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Towards an Indian Organizational Psychology

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There are two ways of doing meaningful organizational research in a large, populous country like India. First, we can start with cross-cultural theories and test them in the Indian context. This approach is better than the pseudo-etic approach in which people invariably start with Western models. Second, we can start with indigenous ideas to develop models, and then examine the cross-cultural theories and Western ideas in light of these indigenous models. I present examples of both these approaches. It is hoped that researchers will put a moratorium on pseudo-etic research that leads to the mindless copying of Western ideas, and start paying attention to indigenous ideas in psychology in India.

Psychology was quite established as an empirical science in the West, both in the USA and in Europe, by 1950. However, in India it was still a part of the discipline of philosophy. Organizational psychology was even slower to start since the economy was primarily driven by the public sector, which lacked the motivation to be profitable and efficient. Organizational psychology has been driven by efficiency and improvement of work performance in the West, and in the absence of these drivers it is not surprising that organizational psychology did not grow as much in India. Sinha (1972) presented the early history of organizational psychology, and suffice to say that much like other areas of psychology, organizational psychology jumped on the bandwagon of "mindless" copying of the West. In the 1950s, the *zeitgeist* was filled with the spirit of national development, and Western countries offered the gold standard for development. India had undergone hundreds of years of colonization and needed to become strong, and Western educated Indian leaders did not know any better than to emulate the West. Humanists like Gandhi did champion indigenization in both the economy and life style, but became the outliers, the saints who were to be venerated and worshipped, but not to be followed by either the leaders or the masses in their daily living.

We owe it to cross-cultural psychology and the indigenous psychology movement in that discipline, to ponder alternative ways of studying human behaviour in organizations and societies. Cross-cultural psychology has consistently reminded us of the limits of taking ideas from the West and testing them in other parts of the world (Triandis, 1994a, 1994b, 1972). The ideas need to have equivalence in concept and measurement to be useful, each of which is

difficult to achieve. Cross-cultural psychology has also established that the search of universals or etics has to be grounded in the specific cultural contexts or emics. Cultural and indigenous psychologies have taken the bold step to argue that all knowledge is cultural in its origin, and must be studied in the unique context of the target culture.

In this paper, I posit that there are two ways of doing meaningful organizational research in a large populous country like India. First, we can start with the cross-cultural theories and test them in the Indian context (Bhawuk, 2003). This approach is better than the pseudo-etic approach in which the starting points are Western models. Second, we can start with indigenous ideas to develop models, and then examine the cross-cultural theories and Western ideas in light of these indigenous models (Bhawuk, 1999a, 2000, 2005). I present examples of both these approaches. It is hoped that researchers will pause to reflect on the merits of copying Western ideas, and begin paying attention to indigenous ideas in psychology.

Scope for Indigenizing Organizational Psychology

The objective of organizational psychological research is usually to either reduce turnover or absenteeism, or to increase productivity by motivating employees. Enhancing organizational commitment of employees, or making them more satisfied with organizational climate, culture, or practises (e.g., reward system) are some other objectives pursued. Organizational psychology covers a range of topics like job analysis, employee selection, performance appraisal, training and development, leadership, motivation, job satisfaction, methods of organizing, turnover and absenteeism, workplace safety, and issues of work related stress. The issues of measurement of variables under each of these topical areas are emphasized. Measurement also addresses efficiency of processes employed in organizations. Organizational psychology has evolved from being an atheoretical field of research that was focused on solving problems raised by organizations to a theory driven field. Evidence of this growth can be found in the theoretical sophistication of the chapters in the second edition of the *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (Dunnette and Hough, 1992). However, much of this work assumes a universal psychology based on Western subjects. This amounts to the questionable practise of imposing Western cultural emics over the rest of the world (Triandis, 1994a).

Sinha (1994) presented a rigorous review of the field of industrial and organizational psychology in India, and categorically stated that organizational psychology, much like psychology in general, has been mostly dominated by Western ideas, theories, and methods. Despite the lack of measurement equivalence, validation data, and a general lack of theory and relevance to the local culture, organizations have developed test batteries based on Western models and scales (Sinha, 1983). Sinha (1994) reviewed the literature on leadership, power, work values, basic human needs, job satisfaction, communication, decision making, conflict resolution, organizational climate, organizational culture, and concluded that little progress had been made in synthesizing cultural values and indigenous wisdom in studying organizational variables. The research on ingratiating behaviour in organizations is offered here as an example of the lack of indigenous content in organizational psychology in India, and how it can be achieved in future research.

Pandey and colleagues (Pandey, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1986; Pandey and Bohra, 1986; Pandey and Kakkar, 1982; Bohra and Pandey, 1984) conducted a program of research on ingratiation in the organizational context in India in the late 1970s (see Pandey, 1988 for a review). This program of research was derived from the work of Jones and colleagues (Jones, 1964; Jones,

Gergen, and Jones, 1963; Jones and Pittman, 1982; Jones and Wortman, 1973), and clearly had Western roots. These studies examined what had already been studied in the West. For example Pandey and colleagues examined if there were cultural differences in the cognitive and motivational bases of ingratiation, and how ingratiation was used to control the target person's behaviour. They also examined if the cognitive reactions of the target person were different in India as compared to the West, and if there were cultural differences in how the status of the target person affected the degree of ingratiation used.

The findings of their research supports that there are cultural differences in the forms of ingratiation, and that the Indian style of ingratiation includes such behaviours as self-degradation, instrumental dependency, name dropping, and changing one's position with the situation (Pandey, 1980, 1981). These are in addition to the three strategies – self-enhancement, other-enhancement, and conformity – used in the West. Thus, this program of research adds some emic content to the literature on ingratiation. Pandey (1988) also reviewed the research stream on Machiavellianism, which complements research on ingratiation, and presented a flavor of what ingratiating behaviours are like, who uses them and when and how they are viewed by superiors. However, the findings are so grounded in the Western literature and method, which is reflected in constructs like Machiavellianism, that they lack the necessary thick description to provide an Indian flavor of ingratiation. This program of research contributes to the cross-cultural body of research, but it is still largely pseudo-etic in nature and in need of indigenization.

In India it is common for people to show up on the door step of their superiors to gain favours. Politicians are often known to have a "*durbār*" or time for public audience at their homes, which provides constituents the opportunity to ingratiate themselves with the politician. It is also not uncommon for senior executives to hold their own "*durbārs*" where junior managers report. This system offers a unique system to manage gossip, and allows junior managers to get closer to the boss. Bringing gifts to the boss's home is another practise that is used to ingratiate oneself with the boss. Gift items range from seasonal fruits and vegetables to alcoholic beverages, perfumes, and chocolates bought in duty free shops. Helping bosses when they have a *pūjā* or other functions at their home (e.g., a wedding) is another way to get closer to the superior. A clear indication that a subordinate has become an in-group member is when the boss trusts him or her with a personal assignment. In fact, the most dependable subordinate earns the title of "Hanumān", in that the person is an able agent of the boss much like Hanumān was to Rāma. Since Hanumān is a favourite Hindu deity, this is not to be taken lightly, and people take pride in affiliating themselves closely to their superiors to earn this title.

Finally, using a go-between who has influence on the superior is another tactic used by Indian managers. Go-betweens can be the superior of the boss, a family relation of the boss or his or her spouse, or simply an acquaintance of the superior. The effectiveness of the go-between depends on how strongly the person is recommended, and how much time is spent in cultivating the relationship. Doing an important favour to somebody is used as an investment, and people are often generous in paying back their debt. Thus, there is a strong social network shaped by intricate relationships spanning generations that shapes ingratiating behaviour in India, and some of these activities are considered respectable social lubricants. It is this kind of emic thick description that is lost by following Western models of ingratiating behaviours or other organizational behaviours. In the next section, an example of how the cross-cultural approach to research could help us understand group dynamics in the Indian context, and avoid imposing the Western model that may not be relevant in Indian organizations is presented.

Variation in Group Dynamics: A Cross-Cultural Approach

Cohen and Bailey (1997) summarized the research on effectiveness of teams and groups. They concluded that team effectiveness is a function of the task, context or environmental factors, and organizational structure. Group effectiveness also depends on the processes, both internal and external, and the personality of its members. Further, in a meta-analysis it was found that conflictual relationships as well as task conflicts were negatively correlated to team performance and team member satisfaction, and this correlation was strong (Dreu and Weingart, 2003). However, the validity of these findings across cultures is not known. Some studies support that group performance is a function of cultural variation in the group (Erez and Somech, 1996; Matsui, Kakuyama, and Onglatco, 1987). There is also evidence that though free-riding tendency or social loafing (Latane, Williams, and Harkins, 1979; Albanese and Van Fleet, 1985) may be a universal phenomenon, individualists are more likely to be involved in this behaviour than collectivists (Earley, 1989). Bhawuk (1999b) proposed that the theory of individualism and collectivism (Bhawuk, 2004, 2001; Triandis, 1995; Triandis and Bhawuk, 1997) could be used to bridge the existing gap in understanding how cultural variations affect the formation and functioning of groups in organizations. Its relevance to Indian cultural context is examined here.

In this section, a popular model of group development is examined in the light of the theory of individualism and collectivism. To do this, the four defining attributes of individualism and collectivism are presented in an integrative framework (Bhawuk, 2001), the group development model is described, and then various phases of group development are examined for cultural variation. Some testable propositions are presented to question the Western model, and to suggest the value of starting with a cross-cultural theory.

Individualism and Collectivism: A Theoretical Framework

The constructs of individualism and collectivism have had a significant impact on psychological research, so much so that researchers called the 1980s a decade of individualism and collectivism (Kagitcibasi, 1994). Schwartz (1990) suggested that the research on individualism and collectivism would be more productive if these concepts were refined into finer dimensions. Synthesizing the literature, Triandis (1995) proposed that individualism has four universal defining attributes that contrast with those of collectivism: Independent versus interdependent definitions of the self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), goals independent from in-groups versus goals compatible with in-groups (Triandis, 1990; Schwartz, 1990; Hofstede, 1980), emphasis on attitude versus norms (Bontempo and Rivero, 1992), and emphasis on rationality versus relatedness (Kim, 1994; Kagitcibasi, 1994). Much work has been done on the measurement and further refinement of these constructs (Bhawuk, 2001; Chen, Meindl, and Hunt, 1997; Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand, 1995; Triandis, Chen, and Chan, 1998; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998; Triandis and Bhawuk, 1997). The four defining attributes of individualism and collectivism offer finer dimensions of individualism and collectivism that effectively address the criticism of Schwartz.

Bhawuk (2001) synthesized these four defining attributes into a theoretical framework in which the concept of self is at the centre, and the three other attributes are captured in the interaction of self with group, society, and other (See Figure 1 below). These four defining attributes have been used to explain cultural differences in leadership (Bhawuk, 2004; Gelfand,

Bhawuk, Nishii, and Bechtold, 2004), personality (Bhawuk, 1998), and have also been used in intercultural training modules (Bhawuk, 1997; Bhawuk and Munusamy, 2006).

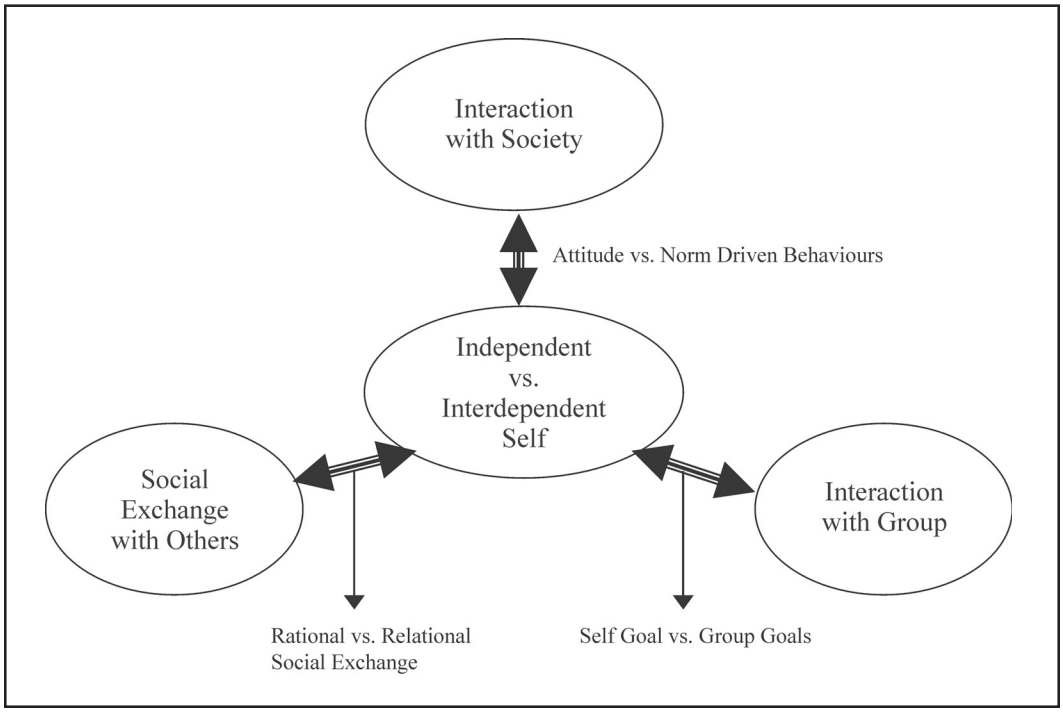

Figure 1 Individualism and Collectivism: A Theoretical Framework (Adapted from Bhawuk, 2001)

In individualist cultures people view themselves as having an independent concept of self, whereas in collectivist cultures people view themselves as having an interdependent concept of self (Triandis, 1995; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Individualists' concept of self does not include other people i.e., the self is independent of others, whereas collectivists' concept of self includes other people, namely, members of family, friends, and people from the work place. People in the Western world (e.g., the US, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) have an independent concept of self and they feel a more pronounced social distance between themselves and others, including the immediate family. People in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and so forth have an interdependent concept of self and social distance between an individual and his or her parents, spouse, siblings, children, friends, neighbours, supervisor, subordinate, and so forth is small.

People in India are likely to have an interdependent concept of self, where the self is shared with many members of the extended family, family friends, and others. Analyzing the words used for relationships, we find that in most Indian languages we have single words not only for members of the nuclear family i.e., father, mother, brother, and sister, but also for members of the extended family. For example, there are single words for paternal grandfather (*dādā*), maternal grandfather (*nānā*), paternal grandmother (*dādī*), maternal grandmother (*nānī*), maternal uncle (*māmā*), paternal uncle (*chāchā*), maternal aunt (*māsī*), paternal aunt (*būā, fūfī*), and so forth.

Having a single word indicates the value attached to the concept in a target culture, and clearly, the extended family is quite important in India, which supports the idea that people in India have an interdependent concept of self[1] .

The boundary of independent self is sharply and rigidly defined, whereas interdependent self has a less rigid and amorphous boundary (Beattie, 1980). This could be a consequence of the holistic view of the world held by people in collectivist cultures. In this view, the self is thought to be of the same substance as other things in nature, and cannot be separated from the rest of nature (Galtung, 1981). In another program of research, Nisbett and colleagues (2001) found that cognitive processes differ across cultures in fundamental ways (e.g., in the process-content distinction) because they are shaped by different social systems. These researchers found collectivist East Asians to be holistic in their causal analysis and dialectic in reasoning, whereas Westerners, who are individualistic, are more analytic and tend to use formal logic.

Therefore, in collectivist cultures the relationship between the self and other people or elements in nature is much closer, and people not only share interdependence but also feel an emotional attachment to members of their extended family and friends. On the other hand, people in individualist cultures usually hold a cartesian worldview, in which the self is independent of other elements of nature (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). An individualistic person, therefore, takes more control over elements of nature or situations around himself or herself, and feels less emotional attachment to others, and more responsible for his or her behaviours. The social and behavioural implications of having different concepts of self are significant for group dynamics.

The second defining attribute focuses on the relationship between self and groups of people. Those with the independent concept of self develop ties with other people to satisfy their self needs, rather than to serve a particular group of people. However, those with interdependent concept of self try to satisfy the needs of the self as well as the members of the collective included in the self. For example, Haruki, Shigehisa, Nedate, Wajima, and Ogawa (1984) found that both American and Japanese students were motivated to learn when they were individually rewarded for learning, whereas unlike the American children, the Japanese students were motivated to learn even when the teacher was rewarded. The Japanese children are socialized to observe and respond to others' feelings early on. So a mother may say "I am happy" or "I am sad" to provide positive or negative reinforcement rather than directly saying "You are right" or "You are wrong". Thus, difference in concept of self leads to difference in how people relate to their in-group or out-group.

Collectivism requires the subordination of individual goals to the goals of a collective (Triandis *et al*., 1985; Triandis, 1989; Earley 1994, 1993), whereas individualism encourages people to pursue the goals that are dear to them, and even change their in-groups to achieve

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[1] The kinship terms often differentiate on both sides of the family, and also mark age and gender explicitly. Here are relationship words in Telugu, a southern language of India. Father: *nanna, trandri*; mother: *amma, thalli*; brother: *anna, tammudu*; sister: *akka, chelli*; uncle: *menamama, mamayya, babai*, *chinnana*; aunt: *pinni, peddammma, atta*; grandfather: *tata*; grandmother: *ammama*, *nanamma*; husband: *bartha, mogudu*; wife: *bhārya, pellam*; brother-in-law: *bava*, *bammaridi*; sister-in-law: *vadina*, *maradalu*; niece: *menakodalu*; nephew: *menalludu;* relative: *bandhuvu*; friend: *snehitudu*; guest: *athidhi*.

those goals. Divorce results many times for individualists, because people are not willing to compromise their careers, whereas collectivists often sacrifice career opportunities to take care of their family needs (in-group goals), and derive satisfaction in doing so. Not surprisingly, making personal sacrifice for family and friends is a theme for successful films in India. The reason for giving priority to the in-group goals is the narrowness of the perceived boundary between the individual and others or the smaller social distance between self and others. Also, collectivists perceive a common fate with their family, kin, friends, and coworkers (Triandis *et al*., 1990; Hui and Triandis, 1986).

Collectivists discriminate between in-group and out-group members quite sharply compared to individualists (Triandis, 1989; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, and Lucas, 1988; Earley, 1993). When a certain group of people is accepted as trustworthy, collectivists cooperate with these people, are willing to make self-sacrifices to be part of this group, and are less likely to indulge in social loafing (Earley, 1989). However, they are likely to indulge in exploitative exchange with people who are not part of their in-group (Triandis *et al*., 1988). Individualists on the other hand do not make such strong distinctions between in-groups and out groups. A laboratory finding supports how collectivists differentiate between in-group and out-group members, whereas individualists do not. When asked to negotiate with a friend versus a stranger, collectivists were found to make a special concession to their friend as opposed to the stranger. Individualists, on the other hand, made no such difference between friend and stranger (Carnevale, 1995). For this reason, in India people approach others through a common friend for getting a good bargain or a good service.

The interaction between self and groups also has important implication for reward allocation. Individualists use the equity rule in reward allocation, whereas collectivists use equality rule for in-group members, and equity rule for out-group members. For example, Leung and Bond (1984) found that the Chinese favoured the equality rule when dealing with in-groups, but used the equity principle when dealing with strangers. This finding is further supported in other studies (Leung and Bond, 1982; Bond, Leung, and Wan, 1982; Kim, Park, and Suzuki, 1990).

The third defining attribute focuses on how the self interacts with the society at large. Those with independent concept of self do what they like to do i.e., they pursue their individual desires, attitudes, values, and beliefs. Since this works for everybody with an independent concept of self, people in individualistic societies value doing their own things. However, people with interdependent concept of self inherit many relationships and learn to live with these interdependencies. Part of managing the interdependencies is to act properly in all kinds of social settings, which requires that people follow the norm rather strictly so as not to upset the nexus of social expectations. It is for this reason that Rāma, a popular deity and a cultural role model for Indian men, always acted properly and is called *maryādā puruṣottam* (or the ideal man who followed the tradition of *dharma*). Hence, the difference in following own attitude versus norms of the society differentiates individualist and collectivist cultures, and has implication for formation of group norms.

One reason for the collectivists' desire to conform results from their need to pay attention to what their extended family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours have to say about what they do and how they do. A sense of duty guides them towards social norms both in the workplace and interpersonal relationships. Individualists, on the other hand, are more concerned about their personal attitudes and values. Often, in individualist cultures there are fewer norms about social and workplace behaviours, whereas in collectivist cultures there are many clear norms.

It should be noted that it is not true that individualist cultures do not have norms, or that collectivist cultures do not have people doing what they like to do. Generally speaking, in individualistic cultures there are fewer norms and those that exist are not severely imposed, whereas in collectivist cultures not only are norms tightly monitored and imposed but also anti-normative behaviours are often hidden from public eyes.

The fourth defining attribute focuses on the nature of social exchange between self and others. In individualist cultures, social exchange is based on the principle of rationality and equal exchange. People form new relationships to meet their changing needs based on the cost benefit analysis. On the other hand, in collectivist cultures, where relationships are inherited, people nurture relationships with unequal social exchanges over a long period of time. They view all relationships as long-term in nature and maintain them even when they are not cost effective (Triandis, 1995).

Clark and Mills (1979) discussed the difference between exchange and communal relationships. In an exchange relationship, people give something (a gift or a service) to another person with the expectation that the other person will return a gift or service of equal value in the near future. The characteristics of this type of relationship are "equal value" and "short time frame". In a psychological accounting sense, people keep a mental record of exchange of benefits and try to maintain a balanced account.

In a communal relationship, people do not keep an account of the exchanges taking place between them; one person may give a gift of much higher value than the other person and the two people may still maintain their relationship. In other words, it is the relationship that is valued and not the exchanges that go on between people when they are in communal relationships. In India, we find that people still maintain relationships they have inherited from their grandparents. In this type of relationship people feel an "equality of affect" (i.e., when one feels up the other also feels up, and when one feels down the other also feels down). It is related to the notion of having a common fate (Triandis *et al*., 1990).

Thus, the four defining attributes provide a framework to understand cultural differences in self and how it relates to groups, society at-large, and interpersonal and inter-group relationships. We can also see that it is a useful framework both to explain and predict social behaviours in the Indian context. Next, a popular model of small group development is examined in the light of this theory to show how it can be adapted for the Indian cultural context.

A Group Dynamics Model

Tuckman and Jensen (1977) presented a model of small group development, which is perhaps the most popular Western model of group development (Maples, 1988). According to these researchers, groups develop in five phases. The first phase is referred to as the forming stage in which strangers come together to work on some common assignment. This is a time of uncertainty and people try to learn about each other and the group task, and decide whether they would like to be part of the group or not. At the end of this stage the group is somewhat loosely formed.

In the second stage, storming, people are said to be exploring how much of their individuality they would sacrifice to become a part of the group. There is a power struggle among the group members, and both task related and interpersonal conflicts arise. The group members deal with these conflicts and learn to accommodate each other's idiosyncrasies. The label "storming" is used to reflect the conflictual nature of this stage, where a lot of group effort and time is spent on dealing with the human Tsunami.

In the third stage, norming, group values crystallize. Members develop a procedural knowledge and understanding of when to start and end group discussions, what to avoid and how, when to take a break, who is strong in what area, what are members' weaknesses or hot spots, and so forth. Thus, group expectations and norms evolve as the group begins to move away from conflicts toward achieving group goals. The group is no longer loose, and members accept each other as a person, with their strengths and weaknesses, with their personal idiosyncrasies and professional strengths. They may even identify themselves as a member of the group.

In the fourth stage, performing, the group focuses on meeting its objectives, and needs to spend little time on managing interpersonal relationships. The group works almost like an individual, and is committed to group goals.

In the final stage, adjourning, which is applicable to only temporary groups and committees, the group members bid farewell to each other, having accomplished their group goals. In this phase, members shift their focus to interpersonal relationships, and closure of the project. Depending on the time frame, members may organize a social event to shake hands before returning to their home assignments.

This model is used in management education both in university courses and corporate training programs, and is discussed in popular experiential management textbooks (Osland, Kolb, and Rubin, 2001). Despite its widespread appeal both in North America and Asian countries, its cross-cultural validity has not been established in research. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine the model's usefulness by using the theoretical framework of individualism and collectivism presented earlier.

Exploring Cross-Cultural Validity of the Model

Each of the four defining attributes has some implications for the stages of group development, though some are more salient than others. The first two defining attributes are more likely to influence the first stage of group development. The interdependent concept of self leads collectivists to forge their identity with their family members and people they closely work with. Therefore, collectivists are likely to attach different meaning to being a part of a group than individualists. For example, individualists can easily dissociate themselves from any group, if they do not like it for whatever reasons. On the other hand, collectivists inherit webs of relationships and are often deeply embedded in the groups they become a part of. Therefore, collectivists are likely to be slow in becoming a part of a new group, and also likely to be slow in exiting the group.

The way people interact with other groups is also likely to influence the forming stage. There is a marked difference between individualists and collectivists in how they interact with friends versus strangers i.e., collectivists treat the in-groups differently compared to out-groups. As such, the tendency for collectivists to look for similarities in a group is higher than it is for individualists. This may make it difficult for collectivists to become a part of a group that has members from an out-group, which might not be an issue for individualists, who would be more concerned with incompatible personalities in the group. Therefore, it is posited.

1. *Proposition 1a*: In Indian organizations, as compared to Western organizations, people are more likely to seek similarities in the forming stage of a group.

2. *Proposition 1b*: The forming stage will be longer for groups in Indian organizations.
3. *Proposition 1c*: The group may never complete the forming stage in Indian organizations if people find that there are members in the group who are from their out-groups.

The second stage is likely to be different for individualistic versus collectivist cultures in many ways. First, because of the norm of face saving, collectivists are unlikely to air their feelings openly in the group, and would take measures to avoid conflict at all costs. "Conflict is good for the group", is a very individualistic idea, and collectivists are not likely to allow conflicts to arise in the first place. Second, since individualists handle conflicts differently than do collectivists, individualists are less likely to be constrained by implicit norms, whereas collectivists will look to norms to resolve conflicts. This phase is also likely to be different since the collectivists treat in-group members differently from out-group members, but individualists do not. Therefore, should a conflict arise, and should there be in-group and out-group members in the group, the collectivists are likely to quickly rally behind their in-groups, thus aggravating the situation. Finally, different leadership patterns may emerge in individualist versus collectivist groups. In individualist groups, those who aspire to lead the group are more likely to express their thoughts and ideas, confront people, take the initiative to mediate conflict between members, and express their desire to work as the leader of the group. In collectivist groups, on the other hand, people are more likely to show deference to people who are older, more senior, more educated, and more experienced. Leaders would emerge by consensus, and those who have the skills to read social contexts and facilitate the group processes are likely to emerge as leaders. Therefore, it is posited.

1. *Proposition 2a*: The storming stage found in groups in Western organizations may not be present in Indian organizations.
2. *Proposition 2b*: Groups in Indian organizations will show significantly more harmonizing efforts to keep the group together than do groups in Western organizations.
3. *Proposition 2c*: In Indian organizations groups are likely to use normative approaches to conflict resolution, as compared to Western groups that resolve each conflict in a unique way.
4. *Proposition 2d*: Presence of out-group members in a group in Indian organizations will lead to formation of cliques.
5. *Proposition 2e*: The locus of evolution of leadership in groups in Indian organizations will be different from that in Western organizations.

The third stage reflects the formation of the identity of the group, and individualists and collectivists are likely to develop different norms for the group. First, because of their inclination to be embedded in relationships, which results from their interdependent concept of self, collectivists are likely to spend more time and effort in nurturing interpersonal relationships than individualists. Individualists are likely to view the relationships among group members as a tool to achieve group goals, whereas collectivists are likely to view the sustenance of the relationships among group members itself as an important group goal. Second, collectivists are likely to extend the work relationship among the group members to the social sphere, since they look at relationships as extending beyond work relationships. Individualists, on the other hand, are likely to limit their interactions mostly to the work meetings. Third, collectivists are likely to develop more cohesive groups than individualists, all else constant, because the group may form a part of

their interdependent self. Finally, since the interdependent concept of self leads collectivists to feel an emotional attachment to the in-group, the members of the collectivists group will show a pronounced emotional attachment to the group in the third stage. Therefore, it is posited.

1 *Proposition 3a*: People working in groups in Indian organizations are likely to spend significantly more time with group members discussing interpersonal issues compared to groups in Western organizations.

2 *Proposition 3b*: Groups in Indian organizations are likely to have more social interactions beyond the work related meetings and interactions than would groups in Western organizations.

3 *Proposition 3c*: Social distance between members in a group in Indian organizations will be significantly smaller than the same in groups in Western organizations.

4 *Proposition 3d*: Members of groups in Indian organizations will show significantly higher affect toward each other than do members of groups in Western organizations.

In the fourth stage, because of their inclination to choose rational exchange in relationships, individualist groups are likely to reduce their social interactions to a minimum. The logic is – we have spent enough time understanding each other, let us now move toward achieving results. Because of their independent concept of self, individualists are also likely to take interpersonal related issues for granted, and focus more on tasks. Also, there may be some social loafing, since that helps maximize individual utility for people with an independent concept of self. Collectivists, however, are relational and like to spend time with their friends and colleagues. Therefore, when the group has gone through the first three stages, its members are likely to continue to spend as much, if not more, time with each other. Collectivist groups are likely to take task-related goals for granted, since group members are likely to compensate for each other's shortcomings in performance. Among collectivists there will be less social loafing, since they make sacrifices for in-groups. Thus, it is posited.

1. *Proposition 4a*: Unlike groups in Western organizations, time spent to smooth out relationships in groups in Indian organizations from the third to the fourth stage will remain about the same.
2. *Proposition 4b*: Compared to groups in Western organizations, groups in Indian organizations will show a significantly lower level of task related communication among group members in the fourth stage of group development.
3. *Proposition 4c*: In the fourth stage, compared to groups in Western organizations, group members in India are more likely to communicate about and bring to table their personal resources, e.g., professional or other skills, for the benefit of the group.
4. *Proposition 4d*: Compared to the well performing groups in Western organizations, well performing groups in Indian organizations will show fewer incidents of social loafing.

When the time comes for adjourning the group, there will be significant differences among the members of individualist versus collectivist groups. Collectivists are relational, and once a relationship is formed, the relationship is valued beyond its functionality. Individualists, on the other hand, view relationships as serving some rational exchange. Therefore, when the group has served its purpose, individualists are likely to maintain relationships with only those who they would continue to work with, whereas collectivists are likely to maintain the relationship for a longer time. It is also relevant to note that collectivists are likely to consider people who

they have worked with on a team project as friends, whereas individualist are likely to consider the relationships as strictly functional and view former team members as acquaintances. Therefore, it is posited.

1. *Proposition 5a*: The frequency of communication between group members will drop significantly, from stage four to five, for groups both in Indian and Western organizations.
2. *Proposition 5b*: The frequency of communication between members of the groups in Indian organizations will be significantly larger than that for the groups in Western organizations after the group has been dismantled.
3. *Proposition 5c*: Indians would communicate less with former team members, whereas westerners would communicate more with those they feel are important contacts to have for the future.

   This is an important proposition since it shows the contrast between rationality and relational social exchange practised by individualists versus collectivists. Individualists find it important to keep some ties strong and current, and the only way to do so is to maintain a reasonable frequency of communication in some form (e-mail, sending cards, lunch meetings, etc.). However, once the relationship is established collectivists feel a sense of bonding, and the need to make effort to nurture the relationship is less pronounced. The social context (weddings, festivals, funerals, etc.) often provides enough opportunities to nurture the relationship, and the socially adept take advantage of such opportunities. Also, collectivists believe that they can approach people they have developed a relationship with even after much time has lapsed without communication.
4. *Proposition 5d*: After the group has been dismantled, in Indian organizations as opposed to groups in Western organizations, people are likely to regard the group members as friends rather than acquaintances.

Even a cursory examination of the model will reveal the task focused nature of the model, in that the culmination of the group process is in accomplishing the task i.e., performing, rather than in bringing together people to form a group i.e., norming. This is clearly an individualistic culture's preoccupation with action i.e., "doing", in Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) typology, as opposed to "being". By applying the theory of individualism and collectivism to this group dynamics model, it can be seen that indeed the theory can be used to predict significant differences in the stages of group development between individualist and collectivist cultures. Thus, there is value in starting research with a cross-cultural theory rather than adopting a pseudo-etic approach. There are other examples of this approach (for example, see Bhawuk, 2003 for an application of cross-cultural theory of creativity). In the next section I discuss how ideas can be derived from indigenous cultures to do culturally relevant research, and use leadership as the domain of organizational psychology to illustrate this.

Indigenous Typology of Leaders: Indian Perspectives

Sinha (1980) contributed to the understanding of leadership in India by presenting his model of the Nurturant Task Leader, which has found support in many studies since his seminal work (see Sinha 1994, 1996 for a review). Interestingly, though grounded in the emic or culture-specific aspects of India, it could be argued to be an extension of the popular Ohio State University (Fleishman, 1953, Fleishman, Harris, and Burt, 1955) and University of Michigan

(Bowers and Seashore, 1966; Likert, 1961, 1967) models of the 1950s and 1960s. In these models, a leadership typology based on whether leaders were job-centred or focused on task (or initiating structure) or were employee-centred or focused on people (or consideration) was presented, which resulted in a 2x2 matrix giving four types of leaders, those who were low on both task and consideration, those who were high on task or consideration (and low on the other), or those who were high on both task and consideration. Nurturant task leaders fit the high-high quadrant i.e., these leaders focus on task but also invest in people.

The Nurturant Task Leader provides much insight in the nature of a leader and follower relationship in the Indian context. This model has implications for a major Western leadership theory, Leader Member Exchange (LMX) theory proposed by Graen and colleagues (for a review see Graen and Wakabayashi, 1994), which has also found some cross-cultural support. In LMX, it is argued that leadership is not simply about making subordinates carry out the leader's wish, but about a two-way exchange between leaders and their followers. In such leader-member exchanges, the leaders invest their personal time and energy in mentoring the subordinates, and also provide them opportunities for organizational growth. On the other hand, subordinates offer loyalty to the leader, and deliver their best, beyond the call of duty, to achieve goals set by the leader. Thus, both the leader and the subordinate invest in each other. Graen and colleagues presented empirical evidence that showed how the relationship between the two grows from being strangers to acquaintances to a mature relationship. In the process their relationship grows from being calculative to moral, to borrow an idea of social exchange from Etzioni (1975).

Sinha (1994) lucidly delineated how Indian organizations have a more pronounced social identity than work identity. This implies that leader-member exchange is likely to be less of an exchange based relationship in Indian organizations and more of a communal relationship as discussed above since that is common with work relationships in collectivist cultures (Bhawuk, 1997). Thus, there is a need to examine closely the process of development of a nurturant task leader in the context of the leader-member exchange theory. It is quite plausible that though most work relationships are social, some emerge to be deeper than others. Examining the antecedents and consequences of these matured relationships would enrich both the leadership literature in India as well as internationally. This may also help further develop LMX theory, since the Indian model may exemplify a more general cultural model, a collectivist model of social exchange in organizations between leaders and subordinates.

To go beyond the existing models of leadership, we need to delve into indigenous approaches to leadership. If we scan the Indian environment for leaders we are likely to find a variety of leaders, which may not be found in other cultures. It may be of value to explore and develop a typology of Indian leadership styles. The following are offered as a starting point to stimulate future research.

Sannyāsī Leaders

Organizational psychologists may wonder about the relevance of studying *sannyāsī* (people who have renounced the world) leaders. It would seem that *sannyāsī*s would have no reason to be a leader since they are by definition not to own any worldly belongings or be attached to any relationship. However, a quick survey of the Indian spiritual and religious organizations shows that we do have active *sannyāsī* leaders. It is also interesting, and often neglected, that many of

the *sannyāsī*s have created incredibly large organizations, with many resources, employees, and a customer base or followers. To name just a few, and this is not to rank them in anyway, Swami Vivekānanda (Rāmkrishna Mission), Swami Yogānanda (Yogoda Satsang Society in India and Self Realization Fellowship internationally), Swami Shivānanda (Divine Life Society), Mahārishi Mahesh Yogi (Transcendental Meditation, Vedic University), Shree Prabhupāda (International Society for Krishna Consciousness or ISKCON), Sathya Sāi Baba (International Sāi Organization), and so forth. Most of these organizations are international, and many of them offer programs and courses in leadership.

Most of the Indian *sannyāsī* leaders are well known internationally, and some of them have also won international awards. For example, Swami Agnivesh received the Right Livelihood Award in 2004, which is also known as the alternate Nobel Prize. He is recognized as a leader of many social reforms, and has founded many religious and social organizations. In recent years, he has been spearheading the initiative for saving children from bonded labour with much success. Similarly, Mother Teresa is known for her legendary service to the downtrodden people of Calcutta, and went on to win the Pope John XXIII Peace Prize in 1971, the Nehru Prize for her promotion of international peace and understanding in 1972, Nobel Prize in 1979, the Balzan Prize in 1979, and the Templeton Prize in 1993. A study of these spiritual leaders and their organizations may present an interesting perspective on leadership and organizational development in India.

Karmayogi Leaders

A leader who focuses on work without paying attention to the fruits of the work, which is a concept derived from the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* would fit this category. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* King Janak is presented as an example of a *karma yogi*, but clearly there are other personalities in the Indian mythology that would fit the description of a karma yogi, including noble kings like Harīśchandra, Raghū, Śivī, Rāma, among others. Many modern prototypes for *karma yogi* leaders come to mind, and Mahārāṇā Pratāp, Śivājī, Bal Gangadhara Tilak, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Morarjee Desai, and many other freedom fighters involved in the Indian independence movement would fit this category. Business leaders like Birla and Tata may also fit this prototype.

Many of the social reformers also fit this typology, and some are noted for winning the Right Livelihood Award. For example, Ela Bhatt of SEWA – Self-Employed Women's Association, was the first recipient of the Right Livelihood Award Prize from India in 1984 for helping home-based producers towards independence and an improved quality of life. Vandana Shiva was another woman who received the Right Livelihood Award prize in 1993 for her work on ecological issues and in the women's movement. Dr H. Sudarshan led Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra (VGKK), and showed how tribal culture can help secure the rights and needs of indigenous people winning the Right Livelihood Award prize in 1994. Medha Patkar and Baba Amte led the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* or Save Narmada Movement, which is a people's movement against the world's biggest river dam project and won this award in 1991. Sunderlal Bahuguna, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Dhoom Singh Negi, Bachni Devi, Ghanshyam Raturi, and Indu Tikekar are credited for leading the Chipko Movement, which saved the forests of Himalaya. Chipko received the Right Livelihood Award prize in 1987. Ladakh Ecological Development Group, founded by Helena Norberg-Hodge, devised appropriate technologies

and sought to preserve the traditional culture of Ladakh winning the Right Livelihood Award prize in 1986. Rajni Kothari, one of the founders of Lokayan, created an organization that stimulated "Dialogue with the People" through the networking of local initiatives and was recognized by this award in 1985. Professors E. K. Narayan and P. K. Ravindran, Presidents of Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad or People's Science Movement of Kerala, led this organization to win the award in 1996 for their crucial role in building Kerala's unique model of people-centred development. Others like Baba Amte, who have received the Templeton Prize in 1990, and Pandurang Shastri Athavale, who received this prize in 1997 are also karma yogi leaders.

These are the prototypes that inspire the Indian leaders and followers. Much work needs to be done in understanding how these heroes are viewed in modern India, and how people attempt to emulate them. A starting point would be to develop a biographical profile of such leaders, which will provide the thick description necessary to understand them and their leadership styles.

Pragmatic Leaders

Many modern politicians and business leaders may be viewed as pragmatic leaders, who are neither *sannyāsī*s nor karma yogis working for the general public welfare. More recent Indian Prime Ministers like Indira Gandhi, Charan Singh, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, or business leaders like the late Dhirubhai Ambani (the founder of the Reliance Group), Russi Modi, Ratan Tata, may fit this typology. Leaders in this category are likely to grow as profit oriented business organizations grow in India, however the above two typologies should not be neglected since we still see innumerable *sannyāsī*s and karma yogis who are committed to serving people without much personal gain, and many of them are winners of the Right Livelihood Award prize and the Templeton Prize.

Legitimate Non-leaders

Perhaps the study of leadership in India should also focus on studying non-leaders who are thrust in positions of leadership by organizations and political parties. These are the people who are technically leaders, because organizations bestow legitimate authority on them and expect them to be leaders, however these people are simply not capable of creating a vision and implementing it, or even running a smooth organizational machine creating profit and growth. This group of non-leaders comes from the government funded and supported organizations, and they simply finish their three or more year term, and leave no mark on the organization or people working in these organizations. This is the group that is often labeled as "managers" rather than "leaders" in Western literature, and it would be worthwhile to explore if India and other developing countries have a larger proportions of such managers thrust in leadership positions. If so, suitable training programs or other such interventions could be designed to effect change. In sum, this typology captures the rich cultural emics of India, and exploring a research agenda like this may contribute to the global understanding of leadership beyond what a pseudo-etic or even a cross-cultural theory driven approach (House, *et al*., 2004) can offer.

Towards an Indian Indigenous Organizational Psychology

I once asked a researcher at a conference in India to translate the word "commitment" in Hindi, the researcher's mother tongue, and he was flabbergasted. He simply could not translate the word. It was not a happy situation as he had spent four years conducting research using Western scales on a construct that he could not even translate into an Indian language! We

can find other such examples. As was noted in the discussion of research on ingratiation behaviour and leadership, there is much scope to synthesize indigenous ideas in organizational psychology in India. Therefore, I propose that researchers engaged in organizational psychology declare a moratorium on pseudo-etic research in Indian organizations. The risks of mindlessly copying the West can be seen in the bulk of organizational research, and research in organizational commitment is a glaring example.

Indigenous models can be developed by starting from cultural insights. India has a rich tradition of scholarship, and psychology can take advantage of this cultural wealth. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* can be a source of much psychological insight to study cognition, emotion, and behaviour (see Bhawuk, 1999, 2005, and also this volume), and there are many other texts from which Indian researchers can borrow ideas. Also, India's rich folk wisdom should be tapped, and a study of proverbs, for example, could provide a good starting point. We need to enrich our psychological understanding of humankind by building indigenous models, especially since we now live in a forever shrinking global village. Clearly, indigenous psychology has tremendous potential to contribute to global psychology (Marsella, 1998), and Indian psychologists should take the lead in this field.

It should be noted that, although counter intuitive, fluency in English language is a major disadvantage that Indian researchers face. Since most Indian researchers are fluent in English, they think in English, and much of Western literature therefore makes sense to them. This gets further compounded by the desire to succeed by publishing in international journals, which require building on Western ideas.[2] Thus, they never pause to think if the concepts would make sense to the masses. It would help if psychology students were required to study classic texts and folk literature to develop sensitivity to indigenous ideas. Managers have to manage employees, and a majority of these employees come from the Indian hinterland, which are villages where Indian culture is still quite well preserved. To borrow an idea from economics, there is an infinite supply of labour in developing countries[3], and there is an infinite supply of culture in large populous countries like India, China, Brazil, Mexico and so forth. It is this supply of culture that demands an indigenous approach to research in psychology in India.

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2 A colleague from Turkey once told me that reviewers of a major American journal rejected her paper simply because her data was from Turkey. It was frustrating to realize that the same study with US data might have been acceptable. Such restrictive gate keeping by reviewers and editors forces researchers to stay with the Western constructs and to follow the pseudo-etic research paradigm.

3 This idea was presented by Sir Arthur Lewis in his article on the topic (Lewis, 1954), which started a huge debate in economics. The soundness of his idea has held up over the years, and he won the Nobel Prize in 1979 (shared with Theodore W. Schultz).

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