

Global Leadership Behaviors and Followers' Openness to Cultural Diversity: Understanding Multicultural Team Effectiveness

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As part of the globalization process, a growing number of employees in Multi-National Organizations (MNOs) face the new reality of working in Multi-Cultural Teams (MCTs). Although a plethora of articles concerning MCTs have been published in the last decade, most of these studies didn't consider the role of leaders and followers in the MCTs as part of their research models.

In this research, we suggested a model which emphasized both global leadership behaviors and followers' openness to cultural diversity as antecedents for desirable MCT outcomes. Based on Self-Concept Based Leadership Theories (Lord et al., 1999; Shamir et al., 1993) and on global work values typologies (Erez & Shokef, 2008) we asserted that global leadership behaviors, which convey a collective sense of global identity, interdependence and openness to cultural diversity, are related to MCT identity. This relation is positively moderated by followers' openness to cultural diversity. Additionally, MCT identity leads to MCT effectiveness.

Our research included two studies: Study 1 consisted of 282 MBA students from 42 nationalities; working in 73 virtual, short term project MCTs. The results of study 1 supported the suggested model. Study 2 consisted of 274 employs, working in 55 on-going MCTs in 9 MNOs. In this study, the research model was expanded by adding team trust as a mediator of the interaction relation between global leadership behaviors and followers' openness to cultural diversity on team identity. The results partially supported this model. Global leadership behaviors were positively related to team trust and team identity. However, the strength of this relationship decreased as the level of followers' openness to cultural diversity increased.

Our research results highlight the importance of considering global characteristics of leaders and followers in MCT effectiveness models. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings will be discussed in the seminar.