Individual's Leadership Style Changes Due to Different Culture in the UK

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the effects of cultural dimensions on individuals' leadership styles. The study focused on two main themes: Culture and Leadership. Two main dimensions considered: Power Distance and Individualism to show their effects on individuals' two main leadership behaviour: Democratic and Autocratic leadership styles. Considering a phenomenological approach, the responses of participants were obtained from their replies to an open-ended questionnaire. Data were analysed with Hofstede's 6D Model. Individuals are from America, Lithuania, India, Italy, and Sri Lanka. They are currently working in the UK, performing as managerial roles, shared their cultural experiences and leadership styles. The study shows individuals from India and Sri Lanka have completely changed their leadership styles due to the surveillance of different culture in the UK. The individual from Italy slightly modified her leadership style while the other two participants from America and Lithuania remain unchanged as they have similar cultural dimensions.

KEYWORDS: Culture, National culture, Leadership, Leadership styles, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

1. INTRODUCTION

Because of rapid globalisation, open market economies, and continuous migration process, workplaces in the UKare becoming culturally diverse more and more (Hussain et al, 2020).Particularly, in theUK retail industry, there are many general employees as well as managers who are from different cultural backgrounds (Szajna-Hopgood, 2020). Sometimes these employees can experience entirely two different cultures which may affect their leadership behaviour. For example, in some societies or countries, people accept unequal distribution of power and they believe that it is the natural order. So naturally, they become followers of dictatorial leaders (Sweetman, 2012).If these individuals move to other countries where it is completely opposite there is a possibility that they will change their perceptions and own leadership styles.

This article will facilitate those individuals who are not aware of the effect of their own culture on their leadership styles to evaluate their leadership traits. Furthermore, it will analyse how these styles can be changed when they move from their country of origin to the UK.

2. Literature Review

As the main focus of the study is on culture and leadership, it is important to discuss culture and its different elements and dimensions. Then to find out the effect of culture on leadership styles it is also important to take into account the leadership styles, their types, and aspects. Therefore, the literature review broadly discusses culture and leadership behaviour below. *How to cite this paper:* Dr. Mohammad RashedKhan "Individual's Leadership Style Changes Due to Different Culture in

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Culture is an abstract theme. Although it is hard to define, anthropologists, sociologists, and many others have defined and developed the concept of culture in different ways over time. Anthropologists Kluckhohn and Kelly (1945: 97) have identified culture as "all the historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational, and non rational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men". This implies culture is a guideline and it is constructed by human beings to lead them. This has been agreed by another anthropologist Herskovits (1955: 305) and he stated Culture is "the man-made part of the environment". Keesing (1974: 89) is also an anthropologist, claimed that culture is "an individual's theory of what his fellows know, believe, and mean, his theory of the code being followed, the game being played, in the society into which he was born". Culture is defined in a slightly different way in a book of anthropology where three fundamental aspects of every culture are explained, they are: the technological, the sociological, and the ideological (Lewis, 1969). The technological is related to tools, materials, techniques, and machines. The sociological characteristic entails the men's relationships into which they enter. The ideological aspect contains beliefs, rituals, art, ethics, religious practices, and myths.

So, in general, anthropologists have given a very wide definition to culture, covering all sorts of values, acts, and artefacts that a particular society has developed to manage life. While Dutch writer Hofstede (2005) posits culture consists of some set of laws of the social game which are unwritten. He defined culture as "collective programming of

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of Trend in Scientific Researc 2.1 nd Culture the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede, 2005:4).Culture refers to those learned behaviours exemplifying the total way of life of members inside any particular society (Hugheset al, 1999). From House et al. (1999), the GLOBE research program gives a complete explanation of culture as "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations" (Zagorsek et al, 2004: 19). Thus, culture includes every single thing of a social human being's lifestyle such as how they speak, which languages they use, what are their social traditions, their living styles and religious view, law, and justice of the society.

From the definitions above, it is clear that elements of culture, for example, norms, values, behaviour, etc are shared by a large portion of the group members of society. Communities are differentiated by all these cultural behaviours and make the shared basis of social action.

2.2. National Culture

Culture differs from country to country since all different countries have their own government, rules and regulations, traditions, rituals, activities, education systems, and family structures. National culture is visible in a specific society's complete prototype of daily life. According to Oberg (1963), cultural differences among all countries are more important than many writers now show to recognise. Greet Hofstede has identified six core national culture dimensions (Huang &Crotts, 2019). These dimensions are briefly discussed below.

Power Distance Index (PDI) is used to classify levels of inequality in organisations and institutions (like the family). Hofstede claims this represents inequality (more against less), but is defined in a downward direction, not from the top (Andrijauskienė&Dumčiuvienė, 2017). He also added that power distance suggests that the inequity level of a society is allowed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Obviously, power and inequality are extremely fundamental facts of any society. France, Spain, Hong Kong, and Iran showed high power distance in Hofstede's work. Countries which have less power distance level are the USA, Italy, and Australia. According to Hofstede's work, UK also showed that power distance is low in its society (Hofstede Insights, 2021).

Individualism (IDV) vs. collectivism, this dimension depicts that an organisation or society supports or opposes any combined activities. In the individualist society, there are loose bonds between people: everyone thinks about him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the other hand, people in a collectivist society find there is strong integration, preferring to live in a group from birth (Rojoet al, 2020). Extended families (with uncles, aunts, and grandparents) are the best example of this sort of society. From Hofstede's work, the USA, France, and Spain show high individualism. And Portugal, Hong Kong, India, and Greece have a collectivist society. Here the society of the UKis represented as high individualism (Hofstede Insights, 2021).

Masculinity (MAS) vs. its opposite femininity, refers to a range between masculine and feminine characteristics. Masculine characteristics include assertiveness and competitiveness alternatively feminine features contain modesty and caring (Andrijauskienė&Dumčiuvienė, 2017).

USA, Italy, Germany, and Japan have high masculine societies. On the other hand, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries have more feminine societies. In addition, UK has a high masculine society (Hofstede Insights, 2021).

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) deals with the feelings of the members of the societies that how they accept if any uncertain or unexpected situation comes. Unstructured situations are not usual and completely unpredictable (Rojoet al, 2020). The societies with uncertainty avoiding cultures "try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'" (Moonen, 2017: 6). France, Germany, Spain, and many of the Latin American countries have high uncertainty avoidance cultures. In the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, Ireland, and the USA, there are low to medium uncertainty avoidance dimension is being present. The UK has also a low to medium uncertainty avoidance society (Hofstede Insights, 2021).

Hofstede (2009) later added a fifth dimension Long-Term Orientation (LTO) against short-term orientation: this fifth dimension can be said to deal with virtue regardless of the truth. This dimension of culture was regarded as Confucian work dynamism. Although Confucius was a Chinese philosopher, the dimension is valid to countries without a Confucian tradition. Countries with LTO showed a strong connection with time the length of a variety as well as past and future-oriented. The societies with LTO are also concerned with the future plans and results of performances. Societies with Short Term Orientation show respect for tradition, satisfying social obligations, and protecting one's 'face'. Predictably highest scores on the long-term orientation are obtained by China and next is Japan. The UK has a short-term orientation culture with a significantly lower score of 25 (Hofstede Insights, 2021).

Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR). Minkov (2010) defined this dimension as "the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised" (Nestorović, 2016: 110).A nation with a high score in this dimension means that the culture of that nation is Indulgent which implies people in general show an eagerness to become conscious of their desires and urges with regard to getting pleasure from life and having enjoyment. They are quite an optimist and possess a positive approach in their mind. Moreover, leisure time is very important to them and they are happy to spend money as they wish (Gunarsih&Wibisana, 2019).With a very high score of 97, Mexican culture has a definite tendency toward Indulgence (Hofstede Insights, 2021).

2.3. Cross-Cultural Studies

Leaders from different cultures want to adjust their strong sense of national cultural norms with the new organisation in a multinational situation by espousing a multicultural attitude, as provided by Fernandez and Underwood (2006: 10) which must have "a willingness to recognise the limitations of one's own cultural norms and to accept and adapt to the culture of the host country". Brewster and Hegewisch (1993) also added that the differences between two cultures can become very apparent when individuals from one culture are employed in another country that has a different culture from the previous one. According to Tsai

(2011), culture can guide individuals in knowing what to do and what not to do. Therefore, in a cross-cultural situation, most of the time people adjust their behaviour because of different cultures' practices, values, and assumptions. Other researchers also posit that there are connections between culture and all kinds of individuals within an organisation in any given country (Wadeet al, 2008).

2.4. Leadership

Useem (2001) states leadership is a method of making a variation. He continues "it entails changing an organisation and making active choices among plausible alternatives and depends on the development of others and mobilising them to get the job done" (Mullins, 2020: 363). However, Useem (2001) advocates two latest important capabilities connecting vision and strategy, they are, leading out and leading up. Leaders need the skill to lead out with more use of outsourcing. For example, if a leader thinks his job is only to send work downwards to subordinates or colleagues then this will not be called a leading out capability, but it will be when he will also use his talent and creativity in delegating work to co-workers. On the other hand, leading up aptitude is to guide superiors, as leaders are the decentralised authority of organisations and they also should have the capacity to collect support from top to bottom.

Leadership has many magnitudes and leadership style could be explained in many plausible ways, such as unitary, dictatorial, benevolent, consultative, bureaucratic, charismatic, abdicatorial, participative, etc. (Silva Guerra, 2009). The style of managerial leadership towards subordinate staff and the focus of power can, conversely, be classified, broadly, within a simplified three-fold heading as follows (Mullins, 2020).

The authoritarian style is where the manager is the only person who makes the decision and has authority for determining policy, procedures for achieving goals, work tasks and relationships, control of rewards or punishments (Bass, 1990).

The democratic style is where the manager shares the leadership functions with co-workers. Members of the group have an important role in any vital decision. Democratic managers give the full right to agree or disagree with any judgment (Marques, 2006).

A manager who follows a laissez-faire leadership style observers his/her subordinates or the fellow workers are doing well on their own or not and s/he does not interrupt members freedom (Mullins, 2020).

This study considers authoritarian or autocratic and democratic leadership styles to explain how individuals from other countries interchange these styles because of a different culture in the UK.

2.5. How Leadership Styles Are Influenced by Culture Hypothetically culture has an important impact on the leaderships' formation (Huntet al, 1990). Hofstede's theoretical dimensions of cultures developed cultural profiles therefore, as said by Koopman et al. (1999), crosscultural diversities desire some assumptions. Many crosscultural studies assist that culture affects leadership perceptions, approaches, and views (Gerstner & Day, 1994; House & Aditya, 1997; Hofstede, 2001). As House et al. (1999) from Zagorseket al. (2004: 20) suggest, "what is expected of leadership, what leaders may or not may do, and the status and influence bestowed upon them vary considerably as a result of the cultural forces in the countries or regions in which the leaders function".

As each country has a unique culture, so, in one culture some activities are good which are at the same time inappropriate in another culture. Within several cultures, a leader may require taking strong important action with the intention of being an effective leader, but in another culture, a leader may need discussion and a democratic technique. Thus, a leadership approach is suitable for a certain cultural dimension which is incompatible in a different cultural dimension. According to Janićijević (2019), in individualistic cultures, everyone is responsible for one's own destiny, and autonomy and independence are very much appreciated. For that reason, the leader in this culture will have difficulties in trying to embrace an authoritarian leadership style as the people expect to be included in the decision-making process. On the contrary, people in collectivistic cultures expect the leader to take care of them and protect them from uncertainty, so they offer their complete obedience and loyalty in return. Consequently, the authoritarian leadership style is favoured more than the democratic leadership style in collectivist culture (Aycan, 2001; Northouse, 2013). This is also evident from Den Hartog et al. (1999) where they suggest that there should not exist as much of a negative attitude about dictatorial leadership in societies with high power distance. Thus, high power distance societies are very suitable for leaders to show their authority and they have a high tendency to show their power which leads them to be autocratic leaders (Yukl, 2013). Additionally, Smithet al. (1994) in their work showed that within the countries with less power distance culture, managersu sea lesser number of regulations and processes, than do managers from more power distance cultures. According to Likert (1961), in cultures with high power distance, the followers naturally expect authoritarian behaviour of the leader. As they accept the power inequality, they do not expect to be included in the decision-making process. Therefore, they consider all the decisions to be made by their leader and completely take the responsibility and the risks on themselves. In addition, concentrating the power the leaders often observe paternalistic behaviour in which they pay attention to the interests of their followers, colleagues, and subordinates, so their leadership styles take the form of benevolent authoritarianism (Janićijević, 2019).

It is also evident but not strongly that other cultural dimensions such as uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs femininity have some impacts on individuals' leadership styles depending on other circumstances (Eagly& Johnson, 1990; Jung et al, 1995; Gibson, 1995; Koopman et al, 1999; Zagorseket al, 2004). Furthermore, the latest dimension of Hofstede's model Indulgent vs Restraint is not available for all the countries yet. Therefore, for this study, Power Distance Index and Individualism vs Collectivism dimensions are considered.

3. Data

This paper uses both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from Hofstede's study and primary data were collected by interview. Five individuals were interviewed with seven open-ended questions (Appendix 1). Individuals have been selected purposively who moved in England from other countries in the world, are working in the retail industry, and living in England at least for ten years. Interviews have been transcribed to case studies that explain interviewees' own culture, their views about the

British culture, and compare previous and current leadership styles. All interviewees' anonyms are used in this study for the data protection reason. Also, informed consent

is provided considering ethical issues. Each case study has been descriptively and graphically analysed with the existing theories and data obtained from Hofstede's study.

3.1. Demographic of Samples

Table 1 below represents the complete demographic of samples that have been used for this study					
Name (Not real name)	Country of origin	Age	Gender	Industry	How many years in the UK
Mr Kaaj	Sri Lanka	47	Male	Retail	15
Sarah	USA	38	Female	Retail	11
Jenna	Lithuania	40	Female	Retail	14
Laura	Italy	31	Female	Retail	10
Gaurav	India	42	Male	Retail	12

Table 1: Demographic of samples. Created by author

4. Discussion

The first interviewee is 47 years old, Mr. Kaaj. His current role is as an assistant manager of a retail store in the UK. Kaaj is originally from Sri Lanka where he used to live in an extended family and most of the people in the Sri Lankan society do the same. In his family, the oldest person is the most powerful. Earning family members are also powerful. They make all the important decisions of the family. Kaaj observed, in the society, rich people, political leaders, and their cadres are stronger than other members of the society which creates high inequalities. Powerful people have a tendency to underestimate other people.

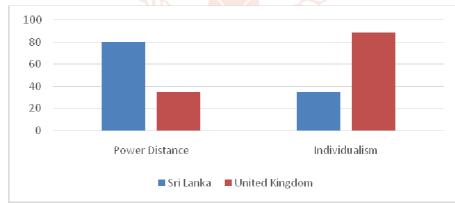
Kaaj performed as a supervisor in an organisation in Sri Lanka. At his workplace, all employees like to practice their power depending on their position. Most senior managers of the organisation hold the most superior power and it follows gradually. Senior managers liked to misuse their power. For instance, most of them come late to the office and leave early. Sometimes they try to exploit their subordinates by pushing them to work more and paying them less.

Seven members were working in his department. Most of the decisions were taken by Kaaj in the group, as he learned it from his senior manager and the culture. This means he followed an autocratic leadership style. He also used to look after his colleagues and subordinates and provide help and support as much he could which made him a very good boss.

When Kaaj moved to the UK he found a big cultural difference with Sri Lanka. After coming to this country, he joined as a sales assistant in an organisation. He found that the organisation was very strict about the quality. Managers, as well as colleagues, were very helpful and friendly. Rules and regulations of the organisation were equal for all employees. There was no discrimination among men or women. After a few years, he joined his current organisation.

Factors that affected him very much of British culture are language, employment rights, less inequality, and individualism. Back home he followed autocratic leadership. But here the British culture influenced him to change his leadership style from autocratic to democratic.

He shares his ideas with his colleagues and subordinates and also exchanges experiences with each other. Kaaj has observed that in the UK it is not so easy to dismiss or transfer any individual as they are protected by law, which is not complicated for a manager in Sri Lanka.



Kaaj thinks culture is the most important factor which affects leaders or managers to change their leadership style.

Figure 1: Scores of Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. Source: Hofstede Insights (2021)

Figure 1 above shows that there is a big difference between British and Sri Lankan culture. Sri Lanka scores 80 and the UK scores 35 in Power Distance means a very high power distance in Sri Lanka where it is very low in the UK. On the other hand, Sri Lanka scores 35 and the UK scores 89 in Individualism means Sri Lanka has a very high collectivist culture and the UK has a high individualist culture. Mr. Kaaj was an autocrat manager in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan culture, his family, traditions, etc. influenced him to be an authoritarian manager. As Sri Lanka has a very high power distance and low individualistic society (Figure 1), there exists a less negative attitude towards authoritarian leadership (Ståhl&Viklund, 2006; Janićijević, 2019). Dominance and ostentatious displays of power might thus be appropriate for leaders in such societies. But British culture persuaded him to become a democratic manager.

From this case study, it is clear that cultural differences affected Kaaj's leadership style and consequently, he changed his leadership style.

In case study 2, Sarah is from the USA. She is an independent and self-motivated person. In the USA she observed a very high individualism and low power distance. She left her parents a long time ago. She is now working in a fashion retail shop. Sarah performed as an assistant manager in an organisation in America. There she always tried to follow a democratic leadership style. From American society, culture, and her family Sarah recognised democratic leadership and she always follows it in her professional life. She thinks all are equal and they are valuable in their own right. She does not treat people based on their social/organisational position/role. She likes to share ideas with her colleagues. When she is acknowledged then she gets embarrassed and at the same time she feels good, and she does not like to boast about her own accomplishments.

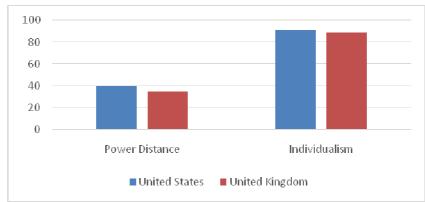


Figure 2: Scores of the USA and the United Kingdom. Source: Hofstede Insights (2021)

Figure 2 above shows that there is not a big difference between British and American culture. America scores 40 in Power Distance and 91 in Individualism where the UK's scores are 35 and 89.

She moved to England in 2007. When she came here, she felt herself at home. In England, people are very friendly, always greet each other. She experiences the spirit of Britishness. Sarah could not find a big difference between the UK and the USA.

Hofstede's 6D model shows both UK and the USA have low power distance and high individualism (Figure 2). Therefore, there is no effect on Sarah's leadership style (Kececi, 2017).

In case study 3, Jenna is from Lithuania. According to Jenna, Lithuania is an individualistic country but still, individuals are closely tied with their other family members. People in this country are very private but the power distance is very low. However, in society, there is a hierarchy and most senior citizens of the country follow it, but young people have a different mentality from them. She started working when she was 15 as a part-time waitress in a restaurant. After completing her honours degree, she joined a multinational company as a management trainee. Jenna adopted the democratic leadership style from her family and society. Within the same organisation Jenna moved from Lithuania to the UK. She is still working for this company and following the democratic leadership style. She found that people are friendlier in the UK than in Lithuania. According to Jenna, in some cases British and Lithuanian cultures are quite similar particularly in both cultures there is less power distance with scores of 35 and 42 respectively (Figure 3).

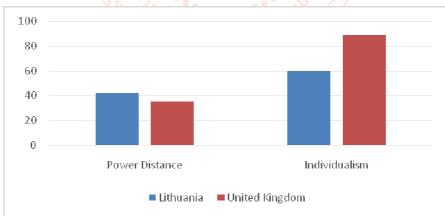


Figure 3: Scores of Lithuania and the United Kingdom. Source: Hofstede Insights (2021)

Figure 3 also shows Lithuania has a less individualist culture and the country scored 60 in this dimension.

From the literature, this is apparent that Jenna should be a democratic leader as both UK and Lithuania have low power distance and individualist culture (Ståhl&Viklund, 2006; Yukl, 2013).

In casestudy 4, Laura is from Italy. She has been living in the UK for the last ten years. She is currently working as a manager of a clothing retail store for two years. In Italy, family is the life of the society and it tries to provide stabilising influences on the family members. For example, parents pay all their children's expenses before they become solvent, and children also help their parents when they start earning. In some regions of Italy, the extended family resides together. Wealth and status are important in Italian society. They believe they have the ability to change themselves and adapt swiftly.

Laura used to follow democratic leadership in Italy, but her colleagues' social status was very important to her. She now feels that it was not right, but she does not blame herself for that. Because she observed it from her culture. When she moved to the

UK, she found a lot of similarities with her own culture, but social status is not so important here. People even do not like to bother about their position in society or family background. This influenced her a lot, and she slowly changed her perceptions.

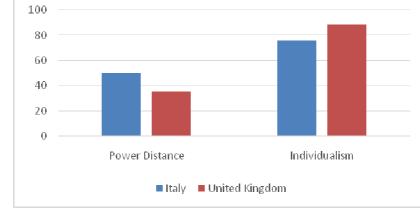


Figure 4: Scores of Italy and the United Kingdom. Source: Hofstede Insights (2021)

Hofstede's 6D model shows (Figure 4) that Italy scored 50 in power distance (UK 35) as in some parts of this country power distances are often high, but Laura observed the democratic leadership style from the area where she is from. At the same time, the model shows that this country has a high individualistic culture (score 76) which is similar to UK (score 89).Laura completely adjusted to the British culture over the last ten years. Because of similar culture in both Italy and UK Laura's leadership style are still the same which is democratic leadership (Ståhl&Viklund, 2006; Yukl, 2013; Janićijević, 2019). However, she is still following the democratic leadership style, but her colleagues' social status does not matter to her anymore.

In case study 5, Gaurav's country of origin is India. He is from a joint family, where his parents, grandparents, uncles all the extended families were living together. His grandfather was the most respected and powerful person in his entire family. Power distance is very high, and inequality is strongly noticeable in every part of society. He observed different types of powerful people in society such as religious leaders, political leaders, wealthy people, government officers, and so on. People in India also inherit power from their families.

Gaurav's first job was in a call centre in India. His manager was a complete autocratic leader which is very common in India. From his early age, he has observed this, and people accept it normally. Therefore, employees adjust not only with their managers' but also any superiors' autocratic leadership style. He was also not different from others and started to follow this leadership behaviour. Gaurav has never been to the UK before, so, reasonably this was a big change for him.

Figure 5 shows that there is a big difference between British and Indian culture. India scores 77 and the UK scores 35 in Power Distance means a very high power distance in India where it is very low in the UK. On the other hand, India scores 48 and the UK scores 89 in Individualism means India has a very high collectivist culture and the UK has a high individualist culture.

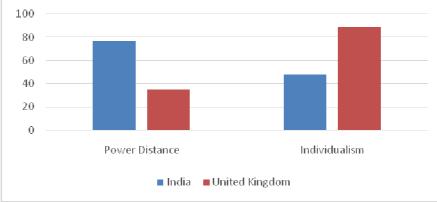


Figure 5: Scores of India and the United Kingdom. Source: Hofstede Insights (2021)

Gaurav likes the British culture, significantly the openness and friendly behaviour. He is currently following the democratic leadership style. According to Gaurav, individuals change their leadership styles due to the different cultures in different countries.

His first job in the UK was in a small newsagent. The manager cum owner of that newsagent was so friendly. There were only four employees altogether and the manager was never bossy which was completely opposite to Gaurav's managers in India. He observed how British people like to live their lives. About his current organisation, he is very positive. He is managing a large superstore in London now. In the UK he also observed a very low power distance. All these, very specifically, low power distance and high individualism of British culture influenced him to embrace the democratic leadership style (Yukl, 2013).

5. Conclusion, Limitations, and further recommendations

The study has investigated how culture influences leaders to change their leadership styles. By deeply studying culture, its

dimensions, leadership approaches and the relationships between culture and leadership, it has been identified that high power distance and collectivism dimensions of a culture strongly affect individuals to become autocratic leaders. But same individuals when they move to the UK, slowly get inspired by low power distance and individualist dimensions of the British culture to follow democratic leadership styles, and ultimately, they change their leadership styles.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic situation, this study interviewed only five individuals remotely. During the interview, it has been also identified that organisational culture has also a big impact on leadership behaviour. Therefore, future research can consider national and organisational culture to analyse their effect on individuals' leadership behaviour with a bigger sample size if possible.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaires

[47]

Note: This questionnaire is completely for educational reasons. Personal information will not be mentioned.

General information:

Name (optional):

Age:

Sex:

Name/type of the current organisation:

Country of Origin:

Moved to the UK:

- 1. Give a brief description of your own culture.
- 2. How can you differ your culture from English culture?
- 3. What type of leadership style did you follow in your country of origin? (Authoritarian or autocratic/ democratic/ laissezfaire)
- 4. How did you feel when you came to this country?
- 5. What leadership style (s) you observe in your current organisation?
- 6. Are you facing any difficulties here with a different culture?
- 7. Have you changed your leadership style after moving to the UK? If yes, then explain why and what type of leadership style do you personally follow now?