Book Review: Editor Michael Moodian's (2009)
Contemporary Leadership and Intercultural Competence: Exploring the Cross-cultural Dynamics Within Organizations

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In the book, *Contemporary Leadership and Intercultural Competence: Exploring the Cross-cultural Dynamics Within Organizations,* edited by Michael Moodian (2009), many facets of leadership in a cross-cultural context are explored while it contributes to the growing interest in identifying cross-cultural leadership competencies.

Today, globalization metastasizes at unprecedented speed as the business leader is thrust into a virtual land of prosperity and peril. The once homogeneous cultures of the world are challenged by the introduction of preferences, tastes, and values from a new world of customers and employees. Michael Moodian (2009), in his book, *Contemporary Leadership and Intercultural Competence: Exploring the Cross-cultural Dynamics Within Organizations*, guides today's leader through these converging cultural dynamics that are flamed by the unprecedented winds of global commerce.

The book is a compilation of 20 chapters authored by some of the top researchers and practitioners in cross-cultural leadership and diversity. It presents a balance between theory and application. The capable editor, Michael A. Moodian, is an assistant professor of social science and sociology at Chapman University. Topics range from the evolving role of diversity to measuring intercultural competencies in leaders. The book is well edited and careful not to be repetitive; rather, each contributing author reinforces the message from previous chapters. Written as a text for upper-level undergraduate or graduate level classes in human resources, organizational development, or leadership, each chapter provides discussion questions that would help in classroom facilitation of this subject. The end notes of each chapter can be helpful as they provide additional references including web addresses for the researcher. In addition, the business practitioner would be informed by the numerous examples of workplace applications throughout the text.

The strength of the book rests in the identification of intercultural competency as an integral part of the modern leadership model. Trompenaars and Woolliams (in chapter 13) contended that "every organization is a cultural construct" and "culture is imbedded into the way we do business" (p. 161). Therefore, past leadership models fall short as they fail to give sufficient attention to culture. Trompenaars and Woolliams introduced an intercultural profile with a range of cultural competence components, thus broadening our perception of leadership.

In addition to Trompenaars and Woolliams, the book provides six additional chapters on measuring intercultural competencies including the review of instruments that currently exist. In chapter 18, Van Dyne, Ang, and Koh introduced the measurement and development of a cultural intelligence scale. They defined cultural intelligence as the "capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings" (p. 233). Their detail on the scale development and validation studies provides the necessary rigor to this emerging field within leadership studies and presents new methods of measuring leadership effectiveness.

The book also provides practical applications that enhance the multicultural leader's effectiveness. Chapters 8-12 examine how intercultural competence can be developed across organizations and become recognized as a critical component of leadership competencies. In Chapter 12, *Beyond Borders*, Gupta provided practical insights for leading multicultural and geographically dispersed teams. He gave pertinent examples and insights into the values and beliefs that frame our behaviors. Gupta addressed the most commonly encountered and challenging issues of time orientation, grooming, and formality in communications and style.

The text also introduces topics that usually are not included in diversity or cross-cultural discussions. Tobin addressed the legal implications of cross-cultural leadership and trade. What happens, for example, when a society based on common law engages in trade with civil law systems? Tobin pointed out that situational awareness of cultural cues is critical when navigating between competing legal paradigms. In chapter 7 Palthe highlighted trends in global human resource management and offered various approaches to improve talent development. Bennett introduced in chapter 5, the topic of religious and spiritual diversity in the workplace. He advanced the concept of faith-friendly institutions through strategies and structures that utilize the value of religious traditions. Again, it was refreshing to see these three topics being introduced in this text as it broadens the field of diversity and cross-cultural leadership.

The weakness of the book is found in the introductory chapters. Bhawuk, Landis, and Munusamy present in chapter 2, *Understanding the Basics of Culture*. Absent from their definition of culture were values and belief systems. The primary resisting force in changing an organizational culture is deeply held beliefs and values of those being impacted by the change. Their model focuses on history and ecology as the determinants of culture. They see culture determined by geography, time, and language. These are important elements that shape the culture and can provide greater cultural insights, however these are what Schein (2004) would refer to as cultural artifacts and do not go deep enough to gain a thorough understanding of the culture. Effective leaders also need to understand the underlying values and belief systems if they are to successfully facilitate change.

An even greater oversight by the book is the failure to establish a business case for diversity based on quantitative or qualitative research. Cultural diversity has been embraced by society in general as a cultural ideal while the academic community has only recently shown the virtues of diversity through rigorous research. In chapter 3, *Developing and Implementing a Multicultural Vision*, there are several recommended actions without any evidence that it improves productivity, reduces employee turnover, or increases profitability. Why should a

business leader follow such advice? The book has missed an opportunity to introduce the most recent research that infers diversity's positive impact to the business. If this text is used in the classroom, it would be beneficial to students if the professor would supplement it with these additional studies.

Even with the book's shortcomings mentioned above, this text is an asset to any researcher or student of leadership who wishes to advance his or her understanding of the relationship between cultural competency and leadership. Given our dynamic global economy, leaders must develop greater capabilities in getting work done through people within the multicultural context of today's marketplace. This book provides new perspectives on measuring intercultural competencies, assessing leadership within a multicultural context, and numerous examples of how organizations can lead in an evolving multicultural world.

About the Author

Douglas Crawford, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of business at Wilson College and chair of the Business & Economics Department. He has worked extensively in organizational diagnostics, global leadership effectiveness, and strategic change for several multinational corporations. He holds a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Regent University and an M.S. in industrial relations from West Virginia University. In addition, he has a certificate in executive leadership coaching from Georgetown University.
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