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# Leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand: A cross-cultural study.

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*This study investigates the leadership characteristics of New Zealand's two largest cultural groups, Māori and Pakeha. It examines the extent to which these leadership characteristics are rooted in the unique contexts of each culture. Followers' perceptions of leadership behaviour were examined using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The hypothesis that leadership is deeply rooted in the broader cultural contexts was supported. This provides tentative evidence that leadership concepts are culturally endorsed in New Zealand. These findings, if substantiated with further, more in-depth research, may prove crucial to public communicators seeking ways to disseminate information to these groups, particularly when working through opinion leaders.*

## Introduction

Since the early 1930s, leadership study has been a well recognised academic pursuit (Bass, 1990). Despite a large volume of leadership research, however, there is no single generally accepted definition of leadership (Bass, 1990). Most western definitions tend to focus on the notion of influence (Yukl, 1998). However, based on the well-established idea that there are variations in values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour across cultures, it seems likely that the meaning and importance of leadership also vary across cultures (Thomas, 2001).

Adler argues that, while many definitions of leadership position themselves as global, they are not, because most 'universal' theories of leadership fail to account for cultural context (1999). Most commonly, they describe the behaviour of leaders in one particular country, the United States (Peterson & Hunt, 1997). This is particularly unfortunate for understanding global leadership since aspects of American

culture, such as extreme individualism, may render American leadership practices unique; that is, different from the approaches in most areas of the world (Dorfman, 1996; Hofstede, 1991). Therefore, while some applicability to other cultures has been found, these theories are largely inadequate to explain or predict leadership across cultures, especially those in the unique multicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. As a whole, New Zealand's leadership requirements are likely to be different from other countries' because of the different values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour that exist here (Gold & Webster, 1990), but internally the differences may be even more marked.

## Literature Review

Cross-cultural research has identified differences in what constitutes leadership behaviour from culture to culture (House, 1999; Gerstner & Day, 1994; Brodbeck, 2000; Den Hartog, 1999). This suggests leadership behaviour may be deeply rooted in broader cultural contexts. The fit between expected leadership behaviour and individual behaviour in leadership positions has been shown to be important to the success of the leadership process (Bass, 1998). Therefore the identification of differences in leadership behaviour within the cultures of Aotearoa New Zealand may be important to the success of the leadership process in cross-cultural communication. The findings could have applications in internal communication for multicultural organisations, as well as in public information campaigns within and between specific cultural groups.

The Māori and Pakeha cultures, New Zealand's two largest cultural groups, have been described as having distinct characteristics (Willmot, 1989; Walker, 1989). They are

distinguished by the total collection of behaviour patterns, values and beliefs that characterises each cultural group as a whole. Yet in other studies, these cultures have been collectivised as ‘New Zealanders’, despite their many differences. It is important to recognise the historical and contemporary differences of these cultures and how these distinctions may influence the leadership process.

### **Māori New Zealanders**

The Māori people are the indigenous race of New Zealand. Traditionally, Māori society is characterised by communal living, with social groupings based on extended families. Hapu (sub tribe) and iwi (tribes) are usually based upon descent from a common ancestor (Mahuika, 1992). Patterson (1992) describes Māori culture as having collective ideals, with wealth and power being attributed to the group instead of the individual.

While historical records document oppression of Māori culture by a dominant Pakeha culture employing a variety of means including oppressive government policy, there has been a resurgence of Māori cultural identity. Walker (1989) argues that a resurgence of confidence in Māori identity has manifested itself in cultural assertiveness.

Māori leadership was traditionally exercised by male chieftainship and determined by primogeniture based on the first-born male in any generation (Mahuika, 1992). Each community was ruled by a rangatira (Māori aristocracy), with the chief, or the first-born male of the most senior family, endowed with the title ariki. The literal meaning of rangatira is ‘to weave people together’; a definition of leadership that encapsulates the interdependent and collectivist nature of Māori society (Kennedy, 2000).

Several studies have been published on Māori leadership and its transition into its contemporary role in society (Mahuika, 1992; Whaiti, 1994; King, 2001; Ra, 2000). Contemporary New Zealand society has shown adaptation to a new style of Māori leadership. Māori leadership positions are increasingly open to those with education, leadership skills, and

with experience in things both Māori and Pakeha (King, 1997). Tapsell (1997) describes a new Māori management style, incorporating long-standing cultural leadership qualities with those learnt from business and management courses across New Zealand.

### **Pakeha New Zealanders**

Pakeha is a term, coined by Māori, referring to non-Māori New Zealanders of European heritage. Although the exact meaning of the term Pakeha has been disputed, Pakeha culture can be defined as “membership in the dominant group and by a particular relationship to the Māori and to the social and physical environment of New Zealand” (Spoonley, 1994, p. 89). Pakeha society is characterised by a high degree of individualism and an emphasis upon personal responsibility and independence rather than the collective group (Hofstede, 1980).

Pakeha society can be described as an achievement-based society, where leadership positions are occupied on the strength of merit, and promotion is based on achievement (Smith, Dugan, & Trompanaars, 1996). Founded on democratic principles, Pakeha leaders must largely be deemed worthy of the position by the combination of individual achievements, acceptance by the general public, and favourable acceptance of what he or she intends to achieve (Ah Chong & Thomas, 1997).

### **Leadership Perceptions: Implicit Theories of Leadership**

Much of the early leadership study falls into a category of research known as the trait approach in which the leader’s style, behaviours, and specific actions were determined, taking a leader-centric approach. Research from this perspective was unsuccessful in defining a set of leadership behaviours that would guarantee the manifestation of the leadership process (Bass, 1990). In recent years, there has been growing criticism of this approach, arguing that leadership is very much in the eye of the beholder. Mendl (1995) argues that the follower,

not the leader or the researcher, defines the leadership process.

Contemporary studies have more typically taken a follower-centric approach that places more weight on the images of leaders as constructed by followers (Popper & Druyan, 2001). These studies rely on implicit leadership theory, which is based on followers' beliefs about how leaders behave in general and the behaviour they expect from leaders (Den Hartog, 1999). These beliefs are formed by implicit memories, which are inflexible, long-lasting memories based on each individual's perceptual experiences of their environment (Lord & Maher, 1993). Individuals tend to understand their own implicit memories as knowledge rather than memory (Gardiner & Java, 1993), and to group non-identical memories together to form implicit theories. These cognitive frameworks are used during information recall and processing to encode and understand specific events and behaviour (Shaw, 1990). Implicit theories thus provide perceptual blueprints of leadership behaviour that define followers' leadership expectations and judgements (Rosch, 1978).

Lord and Maher (1993) claim that while leadership perceptions may not be reality, they are used to evaluate, and subsequently distinguish, leaders from non-leaders. The better the fit between a perceived individual and the leadership prototype, the more likely this person will be seen as a leader.

There is evidence that implicit leadership theories can increase understanding of the leadership processes of cultural groups (Mendl, 1995). Gerstner and Day (1994) examined the perceptions of leadership of students from eight different countries living in the United States of America. They found that the students from each country had a different conception of leadership, with none of the five most typical characteristics of leaders in the United States being ranked by the subjects. Other studies have found cross-cultural similarities in the study of transformational leadership – leadership which goes beyond ordinary expectations, seeking to arouse and satisfy higher needs, and engaging the full person of the follower (Blyde, 1997). For example, a study based on Bass's (1985)

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire shows similar leadership behavioural characteristics in India, Singapore, The Netherlands, Japan, China, Germany and Canada (Fiol, Harris, & House, 1999). This suggests that although each cultural group is likely to attribute different characteristics to leadership behaviour, some behavioural characteristics, specifically those associated with transformational leadership are likely to be universally endorsed as contributing to outstanding leadership (Bass, 1998).

### **The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire-5X**

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X), developed by Bass in 1985, measures transformational and transactional leadership behaviour. Transactional leadership is that which rewards or disciplines a follower, depending on the adequacy of the follower's performance (Bass, 1998). The MLQ-5X investigates relationships between these leader styles and work unit effectiveness and satisfaction. It was developed in response to substantive criticism of its predecessor the MLQ-5R (Bass & Avolio, 2000), and in a cross-validation examination with nine samples, it has proved to have good construct validity. (For a detailed account of validity testing of the MLQ-5X, see Bass & Avolio, 2000.) In its most recent version, the MLQ-5X has been designed to test a "full range" of leadership styles ranging from charismatic to avoidant and laissez-faire (Bass & Avolio, 2000). The first four factors (idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration) are identified as transformational leadership factors, while contingent reward and management by exception (active and passive) are categorised as transactional leadership factors. Laissez-faire leadership or an absence of leadership is included to embody the entire range of leadership styles. The MLQ has been used in the study of leadership in different cultures in the international context (Yokochi, 1989; Koh, 1995; Den Hartog, 1997; Carless, 1998; Geyer & Steyrer, 1998).

Bass (1999) argued that transformational leadership generates greater follower effectiveness and satisfaction than transactional leadership, and Bass and Avolio (2000), found that the most effective leaders encompass some transactional but more transformational characteristics. In support of this, Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam's 1996 meta-analysis of 33 independent MLQ-based studies from America, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Singapore, and India concluded that there are strong positive correlations between all transformational leadership components and objective and subjective performance measures. Transactional, contingent reward leadership was less positively correlated with performance; and passive, management by exception leadership was negatively correlated with performance.

Numerous refinements and rigorous testing have shown the MLQ-5X to be valid and reliable in many studies (Bass & Avolio, 2000). A brief description of the full range of leadership dimensions measured by the MLQ-5X is as follows:

- *Idealised Influence (charisma)*. Leaders with idealised influence become role models as followers identify with and want to emulate them. These leaders are admired, respected and trusted and are perceived as having extraordinary capabilities, persistence and determination.
- *Inspirational Motivation*. Leaders who create inspirational motivation paint a clear vision for the followers' future state and create the momentum to reach that vision through the arousal of team spirit. These leaders provide meaning, challenge, clearly communicated expectations, and a commitment to set goals.
- *Intellectual Stimulation*. Leaders who exhibit intellectual stimulation encourage followers to be innovative and creative by getting followers to readdress old problems in new ways, think outside the square and regularly examine old assumptions to see if they are still viable.

- *Individualised Consideration*. A leader who shows individual consideration treats each follower as an individual and considers their individual needs, abilities and aspirations. They help individuals to develop their strong points and spend time training and guiding people.
- *Contingent Reward*. Contingent reward highlights a relationship between leaders and followers that stresses exchange, with the leader facilitating the achievement of this process. Reinforcement of this process is generally positive.
- *Management by Exception*. Active management by exception involves a leader who actively monitors followers to safeguard against mistakes and takes action when mistakes occur. Passive management by exception involves a leader who only intervenes to take corrective action when things go wrong. Reinforcement of this process is generally negative with the use of criticism and negative feedback.
- *Laissez-faire*. This is the avoidance or absence of leadership where the leader avoids getting involved altogether. No attempt is made at problem solving or at motivating followers, and decisions are often delayed.

### **The New Zealand context**

To date, most of the leadership research conducted in New Zealand has not taken into account cultural differences within New Zealand society. Parry (2000) conducted 'The New Zealand Leadership Survey' which investigated leadership processes and profiled the future leaders of New Zealand organisations. Additionally, Kennedy (2000) produced a discussion paper on leadership and culture in New Zealand. These studies provided a comprehensive description of New Zealand's dominant pattern of leadership, but disregarded the sub-cultures within New Zealand society.

In recent years New Zealand has been included in some cross-cultural leadership studies that use national borders as cultural

boundaries. For example, in the GLOBE project, a study spanning 62 cultures, House and colleagues (1999) identified similarities and differences in leadership behaviour across nine cultural dimensions. They found some characteristics that were universally viewed as contributing to effective leadership, and some that contributed to leadership in some cultures but impeded it in others.

While these studies provide valuable insights into leadership in New Zealand as a whole, they fall short of considering potential differences between groups within the broader cultural context, and largely reflect the view of the dominant Pakeha culture and while overlooking potential differences that characterise leadership behaviour within New Zealand's diverse cultural make-up.

However, some studies have explored concepts of leadership within New Zealand's subcultures. Ah Chong & Thomas (1997) conducted a within-country sub-cultural study on Pakeha and Pacific Island New Zealanders. They concluded that the leadership prototypes held by members of the two ethnic groups appear to have culturally based differences. In a further study of the New Zealand workforce, Nedd and Marsh (1983) identified different compliance-gaining strategies of first level supervisors. These studies illustrate potential differences in leadership between subcultures in New Zealand.

Although some studies and discussions have provided qualitative descriptions of Māori leadership (Walker, 1993; Diamond, 2003; Henry, 1994), no studies to date have specifically quantified Māori perceptions of leadership or produced a broader overview of Māori leadership characteristics. A detailed study of the characteristics of New Zealand leaders' behaviour is important, as New Zealand's unique cultural makeup indicates that it is likely there is a unique set of problems contributing to the quality of leadership (Parry, 2000).

The aim of this study was to determine whether leadership characteristics of Māori and Pakeha New Zealanders are rooted in their broader cultural contexts. Specifically, it aimed to identify differences in the leadership

prototypes between the two largest sub-cultures within New Zealand (Department of Statistics, 1997). It was hypothesised that perceived leadership behaviour would vary as a function of cultural difference between Māori and Pakeha New Zealanders.

As it is the first study of its kind on subcultures within New Zealand, this relatively simple objective will begin to unearth a more holistic picture of the leadership behaviour in this country. With its focus on cultural difference, the study will begin to fill the gap left by previous studies that have encompassed New Zealand in their research sample, but have not recognised the sub-cultures within its shores.

A further objective of this study was to test a popular research method used in the study of leadership within a collectivist culture. The literature shows a shortage of well-validated methodologies for research into leadership in collectivist cultures (Jung, Bass, & Sosik, 1995). Therefore the selected methodology was chosen with the intention of exploring its potential fit within this context. It is important to test the standard methodologies of leadership research to access their applicability in the context of the increasing interest in cross-cultural leadership.

## **Methodology**

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) was used to measure perceived leadership characteristics. This tool was chosen due to the breadth of its use in leadership research (Lowe et al., 1996) and its record of high validity (Bass & Avolio, 2000), as discussed earlier. Subjects were asked to respond to 45 questionnaire items on a 5-point Likert scale. They were asked to rate how frequently each statement fit the behaviour of the leader they were describing. The scale ranged from 0, infrequent 'Not at all', to 4, frequently, if not always'.

## **Sample**

This study is based on a sample of New Zealanders (N=37), from both Māori and Pakeha cultures. The number of participants per

cultural group is as follows: Pakeha (N = 19), Māori (N = 18). In obtaining this sample, the researcher enlisted the help of Matene Love, Senior Lecturer in Māori Business at Victoria University, and Jan Pfeifer, Public Health Promoter in the Southland region. This was done with the intention of gaining access to a more representative sample of New Zealand's population than the researcher would have had access to collecting the data alone.

Firstly, the researcher, in collaboration with Matene Love, decided on a predetermined set of criteria for selecting the participants in the study. The objective of this process was to gain as representative a sample as possible within the constraints of this study. Paying attention to these demographic features will potentially reduce bias created by a less representative sample and increase external validity of this study. The predetermined criteria were as follows: a 50% gender split; age grouping (under 20, 20-25yrs, 25-30yrs, 30-40yrs, 40-50yrs, 50-60yrs); the geographic location of the participants rural (R=25%); or urban dwelling (U=75%); and a judgement of whether the participant was a leader (L=15%); or follower (F=85%). Two of these factors (rural/urban and leadership status) are difficult to define and therefore highly discretionary. These were classified according to judgments made by the participants themselves for the former, and based on occupational position (Pakeha) or hereditary position (Māori) for the latter. However, this process involved some guesswork, as only once the questionnaires were returned with completed demographic data was it revealed whether the predetermined criteria were realised. (For further analysis of the research sample, please refer to Table I in the results section).

### **Data Collection Methods**

The researcher sent the questionnaires to Matene Love and Jan Pfeifer who distributed them within the scope of their assigned criteria. Matene Love sourced the urban and rural Māori sample, Jan Pfeifer sourced the small sample of the Pakeha population in rural New Zealand,

and Dale Pfeifer sourced the remainder of the Pakeha sample. The questionnaires were distributed by each of the researchers with due regard to the previously mentioned criteria. Matene Love distributed the questionnaire in both urban and rural localities in the lower North Island of New Zealand to participants he encounters during his work as an academic, while Jan Pfeifer distributed the questionnaires around rural Southland to participants she comes in contact with in her work as a Public Health Promoter. Fifty questionnaires were originally distributed, Māori (N=25), and Pakeha (N=25), with Māori (N=18), and Pakeha (N=19), and a total of (N=37) questionnaires returned. Questionnaires were distributed by hand to each of the participants who were asked to return them by hand within two weeks. Those who did not return the questionnaire within this time were given one verbal reminder to do so within the next week. The questionnaires were then returned to the primary researcher by post.

### **Data Analysis**

The score for each of the 45 items of the MLQ-5X was entered into two Excel spreadsheets, one for Māori and one for Pakeha New Zealanders. These scores were then totalled and the mean was calculated. The mean scores were then divided into their appropriate categories according to their MLQ-5X classifications (idealised influence [attributed and behavioural], inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration). The average and standard deviation of the scores from each category were then calculated using free software available on the Internet at <http://www.physics.csbsju.edu/stats/descriptive2.html>. The variance was then calculated to test for normal distribution of the two samples. This was done using an F-test in the data analysis function of Microsoft Excel. As the variances were unequal, a two-sample t-test using unequal variance was undertaken (using the t-test function in Microsoft Excel) to gauge the similarity of the two sample means. This test was chosen due to the continuous nature of the data from two independent random samples. A

comparative table was produced to facilitate analysis of the research results.

### **Research Ethics**

During the course of this study, due attention was paid to ethical research conduct. Before data collection began, the MLQ-5X was submitted to Matene Love to check for cultural sensitivity to issues surrounding Māori, including language and protocols. Matene also checked the questionnaire for continuity in frames of reference. In other words, the comprehensibility and compatibility of norms and values tested in the questionnaire were checked to ensure a match between the norms and values of Māori and Pakeha society.

A cover sheet attached to each questionnaire gained informed consent by clarifying the nature of the research and the responsibility of each of the parties; guaranteed anonymity of all participants; explained that participation was optional; and offered support by way of the researcher's contact details to safeguard participants from harm caused by any issues that may have arisen due to the research.

The research findings must also be considered with due regard to the power, influence and

legitimacy that characterise transformational leaders (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999) and the leadership process. Care and integrity have been taken with research findings by making the results of the research findings available only through application to the researcher and the MLQ organisation.

### **Results**

#### **The Research Sample**

Table I provides a summary of the known demographic features of the research sample. These demographic features come under the categories of ethnicity, age, sex, locality and leadership position. As shown in this table the ethnicity of the sample population was Māori (N=18) and Pakeha (N=19). The age of the sample population skewed towards the younger age categories rather than the older ones. (N=4) of the Māori sample came from rural areas of New Zealand, while (N=5) of the Pakeha population came from rural New Zealand. Only a small portion of the sample (N=3) Māori and (N=3) Pakeha, can be considered leaders.

**Table I. Demographic features of the population sample**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Rural/ urban</b>	<b>Leadership position</b>
Māori	< 20	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	20 - 25	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	20 - 25	Female	Urban	No
Māori	20 - 25	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	20 - 25	Female	Urban	No
Māori	20 - 25	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	20 - 25	Female	Rural	No
Māori	20 - 25	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	20 - 25	Male	Urban	No
Māori	20 - 25	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	20 - 25	Male	Urban	No
Māori	20 - 25	Male	Urban	No
Pakeha	25 - 30	Male	Urban	No
Māori	20 - 25	Male	Urban	No
Pakeha	25 - 30	Male	Urban	No
Māori	20 - 25	Male	Urban	No
Pakeha	25 - 30	Male	Urban	No
Māori	25 - 30	Male	Urban	Yes
Pakeha	25 - 30	Male	Rural	No
Māori	25 - 30	Male	Urban	No
Pakeha	25 - 30	Female	Rural	No
Māori	25 - 30	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	25 - 30	Female	Urban	Yes
Māori	25 - 30	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	30 - 40	Female	Urban	No
Māori	25 - 30	Female	Urban	No
Pakeha	30 - 40	Female	Urban	No
Māori	30 - 40	Male	Urban	Yes
Pakeha	30 - 40	Female	Rural	No
Māori	30 - 40	Male	Urban	No
Pakeha	30 - 40	Male	Urban	No
Māori	30 - 40	Female	Rural	No
Pakeha	40 - 50	Male	Rural	Yes
Māori	40 - 50	Male	Rural	Yes
Pakeha	40 - 50	Female	Urban	No
Māori	40 - 50	Female	Urban	Yes
Pakeha	50 - 60	Male	Urban	Yes

## The Research Results

Table II presents the results in scores (on a five-point Likert scale) for both Māori and Pakeha New Zealanders with their corresponding standard deviations and t-tests. As was hypothesised, cultural difference is reflected in the assessment of leaders. Māori evaluated their leaders higher than their Pakeha counterparts on most dimensions of leadership: idealised influence (behavioural and attributed); inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation;

individual consideration; contingent reward; and management by exception (active). Results were significant on three dimensions; influence (attributed), inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. The only exceptions to the higher rating were management by exception (passive) and laissez-faire or the absence of leadership, in which the situation was reversed and Pakeha were scored higher than Māori, although these results were not significant.

**Table II.**  
**Difference between Māori and Pakeha New Zealanders on the MLQ factors (n=37)**

Factor	Cultural Group	Average	SD	T
Idealized Influence (attributed)	Maori	13.50	2.503	2.592
	Pakeha	10.79	3.706	
Idealized Influence (behaviour)	Maori	12.00	3.343	1.178
	Pakeha	10.74	3.177	
Inspirational Motivation	Maori	13.28	2.164	2.216
	Pakeha	11.47	2.736	
Intellectual Stimulation	Maori	11.72	2.321	2.231
	Pakeha	9.63	3.270	
Individualised Consideration	Maori	12.39	2.524	1.551
	Pakeha	10.89	3.264	
Contingent Reward	Maori	11.67	2.612	1.665
	Pakeha	9.95	3.566	
Management by exception (active)	Maori	9.56	2.995	1.368
	Pakeha	7.95	4.048	
Management by exception (passive)	Maori	5.72	2.630	-.0358
	Pakeha	6.11	3.740	
Laissez-faire Leadership	Maori	4.83	2.526	-0.144
	Pakeha	5.00	4.243	

## Discussion

The results support the hypothesis that New Zealanders' perceptions of leadership behaviour are rooted in broader cultural contexts. This suggests that two subcultures within New Zealand, Māori and Pakeha, show some differences in leadership behaviour. A comparison of these two cultural groups

indicates that Māori scored higher than their Pakeha counterparts in seven out of nine leadership factors: idealised influence (attributed and behavioural); inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; contingent reward; and management by exception (active); and significantly higher in three of those factors. Interesting, Māori scored significantly higher

across three out of five dimensions of transformational leadership. This gives tentative evidence that Māori perceive their leaders as demonstrating more transformational leadership behaviours than Pakeha New Zealanders.

This result is in line with many other studies on cross-cultural leadership that demonstrate that leadership behaviour differs between cultures (House, et al, 1999; Brodbeck, 2000; Lowe et al., 1996). For example, the GLOBE project investigated the links between culture and leadership by examining the extent to which leadership behaviour is universally endorsed or culturally contingent (House, et. al., 1999). The preliminary findings of the GLOBE project indicate that cultural difference strongly influences the way followers perceive their leaders as well as societal norms concerning status, influence, and privileges granted to leaders.

The study of culture gives one explanation for this difference in perceived leadership behaviour of Māori and Pakeha. Culture can be described as a shared value structure that results in decreased variability in individuals' responses to stimuli (Erez & Early, 1993) and influences a group's response to the environment (Hofstede, 1991). Cultural values influence the perceptions of the people in each culture, and are reflected in their behaviour (Gudykunst, 1997). Research has shown that shared value systems differ over several dimensions of culture (Hofstede, 1991). Hofstede (1980), in his foundational work on worker-manager relationships, demonstrated differences across the cultural dimensions of collectivism versus individualism, power distance, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. A unique set of cultural values is likely to influence the perceptions of both Māori and Pakeha cultures (Hofstede, 1991; Mahuika, 1992).

In line with this, the findings of this study may be a reflection of the difference in culture of Māori and Pakeha New Zealanders. The differences in leadership behaviour as perceived by these two sub-cultures may be a manifestation of the differing values underpinning each of the cultures. The results of this study give tentative evidence that

(collectivist) Māori New Zealanders perceive their leaders as more transformational than (individualistic) Pakeha New Zealanders perceive their leaders to be. This is in line with previous research that suggests that transformational leadership behaviour is more likely to emerge in cultures exhibiting collectivist values, than in cultures exhibiting individualistic values (Jung, Sosik, & Bass, 1995). In support of this, Yokochi (1989) attributed the high level of intellectual stimulation attributed to Japanese senior managers to the Japanese culture that values lifelong, continuous learning and pursuit of intellectual activities (cited in Bass, 1998). This indicates that cultural difference could influence the manifestation of transformational leadership behaviour.

However, some evidence suggests that the differences found between perceptions of leaders are not necessarily differences in leadership behaviour but rather a reflection of differences among followers themselves (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). The difference in inherent cultural values is reflected in the behaviour of followers and could be the root of different perceptions of leadership attributes. For example, in collectivist cultures charismatic leadership (idealised influence) may be due to cultural values that result in followers holding an ordinary high level of respect, trust, loyalty and obedience to authority (Jung, Sosik, & Bass, 1995). Additionally, inspirational motivation may result from followers holding this high level of respect, trust, loyalty, and obedience to authority (idealised influence) in combination with the commitment to collective accomplishment as characteristic of collectivist cultures (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Therefore, it is possible that the transformational leadership style of Māori leaders as perceived by their Māori follower-ship could be rooted in the values underpinning Māori culture. It is possible these values result in Māori follower-ship behaviour that facilitates the transformational leadership process, rather than the behavioural characteristics of Māori leaders themselves, as indicated by the approach taken in this study.

## **Future Research & Limitations**

The research method employed, the MLQ-5X, produced some promising results and proved an adequate measure of leadership in the cross-cultural context in New Zealand. As interesting data was yielded for both (collectivist) Māori and (individualistic) Pakeha cultures, this lends support for the use of this research method when investigating leadership in collectivist cultures. However, in future studies, complementary research with a specific focus on Māori follower perceptions or the context in which the leader-follower relationship is enacted might be important for exploring the particular dimensions of leadership in a collectivist culture.

Additionally, due to the constraints of this study, the sample population was too small to give an accurate representation of New Zealand's population. The results are interesting, but are only indicative. However, this study was intended as a pilot for a larger project. The major study includes a much larger sample size and will allow wider reading, further testing of the hypothesis, and generation of more valid and reliable results.

## **Social Applications**

The results tentatively suggest that the impact of culture on leadership has practical implications in New Zealand, particularly at a time when people are aware of growing multiculturalism. As leading diversity becomes increasingly significant, leaders need to become more aware of cultural difference and more knowledgeable about other cultures and their nuances. The fit between a leader's behaviour and the leadership prototype of a follower have been shown to be critical in the successful enactment of the leadership process (Gerstner & Day, 1994; House et. al, 1999). Therefore, in a cross-cultural setting, ethnocentric leadership behaviour will hinder the leadership process (Hofstede, 1983).

Clear identification of subcultural leadership prototypes within New Zealand will lead to a culturally unique 'blueprint' of leadership. New Zealand's unique cultural mix suggests that a

distinct set of leadership behaviours is required to lead diversity within its shores. The identification of such a set could provide the foundations for a model on which to base New Zealand's future leadership development. This model could offer evidence of how Māori might secure leadership positions in business, or how Māori leadership characteristics might be understood advantageously in cross-cultural settings.

Future research should take a more holistic approach and focus not just on perceptions of leaders but on the characteristics of followers and the context in which the leader-follower relationship takes place. Research suggests that unique cultural characteristics may influence leadership perceptions through the culturally contingent way in which leader/follower relationships are structured and behaviours are interpreted (Chemers, 1997). Therefore future leadership research could consider the cultural variables surrounding the leadership relationship, or the effect of leadership behaviour on followers such as motivation and performance.

This study only focused on followers' perceptions of leadership. It did not investigate whether leadership behaviour stemmed from leaders themselves, resulted from followers' behaviour, or arose from the cultural context in which the leader-follower relationship takes place. Without due consideration of these factors, caution must be taken in generalising the results of this study.

A further limitation of this study is the selection of the MLQ-5X as the instrument to measure Māori and Pakeha leadership. The MLQ-5X was developed in the United States of America. Therefore the scope and primary orientation of this tool is American, and it does not include all the aspects of leadership which may be important in other cultures. For example, the MLQ-5X does not account for some facets of Māori leadership which have been reported to influence leadership success. This includes family bloodlines, which have been reported to give leadership status to Māori as of right (Mahuika, 1992). To gain a richer picture of perception of Māori leadership, a tool

needs to be developed specifically to address the New Zealand context.

### Conclusions

This study extends previous cross-cultural analyses by presenting tentative evidence that leadership concepts are culturally endorsed in New Zealand. It shows differences in perceived leadership behaviour of Māori and Pakeha New Zealanders. The results of this study can be helpful for the leadership practitioner by providing some insights into the leadership behaviour of two of New Zealand's predominant cultural groups. Although Māori and Pakeha cultures share much, they are also culturally distinct. The ability to build conceptual bridges between cultures is important in terms of gaining an understanding of the skills and application best needed to lead culturally diverse populations. The suggestion of differing concepts of leadership also has implications for leadership in other multicultural settings, and for communication programmes in which the involvement or endorsement of business or community leaders is sought.

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