

The Relationship of Leadership Practices to Culture

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Abstract

The relationship of leadership to culture is explored in this study. The study was designed to determine if significant relationships existed between specific leadership practices and different cultural profiles. The treatment for this correlational study consisted of 15 teams with an assigned formal leader for each team. Significant relationships were found between the variables in 14 of the 20 relationships examined. It was concluded that different leadership practices resulted in different cultures.

Introduction

In the Winter 2000 issue of *The Leadership Quarterly: Yearly Review in Leadership*, Hunt and Dodge argued that leadership research had been “primarily concerned with relationships between leaders and their immediate followers” while “the organizational and environmental context in which leadership is enacted had been almost completely ignored” (p.435). This focus, according to the authors, on the leader-follower relationship had reached the point of repetition and thus offered no new insight into the complex nature of leadership. The authors agreed that it was time to consider leadership in relation to the environmental context.

Leadership studies are unlikely to be of any additive value until they take into account organizational variables. If the effects of varying leadership

styles are to be unraveled, the research design will need either to hold organizational variables constant and explore for leadership effects, or to explore the interaction effects by incorporating organizational variables and leadership dimensions. Neither of these is likely to occur until organizational researchers pay greater attention to leadership models and leadership researchers pay greater attention to organizational models (Hunt & Dodge, 2000).

With that argument in mind, this study was designed to explore the relationship between leadership and the environmental context. Specifically, it sought to examine identifiable leadership practices and their relationship to four distinct cultural profiles.

Understanding the Relationship Between Leadership and Culture

Edgar Schein (1992) proposed that “the unique function of leadership that distinguishes it from management and administration is...concern for culture.” He stated, “leaders create culture” (p. 209). According to Schein, culture originates when leaders impose “their own values and assumptions on a group” (p.1). His research showed that leaders of new organizations strongly impacted an organization’s culture. However, adding complexity to this relationship, leaders entering organizations in which the culture was already established did not typically impact the culture in the same way, but rather the established culture began to define the leadership.

Furthermore, leadership in both new and old organizations “must be guided by a realistic vision of what kinds of cultures enhance performance” (Kotter & Heskitt, 1993, p. 12). Through an examination of the literature, different cultures were found to be effective for different organizations, as were different styles of leadership. Leaders understood that what they did must fit what was appropriate for the organization. What worked for one organization did not necessarily work for another.

Leadership must be considered in relation to culture (Schein, 1992; Kotter & Heskitt, 1993; Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Kouzes & Posner, 1997; Hunt & Dodge, 2000). A review of the scholarly research showed that there was still much to be learned regarding the relationship between leadership and culture (Brungardt, 1996; Hunt & Dodge, 2000; Lewis, 1996). An understanding of which leadership practices influenced specific organizational cultures was needed. However, the review of literature offered hope and showed that it was possible to gather research toward the understanding between leadership and culture by designing studies that carefully defined and measured what was meant by both leadership and culture (Den Hartog, Van Muijen, & Koopman, 1996).

Defining and Measuring Leadership and Culture

In accordance with the literature, this study carefully defined both leadership and culture, specifically relying upon definitions and tools widely used in practice. Leadership was defined based upon Kouzes' and Posner's (1997) five leadership practices and measured through the use of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), also developed by Kouzes and Posner. Furthermore, this study specifically defined culture based on the research of Cameron and Quinn (1999) and sought to measure four cultural profiles through the use of the Organizational Cultural Assessment Instrument (OCAI) developed by Cameron and Quinn.

Kouzes and Posner (1997) believed that each organization was quite different, and stated "successful companies may have very different values and that the specific set of values that serves one company may hurt another" (p. 215). Described through their research were five fundamental practices of successful leaders: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart (refer to Table 1). The researchers developed the LPI through their exploration into best practices of leadership. The LPI was designed to measure these five leadership practices.

Table 1. Key Descriptors for Leadership Practices as Defined by Kouzes and Posner (1997)

Leadership Practices	Key Descriptors
Challenging the Process	Seeking out change, growth, innovation; taking risks; learning from mistakes.
Inspiring a Shared Vision	Envisioning the future; enlisting others; appealing to hopes and values.
Enabling Others to Act	Fostering collaboration; building trust; giving power away; offering support.
Modeling the Way	Setting the example; promoting consistent progress; building commitment.
Encouraging the Heart	Recognizing individuals; celebrating team accomplishments.

Cameron and Quinn (1999) studied more than 1000 organizations and found that there was no ideal culture for a specific type of organization, but rather "each organization must determine for itself the degree of cultural strength required to be successful in its environment"(p. 64). Through their research they determined four cultural profiles: clan, hierarchy, market, and adhocracy (refer to Table 2). Additionally, Cameron and Quinn developed the OCAI. The OCAI was designed to identify these four cultures.

Table 2. Key Descriptors for Cultural Profiles as Defined by Quinn and Cameron (1999)

Cultural Profile	Key Descriptors
Clan	Internal maintenance; flexibility; concern for people; sensitivity to customers.
Hierarchy	Internal maintenance; need for stability and control.
Market	External positioning; need for stability and control.
Adhocracy	External positioning; high degree of flexibility; individuality.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to develop some clarity about the relationship between leadership and culture. Specifically, the problems investigated in this study included the impact of leadership behaviors practiced by assigned leaders within newly formed collegiate teams and their relation to culture. The goal of the study was to determine if significant relationships existed between specific leadership practices as defined by Kouzes and Posner (1997) and different cultural profiles as defined by Cameron and Quinn (1999).

Methodology

The study followed a correlational design in which post-data were collected. The independent variables in the study were leadership practices while the dependent variable was team culture. A purposive sample (Babbie, 1992) was used to collect data from 85 (N = 85) undergraduate students enrolled in three sections of a senior capstone course at a major research university. The treatment for this correlational study (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) consisted of 15 collegiate teams, each with four to six members. Additionally, within each team the members assigned a formal leader.

Two instruments, the LPI and the OCAI, were used to determine if there was a correlation between leadership practices and team culture in temporary undergraduate student teams. Based on the purposes of the study and the dimensions of leadership and culture measured by the instruments, the relationship between five specific leadership practices and four cultural profiles were examined.

Post-test data were collected during the last regularly scheduled meeting of the participants, which occurred on the final class day of a 15-week semester. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), and hypotheses were tested using Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation

(Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975). A confidence interval of alpha .05 was set a priori.

Findings and Conclusions

Significant relationships were found for each of the five leadership practices and the clan culture. Each of the relationships was positively correlated. Significant relationships were, also, found for each of the five leadership practices and the market culture. However, each of the relationships was negatively correlated. Additionally, significant relationships were found between the leadership practice, enabling others to act, and each of the four culture profiles. Finally, similar to the leadership practice, enabling others to act, significant relationships were found between the leadership practice, encouraging the heart, and each of the four culture profiles. In summary, significant relationships were found between the variables in 14 of the 20 relationships examined in the study. A summary of the findings is reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Pearson's Product Moment Correlations Between the Five LPI Practices and Team Culture (N = 85)

	Clan	Adhocracy	Market	Hierarchy
Challenging the Process	.298* .006	.165 .131	-.346* .001	.169 .121
Inspiring a Shared Vision	.221* .042	.149 .174	-.362* .001	-.147 .179
Enabling Others to Act	.364* .001	.258* .017	-.338* .002	-.343* .001
Modeling the Way	.215* .048	.013 .904	-.320* .003	-.063 .565
Encouraging the Heart	.319* .003	.227* .037	-.313* .004	-.252* .020

Note: * indicates a significant relationship at alpha (p) = .05 or less.

Challenging the Process and Culture-Findings

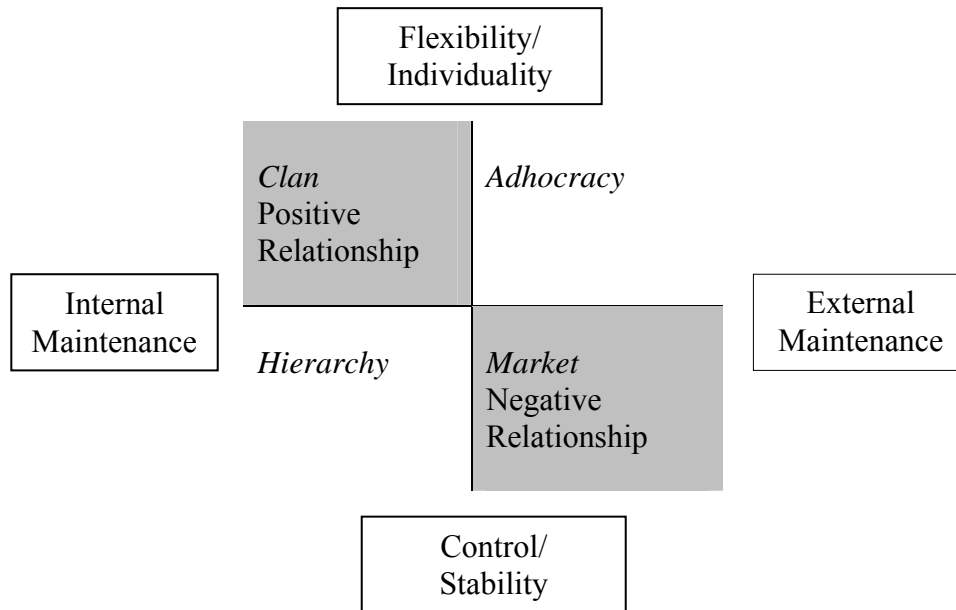
Pearson's product moment correlational coefficient was used to test hypotheses related to challenging the process and culture. The SPSS procedure CORRELATION was used to compare leadership practice and team culture. Correlations were made between the Leadership Practices Inventory's scale, challenging the process, and the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument's four culture profiles: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy.

Statistically significant relationships were found between LPI practice-challenging the process and two of the four culture profiles: clan ($r = .298$), and market ($r = -.346$). The statistically significant relationship between challenging the process and the clan culture indicated that when team leaders practiced behaviors defined by challenging the process that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the clan profile. The statistically significant relationship between challenging the process and the market culture indicated that when team leaders did not practice behaviors defined by challenging the process that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the market profile.

Challenging the Process and Culture-Conclusions

The findings suggested that there is a positive relationship between the clan culture and leadership that challenges the process, and a negative relationship between the market culture and leadership that challenges the process (refer to Figure 1). In explanation, leaders who challenge the process are committed to change, innovation, experimentation, and taking risks. Challenging the process is positively correlated with the clan culture, described by internal maintenance and having a concern for people and flexibility. Whereas, challenging the process is negatively correlated with the market culture, described by external maintenance and having a need for stability and control.

Figure 1. Relationship diagram for LPI practice, challenging the process, and the OCAI culture profiles



Although the negative relation between the market culture, one in which stability and control is valued, and challenging the process is expected, the relation between the clan culture and challenging the process is not. More specifically, examples in the literature support a positive relationship between challenging the process and the adhocracy culture.

For example, a former CEO of Ford Motor Co. in seeking to change the culture, practiced leadership best described by challenging the process towards a culture best described by adhocracy. Ford Motor Co. trained revolutionaries, change agents, and leaders based on a leadership philosophy rooted in action (Hammonds, 2000). Furthermore, Michael Eisner, Disney's CEO and chairman since 1984, intentionally created a culture at Disney that involved lots of noise, provoking, and uninhibited discussion (Wetlaufer, 2000). This type of leadership challenged the process; however, the resulting culture was an adhocracy, rather than a clan culture, as the research findings in this study would suggest.

Inspiring a Shared Vision and Culture-Findings

Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to test hypotheses related to inspiring a shared vision and culture. The SPSS procedure CORRELATION was used to compare leadership practice and team culture. Correlations were made between the Leadership Practices Inventory's scale, inspiring a shared vision, and the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument's four culture profiles: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy.

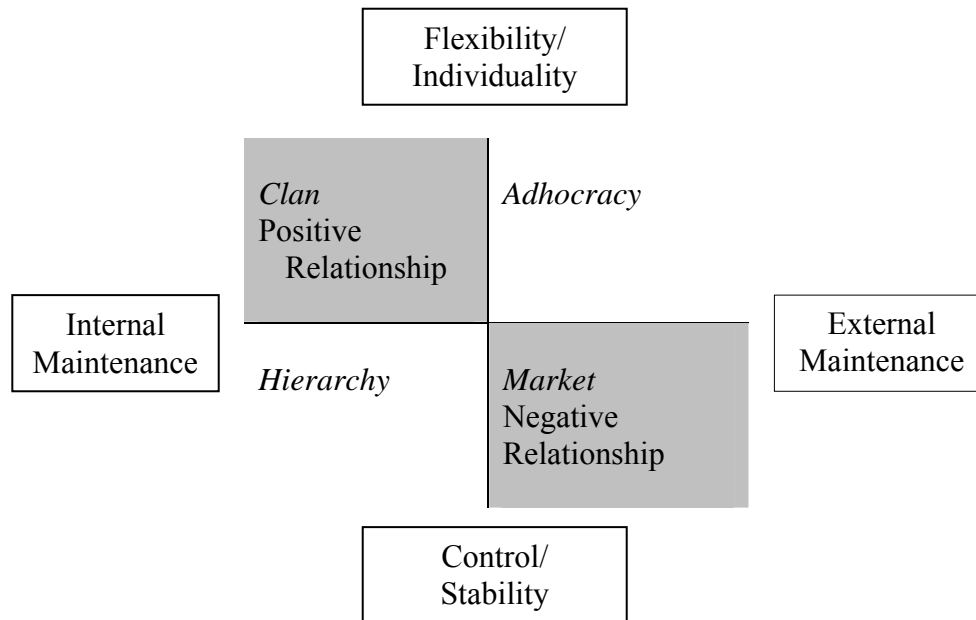
Statistically significant relationships were found between LPI practice-inspiring a shared vision and two of the four culture profiles: clan ($r = .221$), and market ($r = -.362$). The statistically significant relationship between inspiring a shared vision and the clan culture indicated that when team leaders practiced behaviors defined by inspiring a shared vision that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the clan profile. The statistically significant relationship between inspiring a shared vision and the market culture indicated that when team leaders did not practice behaviors defined by modeling the way that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the market profile

Inspiring a Shared Vision and Culture-Conclusions

The findings suggested that there is a positive relationship between the clan culture and leadership that inspires a shared vision, and a negative relationship between the market culture and leadership that inspires a shared vision (refer to Figure 2). In explanation, leaders who inspire a shared vision are committed to envisioning the future and involving others in the pursuit of the vision. Inspiring a shared vision is positively correlated with the clan culture, described by internal maintenance and having a concern for people and flexibility. Whereas, inspiring a shared vision is negatively correlated with the market culture, described by external maintenance and having a need for stability and control.

Both leadership researchers and leadership practitioners have reported the importance of inspiring a shared vision over the years. In an examination of Disney, 3M, Southwest Airlines, and Ford Motor, Co., each of the top leaders recognized the importance of vision. Transformational leadership, a widely studied model of leadership, has recommended that successful leadership is partly based on this ability to envision the future and to involve others in the pursuit of this vision (Bass, 1990). Like numerous researchers, Nwanko and Richardson (1996) found that visionary, transformational leadership was required for achieving success. However, similar to this study, transformational leadership was positively correlated with Cameron's and Quinn's supportive (clan) and innovative (adhocracy) cultures; and, negatively correlated with Cameron's and Quinn's procedural (hierarchical) and goal oriented (market) cultures (Den Hartog, Van Muijen, & Koopman, 1996).

Figure 2. Relationship diagram for LPI practice, inspiring a shared vision, and the OCAI culture profiles



Enabling Others to Act and Culture-Findings

Pearson's product moment correlational coefficient was used to test hypotheses related to enabling others to act and culture. The SPSS procedure CORRELATION was used to compare leadership practice and team culture. Correlations were made between the Leadership Practices Inventory's scale, enabling others to act, and the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument's four culture profiles: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy.

Statistically significant relationships were found between LPI practice-enabling others to act and each of the four culture profiles: clan ($r = .364$), adhocracy ($r = .258$), market ($r = -.338$), and hierarchy ($r = -.343$). The statistically significant relationships between enabling others to act and the clan and adhocracy cultures indicated that when team leaders practiced behaviors defined by enabling others to act that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the clan or adhocracy profile. The statistically significant relationships between enabling others to act and the market and hierarchy cultures indicated that when team leaders did not practice behaviors defined by enabling others to act that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the market or hierarchy culture profile.

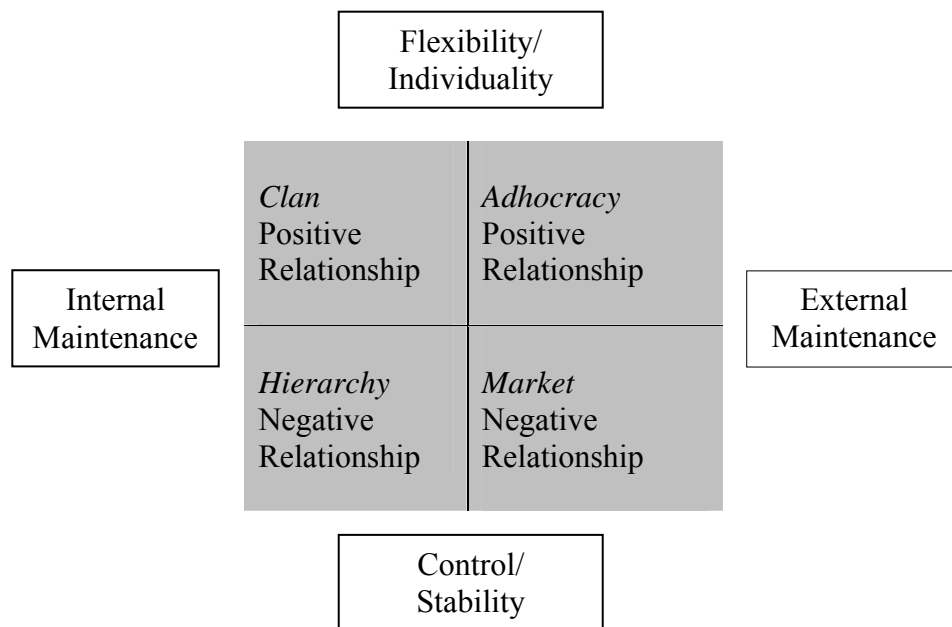
Enabling Others to Act and Culture-Conclusions

The findings suggest that there is a positive relationship between leadership that enables others to act and both the clan and adhocracy cultures, and there is a negative relationship between leadership that enables others to act and both the hierarchy and market cultures (refer to Figure 3). In explanation, leaders who enable others to act are committed to fostering collaboration, building trust, giving power away, and offering support.

Enabling others to act is positively correlated with the two cultures based on flexibility and individuality, the clan culture and the adhocracy culture. The clan culture is also described by internal maintenance whereas the adhocracy culture is described by external maintenance.

Enabling others to act is negatively correlated with the two cultures based on control and stability - the hierarchy culture and the market culture. The hierarchy culture is also described by internal maintenance whereas the market culture is described by external maintenance.

Figure 3. Relationship diagram for LPI practice, enabling others to act, and the OCAI culture profiles



Enabling others to act has been widely studied in recent years. Research has found that a culture based on a collaborative mind-set, as well as, collaborative process and structures was required for organizational success (Goldberg, 2000). Furthermore, high-performance teams required a climate of community, and a learning culture based on sharing of experience, trust, honesty, and openness led to a healthier environment (Beech & Crane, 1999). Echoing Beech and Crane,

self-managing teams were found to be successful when the environment was based on equality, trust, and freedom (Banai, Nirenberg, & Menachem, 2000).

Employees at Southwest Airlines agreed, as they “saw themselves as leaders who made a difference” (Freiberg, 1997, p. 312). They believed that their actions helped to create the work environment, and that leadership was a relationship between leaders and collaborators. Attaran & Nguyen (2000) recommended that moving from the traditional hierarchical work group, self-directed teams required a climate based on trust, creativity, willingness to listen, and the freedom to generate ideas without criticism. Lok and Crawford (1999) found that control over the working environment was strongly related to commitment within the organization.

Similar to this study, Lok and Crawford (1999) also found that bureaucratic subculture (hierarchical) was negatively correlated with organizational commitment and consideration leadership styles were strongly related to employee commitment within the organization.

Modeling the Way and Culture-Findings

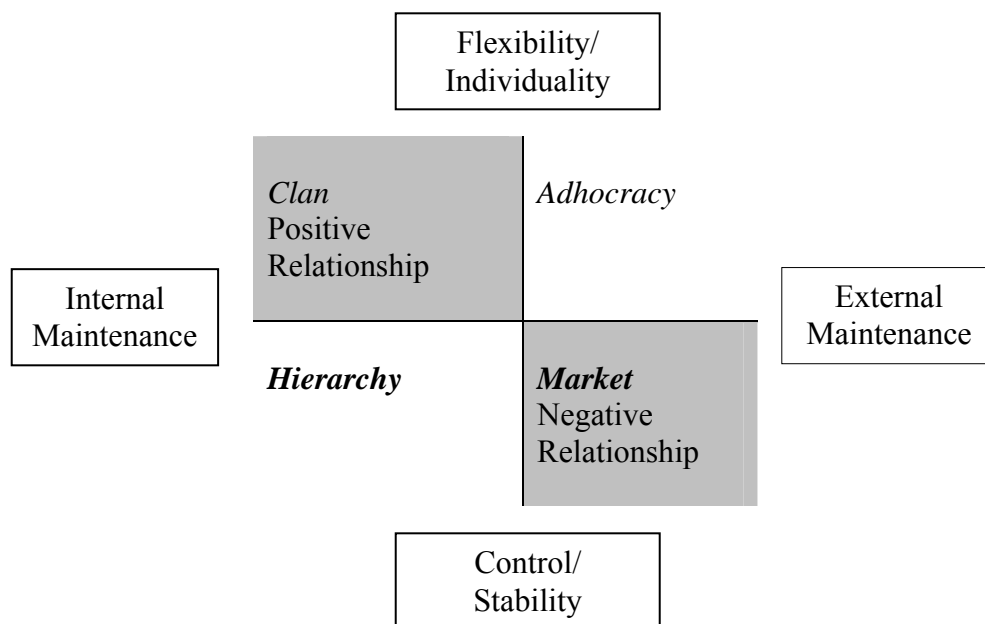
Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient was used to test hypotheses related to modeling the way and culture. The SPSS procedure CORRELATION was used to compare leadership practice and team culture. Correlations were made between the Leadership Practices Inventory’s scale, modeling the way, and the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument’s four culture profiles: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy.

Statistically significant relationships were found between LPI practice-modeling the way and two of the four culture profiles: clan ($r = .215$), and market ($r = -.320$). The statistically significant relationship between modeling the way and the clan culture indicated that when team leaders practiced behaviors defined by modeling the way that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the clan profile. The statistically significant relationship between modeling the way and the market culture indicated that when team leaders did not practice behaviors defined by modeling the way that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the market profile.

Modeling the Way and Culture-Conclusions

The findings suggested a positive relationship between the clan culture and leadership that models the way, and a negative relationship between the market culture and leadership that models the way (refer to Figure 4). In explanation, leaders who model the way are committed to setting an example through their own behavior and to building commitment. Modeling the way is positively correlated with the clan culture, described by internal maintenance and having a concern for people and flexibility. Whereas, modeling the way is negatively correlated with the market culture, described by external maintenance and having a need for stability and control.

Figure 4. Relationship diagram for LPI practice, modeling the way, and the OCAI culture profiles



Beech and Crane (1999) found that leadership of high-performance teams was from within. The leader took on specific roles within the team as well as traditional leadership roles. In other words, part of the leader’s role was to model the way.

The transformational leadership model also agreed, recommending that successful leadership is partly based on idealized influence or the ability of leaders to act as strong role models for followers (Bass, 1990). Similar to this study, transformational leadership was found to be positively correlated with Cameron’s and Quinn’s supportive (clan) and innovative (adhocracy) cultures and negatively correlated with Cameron’s and Quinn’s procedural (hierarchical) and goal-oriented (market) cultures (Den Hartog, Van Muijen, & Koopman, 1996).

Encouraging the Heart and Culture-Findings

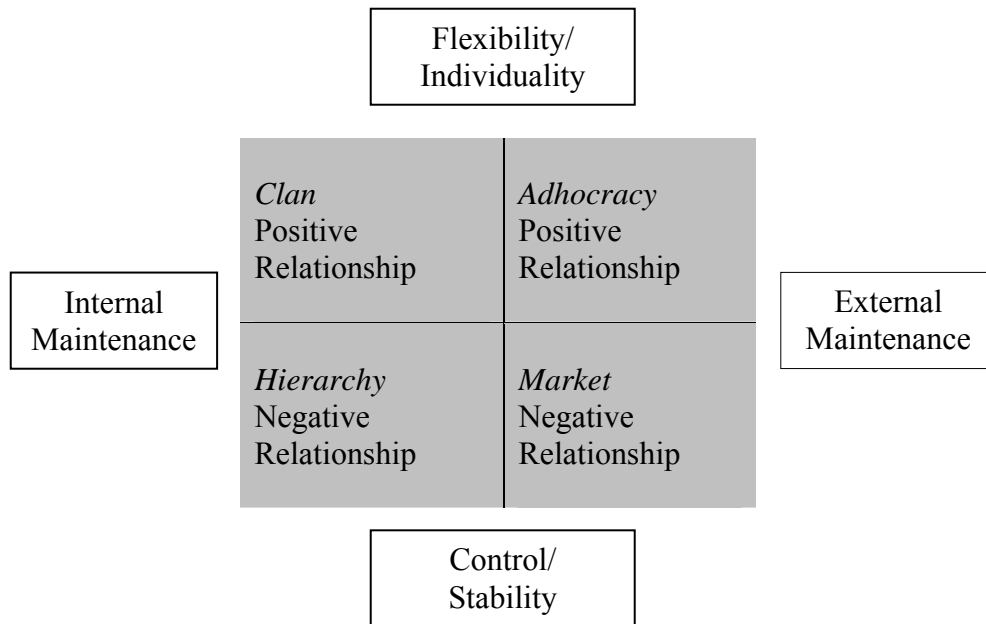
Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to test hypotheses related to encouraging the heart and culture. The SPSS procedure CORRELATION was used to compare leadership practice and team culture. Correlations were made between the Leadership Practices Inventory's scale, encouraging the heart, and the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument's four culture profiles: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy.

Statistically significant relationships were found between LPI practice-encouraging the heart and each of the four culture profiles: clan ($r = .319$), adhocracy ($r = .227$), market ($r = -.313$), and hierarchy ($r = -.252$). The statistically significant relationships between encouraging the heart and the clan and adhocracy cultures indicated that when team leaders practiced behaviors defined by encouraging the way that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the clan or adhocracy profile. The statistically significant relationships between encouraging the heart and the market and hierarchy cultures indicated that when team leaders did not practice behaviors defined by modeling the way that the team culture was more likely to be described by the team members as a culture fitting the market or hierarchy culture profile.

Encouraging the Heart and Culture-Conclusions

The findings suggest a positive relationship between leadership that encourages the heart and both the clan and adhocracy cultures, and there is a negative relationship between leadership that encourages the heart and both the hierarchy and market cultures (refer to Figure 5). In explanation, leaders who encourage the heart are committed to recognizing individual contributions and celebrating team accomplishment.

Figure 5. Relationship diagram for LPI practice, encouraging the heart, and the OCAI culture profiles



Encouraging the heart is positively correlated with the two cultures based on flexibility and individuality, the clan culture and the adhocracy culture. The clan culture is also described by internal maintenance whereas the adhocracy culture is described by external maintenance.

Encouraging the heart is negatively correlated with the two cultures based on control and stability, the hierarchy culture and the market culture. The hierarchy culture is also described by internal maintenance whereas the market culture is described by external maintenance.

Much of the research between leadership and culture focused specifically on transformational research and total quality management (TQM) in relation to culture. In looking at encouraging the heart, it is unclear if encouraging the heart represents transactional leadership in the form of contingent reward or transformational leadership; thus, conclusions cannot be drawn based on studies examining transformational leadership.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

In summary, significant relationships were found between the variables in 14 of the 20 relationships examined in this study (refer to Figure 6). Different cultures were found to result from different leadership practices. Previous research studies had reached the same conclusion; however, definitive links between specific leadership practices and cultural profiles had not yet been revealed. This study has

revealed links between specific leadership practices and specific cultural profiles and calls for additional research.

Figure 6. Summary relationship diagram for LPI leadership practices and the OCAI culture profiles

<p><i>Clan</i> Positive Relationship with All Five Leadership Practices</p>	<p><i>Adhocracy</i> Positive Relationship with Enabling Others to Act & Encouraging the Heart</p>
<p><i>Hierarchy</i> Negative Relationship with Enabling Others to Act & Encouraging the Heart</p>	<p><i>Market</i> Negative Relationship with All Five Leadership Practices</p>

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that leadership practices and culture outside the academic environment be examined. In a study designed to answer if the business world and higher education could learn from each other, Wolverson and Poch (2000) discovered distinct similarities between corporate CEOs and academic deans. The study concluded that the two, the business world and higher education, could learn from each other.

Additionally, this study identified a negative correlation between enabling others to act and the market and hierarchy cultures. It also found a negative correlation between encouraging the heart and the market and hierarchy cultures. In response to these findings, it is recommended that future studies examining the relationship between leadership and culture use additional tools (beyond the LPI) to measure leadership in an effort to determine specific leadership practices leading to market and hierarchy cultures.

As a final recommendation, research toward understanding the relationship between leadership practices and culture should be continued. It is recommended that this study be replicated as well as new studies designed with the same purpose. To be of additive value to the current body of knowledge, leadership studies must take into account organizational variables (Hunt & Dodge, 2000).

Implications for Leadership Educators

Leadership educators will want to consider the following implications specific to Kouzes' and Posner's *Leadership Challenge* (1997) and related materials: (1) teams and organizations seeking to foster a clan culture **should** consider training programs based upon the five leadership practices; (2) teams and organizations seeking to foster an adhocracy culture **should** consider training programs that

include enabling others to act and encouraging the heart; (3) teams and organizations seeking to foster a hierarchy culture **should not** use training programs that include enabling others to act and encouraging the heart; and, (4) teams and organizations seeking to foster a market culture should **consider alternatives** to leadership practices as described by Kouzes and Posner when developing leadership training programs.

Additionally, this study supports training organizational leaders to understand their role as it relates to culture. They must understand that what they do as a leader impacts the culture of the team or organization in which they work. Knowledge of how leadership practices specifically influence culture needs to become part of the leader's toolbox.

Cultural change efforts should consider leadership in relation to culture. As organizations seek change, the relationship between leadership and culture must be understood. Specifically, leaders must understand that the leader's influence over new organizations is typically much stronger than that over existing organizations. Specific practices influence specific cultures. Leaders must know what the goal is before determining the process.

Finally, in the development of teams, consideration should be given to the desired outcomes prior to assigning leadership. Although some leaders can adjust their style to fit the situation, many require that the situation fit their style. Appropriate leadership can be selected based upon knowledge of how leadership practices influence specific cultures, which in turn influences outcomes.

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