

# Universally Enforced Attributes of Leadership with Current Prevalent Leadership Theories Taught at Texas A&M University

*J. Muenich and J. Williams  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX*



## Abstract

Globalization is changing the shape of today's world. The result is an increasing importance for leaders to possess international leadership competencies as well as westernized competencies. Researchers are questioning exactly which competencies are needed to be an effective global leader across cultures. To date, the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) study is the largest worldwide leadership study, which focused on cultural leadership competencies. This article uses the universally effective leader attributes defined by the GLOBE study to assess whether the Texas A&M leadership program is preparing students to be competent global leaders. It is concluded Transformational and Charismatic leadership theories taught at Texas A&M are universally endorsed theories, while behavioral leadership, task and relationship competencies, are not considered important for westernized leadership. This has profound impacts on the leadership education community. The question becomes: should leadership programs focus more on global leadership theories and competencies?

## Introduction

### Globalization

Much like leadership, globalization is a widely used term that does not have a clear, agreed upon definition. Often it is used to refer to the increasing interconnectedness of today's world. Globalization is a complex issue that encompasses political, economic, technological and social factors. The term globalization was coined in 1985 by economist Theodore Levitt (Stromquist, 2002) but is an economic trend, referred to as neo-liberalism, evidenced throughout history long before the 1980s. Neoliberal economics center on an international free market, less government regulation, and more trade with more countries. The result is a more

interconnected world through international trade and investment (Mayo, 2005). While globalization has its roots in economics it has been undeniably proliferated by our technological advancements of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The Internet, for instance, has revolutionized how the world does business. People who used to be worlds away are now accessible at the click of a mouse. The increase in globalized teams in industry has skyrocketed in the last 5 years (Coe, et al., 2007).

Globalization has pressed companies to be internationally active in order to stay on top. Companies are expected to be "world class- in orientation, sourcing and standards...and to thrive domestically by joining global networks" (Kanter, 2010, p. 572). Globalization does not only call out to business leaders but also to political, public and non-profit leaders to manage the complexity of our changing world. The result is an increasing importance for leaders to possess international leadership competencies as well as national competencies. Thus, globalization is changing the face of leadership and researchers are drawing their attention towards how leadership is perceived and executed in different world cultures.

### Implications for Agricultural Leadership Educators

Peter Dorfman (2004), a member of the GLOBE Coordinating Team, states in a Theoretical Letter "the fact is the terms leaders and leadership are not as universally revered as we in America think" (p. 283). Is it true that Americans' view of leadership varies significantly from other cultural views of leadership? If so, what are the implications for leadership educators? On the other hand, are there aspects of leadership that transcend cultural barriers? Many universities have added global perspective courses as a requirement for

## Universally Enforced Attributes

all majors. For example, one goal articulated in the 2009 Texas A&M Task Force Report for the university in this case was “to be recognized internationally for notable impacts of international initiatives of faculty and students” (p. 2). Leadership educators have the ability to be on the forefront of this opportunity. The pressure of university regulations coupled with the notion of specific and divergent leadership competencies one must possess to be effective in a global market place, leadership educators are feeling the need to change curriculum (Moore, et al., 2011). Irani, et al. (2006) note most students do not possess the leadership skills needed to be global leaders. The objective of this study was to compare the GLOBE universally endorsed leadership attributes with leadership theories taught in leadership theory courses at Texas A&M.

### GLOBE Studies

GLOBE stands for Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness and was an 11 year study conducted in 62 different countries. The GLOBE research study is the largest worldwide leadership study conducted thus far. The intent of the GLOBE study was “to explore the cultural values and practices in a wide variety of countries and to identify their impact on organizational practices and leadership attributes” (House et al., 2002, p. 3).

The definition of leadership held by GLOBE researchers is “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members” (House et al., 2002, p. 5). A theory of focus for the study is the implicit leadership theory (ILT). This theory, coined by Lord and Maher, states individuals have implicit beliefs (also known as mental models or schemas) about the types of skills, behaviors and attributes of effective and ineffective leadership (House et al., 2004, p. 669). Thus leadership is “in the eye of the beholder” (p. 348) or “the process of being perceived by others as being a leader” (Northouse, 2010, p. 359). GLOBE researchers built on this theory to identify the culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory (CLT). Rather than an individual level theory, CLT is a cultural level theory that states that members of an organization or society have shared beliefs about effective leadership. The study provides “convincing evidence that people within cultural groups agree in their beliefs about leadership” (House et al., 2004, p. 669). CLT profiles were created to represent shared leadership beliefs of a common culture. Therefore researchers not only defined how individuals within a culture view leadership based on shared beliefs, they compared how those beliefs varied in content across cultures (House

et al., 2004, p. 671). From this research the GLOBE study was able to identify attributes that are universally endorsed as contributors and inhibitors of effective global leadership.

### Universally Endorsed Attributes of Leadership

Is leadership culturally contingent or can it transcend cultures? The answer according to the GLOBE study is yes and no. Data shows there are specific aspects of leadership (namely Charismatic/Transformational and Team Leadership Theories) that are transferable across cultures while at the same time there exists culturally contingent attributes of effective leadership. There is clear and abundant evidence for the support of culturally contingent leadership attributes but because of the constraints of the paper they will not be discussed. This paper will focus on the attributes in the GLOBE study found to be universal.

The universal leadership attributes are characteristics which are cross-culturally generalizable. This universal focus of human behavior is termed *etic* and defined by GLOBE researchers as “behaviors ...that can be compared across cultures using common definitions and metrics” (Hartog et al., 1999, p. 230). GLOBE found 22 attributes universally endorsed as contributing to effective leadership termed Universal Positive Leader Attributes. These attributes are listed in Table 1.

One hypothesis of the GLOBE study was the idea that Charismatic/Value-Based leadership behaviors and leader integrity would universally be viewed as effective leadership. Charismatic/Value-Based leadership is defined in the study as leaders who “articulate and emphasize end-values such as dignity, peace, order, beauty and freedom” (p. 673). “[It is] the ability to inspire, to motivate and to expect high performance outcomes from others on the basis of firmly held core values” (House et al., 2004, p. 675). The definition includes six subscales: visionary, inspirational, self-sacrifice, integrity, decisive and performance oriented (House et al., 2004). The results of their study indicate the visionary and inspirational aspects of Charismatic/Value-Based leadership are universally considered effective (see Table 1). However, attributes comprising other subsets of Charismatic/Value-Based leadership were not universally endorsed. The attributes also support team oriented leadership and leader integrity as being universally endorsed leadership styles (see Table 1).

Team leadership is defined in the GLOBE study as “a leadership dimension that emphasizes effective team building and implementation of a common purpose or goal among team members” (p. 675). This leadership dimension also has six subscales: collaborative team

Table 1. GLOBE Universal Positive Leader Attributes

Leader Attribute	Corresponding Primary Leadership Dimensions
Trustworthy	Integrity
Just	Integrity
Honest	Integrity
Foresight	Charisma 1: Visionary
Plans ahead	Charisma 1: Visionary
Encouraging	Charisma 2: Inspirational
Positive	Charisma 2: Inspirational
Dynamic	Charisma 2: Inspirational
Motive arouser	Charisma 2: Inspirational
Confidence builder	Charisma 2: Inspirational
Motivational	Charisma 2: Inspirational
Dependable	Malevolent (reverse score)
Intelligent	Malevolent (reverse score)
Decisive	Decisiveness
Effective bargainer	Diplomatic
Win-win problem solver	Diplomatic
Administrative skilled	Administratively competent
Communicative	Team 2: Team Integrator
Informed	Team 2: Team Integrator
Coordinator	Team 2: Team Integrator
Team builder	Team 2: Team Integrator
Excellence oriented	Performance Oriented

orientation, team integrator, diplomatic, malevolent, administratively competent (House et al., 2004). Based on the 22 universally endorsed leader attributes GLOBE researchers state “the portrait of a leader who is universally viewed as effective is clear: The person should possess the highest levels of integrity and engage in Charismatic/Value-Based behaviors while building effective teams” (House et al., 2004).

Although not part of the original hypothesis, GLOBE also found nine attributes to be universally endorsed as hindrances to effective leadership. These are titled the universal negative leader attributes. They are loner, asocial, non-cooperative, irritable, non-explicit, egocentric, ruthless and dictatorial (House et al., 2004).

**Prevalent American Leadership Theories**

Currently, at Texas A&M the textbooks The Leadership Experience by Daft (2008) and Leadership Theory and Practice by Northouse (2010) are used for the foundational leadership theory courses at the graduate and undergraduate level. These texts will be referenced to define prevalent American leadership theories taught in these specific courses.

**Transformational and Charismatic Leadership**

Transformational leadership and Charismatic leadership are often used synonymously and while the theories do have some convergence (Rowold and Heinitz, 2007), they are not the same (Daft, 2008).

To begin, in his book Leadership: Theory and Practice Northouse (2010) cites House’s theory of charismatic leadership. House defines personality characteristics as well as behaviors of charismatic leaders. The combination of these personality traits and behaviors has a specific effect on followers. Table

2 details the personality characteristics, behaviors and effects on followers as defined by House. Followers of a charismatic leader have a sense of increased self-efficacy thus improving performance (Northouse, 2010).

Daft (2008) states charismatic leaders “*have an emotional impact on people and inspire them to do more than they would normally do, despite obstacles and personal sacrifice*” (p. 364). Daft depicts charismatic leaders as appealing to followers’ emotions by being perceived as leaders who will stick to a cause and triumph over any hurdles. Charismatic leadership inspires followers to overcome or rise above the status quo to create change. Charismatic leaders are unconventional and influence out of personal characteristics as opposed to power. Both Northouse and Daft describe charismatic leaders as emerging during stressful or troubled times, since their “*inspiring personality can help to reduce stress and anxiety among followers*” (Daft, 2008).

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is defined as “*the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower*” (p. 172). Transformational leadership focuses on the needs of the followers and raising their sense of morality (Northouse, 2010). Daft (2008) refers to transformational leadership as bringing about change by focusing on aspects such as vision, shared values and giving larger meaning to activities. Transformation leadership is a skill set that can be learned and is “based on the personal values and beliefs” of a leader (Daft, 2008).

Northouse (2010) lists Bass’ four factors of transformational leadership: Idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Factor one is referred to as idealized influence or charisma. These leaders have high moral and ethical standards, are trusted by followers and provide a clear vision and mission for followers. Factor two, inspirational motivation, refers to leaders who inspire commitment to the vision of the organization through high expectations and using encouraging words. Factor three is intellectual stimulation and occurs when a leader encourages followers’ innovation and development of creative ways to solve problems. Finally, individualized consideration is the fourth factor of a transformational leader. This factor refers to the individual attention a leader gives to a follower in order to meet the follower’s needs. Leaders who embody this factor create a supportive and caring environment.

**Style Approach**

The style approach, also referred to as the behavioral approach, broadens leadership research to include

## Universally Enforced Attributes

the actions of leaders towards followers (Northouse, 2010). The style approach to leadership is distinguished from the trait approach (focusing on personality traits of leaders) and the skills approach (focusing on the specific skill set of a leader) by studying the behaviors of effective leaders. Three studies are presented in the Daft (2008) and Northouse (2010) texts: the Ohio State studies, the University of Michigan studies and the Blake and Mouton leadership grid. These studies center on a theme of two broad leadership behaviors identified as task behaviors and relationship behaviors (Northouse, 2010).

Much research has been done in the area of style approach to leadership, but these two studies provide a “clear picture of the underpinnings and implications of the style approach” (Northouse, 2010, p. 70). Thus the style approach can be summarized in two broad leadership behaviors- task and relationship.

## Methods

The objective of this study was to compare the GLOBE universally endorsed leadership attributes with leadership theories taught in undergraduate and graduate leadership theory courses at Texas A&M. Deductive content analysis comparing the GLOBE with theories taught from the Daft (2008) and Northouse (2010) texts was conducted (Patton, 2002).

## Results and Discussion

After content analysis provided substantial findings. Grouping the universal attributes into the westernized theories taught at Texas A&M showed some correlation but also some glaring differences. Table 3 compares the 22 universal attributes that contribute to effective leadership from the GLOBE study to the American definitions of charismatic leadership, transformational leadership and the behavioral approach to leadership.

### Charismatic Leadership

Eleven of the 22 universally endorsed positive leader attributes are displayed in charismatic leadership as defined by the Northouse (2010) and Daft (2008) textbooks. The 11 attributes present are trustworthy, just, honest, foresight, encouraging, positive, motive arouser, confidence builder, motivational, dependable and communicative. Because a charismatic leader is described as having strong moral values (Northouse, 2010) the universal attributes trustworthy, just and honest are applicable. Also, charismatic leaders were defined as inspiring followers to overcome the status quo and operate at a higher level than they normally would. For this reason the attributes positive, motive arouser, confidence builder and motivational fall in the category

of charismatic leadership. Since no definition is given in the GLOBE study for foresight it is understood to mean vision casting for this analysis. Because charismatic leaders often emerge during crises foresight, encouraging and dependable fall in this category as well. Finally, the attribute communicative is placed in the category of charismatic leadership since charismatic leaders were previously described as articulating goals and communicating high expectations (Northouse, 2010).

GLOBE researchers found their hypothesis that Charismatic/Value-Based leadership would be universally viewed as effective leadership to be mostly true. It is not surprising then that 11 of the 22 universally endorsed positive attributes are displayed in the American definition of charismatic leadership since the definition of charismatic leadership as taught in American classrooms is similar to the definition provided in the GLOBE study of Charismatic/Value-Based leadership. It can be concluded that Texas A&M leadership educators are effectively producing global leaders when teaching students about charismatic leadership.

*Table 2. Personality Characteristics, Behaviors, and Effects on Followers of Charismatic Leadership*

Personality Characteristics	Behaviors	Effects on Followers
Dominant	Sets strong role model	Trust in leader's ideology
Desire to Influence	Shows competence	Belief similarity between leader and follower
Self-Confidence	Articulates goals	Unquestioning acceptance
Strong moral values	Communicates high expectations	Affection toward leader
	Expresses confidence	Obedience
	Arouses motives	Identification with leader
		Emotional involvement
		Heightened goals
		Increased confidence

### Transformational Leadership

The American definition of transformational leadership includes 12 of the 22 universally endorsed positive leader attributes. The universal attributes are win-win problem solver and the 11 also found in charismatic leadership: trustworthy, just, honest, foresight, encouraging, positive, motive arouser, confidence builder, motivational, dependable and communicative. Because a transformational leader is concerned with meeting the needs of his or her followers (referred to as individualized consideration) the attributes win-win problem solver, dependable and encouraging are applicable. A transformational leader also raises the level or morality in followers thus validating the attributes trustworthy, just, honest, positive, motive arouser and motivational. Lastly, a transformational leader was defined as relying on vision and giving larger meaning to activities. For this reason the universal attributes foresight, confidence builder and communicative fall into the category of transformational leadership. Because transforma-

tional leadership, again as defined in the textbooks used at Texas A&M, embodies various universally endorsed leader attributes, it is concluded to be another universally effective leadership theory.

**Style Approach to Leadership: Task Behaviors**

The task behaviors a leader might exhibit, labeled initiating structure or production orientation in the Ohio State and University of Michigan studies, display four of the universal leader attributes: plans ahead, administrative skilled, coordinator, excellence oriented. A task oriented leader is focused on task facilitation. Therefore the attributes of plans ahead, administrative skills and coordinator accurately define a task oriented leader. Also, because task oriented leaders are focused on goal achievement the attribute of excellence oriented applies as well. These universal attributes are less descriptive and leave room for interpretation. For instance, the attributes administrative skilled or plans ahead could have a variety of meanings. A leader who “plans ahead” could be considered organized or goal oriented or a micromanager. While the universal positive leader attributes are helpful in defining a global leader, many of these attributes leave much room for interpretation. Because a task oriented leader embodies only four of the universally endorsed leader attributes it can be concluded that the theory is not globally endorsed according to the GLOBE study research.

**Style Approach to Leadership: Relationship Behaviors**

A relationship oriented leader according to the style approach exhibits six of the universal leader attributes from the GLOBE study. These six attributes are trustworthy, just, honest, encouraging, win-win problem solver, team builder. A relationship oriented leader shows high concern for developing a positive relationship with their followers thus making them trustworthy, just, honest and encouraging. Since a relationship oriented leader respects the needs of their followers they also embody the attributes of being a win-win problem solver and a team builder. While a relationship oriented leader exhibits more universal attributes than a

task oriented leader, it can be concluded that relationship behaviors do not contain a majority of the universally endorsed leadership attributes and thus are not universally effective.

**Summary**

The GLOBE study set out to define various aspects of how culture affects leadership effectiveness. The theories taught by Texas A&M leadership educators were compared to the universally endorsed attributes that contribute to effective leadership as defined by the GLOBE study. It is concluded that charismatic and transformational leadership theories taught at Texas A&M are endorsed as universally effective leadership theories. However, the style approach including both task and relationship leader behaviors, is not universally endorsed as an effective leadership theory.

One weakness of the GLOBE study is the ambiguity of the universally endorsed leader attributes. Effectively analyzing leader attributes is challenging due to the fact the GLOBE study does not provide a clear definition for these attributes. Thus, there is not a universal standard for researchers to use when referencing the universally endorsed results of the GLOBE study.

While the GLOBE study found Charismatic/Value-Based leadership to be endorsed by all cultures, it may not always be the best method within every culture. By limiting the comparison of Texas A&M taught leadership theories to only the universally endorsed leader attributes (and not the culturally contingent attributes as well), a clear definition of the best leadership method for a given culture is not determined.

*Table 3. The Cross-Section of Universal Positive Leader Attributes and Prevalent American Leadership Theories*

Universal Positive Leader Attributes	Charismatic Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Style Approach (Task Behaviors)	Style Approach (Relationship Behaviors)
Trustworthy	X	X		X
Just	X	X		X
Honest	X	X		X
Foresight	X	X		
Plans ahead			X	
Encouraging	X	X		X
Positive	X	X		
Dynamic				
Motive arouser	X	X		
Confidence builder	X	X		
Motivational	X	X		
Dependable	X	X		
Intelligent				
Decisive				
Effective bargainer				
Win-win problem solver		X		X
Administrative skilled			X	
Communicative	X	X		
Informed				
Coordinator			X	
Team builder				X
Excellence oriented			X	

## Universally Enforced Attributes

While the theories taught by leadership educators at Texas A&M prove to be very effective in an American context, Texas A&M educators should broaden the scope of their courses to include more universally endorsed leadership theories as well as and other culturally contingent theories, too.

Areas for further research include content analyses of syllabi for foundational leadership theory courses in the United States. Also, a content analysis of PowerPoints used for lecturing would prove helpful in quantifying exactly which theories leadership educators are teaching across the nation. In addition to content analyses, researching what textbooks are used at other universities for leadership education programs in the U.S. will help give greater understanding to which leadership theories are commonly taught in America.

Finally, further cross-cultural analysis of the universally endorsed leadership attributes would be helpful in more clearly defining what leadership behaviors are acceptable around the world.

### Literature Cited

- Boyd, B.L., L.L. Moore, J. Williams, and C.D. Elbert, 2011. Entry-level competencies needed for global leaders. *International Leadership Journal* 3(1), 20-39.
- Coe, D.T., A. Subramanian and N.T. Tamirisa, 2007. The missing globalization: Puzzle: Evidence of the declining importance of distance. *IMF Staff Papers* (54)1, 34-58.
- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS). 2009. Task force report on internationalization of the curriculum. Retrieved from <http://agroamaps.tamu.edu/page.asp?o=tamuands=ampandp=423749>
- Daft, R.L. 2008. *The leadership experience* (5th ed.). Manson, OH: Cengage Learning.
- Hartog, D.D., R.J. House, P.J. Hanges, S.A. Ruiz-Quintanilla, and P.W. Dorfman 1999. Culture specific and cross-culturally generalizable implicit leadership theories: Are attributes of charismatic/transformational leadership universally endorsed? *The Leadership Quarterly* (10)2, 219-256.
- House, R.J., P.J. Hanges, M. Javidan and P.W. Dorfman 2002. Understanding cultures and implicit leadership theories across the globe: An introduction to project GLOBE. *Journal of World Business* (31), 3-10.
- House, R.J., P.J. Hanges, M. Javidan, P.W. Dorfman and V. Gupta 2004. *Culture, Leadership and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Irani, T., N.T. Place and C. Friedel 2006. Beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and barriers toward international involvement among College of Agriculture and Life Science students. *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education* 13(2), 27-37.
- Kanter, R.M. 2010. Leadership in a globalizing world. In Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership theory and practice* (ch. 20). Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.
- Mayo, M. 2005. *Global citizens: Social movements and the challenge of globalization*. New York, NY: Zed Books Ltd.
- Moore, L.L., J. Williams, B.L. Boyd and C.D. Elbert 2011. International experiences of agricultural leadership and development seniors. *International Journal of Business Management and Economic Research* 2(1), 117-123.
- Northouse, P. 2010. *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M.Q. 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rowold, J. and K. Heinritz, 2007. Transformational and charismatic leadership: Assessing the convergent, divergent and criterion validity of the MLQ and the CKS. *The Leadership Quarterly* (18)2, 121-133.
- Scandura, T. and P. Dorfman, 2004. Leadership research in an international and cross cultural context. *The Leadership Quarterly* (15)2, 277-307.
- Stromquist, N.P. 2002. Education in a globalized world: The connectivity of economic power, technology and knowledge. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.