

Identification of Key Values and Behaviours Influencing Leadership Orientation in Southern Africa

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Abstract

In Southern Africa, apart from probably South Africa, there are a number of emerging economies, each with their own cultural and administrative differences. This study examines the elements of the value systems and behaviours of managers from several corporate companies and develops insights into constructs of leadership styles shaped by individual value systems and behaviours in the workplace. Leadership primarily stems from the desire to control one's environment including people and productive resources. Data was collected from 259 managers using a survey questionnaire and exploratory factor analysis and comparative means were used as the basis of analysis. The study reveals that there may be four leadership orientations in the African context. The first group comprises those who are driven by an achievement orientation which requires ambition and to be challenged in the role. The second group comprises those motivated by the rewards of leadership in terms of wealth and security. The third orientation type was managers who seek a degree of conformity and loyalty from subordinates and followers. The fourth was a more transformational leadership and innovative, with the willingness to challenge existing managerial paradigms. These orientations were not deemed to be mutually exclusive as managers may in fact display more than one of these orientations. The measure of how successful a manager is likely to be in a particular leadership role may depend on the strength of their orientation in relation to achievement, reward, conformity and innovativeness. These findings are significant for understanding leadership motivations and drivers of behaviour especially in selecting managers to fulfil specific roles. For example, a situation that predominantly demands innovativeness and outcomes (achievement) will need individuals who score the highest in that area rather than on "reward and conformity".

Keywords: values, leadership orientation, behaviours, workplace, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

In emerging African economies, largely characterised by relatively scarce resources, good leadership is critical for both public and private sector organisations. However, selecting the appropriate type of manager can be difficult, especially when the selection processes are not always as objective because of myriad cultural and social influences. Once an individual is appointed in a position of some influence more often they are extremely difficult to remove even though the being caused may appear obvious. Therefore, in the selection and training of managers, it necessitates that closer attention is given particularly to understanding personalities, behaviours and motivations that individuals bring to leadership positions.

An individual's personality is rooted in his or her values and form the foundations influence individual behaviour (Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz, 2001; Schwartz, 2005), while culture shapes the context within which values develop (House et. al., 2004; Sarros and Santora, 2001). These deep-rooted values represent the true self which is hidden in the unconscious mind leaving the individual to become an actor that must conform to the situations and

conditions of a workplace and a larger society. This paper investigated an extended value system package (EVSP) as a form of a multidimensional construct that shape behavior and consequently leadership traits at the workplace.

Value identification is a key concept in reaching self-actualisation and gaining self identity. It ultimately shapes the personal and shared attitudes even at workplace. Individuals need to explore ways of achieving congruency in actually living a social life. Focusing on the Self: Humanism and Self-Actualization is vital. The self-concept is a knowledge representation that contains knowledge about our beliefs, personality traits, and values that exist in individuals (Kagan, 1991).

A myriad of theorists studied the areas relating to needs, motives and values but the model on personality was heralded by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs pyramid. According to Maslow (1970), when people have attained their lower needs within the hierarchy, only then will they move to achieve the higher needs of self esteem and eventually self-actualisation which is the pinnacle of developing our inner potential to the fullest. According to Luthans

(1995) the issue of security is a very intense motive, especially in a fast-paced highly technological society. This largely explains why people tend to have a learned security motive to protect themselves from contingencies of life and actively try to avoid situations which would prevent them from satisfying their primary, secondary and other motives. There is also the adage of the unconscious security motive taken care by insurance programs and other fringe benefits at the workplace.

Individual behaviour directed towards the achievement of motivational goals either relating to the person or the organisation, fundamentally depend on values (Rokeach, 1968). The way in which these values are organised and ranked in order of relative importance is referred to as a value system. Argyris, et. al. (1985) distinguish between value in-use, which are those values that are converted into behaviour, and espoused values which are merely espoused to create an image that the individual desires to display or represent.

Consequently, identifying the right managers for specific situations can present serious problems for both private and public organisations. Based on the value systems of current budding managers from a diverse range of organisations, this study will provide some guidelines on how leadership motivations can be grouped, so that identification of the right types of leaders can be facilitated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a preponderance of studies done in the area of leadership but despite the plethora of research in the area, there is still considerable controversy. Traditionally, models of leadership focused on relationships between people and production on the one hand (Blake and Mouton, 1982) and organisational change and development on the other (Skogstad and Einarsen, 1999). Some do not recognize leadership and state that the social constructs of leadership is a myth that functions to reinforce existing social beliefs and structures about the necessity of hierarchy and leaders in organizations (Luthans, 1995). Northouse (2004) defines it as a process whereby one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Drucker (1985) defines leadership as “the lifting of peoples’ vision to a higher standard, the building of their personality beyond its normal limitations”. There are different types of leaderships, that is, transactional, transformational and spiritual. The different leadership styles have been of great interest to a number of researchers.

Spiritual leadership - comprises of values, attitudes and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate ones’ self and others. It entails creating a vision where leaders and followers experience a sense

of calling, in that life has meaning and makes a *difference*. It exists to establish a social organisation culture based on the values of altruistic love where leaders and followers have a sense of membership, feel understood and appreciated and have genuine care, concern and appreciation for both self and others (Fry, Vitucci and Cedillo, 2005).

Transformational leadership has been explained in terms of individual values and the values emerging from the work environment (Hoffman et. al., 2011; Jung and Avolio, 2000). Transformational leaders create innovative teams (Keller, 2006) and effective team environments and groupings by arousing strong emotions and loyalty (Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006). The effective achievement of organisation goals will only result if the followers self development needs are met. Leaders convey role expectations to their followers and provide tangible rewards towards these expectations. Therefore, transformational leadership can be defined by values and behaviours that motivate followers to place shared goals above self-interests (Bass and Avolio, 1995). High levels of leader engagement can create “electricity” on the followers. According to Goodwin, Wofford & Whittington (2001) loyalty will result. However, loyalty should not be the incubation of obedience where an individuals’ opinions are stifled, as this may not equip the employees to think “outside the box” during turbulent periods of change. In a study conducted in China, it was found that it is important for social bonding to exist between leader and member and more so with a transformational leader (Wang et. al., 2005).

Individuals and teams directed by transformational leaders tend to align their own goals with those of the organisation resulting in greater effort and commitment towards those goals (Hoffman et. al., 2011; Bono and Judge, 2003). As a consequence, individual and team behaviours begin to reflect organisational values and enhance the individual’s self-concept (van Knippenberg et. al., 2004). However, Hoffman et. al., (2011) reveal that the consistency between leader and follower values does not guarantee consistency with organisational values.

Prominent Values of Visionary Leaders

Vision and organisation commitment represents a psychological link between employee and his or her organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1996). The new leadership theories emphasise the emotional attachment of employees, to the leader and the organization (George, 2000). Transformational or visionary leaders use the creation of a vision to inspire followers to perform exceptionally well (Awamleh and Gardner, 1999). Studies have shown that a leader’s visionary versus non-visionary message affected the perceptions of the leader’s

effectiveness (Awamleh and Gardner, 1999; Locke, 1996).

Visionary leaders have values that differ in the relative importance associated with self- versus others-beneficial values and with social values achievement-oriented focus (Dvir, Kass and Shamir, 2004). The vision of the leader is ideological and must be stated in clear values for the organisation. According to Dvir, Kass and Shamir (2004), there must also be a buy-in into the vision for it to result in affective commitment (AC) by the followers. Transformation will not work without this buy-in. Followers, must believe that they are part of the vision and have power to suggest changes or dissenting opinions for the betterment of the organisation. Organisations should learn to deal with new ideas and must also adopt and adapt as a learning organisation. The view that it is important for a leader to lead change is not in concert with Collins and Porras (1994) who doubted the importance of the leader's role in the vision.

Review of the Elements of Value System

A review of the elements of the value system common to leaders includes: achievement, power, affiliation, creativity, equality, learning, security and vision are thus first presented (Rokeach, 1968; Schwartz, 1994, 2001, 2005). With an understanding that the value system is complex and underlie even our human belief systems, a second set of elements (Bass and Avolio, 1995; Schwartz, 1994, 2001, 2005) is henceforth incorporated: *ambition, challenge, enjoyment, friendship, honesty, independence, loving, obedience, recognition, relevance, risk, loyalty, leaving a legacy, inner harmony, family, different, constructive dissent, location, service, wealth and time*. This formed an extended and more complete value package. It is anticipated that a deeper scope of values that are important to the individual and their interplay can bring a sense of realisation of what the true-self should strive for in the socialisation and modern workspace.

Self- efficacy is an important construct in behavioral management and it has been defined as people's judgement of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated type of performance (Bandura, 1997). McClelland (1965) pointed out that people with a high need for achievement (n Ach) want to accomplish reasonable *challenging* goals through their own efforts. High n Ach people perform better when given considerable *independence*. They prefer activities that give immediate feedback on how they are performing (Luthans, 1995). An overture for greater achievement translates to a higher affinity for power which implies that some form of task control and ownership are needed to perform effectively.

Need for Power (n Pow) is an important source of motivation (Luthans, 1995). This need refers to a desire to control one's environment including people and material resources. People with a high n Pow want to exercise control over others and are concerned with maintaining their leadership position. Some people have a high need for personal power, while others have a high need for institutional power. All this is learnt rather than instinctive. In the example of entrepreneurs, the need for power is primarily driven by a motivation of the need to achieve than the need for personal power.

The concept of affiliation, when applied to modern workplace environments describes the basis for co-location and virtual location. In co-located arrangements, employees share the same work space while in virtual platforms, they are far spaced and mostly rely on technology to coordinate and relate. In either case, decisions and actions of leaders and team members are perceived and interrelated by individuals as either enabling or constraints to their own performance (Kelley, 2006). The need for affiliation (n Aff) refers to a desire to seek approval from others, conform to their wishes and expectations and avoid conflict and confrontation (McClelland, 1965). Such individuals are more effective in conducting roles and in jobs requiring social interaction. However, the self-aspect and values are compromised, when the individual has to conform to group rules. These views cover group dynamics and revolve around being liked by many people, accepted as part of a group or team, working with people who are friendly and cooperative, maintaining harmonious relationships and avoiding conflicts, thus participating in pleasant social activities. An enabling work climate promotes creativity.

Innovation is pivotal for growth and competitiveness of organisations (Dvir, Kass and Shamir, 2004). For an individual to enjoy creativity, the individual must have the knowledge in the required field (Dorf and Byers, 2008). This entails that knowledge must be transferred so that the intellectual abilities to recognise connections, redefine problems and envision and analyse possible practical ideas are achieved. One's level of intellectual growth and thus innovative capacity is increased through strong affiliations. For work types that require a higher degree of reliance on experiential knowledge, affiliation is a precursor to creativity. Human capital theory actually maintains that shared knowledge provides individuals to increase their cognitive abilities leading to more productive and efficient potential activity. What is not known is whether gender has an influence over affiliation and hence the levels of creativity at workplace.

Internal and External Locus Of Control and Values

Locus of control (LOC) refers to a dimension with opposing differentiates of internal versus external. The internal LOC individual interprets reinforcements they receive from their surroundings as contingent upon their own actions while the external LOC individual perceives their actions to be perpetuated by luck, fate or unpredictable factors (Rotter, 1966). According to Rotter (1966), the distinction assumes human attitudes to be extreme bipolar and a definitive differentiation is hard to ascertain since externally inclined persons may exhibit some internal traits and vice versa.

Findings in a study by Kelley (2006) relating to LOC and attitudes to working in virtual teams indicate that the premise of social learning theory is that a personality dimension such as LOC is relative but not absolutely stable, in which case it is possible to moderate LOC orientation through a planned development program. But such programs can be effectively supported by alignment, re-orientation and reinforcing certain individual values. Such could enable individuals recognising their own strengths and weaknesses, to aim to give them pedagogy and tools to overcome their anxiety of difficult or unknown situations.

THE STUDY

The study is based on data collected from 259 managers largely from South Africa (71%), other African countries (17%) and the remainder being from non-African origin. A wide range of industry sectors were represented, including finance, IT and telecommunications, mining, energy and manufacturing, retail and services industries. A questionnaire instrument based on a five point Likert scale was used to capture the data from the respondents who were attending a master's degree programme at a business school.

The instrument consisted of the descriptive section as well as the main items hypothesised to define the individual value system as observed variables. The data or answers to the main items depicted the extent to which respondents practiced or lived the suggested value constructs. The Likert scale anchors used in the survey were *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*; they were coded as 1 through 5, respectively. Cronbach's alpha was used to validate the questionnaire instrument and an acceptable score of 0.88 was obtained. Further analyses included; descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, factor analysis and test statistics.

Descriptive statistics was conducted primarily to provide an immediate sense of the composition of the respondents and the consistency in which they graded their opinions. Correlation analysis was then used to

identify pertinent patterns of relations among the value variables. However, since correlation does not imply causality, further analyses were required. Factor analysis was thus conducted, primarily to construct a more hypothetical and tentative concept underlying the value system. This is a case when independent variables are not observed directly. The inferred independent variables are called *factors*. A typical factor analysis suggests answers to four major questions: 1. How many different factors are needed to explain the pattern of relationships among these variables? 2. What is the nature of those factors? 3. How well do the hypothesised factors explain the observed data? 4. How much purely random or unique variance does each observed variable include? The Test statistics were finally conducted in order to establish more causal evidence in the relationships between the value systems of employees.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The sample data consisted of 259 managers/leaders across different sectors listed as: Education (4%), Retail (7%), Financial (21%), Consultancy (9%), Engineering (22%), Health (7%), Information Technology (16%) and Marketing (7%). Age ranged between 22 and 50 years with the majority around 20 and 39 years. The total number of females was 65 and that of male 193. The average age of respondents was 32 years with a standard deviation of 4.1 years and the mean years of experience was 8.5 years with a standard deviation of 4.2 years.

Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationships among the variables. Correlations with a score of around 20 were considered as weak while those around 30 were taken as moderately high and those around 40 and above were viewed as significant. Only, weak, moderate and significant correlations are captured in table 1. The means and deviations were also recorded in columns two and three as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Inter-Item (value) correlations

Correlations									
Mean	SD	1 ^a	2 ^a	3 ^a	4 ^a	5 ^a	6 ^a	7 ^a	8 ^a
Security	2.62	.97	1						
Power	2.78	1.0	.34	1					
Recognition	2.89	.86	.40	.466	1				
Wealth	2.49	1.0	.36	.34	.38	1			
Leadership	2.80	.97	.24	.38	.30	.15	1		
Challenge	3.15	.94	.19	.34	.33	.25	.30	1	
Ambition	3.20	.92	.18	.27	.42	.25	.19	.45	1
Achievement	3.29	.90	.24	.40	.39	.27	.22	.50	.55

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results revealed that means were around 3.0 with the lowest value of 2.62 and highest of 3.29. This implied that there was consistency in the way respondents graded their opinions on the Likert scale of the given items. Two variables, Power and Wealth recorded the highest standard deviations of 1.025 and 1.024 respectively. This implies that respondents had divergent perceptions on power and wealth. The highest correlation was between achievement and ambition (.558). This could imply that highly ambitious individuals are best achievers. The second highest was between achievement and challenges (.504). This could mean that challenge is a precursor to achievement or greater achievement is premised on challenging tasks. Recognition and power correlated at .466, which could mean that recognised individuals are also seen as powerful or easily can ascend to power. Recognition and security correlated at .402 while ambition and recognition scored a correlation of .420. Achievement and power correlated at .401 which could imply that great achievers are perceived to have attained certain powers of influence.

Identification of Key Values Influencing Behaviour

More than other statistical techniques factor analysis aims at discovering simple patterns in the relationships among the variables. In particular, it seeks to discover if the observed variables can be explained largely or entirely in terms of a much smaller number of variables called *factors*. The 19 observed variables were reduced over a number of iterations to 12 key values, which grouped into 4 factors that explain leadership behaviours. Values that were cross-loading across multiple factors were examined for the strength of their contribution to the factors and progressively eliminated over subsequent iterations.

The purpose of the analysis was to identify meaningful groups of value that would define the underlying motivations and behaviours. The 12 remaining observed variables grouped into four factors with eigen values ranging from 1.023 to 3.601 and accounted for 68% of the variances in the data. Component one accounted for 33% of the variance, component two 14 percent, component three 12%, while component four represented 9%. Keiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .751 and Bartlett's test was significant. The factor matrix is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor Matrix

	Component Factors			
	1	2	3	4
Ambition	.908			
Challenge	.746			
Achievement	.713			
Security		-.778		
Wealth		-.766		
Obedience			.834	
Loyalty			.716	
Relevance			.703	
Different				.886
Constructive				.734
Dissent				.613
Creativity				.507
Risk				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

Three items loaded onto Factor1, (ambition, challenge and achievement) which indicates that the managers who are ambitious are also driven by achievement and challenge their leadership role presents. Because they are largely achievement oriented, although drive by challenge and ambition, this factor can be labelled as "achievement orientation". Ambitious managers are likely to take on challenges and henceforth become great achievers. Independency is a strong characteristic of managers with high ambitions and fits well with theory Y. The ultimate framework, however, spans across a larger set of behavior variables and expectations.

Two items loaded onto the second factor (security and wealth) which relate to "reward", indicating that the material rewards of leadership have a significant influence on how managers are likely to behave. Three items loaded onto Factor 3 (obedience, loyalty and relevance), which was labelled as "conformity", indicating that managers may be seeking a certain degree of compliance from followers. Four items loaded onto Factor 4 (different, constructive dissent, creativity and risk) which seems to indicate not that there is discord but that being different, creative, and risk taking by airing dissenting views can in fact be transformational. Therefore the fourth factor can be labelled as "innovative". These factors reaffirm that the vision of the leader is ideological and must be stated in clear values for the organisation. According to Dvir, Kass and Shamir (2004), there must also be a buy-in into the vision for it to result in affective commitment (AC) by the followers.

It was interesting to see that loyalty (Factor 3) could influence ones obedience and relevance. This seems to suggest that being loyal or obedient is proportional to how one feels relevant within the context of team or organisation. With Factor four (innovative) there is a need to present alternative views or solution, which may require a degree of creativity as well as disagreeing with others, but at some personal risk.

“Different” was the leading element. It could mean that individuals with constructive descent are perceived to be peculiar. However, possessing these values are often seen, on the one hand, as being destabilising and on the other hand as change agents who speak honestly about their views and present alternative views of the world. Risk was the element with the weakest correlation in the group implying that being innovative invoked a level of perceived risk. However, creativity can be used to avoid risk of losing influence and even one’s job.

In summary, the leadership in the African context can be narrowed down to four factors, namely: achievement, reward, conformity and innovativeness. These are the different factors that explain the pattern of relationships among leadership or managerial values (variables).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the value elements at the workplace and how they influence leadership behaviours. These value elements can be used to identify and position managers/leaders at workplace. Strong affiliation can naturally deal with certain group dynamics and thus would be suitable for team leaders in certain co-location as well as virtual locations.

This paper reveals that there may be four leadership types or styles in the African context. The first group comprises those who are driven by an achievement orientation which requires ambition as well as seeking to be challenged in the role. The second group comprises those motivated by the rewards of leadership in terms of wealth and security. They are more likely to be self-centred and driven by personal gain leadership position brings. The third group manage by seeking a degree of conformity and loyalty from subordinates and followers. The fourth group are those who are more transformational in their approach and innovative in their style, with the willingness to challenge existing managerial paradigms.

These types or styles are not mutually exclusive such that in practice there may be a degree of overlap such that a leader could display any combination of styles. However, the study does show clearly that behaviours are driven by four discrete value systems. Therefore, to measure how successful a manager is likely to be, it is important to measure the strength of their orientation in relation to achievement, reward, conformity and innovativeness. This is irrespective of one’s gender, and orientation must be evident or clearly demonstrated otherwise it becomes a form of deception.

This study has some limitation because the dataset relates to budding young and less experienced

managers from a diverse range of professions and organisations, making it a specific study that excludes mature managers that are already practicing leadership. Furthermore, while this study identifies the four categories of leadership motivation, it however does not establish whether the specific dominant leadership motivation is expressed in their leadership practice. This aspect as well as validation of the results in other African and emerging nation context will require further studies.

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