Predictors of Leadership Effectiveness for Indian Managers

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Abstract

The predictors of leadership effectiveness for Indian managers were identified using the Integrated Competing Values Framework (ICVF). The relative effects of gender and rater differences were also investigated. One hundred and eleven middle managers participated in a 360° feedback program that sought responses from their bosses, peers and staff. Repeated measures ANOVAs identified significant differences in the extent to which each of the leadership roles were displayed. The managers were focused most on getting the job done and developing their staff. There were no gender or rater differences. The results of multiple regression analysis found that the Integrator, a learning role, was the strongest predictor of effectiveness.

Key words: international management; leadership and governance

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the leadership behaviours of Indian managers and to determine whether there were any gender differences. As the managers received feedback from their significant others (boss, peers and staff) the present study was also interested in determining the existence of rater differences. Previously there has been no such research undertaken in India using the ICVF, a well-accepted leadership model in Western cultures. This leadership framework has the capacity to explain why some managers are more effective than others. Such a study will allow comparisons to be made between Indian and Western managers’ leadership behaviour.

The Indian economy has now put Indian managers in a transition mode. They are in the process of re-inventing themselves in the changed work environment of post-liberalisation since 1992. In particular, Indian managers are re-inventing their work profile and their strategic position. Young managers are either at the entry point or at the second level and are receiving different training to their predecessors. It is important to map these transitions and to understand how the ‘new’ Indian manager is reconstructing their role and responsibilities. India now presents a critical site for evaluating the efficacy of any established leadership models like the ICVF because it has one of the fastest growing economies. It is also experimenting with international practises and standards used by the developed countries including Australia for it various businesses.

1 We would like to acknowledge the outstanding editorial work that Judith Saebel has completed on this paper.
Traditionally, Indian managers preferred to be, and needed to be, authoritarian because Indian subordinates expected this behaviour from their superiors and considered authoritarian managers as icons of effectiveness (Kunnanatt 2007). However, today there is a rising class of highly educated knowledge workers who possess a high level of technological skill sets and enjoy a good standard of living (Kunnanatt 2007).

As new managerial ideologies have evolved the older managers have not disappeared; instead images and practices central to each have gradually been institutionalised (Barley & Kunda 1992; Singh 2005). This makes India an interesting case to study the leadership roles of managers because of the innovative leadership approaches brought with direct foreign investment and multinational corporations which challenge established leadership models in India. This study will contribute both in academic and practical contexts. In the academic context, it adds to the work done by various researchers into leadership roles of managers and their effectiveness. In the practical context, an understanding of the existing management approaches would be valuable information for business representatives from other cultural contexts when working with their Indian counterparts. The findings will contribute towards designing management and leadership development programs.

THE INTEGRATED COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK (ICVF)

In the 1980s Robert Quinn and his associates developed the Competing Values Framework (CVF) to explain the various managerial roles required for leadership effectiveness in complex organisational environments (Quinn 1988; Quinn & McGrath 1982; Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1983). Since Quinn’s initial work, the model has been applied in a number of settings and further modified by management leadership researchers. The most important modification was made by Vilkinas and Cartan (2001) who added an additional role, the Integrator, to CVF, and labelled this modified framework the Integrated Competing Values Framework (ICVF). The validity of the modified framework has been empirically proven through its wide application in explaining not only the behaviour of Australian managers and executives but also that of academic program directors and supervisors of doctoral students in universities (Vilkinas, Leask &
Rogers 2007; Vilkinas 2008). Of particular interest in this paper is the application of ICVF to the Indian context.

At the heart of the ICVF is the observation that there are two key dimensions to effective management—a people-task dimension and an external-internal focus dimension (Vilkinas & Cartan 2006b). These two dimensions create a four-quadrant model indicating five operational roles for managers, which are dubbed Innovator, Broker, Deliverer, Monitor and Developer (see Figure 1).

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

According to Vilkinas and Cartan (2001, 2006a, 2006b) the five operational roles of managers are inherently paradoxical in nature which often leads to tensions and potential conflict for the individual. That is, managers need to deliver a range of activities that are inherently contradictory: caring for the individual and dealing with their personal issues (Developer role) whilst at the same time demanding that the individual completes their job (Deliverer role). The role of the manager is undoubtedly complex. As Robertson (2005) argued, individuals need to be able to integrate these paradoxical behaviours so that they are not disabled by the roles’ conflicting demands.

Vilkinas and Cartan (2001) saw the need for an integrating role which they titled the Integrator (see Figure 1). This role has previously been described as the behavioural control room for the other five operational roles (Vilkinas & Cartan 2001). The Integrator facilitates the integration of information for managers. That is, they are able to assess which role is most appropriate to use in a particular situation by reflecting on past experiences and learning from these. These reflections are integrated with the current requirements. The Integrator is the linchpin that allows managers to move easily between the five operational roles (Vilkinas & Cartan 2001).

This integrating role has two parts: critical observer and reflective learner. The purpose of the former is to decipher which of the operational roles is required at any particular time in response to any environmental stimuli. In this way it assists in the appropriate execution of the chosen role. It ensures a ‘fit’ between context and behaviour (Vilkinas & Cartan 2001).

The purpose of the second part, the ‘reflective learner’, is to reflect on past and current usage of the operational roles and to learn from those experiences. Rogers reported that the most common
definition of reflection was one that allowed individuals to ‘integrate the understanding gained into one's experience in order to enable better choices or action in the future as well as enhance one's overall effectiveness’ (2001: 41). Booth and Anderberg (2005) argued that reflection underpins an individual's development. Here the manager would demonstrate a heightened and accurate self-awareness. This introspection and self-awareness provides a manager with opportunities to learn from their previous experiences and to inform future behaviours. They need to be able to critically assess their own performance, reflect on their assessment and learn from it (Ash & Clayton 2004), thus constantly improving their leadership capabilities.

Previous results support Integrator being a pivotal role for managers (Vilkinas & Cartan 2001). In the Vilkinas and Cartan study those managers with a stronger Integrator displayed each of the ICVF’s roles more and were more effective than those with a weaker Integrator. This role was also found to be a strong predictor of the Effectiveness.

Leadership research in India has mostly followed the models used by Western researchers which is task versus relationship dichotomy (Kunnanatt 2007). The findings have been intriguing. Early research clearly identified authoritarian leadership as the predominant style of management in India (Bass & Berger 1979; Kumar & Singh 1976). This is attributed to the wider societal culture high power distance between superiors and subordinates who prefer authoritarian and hierarchical organisational structures and are receptive to close supervision (Gopalan & Rivera 1997; Pugh et al. 1993; Sabharwal 1995). In such a cultural environment, a democratically styled leadership approach by managers could be viewed as a sign of manager’s ineptness. So Indian managers preferred centralised decision-making, practised tight control and did not like to delegate authority (Budhwar & Boyne 2004; Sparrow & Budhwar 1997).

On the other hand, there is emerging literature that suggests a paradigm shift towards a more democratic style of management leadership (Jagadeesh 1999; Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly & Marks 2000; Pearson & Chatterjee 1999). These researchers suggested that a successful Indian manager today is one who is highly task-oriented but also a nurturer, being affectionate and considerate to the needs of subordinates. Therefore, the effective manager will be both high task and high relationship oriented. In ICVF terms, they will be able to display both the Developer and Deliverer roles.
Gender

Previously, Vilkinas (2000) in her study of 509 managers (127 females) reported that when the gender of the managers and that of their significant others (staff, peers and boss) was taken into account there was no significant difference reported in the extent to which the operational roles were displayed nor the effectiveness level of male and female managers. The results of this study indicated that the gender of the manager did not impact on how they were perceived by their significant others. Rather, it was their effectiveness as managers that determined these perceptions. To date no such studies have been undertaken in India.

Rater Difference

Previous research has shown that managers and their significant others hold differing perceptions of the managers’ leadership behaviours. Vilkinas, Cartan and Sealey (2008) reported that while managers and their significant others held conceptual equivalence (Diefendorff, Silverman & Greguras 2005), they did not have psychometric equivalence. When their perceptions were compared, the managers and their significant others held the same views on the managers’ leadership behaviours for Deliverer and Innovator but they differed in their perceptions for the Developer with the managers stating that they did more for this role than their significant others noted. The reverse was true for the Broker. No such similar studies have been undertaken in India.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the current study was to determine if Indian managers lead in a similar way to Western ones. In particular, the current study investigated:

- which leadership roles Indian managers displayed most
- the predictors of leadership effectiveness, and
- if there were
  - gender differences, and
  - rater differences.
These results were compared to those found for Western managers (Vilkinas 2000; Vilkinas & Cartan 2001, 2006b).

**METHOD**

**Participants**
For the present study a list of service sector units in the twin cities of Chandigarh and Mohali was prepared and units employing more than 500 personnel were shortlisted. A consent survey was first carried out and the units that agreed to participate in the study were approached for data collection. Data were collected based on a 360° feedback process commonly used in organisations (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998; Dalton, 1998; Hooijberg & Choi, 2000).

One hundred and eleven managers participated in the study. Of these, 73 (65.8%) were male with an average age of 32.6 years. They worked across a range of industries: finance, textile, food processing, information technology, pharmaceutical and retail. The majority (90.1%) held tertiary qualifications.

Each manager (n = 111) completed a questionnaire and also selected a set of their staff (n = 120), peers (n = 125) and bosses (n = 13), referred to as their significant others, to respond to a questionnaire. Each respondent had frequent contact with and overall knowledge of the participant manager.

Participating managers were given a package containing the questionnaires that were to be distributed to their boss, five of their peers and five of their staff. On receiving the package, the boss, peers and staff were asked to complete the questionnaire and to return it in a reply paid envelope to the researcher.

**Questionnaire**
The questionnaire measured the five operational roles using the scales developed by Vilkinas and Cartan (2001, 2006b). The scales are based on Denison, Hooijberg and Quinn’s (1995) original work (see Appendix A). Vilkinas and Cartan who used these scales in a study with 100 Australian managers
(Vilkinas & Cartan 2001) reported that the measures for each of the five roles are separate. The questionnaire was translated into Hindi and translated back into English as an accuracy check.

For each of the five operational roles, mean scores were used. The scores for items were summed and divided by the number of items to give the mean score for that role. Responses from manager and boss scores for each role were processed in this way. Responses from all the staff of a particular manager were aggregated to produce a single mean score for the items associated with each role for a single manager. The five means of these staff responses made up the measures for each manager’s staff score. A similar process was used for the peer responses. Thus each manager had a mean score on each of the five operational roles for their self, their boss, staff and peers.

A similar measure for the Integrator role was developed by Vilkinas and Cartan (2001). The Integrator scale offered six items for the respondents to consider (see Appendix A). For the Integrator role, responses to the six items were averaged to calculate the mean score for that role.

The questionnaire measured effectiveness using the scale developed by Denison et al. (1995; see Appendix B). Vilkinas and Cartan (2001) employed this scale in their study of 100 Australian managers. The five items were considered to be of equal value in the previous research. To allow comparisons to be made across cultures the same assumption was made in the current research. For the effectiveness measure (see Appendix B), responses from the managers were summed for the five items and divided by five to produce a mean score. The same process was used for the bosses’ responses. For the staff responses, the scores from all staff were aggregated for each item to produce a single score. The average for each of the five items was calculated, summed to give a score for the five items and then divided by five to produce a mean score for effectiveness from staff. A similar process was used for peer responses.

The means, standard deviations and Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for each scale are shown in Table 1. These descriptive statistics illustrate that the alpha coefficients for each of the roles are quite acceptable other than for the Monitor which had a very low alpha coefficient of .35 (Streiner 2003). The items measuring the Monitor remained in the study for comparison purposes but the authors are aware of the need to develop more reliable items in future research.
Data Analyses

A repeated measures ANOVA was performed on the data to determine if the within-subject factor Role or the between-subject factor Gender had any significant main or interaction effects. A repeated measures ANOVA was also performed to determine if there were any rater differences. A standard multiple regression was performed on the roles to determine predictors of effectiveness. This was followed by a stepwise forward regression analysis.

[Insert table 1 about here]

Results

The repeated measures ANOVA found only one significant result, namely, the Role main effect ($F(5, 1820) = 3.89, p < .002$). There was no significant effect for gender, rater (boss, peer, staff and self), or any interaction. Given that the univariate assumptions were not met, a multivariate test was also performed, Wilks’ Lambda for Role = 0.94 ($F(5, 360) = 4.89, p < .001$). Tukey HSD post-hoc tests yielded the following results (see Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

There were some significant differences between the operational roles. The Deliverer was displayed significantly more than the Innovator, Broker and Monitor, and the Developer significantly more than the Monitor. There were no other significant differences. The Integrator had a mean score of 5.42 which indicates that the managers did use this role frequently but that it was reasonably well developed.

A standard multiple regression performed on roles displayed showed that four of the roles, Innovator, Monitor, Integrator and Developer, predicted Effectiveness. A subsequent stepwise forward regression showed that Integrator was the strongest predictor ($F(1, 364) = 67.28, p < .001$) accounting for 15.6% of the variance in the Effectiveness. The Deliverer explained an additional 5.1%, the Monitor 1.8% and the Innovator 0.9% of variance in Effectiveness. The Developer and Broker did not explain any of the variance in the Effectiveness.
DISCUSSION

The managers in the current study mainly used the Deliverer and the Developer to influence their staff. The Broker and the Innovator were used next, with the Monitor used least. Styles of leadership in Indian service sectors are still in formative stages. Such findings support the work of earlier research that suggests a paradigm shift towards a more democratic style of leadership (Jagadeesh 1999; Mumford et al. 2000; Pearson & Chatterjee 1999). These researchers suggested that a successful Indian manager today is one who is highly task-oriented (Deliverer) but is also a nurturer, being affectionate and considerate to the needs of subordinates (Developer). Therefore the effective manager is both high task and high relationship oriented. Indian organisational structures do not provide enough opportunities for innovation (Innovator). Targets and deadlines are prerogatives with these Indian managers (Deliverer). This restricts the capacity of Indian these managers in the study for building initiatives. These managers also perceived themselves as team leaders (Developer). They start by building teams, sharing emotional and individual concerns of peers and subordinates, consistent with collectivist values (Kunnanatt 2007). It is this personal touch that becomes the major motivating agent. These results are similar to those found for Australian managers, where the Deliverer and Developer are displayed most with the Monitor displayed least (Vilkinas & Cartan 2006a).

The current results suggest that Indian managers can move between most of the operational roles, thus displaying some behavioural complexity. Earlier research has shown that managers who display such behavioural complexity are effective in their leadership roles (Denison et al. 1995; Hooijberg, Bullis & Hunt 2004). The managers and their significant others indicated that they were moderately effective with an average score of 3.63 on a 5-point scale, similar to the effectiveness levels of Australian managers [mean = 3.81] (Vilkinas & Cartan 2001). To improve their level of effectiveness the Indian managers would need to be able to display all roles equally and frequently. That is, they would need to display behavioural complexity. That is the managers need to be able to integrate these paradoxical behaviours, so they are not disabled by the roles’ conflicting demands (Robertson (2005).

The Integrator emerged as the strongest predictor of Effectiveness. That is, managers who were able to critically observe their own behaviour, to reflect on those observations and learn from them
were more likely to be effective, as was the case with Australian managers (Vilkinas & Cartan 2001). The Integrator of the managers in the present study could be developed as it is 5.47 on a 7-point scale meaning that with training their critical observation and reflection skills could be enhanced. Using their Integrator more is likely to result in improved effectiveness. Little of the variance in the Effectiveness was accounted for by the operational roles. The role displayed most, the Deliverer, only accounted for an extra 5.1% of the variance in the Effectiveness and the Developer did not explain any. Thus, the two roles that were displayed most had very little impact on the Effectiveness of this sample of Indian managers.

There were no significant differences in the leadership styles displayed by male and female managers as there were no significant main effect for gender in the repeated measures ANOVA. These results support the earlier work of Vilkinas (2000) among Australian managers. Vilkinas reported that it was the level of effectiveness and not gender that influenced the perceptions of Australian managers by their significant others.

There were no significant differences in the perceptions of leadership behaviour for the managers and their significant others as there were no significant main effect for position in the repeated measures ANOVA. These similarities in perception are consistent with Australian managers for the Innovator and Developer roles where Australian managers held similar perceptions to their significant others. These results are different to those reported for Australian managers for the Deliverer and Broker roles. Australian managers said they did significantly more of the Deliverer role than did their significant others while for the Broker, the Australian managers said they did significantly less than what their significant others observed. Further research is needed to understand why the Indian managers hold similar perceptions to their significant others for all roles especially as Indian organisations are highly bureaucratic with a high power distance culture. It is unlikely that the similarity in perception is an artefact of the measuring instrument given that differing perceptions are reported for the Australian culture.
**Future Research**

Comparisons need to be made across cultures to determine if there is a conceptual equivalence for the managers and significant others perceptions of the managers' leadership behaviour. That is, do Indian managers use the same conceptual framework when perceiving the roles as do managers from other cultures? To explain the lack of disparity between self and others’ perceptions, the expectations of the groups needs to be assessed to see if there are any differences. Indian managers are under tremendous pressure and in a phase of transition. It is important to note that the organizations in the current study had two sets of employees, i.e., those who have been with the organization for more than 30 years, and those who had joined recently. Any future study must take into account the number of years spent in an organization and the level at which entry to the organization as qualifications may be given precedence over experience.

**Implications**

The results of the current research can be used for the selection and development of Indian managers. In particular, assessment of the Integrator can be used as an indicator of leadership effectiveness. If the level of the Integrator were assessed to be low than managers could be assisted to develop their critical observation skills, their ability to reflect and to learn from these reflections. The managers may also need assistance to develop some of their operational skills so that they are able to deliver them more often and appropriately.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Indian managers, like their Australian counterparts, are most focussed on getting the job done and on developing their staff, and least focussed on Monitoring their performance. Both groups are moderately effective and the Integrator was identified as a predictor of their effectiveness. The two groups did differ when the managers’ perceptions were compared to those of their significant others. For Indian managers there were no differences in perception whereas some do exist for Australian managers.
APPENDIX A

Questionnaire Items by Role*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Innovator Role (.78)</td>
<td>Comes up with inventive ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiments with new concepts and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Broker Role (.80)</td>
<td>Exerts upward influence in the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influences decisions made at high levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Deliverer Role (.87)</td>
<td>Gets the unit to meet expected goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sees the unit delivers on stated goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarifies the unit’s priorities and directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anticipates workflow problems, avoids crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Monitor Role (.66)</td>
<td>Maintains tight logistical control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compares records, reports, and so on, to detect discrepancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Developer Role (.84)</td>
<td>Encourages participative decision-making in the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treats each individual in a sensitive, caring way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shows empathy and concern in dealing with subordinates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: These items were originally developed by Denison et al. 1995. Alpha coefficient is shown in the parentheses, Vilkinas and Cartan (2006a).

The Integrator Role (.91)

Learn after reflecting on your past behaviours as a manager?
Change your behaviour after reflection?
Respond to others in an appropriate manner?
Accurately read the signals in your environment?
Use a range of responses to different situations?
Focus on the most important signals in your environment?

Note: Alpha coefficient is shown in the parentheses, Vilkinas and Cartan (2001).
APPENDIX B

Effectiveness Items

In this section, we would like to know your overall assessment of yourself / the person as a manager.

In answering the following questions, please circle the appropriate number.

1. **Meeting of managerial performance standards.**
   - Below most standards 1 2 3 4 5 Above most standards

2. **Comparison to person's managerial peers.**
   - Worse manager than peers 1 2 3 4 5 Better manager than peers

3. **Performance as a role model.**
   - Poor role model 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent role model

4. **Overall managerial success.**
   - A managerial failure 1 2 3 4 5 A managerial success

5. **Overall effectiveness as a manager.**
   - Ineffective manager 1 2 3 4 5 Effective manager

Note: These items were originally developed by Denison et al. (1995).
REFERENCES


FIGURE 1: INTEGRATED COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK (Vilkinas & Cartan, 2001, 2006a, 2006b)
### TABLE 1: MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND RELIABILITIES FOR ROLES DISPLAYED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role displayed</th>
<th>Self Mean</th>
<th>(Standard Deviation)</th>
<th>Boss Mean</th>
<th>Peer Mean</th>
<th>Staff Mean</th>
<th>Total Mean</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovator</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>(0.96)</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>(1.16)</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broker</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>(1.00)</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>(1.08)</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>(0.90)</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>(1.70)</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>(0.80)</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>(1.23)</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliverer</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>(0.76)</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>(1.21)</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrator</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>(0.73)</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>(1.13)</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>(0.70)</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>(0.94)</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2: RESULTS OF POST-HOC TESTS (TUKEY HSD) FOR ROLES DISPLAYED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell no</th>
<th>Role displayed</th>
<th>Approximate probabilities for post-hoc tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Means</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Innovator</td>
<td>.997 .984 .001 .104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Broker</td>
<td>.997 .852 .008 .295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>.984 .852 .000 .015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Deliverer</td>
<td>.001 .008 .000 .752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Developer</td>
<td>.104 .295 .015 .752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Error: Within MS = 0.573, df = 1820.