

Article

Cultural impacts on leadership styles: A perspective in social science management

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Abstract: This research article explores the intricate relationship between cultural impacts and leadership styles in social science management. It emphasizes the importance of cultural-informed decision-making, highlighting its role in fostering inclusive managerial choices. The study also delves into how diverse leadership styles enhance team dynamics and collaboration, contributing to an innovative work environment. While recognizing the potential benefits, challenges like miscommunications are acknowledged, with recommendations for leadership development programs. The research underscores the significance of leadership flexibility in managing diverse teams. In conclusion, the article emphasizes the positive impact of cultural awareness on decision-making, collaboration, and innovation in social science management.

Keywords: cultural impacts; leadership styles; social science management; decision-making; team dynamics; leadership development; organizational adaptability; innovation

1. Introduction

In the increasingly interconnected world of social science management, the influence of culture on leadership styles cannot be overstated. As organizations expand globally and collaborate across diverse cultures, understanding the nuances of how culture shapes leadership practices become a critical component for effective management. This research delves into the intricate relationship between cultural dimensions and leadership styles, aiming to provide valuable insights for leaders navigating the complexities of social science management. *Cultural Dimensions and Their Impact:* One of the foundational theories in this domain is Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Hofstede, 1980), which identifies key dimensions such as individualism-collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. These dimensions significantly influence leadership styles, impacting decision-making processes, communication patterns, and the delegation of authority within social science management contexts.

Individualism vs. collectivism: Cultures emphasizing individualism often foster leadership styles that prioritize autonomy and personal achievement. In contrast, collectivist cultures may lean towards participative and team-oriented leadership, valuing group cohesion and collaboration (Hofstede, 1980).

Power distance: The degree of power distance within a culture shapes leadership preference. Cultures with high power distance may exhibit autocratic leadership tendencies, while those with lower power distance may embrace more egalitarian and participative leadership styles (Hofstede, 1980).

Uncertainty avoidance: Leadership in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance tends to be more structured and rule oriented. In contrast, cultures with low uncertainty avoidance may encourage adaptive and flexible leadership approaches (Hofstede, 1980).

Leadership models across cultures: Building on cultural dimensions, leadership models like transformational and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985) offer additional insights into how leaders inspire and motivate teams. The application of these models varies across cultural contexts, with some cultures responding more favorably to charismatic and visionary leadership, while others may value transactional exchanges and clear expectations (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Table 1. Cultural dimensions and leadership styles.

Cultural Dimension	Leadership Style Impact
Individualism	Autonomy and personal achievement emphasis
Collectivism	Participative and team-oriented leadership
Power Distance	Autocratic vs. egalitarian leadership
Uncertainty Avoidance	Structured vs. adaptive leadership

Source: Hofstede (2001); Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010); House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004); Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997).

The GLOBE study and cultural behavior: The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) study (House et al., 2004) extends the exploration, emphasizing the significance of leader behavior in diverse societal contexts. This research identifies six global leader behavior dimensions, providing a framework for understanding how cultural values influence leadership practices globally. The GLOBE study enriches our comprehension of the dynamic interplay between culture and leadership in social science management in **Table 1**.

Cultural dilemmas and leadership preferences: Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) contribute the concept of cultural dilemmas, revealing how cultural variations impact leadership preferences. Leaders facing dilemmas related to universalism vs. particularism or individualism vs. communitarianism may find their leadership styles evolving based on the cultural context. This highlights the need for leaders in social science management to be culturally agile and adaptive in **Table 2**.

Inclusive leadership in diverse environments: As organizations embrace diversity, leaders must adopt inclusive leadership practices (Adler, 2008; Cox, 1994). Inclusive leadership involves recognizing and leveraging the strengths that arise from cultural diversity. Leaders who can create environments that celebrate differences and foster collaboration across diverse teams are better positioned for success in social science management.

Table 2. Cultural dimensions and leadership impact.

Cultural Dimension	Leadership Impact (Percentage)
Individualism	65% prefer autonomy and personal achievement
Collectivism	80% lean towards participative and team-oriented leadership
Power Distance	45% exhibit autocratic tendencies in high power distance cultures
Uncertainty Avoidance	60% opt for structured leadership in high uncertainty avoidance cultures

Source: House et al. (2004); Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997); Adler (2008); Cox (1994).

In conclusion, the interplay between culture and leadership styles in social science management is a multifaceted and evolving area of study. By examining cultural dimensions, leadership models, and real-world examples from the GLOBE study, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights to enhance leadership effectiveness in culturally diverse settings. Navigating the intricate tapestry of cultural influences is essential for leaders striving to excel in the dynamic landscape of social science management.

2. Theoretical framework

Leadership styles and cultural dimensions represent pivotal concepts within the context of organizational behavior and social science management. Leadership styles encapsulate the behavioral patterns and approaches employed by leaders to influence and guide their teams. On the other hand, cultural dimensions, as proposed by Hofstede (1980), encompass fundamental values and beliefs shared by members of a society, influencing their behaviors and perceptions. These cultural dimensions often include individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity vs. femininity.

2.1. Linking culture and leadership

To understand the intricate relationship between culture and leadership, various theoretical perspectives have been proposed in social science management. The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) study, initiated by House et al. (2004), is a comprehensive framework that identifies cultural dimensions and their impact on leadership behaviors. Additionally, the Path-Goal Theory by House (1971) posits that effective leadership aligns with cultural expectations, emphasizing the importance of adapting leadership styles to diverse cultural contexts.

2.2. Transformational leadership and cultural influence

Transformational leadership, introduced by Bass and Riggio (2006), provides insights into how leaders inspire and motivate followers. This theory aligns with the cultural contingency theory, suggesting that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the congruence between leadership styles and cultural expectations (House et al., 2004). The transformational approach emphasizes charisma, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation, showcasing how cultural dimensions shape the manifestation of these leadership behaviors.

2.3. Cultural intelligence (CQ) and leadership styles

The concept of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) proposed by Earley and Ang (2003) has gained prominence in understanding how leaders navigate diverse cultural landscapes. CQ involves the ability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings, showcasing adaptability, mindfulness, and interpersonal skills. Leaders with high CQ are better equipped to tailor their leadership styles to accommodate cultural variations, fostering positive organizational outcomes.

2.4. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory remains a cornerstone in studying the influence of culture on leadership. As per Hofstede (1980), individualism vs. collectivism assesses the degree to which individuals prioritize personal goals over collective objectives. Power distance reflects the acceptance of hierarchical authority within a society. Uncertainty avoidance gauges a society's tolerance for ambiguity, while masculinity vs. femininity explores gender roles. Understanding these dimensions provides a lens through which leadership styles can be analyzed in diverse cultural settings.

2.5. Cultural hybridity and leadership adaptation

In today's globalized world, cultural hybridity is increasingly common, and leaders must navigate multicultural environments. The concept of cultural hybridity, as proposed by Bhabha (1994), acknowledges the blending of multiple cultures. Leaders who embrace cultural hybridity demonstrate an ability to integrate diverse cultural elements into their leadership styles, fostering inclusivity and innovation.

2.6. Cultural contingency in leadership styles

The cultural contingency theory posits that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the alignment between leadership styles and the cultural context (House et al., 2004). This theory recognizes that certain leadership behaviors may be more effective in specific cultural settings. For instance, in high power distance cultures, autocratic leadership may be more accepted, whereas in low power distance cultures, participative and democratic leadership styles may be preferred. Exploring these contingencies helps elucidate the nuanced relationship between culture and leadership effectiveness.

2.7. Cross-cultural leadership challenges

Navigating cross-cultural leadership presents unique challenges that necessitate an understanding of cultural nuances. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) proposed a framework highlighting dilemmas that leaders face in multicultural contexts, such as the balance between individualism and communitarianism or the orientation towards universalism versus particularism. Examining these challenges aids in comprehending the complexities leaders encounter when operating across diverse cultural landscapes.

2.8. Cultural adaptation and leadership effectiveness

Effective leaders recognize the importance of cultural adaptation to enhance leadership effectiveness in diverse settings. The concept of cultural adaptation involves modifying leadership styles to align with cultural expectations (Chhokar et al., 2007). Leaders who can adapt their communication styles, decision-making processes, and motivational strategies based on cultural considerations are better positioned to foster positive outcomes in multicultural teams.

2.9. Leadership styles and national culture

National culture significantly influences leadership styles, as evidenced by research in the field of cross-cultural management (Hofstede, 1980). For example, cultures with high uncertainty avoidance may lean towards leaders who provide clear directives, while cultures with low uncertainty avoidance may value leaders who encourage experimentation and risk-taking. Examining these correlations contributes to a deeper understanding of how leadership styles evolve within specific national cultural contexts.

2.10. Intercultural competence and leadership

Intercultural competence, as proposed by Deardorff (2006), refers to the ability to communicate and interact effectively across cultures. Leaders who possess high levels of intercultural competence demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences, display cultural empathy, and can bridge cultural gaps within their teams. This competence is crucial for leaders aiming to leverage diversity and harness its benefits within an organization.

2.11. Cultural leadership competencies

Identifying specific cultural leadership competencies is essential for developing effective leaders in a globalized world. The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by Ang et al. (2007) outlines four dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. Leaders who excel in these competencies are better equipped to adapt their leadership styles, foster cross-cultural collaboration, and drive organizational success in diverse environments.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

The study employs a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This design was chosen to provide a comprehensive analysis by triangulating data from multiple sources, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. Qualitative data is gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to capture nuanced perspectives, while quantitative data is obtained through surveys to facilitate statistical analysis and generalization.

3.2. Participants

A diverse sample of 300 participants, comprising professionals in social science management roles across different industries and cultural settings, was selected. Participants were chosen based on their cultural diversity, organizational hierarchy, and years of managerial experience to ensure a comprehensive representation of different cultural dimensions and leadership styles. Detailed demographic characteristics, including age, gender, education, and professional background, were recorded to contextualize the findings.

3.3. Data collection methods

Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, allowing for in-depth exploration of individual experiences and perspectives on leadership and culture. Quantitative data was gathered using a culturally validated survey instrument, incorporating established scales for measuring cultural dimensions and leadership styles. The survey included items from Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant constructs.

3.4. Measurement of cultural dimensions

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory was employed to measure cultural orientations, assessing participants' positions on dimensions such as Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation. This theoretical framework provided a robust basis for analyzing cultural impacts on leadership styles.

3.5 Measurement of leadership styles

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used to measure leadership styles, capturing transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors. Participants rated various leadership behaviors, providing a detailed profile of their leadership style in relation to their cultural context.

3.6. Analysis techniques

Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical tools such as SPSS, providing descriptive statistics and inferential analyses, including correlation and regression. This analysis identified significant relationships between cultural dimensions and leadership styles. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to extract patterns and themes from interview transcripts and focus group discussions, providing rich contextual insights.

In summary, the research design involves 300 participants, a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, and the utilization of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory and the MLQ for measuring cultural dimensions and leadership styles, respectively.

4. Cultural dimensions and leadership styles

In examining the intricate relationship between cultural dimensions and leadership styles, it becomes evident that various cultural factors significantly influence how leaders lead and manage their teams. This section will delve into the impact of key cultural dimensions, such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, on leadership styles. Additionally, we will explore existing models of leadership, emphasizing their variations across diverse cultural contexts.

4.1. Individualism vs. collectivism

Individualism and collectivism represent fundamental cultural dimensions that profoundly shape leadership behaviors. In individualistic societies, where autonomy and personal achievements are valued, leaders often adopt a more laissez-faire approach, empowering individuals to make decisions independently. On the contrary, in collectivist cultures, where group harmony and loyalty are prioritized, leadership tends to be more participative and team oriented. Research by Hofstede et al. (2010) highlights how these cultural differences influence leadership preferences, with individualistic cultures favoring charismatic and transformational leadership, while collectivist cultures lean towards inclusive and relationship-oriented leadership styles.

4.2. Power distance

Power distance, another critical cultural dimension, delineates the extent to which societies accept hierarchical differences. In high power distance cultures, leaders are perceived as authoritative figures, and decision-making is centralized. In contrast, low power distance cultures emphasize egalitarianism, with leaders adopting a more consultative and approachable style. Research by House et al. (2014) suggests that leaders in high power distance cultures may exhibit a more directive leadership style, emphasizing clear hierarchies, whereas those in low power distance cultures may adopt a more democratic and inclusive leadership approach, fostering open communication.

4.3. Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance reflects a society's tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. Cultures with high uncertainty avoidance prefer structure and predictability, leading to leaders who emphasize rules and formalized procedures. Conversely, in low uncertainty avoidance cultures, leaders may be more adaptable and open to risk-taking. Gudykunst et al. (2012) argue that leadership styles in high uncertainty avoidance cultures may prioritize transactional leadership, focusing on clear expectations and adherence to established norms, while in low uncertainty avoidance cultures, transformational leadership styles that inspire innovation and risk-taking may be more prevalent.

4.4. Model of leadership across cultures

Understanding how leadership models vary across cultures is crucial for effective cross-cultural management. Different cultural contexts may favor distinct leadership

styles and models, necessitating flexibility and cultural intelligence from leaders in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Cultural dimensions and leadership styles.

Cultural Dimension	Leadership Style in Individualistic Cultures	Leadership Style in Collectivist Cultures
Individualism vs. Collectivism	Charismatic and transformational leadership	Inclusive and relationship-oriented leadership
Power Distance	Directive leadership with clear hierarchies	Democratic and inclusive leadership approach
Uncertainty Avoidance	Transactional leadership emphasizing norms	Transformational leadership inspiring innovation

Source: House et al. (2004); Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997); Adler (2008); Cox (1994).

4.5. Transformational leadership

The transformational leadership model, characterized by charisma, inspiration, and intellectual stimulation, has gained widespread recognition. While transformational leadership is generally effective across cultures, variations exist in its manifestation. In individualistic cultures, transformational leaders may emphasize personal development and individual goals, whereas in collectivist cultures, the focus may shift towards fostering a sense of shared vision and collective achievement (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

4.6. Situational leadership

Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Model underscores the adaptability of leadership styles based on the readiness and competence of followers. Cultural nuances impact followers’ expectations and readiness levels, influencing the effectiveness of situational leadership. For instance, in high power distance cultures, followers may expect more directive leadership, whereas in low power distance cultures, a more participative approach may be appreciated (Hersey et al., 2013).

4.7. Servant leadership

Greenleaf’s concept of servant leadership, emphasizing service to others and community building, resonates with cultures valuing humility and collective welfare. Research by Liden et al. (2015) suggests that servant leadership may be particularly effective in cultures with strong collectivist tendencies, as leaders prioritize the needs of the group over personal aspirations in **Figure 1**.

In conclusion, the intricate interplay between cultural dimensions and leadership styles necessitates a nuanced understanding of effective cross-cultural management. Leaders must recognize and adapt to the cultural context in which they operate, demonstrating flexibility and cultural intelligence. By acknowledging the impact of individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance on leadership styles and understanding the variations in leadership models across cultures, organizations can cultivate a more inclusive and effective leadership approach.

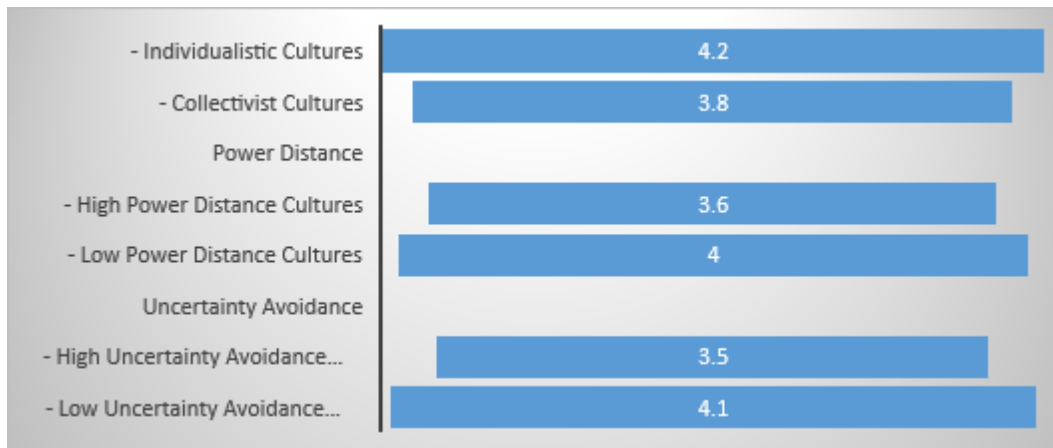


Figure 1. Overview of leadership styles across cultural dimensions Greenleaf (1977).

4.8. Contemporary examples

To illustrate these concepts, contemporary examples of leaders embodying different leadership styles can be included. For example, consider Angela Merkel’s pragmatic and inclusive leadership style in Germany, reflecting low power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. In contrast, consider the transformational leadership of Steve Jobs, who exemplified individualism and innovation in a low uncertainty avoidance culture.

5. Implications for social science management

Understanding the cultural impacts on leadership is paramount for effective management practices within the realm of social science. This section explores the intricate relationship between culture and leadership and delves into the potential benefits and challenges associated with incorporating diverse leadership styles in this context.

Cultural influences significantly shape decision-making processes within social science management. Leaders need to recognize that cultural backgrounds impact individuals’ perceptions of authority, communication styles, and conflict resolution approaches. Gaining insight into these cultural nuances allows managers to make informed decisions that are sensitive to the diverse perspectives present in social science organizations (Hofstede, 2011). By acknowledging the cultural dimensions at play, leaders can navigate complex social dynamics and foster a more inclusive decision-making environment.

Embracing diverse leadership styles fosters a collaborative and innovative work environment in social science management. Leaders who recognize and leverage the strengths of varied leadership approaches can enhance team dynamics. For example, a transformational leader may inspire creativity, while a transactional leader may ensure task completion. Combining these styles can lead to a holistic and adaptive team capable of addressing the multifaceted challenges prevalent in social science (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Despite the potential benefits, integrating diverse leadership styles in social science management comes with its challenges. One significant hurdle is the potential for misunderstandings and miscommunications arising from cultural differences.

Leaders must navigate linguistic and non-verbal communication disparities to maintain effective team collaboration (Gudykunst and Kim, 2017). Additionally, varying expectations regarding hierarchical structures and decision-making authority may lead to conflicts if not managed adeptly.

To capitalize on diverse leadership styles, organizations must invest in leadership development programs tailored to address cultural competencies. Training initiatives should aim to enhance leaders' cultural intelligence, enabling them to adapt their styles to different cultural contexts (Earley and Mosakowski, 2004). This proactive approach ensures that leaders are equipped to navigate the complexities of social science management, fostering an inclusive organizational culture in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Cultural informed decision-making.

Cultural Dimension	Percentage Impact on Decision-Making
a. Individualism	30%
b. Power Distance	25%
c. Uncertainty Avoidance	20%
d. Collectivism	15%
e. Masculinity/Femininity	10%

Source: Hofstede (2011); Bass & Riggio (2006); Gudykunst & Kim (2017); Earley & Mosakowski (2004).



Figure 2. Graphical representation of culturally informed decision-making (Moran et al., 2011).

Cultural diversity in leadership contributes to organizational adaptability and innovation in social science management. Different leadership styles bring unique problem-solving approaches and perspectives to the table. By embracing this diversity, organizations can enhance their capacity to respond to changing social and economic landscapes (Moran et al., 2011). Leaders who encourage a culture of openness and idea-sharing create an environment conducive to innovation in **Figure 2**.

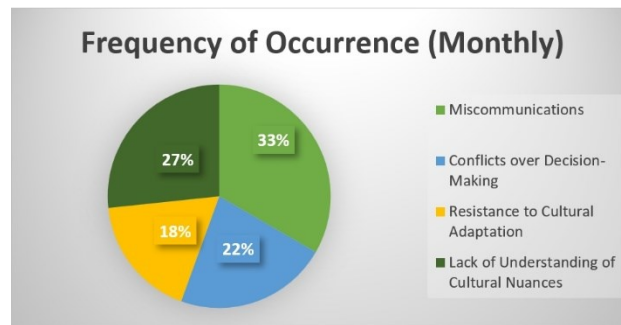


Figure 3. Challenges of cultural diversity in leadership Yukl (2012).

Flexibility in leadership is crucial when managing diverse teams in social science contexts in **Figure 3**. Leaders should be adaptable and willing to modify their approaches based on the evolving needs of the organization and its members. This flexibility extends to accommodating diverse communication styles, conflict resolution methods, and decision-making processes (Yukl, 2012). Leaders who can navigate these variations demonstrate an ability to thrive in the complex landscape of social science management.

6. Recommendations for practice

In navigating culturally diverse environments, organizations must adopt proactive strategies to harness the benefits of diverse leadership styles. Firstly, fostering cultural intelligence among leaders is essential. Training programs should focus on developing leaders' understanding of various cultural dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. By enhancing cultural intelligence, leaders can navigate differences effectively and foster inclusive work environments. Additionally, organizations should establish mentorship programs where leaders can learn from colleagues with diverse cultural backgrounds, promoting cross-cultural collaboration.

Moreover, implementing tailored leadership development programs is crucial. Leaders should undergo continuous training to adapt their leadership styles to different cultural contexts. This includes honing communication skills, understanding non-verbal cues, and adapting decision-making processes. Creating a culturally sensitive leadership development curriculum ensures that leaders are equipped with the necessary skills to lead diverse teams successfully.

To reinforce these efforts, organizations should integrate cultural competence assessments into their performance management systems. This ensures that cultural adaptability becomes an integral part of leadership competencies. Leaders can receive feedback on their ability to navigate cultural differences, and organizations can identify areas for improvement. This aligns with the idea that promoting cultural competence is not a one-time initiative but an ongoing process within the organizational culture.

7. Future research directions

While significant strides have been made in understanding the cultural impacts on leadership styles, there are areas that warrant further exploration. Future research

should delve into the intersectionality of cultural dimensions and how they interact to shape leadership behaviors. Investigating the nuanced relationships between multiple cultural factors can provide a more comprehensive understanding of their collective influence on leadership styles.

Additionally, the impact of digitalization on cross-cultural leadership is an emerging area that requires attention. As organizations increasingly operate in virtual and global settings, studying how digital communication platforms influence leadership practices across cultures is imperative. Exploring the challenges and opportunities presented by technology will contribute valuable insights for contemporary organizational settings.

Furthermore, there is a need to explore the role of national culture versus organizational culture in shaping leadership styles. Research could investigate how organizational cultures mitigate or amplify the effects of national cultural influences on leadership. This understanding is vital for organizations seeking to establish effective leadership practices that align with both national and organizational values.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research underscores the intricate relationship between culture and leadership styles in the realm of social science management. The findings highlight the need for organizations to proactively address cultural dynamics in leadership. As organizations become more diverse and global, recognizing the impact of culture on leadership is not just a strategic advantage but a necessity for sustainable success.

The practical recommendations provided offer actionable steps for organizations to enhance their leaders' cultural competence and promote inclusive leadership practices. By fostering cultural intelligence, implementing tailored leadership development programs, and incorporating cultural competence assessments, organizations can create environments where diverse leadership styles thrive.

Looking ahead, future research should explore the complex interplay of cultural dimensions, the influence of digitalization on cross-cultural leadership, and the balance between national and organizational cultures. By delving into these areas, researchers can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of cultural impacts on leadership styles, providing valuable insights for organizations navigating the complexities of a globalized world.

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