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What is needed to lead in the Japanese workplace? - Classic assigned expatriates versus *Hybrid* managers' acculturation, networking and leadership

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What is needed to lead in the Japanese workplace? - Classic assigned expatriates versus *Hybrid* managers' acculturation, networking and leadership

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Abstract

This research seeks to clarify how Japan-based managers can reconcile cultural differences and become servant-leaders. This study followed a compartmentalized mixed method strategy. First, guided by the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner framework it was hypothesized that Hybrid managers reconcile cultural difference more successfully than classic assigned expatriates in the fashion of a Servant-leader. Twenty-four managing directors were interviewed using a structured onscreen questionnaire. Confirmatory sampling method was applied to distinguish differences in the cultural adjustment and networking behavior for Classic Assigned Expatriates and Hybrid managers. The analyses showed that the Hybrid managers reconcile towards groupism but retain their achievement orientation. Second, evidence from four case studies showed that culturally competent managers' leadership can be explained by functional and accompanying attributes of the servant leaders. Finally, integrating results from both studies a novel theoretical model has been introduced that discusses just two dimensions: Leadership acceptance and the leader's strategic intent. Thanks to the mixed method applied validity for the hybrid manager as a cultural competent and achievement-oriented leader, facilitating the hybrid manager typology new knowledge that provides essential aspects on how to lead local teams in Japan with intercultural competence could be provided.

Keywords: *Hybrid* managers, acculturation, reconciliation, networking, servant-leadership

1. Introduction

Do Japan-based managing directors of foreign affiliate firms succeed in leading people as servant leaders? What are the important aspects of cultural adjustment and relationship building in the Japanese workplace?

<u>What is servant leadership?</u>

Robert Greenleaf (1977) introduced the concept of servant leadership. He contrasted the traditional leader who has the desire to lead followers to achieve organizational objectives with the Servant Leader who serves others in order to make them capable of becoming a leader themselves. Although his idea traces its origin to biblical thinking, the idea of self-actualization of the followers revolutionized the leadership model. From a Christian perspective, leaders are supposed to lead others to lead themselves. Referring to those principles Hannay (2009) emphasized on the importance of empowerment in defining a servant-leader. She sees servant-leaders as people-oriented and focused on their needs enhancing personal development and boosting performance. She pointed to the parallels of transformational leadership in the Theory Z developed by Ouchi (1981) blending Japanese and American management practices into a new management model which – as he has suggested – might be effective in both cultures [1]. Utilizing Hofstede's five cultural dimensions as a framework, she addresses the application of servant leadership in a cross-cultural context. She concludes that servant-leadership theory was developed in the United States based on American research, but it does not appear to her that it is a model that is only applicable to the American leader or even one that is necessarily best suited to the American workplace (Hannay, 2009, p.9). Although she does not provide empirical evidence from an original survey, her idea is inspiring and suggests the need to survey leadership styles in intercultural workplaces.

Lumpkin and Achen's work (2018) explicated the synergies among Self-Determination Theory (SDT), ethical leadership and servant leadership, and Emotional Intelligence (EI), and then apply identified synergies to leadership. They found that EI, especially associated with relatedness, strongly suggests how leaders serving as extrinsic motivators help others to internalize synergistic traits and build stronger bonds. Emotionally intelligent servant-leaders and ethical leaders supplant negative outcomes with awareness, empathy, fairness, integrity, moral values, motivation, trust, relationship management, respect, and self-management,

benefit to others becomes significant. Lumpkin and Achen (2018, p.16) listed what leaders with an ethical foundation need to do:

- Create a culture of warmth and belonging, where everyone is welcome.
- Act with courage, challenging the status quo.
- Be present, connecting with transparency, dignity, and respect.
- Deliver the very best in everything done with accountable for results.
- Be performance driven through the lens of humanity.

Their advocacy of the synergies among SDT, ethical leadership, EI, and servant leadership indicates the need for quantitative and qualitative explorations of possible direct causal relationships.

Russell and Stone (2002, p. 145) critiqued the Servant-Leadership theory as anecdotal in nature and lacking support from empirical research. In order to provide a researchable model, they conducted a literature review listing the functional and accompanying attributes of servant-leadership as seen in the table below. Based on their literature review, Russel and Stone (2002) developed two models. The first model treats values as an independent variable and looks only at the relationship between leader attributes and manifest servant leadership as a dependent variable. Interestingly, the second leadership model is a more encompassing model for servant leadership that aims to investigate the organizational performance. It draws into consideration the intervening variables as organization culture and the attitude of employees.

When employed as a model for a cross-cultural management situation investigating the application of servant-leadership, modifications are needed: organizational performance should be measured by cultural synergy creation and not only the attitude of employees but also their cultural orientation should be treated as modifying variable. Adler (2007: p. 110) showed that cultural synergy assumes equifinality - that many equivalent ways to work and to reach final goals together exist. Thus, the synergy approach assumes that cultural orientation matters when choosing the best way depending on the situation and the particular cultures involved. Clearly, in order to invent a researchable model of the servant-leadership theory in intercultural settings further modifications are needed. The research presented here should help to prepare this academic endeavor.

At the level of the Japan-based leaders in overseas subsidiaries of foreign firms, not the values of the leader but the extent to which these values are reconciled with the values of the host culture become important. The extent of reconciliation will determine to what extent the

servant-leadership approach can be facilitated to lead local subordinates spurring the organizational performance. In other words, the cultural adjustment of the leader towards cultural values of the host culture needs to be investigated first. It can be assumed that the question whether the subordinates buy into the leader depends much on his/her successful cultural adjustment or acculturation at the level of the intercultural workplace. Cultural adjustment is not free of conflict. Adjusting to different cultures can be full of obstacles and result in painful learning episodes for the expatriate manager (Baber 2016). The cross-cultural leader is not a superficial self but rather the sum of values and principles that have been learnt through the experience and realization of cultural differences and similarities on the particular international assignment (Russel and Stone, 2002, p. 153).

Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (2000) suggested how to reconcile cultural dilemmas based on seven value dimensions. The Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (THT) framework can be applied to surveys not only cultural differences but also the acculturation strategies of international managers more appropriately [2]. Backed up by a large survey on cultural orientation, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2006) sought to provide a concept that gives managers a better understanding of cultural diversity in global business. Together with Voerman, Trompenaars found fascination in the discussion of how Servant Leadership across cultures as an integration of opposites can be applied (Voerman & Trompenaars, 2010). Their approach to train managers to become servant leaders is based on the following four steps [3]:

1. Learn to Recognize cultural differences
2. Learn to Respect different points of view
3. Learn to Reconcile the dilemmas that result from the tensions between different value orientations (cultures)
4. Learn to Realize the business benefits of implementing the reconciliations and embedding a mindset across the organization that continually reconciles dilemmas

The THT concept was also applied to the question how to reward performance in global organizations by reconciling the global-local dilemma (Trompenaars & Greene, 2017). To conclude, the THT framework shows capacity building tactics to cope with various managerial problems in the intercultural workplace [4]. Managers can thus learn to anticipate action and reaction of co-workers with different cultural backgrounds. Better decision making in the intercultural workplace can be achieved by reconciling cultural differences. Reconciliation has been defined as high-level synthesis that resolves dilemma situations by integrating and

harmonizing conflicting values through multiple iterations, first described in relation to the seven cultural dimensions proposed by Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (2000).

Trompenaars has a fascination for the success of Japanese management. He believes that Japanese managers recognize the multi-dimensional character of their company to switch between analytical-rational and synthetic-intuitive approaches. He also sees that Japanese managers learn about other cultures but nevertheless insist on their cultural approach when managing abroad. Of course this tendency to insist on their own culture is even stronger in workplaces within Japan which makes it less easy for international managers or foreign leaders to manage subordinates at the local subsidiary.

Can Japan-based culturally competent managers be servant leaders?

Komisarof (2018) found that Japan-based foreign expatriates are troubled with identity problems and their desire of belonging. National group belonging evaluates the extent that an expatriate feel accepted as a member of other cultural and linguistic communities by coworkers. Organizational belonging is extent that employees see themselves as core members of their companies. This model that discusses intercultural communication competence, actualization of professional skills, job effectiveness, and quality of intercultural relationships with colleagues suits the assessment of dependent employees at Japanese universities and perhaps also in corporate organizations. However, it has limited capacity to assess the leadership role of managing directors in international organizations. Therefore, there is a need to create a model that is more tailor-made for managing directors reconciling cultural differences in order to prevail as leaders.

Bjerke (2001, p. 187), referring to work of leading Cross-cultural management scholars, found that there is lower ambition for individual achievement in Japanese culture. Responsibility and success by the team are more emphasized than by individuals who are supposed to perform the virtues of modesty and self-restraint. The fact that Japanese value not only the group more highly than individual members, but order and harmony in a group, makes it even more difficult for foreign managing directors who come from cultures often characterized by relatively strong individualism (Bjerke, 2001, p. 188). This presents a great challenge for international managers to lead subordinates who are rooted in the Japanese culture.

Classic expatriated managers are characterized as people with global management skills but often described as being disembedded from their work and living environment. Company

Assigned Expatriates (CAEs) are believed to have little understanding of local business environments and employee relations because CAEs are likely to lack cross-cultural skills needed to build local social networks (Tharenou, 2013, p. 343). Peltokorpi (2007, p. 75) observes that even expatriates fluent in Japanese experience difficulty communicating "tricky issues" to Japanese employees. He found that "the success of the tactic ... depends on each expatriate's ability to develop friendly ties with local managers" (Peltokorpi, 2007, p.77). Peltokorpi and Froese (2009) found that Self-initiated Expatriates (SIEs) tend to be better adjusted to the general environment and to interaction with host country nationals than classic expatriates. Self-Initiated Expatriate (SIE) is a recent definition in the field of International Human Resources Management (IHRM). The promising message of Haslberger and Vaiman (2013, p.1) is that to gain "new answers to old problems, new sources of talent must be found. SIEs are one of such sources". Even if SIEs are still a neglected source of global talent they argue that traditional talent management that centers on CAEs no longer works since modern careers have become more independent of specific organizations.

Statistical analysis of a database consisting of eighty-one Japan-based managers with leadership functions showed three important criteria to define the Hybrid manager (1) the ability to communicate in Japanese language in the workplace, (2) the access to a culturally fluent partner or supporter who provides first class information and advice, (3) pro-active involvement in decision making processes at the level of the local subsidary (Schlunze, 2016, p. 182). Additionally the ability to contribute with qualitative improvements or creation of incremental innovations characterizes the bi-cultural *Hybrid* managers. They are able to work in Japan as a local would do, but while developing new and implementing global managerial practices in a fashion that makes synergy effects possible (Schlunze, 2011, 2012). Appling the acculturation perspective of Berry (2005) it must be emphasized that not their effort to assimilate but their effort to integrate culturally makes a competitive source within the domestic labor market for the leadership of subsidiaries of foreign companies in Japan.

Thus, it is necessary to clarify to what extent *Hybrid* managers differ from CAEs regarding networking with locals. Schlunze (2016, p.181) showed that not only acculturation but also the communication about their strategic intent is important when accessing the better performance of *Hybrid* managers. Little research exists on how the interculturally competent manager in Japan reconciles cultural differences and becomes networked in the Japanese workplace (Schlunze & Ji, 2012, Schlunze, Baber & Ji, 2014). Confronting Japan-based international managers in leadership functions with these dilemmas and learning about their network

preferences appears to be novel case study research that provides a better understanding about the most important cultural elements for corporate leaders adjusting to the Japanese workplace. This research seeks to clarify how leaders of foreign affiliated firms reconcile cultural differences becoming a networked and effective leader in the intercultural workplace.

The hypothesis is that culturally competent managing directors achieve better results by showing more flexibility when reconciling important conflicting cultural aspects. It was further expected that they are therefore more engaged in local networks. Further, I wished to clarify if Servant-Leadership is indeed an applicable concept in Japanese workplaces. This research is a longitudinal study on the manager's acculturation skills and tactics needed to succeed in Japanese workplaces. The research questions are: How do competent leaders reconcile cultural dilemmas? Who are their trusted supporters? What kind of leadership can be observed? What are the essential aspects of leading in Japan?

The results are expected to generate useful implications for international managers, as well as for international students at Japanese universities preparing for assignments, taking over leadership roles in local subsidiaries of foreign affiliated companies in Japan. The insights introduced in this study may help professional managers to heighten their awareness of which cultural dimensions are essential to observe when leading Japanese subordinates in the intercultural workplace. Finally, by theorizing from the findings of this multiple case study research I propose an original framework that distinguishes leadership options by two cultural dimensions found to be important when leading and managing people in Japan.

2. Methodology

According to Hurmerinta and Nummela (2011: 225) the use of mixed method studies in international business (IB) research will increase the weight put on conceptual development and interpretation of empirical findings. They also emphasized that the increasing complexity of research problems in IB poses a challenge to research methods. They observed that most IB researchers follow a compartmentalized or aggregate strategy when applying mixed methods motivated by the instrumental and facilitating role, the purpose to improve the validity of the findings, and to acquire a deeper understanding of the research subject. This study followed a compartmentalized strategy since a sequential order of methods was used. During the research process the role of quantitative and qualitative analyses changed and in the end both parts were converging with a theorizing part of this multiple case study.

A pre-test with an online questionnaire was conducted with Tokyo-based international managers. A questionnaire survey targeting 230 members listed in the directory of the European Business Council in Japan (EBC) was conducted from January to March 2009. The first census on 230 foreign executive managers listed in the directory of the European Business Council in Japan (EBC) was conducted on workplace performance. Sixty managers replied to the questionnaire which is a response rate of 26%. Half of them indicated willingness to participate in an interview survey. The interviewees represented a wide range of industry reaching from food and agricultural products, material procurement, chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturing industry to diverse services such as transport, finance, certification, patent attorney and consultancy. However, all these managers were heading sales or service subsidiaries of foreign firms and organizations.

For this multiple case study survey a confirmatory sampling method was chosen in order to contrast twelve *Hybrid* managers with eleven CAEs. An attempt was made to contrast Tokyo and Osaka-based expatriate managers but only four managers were located in Osaka. This investigation completed twenty-one interviews with European managers and additionally three interviews with North American managers, each facilitated by an onscreen questionnaire generated using GrafStat (2006 Edition / Version 3.39-i) in order to investigate the managers' cultural adjustment and networking preferences.

I conducted initial interviews with all managers in the phase between February and April 2009. Most of the managers were in their 40s and 50s. From Western Europe, nine French, five German, three Dutch[5], two Swedish, one British and one Italian manager participated in the survey. All managers had leadership functions within the foreign subsidiaries, heading their organizations as a managing director or president. Three general managers are included since they fulfilled representative and/or legal functions. From North America, two US and one Canadian manager working for a German multinational company joined the multiple case study. Since the cultural adjustment problems of these North American managers appeared to be similar to Western Europeans no obstacles were perceived including them in this survey that would lower the reliability of this survey. With the exception of one female, all managers were Caucasian white males.

Applying the THT framework[6] to this research is not with the intent to understand the particular Western cultures of Japan-based international managers but to understand how they reconcile cultural differences in order to fit into the Japanese workplace and lead Japanese people successfully. To make it clear, I investigated the cultural adjustment of these managers who

come according to Hall (1989) from a relatively "low context" culture into the pronounced "high context" culture of Japan.[7] Thus, I am eager to learn about the ways of better integration into the Japanese workplace by adequate networking behavior overcoming and/or facilitating particular Japanese relationship building practices.

Reconciling cultural dilemmas by contrasting cultural orientations and outlining the cultural adjustment efforts or options within the intercultural workplace is the challenge that this research project addresses. The THT framework consists of reconciliation adjustment strategies for its seven cultural dimensions. According to these dimensions the assumptions about how CAEs and *Hybrid* managers are reconciling cultural differences are introduced as follows.

1. Reconciling universalistic with particularistic perspectives

Universalizing is the dominant mode of business globalization among Multinational Enterprises and applies an abstract, rule based approach (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 2000, p. 48). Most CAE managers are coming from a universalistic environment at the corporate, industry, and regulatory levels, yet culturally *Hybrid* managers are expected to reconcile their universalistic approaches in Japan, a particularistic culture.

2. Reconciling individualistic with collective perspectives

International managers from Western Europe and North America are typically determined to individualize business success in order to climb up the career ladder. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2006, p. 52) found that "the idea of "I" is that rising individualism is part of the rise of Western civilization and is treated as a belief rather than a fact that can be disputed". However, it was expected that *Hybrid* managers learn to reconcile individualistic perspectives and learn to emphasize "We".

3. Reconciling neutral with emotional perspectives

According to Edward Hall (1989), managers from "low context" countries are more likely to show their feelings when they are emotionally upset. It was expected that *Hybrid* managers put relationships first and reconcile affective attitudes performing more neutral expressions of attitude in order to avoid cultural friction within the high-context culture of Japan.

4. Reconciling specific with diffuse perspectives

Expatriates from Western Europe and North America are expected to have a more specific approach to relations. In Japan, customer relations are of utmost importance. Therefore, it was

expected that *Hybrid* managers reconcile diffuse-oriented management style by learning to take time building good relationships with customers based on a narrow focus.

5. Reconciling achievement with ascription perspectives

All expatriated managers in this study come from societies that accord status to managers based on their achievements. In Japan it is possible that status can be ascribed by age, gender, education and professional qualifications. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2006, p. 109) wrote "achievement cultures must understand that some ascriptive cultures, the Japanese especially, spend very heavily on training and in-house education to ensure that older people actually are wiser for the years they have spent in the corporation and for the sheer numbers of subordinates briefing them". Accordingly, it is expected that the *Hybrid* manager meet this scheme, and not challenge it.

6. Reconciling past, present and future perspectives

In Japan the sequential approach of Taylor and Ford to mass production in the automobile industry was improved by Toyota which combined it with the synchronic approach of Just-in-time (JIT) delivery. Since then a reconciliation of both approaches has become public wisdom in Japan. The hypothesis assumes that the *Hybrid* manager realizes this and reconciles from a sequential towards a synchronal approach.

7. Reconciling short-term with long-term perspectives

Japanese subordinates do not necessarily need to be impressed by visionary thinking of the foreign managing director and instead they expect daily support from the manager. Therefore, *Hybrid* managers are expected to know that they do not need to have a master strategy but need to reconcile strategy in response to customer relations.

The null-hypothesis proposes that CAEs and *Hybrid* managers show the same profile for their cultural adjustment.

In order to give full information about the interview procedures the questions are listed in the appendix. The original questions were slightly modified to fit the onscreen analysis and are published as a self-test by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2006) at the end of each chapter explaining about the seven cultural dimensions. Important to this analysis was that Answer (1) and Answer (4) can be perceived as two extreme approaches solving managerial problems. Answer (4) puts relations first, a phenomenon that can be often observed in Japanese culture. Answer (2) is reconciliation from a viewpoint of a relative low-context culture; meanwhile

Answer (3) is a reconciliation coming from the high-context culture of Japan that puts relations first. Cultural competent manager were expected to show their deeper understanding by reconciling both approaches having the Japanese perspective in mind.

To clarify the question of how international managers get embedded, four questions about networking were added to the THT framework. The aim of the network analysis was to investigate what kind of advisor is trusted to support the success of the manager. Interviews were completed with managing directors and presidents of foreign subsidiaries facilitating onscreen survey. Twenty interviews were conducted in Tokyo and four in Osaka. All interviewees were surveyed 1) about their ability to communicate with Japanese in the workplace, 2) the existence of a culturally fluent advisor, and 3) their involvement in decision making processes of the local subsidiary. Evaluating acculturation efforts the interviewees were categorized into two groups: a) CAEs and b) *Hybrid* managers who fulfilled the aforementioned three criteria; which is that *Hybrid* managers 1) communicate in Japanese language, 2) can rely on a cultural fluent advisor, and 3) are pro-actively involved in the decision making at the Japanese workplace.

A multiple case study with managing directors from November 2008 with follow up interviews until recently was conducted. Several managing directors who cooperated with the initial interview survey were invited to join the Cross-cultural management workshops. Two French presidents cooperated with several workshops, a Swedish director attended IHRM workshop and Dutch president gave a lecture about his leadership approach. The workshops covered various topics but always discussed how to reconcile cultural perspectives and how to lead people in Japan. Keeping in contact with these international managers, I conducted follow up interviews and continued the conversation about topics relevant to the international business community in Japan.

During a panel seminar the two types of managers were confronted with the research results introduced here in order to learn more about their intercultural competence development and their leadership approach. The panel seminar has been conducted on September 3rd, 2019. Three managers attended and the fourth manager who has been part of the case study research was interviewed separately on September 4th, 2019. During the panel the managers filled out a questionnaire and discussed a) if they can identify themselves as Hybrid manager or CAE; b) which cultural dimension they strongly adjusted and if they feel they are have got a strong local network; and c) if they think they have attributes that could describe their leadership style as

Servant Leadership, and finally if they agree that the framework if leadership and strategic intent is essential for leading.

Due to the workshops and follow-up interviews a long-term observation of selected managers became possible. Social media such as LinkedIn was used to maintain contact with all managers interviewed and learn about their career developments. As we can see from Figure 1 most of the managers stayed at the same company (Survey from September 2015). *Hybrid* managers were most able to change the workplace within Japan. One classic expatriate manager was returned to his home country and two *Hybrid* managers could not be classified since their current work locations remain unknown. It was observed that some *Hybrid* managers were head hunted by other Japan-based transnational firms. This investigation sees it as a confirmation of managerial success when international managers succeed to stay a decade in Japan whether employed by the same company or at another company. Those CAEs and Hybrid managers who performed well I invited to workshops giving them opportunity to share their stories of synergy creation in the intercultural workplace with the next generation of international managers. The research target was to learn about cases of managerial success were not failure which might have biased the sample of cases comparing CAEs and Hybrid managers.
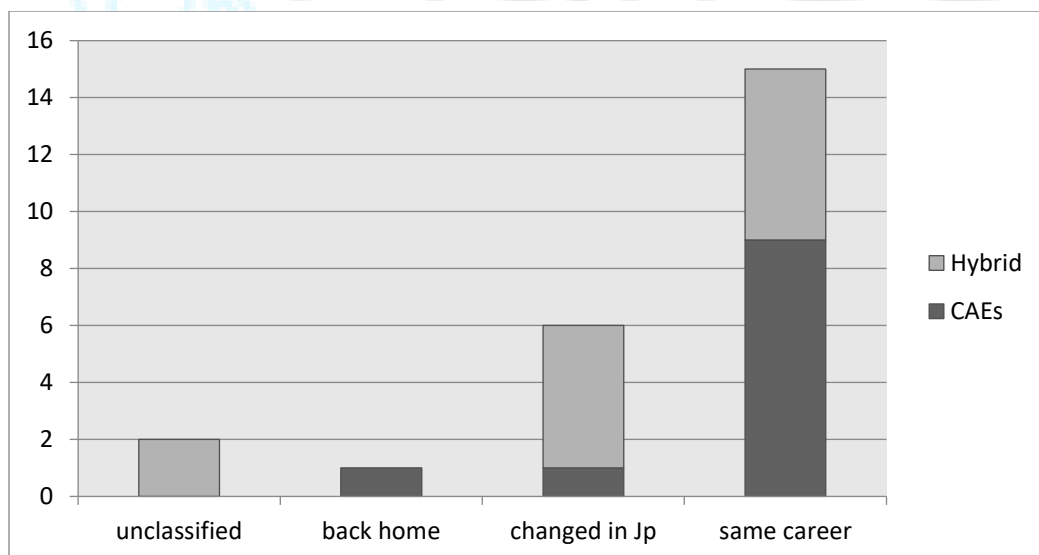
Figure 1: Observing career changes (n=24)

Using non-parametric analysis, the null-hypothesis has been tested that classic expatriate and *Hybrid* managers showing the same range of behavioral choices for a) reconciling the seven

cultural dimensions, and b) have the same range of preferences for networking in the global corporate, workplace, market and living environment. Observations from both groups were jointly sorted and ranked. A bipolar scaling method was used measuring the span from an extreme cultural orientation (1) to another extreme cultural orientation (4) that emphasizes the way to build relationships in either the local or Japanese way. The same applies for networking behavior where (4) indicated a preference for local networks. All questions produced variables with four intervals. The smallest and largest ranks were determined by span computation using SPSS+. The MOSES test of extreme reactions was used to test whether the range of the variables was the same in the both groups or not.

As seen in Table 1 below the results of the analysis showed that the range of the reconciliations of the two types differs significantly in terms of two cultural dimensions: Dimension 2, Individualism versus Groupism, and Dimension 5, Ascription versus Achievement. Expat and *Hybrid* managers differ significantly in their range performing different networking in the a) living, b) market, and c) corporate environments, as well as in the d) workplace.

Table 1: Results of the analysis

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The range of particular is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.953[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The range of groupism is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.020[1]	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The range of neutral is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.200[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The range of diffuse is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.500[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The range of ascription is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.000[1]	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The range of synchronic is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.107[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.
7	The range of external is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.842[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The range of global is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.010[1]	Reject the null hypothesis.
9	The range of market is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.020[1]	Reject the null hypothesis.
10	The range of workplace is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.050[1]	Reject the null hypothesis.
11	The range of living is the same across categories of Hybrid.	Independent-Samples Moses Test of Extreme Reaction	.000[1]	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

[1]Exact significance is displayed for this test.

In the following section the results for two cultural dimensions and networking variables that differed significantly in their range will be discussed. Further, evidence for servant-leadership among four selected cases of leaders who participated in the entire survey will be provided.

3. Results

Most CAEs prefer a universal approach although Japan is considered to be a particularistic business environment when it comes to contract relations. Even CAEs know that they need to avoid making public what they perceive privately. Similar to Japanese, they are rather diffuse, placing importance on the feedback of their customers. Most managers adjusted to just-in-time synchronization of processes but some prefer sequential approaches to speed up operations. In general, managers surveyed like to emphasize their leadership and prefer internal controls over

external controls. In the figures below the profiles of cultural adjustment for CAEs and *Hybrid* managers are shown. Figure 2 shows that both CAEs and *Hybrid* managers learnt to reconcile emphasizing relationships when managing and leading in Japan. However, it appears that *Hybrid* managers reconciled individualism towards groupism or collectivism more strongly (median =3). Further, the *Hybrid* manager appears to be more focused more on achievement than the classical expatriate. This result infers that *Hybrid* managers reconcile important cultural differences in a more favorable way.
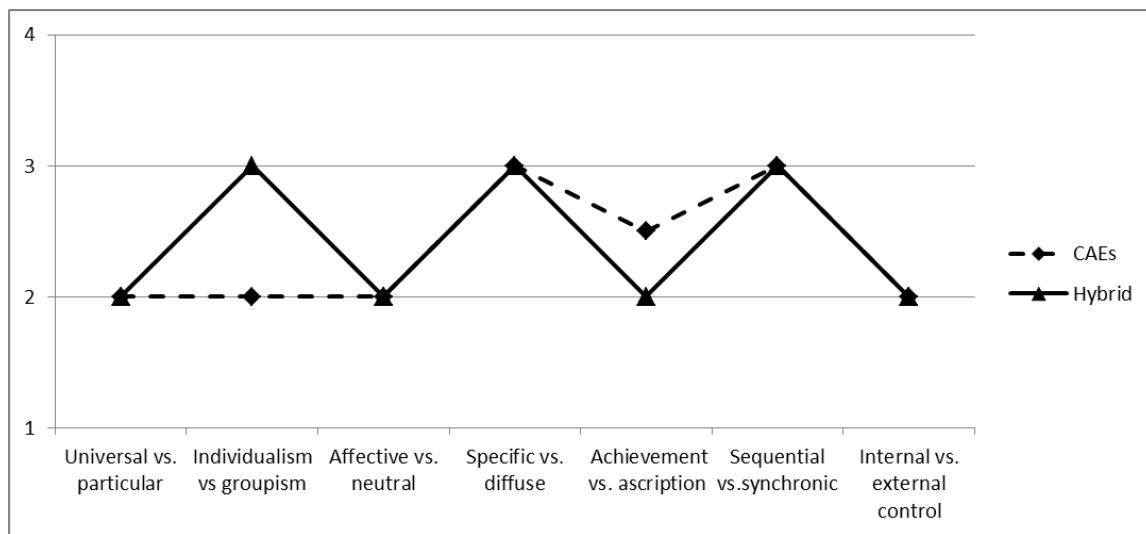
Figure 2: Cultural adjustment of the CAEs and *Hybrid* managers (average=median)

3.1) Cultural adjustment

Reconciling individualistic with collective perspectives (Dimension 2)

Many managers are determined to individualize business success in order to climb the career ladder. However, Japan based expatriate managers learnt to reconcile individualistic perspectives. They know that the team takes the responsibility for success and failure and thus they develop a long-term perspective on working together with their Japanese subordinates. It appears that the *Hybrid* managers learnt to become good team leaders in the Japanese context. In contrast, CAEs often try to appeal by proposing big changes. Malik (2006:211) critiqued the pressure to change something in order to appear successful as a superficial management approach. In contrast, the interviews showed that *Hybrid* managers took time to analyze and perceive problems trusting their team to make gradual changes needed to succeed. The *Hybrid* manager reads the atmosphere correctly and reconciles properly without overemphasizing collective perspectives. My finding that the *Hybrid* managers emphasize more groupism or

collectivism corresponds with principle in the servant leadership model that leaders and the employees work together closer as a team (Hannay 2009, p.6).

Achieving with ascription-oriented subordinates (Dimension 5)

Managers interviewed usually came from societies that accord status to managers based on their achievements and it appears that most of them stay achievement-oriented. Even if in Japanese organizations ascription is still emphasized, the *Hybrid* does not necessarily fulfill the scheme, but seeks ways to challenge it within the organization. Thus, the initial assumption is rejected. Hybrid managers use their intercultural competence to open-up to new challenges in changing Japanese workplaces where employees increasingly demand an assessment based on performance (Meyer-Ohle, 2009, p.7). More than CAEs *Hybrid* managers appear to be ambitious to make achievements with their local team and use their cultural competence to get employees on their side. My finding that *Hybrid* managers emphasize achievement more is supported by the idea that a servant leader who builds trust and cares for harmony is in a better position for enhancing effort or boosting performance of the team in the intercultural workplace (Hannay, 2009, p.7)
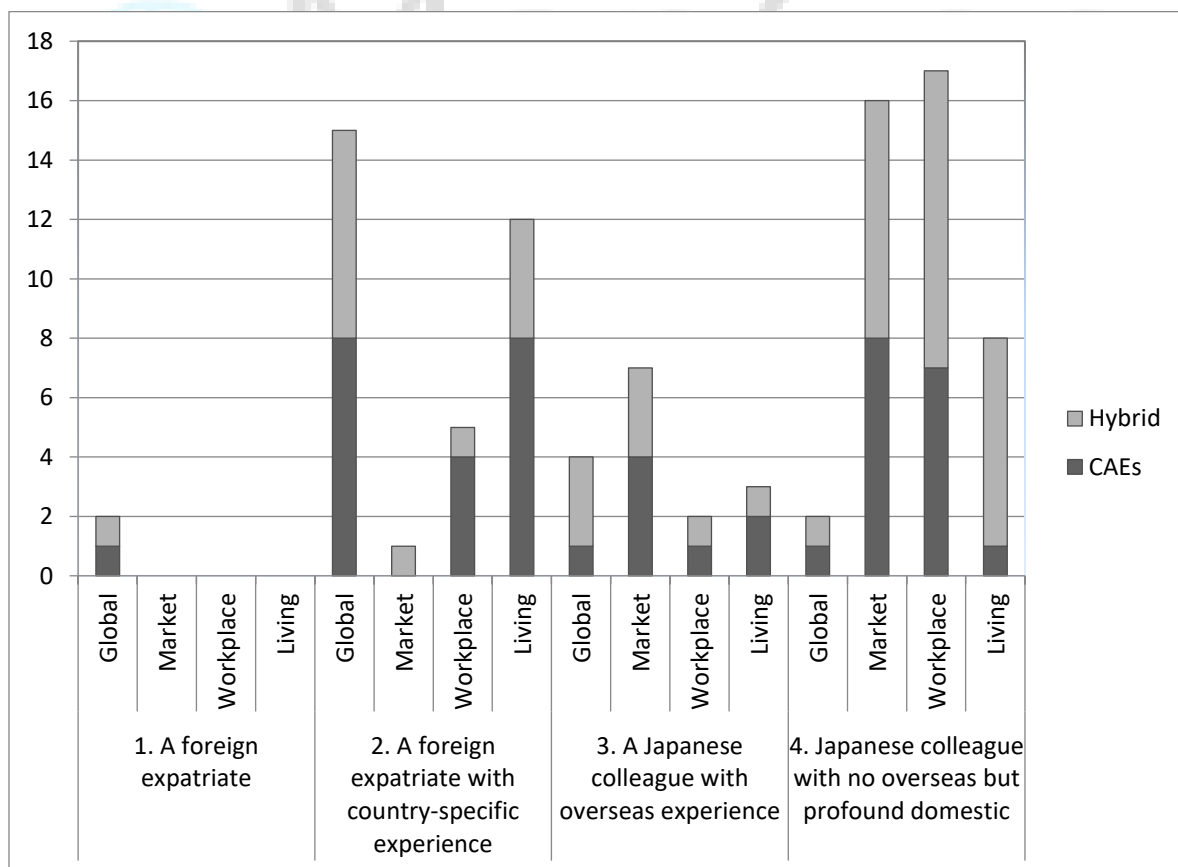
3.2) Networking behavior

As the results in Figure 3 show, the CAE and *Hybrid* manager have a slight but significant different range of networking pattern in the living, market, corporate environment and workplace.

To solve problems in the global or corporate environment, usually expatriates consult each other but the *Hybrid* manager frequently addresses Japanese colleagues and friends. They are confident about integrating Japanese colleagues in their decision making processes since they have achieved mutual trust with the co-workers.

Most expatriate managers do have a strong preference for realizing new market opportunities but the way how to achieve it differs. Different patterns among CAEs and *Hybrid* managers when learning about market opportunities were observed. CAEs rely on the marketing expertise of local managers while *Hybrid* managers refer to a wider range of advisors because the *Hybrid* manager has the ability to assess the market and make the appropriate, consensus based decisions.

Hybrid managers show a strong preference to consult Japanese colleagues about workplace problems even if they do not have overseas experience. In contrast, CAEs avoid cultural friction in the decision making process and ask instead expatriates with country-specific experiences. It is likely that they might seek advice from the *Hybrid* manager in the second tier of the subsidiary. The data showed that the *Hybrid* manager is more engaged in the workplace communication performing a relative stronger preference for workplace harmony.

Hybrid managers are able to build friendship with local nationals in the workplace and in their neighborhood trusting Japanese nationals lacking overseas experiences but who have had profound living experiences. *Hybrid* managers often aim to get settled and undertake extra efforts to integrate themselves into the local community. In case of the CAEs the observed preference for a livable environment where the advice of another foreign friend is possible may suggest that work and living place are often perceived as rather disconnected. Evidence for the cultural learning with respect to the servant-leadership approach of both manager types will be discussed in the next section.

Figure 3: Networking behavior of CAEs and *Hybrid* managers

3.3.1) Evidence from the workshops and follow-up interviews

Several researchers were in the search of characteristics that illustrate what a servant-leadership constitutes. As seen in Table 2 Russel and Stone (2002) produced a helpful list of attributes. My own systematic observations throughout the reports of a dozen workshops held between 2008 and 2015 with professional managers confirm the listed servant leadership attributes by adding more details about managerial practices in this longitudinal study through workshops and follow up interviews with corporate leaders. Practices related to the attributes of servant leadership, written in italics, were reported during the workshops and the functional and also accompanying attributes confirmed during the panel seminar are mentioned by stating the respective cases (ABCD) and discussed in the final section 3.3.2 of the case study research.

Table 2: Servant leadership attributes and observed managerial practices

Functional attributes: *observed practices*	**Case** study	**Accompanying attributes**: *observed practices*	**Case** study
1. Vision: *Co-leadership/Meaning*	A,C,D	1. Communication: *Stakeholders*	C,D
2. Honesty: *Transparency*	**A**,B,C	2. Credibility: *Ethics*	C
3. Integrity: *Selflessness*	**A**,C	3. Competence: *Emotional Intelligence*	B,C,D
4. Trust: *Mutual understanding*	**A**,B,C,D	4. Stewardship: *Responsibility*	C
5. Service: *Coaching*	A,C,D	5. Visibility: *Living ahead*	C,B
6. Modelling: *Social business*	A,C	6. Influence: *Balancing team*	C
7. Pioneering: *Initiatives*	C	7. Persuasion: *Negotiation*	C
8. Appreciation of others: *Humanity*	A,C,D	8. Listening: *Information sharing*	B,C,D
9. Empowerment: *Equality*	C,D	9. Encouragement: *Confidence*	C,D
		10. Teaching: *Inspiration*	C
		11. Delegation: *Effectiveness*	C,D

Based on Russell and Stone (2002, p. 147, Table I) with own observations at the workshops and panel seminar.

During our workshops with Japan-based CAEs and Hybrid managers the relationship building characteristics as trust, credibility, listening and communication but also characteristics such as vision, service, appreciation of others, stewardship, encouraging and delegation were frequently discussed. Facilitating four cases from the longitudinal study evidence for the application of servant-leadership will be introduced in the following more in detail in the following.

<u>Case A</u>

In an early workshop on international business communication on 14th November 2009 different ideas and approaches for succeeding in the intercultural workplace have been discovered. There was much awareness that cultural differences may become an obstacle to business communication and business development. For the French and Japanese co-presidents, communication involves people and it means communication between all stakeholders. As co-leaders of a French financial institution they outlined the conditions for success of their culturally *hybrid* co-CEO system: the co-CEOs are placed on an equal footing regarding compensation. The co-CEOs know and trust each other and were equally empowered. They made sure that the board meeting is equally distributed consisting of the same number of Japanese and French members. Through their co-leadership they improved communication and decision making achieving better results. Transparency implemented improved reaction to problems and the execution of decisions improved.

Cooperating later as co-auditors they continued to make decisions as if they are just "two halves of one brain" and succeeded also in introducing new business tools. Their business improvement efforts included Business Continuity Planning, Compliance, Risk Management, and excellent FSA and Tax Authority inspections. The workplace climate improved and the motivation of the subordinates heightened as well.

The co-auditors participated in 2011 IHRM workshop and talked about the need for checks and balances in business. The French auditor warned participants not to overestimate the extent of globalization when managing and leading people in Japan. By claiming that the world is not really as flat as some journalists have told us and the internet has not merged everything together yet, he shared his awareness that cultural differences still matter. During the workshops we learnt that the president of Nissan, Carlos Ghosn, sometimes received advice from the French auditor about how to lead in Japan with credibility avoiding any kind of financial fraud. Japanese media praised Ghosn as a global manager when Nissan recovered from financial problems and expanding globally. However, Ghosn was imprisoned and lost all his credibility as a leader because a financial fraud discovered and reported by leading local managers of Nissan Corporation who wished to remove him from his leadership position. On 31 January 2019 the French auditor told in e-mail correspondence that the Carlos Ghosn situation offers new angles to think about leadership. He found that the French business community is not really rattled by it[8], but suggested that expatriated managers are certainly

encouraged to demonstrate a higher degree of care in their dealings, especially in internal controls.

Case A implies that efforts to communication with their stakeholders, building trust among and balancing interest among the board members are important steps towards leadership acceptance. Ideas as implementing a management attributed by equality and transparency that is compatible to global management seem to motivate local and international managers working together efficiently. The co-presidents' strategic intent aimed on taking care about workplace climate. Motivation of the subordinates could be improved and organizational performance heightened. The French manager was initially classified as a CAE but his strategic intent to implement a *hybrid* co-CEO system supported by his individual effort to deepen his cultural knowledge featured important attributes of servant-leadership.

Case B

During the IHRM workshop held on 11th June 2011 the president of a Swedish company importing metal powder gave one remarkable advice that indicates his servant leadership approach. He stated that it is very important to be humble in Japan. His experiences in Japanese workplaces taught him that form is much more important than substance. For example, he warned newcomers "you can have the best product, the best price, and the best people, but if you are not tactful with building relationships with your Japanese customers and partners, you will fail here".

In November 2016 I interviewed him at his office in Tokyo about diversity and inclusion at the Swedish subsidiary. He told me that female staff members are not secretaries but perceived as specialists; none of the female staff members is obliged to serve tea at his company.

Case B showed us that the humble attitude of this manager, who started in Japan as a CEA, can be perceived as insurance to keep good customer and partner relationships. The empowerment of female staff members by nurturing special skills of his subordinates was one important goal of the Scandinavian leader. He realized that success and failure is based on quality of relations in Japanese workplaces and domestic market. His wisdom in human resource management shows many attributes of an intercultural competent servant-leader enabling him to support staff members' development and performance. This case shows that a CAE can transform into a *Hybrid* manager. Case B is not married to a local national but he receives constant support and advice from the trusted female subordinates who feel empowered by his HRM policy that

focuses on gender equality. Clearly, gender issues have been his strategic intent and as a good outcome he received the loyalty of the empowered subordinates who help him in return to observe and react to cultural differences not only at the workplace but also within the local market.

Case C

On 20th June 2012 the Dutch president cited Professor Muhammad Yunus who said "I am proposing to create another kind of business, based on selflessness that is in all of us. I am calling it social business" proposed Social Businesses that simply do good. With his own business project importing organic food into Japan he intends to generate profits that enable him to donate to social businesses seeking to support other philanthropists' business activities. His core values of conducting business are Meaning, Inspiration and Effectiveness. Modelling his business, he outlined his company's credo as follows: 1) Our Meaning "To be the key to a better world; to help humanity move to sustainable development"; 2) Our Goal "To become the no. 1 supplier of top quality organic and fair trade food & drink products in Japan". He wishes to promote his MIE Project by enthusing others to think more about sustainability in businesses. Taking initiative, he sees as an attribute of modern leadership. He suggested the equality of leader and follower when stating: "When the people lead, the leaders will follow".

Case C features a *Hybrid* manager who favored a philanthropic approach. He saw selflessness and humanity as core values achieving leadership acceptance. His strategic intent was to inspire his employees about sustainability and lead them to perform effectively taking initiative by themselves.

Case D

On 26th October 2013 the president of a French affiliated pharmaceutical company in Japan told us there is much tension between the direction and orders given by the head office and the reality found at the local subsidiary level. Conflicts and antagonism often arise from cultural differences and misunderstanding. In order to create synergy in the intercultural workplace he introduced a coaching method based on Emotional Intelligence (EI). He encouraged employees to focus on their strength and not on their weaknesses. In California he became a certified coach of the *Disney Imagineering Strategy* that guides people in three steps, including a Dreamer, Realistic and Critic-Phase, to be creative in the workplace. He coached his local staff members

at the subsidiary as a group and individually in order to increase self-esteem. As an effect they gained more confidence in their work, contributed effectively and their performance increased.

On 29th November 2014 we conducted a talent development workshop with him. In the meantime, he retired from the multinational company and works now as professional coaching expert. He taught us how to discover talents in order to build intercultural competence. He stated that "knowing the talents of each member of a team helps a lot to lead the team and increase efficiency." Regarding emotional intelligence said that "Management by using power and fear don't work anymore; Empathy, understanding other peoples' point of view is very important for modern leaders" (Feedback sheet, 29 Nov., 2014). He suggested that sharing information is a useful method to discover talents and promoting mutual understanding in the intercultural workplace. Especially, Japanese staff members need to learn to speak with confidence about their own and their co-workers' talents. He perceives leadership in an organizational role involves following aspects: 1. Establishing a clear vision; 2. Sharing (communicating) that vision with others so that they will follow willingly; 3. Providing the information, knowledge, methods and means to realize that vision; and 4. Coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members or stakeholders. He is aware that leaders need to perform self-awareness, self-control and empathy but for him leadership is indeed all about relationship.

On 1st December, 2017 another workshop with the French coach about adjustment and synergy creation in intercultural workplaces was held. The purpose of the workshop was to understand how cultural differences can be reconciled in order to create cultural synergy. The manager was interviewed about his working and living experiences in Japan. It was observed that the manager adjusted to the collectivistic culture in Japan, firstly as a president with a vision to combine strengths of the host and home countries. The coach pointed out that his business success was made possible through two trustful advisors: His Japanese secretary at the workplace, and his Japanese wife at home.

Case D featured an intercultural competent *Hybrid* who is now working as a Consultant-Executive Coach. Already as a president of the French company he started coaching his team. He received himself leadership acceptance by sharing information, heightening mutual understanding, and building confidence among his team members. His strategic focus on a visionary thinking concerning human relationships in the intercultural workplace is characterized by empathy. Emotional intelligence was found to be a core concept of his coaching service as well.

It appears that the success of the aforementioned four leaders can be explained by cultural adjustment and managerial learning that sums up to an ideal Servant-leadership model. More than the check list of functional and accompanying attributes the observations for group-orientation or leadership acceptances and achievement-orientation or the strategic intent of the leaders as shown in Table 3 are here perceived as evidence for servant-leadership. The case studies imply that servant leadership in combination with cultural adjustment and relationship building appears to be an option to create synergy in the intercultural workplace.

Table 3: Overview on selected leaders' group and achievement orientation

<u>**Case**</u> Date of follow-up interview	**Nationality** and **position;** *Manager type*	**Group-orientation** (Leadership acceptance)	**Achievement-orientation** (Strategic intent)
<u>Case A</u> 1. 2009/11/14 2. 2011/06/11 3. 2019/09/03	French co-president/auditor; *CAE supported by Japanese co-president/auditor*	Communication with all stakeholders, Trust, Balancing interest, Equality, Transparency	Workplace climate, Motivation of the subordinates, Organizational performance; internal control
<u>Case B</u> 1. 2011/06/11 2. 2016/11/25 3. 2019/09/03	Swedish president; *CAE*	Humble attitude, Good customer and partner relationships; Empowerment of female staff members; gender equality	Success/Failure based on quality of relations
<u>Case C</u> 1. 2012/06/20 3. 2019/09/04	Dutch president, EBC Chairman; *Hybrid*	Selflessness, Humanity, Philanthropic approach	Meaning, Inspiration, Effectiveness, Sustainable development
<u>Case D</u> 1. 2013/10/26 2. 2014/11/29 3. 2017/12/01 3. 2019/09/03	French president/ Consultant-Executive Coach; *Hybrid*	Communication and DIS training; Sharing information, mutual understanding, confidence building; Coaching service	Emotional intelligence (EI); Empathy, Relationships; Vision

Shorten: CCM = Cross Cultural Management; IB = International Business, EI = Emotional Intelligence

3.3.2) Evidence from the panel seminar

a) Case A sees himself as a Hybrid manager because he has both achieved intercultural competence. Case B agreed and identified him as a CAE but stated that he changed companies based on his own achievements within Japan like only a bi-cultural or *Hybrid* manager could do. However, both cases have been assigned to serve their company in Japan expatriated by the company. Since they were not self-initiated expats and/or not married to a local national they

were initially perceived as CAEs. However, through their cultural experiences and learning they were able to achieve cross-cultural competence similar to a Hybrid manager. They have got the language skills, received advice from trusted local partners in the workplace and also were eager to be involved into all managerial decision making processes at their Japanese workplace.

Case C and D identified themselves as bi-cultural Hybrid managers. Case C provided explanations that also could identified him as CAE since his first entry to Japan was due to the assignment of an UK multinational company working as a marketing director under the supervision on of a typical CAE with work experiences in South Africa. Case D appears to be the most typical Hybrid manager among the four cases but all managers are unified by their intercultural competence and deep insides into managing business and leading people in Japan.

b) All managers agreed that the cultural dimension individualism is important and stated that they did an effort to adjust to the communitarist environment. Case A mentioned that the team spirit is important when managing in Japan. Case D additionally stated that adjustments to particularism and the different attitude to time in Japan were important for his cultural adjustment. Case C stated that he had difficulties adjusting to the slower path of decision making in Japan and also the neutral attitude of the Japanese since he believes that he is known as emotional person but trust in his positive thinking ability. All managers demonstrated that they have got a strong local network that supports their cultural adjustment and embeds them into the business community.

c) Asking the four managers if they do have attributes that could describe their leadership as a servant leader they positively replied to most of the functional and also some accompanying attributes. Case A agreed to all functional attributes but also indicated that he focuses on honesty, integrity and trust. All agree that once trust is lost in Japan it will never recover. Honesty from the local employees and customers is not always guaranteed since some Japanese believe that there is a "truth for the expat or gaijin" which is an important moment of particularism to be observed in Japan. International managers are obliged to perform outmost integrity by practicing selfishness and transparency in purpose to win the trust of Japanese co-workers and clients. They can impress by meaningful visions but coaching and the appreciation of others with give them more credibility as a leader in a Japanese workplace. Therefore accompanying attributes such as listing and competence are most important. Case D emphasized that he always made sure that information sharing was done instantly. He is a good model of a servant leader who leads people with emotional intelligence that has been seen as important as aspect by the other managers as well. Finally, all managers agreed that the framework of leadership and

strategic intent is essential for leading. Case D saw it essential and mentioned that otherwise employees will not do their best to perform. Accordingly, Case C commented that a clear vision and strategy is needed to motivate employees in Japan.

IV. Discussion

Learning to demonstrate empathy and elicit trust when managing people abroad does not depend on openness only, but also on conscious efforts to adjust to the host culture. The question here is which cultural dimension is most important when adjusting to Japanese culture. The null-hypotheses propose that CAE and *Hybrid* manager show the same profile of dimensions in their cultural adjustment. The null hypothesis could be rejected for following two dimensions:

1. Individualism vs. Communitarianism/groupism

2. Achievement vs. Ascription

Additionally, the range of the networking behavior was found to be different for the two types of managers. The *Hybrid* manager has a stronger preference to become networked locally than the CAE.

The findings let us infer that the profile of cultural adjustment varies foremost for the individualism/groupism and achievement/ascription dimension. It appears that bi-cultural or *Hybrid* managers are more focused on reconciling their individualistic view towards communitarianism but stay with their achievement-orientation. However, from the panel survey it has been learnt that the H*ybrid* manager cannot be seen as a static concept but must be perceived as a dynamic process that lead to intercultural competence achievements enabling the manager to act as a bi-cultural entity in the Japanese workplace – even when he initially has been an classical assigned expatriate manager.

Bi-cultural or *Hybrid* managers take leadership by integrating into the local team whole trusting their subordinates to maintain customer relations and make incremental changes needed to succeed in the Japanese market. Their way of trusting and supporting the team is reconciled and focused on achieving together with their team at the local subsidiary. The slight difference in the way of reconciling differences shows that those managers are more ambitious about gaining

achievements with their local teams. *Hybrid* managers are locally embedded and take conscious action to coach and/or inspire their co-workers, clients and stakeholders. From the case studies it becomes obvious that cultural competence is not a static but a dynamic process that can be learnt. Like a servant-leader, they are interested in the development of leadership skills of their trusted team members. They aim with their strategic intent for outcomes that can be perceived as cultural synergy.

Mimicking Trompenaars, I would like to emphasis that Japan-based international managers with a leadership position have it tough. They must operate on a number of different premises at any one time. To simplify the results of this study in one sentence: The *Hybrid* manager's cultural adjustment profile or DNA [9] for leading in Japan appears to be characterized by group-orientation and strong will to gain achievements through local networks featuring attributes of a servant-leader. It can be inferred that the bi-cultural or *Hybrid* manager has the ability to extend the stay in Japan by finding new career opportunities within a labor market for Japan-based expatriates because he is capable to achieve together with his local team.

Concluding towards a new theoretical framework

Based on the above research findings I propose here a framework which examines the two dimensions of cross-cultural leadership: a) Groupism / Leadership acceptance and b) Achievement / Leader's strategic intent.

a) Leadership acceptance or the extent that the manager feels accepted as a leader by subordinates and/or coworkers who are respected members of another culture. Leaders belong on this dimension when they feel trusted by the local subordinates, co-workers and clients to speak their language, understanding and facilitating the rules and norms of the host culture by receiving constant advice and feedback from local team members who have an advisory function. Those leaders feel enabled to embed their leadership role in the context of workplace and host market.

b) Leader's strategic intent, the extent that managers feel recognized as a leader regarding their intent to make decisions and implement managerial processes that enable subordinates to achieve growth corporate goals. Achievement-oriented leaders who are pro-actively involved in the decision making process by the norms and rules of the host culture are actualizing their cross-cultural management skills and succeed to develop intercultural competence.

When these two dimensions of leadership: Leadership acceptance on the vertical axis and strategic intent on the horizontal axis as shown in Figure 4 are considered together, four types of leadership in overseas subsidiaries of international organizations can be identified: 1) the *Exile* leader is an expatriate manager that is rejected by local employees as incapable of implementing his /her strategic intent; 2) *Master* leader is an expatriate manager that is able to implement his strategic intent by applying cultural dominance. For example, a German manager who insists that the German management style be implemented at the local subsidiary because it suits the German company best; 3) *Refuge* leader is an expatriate manager who chooses cultural accommodation and adapts to local or Japanese management practices. For example, a manager that accepts the opinion that following the norms and values of the host culture is most important in order to succeed locally; 4) *Servant-leader* in the intercultural context is a leader that seeks to create cultural synergy by implementing and embedding his /her strategic intent in the workplace of the overseas subsidiary aiming not only on the acceptance but enabling local employees to grow their international skills and intercultural competence.

The profile of each leader differs by the degree of leadership acceptance and leadership strategy. The feeling of being accepted as a leader and the implementation of a leader's strategic intent focusing on achievements with the trusted team at the local subsidiary determine the fate of the international manager in leadership positions. Depending of the cultural competence development the manager can change his position within the local subsidiary. Self-initiated expatriates or *Hybrid* managers who came to Japan by their own will might often taking an effort to learn and integrate into the local society might start as a refuge leader. The *Hybrid* manager can grow from refuge to servant leader who is able to create cultural synergy.

In contrast, if the classical expatriated manager does not care about cultural skills and competence development he/she can be at the best a Master leader. However, dominating local employees leads sooner or later to isolation; cultural avoidance then endangers the managerial process. An exile leader who is not accepted by the local co-workers and subordinates will lose the leadership position at the point the headquarters finds out about it. For example, Carlos Ghosn is unfortunately in the situation of an exile leader now. The headquarters in France finally agreed to have him replaced by a local manager. All four cases discussed can be perceived as servant leadership cases. Not only the Hybrid managers but also the French and Swedish CAEs show attributes of a servant leader. They found acceptance an by their acculturation and integration effort. Their strategic intent was to keep a high level of

creditability by implementing corporate governance (Case A) and gender equality (Case B) in close cooperation with particular trusted co-workers and subordinates.
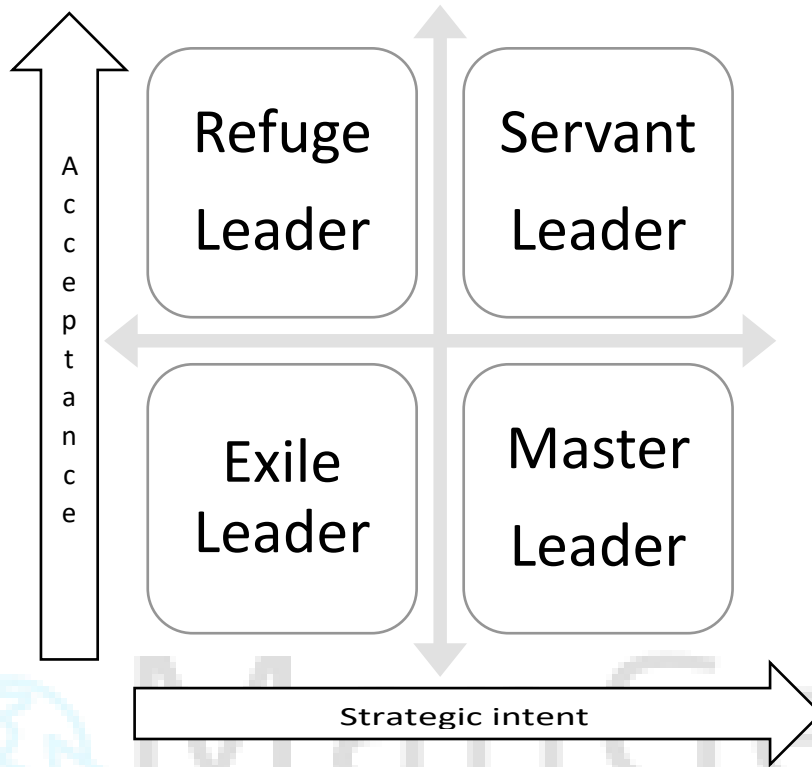
Figure 4: Leadership options explained by Leadership acceptance and strategic intent

Theorizing from cases, leadership options were explained by leadership acceptance and strategic intent. The servant-leadership approach appears to be a promising tool in the intercultural context. To what extent Japan-based expatriate managers succeed as servant leaders still needs to be investigated. Further research should investigate to what extent the combination of leadership acceptance and strategic intent supports the assumption that successful management in Japanese workplaces can be described by the notion of servant leadership.

The results of this multiple-case study infer that cultural competence matters when leading people in Japan effectively. Since Trompenaars and Voerman (2010, p.51) perceive the Japanese leader as the perfect example of the integration of the master and servant role, it has been assumed that *Hybrid* managers accurately imitate Japanese leaders in order to succeed in

Japanese workplaces. However, this research let us infer that *Hybrid* managers are creative in the Japanese workplace adding their "own spice" depending on their strategic intent. One might argue that CAEs may achieve with their team in a similar fashion when applying a servant-leadership approach but they will always depend on assistance if they cannot negotiate using the local language. As long as they have not developed a deep interest in the Japanese culture they hardly develop reciprocal and trustful relations. In contrast it has been observed that *Hybrid* managers have the language and cultural competence which enables them to become networked locally shaping teams as it suits the achievement processes. Therefore, servant leadership practices have been observed foremost at the level of *Hybrid* managers. However, the two cases of CAEs successfully did an effort to become cultural competent and performed the role of a servant leader within their organizations as well. Those cultural competent managers were able to transform global and local management practices creating synergy in the intercultural workplace. Servant-leadership might be a good substitute to lead successfully in Japan but can hardly replace cultural competence nurtured by language and integration efforts observed at the level of Japan-based *Hybrid* managers who are indeed synergy leaders because they are more focused on building a local network of advisors. The implications for international managers, as well as for international students at Japanese universities preparing for assignments, taking over leadership roles in local subsidiaries of foreign affiliated companies in Japan are to consider carefully how to share their strategic intent with trusted subordinates and co-workers when managing and leading in Japan.

Limitations result from the fact that the case study research combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a fashion documented by Hurmerinta and Nummela (2011) heightening the knowledge and providing better validity. By facilitating two standardized questionnaires, several semi- and open interview approaches the mixed method strategy enabled avoiding problems of revealing personal information yet allowed extraction of the essentials of leading with cultural competence in Japan from the interviewees. Methodological strengths and weaknesses of the focus case study on four leaders come from a confirmatory sampling method which investigates further characteristics of two different types of managers defined by previous research. This study provides a clear finding on the cultural adjustment and networking of bi-culturally competent or so called *Hybrid* managers; and deeper insights into the problem of leading people in Japanese workplaces. I hope that the new framework proposed encourages researchers in the field of Cross-cultural Management to investigate Japan-based managers' leadership acceptance and strategic intent in greater detail.

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Appendix

List of interview questions

a) Cultural adjustment by THT model on reconciliation

Dimension 1: Reconciling universalistic vs. particularistic perspectives

In the interview I asked the questions "What is a contract to you?" and the interviewed manager needed to choose one of the following answers closest to his personal opinion.

Answer (1): A contract is a contract! It's an unchangeable deal.

Answer (2): A contract symbolizes the underlying relationship. Terms can be renegotiated if circumstances change.

Answer (3): A contract symbolizes the underlying relationship. But such rigid terms are too brittle.

Answer (4): A contract is a contract! We can add another if changes occur!

Dimension 2: Reconciling individualistic with collective perspectives

The interviewee was asked "Which is more important for success, competition or co-operation? What would be your choice?" and needed to choose one of the following four answers.

Answer (1): Competition is the supreme value. Attempts at co-operation usually end in collusion.

Answer (2): Competition is the supreme value because this involves serving customers.

Answer (3): Co-operation among stakeholders is the supreme value because this shared aim makes companies competitive, thereby fulfilling personal interests.

Answer (4): Co-operation among stakeholders is the supreme value. Personal competition is seriously disruptive to effective operations.

Dimension 3: Affective vs. neutral

The interviewees were given a conflict example and asked how they would react to the situation. In a meeting you feel very insulted because somebody said your proposal is insane. How will you react?

Answer (1): I will show clearly that I am insulted. The counterpart should bear the consequences.

Answer (2): I will show that I am insulted to prevent greater emotional upset.

Answer (3): I will not show that I was hurt because I would spoil our relationship.

Answer (4): I will not show that I was hurt because I don't want to be seen as weak.

Dimension 4: Specific vs. diffuse

To test this dimension interviewees were asked "Do you prefer profitability or stakeholder relationships?" The following answers could be chosen by the manager.

Answer (1): Profitability is most important because business exists to enrich individual owners.

Answer (2): Profitability is most important because it is easy to measure and advertise to stakeholders.

Answer (3): Feedback with the customer is most important because the customers pay!

Answer (4): Feedback with the customer is most important! Profits should be measured by successful relationships.

Dimension 5: Achievement vs. ascription

Following questions were ask: "What is more important for you: status, or recently achieved success? Why would you promote an employee: based on what he/she succeeds in doing or on what qualities are attributed to him/her? Which of the following statements meets your opinion best?" The manager needed to select the answer that is close to his own opinion.

Answer (1): Achievement or success is the only legitimate source of status.

Answer (2): Status is a result of what the employee has achieved. This reputation becomes an attribute enabling more achievement to occur.

Answer (3): Status should lie in the attributes of employees. The attributes tend to be correlated with achievement and leadership.

Answer (4): Status should lie in the attributes of employees and should not change just because of recent success.

Dimension 6: Sequential vs. synchronic

The interviewee was presented with the following situation: Some managers are arguing about the best ways of improving cycle time and getting products to market when they are needed. The interviewee then chose one of the following four answers asking "What is closer to your view?"

Answer (1): It is crucial to speed up operations and shorten time to market. Time is money.

Answer (2): Too much talking and relating to each other are enemies of tighter schedules and faster deliveries.

Answer (3): It is crucial to speed up operations and shorten time to market. The faster jobs are done the sooner you can "pass the baton" to colleagues/customers in the relay race.

Answer (4): Just-in-time synchronization of processes and with customers is the key to shorter cycle times. The more processes overlap and run simultaneously the more time saved. Just-in-time synchronization of processes and with customers is the key to shorter cycle times. Doing things faster results in exhaustion and rushed work.

Dimension 7: Internal vs. external control

The managers answered whether strategy should be devised at the top of the corporation and "cascaded down" to be implemented locally, or emerge from the grassroots and successful interfaces with customers. There were four possible views:

Answer (1): No one dealing with customers is without a strategy of sorts. Our task is to find out which of these strategies work, which don't and why. Devising our own strategy in the abstract and imposing it downwards only spreads confusion.

Answer (2): Our task is to find out a strategy that works and then create a master strategy which is closely followed throughout the corporation.

Answer (3): To be a leader is to be the chief devisor of strategy. Using all the experience, information and intelligence we can mobilize, we devise an innovative strategy and cascade it down to be vigorously implemented.

Answer (4): We create a broad based thrust by empowering rank and file to react and develop strategies and best practices.

b) Networking preferences

To investigate about the networking orientation of the international manager following four questions were asked.

A) Who would you consult if you face problems in your global/corporate network?
B) Who would you consult if you face problems in your market?
C) Who would you consult if you face problems in your workplace?
D) Who would you consult if you face problems in your living place?

The answers for all questions needed to be chosen from the following four answers. Similar to the THT approach answer 2 and 3 can be perceived as a reconciliation of extreme ethno-centric networking.

Answer (1): A foreign expatriate / friend
Answer (2): A foreign expatriate / friend with country-specific experience
Answer (3): A Japanese colleague / friend with overseas experience
Answer (4): Japanese colleague / friend with no overseas but profound domestic

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[1] It can be critiqued that he did not give proof that his new management model was ever applied.

[2] Trompenaars made his discoveries not only through questionnaire surveys but by including countless cross-cultural training programs that the THT Intercultural Management Group gave. Trompenaars perceived their empirical results as an illustration of what they wish to communicate to professional managers, a prescriptive guide for adjustment. They wish for managers to get a better understanding of their own culture and cultural differences in general, by learning how to recognize and cope with these in a business context. It should be noticed that the group is ambitious to provide insights into the "global" versus "local" dilemma (THT 2006, p.2).

³ Source: Trompenaars Hampden-Turner – Culture for Business; Retrieved from
https://www2.thtconsulting.com/about/#about-approach (June 2019).

⁴ Again, it disappoints me that scholars even in the field of Cross-cultural management learn about the seven
dimensions but ignore the fact that Trompenaars advocates a creative way that seeks to balance extremes and
proposed important steps which people need to take to reconcile cultural dilemmas. The double helix of
reconciliation (THT 2006, p. 211, Fig. 13.9) introduces their model of models: the DNA of intercultural
management. This is a metaphor borrowed from life science but helps to visualize the dynamic process of
reconciliation. The ladder of proteins has four rungs; their ladder of cultural values synthesis has seven rungs.
For them the double helix makes obvious the complementarities, provides motivation to accept unexpected
dynamics when pairs come together. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner suggest that uprights on each ladder
may help us when mapping the cultural space. The twist of the spiral contains the coded instructions but
symbolizes the growth and other synergetic processes when managing internationally. We need to admit that
THT Intercultural Management Group is more than a contribution to grasp cultural differences. We need to
observe that the main purpose of the THT framework can be found in the double helix model that summarizes
processes by which values are reconciled.

⁵ One Dutch manager was born in Prague but brought up and educated in many diverse places around the globe
until a multinational firm sent him to Japan. This manager is a good example that a particular national culture is
not as important as the cultural influence that the leader experiences in a Japanese workplace.

⁶ The publication entitled "Riding the Waves of Culture – Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business" by
Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner is not only about how to perceive and explain about cultural differences.
Reading the appendix of the book you will learn about the practical and scientific background. Peter Woolliams,
Professor of Systems Management at University of East London, wrote in the appendix that "the primary
purpose of the Trompenaars database is to help managers structure their cross-cultural experiences in order to
develop their competence for doing business and managing across cultures" (THT 2006, p.245). In the preface
Trompenaars makes clear: "we found an extra impetus to go beyond "plotting" differences, to develop a method
taking advantage of these differences through reconciliation" (THT 2006, x). Trompenaars and Hampden –
Turner's work is about cultural differences but how they affect the process of doing business and managing is
their major concern (THT 2006, p.1).

⁷ Applying Edward Hall's model it is not rude in the field of Cross-cultural management studies and should
permit to contrast high-context culture as the Japanese workplace with the cultural background of the
international leaders who origin from low-context cultures like Germany, Sweden, the United States and mix of
high- and low-context culture like France and Italy.

⁸ Anne Beade and Hiroshi Hiyama, Ghosn case rattles Japan's expat business community, 2019 Jan. 11, Japan
Today (Online Newsletter). Retrieved from https://japantoday.com/category/crime/ghosn-case-rattles-
japan%27s-expat-business-community (Retrieved 2019/01/30; the article has in the meantime expired, and is no
longer available at the online newsletter JapanToday)

⁹ According to Trompenaars the double helix helps summarize processes by which values are reconciled. The
DNA for intercultural management is here used as a metaphor to explain the dynamic profile of international
managers' cultural adjustment.