

Alexis Cummings

Honors 450

Dr. Anne Dahlman

15 March 2016

Leadership Within Colombia

Learning how to critique leadership models and styles within group contexts is a great way to begin to understand a culture and develop global competency. By critiquing leadership styles within my homestay family, my current university and within the Colombian government, I was able to practice group member skills and work together with others toward a common goal.

Leadership within my homestay family is quite different than in my home in the United States. An autocratic leadership style can be seen within the home (Johnson, 2016); this means that often times the parents make decisions alone without the input of their children. To begin, this can be seen in the way the parents of the household have control and authority over her four children. Here in Colombia it is important to parents, especially the mother, that the children display proper demeanor and respect for elders. Similarly, if the children do not respond in a way that their parents ask, there is usually consequences. Next, the parents also value collectivism, religion, and extended family. For this reason, the family usually attends church or a family gathering each weekend without the children having a choice. Another autocratic leadership role that can be seen within the home is from older siblings who are in college or have already finished studying. Often times, young adults in Colombia live with their parents until they get

married; it is not uncommon to see at 26 or 27-year-old still living with their parents while in a relationship and having a job. Because of this, the older siblings help to take care of their younger siblings and keep them from misbehaving. Overall, I think that the autocratic leadership style is used within my homestay family because the children are benefited from being under close supervision until they are adults.

The next place I began to study was leadership within the university and my classroom. After speaking with professors at the university, I have learned that a transformational leadership style is used within the university government. This is based on the fact that high levels of communication are needed in order to meet goals (Johnson, 2016). Most of the people in charge at the university are women and has a strong Catholic influence; this makes the university very unique because women are often very good with communication and enhance productivity. Within my classroom a transformational leadership style is used; this means that in the classroom high levels of communication from management are used to meet goals (Johnson, 2016). My professors motivate me and my classmates to learn Spanish through engaged communication and high visibility. My professors also often work hard to provide a healthy learning environment for the students and always encourages students to participate in class. When comparing my professors there are two different types that can be seen: ones who are always late and some who are very punctual with time. Even with this difference, each professor seems to use a transformational leadership style. Overall, this shows that even within a large institution one can find similar leadership styles.

Finally, leadership can be seen within the government of Colombia. This leadership style can be referred to as participative which is often a democratic leadership

style (Johnson, 2016). The leadership within the country is characterized by the laws of the government and the current president Juan Manuel Santos who was elected in August of 2010; it can also be characterized by the current defense minister and other important political people with power. This people use a leadership style that is meant to allow citizens to have an input in the decision-making process of the country; even though often times this type of leadership fails, it is what the countries constitution is based on. Finally, leadership can also be seen within the Roman Catholic Church and Pope Francis. In Colombia, it is very important to follow the Catholic religion and has great respect for the Pope. The Catholic religion is the countries national religion and plays an important part in the decisions of the government. Overall, the leadership style within the government of Colombia can be characterized as democratic or participative.

From learning about and encountering all of these different types of leadership within Colombia, I was able to learn group member skills and abilities that have be useful in each circumstance. To begin, I learned the importance of communication skills. Within the classroom and my homestay family, I have had to be able to explain my ideas, express my feelings, and learn to listen carefully; I have also had to ask questions when I didn't understand what was going on and pay attention to nonverbal communication that might be different in Colombia versus the United States. Next, I have learned skills for a healthy group climate. Within my time in Colombia I have learned the importance of openness, trust and self-disclosure, support, and respect; this concept has come from interactions with different cultures and leadership styles. Lastly, I have learned the leadership skills for an effective group process. During my time in Colombia I have had to problem solve with other people, provide constructive feedback, and manage and

organize my time; I have also had to understand my role in certain circumstances, and be both responsible and accountable. In total, by evaluating the different types of leadership styles I have been able to become a better leader myself.

Overall, there are many different types of leadership styles that I have seen in Colombia depending on the context. I was able to experience these different styles within my homestay family, the university and from learning about the government structure of Colombia. From experiencing all of these different leadership settings, I was able to learn the importance of group member skills and abilities and become a better leader myself.

Works Cited

Johnson, Rose. "5 Different Types of Leadership Styles." *5 Different Types of Leadership Styles*. Chron, 2016. Web. 09 Mar. 2016.