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# Cultural Backgrounds and Leadership Styles in the Virtual Work Environment

June Reid  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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June P. Brown-Reid

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Walden University

2018

Abstract

Cultural Backgrounds and Leadership Styles in the Virtual Work Environment

by

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MS, New York Institute of Technology, 2003

BS, Florida Metropolitan University, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy Management - Human Resources Management

Walden University

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## Abstract

The introduction of the virtual work environment has resulted in the creation of a new work structure where interaction between employees and leaders occurs through technological innovations such as teleconferencing, emails, and text messages. The absence of physical workspace has also created a diverse work environment with people from various cultural backgrounds working together as virtual teams. Existing studies have been conducted on leadership styles and culture in the traditional work environment, but few empirical studies have been conducted on leadership styles and culture in the virtual work environment. The purpose of this quantitative, nonexperimental survey study was to identify the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. The data were collected by an online survey using the Bass and Avolio multifactor leadership questionnaire and Hofstede's cultural value survey module from a random sample of 303 participants with leadership roles in virtual work environments. Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between the dependent variables, transactional and transformational leadership styles, with the independent variables, being power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. The results of the study showed a negative correlation between the transformational and transactional leadership styles for individualism and uncertainty avoidance. There were no correlations between femininity and power distance for the transformational and transactional leadership styles. The study contributes to social change by confirming that cultural backgrounds can impact the effectiveness of the transactional and transformational leadership styles, regardless of the work environment.

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## Dedication

To my mom, Louise West for sacrifices and selflessness. A woman of strength who persevered during the darkest times.

## Acknowledgments

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	vi
List of Figures .....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study .....	2
Problem Statement .....	3
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	6
Theoretical Foundation .....	10
Nature of the Study .....	15
Definitions.....	16
Assumptions.....	18
Scope and Delimitations .....	20
Limitations .....	21
Significance of Study.....	22
Significance of Theory.....	22
Significance to Practice.....	23
Significance of Social Change .....	24
Summary and Transition.....	24
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	26
Literature Search Strategy.....	26



Theoretical Foundation .....	28
Literature Review.....	31
First Theoretical Framework.....	31
The Structure of Culture .....	32
Definition of Culture.....	33
The Influence of Culture Backgrounds.....	35
Perception .....	35
Attitude .....	37
Language and Communication .....	38
Culture Backgrounds and the Organization.....	39
Leadership and Cultural Backgrounds.....	39
Leadership Trust .....	41
The Influence of National Culture .....	43
Cultural Dimensions .....	45
Attributes of Cultural Dimensions.....	47
Leadership.....	55
Leadership in the Virtual Work Environment .....	57
Definition of Virtual Teams.....	57
Characteristics of Virtual Teams .....	58
Leading the Virtual Work Environment .....	65
Leadership and Cultural Backgrounds.....	66
Leadership Styles Within the Virtual Work Environment.....	68

Second Theoretical Framework .....	69
Characteristics of Political Leaders .....	69
Power and Leadership.....	70
Moral Leadership Structure .....	73
Values and Leadership.....	76
Leadership Styles – The Power and Influence.....	79
Transactional Leadership .....	80
Transformational Leadership .....	87
Implications of the Transactional and Transformational Leadership .....	94
Third Theoretical Framework.....	95
Leadership in Business and Politics.....	95
Leadership, the Broad View .....	100
Transactional Leadership .....	101
Transformational Leadership.....	105
Summary and Conclusions .....	111
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	112
Research Design and Rationale .....	114
Population .....	116
Sampling and Sampling Procedures .....	117
Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs .....	119
Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire .....	119
Cultural Value Survey Module .....	120

Data Analysis .....	121
Reliability of Instrument .....	122
Threats to Validity .....	123
External Validity.....	123
Internal Validity.....	124
Construct Validity.....	124
Ethical Procedures .....	124
Summary .....	125
Chapter 4: Results .....	127
Introduction.....	127
Data Collection .....	128
Study Results .....	129
Preparing the Survey Instruments.....	131
Results.....	134
Descriptive Statistics.....	134
Correlation Analysis .....	136
Research Question 1 .....	137
Research Question 2 .....	141
One-Way Analysis of Variance .....	146
Summary.....	156
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendation .....	158
Introduction.....	158

Interpretation of Findings .....	159
Limitations of the Study.....	167
Recommendations.....	168
Implications.....	169
Positive Social Change .....	169
Recommendation for Practice.....	171
Conclusion .....	172
References.....	174
Appendix A: Consent to Participate in Survey Instrument.....	229
Appendix B: Permission to Use Hofstede Value Survey Module Questionnaire.....	231
Appendix C: Permission to Use MLQ 5X Survey.....	232
Appendix D: Descriptive Statistics – Gender .....	233
Appendix E: Descriptive Statistics – Nationality .....	234
Appendix F: Leadership Style Histogram.....	235
Appendix G: Cultural Values – Histogram.....	236

## List of Tables

Table 1. Participants by Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Year of Birth.....	130
Table 2. MLQ 5X and Cultural Value Survey Module (CVSM) Scale Items.....	132
Table 3. MLQ 5X and Cultural Value Survey Module (CVSM) Scale Averages .....	133
Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Leadership Styles .....	135
Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Cultural Values.....	136
Table 6. Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Individualism.....	137
Table 7. Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Uncertainty Avoidance .....	138
Table 8. Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Power Distance.....	140
Table 9. Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Masculinity.....	141
Table 10. Pearson Correlation – Transactional Style and Individualism.....	140
Table 11. Pearson Correlation – Transactional Style and Uncertainty Avoidance.....	143
Table 12. Pearson Correlation – Transactional Style and Power Distance.....	144
Table 13. Pearson Correlation – Transactional Style and Masculinity.....	146
Table 14. ANOVA Test for Hypothesis One.....	147
Table 15. ANOVA Test for Hypothesis Two .....	148
Table 16. ANOVA Test for Hypothesis Three .....	148
Table 17. ANOVA Test for Hypothesis Four.....	149
Table 18. ANOVA Test for Hypothesis Five .....	150
Table 19. ANOVA Test for Hypothesis Six .....	151
Table 20. ANOVA Test for Hypothesis Seven.....	151
Table 21. ANOVA Test for Hypothesis Eight.....	152

Table 22. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Output – Transformational Leadership.....	153
Table 23. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Output – Transactional Leadership.....	153
Table 24. KMO and Bartlett’s Test – Transformational Leadership .....	154
Table 25. KMO and Bartlett’s Test – Transactional Leadership .....	154
Table 26. KMO and Bartlett’s Test – Individualism .....	155
Table 27. KMO and Bartlett’s Test – Power Distance .....	155
Table 28. KMO and Bartlett’s Test – Masculinity .....	156
Table 29. KMO and Bartlett’s Test – Uncertainty Avoidance .....	156

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Depiction of the virtual work environment.....	9
Figure 2. SurveyMonkey sample size calculator.....	101

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Since World War II, global trade barriers have progressively declined, allowing multinational companies to take advantage of new trade agreements among countries. For example, the North American Free Trade Agreement and China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) have created opportunities for United States companies to transcend national borders into the world market (Haskel, Lawrence, Leamer, & Slaughter, 2012). The opportunity resulting from globalization has facilitated competition, allowed companies to become more efficient, and has created access to new resources and foreign markets (Viswaprakash & Sentamilselvan, 2012). Since the turn of the century, technology, cloud computing, and the internet have created a new form of virtual globalization, allowing remote access to nearly the entire world (Haskel et al., 2012; Santos, Akabane, & Santos, 2013). With globalization came a new work environment, which became known as the remote, virtual workplace (Kai-Tang, Yuan-Ho, Ching-Wen, & Chen, 2014).

Hasan, Ibrahim, and Uddin (2016) indicated that globalization requires the redesign of business procedures to be consistent with the requirements of the global marketplace. Before technological advancement, employees typically worked nearby, with synchronous access to leaders, resources, and colleagues. Now, employees can be in different countries, continents, and time zones, and they seamlessly work together using technology such as the internet and cellular devices to create their workplaces (De Paoli & Ropo, 2015). These virtual teams have led to a need for new types of leadership



processes and have raised questions about how traditional leadership styles operate in the new virtual environment (Kai-Tang et al., 2014; Martinic, Fertalj, & Kalpic, 2012). With virtual workplaces, the question has also risen about how cultural differences may affect work environments with the possibilities of cultural discord or conflict (Militaru, Niculescu, Simion, & Alexe, 2014).

### **Background of the Study**

Hofstede (1980) conducted a well-known study on cultural backgrounds that explored the relationships of people's behavior, attitude, and perception in organizations. The results of Hofstede's (1980) study provided researchers with data on the effects of cultural differences in the work environment. Wickramasinghe and Nandula (2015) identified culture as a factor in the way people behave in the global virtual teams. Due to the varied cultural composition, people will bring their cultural attributes into their work environments. Those who lead the organization also require close attention because they also bring their cultural backgrounds into the work environment (Pinar, Zehir, Kitapçı, & Tanriverdi, 2014). Different researchers have shown that culture in the virtual work environment can influence how leaders run the organization (Jung, Chan, Chen, & Chow, 2010; Meng, 2015). Sabri (2012) found that culture affects which leadership styles are most effective and Jogulu (2010) noted that leadership styles are evolving to meet the demands of the new virtual work environment.

Although significant amounts of research have been conducted on leadership styles in the traditional work environments, a gap exists in research on leadership styles in the virtual work environment. Emmanuel and Ugochukwu (2013), Kamisan and King

(2013), and Rijal (2016) identified the transactional and transformational leadership styles as effective forms of leadership that have been successful in the traditional work environment. Prior studies conducted on leadership in the virtual work environment have focused on leadership styles such as emergent leadership (Ziek & Smulowitz, 2014); authentic leadership (Korzynski, 2013); and autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic, and participative leadership (ElKhouly, Ossman, Selim, & Zaghloul, 2014).

The study by Hofstede (1980) has provided insights into the influence of cultural backgrounds on different aspects of people's conduct in the traditional work environment. Other researchers such as Meng (2015) and Sabri (2012) have identified culture as an influential force on leadership in the organization. This study is important because unlike some of the earlier research studies that focused on culture and leadership styles in the traditional work environment, my study provides an empirical examination of cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment.

### **Problem Statement**

The growth of businesses in the global market has been made possible by technological innovations. The various technological platforms have been used to create opportunities for businesses to develop a more flexible work structure known as the virtual work environment (Vesala & Tuomivaara, 2015). Employees in the virtual work environment work as part of virtual teams whose members communicate with each other and execute their job functions using technology. Through the years, there has been an upward trend in virtual teams in the United States as well as in the global marketplace (Maduka, Edwards, Greenwood, Osborne, & Babatunde, 2018). As reported by Timsal

and Awais (2016) there is a projected growth of approximately 105.4 million remote workers by the year 2020. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) reported that as of the year 2015, 24% of workers in professions such as management, administrative, financial, and sales had done all or part of their work from home. DellaNeve and Gladys (2015) highlighted the significant growth of the virtual work teams. These researchers asserted that with more than 63 million Americans currently working from home, evidence suggests that the virtual work environment is becoming a viable work structure.

The general problem arising from the development of the virtual work environment is that existing studies have mainly focused on leaders and followers interacting in the traditional work environment (Madlock, 2012). However, with technology creating globally dispersed teams (Klitmøller, Schneider, & Jonsen, 2015) and the continuing emphasis on technology as a critical part of the way people live, learn, and work, it is necessary to better understand the dynamics of the virtual work environment (Cordes, 2016). Researchers such as Bishop (2013), and Ziek and Smulowitz (2014), emphasized the substantial influence of technology on organizations with the creation of a workplace structure where employees are separated from their coworkers and managers. Mukherjee, Lahiri, Mukherjee, and Billing (2012) also recognized the significant differences between the traditional and virtual work environment. They described a work environment this is heavily reliant on asynchronous means of communication and infused with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

With the growth in the virtual work environment, a specific problem exists that has increased the need for additional research on the relationship between cultural

backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. It is necessary to understand this relationship because employees in the virtual work environment come from various countries that influence the characteristics of people in the organization (Au & Marks, 2012) and can also influence leadership behavior (Lee & Liu, 2012). Hanlon, Kedia, and Srivastava (2012) identified the absence of adequate studies about leadership within the virtual work environment. Hogue (2015) conducted a study on the transformational leadership style for a virtual team in an information technology organization and specifically identified the lack of empirical studies on leadership in virtual teams. Hogue suggested that future studies be conducted to include other leadership styles. My research study was used to address the gap in existing studies and add to the body of knowledge by examining the effect of cultural backgrounds and the transactional and transformational leadership styles in the virtual work environment.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative, nonexperimental survey study was to examine the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. I examined cultural backgrounds using the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1980) with the transactional and transformational leadership styles of Burns (1978) and (Bass, 1985). The independent variables (IVs) were Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity, whereas the dependent variables (DVs) were (Bass 1978; Burns 1985) were transactional and transformational leadership styles. I intended to identify how cultural backgrounds affect leadership styles in the virtual work environment and whether cultural backgrounds

would influence the dominant use of one leadership style, namely the transactional or transformational, over the other and whether any significant differences or influences exist in the leadership styles in the virtual work environment.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In this study, I aligned with two theories, Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions and the transactional leadership and transformational leadership of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). These theories were the basis for developing the research topic that eventually resulted in the formulation of the research questions. Following are the two research questions and eight hypotheses that guided this study.

#### **Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and transformational leadership style in the virtual work environment?

#### **Hypothesis 1**

*H1<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

*H1<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

*H1<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

#### **Hypothesis 2**

*H2<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

*H2<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

*H2<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

### **Hypothesis 3**

*H3<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

*H3<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

*H3<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

### **Hypothesis 4**

*H4<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

*H4<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

*H4<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

### **Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the transactional leadership style in the virtual work environment?

**Hypothesis 5**

*H5<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

*H5<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

*H5<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

**Hypothesis 6**

*H6<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

*H6<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

*H6<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

**Hypothesis 7**

*H7<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

*H7<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

*H7<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

**Hypothesis 8**

*H8<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

*H8<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

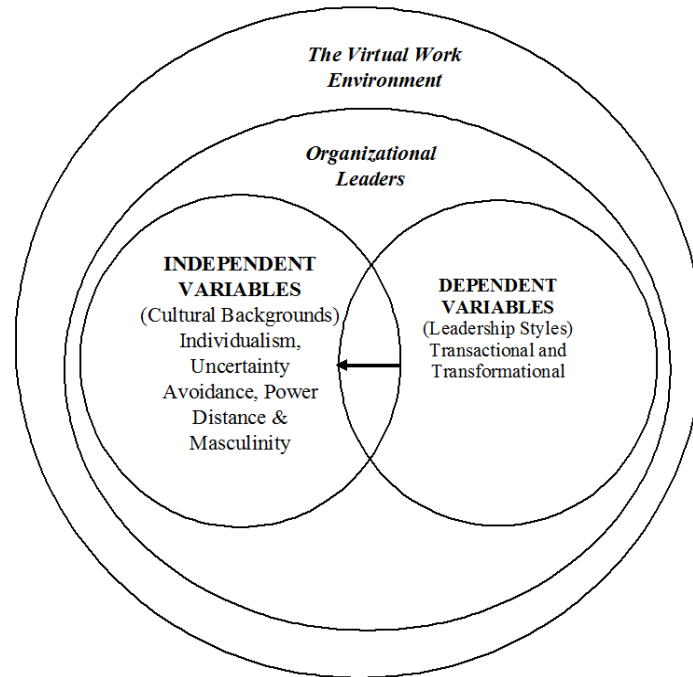
*H8<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

**Summary of Hypotheses**

To illustrate the concept of cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment, I created the model illustrated in Figure 1 to represent the idea of how the cultural variables relate to the leadership variables. Due to the limited empirical studies relevant to leadership styles in the virtual work environment, the concept for the figure was developed. The concept was derived from the review of earlier studies done on cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the traditional work environment (Jung et al., 2010; Madlock, 2012; Meng, 2015; Sabri, 2012).



## A Depiction of the Virtual Work Environment



*Figure 1.* The model represents the hypothesized view of how organizational leaders react to cultural obstacles depending on their leadership styles (Reid, 2016).

### Theoretical Foundation

The current study was used by me as the basis to examine how cultural backgrounds based on four of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions—power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity—related to the transactional and transformational leadership styles (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978) within the virtual work environment. To execute this research, I used a postpositivist worldview to reduce the broad concepts derived from literature about leadership, culture, and the virtual work

environment to smaller ideas where hypotheses were developed and tested with the appropriate data analysis technique.

One of the essential roles in the organization is that of leadership. It is the leader who creates the culture and is a force of influence that can transform the organization (Veisesh, Mohammadi, Pirzadian, & Sharafi, 2014). The leader is expected to possess dynamic characteristics that will energize and motivate people to achieve organizational objectives and goals (Cater, Lang, & Szabo, 2013). With globalization and technology, the structure of the workplace has taken a different form, and leadership characteristics have become more diverse (O'Brien & Robertson, 2009) and reflect the learned values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, and traditions that are part of the national culture (Jalumuri Siva, 2012). Because cultural backgrounds were identified in different studies as having a significant effect on the way people behave and, in the way, they lead the organization (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012), it is also necessary to understand which leadership styles would be most suitable for the virtual work environment (Ruggieri, 2009).

I identified the two theoretical frameworks (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Hofstede, 1980) as appropriate for this study; based on their significant use in other studies as expanded on in Chapter 2. These theoretical frameworks were used to address the gap in existing research about cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. Hofstede's (1980) four cultural dimensions (a) power distance, (b) uncertainty avoidance, (c) individualism, and (d) masculinity were identified as broad taxonomies of national culture based on patterns of beliefs and values (Hoehle, Zhang, & Venkatesh, 2015), and classified the underlying tendencies that exist within different

cultures (Minvok & Hofstede, 2011). These cultural dimensions have been used extensively in other studies to understand cultural practices relating to business (Kim & Kim, 2010). These dimensions identified the differences that exist in society as manifested through values, attitudes, and behaviors of people through their interaction (Alkailani, Azzam, & Athamneh, 2012).

The cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1980) have provided a channel for exploring cultural attributes and values in different environments including academia, corporate, public, and private sectors (Rhein, 2013). Ozgen (2012) described Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a classification of the differences that may exist in various countries. The dimensions also serve as indicators of how national culture can influence the way people lead the organization and demonstrate the differences that exist across cultures. Lee and Liu (2012) who tested the awareness of culture using Hofstede's cultural dimensions identified culture as a significant influence on leadership behavior. These researchers noted that learning about the issues that affect culture will ultimately help in comprehending how cultural backgrounds influence the organization.

As highlighted by Hofstede (1994), the primary emphasis of the study on culture was to identify the value differences in various national cultures. The importance of culture was recognized based on the observations Hofstede made in his studies on how cultural backgrounds affect everyone including leaders and subordinates. Hofstede determined that national culture influence different factors in the society such as politics, government, education, and symbolic values. Hofstede also declared that to function as part of the world we need to understand the differences that exist in different cultures.

The second theoretical framework is the transactional and transformational leadership styles, which were first introduced by Burns (1978) and later enhanced by Bass (1985). This theoretical framework addressed the gap in leadership styles in the virtual work environment. The transactional and transformational leadership styles were identified in different studies as two approaches that have been used to study leadership (Ghazali, Ahmad, & Zakaria, 2015). The leadership study conducted by Burns was concentrated on the characteristics of different political leaders. Burns compared the various aspects of power and leadership as portrayed by political leaders that were examined within the context of two leadership styles: transactional and transformational leadership. Burns used the two leadership styles to identify the various attributes exhibited by business and political leaders. Bass compared the behavioral attributes of different political and business leaders.

The defining qualities of the transformational leadership style or transforming style identified by Burns (1978) were centered on elevating and inspiring followers and creating a relationship that supported mutual goals. Burns viewed this style as having an influential role in shaping the motives and values of followers. Bass (1985) identified the transformational leadership style as an uplifting approach that pursues what is right or proper without concern for popularity. Bass regarded the transformational style of leadership as one that encourages participation. Like Burns, Bass identified it as an influential role that teaches and mentors followers and pursues initiatives that may significantly change the culture of the organization.

The transactional leadership style is a contractual relationship between leaders and followers that is intended to exchange something of value between leaders and followers (Bass, 1985). Burns (1978) identified the relationship between leaders and followers as reciprocal because it is natural for leaders to pursue followers with the intent of exchanging one thing for another to achieve personal goals. Burns acknowledged that the natural exchange element of the transactional style of leadership was sometimes necessary when leaders had to make certain types of decisions. One example was Lyndon B. Johnson who was described as the perfect transactional leader of legislation because Johnson could recognize the needs and motives of senators and used their desires to build a power resource, which Johnson later used to negotiate and make exchanges that were beneficial to his cause or interests (Burns, 1978).

Bass (1985) described the transactional leadership as a style that supported exchange and in a supervisory-subordinate role will reciprocate only if subordinates demonstrate or fulfilled the desired outcome. The transactional style as described by Bass operated within the existing culture and will merge values with what is already in place and will make no change. Like Burns (1978), Bass suggested that it is sometimes necessary for leaders to undertake a transactional role. Bass pointed to world leaders such as Charles de Gaulle, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson who found it necessary to use the transactional style to varying degrees to secure outcomes for the balance of power. Lyndon Johnson demonstrated the most extreme instances of the transactional style. In pursuit of power, Johnson socialized with wealthy men and women and adjusted

the role to be compatible with the group for the sole purpose of gaining their support, which was later used as leverage to achieve Johnson's goals (Bass, 1985).

### **Nature of the Study**

For this research, a quantitative, nonexperimental survey study was used to examine the relationship between IVs of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity to the DVs of transactional and transformational leadership styles in the virtual work environment. A quantitative research design is more conducive to analyzing specific variables and enables explaining, predicting, or controlling of events. The quantitative method allowed me to collect and analyze the data promptly and economically compared with the qualitative research design and enabled more generalized findings. I determined that the qualitative research method was not appropriate for a number of reasons. First, it is used to explore the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants; second, it is more time-consuming and costly to conduct; third, a higher chance of researcher bias exists; and fourth, the qualitative research is not the most appropriate design to answer questions about the relationships between variables such as cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in virtual team. Therefore, I selected the selection of the quantitative approach most appropriate for this research study because the data was used to determine the relevance and significance of the relationship between the variables.

This research study utilized two existing instruments. The first was the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) 5X Short, which was developed by Bass and Avolio (1994) and was used by these researchers to measure leadership styles as it relates to

organizational outcomes. The instrument has been used in several different published studies (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Rothfelder, Ottenbacher, & Harrington, 2012) to measure leadership styles as it relates to organizational outcomes. The MLQ 5X short questionnaire is a self-administered survey that is designed using the five-point Rensis Likert scale: (4) frequently if not always, (3) fairly often, (2) sometimes, (1) once in a while, (0) not at all, to rate the frequency of certain leadership behaviors including the transactional and transformational leadership styles.

The second instrument selected was Hofstede's (1994) cultural value survey module (CVSM-94). The CVSM-94 was chosen because it is widely accepted and has been used in several studies (Khan & Sandhu, 2016; Lee & Liu, 2012; Seleim & Bontis, 2009; Wahjudi, Singgih, Suwignjo, & Baihaqi, 2016; Zheng, 2010) and provides clear-cut dimensions that have been incorporated into different studies (Yeganeh, Zhan, & Sauers, 2009). Hofstede initially used the value survey module to measure the influence of national culture on the different cultural groups within the International Business Machines (IBM) work population (Bergiel, Bergiel, & Upson, 2012).

### **Definitions**

The following is a list comprising of key terms used in the study:

*Collectivism*: A cultural dimension that classifies the bond that exists between groups. It is representative of a culture where people take care of each other and have a high concern for each other's well-being (Engle & Nash, 2015).

*Culture*: The innate values, concepts, customs, and norms, which are common to people from a similar social group (Tagreed, 2012).

*Cultural dimensions:* Cultural classifications that identify the differences that exist between people from different cultures (Hofstede, 1980). A classification of the social interactions that are common among people from different cultural backgrounds (Yoo, 2014).

*Femininity:* A cultural dimension that identifies cultures that are affectionate, easy-going with interest in maintaining social relationships. Unlike the masculine cultures, there is minimal emphasis on the male-female role (Bergiel, Bergiel, & Upson, 2012).

*Globalization:* The growth of economic relationships with various foreign countries. It is also the process by which trades occur with the exchange of goods and services between different countries (Karadagli, 2012).

*Individualism:* A cultural dimension that identifies a society where individuals are expected to take care of their own needs with little or no assistance from others. It also signifies a culture where individuals are more inclined to pursue their self-interest with regards to others (Meng, 2010).

*Masculinity:* A cultural dimension used to identify cultures that are ambitious and unyielding and demonstrate an avid interest in pursuing material things with a strong emphasis on the male role (Kibria, 2013).

*Multifactor leadership questionnaire:* Survey instrument used to measure the qualities of leadership styles (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

*Power distance:* A cultural dimension that identifies how people accept the inequalities that exist in each other. The level of acceptance affects how people relate or



interact with each other depending on the position or status they hold in society (Jiang, Flores, Leelawong, & Manz, 2016).

*Transactional leadership*: A leadership style that focuses on exchanging one thing for another. Leaders who practice this style will reward or punish employees based on how much they comply (Jabeen, Behery, & Abu Elanain, 2015).

*Transformational leadership*: A style of leadership that has a positive impact on performance and seeks to inspire followers to view their role as a partnership (Emmanuel & Ugochukwu, 2013).

*Uncertainty avoidance*: A cultural dimension that identifies the level of a society's tolerance for uncertainty or events that occur unexpectedly (De Bellis, Hildebrand, Ito, & Herrmann, 2015).

*Virtual teams*: A group of people who work remotely together asynchronously or synchronously using technology (Siqueira Ferreira, Edson Pinheiro, & Gouvea, 2012).

*Virtual work environment*: Geographically distributed work environment where people collaborate mainly by various technological methods such as the World Wide Web, Email, and Video Conference (Crespo, Pedamallu, Özdamar, & Weber, 2012).

### **Assumptions**

Before undertaking this study, I made several assumptions. Assumptions are unsupported or imaginary expectations that are presumed by researchers to guide the research in a particular direction (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). My first assumption was that the leadership style of much of the participants would be identified as fitting the transformational leadership style. This assumption was based on the preconceived notion

that most organizational leaders would identify with a leadership style that would create a cohesive, united work environment where employees are treated as partners. My second assumption was that the transformational leadership style would be more suitable for the virtual work environment. I identified the transformational leadership style appropriate because employees are physically separated from leaders and appear to have more autonomy over their work, which would require leaders who possess the characteristics of the transformational leadership style. My third assumption was that leaders in the virtual work environment would be more technology savvy and are more receptive to change. This assumption was based on the integral role that information technology plays in connecting leaders with subordinates.

The expectation is that leaders would be knowledgeable about the use of emails, teleconferencing, blogging, and social media. I also believed that due to the continuous change in information technology, virtual leaders are accustomed to the transformation of technology and would be more open and receptive to change in general. My fourth assumption was that due to the prevalence of information technology all over the world, it would not be difficult to identify participants for the study from cultures who are leaders of virtual employees. My fifth and final assumption is that due to the extensive use of the MLQ 5X short questionnaire in other studies by researchers such as Carter (2009), Cole, Bodleian, and Field (2006), Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2013), and Li, Chen, Ying, and Barnes (2010) that the questionnaire would accurately measure the transactional and transformational leadership styles in the current study.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of the study surrounds the nationality and geographic domain, role in the organization, and the type of work environment of the participants. I included participants who are leaders in their organization and who hold job titles such as chief, senior, manager, director, president, vice president, or deputy. I also included participants born and raised in the United States and anyone born or raised in cultures other than the United States. Participants who were born and raised in the United States could be from any ethnic group such as Italians and West Indians. Participants could be employed in any type and size industry. However, they had to be employed in a work environment that met the criteria of the virtual work environment. This rule means that participants could not be employed in a traditional workplace. They needed to communicate or stay in contact with their employees primarily through information technology.

To stay within boundaries of the research question, other factors that could potentially affect leadership styles such as gender (Brandt & Laiho, 2013), personality traits (Ali, Nisar, & Raza, 2011), and religion (Sarлак, Javadein, Esfahany, & Veiseh, 2012) was not investigated in this study. I recognized that omission of these variables could affect the results of the study. In addition, because the survey study conducted using an online source, I did not have an opportunity to verify whether the respondents' job titles met the criterion. As such, there is the potential that the results could differ from a survey study conducted with leaders in a traditional business environment because there will be no way of verifying the job title and role of the leaders in the online sample population.

## **Limitations**

There was a possibility that the number of eligible participants may not be an adequate sample size to answer the research questions. There was also the concern for the commitment of the participants which could have affected the quality of the data. Respondents may not dedicate the time to read and understand the questions and may have selected answers that do not accurately depict their leadership style. Respondents may have also had preconceived notions about their style of leadership, which realistically may be different from how subordinates view them. Due to the type of population surveyed, there was a high possibility of communication error. Participants in the study could be from foreign countries and may speak different languages, but the survey was written in English, which may have eliminated participants who were not comfortable with the English language.

Another limitation of the study was the research design. Although the quantitative research was determined to be the most suitable for this study, the researcher recognized that the two survey instruments were developed in the 1990s and may not be as effective today as they were at the time they were used initially. However, based on the use of the CVSM-94 (Dartey-Baah, 2013; Garg & Ma, 2005; Lee & Liu, 2012; Seleim & Bontis, 2009; Zheng, 2010) and the MLQ 5X short (Carter, 2009; Cole, Bodleian, & Field, 2006; Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Li, Chen, Ying, & Barnes, 2010) in other earlier studies, there is some reassurance that the instruments continued to be of value in research. Another concern is that quantitative research, unlike qualitative research, was

not done in a natural setting and the information gathered from participants may not be an accurate representation of their characteristics.

### **Significance of Study**

With the help of technology, globalization has changed the dynamics of the workplace and has prompted the need to reexamine leadership styles (Marc, 2011). Globalization and technology have created an avenue for people to work from anywhere in the world (O'Brien & Robertson, 2009). The result of this relationship is a diverse group of individuals who are now part of the work environment and the influences they bring from their different cultural backgrounds that are part of this diversity (Eom, 2009; Nunamaker, Reinig, & Briggs, 2009). Globalization has brought significant change to the organizational culture and structure of the workplace as well as human resource practices (Chen & Chuang, 2013). Hence, the need for stakeholders such as human resources and, leadership practitioners, to understand the impact that cultural backgrounds can have on the leadership styles of their respective organization and offer insights into the structure of the transactional and transformational leadership styles.

### **Significance of Theory**

As part of the strategic partners of the organization, human resource practitioners are tasked with the responsibility of managing the various facets of employee tenure in meeting organizational goals (Suresh & Chandrasekaran, 2012). A study such as this may provide valuable data, which could be used to develop training for leaders who have leadership styles that are contrary to the organizational business model. This study could

a basis for developing new leadership models as well as training for employees on diversity awareness.

### **Significance to Practice**

Leadership practitioners are the members of the organization who are responsible for leading the organization and influencing followers to achieve organizational goals (Taormina, 2010). The result from this study may assist leadership practitioners to become aware of their current leadership style and how it fits within the transactional and transformational leadership styles. This study may also bring awareness of how the attributes of their cultural backgrounds influence decision-making as well as their relationship with followers.

The result of the study may also aid organizations in developing initiatives to address or improve a variety of organizational needs on cultural awareness. The result could also be used to develop appropriate training to prepare employees for leadership responsibilities and may help them to lead culturally diverse, geographically disperse teams effectively. An awareness of the potential impact on national cultures can influence employees to develop a preemptive focus on short and long-term goals to improve current global operations or future expansions into the global marketplace.

The functions of leadership have been identified as critical to the success of the organization (Veisoh et al., 2014). The results could also give support to the ongoing emphasis on the leadership role and contribute to the knowledge and understanding of leadership styles and national cultures in the virtual work environment. It could also provide significant information that will be beneficial to existing global organizations

that use virtual teams and could also educate organizational practitioners who are seeking to operate virtually on the effects of cultural backgrounds on the people who are charged with leading the organization.

### **Significance of Social Change**

The results of the study could be an important contribution to social change by providing valuable information to practitioners as it relates to the fundamental structure of the transactional and transformation leadership. The information could prompt practitioners to formulate proper strategies for enhancing or developing leadership abilities. The results could also offer insights into how the cultural dimensions as presented by Hofstede (1980) affect leadership behavior and decision-making. The implication for positive social change is the promotion of cultural backgrounds as an integral part of people's behavior both in society and in the workplace. It will bring awareness to the unique characteristics of people and their culture and how the differences can be fostered for the betterment of the organization. Also, it is hoped that different regions may be prompted to recognize patterns in their cultural backgrounds, which can be incorporated into other cultures. This study may also help regions to identify patterns that may hinder successful relationships in the different areas of the global technological world.

### **Summary and Transition**

The role of leadership has been identified by researchers (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Veisoh et al., 2014) as an important part of the organization and with the growing popularity of virtual work environment; was noted by researchers such as (Marc, 2011;

Ruggieri, 2009; Shriberg, 2009) that leading employees in this type of environment cannot be done in the same way as a traditional work environment. Some researchers (Brandt, England, & Ward, 2011; Jogulu 2010; Nydegger & Nydegger, 2010; Staples & Zhao, 2006) have also suggested that with the opportunities offered by technology, there is a greater chance that the virtual work environment will be more diverse. In introducing this concept of cultural influence, four of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions (i.e., power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity) were identified as a practical framework to study the effects of cultural background on outcomes such as attitudes, values, and perception of leadership. Burns' (1978) and Bass' (1985) transactional and transformational leadership styles were the selected framework used to study the relationship between culture and leadership styles.

Chapter 1 was used to introduce the problem that prompted the research, present a summary of relevant research about leadership culture, and virtual work environment; identify the purpose; introduce the theoretical frameworks that guided the study; identify the significance and the contribution to the body of knowledge; present theoretical support for the study; and identify the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and scope. Chapter 2 will be used to provide a review of literature relevant to the study that will include details of the theoretical framework of Hofstede (1980), Burns (1978), and Bass (1985).



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

Globalization and technology have caused organizations to become multicultural with people from all over the world working together virtually. This fusion of culture in the virtual work environment has promoted the need to inquire into the influences of cultural backgrounds on the leadership of the organization. My purpose in conducting this quantitative, nonexperimental survey study was to examine the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. The focus of this chapter is the review of literature within the context of the cultural backgrounds (i.e., individualism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity) and the transactional and transformational leadership styles in the virtual work environment.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The research for the literature included various multidisciplinary sources, which consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and public and private electronic searches retrieved primarily from three databases: (a) EBSCO's Academic Search Complete, (b) ABI/INFORM Complete, and (c) Emerald Management Journals. The keyword searches used were *leadership*, *Hofstede's dimensions*, *leadership styles*, *transactional and transformational leadership*, *virtual teams*, *cultural dimensions*, *cultural backgrounds*, *leadership in virtual teams*, *leadership styles in virtual teams* and *leadership behavior*. The searches were limited to peer-reviewed and full-text work.

The results of the searches were EBSCO's Academic Search Complete with the search term *leadership* returned 30,776; ABI/INFORM Complete returned 19,533. The

search term *Hofstede's dimensions* on EBSCO's Academic Search Complete returned 15 results; ABI/INFORM Complete, 261; EBSCO's Academic Search Complete returned 2,067. For the search term *leadership styles*, ABI/INFORM Complete returned 1,762 results. EBSCO's Academic Search Complete returned 7,706. Searches for *transactional and transformational and leadership* returned 259 results; EBSCO's Academic Search Complete returned 106 results. The search term *virtual teams* generated 441 results from ABI/INFORM Complete; EBSCO's Academic Search Complete returned 169 results, Management Emerald Journal 609 results. Searches for *Hofstede* returned 1,736 results from ABI/INFORM Complete; EBSCO's Academic Search Complete, 554, and Emerald Management Journals 830 results. The search term *cultural backgrounds* returned 789 results from ABI/INFORM Complete returned; EBSCO's Academic Search Complete returned 1,359 results; Emerald Management Journals returned 724 results. The search term *leadership in virtual teams* ABI/INFORM Complete returned 53 results, and EBSCO's Academic Search Complete returned two results. The search term for *leadership styles and virtual teams* returned seven results from ABI/INFORM Complete; EBSCO's Academic Search Complete returned 10 results, and Emerald Management Journals returned five results. This literature review consists of 219 peer-reviewed articles and three peer-reviewed books.

The review was divided into two sections. In the first section, I synthesize the literature on different aspects of culture such as the structure of culture, definitions of culture, and the influences of culture on people's perceptions of people or situations, attitude, and communication. It included different aspects of cultural backgrounds and the

effects on the organization, and leadership and cultural backgrounds. The review concluded with the theoretical framework of Hofstede's four cultural dimensions: (a) individualism, (b) uncertainty avoidance, and (c) power distance, and (d) masculinity (Hofstede, 1980). In the second section, I synthesized the literature on themes on the role of leadership and concluded with the theoretical framework of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) transactional and transformational leadership styles.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical foundations for this study were based on two theories. The first was the cultural framework of Hofstede (1980), which was an empirical study on the influence of national culture on people's behavior in the organization and society. Hofstede identified four cultural dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity as classifications of national culture based on patterns of beliefs and values (Huettinger, 2008), which were indicators of the underlying problems that exist within different cultures (Minkov & Hofstede (2011). These cultural dimensions provided distinctions between members of different cultural groups (Park, 2016). Moufakkir and Alnajem (2017) described culture as a unique identifier that affects people's perception, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions provided support that national culture influences the way people behavior and value they demonstrate in the organization. The uniqueness of culture creates diversity that can be challenging when people from different cultures work together. Ag Budin and Wafa (2015) described Hofstede's dimensions as a distinction between groups of people, which is different from

people's race. These distinctions are markers of the characteristics of people as it relates to actions and values and affects morality, behavior, and the work habits of individuals.

In this study, I examined the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions (i.e., power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity) were the appropriate lenses for studying cultural backgrounds in the virtual work environment because they provided a characterization of the tendencies of people from various cultures, which also extends to the work environment (Alkailani & Kumar, 2016). The use of these dimensions in the current study adds to the body of knowledge because they were used to study cultural behavior in the virtual work environment; unlike Hofstede's seminal work, which occurred in a traditional work environment. The results of this study confirmed that cultural backgrounds affect leadership styles regardless of the operational structure.

The second theoretical framework was the transactional and transformational leadership styles of Burns (1978), and Bass (1985). The transactional and transformational leadership styles have been widely-used in different studies on traditional organizational leadership. Of note, are the studies conducted by Emmanuel and Ugochukwu (2013), who investigated the effects of transactional and transformational leadership styles on organizational performance in Nigeria; Kamisan and King (2013), whose study focused on the leadership styles of two leaders in two Malaysia airlines; Emery and Barker (2007), who examined the effect of transactional and transformational leadership on organizational commitment and job satisfaction on

customer service employees in banking and food store organizations; and Deluga (1988), who studied the manager-employee dynamics within the theory of transformational and transactional leadership. The concept of the transactional and transformational leadership styles introduced by Burns (1978) in a study on political leadership (Gandolfi, 2012). These two leadership concepts refined by Bass (1985) represented the types of relationship that leaders exercise with their followers. The transactional form of leadership is based on a contractual exchange between leaders and followers while the transformational leadership is based on a shared positive social relationship (Dhammika, Fais, & Thi, 2013). Alabduljader (2012) found that both the transactional and transformational shared some similarities because they were both intended to achieve a goal but take different approaches to achieve goals.

I selected the transactional and transformational leadership styles because they provided a representation of two styles, with differences in the way leaders develop and interact with followers. The transactional leadership style operates on an exchange relationship between leaders and followers, whereas the transformational leadership seeks to uplift and encourages followers to look beyond their self-interest (Sheshi & Kërçini, 2017). The current study provided evidence that cultural backgrounds influence leadership styles. The results from the data analysis revealed that in cultures with high individualism and high uncertainty avoidance could affect the degree of effectiveness of these leadership styles. This research study adds to the body of knowledge because I examined leadership styles and cultural backgrounds with a sample population of leaders who worked in virtual environments.

## **Literature Review**

### **First Theoretical Framework**

#### **Hofstede's Cultural Framework**

Culture is an important force in almost everything that occurs in the world. It influences people's attitudes, behaviors, and the way they perform in the organization (Qamar, Muneer, Jusoh, & Idris, 2013). Singh (2013) further identified culture as a medium that shapes behavior and considered it to be the primary influence in the way people interact socially and morally. Like an invisible force, culture influences and shapes the behavior of humans, who through interaction with their environment continuously internalize the norms and characteristics that form their cultural backgrounds (Frambach, Driessen, Chan, & van der Vleuten, 2012).

Routamaa (2013) identified culture as a powerful influence on people's values. It shapes people's personal lives and ultimately migrates with people into the organization to eventually become part of the change process. With globalization becoming such a prominent part of the business world, having employees in the workplace from different cultural backgrounds have become the norm (Caldwell, 2015). The capabilities of electronic communication have been used to create a work environment consisting of employees who function as virtual teams and who are not physically near their teammates and may be from different national backgrounds (Orhan, Rijsman, & Van Dijk, 2016). Tagreed (2012) added that advancement in technology has caused the world to become a global village, which has brought people from different parts of the world working together. As such, an understanding of how the mix of cultures integrates into the

organization is vital to a thriving work environment (Jankowska & Bartosik-Purgat, 2012). As identified by Jalumuri Siva (2012) culture can influence pertinent attributes relating to employees' behavior, which also includes values that can influence attitudes and actions that will eventually permeate throughout the organization.

Culture can also affect the leadership of the organization, which is important to the success of the organization. Cheng and Lin (2012) confirmed that leaders across cultures have different qualities that culminate in specific leadership behaviors, which can impact interaction in the organization. Çelik (2012) identified culture as one of the influences for the personal values; specifically, the moral and behavioral values that are brought into organizations by leaders. Additionally, Masrek, Noordin, Anwar, and Idris (2011) identified culture as a strong influence on the way people behave within their group as well as with people from other groups.

### **The Structure of Culture**

The concept of culture has been an evolving force that has been in existence since human civilization and is the social experience that incorporates the collection of lifetime activities of people (Flier, 2003). Anthropologist, sociologist, and social psychologist have viewed the existence of culture as a concept of articulating the multiplicity of behaviors by human factors in different places (Cawelt, 1996). Researchers such as Hanson (2005) viewed culture as the foundation of social solidarity of society, which consists of people with common identifiers, which serves as a way of distinguishing groups of people from each other. Matondo, (2012). Although human behavior varies from culture to culture, Leung, and Cohen (2011) pointed-out that within each culture,

there are also variations between people that create individual differences. In the ongoing quest to understand culture, some models were developed to classify behaviors in different cultures; including the cultural topology of Hofstede's (1980), which is considered one of the most influential models in social science (Refaat & Galal-Edeen, 2009).

### **Definition of Culture**

The definition of culture is neither specific nor straightforward because of the many facets associated with the meaning; especially as it relates to human behavior. It has attracted the interest of various schools of thought, which have attempted to clarify the definition. Kumar, Anjum, and Sinha (2011) indicated that there are about 160 definitions of culture, which have shown identical characteristics in almost all instances. Matondo (2012) indicated that there had been different definitions of culture, which makes it difficult to identify a distinct meaning. In a study on the place of language in culture, Shah and Bila (2012) discussed the challenge of explaining culture with varying schools of thoughts on how to describe it. Anthropologists defined it as a collection of traits; ecologists defined it as the adjustment to the environment, and structural-functionalists defined it as a system of normative beliefs that create a stable entity. Culture is an umbrella term that includes different components, which despite the attempts by different anthropologist and ecologists to decipher the real meaning, has not yielded any conclusive or exclusive definition

Culture is a frame of reference for identifying the differences in people from different countries. Chow, Inn, and Szalay (1987) identified culture as the human



behavior patterns, which consist of the acquired ability of individuals or people in an accepted esthetic that is passed on from generation to generation. Hofstede (1998) described culture as a way of distinguishing one group of people from another and is viewed as the collective programming of the mind. Another clarification offered by Wilkesmann, Fischer, and Wilkesmann (2009) is that cultural attributes are not inherited or based on genetics; it consists of attributes such as values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns that are programmed or learned. These specific attributes enable categorization of groups based on differences in the way of life of these groups.

Although the focus of the literature review is specific to cultural backgrounds as it relates to national culture, some discussions about culture identify national culture and organizational culture as being linked to an important function in the organization, specifically leadership. Al Saifi (2015) described organizational culture as those values that are shared by people in a group. Azanza, Moriano, and Molero (2013) also defined organizational culture as a set of values, assumptions, understanding, and norms shared by members of an organization, which influence factors such as leadership behavior and organizational effectiveness. An important reason for considering the definition of organizational culture is that multinational and international organizations bring with them many cultures that make leadership culturally contingent. This is important because the status and influence of leaders differ considerably due to cultural forces in the countries or regions, which the leaders operate (Rhein, 2013).

## **The Influence of Culture Backgrounds**

Jogulu (2010) described globalization as a “global village” that has brought different cultures together and has created an interdependent relationship between culture and leadership styles and cannot be disregarded. Cultural background influences the way people live and respond to their environment (Nayeem, 2012). Culture is a dominant force that regulates the human behavior and includes common patterns in language and values, which affect the way that people behave. Culture affects people’s behavior, the way they view the world, and the assumptions they make about work and life. Cultural backgrounds affect people’s lives, and these influences circulate into different areas including the organization and could ultimately affect leadership, which is important to the ongoing success of the organization (Xiao & Boyd, 2010). Matondo (2012) indicated that culture is learned, shared, compelling, and dictates orientation or how people react; hence the need to understand the nature of culture and organizational decisions. This section will be used to review three effects of culture namely, perception, attitude, and language and communication.

### **Perception**

The perception formed by people is one of the many influences of culture, but there were very few empirical definitions. One of the few definitions outlined in the review of the literature on perception was Mosley and Patrick (2011) in a study on building high-performance cultures, described perception as the process by, which people interpret information about each other. Although they did not provide a definition, Holt, Bjorklund, and Green (2009) found that people’s perception was influenced by many

things, including their cultural backgrounds. Jankowska and Bartosik-Purgat (2012) studied the differences between companies from different cultures, declared that cultural differences played a role in the perception of rules, customs, and norms.

Mosley and Patrick (2011) emphasized perception as a vital part of the relationship between leaders and followers. These researchers suggested that to influence the workforce to accomplish critical goals, leaders must be able to change the perception of people and one of the methods that a leader can use to do this is through leadership styles. Leadership styles within the cultural context will be discussed further in the section of the literature review on leadership styles.

In empirical research studies, cultural backgrounds are linked to the way people perceive their work environment and the way they work with each other. In a survey study on the perception and behavior of aid workers in an international agency in Japan, Inamori, and Analoui (2010) noted that varying cultural perceptions could create differences that may affect the cohesiveness of the workgroup. Also, the personalities of people from different cultural backgrounds can create perceptions that could challenge the group progress and may create workplace conflict that could eventually affect work relationships. Murphy and Domicone (2010) supported this argument in their study on the trustworthiness and social loafing of Austrian and American students, noted that perception could influence different aspects of the workgroup in areas such as justice and trustworthiness. Based on a study on cultural perceptions and task-technology fit, Omanwa and Musyimi (2016) concluded that there is a need to understand cultural

influences such as perception because of the potential impact on people's reaction to specific processes and changes in the organization.

### **Attitude**

Attitude is another derivative of culture, and much of the scholarly literature relating to attitude so far does not give a single definition of attitude as it relates to cultural backgrounds. Most of the definitions are associated with outcomes such as *attitude towards teamwork*, which looks at the extent to, which people like or dislike teamwork (Beigi & Shirmohammadi, 2012), *attitude towards work*, which relates to their work experience (Beheshtifar, Ali-Nezhad, & Nekoie-Moghadam, 2012). Alas (2005) described attitude as the psychological predisposition exhibited in assessing or responding to different things.

Employee attitudes are considered an indicator of the future success of an organization (Hurst, 1995). Attitude is the psychological predisposition expressed through the evaluation of entities with some degree of favor or disfavor (Currás-Pérez, Ruiz-Mafé, & Sanz-Blas, 2013). People's attitudes influence how they act in a particular way instead of another. In studying the cross-cultural difference in management, Tagreed (2012) noted that culture could affect people's attitude or expressed beliefs towards different things in the work environment such as the meaning of time, power and authority, competitiveness, personal space, and view of the work structure or group (individualism or collectivism). In a study on leadership styles, Alas (2005) observed that people's attitude could manifest into different emotions that can compromise the future success of the organization because of the influence it may have on the way they respond

to situations in the organization. People's attitude may also affect commitment to the organization as well as job satisfaction, which are indicators of the connection to the organization. Despite the limited research relating to cultural backgrounds on attitude, there is enough evidence to show that attitude shapes the behavior of people.

### **Language and Communication**

The history and cultural backgrounds of any country is embodied in the language and is one of the most distinct characteristics, which is accepted as part of people's lives (Geng, 2010). As part of the study on language is tourism, Strezovska and Ivanovska (2012) described language an essential part of the communication process in business because it facilitates the transaction and the exchange of information, which is a necessary component in the business world. Luring (2007) argued that the role of language has not been given the proper recognition and had almost disappeared from research relating to cross-cultural management. Luring and Selmer (2012) also argued that the use of language is an under-researched area in business studies, but its importance in multinational organizations cannot be ignored.

Within this context, the role of organizational leaders as it relates to language and communication is determined to be important because leaders are the purveyor of crucial functions in the organization including communication. Neufeld, Wan, and Fang (2010) and De Vries, Bakker-Pieper, and Oostenveld (2010) agreed that communication is a central part of the leadership function. De Vriess et al. discussed the need to understand how leadership communication impacts followers because an effective communication

style can result in a more significant outcome in areas such as performance and job satisfaction of subordinates.

### **Culture Backgrounds and The Organization**

The integration of people from different cultural backgrounds has created diversity in the work environment. As indicated by AbuzarWajidi and Chandio (2013), globalization has resulted in a workforce comprising of people from different nations, races, and cultures referred to as cultural diversity. Globalization has presented both challenges and opportunities to understand and explore ways to manage the differences in employees who are from different cultural backgrounds. Hofstede (1983) viewed the effects of culture as a noticeable force around us. It is evident in language, attitudes, behavior, responses to situations, relationships, and even the ways people view or tolerate situations.

### **Leadership and Cultural Backgrounds**

Culture has a profound effect on people's lives as it helps to direct the motives and choices of their behaviors (Alkailani, Azzam, & Athamneh, 2012). As one of the essential functions of the organization, there are many expectations for effective leadership and understanding of the motives and choices of those who lead is crucial to a successful organization. Muhammad and Mahmood (2010) described leadership as the means by, which an individual can socially influence others to participate in reaching a goal. Banutu-Gomez (2011) conducted a research examining the powerful influence of specific leadership practices, defined leadership as the ability of an individual to garner

influence over others. They further described leadership as a means of persuading rather than coercing followers to accept changes that are important to the organization.

Jung, Chan, Chen, and Chow (2010), in their study of Chinese chief executive officers, have determined that leadership behaviors can have a significant impact on subordinates' attitude, behavior, and performance, which can negatively impact processes and practices. These researchers found that cultural norms influence leadership behavior and effectiveness. Russette, Scully, and Preziosi (2008) conducted a comparative study on specific cultural grouping, declared that differences in cultural values could affect the way the leaders view rules and procedures, authority, willingness to compromise, level of dependence and independence, and other interpersonal attributes. Jogulu (2010) conducted a research that examined whether leadership styles were culturally linked, identified cultural backgrounds as having a significant influence on leadership as it relates to values, attitudes, and behaviors and could create variation in leadership styles.

Hai and Sherif (2011) identified a strong association between leaders and organizational behavior. These researchers recognized the organization as a reflection of leaders' values and beliefs because the cultural context of individual leaders will ultimately determine what leaders do and how they do it. Hsieh (2010) confirmed in a research on the relationship between leadership and national culture that, not only does culture influence leadership practices, but it can also affect areas like the expectations of followers as well as the norms and organizational practices.

Tagreed (2012) discussed the need to understand how cultural values affect leadership because it has a direct impact on the way they run the organization. Hofstede

(1998) acknowledged that values are at the core of culture and direct the tendencies or preferences in choosing one thing over the other such as evil vs. good. These values will eventually enter the organization through the recruitment process, and although people are socialized into the organizational culture, the values of people will not change because they are rooted in the programming of their cultural backgrounds. Not only is culture one of the most important variables, which influence the leadership practice, but it also impacts other variables such as followers' expectations and norms as well as the type of organizational unit. Several researchers reported that culture has a much more significant influence on managerial assumptions and organizational values than other demographic characteristics such as gender, occupation, and level of education (Laurent, 1986; Zagorsek, 2004).

Based on their empirical result, Byrne and Bradley (2007) showed cultural values to account for approximately 70% of the mediating effect on managers' leadership style. Culture exists on at least three levels: (a) national culture, (b) group culture, and (c) organizational culture. Even though the interactions between various levels of culture may impact people, national culture is prominent because it shapes all other cultural types, namely, group culture and organization culture (Nahavandi, 2006).

### **Leadership Trust**

Trust is a psychological state of mind where individuals demonstrate openness to accept the intentions and behaviors of others (Peñarroja, Orengo, Zornoza, & Hernández, 2013). Within an organizational context, trust is a crucial factor in relationships between followers and leaders. Developing trust between leaders and followers create a more



positive work and social environment in areas such as communication, commitment, and job satisfaction (Torres & Bligh, 2012). Murphy and Domicone (2010) described trust as an essential part of the relationship between followers and leaders. Eventually, followers may develop trust based on the demonstrated competency, knowledge, and abilities of the leaders. Leaders are also expected to be trustworthy, demonstrate integrity, and act in the best interest of the followers (Chong & Wolf, 2010). A relationship based on trust between leaders and employees is considered a vital component in the continued stability of the organization and is also important in encouraging performance (Cho & Poister, 2014).

The presence of trust in the virtual work environment has been the subject of several researchers such as Henttonen and Blomqvist (2005); Jang (2009); Mancini (2010); and Brahm and Kunze (2012) who have all indicated that trust is an essential element in the continued success of virtual teams. Mukherjee et al. (2012) in their research suggested that the need for trust in the virtual environment is even more critical due to the absence of the physical presence of coworkers. Establishing a level of trust among virtual team members may help to develop the necessary social ties that will be beneficial to the working relationship. Holton (2001) suggested that the creation of trust in virtual teams could be accomplished by utilizing robust communication tools to establish dialogue and valuable collaboration. As it relates to leadership, Eom (2009) noted in a research study on cross-cultural teams that cultural backgrounds might influence the leadership of virtual teams. Leaders from individualist backgrounds will be

more focused on personal goals while those from a collectivist culture will value the overall success of the team.

### **The Influence of National Culture**

Dutch anthropologist Geert Hofstede conducted a cross-cultural study of IBM employees in various countries around the world (Hofstede, 1980). Since the study was conducted, there has been extensive use by multiple researchers to examine different attributes relating to national cultures (Gallego-Toledo, 2015). Dartey-Baah, (2013) noted that national culture influences some critical aspects of the organization such as leadership styles, strategic decisions, and human resource management practices. While working as a psychologist with IBM, Hofstede observed that despite the presence of corporate culture, there were remarkable influences of national culture on the different groups of employees within the organization. This observation prompted Hofstede to explore the differences in thinking and social action that appeared to be influenced by people's national culture (Hofstede, 1980). To investigate the theory on the influence of national culture, Hofstede conducted a survey study that focused mainly on cultural values collected from IBM employees in over 50 different nations (Shi & Wang, 2011). The data gathered from this study gave Hofstede (1994) the proof that national culture was a strong stimulus in organizational behavior in term of the philosophies and practices (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011).

In discussing his IBM research, Hofstede (1994) indicated that value differences were a key emphasis of his study of national culture. This Hofstede declared was a significant force because the influence of culture affects all its citizens including leaders

and subordinates and to function as part of the world, we need to understand the value differences that exist in different cultures. To further support his argument for national culture as a critical driver, Hofstede identified three reasons why an understanding of the effects of national was essential to management. First, nations are rooted in the history of politics consisting of their legal, government, education, labor, and employee systems; second, nationality garners symbolic values to its people and creates an identity and sense of who they are. It also creates an emotional and sentimental attachment that can result in a patriotic reaction such as people going to war; and third, nationality holds a psychological attachment that connects people's feelings, which may be associated with family interactions during childhood, educational experiences in schools, and experiences in various organizations (Hofstede, 1983).

Hofstede (1983) indicated that the objective of his study was to provide an empirical terminology for culture rather than assessing cultural influence based on just an impression. He wanted to take a scientific approach by using what he described as systematically collected data from many cultures. He explained how the data analysis allowed him to identify remarkable differences in cultures on survey questions relating to employee values as opposed to questions on employee attitudes. It also allowed him to develop the unique independent categorization of national culture into what he called cultural dimensions. Since the time of the initial research, Hofstede's dimensions have been used in several cross-cultural studies to predict business ethics and practices (Kim & Kim, 2010). Yeganeh (2013), Dartey-Baah (2013), Lee and Liu (2012), Zheng (2010), and Seleim and Bontis (2009) are among the many researchers who have used Hofstede's

dimensions as a framework to study different relationships in management and leadership practices. Boonghee, Donthu, and Lenartowicz (2011) described Hofstede's dimensions as the dominant metric for measuring culture. The popularity of these dimensions stemmed from the extensive theoretical foundation, which had taken the meaning of culture from a conceptual model to an empirical foundation that is linked to different cultural construct.

Despite the popularity of these dimensions, they have also been some criticisms from researchers regarding their long-term relevance to culture. Researchers like Bergiel, Bergiel, and Upson (2012) asserted that there had been a significant change in the cultural landscape due to political, technological, and environmental factors. These researchers suggested that Hofstede's (1980) research may not be relevant due to the changes in culture that have occurred since the time of the initial study; and Kirkman, Lowe, and Gibson (2006) who described Hofstede's dimensions as an oversimplification of culture that lacked the flexibility of capturing culture over time. Minkov and Hofstede (2011) argued that although cultures may have evolved, there are still distinct attributes that have been maintained throughout the changes, which has served to protect the core identity of culture. Other researchers such as Preda (2012) acknowledged the relevance of Hofstede's research study and described it as a window into different cultures, which have facilitated better interaction with people from other countries.

### **Cultural Dimensions**

Regardless of the criticisms, Hofstede's (1983) dimensions have created unlimited outlets for exploring cultural attributes and values in many different environments

including academia, corporate, and private sector (Rhein, 2013). Savitha and Rani (2013) described Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a theory that offered verification of the variation that exists between cultures. Hofstede initially identified four categories from, which people from different cultures perceive and understand the world (Preda, 2012). A fifth dimension, Long-term Orientation or Confucian dynamism was later developed to classify traits of the Asian cultures. The specific focus of this dimension was to identify whether long-term goals and results were the drivers of group actions (Ardichvili, 2001). Unlike the first four dimensions, the fifth dimension was not considered as empirically developed because the data were collected from college students, which were a different caliber of participants than those in the previous study (Fang, 2003). As such, Long-term Orientation was not one of the dimensions used in this research study.

Hofstede (1983) identified the four original dimensions or cultural classifications: (a) power distance, (b) uncertainty avoidance, (c) individualism-collectivism, and (d) masculinity-femininity as broad depictions of national culture based on the standard pattern of beliefs and values (Huettinger, 2008). Haapaniemi and Mäkinen (2009) described these dimensions as a representation of the variability in culture as well as the variation in value systems between cultures, which are used to classify typical responses of human society to the different events that occur in day-to-day life. An example is in the way some societies form relationships and even in the type of leadership style used in organizations (Hofstede, Jonker, & Verwaart, 2012). Minkov and Hofstede (2011) added that the four dimensions were created to classify the fundamental problems that are present in different nations. Hofstede et al. (2011) declared that the cultural dimensions

were not meant to address individual or organizational variables but were intended to support variables across nations. Although some researchers have attempted to use the dimensions to draw correlations between individuals or organization, the result cannot be validated because it is outside of the scope of the classifications in the original study. Boonghee, Donthu, and Lenartowicz (2011) concurred with Hofstede et al. (2011) that researchers who have used the metrics to measure individual cultural orientations had encountered methodological difficulties due to weak correlations.

### **Attributes of Cultural Dimensions**

**Power Distance.** One of the first dimensions identified in Hofstede's (1980) research was power distance. In recognition that there is inequality in every culture; with disparity, more evident in some cultures than others, power distance is defined as the degree of inequality that people in society accept as normal. Both followers and leaders generally accept this endorsement as a normal distinction between classes of people in society. Hofstede acknowledged that people's behavior in the workplace is shaped by the class distinctions they were exposed to with their family and in school. Within these institutions, the expectations of fear or authority of father, mother, and teachers is an acceptable inequality, and these experiences are projected in the way people view the authority of those in charge of the organization.

The level of power distance that exists in the different cultures influences the way that people relate to each other. In some workplaces, employees can see the inequality between them and the person designated as their boss (Najera, 2008). In high power distance cultures, the interaction between leaders and subordinates are kept at a minimum

with employees not having the flexibility to negotiate work assignments. In low power distance cultures, the leader takes on a less authoritative role, and the employees can negotiate their assignments. In low power distance cultures, there is also a more relaxed relationship between leaders and subordinates (Altaf, 2011). From a management perspective, the level of power distance (i.e., high or low can be an indicator of how the people who lead the organization will relate to subordinates). Conversely, the level of power distance can also imply the extent to, which employees will be allowed to participate in the decision-making (Najera, 2008).

The power distance dimension has been used in different studies in the traditional work environment (Curtis, Conover, & Chui, 2012; Dash, Bruning & Acharya, 2009; Rao, 2013), but little research could be identified that linked this dimension to the virtual work environment. The only study on the virtual work environment that referenced power (although different from Hofstede's [1980] power distance) was by Panteli and Tucker (2009). These researchers conducted a study of 18 global virtual teams who were asked to respond to survey questions on their experiences in working in global virtual teams. The survey result indicated that power identification was as prominent in virtual teams as it is traditional teams.

**Individualism vs. Collectivism.** In some cultures, there is a close-knit relationship between families, coworkers, and the community with everyone taking an interest in each other needs while in some cultures, everyone is responsible for his or her own needs. Individualism versus its opposite collectivism is used to identify the level of self-interest versus group or organization interest displayed by the particular culture

(Altaf, 2011). Hofstede (1998) acknowledged that in individualist cultures, there are no strong ties, and everyone is expected to take care of his or her own needs while in the collectivist cultures, there are strong bonds between individuals from birth that extends beyond the immediate family. Individualism and Collectivism are the opposite of the spectrum as it relates to the nurturing and affiliation of members of the group. In the continued discussion of these two influences on culture, Hofstede, Jonker, and Verwaart (2012) cited harmony and interdependence as an essential part of the collectivist group with each member having a place in the group. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the individualist cultures whose emphasis is self-sufficiency with each member being judged individually and speaking their minds regardless of potential disagreement.

The behavior of people from individualist and collectivist societies will eventually penetrate the organization and from all indications could have severe implications for organizations. Tan, Härtel, Panipucci, and Strybosch (2005) discussed the differences between the individualist and collectivist societies and identified individualist as possessing self-serving characteristics, and acceptance in a group is not a primary goal. The hallmark of the collectivist is the emotional connection they have with the group and the need to maintain a cordial relationship. Unlike people from the individualist group, people in the collectivist group are conscious of how their action affects the group and are more inclined to conform to gain the approval of the group. Staples and Zhao (2006) indicated that the individualism-collectivism grouping is a signal of the extent to, which individuals put their interest before that of their team members. These researchers noted



that the values of people in a high individualist group might eventually affect the communication process of people working in teams.

Another effect of the individualist-collectivist dimension of culture is trust. As previously identified, trust is an integral part of the relationship between people in the organization (Murphy & Domicone, 2010) and there are indications that trust within the individualist and collectivist cultural groupings may be different. Huff and Lane (2003) indicated that based on the structure of the collectivist group there is a high level of trust in people from this group based on the close-knit relationship, while in the individualist group based on the weak and self-sufficient relationship that exists there are indications of a low level of trust. Fan, Anantatmula, Nixon, and Kasprzak (2012) discussed trust in the individualist culture, which they described as a calculated motive based on the opportunities derived from the relationship. In a collectivist culture, reputation is important, and the need for group acceptance and the fear or adverse reaction from the group produces trust.

In the virtual work environment, the link to individualist-collectivist cultures from all indications bears similarities to that of the traditional work environment. In a research study on organizational identification among global virtual team members, Mukherjee et al. (2012) indicated that like the traditional work environment, employees in a virtual team environment from collectivist culture may have a need for group affiliation and will be more inclined to learn more about the organization. On the other hand, like the traditional work environment, employees from the individualist culture are less likely to seek out others through technological means due to the self-sufficient characteristics of

this group. In addition, the employees from individualist cultures will not have a great need to establish relationships and will demonstrate a higher level of autonomy.

**Uncertainty Avoidance.** Hofstede's (1983) third dimension uncertainty avoidance examines society's tolerance for things that may occur unexpectedly. Hofstede in his findings on the differences in people's values described uncertainty avoidance as man's search for truth. Hofstede described this dimension as a measure of how society handles things that are vague, unstructured, or undefined and these types of cultures will usually act to minimize the uncertainties by implementing strict laws and measure.

Baker and Carson (2011) noted in their research that unexpected situations threaten people in uncertainty avoidance cultures, and they respond with reluctance and rigidity and seek security by implementing various mechanisms to combat the unknown. Hofstede (1983) in his study of culture, classified people in this cultural type as emotional and nervous. They are driven by the belief in absolute truth and are not open to things that are different. In contrast, uncertainty accepting cultures are perceived as calm, prone to fewer emotions, and are more receptive to new ideas. People from this cultural type, according to Hofstede, are risk takers who take things one day at a time and are not concerned with the future and may not be inclined to work hard.

In an organization, uncertainty avoidance can affect the type of decisions made by organizational leaders. Baker and Carson (2011) discussed how countries in high uncertainty avoidance cultures might adopt risky business strategies such as amassing large quantities of cash on hand as security against a perilous future. On the other hand, those countries with low uncertainty avoidance will tend to be practical in the strategies

they undertake because they do not fear the unknown. Dartey-Baah (2013) conducted a study that looked at the cultural approach to managing human resources. The researcher discussed how organizations in high uncertainty avoidance cultures are governed by numerous rules and are more controlling of work processes while in low uncertainty avoidance societies, those responsible for the organization are more open and will demonstrate more flexibility in decision-making.

Based upon research on the direction of cultural distance on foreign direct investment, Tang (2012) identified uncertainty avoidance as a measurement of the level of tolerance that society has for the unknown. The researcher identified high uncertainty avoidance societies as having a deep reliance on organizational rules and technology to reduce the uncertainties that may occur. People from high uncertainty avoidance work environments can have a stressful interaction when they must conduct business transactions involving subsidiaries from low uncertainty avoidance cultures who have a more casual and independent attitude towards rules.

In a research on the cultural approach to managing international human resources, Dartey-Baah (2013) discussed the effects of the behavior of employees from high uncertainty avoidance cultures. According to the researcher, employees from this cultural type are not self-directed and will be less inclined to seek out answers for themselves because they are not open to ambiguity and will be more responsive to pre-existing rules. Conversely, employees from low uncertainty avoidance cultures will be more open to seeking new information and will pursue experiential learning, and when a failure occurs, they are willing to learn from their mistakes. Additionally, they are more willing to

change their behaviors to accommodate the constant changes taking place in the environment.

In matters relating to the organization, Lee and Liu (2012) found that within the organization, that leaders in high uncertainty culture will provide precise directions to subordinates to eliminate obscurity in job expectations. Yan and Hunt (2005) discussed how high and low uncertainty avoidance cultures view their leaders. In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, subordinates expect their leaders to behave according to historically accepted standards, and any attempts by leaders to introduce change will cause uncertainty and mistrust. In low uncertainty avoidance cultures, followers judge their leaders by performance rather than by how well rules and standards are maintained.

**Masculinity vs. Femininity.** This cultural dimension provides a comparison between the male-female roles. Streimikiene and Mikalauskiene (2012) in their comparative analysis of Taiwan, Mexico, and Lithuania, defined masculinity-femininity as the extent to, which society values the male-female role. In analyzing this pairing between the sexes, Hofstede (1983) described this dimension as the allocation of roles in society that is used to arrive at a range of solutions. According to Hofstede, the IBM study identified distinct differences between the values of men and women. Men demonstrated more assertive and competitive behavior in comparison to women who showed more modest and caring behaviors. Hofstede noted that although women demonstrated a milder characteristic in his study, in masculine cultures, they can also exhibit some degree of assertiveness and competitiveness. Streimikiene et al. (2012) indicated that in high masculinity cultures, men are expected to take on a dominant role;

they are expected to be assertive, strong, and provide for the family. In cultures, low in masculinity, although women work outside the home and have a separate profession from men, professional success is harder to achieve, as men are still expected to assume an assertive role.

Hofstede (1983) offered further clarification of the definition of masculinity-femininity in a publication on motivation, leadership, and organization. Hofstede described masculinity-femininity as the degree to which values in society are considered masculine. He explained that the level of masculinity was found to be an indicator of how assertive people are in their quest to acquire financial wealth and material things, and is also an indicator of the extent to which they care about others (Hofstede, 1983).

Skerlavaj and Huang (2013) also found these cultural types play a role in defining people's behavior. They found that employees from masculine cultural backgrounds are more performance driven and are less likely to invest the time to collaborate and build interpersonal relationships.

In low masculinity cultures, the philosophies of people are different from those in high masculinity cultures. There is little or no discrimination or disparity between genders because both male and female are equally treated. In the organization, leaders are open to the input of their employees, and there is an emphasis on relationships as a means of establishing trust (Lee & Liu, 2012). Yan and Hunt (2005) found that leaders in low masculinity cultures are more nurturing and seek to maintain a healthy relationship with their followers. These researchers found that in high masculinity cultures due to the focus

on material success and achievement, leaders may be more inclined to ignore ethical issues in business practices compared to those leaders from low masculinity cultures.

### **Leadership**

Leadership has been a topic of interest for many years with some concepts emerging based on ingrained cultural beliefs (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). Banutu-Gomez (2013) concurred that there are many different theories of leadership with all having relevance but suggested that combining concepts is best to understand what comprises leadership. Marshall (2012) in a study on middle leaders of change in New Zealand identified leadership as a socially influential role that impacts the structure of the organization. Taomina (2010) compared leadership to art forms such as music and film and offered a chronological outline of leadership from the stone-age to present. The different periods highlighted in the study identified similarities and differences in leadership skills, which the researcher classified as leadership art. In the prehistoric era, leaders were more task-oriented as a means of survival, but in later years, leaders became more people focused and showed more concern for others. The researcher concluded that the different eras had confirmed that the qualities of leadership is not static, but changes over time.

In today's world, with the growing multinational organizations, there is a significant change in the dimensions of leadership (Russette, Scully, & Preziosi, 2008). Snaiderbaur (2012) in a research study that proposed a new descriptive model of leadership, the researcher highlighted the challenges involved in cross-cultural management that have impacted the global corporate environment and has caused

different scholars to attempt to identify the best leadership style. Globalization, efficiency, and competition have resulted in global virtual teams, which as discussed by Zivick (2012) requires leadership skills and personalities, which are different from traditional leadership. Jogulu (2010) added that leadership styles are changing rapidly to keep abreast of globalization and leaders who operate in these types of environment need to have a set of skills to be successful. Eissa, Fox, Webster, and Kim (2012) in their study on proposing a framework for leader effectiveness in virtual teams also identified the unique challenges presented by virtual teams and the need for leaders to possess a different skill set to be effective.

Ruggieri (2009) in a study on leadership styles in virtual teams indicated that virtual team is an exceptional opportunity to redefine leadership and the transactional and transformational leadership styles are among the best approaches to examine this new delineation of leadership. Eom (2009) in a study titled “Cross-Cultural Virtual Team and its Key Antecedents to Success” also identified the transactional, and transformational leadership styles among the strategies for measuring leadership effectiveness. To further explore how virtual teams have transformed the traditional role of leadership, and the leadership style that is most suitable for the non-traditional work environment, this section will review literature pertaining to virtual teams, leadership influence in the virtual teams, as well as leadership styles within the framework of Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) transactional and transformational leadership styles.

## **Leadership in the Virtual Work Environment**

A new organizational form was created due to information and communication technologies. This organizational form known as virtual teams, collaborate and communicate with each other primarily through various methods of technology (Gressgård, 2011). Shuffler, Wiese, Salas, and Burke (2010) in their study on shared leadership in virtual teams acknowledged that technology had created a platform that has enabled people to work together from undefined structure anywhere in the world. Chuan and Messner (2010) added that businesses had utilized the opportunities offered by the technological age by having people from different national cultures collaborate as virtual teams. Zivick (2012) who examined the relationship between virtual teams and all levels of the encompassing organization found virtual teams to be a significant part of companies operating in the global world. The researcher cited companies such as Price Water House Coopers, TRW, and Hewlett-Packard as organizations that have found virtual teams to be an essential part of streamlining their operations and maintain their competitive advantage. Jang (2013) found the use of virtual teams has enabled organizations to pull resources together from different parts of the world to work on projects without limitations of physical boundaries. Additionally, the use of virtual teams has not only allowed easy access to the global market but has enabled organizations to meet the aggressive competition that exists in the business world.

## **Definition of Virtual Teams**

Martins, Gilson, and Maynard (2004) indicated that there had been an abundance of definitions of virtual teams, many with similar meaning that emphasizes connectivity



and communication via some electronic or technological means. Pauleen (2003) described virtual teams as a group of people who work together synchronously or asynchronously through technical means; Mihhailova, Oun, and Turk (2009) defined it as a group of workers who live in a different geographical location and communicate through information and communication technology; Reed and Knight (2010) described it as a group of people who are not co-located but work together from different places to achieve a common goal and Gaan (2012) who described it as a group of geographically dispersed employees who use communication and information technology to accomplish organization task. These definitions all showed that virtual teams rely heavily on technological sources and as discussed by Aiken, Gu, and Wang (2013) having the right electronic communication tools is an important component in the success of these teams.

### **Characteristics of Virtual Teams**

The traditional work environment consisted of employees who conducted business in the same workspace according to a specific schedule, but the introduction of technologic channels such as the internet, has shattered the concept of workspace and time because employees can now perform work from anywhere and at any time (Yanling, Jingzhu, & Yanhong, 2012). Drouin, Bourgault, and Gervais (2010) who conducted a study on virtual team management in two Canadian companies indicated that virtual teams had changed the design of the organization as it relates to hierarchies, resource allocation, and supervision. Palos (2012) in a research study on the information flow in virtual teams discussed how the internet has resulted in the interconnection of people who were once divided by space and time. The ability to quickly connect has transformed the

traditional work structure into a network where critical components are easily accessible at any time and from anywhere.

Virtual teams have provided a means for the organization to meet the demands of the global market efficiently, but according to Jang (2013), virtual teams possess specific characteristics such as leadership, conflict management, and trust, which can be challenging for the organization. Mukherjee, Hanlon, Skiedia, and Srivastava (2012) indicated that the structure of the virtual team is vastly different from the traditional work team not only concerning the physical location but also in characteristics such as communication. According to Brandt, England, and Ward (2011), virtual teams possess unique features, which are different from teams that are co-located. Reed and Knight (2010) also identified the unique characteristics of the virtual teams to include trust, conflict, and communication.

The cultural difference between members further compounds the unique features of virtual teams, and to effectively manage this non-traditional work team requires an understanding of these influences (Eom, 2009). Additionally, Green and Roberts (2010) expressed that understanding the virtual environment may help organization leaders to develop the appropriate human relations strategies to improve team success. Some of these characteristics trust, cultural difference, and communication will be discussed further in this review.

**Trust.** Different researchers have identified trust as one of the perpetuating aspects of the virtual team. Brandt, England, and Ward (2011) in their research on virtual teams discussed that the structure of virtual teams does not readily enable trust because

members may not always have the opportunity to establish the historical interpersonal interaction that occurs when people become familiar with each other. Benetytė and Jatuliavičienė (2013) in their research on building and sustaining trust in virtual teams asserted that trust in virtual teams decreases because of the lack of historical reference between coworkers as well as the cultural and geographic diversity. Clark, Clark, and Crossley (2010) identified trust as a critical component in virtual teams because unlike traditional teams; virtual teams do not have a visual reference of the behavior of others and the ability to observe what others are doing is one of the channels for establishing trust in the work environment.

Gaan (2012) proposed that trust is part of the relationship development process, which includes, time, interaction, and performance. Teams who do not have history will need to develop a relationship based on shared similarities in the present situation or based on the ongoing interaction or exchange with members of the team. De Pillis and Furumo (2007) argued that there is no replacement for face-to-face interaction, and the absence of specific nonverbal indicators such as facial expressions can create mistrust. The researcher also pointed out that there is a delay in communication when there is lack of facial expression and voice tones, which cause members of the team to hold back information that could eventually result in conflict.

A concept presented by Olson and Olson (2012), Fachrunnisa (2012), and Jang (2013) is task interdependence. These researchers asserted that one of the variables that could develop trust in virtual teams is the extent to, which members are dependent on each other for the performance outcome, known as task interdependence. Olson and

Olson explicitly affirmed that there is a better chance of increasing trust when there is high task interdependence because team members will be required to coordinate and communicate more. Another researcher Chyng-Yang (2013) who conducted a study on factors that facilitate trust in virtual teams also found task interdependence as a strong influence on trust because members of the team must rely on each other to complete their jobs. The researcher indicated that the extent to, which members of the team depend on each other, would mean more interaction with each other about information that affects their work.

**Cultural Diversity.** Magpili and Pazos (2013) described diversity is a term that identifies the unique variations that exist between people in the workgroups. The differences as discussed by these researchers may consist of demographic identities such as race, age, and ethnicity, as well as values, beliefs, and attitudes. In the virtual team, the degree of dispersion can span many different cultures, which mean different language, and different values that need to be managed (Staples & Zhao, 2006). Anantatmula (2010) in a research study proposing a knowledge management process model for global projects discussed the different aspects of diversity that exist in virtual teams. These researchers indicated that diversity such as cultural values, religion, work ethics, and beliefs, local and national practices could affect business procedures. It is therefore vital for those who lead virtual teams to recognize how diversity affects this type of environment to formulate effective strategies. In addition, Nydegger and Nydegger (2010) expressed that not only does virtual teams bring flexibility, and ease of doing business, but virtual teams also bring the diversity of perspective, which is vastly

different from that of the traditional work team. Staples and Zhao (2006) also concurred that it is vital for organizational leaders to understand the impact of diversity on the organization as well as on the performance of the teams.

Nunamaker, Reinig, and Briggs (2009) in their research on the principles for effective virtual teams they found that more diversity exists in virtual teams than in traditional teams. They asserted that although diversity is of value to the organization, it can also result in issues as it relates to behavior, expectations, and language. Magpili and Pazos (2013) emphasized in their research on managing diversity in virtual teams that cultural differences can result in preconceived notation about the attributes of co-workers. They pointed out that in virtual environments, the associated diversity of team members may not be as apparent due to the lack of face-to-face interaction, which may lead to a disregard for individual differences.

**Communication.** Virtual teams, unlike traditional teams, are faced with unique communicating challenges due to the decreased social interaction, which Pitts, Wright, and Harkabus (2012) viewed as an obstacle to effective communication. Resnick (2011) added that that the geographic and organizational differences that exist in virtual teams require special care in communication and feedback. The researcher cited this as an essential consideration because unlike co-located teams, virtual teams do not have the face-to-face cues to support the communication medium. Arora, Owens, and Khazanchi (2010) alluded to the communication challenge in virtual teams and suggested that this is mainly due to the reliance on technological and informational methods. Additionally, they indicated that problems in communication could be compounded by different

communication styles and preferences as well as communication delay caused by the lack of face-to-face contact, which may be interpreted as a lack of responsiveness.

In a research study on enhancing effectiveness on virtual teams, Berry (2011) indicated that like other types of teams, virtual teams must communicate and work cooperatively to get work done. Unlike the synchronous nature of face-to-face teams, the asynchronous nature of virtual teams makes it challenging to choose one method of communication that can be considered effective. Neufeld, Wan, and Fang (2010) asserted that there is a difference in frequency, quality, and satisfaction with communication in virtual teams. In a research study investigating the effect of cultural adaptation, communication, quality, and trust on virtual teams' performance and interaction, Hsin, Shuang-Shii, and Shu Han (2011) discussed the differences in communication for people located in the same area and people who work in distributed work teams. According to these researchers, it is relatively easy for people in close proximity to identify communication behaviors among each other, but it requires more time for the quality of communication to develop in virtual teams.

To further enhance the discussion on communication in the virtual team. Brandt, England, and Ward (2011) identified two critical components of the communication process in virtual teams; the first being the technological methods used to communicate and the second concerns the rules for communication. In discussing these two components, these researchers identified electronic methods such as the intranet as the favored technological method of communication in virtual teams but asserted that there are discrepancies regarding the effectiveness of telecommunication tools such as email

and video conferencing. In discussing the rules for communication, the researchers indicated that depending on the function of the team, specific guidelines for communication will need to be established to assure the quality of exchange between team members. In discussing the role of leadership in the virtual team, Wang, Fan, Hsieh, and Menefee (2009) supported that communication methods such as emails do not always provide immediate feedback and is perceived as impersonal. They indicated that the leader could enhance the richness of communication methods such as emails. Neufeld, Wan, and Fang (2010) supported that there is a link between leadership and communication and declared that in teams that are geographically separated, communication is the primary means by, which employees are lead. Wu, Wang, and Tsai (2010) added that leadership is a fundamental element of the workgroup and the necessary steps must be taken to ensure that the level of communication adequately meets the needs of members of the teams.

Within a cultural context, Eom (2009) indicated that culture could influence preference in communication styles. Holtbrügge, Weldon, and Rogers (2012) noted a strong influence of organizational and social differences between people from different cultures. According to these researchers, cultures change the way people communicate with some cultures expressing more formality in their communication styles. Gandolfi (2012) supported that culture plays a role in the communication behaviors of individuals. Self, Self, and Bell-Haynes (2011) in their study on intercultural human resource management discussed the cultural influence on communication in the organization and cited that the level of power distance will influence the way people communicate within

their cultures and will also determine the communication flow between subordinates and employees. Like Gandolfi, they indicated that some cultures possessed a more formal communication style and identified South Korea as one such culture. On the other hand, countries like the United States use a combination of formal and informal communication styles with the tendency for more two-way communication between subordinate and leaders. According to Wang, Fan, Hsieh, and Menefee (2009), the leadership of the virtual teams is an influential role, and the effective leader must set the stage for effective communication by ensuring that the role of team members is clear, and the level of communication effectively meets the needs of the team.

### **Leading the Virtual Work Environment**

Virtual teams have proven to be beneficial to organizations, but the unique attributes of this type of team are challenging for leadership (Jang, 2013). Researchers such as Eom, (2009), Shriberg (2009), Mukherjee et al. (2012), and Eissa et al. (2012) have stressed the importance of leadership to business success and the need for a better understanding about the role of leadership in virtual teams. Although investing in the technology to support virtual teams is essential, Zvick (2012) declared that this alone is not adequate to assure the success of virtual teams. Instead, there must be an emphasis on the skill level and characteristics of those charged with leadership because the requirement to lead a virtual environment is different from the traditional work environment. Zivick observed that unlike conventional leadership, virtual team leaders emit their presence using technological means, which does not transmit in the same way as the physical presence. Shriberg (2009) indicated that it is not an easy task to influence



people even when they are in a traditional environment, and it is equally difficult to influence people in different places.

Ocker, Huang, Benbunan-Fich, and Hiltz (2011) identified the responsibilities of the leadership of virtual team as two-fold. Similar to Zvick (2012), these researchers, agreed that the foundation of the virtual team is not only developed through technology but also through leadership. Leaders must not only have the leadership skills but should also have the technological knowledge. The researcher asserted that the need for technical knowledge is important because the use of communication methods can be restrictive and unstructured and in the virtual environment, the leadership capabilities are primarily executed with the use of technology. Eissa et al. (2012) also argued that although there has been a focus on the advancement of technology in improving virtual operations, there must also be a focus on leadership behavior and interpersonal relationship. According to these researchers, this is necessary because the success of the virtual team is dependent on not only just leadership ability but also on the ability to handle the differences that exist within the team.

### **Leadership and Cultural Backgrounds**

The culture or origin of the leader shapes leadership characteristics. As asserted by Ahmad (2009), the practices of those in charge are not universal and are dictated by the culture of origin. Russette, Scully, and Preziosi (2008) agreed that cultural influence on leadership characteristics has long been recognized in major international studies such as the Global Leadership and Organization Behavior and Effectiveness (GLOBE) project, which predicted the impact of cultural variables on leadership. The GLOBE project, as

identified by the researchers utilized some variables that were similar to the study conducted by Hofstede (1980) that identified characteristics that were specific to the culture of origin. Burns (1978) in the study on leadership styles also found that the relationship between leaders and followers are influenced by cultural forces that shape values and principles.

In a qualitative study about the interaction between the Kuwaiti culture, gender, and leadership Al-Suwaihel (2010) accessed how the cultural references influenced the leadership of female leaders. Although the study consisted of a small sample, the researcher concluded that the results presented evidence that the tradition, custom, religion, and norms of the Kuwaiti culture had impacted the leadership delivery of the female participants. The responses of the participants also showed that there was a strong association between specific factors such as those associated with their childhood that had influenced the way they lead the organization.

Anurit (2012) who presented a paper on the keys dimensions that contributed to excellence in Thailand also identified some cultural characteristics of women leaders in Thailand. Some of these characteristics included patience, sincerity, modesty, and maternal approach to leadership. Ahmad (2009) further supported cultural influence on leadership by comparing the features of leadership and motivation with that of Islam leaders. It was found that Islam leaders were inclined to be protective of their followers and demonstrated a high concern for their wellbeing. Yooyanyong and Muenjohn (2010) who conducted a study on the style of leadership between American and Japanese expatriates found Japanese leaders to be paternalist and like Islam leaders were very

involved in the personal wellbeing of their employees. On the other hand, the American managers although they motivated employees were more focused on completing tasks and achieving goals.

In a paper identifying the knowledge gap in African leadership studies, Kuada (2010) found that leaders from Southern African were more interested in pursuing power and status and could be influenced to create policies that would benefit their self-interest. In contrast to the leaders in Southern Africa, Jogulu and Ferkins (2012) in their study on leadership and culture in Asia highlighted Malaysian leaders as being conscientious about their role and taking a collective approach to the interest of the organization and were very thoughtful of how matters affect their followers.

### **Leadership Styles Within The Virtual Work Environment**

The focus of several prior studies such as Gogulu (2010), Iqbal, Inayat, Ijaz, and Zahid, (2012), Sakiru, D'Silva, Othman, DaudSilong, and Busayo, (2013), and Raja and Palanichamy (2011) have been on the role of leadership styles and culture in the traditional work environment. There have only been a few studies identified that focused on leadership styles in the virtual work environment with only one study specific to the transactional and transformational leadership styles in the virtual work environment. These few studies include Ruggieri (2009) who pursued a study on transactional and transformational leadership styles in virtual teams found that there were few studies that focused on these leadership styles and sought to investigate the characteristics of these styles in a computer-mediated communication environment. Specifically, the researcher examined how these styles were perceived by those who interacted with the leaders;

Quisenberry and Burrell (2012) who established a conceptual framework for utilizing technology to improve communication, trust, and relationship and discussed how the transactional style could be used to build the foundation for a successful virtual environment. The other study done by Lee-Kelley (2002) over 10 years ago, titled “situational leadership in the virtual project team” examined situational leadership in virtual teams. The most recent study by Hogue (2015) done on the transformational leadership style for a virtual team study in a technology company. These few studies have established enough evidence to support that regardless of the type of work environment, leadership style is an important driver of organizational success.

## **Second Theoretical Framework**

### **Characteristics of Political Leaders**

Burns (1978), embarked on a study of leadership that examined the unique characteristics and leadership styles of various political leaders such as Napoleon, Glover Cleveland, Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, and Thomas Woodrow Wilson to analyze how these leaders utilized the transactional and transformational leadership styles to mentor, motivate, and entice followers to accomplish goals. Burns examined the qualities of the leaders’ styles by looking at how psychological and social influences shape the fundamental characteristics of the leaders and how these factors affected leadership decisions as it relates to power, morals, and values, that these leaders employed as part of the transactional or transformational leadership styles.

## **Power and Leadership**

As part of the foundation of his research on the transactional and transformational leadership styles, Burns (1978), highlighted power as an essential element of the leader-follower role. He expressed that to understand the core concept of leadership, there must be an understanding of power. Burns declared that the fascination with power in politics had overshadowed the fundamental role of leadership, which is evident in the many terms developed to define power. He emphasized the need to rethink the way power is regarded and suggested that it is analyzed within the context of motives and constraints. By seeing power within these perimeters, Burns believed that it would create an intellectual connection to leadership that would be more comprehensive than just studying naked power. Burns asserted that the substance of power is tied to vast reserves of “wants and needs of the power wielders and objectives of power recipient” similar to how energy is linked to oil and coal (p. 11).

Burns (1978) acknowledged that power could manifest in different ways, but there are ways to dissect it to identify qualities that can be generalized into the theory that can be used to determine a reasonable power mix. Some of the power theories identified by Burns included Dahl’s dimensions of distribution, scope, and domain and Laswell and Abraham Kaplan’s who used dimensions of weight, scope, and domain. A common way to identify the relationship between power welder and power receiver is to arrange the data according to the size of the arena where power is exerted. Burns asserted that was relatively easy to do because in many studies the power relationship involves a

multiplicity of power holders that shows the relationship between many P's (power holders) and many R's (power recipient).

For power to be effective, it must have relevance and purpose and should not be used as a source for destroying followers' motives. Within power, there are two interrelated elements—*motives* and *resources*, which are drivers of the actions associated with power. Although people have the power to act, they may not necessarily have the motive to do so. These two interrelated functions (motives and resources) are needed for any action to take place. In other words, the absence of either one results in non-action. If a person lacks motive, resource reduces and the lack of resource results in dormant motives, which disables power. From a psychological perspective, Burns (1978) indicated that power is considered a relationship that has a significant impact on both the power holder and power recipient and is a collective effort, which is the intention and purpose of both the power holder and the power recipient. The psychological view of power has three elements:

1. the motives and resources of power holders;
2. the motives and resources of power recipients;
3. the relationship among all three.

The motives of the power holder are not always evident and may have underlined motives that are shared publicly giving the appearance that they are beneficial to the public interest. Although we are inclined to believe that the motives of the power holder are always to govern the behavior of others, this is not necessarily the case because those with a high need for power could be driven by personal deprivation or other experiences

that may cause the pursuit of power to be more personal. Power recipients can benefit from power holders. They can be strengthened and inspired by the exposure to leaders they admire. Some power recipient may absorb the power resource of those they admire and later use what they observe to exert power over those who restricted them. The different motives of power serve as a target for wants, needs, and expectations (Burns, 1978). These desires are the drivers of power, which are identified by psychologists as the need to achieve and as mentioned previously may not be based on the need to control people but are more a need to achieve power over themselves. People in this type of power mode may seek to collect possessions such as cars, paintings, and jewelry; some may seek fame and excitement, and some may seek knowledge and skills. In Western countries, the need to achieve is a powerful motive where a positive result is the ultimate attainment of social control.

The classic models of power wielders (the ones that have dominated the discussions on power), as described by Burns (1978) are based on those who use their training, skill, and competence to manipulate their resources and people to do what they want without regard for what is desired by the respondents. Burns emphasized that the intention of these power wielders is the controlling element that drives the course of action taken to achieve the purpose. Power wielders like Hitler and Stalin who are at the extreme spectrum of the naked power continuum, have used power to manipulate and control their subjects. Leaders such as Woodrow Wilson and Gandhi showed how the use of power could be a positive way to uplift followers.

### **Moral Leadership Structure**

Another aspect of Burns (1978) leadership foundation was the structure of moral leaders. In examining this structure, Burns discussed how the combination of values, levels of wants and needs, and other motivations along with conflict underline the dynamics of leadership. Wants and needs were found to be an integral part of people's being, are triggered by both internal and psychological factors. Using the work of the philosopher Plato, Burns reviewed the structure of moral leadership and the link between morality, wants, and needs and whether wants and needs were common in different cultures. One of Plato's theories was the identification of common factors in the hierarchy of wants and needs, which would provide a standard for *stages* and levels of moral development and reasoning that could help to create a shared foundation of leadership. This Plato believed would help to better define the role of leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers that may identify patterns of leadership behaviors that are common to leaders in various cultures.

Burns (1978) believed that regardless of cultural background wants and needs are in some semblance of hierarchy that distinguishes higher needs from other types of needs. The commonalities of wants and needs among different cultures could be used to identify stages and levels of moral development in a culture that could provide some common foundations of leadership. Across cultures, there have been notable finding from studies in the field of moral development, which have identified uniformities in moral reasoning across several cultures. Burns indicated that there is still work left to be done because



there are indications that the cultural relationships are overgeneralized, and Western biases influence the universal values.

Throughout history, the role of power and values has manifested into actions that affect everyday life. Soviet Armenian legend gave an account of the efforts of Muslim military invaders who wanted to lower the water level of Lake Seven to attack the fortress and Monastery. Many years later, Soviet soldiers sought to modify the Lake, but this time for economic reasons that resulted in the industrial development of farmlands and electrical power. Their kind gesture resulted in ecological, aesthetic damage that had to be repaired years later by a Soviet construction crew. In this respect, the Lake had helped in times of need to build the economy and wealth for many, but years later it was time for those who had benefitted from this venture to participate in its redevelopment. Another example by Burns (1978) was the relationship between Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph P. Kennedy.

During World War I, Roosevelt, an assistant secretary of the Navy requested that Kennedy, who was the assistant manager of the Fore River shipyard in Massachusetts deliver battleships that Kennedy's company had built for Argentina. Kennedy refused, and Roosevelt had to resort to threats to receive cooperation from Kennedy. Two decades later their path again crossed, but this time they were on the same sides; amid the European war and an upcoming election. Roosevelt had appointed Kennedy as ambassador to Britain, but there was underlined animosity because there were reports that Kennedy had openly expressed his lack of confidence in Britain's ability to endure an attack by the Nazi and was also critical of Roosevelt administration. With the pending

election, Kennedy had the leverage because the resignation of a prominent ambassador would be favorable for the opposing Republican. Roosevelt had to evaluate his position carefully and determined how he would persuade Kennedy to remain in London and at the same time obtain his endorsement for the election (Burns, 1978).

Roosevelt proceeded to order Kennedy to remain at his post, but the request was met with a threat from Kennedy to release a statement criticizing the administration. Roosevelt conceded and allowed Kennedy to return home on leave but had devised a plan to gain Kennedy's endorsement. He arranged for presidential agents to meet Kennedy at the airport, preventing him from having any contact with presidential opponent Wendell Willkie. Roosevelt rolled out the red carpet and invited Kennedy to come to the White House for a talk. During the meeting, Roosevelt gained Kennedy's trust by allowing him to air his grievance and in the end received the much sought-after endorsement from Kennedy. Kennedy left with the impression that he would receive a top position once Roosevelt was re-elected, which never materialized (Burns, 1978).

The action by Roosevelt was deliberate in making Kennedy believe that he could secure an ambassador position was considered power-welding, but in this respect, Roosevelt exerted the will, but Kennedy had freedom of choice. Roosevelt could have manipulated Kennedy's motives, self-esteem, and hopes of becoming a wartime czar, but he did not do so, and even if he had, Kennedy had enough influence to be able to achieve self-esteem and recognition through other means. It was evident from the actions of Kennedy in his role as an ambassador that the war was not viewed as a transcending moral issue, which was contrary to Roosevelt's sense of morality. Roosevelt's interest

was not in diminishing Kennedy's self-esteem; Roosevelt was more interested in the moral issues surrounding World War II. His core values were humane and democratic, and he wanted to address and implement programs that would be beneficial to the cause, which would have been hampered by Kennedy's opposing views (Burns, 1978).

### **Values and Leadership**

Leaders like Roosevelt possess the ability to have extraordinary influence over followers because they command powerful causes that speak to their morals and values. Such leaders motivate followers because the moral values of the leader serve as an inspiration that mobilizes an inner zeal that helps them to develop leadership qualities (Burns, 1978). Those who lead are influenced by different things including the need for social esteem that affects the way they respond to the values of other. Burns (1978) identified social esteem as a powerful force.

Mature leaders like Lyndon B. Johnson sought the approval of everyone in the Senate when he was majority leaders and wanted Americans to love him when he was president. There came the point when Johnson recognized that this was not possible, and he had to settle for something more realistic. Burns (1978) asserted that regardless of the need to have the approval of the mass, leaders must be willing to make enemies and accept conflict. At what point is the decision made not to win friends? Burns contemplated that this decision may be merely a practical realization by the political leaders that he studied that there needs only to be enough support to win in the different political areas where they are involved. Leaders will, therefore, need to decide what sides

they will take, and whom they will support. This decision may be influenced by either purpose or values (Burns, 1978).

Childhood was another area explored by Burns (1978) as influencing the morals and values of leaders. During childhood, children gain exposure to parental authority that instills values that become deeply ingrained into adulthood. The childhood years are the periods when the superego develops and works to resolve emotions and desires, which are part of the Oedipal conflicts. Children learn and adapt to the rules and guidance as articulated by parents and to please their parents; they learn to display or demonstrate the behaviors that would result in favorable responses while avoiding those that would result in penalties. The superego, which eventually manifests into feelings of conscience and overtime has a powerful influence on the course that children's values take (Burns, 1978).

In continuing the discussion on the influence of childhood on morals, Burns (1978) wrote that moralistic rigidities garnered through childhood may continue to guide the lives of some adults; for some adults, the rules do not adequately transform into values. The inadequate transformation could be due to the influences of the different socializing dynamics. Different human development specialists have supported the effects of the various socialization dynamics in the transformation of values.

Burns (1978) highlighted psychotherapist Carl Jung's dismissal of the Viennese notation that the brain was merely an extension of the genital glands and is responsible for the automatic responses to action. Others such as philosopher Jean Piaget identified socialization forces as an influence on the transformation of values, sociologist Talcott

Parsons identified moral standards and common culture as a significant element in personality structure, evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley identified flaws in the evolution of the superego from a primitive to rational mechanism that alters values, psychologist Erik Erikson, identified the naturally primitive, cruel, and uncompromising conscience of children as an influence on their values. In addition, Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud believed that the early configuration of conscience is a combination of biological process and child-parent relations that are unlikely to change in the adult life. Freud emphasized that the only possible change to this configuration is through psychoanalysis. Sociologist Talcott Parson found Freud's views to be unrealistic because morals and values are influenced by other forces such as cultural components (Burns, 1978).

Burns (1978) believed that the concepts presented by Freud and Jung were the most useful in understanding the structure of moral leadership because they facilitate the concept of values, which are created and solidified by conflict. The conflict identified by Burns is a natural part of the relationship between humans and can be a path to growth or destruction. It is an occurrence that will be encountered regardless of the professional pursuit that and will require recipients, specifically leaders to choose a position whether to confront it, exploit it, or embody it.

The course of the conflict is shaped by leaders who influence the scope and intensity by taking on various roles that may include supporting followers' interest, bargaining with others, overruling specific motives of followers, and sometimes seeking the involvement of others. The choices made by leaders in matters of conflict entail

legitimacy and consciousness of the selection among the various alternatives. Conflict can serve as a motivating force for leaders because it triggers the conversion of conflicting demands, values, and goals into distinct behaviors. Throughout the process of handling conflict, leaders expose followers to their values and morality which per the basic premise of leadership should be beneficial to both the needs of followers and leaders. The fundamental strategy of leadership is to recognize that there will be different motives and goals that must be balanced and conflict disagreement over goals from followers or other sources galvanize either agreement or disagreement. The steps taken by leaders by effectively managing the various sources of conflict can be one of the pathways to increase leadership power (Burns, 1978).

### **Leadership Styles–The Power and Influence**

There is significant potential for leaders to exert considerable influence over followers. They can use power to inspire or coerce followers to do things they would not usually do, which may be at different extremes on the power scale. They can create a platform where values are modeled, aspirations are redefined, and motivations are nurtured, but they can also use their power to exploit and destroy the motives of followers. Although leadership is primarily attached to the needs and goals of followers with the intent of pursuing a common purpose, there are distinct differences in the levels of motivation, power potential, and skills level. The leader-follower interaction takes two different forms classified as the transactional and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978).

## **Transactional Leadership**

The theory of the transactional leadership style as described by Burns (1978) is the exchange of something of value between leaders and followers with each side understanding the extent of the power they hold. In this respect, although their purposes are connected, the relationship is only valuable, for if the transaction is in effect. There is no binding relationship between the leaders and followers. After the purpose is fulfilled, the relationship disintegrated as basically a short-term exchange that satisfied the individual interest. Burns indicated that the transactional exchange could take any form that is of value to the leader-follower relationship, an example would be the exchange of goods for money or votes between citizens and candidates. Burns' insight into the transactional leadership style manifested through various political analogies associated with the opinion, group, party, legislative, and executive leadership. These different political groups demonstrated the actions of leaders at different levels; in both formal and informal roles and the impact and influence that emerged in the leader-follower relationship.

**Opinion Leadership.** Burns (1978) suggested that transactional leadership consists of a cluster of leadership-followership relationship that is highly influenced by opinion leaders. The three types of opinion leaders identified were: (a) highly visible and significant leaders whose primary objectives are to mobilization and motivate followers to fulfill their ideology and policies; (b) leaders who controlled the different forms of communication media including those in the formal and informal channels. They influence public opinion by manipulation, distortion and straight or unbiased news; and

(c) inconspicuous leaders who spread their views to the mass media and the mass public. This class of opinion leader is bestowed upon the person who is the purveyor of information and idea. People in the role of opinion leaders do not have any apparent purpose in passing on ideas and information, but garner influence by modifying the information they disseminate to suit the interests and preferences of those to whom they are seeking alignment. This type of leadership does not necessarily have formal authority as a leader and could be anyone from the taxi driver, the neighbor, or shop foreman. They are a master at personalizing the influence they have on others by tailoring what is said to benefit the person or group in which they communicate. They have no time constraint and position themselves to be able to captivate their listeners or followers to their brand of indoctrination.

**Group Leadership: Bargainers and Bureaucrats.** Small groups and bureaucrats are types of group leadership identified by Burns (1978) within the hierarchal structure. Small group leadership is an informal non-autonomous level of leadership that spawns from social conditions. In this type of leader, the relationship between leaders and followers is a well-coordinated arrangement derived from the explicit goals of the group. It is a methodological and rigid structure that focuses on goals and task, with very little chance of conflict. The leader is the focal point of the group and controls the flow and format of the group dynamics. Followers in this type of structure are not given independent roles and are highly dependent on the leader for guidance and approval. In the absence of the leader, the group loses coordination and is not able to function effectively (Burns, 1978).



The Norton Street corner group was an example from Burns (1978) of how small group leadership functions. In the 1930s, this group rose to prominence under the leadership of Doc, a young man of Italian descent. He became the leader after rising to prominence through physical competition in the neighborhood and combat. Under Doc's leadership, the group became prosperous through the carefully calculated use of conflict within the group and outside of the group to create a secure system of interrelations and exchanges. The group took pride in avoiding unsavory behaviors, which they claimed made their street the best in the community. Because of their reputation, they eventually became involved in politics, which granted them access to local government and offered them protection from certain aspects of the law. The leadership of the Norton Street group is an appropriate trait of the transactional leadership because their leader strived on brokering, mutual support, and mutual promise.

Burns (1978) indicated that conformity is a powerful predisposition in small group leadership. It is used to set the standards for behavior both inside and outside group and, is intended to assure purpose and consensus. The group strives for familiarity and stability and group members unite based on set goals and norms. Members of the group do not relate well to others outside the group and can only co-exist with those from their same group. Interacting with more than one group at a time or with others outside the group has the potential for conflict. The leader's interaction with others outside the group is purposely more intense to boost the leader's standings within his or her group. Conversely, the reputation of the leader within the group confirms the status and reputation outside the group.

Bureaucracy is another type of group leadership, but unlike small group leadership, the bureaucracy has formal authority to organize employees to meet a specific purpose. The authority and power of bureaucratic leaders are derived from the position held in the organization and recognized at different levels of the organization including those subjected to the rules. On the surface, bureaucratic organizations appear to personify the characteristics of leadership because it gives the appearance that all the factors are organized logically to meet defined goals. Closer examination of this structure reveals goals, rules, and procedures that are overtly formulated to control members. There is jurisdiction over every detail and employees are organized into categories according to purpose, process, and clientele. This type of structure models the transactional leadership because it is void of any form of personalized relationship (Burns, 1978).

**Party Leadership.** This formation of party leadership evolved from different groups who shared similar political doctrines. Over time, the group became more organized and included the conversion of millions of people in what Burns (1978) described as followers of which some became local and national leaders. This type of leadership is identified by Burns as an institution of collective leadership derived from group transformation into political parties. The power of the political parties lies in leaders' ability at any level to leverage wants and needs and fulfill promises for party followers. The structure of party leadership is made up of a president who is also called a national chairman, a national executive committee, and national conference representative, and state and regional committee whose members come from different

supporters. The control of the leadership structure is documented in the party leadership rules with decisions by leaders subjected to a referendum. The relationship among party leadership is competitive, and leaders are expected to be flexible and forceful in meeting demands as there is no time for extensive debate or decision-making. The doctrine and goals of the party set the tone for the direction and emphasize the actions that the party leadership takes in relating to followers. In Democratic Party leadership, the relationship between leaders and followers is based on two principles. One principle emphasizes the doctrine of the party where goals and procedures are focused on the needs, attitudes, and sensitivities of the members while another principle emphasizes the party constitutions. There is also a strong emphasis on the participation of members through meetings and elections that is used to support the party's position at higher levels.

**Legislative Leadership.** Burns (1978) described the legislative leadership as one that focuses on constituency issues and the forging of influence over lawmakers and constituency. According to Burns, the nature of relationships gives the perception of equality among the members but is a reciprocal relationship of mutual exchange. The transactional characteristics of the relationship of Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson were an example of a skillful legislative transactional leader. Johnson had a strong influence on Senate activities including appointments and chairmanships and several loyal lieutenants. When he transitioned to the role of President, he transferred his legislative techniques to the White House, but now Johnson had a much broader resource, which he utilized to the fullest. With the help of congressional liberal, he secured a win on a significant voting rights bill (Burns, 1978).

Other Western legislature believed that they could be as successful as Johnson without having executive leadership, but their expectations were not realized, and they could not attain Johnson's success in addressing current issues. The lack of success was compounded by the pace of legislative deliberation, the antiquated lawmaking procedures, the obstruction of minority delays, and the divide with veto powers. However, it was recognized that in comparison to the group and party leadership, legislative leadership holds autonomous control during their term of office and the vital power of one vote. The full potential of legislative leadership depended on the way they respond when faced with conflict, the role they assume when faced with demands, how they pursue goals within the context of their values, and their achievement of legislation by leveraging their position as a legislator (Burns, 1978).

In pursuing legislative duties, leaders had to filter between local and national responsibilities. In this respect, they could select from one or more role categorized as *ideologues, tribunes, careerists, parliamentarian, and broker*. In the role of *ideologues*, the legislative leader focuses on the doctrine that may be supported by the district or a small group of supporters. The *tribunes*' role is one where the legislative leader acts as an advocate for the constituents and positions themselves as a strong link in matters that affect those they represent. The role of *careerists* is the point at which legislative leaders lay the foundation for a higher position in the legislature, and every effort is made to align with those who can help in this career path. *Parliamentarians* take on two different roles—technician and institutionalist (Burns, 1978).

As a technician, parliamentarians take on the role of the expert in parliamentary matters and were influential in the outcome of legislative issues. As an institutionalist, parliamentarians act as protectors of the institution. They revere the indoctrination and tradition of the parliamentary institution. In the role of the *broker*, the legislative leader acts as a mediator between aggressive lawmakers and manages conflict and creates unity. The role chosen by the legislative leader is based on their view of the climate under which they operate. They take on the role that supports their legislative principles and strengthens their position when responding to the different forces that are part of the political process. It could also be a deliberate strategy to position themselves for higher career opportunities (Burns, 1978).

**Executive Leadership.** Burns (1978) described Charles de Gaulle as the symbol of executive leadership. De Gaulle rose to prominence as the president of the Fifth Republic party. Unlike other party members, he had no political experience, and there was speculation about whether members of parliament would have respect for someone with no political background. De Gaulle also had some prejudice about the parliamentarian and despised the conducts and practices of the parliamentary machinery and eventually implemented procedures to ensure that the components of government were kept in their respective places. After World War II, he announced that parliament would not have executive power, but should focus on exercising legislative power. DeGaulle believed that separating the two would create a stronger government and remove the confusion of powers and at the same time preserve the sanctity of government.

Although he lacked a strong political background, De Gaulle garnered his political power from his self-confidence instead of the traditional political machinery. DeGaulle exploited his personality, which was dubbed as the “style of the general.” He saw the office of the presidency as one of high dignity and demonstrated his belief in grand ceremonies at the different events in which he participated. He seized every opportunity to put on a show that characterized his personal approach (Burns, 1978). De Gaulle gained immense political powers that allowed him to exercise executive leadership. He took over control of budgetary matters under emergency power. The French legislative members were not pleased with him taking over, but they were powerless to do anything.

The actions of De Gaulle over the time he served as president resulted in extensive enhancements to his functions as an executive. He created precedence that although typical to characteristics of executive leadership, in some instances served a useful purpose. In the long run, and most notable in the last few years of his tenure, his actions did not result in any transformation for the citizens of France. Burns described De Gaulle’s actions as a fundamental problem with executive leadership because, on the one hand, it has the potential to target the needs of followers, but there is also the potential for it to be more self-serving (Burns, 1978).

### **Transformational Leadership**

In contrast to the transactional leadership style, the second half of Burns (1978) leadership model; the transformational leadership fuses the leader-follower relationship where the leader takes on a teaching role that unites followers in achieving higher goals.

The transformational style of leadership creates a cohesive relationship, which after an initial stage of separate, but related purpose, there is eventually a transformation where leaders and followers begin to work together and become a support system of motivation and morality for each other. Gandolfi (2012) identified the transformational leadership style as one that seeks to elevate the morality and motivation of followers. Beugré, Acar, and Braun (2006) defined transformational leadership as a style that possesses the charisma that provides intellectual stimulation and pursues the connection of individual interest with collective interest also allows followers to pursue transcending goals. Burns discussed some of the characteristics of the transformational leadership within the context of intellectual leaders, reform leadership, revolutionary leadership, intellectual leadership, and heroes and ideologues.

**Intellectual Leadership.** Burns (1978) identified transformational leadership as a form of intellectual thinking that utilizes both analytical and normative reasoning. The transforming mechanism of intellectuals is driven by the desire to respond to the needs of society. They are devoted to ideas, knowledge, and values; and pursue those things that transcend their intellect. The intellectual leaders bring to their environment a combination of analytical and normative ideas. Burns identified intellectual thinkers as having a profound commitment to pursuing social and societal actions. Their role is based on a conscious purpose, which comes from their values. Ismail, Mohamed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, and Yusuf (2011) depicted this type of leadership as one that is vested in intelligence.

There is an avid interest in logic, rational thinking, and problem-solving. As a dimension of transformational leadership, the principal result of intellectual leadership is the focus on innovation, promotion, and motivation (Smother, Doleh, Celuch, Peluchette, & Valdadares, 2016). Dealtry (2001) supported that leaders of today must be intelligent in their approach to be able to meet the needs of the organization. Leaders must possess instinctive behavior that encompasses creativity and the ability to access situations and act quickly in responding to the changing business environment.

In his continued highlight of the political arena, Burns (1978) drew on the notion of conflict as a catalyst for intellectual thinking. Burns identified the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the eras where intellectuals such as David Hume and John Stuart Mill faced inner conflict from an early age that manifested into psychotic behaviors that pushed their intellectual thinking. Burns mused that the path to intellectual thinking based on the behaviors of these intellects appears to be naturally conflict-ridden to push the boundaries of their thinking on profound matters such as man's relations to God, the nature of nature, the legitimacy of tradition and custom, and the place of man in the universe. This type of thinking goes beyond speculations; it requires opening one's mind to the "pure and the applied," "the negative and the affirmative," "the analytical and the prophetic," "the relationist and the absolutist," "the classic and rationalist" (p. 143). He applauded English intellectuals and their influence over political ideas that transcended different social class.

After the Civil War started, there was an abundance of proposals on how to resolve the formidable problems of liberty and power. They had to address the issue



between two systems of mixed government or balanced constitution and separation of power. The compelling issue for the intellects was to deduce how these two systems, with many different versions, relate to each other while dealing with the societal problem of liberty against power. Burns (1978) concluded that the efforts of these intellects in shaping the course of the governmental structure had been somewhat underappreciated because we are now so accustomed to mixed and separated constitutional arrangements. However, the path to these governmental structures was profound issues that required intense efforts to craft a theory of divided power in the theory of mixed and balanced classes (pp. 150, 152).

**Reform Leadership.** Burns (1978) define reform leaders as one that operates on moral principles and his concerned with following a path that will achieve moral ends. Reform leaders pursue change that is congruent with current trends and compatible with fundamental principles and movements. Despite the tendency of reform leaders to take a gradual approach to situations, they must still be willing to transform society whether in whole or part to achieve moral principles. Burns contemplated why some people were brilliant and effective at reform while others like Charles Gray had periods of success and failures.

At the age of 21, Gray became a Member of Parliament, and in 1932 he had the opportunity to display his skills as part of the parliamentary team in the Great Reform Bill. During the late 18th and 19th centuries, English political reformers including Gray faced several issues including the slave trade, Catholic emancipation, and electoral reform, but due to the climate at the time, political reform was deemed to be an urgent

issue. Political reform was a pressing matter at that time due to the years of upheavals from the French revolution through the cold war and the social discontent with Britain. Before the Great Reform, Gray was experiencing stagnation in the political area, but the Great Reform Bill re-energized his political career. Although the reform process was arduous and fraught with conflict, Gray intended to bring unity to the stakeholders. Through steadfast purpose and ingenious mediation, and the support from the outstanding efforts of the other parliamentary members, Gray quelled the sometimes-heated exchanges and embraced the frustrations and disagreements to ultimately create the Bill, which was introduced later into law (Burns, 1978).

On the American political scene, Burns (1978) highlighted some notable reformers including Neal Dow who sought Prohibition reform, Elizabeth Cady Stanton for women's rights, Horace Mann for better schools, and James G. Birney for emancipation. These reformers were acutely aware of the challenges and the slow pace of their effort to change. However, they were not concerned with obstacles or popularity; they were focused on "ideas, conscience, and common sense" (p. 191).

The American political reformers although faced with many dilemmas, were patient and remained focused on the cause; there were no expectations of immediate success, and the purpose was void of self-interest. Their aim was not to influence public opinion but to be a representative of the public opinion. In the present day, the concept of reform leadership as a transforming style is referred to by researchers such as Mehta, Maheshwari, and Sharma (2014) and Ionescu (2014) as change leadership. Mehta et al. (2014) asserted that successful leadership requires the ability to initiate change. Ionescu

(2014) supported that leadership is charged with creating and maintaining a change to sustain competitive advantage. As previously mentioned by Burns (1978), change is a responsive action to trends. Ionesse expressed the same sentiment that change is not a continuous process but is presented at events that may happen at different times.

McKnight (2013) emphasized change as a vital component of the transformational leadership style. This type of leadership is attuned to the need for change and will mobilize the needed action and embrace the support to create a new vision.

**Revolutionary Leadership.** Burns (1978) discussed the transforming effect of the revolutionary leadership. In politics, the act of revolution means an extensive transformation of a social system. It is a total commitment by the political leader to conquer and create a new system. The successful revolutionary leader similar to the reform leader requires a commitment to the cause and be willing to dedicate the time and effort regardless of the risk involved and like other types of leadership is ridden with conflict. However, unlike other types of leadership, the revolutionary leader is even more intense and may rise to the level of a martyr. This type of leadership requires dedication, passion, courage, sacrifices, and confidence. The trigger of revolutionary leadership is dissatisfaction with oppression and the failure of reform.

Among the leaders highlighted by Burns (1978) in the political context was Martin Luther King. Although King was a revolutionary leader, Burns described him as an anomaly because he was not associated with any party or organization. Instead, he had strong support from his followers that he was not intimately connected, but the power of his leadership had a profound impact on both the political and religious arena. He

displayed a strong conviction and ideology that emerged in a period when the need for change was growing, and the ability to communicate had become more efficient.

King's Bible-based ideology was the foundation of his leadership, and he gained almost instant notoriety as he ministered to different groups. His reputation was one of courage and independence, and his followers emulated his teachings. With increased literacy, the message for reform was spread through the printed words with the Bible becoming the best seller. King's religious teachings were a contradiction to the papal establishment who pushed for exclusion and restriction. He was by no means passive, but his Bible-based platform focused on teaching as well as learning. He even translated the Bible into German to broaden his ability to communicate with the people. His confrontation with the establishment was a threat to economic bases because he was steadfast in his pursuits and beliefs and would not bargain nor adjust. King's convictions elevated him to a master preacher and propagandist (Burns, 1978).

Watkins (2012) in highlighting the challenges faced by revolutionary leaders and their eventual demise at the hands of those they challenged. He identified King's pursuit of justice and his denouncement of critical events such as Vietnam as a mark of death. This supported Burns (1978) argument that revolutionary leaders must be willing to make the sacrifice and even be a martyr for the cause. Burns concluded that King's actions had significant implications, but "He was not an organizer, a collective leader, a revolutionary strategist. He was more of a prophet than a politician" that led a revolution that impacted the future (p. 205). In the business organization, Beugré, Acar, and Braun (2006) described revolutionary leadership as one with a vision that shapes the environment and

prepares the organization to meet the external environmental forces. McKnight (2013) added that radical change requires leaders who can formulate a systematic strategy to effectuate revolutionary change. Warrick (2011) identified the transformational leader as a visionary who pursues innovations and is willing to make revolutionary change.

### **Implications of the Transactional and Transformational Leadership**

In looking at how the transactional and transformational leadership style manifested in politics, Burns (1978) drew several conclusions. First leadership is a reciprocal arrangement that is controlled by those with specific motives and values, which makes the relationship transactional. Second, leaders play a critical role as teacher with the ability to uplift followers' motives and values, which is transforming. The two leadership styles can serve the intended purpose. The exchanges that occur in the transactional form of leadership serves the purpose of realizing the goals of those involved and therefore honoring the commitments or moral values, which is a fundamental principle of the transactional style.

The transformational form of leadership is based on the principle of equality and is concerned with end-values such as morality and uplifting followers. Both styles have moral implications because it is hard to define morality as even leaders like Hitler can argue that he was demonstrating the values of his people. Burns (1978) concluded that while there is a blending of the functions between leaders and followers, regardless of the style of leadership, there is a distinct difference between the role of leaders and followers. Leaders are responsible for setting the tone of the relationship and creating a link that facilitates communication and exchange. Leaders must also be intuitive about the motives

of followers, know their followers' power bases, and anticipate how followers may respond to suggestions. Burns concluded that both the transactional and transformational leadership styles could be a valuable contributor to human purpose, and although different in approach both have moral implications.

### **Third Theoretical Framework**

#### **Leadership in Business and Politics**

After Burns' (1978) study, Bass (1985) presented a study that expanded on the transactional and transformational leadership styles. Bass' study like Burns' study, discussed the effect of leadership on followers and how leadership styles created a dynamic change in followers. Bass in his research study, examined the characteristics of and differences of the transformational or transactional leadership styles and how they impact the relationship between leaders and followers as well as the performance and motivation of followers. For many years, the autocratic and democratic leadership styles were the primary focus of leadership studies, but eventually, there was a shift that promoted a "change in individuals, groups, and organizations" (p. 3). Despite the new focus, the emphasis was still too narrow because it was mainly concerned with areas such as quantity and quality of performance but Burns was optimistic that "higher order" change was imminent. Higher order change was forecasted to be a dynamic difference that would result in new leadership that could influence groundbreaking changes and sway traditional ways of thinking to more modern ideas. This new way of thinking would result in increased performance, "changes in attitude, belief, values, and needs" (p. 4).

The first order of change identified by Bass (1985) changes of degree was declared to be compatible with the transactional leadership style and the current theoretical emphasis on leadership as an exchange process. Bass found that while first order of change is enough at the level where followers' needs are met if they fulfill the contract between them and their supervisors, this compatibility is not enough, and there is a need for something different, which was identified as a second order of change. The higher level of change was identified as more in line with the transformational leadership style, a style described by Bass as a shared relationship that has a strong influence on followers in the major areas that affect performance. Bass contemplated the slow progress from first order to second order change, which he suggested was due to the appeal of exchange theories such as cost-benefit exchange and path-goal. He believed that these types of theories did not sufficiently account for the variations in leadership displayed by leaders like DeGaulle, Johnson, Alexander, and many others (Bass, 1985).

**Cost-benefit Exchange Theories.** This theory was highlighted by Bass (1985) as part of the strategies that have been used to measure the relationship between leadership and subordinates. He explained that the study of leadership has had roots in different disciplines and is an experimental social science that has progressed within organizational psychology from trait to situational theories and overtime advanced to the contingency theories. Bass asserted that these experiments have caused a noticeable shift in the way leadership is perceived, with a shift in focus from the leader-group relationship to the individual leader-follower relationship. Leaders were no longer viewed as those who gave directions to obedient subordination but were expected to create the

structure and show concern for human relations making the role of leaders' directive/and or participative. While these approaches resulted in a shift in the leader-subordinate connection, Bass indicated that the outcome was based on economic cost-benefit exchange theories that mainly drew assumptions on outcome such as "motivation, perception, and behavior" (p. 5). Theorists have used the cost-benefit assumptions as an indicator of the leader-follower grouping, and behaviorists have used it to focus on rewards and punishments, while cognitive theorists used it to focus on goals and achievement. The various inputs from these different theorists have helped to shift the focus from the relationship of the leader-group to an individual leader-follower relationship.

**The Path-Goal Theory.** This theory was highlighted by Bass (1985) as a hindrance to the progress of second order change. This theory promotes leadership as an extension of the expectancy theory of motivation and the cost-benefit construct. Thus, subordinates' satisfaction and work performance were identified as dependent on their expectations of a positive outcome and any enhancements by their superiors were expected to reinforce their expectations. Bass found the expectancy and cost-benefit assumptions to be unrealistic because the path-goal model has not been supported by an empirical test in the real world. Cost-benefits exchange theories were mainly concerned with factors that relate to or occurred in specific situations, and the narrow focus created limits on surveys and experimental research. As such, they have not elevated the thinking about leadership beyond first order change.



The continued focus on cost-benefit is due to the ease in which exchanges can be observed, recorded, and measured, but it was asserted that this emphasis could only be feasible if man's behavior were predictable and reasonable (Bass, 1985). However, Bass (1985) noted that in experimental psychology, there had been a shift from the use of a cost-benefit approach as the only way to assess motivation. He suggested that people's motivation is personal and varies from individual to individual and may be influenced by desires that are not always easy to explain. The Jim Jones tragedy in Guyana where coercion and misguided ideals resulted in a mass suicide; the millions who are enthralled by the policies of Pope John Paul although they may be contrary to their self-interest; and Lee Iacocca who was able to persuade people in his constituents to rise above their self-interest to save the almost bankrupt Chrysler. In these instances, the overarching phenomena of leadership-follower relationship to "symbolism, mysticism, imagining, and fantasy" is overlooked by exchange theories and experiments (p. 6). Bass further explained that the ineffectiveness of the cost-benefit exchange theories is evidenced in the limited statistical findings of repeated studies on independent variables such as external environment, organization, teams, and personality of leader and follower, and on dependent variables, such as leader behaviors, decision styles, or task-relationship orientation. The findings have yielded insignificant correlations and unexplained variances that would only be useful for conceptualization.

Despite this popularity of exchange theories, Bass (1985) identified the Homeostatic and Opponent Process Theories as possible breakthroughs in new leadership thinking. Bass described these models as the shift in the direction of second order change.

Homeostatic theory treats the relationship between leaders and followers as one where followers have a state of consciousness of how far they deviate from what is expected. The state of consciousness changes the concept of motivation as a matter of rewards and punishment because it guides the extent to which subordinates depart from the standards set by the leader and creates a sense of stability. Lai and Cummins (2013) in their research on the contribution of job and partner satisfaction to the homeostatic defense of subjective well-being, discussed the structure of the homeostatic theory as one that restricts the responses to external factors, which means that the subject is not given the flexibility to respond therefore creating a sense of a stable and relatively positive state.

The opponent process theory, on the other hand, accounts for the intensity of the stimulus that affects motivational response. It creates a link between followers' emotional state and their response to given situations. Strong or intense stimulus events will cause followers to retreat to a safer condition. In some instances, the effects of the opponent process may be slower causing the effect of the stimuli to linger. This theory was highlighted by Bowling, Beehr, Wagner, and Libkuman (2005) as a physiological process that regulates the emotional response to a stimulus, which determines people's state of being as they are exposed to different stimuli. As it relates to the leader-follower relationship, Bass (1985) concluded that there is a strong possibility that leadership influence may be more intense than expected, therefore reducing the frequency of deviation by followers. However, Bass cited discrepancy in the analysis of leadership behavior as it relates to followers because there is a tendency to look at the frequency of leadership behavior instead of the intensity of the behavior.

### **Leadership, The Broad View**

Analysts have dedicated much time to the organization as it relates to market share, the life cycle of the product, competition and portfolios, and strategic share. However, Bass (1985) suggested that it would be better to assess strategies and effectiveness as a reflection of the values and perceptions of the people who make up the organization. Bass suggested that there is evidence that these are important factors because of the effect that people have on the organization. For example, an organization led by a younger manager is likely to experience more growth than if an older manager ran it; the executive hired externally is inclined to make more changes than an executive promoted from within; the level of education and financial standing of the executive affects the way the organization is run. Despite these types of evidence, research in the field of social and organizational psychology on leadership continues to focus on only what can be readily observed such as the leader-follower relationship and ignoring the personality or charisma of the leader as a part of their power and influence and personal leadership.

Bass (1985) highlighted General Eugene Meyer as one of the people who had recognized the importance of charisma in leadership. The General believed that this trait was important in securing followers' loyalty and executing successful missions. Board Chairman of Arthur D. Little Inc., Robert K. Mueller was also another believer of the charismatic trait. He expressed the need for leaders to develop a sound foundation that can motivate individuals and steer the organization through the various complexities. Besides, leaders are expected to fuel the excitement, inspire, and arouse intense feelings

in the organization. Bass argued for the broader view of leadership to enable a more probing assessment of the workings of leadership in the organization as opposed to a more generic view that has been pursued by analysts.

### **Transactional Leadership**

Bass (1985) classified the transactional leadership style as an economic exchange between leaders and followers, which, does not result in any long-term change in attitudes and motivation because the focus is more on short-term outcome. Breevaart et al. (2014) portrayed this style as one that ensures that expectations are met and is driven by the need to fulfill the leader expectations. The intent is a cost-benefit exchange that yields material and psychological needs of subordinates who render service. It is a style that operates within a status quo and pursues immediate self-interest, and any reward to followers is only given in exchange for their efforts. Leaders with this style do not generate or foster any long-term change and are only focused on the process, making deals, and maintaining control instead of taking the time to understand the depth of the issue. The transactional style according to Washington, Sutton, Sauser, and William (2014) depends on hierarchical authority, task completion, and rewards and punishments. It is likely that followers will be compliant because of the expected outcome of the exchange, where the leader gets something, and the followers also get something.

Other researchers have concurred with Bass (1985) on the structure of transactional leadership style. Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, and Sassenberg (2014) described transactional leadership as an individualist style that provides contingent rewards according to levels of performance. Compensation is presented to followers

based on terms specifying the expectations and outcome. To ensure the desired outcome, transactional leaders are heavily involved in setting the objectives and expectations and monitors and measures behaviors to control and missteps or deviations (Martin, 2015). There is not much consideration for the followers' needs; the focus is on the reciprocal bargaining that is attached to the reward or benefits (Vito, Higgins, & Denney, 2014). Bass also supported the lack of consideration for the needs of followers that is displayed in the transactional leadership style and the association of reward to service performed. The transactional style of leadership as a style with two dimensions: one active (contingent reward) and one passive (management-by-exception). To further explain the structure of the transactional leadership, Bass examined contingent reward and management by exceptions and how they are embedded in the transactional leadership style.

**Contingent Reward.** Bass (1985) described the contingent reward as an embedded feature of the transactional leadership style. From the onset, the relationship between leaders and their followers are established as an agreement that followers must fulfill to yield the desired reward. There is a mutual understanding of the performance criteria for completing the task with the reward granted based on satisfactory performance (Tetteh-Opai & Omoregie, 2015). Breevaart et al. (2014) described a contingent reward as a system where followers receive incentives after the accomplishment of tasks and become transactional when material incentives such as bonus are awarded. Bass added that the structure of the reward contingencies is based on

the outcome of individualized performance; thus, the initial stages of the negotiation are used to determine the type of reward and whether it is acceptable.

Bass (1985) highlighted the work of leadership researcher such as Gary Yukl who identified the structuring of reward contingencies as one of the areas in leadership and includes the efforts to provide rewards for effective subordinate performance. Rewards, which may include a pay increase, promotion, favorable work schedule, and more time off. What Bass described as a contractual relationship between leader and subordinate is described by Yukl as goal setting. In this regard, there is an emphasis by the leader on setting specific performance goals for the work to be performed, with specific criteria for evaluating the progress in meeting the goals. Tremblay, Vandenberghe, and Doucet (2013) discussed the connection between contingent reward and positive work attitude and how the use of this type of reward creates a perception of fairness. This is because the exchange rules are clear and provide the consistency and accuracy and reduce the chance of bias as it relates to performance and reward. Gaudet, Tremblay, and Doucet (2014) in their research on perceived justice and emotional exhaustion identified contingent reward as a tangible or intangible offering that is tailored to individual performance. The structure of this type of reward enhances the perception of followers that the reward received is equivalent to the level of performance. Employees want to be treated equitably and want their contributions to be recognized and be rewarded at fair value, and in return, they will demonstrate behaviors that will benefit the leader.

Bass (1985) mentioned that there are several ways that leaders can pave the path for subordinate success starting with clarifying the role of subordinates and identifying

rewards that are tied to the level of performance. However, he cautioned that the extent to which leaders need to establish a strong path-goal process is dependent on whether the organization already has a system in place that must provide the different components of contingent reward. Another consideration is the state of employees' readiness to assume responsibility and how motivated they are to achieve the goals that were established. Inexperienced employees may require more frequent reinforcement until they acquire the desired level of skill.

**Management-by-Exception.** Bass (1985) described management-by-exception as a transactional style of leadership that monitors negative deviations from standards. There is no intervention or directives for the leader if the current method works and performance goals are met (Ejere, Oladele, & Akeke, 2016; Ghazali, 2010). There are two types of management by exception—active and passive. Active management by exception expects mistakes to occur and implements the necessary rules to thwart mistakes from happening while passive management by exception confronts followers only when errors happen. The practice of management by exception does not allow much autonomy by followers because they are monitored continuously and indicates that leaders in this respect do not have the power to inspire or motivate those they lead (Breevaart et al., 2014). Any deviation from expected performance Bass continued would result in automatic consequence or negative feedback. The feedback could be as mild as clarification of duties or encouragement or maybe as severe as disciplinary action.

Sommer, Howell, and Hadley (2016) in their research on keeping positive and building strength identified the transactional effect of management by exception as one

where the focus of the leader is on continuous monitoring of subordinates' performance to detect mistakes. Bass (1985) expressed that feedback despite the negative connotation may be beneficial to inexperienced employees by providing them with information on what is expected. However, this type of leadership sets the tone of the relationship with subordinates but is less effective when compared to the contingent reward. It also creates the notion of "management as a controller, and as long as the ship is on course, nothing needs to be done" (p. 137).

### **Transformational Leadership**

The transformational leadership is defined by Bass (1985) as a style of leadership that motivates followers to make commitments beyond their self-interest. Bass proclaimed the transformational leadership as the answer to second-order change where leaders can command the respect of followers and move into a state where they can achieve personal growth. The personal characteristics of the leader influence followers to elevate themselves to a higher level of need. Birasnav (2014) indicated that the transformational leadership inspires followers to commit to the shared vision and transforms employees into innovators. Transformational leaders also encourage and support organizational culture and guide followers in the different phase of the organization. Bass emphasized that among the fundamental differences between the transactional and transformational leadership styles is the ability of the transformational leaders to raise followers' consciousness to a higher consideration.

There is more than a desire for superficial change. This type of leadership possesses the vision and self-confidence and inner strength and paves the way for success



based on sound decisions rather than popularity. Jayakody and Gamage (2015) identified transformational leadership as a style that seeks opportunities for change and takes steps to establish a long-term vision. It is a proponent of group goals and provides subordinates with the support to increase the level of success. Bass (1985) suggested that a transforming leader offers a platform for high standards in performance and serve as the inspiration for followers to be successful. Bass identified three distinct characteristics associated with the transformational leadership style—*charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation*.

**Charisma.** Over time, charisma has been used to describe people with strong attractive and inspiring personality (Bass, 1985). Stefan, Urbano, and Alvarez (2013) identified charismatic leadership as comprising of various attributes such as vision, inspiration, integrity, and self-sacrifice. In the social and political science field, charisma is used to describe the extreme effect that leaders have on their followers (Bass, 1985). It consists of psychological and behavioral attributes that are considered essential components of effective leadership. Contemporary research per Milosevic and Bass (2014) identified charismatic leadership as a standard characteristic of those who aspire to influence people and the performance of the organization. It is an attribute that is recognized in social organization as a means of bringing people together (Bastedo & Kleinman, 2014). Horn, Mathis, Robinson, and Randle (2015) declared that charismatic leaders have a strong connection with followers developed through unrelenting passion, vision, and initiative that create a level of excitement that captivates followers.

Bass (1985) proclaimed that charisma is dependent not only on leaders but also followers. The way in which followers respond to leaders can rise to the level of devotion, amazement, and even reverence. It is an unequivocal emotional connection with the leader that speaks to the command and magnetism of the leader. Sosik, Chun, and Zhu (2014) agreed that charisma is a combination of the personal attributes of leaders as well as an acknowledgment from followers. In a time of crisis, the charisma of the leader is even more important because at that time followers are looking for appealing and groundbreaking solutions to the problems. Bass added that within certain schools of thought, charisma causes huge displacement of feelings between leaders and followers, which may be due to unfulfilled yearning. Li, Tan, and Teo (2012) indicated that followers would assign charismatic attributes to leaders if they are emotionally inspired.

The transformational element of the charismatic leader is the ability to anticipate the needs, wants, and desires of followers, through inspiring words and actions that draw people out of thoughts and feelings that may not be positive. The aim of transforming charismatic leaders is to link the mission of the group by arousing the desires of followers as it relates to achievement, affiliation, and power. Followers are united to put forth their best efforts to achieve that which they pursue. Leaders transform followers through optimism, and confidence in their abilities to excel. The high level of trust experienced under the charismatic leaders raises the self-esteem and enthusiasm of followers who in turn are motivated to fulfill the expectations of the leaders. The transformational tendencies of the charismatic leader provide followers with a realistic frame of reference by defining the situation in a way that can be quickly processed. Sun, Xu, and Shang

(2014) concurred that transformational, charismatic leaders have the tenacity to help followers to understand the climate and keep them abreast of what is going on around them. Graham, Ziegert, and Capitano (2015) declared that charismatic, transformational leadership is more effective during times of threat and periods of change. They can help followers to find the common link with the organization, thus inspiring loyalty that will secure the organization interest.

Bass (1985) indicated that although possessing charisma makes it more likely for leadership success, leaders can be successful without possessing charisma. Leaders such as George Washington who did not have natural charismatic abilities but managed to be revered by followers and was regarded as a successful military and political leader. On the other hand, Bass declared that those who possess a natural charisma are not always successful leaders due to constraints that could be environmental or personal. John F. Kennedy was a charismatic leader, who was viewed by many with great favor, but despite strong, charismatic abilities, he was not able to influence much change on the domestic front. Fidel Castro, another charismatic leader who for the most part could transform his revolutionary principles to Cuba but failed to export his ideas to other areas of the world. Silva (2014) pointed added that charismatic leaders can also be self-serving. Leaders such as Hitler were considered charismatic but used it to manipulate followers.

**Individualized Consideration.** This characteristic was identified by Bass (1985) as a key component of the relationship between leaders and their subordinates that encompasses delegation, communication, recognition of individual differences, and mentoring. It is an element of transformational leaders where subordinates are given

individualized attention and the opportunity to discuss matters relating to the job. It is also an opportunity for leaders to have meaningful discussions with subordinates about performance, interest, and aspirations as well as to provide mentorship. Individualized consideration, as described by Zacher, Pearce, Rooney, and Mckenna (2014), is the nurturing, caring, and support demonstrated by the leader in the personal development of followers. The transformational leader who practices idealized consideration considers the individual needs of each subordinate. This creates a feeling of fairness, which also creates satisfied and motivates employees. It entails coaching, and opportunities for learning and nurturing a supportive climate for growth (Mokhber, Ismail, & Vakilbashi, 2015). Each follower is treated as an individual and is entrusted with projects to promote a meaningful learning experience. The needs of followers are a primary consideration with the leader paying close attention to issues affecting everyone (Pongpearchan, 2016).

Individualized consideration offers different beneficial outcome to the organization. It raises the opportunity for the potential of all subordinates to be cultivated in preparation for both current and future opportunities within the organization. It is an inclusive approach that provides challenging work and increasing responsibility to develop leadership. It bridges the communication gap because subordinates are informed about things that are happening, which means that changes are not a surprise. This, in turn, creates a feeling that they are part of organizational development (Bass, 1985). Mentoring is also another benefit of individualized consideration. Through mentoring, leaders take the time to counsel subordinates to develop skills that will help them to

progress through the organization. It also develops subordinates' self-image and transforms them into confident individuals

**Intellectual Stimulation.** Like Burns (1978), Bass (1985) drew on intellect as a factor of the transformational leadership style. However, Bass's viewpoint was more focused on the stimulation of followers to think intellectually and the arousal and change in followers to detect and solve problems. It is an influence that creates in-depth thinking about problems. Smothers, Doleh, Celuch, Peluchette, and Valadares (2016) identified intellectual stimulation as a transformational leadership characteristic where followers are encouraged to display problem-solving skills that are intellectual, logical, and rational. Leaders who exemplify intellectual stimulation do not focus on short-term goals; they are more interested in strategic thinking and intellectual activities that will drive followers to analyze, formulate, implement, interpret, and evaluate problems. This transforming factor establishes a focus that goes beyond everyday thinking because there is a push to a pursue more rigorous information that will uncover the opportunities and threats facing the organization as well the strengths, weaknesses, and competitive advantages of the organization. The aim is to be innovative and discover ways to make the organization successful (Bass, 1985).

Bass (1985) believed that the intellectual stimulation espoused by transformational leaders is necessary because it forces followers to develop capabilities that result in a fresh look at things. It reduces snap decisions because there is now an ingrained sense to question and probe. Intellectual stimulation is a major factor in times of crisis, when things are unstructured, and when there is a critical problem that is affecting an internal

organizational problem. These are times when problem-solving skills are needed to delve into the core of the issue to identify innovative ways to transform the organization.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Both Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) highlighted the transactional leadership as one that is grounded in an exchange process between leaders and followers. The agreement between leaders and followers solidifies the understanding that for there to be a positive outcome or reward, the obligation must be fulfilled. Burns categorized the qualities of the transactional leadership within the political arenas as opinion leadership (information authority with no real purpose), group leadership (small group and bureaucrats), party leadership (primary focus on party doctrine and constituents), legislative leadership (reciprocal relationship that gives the appearance of equality), and executive leadership (intentions that a self-serving). Bass aligned the characteristics of the transactional leadership to contingent reward (reward tied to fulfillment of agreement), and management by exception (monitoring and reacting to deviations from expectations).

The transformational leadership was viewed by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) as a style that brings about some form of change. However, Burns saw the effects of transformational leadership as one that elevates followers and leaders who use their influence in a negative way such as Hitler was not regarded as transforming. Bass, on the other hand, viewed this style as one that motivates followers to go beyond what they would typically do. Burns categorized transformational leaders as intellectual leadership (thinking that is devoted to transcending intellect), reform leadership (deeply entrenched

in moral principles), revolutionary leadership (conquer and create something new). For Bass, transformational leadership entails charisma (a personality that uplifts and inspires), individualized consideration (treating followers as unique individuals), and intellectual stimulation (arousal of change and awareness in followers).

Regardless of the leadership style, the actions taken by leaders as outlined by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), shape the behavior of followers and impact the level of motivation to accomplish goals. A transformational style is an approach that views followers as an integral part of the organizational progress and makes every effort to stimulate creativity. A transactional style, on the other hand, sets the standards without seeking input from followers. The transformational style takes proactive approaches to decision-making unlike the reactive approach of the transactional style. The two styles although different in approach and intent was acknowledged by Burns both Bass beneficial in given circumstances.

A detailed description of the research methodology is presented in Chapter 3, with a specific focus on the population, sampling procedures, recruitment procedures, instrumentation, and operationalization of constructs. The chapter continues with a discussion on the threats to validity and ethical procedures for the study.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

My focus in this quantitative, nonexperimental survey research was the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. The concept for the research was based on the seminal work of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-

collectivism, and masculinity-femininity), which were classifications of how people behaved in accordance with their respective cultures and Burns' (1978) and Bass' (1985) transactional and transformational leadership styles. Prior studies have given insight into the growth of the virtual work environment due to technology (Chary, 2007). Information technology has enabled people to work from anywhere in the world at any time of day or night without physically seeing coworkers or leaders (Nydegger & Nydegger, 2010).

This change in the structure of the work environment has created the opportunity for people from different nationalities to work together (Eom, 2009). However, current studies have only addressed leadership in the traditional work environment (Mukherjee et al., 2012), but few empirical studies on cultural backgrounds in the virtual work environment (Srivastava, 2012). Evidence from researchers such as Marc (2011) and Shriberg (2009) have supported the differences that exist in the virtual work environment due to the diverse cultures. In pursuit of the gap identified by these researchers, there were two compelling questions to be answered, which were:

RQ1: What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the transactional leadership styles?

RQ2: What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the transformational leadership style?

This chapter includes a comprehensive overview of the method used to answer the research questions with details about the survey design, target population, sample and setting, instruments, and tools used to analyze the data after the collection.



### **Research Design and Rationale**

My purpose in this quantitative, nonexperimental survey study was to examine the relationship between cultural backgrounds and in the virtual work environment. This study compared the IVs of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity and the DVs of transactional and transformational leadership styles in the virtual work environment.

The quantitative methodology was appropriate to pursue the sampling process and testing of differences and relationships among variables (Leahey, 2009) and would also facilitate the generalization of findings to a larger population and provide statistical evidence to accept or reject the hypotheses and enable the summarization of the numerical data (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013), which can then be compared, ranked, quantified, and replicated. The quantitative research design enabled the testing of unbiased theories and identify the relationships among variables (Ingham-Broomfield, 2014) and provided concrete meaning to the construct as well as the ability to expand and quantify the results (Westerman, 2011).

The IVs were Hofstede's cultural dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity to the dependent variables, whereas the DVs transactional and transformational leadership styles. The data was collected through an online survey. I chose an online survey because it was considered a dependable method for obtaining information on the attitude and behavior of respondents (Dillman et al., 2007; Vamsi & Kodali, 2014). The survey instrument for leadership styles was the MLQ 5X short survey, which was developed by Bass and

Avolio (1994). This instrument was designed to measure specific leadership styles and has been used extensively in various studies (Carter, 2009; Cole, Keung, & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Li, Chen, Ying, & Barnes, 2010) and has proven to be adequately reliable and valid (Lee, 2005; Rothfelder et al., 2012). The instrument has a recorded reliability rating of  $r = 0.74$  to  $r = 0.94$  and validity ratings between  $r = 0.56$  and  $r = 0.91$  (Salter, Green, Duncan, Berre, & Torti, 2010).

The earlier design of the MLQ 5X short was a six-factor leadership model developed from surveying United States Army Field Grade Officers on how they viewed the leadership of their superior officers. Since that time, there have been several modifications that have incorporated analyses and criticisms from researchers who have used the instrument (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). The modified instrument was validated in subsequent studies that measure the effect of individual variables on leadership styles including the transactional and transformational styles (Ali Shurbag & Zahari, 2013; Bennett, 2009). The repeated use of the instrument provided a basis for the current study to measure the transactional and transformational leadership variables.

Hofstede's (1994) cultural value survey module was used to measure the cultural dimensions of individualism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity (Hofstede, 2001, 2002). I selected Hofstede's cultural variables because they were widely accepted and used in several studies (Dartey-Baah, 2013; Garg & Ma, 2005; Lee & Liu, 2012; Seleim & Bontis, 2009; Zheng, 2010) and provide clear-cut dimensions incorporated in different studies (Yeganeh, Zhan, & Sauers, 2009). Hofstede initially used the value survey module to measure the influence of national culture on the different

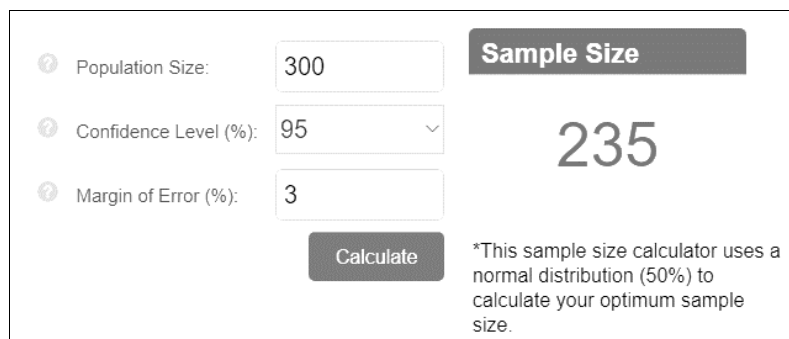
cultural groups within the IBM work population (Huettinger, 2008). Based on the IBM study, this survey instrument has recorded reliability for the dimensions of individualism  $r = 0.71$ , uncertainty avoidance  $r = 0.59$ , power distance  $r = 0.57$ , and masculinity  $r = 0.24$  (Hofstede, 2002).

Multiple linear regressions were used to analyze the data. Multiple linear regressions are the most accepted methods used to convey the extent to which the response variables are dependent on the predictor variables (Ghazali et al., 2010; McCluskey, Davis, Haran, McCord, & McIlhatton, 2012). Researchers such as Allore, Tinetti, Araujo, Hardy, and Peduzzi (2005); Ghazali et al. (2010); and El Genidy (2012) have used multiple regression to successfully analyze the data collected in their research to assess the relationships between specific variables. This method of analysis is suitable for understanding the causal relationship between the IVs and DVs (Muzumdar, 2014). Multiple regression was used to understand the effect of the variables better and whether they would be positive or negative on the outcome (Marinkovic & Radovic, 2010). Based on the success in other studies, multiple regression analysis was the best method of verifying the relationship between the four independent variables and the two dependent variables in this study.

### **Population**

The population for this research was obtained through paid subscription from the database of Quest MindShare and consisted of people employed in leadership roles such as chief, senior, manager, director, president, vice president, or deputy in the virtual work environment. The subscription was for a global panel of 300 with a projected sample size

of 235, a confidence level of 95%, and a margin of error of 3% derived from the SurveyMonkey sample size calculator.



The image shows a screenshot of the SurveyMonkey Sample Size Calculator. It features three input fields: 'Population Size' with the value 300, 'Confidence Level (%)' with a dropdown menu set to 95, and 'Margin of Error (%)' with the value 3. A 'Calculate' button is located below these fields. To the right, the calculated 'Sample Size' is displayed as 235. A small note at the bottom right explains that the calculator uses a normal distribution (50%) to determine the optimum sample size.

*Figure 2.* SurveyMonkey Sample Size Calculator (SurveyMonkey, n.d.).

### **Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

The data were collected online from the database of Quest MindShare. To support the cultural background variables, the survey was available to participants from any geographic location and to support the leadership style variables; participants were required to have job titles that represented leadership roles (i.e., chief, manager, senior, director, president, vice president, or deputy). The participants were selected randomly from the audience panel by Quest MindShare. The selection was made with criterion such as nationality and type of work environment, which was part of the survey setup. The use of random sampling by Quest MindShare increased the probability that everyone in the sample unit had an equal chance of being selected. The random selection method was described by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) as an unbiased procedure for choosing the sampling unit from the population.

To ensure that participants were adequately informed about the nature of the research, I outlined the purpose and intent of the study in the introductory letter. The letter was made available to the participants identified by Quest MindShare who meet the criteria of the study. Participants who agreed to take the survey were provided with instructions and a link to the survey.

The screening criterion included gender, age, race, educational level, job title, nationality, and supervisory responsibilities (Tipuric, Podrug, & Hruska, 2007). There were also questions to identify whether participants were employed in a virtual work environment. Questions included (a) Do you have supervisory responsibility for employees?, and (b) Are you located in the same city, country, or state, as your employees?

Participants were not required to identify the name of the organization they worked for or any personal information, but some important criterion (gender, age, race, educational level, job title, nationality, and job title) was required to ensure the data collected identified cultural background, work environment, and role or position in the organization, to test the research hypotheses properly. The role or position held by participants was used to identify leadership responsibilities. The nationality of participants identified their cultural backgrounds, and the type of work environment identified whether participants work in a virtual or traditional workplace.

The population was defined by a set of criterion entered in the service provider's database, and I did not have any direct contact or communication with participants nor was I privy to any personal characteristics. The surveys were self-administered, and

anonymous and participants were not required to provide any personal information or divulge any information about their place of employment.

### **Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs**

The data collection instruments used for the study were the Multiple Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X Short (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and the Cultural Value Survey Module (CVSM-94) (Hofstede, 1994). Both instruments had been used in other studies and had established acceptable levels of validity and reliability through repeated use in different studies.

#### **Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire**

The original MLQ 5X short used in the study consisted of 45 questions with a 5-point rating scale similar to the Likert Scale, and anchored labels of 0 = not at all, 1 = once in a while, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = frequently/if not always. The instrument captures 32 behaviors that identified how often respondents believe that they engage in specific behaviors with their subordinates. There are 12 factors. Nine factors were used to measure the structure of leadership styles, and the remaining three factors were used to measure the outcome of leadership styles. The nine factors were further broken down to measure specific styles. Five of the factors measured the transformational leadership style; three factors measured transactional leadership style, and the last factor measured the non-transactional attributes (Seyal & Rahman, 2014).

The factors relating to the transformational leadership are idealized influence attributes, idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. The factors for the transactional leadership are

the contingent reward, management-by-exception (active), and management-by-exception (passive). One factor is attributed to the non-leadership characteristics, which is classified as laissez-faire (Edwards, Schyns, Gill, & Higgs, 2012). The laissez-fair style is not a variable in this research and was not measured or reported on in the result.

In the current research, the MLQ 5X short was used to assess how individual participants perceived their engagement with subordinates in 32 defined categories of behavior. Although shorter versions of the MLQ 5X short have been used in other studies, I was unable to ascertain the validity and reliability of the shortened version. The 45-item instrument was used because there are established validity and reliability by researchers such as Cole, Bedeian, and Field (2006), Carter (2009), Li, Chen, Ying, and Barnes (2010), Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2013), Lee (2005), and Rothfelder et al. (2012). The proper licensing and permission to use the survey was obtained from Mind Garden Inc., and the instrument was recreated as an online survey on the SurveyMonkey website. The MLQ 5X short is expected to take participants approximately 15 minutes to complete (Bennett, 2009).

### **Cultural Value Survey Module**

The 1994 Cultural Value Survey Module (CVSM) is a survey instrument developed by Hofstede to reflect the differences between nations (Heuer, Cummings, & Hutabarat, 1999). This field-tested instrument consists of twenty contents and six demographic questions. The content questions measure five separate dimensions of national culture: (1) Individualism-Collectivism, (2) Power Distance, (3) Uncertainty Avoidance, (4) Masculinity-Femininity, and (5) Long-term Orientation (Murad, Hj Syd

Abdul Rahman Hj, & Syd Zin, 2011). Although a part of the survey instrument, the fifth dimension, Long-term Orientation variables were not measured or reported in this study. Unlike the four original dimensions (i.e., power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity), the research for Long-term Orientation was with university students instead of employees within an organizational setting (Hanzaee & Dehkordi 2012). As such, I determined that the Long-term Orientation dimension would not fit the scope of this study because of the focus on the business environment.

The CVSM-94 uses a 5-point Likert Scale with the first 12 items using a rating of 1 = of utmost importance, 2 = very important, 3 = of moderate importance, 4 = of little importance, and 5 = of very little or no importance. Two items use a frequency rating with different response ratings. The last six questions use a rating of 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = undecided, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. Permission to use the instrument was obtained from the Institute for Research and Intercultural Cooperation (IRIC) and were created as an online survey on the SurveyMonkey website.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were coded and keyed for computer analysis using the Statistical Package of Social Science Software (SPSS). Descriptive and correlational statistical methods were used to describe the samples and analyze frequency distribution. Research questions one and two both have four hypotheses that were tested to assess the relationship between IVs of cultural dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity (Hofstede, 1980) to



the DVs of transformational and transactional leadership styles. The primary statistical process was a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and the Pearson correlation coefficient. The one-way ANOVA was used to test the eight hypotheses to identify the significance of the relationship between the four cultural dimensions and two leadership styles. The Pearson correlation was used to determine if a linear relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. The statistical significance level was set at .05 and was an indicator of accepting and rejecting the null hypothesis (Field, 2005). A detailed description of the analysis is presented in Chapter 4.

### **Reliability of Instrument**

Reliability is concerned with the accuracy of the measurement instrument and the extent to which the instrument measures what it is designed to do. It is, therefore, necessary to evaluate the degree of accuracy to ensure that findings are accurate (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Cronbach's Alpha was used to analyze the reliability of the MLQ 5X. Cronbach's Alpha was developed in 1951 by Lee Cronbach as a means of securing internal consistency for test or scales (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). It is a widely-used method for testing reliability of the questions in the surveys (Chen, 2013; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011) and assisted in identifying whether the questions reflect the construct that is being measured (Field, 2005). The alpha score was set at 0.7, which is considered adequate for survey instruments (Eiras, Escoval, Isabel, & Silva-Fortes, 2014).

The reliability of CVSM-94 was not tested with Cronbach's Alpha based on the caveat from Hofstede (1994) in his analysis of the use of the instrument. Hofstede

suggested that the instrument is to be used for testing the mean across countries and not for testing individuals. He indicated that the reliability of the instrument is related to his original IBM study and results are compromised when used to compare individuals or a single country instead of across the country (Hofstede, 2002). The focus of this research was to identify the cultural backgrounds of individuals, and I wanted to preserve the integrity of the instrument and the survey results by adhering to the guidelines supplied by Hofstede.

### **Threats to Validity**

The extent to which an instrument measures what it is designed to do is referred to as validity (Magasi et al., 2012). Validity is important because it assures that the conclusion drawn from testing the hypotheses is accurate or credible. The assurance of validity is established by ensuring that the data collection instrument is accurately measuring the variables (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

**External Validity.** The concept of external validity identifies the effectiveness of the research findings to be generalized in different settings and populations. One of the threats attributed to external validity is the lack of a representative sample. Participants in the current study were randomly selected to ensure that the proposed population would be an accurate representation of the the sample that fits the criterion of the study (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Another threat is the attrition of participants from the study because some may find the task of completing two surveys tedious or time-consuming. The contingency if this occurs, was to purchase an additional subscription to ensure that sample size would be adequate for the study.

**Internal Validity.** According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), internal validity is a means of establishing confidence that the values of the dependent variables are not impacted by any other factors than the ones being measured. The threat to internal validity of the current study was minimal because the research instruments selected had been used in other studies over the years.

**Construct Validity.** The construct validity is important to this research because it established the relevance of the instrument to the theoretical framework of the study, and the impact on the outcome of the study (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Factor analysis was used to test the construct validity because it was considered one of the best method to perform this test (Sharma, 2012). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) supported the use of factor analysis as a method of identifying indicators to increase the effectiveness and validity of the research. Van der Eijk and Rose (2015) also identified factor analysis as one of the methods that assist in determining the variables that are common in survey data and the correlations in the survey items.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Human participants were treated with the highest degree of ethics. The rights of the participants were protected by carefully following the standards of Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants were provided with information about the study with full transparency on how the information would be used and stored after the study concludes. The identity of the participants was protected as the information collected from the survey did not contain any personally identifiable information. Additionally, before collecting the data, ethical considerations relating to human

participants were addressed by obtaining approval from Walden University IRB (Approval number: 07-13-17-0277526).

### **Protection of Participants Rights**

The rights and welfare of research participants were protected in keeping with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (APA) (2009). Personal information was kept within the perimeter of the demographic questions of the CVSM-94 and the MLQ 5X. The online survey was embedded with a confidentiality statement that provided full disclosure about the purpose of the survey. The overall risk to participants was minimal because there was no specific identification or self-disclosure required that would reveal who is completing the survey. Additionally, I do not know the participants as they were procured via Quest MindShare's database based on a pre-defined criterion.

Participation in the research study was strictly voluntary, and those who choose to participate had the option to withdraw at any time. Participants could withdraw by merely not registering for the survey, and if they started the survey and decided to withdraw, they could simply abort the process. Data from incomplete surveys were not be included in the analysis and was handled in the same confidential manner as those who fully completed the study. Once the data was collected, and the study closed, the information was accessible only by me and to protect the confidentiality of participants, all data collected will be stored for 5 years in a secured cloud storage.

### **Summary**

The structure of the current study was in response to the gap in research concerning the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in a

virtual work environment. The choice of theoretical frameworks, the research instrument, and data analysis were selected as the best strategies to answer the research questions based on results from existing studies on leadership styles and culture. The two survey instruments, MLQ 5X short and CVSM-94 developed by Bass and Avolio (1994) and Hofstede (1994) respectively, are complements to the theoretical frameworks because they incorporate questions that identified participants' style of leadership and behaviors associated with cultural backgrounds. The extensive use of these instruments in other studies assured the validity and reliability to measure the hypotheses in the current study.

The characteristics of the sample and setting were inherent to the intent of the research and will target participants with leadership responsibilities in the virtual work environment. The cultural backgrounds of participants were established through the demographic question about nationality as well as responses to the CVSM-94 to provide data to support the dependent variable. Leadership style was established through the responses furnished in the MLQ 5X short. The privacy of participants was protected through the collecting of generic demographic information. I did not have contact with the participants and information obtained in response to the study was confidential and not bear any personal information. Informed consent was obtained with an introductory letter provided to participants with detailed information on their role, intent, and purpose of the research. The significance of the study is revealed in Chapter 4, where the compilation of the data collected from participants as it relates to cultural backgrounds and leadership styles is discussed in detail.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental survey study was to examine the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. The gap in the research prompted this research study on cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. It was important to address this gap because technology has created the opportunity for people to work from anywhere in the world using a computer and other technological means. This change in the work environment has increased the prospect of cultural diversity or cultural differences in the organization (Maranga & Sampayo, 2015). The gap in research was pursued by the theoretical frameworks of Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) transactional and transformational leadership styles and the cultural background dimensions of Hofstede (1980). Two research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the transactional leadership styles?

RQ2: What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the transformational leadership style?

Chapter 4 is used to present the data collection strategy, data analysis, statistical findings of the research, description of the data, descriptive statistics, statistical assumption, inferential statistics, and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

## **Data Collection**

The data collection instruments used in this study were the MLQ 5X short (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and the CVSM-94 (Hofstede, 1994). The survey was uploaded on the Survey Monkey website with Quest MindShare serving as the data collection source. The survey process was anonymous. The information requested in the survey had no personal data, and I had no contact with those who participated. The only demographic information required was nationality, which was part of the CVSM-94 questionnaire to establish cultural backgrounds and the year of birth of participants.

The data collection was over a 5-day period, from November 15, 2017, to November 20, 2017. Upon the conclusion of the collection period, I received an email notification from the Quest MindShare representative. The data was retrieved by logging into the SurveyMonkey website. A total of 303 responses were received from participants who met the criterion based on a “yes” response to the three qualifying questions included at the beginning of the survey (a) Do you work in a virtual/remote/online work environment? (b) Do you hold the leadership roles with job titles such as manager, director, supervisor? (c) Do you manage employees located in a different state, county, or country from you?

After reviewing the data on SurveyMonkey, the information was downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet where I reviewed the data, coded for gender, ethnicity, and nationality, and calculated the average scores for the survey instruments. Based on the instructions from the MLQ 5X short and CVSM Manuals, blank answers were not

included in the calculation of the mean score of the scales. The preparation of the scales is explained in the descriptive statistics section.

## **Study Results**

### **Demographics**

The demographic composition of the sample population is presented in Table 1. The population by gender consisted of 134 females (44.5%) and 167 males (55.4%). There was no response to the gender question from 2 participants, which were treated as incomplete items and not included in the result. The race/ethnicity breakdown also shown in Table 1, were 2.0% American Indian/Alaskan Native; 6.0% Asian/Pacific Islander; 11.3% Black/African American, 13.6% Hispanics; 66.0% White/Caucasian American; 1.0% multiple ethnicity/other; and 1.0% no response. Majority of the participants were White/Caucasian Americans.

The demographics of participants based on year of birth showed 2.3%, born 1955 to 1958; 3.7%, born 1961 to 1969; 10.3%, born 1970 to 1975; 14.6%, born 1976 to 1980; 33.2%, born 1981 to 1985; 21.6%, born 1986 to 1990; 9.6%, born 1991 to 1994; 4.7%, born 1995 to 1998. There was no response from 2 participants, which were treated as incomplete and was not included in the results. Most of the participants (33.2%) were born in the year 1981 to 1985. The year of birth by gender showed 1% male, 1.3% female born 1955 to 1958; 2.7% male, 1.0%, female born 1961 to 1969; 6.3% male, 4.0% female born 1970 to 1975; 8.3% male, 6.3% females born 1976 to 1980; 19.6% male, 13.3% female born 1981 to 1985; 12.3% male, 9.3% female born 1986 to 1990; 3.7% male, 6.0% female born 1991 to 1994; 1.7% male, 3.0% female born 1991 to 1995; 1.7% male, 3.0



female born 1995 to 1998. There was no response from 1 male and 1 female participant or 0.3% respectively, which were not included in the results. The highest percent of both male and female were born 1981 to 1985.

Table 1

*Participants by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Year of Birth*

Variables	<i>N</i>	Percentage
Gender		
Female	134	44.0
Male	167	55.4
No response	2	0.7
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	6	2.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	18	6.0
Black or African American	34	11.3
Hispanic	41	13.6
White/Caucasian American	198	66.0
Multiple ethnicity/Other	3	1.0
No response	3	1.0
Participants by Year of Birth		
1955-1958	7	2.3
1961-1969	11	3.7
1970-1975	31	10.3
1976-1980	44	14.6
1981-1985	100	33.2
1986-1990	65	21.6
1991-1994	29	9.6
1995-1998	14	4.7
No response	2	0.7

*(table continues)*

Participants by gender and year of birth Variables	N		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1955-1958	3	4	1.0	1.3
1961-1969	8	3	2.7	1.0
1970-1975	19	12	6.3	1.0
1976-1980	25	19	8.3	6.3
1981-1985	59	40	19.6	13.3
1986-1990	37	28	12.3	9.3
1991-1994	11	18	3.7	6.0
1995-1998	5	9	1.7	3.0
No response	1	1	0.3	0.3

*Note.* Gender = N 301; Race = N 303; Year of birth = N 301; Gender and year of birth = N 301.

### **Preparing the Survey Instruments**

Before analyzing the data in SPSS, the averages for both the CVSM-94 and the MLQ 5X short surveys were calculated. The items for both the cultural backgrounds and leadership questions were first labeled and grouped respectively by questions according to the instructions in CVSM and the MLQ 5X short manuals as shown in Table 2.

The MLQ 5X Short consisted of a total of 45 questions. Although data were collected for all 45 survey items, only items that were classified as transformational and transactional leadership styles were analyzed and reported in this research. Table 2 shows the breakdown of scale names by leadership characteristics. Transformational Leadership characteristics consisted of 20 items (Idealized Influence/Idealized Attributes, items 10,18,21,25; Idealized Behaviors/Idealized Influence, items 6,14,23,34; Inspirational Motivation, items 9,13,26,36; Intellectual Stimulation items 2,8,30,32; Individual Consideration, items 15,19,29,31). The transactional leadership characteristics shown in

Table 2, consisted of two items, Contingent Reward, items 1,11,16,35 and management by exception (Active), items 4,22,24,27.

Table 2

*MLQ 5X and Cultural Value Survey Module Scale Items*

Characteristics	Items
MLQ 5X leadership characteristics	
Transformational Idealized Attributes (IA) or II(A) or Idealized Influence (Attributes)	10,18,21,25
Transformational Idealized Behaviors (IB) or II(B) or Idealized Influence (Behaviors)	6,14,23,34
Transformational Inspirational Motivation (IM)	9,13,26,36
Transformational Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	2,8,30,32
Transformational Individual Consideration (IC)	15,19,29,31
Transactional Contingent Reward CR	1,11,16,35
Transactional Mgmt. by Exception (Active) (MBEA)	4,22,24,27
Cultural value survey module scales	
Individualism (IDV)	1, 2, 4, 9
Power Distance (PD)	3, 6,14,17
Masculinity (MAS)	5, 7, 15, 20
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	13, 16, 18, 19

*Note.* Transformational leadership style = 20 items; Transactional leadership style = 8 items. CVSM scales consisted of 4 times each.

After grouping the questions, the mean for each of the characteristics in the scale was calculated in Microsoft Excel©. The mean for the CVSM and MLQ 5X was calculated by adding the total score of the items in each scale and dividing by the number of participants. For example, the average for Idealized Attributes/Idealized Behavior was calculated by adding items 10, 18, 21, and 25 divided by four. If a response were received for only three items, the total items would be divided by three. Table 3 shows the mean score for scales associated with the transformational and transactional characteristics. Scale averages for transformational leadership were: Idealized Influence/Idealized

Attributes, 3.93; Idealized Behaviors/Idealized Influence, 3.93; Inspirational Motivation, 3.99; Intellectual Stimulation, 3.90 and Individual Consideration, 3.95. Scale averages for transactional leadership characteristics (Contingent Reward, 3.95 and Management by Exception, 3.69). The mean score for scales associated with cultural values was: Individualism 2.23; Power Distance 2.27; Masculinity 2.52, and Uncertainty Avoidance 2.34.

Table 3

*MLQ 5X and Cultural Value Survey Module (CVSM) Scale Averages*

Scale	Items	Scale averages
Leadership styles		
Transformational Idealized influence (attributes)	10,18,21,25	0.98
Transformational Idealized influence (behavior)	6,14,23,34	0.98
Transformational Inspirational motivation	9,13,26,36	1.00 90
Transformational Intellectual stimulation	2,8,30,32	0.97
Transformational Individualized consideration	15,19,29,31	0.99
Transactional contingent reward	1,11,16,35	1.33
Scale	Items	Scale averages
Cultural backgrounds		
Individualism (IDV)	1, 2, 4, 9	0.59
Power Distance (PD)	3, 6,14,17	0.57
Masculinity (MAS)	5, 7, 15, 20	0.61
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	13, 16, 18,19	2.31

*Note.* Rating scales for leadership styles and cultural backgrounds were based on a five-point rating scale.

## Results

The data for the study was from a random sampling of 303 participants. Testing of eight hypotheses was done to answer the two research questions to identify the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. The following SPSS analyses were performed to interpret the data:

1. Descriptive statistics to determine frequencies and summaries of the variables.
2. Pearson correlation analysis to determine the relationship between the variables.
3. ANOVA to determine the statistical significance of the variables.
4. Cronbach Alpha to test the consistency between the items in the MLQ 5X Short items.
5. Factor Analysis to identify indicators between leadership styles and cultural variables.

### Descriptive Statistics

Transformational leadership style was represented by characteristics, Idealized Influence (attributes and behavior), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. The transactional leadership style was represented by characteristics, Contingent Reward, and Management by Exception (active). Data were analyzed using the subscale scores items for transformational leadership and transactional characteristics shown in Table 3. The percentile of the mean subscale scores for the leadership scales are shown in Table 4. Transformational leadership produced  $M=19.71$ ,  $Mdn=20.00$ ,  $SD=3.45$ , skewness and kurtosis were between +1 and -1, which indicated that transformational leadership scores were normally distributed. The percentile of the mean subscale scores for transactional leadership produced  $M=17.52$ ,  $Mdn=17.71$ ,

SD=2.16. Skewness and kurtosis were between +1 and -1, which indicated that transactional leadership scores were normally distributed.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Leadership Styles*

Transformational Leadership Characteristics		Transactional Leadership Characteristics	
Mean	19.71	Mean	17.52
Median	20.00	Median	17.71
Std. Deviation	3.45	Std. Deviation	2.16
Skewness	-.760	Skewness	-.601
Kurtosis	.865	Kurtosis	.140

*Note.* Transformational characteristics=Idealized Attributes, Idealized Behavior, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. Transactional characteristics=Contingent reward and Management by Exception (Active).

Cultural backgrounds were individualism, power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Data for cultural backgrounds were analyzed by averaging the scores of items in the subscales (Table 3). As shown in Table 5, Individualism had scores M=2.33, Mdn=2.00, SD=1.15, skewness=.833, and kurtosis=-.437. Power Distance had scores M=2.27, Mdn=2.50, SD=.763, skewness and kurtosis were between +1 and -1, which indicated that Power Distance scores were normally distributed. Masculinity had scores M=2.53, Mdn=2.50, SD=.749, skewness and kurtosis were between +1 and -1, which indicated that Masculinity scores were normally distributed. Uncertainty Avoidance had scores M=2.92, Mdn=2.00, SD=1.02, skewness and kurtosis were between +1 and -1, which indicates that the Uncertainty Avoidance scores were normally distributed.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for Cultural Values*

Individualism		Power Distance	
Mean	2.33	Mean	2.27
Median	2.00	Median	2.50
Std. Deviation	1.15	Std. Deviation	.763
Skewness	.833	Skewness	.542
Kurtosis	-.437	Kurtosis	.609
Masculinity		Uncertainty Avoidance	
Mean	2.53	Mean	2.92
Median	2.50	Median	2.00
Std. Deviation	.749	Std. Deviation	1.02
Skewness	.628	Skewness	1.40
Kurtosis	.132	Kurtosis	.291

*Note.* Cultural background variables.

### **Correlation Analysis**

Pearson correlation Analysis was used to identify the relationship between the IVs Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity to the DVs transactional and transformational leadership styles. Pearson correlation is reliable for analyzing correlations between variables and has been used in various studies (Khan, Langove, Shah, & Javid, 2015). Field (2009) described Pearson correlation analysis as a method that measures the strength of the relationship between variables. The values range from -1 to +1. A negative correlation indicates that as one variable increases, the other decreases. On the other hand, a positive correlation indicates that an increase or decrease in one variable will result in a similar change in the other variable.

### Research Question 1

What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and transformational leadership style in the virtual work environment?

### Hypothesis 1

$H_{10}$  There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

$H_{1a}$  There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

$H_{1b}$  There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

Table 6

#### *Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Individualism*

Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation		1	-.167**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.004
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	0	-.004
		Std. Error	0	.051
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.274
		Upper	1	-.065
Individualism	Pearson Correlation		-.167**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	-.004	0
		Std. Error	.051	0
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	-.274	1
		Upper	-.065	1

*Note.* \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
Correlation between leadership and cultural variable.



The statistical analysis for transformational leaders and individualism (Table 6) showed statistical significance and negative correlations for the combined characteristics for the transformational leadership style ( $r = -.167, p < 0.05$ ) and cultural dimension Individualism. The results indicated that there is a relationship between the two variables and an increase of one, would result in the decrease of the other. Based on the statistical significance of the result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

## Hypothesis 2

$H_{2_0}$  There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

$H_{2_a}$  There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

$H_{2_b}$  There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

Table 7

### *Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Uncertainty Avoidance*

Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation		1	-.131*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.023	
	N		303	303	
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias		0	.001
		Std. Error		0	.053
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.240
			Upper	1	-.032

(table continues)

Uncertainty Avoidance	Pearson Correlation		-.131*	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023			
	N		303	303		
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias		.001	0	
		Std. Error		.053	0	
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower		-.240	1
			Upper		-.032	1

*Note.\*.* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
Correlation between leadership and cultural variable.

The statistical analysis for transformational leaders and Uncertainty Avoidance (Table 7) showed statistical significance and negative correlations for the characteristics of the Transformational Leadership style ( $r = -.131$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and cultural dimension Uncertainty Avoidance. The results indicate a relationship between the two variables, which means that an increase in one will cause a decrease in the other. Based on the statistical significance of the result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **Hypothesis 3**

$H3_0$  There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

$H3_a$  There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

$H3_b$  There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

Table 8

*Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Power Distance*

Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation		1	-.076	
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.188	
	N		303	303	
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias		0	.002
		Std. Error		0	.059
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.185
			Upper	1	.050
Power Distance	Pearson Correlation		-.076	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.188		
	N		303	303	
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias		.002	0
		Std. Error		.059	0
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	-.185	1
			Upper	.050	1

*Note.* Correlation between leadership and cultural variable.

The statistical analysis of transformational leaders and Power Distance in (Table 8) did not have statistical significance or correlation for the characteristics of transformational leadership ( $r = -.076$ ) and the cultural dimension Power Distance. The results confirmed that there is no relationship between the variables. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is accepted.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

$H_{4_0}$  There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

$H_{4_a}$  There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

$H4_b$  There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

Table 9

*Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Masculinity*

Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation		1	-.101
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.080
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	0	-.004
		Std. Error	0	.062
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.222
		Upper	1	.024
Masculinity	Pearson Correlation		-.101	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.080	
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	-.004	0
		Std. Error	.062	0
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	-.222	1
		Upper	.024	1

*Note.* Correlation between leadership and cultural variable.

The statistical analysis of transformational leaders and Masculinity (Table 9) did not have statistical significance or correlation for the characteristics of transformational leadership ( $r = -.101$ ) and the cultural dimension of Masculinity. The result confirmed that there is no relationship between the two variables. Based on the result, the null hypothesis was accepted.

## Research Question 2

What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the transactional leadership style in the virtual work environment?

### Hypothesis 5

$H5_0$  There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

$H5_a$  There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

$H5_b$  There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

Table 10

#### *Pearson Correlation – Transformational Style and Individualism*

Transactional Leadership	Pearson Correlation		1	-.159**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.006	
	N		303	303	
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias		0	-.002
		Std. Error		0	.055
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.267
			Upper	1	-.053
Individualism	Pearson Correlation		-.159**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006		
	N		303	303	
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias		-.002	0
		Std. Error		.055	0
		95% Confidence Interval	Lower	-.267	1
			Upper	-.053	1

*Note.* \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
Correlation between leadership and cultural variable.

The statistical analysis for transactional leadership and individualism (Table 10) showed statistical significance and negative correlations for the combined characteristics for the transactional leadership ( $r = -.159$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and cultural

dimension Individualism. The result confirmed a relationship between the two variables and the increase in one would cause a decrease in the other. Based on the statistical significance of the result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Hypothesis 6

$H_{6_0}$  There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

$H_{6_a}$  There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

$H_{6_b}$  There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

Table 11

#### *Pearson Correlation – Transactional Style and Uncertainty Avoidance*

Transactional Leadership	Pearson Correlation		1	-.115*
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.045
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	0	-.007
		Std. Error	0	.058
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.239
		Upper	1	-.014
Uncertainty Avoidance	Pearson Correlation		-.115*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.045	
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	-.007	0
		Std. Error	.058	0
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	-.239	1
		Upper	-.014	1

*Note.* \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
Correlation between leadership and cultural variable.

The statistical analysis for transactional leadership and uncertainty avoidance (Table 11) showed statistical significance and negative correlations for the combined characteristics for the transactional leadership ( $r = -.115$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and cultural dimension Uncertainty Avoidance. The result confirmed that there is a relationship between the variables and any change in one will result in a decrease in the other. Based on the statistical significance of the result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Hypothesis 7

$H7_0$  There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

$H7_a$  There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

$H7_b$  There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

Table 12

#### *Pearson Correlation – Transactional Style and Power Distance*

Transactional Leadership	Pearson Correlation		1	-.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.179
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	0	.000
		Std. Error	0	.058
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.193
		Upper	1	.027

(table continues)

Power	Pearson Correlation		-.077	1
Distance	Sig. (2-tailed)		.179	
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup> Bias		.000	0
	Std. Error		.058	0
	95% Confidence	Lower	-.193	1
	Interval	Upper	.027	1

*Note.* Correlation between leadership and cultural variable.

The statistical analysis of transactional leadership and power distance (Table 12) did not have statistical significance or correlation for the characteristics of transformational leadership ( $r = -.077$ ) and the cultural dimension Individualism. The result confirmed that there is no relationship between the variables. Based on the result, the null hypothesis was accepted.

### **Hypothesis 8**

*H8<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

*H8<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

*H8<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.



Table 13

*Pearson Correlation – Transactional Style and Masculinity*

Transactional Leadership	Pearson Correlation		1	-.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.116
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	0	-.009
		Std. Error	0	.057
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	1	-.220
		Upper	1	.016
Masculinity	Pearson Correlation		-.091	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.116	
	N		303	303
	Bootstrap <sup>c</sup>	Bias	-.009	0
		Std. Error	.057	0
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	-.220	1
		Upper	.016	1

*Note.* Correlation between leadership and cultural variable.

The statistical analysis of transactional leadership and masculinity (Table 13) did not have statistical significance or correlation for the characteristics of transformational leadership ( $r = -.091$ ) and the cultural dimension of Masculinity. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is accepted.

**One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

The significance of the relationship between the four cultural dimensions and two leadership styles were tested with one-way ANOVA. The purpose of the ANOVA is to determine the significance of the dependent variable on the independent variable (Koohang & Hatch, 2017).

## Hypothesis 1

$H1_0$  There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

$H1_a$  There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

$H1_b$  There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

Table 14

### *ANOVA Transformational Leadership and Individualism*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1034.266	20	51.713	5.677	.000
Within Groups	2568.619	282	9.109		
Total	3602.885	302			

The ANOVA test for Hypothesis 1 (Table 14) produced a significant effect of cultural background (IV) individualism on transformational leadership (DV) at  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(20, 282) = 5.677, p = .000$ ].

## Hypothesis 2

$H2_0$  There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

$H2_a$  There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

*H2<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

Table 15

*ANOVA Transformational Leadership and Uncertainty Avoidance*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	729.136	18	40.508	4.003	.000
Within Groups	2873.749	284	10.119		
Total	3602.885	302			

The ANOVA test for Hypothesis 2 (Table 15) produced a significant effect of cultural background (IV) uncertainty avoidance on transformational leadership (DV) at  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(18, 284) = 4.003, p = .000$ ].

### Hypothesis 3

*H3<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

*H3<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

*H3<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

Table 16

*ANOVA Transformational Leadership and Power Distance*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	200.682	17	11.805	.989	.471
Within Groups	3402.204	285	11.938		
Total	3602.885	302			

The ANOVA test for Hypothesis 3 (Table 16) did not produce a significant effect of cultural background (IV) power distance on transformational leadership (DV) at  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(17, 285) = .989, p = .471$ ].

#### **Hypothesis 4**

$H_{4_0}$  There is no relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

$H_{4_a}$  There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

$H_{4_b}$  There is a negative relationship between the transformational leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

Table 17

*ANOVA Transformational Leadership and Masculinity*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	553.403	19	29.126	2.703	.000
Within Groups	3049.482	283	10.776		
Total	3602.885	302			

The ANOVA test for Hypothesis 4 (Table 17) produced a significant effect of cultural background (IV) masculinity on transformational leadership (DV) at  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(19, 283) = 2.703, p = .000$ ].

#### **Hypothesis 5**

$H_{5_0}$  There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

*H5<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

*H5<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of individualism.

Table 18

*ANOVA Transactional Leadership and Individualism*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	814.431	20	40.722	5.197	.000
Within Groups	2209.745	282	7.836		
Total	3024.176	302			

The ANOVA test for Hypothesis 5 (Table 18) produced a significant effect of cultural background (IV) Individualism on transactional leadership (DV) at  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(20, 282) = 5.197, p = .000$ ].

**Hypothesis 6**

*H6<sub>0</sub>* There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

*H6<sub>a</sub>* There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

*H6<sub>b</sub>* There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance.

Table 19

*ANOVA Transactional Leadership and Uncertainty Avoidance*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	546.825	18	30.379	3.483	.000
Within Groups	2477.352	284	8.723		
Total	3024.176	302			

The ANOVA test for Hypothesis 6 (Table19) produced a significant effect of cultural background (IV) uncertainty avoidance on transactional leadership (DV) at  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(18, 284) = 3.483, p = .000$ ].

**Hypothesis 7**

$H7_0$  There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

$H7_a$  There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

$H7_b$  There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of power distance.

Table 20

*ANOVA Transactional Leadership and Power Distance*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	169.592	17	9.976	.996	.463
Within Groups	2854.584	285	10.016		
Total	3024.176	302			

The ANOVA test for Hypothesis 7 (Table 20) did not produce a significant effect of cultural background (IV) Power Distance on transactional leadership (DV) at  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(17, 285) = .996, p = .463$ ].

### **Hypothesis 8**

H8<sub>0</sub> There is no relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

H8<sub>a</sub> There is a positive relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

H8<sub>b</sub> There is a negative relationship between the transactional leadership style and the cultural dimension of masculinity.

Table 21

#### *ANOVA Transactional Leadership and Masculinity*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	452.286	19	23.805	2.619	.000
Within Groups	2571.890	283	9.088		
Total	3024.176	302			

The ANOVA test for Hypothesis 8 (Table 21) produced a significant effect of cultural background (IV) Masculinity on transactional leadership (DV) at  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(19, 283) = 2.619, p = .000$ ].

### **Reliability Analysis**

The reliability of the MLQ 5X Short was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. This reliability measure provides an output which depicts the internal consistency between the items in scale (Rossoni, Engelbert, & Bellegard, 2016). A reliability level of 0.70 or

higher is considered acceptable (Kotni, 2016). The reliability output will not be done for the CVSM survey. As mentioned previously, the creator of the instrument (Hofstede, 2002) indicated that the instrument was designed to measure the mean across countries and not individuals.

The Cronbach Alpha scores showed the significant relationship among items in the MLQ 5X Short survey and confirmed that there is internal consistency for all the scales. The output for transformational leadership (.943) for five characteristics, Idealized Attributes, Idealized Behavior, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Idealized Consideration. The output for transactional leadership (.818) for two characteristics, Contingent Reward and Management by Exception (Active).

Table 22

*Cronbach Alpha Reliability Output- Transformational Leadership*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.943	.943	20

Table 23

*Cronbach Alpha Reliability Output – Transactional Leadership*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.818	.820	7

### **Factor Analysis**

Factor analysis is a procedure used to simplify the data and identify hidden



patterns and helps to explain the structure of the data (Hussain & Hassan, 2016). The factor analysis measures used for this research were the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, which requires a 0.5 score or higher to be considered acceptable, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which requires p-value (Sig.) of < 0.05 to be considered significant (Baranidharan & Vanitha, 2015).

Table 24

*KMO and Bartlett's Test – Transformational Leadership*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.961
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2947.338
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Factor analysis was conducted for the 20 subscales for transformational leadership. KMO was .961 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showing significance in Chi-Square ( $X^2=2947.338$ , df 190,  $p = .000$ ). Results of the KMO and Bartlett's Test are shown in Table 24.

Table 25

*KMO and Bartlett's Test – Transactional Leadership*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.838
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	603.885
	df	28
	Sig.	.000

Factor analysis was conducted for the eight subscales for transactional leadership. KMO was .838 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showing significance in Chi-Square ( $X^2=603.885$ ,  $df$  28,  $p = .000$ ). Results of the KMO and Bartlett's Test are shown in Table 25.

Table 26

*KMO and Bartlett's Test – Individualism*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.829
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	781.738
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Factor analysis was conducted for the four items on the Individualism scale. KMO was .829 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showing significance in Chi-Square ( $X^2=781.738$ ,  $df$  6,  $p = .000$ ). Results of the KMO and Bartlett's Test are shown in Table 26.

Table 27

*KMO and Bartlett's Test – Power Distance*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.496
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	317.832
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Factor analysis was conducted for the four items in the Power Distance scale. KMO was .496 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showing significance in Chi-Square ( $X^2=317.832$ ,  $df$  6,  $p = .000$ ). Results of the KMO and Bartlett's Test are shown in Table 27.

Table 28

*KMO and Bartlett's Test – Masculinity*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.517
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	288.866
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Factor analysis was conducted for the four items on the Masculinity scale. KMO was .517 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showing significance in Chi-Square ( $X^2=288.866$ ,  $df$  6,  $p = .000$ ). Results of the KMO and Bartlett's Test are shown in Table 28.

Table 29

*KMO and Bartlett's Test – Uncertainty Avoidance*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.678
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	179.233
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Factor analysis was conducted for the four items on the Masculinity scale. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .678 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showing significance in Chi-Square ( $X^2=179.233$ ,  $df$  6,  $p = .000$ ). Results of the KMO and Bartlett's Test are shown in Table 29.

### Summary

The scope of this research was to identify the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment, within the framework of two research questions and eight hypotheses. Throughout Chapter 4, the data analysis

and statistical outcome were presented for the sample population of 303 participants. The descriptive statistics were used to present basic demographic information on the sample population as well as information on the questions and scale items for the MLQ 5X and the CVSM surveys.

To answer the research questions and determine which of the hypotheses would be accepted, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted for the eight hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 and 2 had statistical significance and correlation between transformational leadership and the cultural background variables resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. Hypotheses 5 and 6 did not have any correlation resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Hypotheses 5 and 6 had statistical significance between the transactional leadership and cultural backgrounds resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. Hypotheses 7 and 8 showed no correlation between transactional leadership the cultural background variables resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

The ANOVA analysis yielded statistical significance between the two leadership styles and the four cultural value characteristics. The results of the Factor Analysis also showed statistical significance between the two leadership styles and the four cultural backgrounds characteristics. The interpretation of the findings and recommendations will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendation

### **Introduction**

The data analysis and results from Chapter 4 captured the essence of the research topic and hypotheses, which were to identify the relationship between leadership styles and cultural backgrounds in the virtual work environment. The transformational and transactional leadership styles were the DVs based on the theoretical framework of Burns (1985) and Bass (1978). The transformational leadership characteristics consisted of Idealized Influence/Attributes, Idealized Influence/Behavior, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. The transactional leadership characteristics consisted of Management by Exception (Active) and Contingent Reward.

These two leadership styles have been used in different research studies in the traditional work environment. Tung (2016) highlighted the transformational leadership as a style that fosters creativity in employees. The charismatic portrayal of a transformational leader facilitates a platform where everyone is a part of the collective efforts to meet organizational goals. The transactional leadership is focused on reward and punishment where employees are expected to accomplish the agreed-upon goals or actions in exchange for an agreed-upon reward. Deviations or failures are addressed through the appropriate corrective action.

The IVs were Hofstede's (1994) cultural dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. These cultural dimensions portrayed the different facets of culture and the effect on the way people respond to their environment (Farivar, Cameron, & Yaghoubi, 2016). Vrânceanu and Iorgulescu (2016)

concurred that Hofstede's research had demonstrated the influence of national culture on people's behavior both in society and in the work environment and may also influence the way they lead the organization.

In pursuing this research, there were some important considerations to ensure that the sample population would aid the study as it relates to the leadership styles and cultural backgrounds criterion. Participants in the sample population had to be employed in a virtual work environment and had to hold a leadership role. With these criteria, as well as demographic information such as gender, the analysis of the data was done using Microsoft Excel© and SPSS. Chapter 5 is designed to explain the study by expanding on the data analysis and results from Chapter 4. The format of this chapter entails: interpreting the findings of the study, identifying the limitations of the study, offering recommendations, identifying the implications of the study, a discussion about positive social change, and will conclude with general comments about the study.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

Two research questions and eight hypotheses were used to pursue this research study. The first research question was used to identify the relationship between the cultural dimensions (individualism, power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance) and the transformational leadership. The second research question was used to identify the relationship between cultural dimensions (individualism, power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance) and the transactional leadership style. This section is used to present the interpretation and findings of the research study.

### **Research Question 1**

The analysis of the data associated with the transformational leadership style and the cultural variables resulted in a significant correlation between two of the four hypotheses. The first correlation was between transformational leadership style and individualism ( $r = -.167, p < 0.05$ ). The negative correlation signified the influence of the cultural variable on the leadership variable and vice versa, which also means that any increase in the transformational leadership style will cause a decrease in individualism tendencies. Conversely, a decrease in the transformational leadership style will cause an increase in individualism tendencies.

People in high individualism cultures as discussed by Alkailani and Kumar (2016) are more focused on individual accomplishments and is not in favor of the cohesive group efforts. Also, in high individualism countries, those who lead may be more focused on things that will benefit their self-interest, such as compensation (Khlif, Hussainey, & Achek, 2015). Mesu, Sanders, and Riemsdijk (2015) asserted that transformational leaders would be less effective in those cultures with high individualism. This assertion compliments the negative correlation between transformational leadership and individualism because it implies that a transformational leadership style would be more successful in cultures that are predisposed to low individualism. The claim by Mesu et al. (2015) is consistent with the literature, which supports that cultural backgrounds can influence leadership style. However, despite the strong influence of culture, (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978) contended that the platform of the transformational leadership style is one that brings about some form of change. Bass (1985) aligned the transformational

leadership with a higher level of change that has a strong influence on followers in significant areas of performance.

The proactive and inclusive nature of the transformational leadership style (Syaifuddin, 2016), could counter the effects of high individualism cultures if the transformational leadership characteristics (Idealized Influence/Attributes, Idealized Influence/Behavior, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration) are fully in force. Additionally, the influence of the transformational leadership in engaging and inspiring followers can be used to overcome tendencies that are not beneficial to the organization (Khlif, Hussainey, & Achek, 2015).

The second correlation was between transformational leadership and uncertainty avoidance ( $r = -.131$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The statistical significance further confirms the findings from existing research that leadership can be impacted by national culture (Nguyen, Ermasova, Geyfman, & Mujtaba, 2015). High uncertainty avoidance cultures are concerned with controls and regulations. Followers in this type of culture are open to leaders who exercise power over the outcome (Caza & Posner, 2017). Mesu, Sanders, and Riemsdijk (2015) indicated that transformational leadership would be more effective in cultures with low uncertainty avoidance. However, Sattayaraksa and Boon-itt, (2016) reasserted that transformational leadership can be inspirational and can positively influence followers to be innovative and to take the risk. Molodchik and Jardon (2015) indicated that transformational leadership could be effective in reducing uncertainty.

Although the participants in the current study are leaders employed in a virtual work environment, consistent with the literature review on the traditional work



environment, transformational leadership is focused on innovation, promotion, and motivation (Smother, Doleh, Celuch, Peluchette, & Valdadares, 2016). The transformational leadership characteristics provide an avenue of empowerment, which allows followers to respond to challenges that occur with change (Aleksic, 2016). Culture with high uncertainty avoidance is not prepared for crisis and experience stress when faced with unusual or changing situations (Lee & Liu, 2012). Therefore, in the general realm of leadership, as stated by Dealtry (2001), leaders must possess the intuition to respond to changing business environment. Lee and Liu (2012) emphasized that leaders must be able to influence and not maintain a status quo.

Transformational leadership can influence followers to pursue change actively. Liu, Zhang, Liao, Hao, and Mao (2016) posited that during high uncertainty avoidance, the empowering qualities of transformational leadership will have a positive effect in strengthening employees' creativity. Birasnav, Rangnekar, and Dalpati (2011) identified the transformational leadership style as a one that creates low uncertainty avoidance by crafting a culture where employees can explore various opportunities including skills development, promotion, and other human capital investments. Transformational leadership motivates followers and infuses hope (Richardson, Millage, Millage, & Lane, 2014).

The two variables not correlated with transformational leadership were power distance ( $r = -.076$ ) and masculinity ( $r = -.101$ ). Power distance is the cultural dimension that creates a class distinction between leaders and followers. This means that followers are willing to accept the difference in status between them and those who lead (Caza &

Posner, 2017). Masculinity is the cultural dimension where individuals are assertive, goal-oriented, and highly competitive (Khan, Bashir, Abrar, & Saqib, 2017). The results from existing literature on transformational leadership and power distance is conflicting. Ag Budin and Wafa (2015) suggested that that transformational leadership may be more influential in high power distance cultures. However, Caza and Posner (2017) had an opposing view, which suggested that that transformational leadership may not be effective in high power distance cultures. As it relates to masculinity, Pfajfar, Uhan, Fang, and Redek (2016) in their research titled Slovenian business culture – how proverb changed dynamic leadership; found that positive leadership such as transformational leadership did not correlate to the masculine cultural characteristics. Limsila and Ogunlana (2008) in a research titled performance and leadership outcome correlates of leadership styles and subordinate commitment; also identified the transformational leadership to be effective in cultures with high power distance.

### **Research Question 2**

The analysis of the data associated with the transactional leadership style and the cultural variables resulted in a significant correlation between two of the four hypotheses. The first correlation occurred between transactional leadership and individualism ( $r = -.159, p < 0.05$ ). The negative correlation signals that an increase in one variable will cause a decrease in the other variable. The premise of the transactional leadership style is to engage followers in mutually beneficial exchanges. People from cultures with Individualism characteristics will be more focused on their self-interest. Jung and Avolio (1999) in their research on the Effects of Leadership Styles and Followers' Cultural

Orientation on Performance in Group and Individual Task Conditions, identified the transactional leadership as a compatible style to individualistic cultures. These researchers highlighted individualist cultures as one that is more concerned with personal initiatives, which support the basic tenet of the transactional leadership style. Chin-Chung (2011) stated that the individualism characteristics are a match for the transactional leadership style whose focus is on temporary results. The characteristics of individualism are focused on personal gains that fulfill transactional agreements. Yang (2016) suggested that managers operating in high individualistic cultures such as Korea will be more successful with the transactional leadership style.

The second significant correlation occurred between the transactional leadership style and uncertainty avoidance ( $r = -.115$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The negative correlation signals that an increase in one variable will cause a decrease in the other variable. Uncertainty avoidance is characterized by rules and regulations to combat the unexpected (Sabri, 2012). Countries like Germany with high uncertainty avoidance is highly receptive to the transactional leadership style. Leaders with this style will take steps to implement rules and ensure that they are obeyed to avoid unexpected interferences (Richardson et al., 2014).

In earlier research on a cross-cultural perspective on self-leadership; Alves, Lovelace, Manz, Matsypura, and Toyasaki (2006) discussed the characteristics of uncertainty avoidance cultures. These researchers identified the rigid rules established in uncertainty avoidance cultures that serve to control and restrict the creativity of employees. The rigidity shows a lack of confidence in employees' abilities to lead, and

there is a void in opportunities for them to participate in decision-making in contrast to transformational leadership style, which seeks to develop employees. Sabri (2012) identified the Arabic World as a high uncertainty avoidance culture with inequalities in power and lack of upward mobility for followers. The leaders in this respect have ultimate power and are unwilling to relinquish responsibilities that will allow followers to grow. The transactional leadership style compliments uncertainty avoidance because as described by Liu, Liu, and Zeng (2011) leaders who practice this style do not provide followers with autonomy and room for creativity. As such, followers do not develop critical thinking because they are only allowed to utilize simple methods for solving problems.

The two cultural variables not correlated to transactional leadership were power distance ( $r = -.077$ ) and masculinity ( $r = -.091$ ). Hussian, Khairuzzaman, Ismail, and Javed (2017) in their research on comparability of leadership construct from Malaysia, and Pakistani perspective examined the effectiveness of transactional leadership and power distance. These researchers found that transactional leadership was culturally contingent and is not effective in low power distance cultures such as Pakistan. This theory was supported by Limsila and Ogunlana (2008) who found that transactional leadership is effective in bureaucratic cultures with high power distance such as Asia. Richardson et al. (2014) in their research on the effect of leadership styles in China, Germany, and Russia found very low ranking for between transactional leadership and uncertainty avoidance in countries like Germany.

The lack of correlation between the transactional leadership and masculinity was not defined in existing research to support whether the result of this study was an anomaly. Richardson et al. (2014) identified a high ranking of the transactional leadership style with masculine cultures based on a research study on the Chinese, German, and Russian cultures. Alves, Lovelace, Manz, Matsypura, Toyasaki, and Ke (Grace) Ke (2006) found that those who lead in masculine cultures are expected to be aggressive based on an assessment of cross-cultural self-leadership. Chin-Chung (2011) identified masculinity as effective for female leaders who practice the transactional leadership styles based on a research study on communication and cross-cultural leadership.

As identified in Chapter 1, the concept of leadership styles in current studies is based on the traditional work environment. This study was prompted by the new trends created by globalization and technological breakthroughs, which were used to pave the way for more diversity in the workplace and a new workplace structure known as the virtual work environment. The findings of the current study were significant in two ways. First, although analysis of the data resulted in correlation between leadership styles and only two cultural backgrounds characteristics for each of the research questions. The findings were significant because they supported prior research studies that emphasized the impact of cultural backgrounds on leadership styles as well as the impact of leadership in shaping the organization. Second, the participants in this study were leaders in the virtual work environment. Compared to leadership styles in the traditional work environment, the results of this study did not show any significant difference in leadership styles and cultural backgrounds in the virtual work environment. The results

confirmed that regardless of the work environment cultural backgrounds can influence leadership styles and leadership style can impact the work environment. The results also confirmed that as the traditional work environment, leadership styles in the virtual work environment could be either transformational and transactional.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In Chapter 1, there were several limitations anticipated as it relates to the participants of this study. The data analysis indicated two limitations about the sample population. The first limitation was in the demographic makeup. The population for this study was unequally represented with 198 (66%) participants who were White/Caucasian. It would have been valuable to have a more diverse representation of the population.

The second limitation was with the geographic location of the population. It was anticipated that the sample population would consist of participants from different geographic locations. However, the actual sample population did not derive any global participants. All participants were from the United States. Although the United States participants were from different ethnic groups, it would have been valuable if data were collected from participants in other countries.

The third limitation of the study relates to the sincerity of the participants in their responses to the MLQ 5X Short leadership questionnaire. I was unable to establish if participants dedicated the time to read and understand the questions or if answers were chosen that may not be an accurate reflection of their leadership style.

## **Recommendations**

Throughout the literature review, several studies supported the influence of cultural backgrounds in shaping the characteristics of people in society and the work environment (Alkailani, Azzam, & Athamneh, 2012; Mahmood, 2010; Tagreed, 2012). Hofstede (1994) emphasized the strong influence of culture through the four cultural dimensions: (a) individualism, (b) power distance, (c) masculinity, and (d) uncertainty avoidance. Lee and Liu (2012) alluded to cultural dimensions as a source for understanding the effects of culture. These cultural dimensions are also the basis for understanding how those who lead the organization, as well as employees, will conduct themselves. Nguyen, Ermasova, Geyfman, and Mujtaba (2015) supported the argument that national culture has a significant impact on the behaviors and values of those who lead.

The literature review also supported leadership style as a core consideration for the success of the organization. The review confirmed leadership styles as a byproduct of national culture, and the derivative of the chosen style will drive many of the outcomes that affect the organization (Banutu-Gomez, 2011; Jung, Chan, Chen, & Chow, 2010; Muhammad & Mahmood, 2010; Russette, Scully, & Preziosi, 2008). Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) in their respective research identified the transformational and transactional leadership as styles that influence the relationship between leaders and followers. These two styles, although different in their approach must be observed as significant forces that can impact the organization. Marx (2015) emphasized that leadership is responsible for formulating strategies and their ability to adapt will determine the outcome.

The findings of this study offer some insights into cultural backgrounds, and leadership styles, in the virtual work environment; specifically, as it relates to the influence of the cultural variables individualism and uncertainty avoidance on the transformational and transactional leadership styles. The implication of this study is an avenue for further research into different aspects of leadership and cultural backgrounds in the virtual work environment. As it relates to the virtual work environment, there is limited research concerning leadership styles specifically, the transformational and transactional leadership. It is recommended that future studies examine leadership from the perspective of employees in the virtual work environment. A research study from the perspectives of employees may create an objective loop into a work environment that is driven by asynchronous means of communication and interaction.

### **Implications**

Leadership is vital to the organization, but culture is also a driving force in shaping leadership characteristics. In the traditional work environment, the relationship between various leadership styles and cultural backgrounds is well documented; however, the same information is not readily available as it relates to the virtual work environment. The findings of this research study add to the body of knowledge regarding leadership and cultural backgrounds and more specifically as it relates to the virtual work environment.

### **Positive Social Change**

The results of this study have the potential for positive social change. The correlations between transformational leadership and individualism and uncertainty



avoidance confirm the output from the literature review regarding cultural backgrounds and leadership styles. Human resources practitioners could apply the information from this study to in their decision making as it relates to the human resources functions.

Human resources practitioners who operate in a virtual work environment may encounter more diverse employees. As such, Derven (2016) emphasized the need for sensitivity to cultural backgrounds and the associated biases that can impede team participation. As confirmed by the results of the study, those who practice the transformational leadership style would be more successful in low individualism and low uncertainty avoidance cultures. Conversely, those who practice the transactional leadership would be more successful in cultures with high individualism and high uncertainty avoidance. With such insights, there is a chance for human resources practitioners to proactively identify cultural characteristics that are aligned with the leadership style that would be most effective for the business model. Proactive approaches may take the form of structuring the recruitment and selection as well as training and development programs to increase the success of leaders.

Another contribution to social change is the prospect of adding to the body of knowledge on the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment. Information relating to culture can help organizations to develop proactive policies and strategies that focus on diversity inclusion in the global virtual work environment. Long, Doerer, and Stewart (2015) alluded to the broader issues associated with diversity due to globalization. Diversity is an important issue because businesses operating in global marketplace and those who operate virtual workplace may

have a more diverse work environment with employees who are prone to the individualism and uncertainty avoidance characteristics. As it relates to the transformational and transactional leadership styles, understanding how these leadership styles respond to specific cultural characteristics will provide a framework for students and educators to work on bringing even more awareness to the virtual work environment.

### **Recommendation for Practice**

Leadership is considered crucial to the success of the organization, and notwithstanding the type of culture, there is still an expectation that the leader, regardless of the leadership style will strive to achieve success for the organization. The virtual work environment is a unique workplace that has made cultural backgrounds a central component of this work structure. In applying the results of this study, organizations that operate or plan to operate in the virtual work environment must assess or understand the culture they are involved with to identify how the dominant cultural characteristics will affect leadership, decision making, and relationship with employees.

The current study showed that the transformational leadership style is more effective in low individualism and uncertainty avoidance cultures while the transactional leadership style is more effective in high individualism and uncertainty avoidance cultures. The self-absorbed approach of individualism culture may be counterproductive to the goals and mission of the organization. Uncertainty avoidance cultures may also create obstacles because of tendencies to avoid risks. Therefore, when selecting leaders for the virtual work environment, organizations must align the style of leaders with the most suitable cultural characteristics. The selection process may include leadership

testing as part of the selection process to identify the leadership style of candidates. For leaders already employed, the organization will need to provide ongoing training to strengthen leadership skills to neutralize the obstacles that may arise from these cultural characteristics.

To preserve the natural characteristics of cultural backgrounds, organizations will also need to educate those who are selected to work in the virtual work environment on the unique characteristics of the culture in which they will be interacting. Those who are already employed must receive ongoing training to ensure that individual differences and other cultural norms are recognized. Diversity inclusion efforts must also be extended to the general employee population to create an organizational culture of respect for individual differences.

### **Conclusion**

The study on the relationship between leadership styles and cultural backgrounds in the virtual work environment granted a unique opportunity to examine culture and leadership in a distinct work environment. Cultural backgrounds established through the research by Hofstede (1980) captured some of the intricacies that are associated with the cultural characteristics. Central to the research topic were the transformational and transactional leadership styles by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). Although different in approach, these two styles were the competing variables with cultural backgrounds, that were used to address the gap in existing research.

The results of this study indicated that cultural backgrounds and leadership styles might have a converse relationship depending on the degree of the influence. High

individualism and high uncertainty cultural characteristics influence the degree of effectiveness of the transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles. Transformational leadership style based on existing studies in the traditional work environment is more effective in low individualism and low uncertainty avoidance cultures and less useful when these cultural characteristics are high. On the other hand, transactional leadership performs much better in high individualism and high uncertainty avoidance cultures and less effective when these cultural characteristics are low.

In fulfilling the purpose of this research, the findings are an avenue for continued recognition of the force of cultural background not only in the traditional but also in the virtual work environment. Also, there is an opportunity to continue to recognize the strong association between diversity and the virtual work environment as supported by the literature review. Finally, the results of this study have provided information that adds to the body of knowledge on leadership styles and created a path to associate the transformational and transactional leadership styles to the virtual work environment.

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## Appendix A: Consent to Participate in Survey Instrument

Dear (Participant),

### CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study about Cultural Backgrounds and Leadership Styles in Virtual Environment. The researcher is seeking participants who are leaders/managers/supervisors in a virtual/online work environment in the United States or any country around the world; to be in the study. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named June Reid, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete two surveys.
- The first survey will focus on leadership styles and will ask questions to determine the style most compatible with the responses provided.
- The second survey will ask questions pertinent to cultural backgrounds.

The total time to complete the survey will be approximately 30 minutes; about 15 minutes for each survey. There are no correct answers; the survey is asking you for your perspective.

#### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

This study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will be respected. If you decide to participate in the study, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time you choose.

#### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue or stress. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The study has no direct benefit to you as a participant but may assist in understanding the dynamics of cultural backgrounds and leadership styles in the virtual work environment to the business world and human resources.

**Payment:**

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use the information for any purposes outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure by keeping participant lists and data collected in separate password encrypted files in a password protected online storage. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You may contact the researcher via email at [june.reid@waldenu.edu](mailto:june.reid@waldenu.edu). If you want to speak privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 07-13-17-0277526 and it expires on July 12, 2018.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

**Obtaining Your Consent:**

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by clicking on the link below.

Appendix B: Permission to Use Hofstede Value Survey Module Questionnaire

VALUES SURVEY MODULE 1994

QUESTIONNAIRE

English version

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FOR REPRODUCTION IN COMMERCIAL PUBLICATIONS,

PERMISSION IS NEEDED

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## Appendix C: Permission to Use MLQ 5X Survey

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# Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire™

## Third Edition Manual and Sample Set

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## Appendix D: Descriptive Statistics – Gender

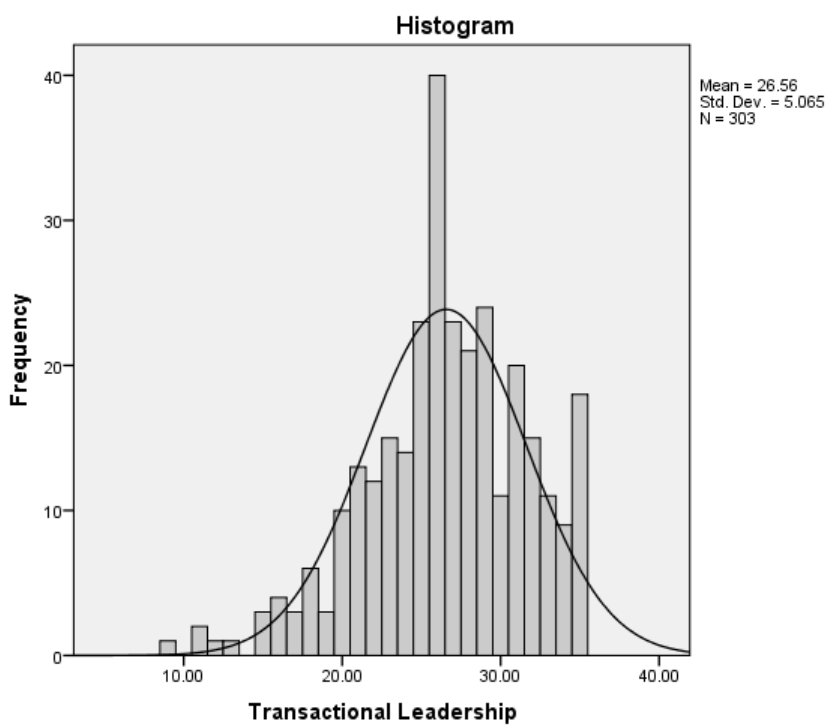
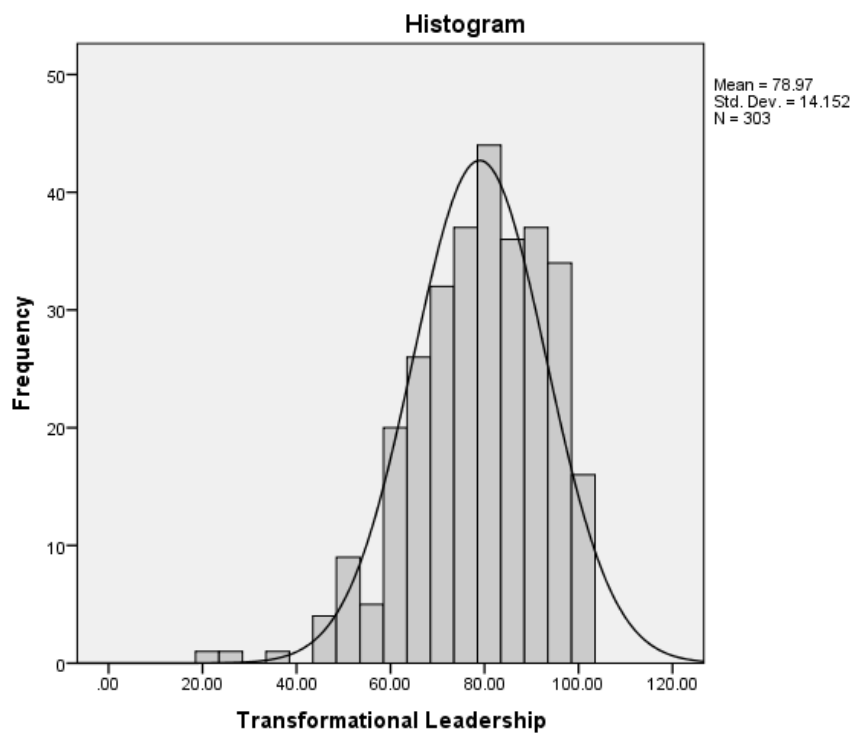
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	134	44.2	44.5	44.5
	Male	167	55.1	55.5	100.0
	Total	301	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.7		
Total		303	100.0		



## Appendix E: Descriptive Statistics – Nationality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	3	1.0	1.0	1.0
	American/Alaskan Native	6	2.0	2.0	3.0
	Asian/Pacific Islander	18	5.9	6.0	9.0
	Black/African American	34	11.2	11.3	20.3
	Hispanic	41	13.5	13.7	34.0
	White/Caucasian	198	65.3	66.0	100.0
	Total	300	99.0	100.0	
	Missing System	3	1.0		
Total	303	100.0			

## Appendix F: Leadership Style Histogram



Appendix G: Cultural Values – Histogram

