

Top-Down Vs. Bottom-Up Leadership Assessment: Practical Implications for Validation in Assessment Centers.

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Growing Interest in Cross-Cultural Issues

- Businesses are going global.
- I/O psychologists attempting to address emerging needs.
- Management confronted with issue of whether one could validly implement uniform leadership practices across international operations.

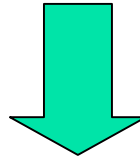


Cross-cultural Leadership Debate

- Considerable disagreement about universality of leadership traits.
 - Transformational leadership is universally the most effective (Bass, 1997).
- VS.**
- Strict standards of local research suspended for cross-cultural research (Gelfand et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2001).
 - Testing Western concepts in foreign cultures without testing their equivalence.
 - Using cross-culturally non-valid tools.
 - Failing to assess practical significance of findings.

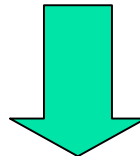
Purpose

1. Has the cross-cultural study of leadership been conducted effectively (i.e., meets standards of sound cross-cultural research)?



Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness Research Program (GLOBE)

- 2. What challenges do the assumptions of cross-cultural psychology present for practitioners?



ASSESSMENT CENTRES



Goals of Cross-Cultural Research

- Similarities → Tests universality (=Etic)
 - Basic human characteristics are common to all human beings but culture influences the development and display of these characteristics (Berry, 1997).
 - E.g., Individualism/Collectivism (Hofstede, 1980).
- Differences → Tests cultural-specificity (=Emic)
 - Search for highly culture-specific, unique information.
 - E.g., Confucius Dynamism.

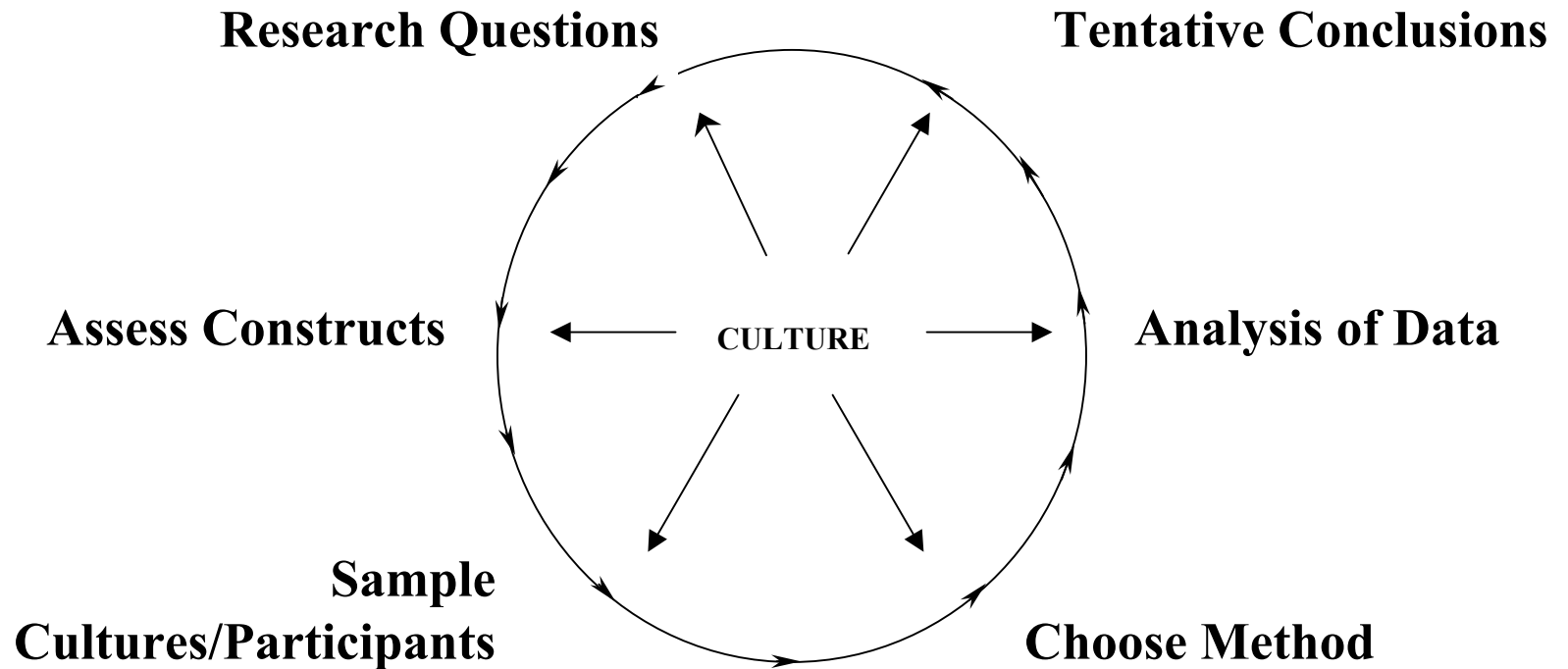


GLOBE



- Central goals (House, et. al., 1999)
 - Determine extent etic and emic aspects of effective leadership.
 - Determine whether leadership characteristics are culturally endorsed.
 - To develop generic culture and leadership measures.
- On-going program (currently in progress)
 - **Phase 1:** Scale development:
 - Global leadership dimensions (e.g., Team based, Charismatic)
 - Global cultural dimensions (e.g., Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance).
 - **Phase 2:** Assess etic of leadership and culture.
 - Phase 3: Assess emic of leadership and leadership effectiveness.
 - Phase 4: Laboratory research.

Elements of Research Process



Adapted from Gelfand et al., 2002

1. Define Research Question



- Specifying theoretical foundation.
 - Ensuring applicability to all relevant cultures.
 - Using cross-cultural team.
- 54 researchers; 38 countries.
 - “Are there leader behaviors, and attributes that are universally accepted and effective?”
 - “Are there leader behaviors and attributes that are accepted and effective in only some cultures?”
 - Based on *Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT)*.



Theoretical Foundation

- Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) (Lord & Maher, 1991):
 - Individuals hold implicit theories about “effective leader” attributes → they evaluate leaders based on these implicit theories.
 - Leader prototypes are highly sensitive to situational differences (e.g., culture) (Hanges et al., 2000).
- Culturally-Endorsed ILT (House et al., 1999):
 - ILT’s are culturally-endorsed.
 - There will be high within-culture agreement on ILT’s.
 - Will account for differences between cultures.

Contradictory Hypotheses



- Culturally Endorsed ILT not compatible with:
 - Hypotheses about global leadership prototypes (e.g., charismatic leadership is universally endorsed).
- Prototypes cannot be highly sensitive to cultural differences and also be generic in nature.
- Implication: Further theoretical justification necessary.



Inappropriate Prototype Activation

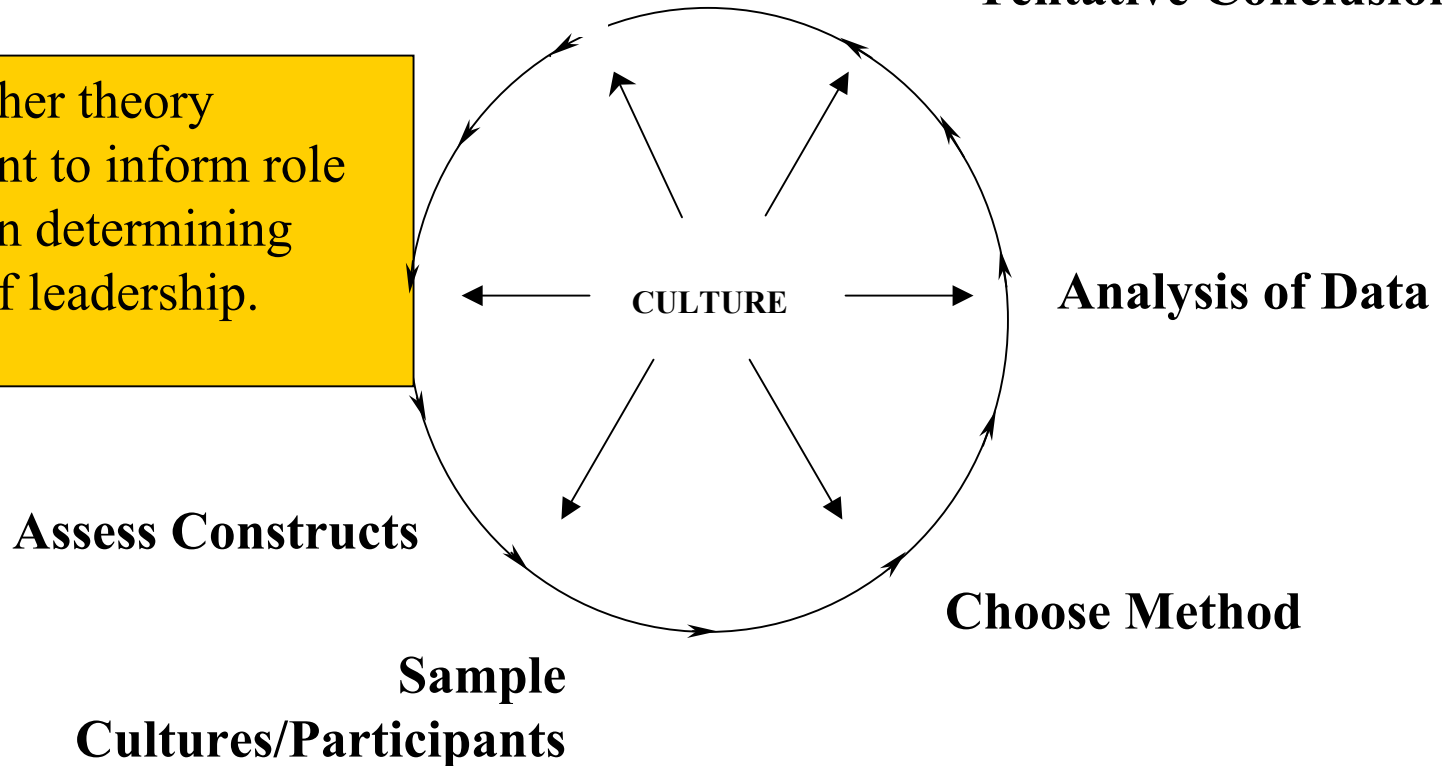
- Very specific cultural context and referent group must be made salient to people.
 - Known differences in prototypes at general level (“leader”) vs. basic level (“political leader”) (Lord & Maher, 1989).
- **GLOBE:** Activated general prototype.
 - “What is a leader? Recall an outstanding leader and describe the traits/behaviors that facilitated his success...” (Abdalla & Al-Homoud, 2001).
 - Resulted in non-comparable findings (e.g., Asians = Political leaders; Americans = Business leaders) (Brett et al., 1997).

Summary: Research Question

Research Questions

Tentative Conclusions

- Need further theory development to inform role of culture in determining etic/emic of leadership.





2. Develop Local Research Models

- Examine research question from emic perspective.
 - Develop local research models.
 - Compare models.
 - Goal: Construct union model of emic and “derived-etic” constructs.
- Imposed etic approach unacceptable (Berry, 1997).
 - Apply construct relevant to Culture A to Culture B.
 - Goal: Transport and test knowledge of Culture A into other cultures.
 - Erroneous Assumption that construct is etic without intervening test of relevance or deficiency.
 - E.g., China – 3rd leadership dimension = Moral Character (Hui, 1990).

Imposed Etic in GLOBE



- Imposed etic approach used.
 - No review of local research models - focus primarily on charismatic leadership (House, et. al., 1999).
 - Development of research models by 11 members, representing only 6 countries.
 - Local researchers provide limited emic information.
 - Translations/Back-translations do not tap emic aspects.
 - No development of a union model.

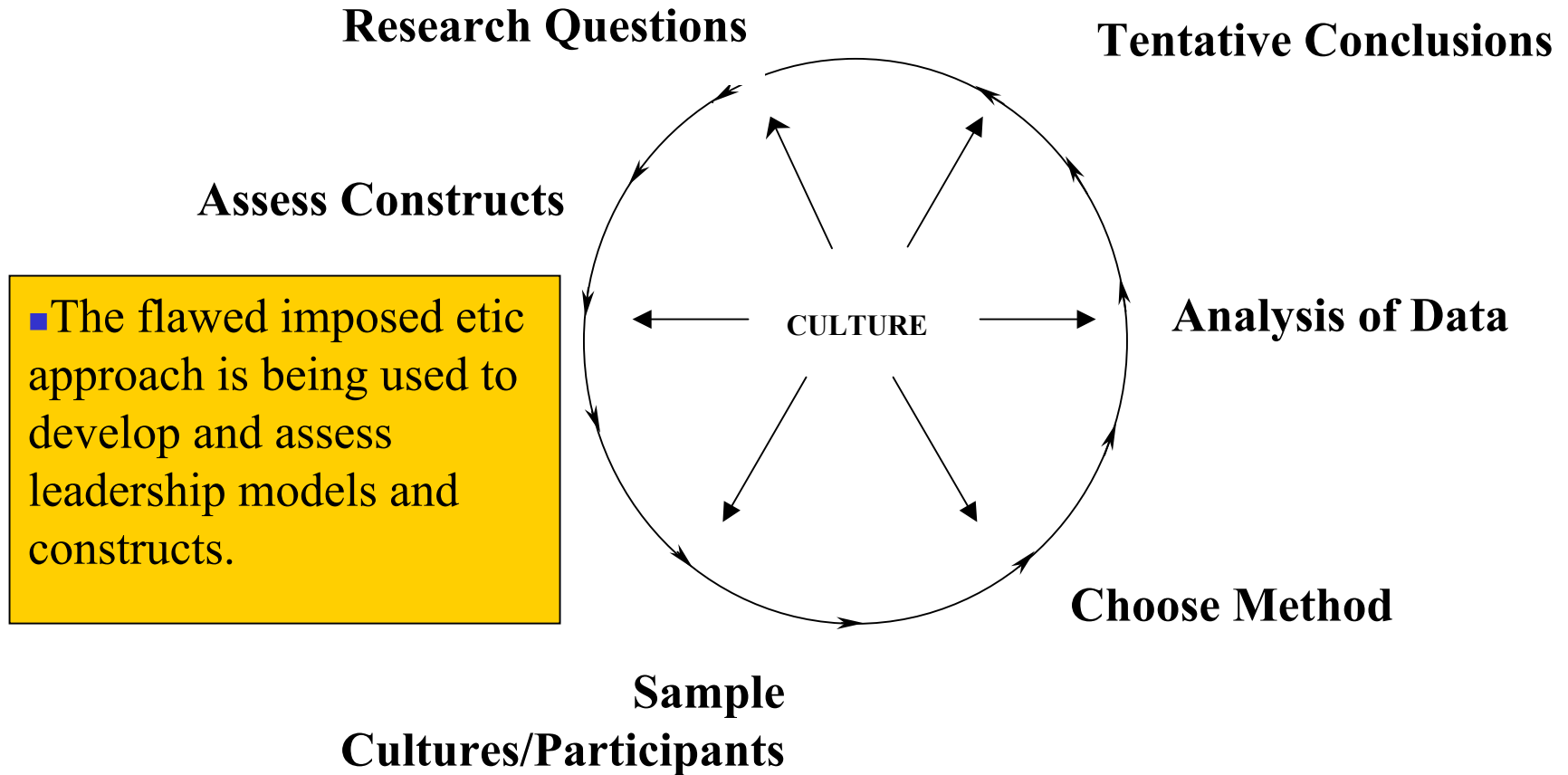
3. Assess Constructs




- Emic operationalization of constructs.
 - Generic measures inappropriate.
 - Conceptual non-equivalence.
 - Even universalism assumes culture-specific displays of behavior.

- Imposed etic approach → constructs do not hold same meaning.
 - Equivalence assumed prematurely.
 - Use of only language translations and superficial cultural adaptations.
 - E.g., Evasiveness – “refraining from making a negative comment to maintain good relationships and saving face”.

Summary: Assess Constructs



4. Choose Methodology

- Familiarity with constructs.
- Depth of information required.
- Stage of research.
 - Greater depth necessary in early research stages.
 - Interviews – open ended, context-rich information.
 - Surveys – close-ended, context free information.
- **GLOBE** 
 - Conducted in unfamiliar cultures (e.g., Qatar, Zimbabwe).
 - Leadership prototypes generated by principal investigators and administered as surveys (close-ended).



5. Find Sample

- Sampling contingent on purpose of research (Brett et al., 1997; Gelfand et al., 2001).
 - To illustrate universality → representative sampling required (large, random sample of cultures and people).
 - Use matched samples.
- Maintain high response rates (Brett et al., 1997; Gelfand et al., 2002; Keuchler, 1998).
 - Difficult to discern if non-respondents vary in some systematic manner from respondents.
 - Limits external validity of findings.

Non-representative sampling



- Phase 1, $N = 877$ from 28 countries.
 - = 31 participants per country.
- Information on sampling procedures not provided.
 - Random sampling?
 - Non-response rates?
 - Matched only on industry type and position level.
 - SES, gender, age, occupational/organizational tenure?
- **Generalizability unknown**

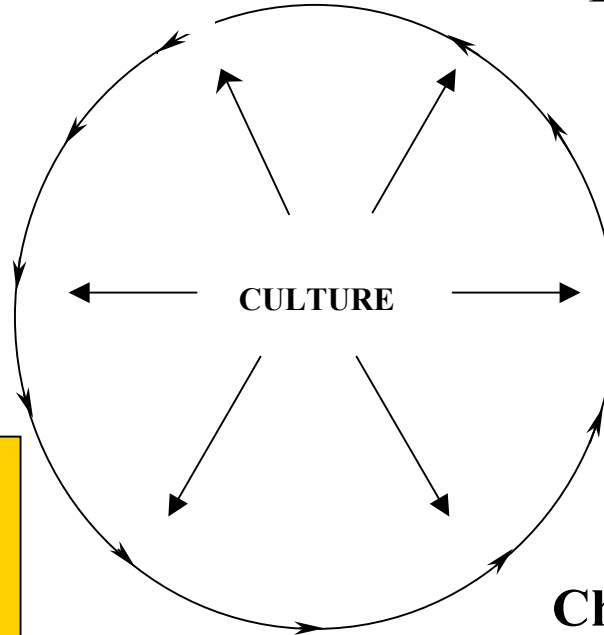
Summary: Sampling & Methodology

Research Questions

Tentative Conclusions

Assess Constructs

**Sample
Cultures/Participants**



Analysis of Data

Choose Method

- Sampling not conducive to illustrating universality.

- Survey method offers little understanding of etic/emic.



5. Analyze Data

- Individual values aggregated.
- EFA to determine structure of leadership and cultural dimensions.
- HLM to determine explanatory value of cultural dimensions for leadership differences.



Aggregation Problems

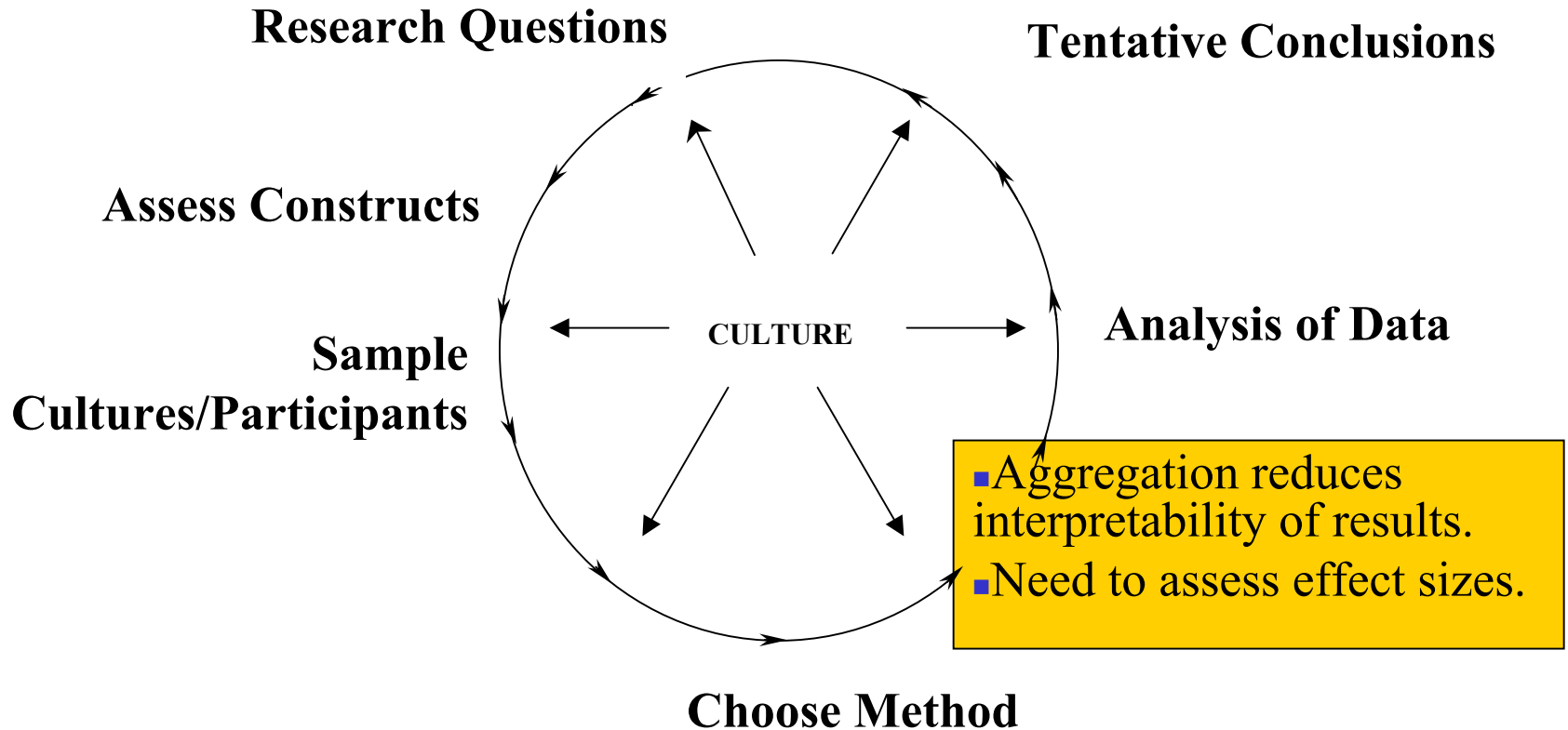
- Aggregate individual values to accurately represent collective (Brett, et. al., 1997)
 - Inaccurate representation with inadequate sampling (i.e, GLOBE).
- Exploratory Factor Analyses to validate factor structure of global leadership measure.
 - Aggregation resulted in small sample sizes
 - Phase 1: N = 28 (countries).
 - Phase 2: N = 54 (countries).



Effect Size

- Conventional significance testing
 - Incomplete view of significance of results (Prentice & Miller, 1992).
 - Need to assess effect sizes too.
- **GLOBE:** Weak evidence of Culturally Endorsed ILT's.
 - Small effect size.
 - E.g., collectivism positively related to team leadership.
 - Collectivism explains 1.75% of variance in team leadership.

Summary: Analyze Data





Tentative Conclusions

- Theory and constructs are *not* operationalized consistently or measured appropriately for each culture.
 - Samples are *not* representative of population.
 - Fit between hypotheses and data are significant but *uninformative*.
- 👉 Has the cross-cultural study of leadership been conducted effectively?



Practical Implications

- **What challenges do the assumptions of cross-cultural psychology present for practitioners?**
 - Examine effect of culture on assessment centre practices.



Assessment Centers

- Definition (Int'l Task Force on AC Guidelines, 2000):
 - Standardized evaluation of behavior based on multiple inputs (e.g., interviews, work samples, personality tests).
 - Several trainers and techniques are used.
 - Validation (construct, content or criterion) required.
- Link with culture:
 - Assessment centers (AC) are used to select leaders for international operations.
 - Cultural differences can affect validity.



Construct Validity Challenges

- AC will be invalid:
 - If constructs measured in cross-cultural AC's are conceptually non-equivalent.
 - If there are emic differences to job:
 - Job analysis information not fully generalizable across cultures.



Recommendations

- Conduct/ Validate job analysis information across countries.
 - Due to high cultural variation, validation necessary for each country.
- Avoid use of conceptually non-equivalent generic measures even for etic constructs.
 - Compare pre-existing measures to emic information.
 - Develop emic versions of measures.



Content Validity Challenges

- Cultural differences in job → deficient representation of emic job content.
- Failing to sample emic job content information across cultures → biased job descriptions → employment equity concerns.



Recommendations

- Representative cultural sampling.
 - Emic dimensions captured e.g., Confucius Dynamism.
- Sampling of cross-section of members from protected groups.



Criterion Validity Challenge

- Constructs may not be equally predictive of / relevant for job success.
 - E.g., Risk taking behaviors predictive of leadership success in individualistic countries but not in collectivist countries (Smith et al., 2001).
- Will demonstrate less criterion validity in some cultures.



Recommendation

- Job analysis should verify:
 - Emic and etic aspects equally predictive of successful job performance.
- To ensure criterion validity:
 - Construct does not need to be conceptually equivalent.
 - Needs to be equally predictive of job success and be job relevant.



Assessor Training

- Assessors use cognitive schemas during assessment (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Lievans & Klimoski, 2001).
 - Schemas include ILT's (Lord & Maher, 1989).
 - Culture-specific (Hanges et al., 2000).
 - Deviations from schema/ILT → lower ratings for candidate from different culture.



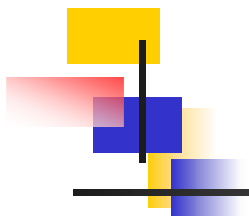
Recommendations

- Assessor training
 - Appropriate cultural models of leadership.
 - Frame-of-reference training (Lievens & Klimoski, 2001).
 - Clarify parameters of effective performance.
 - Makes prior knowledge frameworks less salient & increases rating accuracy.



Implications for Practice

- What challenges do the assumptions of cross-cultural psychology present for practitioners?
- Cannot adopt uniform tool for selecting international leaders.
 - Must incorporate emic.
- Without emic, assessment will be:
 - Biased in favor of Western leadership style → high expatriate failure.
 - Biased against members of protected groups.



Question Period