

Cao Yikai

A leadership competency model for multi-national companies in China

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to define a leadership competency model for Chinese middle and senior management within the context of multi-national companies (MNCs) in China. This model was validated by, but not limited to, managers in the German organisations. Being exploratory, this study followed a combination of research-based approach and strategy-based approach of competency modelling (Briscoe & Hall, 1999). Semi-structured interviews, together with direct participation and observation, were carried out. Data analysis involved a thematic coding process to analyse open-ended comments (Berg & Lune, 2012). The researcher being a native, many of the inherent cultural difficulties of conducting a qualitative study in a high-context environment, i.e., China, such as a considerable amount of information is implicit coded rather than explicitly expressed (Hall, 1976), were minimised.

The interpretation of the data lead to the following conclusion: achieving sustainable business results and sense-making and influence are critical competency categories for the success of MNCs in China. Achieving sustainable business results concerns entrepreneurship and strategic thinking. Sense-making and influence involves intercultural communication, adaptability, and personal involvement.

The literature review showed that although previous leadership competency model studies were extensive, little research had been conducted to explore the competencies required for managers in a multi-cultural setting. Based on the findings obtained, it was argued that given the increasing globalisation of industrial organisations, the need for a better understanding of both national and organisational cultural influences on leadership practice has never been greater. Managers in MNCs are confronting situations that are highly complex and difficult to interpret. This study would contribute to fill the gap in the literature.

References

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