

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Leader–Member Exchange: A Cross–Cultural Study Among Turkey and France

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Received: January 06, 2020

Accepted: February 14, 2020

Published: May 01, 2020

Abstract: Leadership is a comprehensive field of study that is significantly affected by cultural differences. In this study, the effects of cultural values on leading member interaction were examined. Leadership concept, leader member exchange, effects of cultural differences on leader member interaction and data on Turkish and French cultures are discussed. The point of the study is to test the effect of cultural differences and values on the leading member exchange. For this purpose, the sample comprising of Turkish and French employees is planned to be tested with the Leader - Member Exchange 7 Questionnaire (LMX7) developed by Graen and Uhl–Bien, and the Cultural Dimensions and Values Survey Module (VSM 2008) developed by Hofstede. As a result of the measurement, it is aimed to find differences between the cultural values of Turkish and French employees and the impact of these contrasts on the leader member interaction will be discussed in the conclusion section.

Keywords: Culture, Leadership, Cultural Value, Cultural Dimensions, Leader Member Exchange

1. Introduction

Developing technology, facilitating communication and changing trade boundaries have led to more interaction between people in different civilizations and cultures. In short, the world is getting a worldwide village in intense interaction in terms of politics, economy, culture and social structures. Consequently, of this situation where it is easier for people from diverse cultures to work together, interact and communicate, the interaction of the leader with his followers has become more important and the interaction stemming from cultural differences has taken a new direction.

Today's businesses accommodate people from numerous different cultures and must work with individuals with different cultural backgrounds within the framework of their

activities in international markets. These changes show that businesses have become multicultural. The increase in cultural interaction has brought culture and cultural differences to the forefront and increased its importance.

Many of the theories and approaches related to leadership have focused on what behaviour the leader should exhibit in his followers under various situations. However, in the theory of leader member exchange, which is one of the most attractive theories to examine the relationship between the leadership process and the results of this process, leaders or managers develop relations of different quality as a result of the mutual interaction with their subordinates. In this theory, it is assumed that the leader does not treat all his followers in the within the same way.

2. Conceptual Background

2.1. Culture

Culture is seen as the most abstract concept affecting human behaviour. (McCort ve Malhotra 1993:92). Therefore, there are many definitions of culture in the literature. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) They examined 160 different culture definitions in 7 groups. The definitions examined according to Young Dahl (2003) point to the following common characteristics. (Youngdahl vd,2003:111).

- Culture consists of open and implicit behaviour patterns. Thus, culture teaches its members how to perform a behaviour and gives the rationale behind it.
- Culture is acquired through symbols and embodied by artefacts in transfer.
- The essence of culture is made up of traditional ideas and especially values attached to them.

2.2.1 Hofstede's Framework

In many studies, various dimensions of national cultures have been tried to be determined. These cultural dimensions are effective in clarifying the ways in which countries are similar and different from each other in terms of their values. Social cultural dimensions seem to be important in terms of understanding the organizational values of the firms in that society, since cultures are a shared values system.

Hofstede's classification is the most used classification when examining the cultural characteristics of societies. Between 1967 and 1973, Hofstede did this work on IBM employees in more than 70 countries. Hofstede (2001) argues that culture has five dimensions in its work to identify intercultural differences: 1. Individualism–

Collectivism, 2. Masculinity–Femininity, 3. Power Distance, 4. Avoidance of Uncertainty and 5. Long–Short Term (Hofstede, 1983, 1984, 2001).

2.2.1.1 Individualism–Collectivism: The main issue addressed by this dimension is the degree of commitment that a society maintains among its members. It is about whether people's own images are defined as "I" or "we". In individualist societies, people need to deal with themselves and only their nuclear families. In collectivist societies, people belong to faithfully connected 'groups'.

2.2.1.2 Masculinity–Femininity: Some societies allow both men and women to play many different roles. Others sharply distinguish between what men should do and what women should do. A high score in this dimension (Masculine) indicates that the society will be guided by competition, success, and the value system that starts at school continues throughout organizational life. The low score on the dimension (Feminine) means that the dominant values in society give importance to others and quality of life.

2.2.1.3 Power Distance: This dimension expresses that not all individuals in societies are equal and the attitude of social culture towards these inequalities. Power Distance is defined as the less powerful members of organizations and organizations in a country think and accept that power is unevenly distributed.

2.2.1.4 Avoiding Uncertainty: The uncertainty avoidance dimension is related to the way a society handles the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future, or should we allow it to happen? This uncertainty arouses concern, and different cultures have learned to address it in different ways. Cultures that avoid high levels of uncertainty have organizations that seek to ensure security and avoid risk.

2.2.1.5 Long–Short Term Orientation: dimension of a society is more focused on the efforts of the present or future or the past (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). According to Hofstede, long and short-term adjustment is about dealing with the problems of choice between virtue and reality in life and respecting and obedience to elders is important in long-term harmonized societies.

2.2 Leadership

Leadership is one of the humans, social and universal phenomena. People have social activities and the fact that they can accomplish the things that cannot be accomplished by themselves necessitates them to live together. There is leadership in all times and places where people live and operate together as a group, organization, community.

Although scientific studies on leadership started in the 20th century, it has been one of the subjects that have attracted the attention of the scholars and philosophers since the early ages. Leadership is a developing discipline today.

2.2.1 Leader–Member Exchange Theory (LMX)

The basic assumption that this theory is based on is that the leaders do not stand at the same distance from the group members and do not share equally. It was determined that the members formed different groups in the organizations and the quality of these groups' relations with the leader and the mutual exchanges were different.

It is seen that a new member joins organization through various experiences and role stages to clarify their role in the organization against the leader. Accordingly, it will either be more intimate, informal relations in the immediate vicinity of the leader, or stand at a greater distance from the leader and develop cooler, formal relations. The quality of the leader member relationship constitutes the role of members / subordinates / spectators in the organization. This determines whether the roles of members / subordinates / spectators will be less mutual trust in rules, policies, procedures, less frequent and formal communication, less support by subordinate supervisor, and in-group membership role supported by trust, communication, support and formal / special rewards. It was observed (Whiteley, 2012).

In the 21st century, the “Leader–Member Exchange Theory” is of great importance in organizations that question and improve the productivity, performance, commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, perception of organizational justice, and the underlying causes of organizational silence. Therefore, especially after the 2000s, studies on leadership have shifted to this field and became more popular. In connection with this, there has been an increase in the number of postgraduate theses conducted in universities in this field and the researches on “Leader–Member Exchange Theory” have increased.

3. Research Model and Hypothesis Development

3.1. Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between Turkish and French employees between leader/member exchange (LMX) and cultural values (power distance) beyond the impact of gender, age, education level, work experience, and job title/position?

2. Is there a relationship between Turkish and French employees between leader/member exchange (LMX) and cultural values (collectivism/individualism) beyond the impact of gender, age, education level, work experience, and job title/position?

3. Is there a relationship between Turkish and French employees between leader/member exchange (LMX) and cultural values (femininity/masculinity) beyond the impact of gender, age, education level, work experience, and job title/position?

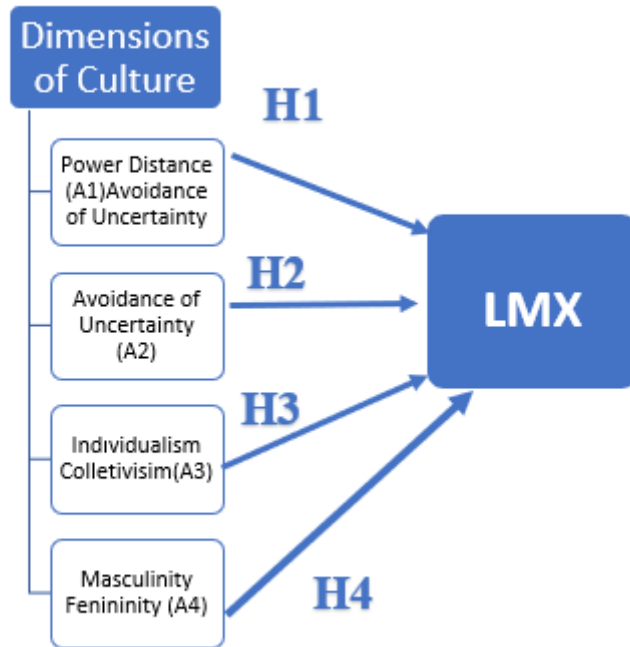
4. Is there a relationship between Turkish and French employees between leader/member exchange (LMX) and cultural values (uncertainty avoidance) beyond the impact of gender, age, education level, work experience, and job title/position?

3.2. Hypotheses

In this study, white collar workers will be investigated in the interaction of the leading members of cultural differences in French and Turkish society. In this context, it is planned to reveal the relationship between two conceptual structures by using descriptive method. In addition to these two conceptual structures, research will be guided by demographic variables. With the hypothesis and alternative hypotheses that determine the direction of the research, it is aimed to add depth and versatility with a total of 4 hypotheses. The model of conceptual structures and dimensions can be drawn as follows:

Dimensions of culture concept:

- 1) Power Distance (A1)
- 2) Avoidance of Uncertainty (A2)
- 3) Individualism Collectivism (A3)
- 4) Masculinity Femininity (A4)



Hypotheses #1: There is positive relationship Turkish and French employees between Power Distance and LMX

Hypotheses #2: There is positive relationship Turkish and French employees between Avoidance of Uncertainty and LMX

Hypotheses #3: There is positive relationship Turkish and French employees between Individualism Collectivism and LMX

Hypotheses #4: There is positive relationship Turkish and French employees between Masculinity Femininity and LMX

5. Conclusion

In this study, the effect of the cultural differences of the employees in French and Turkish society on their interaction with the leaders is the main body of the white-collar Turkish and French citizens. According to the calculations made in this group, 300 employees were randomly selected and set an example. Equal distribution of gender and nationality was taken into consideration.

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