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The Impact of Leadership Styles, Cultural Dimensions and Values on Academic Leaders

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Abstract: This study investigates the cultural dimensions, values, and leadership styles of school leaders in Indian K-12 and European schools, specifically focusing on cross-cultural differences. The objective is to explore how leadership styles and cultural orientations differ between Indian and European school leaders and to examine how these variations impact organizational culture and decision-making processes. A non-experimental quantitative research design was employed, utilizing standardized instruments such as the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-Form 6S), OCTAPACE, and the Scale of Individual Cultural Values (CV) to measure leadership styles and cultural dimensions. Data were collected from 165 Indian leaders across Punjab, Haryana, Delhi-NCR, and Uttar Pradesh, as well as 156 European leaders from Croatia, Hungary, Poland, and others, using purposive and convenience sampling methods. Independent t-tests and Discriminant Function Analysis (DFA) were used to compare the two regions' leadership styles and cultural orientations. The findings reveal that Indian school leaders predominantly demonstrate transformational and laissez-faire leadership behaviors, influenced by hierarchical structures prioritizing collective goals and authority delegation. Indian leaders scored higher on openness, trust, and collaboration dimensions, which align with collectivist and hierarchical cultural norms. In contrast, European leaders emphasized confrontation, authenticity, and individual autonomy, reflecting a preference for more egalitarian and individualistic decision-making approaches. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how leadership and cultural values shape educational practices in different contexts.

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world, the role of culture in shaping academic leadership has gained considerable attention, particularly in the context of education. Academic leaders must navigate diverse cultural settings, complicating their leadership roles and decision-making processes (Peterson, 2002; Kasalak et al., 2022; Sunarso et al., 2024). Numerous studies have examined the crucial relationship between organizational culture and leadership, highlighting its significance to scholars and practitioners (Cameron and Quinn, 2006; Cetin and Kinik, 2014; Schein, 2010; Sertel et al., 2022; Sharma and Aggarwal, 2024). In this globalized era, academic leaders must develop a global mindset and cross-cultural awareness to effectively lead institutions across cultural divides (Kappagomtula, 2017; Bird and Mendenhall, 2016). However, despite extensive research in this area, a significant gap exists in understanding how cultural dimensions and leadership styles interact in academic institutions, particularly in non-Western contexts like India.

Leadership

Leadership is a multifaceted concept with varied interpretations across cultural and organizational settings.

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While Yukl (2002) provided a range of definitions, Sergiovanni (2000) emphasized leadership as guiding collective actions grounded in relationships and mutual influence. Burns (1978) introduced the widely acknowledged transformational and transactional leadership models, which stress the moral aspects of leadership, mutual persuasion, and elevating followers' potential. Bass (1998) extended Burns' work, revealing the motivational power of transformational leadership, which is particularly effective in inspiring followers to go beyond self-interest for the collective good (Avolio, 1999). Recent research has further evolved leadership models, highlighting shared leadership, empowerment, and organizational learning (Hallinger, 2003).

Leadership Styles

Research on leadership styles spans multiple theories, including trait, power and influence, behavioral, contingency, cultural, and symbolic frameworks (Bensimon et al., 1989; Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016; Alsharairi et al., 2023). Trait theories focus on identifying inherent personal characteristics that contribute to leadership effectiveness, while power and influence theories examine how leaders leverage different sources of power (Bensimon et al., 1989; Yukl, 2002). Behavioral theories distinguish task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership, although it is still difficult to prove a clear link between conduct and effective leadership. The alignment of situational elements like the environment and team dynamics with leadership conduct is emphasized by contingency theories (Yukl, 2002). Cultural and symbolic theories focus on how leaders shape corporate culture and common meanings.

Transformational and transactional leadership theories are two of the most extensively researched frameworks. In contrast to transformational leadership, which stresses motivating followers, stimulating creativity, and promoting higher-order demands, transactional leadership emphasizes exchanges, contingent incentives, and compliance (Bass and Avolio, 2004; Bass, 1998). This distinction is important because educational leadership needs to align with moral values and cooperative decision-making (Leithwood and Duke, 1999). The effectiveness of transformational leadership is still being debated in research, though, with some studies casting doubt on its cross-cultural and cross-educational applicability (Stewart, 2006).

Importance of Leadership Styles in Academia

Education leadership styles are pivotal in shaping institutional outcomes and influencing teachers and students. In order to ensure stakeholder engagement, cultivate a pleasant learning environment, and advance curriculum reform, school leaders play a critical role (Hallinger, 2005). Studies have consistently demonstrated that leadership is a key determinant of student achievement, with transformational leadership emerging as a crucial factor in modern educational institutions (Leithwood et al., 1999). Influential academic leaders demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, intelligence, and the ability to cultivate a positive organizational culture (Davis, 1998b). Specific leadership behaviors, such as setting high expectations and fostering a shared vision, are directly linked to improved student outcomes (Witziers et al., 2003). However, much of this research is based on Western leadership models, leaving a gap in understanding how leadership functions in culturally diverse settings, particularly in non-Western educational systems.

Culture

Culture plays a foundational role in shaping how academic institutions function and evolve. It encompasses shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that influence how individuals interact within organizational settings (Schein, 2010). Culture significantly impacts leadership behaviors, decision-making processes, and the overall learning environment in education. Academic leaders are often influenced by organizational culture (their institution's internal norms and values) and broader societal or national cultures (Hofstede, 2001). This dynamic interplay affects how leadership is practiced and decisions are made within academic institutions, particularly in regions with distinct cultural traditions.

Understanding Culture in Organizations

The GLOBE study, initiated by Robert J. House in 1991, emphasized the importance of cultural dimensions in leadership effectiveness. The GLOBE framework identified nine cultural dimensions, including uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and collectivism, highlighting the similarities and differences in societal norms, values, and practices (Hoppe, 2007). These cultural dimensions provide insight into how leadership effectiveness is contextually embedded in the cultural values of those being led. Similarly, Pareek's (2002) OCTAPACE model outlines key organizational cultural dimensions—such as openness, trust and collaboration—that promote organizational effectiveness. Understanding the cultural elements that influence leadership in academic settings, where developing collaboration and trust is essential for long-term success, is made possible by these frameworks.

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The Role of Culture in Leadership

Academic leaders must maneuver through intricate cultural environments, which impact their leadership methods, choices, and the institution's general atmosphere. While leaders in collectivist cultures, like those in India, may place a higher value on teamwork, tradition, and the welfare of society, leaders in Western individualistic cultures are more likely to stress autonomy, academic freedom, and personal creativity. These cultural variations influence how academic leaders resolve disputes, lead diverse teams, and motivate their peers. In order to establish inclusive and coherent learning environments, academic leaders need to comprehend and incorporate a variety of cultural views. The increasingly international nature of educational institutions requires academic leaders to possess cultural competence to navigate this varied environment effectively.

Cultural Aspects and Leadership in Academic Settings

At both the macro- and micro-levels (schools, communities), culture has a critical role in determining organizational outcomes and leadership behaviors (societal and global). Cultural environments differ, which calls for an integrated leadership strategy that considers the possibilities and difficulties specific to each environment (Appadurai, 2009). Academic leaders must strike a compromise between global leadership principles and regional cultural traditions due to the interdependencies brought about by globalization (Tomlinson, 1999a). Academic leaders have unique obstacles in this environment than other leadership disciplines, especially when handling cross-cultural complications and promoting organizational performance.

As also stated, Academic leadership is influenced by leadership styles, cultural dimensions and core values, which shape decision-making and overall effectiveness in educational settings (Choudhury et al., 2024).

Recent studies have shown that leadership styles and cultural factors significantly impact the performance and efficacy of academic leaders. Faculty performance is positively impacted by transformational leadership, although depending on the organizational culture, laissez-faire leadership can have both good and negative consequences (Jamali et al., 2022). Academic leaders must possess cultural competency to successfully serve different student groups, charismatic, servant, transformational, and situational leadership styles are especially pertinent (Phillips and Hammond, 2023). In Turkey, managers tend to adopt paternalistic and authoritarian leadership styles due to cultural factors, including collectivism and significant power distance (Cuhadar and Rudnák, 2022).

According to ÖzdemiŇr et al. (2023) and ÖzdemiŇr (2023), transformational leadership is the most popular approach among academic leaders nowadays. However, its efficacy varies based on institutional circumstances and temporal needs. Asian cultural values influence leadership roles and philosophies; among managers who make decisions, autocratic participatory leadership is becoming more prevalent (Arun and Gedik, 2020).

Objective of the Study

This study investigates the cultural dimensions, values, and leadership styles of school leaders in Indian K-12 schools and European schools. It seeks to examine cross-cultural disparities in leadership styles and cultural orientations between these two regions. By exploring how cultural values influence leadership behaviors, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of academic leaders' challenges and opportunities in diverse cultural contexts. The findings will provide insights into how culturally responsive leadership practices can be developed to enhance the effectiveness of academic leadership in globalized educational settings.

Research Methodology

This investigation is significant because it uncovers the cultural subtleties and leadership practices within educational institutions. The role of academic leaders is continuously evolving to meet the demands and complexities of contemporary schools (Daresh et al., 2000).

Purpose Statement

This study aimed to investigate the cultural dimensions, cultural values, and leadership styles of school leaders in Indian K-12 schools and global schools. Moreover, it will examine the cross-cultural disparities in leadership styles, cultural orientation, and cultural values among school leaders in India and Europe.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the study is to examine disparities in leadership styles, cultural values, and cultural dimensions among school leaders in Indian K-12 schools and global schools.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the present study based on the research questions.

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Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample: Indian (n=165) and European (n=156).

Characteristics		India	Europe
Gender	Male	15.8(26)	53.2(83)
	Female	84.2(139)	46.8(73)
Educator Experience	1-5 years	0 (0)	0 (0)
	6-10 years	4.8(8)	0 (0)
	11-15 years	23.6(39)	16(25)
	16-20 years	22.4(37)	34(53)
	21-25 years	31.4(52)	28.8(45)
	26-30 years	8.5(14)	16.7(26)
	Over 30 years	9.1(15)	4.5(7)
Classroom Experience	At least 5 years	4.8 (8)	36.5 (57)
	At least 10 years	29.1 (48)	34.6(54)
	At least 15 years	33.3 (55)	21.8(34)
	More than 15 years	32.7(54)	7.1(11)
Leadership Experience	1-5 years	26.7 (44)	76.9 (120)
	6-10 years	24.2 (40)	12.2 (19)
	11-15 years	29.1 (48)	3.2 (5)
	16-20 years	7.9 (13)	7.7 (12)
	21-25 years	12.1 (20)	0 (0)
	26-30 years	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Over 30 years	0 (0)	0 (0)

H1: There is no significant difference in leadership styles between education leaders in Indian and global schools.

H2: There is no significant difference in cultural dimensions between education leaders in Indian and global schools.

H3: There is no significant difference in cultural values between education leaders in Indian and global schools.

Research Design

Using statistical data analysis, quantitative research design is an explanatory approach that depicts phenomena objectively. To find patterns and trends, quantitative researchers statistically examine their numerical data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). A non-experimental design was chosen for this study, which entails surveying school leaders to gauge cultural values, dimensions, and leadership styles using standardized instruments such as the Scale of Individual Cultural Values (CV) Scale, OCTAPACE, and the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-Form 6S).

Survey Instrument

The study employed standardized instruments and interviews to measure leadership styles, cultural values, and dimensions:

 # Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-6S): This tool measures three key leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. It is structured with 21 items rated on a 1-5 Likert scale. The MLQ has undergone extensive validation, providing high reliability in cross-cultural settings.

 # OCTAPACE Profile: The OCTAPACE profile evaluates organizational cultural dimensions such as openness, trust, collaboration, and more. This tool gives insights into how cultural factors shape leadership behavior in educational settings.

 # Scale of Individual Cultural Values (CV Scale): This instrument, based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, measures individual power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, long-term orientation, and masculinity through a 26-item Likert scale. This instrument is vital for comparing cultural dimensions between Indian and European leaders.

Population

For this study, the population included academic leaders in K-12 school districts in both India and Europe. The target population was narrowed to specific geographic regions within Northern India and selected European countries chosen for their educational and cultural diversity.

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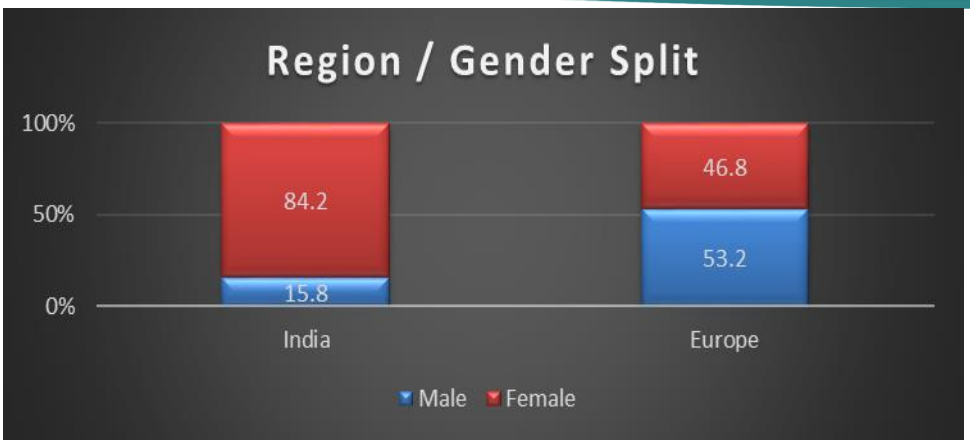

Figure 1. Region/Gender Split.

Figure 2. Educator Experience.

Figure 3. Class Room Experience.

Figure 4. Leadership Experience.

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Table 2. Location distribution of various participants within India and Europe: Indian (n=165) and European (n=156).

India	%(f)	Europe	%(f)
Ambala	0.6 (1)	**Croatian**	7.1 (11)
Chandigarh	12.7(21)	**Czech**	8.3(13)
Delhi	9.7(16)	**Danish**	6.4(10)
Faridabad	12.7(21)	**Dutch**	7.7(12)
Gurugram	47.3(78)	**England/Wales**	5.1(8)
Mohali	16.4(27)	**Finnish**	5.1(8)
Panchkula	0.6(1)	**French**	13.5(21)
		German	19.9(31)
		Hungarian	5.8(9)
		Norwegian	6.4(10)
		Polish	7.1 (11)
		Swedish	7.7(12)

Target Population

The target population for a study represents the entire set of individuals selected from the broader population to whom the study data will be generalized. For this study, the target population was comprised of academic leaders in K-12 districts in Northern India and a few European countries, with samples selected from these regions.

Sample and Sampling Method

A combination of purposive and convenient sampling was suitable for identifying and selecting participants for this study. The study employed a mix of non-probability convenience and purposive sampling techniques, focusing on academic leaders (Field, 2009; Steyn et al., 1998).

The quantitative sample included two groups: academic leaders (principals, head teachers, heads of department, and subject leaders) in Indian and European schools. This research was conducted in both private and public schools. Using purposive sampling, 165 Indian leaders and 156 European leaders were selected. Convenience sampling was used to choose participants based on their availability, and it was noted for its cost-effectiveness, convenience, and time efficiency (Baker et al., 2013).

Data from Indian education leaders were collected from Punjab, Haryana, Delhi-NCR, and Uttar Pradesh. Data were collected from various European countries, including Croatia, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, and the Scandinavian regions. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the quantitative study sample.

First, regarding gender distribution, in Europe, India has a greater percentage of female participants—84.2% (139)—than male participants—53.2% (83). This represents a significant difference in gender representation between the two areas. Going on to educator experience, the data shows the number of years that people have worked in the sector. In India, the largest proportion of those with 21–25 years of experience is 31.4% (52), whereas in Europe, the largest proportion is 34% (53) for those with 16–20 years of experience. Conversely, the lowest percentage of people with 6–10 years of experience is 4.8% (8) in India, and there are no European people in this group. Regarding the number of people with at least five years of classroom experience, Europe has the largest number at 36.5% (57), while India has the lowest at 4.8% (8).

Furthermore, India has the lowest percentage of people having at least ten years of classroom experience—29.1% (48)—while Europe has the largest percentage—34.6% (54). In addition, the table lists leadership experience, illustrating the participants' differing degrees of proficiency. Interestingly, Europe has the greatest percentage of people (76.9%, or 120) with 1–5 years of leadership experience, while India has the lowest percentage (26.7%, or 44) in the same group. Finally, the table explores the geographic distribution of participants in Europe and India, presenting the frequencies and percentages of people from several locations.

For example, Gurugram has the biggest percentage of Indian participants—47.3%, or 78 people—while Germany has the highest percentage of European participants—19.9%, or 31 people. In conclusion, the

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Analysis and Results

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha and Split-half Reliability Coefficients for MLQ-6S, OCTAPACE, and Individual Cultural Values Scale (n = 321).

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Split-half	Number of items
Leadership Styles (LS) Scale	***.719***	***.664***	***21***
Transformational (TFL)	.886	.854	12
Transactional (TSL)	.741	.742	6
Laissez-faire (LF)	.716	.752	3
OCTAPACE Scale	***.774***	***.628***	***40***
Openness	.602	.647	8
Confrontation	.619	.621	8
Trust	.600	.624	8
Authenticity	.756	.654	8
Proactivity	.698	.798	8
Autonomy	.652	.601	8
Collaboration	.689	.785	8
Experimenting	.600	.605	8
Individual Cultural Values Scale	***.901***	***.794***	***26***
Power Distance	.903	.886	5
Uncertainty Avoidance	.918	.922	5
Collectivism	.912	.902	6
Long-Term Orientation	.894	.889	6
Masculinity	.846	.834	4

tables thoroughly understand the sample group's demographic makeup, illuminating factors such as gender distribution, years of experience in leadership and education, and geographic representation. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of the distinctions and similarities between the Indian and European participants.

Data Collection

The study employed a survey questionnaire tool to gather primary data. A copy of the surveys was emailed to the participants. After that, the data analysis was completed in conjunction with the goals.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software's several statistical techniques were used in this study's data processing method. Descriptive statistics were first used to summarise and investigate the sample's demographic features, such as the distribution of genders, the experience of educators, the classroom, and leadership among Indian and European participants. For categorical variables, this meant computing frequencies and percentages, and for continuous variables, calculating means with standard deviations. The study questions and the null hypotheses were then tested using inferential statistical techniques. Independent t-tests were used to examine differences in leadership styles, cultural dimensions, and orientations between education leaders in Indian schools and global schools.

Below is a schematic representation of the study design:

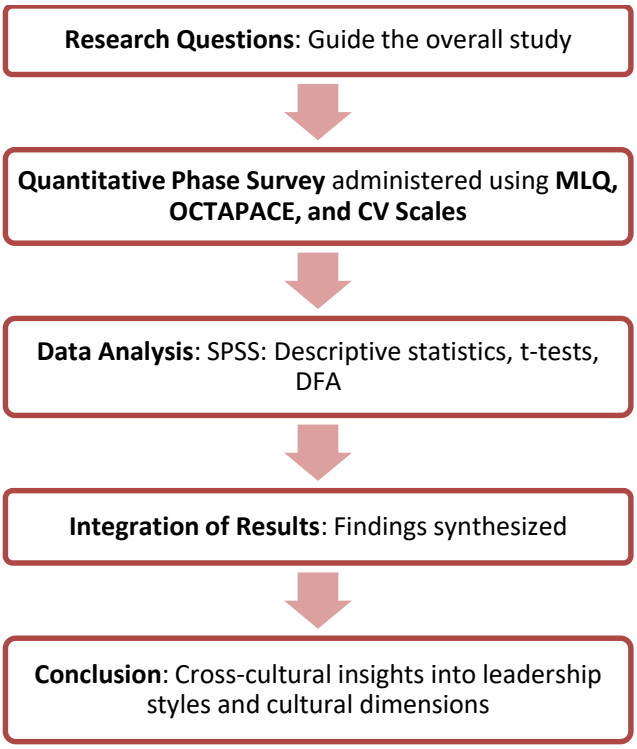

Figure 5. Schematic representation of the study design.

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Reliability of Scales

The reliability coefficients of the leadership styles, culture and individual cultural values scale were calculated for each sub-scale using the split-half coefficient and Cronbach's alpha coefficients (Table 3). According to various scholars, alphas in the 0.65-0.80 range are still considered to be acceptable (e.g., Cortina, 1993; DeVellis, 2003; Spector, 1992; Vaske, 2008). Thus, the scales and their sub-scales were considered reliable instruments (Struwig and Stead, 2013).

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation in MLQ 6S dimensions for three leadership styles.

	India (n = 165)		Europe (n = 156)	
Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Idealized Influence	12.01	1.736	10.44	2.426
Inspirational Motivation	11.55	1.758	10.47	2.510
Intellectual stimulation	11.04	1.828	10.51	2.157
Individualized consideration	11.57	1.672	10.51	2.663
Transformational Leadership	**46.17**	**5.398**	**41.92**	**8.896**
Contingent reward	11.24	2.033	11.30	2.080
Management-By-Exception Passive	10.78	2.142	11.60	2.149
Transactional Leadership	**22.01**	**3.599**	**22.90**	**3.899**
Laissez-faire Total	**9.97**	**2.278**	**6.67**	**2.703**

Table 5. Mean and Standard Deviation of OCTAPACE dimensions of culture.

	India (n = 165)		Europe (n = 156)	
Dimensions	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Openness	15.81	1.956	14.60	3.323
Confrontation	15.07	2.216	16.49	3.161
Trust	15.05	2.054	12.49	3.846
Authenticity	12.44	2.387	13.95	3.375
Proactivity	16.76	2.172	16.29	4.241
Autonomy	12.09	1.645	14.05	3.020
Collaboration	14.59	1.871	12.10	2.264
Experimenting	15.23	1.889	14.76	4.115

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

A comparative analysis explored cultural values, dimensions, and leadership styles among school leaders in Indian K-12 schools and global schools, specifically in Europe. Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation (SD) values for various dimensions of leadership styles measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) 6S dimensions. Notably, Indian school leaders exhibit higher mean scores in Idealized Influence (M = 12.01, SD = 1.736), Inspirational Motivation (M = 11.55, SD = 1.758), Intellectual Stimulation (M = 11.04, SD = 1.828), and Individualized Consideration (M = 11.57, SD = 1.672) compared to their European counterparts (Idealized Influence: M = 10.44, SD = 2.426; Inspirational Motivation: M = 10.47, SD = 2.510; Intellectual Stimulation: M = 10.51, SD = 2.157; Individualized Consideration: M = 10.51, SD = 2.663). These findings suggest a stronger inclination towards transformational leadership styles among Indian school leaders than European leaders. Furthermore, the analysis extends to Transactional Leadership dimensions, including Contingent Reward and Management-By-Exception Passive, where comparable mean scores are observed between Indian and European leaders. However, a notable disparity is evident in the Laissez-faire leadership style, with Indian leaders scoring significantly higher (M = 9.97, SD = 2.278) than European leaders (M = 6.67, SD = 2.703), indicating a greater tendency towards non-interventionist leadership practices among Indian school leaders.

In Table 5, the cultural dimensions are explored through OCTAPACE variables, showcasing distinct differences between Indian and European school leaders. Indian leaders demonstrate higher mean scores in Openness (M = 15.81, SD = 1.956), Trust (M = 15.05, SD = 2.054), Proactivity (M = 16.76, SD = 2.172), Collaboration (M = 14.59, SD = 1.871) and Experimental approaches to culture (M = 15.23, SD = 1.889) compared to European leaders (Openness: M = 14.60, SD = 3.323; Trust: M = 12.49, SD = 3.846; Proactivity: M = 16.29, SD = 4.241, Experimental approaches to culture : M = 14.76, SD = 4.115). Conversely, European leaders exhibit higher mean scores in Confrontation (M = 16.49, SD = 3.161), Authenticity (M = 13.95, SD = 3.375), and Autonomy (M = 14.05, SD = 3.020), highlighting

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differing cultural values between the two groups.

Table 6. Mean and Standard Deviation of Dimensions of Cultural Values Scale.

	India (n = 165)		Europe (n = 156)	
Dimensions	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Power Distance	11.10	3.971	12.58	5.648
Uncertainty Avoidance	20.63	2.593	17.37	5.320
Collectivism	20.92	4.033	10.93	2.125
Long-term Orientation	23.64	3.639	17.06	5.343
Masculinity	10.13	3.616	9.90	4.072

Lastly, Table 6 delves into cultural values and practices using the CV Scale and its sub-dimensions. Indian leaders display higher mean scores in Uncertainty Avoidance (M = 20.63, SD = 2.593), Collectivism (M = 20.92, SD = 4.033), Long-term Orientation (M = 23.64, SD = 3.639), and Masculinity (M = 10.13, SD = 3.616) compared to European leaders (Uncertainty Avoidance: M = 17.37, SD = 5.320; Collectivism: M = 10.93, SD = 2.125; Long-term Orientation: M = 17.06, SD = 5.343; Masculinity: M = 9.90, SD = 4.072). European leaders display higher Power Distance (M = 12.58, SD = 5.648) than their Indian counterparts. These results underscore significant cultural differences in values and practices between Indian and European school leaders, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive leadership approaches in educational settings.

Independent t-test and Discriminant Functional Analysis to examine disparities in leadership styles, cultural values, and cultural dimensions among school leaders in Indian K-12 schools and global schools.

Table 7. 't'-test Results Comparing Means on MLQ 6S Dimensions between India and Europe.

	India (n = 165)		Europe (n = 156)		
Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t value**
Transformational Leadership	46.17	5.398	41.92	8.896	5.20**
Transactional Leadership	22.01	3.599	22.90	3.899	-2.16
Laissez-faire Leadership	9.97	2.278	6.67	2.703	1.80**
Notes: *= p<.05, **=p<.01					

Table 8. 't'-test Results Comparing Means on OCTAPACE Dimensions between India and Europe.

	India (n = 165)		Europe (n = 156)		
Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t value**
Openness	15.81	1.956	14.60	3.323	4.02**
Confrontation	15.07	2.216	16.49	3.161	-4.68**
Trust	15.05	2.054	12.49	3.846	7.48**
Authenticity	12.44	2.387	13.95	3.375	-4.65**
Proactivity	16.76	2.172	16.29	4.241	1.27
Autonomy	12.09	1.645	14.05	3.020	-7.28**
Collaboration	14.59	1.871	12.10	2.264	10.75**
Experimenting	15.23	1.889	14.76	4.115	1.32
Notes: *= p<.05, **=p<.01					

Table 7 compares mean scores and standard deviations (SD) in Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) 6S dimensions, along with t-values indicating the significance of differences between school leaders in India and Europe in terms of leadership styles. The results testing null hypothesis H1a revealed a statistically significant difference in Transformational Leadership between Indian and European school leaders (t (319)= 5.20, p < .001**). Indian leaders exhibit a higher mean score (M = 46.17, SD = 5.398) in Transformational Leadership than European leaders (M = 41.92, SD = 8.896), indicating a stronger inclination towards transformational leadership behaviors among Indian school leaders. On the other hand, there is no significant difference in Transactional Leadership between the two groups (t (319)= -2.16, p = .035). Both Indian (M = 22.01, SD = 3.599) and European (M = 22.90, SD = 3.899) leaders demonstrate comparable scores in Transactional Leadership styles. Interestingly, a substantial difference is observed in Laissez-faire Leadership, with a highly significant t-value (t (319)= 11.80, p < .001**). Indian leaders (M = 9.97, SD = 2.278) score notably higher in Laissez-faire Leadership compared to European leaders (M = 6.67, SD = 2.703), indicating a stronger tendency towards non-interventionist leadership practices among Indian school leaders. Thus, the null hypothesis H1 is partially rejected for Transformational Leadership and Laissez-faire Leadership and accepted for Transactional Leadership.

Table 8 presents a comparison of mean scores and standard deviations (SD) in Organizational Culture

Assessment Instrument (OCTAPACE) dimensions, along with t-values indicating the significance of differences between Indian and European school leaders in cultural dimensions (H1b). The results highlight significant differences between Indian and European leaders in several OCTAPACE dimensions. Notably, Indian leaders demonstrate higher mean scores in Openness (t(319) = 4.02, p<.001**), Trust (t (319)= 7.48, p<.001**), and Collaboration (t(319) = 10.75, p<.001**) compared to European leaders. Conversely, European leaders exhibit higher mean scores in Confrontation (t(319) =-4.68, p <.001**), Autonomy (t(319)=-7.28, p<.001**), and Authenticity (t (319)= -4.65, p < .001**). This partially rejects null hypothesis H2 for all variables except for Proactivity and Experimenting. The findings suggest distinct cultural values between the two groups, with Indian leaders emphasizing openness, trust, collaboration, and experimenting, while European leaders prioritize confrontation and authenticity in their organizational culture.

reflecting cultural values related to hierarchy, ambiguity tolerance, collective goals, and long-term planning. However, no significant difference is observed in Masculinity (t (319)= 0.53, p = .599). This partially rejects H3 for all variables except for Masculinity. These findings highlight profound cultural differences in values and practices between Indian and European school leaders, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity and understanding in leadership roles within diverse educational contexts.

The Discriminant Functional Analysis (DFA) conducted on India and Europe's cultural dimensions and leadership types revealed two significant functions. Further, Discriminant Function Analysis was performed to understand the relationship between a set of predictor variables (Culture and Leadership) and group membership (India and Europe). DFA identifies the dimensions (functions) that best separate the groups and provides insights into the underlying structure of the data.

Table 9. 't' -test Results Comparing Means on CVS Dimensions between India and Europe.

	India (n = 165)		Europe (n = 156)		
Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t value**
Power Distance	12.10	3.971	11.58	5.648	-2.74*
Uncertainty Avoidance	20.63	2.593	17.37	5.320	7.05**
Collectivism	20.92	4.033	10.93	2.125	27.53**
Long-term Orientation	23.64	3.639	17.06	5.343	12.97**
Masculinity	10.13	3.616	9.90	4.072	0.53
Notes: *= p<.05, **=p<.01					

Table 10. Discriminant Functional Analysis on Culture and Leadership in India and Europe.

Function	Eigen value	Canonical Correlation	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	df	p
Function 1 (Culture) (OCTAPACE Scale and CV Scale)	3.943	.893	.202	499.342	13	.000
Function 2 Leadership types	0.665	.632	.601	161.865	3	.000

In Table 9, the results of null hypothesis H3 are reported. A comparison of mean scores and standard deviations (SD) in Cultural Value Survey (CVS) dimensions and t-values indicate the significance of differences between Indian and European school leaders in cultural values and practices. The results indicate significant differences in several CVS dimensions between Indian and European leaders. Indian leaders score higher in Power Distance (t(319) = -2.74, p = .007*), Uncertainty Avoidance (t (319)= 7.05, p < .001**), Collectivism (t (319)= 27.53, p < .001**), and Long-term Orientation (t (319)= 12.97, p < .001**),

In this study, DFA was performed to investigate how cultural dimensions and leadership styles differ between school leaders in India and Europe. The primary objectives were to –(a) Identify Key Discriminative Variables; Determine which cultural dimensions (measured by the OCTAPACE Scale and the Cultural Values Scale) and leadership types are most effective in distinguishing between Indian and European school leaders; (b) Understand Group Differences and analyze how these variables contribute to group membership, providing a deeper understanding of the cultural and leadership landscape in both regions; and (c) to Validate

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Constructs: Confirm the validity of the cultural and leadership constructs by examining their ability to differentiate between the two groups significantly. The study reveals the important variables affecting educational leadership in various cultural situations through DFA. The findings may be used to guide the creation of customized leadership programs and policy suggestions that consider each location's unique requirements and features. Consequently, this can augment the efficacy of educational leadership and positively impact the general state of education systems in Europe and India. The Discriminant Functional Analysis (DFA) findings on the leadership styles and cultural aspects in Europe and India are shown in Table 10, which identifies two key functions.

Function 1 (Culture): The first function, associated with cultural dimensions measured by the OCTAPACE Scale and the Cultural Values (CV) Scale, had a high eigenvalue of 3.943 and a canonical correlation of .893. This indicates a strong relationship between the discriminant function and the group membership, suggesting that cultural dimensions are highly influential in distinguishing between Indian and European contexts. The Wilks' Lambda value for this function was .202, indicating that only 20.2% of the variance in the discriminant scores is not explained by group differences, thus suggesting a strong discriminative power. The chi-square test was significant ($\chi^2(13) = 499.342$, $p < .001$), confirming that this function significantly differentiates between the two groups.

Function 2 (Leadership types): The second function, related to leadership types, had an eigenvalue of 0.665 and a canonical correlation of .632. This shows a moderate relationship between this discriminant function and the group membership, indicating that leadership styles also play a significant role in distinguishing between Indian and European contexts, though to a lesser extent than cultural dimensions. The Wilks' Lambda value for this function was .601, which means that 60.1% of the variance in the discriminant scores is not explained by group differences, indicating moderate discriminative power. The chi-square test for this function was also significant ($\chi^2(3) = 161.865$, $p < .001$), affirming its role in differentiating between the groups.

Discussion

The discussion of this study centers on the cultural and leadership differences between school leaders in Indian K-12 schools and their European counterparts. The study reveals significant variations in leadership behaviors and cultural values between the two groups by analyzing leadership styles through frameworks like the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and cultural dimensions such as Hofstede's model and the OCTAPACE profile.

The research highlights significant differences in leadership styles between Indian K-12 school leaders and their European counterparts. Indian school leaders are strongly inclined towards transformational leadership, characterized by behaviors such as Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, and Intellectual Stimulation (Bass and Riggio, 2006). This can be attributed to the collectivist nature of Indian culture, which prioritizes group harmony, shared vision, and motivational strategies (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004). In contrast, European school leaders, influenced by more individualistic and egalitarian values, show lower engagement with transformational leadership behaviors, focusing instead on autonomy and personal achievement. Interestingly, both Indian and European leaders display similar levels of transactional leadership, indicating a shared approach to performance management that transcends cultural boundaries, emphasizing contingent rewards and corrective action (Den Hartog et al., 1999). The variation in leadership preferences underscores the role of cultural values in shaping leadership paradigms (House et al., 2004). Further research is needed to explore whether organizational demands or cultural nuances are more influential in defining transactional leadership practices across both regions.

Cultural dimensions, particularly OCTAPACE, further underscore these leadership differences. Indian school leaders scored higher in openness, trust and collaboration, which reflect India's collectivist and hierarchical society that values harmonious relationships and collective efforts (Triandis, 1995; Sinha, 1990). These cultural traits support collaborative leadership practices, enabling educational leaders in India to cultivate trust and cooperation within their schools. European leaders, on the other hand, scored higher in confrontation, autonomy, and authenticity, aligning with cultural values that promote direct communication, transparency, and personal responsibility (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). These findings reveal how cultural contexts shape leadership behaviors, with Indian leaders fostering teamwork and inclusivity, while European leaders focus on individual expression and direct problem-solving.

Differences in cultural values further influence leadership strategies, particularly in areas such as uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and long-term orientation. Indian leaders prioritize structured

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environments, collective decision-making, and future planning, aligning with transformational leadership practices that focus on vision and sustained growth (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). European leaders, with lower uncertainty avoidance and higher individualism, display more flexibility and short-term orientations, traits that are conducive to transactional leadership styles focused on immediate results and efficiency (Schwartz, 1999). Surprisingly higher in European contexts, power distance scores suggest that hierarchy still plays a significant role in leadership behaviors, further differentiating the leadership dynamics in Indian and European educational settings (Hofstede, 2001). Understanding these cultural nuances is critical for developing effective and culturally adaptive leadership strategies that resonate with schools' unique organizational and cultural contexts in both regions.

The Discriminant Functional Analysis (DFA) results offer profound insights into the cultural and leadership differences between Indian and European educational environments. Unlike t-statistics, which provide a more surface-level comparison, the DFA highlights how cultural norms and power structures shape leadership practices when interpreted through critical theory. The strong alignment with collectivist and hierarchical values in India suggests that leadership is deeply rooted in cultural expectations of harmony and collective goals, reinforcing traditional power dynamics. While these practices foster a sense of unity, they may also inhibit innovation and marginalize leaders who deviate from these norms (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). On the other hand, the European focus on individual autonomy and lower power distance encourages leadership that prioritizes personal achievement and egalitarianism. However, this emphasis can challenge the collective efforts necessary for educational leadership (Chhokar et al., 2007). From a critical theory perspective, these findings underscore the importance of questioning dominant cultural narratives that shape leadership practices. While leadership styles are influenced by cultural contexts—transformational leadership in India aligning with collectivist values and a balance of transformational and transactional leadership in Europe—the underlying cultural forces play a more significant role in shaping these behaviors (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Educational systems must foster cultural competency and reflexivity, promoting inclusive leadership models accommodating diverse perspectives. Additionally, culturally responsive policies and training programs are essential for creating equitable educational environments that align with social justice goals, ensuring that leadership practices serve the diverse needs of communities (Den Hartog et al., 1999).

This study acknowledges several limitations that may impact the generalizability of its findings. First, the focus on K-12 administrators from select regions in India and a few European countries limits the applicability of the results to other areas globally. Second, the reliance on a relatively small, non-representative sample due to participant availability and purposeful sampling introduces potential bias. Third, using self-reported data may reflect participants' subjective perceptions rather than objective evaluations of their leadership styles. Additionally, the cultural context of the study is specific to Indian and European settings, making global generalization challenging. Lastly, while comprehensive, the mixed-method design carries inherent limitations in interpreting qualitative data.

Conclusion

The comparative study of leadership styles, cultural values, and cultural dimensions among school leaders in Indian K-12 and European schools reveals pronounced cultural differences that significantly influence leadership behaviors and organizational practices.

Leadership Styles

1. Transformational Leadership:

India: Indian school leaders predominantly exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, focusing on collective goals and inspirational leadership.

Europe: European leaders tend to score lower on transformational leadership, reflecting a cultural emphasis on individual autonomy and personal achievement.

2. Laissez-faire Leadership:

India: Indian leaders are more inclined towards laissez-faire leadership, influenced by traditional hierarchical frameworks that delegate authority and responsibilities downward.

Europe: European leaders display a lower tendency towards laissez-faire leadership, aligning with a more structured approach to leadership.

Cultural Dimensions

1. Openness, Trust, and Collaboration:

India: Indian leaders score higher in these dimensions, which is consistent with collectivist and hierarchical norms prioritizing harmonious relationships and collective endeavors.

Europe: Europeans exhibit lower scores on these dimensions due to a cultural preference for

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individuality and autonomy.

2. Confrontation, Authenticity and Individual Autonomy:

Europe: Emphasis on these dimensions is higher among European leaders, in line with lower power distance and higher individualism in European cultures.

India: Indian leaders show less emphasis on these dimensions, reflecting a preference for hierarchical and collective decision-making.

Cultural Values

1. Uncertainty Avoidance, Collectivism, and Long-term Orientation:

India: Higher scores in these dimensions indicate a cultural preference for collective objectives, strategic planning, and tolerance for ambiguity.

Europe: European leaders exhibit different approaches, with lower uncertainty avoidance and a greater focus on individual goals and shorter-term objectives.

2. Power Distance:

India: Lower scores in these dimensions indicate a cultural emphasis on more egalitarian and collaborative organizational relationships.

Europe: European leaders exhibit higher scores on power distance due to a stronger acceptance of hierarchical structures.

This study contributes significantly to academic leadership by illuminating how cultural dimensions influence leadership styles in Indian K-12 and European schools. The comparative analysis reveals that Indian school leaders exhibit transformational leadership behaviors aligned with collectivist values, such as promoting group harmony, trust, and collaboration. In contrast, European leaders, influenced by individualistic and egalitarian cultural norms, prioritize autonomy, direct communication, and personal achievement. These findings highlight the critical role that cultural contexts play in shaping leadership and challenge the universality of leadership models, such as transformational and transactional leadership, by demonstrating how their application differs across cultures. By employing frameworks such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and OCTAPACE profile, the study also validates the importance of culturally adaptive leadership practices that can be more inclusive and reflective of the diverse environments in which academic leaders operate.

The study's contributions extend beyond theoretical insights, offering practical implications for leadership development and training in academic institutions. By recognizing the need for culturally responsive leadership, this research advocates for leadership models tailored to schools' specific cultural values and organizational contexts. For instance, leadership training programs can benefit from integrating cultural awareness into their curricula to prepare leaders better to manage diverse teams and address the needs of multicultural educational settings. The findings also emphasize the importance of equity and inclusion in leadership, advocating for policies reflecting school communities' cultural diversity. In this way, the study advances the academic understanding of leadership and culture and provides actionable insights for developing more effective and culturally competent leadership in education.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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