Theme 12: Introduction, Conclusion & Abstract

Evaluating conclusions

Task 1

Work with a partner. Student A reads conclusions 1 and 2. Student B reads conclusions 3 and 4.

Conclusion 1

The findings revealed that the four cultural dimensions had no significant impact on the transformational, transactional and non-leadership behaviours, with the exception of the small positive impact of power distance on transformational leadership. These results, therefore, led to partially support hypothesis 1 and fully support hypotheses2 and 3. In general, the very limited influence of the cultural dimensions on the three major leadership behaviours seemed to support the universality of the transformational-transactional paradigm proposed by Bass (1997) and the ‘etic’ approach (Triandis, 1994).

It may not be appropriate to conclude that the leadership behaviours should be totally treated as a universal phenomenon. The degrees of cultural values influencing leadership behaviours should depend on how one defines or views ‘leadership.’ However, when leadership behaviours were captured by transformational leadership, as in this study, culture seemed to play a limited role. The universality of the transformational leadership model proposed in this study serves as a basic explanation of how the internal and external forces contribute to a near universalistic position for transformational leadership.

Although this research provided some interesting results, there are some limitations and recommendations for future research arising that should be recognised and addressed. The investigation of the current study employed specific theoretical frameworks: Bass’s transformational leadership and Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. Since the relationships between culture and leadership behaviour are still sensitive and unresolved issues (Dorfman, 1996), whether other theories may produce either similar or different results remains an open research question.

Further research might focus on one of the core cultural dimensions such as femininity since some authors have argued that transformational leadership is inherently more feminine than masculine (e.g. Bass et al, 1996). Also, future research may wish to address other factors that influence leadership behaviours, such as the personality attributes of both leaders and subordinates. On transformational leadership, some previous studies had reported the significant contribution of individual differences from leaders and subordinates of the same cultural background (e.g. Howell and Avoli, 1993). The personality attributes of successful leaders may also vary substantially as between cultures and help to understand the wider implications of leadership styles.

Source: Muenjohn, N. and Armstrong, A. (2007). Transformational Leadership: The influencing of culture on the leadership behaviours of expatriate managers. *International* *Journal of Business and Information,* 2(2), pp.265-283.

Conclusion 2

The objective of the study is to examine the impact of HRM practices on organizational performance. The study revealed that HRM practices have significant impact on organizational performance. It has been found that the university performance can be attributed to HRM practices including recruitment, training, performance appraisal, career planning, employee participation, job definition and compensation. This study is consistent with Khan (2010).

Universities need to have an effective recruitment policy to promote scientific selection of prospective employees. The heads of department and assistant registrars should participate in selection process as they have different preferences in the candidates who need to be selected based on requisite skills knowledge, attitude and qualification using appropriate selection techniques. Besides, appropriate training program for both academicians and support staff should be organised to continuously improve the skills of employees. Furthermore, performance appraisal should be guided by the performance management policy. Employee’s performance should be assessed based on quantifiable standards and feedback be given to employees on their performance.

It was found that career planning contributes the most to university performance. The managers should understand employees’ career plans so that they match the career aspirations of employees and the needs of the university. Similarly, it implies that increasing employee involvement and participation in decision making regarding their career plans will greatly enhance university performance. In this sense, Chen (2009) proposed an integrated performance measurement system for universities. Learning and growth is one of the dimensions which include progression of staff to move up the career ladder hence the importance of career planning performance improvement. Since HRM practices have a significant impact on organizational performance, managers need to implement them in an integrated and coherent manner (Gamage, 2011).

Organizations including universities need to attract and retain talents and leverage them for competitive advantage (Khan, 2010). Candidates need to be selected based on requisite skills knowledge, attitude and qualification using appropriate selection techniques. Consequently, management and the supervisors should allow the employees to participate on decision making on issues which affect the employees. Open communication or information sharing promote decision making. This will influence commitment and job satisfaction (Katou, 2008).

One of the major limitations of this study is the small sample size, thus the findings are not generalizable. Future research should include more universities both public and private. In addition, future researchers should also consider moderating variables such as university culture, organisation climate, and the labor market.

Source: Amin, M. et al (2014). The Impact of Human Resources Practices on Performance. *The TQM Journal*, (26)2, pp.125-142.

Conclusion 3

The first and most important conclusion of this research is that the constructs formed – store image, positive affect, store trust and store commitment - are interrelated, except for store trust and store commitment. The relationship between store trust and store commitment was not significant, but this may due to the low level of reliability for the store commitment construct. As has already been pointed out, the reason may lie in the limitation of the research, which is that ‘commitment’ is the multidimensional variable with low variability. Thus, further research is necessary. The improvement of the measurement scale for this variable represents the necessary extension of this research.

The results provide several managerial implications. They are generally consistent with previous findings (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998; Osman, 1993) showing that store loyalty is a complex and multidimensional research phenomenon. As already pointed out (Thomas, 2013) customer loyalty has become a major concern for retail stores across the globe. A loyal customer may be a source of competitive advantage through the highest likelihood for repeated purchase and highest likelihood of increasing the number of customers through positive word of mouth. These results provide several important insights for the Slovenian market, although there are research limitations arising from the fact that our sample can only be partially generalised to the Slovenian context.

Another important result is that gender differences regarding the store image are significant. This shows that understanding the ‘store image’ concept and the indicators between men and women are not congruent. Another managerial implication arises from these results. The store should build on a carefully analysed gender structure of its customers.

The results of this research suggest that a net of relationships among the constructs analysed exists. The research results offer a very promising basis for the further research of relationships as well as dependencies among the multidimensional variables.

Several extensions of the research are possible (besides the already mentioned extension related to the store image construct). Consistent with the literature, the structural equation model could be applied. Bloemer and Oderkerken-Schroder (2002) presented a structural model that combines the sub-system of store image, positive affect, store satisfaction and store affection with their impact on store trust, and, further, store commitment. Thomas (2013) also used structural equation modelling to analyse the dependencies among customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and store image based on the data collected from leading supermarkets in India. It would perhaps be worthwhile to apply this validated model to the Slovenian market. The measure of purchase intentions is also worth including in the analysis. As Macintosh and Lockshin (1997) pointed out, customers’ attitudes influence the relationships among store satisfaction and purchase intentions as well as store trust and purchase intentions.

The results of this research refer to supermarket customers. The research model should be tested for other store types as well as different specialised stores (stores with technical goods for example) as it is likely that modified models of store image and customer loyalty are applicable.

Source: Grah, M. and Tominc, P. (2015). Relationships among Store Image and Store Loyalty in Slovenia. *Our Economy*, 61(6), pp.28-37.

Conclusion 4

The specific aim of this study was to compare parent and student ratings of the respective importance of factors and features identified as influential in the decision to study abroad are the choice of study abroad destination. A major contribution of this study was to highlight the similarities and significant differences between the perspectives of parents and students. Mainland Chinese parents’ decision to seek study abroad and their choice of a preferred destination were found to be influenced more by factors grounded in cultural, political and socio-economic pragmatism. While they shared with students concerns about the support to be provided, the more tangible qualities of the experience of studying abroad were found to be the most important factors influencing and attracting students. A second contribution lies in the consequence of such differences when it comes to decision making by families and marketers. Deep rooted Confucian ideas and values continue to influence societies such as mainland China. The parent-child relationship characterised by *filial piety* has, as discussed, the potential to significantly affect the decision making process. However, this cultural fundamental until now has been hardly recognised in the literature of marketing international education in Confucian societies. The potential effect on family dynamics and decision making is also a consideration that marketers need to heed and accommodate when dealing with the various stakeholders.

While providing valuable information and insight, this study has limitations. The sample size is small and derived from those in attendance at international education fairs; hence the findings may not be generalizable. The data could have been strengthened had it been collected from a family unit and as such included separate views of mother, father and child. Obtaining data in this way, however, was not always possible. Despite these limitations, several issues and issues are worthy of further exploration. These include: the effect of *filial piety* and *guanxi* networks in contemporary mainland families’ decision making in regard to study abroad; whether knowledge can be used to inform and enhance the marketing of international education in mainland China; and whether access to the internet and especially social networking affect the marketing of higher education in Confucian societies.

The international student recruitment market plays a key role in shaping and challenging the global higher education sector. As highlighted in this study, the emphasis that mainland Chinese parents place in the longer term benefit of such study abroad such as employment and migration has the potential to affect the export of education in mainland Chinese students seeking study abroad. Related constraints on visa applications, work experience opportunities while studying, and/or the failure to provide language, social and academic support services may make a difference in the choice of a country or institution. Failure to develop a relationship with and understand the values and expectations of stakeholders, especially parents, will most definitely affect the recruitment process. Success in the mainland Chinese higher education recruitment market and in those that hold similar Confucian values requires a comprehensive understanding of the cultural, social and familial practices.

Source: Bodycott, P. (2009). Choosing a higher education study abroad destination: what mainland Chinese parents and students rate as important. *Journal of Research in International Education,* 8(3), pp.349-373.

[Task from Trezeciak and Mackay (1994) Study Skills for Academic Writing. Harlow London]

Task 2

Make notes in the table below to analyse and evaluate the conclusions you read.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Conclusion** | **Aims restated?** | **Research Questions answered?** | **Aims and objectives met?** | **Significance / implications highlighted?** | **Recommendations made?** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |

Task 3

Tell your partner about the two conclusions you read. Discuss which conclusion (1-4) was the most effective.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Module Learning Outcomes Covered | Academic Literacies Covered |
| ML5 | AL5 |
| Choose an item. | AL8 |
| Choose an item. | Choose an item. |