Leadership Styles between Cambodian and Chinese Managers
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Abstract:
Cambodia has failed into a so-called terrible domestic war from 1975 to 1979 when many educated people miserably died. Since then, it has been struggling to survive little by little through the donation of foreign countries. Because lots of human resources were destroyed, the country seems to be lacking of proper leadership. On the contrary, China, the most populous country in the world, has recently become the second world biggest economy due to having enough human resource, good leadership styles and well-structured management. It has been always important to find out the differences and similarities of the two countries, Cambodia and China, in terms of leadership styles and management concepts so that some practical experiences that Cambodia used to run into have to be implemented or altered for the sake of developing Cambodia into a so-called developed country in a short future.

Keywords: Leadership; Management, Leadership Styles;

1. Introduction
Management is considered an indispensable factor for making companies grow and prosper. With a proper management, a company is most likely to be prosperous and able to achieve a satisfactorily target. Management is always concerned with leadership which has been playing very important roles in every place around the world. Basically, the two terms overlap. When managers are involved in influencing a group to meet its goals, they are involved in leadership. When leaders are involved in planning, organizing, staffing, and controlling, they are involved in management. Both processes involve influencing a group of individuals toward goal attainment.” Effective leadership helps our nation through times of peril. It makes a business organization successful. It enables a not-for-profit organization to fulfill its mission. The absence of leadership is equally dramatic in its effects.

Without leadership, organizations move too slowly, stagnate, and lose their way. Much of the literature about organizations stresses decision-making and implies that if decision-making is timely, complete, and correct, then things will go well. Yet a decision by itself changes nothing. After a decision is made, an organization faces the problem of implementation—how to get things done in a timely and effective way.

There are various kinds of leadership style which have been so far practiced by managers around the world such as democracy, autocracy, lasses-fair, transformation, participation, so on and so forth. Each has being used and applied in different context based on the real situation and particular environment. We cannot really judge which one is better, yet we can possible say, according to the research and observation, democracy is appreciated by most of employees.

2. Leadership Styles
Achieving of set tasks, the development of a group of people, the meeting of the needs of individuals are what the leaders supposed to do. Exactly how a Leader goes about these responsibilities is often called the leadership style. There is not one standard, correct style for all leaders in all circumstances at all times. Any group or individual behave differently. Tasks are different. Each leader has to recognized those differences and adapt according to the situation (The Scout Association, 1999).
From the late 1940s, the study of leadership has developed significantly towards the understanding of leadership styles (Bryman, 1992). Furthermore, Adeyemi-Bello (2001) believes that leadership style is a variable that has received significant attention in the literature of leadership.

Leadership style represents an important aspect of leadership (Nik Maheran, Filzah, SitiNorezam, &Rosli, 2009). Like the definition of leadership, the problem of defining leadership styles has overwhelmed the literature. Leadership style may be defined as 38 patterns of emphases, indexed by the frequency or intensity of specific leadership behaviors or attitudes which a leader places on the different leadership functions (Andersen, 2008; Casimir, 2001). Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001), on the other hand, defined leadership style as a “relatively stable pattern of behavior exhibited by leaders”. Coleman (2005) defines leadership styles in terms of influence: who is exerting it, what it is exerted for and what are its outcomes. Northouse (2004) and Luneburg and Ornstein (1996) share similar views in which they believe leadership styles is roughly equivalent to the manner in which the leader influences subordinates. Hollander (1978) believes that leadership style refers to the characteristics which are most typical across situations.

Equally important, Leadership style is the pattern of behaviors engaged in by the leader when dealing with employees. Lewin, Lippit and White (1939) identified three leadership styles which are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. Autocratic leadership style involves the leader making all the decisions, assigning tasks to members of the group while the democratic leadership style involves the use of consultative approach, encourages group participation in decision making. More, the laissez-faire leadership style involves non-interference policy, allows complete freedom to all workers and has no particular way of attaining goals. However, there is no one best style of leadership. The effectiveness of a particular style is dependent on the organizational situation (Omolayo, 2004).

2.1. Cambodian Leadership Styles

2.1.1. The Country’s Overview

Cambodia, located in South East Asia, has been known as golden land and famous for its most prestigious heritage called Angkor Wat. It has 181,035 km squares of land with 14,241,640 population (July 2008 est.) It had been under the colonization of French for ninety years starting from 1863 and completely got independence in 1953. Then it failed into a so-called dark era, Khmer Rouge Regime, led by Pol Pot in 1975 which approximately three millions Cambodian people were cruelly killed. The country economy had been stayed still and no any foreign investments dared to invest there. Then in 1979, the regime was destroyed so that people gained peace and started thinking of doing business.

![Figure 1- Cambodia’s Location and Profile](Image)

- **Full name:** Kingdom of Cambodia
- **Population:** 16,287,740 (UN, 2018)
- **Capital and largest city:** Phnom Penh
- **Area:** 181,035 sq km (69,898 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Khmer
- **Major religion:** Buddhism
- **Life expectancy:** 61 years (men), 65 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 riel = 100 sen
- **Main exports:** Clothing, timber, rubber
- **GNI per capita:** US $1,230 (World Bank, 2017)
- **Internet domain:** .kh
- **International dialing code:** +855
2.1.2. Cambodian Managers

Nowadays, there are many investments in Cambodia available both locally and internationally due to the economic strength and country political stability. Based on the long history and strict culture, the power distance between leaders and employees is considered large since most leaders prefer to be highly respected. Many Cambodian want to be leader so that they can have power and get worship. Vuthei (2011) stressed that the goal of Khmer leaders is not to lead, but to strictly dominate. Once they become leaders, they dare to fight for their position and even find techniques or strategies to kick out their competitors in case there is anyone wants to be a leader. This had been so far practiced and remained unchanged until the number of foreign investors has been increased due to globalization [1].

In the 70s, Southeast Asian refugees fled to Western safe havens where they learned to mix and Asian work ethic with a Western capitalist spirit, tiger leadership emerged [2]. A tiger leadership style, which combines the brashness of a Western entrepreneurial style with a tireless Asian work ethic, has been commonly practiced by Cambodian leaders. A young Cambodian entrepreneur, Kith Meng, is an example of the tiger leadership style. He is a Chairman of the Royal Group of Cambodia which owns among other things the country's largest cellular service, most well-known hotels, the second largest full service bank, and the country's #1 TV station [3]. Minter (2007) mentioned that Kith likes to work long hours and never thinks of having holiday [4]. More he is aggressive and has also been described as brash, ambitious and sometimes ruthless (Gluckman, 2008).

2.2. Chinese Leadership Styles

2.2.1. The Country's Overview

China, formally called People’s Republic of China (PRC), is the biggest country in Asia and the third largest in the world, being surpassed only by Russia and Canada [5]. It is located at the eastern part of Asian Continent and on the western shore of the Pacific Ocean with a land territory of 9,600,000 square kilometers [6].

![Figure 2- China’s Location and Profile](image)

| Full name: | People's Republic of China |
| Capital: | Beijing |
| Largest city: | Shanghai |
| Area: | 9.6 million sq km (3.7 million sq miles) |
| Major language: | Mandarin Chinese |
| Major religions: | Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism |
| Life expectancy: | 72 years (men), 76 years (women) (UN) |
| Monetary unit: | 1 Renminbi (yuan) (Y) = 10 jiao = 100 fen; |
| Main exports: | Manufactured goods, including textiles, garments, electronics, arms |
| Internet domain: | .cn |
| International dialing code: | +86 |
### 2.2.2. Chinese Managers

After more than a quarter century of reform and opening to the outside world, by 2005 China’s economy had become the second largest in the world after the United States when measured on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis [7]. The rapid economic growth has significantly improved Chinese living standard and helped raise hundreds of millions of people out of poverty [8]. China has undertaken a series of economic reforms since the late 1970s. As a result, there has been a move from central control towards more independent decision making by managers. Enterprise development has been a major driver of economic growth, coupled with the associated FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) and technology transfer. Many Western companies have established international joint ventures (IJVs) and wholly owned subsidiaries in China. This has seen a steady change so that SMEs and individual entrepreneurs have become more important so as to compete globally [9].

Leadership behavior varies with cultural influences (House & Aditya, 1997) [10]. By gazing at China which so far various kinds of leadership styles are practiced, we may find out that Confucian philosophy has played a major role in unifying China and has become a force in molding the attitude and personality of the Chinese people (Busch. R & May. C & McMahon. R & Unger. A & Wang. Y, 2011). Confucius (Kongzi, 551-479 BC) intended to guide people to act in the right way and his opinion is based on absolute respect for tradition, on a strict hierarchy of primary relationships between family-members, and then again between the people and their rulers [11]. Guanxi, for example, has been deep-rooted in China since Confucius codified the societal rules over 2000 years ago [12].

Participative leadership style is also apparently practiced in China. The leaders strongly focus on the integrity of the team members with the company, locally and globally and also encourage subordinates to take part in making decisions so that they feel they are a part of the company. One managing director of a professional leading company stressed that employees need to be aware of their duties and help each other in terms of solving problem and making decision. Every week, they get together to review the performance of each team so everyone can see and everyone tries to help across teams.

Equally important, leading by examples also exists in Chinese society. The leaders don’t have to train or tell much what has to be done or what should not be done. The employees are supposed to work as well as perform their tasks by observing their leaders. According to Leaf Zhang (2011), VP operation of ResourcePro, had mentioned that “In a Chinese Company, the managers don’t really provide background or train their people, they just give instructions and don’t provide details.” It is a good way because it enables the staff to be more creative and hard working. The leader needs to be passionate, share that passion, led by example and show how things are done because actions speak louder than words (David He, 2011).

### 3. Conclusion

Through research and observation, we might say that the leadership styles practiced by Cambodian managers are not adequate enough responding to the era of globalization. Managers, for instance, mostly use their power to control and dominate employees. As a result, an organization cannot grow well and hard to prosper. The big challenge that many companies are facing is to retain their good employees which considered the indispensable resource to make the company stably successful. The employees tend to change their workplace due to some factors; one of which is because of particular leadership styles the managers used. The gap between the mangers and subordinates is still relatively big while it has been said to be out-of-date leadership practices. Remarkably, Chinese managers are becoming more globalized from time to time since the opening and reforming policies have been set up and put into practiced. They are using their traditional ways, for instance, of leading combined with European styles so that their subordinates are satisfied and willing to contribute as much as they can for the company development.
References


