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Chinese-U.S. Leadership: A Case Study of a U.S. Manufacturing Company in China

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CHINESE-U.S. LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF A U.S. MANUFACTURING
COMPANY IN CHINA

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Leadership and Professional Studies
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
Mengting Gong

December 2021

CHINESE-U.S. LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF A U.S. MANUFACTURING COMPANY IN CHINA

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I dedicate this dissertation to my parents. Due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, I chose to research and write the dissertation in my home country of China because I would like to stay with the family members in this catastrophic and hard time. They provided fully the support and encouragement throughout this process. They also offered a quiet and comfortable environment for research, especially the study at the third floor where my mother used to work and study. Meanwhile, in order to balance life and study, they made the suggestions of taking some quick walks both on the street during the daytime or in the local parks at night to relax and build the body. As far as food was concerned, I really want to thank them for all the nutritious materials and ingredients they sought out and cooked. All these inspired and helped me in getting more fabulous concepts and structures in the dissertation.

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Mengting Gong   December 2021   125 Pages

Directed by: Randall Capps, Nicholas Brake, Lester Archer, and Cecile Garmon

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The purpose of this case study is to gain a better understanding of the way in which some Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches and why they accept and use U.S. leadership approaches in a U.S. manufacturing company in China. Within the single-case (embedded) research design, in-depth interviews and existing data are two main methods of the researcher's data collection. A purposeful sample ($N = 8$) of managers from the corporation served as participants. After collecting relevant qualitative data, two rounds of coding occurred. In the first round, initial coding was comprised of identifying codes from the transcripts. For the second-round coding, the researcher identified codes to be organized into themes. A number of themes emerged from the coding.

Findings of Research Question 1 concluded many in this sample of Chinese managers pointed out the same components of team leadership approaches and similar aspects of transformational leadership approaches. Their corporate headquarters (WEC) established some important requirements and standards for managers who typically presented their ideas about effective leadership methods during the global summits held every two years. These Chinese managers also described more elements of United States than Chinese leadership approaches during their work at WEC. For Research Question 2, the researcher's findings included (1) some early introductions of U.S. leadership approaches from the Chinese government, (2) WEC Chinese managers' educational

background, (3) people-centered organizational cultures, and (4) the economic

globalization.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A variety of successful business leaders, professors, and writers have offered definitions and opinions of leadership. However, and more formal, leadership is guidance for others in the pursuit of individual and collective goals often by directing, coordinating, motivating, supporting, and unifying their efforts and having the ability to lead others (Forsyth, 2018). Also, leadership is necessary to help organizations develop a new vision of what they can be and then mobilize the organization to change toward the new vision (Bennis & Nauus, 1985). Gao et al. (2011) illustrated leadership development activities have been viewed as a possible key to cross-cultural business by multinational corporations (MNCs) and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in China.

Leadership is the most studied aspect of organizations because it serves as the one overarching topic that makes the difference between success and failure (Qadri, 2016). Many typical examples of an organization's operation managed by elites in hierarchies show leadership can provide the key factor to influence organizational achievement. Hence, the researcher investigates in this study the way in which some Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches in a corporation and reasons corporate managers accept or use the methods.

Background of the Study

The Origin and Development of Leadership in China

Han (2013) indicated the traditional perspectives of Confucianism date back over 2500 years. Han noted Confucian leadership focuses on the inner person and requires the effort of self-cultivation and lifelong continuous learning. Confucian leadership not only aims to implement individual perfection through the practice of self-cultivation, but also

establishes social harmony through exemplary conduct (Han, 2013). Lao Tzu and Confucius are among the most respected and popular figures in both the Chinese educational and philosophical contexts. Their books *Tao Tĕ Ching* and *The Analects* have been translated into many different languages, including English (Durrant, 1981). From generation to generation, the training and formation of many Chinese leaders' wisdom, ethics, personality, and concepts of leadership are important relative to the essential components hidden in these two books. Platts (1994), a Western scholastic researcher of Lao Tzu, argued the most capable and ultimately the most powerful leaders include those who practice humility, subtlety, and composure. Platts stated the power in composure and the strength in compassion allow skillful leaders to organize others and to achieve a collective end without the overt use of means suggested by Lao Tzu. No doubt traditional opinions of Confucian leadership have had a significant and far-reaching impact on some powerful leaders referred to as Emperors.

Unquestionably, Ko and Sng (2013) asserted the managerial history with the characteristics of centralization of authority in ancient China of Qin Dynasty could be traced back to over 2200 years. Ko and Sng stated the Chinese built a unitary and centralized state, one that is modern in the Weberian sense as early as the third century BC under the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC). Over the years, scholars have offered a variety of explanations ranging from cultures to topography that account for China's long history of political centralization (Ko & Sng, 2013).

Until 2021, many types of Chinese political systems and strategies were explored and uncovered by various investigators, researchers, and leaders. Some of these systems and strategies include the Imperial Examination in Imperial China (Feng, 1995), The

Edict on Imperial Favors (Zongbin, 2013), and The Closed-Door[1] Policy (Ming & Struve, 1984). Using one of these strategies as an example, Jianhua (2008) demonstrated the closed-door policy was one of the main reasons those powerful leaders failed with their coercive leadership in the late Ch'ing Dynasty. Jianhua also put forth the idea that the closed-door policy protected feudal economy and strengthened the autocratic rule of the feudal rule, but the rule had negative influences on China's commerce, navigation, and foreign trade development. During the Ch'ing Dynasty under the emperors' autocratic and conservative leadership strategies and other national conditions, the long feudal monarchy ended in 1912 (Sarton, 1943).

After several periods of vital political revolutions, Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China in 1949 (Tsang, 2000). As indicated by Huang et al. (2016), subsequent to the economic reform and open-door policy from President Deng in 1978, China's rapid urbanization had been driven by the exponential growth of national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moreover, some foreign trade and investment policies had made significant contributions to the success of China's economic reform drive that began in December 1978 (Qian, 2000), which show China had officially opened its economy to Western business (Vitale, 2001). Since 2001 and under President Xi's strategies of governance and administration of state affairs, China has opened its markets to the outside world and met the international conventions and trading standards set by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 (Ding, 2001). These paternalistic Chinese

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[1] The "closed-door" policy can be used to describe the direction of China's economic policy reform. Under the policy, China did not permit any foreign contacts into the country and refused to cooperate with foreign business.

leaders have improved the domestic economy and advanced the potential for foreign

trade development through effective reform and open-door policies.

The Origin and Development of Leadership in the United States

The origin and development of leadership in the US can be traced back over 400

years. In 1620, some church members signed the first official document, MAYFLOWER

COMPACT, to regulate the government of American colonies and to provide political

evidence of American democracy (Ciobanu, 2011). In July 1790, the first President of the

United States, George Washington, signed the Residence Act (Millikan, 2017). His

involvement in the decision making regarding the new capital showed that the president

was a much more active, hands-on leader than he was sometimes been given credit for

being (Millikan, 2017). Harris (2018) also stated that George Washington had a variety of

well-validated leadership competencies (e.g., emotional intelligence, resilience, and

integrity) largely consistent with leader-centered theoretical conceptions of leadership.

In the same period, as the founder of the modern capitalist economic system, Adam

Smith wrote his famous book *The Wealth of Nations* in England (Smith, 1937). In this

book, Smith described his view of human nature and the "invisible hand" of competition

as a guide to an economic system based on individual self-interest (Smith, 1937).

Lisogurska (2018) noted from 1776 the US gradually entered an age of advancement, and

a new generation of entrepreneurial leaders emerged, e.g., the Rockefellers, the

Vanderbilts, and the Carnegies were the first generations of the so-called entrepreneurial

rock stars (Lisogurska, 2018).

These entrepreneurial rock stars have provided some role models of transformational

leaders. Chen (2007) argued transformational leaders typically create visionary scenarios

used to assemble and mobilize a supporting cast of interdependent members who commit and enact the vision to achieve strategic value creation. Transformational leaders possess a propensity to act autonomously, a willingness to innovate and take risks, a tendency to be aggressive toward competitors, and to be proactive relative to marketplace opportunities (Chen, 2007). They also act as change agents and facilitators to implement creative problem-solving systems or process orientation, thereby releasing creativity from the team and empowering individuals in problem solving, setting quality standards, continually improving, and setting higher goals (Chen, 2007).

Through different generations of U.S. presidents and entrepreneurs, the American economy has grown dramatically to one of the highest levels. Nicholas (2010) described technological change and organizational development as fundamental to U.S. economic growth during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the American economy was in crisis during the 1930s (Lindenberg, 1988), and President Franklin D. Roosevelt decisively set up the effective New Deal program to recover the national economy (Seligman, 1956). For example, President Roosevelt promulgated the Fair Labor Standard Act in 1938, which marked a turning point in American social policy, as this policy protects employees' benefits including minimum wage (Grossman, 1978). Based on President Roosevelt's situational leadership approach, the national economy gradually recovered and developed.

During nearly the same period, Peter Ferdinand Drucker became known as the corporate leader. Pearson (2008) indicated as the Father of Modern Management, Peter F. Drucker published more than 30 books on management. His books included *The Practice of Management*, *The Effective Executive*, and *Managing the Nonprofit Organization*:

Principles and Practices. Until 2021, Drucker's meaningful leadership quotes influenced generations. One of his famous quotes is, "Leadership is lifting a person's vision to high sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations" (Drucker, 2012, p. 10).

The story of the origin and development of U.S. leadership has continued and has lasted long into the 20th century. Hamilton (2004) indicated British diplomats considered President Nixon's China visit of February 1972 a major political success, which has been called "A Week that Changed the Worlds." After his visit, the US and China began to build a long and harmonious relationship to promote the development of world peace and the economy. Through almost half a century of mutual political trust, efforts, and economic cooperation, American and Chinese economies have had an unprecedented development in the second decade of the 21st century.

The Development of U. S. Leadership Methods in China

Sarton (1943) indicated during the late Ch'ing Dynasty of Chinese history (1840-1922) some governors tried many ways to bring in the advanced Western technologies for military industries, building up some modern private enterprises and sending young students to study abroad in the US. These attempts could be considered typical procedures of the "Self-Strengthening Movement" (Qu, 2016). In this movement, three famous reformers, Li-Hung Chang, Tseng-Kuo-fan, and Tso Tsung-t'ang, saw value not only in bringing Western-style military hardware to China, but also in pursuing educational reform and overseas studies (Qu, 2016). Halsey (2014) also stated the Self-Strengthening Movement could never have transformed China into an industrial and

military superpower overnight, but it took the first tentative steps to narrow the disparity between China and the US.

However, this movement has continued to have unimaginable negative impacts on modern China's development. For instance, Elman (2004) pointed out the Self-Strengthening Movement failed due to poor armaments, insufficient training, lack of leadership, lack of funding, and low morale, which combined intensified the sharp contradictions among different parties and classes. With the breach of different political parties and classes, the long feudal monarchy finally came to an end in 1912 (Sarton, 1943).

Modern China witnessed the rise of great politicians such as Liang Qichao, Sun Yat-sen, Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, and Mao Zedong (Fitzgerald, 1995). Through hard times of vital political revolutions, Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China (China) in 1949 (Tsang, 2000). Almost 30 years had transpired when China experienced rapid changes. In 1978, Chinese leaders gradually improved the domestic economy and advanced potential foreign trade development in the early stage of the reform and open-door policies. The open-door policy showed China officially opened its economy to Western business (Vitale, 2001). Under such policies, China had experienced a foreign direct investment (FDI) boom, which meant massive foreign capital inflows served as a critical engine of China's rapid economic growth, creating jobs and bringing much needed technology into the country (Deng, 2001). Smyth (2001) illustrated some well-known multinational American corporations, including International Business Machines Corporation, American Automobile Corporation, and Western Oil Corporation, made major direct foreign investment (DFI) commitments in the 1984-85 boom. Given

the large and increasing interest among American firms in conducting business in China, more American corporate leaders gradually have received considerable profits and benefits. At the same time, these American corporate leaders conveyed their U.S. leadership theories and approaches to local Chinese managers to enrich their knowledge of leadership.

Furthermore, through experienced and effective knowledge of leadership, Chinese managers have had opportunities to put the approaches and theories into practice under the open-door policies. Using transformational leadership as the first example, Gao and Bai (2011) pointed out transformational leadership practiced in Chinese family businesses was effective in promoting family employees' value of commitment to remain. Hall et al. (2002) indicated managers can increase the success of their companies through the use of the transformative approach.

The next example involves situational leadership. McCleskey (2014) indicated the situational leadership theory states effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation and an appropriate response, rather than a charismatic leader with a large group of dedicated followers. McCleskey also revealed situational leadership theory advocates matching the leader to the situation if possible or matching the leadership orientation (task versus relation) to the follower maturity.

A team leadership theory also exists. Zaccaro et al. (2008) indicated team leadership is essential for team effectiveness. The team leadership theory describes the way in which leaders should build work team capabilities and ways to target team development (Kozlowski et al., 2009).

The Origin and Development of the West Electric Corp

In the US, relatively few companies can be identified with continuous operations that have spanned over 100 years (Rkhardlaota, 2019), but West Electric Corp (WEC) offers such a model. WEC not only has a long history, but also has made incredible achievements. In 1886, George Westinghouse, the founder, built his enterprise and was granted his first electric company patent for a "System of Electrical Distribution" (Discover Westinghouse, 2020).

Three years later, the company changed its name from West Electric to the West Electric & Manufacturing Company (Kline & Lassman, 2005). Around 30 years later, West Electric & Manufacturing introduced its first toaster to turn bread mechanically (Rkhardlaota, 2019). In 1940, West Electric & Manufacturing introduced the first automatic washing machine that required being bolted to the floor (Rkhardlaota, 2019). In 1945, West Electric & Manufacturing became WEC (Rkhardlaota, 2019). During the 1960s, winds of change began to alter the course of WEC, as well as the course of the world (Kline & Lassman, 2005).

In 2008, WEC officially entered China and brought advanced technologies and products to the Chinese market (Discover Westinghouse, 2020). At that time many consumers, particularly the younger generation and their families, embraced the corporation's innovation and individualism with unprecedented enthusiasm. WEC has gradually grown and become a novel brand in China. From intelligent home appliances to energy solutions, its innovations can be closely linked to Chinese consumers' lives (Discover Westinghouse, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Since the Chinese government carried out the reform and open-door policy in 1978,

more foreign brands have been adopted for the home market, such as European, Korean, Australian, and American businesses. As one of these popular foreign corporations, WEC entered the Chinese market and brought some experienced and innovative strategies about leadership to the local Chinese managers in 2008. With these reasonable U.S. and Chinese leadership concepts and approaches, many Chinese managers at WEC quickly addressed the Chinese market with its potential customers in the past 10 years, and they have experienced great success. However, other brand companies' Chinese managers failed with their inappropriate leadership, insufficient financial support, and ineffective staff training, e.g., Whirlpool.

As one famous and historical home appliance company, Whirlpool failed to enter and seize the market share many times in China from 1995 to 2021 because its Chinese managers lacked efficient leadership strategies and methods (Khanna et al., 2011). Chinese managers must understand the knowledge of U.S. and Chinese leadership and master the abilities of leadership strategies in order to strengthen their teams, as they can improve their corporations' brand awareness, performance, and core values.

Significance of the Study

Since the Chinese government carried out the reform and open-door policy in 1978, many Chinese managers have had opportunities to learn different types of leadership methods and approaches from the Western world, including European countries, Australia, and the US. As an example, one of the popular electric corporations in the US, WEC, began to gradually enter mainland China in 2008 (Discover Westinghouse, 2020). The global summit, which is held every two years, has provided the most suitable leadership methods and innovative technologies and products of the Western world to the

local Chinese managers. The WEC CEO and the General Manager in China's region typically present their main ideas about the global leadership approaches from the headquarters located in the US.

Chinese product managers are from different provinces and cities. They oversee goods and services relating to personal care, massage chairs, bathroom supplies, kitchen appliances, and water purifiers.

With a few suitable leadership approaches, most WEC Chinese managers have taken high market share in mainland China. Moreover, through a series of global summits, these managers have not only learned relevant knowledge and skills about the leadership approaches from their senior Chinese-American leaders, but also have shared their own perspectives and practical experiences of Chinese and U.S. leadership approaches with their colleagues, partners, and subordinates. These Chinese managers' concerns and practices about leadership approaches have pushed WEC forward in the vast Chinese economic market. These practices to a great extent will influence future domestic economic markets as well.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to gain a better understanding of the way in which Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches and the reason these managers accept or use U.S. leadership approaches at WEC located in China. The long history of Chinese leadership approaches has been a very broad and interesting topic. Cheung and Chan (2005) expressed the leadership methods of some Chinese CEOs have synthesized Confucian, Daoist, Mohist, and Legalist doctrines. Cheung and Chan further explained the Confucian doctrines advocate benevolence, harmony, learning, loyalty, and

humility. Hwang (2013) indicated the Daoist doctrines emphasize flexibility and reversion (e.g., the principle that the weak can defeat the strong). Hwang also revealed the Mohist doctrines underpin thrift, whereas the Legalist doctrines inculcate self-control and innovativeness. One can recognize Chinese CEOs' styles of leadership have not relied exclusively on Confucian ethics, which reflects an evolution over 1000 years of Chinese leadership (Cheung & Chan, 2005). Furthermore, other scholars have indicated Chinese leaders exercise other types of methods like paternalistic leadership and collectivistic leadership (Aycan et al., 2013). Paternalistic leadership (PL) is one well-developed and systematically researched model (Chen & Farh, 2010).

Compared with Chinese leadership styles, U.S. leadership includes various approaches such as transformational leadership, situational leadership, and team leadership. Transformational leadership is one of the most influential styles of the positive employee and organizational outcomes (Budur, 2020). The situational leadership theory proposes effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation and an appropriate response, rather than a charismatic leader with a large group of dedicated followers (Graeff, 1997; Grint, 2011, as cited in McCleskey, 2014). Moreover, Day et al. (2006) indicated team leadership approaches involve the social context associated with individuals working in teams, in addition to the context associated with teams working with other teams in a broader organizational context.

In a cultural context, U.S. leadership approaches differ from Chinese leadership. Therefore, a discussion of different types of leadership affords the knowledge not only of possible cultural differences between China and the US, but also methods to reach a

better understanding of possible distinctive leadership in different cultures, as well as common corporate developmental goals.

Research Questions

This research investigation involves the following two central research questions:

1. How do Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches at WEC?

2. Why do Chinese managers adopt U.S. leadership approaches at WEC?

General Methodology

Researchers employ three main research methods which include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods to conduct their studies (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The qualitative method is one of the three approaches for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Furthermore, as one of the significant qualitative research methodologies, case study is a recognized approach to answer research questions proposed in the present study. The case study approach allows a close look at a real situation in context (Yin, 2009), as faced by Chinese managers working at WEC.

Yin (2009) asserted a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context. The research by Johnson and Christensen (2017) also can be applied to this current study, as a specific company with certain participants is closely and carefully examined.

Further, as one of the popular case study research designs, single-case (type 2) designs may be incorporated into subunits of analyses in order to develop a more complex or embedded design (Yin, 2009). The subunits often can add significant opportunities for extensive analysis, which enhance the insights into the single case (Yin,

2009). However, the type 2 design may be risky at times (Johnson & Christensen, 2017) because many research designers have spent an inordinate amount of time and energy and have given much attention to designing their research.

As one of the major methods of data collection, interviews are the main source of case study information used to guide conversations rather than structure queries (Yin, 2009). Qualitative interviews also are referred to as depth interviews because they can be used to obtain in-depth information about a participant's feelings, opinions, and experience related to a research topic (Milena et al., 2008). In-depth interviews involve four types: informational conversational interviews, interview guide approaches, standardized open-ended interviews, and closed quantitative interviews (Johnson & Christensen, 2017).

The interview guide approach is used by this researcher with a sample of Chinese managers in leadership positions at WEC. The researcher ensures the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2002). The interview guide provides more focus than the conversational approach while allowing for a degree of freedom and adaptability in obtaining the information from the interviewees (Valenzuela & Shrivastava).

Under the scheduled time, the interviewer explores specific research topics and asks specific open-ended questions during the interview (Johnson & Christensen, 2017), which is a valid method to obtain interviewees' answers and relevant data for qualitative researchers. At the end of the investigation, the researcher uses one or two types of online software to record the conversations, which allows the researcher to save the content

confidentially and safely. In addition, transcribing the conversations from Chinese to English can help to achieve a better analysis and comparison of the data.

Case Study Research Method

As a main approach of qualitative research methods, case study research has its own strengths and weaknesses. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context (Noor, 2008). Case study research focuses on providing a detailed account of the characteristics and dynamics present in one or more cases, which include intrinsic case study, instrumental case study, and collective case study (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Relative to its strengths, case study research enables the researcher to gain a holistic view of a certain phenomenon or series of events and provides a complete picture due to the use of many sources of evidence (Noor, 2008). Furthermore, case studies allow research to be conducted with a minimum of effort and allow the results to be communicated much more easily and directly to those concerned (Kyburz-Graber, 2004). Hence, case study research methods can enable a researcher to gradually obtain rich knowledge, use scientific analysis, and gain profound experience.

However, the weaknesses in case studies sometimes can hinder scholars' choices. Yin (2009) indicated the development of the case study research design can be a difficult aspect of conducting case studies, as they include (1) a study's questions, (2) its propositions, if any, (3) its unit(s) of analysis, (4) the logic linking the data to the propositions, and (5) the criteria for interpreting the findings. Also, case study research is presumably not effective in making generalizations (Johnson & Christensen, 2017), as their summarization shows more randomness and subjectivity than other research

methods. Case study generalizations focus more on analytical angle than statistical perspectives, which may to a certain extent limit the researcher's whole view from the investigation.

<div align="center">**Limitations**</div>

Limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher's control (Simon & Goes, 2013). A limitation associated with qualitative study relates to validity and reliability (Simon & Goes, 2013). Johnson and Christensen (2017) described three types of validity especially relevant to qualitative research: (1) descriptive validity, (2) interpretive or emic validity, and (3) theoretical validity. In the current study, interpretive or emic validity was chosen by the qualitative researcher because it can provide more accurate understandings about Chinese managers' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, and experiences at WEC, as well as help the investigator compare specifically between the leadership of Chinese and U.S. managers at WEC in China. Furthermore, Yin (2009) indicated the goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study. During the investigation, the researcher should obtain the participants' honest feedback and different findings in case of invalid bias data and ineffective interview.

As one of the qualitative research methods, the single or intrinsic case study serves as the main tool to understand some Chinese managers' leadership approaches in comparison to U.S. leadership styles. This approach can be used widely because qualitative researchers can invest all their time and resources into the study of a single case and, therefore, develop an in-depth understanding. However, generalizing from a single case can be very difficult and risky, as most qualitative researchers lack opportunities to generalize (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Yin (2009) also described the

single case may be incorporated into subunits of analyses, but extensive attention to the subunits weakens a researcher's main ideas of the study. The single case study has its strengths, but its potential weaknesses should be avoided through large amounts of efficient training and practice.

<div align="center">**Delimitations**</div>

Delimitations are those limitations consciously set by the researcher and in the researcher's control. Researchers determine the boundaries or limits so the study's aims and objectives can be achieved. Delimitations concern the study's theoretical background, objectives, research questions, variables of interest, and the study sample (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Unlike limitations, delimitations result from specific choices made by the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). The delimitations in this study are grounded in the choice of the problem, the method of data collection, and the theoretical conclusions.

Choice of Problem

With the increasing importance of the Chinese market in the world economy, many international companies have rushed to China to explore business opportunities (Zigang & Fan, 2004). Using one of the historical American companies as an example, WEC quickly scored many successes in mainland China and achieved considerable profits with reasonable leadership from 2011-2021. Various cultures and backgrounds brought about different interpersonal relationships (Zhang & Huang, 2013), conflict management (Zigang & Fan, 2004), and leadership approaches. Hence, such a theme of leadership approaches appears more attractive and meaningful than others for qualitative researchers. As a qualitative investigator, the researcher selected such a theme to examine

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the way in which some Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches and reasons they accept and use U.S. leadership approaches at one specific U.S. manufacturing company in mainland China.

Method of Data Collection

Before conducting such a study, a case study (in-depth) interview guide with a list of questions must be developed to ensure all questions and probes are covered by the end of the interview (Hennink et al., 2020). A typical interview guide uses the following structure: introduction, opening questions, key questions, and closing questions (Hennink et al., 2020), but logicality is the main tactic to design a better blueprint of the interview guide. As one of the protection measures during the interview process, a qualitative researcher with special care and sensitivity is responsible for such things as gaining informed consent from all persons involved, protecting participants from any harm, and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate (Yin, 2009).

Theoretical Conclusion

After the investigation, writing the research report requires a smooth and concise expression, which is achieved by avoiding ambiguity or skirting topics, tense, or person; the conciseness of expression is achieved by being frugal with words (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Simon and Goes (2013) demonstrated the delimitations of a study are characteristics that arise from limitations in the scope of the study. For a qualitative researcher, these parts of delimitations are worthy of attention.

Definitions

Chinese Leadership: Smith and Wang (1996) indicated in considering the nature of Chinese organizational leadership, researchers must briefly examine studies of Chinese

organizational structures, as well as some of the historical and contemporary circumstances within which different types of leaders operate. Wang and Chee (2011) also revealed the Chinese translation of *leadership* is "leading ability," which is a series of strategies and personal skills for managers to develop. Also, many Chinese managers recently have come to believe they can find the prescription for leadership in Chinese classical philosophies such as Confucianism, Daoism, or Legalism (Wang & Chee, 2011).

U.S. Leadership: Mills (2005) stated leadership is about a vision of the future and the ability to energize others to pursue it. Nawaz and Khan (2016) also clarified many researchers and practitioners have developed a consensus that leadership is a flexible developmental process, with each new piece of research building upon and seldom completely disregarding that which was derived before it.

Open-Door Policy: According to Huan (1986), the Chinese government adopted a new policy in 1978 which Westerners have referred to as the "open-door policy." This policy has altered China's development strategy from one based on self-sufficiency to one of active participation in the world market (Huan, 1986). By the 1990s, China had become the second largest recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) after the United States (Ng & Tam, 2012). Ng and Tam (2012) also indicated China persistently achieved a highly impressive annual GDP growth rate throughout the early open-door policy period.

Self-Strengthening Movement: Poag (2018) pointed out the Self-Strengthening Movement is an attempt to modernize China through the acquisition of Western technology and science, was a failure due to numerous factors but mainly due to the

rivaled, fractured political factions of the Qing Dynasty. Qu (2016) further clarified by the mid-19th century as the West began to exert its force and influence over the Qing Empire, scholars and officials within the Empire saw a need to emulate the technologies, organizational hierarchies, and cultural traditions of the Occident in an attempt to prevent China from becoming subjugated by the will of Western Imperialism. This process of endeavored reform and emulation became known as the Self-Strengthening Movement.

Interpretive or Emic Validity: According to Johnson (1997), interpretive validity refers to accurately portraying the meaning attached by participants to what is being studied by the researcher. In particular, it refers to the degree to which the research participants' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood by the qualitative researcher and portrayed in the research report (Johnson, 1997). Thomson (2011) also stated "interpretive validity" captures the extent to which the researcher reports the participants' meanings of events, objects, and/or behaviors.

Summary

In this chapter, the beginning section focused on the various definitions of leadership from recognized authors. The researcher then added the background of the study as the second segment of the chapter because it covered the origin and development of leadership in the US and China, the development of U.S. leadership approaches in China, the case study research method, and the origin and development of WEC. The third segment described a reasonable logical alignment between the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, and the general methodology (Bakht, 2018). The final segment of the chapter included a discussion on significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, definitions, and summary.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review discusses the Chinese political and economic backgrounds; describes some Chinese managers' perspectives of Chinese leadership approaches (including Confucian leadership and paternalistic leadership); and focuses on the three main U.S. leadership styles of transformational leadership, situational leadership, and team leadership. These meaningful leadership styles not only involve different concepts and theories, but also have corresponding and reasonable models in real applications.

In 1949 after hard times of vital political revolutions, Mao Zedong (1893-1976) established the People's Republic of China, which most call China (Qingjun, 1994). In the past 30 years China has changed gradually and dramatically both socially and economically. Fan (1992) mentioned Chinese business leaders gradually improved the domestic economy and advanced potential foreign trade development in the early stage of the reform and open-door policies in 1978. Various enterprises and joint ventures sprang up one after another. The open-door policy showed China officially opened its economy to Western business (Vitale, 2001). Under this strategy, many foreign corporations attempted to enter the country and gradually gained access to the Chinese market. Ford Motor Company, for example, was brought to China as a quick and low-cost way of entering the market (Teng, 2004). In contract to Chrysler and GM's JV approach in China, Ford chose to acquire 20% of Jiangling Motors, a relatively small local auto producer (Teng, 2004). Johnson et al. (2012) indicated the rise of a middle class in Asian countries, including India and China, was an opportunity to expand the market share for Apple, Inc. They also mentioned Apple had 40 store openings planned for 2012 and was spending $900 million on new stores in Germany, Spain, France, Australia, Canada, and

China (Johnson et al., 2012). During the same period, local Chinese managers worked at and later led these foreign corporations and accumulated more than four decades of leadership practices, as well as theories of business administration from China and the US. This literature review discusses the differences and similarities not only between the Chinese and U.S. leadership approaches, but also among the Chinese managers working at WEC.

Chinese Managers' Perspectives of Chinese Leadership

Confucian Leadership

From generation to generation, many Chinese managers' wisdom, ethics, personality, and concepts have been associated with Confucian leadership. Han (2013) pointed out the principles of Confucianism, with the practices of Confucian leadership as a catalyst, made the miracles of four Asian newly industrial economies (Korea, Hongkong, Taiwan, and Singapore), as well as engendered China's rising economy. With the dramatic economic development of China, many Chinese managers have come to believe to a large extent the traditional Confucian leadership approach can improve their organizational development. Cheung and Chan (2005) indicated the Confucius philosophies advocate benevolence, harmony, learning, loyalty, righteousness, and humility, which may be the most prevalent tenets that support collectivism in organizations. Moreover, McDonald (2012) stated Confucianism manifests itself as dominant relevant to the competing ideologies of Communism, Daoism, Legalism, and Mohism. McDonald also emphasized the Confucian leadership approach can be the potential antidote to the excesses and turmoil that are all too often in evidence today across many Western economies. Indeed, as one of the most traditional leadership

approaches in China, Confucian leadership has been rooted on Chinese individuals'

thoughts, values, and traditional cultures for thousands of years. For example, Zhou

(2019) mentioned as descendants of Confucius, many Chinese teachers consider the way

in which their teaching methods or models can be related to the Confucian Analects

(*Lunyu* 《*论语*》) in their schools. Moreover, this traditional book contains many

philosophical words and sentences about benevolence, sincerity, and loyalty (Lu, 2018).

Confucian philosophies and related leadership concepts not only offer some classical

knowledge for Chinese teachers at schools, but also the text provides vital and practical

foundations for some experienced Chinese product managers.

Confucian leadership theories typically guide Chinese managers to consistently

move forward. However, Confucian opinions continue to have some negative

implications such as risk avoidance, less innovation, and paternalism in some Chinese

business organizations (Yeh & Xu, 2010). Some corporate Chinese managers fall into the

traditional feudal superstition systems because they believe only the Confucius thoughts

and views. Also, their Confucian ideas sometimes hinder the development of the

corporation's advanced technology because they focus only on the old thoughts and

dogma. Hence, as Chinese product managers, they should retain the essence and discard

the dross of Confucius leadership when using it.

Paternalistic Leadership

As one of the most historical leadership approaches, paternalistic leadership (PL)

has been defined and used by many Chinese scholars and managers in their organizations.

The PL approach has an impact on business organizations. Farh and Cheng (2000)

indicated PL is a father-like leadership style in which clear and strong authority is

combined with concern and considerateness and elements of moral leadership. PL contains three main constituent elements: authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral leadership (Cheng et al., 2004). Among them, each dimension can be correlated to organizational effectiveness.

One study showed affective trust mediated the interaction of benevolence and authoritarianism on employee innovative behavior and knowledge sharing (Tian & Sanchez, 2017). This study also suggested these two constructs underlying PL may promote employee breakthrough behaviors across cultures (Tian & Sanchez, 2017). Moreover, Niu et al. (2009) mentioned benevolent leadership promotes intrinsic work motivation and leader identification by increasing the obligation to reciprocate the leader's kindness; this effect is particularly strong when the individual also is a moral leader. Niu et al. also pointed out authoritarian leadership increases extrinsic work motivation and compliance through setting high standards and providing directive instructions to the employees.

PL is currently facing more and greater challenges under globalization (Han, 2013). Chen et al. (2014) argued while the benevolence and morality dimensions of PL are positively associated with both in-role and extra-role performance, the authoritarian PL dimension is negatively related to subordinate performance. Chan (2014) also pointed out the authoritarian leadership style inhibits employees' tendencies to display behaviors that might be interpreted by the leaders as challenging authority, using some Chinese managers as an example. Some paternalistic Chinese managers focus only on their authority and power, which may collide with their employees. These negative influences suggest PL has some unavoidable shortcomings.

Transformational Leadership

Since the slogan "Innovation You Can Be Sure Of" has been shown in WEC China's website, many Chinese managers have participated in the global summits and began to consider whether their current slogan and public image could be aligned with those of the headquarters located in the US (Discover Westinghouse, 2020). Meanwhile, as managers of each sector, they had to consider and choose the corresponding leadership approaches. After careful comparison and practice, many agreed on one suitable and reasonable leadership approach—Transformational Leadership.

Professor James MacGregor Burns was one of the first to study leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers rather than simply as an assessment of the traits that set leaders apart (Barbour, 2012). He also noted that while leadership is an aspect of power, it must be exercised in the transformational process (Barbour, 2012). Transformational leadership is the process by which a leader fosters group or organizational performance beyond expectations by virtue of the strong emotional attachment with his or her followers combined with the collective commitment to a higher moral cause (Diaz-Saenz, 2011). Rafferty and Griffin (2004) identified a number of subdimensions of transformational leadership, including *charisma* (which was later renamed *idealized influence*), *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation*, and *individualized consideration*. Barbour (2012) stated that transformational leaders engage with others in such a way that both leaders and followers are raised to higher levels of motivation and morality. Transformational leaders support exploring new business concepts for achieving breakthroughs in organizational innovation, which plays a

significant role in leading, driving, and executing innovation strategies (Zuraik & Kelly, 2019). Most transformational leaders facilitate innovation advances at the organizational level by focusing on exploration, fostering a learning climate, promoting safety, being open to divergent thinking, allowing for mistakes, and empowering employees (Zuraik & Kelly, 2019).

Rafferty and Griffin (2004) explained transformational leadership approaches contain the same four main factors as previously described: *inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration,* and *idealized influence.* The first three components typically have significant and positive influences on organizational performance (like WEC), but the fourth element of idealized influence has no important impacts on business performance (Orabi, 2016). To cite an instance, inspirational motivation means some Chinese product managers at WEC use positive words or body language to motivate their employees for organizational commitments or goals. Also, taking e-commerce marketing strategies instead of physical stores modes to promote employee productivity can be correlated to the intellectual stimulation factor, which may cultivate WEC Chinese employees' creation and innovation for the Chinese market. Then, listening to and satisfying employees' needs can be related to the individualized consideration factor of transformational leadership. These three elements can improve WEC performance as long as employees' difficulties can be overcome. As for the fourth component of idealized influence, it sometimes affects WEC performance in a negative way.

However, the magnitude of interest in and enthusiasm for transformational leadership is out of proportion with its weaknesses (Andersen, 2015). Andersen (2015)

mentioned the transformational leadership theory involves some grave problems: conceptual limitations; the claim that transformational leaders are more effective is not empirically supported; and the use of the term *followers* rather than *subordinates* creates confusion in the study of formal organizations. Undeniably, these weaknesses to some extent hinder this theory's development. Most Chinese managers at WEC have obtained incredible profits and benefits from such transformational leadership theories and practices as updating their opinions of leadership, improving their quality of leadership, and promoting the Chinese market economy and development. However, the transformational leadership approaches have some shortcomings such as unclear conceptual definitions, ineffective organizational behaviors, and inadequate causal models (Berkovich, 2016).

Situational Leadership

From 2008 until 2021, many Chinese managers at WEC experienced difficult and complicated situations but made great efforts in the industry (Discover Westinghouse, 2020). During these years, they frequently employed one useful and flexible leadership approach in their corporate operations to face unknown challenges and resolve tricky problems. The method that helped them come through the harsh time is referred to as the *situational leadership approach*.

Meier (2016) reported the Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory (SLT) is one of the best-known theories in the field of managerial leadership. Wimmer (2012) indicated the situational leadership II model (see Figure 1) shows a bell-shaped curve pattern which involves four leader styles of situational leadership: (S1) high directive and low supportive behavior (directing); (S2) high directive and high supportive

behavior (coaching); (S3) low directive and high supportive behavior (supporting); and (S4) low directive and low supportive behavior (delegating). Moreover, these four styles can be matched with the developmental levels of followers from D1 (low competence and high commitment) to D4 (high competence and high commitment) (Wimmer, 2012).

Figure 1

The Situational Leadership II Model
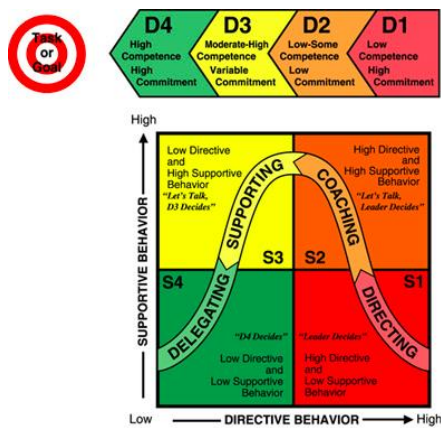
Note. The top describes the development levels of followers from D1 to D4. The second major part of this model concerns the way in which directive and supportive leadership behaviors combine for each of the four styles (i.e., directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating). This model shows different leadership styles and behaviors can be used by different managers based on their followers' changing situations. From "Cooperating Teachers' Use of the Situational Leadership II Model: The Influence of Follower Development on Student Teachers' Satisfaction and Intent to Teach," by G. Wimmer, 2012, Doctoral dissertation, Texas Tech University Libraries, p. 35 (http://hdl.handle.net/2346/46923). Copyright 2020 by the American Psychological Association.

This model is based on the amount of direction (task behavior) and the amount of socioemotional support (relationship behavior) a leader must provide given the situation and the level of "readiness" of the follower or group (Schermerhorn, 1997). Situational leadership's popularity appears to derive from its model's simplicity, ease of use, and relevance to a manager's role (Avery & Ryan, 2002). Avery and Ryan (2002) also pointed out organizational support for situational leadership enhances the likelihood of the model's success, particularly when an organization has a culture-supporting situational leadership. As can be seen, the situational leadership theory and its approaches have many strengths (e.g., practical applications and flexible techniques) in business organizations.

Using some new employees at WEC as an example, these new followers who are very excited but lack the understanding of job description or requirements would be identified as low competence but high commitment (D1) followers (Vandayani et al., 2015). The Chinese managers should use S1 (high directive and low supportive behavior) to treat their new employees, which means a Chinese product manager defines the roles of the followers and instructs them on what, how, when, and where to do various tasks (Schermerhorn, 1997). Three to five years later, new employees may grow and reach from the moderate to high competence with variable commitment (D3) level (Vandayani et al., 2015). These Chinese managers should then use S3 (low directive and high supportive behavior) instead of S1 (high directive and low supportive behavior) to treat these progressive employees. The new employees' development and managers' flexibilities show leaders must adjust and adopt the suitable leadership behaviors for coping with their complex organizational situations.

The situational leadership approach involves some shortcomings. The employee

demographic characteristics, the explanation of the managers, the validity of the

situational leadership model, and the conceptualization of the employee development

levels can be its main disadvantages (McCleskey, 2014). The pros of this situational

leadership approach can be and have been applied in many different and complicated

situations by the Chinese product managers in WEC, but its weaknesses appear to co-

exist. Meier (2016) also emphasized situational leadership theory undergoes many

revisions, with the term *maturity level* changed into the *performance readiness level* in

the newest edition. This change occurred in response to many critics and research in

situational leadership theory (Meier, 2016).

Team Leadership

As one of the basic leadership theories and approaches, team leadership can be

defined as the enactment of the affective, cognitive, and behavioral processes needed to

facilitate performance management (i.e., adaptive, coordinated, integrated action) and

team development (Bryman, 2011). Moreover, Cismas (2011) put forward one

conceptual model under this theory's characteristics, referred to as the Hill Model.

The Hill model for team leadership provides a framework for understanding the

complicated phenomenon of team leadership (see Figure 2) (Cismas, 2011). It contains

seven parts divided into specific actions and factors that can help managers improve their

team effectiveness (Cismas, 2011). The first part is *Leadership Decisions,* which is

divided into two portions: *Internal Leadership Actions* and *External Leadership Actions.*

Each leadership action has its own important factors including *Task-based*, *Relational*,

and *Environmental.* Also, each factor has its own corresponding actions such as

clarifying goals, making decisions, collaborating, building commitment, and negotiating

support. The last part of the model is called *Team Effectiveness,* which involves

performance and development. Some criticism can be seen on this leadership approach.

Bryman (2011) pointed out the team leadership method is complex, multilevel, and a

cyclical process that takes many forms. Another criticism is some managers may

encounter multifaceted management challenges in creating effective organizational

cultures and environments for their team members (Thamhain, 2004).

Figure 2

The Hill Model for Team Leadership

Note. This model provides a framework for understanding the complicated phenomenon

of team leadership, beginning at the top with its initial leadership decisions, moving to

internal and external leadership actions, and finally achieving the targets for team

effectiveness. This model also gives some specific actions (i.e., task, relational, and

environmental factors) that managers can use to improve their team effectiveness. From

"Leadership Patterns Enhanced by E-Activities," by S. C. Cismas, 2011, The 7th

Theoretical Framework

Concepts

Within the long historical Chinese culture, leadership approaches have been defined by many scholars, consultants, and managers. Wang and Chee (2011) indicated the Chinese translation of the term *leadership* is *leading ability*, which is a series of strategies and personal skills for managers to equip themselves. Wu et al. (2012) stated PL, an indigenous Chinese leadership style, is prevalent in Chinese society, given it has been rooted by cultural tradition. McDonald (2012) also mentioned the Chinese style of leadership practices is consistent with Confucian and Daoist ideological foundations but is distinct from Western styles. As two of the most traditional leadership theories in China, the Confucian leadership and PL approaches are closely related to Chinese social ideology, cultures, and core values. The Chinese leadership approaches mainly involve harmony, benevolence, and loyalty because these significant components can match most Chinese employees' cultures and core values, consolidate Chinese managers' status and power, and promote Chinese organizational goals and development.

The U.S. leadership approaches are to some extent similar to the Chinese leadership methods. Many Chinese managers examine and employ some U.S. leadership approaches in their business organizations, such as transformational leadership, situational leadership, and team leadership. Among them, the transformational leaders motivate followers to achieve performance beyond expectations by transforming their attitudes, beliefs, and values as opposed to simply gaining compliance (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004).

Compared with the transformational leadership method, the PL approach has a significant and unique effect on subordinate responses (Cheng et al., 2004). In contrast to the PL method, situational and team leadership can help managers more easily apply them to their own situations (Sims et al., 2009), satisfy their critical needs, and accomplish their team goals (Morgeson et al., 2010).

The Chinese and U.S. leadership approaches have some distinctions. They are different because their theories and methods involve distinctive social ideologies, cultures, and core values. Through the different cultures and social ideologies, many Chinese and American scholars and managers have formed their various concepts and opinions about these two leadership methods. Hence, the Chinese managers at WEC must understand and be able to tell and combine the differences and similarities between these two leadership methods before using them.

Applications of the Models

The Chinese and U.S. leadership approaches possess different patterns of leadership behaviors, and each model can be applied separately to different situations. For some of the Chinese leadership methods, Confucius opinions have a place in China. Zhu (2015) first proposed a theoretical framework based on the Confucian concepts of ren (love and compassion) and yi (righteousness or rightness) and studies their practical manifestation in qing (positive emotions) and li (rationality) for decision making. Chou and Cheng (2020) expressed Confucianism remains a dominant social force in Chinese society, which is influenced by five constant virtues–Ren (仁), meaning benevolence; Yi (義), righteousness; Li (禮), ritual propriety; Zhi (智), wisdom; and Xin (信), trustworthiness, which are interrelated and interact when needed. Chou and Cheng also explained the

principles and values of Confucianism help to shape a leadership mindset that places a greater emphasis on holistic concern regarding employee benefits, maintaining harmony through good relationships and self-sacrifice for the common good.

The second important Chinese leadership method is correlated to paternalism. Chen et al. (2014) described PL is not a unified construct; rather, it consists of three dimensions: authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality. They also put forward Chinese managers usually assume a father-like role and provide protection and care for their employees' professional and personal lives in exchange for loyalty and compliance (Chen et al., 2014). Moreover, Zhang et al. (2015) emphasized these three PL dimensions uniquely influence subordinate attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in organizations. Indeed, as one of the famous and traditional Chinese leadership methods, most Chinese managers have put PL into practical corporate use. These three key components serve multidimensionally as their basic leadership frameworks.

In China, many Chinese managers not only use their traditional Chinese leadership approaches, but also employ some popular U.S. leadership methods in leading their companies. Firstly, Dionne et al. (2004) investigated the way in which transformational leadership theory can provide a framework to impact team performance. They posited idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration could produce such intermediate outcomes as shared vision, team commitment, and an empowered team environment (Dionne et al., 2004). Moreover, these aspects can separately describe characteristics that are valuable to the *transformation* process (Hall et al., 2002). Hall et al. (2002) pointed out when managers are strong role models, encouragers, innovators, and coaches, they are utilizing these *four*

I's to *transform* their associates into better, more productive, and successful individuals. Due to the usability and flexibility of transformational leadership approaches, this U.S. leadership method has been employed by several Chinese product managers in their corporations.

Furthermore, some researchers and managers frequently have used the situational leadership II model because that style is easily understood. McCleskey (2014) mentioned the situational leadership theory focuses on managers' behaviors as either task- or people-focused. Also, the situational leadership II model offers an attractive framework for discussing interpersonal relations in organizations (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). Using this model, Chinese product managers can efficiently adjust their instructions to align with their followers.

The Hill model for team leadership is the last model for discussion in this study. Zaccaro et al. (2001) stated as many organizations move from a traditional hierarchical structure to a more team-based structure, team processes have an increasingly important influence on leader and organizational effectiveness. Also, Cismas (2011) clarified the Hill Team Leadership Model deals with the following aspects: (1) effective team performance based on the leader's mental model of the situation; (2) assigning internal or external leadership; and (3) establishing task, relational, or environmental intervention. As such, the Hill model provides a clear framework for its users.

In addition, Table 1 summarizes five different types of leadership approach behaviors of the present study and exhibits the positive aspects and negative impacts of each approach in detail. The Confucian leadership approach has been discussed by the researcher, along with its positive aspects that contain benevolence, harmony, loyalty,

righteousness, humility, collectivism, and traditional cultures (Cheung & Chan, 2005). On the contrary, its negative impacts include risk avoidance, less innovation, paternalism, feudal superstition, and old thoughts and dogma (Yeh & Xu, 2010).

The next method is the paternalistic leadership (PL) approach. Authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral leadership are three main elements of PL (Cheng et al., 2004). However, its negative influences are related to subordinate performance, authority, power, direction, and sense of fairness. Both of these leadership approaches belong to the main types of Chinese leadership from the perspectives of Chinese managers.

Relative to the Chinese managers' experiences of U.S. leadership approaches, the investigator notes the transformational leadership approach as the first consideration. The positive aspects of the transformational leadership approach consist mainly of idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). The conceptual limitations and insufficient empirical evidence aspects involve its negative influences of Chinese managers (Andersen, 2015).

The situational leadership approach is described next. Its positive aspects involve the behavioral model, directions, socioemotional support, and organizational support (Avery & Ryan, 2002). Conversely, its negative impacts include conceptualization, model's validity, manager explanations, and employees' demographic characteristics (McCleskey, 2014).

Last, goals, performance, development, team problems, decisions, actions, and effectiveness are positive aspects of the team leadership approach (Cismas, 2011). However, complicated procedures, cultures, and environments stand on the other side

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(Thamhain, 2004). In a nutshell, transformational, situational, and team leadership are three main methods of U.S. leadership approaches.

Table 1

Leadership Approaches Behaviors

	Leadership approaches				
	Confucian	Paternalistic	Transformational	Situational	Team
Positive Aspects	Benevolence	Authoritarianism	Idealized influence (charisma)	Behavioral model	Goals
	Harmony	Benevolence	Inspirational Motivation	Directions	Performance
	Loyalty	Morality		Socioemotional Support	Development
	Righteousness	Morality	Intellectual stimulation	Organizational support	Conceptual model
	Humility	Traditional cultures	Individualized consideration	Cultures	Team problem
	Collectivism	Trust	Innovation	Flexibility	Decision
	Traditional cultures	Kindness			Actions
		High standards			Effectiveness
Negative Impacts	Risk avoidance	Subordinate performance	Conceptual limitations	Conceptual-ization	Complicated and cyclical procedures
	Less innovation	Authority	Insufficient empirical evidence	Model's validity	
	Paternalism	Power		Managers' explanation	Cultures
	Feudal	Directions		Employees' Demographic characteristics	Environ-ments
	Superstition	Sense of fairness			
	Old thought and dogma				

Summary

This chapter included and introduction, Chinese managers' perspectives of Chinese leadership, Chinese managers' experiences of U.S. leadership, and the theoretical framework. Each section contained different components of leadership approaches such as Confucian leadership, paternalistic leadership, transformational leadership, situational leadership, and team leadership. Moreover, each leadership method was defined, researched, and examined by many scholars and managers. Last, the theoretical framework also covered concepts and related applications of different models of leadership methods. This literature review covered the main idea of the present study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the methodology's importance, definitions, types, and relevant applications. The Overview of the Research Problem as the second part clarifies the study's issues and purposes. This investigation involved two central research questions:

1. How do Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches?

2. Why do Chinese managers adopt U.S. leadership approaches at WEC?

Context and design are two important elements since they provide basic background and formats for an examination. Data collection strategy, procedures, and analysis also are significant factors because they offer specific steps and strengths of the case study research method. Participants, trustworthiness, and ethical consideration components are about individuals and should be taken into primary account when a researcher conducts a qualitative research study. The researcher often used the boundaries of case, limitation, and summary elements to discuss the investigation's restrictions, as any study has its drawbacks.

The methodology usually takes a key role in a researcher's investigation because it not only focuses on telling the reader how to collect the needed information, but also sells the reader on the study design or plan that has been constructed (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). In this study, the methodology was a pure qualitative research method rather than a pure quantitative or mixed research.

Rationale for Case Study

Williams (2007) described three common research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. He put forward qualitative research also is an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting and enables the researcher to develop a level of

detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Williams, 2007). Moreover, qualitative methodologies can help to find "meaning behind the numbers," provide flexibility without requiring large samples, and offer a clear and holistic view of the content (Sinkovics et al., 2008). Hence, the pure qualitative research methodology was used in the current investigation. Specifically, this study was designed as a case study to identify the way in which some Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches and the extent to which they accept and use U.S. leadership approaches at WEC in mainland China. The researcher sought a better understanding of participants' viewpoints and experiences in real-life settings.

Among the case study designs from which a researcher can select is the single-case (embedded) design. This design is distinguished from others, such as the single-case (holistic), multiple-case (hoslistic), and multiple-case (embedded) designs because it can offer important rationales for the researcher (Yin, 2009). Among these rationales were a critical test of existing theory, a unique circumstance, and a representative case (Yin, 2009). However, the single-case (embedded) design had some weaknesses, as it required careful investigation of the potential case to minimize the chances of misrepresentation and to maximize the access needed to collect the case study evidence (Yin, 2009).

In the investigation, each Chinese manager was asked the interview questions under the approved interview guide. Those dialogues were recorded, transcribed, and later coded from Chinese to English. Furthermore, some meaningful photographs and videos as personal documents were used to answer the research questions. Later, the researcher analyzed the qualitative data to summarize the results, findings, and recommendations at the end of the study.

Overview of Research Problem

Subsequent to the Chinese government carrying out the reform and open-door policy in 1978, additional foreign brands have been adopted for the home market, such as European, Korean, Australian, and American brands. As one of the popular foreign brands, WEC, which is an American local brand, entered the Chinese market in 2008 and brought innovative and effective strategies for Chinese managers. With these reasonable Chinese and U.S. leadership concepts and approaches, many Chinese managers at WEC quickly seized the Chinese market with potential customers from 2011 to 2021 and attained great success.

The researcher used WHA (Whirlpool Home Appliances) Corporation as an example. As one famous and historical home appliance company in the US, WHA failed to seize the market share many times since 1995 in mainland China (Van Fleet, 2010). Other than the corporation's insufficient financial support and ineffective staff training, WHA managers also failed to adjust and change their leadership strategies or methods to adapt to and win the Chinese market. Business failures with ineffective leadership strategies and market positions told managers leadership approaches should be very significant in winning future markets and unknown areas. Therefore, this study utilized a case study analysis to obtain a better understanding of the way in which some Chinese managers described their leadership approaches and reasons they accepted or used U.S. leadership methods successfully at WEC in China.

Context

Subsequent to the Chinese government implementing the reform and open-door policy in 1978, Chinese managers have had opportunities to learn different types of

leadership methods from the Western world such as Europe, Australia, and America. WEC, as one of the popular electric brands, has distributions in 26 countries and employs approximately 12,5000, with 13,5000 stakeholders in the world (Discover Westinghouse, 2020). Its business area is concentrated mainly in power generation equipment, power transmission, transformation equipment, electric material, and household appliances (Discover Westinghouse, 2020). Since 2008, WEC began to enter and gradually seized the Chinese market of household appliances (Discover Westinghouse, 2020).

Designs

The main purpose of the research design was to avoid the situation in which the evidence could not address the initial research questions (Yin, 2009). As one of the main methods, case-study design involved five important components: (1) the study's questions, (2) its propositions, if any, (3) its unit(s) of analysis, (4) the logic linking the data to the propositions, and (5) the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2009).

In the present study, the researcher selected the single-case (embedded) design as the main method because the study used more than one unit of analysis. This design was distinguished from other research designs, including the single-case (holistic), multiple-case (holistic), and multiple-case (embedded), as the subunits often can add significant opportunities for extensive analysis and enhance the insights for the investigation (Yin, 2009). The research topic, case study design, single-case (embedded), in-depth interviews and photos, data analysis, and research findings comprised the design's main parts. These six major steps not only helped the researcher focus on the research topic, obtain qualitative data and analysis, and discover relevant findings, but also provided a clear

map to guide readers to follow the ideas. Figure 3 describes the procedures of the qualitative research design.

Figure 3

Qualitative Research Design

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┌─────────────────┐
│  Research Topic │
└─────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐
│   Case Study    │
│     Design      │
└─────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐
│   Single-Case   │
│   (embedded)    │
└─────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐
│    In-depth     │
│  Interviews &   │
│     Photos      │
└─────────────────┘
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│    Research     │
│    Findings     │
└─────────────────┘
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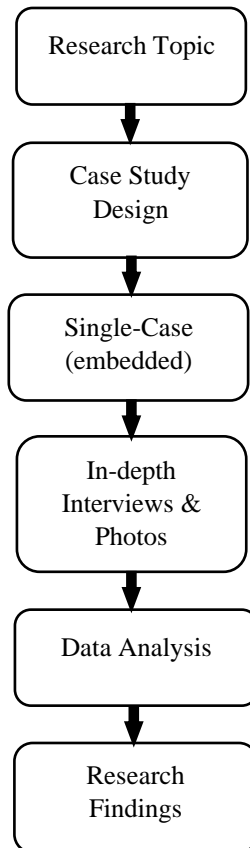
Boundaries of the Case

Perren and Ram (2004) stated boundary-setting decisions are conceptual choices that can influence the trajectory of a research project. They also mentioned the term *case study* is synonymous with a milieu of boundaries placed around the organization (Perren & Ram, 2004). Using WEC of China as an example, this specific single-case study was bounded within mainland China. Many Chinese managers at WEC live in different

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provinces and cities in mainland China, which may to some extent have limited their

opportunities of mutual cooperation and communication. As a Chinese corporation, all of

the Chinese staff follow only the Chinese governmental policies and enjoy relevant

legitimate rights and obligations, which presented a clear trajectory for this research

study from a geographical side.

Since many Western theories and strategies have entered the Chinese market in

1978, many Chinese managers with deficient knowledge and insufficient abilities

encountered positive and negative experiences in their industries in the early stage

(Anderson et al., 2003). Among them, some of the WEC Chinese managers were no

exception. For example, in 2018 the researcher participated in the corporate global

summits at Beverly Hills, California. At that time, a successful Chinese manager told the

investigator some Chinese managers failed and even dropped out of the home market due

to inappropriate leadership methods, insufficient financial support, and ineffective staff

training.

As one of the popular American brands, WEC entered the Chinese market in 2008

and brought innovative and effective leadership strategies for Chinese managers

(Discover Westinghouse, 2020). Many Chinese managers began to recognize this

American brand after 2010. From 2011 to 2021, a few Chinese managers had been

authorized to run a home appliance business in mainland China by the headquarters

located in the US (Discover Westinghouse, 2020). After reviewing and analyzing these

managers' qualitative data in detail, the average number of years of work experience was

found to be only four and one-half years. In addition, the longest tenure was six years;

therefore, they needed more time to digest, accept, and employ this American brand and

relevant leadership approaches in their home market. This issue concerned space and time as the two important elements relative to boundaries of the case.

Participants

With the growing role of leadership in Chinese enterprises, the Chinese managers of WEC have gradually been well appraised by the industry for effective leadership approaches. The participants of this current study ($N = 8$) are Chinese managers at WEC in mainland China. All but one is female. The mean number of years working at WEC is 4.5 years. Specifically, three are located in Guangdong province, and another three are in Zhejiang province. One is in Jiangsu province, and another in Beijing municipality. Although the initial sample identified was 10, two were unwilling to participate in the interviews due to personal reasons (see Table 2).

Table 2

Description of Participants

Name	Interview date	Gender	Location	Educational background	Years at WEC	Category of products
Liu Guang Ming	01/11/2021	Male	Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province	Master's Degree	2	Water Heater
Chen Shan	01/12/2021	Male	Jiangmen, Guangdong Province	Master's Degree	6	Multiple Products
Zhang Qiang	01/13/2021	Male	Shunde, Guangdong Province	Master's Degree	2	Multiple Products
Li Hang	01/25/2021	Male	Nanjing, Jiangsu Province	Bachelor's Degree	5	Personal Care
Wang Jing Wen	01/26/2021	Female	Shenzhen, Guangdong Province	Bachelor's Degree	6	Batteries
Zhao Wei	02/04/2021	Male	Beijing Municipality	Master's Degree	5	Ventilation System
Sun Ke	02/06/2021	Male	Ningbo, Zhejiang Province	Bachelor's Degree	5	Bathroom
Zhouzi Hao	02/09/2021	Male	Ningbo, Zhejiag Province	Bachelor's Degree	5	Water Purifiers

Data Collection Strategies

For the inclusion criteria, these eight Chinese managers were selected not only due to their educational background, years of working experience, categories of products, and division locations, but also due to their comprehensive qualities and the relationship with the researcher. Subjectively speaking, as an attendee at the 2018 WEC Global Summits

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as well as serving as an intern in WEC mainland China, the researcher has a good relationship with these managers and knowledge of the demographic data included in their educational background, years of working experience, categories of products, and divisions' locations. WEC has only a few Chinese managers in mainland China, meaning the researcher had limited choices for participants.

As the main data collection method, the in-depth interviews helped the interviewer obtain participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences about the topic (Yin, 2009). The interview protocol (see Appendix C) included the investigator's introduction, questions relating to concepts or methods of leadership, interviewees' background information, interview questions, and references. After the interviews, the researcher used corporate meaningful and colorful photographs as personal documents to answer the research questions. The researcher was the main instrument used to collect effective qualitative data (Xu & Storr, 2012).

Most important, based on the participants' meaningful perspectives and experiences, the interpretive validity was approved. The interpretive validity referred to the degree to which the research participants' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences were accurately understood by the researcher and portrayed by the research report (Johnson, 1997). The interpretive validity was measured, with important findings and conclusions noted.

Procedures

This study used a single-case (embedded) study design. The investigator established the framework more reasonably through in-depth interviews (Rowley, 2002) and secondary data (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). For the in-depth interviews, Yin (2009)

pointed out it can focus on the topics directly and provided perceived casual inferences and explanations, but the Chinese managers' responses may have had some biases due to poorly articulated questions and the interviewees' insufficient reflections. For the existing data collection, Johnson and Christensen (2017) asserted secondary data may be used with other data for corroboration; they were used as the primary data in the present study (Johnson & Christensen).

In this investigation, as some Chinese managers with the same levels are responsible for different categories of products at various provinces, the researcher scheduled appointments and interviewed them individually in the different provinces such as Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and a municipal city like Beijing. Around eight Chinese managers signed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent forms before the in-depth interviews that involved open-ended questions. Each participant was interviewed separately and answered the questions about their leadership approaches at WEC in China. Among them, four individuals joined in-person interviews after scheduling the appointments because this method of communication helped the researcher establish rapport through social interaction, listening to the interviewee's story, observing the body language, and noticing changes in language and tone to establish the context of the interviewee (Hennink et al., 2020). Other participants were interviewed individually via Wechat audio or video conferences at different locations and times. Any person declining to participate was thanked.

When the interview began, the researcher conducted a reasonable and effective inquiry and recorded the content via Quick Time Player with a Macbook laptop. Yin (2009) emphasized the recording device should not be used when the interviewees refuse

permission or appear uncomfortable in its presence. Fortunately, the reason the researcher used the Quick Time Player to record the participants' responses was because the Chinese managers were willing to accept the recording both before and during the interviews.

Moreover, the interview protocol with questions was approved by the researcher's primary chair and two committee members (see Appendix C). The interview guide lists several questions about leadership approaches such as (1) How much knowledge do you have about leadership principles or methods?; (2) Do you regularly use American methods or principles in your company?; (3) How to raise the corporation's brand awareness and customers-loyalty with the leadership approaches?; and (4) What are the remarkable differences and similarities between the Chinese and U.S. leadership methods or principles in WEC? During the interviews, the product managers' responses were recorded and later transcribed and translated from Chinese to English via the Baidu translator.

In addition, when the researcher reviewed previous personal documents (e.g., photographs and videos), she found a few meaningful photographs and relative videos to explain the corporate phenomenon and also answer the research questions. The photos and videos were collected and recorded at an earlier time, often for an entirely different purpose than the current research (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Hence, the researcher paid particular attention to those photos and videos to interpret the connections between the photos, videos, and answers to the questions.

Data Management and Analysis

Thorne (2000) indicated data analysis is one of the most complex and mysterious phases of a qualitative project. Data analysis began early in this research study, and qualitative researchers alternated between data collection and data analysis during the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2017).

For the in-depth interviews, the researcher used the Quick Time Player software to capture product managers' words about their leadership approaches at WEC in mainland China. After interviewing and recording, fictitious names were assigned, and relevant records were saved on the researcher's Macbook laptop. A popular Chinese app (Xun Fei Ting Jian) was used to transcribe the managers' voices into Chinese text because the accuracy of the transcription played a key role in determining the accuracy of the data that were analyzed and with a degree of dependability (Stuckey, 2014). Next, the researcher translated the transcripts from Chinese to English via the Baidu translator. For each 30-minute interview, the interviewer spent more than four hours transcribing, translating, editing, and saving the transcripts in PDF format. Transcription was a time-consuming process, and the estimated ratio of time required to transcribe was 4:1, which means for every hour of interview time, the cost of a transcriptionist was written into the budget for four hours (Stuckey, 2014).

After the transcription, coding was the next significant step during analysis to organize and make sense of textual data (Basit, 2003). When the researcher found a meaningful segment of text in a transcript, a code or category name was assigned to signify or identify that particular segment (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). In the transcripts, codes were used with various full category names in different colors. For instance, underscores were used to mark the important segments of the participants'

responses, and new categories were generated with full words in different colors, such as team building, innovative strategies, interpersonal communication, partnership, and power issues.

For the secondary or existing data parts, the personal documents were another major source of secondary data because they are frequently used by qualitative researchers (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). In this case, some hands-on photographs from the researcher depicted many corporate Chinese managers had organized a series of activities for team commitment, collaboration, training, negotiating, and information sharing (Cismas, 2011). The team activities or actions were closely connected to the managers' team leadership methods, as they not only enhanced the team's cohesion and effectiveness, but also improved the corporation's performance and development.

Other photos showed the managers usually held a series of innovative and motivational theme conferences for their employees and partners, which exhibited their leadership methods of transformation. The recorded videos were provided by the researcher to answer the two research questions from reasonable and multiple perspectives. After the qualitative data collection, the researcher analyzed and drew relevant conclusions and recommendations that may be useful to some extent for future managers and researchers.

Trustworthiness

Researcher Positionality

Subsequent to the Chinese government implementing the reform and open-door policy in 1978, many foreign brands (European, Korean, Australian, and American); theories; and strategies were embraced and adopted by Chinese entrepreneurs. The

researcher began to show enthusiasm and a special interest in the way in which some Chinese managers described their leadership approaches and reasons they accepted or used Western leadership methods at WEC in mainland China.

Ghafouri and Ofoghi (2016) pointed out assessment and review of trustworthiness should be considered in all studies, which also applies to qualitative studies. In this investigation, the researcher collected all relevant, effective in-depth interviews and existing or secondary data, serving as the main instrument of the qualitative research method. Hence, in the assessment and review of trustworthiness, the researcher as the main instrument in the study was most important.

Member Checks

The in-depth interviews and secondary or existing data collection occurred during approximately three months. After each interview, the researcher asked the participant to review and check the transcript, as the transcription played a key role in determining the accuracy of the analyzed data and the degree of dependability (Stucky, 2014). Moreover, because the Chinese translator app (Xun Fei Ting Jian) sometimes is inaccurate in transcribing, the researcher listened to the records repeatedly and revised meaningful contents of the transcripts. Also, when the researcher discovered relative photographs or videos about the managers' leadership approaches, she personally saved the photos and recorded the videos on her Macbook laptop. Indeed, the accuracy of the transcripts, the reality of the photos, and the clarity of the videos influenced the analysis and results of this investigation.

Audit Checks

In this study, the researcher saved all interview transcripts in PDF format on her Macbook laptop with names and dates, after which she coded them with various full category names in different colors. The researcher then printed out the interview conversations and included participants' fictional names and real dates on the files. All interview transcripts have been kept in a green portfolio on the bookshelf in the researcher's study room. These preservative means not only helped the researcher record the original and qualitative data, but also enabled her to check the notes many times.

Furthermore, the researcher saved all the photographs and recorded videos with meaningful names separately on her Macbook laptop. Each photo and a slip of video were coded with different numbers in files, such as 1, 2, and 3, which helped the investigator with reviewing her personal documents and interpreting the connections between the documents and the Chinese managers' leadership approaches at WEC in mainland China.

In summary, the use of trustworthiness should be considered in all studies because researchers must ensure a measure of validity for a research project (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). Sinkovics et al. (2008) also mentioned a qualitative researcher's tool chest should be geared toward trustworthiness and should encompass issues such as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Thus, in this study, the researcher serving as the instrument conducted member checks and audited checks to add to the validity.

Ethical Considerations

Orb et al. (2001) described ethical principles guide the study in addressing the initial and ongoing issues in order to meet the goals of the research, as well as to maintain the

rights of the research participants. For this study, the first ethical consideration was the Letter of Approval from the General Manager of WEC in mainland China. With his authorization, the researcher was allowed to conduct the study on Chinese managers' leadership approaches at WEC in mainland China. The approval letter also was in preparation for applying and obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Western Kentucky University. The approval letter and relevant materials are attached to the dissertation as Appendices A and B.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the pure qualitative research method, which was used to examine and answer questions of how, where, what, when, and why a person acted in a certain way toward a specific matter (Oun & Bach, 2014). However, qualitative research is not concerned with numerical representativity (Queirós et al., 2017). Queirós et al. (2017) pointed out qualitative research involves aspects or reality that cannot be quantified, which is different from pure quantitative research. Pure qualitative or quantitative methods focus only on one aspect of the research method. Hence, as the third paradigm, the mixed research methods helped to bridge the schism between qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Phenomenology, ethnography, narrative inquiry, case study research, and grounded theory are five specific types of qualitative research methods (Johnson & Christensen, 2017), but this study is limited to a single-case (embedded) research design. The case study method is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context; but it provides little basis for scientific generalization, offers limited procedures for investigators, and gives massive results for readers (Yin, 2009). Case study evidence may come from six sources: documents,

archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2009). However, the researcher used only the interviews and documents to collect her qualitative data (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Further, the researcher selected the qualitative interviews or called in-depth interviews for her research since this method allows her enters into the inner world of another person and to gain an understanding of that person's perspective (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Also, letters, diaries, and email-correspondence are main sources of documentation (Yin, 2009), but the researcher used only the photographs and videos to complete the investigation.

Indeed, the researcher's examination was restricted solely to a situation or status about Chinese managers' leadership approaches at one specific U.S. manufacturing company in the Chinese market. In addition, more evidence for validity and reliability is needed in order to support and approve this study.

Summary

This chapter began with an introduction (rationale for case study); Overview of Research Problem (context, design, boundaries of the case, participants, and data collection strategies); Procedures; Data Management and Analysis; as well as Trustworthiness (researcher positionality, member checks, and audit checks), Ethical Consideration, Limitations, and Summary. Each segment was used to clarify the research methodology as it related to the investigator's research questions: (1) How do Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches at WEC? and (2) Why do Chinese managers adopt U.S. leadership approaches at WEC? The research methodology played a key role in the investigation because it focused on the specific ways of researching and provided strong support for the results and discussion.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter focuses on the findings of the present investigation. The relevant findings can be gained from the answers to the two research questions: (1) How do Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches at WEC? and (2) Why do Chinese managers adopt U.S. leadership approaches at WEC?

Each Chinese manager provided background information before answering the interview questions, which included gender, location, educational background, number of years at WEC, and categories of products. Participants efficiently provided unique insights into the methods of leadership at WEC in China. Their answers comprised the core source of the present investigation. Seven participants are male, and one participant is female. The timeline of interviews was approximately one month (January 11 to February 9). Relative to the educational background, one Chinese manager has obtained a college certificate, four have obtained a bachelors' degree, and another three have attained a masters' degree. In addition, the mean years of service at WEC for the eight participants is 4.5 years. Each interviewee had their corresponding Chinese name, interview date, gender, location, educational background, years at WEC, and categories of products.

Findings for Research Question 1

How do Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches at WEC?

One of the main findings for RQ1 was most Chinese managers used the same components of the team leadership approach. The vital factors involved team performance, organizational goals, team building, and interpersonal communication. These factors were derived from most of the Chinese managers' existing knowledge and

practical experience about leadership. For instance, Ms. Wang Jing Wen described her leadership approaches as follows:

> I had been responsible for battery products around six years. I usually divided my team workers into different groups with effective organizational goals and functions. I also set up a motivational system, which can be aligned with my organizational performance and development. I thought that team building can be the key point to establish a better team at WEC.

Ms. Wang Jing Wen not only focused on team goals and decisions, but also cared about organizational development and performance, which to a great extent showed the significant factors of the team leadership approach. Moreover, another research group, Mr. Lee (the research leader) and his team members, made a similar quote:

> Knowledge sharing has positioned us well for the future...we know what each other's capabilities are...it's like the one brain thinking together which leads to more efficient work...and we are actually very innovative and cost effective. (Lee et al., 2010, p. 484)

Manager Chen Shan indicated several points on interpersonal communication:

> As one manager of WEC, I would like to discuss the relationship between social media (like Wechat public accounts or Tik Tok) and brand influences. Recently, with the growth of some popular social platforms, Wechat and Tik Tok had not only changed dramatically my team workers' ways of interpersonal communication, but also to a great extent promoted the WEC's brand awareness and reputation in the Chinese market.

Most Chinese managers often expressed their personal perspectives of the leadership approach, including organizational goals, performance, effectiveness, communication, and development. However, they lacked professional knowledge to connect the key components of team leadership with the definition or concept of the team leadership approach.

A few similar and important aspects of the transformational leadership approach were mentioned many times during the interviews by most managers, which formed the second finding of this research question. These managers' perspectives of the leadership approach were related to the transformational leadership method, such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and innovation. Using the Ventilation System department of WEC as an example, Zhao Wei, the head of the department, indicated:

I reviewed some leadership books during my routine work, like some principle of leadership. Via those leadership books, I just summarized and took five strategies to lead my group, which included "setting up the role-models," "establishing the innovative strategies and motivational systems," "empowering the employees," "discovering the unknown," and "challenging the status quo." From my personal opinions, the above five ways can be my useful leadership tools, but I was not sure which specific type of my leadership methods belonged to.

In Zhao Wei's in-depth interview, he described specifically his five main strategies of leadership, which were very close to the transformational leadership approach. However, he possessed insufficient relevant knowledge to generalize his core elements of the transformational leadership approach into the professional notion of the transformational leadership method.

The third finding concerned the requirements and standards of WEC headquarters located in the US, as WEC senior leaders for the Chinese region usually presented their ideas about effective leadership methods during the global summits every two years. The summits were scheduled and held at different places in the world, such as Shanghai, Nanjing, and Los Angeles, by WEC headquarters senior leaders. During the conferences, these leaders often demonstrated to the participants their opinions of leadership approaches, which influenced a few of the local Chinese managers' leadership methods. For example, as a Chinese manager with retentive memory, Manager Chen Shan pointed to the group photos in his office and recalled:

In every two years' global summits, WEC senior leaders from headquarters located in the US usually utilized some public speeches, materials, and social media (Wechat public accounts) to convey their latest knowledge and information about some reasonable leadership methods to us. That is very interesting, attractive, and persuasive. After the conferences, I would also take the similar ways to pass relevant information and knowledge to my subordinates, which would strengthen my organizational cohesion and development. You know what? My employees also thought these leadership ways were very meaningful and useful.

Manager Li Hang was another case in point:

Headquarters senior leaders usually provided me a few efficient leadership approaches via global summits and printed documents. For example, I participated in a summit in Nanjing, China. One head-quarter senior leader distributed to me a booklet. When I opened it, I found that it had a few meaningful and useful leadership approaches. After the meeting, I just brought this booklet away and

passed it to my employees when I arrived my office. Interestingly, my employees had the same ideas as I did. Indeed, as a manager of WEC, I really had many chances to know, learn, and absorb relevant efficient leadership approaches from my responsible headquarter senior leaders.

In addition, manager Zhao Wei mentioned the guidance of WEC American headquarters in this way:

I was lucky to be present in all the WEC global summits every two years, and the impressive one for me was in Los Angeles, California, in 2018. Actually, that was my first time to attend the conference outside my country. I remembered clearly that a few WEC headquarters' senior leaders presented in an official way their main ideas of leadership strategies or methods at Columbia Broadcasting System's meeting room in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles. Until 2021, I often recalled that global meeting, and the voices of those senior leaders on leadership methods lingered every now and then in my ears.

Guided by the WEC headquarters' requirements and standards, those senior leaders used a few vivid and effective methods to express their opinions of the leadership approaches to all Chinese managers in the summits. Likewise, all Chinese managers used similar ways to describe and convey relevant practical leadership methods to their subordinates at WEC in mainland China.

The last finding of RQ1 showed more elements of U.S. than Chinese leadership approaches were described by the Chinese managers working at WEC. Compared with the Confucian and paternalistic types of leadership (including benevolence, harmony, humility, and kindness), which are traits of Chinese leadership approaches, most Chinese

managers expressed more remarkable aspects of U.S. leadership (such as goals, motivation, innovation, performance, and effectiveness) than Chinese leadership approaches. For example, one of the Chinese managers, Li Hang, stated:

> As a Chinese manager, benevolence, harmony, and morality, I thought, had rooted in our blood. It sometimes helped us in our routine work as head of the department. But what helped us most was the ideas of organizational goals, employees' motivation, product innovation, etc. I usually set up clear goals or achievements for my team members. Even though my group was smaller than others, I still set up KPI (Key Performance Indicator) since organizational outcomes can help me appraise my employees' work progress and performance. Also, compared with authority, I often used motivation, innovation, decisions, and development as my leadership strategies for us to adapt to and win the home market.

Manager Zhang Qiang also mentioned:

> Frankly speaking, as a result-oriented Chinese manager, I usually cared about the outcomes for WEC's organizational tasks. I often set up short term (around three to five years) plans and long term (about 10 years) goals for my team workers. For instance, I would review and check to see if my group had already achieved the clear targets and organizational effectiveness seasonally.

With these two Chinese managers' responses, the researcher obtained the last finding indicating WEC Chinese managers described more elements of U.S. than Chinese leadership approaches. The managers mentioned in their interviews more components about goals, performance, innovation, motivation, decision, and development rather than benevolence, harmony, humility, and kindness. As one American manufacturing

company in mainland China, WEC Chinese managers' answers appeared to be reasonable and interesting, and the most important aspect was aligned with the corporation's cultures and core values.

Table 3 shows four main leadership practices among Chinese managers at WEC in mainland China, which include Confucian leadership (e.g., benevolence, harmony, and loyalty); paternalistic leadership (e.g., trust, high standards, and cultures); transformational leadership (including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and innovation); and team leadership (such as goals, performance, and development). Specifically, RQ1 was very close to Chinese managers' leadership approaches, as most of WEC's Chinese managers used unique cases, special events, and rich experiences to describe their views of leadership approaches during their interviews.

Table 3

WEC Chinese Managers' Leadership Practices

Leadership Practices			
Confucian leadership	Paternalistic leadership	Transformational leadership	Team leadership
Benevolence	Authoritarianism	Idealized influence	Goals (results-oriented)
Harmony	Benevolence	Inspirational motivation	Traditional cultures
Loyalty	Morality	Innovation	Performance
Collectivism	Traditional cultures	Empower	Development
Traditional cultures	Trust	Competition	Team problems
	High standards	Social media	Decisions
		Traditional cultures	Training
		Development	Team building
			Effectiveness

Findings for Research Question 2

Why do Chinese managers adopt U.S. leadership approaches at WEC?

For RQ2, one of the significant findings was some early introductions of U.S. leadership approaches came from the Chinese government. The fundamental Western leadership knowledge and strategies (i.e., U.S. leadership methods) had been understood by many Chinese managers in mainland China. Subsequent to the Chinese government implementing the reform and open-door policy in 1978, it meant accepting and even adopting the U.S. leadership approaches, which eventually had become a *must* for the Chinese managers based on the Chinese business environment and the increasing appeal

of Western corporate leadership approaches. As one of the most experienced Chinese

managers at WEC in mainland China, Mr. Zhang Qiang explained as follows:

Our national reform and open-door policy brought some Western leadership ideas

and principles for us. The governmental publication and relevant materials showed

me some of the ideas, but not too much of U.S. leadership methods. As one member

at WEC, I thought my leadership strategies should be connected to U.S. leadership

methods since it is an American brand. Currently, the U.S. leadership methods or

strategies should be my first choice.

Another professional Chinese manager, Li Hang, pointed out:

Our nation or schools usually provided some printed materials and relevant books

about Western leadership approaches for us, which included the U.S. leadership

methods. As one product manager of WEC, I thought I may take some effective U.S.

leadership methods since this adoption may connect to the governmental strategies

or policies. Further, the adoption of efficient U.S. leadership methods can also

improve WEC's organizational development.

Moreover, manager Liu Guang Ming stated:

Perhaps, since I had a master's degree in business, I can read some materials about

Western leadership concepts and approaches from our government. The content has

covered various leadership methods from different countries, such as America,

Russia, and Africa. Among them, I think the U.S. leadership approaches can

sometimes be the suitable one for our corporation.

Indeed, the responses by manager Zhang Qiang, Li Hang, and Liu Guang Ming not

only explained the reasons they accepted the U.S. leadership approaches, but also

clarified the importance of adopting U.S. leadership methods for their corporation in mainland China. Governmental introduction, policies, and relevant information had impacted some local managers' key decisions in their corporation.

The second finding was concerned with WEC Chinese managers' educational background. Individuals who were educated usually were willing to accept and use a few advanced and various leadership approaches (i.e., team and transformational leadership) since they were curious creatures and enjoyed learning and acquiring new knowledge (Riddell, 2016). For example, Sun Ke, the head of the Bathrooms department, revealed:

> I had been coached and trained for several years in many different ways, such as obtaining higher degrees or qualified certificates, joining the global summits, and studying relevant social skills. Specifically, my educational background not only provided me some rich knowledge, but also helped me understand, accept and adopt some modern methods (like the U.S. leadership methods) since it offered me many possibilities. Indeed, my higher levels of educational background really enabled me to meet the requirements of my positions at WEC, pushed me further to improve my own competency, and encouraged me to expand my interpersonal and communicative skills in the home market.

On the one hand, Mr. Sun Ke's answers suggest a Chinese manager's educational background had to some extent influenced his understanding, acceptance, and adoption of the U.S. leadership methods. Conversely, this Chinese manager who was well-equipped with U.S. leadership approaches would have had more options or possibilities to push the corporation forward with strong organizational performance and development.

The third finding resulted from people-centered cultures. Most Chinese managers deemed people should be one of the important elements in organizational development. In a people-centered organizational culture, leadership at all levels must be understood, believed, and practiced; and the core values must be reinforced (Black & Venture, 2017). The organizational commitment to the core values related to economic concepts and the efficiency of the leadership of the organization, as people-centered cultures focus on employees as the engines of the organization (Black & Venture, 2017). Indeed, most Chinese managers wished to take a few advanced and effective leadership methods training, such as team and transformational leadership, to improve their organizational commitment and development so WEC could be a corporation with people-centered cultures. Using the Water Heater Department of WEC as an example. Mr. Liu Guang Ming, head of the department, clarified:

Actually, my group was smaller than other teams. I only had a small portion of employees, but I still thought that employees should be the key point for the success of our corporation. As an organization with people-centered cultures, WEC's organizational commitment connected closely to the efficiency of managers' leadership. So, I usually took effective leadership approaches to improve my organizational performance and development, such as the team and transformational leadership methods of the U.S. leadership ways.

Moreover, the head of the Bathroom department of WEC, Manger Sun Ke, also indicated:

Be honest, my group' culture was people-centered. Why did I say that? My employees were very familiar and confident with the domestic market since they

spoke the same language (Chinese) in their routine operation and understood and supported each other with similar backgrounds and cultures. Most importantly, my all staff strived for the common goals. Undoubtedly, in this people-centered organizational cultures, my group could go further with efficient U.S. leadership approaches.

Mr. Chen Shan, who was charged with managing multiple products of WEC, also remarked:

My employees and I were definitely in an organization with people-centered cultures. For instance, my employees often held fabulous activities or parties during some Chinese traditional holidays (such as New Year's Day, Mid-Autumn Festival, and Spring Festival), which may promote the organizational cohesion and development. In addition, we usually contributed to the charitable events for a few poor areas in China, which also to some extent improved our organizational commitment.

Economic globalization was the last finding. Accepting and employing advanced and efficient U.S. leadership approaches were reasonable tools for many Chinese managers to adapt and win the domestic as well as the international markets in the fierce competitive globalized world. During the researcher's qualitative interviews, the ideas of economic globalization frequently were mentioned by most WEC Chinese managers. To cite an instance, as the only female in the interviews, manager Wang Jing Wen stated her opinions of economic globalization:

I had been responsible for battery products from 2015 till 2021 at WEC in mainland China. As an American popular and historical brand, WEC's quality of products

could be guaranteed. What did I mean? I meant that no matter in the domestic or international markets, customers should be satisfied both with WEC's products and its after-sale services since the corporate managers (including me) had already used a few universally accepted advanced and effective U.S. leadership approaches to guide our routine operation to win our global market.

Furthermore, as one of the experienced managers, Mr. Zhang Qiang discussed his ideas about economic globalization:

With efficient U.S. leadership strategies or approaches, WEC's IPO… which can attract more customers' eyes, not only from locals, but also from other countries' potential customers. Actually, economic globalization has been and would always be a key issue for our corporation both at present and in the near future.

In addition, the last participant of the interviews, manager Zhou Zi Hao described his perspectives of economic globalization:

From my own opinions of economic globalization, it should be a significant tendency for global markets, especially for the Chinese market. As one product manager of WEC in mainland China, economic globalization can be considered for future plans since it can help my group go further, such as having clear organizational goals, adopting advanced leadership methods, and promoting effective organizational development. In our Water Purifying industry, suitable and efficient leadership ways can be the useful tools for us to adapt and win the market. Why did I say that? It was due to the reasons that we had many strong local competitors in China, like Media Corporation originated from Foshan City, Guangdong Province.

Economic globalization, as a hot topic for decades, has been discussed and studied by many managers, consultants, and scholars. The concept of global village has hastened the process of the integrated world economy. As Chinese managers working at WEC, an American manufacturing corporation in mainland China, they understood their traditional Chinese leadership methods and also adopted some structured and effective U.S. leadership approaches to run and win both the present domestic markets and the international markets in the near future.

Figure 4 summarizes relevant findings of this study. The left circle exhibits findings from RQ1, which matches the team leadership approach, transformational leadership approach, requirements, and standards of WEC headquarters, as more elements of U.S. than Chinese leadership approaches were described by WEC Chinese managers. For RQ2, the right circle reveals four reasons the Chinese managers adopted U.S. leadership approaches at WEC: (1) early introductions of U.S. leadership approaches from the Chinese government, (2) WEC Chinese managers' educational background, (3) people-centered cultures, and (4) economic globalization.

Figure 4

Summary of Leadership Approaches and Reasons to Adopt Different Approaches
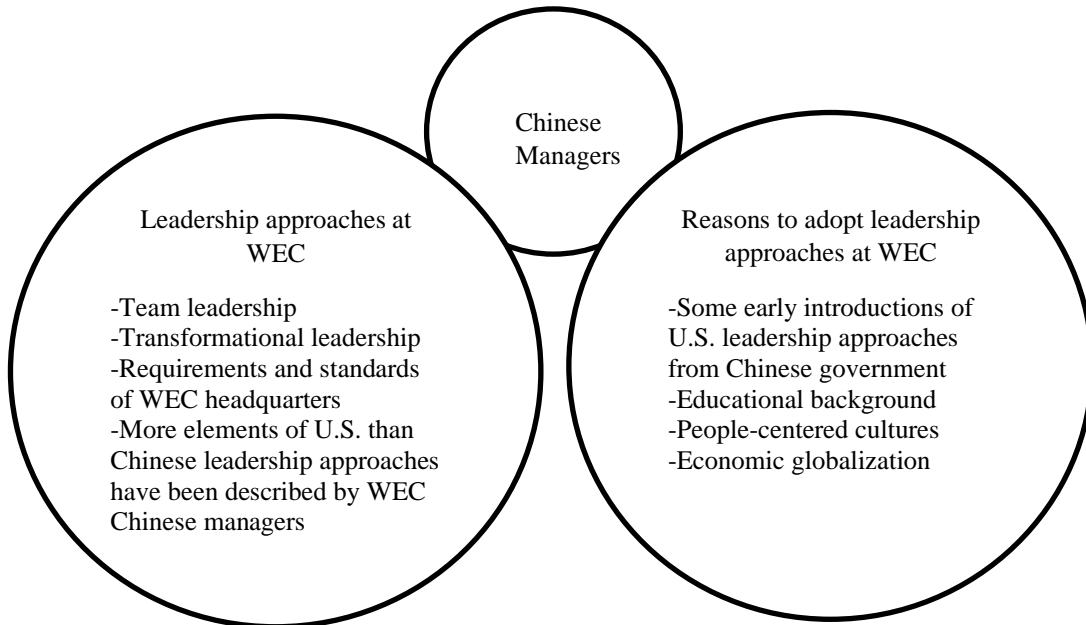
Note. This Venn diagram illustrates the relevant findings of the way in which some Chinese managers described their leadership and reasons these Chinese managers adopted U.S. leadership approaches at WEC.

Summary

This chapter showed the results of the research. More specifically, the researcher's findings for RQ1 included (1) most Chinese managers pointed out the same components of team leadership approach, (2) a few similar and important segments of the transformational leadership approach were mentioned many times during the interviews by most Chinese managers at WEC, (3) WEC American headquarters' requirements and standards, and (4) more elements of U.S. than Chinese leadership approaches were described by the Chinese managers working at WEC. For RQ2, the researcher's findings

focused on (1) early introductions of U.S. leadership approaches from the Chinese

government, (2) WEC Chinese managers' educational background, (3) people-centered

cultures, and (4) economic globalization.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Since the Chinese government implemented a reform and open-door policy in 1978, more foreign companies from Europe, Korea, Australia, and America have been embraced and adopted by Chinese entrepreneurs for the home market. As one of the popular American brands, West Electric Corp (WEC) entered the Chinese market and brought some relevant and different leadership strategies for Chinese managers. These strategies not only helped Chinese managers to understand and gain knowledge of Chinese and U.S. leadership concepts, but also helped them master the abilities of leadership methods and strengthen their organizational performance and development in the Chinese market.

The present study was conducted to gain a better understanding of the way in which Chinese managers described their leadership approaches and the reason these managers accepted and used U.S. leadership approaches at WEC located in mainland China. The researcher deployed a pure qualitative research methodology. Specifically, this study used a case study with an embedded design. During the single-case investigation, relevant qualitative interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information about participants' thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and feelings about the topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The researcher sought to answer two research questions: (1) How do Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches at WEC? and (2) Why do Chinese managers adopt U.S. leadership approaches at WEC? This chapter presents a discussion of the findings.

In response to Research Question 1, the researcher obtained the following findings: (1) most Chinese managers pointed out the same components of the team leadership

approach, (2) a few similar and important aspects of the transformational leadership approach were mentioned many times during the interviews, (3) requirements and standards from WEC headquarters located in the US have been established for the Chinese region when ideas about effective leadership methods are usually presented during the global summits every two years, and (4) more elements of U.S. than Chinese leadership approaches were described by the Chinese managers working at WEC.

In the next section, the researcher discusses relevant findings for Research Question 2: (1) early introductions were noted of U.S. leadership approaches from the Chinese government, (2) WEC Chinese managers' educational background, (3) people-centered organizational cultures, and (4) economic globalization.

After discussing the findings from the two research questions, the investigator addresses concerns about a few limitations of this study, such as shortcomings of case study methods, types of leadership approaches, and methodologies of research, as well as several recommendations for future investigation. The end of this chapter includes a discussion of implications for future studies and the comprehensive conclusion for the entire investigation.

Discussion of Findings

RQ1. How do Chinese managers describe their leadership approaches at WEC?

During the in-depth interviews, most Chinese managers spent little time discussing the few elements of Chinese leadership approaches (e.g., benevolence, harmony, morality, and trust). Most of their time was given to describing the same components of their team leadership approaches (e.g., team performance, organizational goals, team building, and interpersonal communication), as they were equipped with relevant

leadership knowledge, had similar practical experiences, and possessed a will to share their unique perspectives.

Team leadership was considered essential for team effectiveness, meaning the contribution of leadership for effective team performance rested on the extent to which team leaders helped members achieve a synergistic threshold in which collective effort accomplished more than the sum of individual abilities or efforts (Zaccaro et al., 2008). Coincidentally, the Confucian leadership of Chinese leadership approaches included a similar meaning of the team leadership approach; i.e., Confucius philosophies may be the most prevalent tenets that support collectivism in organizations (Cheung & Chan, 2005). However, most WEC Chinese managers in their interviews focused on and discussed their team leadership rather than the Confucian leadership approach.

For instance, manager Chen Shan stated several points on interpersonal communication:

> As one manager of WEC, I would like to discuss the relationship between social media (like Wechat public accounts or Tik Tok) and brand influences. Recently, with the growth of some popular social platforms, Wechat and Tik Tok had not only changed dramatically my team workers' ways of interpersonal communication, but also to a great extent promoted the WEC's brand awareness and reputation in the Chinese market.

His perspectives can be connected to the team leadership approaches in the US, which were distinguished from the Confucian leadership approaches in China.

Longenecker (2007) pointed out results-oriented leaders gradually begin to realize training and educating their workers in the correct way increases the likelihood of achieving high performance, and poorly trained workers create a myriad of performance

problems. The results-oriented (goals) that imposed either a positive or negative impact on organizational performance generally were within the range of team leadership approaches. Likewise, for the Chinese leadership approach of PL, two possible driving forces were seen: optimistic or pessimistic. The benevolence and morality dimensions were positively associated with both in-role and extra-role performance, and the authoritarian PL dimension was negatively related to subordinate performance (Chen et al., 2014). These connections of the positive and negative, along with benevolence and authoritarianism found in leadership approaches, showed organizational goals and performance were absent in the PL approach but could be elements of team leadership in U.S. leadership approaches.

As far as the team leadership approach, high performance leaders are doing the things necessary to develop their workers and to educate them about the bigger picture of their organization to enable them to make better decisions and to be more engaged (Longenecker, 2007). WEC's Chinese managers use their internal or external leadership decisions and actions and empower their employees for the sake of their individual teams, which promotes the effectiveness of their group work. The Hill model of team leadership also could be applied to a great extent to these Chinese managers, as it offers mental road maps to diagnose their team issues, as well as helps them take appropriate actions to correct their team problems (Cismas, 2011). Using the same organizational structures (divisionalisation), traditional cultures (Chinese), and leadership approaches (team leadership methods), these managers gradually promoted their corporation as well as improved personal performance and development. For example, Ms. Wang Jing Wen stated the following:

I had been responsible for battery products around six years. I usually divided my

team workers into different groups with effective organizational goals and functions.

I also set up a motivational system, which can be aligned with my organizational

performance and development. I thought that team building can be the key point to

establish a better team at WEC.

As one Chinese manager, Ms. Wang Jing Wen focused on the team's goals and decisions

and cared about organizational development and performance, which to a great extent

showed the significant factors of the team leadership approach.

The second finding of RQ1 was a few similar and important components of the

transformational leadership approach were mentioned many times during the interviews.

These main components included motivation, innovation, competition, social media,

empower, and development, which were distinguished from the elements of paternalistic

and Confucian leadership in Chinese leadership approaches. The type of phenomenon

implicitly indicates Chinese leadership approaches (e.g., PL and Confucian leadership)

are neglected by the Chinese managers.

Over time, four essential components of transformational leadership emerged, which

included idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and

individualized consideration (McCleskey, 2014). Among them, McCleskey (2014) stated

researchers frequently group the first two components (idealized influence and

inspirational motivation) together as charisma. Bolkan and Goodboy (2010) further

discussed transformational leaders motivate their followers through inspirational

leadership (charisma), stimulate employees to take new approaches, and expend more

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effort when problem solving (intellectual stimulation), working with employees on an individual level to meet their developmental needs (individualized consideration).

More specifically, relative to idealized influence, WEC's Chinese managers served as good examples for their subordinates. As role models of each corporate sector, they usually impressed their followers through positive attitudes and efficiency. Steinmann et al. (2018) indicated transformational leaders influence the extent to which followers evaluate organizational goals as important and perceive them as attainable. Steinmann further explained these organizational goals transmit the effect of transformational leadership on followers' job attitudes and proactive behaviors.

As to the second component, inspirational motivation, some examples could be recognized among a few Chinese managers who often used positive words (e.g., "yes--you can," "why not have a try," "you did a good job") and body language (e.g., shaking hands, nodding heads, and patting shoulders) to motivate their employees for organizational commitment. Similar to this factor of the transformational leadership approach, the authoritarian of the PL approach has the same function of inspirational motivation. The authoritarian leadership increases the extrinsic work motivation and compliance through setting high standards and providing direct instructions to the employees (Niu et al., 2009).

Harvey et al. (2003) pointed out intellectual stimulation is another key factor of transformational leadership in the managers' abilities in getting individuals to think differently and creatively (Harvey et al., 2003). For instance, WEC Chinese managers regularly help their employees develop creative and different ideas of marketing tactics to adapt and win the home market, such as price, product, channel, and promotional

strategies. Cetin and Kinik (2015) indicated transformational leaders stimulate others to be creative and never publicly correct or criticize. They also pointed out transformational leaders display intellectual stimulation when they help their followers develop new ideas, motivate them to take alternative routes to problem solving, and take a close look at all possible solutions (Cetin & Kinik, 2015). Using WEC Chinese managers as an example, when their employees made mistakes, these managers privately corrected or criticized them and promptly provided them with possible and effective solutions. In this regard, the Confucian leadership approach achieved the same results. The Confucian leadership approach aims to implement individual perfection through the practice of self-cultivation and establishes social harmony through exemplary conduct (Han, 2013).

Hall et al. (2002) indicated the last component of transformational leadership is individualized consideration by which leaders help their followers achieve their personal goals. Koveshnikove and Ehrnrooth (2018) stated individualized consideration aims to attend to followers' emotional needs, to act as a support, and to listen to followers' concerns. For example, WEC Chinese managers habitually inquire about their employees' requirements and needs in their personal lives, obtain their voices and feedback about organizational goals and development, and offer relevant feasible and effective support. Ogola (2017) also emphasized individualized consideration deals with fundamental transformational leadership behaviors of treating individuals as important contributors to the organization. Leaders who use this style of leadership give due consideration for their employees' needs and coach them to bring sustainable development (Ogola, 2017). Indeed, the transformational leadership approach already has taken root for Chinese managers at WEC. They described some significant pieces of the

the transformational leadership method during the interviews and use relevant leadership practices in their job routines.

The third finding identified the requirements and standards of WEC American headquarters. Since WEC senior leaders for the Chinese region usually present their ideas about effective leadership methods during the global summits every two years, WEC headquarters was found to influence these managers. Undoubtedly, headquarters still plays an important role in the corporation, which means headquarters adds value to the firm, such as fulfilling legal requirements, designing the strategic corporate context, and handling basic governance functions (Ambos & Mahnke, 2010). Furthermore, managers who implement a company's requirements transform the organizational culture, processes, strategic priorities, and beliefs (Pheng & Teo, 2004). They also review internal operational data and external data on competitors and the business environment (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Using WEC senior leaders as an example, their conference speeches often impact many participants because they address their followers with meaningful organizational cultures, offer them powerful competitive skills, and encourage them with corresponding leadership strategies.

As the main participants in the meetings, WEC's Chinese managers sit together at random, listen to speeches, and discuss and share their individual and group leadership methods in a friendly and harmonious atmosphere. This way of mutual understanding and communication and the formation of group harmony reminds them of the importance of Chinese leadership approaches (e.g., Confucian leadership and PL) and to a great extent enhances the willingness and tendency of these managers to adopt U.S. leadership approaches in mainland China.

The last finding of RQ1 suggests more elements of U.S. than Chinese leadership approaches were described by the Chinese managers working at WEC. After analyzing the dialogues in the interviews, the researcher noticed such U.S. leadership approaches as team leadership and transformational leadership, rather than Chinese leadership methods, (e.g., Confucian and PL) appeal to a great majority of Chinese managers.

During the interviews, most WEC Chinese managers provided specific events and personal experiences to express their methods of leadership. They also emphasized their methods not only advanced the corporation's performance and development, but also offered important elements for their successes in the Chinese market, including organizational goals, interpersonal communication, charisma, and competition. It is worth mentioning these managers described the U.S. leadership approaches (e.g., team and transformational leadership) rather than ideas of Confucian and PL methods (e.g., benevolence, harmony, authoritarianism, morality, traditional cultures, and trust) (Chen et al., 2014) through the in-depth conversations.

RQ2. Why do Chinese managers adopt U.S. leadership approaches at WEC?

For RQ2, one of the significant reasons Chinese managers adopted U.S. leadership approaches appears to be connected to a political background. Some early introductions of U.S. leadership approaches came from the Chinese government. Subsequent to the year of reform and open-door policies in the late 1970s, many foreign enterprises entered the Chinese mainland market and brought advanced Western leadership approaches (Wang et al., 2005). Specifically, relevant modern and efficient U.S. leadership approaches have been introduced to the Chinese business world. Importation of Western leadership approaches emphasizes the traits of U.S. leadership methods, as well as

provides reasonable applications of the U.S. leadership models among local Chinese managers. For instance, Pearson (2008) indicated, "effective leadership is not about being liked; leadership is defined by results, not attributes" (p. 2).

Another reason these participants adopted U.S. leadership practices was due to WEC Chinese managers' educational backgrounds. The eight managers' high levels of educational background reveal they had rich knowledge and potential abilities to understand and to learn different opinions or methods from different countries (like the US). In addition, they are curious creatures and enjoy learning and acquiring new knowledge (Riddell, 2016). Moreover, Chen et al. (2010) indicated the organizational leaders' levels of education have an impact on subordinate job satisfaction for both transformational leadership and transactional leadership relations. Leaders' levels of education (undergraduate and graduate) affect trust in relation to subordinate job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chen et al., 2010). Hence, most Chinese managers with high levels of education at WEC are likely to accept and adopt advanced U.S. leadership approaches (e.g., team and transformational leadership) to be more knowledgeable, trustworthy, and responsible.

Another reason the Chinese managers adopted U.S. leadership practices appears to be connected to people-centered cultures. Black and Venture (2017) indicated people-centered organizational cultures promote a more meaningful organization, which involves seven elements: (1) people-first one values, (2) leadership, (3) open communication, (4) trust, (5) aligned operations and work environments, (6) change responsiveness, and (7) organizational resiliency.

As an America manufacturing company, WEC exhibits a close connection between people-centered organizational cultures and effective U.S. leadership approaches. Most Chinese managers in the interviews mentioned the challenge for leaders to consider the needs of both the organization and its people, i.e., to be practical and humanistic (Black & Venture, 2017). Using employees' decision-making rights, training opportunities, and performance evaluation as examples, these aspects should be reasonably and efficiently provided by department managers. Black and Venture (2017) posited leaders of people-centered organizations usually care deeply about employees and help to energize them to be effective, efficient, and innovative through encouragement and rewards. Furthermore, as one of the main approaches of Chinese leadership, the PL approach has some intersections with people-centered organizations. One study suggested authoritarianism and benevolence, which are two essential elements for PL, may promote employee breakthrough behaviors across cultures (Tian & Sanchez, 2017). Indeed, the WEC Chinese managers in this study give their employees priorities for training and development, as well as promote a corporate people-centered culture with advanced and effective leadership strategies or approaches (e.g., team and transformational approaches).

An additional reason the Chinese managers at WEC relied on U.S. leadership practices was related to economic globalization, as globalization impacts global leadership and practices (Maranga et al., 2018). On the one hand, the PL approach among Chinese leadership approaches faces more and greater challenges under globalization (Han, 2013). Conversely, economic globalization in the past decades was marked with the dominant roles of some developed countries like the US and big transnational firms

such as Microsoft, McDonald, and international organizations like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Rifai, 2013). Hence, more Chinese corporate managers accepted and adopted U.S. leadership concepts and approaches (e.g., team and transformational leadership) since they needed the leadership skills and practices for leading effectively in a globalized environment (Perez, 2017).

Using WEC's Chinese managers as an example, in the globalized business environment they accepted and adopted the U.S. leadership approaches (e.g., team and transformational leadership) to achieve their organizational goals, to improve their enterprise's innovative abilities, and to promote their corporate performance and development. By doing so, WEC and its Chinese managers would advance in a competitive and globalized business world.

Limitations

Every paper has its shortcomings, just as every person has their faults. The researcher mainly discussed a case study of a U.S. manufacturing company in mainland China and its managers' Chinese and U.S. leadership approaches. However, some traditional prejudices, including bias for scientific generalization, limited procedures for investigators, and massive results for readers exist in this case study method (Yin, 2009). Moreover, as far as leadership approaches are concerned, the researcher discussed several specific Chinese and U.S. leadership methods chosen by and observed in these Chinese managers, which means other types of leadership were simultaneously ignored, such as adaptive leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership approaches (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). The research methodology section involved research questions, boundaries, participants, data collection strategies, procedures, data analysis, and ethical

consideration. However, the investigator limited the research method to pure qualitative research, which is different from the pure quantitative research method and mixed research methods. Relative to data analysis, a limitation of the analysis is the reliance on only one coder. As a result, no inter-rater reliability analysis occurred. While this is a limitation relating to reliability, issues of validity are not affected (Syed & Nelson, 2015). In addition, as a pure qualitative research study, the "how" or "why" research questions helped the researcher with the relevant and meaningful findings; the "where," "what," and "when" research questions (Oun & Bach, 2014) are not discussed in the investigation.

Recommendations

The investigator collected, reviewed, and analyzed relevant materials about WEC. However, a similar but larger study would allow the content of interviews to be enriched, the scientific generalization to be enhanced, and the researcher's comprehensive abilities to be improved. Furthermore, if more background information could be obtained about the corporation, a better understanding of manufacturing companies would be achieved. Other recommended topics could include an investigation into different levels of Chinese managers in one manufacturing company, research on Chinese managers of the same level positions in another manufacturing corporation, or exploring managers of different races in a manufacturing company of other countries (not limited to China).

Moreover, relative to the literature review, the researcher discussed some opinions and experiences of the Chinese managers about Chinese and U.S. leadership approaches; however, a wider review of literature could produce more instructive ideas. Concerning the methodology section, the researcher used in-depth interviews and secondary data as

methods for data collection, which means qualitative observation, tests, and other ways could possibly be taken into account in future investigations.

Also, if the researcher had more help (e.g., instructors, classmates, and other universities' students), a larger research group could be formed. For instance, a similar but larger study with researchers from other universities or institutions could produce fruitful findings and conclusions.

Implications for Further Study

The purpose of this qualitative study using a single-case (embedded) design was to explore some Chinese managers' leadership approaches at WEC in mainland China. During the study, the investigator addressed the research questions about the way in which the Chinese managers described their leadership approaches and the reason the managers adopted U.S. leadership methods in their corporation. However, some "where," "what," and "when" research questions of leadership approaches (Oun & Bach, 2014) could occur in the near future.

Furthermore, the investigator's existing findings may serve as a beacon for some heuristic ideas of future scholars. For example, future researchers could probe into more specific details about these Chinese managers' leadership approaches at WEC, such as when they learn, absorb, and form their leadership concepts and theories; where (locations) they use their leadership methods to lead their subordinates; or their best methods of leadership.

Also, from the writer's academic perspectives, the pure qualitative method was used to investigate some WEC Chinese managers who are at the same level position in an American manufacturing company in mainland China. However, other than the pure

qualitative research method, quantitative and mixed research approaches are other reasonable options for future research studies. A few curious, knowledgeable, and experienced scholars may find the shining points, light the sparks, and broaden their writing ideas from this current limited dissertation.

Conclusions

The author used the pure qualitative study with a single-case (embedded) design to explore eight Chinese managers' Chinese and U.S. leadership approaches at WEC in mainland China. The researcher addressed Research Question 1 on the way in which these Chinese managers described their leadership and Research Question 2 on the reason they adopted U.S. leadership approaches at WEC in the Chinese market.

More specifically, answers to Research Question 1 included four main findings: (1) most Chinese managers pointed out the same components of the team leadership approach, (2) a few similar and important segments of the transformational leadership approach were mentioned many times during the interviews by most Chinese managers at WEC, (3) requirements and standards from WEC American headquarters were established by its senior leaders for the Chinese region when effective leadership methods are usually presented during the global summits every two years, and (4) more U.S. than Chinese leadership approaches were described by the Chinese managers working at WEC.

The investigator's findings of Research Question 2 contained four areas: (1) early introductions of U.S. leadership approaches from the Chinese government, (2) WEC Chinese managers' educational background, (3) people-centered organizational cultures, and (4) economic globalization. Indeed, the relevant findings have some limitations,

recommendations, and implications for future studies. However, the researcher's

conclusions are aligned with national conditions and coordinate well with the domestic

market, in addition to efficiently improving the organizational performance,

development, and competition around the world.

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APPENDIX A: IRB Approval and Informed Consent Documents

WKU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

DATE: December 10, 2020

TO: Mengting Gong
FROM: Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1693780-1] A Case Study of a Chinese Company to Research on Chinese-American Leadership
REFERENCE #: IRB 21-132
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: December 10, 2020
EXPIRATION DATE: December 10, 2021
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a *signed* consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a MINIMAL RISK project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of December 10, 2021.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin Pyles at (270) 745-3360 or irb@wku.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

- 1 -   Generated on IRBNet

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: A Case Study of a Chinese Company to Research on Chinese-American Leadership

Investigator: Mengting Gong, Educational Administration & Leadership Research, mengting.gong543@topper.wku.edu

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

You must be 18 years old or older to participate in this research study.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1.   **Nature and Purpose of the Project:** This project mainly analyzes the similarities and differences between Chinese and American leadership from some Chinese managers of a Chinese company through qualitative method of case study. The research project will help the investigator understand better why some Chinese managers' can succeed at Westinghouse Electric Corporation in mainland of China. Also, by learning relevant knowledge of leadership, the investigator can continuously improve her quality and levels of leadership.

2.   **Explanation of Procedures:** This project is carried out by a single (embedded) case study method. The investigator will establish the case framework more reasonably through in-depth interviews (Rowley, 2002). A total of 10 to 12 Chinese managers will participate in this interview, and each participant will be interviewed separately and answer the questions raised by the investigator (around 30 minutes to less than an hour). Among them, five or six people will participate in face-to-face interviews, while others will participate in video conference (such as WeChat video conference). During the interview, the investigator will conduct a reasonable and effective interviews and record the content according to the questions in the interview guide. The interviewee can choose a suitable and comfortable place for his or her interview depends on his or her situation, such as an office or a cafe. After the interview, the investigator will translate the recordings into English for research purposes. Finally, the research investigator will analyze the recording documents based on the answers of interviewees so as to draw and summarize relevant conclusions.

3.   **Discomfort and Risks:** There are no anticipated discomfort or risks associated with this data collection. This interview will be anonymous, and no one can identify you with any answers.

4.   **Benefits:** Participants will receive conclusions about leadership in this project. At the same time, these conclusions can also help other researchers to better study and discuss issues such as Chinese and American leadership in the future.

5. **Confidentiality:** The data will be collected via Interviews in-person or Wechat. Records will be viewed, stored, and maintained in private, secure files only accessible by the P.I. and advising faculty for three years following the study, after which time they will be destroyed.

6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:** Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Signature of Participant	Date

Witness	Date

- I agree to the audio/video recording of the research. *(Initial here)* _____

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEENREVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Robin Pyles, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-3360

WKU IRB# 21-132
Approved: 12/17/2020
End Date: 12/10/2021
EXPEDITED
Original: 12/10/2020

知情同意书

项目名称：一家中国公司有关中美领导力的案例研究

项目研究员：宫梦婷，教育管理与领导力研究，

mengting.gong543@topper.wku.edu

您被邀请参与并签署西肯塔基大学本次项目研究。

该项目的参与者必须年满 18 周岁或以上。

项目研究员将向您详细阐述关于该项目的目的，过程，以及相关的益处和可能的风险。期间，您可以咨询任何问题来帮助您了解该项目。基本内容说明如下，请仔细阅读并向研究员提出您所考虑的问题。 如果您决定参与该项目，请在向您解释该项目的研究员在场的情况下签署此表格。该表格副本可以保存。

1. **项目的本质和目的：**该项目主要通过案例研究定性方法来分析中国公司中国经理人身上中美领导力的相同点和差异性，从而有助于研究员更好地理解为什么一些中国经理人能够在中国大陆的西屋电气公司取得成功。同样，通过学习相关的领导力知识，研究员可以不断提高自身的领导力素养和水平。

2. **程序说明：**本项目采用单一（嵌入式）案例研究方法进行。研究员将通过深入式访谈法更合理地建立案例框架（罗利，2002）。本次访谈共有十到十二名中国经理人参与，每位参与者将分别接受采访并回答研究员所提出的问题（约三十分钟至一小时以内）。其中，五到六人将参加面对面的访谈，而其他人将参加视频会议（比如微信视频会议）。在访谈过程中，研究员会根据采访指南中的问题进行合理有效地访谈并记录相关内容。受访者可根据自身情况来挑选合适且舒适的地点进行访谈，比如办公室或者咖啡馆。访谈结束后，研究员将会把访谈中的录音译成英文，以作课题研究之用。最后，该研究员将根据受访者的回答对记录的材料进行分析，从而得出并汇总相关结论。

3. **不适与风险：**不存在与此数据收集相关的预期不适或风险。该访谈将是匿名的，且没有任何人会通过您的回答知晓您。

4. **益处：**参与者将得到该项目有关领导力的结论。同时，这些结论也可以帮助其他研究员更好地研究和探讨未来中美领导力等问题。

WKU IRB# 21-132
Approved: 12/17/2020

End Date: 12/10/2021
EXPEDITED
Original: 12/10/2020

5. **保密性**：该定性数据收集将通过面对面以及视频会议采访方式收集。该项目研究结束后的三年内，课题相关内容将保存在私密的文档内并仅限研究员和相关导师进行查看。三年之后，该课题相关材料将被销毁。

6. **拒绝与退出**：拒绝参加本次研究并不会影响您今后从该学校获得任何服务。任何同意参加本次研究的人员均可在任何时候退出本次研究且不受任何惩罚。

你也明白在实验过程中不可能预估所有潜在的风险，相信您已经采取了合理且安全的措施来减少已知和未知的风险。

_____   _____

参与者签名   日期

_____   _____

见证者签名   日期

● 　我同意该课题研究以视频或音频作为记录。　*(以首字母签名)* _____

在此同意书上注明日期的批准表明

该项目已被西肯塔基大学机构审查委员会审查和批准

罗宾 派尔斯，人身保护管理员

电话：(270) 745-3360

WKU IRB# 21-132
Approved: 12/17/2020

End Date: 12/10/2021
EXPEDITED
Original: 12/10/2020

APPENDIX B: Letter of Approval

批准信

致美国西肯塔基大学：

鉴于领导力在中国企业中的作用与日俱增，西屋电气家电部门及其相关公司的中国经理们通过其卓越有效地领导力来拓展中国家电市场并获业内一致好评。特批准美国西肯塔基大学教育领导力在读博士生宫梦婷对该领域进行相关基础研究。

谨致问候！

日期：
签字： 2020.11.20

Letter of Approval

To Western Kentucky University (U.S.):

In view of the growing role of leadership in Chinese enterprises, the Chinese managers of Westinghouse Electric Corporation and its related companies have been well appraised by the industry for their effective leadership in developing the Chinese home appliance market. We hereby authorize Mengting Gong, a doctoral candidate in educational leadership at Western Kentucky University, to conduct some basic research in this field.

Kind Regards,

Date:
Signature: 2020.11.20

Introduction

My name is Mengting. I am conducting a research for my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at an American University. I appreciate your willingness to provide data for the research. This research is on the application of Chinese and U.S. leadership approaches for Chinese business.

Currently, more and more researchers discuss the differences and similarities between leadership and management because they think it is a hot topic. Some researchers support an idea that leadership and management are distinct. For instance, the "Father of Modern Management", Peter Ferdinand Drucker has said "management is doing things right, and leadership is doing the right things" (Drukcer, 2012, p.102). Other researchers point out that management skills can be used to plan, build and direct organizational systems to accomplish missions and goals, but leadership skills are used to focus on a potential change by setting a direction, aligning people, and motivating (Algahtani, 2014).

However, there are still some people who hold different ideas of the leadership and management. They think leadership and management often overlap and hard to set apart (Toor, 2011). They suggest that the two functions are blended and complementary because sometimes leaders manage and sometimes managers lead (Toor, 2011). In short, these researchers above stand by a point that leadership is not a special phenomenon and an entirely distinct activity, but perhaps an important aspect of managing (Toor, 2011).

In this interview, I would like to understand more about your ideas and experience of leadership, such as traits, styles, and behaviors. My questions will only be related to leadership. Everything you tell me will be used for this research only and will not be

shared with others. Also, your real name will not appear to make sure that no one can

identify you with answers. You have already agreed to the interview with the consent

form. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background information

Date_____

Position_____

Education_____

Product category:

Number of years at Westinghouse:

Number of employees you supervise:

Interview Questions

1. How much knowledge do you have about leadership principles or methods?
    Probe: leadership, principles, methods

2. As a Chinese manager, what are your opinions about Chinese leadership principles in a corporate development?

    Probe: Chinese managers, Chinese leadership principles, company

3. You are in charge of Westinghouse, an American brand company, how much knowledge do you have about U.S. leadership principles or methods?

    Probe: Chinese managers, American brand, American methods of leadership

4. Do you regularly use American methods or principles in your company?

    Probe: a company, American principles or methods

5. To what extent, do your employees accept U.S. leadership approaches?

    Probe: U.S. leadership approaches, Chinese employees' acceptance level

6. How do you use American principles or methods to allow Westinghouse to stand out in the industry?

    Probe: team leadership, transformational leadership, Westinghouse brand

7. Specifically, how do you think these American methods can raise Westinghouse brand awareness and customer-loyalty?

    Probe: brand awareness, customer loyalty, U.S. leadership techniques

8. In your opinion, what are the remarkable differences and similarities between the Chinese and U.S. leadership methods or principles in Westinghouse corporation?

Probe: similarities, differences

9. In view of these similarities and differences, what needs to be adjusted to cater to the Westinghouse official website slogan--"Innovation You Can Be Sure Of"?

Probe: Innovation, U.S. leadership approaches

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访谈指南

介绍

  我叫宫梦婷。目前在美国一所大学攻读教育领导力博士学位并进行相关课题研究。首先，我很感激您愿为我提供这次研究的相关数据。该项目主要研究中美领导力方法在中国公司中的应用。

  目前，由于领导和管理的话题愈发热门，越来越多的研究者不断讨论着这两者之间的异同。一些人认为领导和管理是两个截然不同的观点，比如"现代管理学之父"彼得德鲁克曾说过"管理就是把事情做对，而领导是做对的事情"（Drucker，2012）。另一些人同样认为管理技能可用于计划，建立和指导组织系统来完成任务和目标，而领导技能用于设定方向，调整人员和激励来关注潜在的变化（Algahtani，2014）。

  但其他人的看法却不一样。他们认为领导和管理中有许多重叠且难以区分的部分（Toor，2011）。他们觉得这两个职能可以相互融合和互补，因为有时候领导者会善于管理，而管理者也可以成为领导者 （Toor，2011）。简言之，这些人认为领导力并不是一种特殊现象，也并不是一种完全另类的活动。相反，它可能是管理中一个重要的方面 （Toor，2011）。

  在本次采访中，我希望了解更多您对领导力的想法和经验，比如特征，风格以及行为等。我所提出的问题将只会与领导力话题相关。您告诉我的所有内容将只用于该项目研究且不会与他人分享。此外，您的真名将不会涉及，没有其他人可以通过您的答案而知晓您。您已同意受访，我们开始之前，您还有什么疑问吗？

背景资料

日期____

职位____

教育背景____

产品种类：

在西屋公司的工龄：

员工人数：

访谈问题

1.您对领导原则或方式了解多少？

提示：领导力，原则，方式

2. 作为一名中国经理人，您对中国领导力在企业发展中有什么看法？

提示：中国经理人，中国领导力原则，企业

3. 您掌管的是美国西屋品牌公司，您对美国领导原则或方式了解多少？

提示：中国经理人，美国品牌，美国领导方式

4. 您在公司中经常采用美国领导方式吗？

提示：公司，美国领导原则或方式

5. 您的员工对于这些美国领导力接受程度如何呢？

提示：美国领导方式，中国员工接受程度

6. 如何使用美国领导力让中国西屋在行业内脱颖而出？

提示：团队领导力，变革型领导力，西屋品牌

7. 具体来说，这些美国方式怎样能提高西屋品牌认知度和客户忠诚度？

提示：品牌认知度，顾客忠诚度，美国领导技巧

8. 就您而言，中美领导方式或原则在西屋公司中有哪些显著异同？

提示：相同点，不同点

9. 针对这些异同点，您觉得需要做哪些调整来迎合西屋官网上"创新为您"的口号呢？

提示：创新，美国领导方式

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APPENDIX D: Participant Interviews

<u>Liu Guang Ming</u>

Liu Guang Ming is one Chinese manager who operated Water Heater products from 2018 to 2021 at WEC. He pointed out one Chinese idiom about his methods of leadership, which is called Kan Cai Xia Fan (看菜下饭). This Chinese idiom means circumstances alter cases, which shows that a leader needs to set up specific strategies and goals under different situations for his organizations. For example, due to the pandemic impacts in China, he had taken *e-commerce* marketing strategies instead of physical stores modes to boost his employees' moral, raise their productivity, and build brand reputation of WEC when COVID 19 outbroke in 2020.

He also mentioned that core value of the team is stabilization since team members need to take time to adapt the new working environments and master the useful abilities from the real world. Also, he emphasized that reasonable resolution or transformation can improve organizational team development, especially in facing their competitors in the Chinese market. For instance, he said his employees need more time and innovative techniques to catch up with the A.O. Smith, No.1 American brand in the Water Heater industry of mainland China. Efficient strategies, clear structures, and loyal staff are something he mentioned many times.

The power theory should be another important point from his responses because he clarified the relationship between leaders' power and organizational goals. To cite an instance, as a leader, he empowered his employees to improve their potentials and abilities, but he still has the last word to veto those employees' unrealistic ideas or

plans. Indeed, these procedures also can be called "A System of Responsibilities of Managers" in his department at WEC.

<u>Chen Shan</u>

As one of the most intelligent and sophisticated Chinese product managers at WEC, Chen Shan laid great stress on the relationship between social media and brand influences. He said the corporation's brand reputations and popularity could be promoted by some popular social media (e.g., Wechat, Tik Tok, and Weibo) in Chinese market. Furthermore, a few opinion leaders usually utilized these social media and offered the latest knowledge and information to his group workers. Under his guidance, his team members often hold fabulous activities or parties during some Chinese traditional holidays (e.g., New Year's Day, Mid-Autumn Festival, and Spring Festival), which may strengthen a team's cohesion and development. His group also contributes to the charitable events for a few poor areas in China.

He emphasized that empowerment could be the core organizational cultures. For example, he set up several small groups as one type of organizational structure. Each group only focused on one category of product, and the functions of different group would not be overlapped. However, the small group leaders still need to listen to, obey, and convey Chen Shan's opinions to every team member.

Also, he talked about the partnership for WEC business operations since it showed a special incentive and restraint mechanism. According to the corporation's reasonable systems, his partners may have different portions of the profits, distinctive levels of motivations, and different sense of responsibilities. In addition, effective interpersonal communication can not only improve these partners' cooperation with

the corporation, but also promote their own core competitive advantages in the industry.

Zhang Qiang

As one of the experienced Chinese product managers, Zhang Qiang described the importance of team leadership for his organization at first. He put forward the concept of "Wolf Culture" and used this idea as his organizational principles or approaches. For example, as the leader, he usually cared about the outcomes for organizational tasks, which meant that he was a result-oriented leader. He emphasized that he often set up short term (around three to five years) plans and long term (about 10 years) goals for his team workers. Several years later, he would review and check to see if his group had already finished the specific assignments and achieved the clear targets.

He also discussed opinions of partnership for WEC business operations since it exhibited a unique incentive and restraint mechanism. Moreover, he said moral partners would be taken into account first. Before the cooperation, he would estimate his partners from multi-dimensional moral consideration: such as reviewing the partners' former work or background information, getting efficient feedback about the partners from peers in the industry, and making some interesting and meaningful conversations with his new partners.

In addition, he deemed that the WEC had a huge potential in China due to the large population, governmental policies, and marketable environments. He also said he would be pleased to make more contributions to the corporation and society.

Li Hang

Li Hang was charged with Personal Cares products about five years at WEC in mainland China. He thought that his employees (around 9 people) used more Chinese leadership approaches than Americans' since they only contacted Americans via emails and set up some standards under the head-quarter's basic requirements. As the leader, he said his team is a smaller one than others, but it is result-oriented because the outcomes can be easier to appraise his members' work progress and performance. Furthermore, he will spend more time and energy building a better group this year, such as dividing workers into different groups, developing more new products, and hiring more talented employees.

He also described the decision-making power in the operation at WEC. He said that autonomy in management can be very important due to the rapid development of China's internet. For example, as one of the product managers, he usually developed the latest strategies or policies for new products to adapt and win the Chinese market, like using current and popular social platforms and building up more internet communities. In addition, he mentioned that communicating and learning from other product managers can help him and his group get more improvement and development in the market.

Wang Jing Wen

Wang Jing Wen has been responsible for Batteries since 2015 till 2021 at WEC in China. She said that her team had around 50 employees. She indicated that based on the different platforms, she usually divided her team workers into different small groups with effective organizational goals and functions. Motivational policies can be

aligned with the organizational performance and development. She also demonstrated that team building can be the key point to establish a better team at WEC.

Moreover, she said that WEC was a long historical brand (around 130 years) in United States, may draw Chinese people's attention to this brand. Thus, the quality of products could be guaranteed. Customers' attentions and other relevant advantages had really improved the corporate positions and influences in the Chinese market.

Zhao Wei

After reviewing the interview questions, Zhao Wei said confidently that he had already read some books of leadership in his daily work, like *the 21 Laws of Leadership.* Based on his knowledge and experience of leadership, he formed his own opinions about leadership. His concepts of leadership perhaps had five main components.

The first one was called role-model, which meant that he had to set a good example. He pointed out that a leader not only embraced the success, but also should face and overcome the challenges. The second factor was about the inspiration and motivation. For example, he usually made cordial one-on-one conversations with his employees in the routine operation, especially in their difficult phase. Furthermore, he inspired his employees with positive attitudes, words, and body language when they could not reach the targets or obtain achievements. After that, building up the trust and cooperation among his group workers should be take into account since it might improve their abilities of development and enhance the sense of initiative and competition. Next was to discover the unknown. Then, he emphasized that challenging the status quo could be the last but not the least one. Each Chinese

corporation had experienced ups and downs. To cite an instance, his team had been through dark times for a difficult project. Those team members had spent almost six months winning the project tender of Ventilation System since they encountered an extremely strong competitor in the Chinese market.

He also mentioned one specific and special way to improve his employees' productivity, which was called "Eliminating Adjectives". In other words, accurate data would replace of some exaggerated and embellished adjective words in his employees' routine work. Indeed, effective data sometimes really could tell us more facts than other methods due to its straight forwardness.

Sun Ke

Sun Ke indicated one significant concept about his team leadership, which could be called "Coaching and Training". As one professional and sophisticated leader at WEC, he usually coached and trained his employees to meet the requirements of their positions. He stood a point that the post competency could be a core component to improve his team's performance and development in a long term.

He also said that the group was very familiar and confident with the Chinese market since his team members were all Chinese. His employees could speak the same language (Chinese) in their routine operation, understand and support each other with similar background and cultures, and also strive for the common goals. In addition, he put forward that this American historical brand belonged to the high-end position in China, which can attract more and more Chinese customers' attention. Therefore, his team undoubtedly could go further in China and become better in the near future.

<u>Zhou Zi Hao</u>

Decision-making, implementation, targets, outcomes, feedback, as five key elements of leadership, had been mentioned many times from Zhou Zihao's conversation. He demonstrated that results-oriented method should be the core component among these factors. Therefore, he had set up clear and suitable organizational positioning and goals for his team in Water Purifying industry. However, if he realized the positioning or the organizational goal was too high to be reached in the Chinese market, then, he would revise or change his plans quickly and timely. It was just from what he did and said that I realized more than before that a good leader should be more able to face the crises and resolve the problems.

Moreover, he pointed out that transformational leadership approaches and concepts of technological innovation could help his group grow better on the industries since the innovative strategies could usually help a leader find the way out of difficulties. He also revealed his own inner ideas about his team, such as centripetal force, cooperation, and training. As a team leader, for example, he would organize the team building activities every month, and their activities usually took form of seminars with various but specific topics. The main point of these activities was the interchange of ideas among employees and employers. In addition, via a Wechat video conference, he gave me more facial expression and different kinds of body language than other interviewees who just used the Wechat audio. He smiled when he talked and his eyes glinted friendly while expressing himself freely about leadership approaches. Sometimes an enormous grin spread across his face after satisfying responses to my interview questions. Indeed, the video conferences would exhibit more meaningful contents than audio meetings but it

still lacked enough interpersonal and effective communication compared with in-person

conversations.