Navigating Cross-Cultural Ethics and Leadership in Global Project Management: Enhancing Organizational Performance Through Cultural Intelligence and Ethical Practices

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Ethics; Cultural Intelligence; Leadership Styles; Global Project Management; Organizational Performance

The administration of projects in a cross-cultural setting has become a crucial issue of discussion as the corporate world becomes more globalized. As a result, investigating ethical and cultural issues in project management is paramount to multinational corporations' sustained growth and sustainability. This research examines the influence of cross-cultural ethics and practices on management performance within international organisations. The leadership styles, cultural intelligence, and organisational practices will be investigated in this research concerning how they affect management performance in a multicultural environment. Finally, this research will provide insight into effective global organisations' strategies to enhance their performance. This study critically analyses the current literature, integrating lessons from research across different businesses and geographical contexts. The paper discusses significant aspects of cross-cultural leadership, emphasising the significance of cultural intelligence, styles of communication, and adaptation in leaders. It investigates how cultural variety affects group dynamics, decisions, and an organisation's performance. The findings revealed that cross-cultural ethical practice management helps improve project by bringing more understanding and vital teamwork among the different teams. It implies that good leadership practices in the cross-cultural setting make conversation, collaboration, and understanding smoother among different team players. The evaluation emphasises how crucial it is to develop culturally aware leadership to successfully negotiate the challenges of leading multinational teams. This article adds to the discussion on successful leadership in a globalised environment by highlighting challenges and providing workable solutions.

Introduction

With the globalization of the current business environment, managing cross-cultural projects has become a significant concern. Organizations face the issue of culture in project management in their efforts to embark on globalization to widen their operation (Broesch et al., 2020). Managers in

these projects can face other people with differing cultural perspectives and a wide range of standards, beliefs, and behaviours. Globalization of business is on the rise, and as such, more project managers need to be equipped with adequate knowledge and tools to deal with cultural differences in project teams. This complexity raises distinct concerns concerning project management leadership characteristics, particularly some essential questions of proper ethical and practical conduct (Tam and Milfont, 2020). This could lead to contradiction, confusion, and wastage of time, and moral norms complicate the situation by introducing diversity in methods adopted. Knowledge of conflict from cultural differences and a combination of those working ethics are vital for multinational projects (Milfont et al., 2020). This goes beyond just comprehending the effects of culture on the system; it also includes defining the modifying actions that can be utilized and creating a specific plan through managing the project. Cross-cultural Project Management enables project delivery across different cultures within set time and resource utilization and ideally to the client's satisfaction from various disciplines (Wong, 2020). Consequently, a global study of ethical and cultural factors influencing project management is essential for MNCs' long-term success and viability.

One of the substantial issues discussed in this review is the issue of how project managers struggle to adopt the standards and ethics of project management in vastly different cultures (Bracht et al., 2021). This issue is critical because disparities in cultural outlook

and ethical concerns may hinder project progression, raise costs, and compromise efficacy (Egan et al. , 2020). Thus, the communication style is culturally diverse based on the work environment and imposes different approaches to decision-making and conflict-solving among the employees within the project teams (Rezaei et al., 2020). For example, the direct communication style often appreciated in one culture may be viewed as impolite or even violent in another (Nwankwo et al., 2021). As is the case with most other aspects of life, Attitude towards authority, self-organizational culture, and time vary with culture, making it almost impossible to try to promulgate a single ethical code across the globe.

Various frameworks for cross-cultural project management have emerged recently. For instance, in their study, Caligiuri and Caprar (2021) examined the impact of cultural intelligence on projects. This research revealed that project managers with more cultural intelligence are better prepared for cross-cultural situations. Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to one's capability of managing cultural encounters possessing the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Paiuc, 2021). High CQ helps project managers understand novel behaviors correctly and vice versa, allowing them to adapt to different circumstances.

Rocksstuhl et al. (2021) also highlighted leadership behaviors in cross-cultural project management and advocated for transformational leadership. Transformational leaders motivate people by painting a picture of the future, making people feel valued, and encouraging

creativity (Ghasabeh, 2021). This flexible leadership style can overcome cultural barriers by emphasizing the similarities of objectives and standards (Sarwar et al., 2020). However, while these studies offer significant contributions, they also present the following gaps: a lack of universal frameworks that address cultural ethics in project management. For instance, cultural intelligence and transformational leadership are practical; however, they must be backed by organizational policies and procedures that will enforce ethics and cultural awareness during the project.

Managing cross-cultural projects is very important for every international project as it impacts the workflow, team, customers, and the project. Appreciation of cross-cultural ethics and practices assists the project managers in developing credible rapport, improved communication, and a welcoming culture (Urassa et al., 2021). This, in turn, results in higher problem-solving efficiency, better decision-making, and enhanced project performance (Rogito and Nyamota, 2020). Also, ethical leadership across cultures fosters such values as fairness, respect, and integrity, which must be preserved to sustain a favorable image and reach success.

Objectives and Scope of the Review

This review investigates how cross-cultural ethics and practices in project management are crucial for global organisations ongoing success and competitiveness.

i. To analyze the effects of cross-cultural leadership in the context of project management in the international environment.

ii. To establish the relationship between cultural intelligence and the efficiency of project managers concerning the teams with diverse cultures.

iii. To seek out best practices for sustaining ethical practice within multicultural teams.

This discusses cross-cultural ethical practices on project management effectiveness at a global level in terms of systematic review using the PRISMA approach. In light of all the findings outlined in this review, the study aims to provide practical assistance and advice to leaders and organisations, which can boost their cross-cultural leadership capabilities.

Literature Review

Interactions in organizations cut across cultures and different geographical regions; thus, handling projects on the best standards of ethics in the contemporary globalised business environment requires cross-cultural project management. This brief literature review focuses on the primary studies and findings on cross-cultural ethics and effective strategies for managing international teams.

Hofstede's aspects of culture study are one of the most famous and essential works in the case of leadership in a globalized context (Nosratabadi et al., 2020). It emphasizes the importance of using an open mind to understand the differences between various cultures by introducing configurational similarities and differences. Scholars have analyzed such attributes to determine their impact on the dynamics of the teams and leadership models in global contexts. Sarfraz et al. (2021) reveal that the Hofstede aspect

measures the degree of civilisations based on the five components of culture to familiarize leaders with how they can transform their leadership skills. Such cleavages include long-term orientation against short-term orientation, having a high power distance against having a low power distance, perceiving femininity against perceiving masculinity, and individualism against having collectivism.

Further research on cross-cultural competency in leadership emerged in the following years. According to Sertel et al. (2020), the three areas essential for leaders to develop include cultural intelligence, flexibility, and intercultural competence. It is evident from the literature that training enhancement and practical experiences in management are essential to increase leaders' skill in dealing with cultural differences in a team context. Further research on cross-cultural leadership has been carried out in the recent literature deliberately considering the dynamic nature of the international business environment. Shen et al. (2021) have addressed the issue of biculturalism by observing that managers of multiple identity teams receive great value from figures who can navigate through different cultural gender roles.

Steers and Osland (2021) defined cross-cultural psychology as a discipline that focuses on understanding how people from different cultures get along. In this respect, cross-cultural leadership has arisen to capture leaders functioning in the newly globalised marketplace. Contemporary international organisations require chief executives capable of engaging new environments and working with partners and subordinates from diverse cultures (Tolstikov-Mast et al., 2021). Also, it is not axiomatic that a manager who excels in one country will do well in another.

According to Zhou et al. (2021), cross-cultural leadership is a person's capacity (the leader) to purposefully and unfairly influence and inspire members of a different cultural group to achieve a desired goal by appealing to their shared meaning systems and body of knowledge. Upon closer examination of this concept, it is evident that the phrase "culturally different" distinguishes cross-cultural leadership from essential leadership (Zhou et al., 2021). The ability to factor in the effects of followers' varying knowledge bases and meaning systems throughout the influence process distinguishes cross-cultural leadership. A viewpoint that promotes "harmony" between the differences and the development of "cultural synergies" is frequently adopted in scholarly works on handling diversity and cross-cultural leadership (Nandeesh et al., 2020). This is claimed to be for the advantage of all organisational stakeholders. Still, these conversations on cross-cultural leadership" often begin from a management level viewpoint.

Ahmed (2021) said that organisations need to consider cultural variations as business becomes more globalized. He says cultural barriers rise as economic borders fall, creating new business possibilities and challenges. Blyznyuk (2020) posits that leadership may be grounded in traditions, with the following examples: in the United States, with its extensive history of

professional managerial excellence, the corporate CEO is the most easily accessible role model for a company's head. The family head is in charge of managing enterprises in China. The military general is still in charge in France. It is the one who builds consensus in Japan. It is now the coalition builder in Germany (Caligiuri and Caprar, 2021). There are many different leadership philosophies because of how complicated the settings are regarding politics, history, beliefs, and cultures. Indeed, leadership needs to be adjusted to the various environments.

Many aspects commonly seen in a project management system are suggested by analysing the literature and practical experience. These components are frequently shown as a project management cycle (Ghasabeh, 2021). The literature indicates that the cultural environment may significantly impact goal-setting and formal assessment processes, typically at the centre of cross cultural moral standard and practices (Kortsch et al., 2021). A standard cycle might include performance evaluation, goal-setting, and growth and performance assessment.

Methodology
Design
This research paper uses a systematic literature review methodology to investigate and summarise all the aspects of cross-cultural ethical standards and practices in project management and handling international teams. The methodical technique was chosen due to its strict and efficient framework, which enables identifying, gathering, and evaluating pertinent research from scholarly databases.

Search Strategy
Google Scholar, Scopus, CINAHL, Cochrane Library E-Journals, and Academic Search Complete were the electronic databases that were searched. The grey literature kept on campus and in institutional repositories and the reference lists of previously discovered publications were also examined to find more papers.

The database, which is renowned for its extensive collection of academic literature, provided the information for the study through database searches. A purposeful keyword selection was used to focus database searches on capturing the effect of cross-cultural leadership on management performance in multinational organisations. The research intended to ensure that no phrases related to managing across culture's ethical and practical standards crucial to the leadership of multinational organisations were overlooked. According to Lee et al. (2021), the search phrases that were utilised were cross-cultural leadership OR management AND ("ethics*" OR "practices*") AND (international organisations). Using the asterisk as a wildcard broadened the search scope and helped the researcher identify additional versions of the key phrases. Prior to conducting a thorough search of the relationship between cross-cultural ethical values and management of multinational organisations, the study was restricted to peer-reviewed publications only. It was intended to highlight new examination areas while revealing the scope of existing knowledge. Two different reviewers will carefully check each of the text's articles to ensure no biases once the dataset has been

initially evaluated and duplicate and redundant studies have been eliminated. Shortlisted articles deemed most relevant to the topic were the outcome of this double review process and laid the foundation for the final analysis. The chosen papers provide a comprehensive synopsis of the completed research.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

All published works examining how cross-cultural leadership affects management performance in global organisations were initially collected, and research projects received approval based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. One of the chosen criteria was the full text of the studies that examine ethical and practical principles, cross-cultural leadership, and multinational organisations. The selected articles were published between May 1, 2020, and May 13, 2021. Only English-language publications were included in the analysis. To obtain further knowledge and access other articles, the sources of the papers being evaluated were investigated. Duplicate studies, case reports, unclear methodology, and unavailability of the full text of the research are among the exclusion criteria.

Data Collection

Every database search result was exported or forwarded to the Citespace programme. Duplicated content was eliminated once every search result was gathered into a single file. Subsequently, two impartial reviewers examined the research based on the predetermined inclusion criteria. Articles that explicitly addressed the effect of multicultural ethical standards on management performance in multinational corporations were chosen for abstract screening after passing through title screening. Articles that met the eligibility requirements were selected for full-text screening, driven by their titles and abstracts. All qualifying articles were eventually chosen for additional examination. The reviewers' consensus took into account the inclusion of papers. Figure 1 shows the PRISMA flowchart, which provides a comprehensive visual depiction of the selection process.
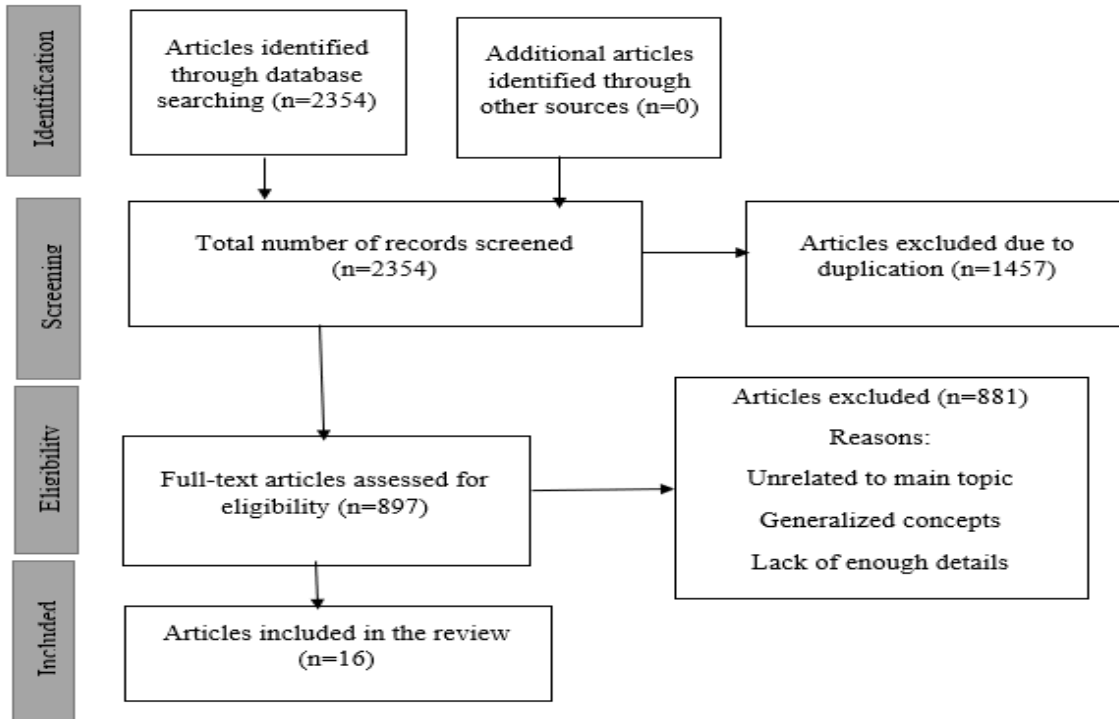
Figure 1: PRISMA Framework

Quality Assessment

The quality evaluation checklists for data-driven cross-sectional studies, text as well as opinion articles, and qualitative research from the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) (Nandeesh et al., 2020) were used to assess the methodological reliability of the incorporated papers.

Findings

The data from May 2021 to May 2020 may be used to identify different stages of academic research. Research on how cross-cultural ethical and practical values affect management effectiveness in multinational organisations started in 2020 with the publication of one paper. There were two articles in 2020, and three were published in 2021. Additionally, the data indicates a rise in publications in 2021 (6 total) and a return to 4 in 2021. This expansion may be seen as a reflection of the worldwide paradigm change in management performance within international organisations towards successful cross-cultural ethical practices. With 16 research papers as of the deadline in May 2021, the research enthusiasm in this field is still strong (Figure 2).
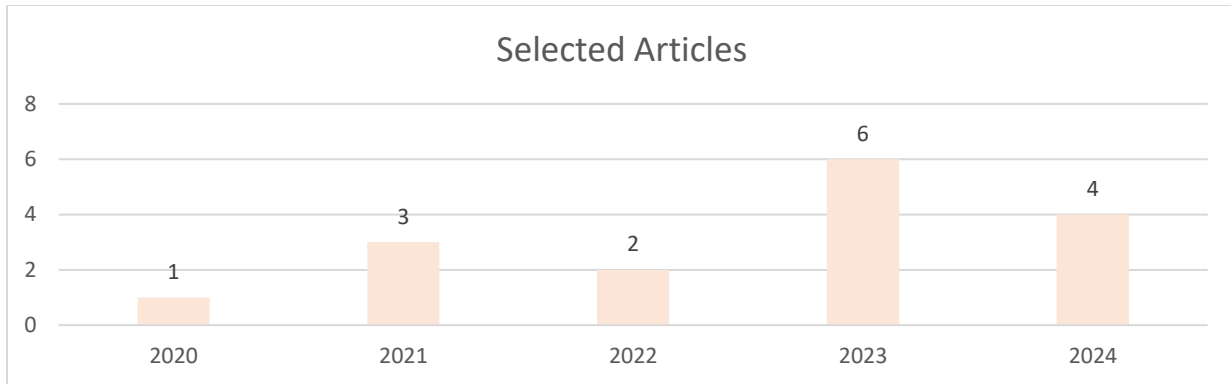
Figure 2. Year-wise distribution of chosen articles.

Key Findings from Selected Studies

Influence of Cross-Cultural Leadership on Project Management

The value of cross-cultural leadership in project management is demonstrated in a way that is more positive through its ability to improve communication, collaboration, and awareness between members with diverse backgrounds (Kortsch et al., 2021; Nosratabadi et al., 2020; Paiuc, 2021). To a more prominent extent, leaders with cultural intelligence can spot the ethical practices intricacies of business dealings worldwide (Ghasabeh, 2021; Bracht et al., 2021; Rockstuhl et al., 2021).

Role of Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is required for effective moral and practical principles in multicultural settings. Leaders with high CQ have an advantage when leading in different cultures because they can adjust their style of leadership to fit a given cultural setting and ethical and practical standards, which then better manages the company operations (Lee et al., 2021; Rogito and Nyamota, 2020; Sarfraz et al., 2021; Tolstikov-Mast et al., 2021).

- ### *Best Practices for Implementing Cross-Cultural Ethical and Practical Standards*

Successful cross-cultural management entails continuous development initiatives and training programs to increase sustaining ethical principles with multicultural cross-project teams (Ahmed, 2021; Blyznyuk, 2020; Caligiuri and Caprar, 2021; Ghasabeh, 2021). Organisations focused on these initiatives do better in the international market.

Discussion

Interpretation and Analysis of Findings

The research question concerns the effect of cross-cultural ethical and practical standards on management performance in the global environment. The research has revealed that cross-cultural management helps improve project management by bringing more understanding and vital teamwork among the different teams (Nandeesh et al., 2020). It implies that good leadership practices in the cross-cultural setting make conversation, collaboration, and understanding smoother among different team players. Culture-competent leaders can also close cultural

gaps, which fosters a more inclusive workforce within sustaining moral practice. Communication is vital in multicultural scenarios because language, nonverbal cues, and communication styles are reasons that misunderstandings may occur (Lee et al., 2021). A great leader makes clear and interprets messages, reducing the risks of miscommunication and boosting productivity and efficiency. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is an indispensable element of efficient cross-cultural leadership that helps leaders grasp and customize moral practices to various cultural environments (Nandeesh et al., 2020). It involves three key dimensions: cognitive, motivational, and behavioural. Cognitive leaders know cultural variations can be crucial in human actions and responses and are ready to face all possible issues (Rockstuhl et al., 2021). Such leaders thrive in different environments and promote intercultural understanding and collaboration. Behavioural leaders change their attitudes to fit in different cultural worlds, adjusting their communication and organisational standards to align with what is acceptable to the staff (Paiuc, 2021). High CQ, therefore, brings out the best in international business management.

Integration of cross-cultural leadership in an organisations requires some moral standards to help leadership become more effective and upgrade management performance (Sarfraz et al., 2021). Training and development should be continuous; fostering an inclusive corporate culture and using local cultural insights are specific practices. Cross-cultural competency training and development programs should regularly equip leaders and employees (Shen et al., 2021). The programs should emphasise cultural sensitivity, communication competencies, and adaptive leadership skills. Thorough training of leaders will enable organisations to reinforce their readiness for rules and procedures to deal with diverse societies (Tolstikov-Mast et al., 2021). Thus, for instance, business training on cultural sensitivity and communication will enable leaders to comprehend and appreciate the diverse cultural backgrounds of their employees.

Strengths and Limitations of Included Studies

A notable strength of the studies included is that they span a wide array of sectors and cultural environments, thus contributing significantly to the generalizability of the presented results. This diversity would result in the comprehensive principle of cross-cultural ethical values and its adjustment towards different environments setting. Besides, presenting cases and real-life examples would significantly enhance the content as they provide a practical understanding of successful leadership tactics in mixed cultures. The studies encompass various quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. This diversity is a great advantage because it allows for a holistic grasp of cross-cultural leadership issues from many different angles. However, the limitations of these studies also need to be noted. One limitation was the lack of applicability to all sectors because they are narrow in scope, and a few cover regions, organisations, and others. Furthermore, the results of studies utilising self-reported data and subjective scales may be confounded by

bias and may be of less reliability in comparison to other methods.

Gaps in the Literature and Areas for Future Research

With organisations' rapid uptake of digital technologies and virtual cooperation tools, there is a communication gap on how to align cross-cultural leadership practices to address the problem of technological advancement. Future research should pay more attention to the potential of digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence and virtual reality, to encourage dialogue across cultural barriers and the possible applications in developing leaders.

Theoretical Implications

The paper's results underline the significance of cultural and ethical standards in project management. So CQ must be part of leadership models that truly reflect the complexities of today's business world (Ahmed, 2021). Such integration may nourish the leader with the appreciation of how culture fashioned the trends in leadership efficacy. To efficiently develop sales and profit while maintaining a competitive edge in the national and global markets and improving staff retention and client satisfaction, it is essential to enhance the performance of foreign companies through continuous cross-cultural improvement. Due to the new reality brought about by globalisation, businesses must reevaluate their goals and grasp the demands of their clients to stay competitive. Without a thorough grasp of cultural variations, these are challenging to accomplish and may impact an organisation's overall effectiveness, primarily if it operates internationally. Businesses, particularly those expanding or conducting overseas, must constantly improve their cross-cultural awareness.

Practical Implications

For the practitioners, the review signifies gaining cultural competence through constant training and creating inclusive organisational cultures (Blyznyuk, 2020). Enforcing these policies will improve team harmony, employee satisfaction, and ultimate leaders' performance. Organisations where multicultural moral values exist (like Malaysia) need to focus their methods on staying competitive and effective in the global market.

Future Research Directions and Recommendations

Future research should address the gaps identified in the review, such as conducting longitudinal studies to understand the long-term effects of cross-cultural leadership and focusing on small and medium-sized organization contexts to provide a balanced perspective (Caligiuri and Caprar, 2021). Additionally, exploring the impact of technology on cross-cultural leadership and employing interdisciplinary approaches can further enrich the field.

Considering this review, cultural intelligence training for leaders and employees of organisations is advised to occur consistently. This training should be centred on developing cultural intelligence, such as fostering cross-cultural communication, understanding cultural differences, and tailoring leadership styles to fit different cultures' ethical practices. Thus, the training

will put managers in a better position to perform successfully in multicultural settings, leading to a rise in management performance. By implementing these suggestions, organisations can improve their management and efficiently deal with the various dynamism of a global economy.

Conclusion

In today's globalized business environment, the ability to manage cross-cultural ethics and leadership effectively is crucial for the success of international projects. This research has highlighted the significant role that cultural intelligence and ethical practices play in enhancing management performance within multinational organizations. By fostering an understanding of diverse cultural norms and ethical standards, leaders can improve communication, collaboration, and decision-making across culturally diverse teams. The findings underscore the importance of developing culturally aware leadership to navigate the complexities of managing global projects successfully. Furthermore, continuous training and development in cultural intelligence and ethical leadership are essential for sustaining organizational performance and competitiveness in the global market. By adopting these strategies, organizations can ensure smoother operations, stronger team cohesion, and ultimately, more successful project outcomes in a multicultural setting.

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