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**CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP:  
AN EXTENSION OF THE HOFSTEDE AND GLOBE DIMENSIONS**

by

**Andrea Rae Barlow**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree**

of

**DEPARTMENTAL HONORS**

in

**Finance & Economics  
in the Department of Economics and Finance**

**Approved:**

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**Director of Honors Program**  
Dr. Nicholas Morrison

**UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, UT**

**Spring 2014**

Women in Leadership: An Extension of the Hofstede and GLOBE Dimensions

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### Abstract

Technology has forever changed the face of business. Although in the past business markets have been limited to local geographic areas, the concept of outsourcing has opened a diverse spectrum of international markets. An increase in suppliers and consumers can improve business effectiveness and efficiency, but entering international markets can be detrimental if the business is unaware of the subtle differences the new market has in regard to leadership styles and cultural values. Hofstede's cultural dimension analysis has been the primary research study for many industry and academic professionals (Bond 2002; Hofstede 1997). However, many scholars are questioning whether Hofstede's work is still relevant in the fast-changing business world, especially with the influx of women in the workforce. This proposal combines the research presented by Hofstede and the GLOBE study and narrows in on the effects culture has on women pursuing leadership, particularly women already labeled as leaders. Seventy-two women from thirty-one different countries attending the 2014 Insight Dubai Conference were surveyed.



### Women in Leadership: An Extension of the Hofstede and GLOBE Dimensions

Hofstede's International Business Machines (IBM) study of cross-cultural dimensions forever changed the face of international business interactions (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede orchestrated a research study examining how the impact of culture affects workplace values. Hofstede analyzed employee value scores and created the five Hofstede dimensions of national culture: power distance (PDI), individualism versus collectivism (IDV), masculinity versus femininity (MAS), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and long-term orientation (LTO). Power distance refers to the level at which members of a country feel power should be evenly distributed. Individualistic societies often create cultures fostering unique and creative thinking. Collectivists, on the other hand, are raised to believe group opinions are important; conflicts should be avoided and harmony should be maintained. Countries scoring high on masculinity live to work; they are highly successful and goal oriented. Feminine societies view work as a means-to-an-end, often seeing work as over-romanticized and overemphasized. Countries with high levels of uncertainty avoidance feel uncomfortable with ambiguous situations. Rather, decisions are most often made after scrutinizing minor details to avoid unexpected circumstances. Long-term oriented countries do not make impulse decisions or seek quick results (Hofstede, 2013).

While Hofstede is not without critics, many in the business field lean on Hofstede's research as absolute and unequivocally accurate. Regardless of one's opinion on the method by which Hofstede came to his conclusions, the literature on how culture biases affect the potential for women to pursue leadership positions is lacking, particularly in women are already labeled as future leaders (Jones, 2007).

There are problems with the current literature in the area of cross-cultural leadership analysis because of ambiguous definitions and research samples where the women sampled are not interested in leadership positions. What it means to be a leader in one culture can differ greatly as to what is considered a leader in another culture; these definitions only get more vague with regards to women who are pursuing leadership positions (Ansbacher, 2008). As more and more women enter the workplace, it becomes more imperative to take a closer look at the impacts cultural biases have in supporting or hindering certain genders from obtaining leadership positions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). While studies have shown women in leadership positions are equally as successful as their male counterparts, cultural pressures often create glass ceilings, which prevent women from attaining such positions (Pereira, 2013; Leong & Fischer, 2011).

For the purposes of this study, leadership will be defined by one's ability to have influence over others (Yukl, 2002). As the level of influence increases, the person's ability to invoke a certain behavior out of others, otherwise known as power, comes into play (Johnson, 2001). Certain cultures persuade women against pursuing positions with influence and power. Regardless of the country's reasoning, the result is the same. Fewer women are actively pursuing leadership roles, which then propels women into the stereotypical roles, i.e. secretary, homemaker, schoolteacher. As each generation passes, these stereotypical roles continue to be seen as binding in some women's eyes, which stops them from reaching their full potential (Toh & Leonardelli, 2013).

A basic understanding of how countries differ can help to prevent cultural misunderstandings and future problems. The Hofstede model is extremely effective when trying to form quick group patterns relevant in daily interactions with other cultures; it gathers macro-

level data that enables macro-level extrapolations. Individuals may vary within a group, but as a whole, groups tend to act as Hofstede's model predicted (Hofstede, 2013). When the Hofstede model is used to predict individual behavior, however, it encounters problems. There are too many factors that influence behavior to justify using a simple, clear-cut, linear model.

Another problem those using the Hofstede model face is the research does not separate national culture from organizational culture. While national culture may think in one manner, organizational culture may disagree (Dorfman & Howell, 1988). Hofstede's data is only able to show a culture as one holistic entity, rather than being able to break culture down into smaller groups. In addition, because Hofstede's model cannot show subcultures, the model lacks sophistication with regards to one culture interacting with another. Depending on one's views on how fast cultures change, Hofstede's data may be viewed as outdated and irrelevant. Hofstede collected his data from one single company four decades ago (Hofstede, 2013). After collecting data from one company, Hofstede used the data to describe the world's nations. Because of a biased sample size that does not necessarily reflect the population as a whole, critics are concerned Hofstede's research is neither valid nor reliable.

In 2004, a similar cross-cultural research study came into fruition designed to help fill the gaps left by Hofstede. The GLOBE study was designed to highlight cross-cultural differences and gender egalitarianism. GLOBE spent years comprising and evaluating the best set of questions in relation to gender equality, which can also be applied to leadership (House et al., 2004). In order to leverage the work done by both GLOBE and Hofstede, this study will use both of their psychometric characteristics. The GLOBE study sampled 60 countries to obtain the results of their study. After completing their research, GLOBE compiled the data in order to discover which countries were the most cognizant of gender egalitarianism and which countries



believed gender equality to be important. GLOBE found Hungary, Russia, and Poland currently rank among the highest egalitarian countries, while Kuwait and South Korea currently rank among the lowest. They also concluded England, Sweden, and Ireland were the most pro-gender equality and Kuwait, Qatar, and Egypt were the least. However, South Korea scored in the middle indicating a higher desire for egalitarianism than was currently found in their country (House et al., 2004).

The findings from the GLOBE study lay a foundation for research relating to women in leadership across different cultural dimensions. Because of the GLOBE's broad sample reflecting the population as a whole, their psychometrically tested questions, thorough analysis, and research will be relied upon to compare results and also to assist in formulating questions. The proposed research study will take one step further in determining if perceptions of these women differ from the general population, which would assist these women to become leaders. This study will focus on these young leaders' personal perceptions and how they differ from their general home population.

Toh and Leonardelli research shows how "cultural tightness" often leads to countries having a difficult time allowing women to acquire a leadership position (2013). Furthermore, they found countries with high levels of "tightness," meaning cultures that resist urges to change, directly affect a country's willingness to allow women to advance into leadership roles. As more research is conducted on the effectiveness of women in leadership positions, the more countries will have the information needed to create a workforce seeking to balance the strengths of both genders. In order for more countries to benefit from having women in leadership roles, perceptions of women in leadership positions must be researched, identified, and analyzed in order to better understand the topic.

Other studies have focused more on how social status has affected views towards anti-egalitarianism. Situations, regions, and social dominances are not affected by gender egalitarianism (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Because of inconclusive research findings, there is reason to research to gain greater understanding about women in leadership roles across differing cultures (Sidanius, Levin, Liu, & Pratto, 2000).

While there have been large amounts of research focused on women and leadership, only questions based on why men generally fill leadership roles and how culture and social status effects egalitarianism have been studied. There is a lack of understanding of what essential characteristics women should encompass in order to break out of their cultural molds and govern effectively, while still maintaining respect from others (Perez, 2012).

Few research studies have examined why women choose to pursue leadership positions. Culture appears to play an important deciding factor (Fournier & Grey, 2000; Migliore, 2011). Koc studied how assertiveness, performance, and gender egalitarianism of Turkish culture influenced relationships with their main trading partners of the European Union. Country specific research such as this, while beneficial in some regards, still allows for large areas to be explored in a more global context (2010).

Prior to this research, others have attempted to prove or disprove Hofstede in relation to varying cultures. Jones, at the University of Wollongong, focused specifically on Hofstede and his findings related to culture. Again however, the research focused on only two countries, Australia and Indonesia. This limited focus is not sufficient to discount Hofstede's findings; however, researcher's inability to comprise a substantial sample of women from across many different nations creates an inability for researchers to make generalizations regarding women in leadership positions (2007).

Despite numerous studies about leadership traits and the factors leading individuals to develop leadership characteristics, no studies have compared perceptions of women who choose to pursue leadership and those who do not (Hornsby, Marrow-Jones & Ballam, 2012). Even though other psychological measurements provide insightful information regarding the impact culture has on gender egalitarianism, none of the previous research has been able to sample a group of elite women already labeled as future leaders (Toh & Leonardelli, 2013). By sampling the population of participants attending the Insight Dubai Conference, the hope is to discover what characteristic traits and personal perceptions have set these women apart and allowed them to be successful leaders, notwithstanding any cultural biases impeding other women. Findings will be compared and contrasted to the GLOBE research already performed; there findings will be the control group. As the research is compared to varying models, conclusions will be drawn regarding perception differences. The proposed research study will examine the key perceptions predisposing some women to pursue leadership. Specifically, this study will examine motivation, drive, and goal-orientation.

### Method

#### Participation:

An approximate total of 70 participants between the ages of 18-28 were recruited to participate in this study. Research participants were recruited from a larger population of Insight Dubai 2014 conference participants. Participants were asked through an email link or in person to participate in a Qualtrics survey. This research study focused on finding personality characteristics (perceptions) propelling women to pursue leadership positions regardless of their nationality. Surveys from 31 different countries were grouped together into seven different geographical areas: Africa, Southern Asia, Confucian Asia, Middle East, Europe, Latin America, and Anglo.

#### Design:

The research began after approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Utah State University on March 3, 2014. Insight Dubai participants were selected because these women have already been labeled as having leadership qualities in their respected cultures. The basic research design uses a nonprobability sampling, specifically, purposive survey sample. Those asked to participate already meet predetermined criterion from their respective organizations. The nonprobability sampling is essential to segregate the specific women. The use of a nonprobability sample is due to the research question aiming specifically at women's perspectives who have already been labeled as leaders. The primary dependent variable is leadership, specifically, if a professor has seen enough "leadership qualities," according to their specific culture, than a participant is recommended to attend the Insight Dubai 2014 conference. This research uses a self-reporting measurement; there is no manipulation. For the purposes of this study, data was gathered in a one-time collection. The survey link was sent to all participants or they were asked in person to fill out the survey through the link. The primary independent



variable is the country the participant is originates. This proposed project is nonexperimental. As such, there is no need to have within subjects or between subject groups. Participants were put into seven different geographic groups based upon their country of origin.

Because of the large geographical area of the sample population and due to a small sample size, we are aware of the dangers that exist when trying to extrapolate these findings. In order to mitigate these threats, we mapped out participants' home countries and find geographical sub-regions where we can lump 10-15 participants together. While these groups will still have a small number of participants, it will help increase internal validity by having more participants in each category, while also leveraging the opportunity of having a diverse population from many different countries. Thirty-one countries will be represented at the conference, which will account to approximately seven sub-region groups.

#### Measures:

The control group will be the GLOBE study. We are using the GLOBE measurement due to sound psychometric properties. Out of the 54 GLOBE questionnaire scales, all of them showed "significant within-culture response agreement, between-culture differences, and respectable reliability of response consistency." Generalizable coefficients exceeded 0.85 for all of their scales (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House, 2008).

#### Procedure:

After returning from the Insight Dubai conference, the data was stratified in order to consider how responses compared to the GLOBE measurements. The GLOBE study will be the control group, because their sample was random and does not have a concentrated pool of participants who have leadership characteristics. The difference between the Insight Dubai sample's answers and the answers GLOBE received will help distinguish perceptions



distinguishing women who will pursue leadership positions from those who do not. This is the reasoning behind the decision to use the GLOBE's statistically proven questions. By analyzing the different measurement scores, this study hopes to discover the underlying differences in what sets apart women who will become leaders and those who let cultural biases hinder them from pursuing leadership roles. Four of the survey questions are based off of the GLOBE study, while the other questions have been created just for this research project (see attached appendix).

## Results

Overall trends show the sample population feels more leadership opportunities *should* be available for women and feels societies are biased to encouraging men to pursue leadership roles. While the GLOBE results typically fall into the middle neutral ground, our participants were more extreme in all questions asked, i.e. more likely to “strongly disagree” or “strongly agree.”

	Mean Values Society Practices (Globe Study)	Mean Values Society Values (Globe Study)	Mean Values Society Practices (New Study)	Mean Values Society Values (New Study)
Africa (n=3)	3.29	4.30	2	5.17
Anglo (n=25)	3.40	4.91	3.28	5.66
Confucian Asia (n=10)	3.18	4.19	3.33	4.70
Europe (n=11)	3.78	4.64	3.96	5.41
Middle East (n=14)	2.95	3.65	3.82	4.40
Latin America (n=5)	3.41	4.77	2.76	5.30
Southern Asia (n=4)	3.28	4.10	2.88	5.75

## Africa:

Three survey responses were received from African citizens. The sample shows participants agree women in leadership should be valued (societal practices), but in regards to a country actually valuing women (societal values), they disagree strongly from the GLOBE results saying their countries do not support women who pursue leadership roles. The differences

in values may be due to a small n value; however, a further explanation would be that our African sample varied from GLOBE's sample. When the GLOBE project began, researchers sought out middle managers; which were predominately men, 74.8% (House et al., 2004). The major difference of gender between our sample and that of GLOBE's could account for the large variance we see between the mean scores.

Anglo:

The n sample of Anglo participants was 25. Mean values between GLOBE and the new study in regards to societal practices were nearly identical. Similarly to Africa's means, societal values were more strongly disagreed with, meaning their societies do not support women who pursue leadership positions. Our data, with the addition of GLOBE's data, helps to conclude that men and women from western societies have a similar perspective of women who pursue leadership roles.

Confucian Asian:

Confucian Asian numbers did not vary significantly from GLOBE's numbers. We have accounted this to a broad sample base of countries and participants, n=10. From personal interviews, we learned that most of the women that we sampled that fit into the Confucian Asian sample were already in the workforce. On average, GLOBE participants had already spent 19.2 years in the workforce by the time they were recruited for this study (House et al., 2004). Because both samples had experience in the workplace, we account this as the reason there was not a significant amount of variance between the two sets of means. There is a common trend in all the countries in that they feel like their country does not give them the necessary support to pursue leadership roles. It would appear the sample of participants requires a more active role from government in creating equality between genders.

## Europe:

Societal practices between GLOBE and this study only varied by .28 points. Societal values on the other hand, were almost a whole number higher; sampled women desire for women to be given more opportunities for leadership roles. Over 91% of the European sample was over the age of 21 and most were still in higher education. Without a substantial amount of work experience, it is logical to see why our sample and the GLOBE sample varied. While our small sample of 11 might be causing the difference, it could also be because our sample was heavily populated with Italians; 6 out of the 11 women sampled lived and grew up in Italy. The GLOBE sample had participants scattered all over the European continent.

## Middle East:

Even though there was a relatively large n for Middle Eastern population, mean averages were very different than GLOBE's discovery. Neither societal values or societal practices were remotely close to each other; the means varied by almost a full 1.0. This may be due to a large portion of individuals surveyed were natives of the United Arab Emirates, one of the most progressive Arab cultures. In addition, the UAE's sample had one of the lowest age demographics; over half were under the age of 21. Without any substantial work experience, we conclude that one of the main reasons why our sample differed from that of GLOBE is the lack of work experience in our sample. Most of those who were sampled by GLOBE had an average of 10 years as a business manager at their respected organizations (House et al., 2004).

## Latin America:

With a sample size of 5, it makes sense the outcome was very different from GLOBE's. The differences between societal practices in GLOBE and the new study varied by over 1.0, the largest gap in the entire set of data. Societal values continue to be higher in the surveyed

population than GLOBE. Numerous reasons could explain the difference between the two studies. On the surface, 2 out of the 5 sampled in our population were from Ecuador. Jamaica, Mexico, and Peru were the only other countries that had participants. While the GLOBE participants averaged 19.2 years of work experience, over 60% of our population was under the age of 20 (House et al., 2004). Another reason for the variance between the two samples would be the small n. Sampling 5 women and expecting it to relate to a large study of middle age men in management positions is illogical.

Southern Asia:

According to the data, participants in Southern Asia feel societies encourage men to pursue more leadership than women, while also feeling opportunities should be more available to women. Our sample of Southern Asia women only received four responses; all four were from India. Our study might relate more closely with the GLOBE study if we could break apart the GLOBE and only look at India as a country, rather than as a part of a larger whole, Southern Asia. The similarities that we did see could be a result of the larger age population. Half of our population was over the age of 24, which was one of the oldest means for a country that we sampled.



### Discussion

By crafting and completing this research project, the intention is to provide a more thorough, complete scope of the key attitude characteristics and perceptions needed to make a “successful” women leader. While Hofstede may be the default cultural dimensions analysis, more research is needed to confirm his findings, particularly in regard to women in leadership.

Because the sample population involved an extremely unique population, it is understood the statistics are slightly biased in order to discover what sets women apart in leadership positions from the rest of the society. The vetted population of women already deemed leaders was essential. Unfortunately the sample size was small and in order to obtain more sound results a larger population would be necessary. This was also a self-selecting population where the women personally labeled themselves leaders and many may not truly be the kind of person a majority of people would want to follow.

The research is exploratory and the purpose is to discover if there are certain ideals leading women to leadership position. Due to the level of research required for this project, no in depth statistical analysis was performed and only general analysis was used. Findings show a moderate plausibility of such characteristics, but in order to be certain, further research will be needed. Reactivity is a relative concern for this survey, because certain women may have tried to answer the questions in a way making themselves or their country of origin appear in a more positive light; as such, social desirability may become a major issue.

While the research performed is not conclusive, it does lay the groundwork to understand how some women’s perceptions vary from their general culture enabling them to look past expectations and excel, priming these women to take on roles of leadership. Overall, the majority of participants do not agree with societal norms leading them to take action and

breakaway from common expectations. Without these varying perceptions, the norm would never be challenged and societies would never progress.

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## Appendix

## SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS:

This research project has been approved by Utah State University's IRB. The risk to participate in this survey is minimal; no information identifying participants to responses will be kept. This research project is designed to help better understand qualities engendered in women leaders who pursue leadership positions. The project seeks to better understand cross--cultural leadership styles and their relation to existing cultural models. Please take this survey based on your perceptions of what life is like in your home country. We recommend taking this survey in a private setting where you feel you can answer the questions honestly. If at anytime you feel uncomfortable, you may stop taking this survey. All responses will be anonymous.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact

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1. Are you planning or have you already attended the Insight Dubai Conference?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Men are encouraged more than women to obtain a higher education.
 

Strongly Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
1            2            3            4            5            6            7		
3. Men should be encouraged more than women to obtain a higher education.
 

Strongly Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
1            2            3            4            5            6            7		
4. Men are encouraged more than women to hold a position of high office.
 

Strongly Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
1            2            3            4            5            6            7		
5. Men should be encouraged more than women to hold a position of high office
 

Strongly Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
1            2            3            4            5            6            7		
6. Opportunities for leadership positions are more available to men
 

Strongly Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
1            2            3            4            5            6            7		
7. I believe opportunities for leadership positions should be more available to men
 

Strongly Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree
1            2            3            4            5            6            7		
8. In my home country, men are more encouraged to participate in professional

- development activities than women
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |
9. Men should be more encouraged to participate in professional development activities than women
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |
10. Women in leadership positions are thought of positively
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |
11. Women in leadership positions should be thought of positively
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |
12. Men respect women in leadership positions
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |
13. Men should respect women in leadership positions
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |
14. Men are generally paid more than women
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |
15. Men should be paid more than women
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |
16. In my country, maternity leave is
- Less than 4 weeks (less than 1 month)
  - 5--8 weeks (1--2 months)
  - 9--12 weeks (2--3 months)
  - 13--16 weeks (3--4 months)
  - 17--20 weeks (4--5 months)
  - Over 21 weeks (over 5 months)
  - Women are not given maternity leave
17. Women should receive longer maternity leave
- |                |   |                            |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Neither agree nor disagree |   | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2 | 3                          | 4 | 5                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 6                 |
|                |   |                            |   | 7                 |

18. In my country, gain their power by (choose the best answer below)

- a. Coercive
- b. Reward
- c. Position
- d. Knowledge
- e. Referent (trust from others)

19. The most important quality of a good leader in my country is (choose the best answer below)

- a. Confidence
- b. Knowledge
- c. People Skills
- d. Hard Working

20. Age

- a. Under 18
- b. 18--20
- c. 21--23
- d. 24--26
- e. Older than 26

21. Country of Citizenship: