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Examining the Impact of Confucian Values on Leadership Preferences

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Introduction

Concerning effective leadership, Machiavelli (1998) asserted that fear, rather than love, was the ultimate motivational tool. According to this perspective, autocratic leadership, which governs subordinates using top-down decision-making, and transactional leadership, which controls constituent behavior through top-down provision of rewards and punishments, are the most effective strategies. Indeed, research suggests that official position and resource control, associated with autocratic and transactional leadership styles, respectively, are key components of the leadership process (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Koh, Steers, & Terborg, 1995; Luthans, Rhee, Luthans, & Avey, 2008). Although authoritarian styles of governance may be effective, they do not encapsulate all of the methods through which organizations may be influenced. Transformational leadership, which encourages change through individual development, and democratic leadership, which fosters participation in the decision-making process, may also enhance group performance through empowerment and cultivation of a common vision (Burns, 1978; Foels, Driskell, Mullen, & Salas, 2000; Saadi et al., 2009). While each leadership style may have a positive impact on organizational performance, efficacy can be mitigated by specific contextual or cultural variables (Leong & Fischer, 2011). Careful consideration of situational contexts which impact group performance may determine when and how diverse leadership styles should be utilized.

Although transformational or democratic leadership strategies provide potential to improve educational institutions, implementation has been problematic in Confucian countries. Educational institutions in China, for example, reveal only a limited capacity to apply more service-oriented, democratic Anglo-American leadership strategies (Liu, Hu, & Cheng, 2015). Difficulty utilizing new leadership paradigms within Confucian contexts exposes a conceptual bias within past research. As indicated by House (2004), more than 90 percent of organizational literature is a reflection of U.S.-based research. This view is supported by coverage in meta-

analyses. Within research conducted by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Van Engen (2003), for example, 36 of the 44 studies came from Western contexts. Essentially, predominance of research from one cultural environment has made generalization of results problematic. Prevalence of American cultural values has also resulted in a moral equivalency dilemma. Bias has created a widespread view that effective leadership practices are universal.

Research suggests that leadership approaches are implicitly imbued with an American cultural preference for charismatic, value-based, participative, and humane-oriented forms of governance (Northouse, 2013). This predilection for individual action and democratic participation has led to assertions that transformational approaches are universally needed (Bass, 1997, 1999). Such bias may be exemplified by a study of autocratic leadership. While the research found that positional authority was tenuous, and did not promote strong bonds with followers, exclusive investigation of a U.S. campus limited utility of results (Georgesen & Harris, 2006). In reality, other contexts may be more conducive to the utilization of autocratic strategies. Asian societies like South Korea, for example, have complex and rigid status hierarchies that appear to favor a dictatorial approach (Ishibashi & Kottke, 2009; Kim, 2013).

Just as status-oriented cultures may place higher value on power distance, which denotes the degree to which members of a group accept unequal power relationships (Northouse, 2013), other cultures may differ in the degree to which collective action is desired. Some Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern countries, for example, have highly collective cultures (Gumusluoglu & Islev, 2009; Northouse, 2013; Rodgriguez-Rubio & Kiser, 2013). While strict adherence to group norms may inhibit the cultivation of self-directed strategies, which are required by some employee-centered leadership paradigms, a deep-seated sense of institutional and in-group collectivism can promote the development of a common group vision, thereby enhancing employee performance. This view is exemplified by research of transformational leadership in Turkey, which revealed that collectivist culture increased both creativity and performance on an organizational level (Gumusluoglu & Islev, 2009).

Essentially, prevalence of leadership studies in an American context has established an implicit bias within leadership research, making the application of empirical studies to foreign contexts problematic. Because culture may have a large impact on the efficacy of a leadership approach, more research is needed to clearly establish how cultural variables impact leadership styles in foreign contexts.

Leadership in a Confucian Context

While the impact of cultural differences on leadership and education has been well documented (Callaway, 2016; Carl, Gupta, & Javidan, 2004; de Luque & Javidan, 2004; Den Hartog, 2004; Emrich, Denmark, & Den Hartog, 2004; Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004; Javidan, 2004), little research has been performed to understand how these differences impact the implementation of Western leadership styles. Contemporary research has identified some conceptual differences that impact new leadership approaches in Confucian countries (Liu et al., 2015; Nguyen, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2006). The research, however, has failed to establish novel theoretical models for contextual adaptation. A study of 659 Chinese civil servants, for example, identified cultural and institutional "violations" of servant leadership, but did not yield a new conceptual framework to address Confucian contexts (Liu et al., 2015). Ultimately, a more comprehensive understanding of relationships between cultural values and Anglo-American leadership styles is needed. Further inquiry may facilitate the design of new theoretical models for diverse cultural contexts. Moreover, it may lead to conceptual and behavioral training which can enhance the effectiveness of new leadership strategies.

Although limited, research has been conducted to examine the impact of Confucian values on traditionally Western leadership styles in South Korea (Bryant & Son, 2001). Through surveys from 292 Korean principals, the influence of Confucian beliefs on democratic and autocratic leadership styles was examined. The study revealed that highly rigid social structures impact the ability to adapt new strategies (Bryant & Son, 2001). While insightful, the study did not holistically measure the influence of Confucianism on other traditionally Western constructs,

such as transformational, transactional, or servant leadership. Moreover, the study failed to adequately address the simultaneous significance of correlations to both democratic ($r = .45$; $p < .01$) and autocratic ($r = .44$; $p < .01$) leadership styles. While Bryant and Son (2001) cited a lack of dichotomy between the two approaches, the method by which the constructs were interpreted by Korean participants was not clearly expounded. In reality, there may be distinct situational or cultural contexts in which both types of leadership are necessary, revealing a need for new, hybrid models of leadership.

Clearly, more research is necessary to examine the impact of Confucian values on leadership in contexts such as South Korea. Comprehensive study of cultural beliefs in both Western and Confucian contexts may promote the development of morally relativistic leadership models. These models, in turn, may allow for effective adaptation of theoretical concepts to foreign contexts. Modern examination of diverse contexts may also reveal contemporary trends and cultural influences, which have emerged as a result of growing interaction on a global scale.

Characteristics of Confucianism

Due to prevalence of the Confucian social value system in many Asian societies today, consideration of the philosophy is needed to further understanding of leadership behaviors and beliefs. According to Confucianism, there are five virtues to be followed for a harmonious society. The first virtue is referred to as *Ren*. This quality denotes benevolence, altruism, and humanity (Park & Chesla, 2007). According to this tenet, all people are considered to be capable of *Ren* and, therefore, may become virtuous contributors to political life. Moreover, political, social, and economic institutions are thought to function so as to develop this virtue (Ackerly, 2005).

The second virtue is *Yi*, a sense of righteousness (Park & Chesla, 2007). According to this virtue, one is to provide fair treatment of others, despite status differences. It is often used, along with *Ren*, as theoretical support for the adaption of democratic leadership principles and employee empowerment. A traditional view that "the people's will" is "heaven's will," for example,

describes a responsibility of the leader to make decisions based upon group consensus (Xu, 2006). This ideal promotes a form of distributive justice which allows all group members to participate in the decision-making process (Kim, 2013).

The next virtue is *Li*, which defines the boundaries of proper behavior. In addition to simple etiquette, it describes ritual propriety, social order, effective modes of action, modes of education, and self-cultivation. This virtue emphasizes knowing one's role, being satisfied with this role, and working hard to fulfill one's responsibilities (Hadley, 1997). As a result of the concept of *Li*, concrete social hierarchies have developed, whereby each member of an organization has a distinct role as either a superior or subordinate (Ishibashi & Kottke, 2009).

The fourth virtue, *Chih*, describes an ability to discern good from bad. This capacity is thought to be achieved through self-cultivation (Park & Chesla, 2007). Since self-cultivation promotes individual training and development, it may support empowerment of subordinates, as well as implementation of employee-oriented managerial styles. The fifth and final virtue of Confucianism is *Shin*. It describes the trust which results from living a life without deception (Park & Chesla, 2007). Like *Chih*, *Shin* may support employee-oriented leadership styles through promoting empathy and altruism.

While precise descriptions of moral ideals provide insight into Asian values and behaviors, the choice to utilize five moral "absolutes" in itself delineates the cultural character of Confucian societies. Since virtues are thought to be everlasting, they must be followed regardless of time. Individuals concentrate on following these virtues to promote a present and perpetual "ideal state," explaining why planning for the future is not highly valued. In conjunction with emphasis on the present, *Li's* regulations for performance of duties account for high values placed on task outcomes (Northouse, 2013).

Unlike Western contexts, Asian countries like South Korea have deep-rooted Confucian traditions that permeate organizational practices. Although strict hierarchical relationships promote power distance and dissuade application of democratic leadership principles, emphasis

placed on harmony, trust, and group cohesion facilitates transformational group behaviors. Due to the coexistence of seemingly contradictory philosophical views, the application of diverse leadership styles in Confucian contexts is highly complex. More research is needed to better understand these cultural characteristics so that more effective leadership strategies may be implemented.

Research Questions

In accordance with the need for further research of Confucian values and contexts, the following questions were posed:

1. How do Confucian values relate to leadership preferences? How does this relationship differ in a South Korean and American context?

2. How do individual characteristics of Confucianism (*Ren*, *Yi*, *Li*, *Chih*, and *Shin*) relate to leadership preferences? How do these relationships differ in a South Korean and American context?

Method

Data Collection Sources

To examine Confucian values, the Chinese Values Survey (CVS) (Bryant & Son, 2001) was used. The 29-item assessment examines the perceived importance of various Confucian concepts associated with relationships and cultural beliefs. Analysis of individual factors reveals a valid link to these Confucian values related to self-development, social responsibility, relationships with others, and worldly wisdom (Matthews, 2000); furthermore, a high Cronbach's alpha score of .92 suggests that the Confucian construct is being consistently measured (Bryant & Son, 2001). Each item was rated on a scale from 1 to 7 (7 represented the highest importance). Since Korean was the native language of some survey participants, a Korean version of the CVS was obtained from a study by Bryant and Son (2001).

To investigate preferences for leadership styles, the 27-item Vannsimpco Leadership Survey (VLS) was used (Vann, Coleman, & Simpson, 2014). The survey evaluates preferences

for nine different leadership styles: transactional, democratic, autocratic, autocratic-transformational, autocratic-transactional, democratic-transformational, democratic-transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership. In addition to being a valid measure of leadership preference, the survey is reliable and has a test-retest reliability of r[108] = .91, $p < .001$ (Vann et al., 2014). To develop a survey for Korean participants, a government certified agency was used for translation. Following translation, the survey was checked for accuracy by a bilingual researcher in the field of educational leadership.

Sampling

To examine the relationship between Confucian beliefs and leadership, two universities, serving southern regional populations from different cultural contexts, were selected. To represent Confucian contexts, a private university was selected from South Korea; to represent Western contexts, a private university was selected from the United States. Care was taken to select universities that were similar in size and function. Although the Korean university is set in an urban context, and the American university is in a rural setting, both institutions fall under the classification of master's college and university according to the Carnegie Classification. Utilizing institutions with similar characteristics helped to isolate cultural differences of leadership, rather than disparities related to institutional complexity.

Before data were collected from participants, approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of the Cumberlands was obtained. In total, 459 potential participants were identified: 168 from the American institution and 291 from the Korean institution. After the list of participants was obtained, all faculty were sent an invitation to take a survey which combined questions from both the CVS and VLS. Before participants completed the survey, they were given an informed consent letter. The survey was left open for three weeks, and reminders were sent when no responses were received for seven days (for a total of two reminders). Of the surveys sent, a total of 95 were returned, 47 from the American

university and 48 from the Korean university. The surveys represented return rates of 28 percent and 16 percent respectively.

Procedure

An instrument combining questions from both the Chinese Values Survey (CVS) and Vannsimpco Leadership Survey (VLS) was developed using SurveyMonkey, an online development tool. Before the survey was given, users had to read and accept a consent form which explained both the intent of research and the participant's right not to take part in the study. After both surveys were administered, data were systematically compiled to investigate the research questions posed.

To answer the first research question, which holistically examined the relationship between Confucian values and leadership preferences, results from the CVS were averaged to obtain one overall score. This score was then compared to leadership preferences obtained from the VLS by using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient. Since Likert-scale data represent ordinal variables, this formula was deemed most appropriate. The procedure was repeated for both Korean and American participants.

To answer the second research question, which sought to understand the relationship between individual Confucian components (*Ren*, *Yi*, *Li*, *Chih*, and *Shin*) and leadership preferences, individual components of the CVS were correlated to different leadership styles of the VLS by using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (Mendenhall, Beaver & Beaver, 2013). Following calculation, correlations between Confucian values and leadership styles were compared for each country. This comparative analysis was conducted to investigate a potential link between cultural beliefs and leadership preferences.

Results

Individual correlations of beliefs from the Chinese Values Survey to preferred leaderships styles contained within the Vannsimpco Leadership Survey revealed a number of

significant results. Not surprisingly, there were a larger number of correlations among Korean respondents (see Figure 1).
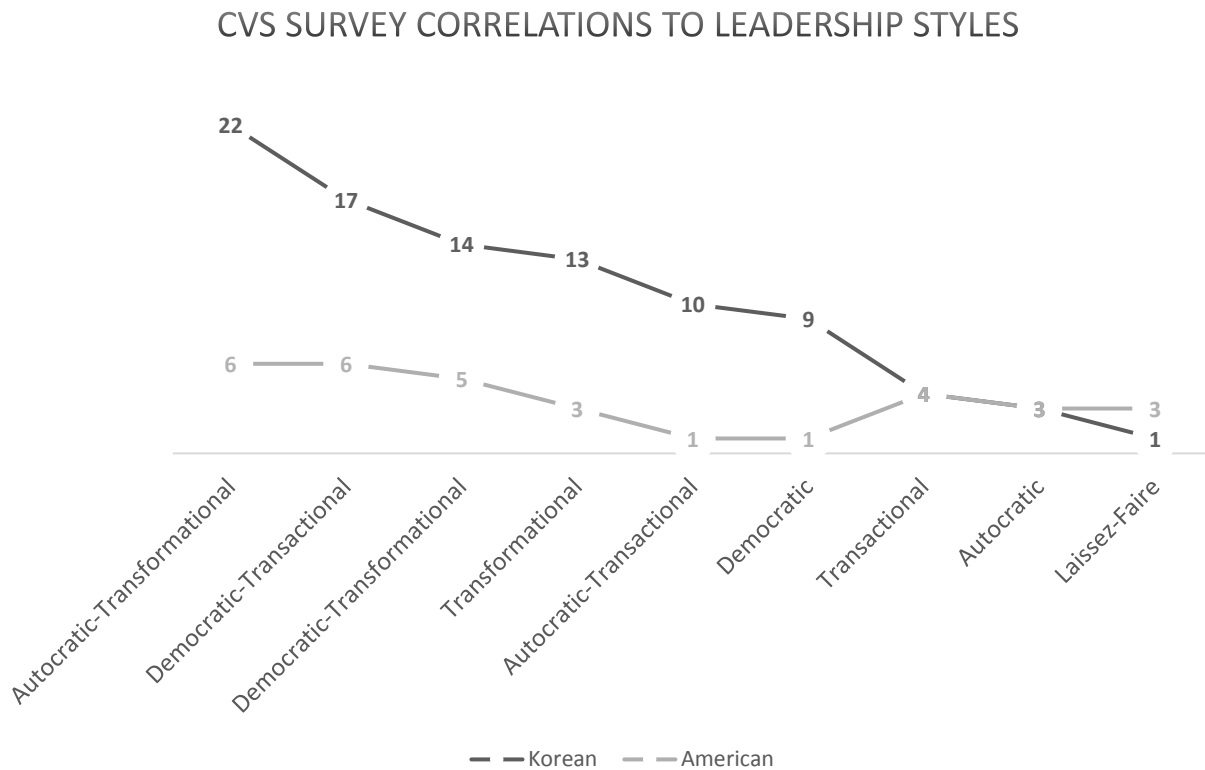
CVS SURVEY CORRELATIONS TO LEADERSHIP STYLES

Figure 1. CVS Survey correlations to leadership styles.

The number of correlations was similar for transactional, autocratic, and laissez-faire styles. In contrast, democratic, transformational, and hybrid forms of leadership (autocratic-transformational, democratic-transactional, democratic-transformational, and autocratic-transactional) had many more correlations among Korean respondents. The largest disparity was for autocratic-transformational leadership, which differed by 16 correlations. Differences in the number of correlates then steadily decreased (see Figure 1). The last major disparity was democratic leadership, which differed by eight correlations.

When comparing average CVS scores with those of the VLS, overall disparity in cultural beliefs becomes salient. As apparent in Table 1, Confucian cultural beliefs are strongly linked to most leadership styles in a South Korean context. Transactional, autocratic-transformational, autocratic-transactional, democratic-transformational, democratic-transactional, and

transformational styles were all significantly correlated to traditional Asian values. Democratic-transformational leadership yielded the strongest correlation (r_s [31] = .57, p < .001) and transformational leadership yielded the second strongest (r_s [31] = .53, p < .01). Notably, neither democratic nor autocratic leadership styles of Korean respondents correlated significantly to the CVS values.

Table 1

Overall Correlation of the Confucian Values to Leadership Styles

		Korean	American
Transactional	r_s	.39*	.29
	p	.036	.093
	n	30	35
Democratic	r_s	.34	-.10
	p	.062	.554
	n	31	35
Autocratic	r_s	.19	.24
	p	.312	.173
	n	31	35
Autocratic-Transformational	r_s	.51**	.55**
	p	.004	.001
	n	30	35
Autocratic-Transactional	r_s	.42*	.28
	p	.021	.099
	n	30	35
Democratic-Transformational	r_s	.57**	.07
	p	.001	.672
	n	31	35
Democratic-Transactional	r_s	.48**	.36*
	p	.006	.034
	n	31	35
Transformational	r_s	.53**	.02
	p	.002	.915
	n	31	35
Laissez-Faire	r_s	.06	.23
	p	.739	.180
	n	31	35

Note. *Significant at .05. **Significant at .01.

Not surprisingly, cultural beliefs in American contexts did not yield many significant correlations. While a strong correlation with autocratic-transformational leadership was obtained (r_s [35] = .55, $p < .01$), a weaker correlation was obtained for democratic-transactional leadership (r_s [35] = .36, $p < .05$). There were no other significant correlations.

Analysis of Correlates in a Korean Context

Analysis revealed that autocratic-transformational leadership was consistent with traditional Asian ideologies. In total, 22 of the CVS factors significantly correlated to this leadership approach. Autocratic-transformational leadership was correlated to several cultural values that concerned group performance. First, it was related to interpersonal relationships and positive interaction. Factors such as tolerance (r_s [41] = .34, $p < .05$), kindness (r_s [42] = .37, $p < .05$), sincerity (r_s [41] = .47, $p < .01$), sense of righteousness (r_s [40] = .38, $p < .05$), prudence (r_s [41] = .50, $p < .01$), trustworthiness (r_s [42] = .37, $p < .05$), and patience (r_s [42] = .38, $p < .05$) each yielded significant scores. The leadership style was also correlated to values concerning group cohesion and cooperation, which included solidarity (r_s [41] = .52, $p < .001$), the middle way (r_s [42] = .44, $p < .01$), non-competition (r_s [40] = .49, $p < .01$), and the importance of an intimate friend (r_s [42] = .37, $p < .05$). Finally, autocratic-transformational leadership was related to respect for authority; factors such as filial piety (r_s [42] = .32, $p < .05$), patriotism (r_s [42] = .45, $p < .01$), respect for tradition (r_s [42] = .34, $p < .05$), and the importance of being content with position in life (r_s [42] = .32, $p < .05$) all yielded significant values.

Although seemingly contradictory to group-oriented beliefs, some qualities of individual self-development correlated with the autocratic-transformational leadership type. Knowledge (r_s [42] = .40, $p < .01$), for example, which may signify intellectual stimulation or training, was significant at the $p < .01$ level. Likewise, associations between industry (r_s [39] = .38, $p < .05$) and adaptability (r_s [42] = .33, $p < .05$) revealed individualistic qualities that may contribute to group performance. Other leadership styles also contained correlates associated with

autocratic-transformational leadership, albeit in smaller numbers (see Figure 1). Democratic and transformational styles of leadership had significant correlations for harmony, solidarity, the middle way, and sincerity, reflecting an emphasis on group cohesion. In addition to beliefs concerning group cohesion, democratic and transformational styles correlated to factors denoting a preference for social status, such as respect for tradition, having few desires, and contentment for position in life (see Appendix A).

Analysis of Correlates in an American Context

Albeit a weaker relationship, patterns of correlation across leadership styles for American respondents resembled those revealed in the Korean context. As with Korean respondents, autocratic-transformational and democratic-transactional leadership styles had the highest number of significant statistical relationships. The number of correlations for democratic-transformational, transformational, autocratic-transactional, and democratic forms of leadership also steadily decreased (see Figure 1). While transactional and autocratic associations were consistent for respondents from both countries, laissez-faire leadership showed a slightly higher link to CVS values within the American context.

Like patterns of correlations, individual correlations of CVS values to leadership styles at the American university revealed similarities to those in a Korean Confucian context. As with Korean respondents, sense of righteousness was significantly correlated only to autocratic-transformational leadership (r_s [40] = .35, $p < .05$). Likewise, sense of shame was also significantly correlated to transactional leadership (r_s [41] = .59, $p < .001$). While some similarities in correlation did indeed exist for both Korean and American respondents, individual associations between CVS factors and preferred leadership styles often differed. For American respondents, democratic and transformational leadership styles were often associated with qualities related to interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution. The autocratic-transformational style, for example, yielded significant correlations to reciprocation (r_s [40] = .38, $p < .05$), kindness (r_s [40] = .39, $p < .05$), non-competitiveness (r_s [40] = .40, $p < .05$), prudence

(r_s [40] = .33, $p < .05$), and courtesy (r_s [40] = .49, $p < .01$). Other democratic and transformational forms of leadership also had significant correlations to sincerity, kindness, non-competitiveness, and patience, further supporting a hypothesized emphasis on personal relationships and the reduction of conflict.

Although democratic and transformational styles tended to correlate with qualities concerning individual relationships and conflict resolution, autocratic and transformational forms of leadership were associated with values emphasizing group cohesion and respect for authority. Transactional leadership was positively correlated to sense of shame (r_s [41] = .59, $p < .01$), contentedness with position (r_s [41] = .40, $p < .05$), protecting your "face" (r_s [40] = .32, $p < .05$), and filial piety (r_s [41] = .43, $p < .05$). Autocratic leadership, like its transactional counterpart, revealed an emphasis on solidarity (r_s [40] = .33, $p < .05$), suggesting a conceptual link between both transactional and autocratic preferences.

Whereas virtues valuing solidarity, status, and authority tended to be correlated to autocratic and transactional forms of leadership, values fostering positive individual interaction and conflict resolution were often statistically associated with democratic or transformational leadership styles in an American university context. Results suggest that there may be some conceptual dichotomy between these forms of leadership in an American context.

Discussion

This study examined relationships between traditional Confucian values and leadership preferences. Associations between variables were investigated through statistical correlation, as well as cross-cultural comparison of a Confucian and Western higher educational context. In general, statistical inquiry revealed fundamental differences between South Korean and American professors' perceptions.

When comparing average CVS scores with those of the VLS, overall influence of Confucian values becomes more salient. Table 1 reveals that traditional Asian beliefs were strongly correlated to most leadership styles in a South Korean context. Transactional,

autocratic-transformational, autocratic-transactional, democratic-transformational, democratic-transactional, and transformational styles were all significantly correlated to average CVS scores. Interestingly, neither democratic nor autocratic leadership styles of Korean respondents correlated significantly to the CVS, confirming the notion that discreet theoretical styles are incongruent with Confucian beliefs. Neither purely autocratic, nor democratic, the Confucian philosophy relies on a mutual respect between superiors and subordinates that cultivates an adherence to authority, as well as a group consensus concerning behaviors or goals of an organization.

In the case of "pure" democratic leadership, staff are given the power to make policy decisions or correct problems, circumventing Confucian virtues respecting superiors; concerning autocratic leadership, superiors have all the power, neglecting the will of the people. Because both leadership styles violate major Confucian tenets, they do not strongly correlate to mean CVS values. Higher associations between cultural beliefs and hybrid leadership styles confirm synonymous influences from *Li*, *Ren*, and *Yi*, which emphasize both autocratic and democratic ideals. Due to social complexity created by seemingly contradictory Confucian virtues, more intricate styles of governance will be needed in a South Korean context. If any group members are neglected, either superiors or subordinates, a new leadership style may be ineffectual. Within new leadership models for Confucian contexts, roles for democracy, autocracy, transformational strategies, and transactional tasks must be investigated. Fundamentally, new leadership techniques require strategies from each leadership type so that culturally complex Confucian social systems can be accommodated.

Whereas a Korean context reveals interwoven beliefs integrating values supporting authority and democratic input, there appears to be a conceptual distinction between democratic and autocratic principles of leadership within an American context. Faculty at American universities may consider it essential to support individual initiative and positive interaction when implementing either democratic or transformational styles; they may also feel that maintaining

solidarity and retaining authority are essential for either autocratic or transactional styles. In the United States, a context without strong Confucian beliefs, a simultaneous respect for both autocratic and democratic values may be unnecessary, explaining why fewer correlations between leadership styles exist. At the same time, correlations between hybrid styles, autocratic-transformational and democratic-transactional, reflect cultural beliefs which may be conceptually connected to these governance styles.

Respect for Authority and Solidarity

Values delineating respect for authority and solidarity (e.g., sense of shame, filial piety, contentedness with position, solidarity, and respect for tradition) were correlated to nearly every leadership strategy for Korean professors. Such data confirm that hierarchical roles must be considered when any leadership paradigm is adapted to a Confucian context. Regardless of leadership style, superiors will need to maintain a highly autocratic persona. Otherwise, subordinates may think it is their right to overstep authority and act in their own self-interests. In Korea, freedoms may promote individualism, rather than innovation. This problem relates directly to a lack of vision among subordinates. Because an organizational vision is generally held by autocratic leaders, who strictly control actions of subordinates, followers may not realize the purpose of new freedoms. Inevitably, employees with no goal and a great deal of autonomy will become ineffectual and dormant.

Just as absolute authority may negatively impact empowerment, power distance may threaten the utility of mentor/mentee relationships among organizational members of different status levels. Subordinates, in an effort to save face, may avoid talking about problems. To counteract this issue, organizational members of similar status may be grouped together, so that sharing may flourish. While these partnerships will be beneficial theoretically, they may be difficult to utilize in practice, since most employees with a great deal more experience, the ideal mentors, also have much higher status. Perhaps expert training (e.g., online videos, remote

training, etc.) from an external source for groups of a similar status may provide the environment necessary for sharing and educational growth.

Although values delineating respect for authority and solidarity (e.g., filial piety, contentedness with position, solidarity, and respect for tradition) were correlated to nearly every leadership strategy for Korean professors, they were only correlated to transactional and autocratic styles of leadership for American faculty. Transactional leadership was positively correlated to sense of shame, contentedness with position, protecting your "face", and filial piety. While contentedness with position and filial piety suggest a respect for status and role differentiation, sense of shame and protecting your "face" both suggest an effort to maintain one's status position. Like its transactional counterpart, autocratic leadership revealed an emphasis on solidarity. There appears to be a conceptual link between the two leadership styles.

Within a U.S. context, the appearance of traits denoting respect for authority and solidarity within only two styles of leadership suggests a conceptual link. Transactional differentiation of roles and distribution of resources is often based upon asymmetrical power relationships. Employees of a transactional bureaucracy, for example, are generally compelled to complete tasks via an organizational chain of command, which must promote solidarity to retain authority. Autocratic leaders must also maintain solidarity to ensure that their authority is not questioned or disobeyed. Data suggest that autocratic roles may be conceptually compartmentalized in an American cultural context, yet may not be extricated from Korean social institutions.

Interpersonal Relationships

In addition to conceptual differences concerning status or authority, cross-cultural ideological disparities pertaining to interpersonal relationships were evident within statistical correlations. Among Korean respondents, personal relationships (e.g., intimacy, courtesy, patience, and prudence) were important, yet this importance was tempered by an emphasis on status relationships (e.g., respect for authority). Such a finding is not surprising, since close

connections to organizational members may erode power distance. Friendly relationships with members of lower status may threaten authority, giving subordinates an opportunity to overstep powers assigned by their socially-mandated position. Furthermore, these relationships may stimulate jealousy, disrupting harmony and introducing conflict. Due to real or imagined threats to social position, Korean superiors may have difficulty working closely to solve problems or encourage innovation. Training in cooperation and group problem-solving could cultivate an appreciation of the interpersonal skills necessary to transform institutions. Such instruction may also help establish more positive mentor/mentee relationships among members of a different status. However, superiors and subordinates may be unwilling to learn such techniques, feeling that they desecrate traditional Confucian values. Training will need to operate within a restricted cultural domain which recognizes *Li*, *Ren*, and *Yi*.

For American respondents, CVS values related to interpersonal skills frequently correlated to democratic and transformational leadership styles. Collectively, these values revealed an emphasis on two personal qualities: individual interaction and conflict resolution. The autocratic-transformational style yielded significant correlations to reciprocation, kindness, non-competitiveness, prudence, and courtesy. Other democratic and transformational styles included similar correlations, albeit in smaller numbers. Whereas reciprocation, courtesy, and kindness promote positive working relationships, non-competitiveness and prudence reduce conflict, compelling organizational members to act appropriately. In contrast to Korean virtues, which tend to emphasize cohesion and acceptance of authority, American values appear to reflect a concentration on interpersonal interaction. Essentially, individualistic emphasis on cultivation of close personal relationships appears paramount.

Conclusion

The present study yielded several insights concerning the relationship between Confucianism and leadership. Research suggests that environments such as South Korea, which have strong Confucian tendencies, must maintain a delicate balance between autocratic,

positional power and democratic ideals that promote group harmony. When implementing purely democratic leadership strategies in such contexts, particularly those which require devolvement of power, elicitation of participation may be problematic. Superiors may not be willing to devolve decision-making; conversely, subordinates may be unwilling to accept increased responsibilities associated with empowerment. Because novel forms of governance can contradict traditional Confucian values, innovative educational programs may be needed to facilitate understanding of new techniques and necessary adaptations. Analysis of data suggests that Confucian leaders may encourage democratic decision-making, devolvement of authority, and empowerment through the following culturally-sensitive leadership practices.

Leaders in Confucian contexts may choose leadership strategies that encourage democratic participation (*Ren* and *Yi*), while simultaneously maintaining the existing Confucian hierarchy (*Li*). Because asymmetrical power relationships must be maintained, some autocratic tasks may need to be assigned to solidify status positions (e.g., summative test scores or weekly reports). While positional power is enforced, leaders may also designate some work domains as free from autocratic influence. Within a university setting, for example, professors may be assigned to groups so that they can establish new elective classes. Regarding such a democratic domain, Confucian leaders can be hands-off, facilitating innovation and creativity in the utilization of new pedagogical techniques. Too much autocratic leadership will prevent attempts to promote group decision-making and creativity. Conversely, too much democratic leadership may obfuscate the hierarchical social system present in Confucian organizations.

Concerning the choice of leadership strategies, leaders in Confucian contexts can choose the best hybrid styles based upon situational context. As suggested by preferences among Korean respondents, autocratic-transformational and autocratic-transactional leadership styles may be ideal for reinforcing status relationships. As direction and support are removed, employees may move from rigid supervision to delegation or empowerment. Because democratic decision-making or interpersonal influence is not preferred among Confucian

organizational members of a different status, leadership styles utilizing such strategies may only be possible in smaller, more egalitarian groups.

Leaders in Confucian contexts may facilitate democratic decision-making and empowerment through special training. Autocratic guidance and instruction may be provided to followers, at first, via a situational approach. Subordinates may then move toward delegation as their competence increases. While this technique may sometimes be effective, too much authoritarian intervention could stifle creativity or preclude cooperation. Egalitarian groupings may resolve such issues using collaboration, yet members of the same status level, particularly those who are new to an organization, may lack expertise concerning target objectives (e.g., becoming an expert in a content area of instruction). To deal with this issue, online training platforms or classes external to an organization may be used to provide direct guidance, while, at the same time, eliminating rigid control and intense pressure to adhere to group norms.

Finally, leaders in Confucian contexts may encourage the use of democratic forms of evaluation. Although summative assessments may be needed to maintain existing power structures, others may be used to facilitate empowerment of group members. Participatory/collaborative evaluation, in which group members make democratic decisions about the efficacy of performance, and empowerment evaluation, which promotes self-determination through a bias for minorities or women, may both serve as ideal forms of democratic evaluation (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009). Because difference, rather than egalitarianism, is a hallmark of Confucian cultures, special training may be needed to adapt these assessment techniques. In an effort to avoid perceptions of autocratic interference, leaders may choose not to give formal feedback about group performance in regards to designated domains of evaluation. Instead, they may choose to informally compliment employee groups when significant achievements or creative solutions materialize. Such "low profile" forms of feedback may also help prevent perceptions of favoritism, which represent a threat to social

harmony. At the same time, leaders may need to maintain autocratic status positions through forms of feedback (e.g., summative test scores or weekly status reports) which assert authority.

Comprehensive analysis of differences between South Korean and American institutions has provided insights which may enhance leadership in Confucian settings. While the present study was conducted in a higher educational context, findings may be applicable to other Confucian organizations. On the whole, research suggests that culturally-congruent governance strategies, which utilize both autocratic and democratic principles to maintain a balance, are needed in a Confucian context. Within a higher educational setting, faculty can be given the opportunity to cooperate democratically, while simultaneously maintaining the status hierarchy. Within the classroom, faculty can utilize leadership strategies to bolster student achievement. Language instructors, for example, may use autocratic domains (e.g., standardized tests, summative assessments, etc.) to build foundational knowledge needed for spoken or written communication. They may then utilize democratic domains to promote effective communication and growth of metacognitive learning strategies. In Korean society, where learners are strictly controlled through summative assessments, more democratic domains of study could heighten linguistic development considerably.

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Appendix A. Table A1

Table A1

Select Correlations to Vannsimpco Leadership Styles for Korean Respondents

CVS Factor		Transact	Demo	Auto	Auto-Trans-form	Auto-Trans-act	Demo-Trans-form	Demo-Trans-act	Trans-form	Laissez-Faire
Harmony	r_s	.02	.33*	.25	.15	.24	.29	.40*	.34*	.08
	p	.880	.033	.105	.346	.130	.063	.012	.030	.601
	n	42	43	42	41	41	42	39	40	42
Solidarity	r_s	.13	.46**	.13	.52**	.31	.43**	.46**	.37*	.13
	p	.402	.002	.419	.000	.052	.004	.003	.019	.410
	n	42	43	42	41	41	42	39	40	42
Middle way	r_s	.16	.51**	.11	.44**	.34*	.31*	.46**	.10	-.04
	p	.309	.000	.479	.004	.029	.047	.003	.549	.797
	n	43	44	43	42	42	43	40	41	43
Sincerity	r_s	.24	.34*	.09	.47**	.24	.44**	.32*	.46**	.15
	p	.123	.024	.591	.002	.131	.004	.044	.003	.346
	n	42	43	42	41	41	42	39	40	41
Contentedness with one's position in life	r_s	.37	.44**	.18	.32*	.21	.51**	.52**	.35*	.21
	p	.015	.003	.254	.039	.173	.001	.001	.025	.185
	n	43	44	43	42	42	43	40	41	43
Having few desires	r_s	.08	.30*	.20	.50**	.22	.28	.20	.36*	-.05
	p	.612	.049	.213	.001	.160	.068	.209	.022	.747
	n	42	43	42	41	41	42	40	41	43
Respect for tradition	r_s	-.02	.30	.17	.34*	.27	.27	.25	.43**	.24
	p	.894	.052	.280	.028	.081	.077	.118	.005	.126
	n	43	44	43	42	42	43	40	41	43

Note. *Significant at .05. **Significant at .01.