studies have examined ethical leadership. According to Resick, Hanges, Dickson, and Mitchelson (2006), at the time of their publication, they could only find two empirical studies on ethical leadership (i.e., Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). With few empirical examinations, it is imperative that research on ethical leadership continues to grow and spread, especially in the area of cross-cultural differences. One of the main problems with current research is that although many cross-cultural studies of leadership are on the rise, few have focused on ethical leadership (Resick et al., 2006). Additionally, almost no research exists on the perceptions of ethical leadership by those who are in position to be the leaders of the next generation: college students. It would be wise for social scientists to establish how college students perceive ethical leadership in order to understand what the leaders of the next generation value in terms of morals, behaviors, and personal characteristics.

Origins of ethical leadership

In the dearth of research available in this area, studies are often based on a Western perspective and do not take into consideration the various intricacies of other cultural views (Resick et al., 2006). Therefore, there is a need to examine how ethical leadership is perceived in countries not based in Western culture, such as Confucian Asia,

and the Islamic Middle-East. Recent definitions and theories of ethical leadership, based in Western philosophy, provide a good starting point to apply ethical leaderships to other cultures. From a Western perspective, views on ethical conduct have been traditionally examined in three ways: Aristotelian virtues, consequentialism and deontology.

Starting with the latter two, the consequentialist approach is concerned with the product of a given action, whereas the deontological approach values more the motives behind a given action. According to consequentialism, the actions of a person are only deemed ethical if the outcome of the action is positive or favorable (Northouse, 2010). In other words, the motive and character of a person are not important, so long as an action results in a good outcome (Northouse, 2010). On the other hand, deontology suggests that a person can behave in an ethical manner, but that it may not lead to a favorable outcome (Kant, 1964). Kantian deontology suggests that, regardless of results, it is the duty of all people to act in an ethical manner and that is properly fitting of themselves and their cultures, regardless of their setting (Dion, 2012).

An example to contrast deontology and consequentialism is Nazi Europe's human experimentation on the Jews. Although inhumane and atrocious, these experiments have contributed greatly to modern medicine's understanding of human physiology and anatomy. According to consequentialism, even though the actions were repulsive, the results led to the benefit of the greater good, making the action "ethical." On the flip side, deontology would consider the experiments unethical because the motives and character of the Nazis were inherently evil, despite some good outcomes. As current research on

the construct of ethical leadership develops, these two philosophies will continue to serve as foundations for future findings (Lefkowitz, 2003).

The third approach to ethical leadership that has influenced modern day research is based in Aristotle's philosophy of virtues. Northouse (2010) indicates that Aristotle's philosophy includes concepts for ethical leadership such as respect for others, servitude, concern with justice, manifestation of honesty, and building of community. Although these virtues are important, Aristotle believed that if a person held any of these virtues in excess (e.g. excessively honest about everything) that it would be immoral (Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis, 2010). It is through this scope that virtue-based ethical leadership has been examined and studied and an important empirical scale of ethical leadership measurement, the Leadership Virtue Questionnaire (LVQ) was established (Riggio et al., 2010). In addition, all of the virtues that Aristotle proposed were part of a much bigger picture. According to the Greek philosopher, there are four cardinal virtues that encompass how a person should live, and it is by these four that modern day virtue-based ethical leadership is approached. To begin, the first cardinal virtue is *prudence*. According to Riggio and colleagues, prudence is the ability to decide what the right course of action is based on the setting the person is in. For example, it might be prudent for a leader to withhold sensitive information from another leader if it was ethical and justified. The next cardinal virtue is *fortitude*. Fortitude is described as courage and the ability to act courageously even when faced with resistance (Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis, 2010). The last two Aristotelian cardinal virtues are *temperance*, the ability to

control one's emotions, and *justice*, which is the ability to follow rules and laws while acting fairly.

These Western-based philosophies of ethical leadership are primarily what drive the research on how ethical leadership is measured, theorized, and modeled. Although these philosophies may be culturally biased, they share many similar characteristics of ethical behavior with philosophies in a less Euro-American setting. For example, Hofstede's (1980) research into identifying the implications of cultural differences for organizational behavior was critical to expanding the realm of cross-cultural leadership research. Hofstede's research, however, began by looking into the Western-philosophies espoused by Aristotle and Kant.

With a basis on how ethical leadership has been developed in Western-ideals, we now analyze how current researchers have attempted to bridge the cultural gap with non-western philosophies. To begin, social scientists have found that practices, norms, and values that become commonly shared by members of a society to provide a frame of reference for making social comparisons (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002). These comparisons are critical to the leadership process in different cultures and influence the type to people that inhabitants of a county come to accept as leader among other things such as authority and loyalty (Lord & Maher, 1991). Finally, researchers have found that societal culture is associated with differences in personal values and sensitivity to ethical issues (Jackson, 2001).

The overall point of examining culture and ethical leadership in a business setting is that practices that may be considered acceptable, and perhaps, ethical in one culture,

may conflict with viewpoints on ethical practices in another, therefore making it prudent for researchers to understand the impact of culture on ethical leadership (Carroll, 2004; Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999). As organizations grow and expand, it is critical for leaders to understand how the rules of business in one culture differ from another. For companies in the U.S., or for any organization that has leaders from different parts of the world, understanding the perception of people from different cultures is essential to the success of effective team-building and team-function. Additionally, with researchers establishing universally ethical characteristics, leaders who learn to express the same ethical behaviors in different manners, can help establish better relationships with their subordinates and give their firm a possible competitive advantage.

Previous research into cross-cultural ethical leadership

As mentioned, previous studies examining ethical leadership via a multi-cultural approach are difficult to locate. One exception is a study by Resick et al. (2006), which identified six key attributes that universally characterize ethical leadership: *character and integrity, ethical awareness, community/people-orientation, motivating, encouraging and empowering, and managing ethical accountability*. Resick and colleagues' study tested these attributes in a cross-cultural setting by combining their conceptual dimensions of ethical leadership with the scale dimension of ethical leadership proposed by the GLOBE leadership scale. The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) scale was a worldwide multiphase, multi-method project designed to increase understanding of cultural influences on leadership and organizational practices. In order to develop the GLOBE scale, 150 co-investigators collected responses from

17,000 middle managers in 951 organizations and 62 societies throughout the world. Not derived from any one philosophy, the GLOBE scale was founded on the tenants of many different religions and philosophies such as Islam, Buddhism, Confucisim, Taoism and Hinduism among others. Although not originally intended to be a measure of ethical leadership, the GLOBE identified key characteristics that would be considered as ethical by people around the world (Winston & Ryan, 2008). From the entire scale, the researchers identified a total of 23 items that reflected ethical leadership and after applying many statistical procedures, such as exploratory factor analysis and SEM, out of the six attributes, four key themes were identified (Resick et al., 2006). Those four key themes are *Character and Integrity*; *Community/People-Orientation*; *Motivating, Encouraging, and Empowering*; and finally *Ethical Awareness and Managing Ethical Accountability*.

Beginning with *Character and Integrity*, the researchers identified trust, sincerity, justness, and honesty as scale dimensions that defined the character/integrity concept. Next, the concept of *Community/People-Orientation* was identified by *Altruism* which included questions measuring generosity, fraternity, compassion, and modesty. In addition *Collective Motivation* was measured by communication, confidence building, group orientation, motive arousing, and team building. The *Motivating, Encouraging, and Empowering* concept was identified by questions that measured *Collective Motivation and Encouragement*, which included seeing if leaders that were encouraging and morale-boosting could be classified under this concept. Finally, the *Ethical Awareness, Managing Ethical Accountability* theme was not addressed by any specific subscale of questions.

Next, building on the work of Ronen and Shenkar (1985), the GLOBE project created a set of culture clusters by combining societies that have similar cultural values

and practices (Gupta & Hanges, 2004). The GLOBE project researchers assessed cultural values and practices of societies among nine dimensions including: *Assertiveness, Future Orientation, Gender Egalitarianism, Human Orientation, In-Group Collectivism, Institutional Collectivism, Performance Orientation, Power Distance, and Uncertainty Avoidance*. The GLOBE clusters were the basis for Resick and colleagues for their research in various cultural settings. They identified fundamental differences in what is considered ethical leadership in various cultures.

One fascinating result Resick and colleagues identified was that out of the four key concepts previously mentioned, *Character/Integrity, Altruism, Collective Motivation, and Encouragement*, all were found to be universally supported. It was only the strength of endorsement for different components that differed across cultures. To further understand this piece of important research, a brief overview of these four components will be given.

To begin, *Character*, as defined by Petrick and Quinn (1997), refers to “the pattern of intentions, inclinations, and virtues that provide the ethical or moral foundation for behavior” (p. 51). *Character* is important to ethical leadership because researchers have suggested that a leader’s character can be a representation of their humility, loyalty, virtue, generosity, and forgiveness (Bass, 1956). In addition, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) contended that a person with good character is committed to virtue under all circumstances. Next, *Integrity* is a fundamental component of character (Fluker, 2002; Petrick & Quinn, 1997). It is considered an important aspect of leadership in

general, and a leader who demonstrates integrity often is considered trustworthy (Bass, 1990; Bennis, 1989; Locke, 1999; Posner & Schmidt, 1984; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

Altruism falls under the umbrella of the concept of *Community/People-Orientation*. Altruism involves engaging in behaviors intended to help others without expecting external reward and is done with disregard for one's own welfare (Macaulay & Berkowitz, 1970; Krebs, 1982). Kanungo and Mendona (1996) argued that altruism is an important foundation for ethical leadership and can be important in the development of community.

Collective Motivation is a subset idea of motivation in general. It indicates how strongly people are willing to set aside personal goals to put the interests of the group above their own. Accordingly, an ethical leader can motivate followers to put the interests of the group ahead of their own (Bass & Steidlmeier 1999). Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) suggested that ethical empowerment of followers is an important antecedent of followers' perception that the leader's intentions are in the best interest of the group.

Finally, *Encouragement* is the idea the ethical leaders are empowering to followers, which allow followers to gain a sense of personal competence and be self-sufficient (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Gini, 1997). Similar to Transformational Leadership, an *Idealized Influence* is involved that motivates followers to think independently and demonstrates that the leader is treating followers equitably and fairly (Resick et al, 2006). In sum, this overview of the important cross-cultural components of

ethical leadership helps to understand the influence of the GLOBE study and where research on cross-cultural ethical leadership is going.

Cross-Cultural Ethical Leadership Viewpoints and Research Hypotheses

Previous researchers have grouped countries based on culture and societal expectations which led to them identifying ten different cultural clusters (Javidan & House, 2001). Those ten clusters include Anglo, Confucian Asia, Eastern European, Germanic European, Latin American, Latin European, Middle Eastern, Nordic European, Southeast Asian, and Sub-Saharan Africa. What this suggests is that the dimensions of ethical leadership included in Resick et al.'s (2006) study indicate a *vaniform universal*, which means that a principle is viewed similarly across the world, but that cultural subtleties lead to differences in the enactment of that principle across cultures (Hanges, Lord, & Dickson, 2000; Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman, 1999). The current study will modify these groups into a non-native and native (U.S. born) to the U.S. group. Native will be defined as having lived in the U.S. for more than 10 years, whereas non-native will be identified as students who have lived in the U.S. for less than 10 years. This is based on research which indicates it takes about 10 years to full assimilate into a culture (Miroshnik, 2002). The non-native group will be composed of students from the clusters mentioned above. Specifically, I will be contacting students from East Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Europe, and Africa. If enough subjects can be found, I may also attempt to divide the non-native group further amongst the cultural clusters found by GLOBE researchers

The present study expected to find that the dimension of *Character/Integrity* would be endorsed most highly by Nordic-European societies. Indeed, Resick et al.'s (2006) study found that, of different clusters of countries, the highest level of endorsement was found among Nordic-European countries. Interestingly, according to a 2001 study, two of the countries that have the lowest corruption levels in the world, as indicated by the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) are Sweden and Finland, countries that are part of the Nordic-European cluster (Transparency International, 2001). Accordingly, *Hypothesis 1* will be:

H1. Students from Western-based countries, especially those in the European cluster will be most likely to endorse *Character/Integrity* as a fundamental aspect of ethical leadership.

Next, researchers found that *Altruism* was endorsed most by Southeast Asian societies (Resick et al., 2006). This could be because there is a strong sense of in-group pride and loyalty coupled with a humane orientation engrained in cultures of Southeast Asia (Gupta & Hanes, 2004). It could very well be that effective leaders in Southeast Asian countries tend to be generous and fraternal towards their subordinates.

H2. Students from Asian-based countries, especially those in Southeast Asia will be most likely to endorse *Altruism* as a strong indicator of ethical leadership

With *Collective Motivation*, research has found that Latin American and Anglo societies are the most likely to endorse this component of ethical leadership. Collective Motivation embodies aspects of communication, team-building, and motive arousal in followers. Both Latin American and Anglo societies tend to be more accepting of expressive

communication and open displays of emotion (Dickson & Den Hartog, 2005).

Additionally, Anglo societies tend to view visionary communication by leaders positively and have expectations for communication and participation in decision making (Dickson, Den Hartog, & Michelson, 2003). As an interesting side note, it seems that normally collectivistic Confucian Asian societies tended to endorse collective motivation to a lesser degree than other cultures and people tend to communicate a vision in a non-aggressive manner (Fu & Yukl, 2000). Therefore I hypothesized that:

H3: Latin American students will view ethical leadership strongest in terms of Collective Motivation followed closely by Anglo and Nordic-European societies.

Finally, *Encouragement* although a core component of ethical leadership, was not researched as well as the other components. To this end, what little research there was showed that *Encouragement* was a component strongly endorsed by Nordic-European societies and less so by Middle Eastern societies (Resick et al., 2006). The last hypothesis for research was:

H4: Students from Nordic-European countries will endorse Encouragement as the most representative of ethical leadership over other cultural groups.

Methods

Participants

A total of 302 participants from a medium-sized Midwestern university completed an online survey. Of those 302 participants, only 244 completed the entire survey, for a response rate of 81%. Through active recruitment with the university's international center and cultural student organizations, an attempt was made to ensure that all groups

on campus were adequately represented. However, due to a lack of diverse participants on campus, as well as small numbers of diverse participants completing the survey, data included very small sample sizes for some cultural groups. Demographics of participants included Anglo ($N = 122$), Germanic-European ($N = 27$), Latin-European ($N = 1$), Nordic-European ($N = 9$), Eastern-European ($N = 4$), Latin-American ($N = 8$), Confucian Asia ($N = 24$), and Southern Asia ($N = 5$).

In order to address these issues, some cultural clusters were collapsed across groups in order to increase power. Those who identified as themselves of Germanic, Latin, Nordic, and Eastern-European heritages were collapsed into one group, known as Europeans ($N = 37$). Additionally, participants who self-identified as Confucian and Southern Asia were also collapsed into a group called Asian ($N = 20$). Of the participants who completed the survey, 76% were native to the U.S. ($N = 184$) (defined as having lived in the US for more than 10 years), and 24% were non-native ($N = 59$).

Data Collection

All participants were asked to sign a form of consent and told the purpose of the study. They then completed a survey adapted from the GLOBE, created by Resick and colleagues. They were told that taking the survey was optional and that refusal to take the survey could be invoked at any time and quitting would not have any effect on the relationship between participants and the school. Participants were asked to provide basic background information including: gender, age, ethnicity, race, and citizenship status. Participants were asked questions that characterized the four components of cross-cultural ethical leadership as adapted by Resick et al. (2006). Questions included items on

topics such as motivation, personality, behavioral norms, sense of justice, sense of trust, and communication. With the hope of increasing completion rates, participants were asked if they wished to be entered into a drawing for two gift cards from local businesses.

Measures

The online ethical leadership survey consisted of 107 items divided into five sections assessing perceptions towards the four major themes of cross-cultural ethical leadership: *Character/Integrity*, *Altruism*, *Collective Motivation*, and *Encouragement*. In addition, there were multiple demographic questions that assessed background information mentioned earlier in the data collection section. The response options for the items in the four major themes was a 7-point Likert scale based on the GLOBE study, with 1 indicating the lowest endorsement (greatly inhibits) and 7 the highest endorsement (contributes greatly) of a belief, value, or behavior. Scale reliability was acceptable across all themes with *Collective Motivation* and *Altruism* scales lower in reliability than the other two (see Table 2). Also, faking identifiers were put in place in order to help detect random answering. One item each was placed in sections 1 and 3 of the survey. These items simply asked the participant to choose the correct corresponding answer as indicated in the question, in order to pass the faking identifier. Also, a paper option was available for participants who wished to take it offline. For a copy of the survey used, please see the appendix.

Results

Prior to analysis, all data was examined for cases omitted, dropped, or improperly completed. In order to select useful data, cases that included participants who failed to

properly pass faking identifiers were eliminated. In addition, cases which did not include at least 50% of answers were also eliminated. Not all participants answered every section on the survey. On each section, an average of 81% of participants completed that section. In addition, reliability analysis was conducted to see if the four dimensions identified by Resick et al. were good identifiers of ethical leadership. In order to better test the four dimensions, a summed composite score was made for each subscale. Finally, intercorrelational analysis was conducted to understand the relationships between the dimensions. These results are presented in Table 1.

To test hypothesis 1, an independent sample t-test was conducted, with culture as an independent variable and *character/motivation* subscale composite as the dependent variable. Results indicated that students with a European heritage ($N = 37$) ($M = 134.59$) endorsed *character/motivation* significantly higher than students from a non-European heritage ($N = 173$) ($M = 125.58$) ($t = -2.27, p < 0.05$). This supports hypothesis 1.

For hypothesis 2, an independent sample t-test with culture as the independent variable and *Altruism* composite scores as the dependent variable, indicated that students with an Asian heritage ($N = 20$) ($M = 78.90$) ($t = 5.97, p < 0.001$) endorsed *Altruism* significantly lower than students from a non-Asian heritage ($N = 190$) ($M = 89.86$). These results were in contrast to my hypothesis and to previous literature, which suggests that given the societal influences of Asian countries, people with a background from Asia should actually support altruism more than those of other countries. Possible reasons for this contradictory finding will be described in more detail in the discussion section.

For hypothesis 3, a very small sample size of Latin students was used. An independent sample t-test, with culture as the independent variable and *collective motivation* composite scores as the dependent variable, indicated that students with a Latin heritage ($N=7$) ($M = 135.71$) did not significantly endorse *collective motivation* any more than students from a non-Latin heritage ($N=201$) ($M = 135.81$) ($t = 0.01, p = \text{n.s.}$), showing a lack of support for the hypothesis.

To test hypothesis 4, all European students, rather than only Nordic European students, were used in the analyses. This was due to the fact that, a very small sample of Nordic-European students responded to the survey. An independent sample t-test, with culture as the independent variable and *Encouragement* composite scores as the dependent variable, indicated that students with a European heritage ($N=37$) ($M = 119.97$) endorsed *Encouragement* significantly higher than students from a non-European heritage ($N=172$) ($M = 112.95$) ($t = -2.78, p < 0.01$). This provides support for hypothesis 4.

As a final examination, all hypotheses were tested comparing the Anglo and non-Anglo groups, and native and non-native groups. For both analyses all group means were significantly different with the Native and Anglo groups having significantly higher mean scores than non-native and non-Anglos on all subscales of ethical leadership. Mean differences are reported in Tables 2 and 3.

Discussion

Ethical leadership across cultures is a complex idea that incorporates many subtleties of the politics, beliefs, and ideals of a country or peoples. The purpose of the

present study was to examine whether certain cultures would endorse different behaviors and attitudes of ethical leadership depending on the type of leadership characteristics. These results add a good step to understanding the complexity of a cross-cultural component to the existing literature on ethical leadership.

Beginning with Hypothesis 1, results indicate that students from Western, especially European countries, were more likely than other groups to indicate *Character/Integrity* as a fundamental aspect of ethical leadership. This suggests that people from such countries tend to strongly focus on a leader's moral integrity and how much character as a person the leader shows in such areas as honesty, accountability, and responsibility.

Indeed, significant differences were found among groups from Europe and non-European students. This supports Resick et al. (2006) theory that due to character and integrity being most related to Aristotelian and Western based philosophy, it would come as no surprise that cultures based on those philosophies would most likely endorse this characteristic. Western ideas of *justice, temperance, courage, and wisdom*, all play into what is considered important in a leader's character. These are often based on western philosophies (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Also, as mentioned before, some of the countries with the lowest corruption perception by its peoples happen to be those in Europe (Transparency International 2001).

It was also predicted that students from Asian countries would endorse *Altruism* as a strong indicator of ethical leadership. Findings indicate no support for this hypothesis. This is in direct contrast to existing literature, which states that Asian cultures

tend to be collectivistic in nature and that the strong sense of in-group pride and loyalty are the basis for many of these cultures (Gupta & Hanges, 2004). In fact, completely opposite of what was expected, those from Asian cultures tended to endorse *Altruism* less than those from other culture.

In another international study by Resick, et al. (2011), Asian nations such as China and Hong Kong, heavily endorsed characteristics related to consideration and respect for others, fairness, and non-discriminatory treatment, emphasizing the importance of altruism in Asian societies. This esoteric result could be due to the fact several of the Asian participants were either already considered “native” to the U.S. and therefore had been assimilated into Western culture, or did not live in an Asian country for most of their lives. Of all 20, Asian participants, only 13 identified themselves as having lived in a country in Asia the longest. Additionally, a changing perspective among Asian countries has been occurring, as nations such as China, Japan, and Korea, become more “westernized” and politically powerful (Carroll, 2004).

Next, results did not indicate that Latin students significantly endorsed *Collective Motivation* more than non-Latin students. In fact, Latin-American students seemed to endorse *Collective Motivation* roughly the same as any other student group. Although Latin-American and European societies tend to value expressive leaders and communal decision making, the results indicated here do not share this viewpoint (Dickson & Den Hartog, 2005). This could be due to the extremely low sample size for the Latin participants, or could again be caused by these students already being assimilated into Western culture. In fact data from demographic items in the survey, only 3 participants

had lived in a Latin country the longest, with the rest having lived in the US the longest, suggesting these people were likely assimilated.

Finally, results indicate that students from a European heritage did significantly endorse *Encouragement* more than any other group of students, showing support for the hypothesis. Previous research suggests that European cultures tend to value respect for others and the moral responsibility of individuals to view people not as a means to an end, but rather a companion or friend who should be helped in times of need (Resick et al., 2011). Perhaps this indicates people around the world value *Encouragement* much the same as those in Europe, but may be expressing it in a different form. Future research should consider examining this in more detail.

As mentioned throughout the paper, there is really no general theory of ethical leadership across cultures (Rubenstein, 2003), but there are certain characteristics, that though endorsed to various degrees, are still maintained as what makes a leader ethical in his actions (Ayers, 2004). The current study adds to the body of literature on construct of ethical leadership, specifically giving attention to the cross-cultural component of the dimensions associated with this construct.

Limitations

A few limitations in this study likely have affected these results. The most evident limitation was the sample size of non-native students. Due to the demographics of the sample population, it was difficult to recruit equal numbers of participants for each cultural cluster. As such, a majority of the population was Anglo ($N=110$), whereas all other cultures had less than 100 participants per cultural cluster. In addition, as mentioned

in the results, most participants were considered native to the U.S. ($N=186$). These limitations reduced the power of the study to detect differences among various cultural groups, as well as affected the assumptions of heterogeneity in analyses. Also, even if a participant may have identified with a certain cultural cluster, their nativity status may still have allowed them to be influenced by American culture through assimilation.

A second limitation was the format and the number of questions presented on the survey and the relatively small sample size. Due to the survey being online and a large number of questions, mortality may have been high, and faking may have occurred due to boredom or stress. Although I put in faking identifiers, many of the participants may have still answered the questions in a rushed manner, and correctly identified the faking questions by chance.

Finally, an attempt was made to compare Anglo and non-Anglo groups, and native and non-native groups in order to provide a potential explanation for differences in subscale scores. After analyzing these broad groups, it was determined that collapsing across cultural groups only muddies the findings, and does not allow for a practical interpretation, particularly as the main point of this research was to understand cultural differences in ethical leadership. In addition, since the GLOBE survey has a western-basis, some of the items may have not translated well to other cultures, creating confusion for non-Native participants. Collapsing cultural groups into non-native and non-Anglo do not help this cause.

Future Directions

This study attempts to explore ethical leadership in cross-cultural settings. Although it examined some of the different characteristics endorsed by students of various culture, it would be wise for researchers to continue to examine these issues and expand the sampling to examine the endorsements of working leaders in the world. Although there is continued understanding of differences in leading across cultures, there is still a lack of literature and research on the practicality of these studies (Dickson, Den Hartog, & Mitchelson, 2003). Given the strong focus on globalization by today's corporations and organizations, researchers should continue to focus on subcomponents of characteristics studied in the survey and link specific behaviors, beliefs, or attitudes to effective ethical and cross-cultural leadership across a variety of cultural groups.

Constructs such as power distance, political influence, or simply the apathetic attitude of certain cultures towards their leaders, could interact with the four themes talked about here to affect ethical leadership as well. As mentioned earlier, the *vaniform universal* theory suggests that all societies will endorse certain behaviors or values considered to be ethical (Resick et al., 2006). However, due to constructs like power distance and political influence playing a role in a society's way of thinking, endorsement of certain themes may change. Lastly, it would be a good step for researchers to also tie in specific values, behaviors, or beliefs to ethical leadership. Identifying the specific drivers of endorsements with values such as honesty or courage will allow researchers to better understand links between ethical leadership and endorsements.

Conclusion

In closing, cross-cultural ethical leadership continues to be a critical issue in today's globalized economy. Many corporations and companies continue expanding across borders and differences in viewpoints on ethics frequently cross those borders (Carroll, 2004). Many societal pressures and influences affect perceptions of ethical leadership across the world, and it is up to social scientists and researcher to continue exploring the deeper aspects of these perceptions (Jackson, 2001). As business leaders increasingly face challenges of leading ethically across cultures, the practical applications of cross-cultural ethical leadership will continue to play an important role in creating effective and respectful business relationships that drive productivity and efficiency across business functions (Resick, et al., 2006).

Table 1
Intercorrelational analysis of four factors of ethical leadership

| | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Collective Motivation | 207 | 135.82 | 14.03 | (.70) | | | |
| 2. Altruism | 207 | 88.97 | 8.36 | 0.57 | (.70) | | |
| 3. Encouragement | 207 | 114.17 | 19.82 | 0.81 | 0.67 | (.95) | |
| 4. Character/Integrity | 207 | 127.02 | 22.25 | 0.76 | 0.67 | 0.91 | (.94) |

*All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2
Mean differences between Anglo and non-Anglo students on ethical leadership

| | Anglo | <i>SD</i> | Non-Anglo | <i>SD</i> | Mean Difference |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Collective Motivation | 138.61 | 8.26 | 132.68 | 17.86 | 5.93 |
| Altruism | 90.52 | 7.06 | 86.90 | 9.36 | 3.62 |
| Encouragement | 118.75 | 9.54 | 109.14 | 25.87 | 9.61 |
| Character/Integrity | 132.33 | 11.93 | 121.50 | 28.55 | 10.83 |

*All differences were significant at the 0.01 level or below (2-tailed)

Table 3
Mean differences between natives and non-native students on ethical leadership

| | Native | <i>SD</i> | Non-Native | <i>SD</i> | Mean Difference |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Collective Motivation | 138.45 | 10.13 | 123.68 | 21.46 | 14.78 |
| Altruism | 90.29 | 7.27 | 82.13 | 10.12 | 8.16 |
| Encouragement | 118.66 | 12.96 | 94.31 | 30.40 | 24.35 |
| Character/Integrity | 132.50 | 14.39 | 103.29 | 33.18 | 29.21 |

*All differences were significant at the 0.01 level or below (2-tailed).

Appendix

Survey

Online Survey Consent

You are requested to participate in research supervised by Dr. Andrea R. Lassiter, on college student perceptions toward ethical leadership. This survey should take about 15-20 min. to complete. The goal of this survey is to understand what the differences are in perception among students from different countries on the important characteristics that make up an ethical leader. If you have any questions about the research, please contact Dr. Andrea R. Lassiter at andrea.lassiter@mnsu.edu.

Participation is voluntary. You have the option not to respond to any of the questions. You may stop taking the survey at any time by closing your web browser. Participation or nonparticipation will not impact your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato. If you have questions about the treatment of human participants and Minnesota State University, Mankato, contact the IRB Administrator, Dr. Barry Ries, at 507-389-2321 or barry.ries@mnsu.edu.

Responses will be anonymous. However, whenever one works with online technology there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

The risks of participating are no more than are experienced in daily life.

There are no direct benefits for participating. Society might benefit by the increased understanding of ethical leadership in cultures around the world.

Submitting the completed survey will indicate your informed consent to participate and indicate your assurance that you are at least 18 years of age.

Please print a copy of this page for your future reference.

MSU IRBNet ID#

Date of MSU IRB approval:

Q2 Instructions

As a college student, you may have had experience with or heard about an important role model or leader who has treated people with respect, behaved in a proper manner, all the while helping you or others in the workplace or in society. Depending on the country you are from, these role models or leaders likely acted in a way that you would make you consider them to be a “good” person (e.g. Proper, moral, and/or helpful) In the U.S. we call these people “Ethical leaders”. You have been asked to complete a survey rating the importance of different behaviors, values, and beliefs in making up a good ethical leader from your country of origin or birth (the country you have spent most of your life in). On the following pages are several behaviors, values, and beliefs that can be used to describe leaders. Each behavior, value or belief is followed by a short definition to explain its meaning. Using the description of ethical behaviors above as a guide, rate the behaviors, values, and beliefs on the following pages. To do this, use the scale below as a reference and choose what you think is the best rating for each behavior, value, or belief.

SCALE

- 1 = This behavior, value, or belief **greatly inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
- 2 = This behavior, value, or belief **somewhat inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
- 3 = This behavior, value, or belief **slightly inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
- 4 = This behavior, value, or belief **has no impact** on whether a person is an ethical leader.
- 5 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes slightly** to a person being an ethical leader.
- 6 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes somewhat** to a person being an ethical leader.
- 7 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes greatly** to a person being an ethical leader.

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| others | | | | | | | |
| Enthusiastic: Demonstrates and gives people a strong positive emotion for work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Risk averse : Avoids taking risks; dislikes risk | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

SCALE

- 1 = This behavior, value, or belief **greatly inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
 2 = This behavior, value, or belief **somewhat inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
 3 = This behavior, value, or belief **slightly inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
 4 = This behavior, value, or belief **has no impact** on whether a person is an ethical leader.
 5 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes slightly** to a person being an ethical leader.
 6 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes somewhat** to a person being an ethical leader.
 7 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes greatly** to a person being an ethical leader.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| value on preserving individual rather than group needs | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

SCALE

- 1 = This behavior, value, or belief **greatly inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
2 = This behavior, value, or belief **somewhat inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
3 = This behavior, value, or belief **slightly inhibits** a person from being an ethical leader.
4 = This behavior, value, or belief **has no impact** on whether a person is an ethical leader.
5 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes slightly** to a person being an ethical leader.
6 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes somewhat** to a person being an ethical leader.
7 = This behavior, value, or belief **contributes greatly** to a person being an ethical leader.

Q11

Section 5 Demographic Questions

Following are several questions about you, your background, and the place where you work. These questions are important because they help us to see if different types of people respond to the questions on this questionnaire in different ways. They are NOT used to identify any individual.

Q12 How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25 or over

Q13 What is your gender? (check one)

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q14 Which of the following best represents your cultural background?

- Anglo (U.S. England, Australia, South Africa (Caucasian), Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, etc...)
- Germanic-European (Austria, Switzerland, Germany, South Tyrol, Lichtenstein, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, etc...)
- Latin-European (Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, etc...)
- Nordic-European (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, etc...)
- Eastern-European (Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Serbia, Greece, Slovenia, Albania, Russia, etc...)
- Latin-American (Costa Rica, Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, etc...)
- Confucian Asia (Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, China, Japan, Vietnam, etc...)
- Southern Asia (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Turkey, Thailand, Philippines, etc..)
- Arab (Algeria, Qatar, Morocco, Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, etc..)
- African (Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa (African), Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, etc...)
- Other/I don't identify with any culture

Q15 How long have you lived in the U.S.?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

Q16 What country have you lived in the longest?

Q16 What is your ethnic background?

- Caucasian
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- African
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American/Alaskan Native
- Other/Multiethnic

Q17 Do you have a religious affiliation?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know/I refuse to answer

Q18 If you answered yes to the last question, please indicate the name of the religion.

Q19 What year of college are you in?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate student
- Other

Q20 If you wish to be entered in a random drawing for a \$20 Target gift card, please enter your name and contact information below. The information provided will be in no way used to publicly reveal your identity on this survey.

This concludes the survey. PLEASE MAKE SURE TO CLICK THE BUTTON BELOW TO SUBMIT. We truly appreciate your willingness to complete this survey and assist in this research project.

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