

Chapter 98

Contemporary Leadership Development in Kazakhstan

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ABSTRACT

During the 25 years of Kazakhstan's independence, universities in the country have been educating/training managers and leaders with emphasis on translated and adopted traditional Western models and research instruments of human resource development. However, managers of various levels, working in different industries, who were taught about these leadership theories, using the latest information technologies, still tend to choose traditional/national leadership values within organizational culture of their companies. This chapter is the continuation of series on leadership research in Kazakhstan. The obtained comparative data of 2010 and 2014 on leadership styles, career anchors, and interpersonal behaviors for five leadership styles are of great interest for researchers and professionals.

INTRODUCTION

Since the independence of Kazakhstan, 25 years ago, universities in the country have developed the system of educating and training managers and leaders for all spheres of the economy. Obviously the world-wide processes such, as globalization, integration, information technologies in higher education as well have their impact on the formation of leadership. As in many other countries in order to educate new managers and leaders, traditionally western models of human resource development were translated and adopted. This article is the continuation of the series of social-psychological researches in the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK). The co-authors began their collaboration in spring semesters of 2009 and

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2010, when Dr. Tazhina was undergoing an internship at the Columbia University and together with Dr. Parker developed a joint international research project. Later, in 2012, Dr. Ivashov joined the research when he had internship at the NYU.

BACKGROUND

The Traditional Culture of Kazakhstan and Contemporaneousness/Globalization

Traditional Kazakh culture has historically been determined by the nomadic lifestyle and harsh living conditions of this vast territory and became a regulatory mechanism for daily life. Clan membership, a clear age hierarchy and inter-familial relationships were a priority. Elders were at the top of the hierarchy and the family was and still is in charge of resolving social and psychological conflicts. (Masanov, 1998). Later Akshalova (2002) clarified, that “from outset, it should be asserted that within the Kazakhstani culture, there is respect to elders and seniors and hence, all the more, father leadership should be encouraged and practiced in small business management. After all, it is a benevolent leadership style that benefits all parties concerned – the leaders, the people and the organizations”.

For this reason, from the point of view of the identity formation and managerial education, it is important to consider the impact of globalization and a joint conflict between western mind-set and traditional values (Tazhina, 2010). The latter and a number of other social phenomena led to risen demand for applied psychology, which takes form of social-psychological training of skills such as leadership, effective communication, motivation, etc.

While individual leadership is important, the context of the organization can enhance or inhibit the leadership of its members. Dorfman and House (2004) report that at the first GLOBE research conference in 1994, there was a consensus of the 54 researchers from 38 countries (of which Kazakhstan was one) about a definition of organizational leadership. “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members” (p. 56). GLOBE is international project, which is aimed to seek answers to questions like: in what ways can community culture and organizational culture affect behavior of leaders/managers and company’s/organization’s development, commenting on the effectiveness of both?

Contemporarily, Kazakhstan is actively involved in the processes of globalization and integration. The following are just some examples of such activity: OSCE Chairmanship of the RK in 2010 and the largest international exhibition of the decade, EXPO, is to be held in the capital of Kazakhstan in 2017. In this context the necessity of studying leadership and its development in each segment of the society and economy is evident.

Leadership Issues

The American historian David McCullough (2008) emphasizes that “We need leaders and not just political leaders. We need leaders in every field, in every institution, in all kinds of situations. We need to educate our young people to be leaders” (p. 45). He asserts that “the great leadership lessons don’t change” (p. 45) and cites numerous historical figures that he considers demonstrate these fundamental qualities.

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