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Leadership Skills and Competencies of Global Business

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LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF GLOBAL BUSINESS LEADERS

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ABSTRACT

As business landscape changes due to globalization, organizations are seeking new and innovative ways to remain competitive and one of the ways is practice of effective leadership. The purpose of this empirical qualitative study is therefore to (i) explore how globalization affects leadership by identifying the changes and challenges that leaders face, and (ii) identify the essential skills and competencies required to be an effective leader in this era of globalization. This qualitative study employs in-depth interview conducted with four executive level leaders (domestic and expatriate) who lead in multifunctional and multidimensional organizations. Content analysis was used as a tool for analyzing the data. The study reveals that effective leadership in this era requires leadership skills and competencies that are responsive to the global and cross-cultural dimensions of the global context. The study also provides insights into global leadership competency from the view of expatriate and domestic leaders which is lacking in current literature. Whilst acknowledging the significance of Bird's (2013) three themes of competencies (as cited in Mendenhall et al., 2013) - skills business and organizational competencies, managing self-competencies and managing people and relationship competencies - the study reveals the latter as crucial regardless of the leader's primary operation – domestic, international or global. In respect to this, maintaining trust and being culturally sensitive in particular are seen as very important for global leaders.

Keywords: Leadership, Global, Cross-Cultural, Globalization, Competencies, Skills, Characteristics, Challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

The complexity of globalization and its revolution have created many challenges as businesses are forced to keep pace with changes brought by the emergence of new technology, environmental challenges, and political, religious and social strife. In addition, a power shift of economies from the United States and Western Europe to emerging economies such as those in China, India, Brazil and Russia - that accounts for more than 60% of the world's wealth - meant that the economies of countries will further expand its partnership beyond their current partners (Cox, 2012; Van Ark, 2010). Furthermore, the population of different countries are ageing and are also increasingly diversified through migration and these present businesses with expansions opportunities (Beinecke et al., 2007). Due to these constant and unpredictable changes, the revolutionary impact of globalization on organizations and its leaders may be significant in the upcoming years.

In light of this, organizations are compelled to look for new innovative ways, to efficiently perform global tasks and activities in search for a new competitive edge. Boatman and Wellins (2011) and Okoro (2012) emphasize the instrumental role of leaders for the long-term viability and sustainability of their respective organization. Leadership is viewed as a key component of all organizations, but its function and capacity are getting complicated with involvement in globalization (Punnett, 2004). Experts argue that leadership styles and skills that have flourished in stable and predictable times will most probably be inadequate as globalization changes the competitive landscape. As a result, many claim the need for leaders to acquire the appropriate skills and competencies in order to remain successful (Mendenhall et al., 2013; Boatman et al., 2011; Wanasika, 2009; Levy et al., 2007; Patterson et al., 2007; Marquardt et al., 2000). A review by Jokinen (2005) on global competencies reveal that identifying these skill set begins with an analysis of the dynamics of the global business environment, and ends with identifying the necessary skills and competencies of leaders to function in such environment. However, in a global context, it might difficult to define what are universally acceptable and universally unacceptable for global leaders due to several factors including social culture, and how the competencies differ than domestic leaders (Silva, 2016; Ahmad, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2009; Work, 2004;).

Global leadership literature is observed to synthesize expatriate leadership literature as well as general leadership literature (e.g. Kohonen, 2005; Spreitzer et al., 1997), because of its relevance in studying global leaders. However, the majority of the research on international competencies has been about expatriates. It is argued that a global leader is not necessarily an expatriate (see Nguyen et al., 2009; Beechler et al., 2007; Jokinen, 2005; Kohonen, 2005). Even though the value of an expatriate assignment as a major developmental experience for those pursuing global career is widely acknowledged, Jokinen (2005) stressed the need to distinguish their primary operation – whether it is

domestic, international or global. This will help determine the person's degree of global leadership activities, responsibilities and challenges as global leadership requirements will vary significantly for each type of leader (Mendenhall et al., 2012).

The purpose of this empirical qualitative study is therefore to (i) explore how globalization affects leadership by identifying the changes and challenges that leaders face, and (ii) identify the essential skills and competencies required to be an effective leader in this era of globalization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Business leadership

There is a lack of "specific, rigorous and widely accepted definition" of global leadership in the current literature (Mendenhall et al., 2012). Existing definition varies along different dimensions and authors either categorized it as 1) a state whereby job scope, roles, responsibilities, specific tasks and activities that global leaders take on (Quinn, 2005), 2) a process whereby it reflects engagement and fulfillment of roles and responsibilities and how a global leader exerts its influence on the people around them through a global context (Yukl, 2006) or 3) both a process and a state (Mendenhall et al., 2012). Mendenhall et al. (2012) recently proposed a framework to define the word global in global leadership to include three dimensions of global: (i) complexity of the global leader's multidimensional and multifunctional organizational environment. This multidimensionality arises from operating in multiple geographical markets, engaging in multifunctional activities, and in dealing with heterogeneity in terms of their roles given the multiplicity of competitors, customers, governments, and stakeholders, along with multiplicities across the value chain, when operating globally. In light of such complexities in a global environment, Rosen et al. (2000) contend that global leaders must handle environments that are very different from those that domestic leaders face; global leaders, they argue, confront ongoing change with stakeholders across cross-cultural, geographical, and socio-political contexts (ii) Flow refers to the relational or boundary spanning dimension of the global construct because the essential content of the relations between actors across boundaries is information exchange through multiple and various types of channels. Osland and Bird (2005) claim that global leaders face issues related to "connectedness, boundary spanning, complexity, ethical challenges, dealing with tensions and paradoxes, pattern recognition and building learning environments, teams, and community and leading large-scale change efforts across diverse cultures". Thus, intercultural communication in response to the cultural differences experienced in global work is deemed crucial for effective leadership (Hofstede et al., 2005; House, et al, 2004). Leaders will need the skill to harmoniously work with domestic leaders and develop them

to execute the strategies across nations and regions, at the local level in order to satisfy the unique local tastes of their customers. Thus, global leaders are also viewed by some to be good domestic leaders (Ekekwe, 2012). In contrast, a domestic leader's local experience and local mindset may not readily accommodate the challenges of global businesses in such a context. (iii) Presence reflects the amount of actual physical relocation that a person needs to engage in to interact with key stakeholders who are situated in various locations around the world. Whilst some linked global leadership to the globalization phenomenon, others focus mainly on associating global leaders as expatriates or consider expatriates and their overseas experience as an important global leadership competency developmental tool (Kohonen, 2005; Jokinen, 2005). The literature on expatriation has long characterized international assignees as boundary spanning individuals (e.g., Reiche, 2011; Carraher et al., 2008). At the same time, scholars have acknowledged that international assignees are not necessarily global leaders just because they are located overseas.

Many definitions (see Mendenhall et al, 2013; Beechler et al., 2007) include the need for global leaders to cross a variety of boundaries, both within and outside of the organization. This points out the the importance of effective leadership in cross-cultural management that has been emphasized in the literature (Nguyenel et al., 2009). Nevertheless, as in the case of leadership and global leadership, there is also no agreed definition of culture (Work, 2004). The agreed common definition derived in the literature involves shared knowledge, value and meaning systems among the society members (Hudelson, 2004; Banks et al., 1989; Hofstede, 1980). The "cross" in cross-cultural leadership refers to the difference in culture of the leaders from his/her follower's culture (Work, 2004). Therefore, cross-cultural leadership refers to the leader's capacity to intentionally and unequally influence and motivate culturally different members and focused on the implications and incorporations of the knowledge and meaning systems of their followers in the influence process (Work, 2004). Scholars have argued that understanding the culture alone is insufficient. Finding the best way to understand and implement business strategies and how to maximize the expatriate management in the country of investment is the key focus identified in this leadership domain (Deng and Gibson, 2008).

Global Business leadership skills and competencies

Mendenhall et al. (2012) claim that the global context in terms of complexity, flow and presence outlined to the word global leadership is what makes the global leader's environment very different from domestic leaders. What then are the competencies required in the global context? Competencies have been defined with terms describing certain personal traits, behaviors, skills, values, and knowledge, and many existing frameworks are combinations of these. In existing research, different types of dimensions

have often been mixed and treated as equals. A certain trait in one framework is replaced with corresponding behaviour in another. A review by Jokinen (2005) defines global leadership competencies are seen as those universal qualities that enable individuals to perform their job outside their own national as well as organizational culture, no matter what their educational or ethnical background is, what functional area their job description represents, or what organization they come from.

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Project (GLOBE) incorporated both the Implicit Leadership Theories and Hofstede's dimensions and studied the relationship between organizational culture, society values and leadership in 62 countries and found that different countries have both diversely different and similar views of leadership (Mendenhall et al., 2013; Javidan, et al., 2006). Thus, a list of leader attributes were identified that are universally acceptable, universally unacceptable and culturally contingent. Javidan, et al (2006) cautioned that leaders who are successful in one country may not necessarily mean that they can succeed in another. As such, leaders with followers from different cultures will need to incorporate different styles in leading and influencing their followers depending on the situation and the people involved. This was shown in another study by GLOBE which found that culture affects the leadership style instead of the leadership's behaviour or effectiveness (House et al., 2014). In addition, Hanges et al. (2016) have identified many studies that supported this hypothesis whereby societal culture affects the style of leadership and how leadership is perceived. Thus, there is an increasing need for leaders in this era to be more self-aware including personal biases and be willing to learn from others who are different from them (Butler, et al. 2012).

Understanding global challenges, understanding cultural differences and having global work experiences do not necessarily guarantee effective global leadership or cross-cultural leadership. Similarly holding the position as an executive or a manager in an organization does not necessarily mean that they have what it takes to be a leader. A study on Global Leadership Forecast 2014/2015 revealed that up to 40% of human resource professionals report that leaders are incapable of meeting the challenges of the global context/environment, that has been described by Mendenhall et al. (2013), as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguity (DDI et al., 2015). Thus, in order to improve the quality of an organization's leadership, there is a need to identify competencies, characteristics and skills that leaders require for their effective development and application. For example, Hanna (2012) reveals that the characteristics of a global leader includes: intellectual understanding of the local and global business context; in favor of non-dominant thinking, an aptitude for cross boundary partnering, self-awareness and self-assurance of one's own values; and, sense of purpose and the ability to develop network within and external to an organization.

Having Mendenhall et al. (2013) framework in perspective, Bird's (2013)) review of the global leadership competency literature reveals extensive and wide-ranging

competencies of up to 160, which have been systematically categorized into three main categories (see Table I), can explain what global leadership needs the three dimensions of global. The three categories are competencies in business and organizational acumen (visioning and strategic thinking, leading change, business savvy, organizational savvy, managing communities), managing people and relationships (valuing people, cross-cultural communication, interpersonal skills, teaming skills, empowering others) and managing self (inquisitiveness, global mindset, flexibility, character, resilience). The first group, business and organizational acumen, addresses the practical understanding of business and organizational realities and how to get things done efficiently and effectively in a global context. The second group of global leadership competencies is directed towards people and interpersonal relationships and represents competencies that target primarily direct personal interaction. The final group of global leadership competencies is directed inward to managing self and entails the predisposition, cognitive, and attitudinal processes of global leaders as well as aspects of personal management.

Table I: Global Leadership competences as categorized by Bird (2013)

Global competencies	Associated competencies	Examples
Business and organizational acumen	Vision and strategic thinking	Intellectual intelligence, able to deal with complexity, oscillation between detail and big picture, environmental scanning, frame shifting
	Business savvy	Business acumen, results orientation, global capitalist, technical savvy, finding creative solutions, third way solutions
	Managing communities	Customer orientation, stakeholder orientation, building partnerships and alliances, influence stakeholders, build community, boundary spanning
	Organizational savvy	Total organizational acumen, designing and aligning, architecting, manage a budget on a world-wide basis
	Leading change	Catalyst for strategic change, catalyst for cultural change, lead change
Managing people and relationships	Cross cultural communication	Communication skills, culture Bridger, cultural interest and sensitivity, cultural understanding, mindful communication, cultural self-awareness

	Interpersonal skills	Emotional intelligence, influencing, urgent listening, relationship interest, social flexibility, results through relationships
	Valuing people	Skilled people reading, understand actors, cultural acumen, respectful modernizer, respect for others, pragmatic trust
	Empowering others	Being able to empower others, energizing, rewarding and feedback, connective teaching, sharing leadership
	Teaming skills	Team building, multicultural teaming, managerial ability, with an emphasis on teamwork and interpersonal skill
Managing self	Resilience	Stress and emotional resilience, resourceful, optimistic, energetic, self-confidence, personal management, life balance
	Character	Integrity, maturity, exhibit character, honesty, conscientiousness, self-identity, core values and flexibility, make ethical decisions, tenacity
	Inquisitiveness	Inquisitiveness, curiosity and learning, aggressive insight, open-mindedness, openness to experience, inviting the unexpected, non-judgmental, confident humility, motivation to learn
	Flexibility	Thinking agility, authentic flexibility, open minded and flexible in thought and tactics, interest flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, embrace duality
	Global mindset	Global mindset, cosmopolitanism, cognitive complexity, thinking globally

Integrated in the cross cultural leadership effectiveness are the theories of emotional intelligence (EQ), and EQ was suggested to be related to CQ's competence construct (Earley and Mosakowski, 2004). Deng and Gibson (2009) identified managers' cultural intelligence (CQ) to have a significant impact in their effectiveness and this has been identified to contribute significantly to task performance in a recent study (Jyoti et al., 2015). It is claimed that CQ managers have shown to engage employees more effectively (Kodwani, 2012) and their ability to integrate diverse resources is suggested to have a

higher potential to drive innovation and creativity (Earley et al., 2004). Hence, managers with CQ are viewed as a strategic and competitive advantage as it was found to be a stronger predictor of cross-border leadership effectiveness whilst EQ was a stronger predictor of domestic leadership effectiveness. In addition, the literature has suggested that leadership in global or multicultural context has unique competencies related to reduced ethnocentrism or valuing cultural differences, cultural flexibility or adaptability and ambiguity (Caligiuri et al., 2012). There is also a combined effect of personality characteristics relating to extraversion, openness to experience and lower neuroticism and cross-cultural work and non-work experiences which predict dynamic cross-cultural competencies, and in turn determines leadership effectiveness (Caligiuri et al., 2012). Many of existing frameworks combined personal traits, behavioural skills, and knowledge into the same model indicating that "competencies are configurations of behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, intelligence and skills" (Bonnstetter, 1999) and although many authors shared the view that the increasing or conceptualised differently in different countries (see Kowske et al., 2007; Morrison, 2000; Jordan et al., 1998;).

This can be challenges and concerns for global leaders in managing culturally-diverse settings efficiently (see Mendenhall et al., 2013; Boehm et al., 2015; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Work, 2004). Nguyen and Umemoto (2009) argued that appreciating individual cultural differences can better fulfill leader's responsibility of creating multi-cultural workplace. Chuang (2013) believed that a more flexible relationship between global leaders and their followers is essential in the workplace. For organizations to remain competitive, an ongoing development of trust and loyalty between leaders and followers must be established. Lussier (2015) maintained that a greater manager-employee relationship can significantly influence members' behaviours and increase the degree of their commitment to the leader and the organization. To achieve good performance, global leaders must have the ability to guide and influence employees to work toward the organizational goals.

Challenges and concerns for Global leaders

Understanding different aspects of globalization and interrelationships of various factors and their changes will help organizations to equip the global leaders to meet the new challenges brought by globalization (see Mendenhall et al., 2013). In today's competitive landscape, a sustainable advantage of globalization depends on the skills and competencies of a leader who can manage diversity and implement increasingly complex business strategies. Okoro (2012) believes that effective workforce diversity management is a key to global business success. In pursuit of this, cross-cultural leaders need to be able to manage culturally-diverse settings efficiently (see Boehm et al., 2015; Work, 2004).

As asserted by Gutierrez et al. (2012), cultural context is one significant variable that should be considered in leadership. Work ethics, behaviors, communication styles, and

management-labor relationships vary from country to country. Due to this, Kowske and Anthony (2007) argue that leadership competence is conceptualized differently in different countries. Different cultural groups have different expectations of leadership, and this can affect the behaviours of employees and managers. When leaders appreciate individual cultural differences, they can better fulfill their responsibilities of creating a multi-cultural workplace (Nguyen et al., 2009).

Apart from that, Chuang (2013) believed that a more flexible relationship between global leaders and their followers is essential in the workplace. For organizations to remain competitive, an ongoing development of trust and loyalty between leaders and followers must be established. Lussier (2015) maintained that a greater manager-employee relationship can significantly influence members' behaviours and increase the degree of their commitment to the leader and the organization. To achieve good performance, global leaders must have the ability to guide and influence employees to work toward the organizational goals.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study used a combination of semi-structured face-to-face and skype interviews. A total of four participants were interviewed upon consent. An interview guide was designed and send to the interviewees prior to the scheduled interviews. The interviewees were selected based on the following criteria: (I) A leader who is respected and viewed as an effective or exemplary leader in their organization and possess expertise in doing global work (years of experience) (II) An executive or senior management level with an international job scope who is required to work with individuals across different context (III) A mix of expatriate and domestic leaders. The profile of the respondents[1] is illustrated in Table II below.

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[1] To maintain the respondent confidentiality, limited demographic information collected in the interviews such as race and designation can not disclosed.

Table II: Profile of respondents

Respondent	Age	Gender	Country/ Region of operation	Primary operation	Sector	Business scope of organization
L1	62	Male	Brunei	Expatriate	Finance and banking	Domestic, international cooperation
L2	47	Male	Singapore	Domestic	Health (Pharmaceutical)	Multinational
L3	57	Male	USA	Domestic	Health (Medicine) and Education	Transnational
L4	71	Male	Brunei	Domestic	Public	Domestic, International cooperation

Content analysis is used to analyses the data which involves counting and comparisons, of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Competencies and Skills Identified for a Leader in the Globalized Business World

The findings of the research suggest that globalization has influence the way leaders lead in order to meet the challenges in a globalizing world. The findings as seen in Table III, which is based on Bird's (2013) set of competencies, reveal that there is similarity in responses received from the participants, regardless of their different national and organizational culture, in the set of competencies which are deemed important for global leaders. This suggests that these are universal qualities required by a global leaders which are agreed by most authors in the literature (see Silva, 2016; Mendenhall et al., 2013; Boatman et al., 2011; Ahmad, 2009; Wanasika, 2009; Levy et al., 2007; Patterson et al., 2007; Marquardt et al., 2000).

Table III: Competencies required to be a Successful Leader in the Era of Globalization

Business Organizational Competencies	Managing people and relationship competencies	Managing self
Creative (1/4)	Ability to maintain cohesion of the team (2/4)	Hardworking/diligence (2/4)
Innovative (2/4)	Listening and communication skills (3/4)	Continuously updating knowledge and experience (3/4)
Globalization (4/4)	Charisma (1/4)	Aware of own weaknesses (1/4)
Good understanding of business and risk (2/4)	Team work cross functionally and cross culturally (4/4)	Humility (3/4)
Business expertise – knowledge and experience (4/4)	Empowering others through delegation (2/4)	Openness to learning (3/4)
Vision (4/4)	Empowering others through coaching (2/4)	Global mindset (3/4)
Overseas training and/or experience (4/4)	Inclusive (4/4)	Commitment (1/4)
Ability to coordinate team and strategic activities (2/4)	Employee engagement (1/4)	Flexibility to adapt (3/4)
	Ability to choose the best leadership style for the situation (1/4)	Courage/ability to change and embrace change (4/4)
	Cross-cultural communication (4/4)	Integrity (4/4)
	Ability to generate, maintain and harbor trust (4/4)	Mastery of subject (1/4)
		Cross cultural sensitivity (4/4)

Business and organizational competencies are needed to respond to changing market regulation and the advert of new technologies and in this case, all participants have repeatedly mentioned competencies such as globalization, business expertise (knowledge

and experience), overseas training and experience and vision as crucial for achieving organizational success in a global world. Even in general leadership literature, visionary is an important element. The ability of a leader to create a vision and turn it into organizational reality, or as the ability to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization (Silva, 2016; Jokinen, 2005). According to several authors (Cohen, 2010; Alon et al., 2005), learning from experience about how organizations do business in other parts of the world is argued to be the best teacher, which has been agreed by the participants as mentioned by L2, a domestic leader:

'you can read about it [a culture], but you won't really understand it until you make friends and experience the culture. You have to be overseas to understand it...'

This idea relates to another most mentioned business competency and that is for leaders to have a global-local business strategy, 'globalization'. This finding is similar to some authors (see Silva, 2016; Elekwe, 2012; Hanna, 2012; Ahmad, 2009; Jokinen, 2005) who argue that the importance of acquiring globalization to create opportunities to broaden perspective on local and global challenges and increase ability to manage tensions and to balance global and local needs.

When leading globally, it is important for leaders to be able to switch perspectives and understand global interdependence in terms of different national contexts and new patterns of social interaction to drive for a broader picture. The findings support the relevance of looking at general leadership literature to study global leaders (see Silva, 2016; Ahmad, 2009; Jokinen, 2005) by showing vitality for global leaders to acquire managing people and relationship competencies as well as managing self-competencies such as managing teamwork cross functionally and cross culturally, cross culture communication, ability to generate and maintain trust; cross cultural sensitivity, courage/ability to change and embrace change. In view of this, the findings agree with the idea that leadership is a relationship process oriented, in other words follower-centric approach that emphasize followers' contribution and roles in the leadership process (Silva, 2016; Yulk, 2002; Handy, 1992) thus, managing people and relationship comes into play when leading globally. For example, being human or having humility, as shown by the quotations below, is important when managing people and relationship:

'Having humility is a pre-requisite to be able to actively listen to others and use the information to synthesize or analyze own decisions and approach whilst adapting to the cultural environment. Humility is also important for a leader to be able to recognize their own weaknesses and have the ability to learn and adjust accordingly to identify changes needed with his team'. (Participant, L1)

'Everything is changing so we also have to change our attitude…. but certain basic things will still have to stay, such as being human and how you deal with people'. (Participant L2)

Despite coming from different contexts, all participants agreed that managing people and relationship including self are still priority. The participants have argued that leaders have to make an effort to understand and connect to people through establishing values relationships such as partnership and friendship as all participants agreed that integrating local concepts and values is important to make the organization more successful. This is similar to Jokinen (2005) who suggests that 'empathy' is a desired mental characteristic of global leaders. In having humility or empathy, this means leaders being participative and sensitive to others' needs and assumptions, having genuine concern for others and respect (Ahmad, 2009; Jokinen, 2005; Gregersen et al., 1998). Also, all participants argue that global leaders must act with integrity and sincerity to serve through different context, cultural values and governance and regulations to reduce misunderstandings in a multicultural context (Silva, 2016; Ahmad, 2009; Jokinen, 2005). In order to reduce misunderstandings, create and maintain trust and being culturally sensitive are seen very crucial. All participants have expressed that there is an increasing need to be *"culturally and operationally sensitive"* to the fast-changing world environment. This leads to another most mentioned competency, cross-cultural communication.

Having a good command of the local language is an important leadership skill as direct translation of specific words does not necessarily assure the conveyance of meaning. Dorfman et al. (1997) and Deresky (2010) argues that it is about releasing the right responses than sending the 'right' messages. By having cultural sensitivity, humility and effective cross-cultural communication, leaders not only can communicate well with individuals they are working with, but also can gain their trust, regardless the followers are within the same country or not. Rosen et al (2000) suggests that that global leaders must handle environments that are very different from those that domestic leaders face as they confront ongoing change with stakeholders across cross-cultural, geographical, and socio-political contexts. This directs to the perspective of being cross cultural leaders rather than merely global leaders (see Deng et al., 2008; Hudelson, 2004; Work, 2004; Banks, et al, 1989; Hofstede, 1980).

At this point, the findings highlight the importance of seeing culture as an influential factor in how global leaders lead. Recognizing the cultural variables in the communication process, especially during implementing business strategies and managing and influencing people, and what factors can cause 'noise' (or misinterpretation) in that process is essential. As Work (2004) stated, cross-culture leader ought to influence and motivate culturally different members and focuses on the implications and incorporations of the knowledge and meaning systems of their followers in the influence process. In light of this, implementing 'globalization' must be more than just acquiring a global mindset – that it needs to include the capacity for appreciating different elements of cultures and business complexity (Silva 2016; Cohen, 2010; Ahmad, 2009; Jokinen, 2005). However, as Mendenhall et al. (2012) have argued, global leader multidimensional and multifunctional organizational environment is complex. In fact, in light of such

complexities in a global environment, most participants in this study have agreed with Mendenhall et al. (2012) and Rosen et al. (2002) that there is no one leadership style that fits all, and that a leader of today must has the ability to analyses the people involved, situation and the environment to choose the best style.

CHALLENGES LEADERS FACE LEADING IN THE GLOBALIZED BUSINESS WORLD

The findings show that participants have different views or experiences in leading or operating in a globalized world. One finds it challenging to lead locally while another view leading overseas as more challenging; and others might regard both context similarly challenging. Despite these varying responses, the common issue raised is the challenge of influencing the followers and of gain their trust whether leading or operating locally or internationally. The first view (see quote below) is in contrast to the impression given by the existing literature about what challenges leaders may face in the complexity of a global world. An expat, L3, has expressed the difficulty faced leading in his own country when compared to leading globally:

'Local is most difficult because I am stuck with what I've got. Some of the people I work with and some of the structures I work with are wonderful; but there are some people.... who are not very functional.... Some organizational structures are just horrible. It is really hard to look at success at a local level as there are these things that don't go away. At global level... it is fortunate that I work with people who want the same things that I want'. (Participant, L3)

While many of cross-cultural leadership studies suggest that the ability to respond to cultural differences is paramount, this view suggests that when leaders lead in their own context, they too face the challenge of adjusting to their local context. Leaders are bounded by the culture and tradition that seem difficult to disintegrate or change (Ritchie, 2014; Brillantes et al., 2011; Carino, 2008; Kikuchi, 2007). This may be due to rigidity of local laws and regulations, the complexity of tradition and cultural values such as conservative leaders and risk adverse (see Ritchie, 2014; Carino, 2008). Hence, this explains the reason why L3 (as mentioned above) finds it less challenging when leading in other context because he claimed people wanted the same things that he wanted, i.e. change as can be seen in this quotation:

'you (have to) make things happen. I don't want them to mess up their culture... I have to teach young people to have the courage to step beyond their traditional boundaries. But I also respect that the traditional boundaries are important to them and their country'. (Participant, L3)

This idea brings to the second perspective which finds it more challenging to lead in other context when followers are bounded by their culture and tradition, as explained by L1:

'Because of the (local people's) culture, it is more difficult to find people who are able to express themselves and implement their ideas. We are in a country that believe in a top down approach. The first immediate reaction when there is a problem is to see what the boss has to say to solve the problem, or, they have an idea but will not share it the boss, as he is defining the strategy... and opted not to share their ideas'. (Participant, L1)

The issue that has been pointed out in this second perspective can be related to Mendenhall et al. (2012)'s second dimension about flow. The finding is in parallel with Mendenhall et al. (2012) as well as Osland and Bird (2005) view that global leaders face issues of connectedness, boundary spanning, dealing with tension and paradoxes, pattern recognition and leading change efforts across diverse cultures. Thus, participants have identified the relevant competencies in responding to the cultural differences especially when managing people and relationship in a global world. Otherwise, as several authors suggests (Caligiuri et al., 2012; Ekekwe, 2012; Rockstuhl et al., 2011; Goldsmith, 2009 Deng and Gibson, 2009;), domestic leaders local experience and local mindset may not readily accommodate the challenges of global businesses. In fact, this view does not coincide with Mendenhall et al. (2012) third dimension of presence which suggests that global leadership mainly associate global leaders as expatriates. Some authors (see Nguyen et al., 2009; Beechler et al., 2007; Umemoto, 2009;) have argued that international assignees are not necessarily global leaders just because they are located overseas.

House et al. (2004) have mentioned that leaders' perception and understanding of the leadership is influenced by cultural forces in the country that the leaders' function which can impact on how a leader leads. This relates to the last view or experience in leading at a globalize world that 'there is no significant difference in leading local or global context'. The issue, according to some participants, is how to convince and influence people to follow the leaders as the people are now increasingly exposed to good and bad aspects of the world (including factual and misleading information depicted by the global media). The most important competencies here, based on the ones have been identified above, include facilitating intercultural communication, openness and resilience. This is in consistent with studies of Caligiuri and Tarique (2012), Jyoti and Kour (2015), Deng and Gibson (2009), Ahmad (2009), Earley and Mosakowasi (2004) and Bonnstetter (1999). Trust can bridge culture and establish strong collaboration and partnerships when working with others irrespective of whether they are local or global (see Leung et al., 2005; Rosen et al., 2000). Whether it is domestic, international or global, in line with Mendahell et al. (2012), distinguishing their primary operation will help determine the person's degree of global leadership activities, responsibilities as well as challenges. Global leaders will still need the skill to harmoniously work with domestic leaders and develop them to execute

the strategies across nations and regions, at the local level in order to satisfy the unique local tastes of their customers. Thus, global leaders are also regarded by some to be good domestic leaders (Ekekwe, 2012) Regardless of the different views identified from the participants in the study, acquiring competencies in managing relationship and people seem to be the highlight of the study.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Globalization is indeed changing the way leaders lead. Many of existing frameworks combine personal traits, behavioral skills, and knowledge into the same model indicating that "competencies are configurations of behavior, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, intelligence and skills" (Bonnstetter, 1999), yet the increasing need for global leaders and the specific competencies of these leaders are far from clear (see, for example, Morrison, 2000 and Jordan et al., 1998). This study has address this by identifying several competencies based on three themes; 1) business and organizational competencies 2) managing people and relationship competencies and 3) managing self-competencies. The combination of competencies framed within the context of leadership work and responsibilities that were found in this study describe the elements of global leadership and cross-cultural leadership according to the works of many scholars (Caligiuri et al., 2012; Rockstuhl et al., 2011; Deng et al., 2009; Goldsmith, 2009).

The study has also found several views on the challenges faced by leaders leading in local, international and global context; the most challenging is influencing, motivating and developing today's employees due to their having higher expectations and the difference in culture. However, similar to Mendenhall et al. (2012) argument that global leadership challenges and responsibilities will vary significantly for different type of leaders. Overall, the study has contributed more insight into global leadership competency from the view of expatriate and domestic leaders which is lacking previous literature as well as to Bird's (2013) three dimensions of global leadership. However, like other studies this research also has limitation. This study is only based on small sample size and findings cannot be generalized to other countries and cultures.

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