

## A PREFERRED LEADERSHIP PORTRAIT OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

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**ABSTRACT. Purpose:** This article seeks to highlight the significance of the understanding of the cultural dimensions, global leadership attributes, and leadership profiles of the home culture of Malaysia in comparison to the adopted host culture of Canada to incorporate the best cross-cultural leadership practices. It presents the preferred leadership portrait of successful cross-cultural leadership. **Findings:** Cross-cultural competence has become a considerable important research in the last two decades. Cross-cultural studies on cross-cultural differences in leadership interaction of the home and host cultures of leaders are needed. It is appropriate to consider the preferred leadership portrait that adapts to the cultural dimensions, global leadership attributes, and leadership profiles of the leader's home and host cultures for effective cross-cultural leadership practice. **Research limitations/implications:** The findings of this conceptual review paper need further study to validate the application of the adaptation of the cultural dimensions, global leadership attributes, and leadership profiles of the related home and host countries based on the GLOBE study. **Practical implications:** There are values in the understanding of the application of cross-cultural principles based on cross-cultural research information for cross-cultural leadership adaptation and practices. The knowledge of the related leadership, cultural factors will facilitate cross-cultural understanding and interrelation. Leaders today are to develop the competencies to be effective in the globally connected societies as well. **Originality/value:** This paper on cross-cultural leadership used findings based on the GLOBE studies as the

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main text to understand the various cultural factors that have an impact on leadership. The information on the cultural dimensions, global leadership attributes, and leadership profiles of the home and adopted host countries were compared and contrasted to construct the best approach for cross-cultural leadership practices. The concept of the preferred leadership portrait is in congruent to the leadership, sustainability concept that promotes the long term view and progress of leaders, systems, and organizations.

**Keywords:** GLOBE Study, Malaysia, Canada, Leadership Adaptation, Cross-cultural Competence.

**JEL Classification:** M16

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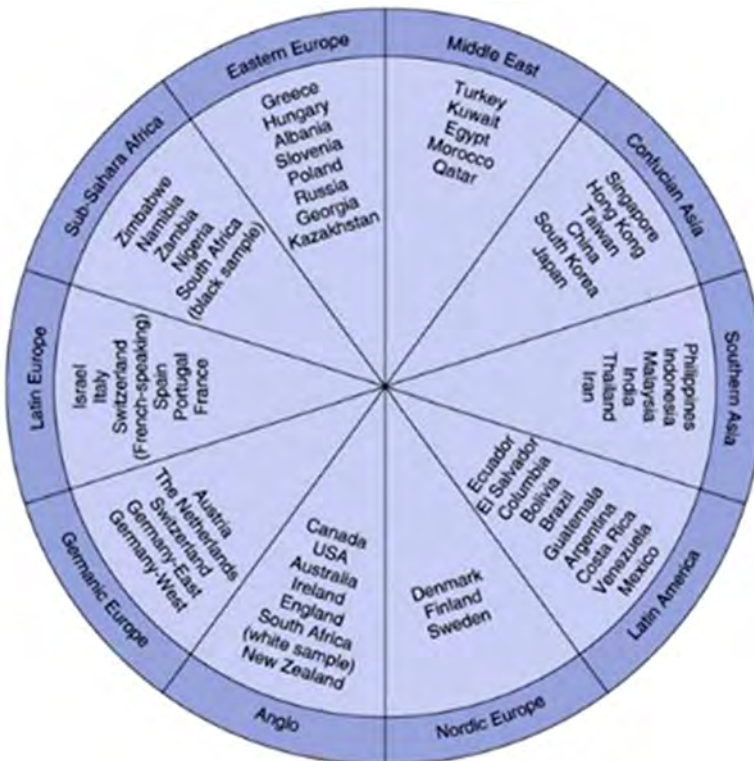
## **Introduction**

It is worth noting that according to House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, (2004) an understanding of the definition of leadership has emerged amongst the GLOBE researchers. An overview of leadership literature indicates that there are no consensuses on the definitions of leadership among scholars (House et al., 2004; Munley, 2011). However, the core of most definitions has to do with influence, that is, how leaders influence others to help accomplish an organizational goal. On the other hand, GLOBE researchers defined leadership as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members” (p. 15). In addition, in the context of cross-cultural leadership, the definition and practice of leadership vary from culture to culture (House et al., 2004).

This article on cross-cultural leadership leveraged on the GLOBE research findings. Northouse (2013) asserts that the GLOBE research offers the strongest body of knowledge on the study of culture, leadership, and organizations. The GLOBE project presents findings of culture and

leadership across global cultures in 62 societies in 10 regional clusters (See Figure 1). The study aims to facilitate the understanding of cross-cultural interrelation and the effect of culture on leadership. There are differences in the way each culture conceptualized the meaning of leadership (Dickson, Castano, Magomaeva, & Hartog, 2012; Mittal & Elias, 2016).

The findings of the project show how the various cultures of the different regions view leadership. Robert J. House, an initiator of the GLOBE research project, was influenced by Hofstede’s studies of cultural dimensions had decided to proceed with the GLOBE project. The GLOBE’s project replicated and further extended Hofstede’s research on the cultural dimensions (House et al., 2004). The GLOBE study developed nine cultural dimensions in each study, both on the cultural practices and values.



**Figure 1:** GLOBE’S Country Clusters  
**Source:** House et al. (2004)

Culture affects leadership behavior, style, and effectiveness (Hanges, Aiken, Park, & Su, 2016). There are also indicators that culture influences leadership and organizational processes (House et al., 2004). Schein (1992) states “Leadership and culture are conceptually intertwined” (p. 273). Culture is shared beliefs, values, norms and practices representative of distinct people in geographical locations unique to themselves. It is in the understanding of culture that enables people to use their creativity in applying principles in their leadership context. It enables them to create practices that are relevant and meaningful in their society. As eluded by the different researchers on culture and leadership, there is a need to recognize the challenges for today’s leader to extend further from one’s cultural understanding of leadership (Northouse, 2013). However, it is pertinent to state that in cross-cultural studies the concept of cross-cultural competence (CCC) includes cultural intelligence (CQ) and intercultural competence (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017). CQ has been attributed as pivotal for leadership in the international arena (Maldonado & Vera, 2014). While CCC involves relying on knowledge, skills, and attributes to relate with individuals of different cultural backgrounds.

There are values in the understanding of the dimensions of cultures in the practice of leadership, cross-culturally to achieve success in leadership (Cohen, 2009; Jogulu & Ferkins, 2012; Shi & Wang, 2011). The trend of globalization can contribute towards leadership misunderstanding in the workplace (Earley, Ang, & Tan, 2006; Ramalu, Chuah, & Che Rose, 2011). As a result, the interconnectedness of today’s world, it dictates a need for leaders who understand the cultural differences in these diverse settings (Dickson, Hanges, & Lord, 2001). Similarly, studies in cross-culture revealed that about 40 percent of managers assigned to foreign countries failed primarily because of the lacked of ability to function in a foreign assignment with contributing factors due to cultural differences (Tung, 1981). The failure to adjust to the culture of the host country has an impact on the performance issues of the incompleteness of assignments and even the failure in business deals (Holopainen & Bjo’Kman, 2005). There are also the challenges of individuals understanding the cultural dimensions of host the country. Cross-cultural adjustments and adaptations are a key determinant to succeed in the international work assignments

(Festing & Maletzky, 2011; Ramalu et al., 2011). Hence, having the knowledge of the related cultural factors will enhance cross-cultural understanding and adaptation. Livermore (2010) postulates that a majority of about 90% leaders from 68 nations view cross-cultural leadership as a critical challenge. Cross-cultural competency were identified as one of the required professional abilities for leadership success (Future Work Skills 2020, 2011).

An important component of the cross-cultural competence is adaptation. It is imperative for leaders to adjust to the cross-cultural work environment (Festing & Maletzky, 2011). Leaders assign for cross-cultural assignments and projects need to be aware and prepared (Alhamad, Osman, Abdul Manaf, Abdullah, AlShatnawi, 2015). The ability to adapt in the diverse cross-cultural settings is also linked to the study of CQ (Livermore, 2010; Nunes, Felix, & Prates, 2017; Ramalu et al., 2011). Jones et al. (2014) in their qualitative study on the cross cultural consensus of the preferred leadership construct found the competency of adaptability as one of the key components. Adaptability is one of the needed ability to adjust in a new cultural environment.

Researchers are calling for more studies needed on the related cross-cultural factors involving other countries for the benefits of the cross-cultural leaders and organizations (Ko, 2015; Nunes et al., 2017; Shi & Wang, 2011). The information is valuable to those assigned for international assignments (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016). Research on cross-cultural leadership adaptation is still needed (Festing & Maletzky, 2011). This paper presents the perspective of the various aspects of the host culture of Canada and the home culture of Malaysia. It then proposes the preferred leadership portrait for successful cross-cultural leadership. At the same time, due to the multi-cultural context and interconnectedness of today's world, leaders need to be aware and know the cultural differences in the diverse setting in the organization (Earley et al., 2006; Livermore, 2010). It is essential that cross-cultural leaders enhance their cross-cultural competencies accordingly to reduce misunderstanding and misconceptions (Hanges et al., 2016; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

This paper discusses on these related issues after the introduction: home culture dimensions of Malaysia, host culture dimensions of Canada, preferred profile, highlights of the Southern Asia and Anglo leadership

profile, and a preferred leadership portrait. The cultures of Malaysia and Canada are also a typology of understanding the cultural orientation of the countries in the Southern Asia and the Anglo clusters (See Figure 1). This information would be particularly helpful for leaders to develop the cross-cultural leadership competencies.

### **Home Culture Dimensions of Malaysia**

This section, highlights Malaysia's societal culture following the framework of GLOBE's studies. GLOBE researchers identified nine core cultural dimensions. The cultural dimensions were "uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation, and humane orientation" (House et al., 2004). GLOBE researchers used these cultural dimensions to understand the approach to leadership in societies in the various regional clusters. A thorough knowledge of the cultural dimensions will help a leader to lead effectively in the other cultures.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society, multi-cultural, and multi-religious country which has preserved a distinct Asian cultural values in spite of the challenges of modernization (Kennedy, 2002; Peow, 2011). Given the Malaysia's multi-ethnic society, it is misleading to suggest that there is only one primary culture (Lo, Ramayah, & De Run, 2010). Some of Malaysia's long and unique background includes a colonial heritage under the Portuguese and English cultures, then experienced the Japanese occupation in World War II, before her independence from the British in 1957 (Kennedy, 2002). It later received the migration of the Chinese and Indians over the second millennium A.D. In the country's economic development, it has maintained close links with China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan over the decades (House et al., 2004). The country's increasing industrialization and economic growth have also led to the westernization of many management practices. However, the presence of cultural and religious values makes the Malaysian leadership styles distinctive (Keneddy, 2002).

In the GLOBE's research, Malaysia is grouped in the Southern Asia cluster. The countries in this cluster are the Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, India, and Iran. According to Chhokar, Brodbeck, and House (2008), one of the specific characteristics of the cluster is the adaptation of cultures which has contributed to the people's coexistence over time. These countries displayed high degrees of humane orientation and in-group collectivism (House et al., 2004). Additionally, the Southern Asia cluster exhibited strong family relationship and great interest for their clans or communities. In a humane oriented culture, it cultivates the positive attributes of fairness, altruism, generosity, kindness, and care for one another (House et al., 2004; Northouse 2013). Northouse (2013) adds that "humane orientation is concerned with how much a society or organization emphasizes sensitivity to others, social support and community values" (p. 389). People are very tolerant of mistakes. Some of the highlights of the characteristics of high humane orientation communities are such as family, friends, and neighbors are important as opposed to the low human societies where self-interest is a way of life (House et al., 2004). Javidan and House (2001) further elaborate on the term human orientation as the high degree of values placed on human relations, especially the weak and vulnerable. Even the approach to communication focused on the avoidance of conflict. Regarding leadership, the human orientation factor is significant (Kennedy, 2002).

The Southern Asia cluster of which Malaysia is group, also registered high in in-group collectivism (House et al., 2004). The dimension of in-group collectivism mainly refers to the devotion or cohesiveness people place in their organizations or families (Northouse, 2013). In contrast to the individualistic societies, relationship ties tend to be loose, and people should plan to take care of themselves (Tata & Prasad, 2015). The perception and cultural behaviour of the individualistic and collectivistic cultures are different (Triandis, 2004). Individualism and collectivism were considered as "one of the most important dimension of variation" (Munley, 2011, p. 24). There is the relevance of individualism and collectivism to important decision making. People, who emphasize group goals over individual goals, solve relational conflicts in different ways as compared to individuals who emphasize personal goals.

Besides, Shulruf et al. (2011) argue that people from the collectivist culture tend to use indirect ways of communication in preference for harmony and “save face” in the group. Hence, the dimension of collectivism and individualism affects perceptions, reasoning, and behaviors of people in organizations (Husted & Allen, 2008). There is also an emphasis of cohesiveness in the family and the workplace. Furthermore, according to Kennedy (2002), the culture of the display of assertiveness or confrontational behavior is not encouraged. Hence, in understanding the Malaysian culture, values are placed on human orientation and collectivism rather than individualism.

In cultural research, Malaysia scored high for power distance (McCourt & Foon, 2007). The GLOBE project has defined “power distance as the degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally” (House et al., 2004, p. 30). The cultural dimension of high power distance has been referred to as “hierarchy” while the low power distance as “egalitarianism.” The power distance relationship denotes the status differences between the subordinates and the superiors (Gomez-Mejia & Welbourne, 1991). In simple terms, power distance refers to the far apart leaders, and followers feel for each other. It also relates to the people or citizens being able to accept a hierarchical system or the power structure in organizational settings. Hence, leaders and managers in high power-distance societies tend to be inclined towards autocratic, conformity, and orderliness (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016; Lim, 2001).

The trends of the high power distance orientation between the leader and the peer or follower are that they are more receptive to the top down hierarchical relationships (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, & Lowe, 2009). Also, leaders and followers do not socialize with each other regularly. Followers address leaders formally, and the status of leaders is accorded respect. As in contrast to low power distance cultures, followers in low power distance cultures feel comfortable socializing with their leaders, addressing them as peers (Earley et al., 2006; Livermore, 2010).



## **Host Culture Dimensions of Canada**

This section further elucidates on Canada as the adopted host culture. A study of the cultural dimension of Canada is helpful for those in leadership or work-related assignment. In GLOBE's research, Canada is grouped in the Anglo cluster. The countries in the cluster are US, Canada, England, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The countries in the Anglo cluster score high in the cultural dimension of performance orientation, but low on the cultural dimension of in-group collectivism. This means that the main characteristics of these countries are ambitious and performance orientated. At the same time, relationships with family and groups are not a priority or of significant concern. Performance orientation is being defined as priority of members towards performance and excellence (House et al., 2004; Northouse, 2013). This dimension describes the extent where the society encourages the people towards achieving results and performance. Performance orientation focuses on whether people in their culture are recognized for achieving results (Northouse, 2013).

Societies that espoused high performance are characterized as economically prosperous and successful. They also have a stronger social support for competitiveness and enjoy improved levels of human development. In GLOBE's study of Human Development Index (HDI), Canada ranked first with the HDI value of 0.980. The HDI measures the three areas of human development of longevity, knowledge, and standard of living. In contrast, Malaysia ranked 60 with the HDI value of 0.834. As indicated, a performance orientated society can more likely prosper. Studies have shown that societies strong in performance-orientation emphasized education, results, and sets high-performance targets. Another characteristic is the people tend to communicate explicitly and directly (House et al., 2004). Also, Hofstede has argued that the increase in affluence contributed towards individualism in society (House et al., 2004; Triandis, 2004).

The Anglo cluster countries or populations are also described as registering low in in-group collectivism and less attached to families or similar groups (Northouse, 2013). This suggests that the value of family relationship or same group is not the main concern. In the society in-group collectivism practice scores, Canada registered a score of 4.26 which is

lower as compared to 5.97 in its values score (House et al., 2004). The cultural dimension score for Canada's in-group collectivism is low. This would imply Canada is an individualistic society. Individualism is defined as people in the community where relationships are not prioritized or loose; people take care of themselves and their own family (Tata & Prasad, 2015). The collectivistic and individualistic dimensions are the core dimensions of cultures that show the thinking, differences, and the way people work (Triandis, 2004). In an individualistic society, an individual act independently to pursue his or her interest and place the priority of personal goal over group goal. Achieving goals or tasks is more important than up keeping a harmonious relationship (Husted & Allen, 2008).

Regarding power distance, Canada scored 4.82 in practice while Malaysia scored 5.17. Hence, Canada is classified as a low power distance society where the casual relationship, approachability, and communication is practiced. In low power distance culture, followers feel at ease socializing with their leaders. It is acceptable for peers and subordinates to address a high-ranking manager or professional by their first name, but it is not so for those from a high power distance society (MacNab & Worthley 2007). Peers, or subordinates expect to have input in the decision-making processes with their superiors. While individuals or followers from high power cultures indicate fears of disagreeing with their leaders. They also show less questioning of authority in general (Smith & Hume, 2005). Besides, individuals from low power distance societies believe that power inequities should be minimized (Smith & Hume, 2005; Tata & Prasad, 2015). The other cultural dimensions where Canada had mid scores are assertiveness, future orientation, gender egalitarian and uncertainty avoidance.

### **Desired Global Leadership Profile**

There are debates that one could not find a universally acceptable leadership style. House et al., (2004) posit that "Many leadership attributes are culturally contingent" (p. 40). As culture affects leadership, understanding the cultural dimensions and the CLT of one's home and adopted host CLTs is necessary for effective cross-cultural leadership. The GLOBE studies integrated the Culturally Endorsed Implicit Theory of Leadership (CLT) which states that individuals who hold certain theories have an impact on the

way they perceive leadership. The CLT was developed from the implicit leadership theory literature (House, Quigley, & de Luque, 2010). The knowledge of the implicit leadership theory enhances one's understanding of the influence of CLT and the practice of leadership.

GLOBE researchers have highlighted six global leadership attributes that categorized how the various cultures perceive leadership behaviors in others. They wanted to explore the dominant leadership preferences within those clusters (Resick et al., 2011). The six global leadership behaviors or dimensions of CLTs are "charismatic/value-based leadership, team orientated leadership, participative leadership autonomous leadership, humane-oriented leadership, and self-protective leadership" (Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, Dastmalchian, & House, 2012; House et al., 2004) (See Appendix 1). Using these behaviors, the researchers came up with the leadership profiles for the ten cultural clusters in assessing and explaining leadership. House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, (2002) states that these six global leadership dimensions are culturally generalizable.

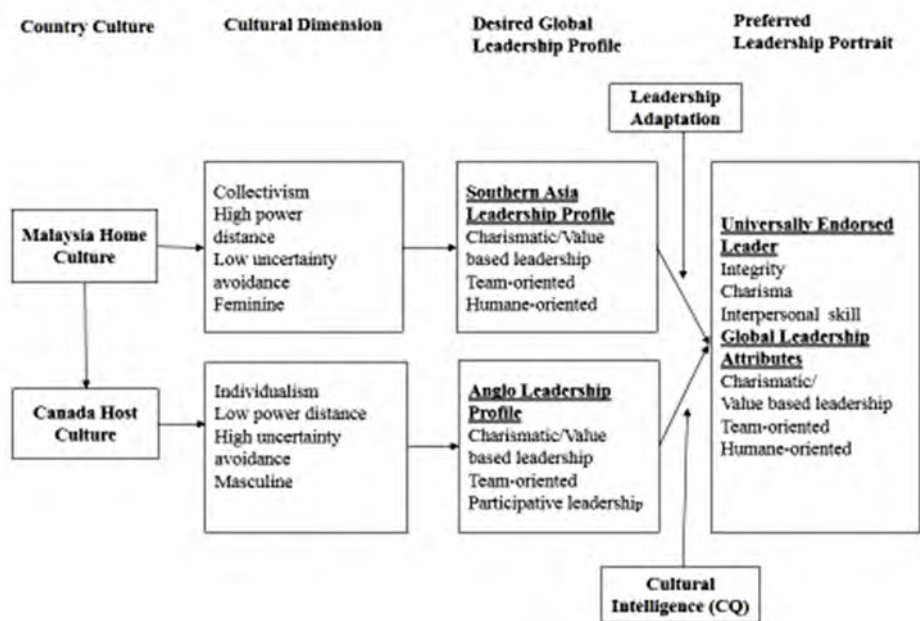
Here is a brief highlight of the Southern Asia leadership profile and the Anglo leadership profile. Based on GLOBE's research on the leadership CLT scores for societal clusters and desired leadership behaviors, the desired leadership profile of an effective Southern Asia leader would be one who displays the charismatic/value based, team-oriented, and humane-oriented leadership attributes. Such a leader would place importance on self-protective, and would not place an importance in participative leadership. The characteristics of such leader are described as "collaborative, inspirational, sensitive to people, and concerned with status and face-saving" (Northouse, 2013, p. 402). On the other hand, the Anglo leadership profile is described as supporting the charismatic/value-based leadership, which is valued by all clusters (House et al., 2004; Northouse, 2013). The Anglo cluster also supports team-oriented leadership with elements of participative leadership, coupled with humane-oriented manner. A people-oriented leadership is desired in all Anglo countries whereby a leader operates as a part of a team and at the same time autonomous (Chhokar et al., 2008; Northouse, 2013). This would imply that as much as the Anglo countries preference for a person-oriented leader to be part of the team, but by the virtues of the embedded cultural dimension nature of individualism, there is still a need to be autonomous.

## **A Preferred Leadership Portrait**

In proposing the desired global leadership profile, it would be appropriate to consider a universal preferred leadership characteristic that emerged from GLOBE's findings. The GLOBE's findings had identified a list of 22 valued positive global leadership characteristics (Dorfman et al., 2012; Northouse, 2013). The universally supported portrait of an excellent leader is "trustworthy, just, honest, foresight, plans ahead, encouraging, positive, dynamic, motive arouser, confidence builder, motivational, dependable, intelligent, decisive, effective bargainer, win-win problem solver, communicative, informed, administratively skilled, coordinative, team builder, and excellence oriented" (House et al., 2004, p. 677). Clearly, in a nutshell, based on the identified list, the universally preferred leader has the qualities of "integrity, charisma, and interpersonal skill" (Northouse, 2013, p. 403).

On the other hand, the universal, description of an ineffective leader is described as "loner, irritable, ruthless, asocial, non-explicit, dictatorial, non-cooperative, and egocentric" (House et al., 2004, p. 678). Hence, an ineffective leader is one described as "asocial, malevolent, self-focused, and autocratic" (Northouse, 2013). According to GLOBE's findings, the leadership behaviors from the charismatic/value-based and team-oriented leadership dimensions were seemed as contributors to leadership. Thus, these two leadership dimensions would be positively perceived among the 10 clusters (House et al., 2004). In summarizing the combined strength of these descriptions of leadership attributes and dimensions contributes towards an ideal portrait of a universally exceptional leader is formed (See Figure 2).

An ideal preferred leadership profile from the home country of Malaysia and the adopted host country of Canada would incorporate these two leadership dimensions of charismatic/value-based leadership and team-oriented leadership which is the dimensions that are listed in both the Southern Asia and Anglo leadership profile. The humane-oriented leadership dimension which is also listed in both the regional clusters of Southern Asia and Anglo is reported to be somewhat of a contributor to effective leadership (House et al., 2004).



**Figure 2:** The conceptual framework of the preferred leadership portrait

**Source:** Author’s inference from related cross-cultural leadership literature

In consideration for effective leadership in both the home and adopted host cultures, the above-mentioned universally desired leadership attributes that emerged from GLOBE’s findings can serve as principle guidelines for leadership. Factors for leadership adaptation include some specific aspects of the cultural dimensions of the home country where the leader is accustomed to as well as in exercising effective leadership in the host country.

First, the cultural dimensions of power distance. As was identified in GLOBE’s findings, Canada the adopted host country scores low in practice while Malaysia the home country score high (House et al., 2004). As discussed earlier, low power distance oriented approaches are consultation and approachability (Gomez-Mejia & Welbourne 2002; MacNab & Worthley 2007). In societies that score in low power distance culture, there is the expectation that all should have equal rights. Furthermore, the people will

question and challenge the views of superiors or peers (Livermore, 2010). Thus, as a leader coming from a high power distance society, this cultural dimension needs to be appropriated in the expectation and the exercise of leadership.

There is the cultural expectation of approachability, flexibility, and informality in working relationships. For instance, as a team leader assigned to lead in an assignment or project in the adopted host country with low power distance, one's approach and style to leadership need to change and adjust accordingly. There are cultural differences one needs to recognize. The leader can expect to be treated informally, addressed as peers, being questioned in his directives and inputs and decision-making rights. As a team leader, one cannot merely be making arbitrary decisions in the assignment or project. A high power distance team leader cannot be expected to be accorded with respect merely from his titles, status, and positions. A participative or engaging style would help.

As a team leader in a low power distance society, a leader needs to exercise CQ and seek to understand the cultural dimensions of the particular culture involved (Earley et al., 2006; Livermore, 2010). For instance, there is the informal peer relationship between the leader and group members. For a leader of the home country where it is high power distance, it requires adjustment. Also, in the leader's interactions with those in the position of authority, it is preferable that the leader exhibit an openness and approachability.

Second, the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism. There are differences and dynamism in these cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism as was discussed in the section on the leader's home country of Malaysia as well as the adopted host country of Canada. As a team leader from a collectivist culture working in an individualistic culture, there are certain aspects of the cultural dynamics one need to be aware of to be effective. A point emphasized by Livermore (2010) for those from the collectivist cultures in working with an organization from an individualist culture, the approach should preferably be working with mainly one or two individuals. In individualistic oriented cultures, there is the tendency to use positive feedback to motivate own followers.

In the North American low-context culture's words are explicitly emphasized and direct communication valued instead (Livermore, 2010). There is a preference or practice of direct open communication rather than indirect as in the collectivist culture. Therefore, as a team leader working in an individualistic culture, this perception and practice need adjustment. As a team leader from a collectivistic oriented culture, that needs adjustment as well. For instance, a team leader in a collectivistic society communicates or sends instructions indirectly or through a third party. It is a standard practice in such cultures, but will likely to be misunderstood in an individualistic culture.

A related concept of the dimension of the culture of the host country is the level of high uncertainty avoidance oriented where there is the preference for writing rules, structure, and regulations (Livermore, 2010; Tata & Prasad, 2015). Javidan and House (2001) states, "Societies that are high on uncertainty avoidance have a stronger tendency toward orderliness and consistency, structured lifestyles, clear specification of social expectations, and rules and laws to cover situations" (p. 293). When working with individuals with high uncertainty avoidance, there need to be explicit objectives and deadlines. Malaysia falls into the category of low uncertainty avoidance except for the more literate urban city areas. According to Kennedy (2002), this cultural practice is valued by respondents in their survey as Malaysia progresses towards a developed economy, hence the desire to reduce future uncertainty. Hence, as a team leader, this cultural dimension needs to be considered regarding strategy and communication.

The other aspect of the adopted host country's cultural dimension is the orientation towards Hofstede's definition of masculine cultures (Contiu, Gabor, & Stefanescu, 2012). The masculine cultures support assertiveness, challenge, and ambition while the feminine cultures place emphasis on cooperation, nurturance, good working relationship, and affiliation (Tata & Prasad, 2015). A country that scores high on this dimension accepts the philosophy that men or masculine values are dominant within the society. The Malaysian cultural practice tends towards the feminine cultures (Kennedy, 2002).

According to Hofstede (1991) study of cultures, the elements of both assertiveness and nurturance for effectiveness are required for managerial jobs (Offermann & Hellmann, 1997). Thus, as a team leader,

employing cultural intelligence (CQ) to know how to assess the situation and to cultivate the skills of using the elements of assertiveness and nurturance. In the course of work assignments, there is a need for the value and place of cooperation and good working relationship. At the same time in the context of the adopted host country of Canada, where it is oriented towards masculine cultures, there is a need to assert, challenge, and step up. This is a summarized description of the strength of the concept of the preferred leadership portrait of successful cross-cultural leadership. Leaders who follow this framework will be effective (Dorfman et al., 2012).

There were concerns on the issues of developing sustainable leadership in recent times (Grooms & Reid-Martinez, 2011; Rogers, 2011). Researchers are urging for leadership development to include the sustainability agenda (Galpin, Whittington, & Bell, 2015; Quinne & Dalton, 2009). Essentially, sustainable leadership development involves new thinking for the long term progress of leaders, systems, and organizations employing sustainable principles (Rogers, 2011). The proposed preferred leadership portrait encapsulates the concept of sustainability leadership. The effects of the implication of the concept of sustainability in this study are many folds, such as, achieving leadership objectives and success, sustaining one's leadership work, and developing the human resource (Grooms & Reid-Martinez, 2011). Hence, there are many benefits of the proposed preferred leadership portrait model.

## **Conclusion and Implications**

This article began with a brief overview of the definition of leadership. Influence is the key word in many definitions of leadership, including GLOBE's definition. We are also introduced to GLOBE's project in their findings of culture and leadership across global cultures in 62 societies as the central text for understanding effective cross-cultural leadership. GLOBE's studies on the nine cultural dimensions of each society and the six global leadership aspects of CLTs offered perspectives on the understanding and application of cross-cultural leadership practice.



The paper, then presented the cultural dimensions of Malaysia. Malaysia being the home country of the leader is grouped in the Southern Asia cluster. The countries in this cluster score high in humane orientation and in group collectivism. Some of the characteristics of the humane orientation dimension are cohesiveness and supports as express in communication and practice. The features of the in-group collectivism is essentially the degree where individuals communicate care for their communities and families. Malaysia has also been classified as a high power distance society. Hence, as discussed, there are a formality and distance between a leader and a follower.

In contrast, the cultural dimensions of Canada as the adopted host country are also presented. Canada is grouped in the Anglo cluster, where they excel in performance orientation and low in in-group collectivism. In performance orientation, the society encourages improved performance and excellence. The society of such cultural dimensions, usually results in improvement and prosperity in many significant fields. While being low in in-group collectivism would imply an individualistic society which places an importance of achieving results than on maintaining a harmonious relationship. Canada being classified as a low power distance society has characteristics of informal and flexible working relationships. Also, there is open communication between a leader and the peers.

The preferred leadership portrait would also include explicit consideration of the cultural dimensions of the adopted host country and adaptations to one's leadership such as power distance, individualism, and masculine culture trends. A cross-cultural leader nurtured and formed from a Southern Asia cluster and specifically from the Malaysian context is to take cognizance of these leadership and cultural dimensions and with growing CQ, adjust and apply the leadership competencies accordingly. There is a leadership strength of the elements of the cultural dimensions of Malaysia that would enhance a leader's practice in the setting of the host country of Canada such as the cultural dimensions orientation of humane orientation and in group collectivism. A leader from the Malaysian background contributes strength in these values in their perspective and leadership practices. In the humanistic orientation, there is a stronger element of sensitivity, support, and care for families, neighbors, workplace, and the communities. As highlighted, the leadership approach tends to

focus on avoiding conflict and being caring. A leader from an in-group collectivist background will contribute or reflect the value of cohesiveness and harmony in teams or organizations which will be a positive contributing factor. In conclusion, this study of the proposed preferred leadership construct will contribute towards a sustainable cross-cultural leadership theory and practice.

### **Recommendation**

Further research is needed to validate the characteristics and functions of an ideal preferred leadership portrait of a cross-cultural leader incorporating the cultural dimensions, global leadership dimensions, and desired leadership profile of the home culture of Malaysia and the host culture of Canada. Furthermore, the field of leadership adaptation between the different cultures are potential areas of research. There has been the lack of empirical data in field of study.

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## Appendix 1

### Global leadership behaviors

No	Global leadership behaviours	Definitions
1.	Charismatic/Value-based Leadership	The ability to inspire, to motivate, and to extent high performance outcomes from others on the basis of firmly held core values. This leadership dimension includes being (a) visionary, (b) inspirational, (c) self-sacrifice, (d) integrity, (e) decisive, and (f) performance oriented. The Charismatic/value-based leadership is universally reported as a contributor to effective leadership.
2.	Team-Oriented Leadership	The ability to effectively build teams and to implement a common purpose or goal among team members. Team-oriented leadership consists of (a) collaborative team orientation, (b) team integrator, (c) diplomatic, (d) benevolent, and (e) administratively competent. All ten regional clusters considered this a desirable leadership attribute.
3.	Participative Leadership	The degree to which leaders involve others in making and implementing decisions. Participative leadership is generally viewed positively.
4.	Humane-oriented Leadership	The degree to which leaders are supportive, considerate, compassion, and generosity to followers. Humane-oriented leadership is seen as neutral in some countries, and moderately contributing to effective leadership in other countries.
5.	Autonomous Leadership	The tendency of leaders toward individualism and independence. This leadership dimension ranges widely from being seen as an impediment to effective leadership in some countries, to be a desirable attribute in other countries.
6.	Self-Protective Leadership	The degree to which leaders employ status enhancement and face-saving to ensure the safety of the individual or group. Aspects of self-protective leadership include (a) self-centred, (b) status conscious, (c) conflict inducer, (d) face saver, and (e) procedural. This leadership dimension is reported to impede effective leadership, although there is a wide range of scores between cultures.

Source: House et al., (2004)

