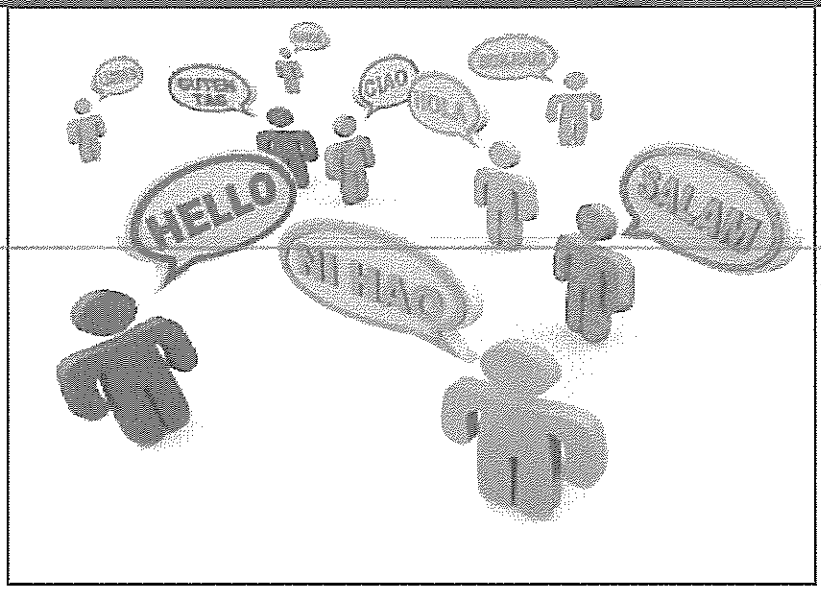
CHAPTER 5

CROSS - CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP



One of the main debates among cross-cultural management scholars is how well the application of management practices may be transferred across cultures (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2007). On one hand, scholars believe the significant changes in technology, communication, transportation, and free-market capitalism has resulted in cultures becoming more alike because of the flat environment in which businesses are conducted today (Levitt, 1995).

Organizational complexity further stems from interdependence among people, organizations, and nations, among various disciplines, and emerging technologies (Twomey, 2006). It was argued that culture was rooted in a deep value system that was unlikely to change; therefore, management practices needed to be tailor-made to fit diverse cultural backgrounds of leaders from diverse cultures (Hofstede, 1995). Other challenges encountered by organizational leaders include lack of authority and control, the need to answer to multiple stakeholders with diverse values, beliefs, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and the lack of funding, staff, and resources (Silverman & Taliento, 2006).

In a study conducted on the universal tendencies found across countries, Terpstra (1978) observed that there are unique cultural differences among different religions, customs, values, beliefs, attitudes, norms, language, education, wealth, social organization, politics, and law. These environmental factors were found to affect leader-follower relations, and these environmental factors dictated the way in which leaders exercised their leadership based on the culture of the environment in which they operate (Bass, 1990). A gesture is a characteristic of nonverbal communication in which visible body actions communicate a particular message. Gestures include movement of the hands, face, or other parts of the body.

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UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT CULTURES

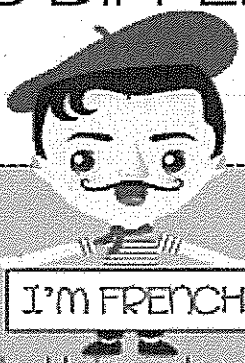
I'M CHINESE

It is impolite to open gifts when received.

Remove your shoes before entering someone's home.

If you are invited to someone's home, you should always bring a gift to the hostess.

When receiving and offering business cards, always do it with both hands and never write on it!



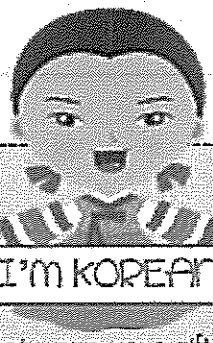
I'M FRENCH

You should always dress well. It is better to be formal than too casual.

Do not give anything with the number 13. It is bad luck to French people!

It is OK to open gifts when received.

Handshake is common way of greeting but friends may greet by kissing on both cheeks.



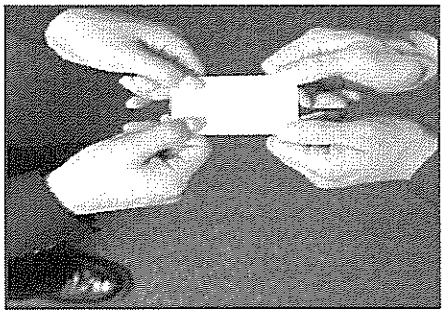
I'M KOREAN

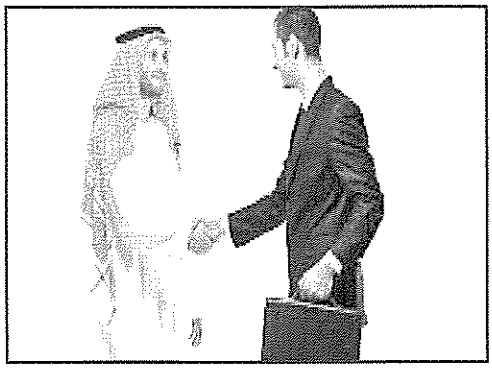
Do not wrap your gifts in green, white, or black colored paper.

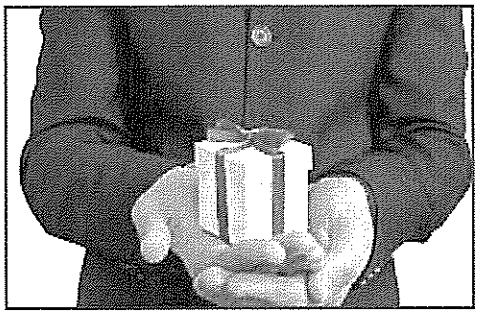
You should never sign or write anything in red ink.

When eating, the eldest or senior person should eat first.

When meeting someone, the person of lower status should bow to the person of higher status first.







LEADERSHIP DILEMMA

1. What organizational environment does the image below represent in your organization?

2. Why do you think the image above best represents leadership in a cross-cultural environment with the leadership style that you selected?

3. What steps have you taken to maintain or improve your cross-cultural leadership style and organizational effectiveness?

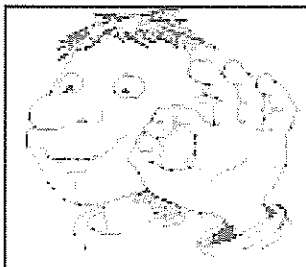
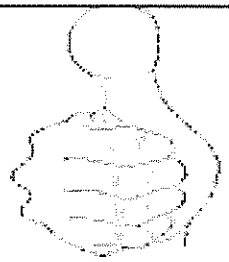
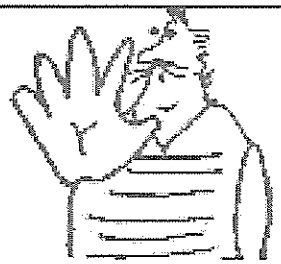
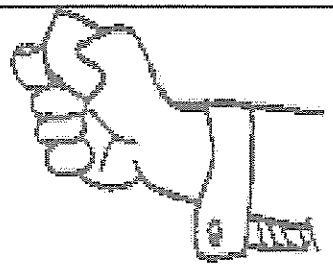
LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS

1. What are some challenges of cross-cultural leadership in your organization?

2. How do you use your leaderhip style in addressing some of these cross-cultural leaership challenges?

3. What cross-cultural leadership experiences do you have in understanding the different cultural values of both your subordinates, and others within your organization?

GROUP ACTIVITY

			
Perfect	Thumbs up	Stop	The 'fig'
Commonly everything's all right perfect France worthless Japan money Germany rude Malta, Greece, Brazil obscene	Commonly all OK Australia, Iran rude Nigeria very offensive Japan five Turkey political rightist party	Commonly stop, enough (person, car, action) Turkey You get nothing from me W Africa You have 5 fathers!	Turkey, Greece, Tunisia, Holland obscene Russia you get nothing from me Yugoslavia you can't have it Brazil good luck

1. What are some of the gestures that you have observed within your organization?

_____

_____

_____

2. What other gestures or expressions have experienced cross-culturally?

_____

_____

_____

3. What steps have you taken to improve or maintain your cross-cultural leadership and decision-making style in understanding different cross-cultural expressions and gestures within your organization?

_____

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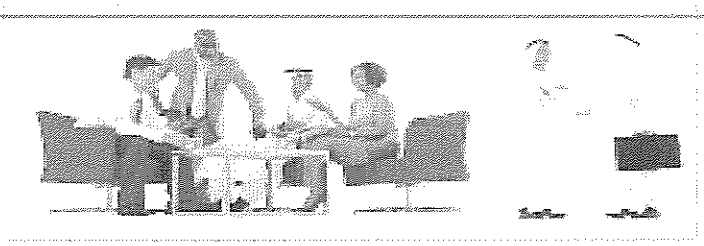
_____

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

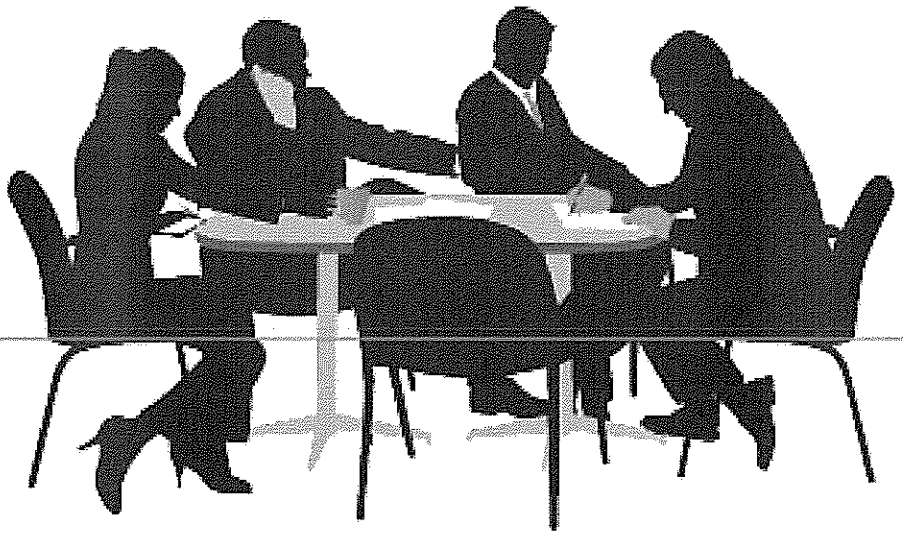
1. What are some environmental factors that can dictate ways leaders exercise their leadership styles based on the culture of the environment?



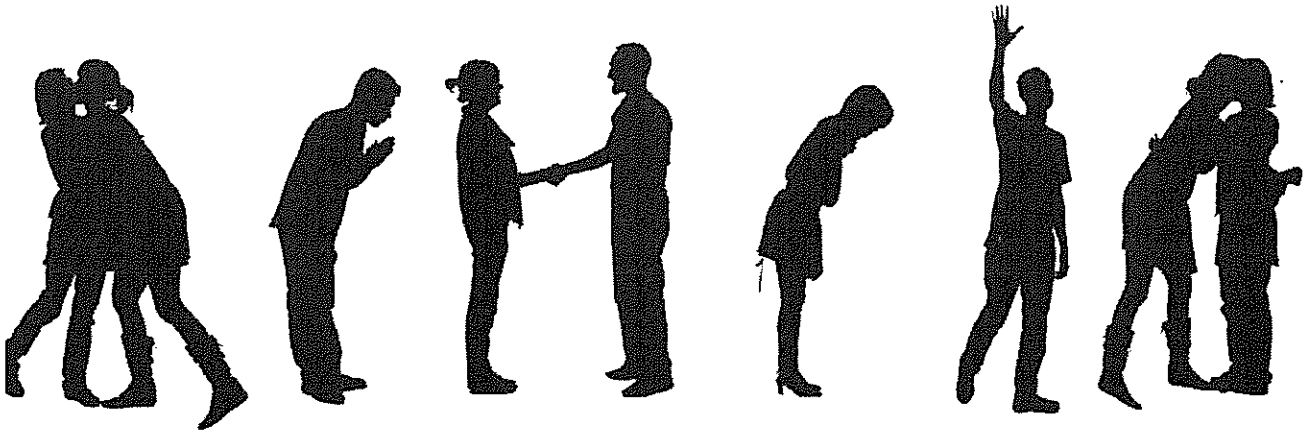
2. Within your organization, what are the challenges organizational leaders face when there is a lack of authority and the need to answer to multiple stakeholders with diverse values, beliefs, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, staff, and resources?

"This really is an innovative approach, but I'm afraid we can't consider it. It's never been done before."

3. How does the image below reflect your own leadership style with subordinates or peers in your organization?

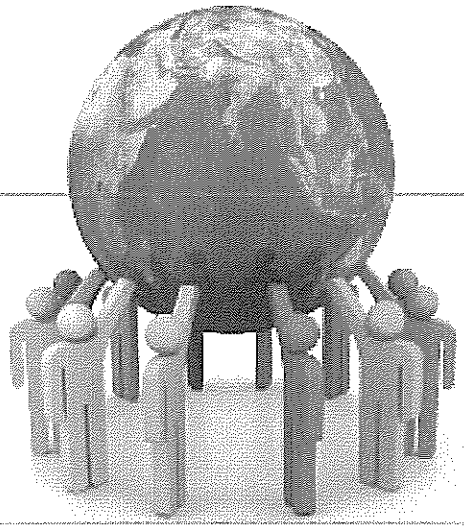


4. What steps have you taken to improve your understanding of gender and cross-cultural gestures and body language by your subordinates and peers, if any exist within your organization?



CHAPTER SUMMARY

"You cannot be a leader, and ask other people to follow you,
unless you know how to follow, too."
--Sam Rayburn



KEYWORDS

- CULTURE
- GESTURES
- BODY LANGUAGE
- NORMS
- BELIEFS
- LEADERSHIP
- CROSS CULTURAL
- CULTURAL VALUES
- CROSS CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

Organizational complexity further stems from interdependence among people, organizations, and nations, among various disciplines, and emerging technologies It was argued that culture was rooted in a deep value system that was unlikely to change; therefore, management practices needed to be tailor-made to fit diverse cultural backgrounds of leaders from diverse cultures.

Other challenges encountered by organizational leaders include lack of authority and control, the need to answer to multiple stakeholders with diverse values, beliefs, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and the lack of funding, staff, and resources.

NOTES