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Rise of the Indian Firm: Understanding Leadership in Indian Organizations

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Introduction

There has been phenomenal growth of India's multinational companies (MNCs) since 2000. Bloomberg data reported that between 2000 and 2012, there were 1,995 acquisitions by Indian firms, at total value of US\$116 billion (Goswami, 2013). This was an increase of 251% compared to 2007 with 223 mergers and acquisitions valued at \$US33 billion and a 300% increase from 2006 (Raghavan, 2008). This growth has produced a need for an understanding of how the Indian mind works and of Indian organizational behaviour in order to facilitate cultural exchange with and within Indian MNCs.

India's MNCs, as Raghavan (2008) reports, have resorted to mergers and acquisitions as their pathway to a global presence. Tata, Infosys, Reliance, Mahindra and Mahindra, Aventis Pharma, Hindalco, Suzlon, Bharat Forge and Sundram Fasteners are some of the companies that have ventured onto the international stage (Cappelli et al., 2010a; Raghavan, 2008). This scale of development of Indian MNCs, in a very short time frame, is just the beginning and, as the Indian economy develops, as it is poised to do, the management of these companies and the cultural values that Indian managers bring will become topical as we have seen in the past for US, Japanese and, more recently, Chinese management styles. As implied by Raghavan (2008, p. 61), "they have to go global and take charge in a very short time". It is from this perspective that the study reported in this chapter is discussed. It is from these premises we explore how modern Indian management and leadership operates in large companies in India, which we hope will provide

the basis for understanding managerial values that these managers, as Indian expatriates, bring to their MNCs.

Despite the increasing attention on India's development as a global economic powerhouse, literature on Indian human resources development is perceived to be lacking (Bhawuk, 2008; Budhwar, 2009; Pio, 2007; Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010). In pursuit of discovering how the largest Indian-based companies, such as the multinationals Tata, Infosys, Reliance, Mahindra and Mahindra, Aventis Pharma, lead their organizations to high performance, Cappelli et al. (2010a) discovered the emergence of a distinct Indian model, where emphasis is on employee interconnectedness rather than on stockholder interest, a model that these researchers believe is exportable. Jain et al. (2012, p. 1006), in a survey of human resources professionals in Indian MNCs and foreign MNCs, concluded that "Indian MNCs are clearly focussed on managing performance from within, and have put in place innovative culture-building practices", while foreign MNC are focused on keeping the balance between parent and subsidiary and standardizing the human resources management innovation (HRMI) practices in various global areas". Again emphasizing the family-oriented value systems that permeate many Asian organizations, Chandra (2012) refers to differentiating values in the work-life balance between Eastern and Western perspectives. Som (2007), when exploring innovative practices to support organizational commitment in Indian firms, found that linking employee participation strategies with corporate strategies, investing in career development, having an open and transparent work atmosphere and decentralizing organizational processes improved employee motivation and morale. This emphasizes the importance of the interconnectedness of employee harmony and support for the organization with an organization's performance.

The Indian MNCs, such as Wipro, MindTree Consulting and Sasken, provide insights into the employee-centred approach that is increasingly seen operating in Indian-based organizations (Jain et al., 2012). The organizational culture in these organizations emphasizes high performance with equally high caring. The interests and welfare of families are included in the caring orientation. Paternalistic nurturing is back in vogue within an innovative HR practice system that is geared toward the recognition of employees as a strategic and most important resource for sustained organizational performance. Herald (2011) supports this assertion in his research of five Indian MNCs, which are business process outsourcing (BPO) firms, where promotion based on the recognition of good work, feeling valued in the company and being encouraged to

take new initiatives/risks increased managers' satisfaction with reward and recognition policies.

In this chapter we discuss the employee-centred notion and provide evidence based on research conducted across India about Indian managerial behaviours associated with excellent leadership. The results contradict the accepted Western notion of what constitutes good managerial leadership. In this research, we seek a leadership style that will provide high performance in Indian-based and Indian-led organizations. However, gaining an understanding of the usefulness and application of this leadership style in an international context is not the aim of this research, but gaining an understanding of the value system that Indian managers will bring with them to their international assignments is. It is from this perspective that this chapter addresses Indian managers perceptions about leadership.

The sociocultural environment in India is unique. Its peculiarities mould the personality of the management practitioners and influence management practices. One of the salient features of Indian management is the emphasis on the personality of the leader of the organization. Most studies on Indian management highlight the paternalistic nature of the leader (see, Mathew and Jones, 2013; Northouse, 1997; Pellegrini et al., 2010; Sanyal, 2008; Sinha, 1990). The essential requisite for paternalism appears to be unity in the leadership, and a single, identifiable source of power. What has not been properly researched is how the concept of power is utilized. This implication on how power becomes critical to the understanding of the Indian work environment because, as Das (2002) explains, foreign investment into India has impacted on the traditional view of work and the working environment. It is therefore important to know in what way this new environment, this India in the 21st century, is different.

The Indian social system has exaggerated the power and control of authority over people through both a familial structure and the parallel caste structure. It is this duality that often spawns patronage and friction. As emphasized by Rao (2007, p. 1817), "the Indian managers often confuse their professional role in an objective, rational, organizational system with their social hierarchical role with expectations of conformity and paternalism". The value dilemmas in the Indian managerial roles are further exaggerated as India progresses as a dynamic participant in a global environment.

Realizing the unique features of Indian behaviour and developing workable strategies that suit the environment is, therefore, the challenge for international business. As Rao (2007) adds in support of Sparrow

and Budhwar (1997), the performance management process in Indian managerial practices is underemphasized and there is a dire need to study this phenomenon. It is argued that deference to familiarity, seniority, age and open-door communication, be it in a multinational or public sector organization, a traditional family-owned company or a government department, are management features that augur well in Indian organizations.

Based on the study of over 40 organizations of various types in India, it has been found that management in India is characterized by a peculiar dualism (Virmani & Guptan, 1991; Virmani, 2000). There is a distinct difference between the professed policies and the actual practices followed in Indian organizations. This is due to the conflict that arises from having foreign systems thrust on resident Indian practices and expectations. Indian management can absorb principles unfamiliar to it, but these principles should be modified to suit Indian conditions. If such a blending is not done, then conflicts arise in management styles, and the compromises in regard to policies and principles may fail to work.

The theoretical framework for excellent leadership

In an article in the *Leadership Quarterly*, Dorfman et al. (1997, p. 233) explain that although “the phenomenon of leadership is widely considered to be universal across cultures, the way in which it is operationalized is usually viewed as culturally specific”. Terms to circumscribe the universality of the phenomenon and discrete differentiation of culturally specific experiences have been covered in the management literature. Etic and emic traits (see Jayakody, 2008), generalizable and idiosyncratic (see Morrison, 2000) and rationalist and culturalist views (see Marcoulides et al., 2004) have been used to describe behaviour within universal and culturally specific experiences. These assumptions are reflected in studies such as the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness) study (Den Hartog et al., 1999) and are also the basis for the Selvarajah et al. (1995) framework. The framework is based upon the assumption that there are leadership factors that are universal (etic), but that these factors are manifested in various overt behaviours, which depend on the cultural (emic) context, thereby sidestepping the etic-emic dilemma (Javidan & Carl, 2004; Jong et al., 2009; Smith et al., 1989). The concept of excellence in leadership is seen by Selvarajah et al. (1995) as a combination of factors that are desirable for good leadership within a cultural context framework.

The Asian Perspectives on Excellence in Leadership APEL model

Selvarajah et al. (1995) developed 94 'excellence in leadership' value statements. In their theoretical framework, 'excellence' is defined as "surpassing others in accomplishment or achievement" (Taormina & Selvarajah, 2005, p. 300). Excellence is examined in terms of *behaviours* exhibited by someone in a managerial position, rather than in terms of personal traits or personal characteristics, as the latter are difficult to observe (Taormina & Selvarajah, 2005).

The statements were formulated based on an in-depth study of literature on leadership and management excellence, using both Western and Eastern literature. Subsequently, four broad dimensions were identified: (1) environmental influences, (2) personal qualities, (3) managerial behaviours and (4) organizational demands (see Selvarajah et al., 1995 for more details and the methodologies used to select the 94 value statements).

Environmental influences refer to the way managers react or respond to external factors that influence the operation and the success of the organization. They emphasize the importance of scanning and evaluating the external environment for opportunities and threats. *Personal qualities* are the personal values, skills, beliefs and qualities of an individual with regard to leadership, irrespective of profession or organization. These are the deep-rooted, personal factors that determine a person's approach to leadership in general, not just to management. They emphasize morality, religion, interpersonal relationships and communication. *Managerial behaviours* cover a person's attitudes, actions and styles that are specific to the performance of the managerial task. They emphasize executive-level decision-making rather than participative management. *Organizational demands* include the ways a manager reacts or responds to the organization's goals, objectives, structures, issues, demands, pressures and rewards. They emphasize the importance of organizational prosperity. The dependent variable, the *excellent leader* scale then includes the combination of behaviours and attitudes desirable for good leadership within a certain cultural context as shown in Figure 5.1 (also illustrated, e.g., in Selvarajah et al., 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Selvarajah and Meyer, 2006, 2008a, 2008b).

Following the identification of the leadership dimensions, the 94 excellence in leadership value statements were subjected to a Q-sort technique (Kerlinger, 1973), using the above four dimensions as the framework for categorization. For the Q-sort procedure, all statements were printed three



Figure 5.1 Conceptual framework for the study of excellence in leadership

Source: Selvarajah et al. (1995)

times on small cards, and the respondents were asked to sort the three sets of cards in three different ways. The first sorting was used to determine the order of importance of each statement for excellence in leadership. The second sorting was used to determine to which of the four dimensions each statement belonged, and the third sorting was used to determine the importance of each statement in terms of its chosen dimension (i.e., the importance of each statement versus the other statements assigned to the same dimension)., studies by Selvarajah have shown that by using the most important statements for each dimension valid measures have been developed from these items for several Asian countries, such as Cambodia (Selvarajah et al., 2012); Singapore (Selvarajah et al., 2013a); Thailand (Selvarajah et al., 2013b);, Malaysia (Selvarajah and Meyer, 2006, 2008a); China (Selvarajah and Meyer, 2008b); and in a regional context, such as ASEAN (Taormina and Selvarajah, 2005). More specifically, it was found in these studies that the factor loadings of the items onto the distinguished dimensions differed across Asia, thus providing cultural insights into leadership behaviours and values in these countries.

The concept of cultural modelling

The theory underlying our approach is similar to the cultural modelling presented by Hinton (1998), which also studies the influence of culture, predicting how it affects organizational functions and adaptability.

Culture is therefore seen as a determinant of behaviour within organizational units and as a macro-level determinant of leadership behaviour that is environment specific. It is based on this understanding that cultural models for APEL country studies are developed, theorized and discussed. Each country's model is therefore unique, but builds on the same generic four-dimensional APEL model.

From this perspective, the unique dimensions for each country are seen as cultural quotients measured on a continuous scale, rather than as a bipolar attempt to categorize national culture (e.g., masculine versus feminine). In this chapter, we similarly explore leadership behaviour in Indian organizations, employing structural equation modelling to study the dimensions of leadership excellence. Similar to Selvarajah et al. (2012, 2013b), where the four-dimensional APEL model for two Mekong nations provided, respectively, eight and seven distinct cultural constructs that described excellent leadership in organizations, this current study in India has seven constructs.

This study shows that the APEL model is sufficiently robust to allow cultural interpretations for understanding leadership behaviours in India, as it has for many other countries.

Literature review

In a recent article titled "Leadership lessons from India", published in the *Harvard Business Review* (Cappelli et al., 2010a, p. 92), it was shown that Indian business leaders prioritized key responsibilities and ranked the top four as:

1. chief provider of business strategy
2. keeper of organizational culture
3. guide, teacher, or role model for employees
4. representative of owner and investor interests.

The findings in the study were in stark contrast to US executives, who rank shareholder interest as number one (Cappelli et al. 2010a). Appropriate leadership behaviour in the Indian context supports the concept of excellence within a family and a communal framework. The interpretation by Cappelli et al. (2010a) is somewhat similar to the framing of familial thinking based on the *runas* – the manager in the Indian context is seen as god-like – a strategist, a parent-like keeper of organizational culture, a teacher, a selfless role model, and lastly, a representative of the organizational sustainability interest. From the

manager's perspective, this involves the creation of a 'social mission' as the basis for mutual dependency. The article stresses a personal style that establishes dependability, trustworthiness, consistency in personal relationships, respect for individuals and acceptance that people make mistakes, and thereby supports transparency and accountability.

The article also recognizes the importance of communication and decision-making as valued attributes of an excellent leader. Empowering employees to communicate and enabling employees down the ranks to participate in decision-making are viewed as essential for a good leader.

Research in leadership and decision-making was popularized by Vroom and Yetton in 1973 with the publication of their book *Leadership and Decision Making*. Vroom (2000, p. 83) argues that "theories of decision-making intersect with theories of leadership", and he quotes the work of Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973), which defines styles of leadership as being influenced by "area of freedom afforded subordinates" (cited in Vroom, 2000, p. 83). He refers to organizational cultural boundaries within which leadership decision-making operates. Dickson et al. (2003) provide insights into universal values and those that are culture specific – not only when compared between the West and the East, but also within a region.

One of the earlier attempts to search for an appropriate effective leadership style in the Indian context was made by Sinha and Chowdhary (1981). Based on their extensive research, mainly in East India, they reported that in the Indian context the Nurturant-Task Leadership (NTL) style was found to be most effective. The style is characterized by leaders who are both task- and person-centred.

According to Sinha (1990, 1994), the NTL model has been found to be more congruent with Indian cultural values and behaviour dispositions. The style is essentially paternalistic, drawing heavily on the patterns of interaction typifying family dynamics in India. In this respect, a study done by Karla and Gupta (1995) supported the nurturance aspect and showed that effective managers were rated high on nurturing dimensions. However, the study also showed that effective managers were rated low on task obsession and they were seen as moderately prescriptive. Therefore, in this sense, they were nurturing and moderately prescriptive, but not task oriented.

In the Indian context, the paternalistic or the authoritative benevolent leader seems to be repeatedly emphasized as a leadership construct highly valued in society (see Aycan et al., 2000; Chhokar, 2008; Mathur et al., 1996; Sinha, 1990). While Gelfand et al. (2007, p. 493) defined paternalism as a "hierarchical relationship in which a leader

guides professional and personal lives of subordinates in a manner resembling a parent, and in exchange expects loyalty and deference”, Northouse (1997, p. 39) says that US-based literature portrays paternalism as “benevolent dictatorship”.

Paternalistic leadership suggests people in authority assume the role of parents. The leader’s benevolence is coupled with a controlling authority, which requires loyalty to the authority figure (James et al., 1996; Pasa et al., 2001). Farh and Cheng (2000, p. 91) define paternalistic leadership as “a style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence”. Studies have shown that paternalistic leadership, in collectivistic and high-power-distance cultures, has positive impact on employees’ attitudes (see, e.g., Aycan, 2006; Aycan et al., 2000; Farh & Cheng, 2000; Sinha, 1997). The organizational culture based on the concept of mutual dependency establishes the importance of organizational prosperity as a valued long-term objective of the leader and subordinate. Benevolence, mentoring and supporting employees in the interest of the organization is all about organizational demand.

As India develops and takes its place in world economic affairs as a super-power, Indian management values and leadership is bound to influence global thinking (Cappelli et al., 2010a, 2010b), as have Western, Japanese and, more recently, Chinese management philosophies. Greater understanding of dharmic values and the cultural values of the Indian social system is bound to happen. What the *Harvard Business Review* article by Cappelli et al. (2010a) has alluded to, and what we have highlighted above, is the integral nature of a value system that has been passed down through generations of Indians and exists today in modern-day India. What was poorly understood in the past is today making a breakthrough as a management and leadership value that may provide the answers on how to build a sustainable and enduring leadership behavioural paradigm. The notion of preserving traditions while emphasizing change as a prerequisite for growth and recognizing the existence of the social, political and economic environment describes India’s position in a globalizing world.

In this study, the importance of managerial style, decision-making, environmental influence and organizational demand are explored in the context of Indian leadership behaviours. The importance of leadership behaviours for leadership excellence and the facilitating (mediating) effects of personal style and communication are then considered in the context of leadership excellence in India. Based on the above discussion, Figure 5.2 below provides the conceptual framework for this study, while also indicating the hypotheses that will be tested.

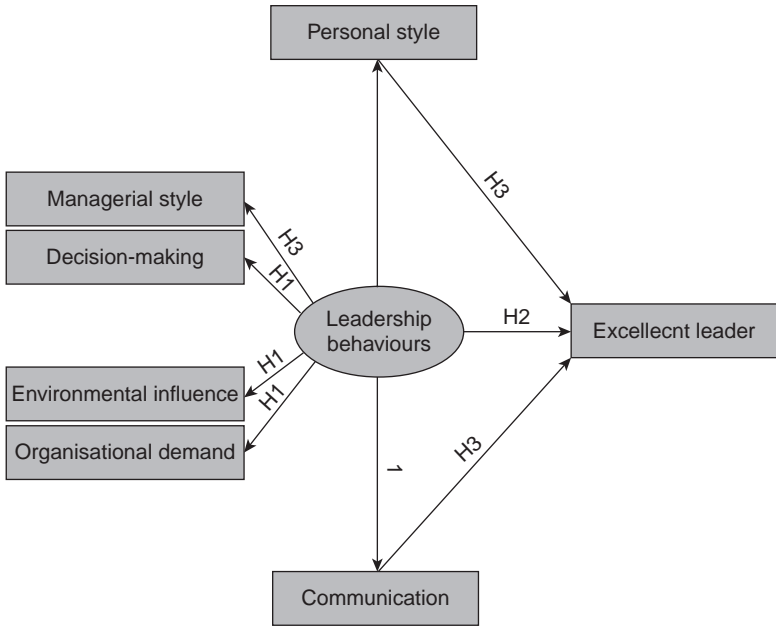


Figure 5.2 Conceptual model

Hypothesis 1. Managerial style, decision-making, Organisational demand and environmental influence are all important in terms of Leadership Behaviours.

Hypothesis 2. Leadership Behaviours define what constitutes an Excellent Leader.

Hypothesis 3. Personal Style and Communication together mediate the relationship between Leadership Behaviours and Leadership Excellence.

Hypothesis 4. Leadership dimensions are defined differently in different regions of India.

Research methodology

The data collection was carried out using the questionnaire developed by Selvarajah et al. (1995), and 539 managers from 22 Indian states completed the survey. The leadership project was coordinated by the Bharathiar School of Management and Entrepreneurship Development (BSMED) at Bharathiar University in Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, South

India. Both national and regional organizations were contacted, questionnaires were distributed, and completed questionnaires were returned to BSMED. The Likert-type questionnaire had 94 items, and in the answer section 1 indicated no importance and 5 indicated very important. Neither the respondents nor their organizations were required to identify themselves. A total of 3500 'Asian Perspectives on Excellence in Leadership' questionnaires were distributed and 612 were returned. Of the 612 returned, 539 were useable, giving a 15.4% effective return rate. As English is the commercial language in India, there was no necessity to have the questionnaire translated into a local language.

In this research, we developed scales for constructs, using the framework for the characteristics of an excellent leader consisting of personal qualities, managerial behaviour, organizational demands and environmental influences (provided in tables below). The work of Selvarajah et al. (1995) provided the basis for these scales but certain improvements were introduced in the current structure. In particular, in order to produce discriminant validity between the scales, the statements about the excellent leader are not included in any of the other four scales, and exploratory factor analysis is used to split the managerial behaviour and personal qualities constructs into scales that relate to the hypotheses. It was found that managerial behaviour was composed of two dimensions discussed above, namely, managerial style and decision-making, and personal qualities was also composed of two dimensions, namely, personal style and communication. Organizational demand and environmental influences retained their singular structures.

The reliability of the scales was measured by Cronbach's alpha, and the internal validity of the scales was assured using confirmatory factor analysis. The results of the confirmatory factor analyses where the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is less than 0.10 (Byrne, 2001), a goodness of fit (GFI) statistic is above 0.90 and a normed chi-squared (CMIN/DF) statistic is less than 3, suggest adequate internal validity (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999) for all the scales. All reliability scores in this study exceed 0.68, which makes all the scales at least reasonably reliable (Hair et al., 1998).

An initial correlation analysis for the scales is used to test whether the hypothesized dimensions are associated with perceptions of leadership, and structural equation modelling is then used to test first hypothesis, effectively validating the conceptual model proposed in Figure 5.1. Finally, tests of invariance are performed in order to determine whether there are age and gender differences with regard to what characteristics are perceived as being more important in an Indian leader, and whether

there are significant differences between the Northern and Southern managers. In all of Selvarajah's APEL studies, a concerted effort is also made to study subpopulation effects within nations and regions. The same is done in this study. SPSS v21 and AMOS v21 are the software packages used for the above analyses.

Results

The majority of the managers (345) were located in South India, with 194 managers located in North India. Tamil Nadu in the South and Jharkhand in the North were the best-represented states, with 46% and 27% of the respondents respectively. There were 13 most commonly spoken languages, with Tamil and Konkani the most commonly spoken languages for 37% and 22% of the sample, respectively. There was a strong gender bias: 76% of the respondents were men and only 24% women. This is in line with Chhokar's (2008) observation where he stresses that although there is increasing urbanization and education, India continues to be a traditional and male-dominated society. Hinduism (74%) and Christianity (22%) were the most common religions in this study. This breakdown in the sample by religion is not representative of the Indian population. The available census data, as at census date 2001 (Census, 2011), indicates a total Indian population of 1,028 million people, with Hindus in the majority with 80.5%, followed by Muslims (13.5%) and Christians (2.3%). The majority of the respondents were employed in the banking industry (69%), with 10% in textiles, 6% in insurance and 14% in other industries. This suggests an important bias in the data in terms of religious representation and industry.

The majority of the respondents were employed in middle-management positions (59%), with 20% in senior management and 24% in line management. In addition, the majority of the respondents were at most 35 years old (52%) with 27% in the 36–45 age group and 16% in the 46–55 age group, with only 4% over 55 years of age. As expected from the industry breakdown, almost half the respondents worked in organizations employing over 1,000 people, with only 11% employed in organizations with at most 50 people, 18% in organizations with at most 100 people, 36% in organizations with at most 500 people and 51% in organizations with at most 1,000 employees. However, 34% worked in departments employing at most 10 people, with 22% in departments employing between 11 and 25 people. While 11% worked in departments with between 26 and 50 people and 10% worked in departments

with between 51 and 100 employees, 23% worked in departments with more than 100 people.

The effect of regional differences on demographic

The relationships between gender, age, region and management position were investigated using a log linear analysis. Only second order interactions were found to be significant. In particular, major significant differences were found between the northern and southern samples. The northern sample was younger than the southern sample with 65% of the northern managers being at most 35 years old as opposed to only 45% for the southern sample. As a result, there was a higher percentage of senior managers in the southern sample (25%) than in the northern sample (12%). In addition, there was a higher percentage of men in the southern sample (82%) than in the northern sample (65%). There was also a very significant difference with regard to industry. Although both samples were dominated by the banking industry, the percentage of banking managers was much higher in the northern sample (97%) than in the southern sample (54%). This means that any comparison of the northern and southern samples must be treated with caution.

In addition, there was an interesting significant relationship between gender and age with females comprising 33% of the under-35 age group in the sample, but only 14% of the over-35 age group. This suggests that a major change is taking place in India as women start to enter the workforce in growing numbers. However, the relationship between management position and gender and that between management position and age show that senior management is still very much the preserve of older males. In this sample, 91% of the senior managers were male, while only 20% of the senior managers were less than 35 years old. In contrast, 76% of the middle managers were males and 49% of these managers were aged under 35. Finally, 63% of the line managers were male and 88% of these managers were less than 35 years old.

Development of measurement models for leadership excellence

Single scales were constructed for excellent leader, environmental influence and organizational demands. However, it was found that there were two constructs underpinning personal qualities – personal style and communication – and two constructs underpinning managerial behaviour – managerial style and decision-making. As shown in Table 5.1, the measurement models for excellent leader, environmental influence, organizational demand, managerial behaviour and personal qualities described the overall sample well.

Table 5.1 Goodness of fit for measurement models with complete sample

	Normed chi-squared	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Excellent leader (EL)	2.31	0.99	0.97	0.97	0.99	0.05
Environmental influence (EI)	2.91	0.98	0.96	0.93	0.95	0.06
Organizational demand (OD)	2.73	0.98	0.95	0.92	0.95	0.05
Managerial behaviour (MB)	2.76	0.94	0.92	0.90	0.92	0.06
Personal qualities (PQ)	1.87	0.98	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.04

As shown in Table 5.2, all seven scales had reasonable reliability for an exploratory study and the correlations between the scales were mostly of moderate strength. In particular, there were strong correlations between the managerial style, decision-making, environmental influence and organizational demands scales, suggesting that these scales together provided a good measure of leadership behaviours in India, providing support for the first hypothesis.

We now consider the issue of subsample differences. When these models were fitted separately for each demographic group (gender, age, region and management position) the fit was still acceptable according to Byrne (2001) with values for the RMSEA always less than 0.10 as shown in Table 5.3.

Using the complete data set, the postulated conceptual model could be tested using structural equation modelling, allowing the testing of the hypotheses. Structural equation modelling showed that the above conceptual model described the data well (normed chi-squared = 2.685, GFI = 0.98, AGFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.056). The model explained 72% of the variation in the excellent leader scale. In Figure 5.3, the strong loadings for management style, decision-making, organizational demand and environmental influence on the leadership behaviours construct provide further support for the first hypothesis. In support of the second hypothesis, there is a moderately strong relationship between leadership behaviours and excellent leader. However, personal style and communication partially mediated this relationship, serving to strengthen it and providing support for the third hypothesis. Indeed, only 64% of the standardized total effect size for the leadership behaviours – excellent leader link – can be attributed directly to leadership behaviours. The remaining 36% of this effect is conditional on the personal qualities of the leaders, their personal style and communication effectiveness.

Table 5.2 Descriptive statistics and correlations

	Excellent leader (1)	Managerial style (2)	Decision-making (3)	Environmental influence (4)	Organizational demand (5)	Personal style (6)	Communication (7)
Mean	4.32	4.01	3.95	3.85	4.07	4.22	4.06
SD	0.59	0.55	0.72	0.59	0.57	0.68	0.62
Cronbach Alpha	0.84	0.86	0.69	0.76	0.68	0.73	0.68
(1)	1	0.774**	0.463**	0.611**	0.703**	0.668**	0.722**
(2)	0.774**	1	0.585**	0.719**	0.758**	0.627**	0.753**
(3)	0.463**	0.585**	1	0.443**	0.470**	0.440**	0.482**
(4)	0.611**	0.719**	0.443**	1	0.663**	0.473**	0.611**
(5)	0.703**	0.758**	0.470**	0.663**	1	0.579**	0.634**
(6)	0.668**	0.627**	0.440**	0.473**	0.579**	1	0.524**
(7)	0.722**	0.753**	0.482**	0.611**	0.634**	0.524**	1

Table 5.3 Goodness of fit for measurement models for demographic groups (RMSEA)

		N	EL	EI	OD	MB	PQ
Gender	Male	409	0.054	0.058	0.062	0.066	0.052
	Female	130	0.056	0.079	0.015	0.074	0.089
Age	Under 35	282	0.043	0.051	0.047	0.064	0.017
	Over 35	256	0.079	0.072	0.082	0.086	0.046
Region	South	345	0.061	0.053	0.055	0.070	0.050
	North	194	0.030	0.093	0.084	0.063	0.038
Position	Senior	109	0.064	0.074	0.061	0.076	0.079
	Middle	301	0.060	0.074	0.061	0.073	0.057
	Line	128	0.085	0.095	0.087	0.089	0.039

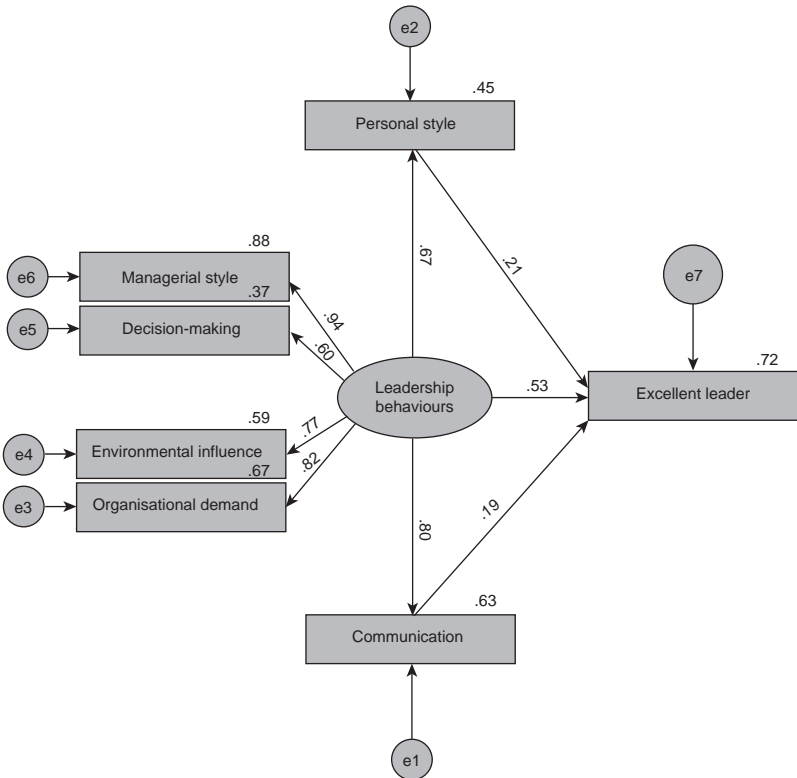


Figure 5.3 Fitted model showing beta weights and R² values

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In Table 5.4, a test of invariance is performed for each demographic variable for each measurement model to determine whether demographic groups attach similar importance to the items used to construct each measurement model, and to test the fourth hypothesis.

The construct with the greatest demographic differences appears to be managerial behaviour. Significant gender, age, regional and positional differences were observed for this construct. However, for organizational demand there were no significant demographic differences, and in the case of personal qualities there were only differences in relation to management position. Age differences were observed for the excellent leader and environmental influence construct, but there were also regional differences for the excellent leader construct. In Tables 5.5 to 5.9, these differences are explored in greater depth. Only significant differences in the weights are highlighted in bold in these tables and are discussed below.

There are three significant differences in weights for the excellent leader construct in Table 5.5. In particular, younger managers attribute

Table 5.4 Demographic comparisons of measurement model weights

	Gender			Age			Region			Position		
	χ^2	df	P	χ^2	df	P	χ^2	df	P	χ^2	df	P
EL	12.6	6	0.050	31.8	6	>0.001	23.4	6	0.001	19.8	12	0.070
EI	13.3	7	0.065	16.3	7	0.023	4.9	7	0.677	29.0	14	0.011
MB	36.6	15	0.001	32.3	15	0.006	48.1	15	>0.001	51.8	30	0.008
OD	7.5	7	0.380	10.1	7	0.182	4.7	7	0.693	11.3	14	0.661
PQ	11.2	7	0.131	6.9	7	0.437	9.0	7	0.250	28.2	14	0.013

Table 5.5 Excellent leader standardized regression weights

	Region			Gender		Age	
	Overall	North	South	Male	Female	Under 35	Over 35
Give recognition for good work	0.748	0.674	0.763	0.702	0.837	0.724	0.775
Create a sense of purpose and enthusiasm in the workplace	0.682	0.659	0.686	0.669	0.703	0.619	0.757
Motivate employees	0.641	0.680	0.602	0.622	0.700	0.655	0.609
Continue to learn how to improve performance	0.627	0.698	0.500	0.567	0.724	0.747	0.482
Have confidence when dealing with work and with people	0.620	0.681	0.491	0.515	0.797	0.691	0.513
Have a strategic vision for the organization	0.616	0.619	0.558	0.590	0.681	0.609	0.625
Be honest	0.603	0.721	0.435	0.576	0.617	0.579	0.620

more importance to “continue to learn how to improve performance” and “have confidence when dealing with work and with people”, while managers from the northern region attribute more importance to “be honest” than managers from the southern region. However, no significant gender differences emerged, although overall the gender effect was (just) significant with $P = 0.05$.

Table 5.6 also shows major demographic differences, this time in terms of perceptions regarding managerial behaviour. “Using initiative and taking risks” is relatively unimportant for young managers and for line managers. Female managers are more in favour of leaders who “trust those to whom work is delegated”, “think about the specific details of any particular problem” and “try different approaches to management” than are their male colleagues. Interestingly, managers from the North think that “trust those to whom work is delegated” is more important than their southern neighbours, despite the fact that the northern sample has a higher percentage of men than the southern sample. The over-35 age group is more concerned that leaders “keep up to date on management literature”, while female managers and middle managers attribute the most importance to “be consistent with making decisions”. Southern managers are more concerned that leaders “select work wisely to avoid overload”. In terms of decision-making, line managers are most concerned that leaders “make decisions earlier rather than later”, while senior managers are least concerned that leaders “make decisions without depending too much on others”. Finally, it seems that northern managers expect leaders to “make decisions earlier rather than later” to a greater extent than their southern neighbours.

No significant differences were found between demographic groups in regard to the relative importance of the organizational demand attributes. As shown in Table 5.7, the items “focus on maximizing productivity”, “act as a member of the team” and “support decisions made jointly by others” were seen to be particularly important by all Indian managers.

Table 5.8 shows major differences between ages and positions in regard to the importance of environmental influence. Managers in the over-35 age bracket were more concerned that a leader should “check consistently for problems and opportunities”, “use economic indicators for planning purposes” and “study laws and regulations that may have an impact on work”. However, it was middle and line managers rather than senior managers who thought that “check consistently for problems and opportunities” and “be socially and environmentally responsible” was particularly important, with middle managers giving the

Table 5.6 Managerial behaviour standardized weights

Managerial style	Overall	Age		Gender		Region		Position		
		Under 35	Over 35	Male	Female	North	South	Senior	Middle	Line
Tell subordinates what to do and how to do it	0.670	0.642	0.695	0.630	0.779	0.641	0.672	0.555	0.742	0.604
Think about the specific details of any particular problem	0.666	0.685	0.652	0.596	0.826	0.720	0.616	0.603	0.688	0.646
Persuade others to do things	0.657	0.653	0.658	0.666	0.645	0.661	0.680	0.613	0.671	0.640
Listen to and understand the problems of others	0.641	0.633	0.640	0.593	0.714	0.666	0.591	0.629	0.634	0.629
Delegate	0.560	0.604	0.502	0.507	0.689	0.646	0.491	0.575	0.550	0.574
Be strict in judging the competence of employees	0.544	0.536	0.567	0.575	0.478	0.495	0.582	0.472	0.577	0.504
Be objective when dealing with work conflicts	0.528	0.531	0.494	0.527	0.581	0.560	0.489	0.395	0.515	0.601
Keep up to date on management literature	0.521	0.455	0.600	0.484	0.608	0.562	0.467	0.518	0.514	0.519
Try different approaches to management	0.518	0.591	0.455	0.443	0.687	0.603	0.459	0.599	0.489	0.592
Focus on the task in hand	0.513	0.579	0.457	0.453	0.624	0.538	0.465	0.310	0.561	0.558
Be consistent in making decisions	0.499	0.505	0.465	0.435	0.600	0.551	0.412	0.328	0.531	0.429
Select work wisely to avoid overload	0.491	0.484	0.511	0.479	0.492	0.400	0.531	0.575	0.461	0.529
Trust those to whom work is delegated	0.487	0.493	0.458	0.390	0.696	0.634	0.333	0.264	0.498	0.559
Use initiatives and take risks	0.453	0.346	0.563	0.439	0.458	0.356	0.490	0.502	0.540	0.208
Decision-making										
Make decisions earlier rather than later	0.679	0.737	0.614	0.615	0.822	0.766	0.584	0.635	0.611	0.853
Make work decisions quickly	0.639	0.558	0.712	0.653	0.627	0.601	0.670	0.601	0.672	0.588
Make decisions without depending too much on others	0.634	0.664	0.624	0.642	0.717	0.677	0.665	0.381	0.719	0.630

Table 5.7 Organizational demand standardized weights

	Overall
Focus on maximizing productivity	0.611
Act as a member of the team	0.594
Support decisions made jointly by others	0.579
Give priority to long-term goals	0.492
Adjust organizational structures and rules to the realities of practice	0.477
Adapt to changing working conditions	0.452
Share power	0.426
Sell the professional or corporate image to the public	0.283

Table 5.8 Environmental influence standardized weights

	Overall	Age		Position		
		Under 35	Over 35	Senior	Middle	Line
Identify social trends that may have an impact on work	0.653	0.692	0.636	0.613	0.700	0.606
Have a multicultural orientation and approach	0.626	0.549	0.708	0.666	0.627	0.623
Check consistently for problems and opportunities	0.610	0.530	0.677	0.425	0.628	0.670
Study laws and regulations that may have an impact on work	0.526	0.449	0.586	0.320	0.635	0.438
Foster an international perspective in the organization	0.526	0.532	0.521	0.553	0.475	0.602
Be socially and environmentally responsible	0.513	0.439	0.597	0.280	0.540	0.557
Use economic indicators for planning purposes	0.503	0.391	0.583	0.561	0.543	0.380
Be responsive to political realities in the environment	0.279	0.382	0.205	0.183	0.210	0.500

most weight to “study laws and regulations that may have an impact on work” and line managers giving the most weight to “be responsive to political realities in the environment”. Overall therefore, senior managers appear to view environmental influence as less important than managers in lower positions.

Table 5.9 shows major differences in positional attitudes in regard to the importance of personal qualities, with senior managers considering “be dependable and trustworthy”, “accept responsibility for mistakes” and “be informal when dealing with employees outside work”

Table 5.9 Personal qualities standardized weights

Personal style	Overall	Managerial position		
		Senior	Middle	Line
Be consistent when dealing with people	0.708	0.778	0.729	0.678
Be dependable and trustworthy	0.681	0.428	0.695	0.679
Accept responsibility for mistakes	0.600	0.118	0.642	0.751
Be an initiator – not a follower	0.584	0.484	.620	.522
Communication				
Speak clearly and concisely	0.725	0.768	.724	.701
Respect the self-esteem of others	0.700	0.544	.715	.754
Deal calmly with tense situations	0.623	0.487	.610	.716
Write clearly and concisely	0.397	0.275	.439	.390
Be informal when dealing with employees outside work	0.361	-0.046	.376	.509

as relatively unimportant, while middle managers and line managers found these attributes to be relatively important.

Overall, there are clearly major demographic differences in perceptions of leadership excellence as viewed in India. Only in the case of organizational demand does there appear to be consensus. However, the confounding of regional and demographic effects makes it likely that these are mostly caused by regional differences.

Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter we explored a number of assertions based on existing literature on culture and leadership in India. India is known for advancing to the world philosophies and spiritual knowledge from the Vedas and the ancient treatise based on dharma. The Eastern world, especially, has benefitted immensely from the works of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, as the West has from the Iliad. Though the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are Hindu scriptures, the philosophical base for dharma has been secular and has influenced the mind and behaviour of Indians generally, irrespective of religious affiliation. It is from this premise that this chapter explores leadership behaviour in India.

We commenced this chapter by discussing ancient philosophical thrusts associated with dharma, the caste system, the British influence and modernization to guide our thinking about behaviour and specifically leadership behaviour in organizations in India. Dharma has evolved and influenced the secular system of India. It forms the central

beliefs in all the religions that originated in the Indian subcontinent, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. The philosophy was transported along the silk and spice routes to the far corners of East Asia and influences the spiritual psyche of people in the Far East, including Japan where it merges with Confucianism.

In this chapter we therefore assert that dharma influences the contextual thinking and behaviour of Indian leaders. As one studies the influence of Confucianism in East Asia, dharma from India has also influenced South East Asian thinking (see Selvarajah et al., 2012, 2013b). In this chapter we have therefore attempted to explore the societal value-base when studying the leadership phenomenon in Indian organizations.

In furthering the understanding of this phenomenon, we sought evidence from earlier researchers such as Sinha (1980) and the more recent the works of Cappelli et al. (2010a, b) and we were able to weave in the four ancient doctrines of dharma to explain the observable Indian leadership behaviours. What we are able to gauge from the results is a distinct Indian leadership behaviour model. In this study, perceptions of what makes an excellent leader in India have been examined through the lenses of the four-dimensional framework suggested by Selvarajah et al. (1995) in their exploratory research of leadership excellence in Asia. The findings suggest that the initial four APEL dimensions produced six valid dimensions unique to India to explain the cultural phenomenon of leadership excellence observed in the Indian organizations. The Indian cultural model provided the explanation of the excellent leader construct and its relationship to the six behavioural dimensions. Reliable scales have been constructed for these dimensions and the excellent leader construct – and overall ratings are high for all six dimensions – confirming their importance.

Correlation analysis showed that the four dimensions of personal qualities, managerial behaviour, environmental influence and organizational demand are all associated with the excellent leader construct, while the structural equation model showed that the model is a reflection of a social system that values a paternalistic approach to management. The leadership behaviours of importance to the Indian manager incorporate a managerial style that reflects decision-making that is swift and personal, where leadership behaviour accepts and operationalizes social trends that impact on work performance and where organizational demands (needs) are supported by workers who engage in activities that will maximize organizational prosperity. These leadership behaviours, thus, directly influence what the Indian managers

perceive as an excellent leader. However, the leadership behaviours are improved and made stronger in their relationship to an excellent leader by the personal styles of the managers and the level of communication. The importance of personal style and its congruence to the Indian social system and the importance of transparent congenial communication systems in Indian organizations are highlighted in the two articles by Mathew and Jones (2012, 2013) where they explain that an foreign personal managerial style and an equally foreign communication system have been disastrous to Toyotas' performance in India. Suzuki's experience as a joint venture company with the Indian car company, Maruti, has been worse, with management staff killed by employees, of property destroyed and the eventual shut-down of the factory (Vijay Kumar, 2013).

The excellent leader in India is, therefore, one who values social interdependence in a way akin to family members and, as such, these leaders have the need to experience intense emotional interdependence. This peculiar Indian characteristic has its roots in the Indian cultural system, which is familial, purposeful and guided by a doctrine that seeks specific outcomes at an individual's life stages. The paternalistic culture identified by researchers such as Sinha (1980, 1990), which we describe as intrinsically Indian, is a culmination of virtues based on India's cultural inheritance. A view commonly shared in the literature is that paternalism combines benevolence with authority (Pellegrini et al., 2010) and the subordinate's decision-making is controlled (Martinez, 2005). This leads to respect based on societal hierarchy, though total equality is seldom evident in daily life. However, this notion of control over a subordinate's decision-making is being challenged (Cappelli et al., 2010a; Gelfand et al., 2007). This is especially so in modern Indian organizations where the Indian way of life is taking a new meaning and where the cultural traits of the Indians are harnessed to increase organizational performance. Reading *The India Way* (Cappelli et al., 2010b), we are drawn to the conclusion that the new breed of Indian business leaders have unshackled the traditional servitude of caste- and clan-based behaviours, at least in the business organizations, to accept a purely familial type of behaviour. India's Achilles heel is its strong caste-based system, and the values associated with it are deemed unsuitable for advancement of a modern society. Literature recognizes the dual systems of management – the old and the new. As Sapre (2000, p. 295) says, Indian organizations are experiencing “a kind of internal conflict, as if the nation were facing two ways simultaneously and not quite able to make up its mind”. Virmani (2000) explains the dualism as

a distinct hiatus between professed policies and actual practices in the Indian organizations. India, he explains, has adopted the British style of management and this is an overlay for the way Indian management is practised.

This debate and India's contribution to management and leadership has just begun, and we will be seeing more publications in this field in years to come. Even though the article and the book by Cappelli et al. (2010a, 2010b) seem to suggest that Indian management style has come of age and is an 'exportable commodity' and that the West can learn from the lessons, more empirical research is needed to support this claim.

Limitations of the study

This study is based on ratings of importance for 94 items in terms of leadership excellence collected using a single questionnaire. This means that common variance bias may have affected the results. However, as commented by Meade et al. (2007) on the basis of Confirmatory Factor Analysis CFA models applied to 24 multitrait-multimethod correlation matrices, while not trivial, common variance bias is often minor in magnitude. Also the work of Siemsen et al. (2010) with respect to multivariate linear relationships shows that common method bias generally decreases when additional independent variables suffering from common method variance are included in a regression equation. In this study the APEL dimensions were tested simultaneously, suggesting that common method variance has been addressed to some extent in the analysis itself. Podsakoff et al. (2003) have suggested several research designs that can be used to reduce the effect of common method variance, and Podsakoff et al. (2012) suggested that future research should consider some of these procedural remedies. In addition, it is suggested that items allowing the measurement of possible causes of common method variance, such as social desirability, be included in the questionnaire, enabling the use of statistical remedies for common method variance.

Admittedly, a research design that allowed an objective measure of leadership excellence as the dependent variable would have been preferable. However, this is not easily done and even well-known studies, such as House's GLOBE study, have been unable to achieve this (see Chhokar et al., 2008; House et al., 2004). In particular, several demographic differences have been identified as influencing perceptions of leadership excellence in India and these needs to be investigated further. However,

what has not been explored is the way in which these differences will affect work behaviour and the consequences of ignoring these differences in an organizational setting. Also, it must be acknowledged that the current sample is biased with regard to the religious representation of the population and the over-representation of the banking industry.

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