

The Effect of Globalization on Leadership, Education, Workforce Development, and the Twenty-First Century American Community College

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Abstract

A literature review was drafted on the importance of leadership on globalization and the globalization of education and workforce development. Several prominent leadership styles of Western culture were identified and summarized. Implications of leadership and leadership styles to the globalization of education were considered and expanded upon via examples related to the American community college.

Keywords: leadership, leadership styles, education, globalization

Community colleges are facing a leadership crisis (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013). By the end of the decade approximately 42% of current community college presidents nationwide will be retired (Aspen Institute, 2013). The development of global leadership and global competence are of the utmost importance to future college leaders (Holt & Seki, 2012). Globalization is putting a spotlight on the need for an educated and self-actualized workforce for an increasing globally competitive economic climate; the need for higher education is more important now than ever before (Levin, 2002). But, due to globalization, local businesses are moving out of their regions; yet, community colleges remain grounded in their communities (Shaffer & Wright, 2010). Emerging college presidents and senior administrators must be global leaders, as external partnerships with both local and global organizations are imperative to the missions and success of community colleges.

Leadership affects organizational culture and behavior via the hybridization of culture and globalization. Conversely, culture and globalization affect leadership (Wiggan & Hutchison, 2009). According to Wiggan and Hutchison (2009), globalization has resulted in the assimilation of other cultures into Western culture; consequently, Western culture has emerged as the dominant culture, laying the foundation and standards for global competencies of education. Internationally, business and academia have adopted the leadership styles of Western culture (Wiggan & Hutchinson, 2009).

With multiple missions, multiple modes of both informal and formal structures of power, constantly changing environmental demands and constraints, competition for resources, and the importance of successful interpersonal skills, college leaders must recognize the significance of various leadership styles, as well as the relationship between leadership and globalization. Stogdill (1974) wrote, "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (as cited in Yukl, 2002). Yukl (2002) developed a working definition of leadership as:

Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives. (p. 7)

Moving forward, the authors will discuss the implications of globalization on higher education, in particular, the effect of globalization on the American community college. Moreover, the authors will briefly list and describe two prominent Western leadership styles and expand upon the importance of those styles of leadership to the globalization of education. The authors will operationally define global work experience, and will discuss the dire need for current and future college leaders to possess an acute awareness for the future consequences of globalization.

Globalization

Milliron (2007) postulated that it is one of the roles of higher learning institutions to educate and prepare students to thrive in a flattening and competitive globalized world.

Such an education will serve to not only allow students to excel and lead in a diverse workforce environment, where companies value employees who have some type of international competency level, but will provide students with the capability and cultural sensitivity needed to foster interests for humanity around the world (Milliron, 2007; Wiggan & Hutchinson, 2009).

The latest wave of globalization is driven by education, technology, and interpersonal relationships — all affecting leadership (Milliron, 2007). For educators to be proficient instructors, with the capabilities of preparing their students to be successful and hireable in a multicultural society, they first need to understand the important concept of globalization. Educators must then look to the school's leaders to mandate an integrated process of globalized education, a process that becomes ingrained in the classroom structure. Wiggan and Hutchinson (2009) defined globalization as: "Globalization is a social and economic process that is identifiable by growing levels of financial and technological integrations and interconnections in the world system" (p.2).

Ethical Leadership

As a style of leadership, ethical leadership is imperative to a global and culturally variant environment, as the awareness, acceptance, and assimilation of universal, as well as, culturally specific ethics are inherent in globalization (Elliott, Krouse, Burian, & Fogle, 2014). Elliott et al. (2014) posited that leaders and general business practices should be cognizant of cultural variations of ethics in a global environment. Elliott et al. (2014) defined ethical leadership as a style of leadership that encouraged autonomy and respect for all followers; a leader will exercise his or her power, while not misusing that power in pursuit of the attainment of the shared vision for the organization. Moreover, Elliott et al. (2014) listed four traits of a global ethical leader: humility, authenticity, honesty, and good example.

Humility

Ethical leadership transcends a leader's ego. When expressing humility, ethical leaders place great importance on positive interpersonal relationships with followers; ethical leaders display empathy, and avoid making negative judgments of employees' behaviors (Elliott et al., 2014).

Authenticity

Globally ethical leaders are authentic leaders; by being authentic, leaders lead via example, and are cognizant of their attitudes. Ethical leaders make decisions based on their ethics, and not solely based on the external circumstances of the situation (Elliott et al., 2014). "Ethical leaders hold themselves and others to high, unwavering ethical standards" (Elliott et al., 2014, p. 5).

Honesty

Ethical leaders are not self-serving leaders (Elliott et al., 2014). Instead, ethical leaders are honest and lead via universal ethical beliefs in an attempt to make fair decisions. Transparency promotes honesty (Elliott et al., 2014). Elliott et al. (2014) also noted that ethical leaders communicate in a clear and precise manner, and avoid sending ambiguous messages to constituents and employees.

Set a Good Example

Employees respect leaders who lead by example and show commitment to both job-related tasks and the organization. By setting a good example, ethical leaders gain the trust of their employees (Elliott et al., 2014). Consequently, employees are more likely to buy-in to the shared vision for the organization and model the behavior of the leader. Ethical leaders encourage employees to self-actualize (Elliott et al., 2014).

While there are many positives of ethical leadership as a way of placing significance on values and ethics when making decisions, some limitations exist. In some situations the most effective outcome is the promotion of the leader's career. This is known as egoism. It should be noted, extreme egoism can be unhealthy for a leader and for the organization or college; a balance seems to be ideal. Both egoism and utilitarianism are effective outcomes of ethical leadership (Nevarez, Wood, & Penrose, 2013).

Global Leadership

According to Holt and Seki (2012), urbanization and population growth in Africa and Asia are affecting globalization and reshaping both the benefits and risks associated with globalization. Globalization is fueling global competition, and very few organizations are immune to the effects of globalization and the flattening global environment. Therefore, the study and understanding of global leadership is of importance to the understanding of globalization (Holt & Seki, 2012). Holt and Seki (2012) asked, "What is Global Leadership" (p. 196). Holt and Seki (2012) noted that the literature on global leadership lacks a universally agreed upon and precise definition for global leadership.

The authors are quite surprised by this finding, as it would be prudent to first have a valid definition of global leadership before relating global leadership to globalization. Holt and Seki (2012) argued that the majority of today's leaders are essentially global leaders; "We believe a huge shift is underway that will ultimately define all leaders as global leaders" (p. 198).

Holt and Seki (2012) defined a global leader as "anyone who operates in a context of multicultural, paradoxical complexity to achieve results in our world" (p. 199). Moreover, any person can become a global leader (Holt & Seki, 2012). Holt and Seki (2012) listed four developmental shifts associated with global leadership: "developing multicultural effectiveness (MCE)" (p. 197), "becoming adept at managing paradoxes associated with global work" (p. 197), "cultivating the being dimension of human experience" (p. 197), and "appreciating individual uniqueness in the context of cultural differences" (p. 197).

Global Work Experience

Dragoni, Oh, Tesluk, Moore, VanKatwyk, and Hazucha (2014) espoused that the vast majority of Western leaders are unable to successfully navigate, work, and lead in a global environment. Furthermore, "less than one third of large businesses report that their leaders possess an adequate global perspective to achieve their strategic goals" (Dragoni, et al., 2014, p. 2). Given that the fastest growing companies are stemming from countries outside the Western world, Dragoni et al. (2014) were interested in the relationship between a leader's global work experience and a leader's strategic thinking competency, as this relationship has not been established in the literature on global leadership. Dragoni et al. (2014) operationally defined global work experience and strategic thinking competency as a leader's psychological and physical exposure to distant countries and a leader's ability to think strategically, respectively.

Dragoni et al. (2014) hypothesized that strategic thinking was positively correlated to length of global work experience and that exposure to cultural distance would positively affect the relationship between a leader's global work experience and strategic thinking competency. Dragoni et al. (2014) defined cultural distance as "the extent of novelty or difference between the leader's own national culture and the cultures of other countries he or she has encountered" (p. 3). From data gathered from 231 upper level leaders, both hypotheses were supported (Dragoni et al., 2014). Strategic thinking was positively related to global work experience, and greater cultural distance strengthened the relationship between strategic thinking and global work experience (Dragoni et al., 2014).

Dragoni et al. (2014) concluded that their study would add to the much-needed theory of the development of leadership via global work experience, as that research topic is underrepresented in the literature on leadership. Due to the diverse sample of 231 upper level leaders, Dragoni et al. (2014) cautioned the generalization of the results of the study across industries.

Global Awareness and College Leaders

Community colleges were conceived to serve local communities (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013). However, community colleges are recently being charged with educating and training tomorrow's global leaders (Aspen Institute, 2013). Also, the need for global leaders in senior-level administrative roles of community colleges is more important than ever (VanderPal, 2014), as community college leaders will prepare students to work in a global environment (Opp & Gosetti, 2014). The present call for global community college leaders represents both a first and second order change in higher education. As a first order change, future community college leaders will have to continue to work and deal with certain existing structures while leading constituents, students, and colleges toward new global competencies (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013). Notwithstanding continued refinement resulting from a first order change of leadership, community colleges will also soon experience a second order change — incoming freshmen global leaders. The majority of current community college presidents are not global leaders (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013). The significant turnover of community college presidents and administrators by 2020 (Aspen Institute, 2013) and the demand for global leaders (Holt & Seki, 2012) will shake the very foundation of higher education, as a new perspective and way of doing business will be required of community college leaders (Kezar, 2014). Globalization and student success in a global economy will become the central themes for the rebirth of the American community college (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013).

The globalization of the American community college is resulting in global competition for resources and services. College leaders must break free of the industrial factory model and embrace novel programs and policies that will result in educational transformation (Milliron, 2007). In doing so, leaders will serve students by recognizing new global challenges and improving job market readiness in a globally competitive world (Milliron, 2007). The first step in recognizing and understanding global challenges is to gain an awareness of, and develop an appreciation for, the leadership styles of various cultures.

The call for global leaders in higher education, being fueled by the development of global leadership in the Western world, is bestowing future community college leaders with the responsibility of meeting the current challenges facing global leadership.

Specifically, Holt and Seki (2012) stated that leaders must integrate, explore, revamp, create, and develop multicultural leadership competencies in an effort to become global leaders. That is, leaders need a solid knowledge-base and comprehension of multicultural effectiveness (MCE); leaders must recognize individual uniqueness, while avoiding the generalization of negative stereotypes; leaders need to overhaul old leadership models, and create and develop new models and assessment tools necessary for the measurement of global leadership competencies; leaders, must themselves, lead by example and become global leaders (Holt & Seki, 2012). Global leadership in higher education represents a second order change for community colleges, thus focusing on Kezar's (2014) social cognitive and cultural theories of change. The context for change in leadership from a local focus to a global focus for community colleges is not only political and social, but also structural and cultural (Kezar, 2014). Global leadership will push colleges to begin communicating bottom-up and will allow for shared leadership between senior-level college administrators and faculty and staff.

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