Comparing Dutch and British high performing managers

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Abstract

National cultures have a strong influence on the performance of organizations and should be taken into account when studying the traits of high performing managers. At the same time, many studies that focus upon the attributes of successful managers show that there are attributes that are similar for managers across countries. This article reports on the development of empirically validated profiles of Dutch and British high performing managers. Based on a sample of 808 Dutch and 286 British managers and using the cross-cultural framework of Excellent Leadership by Selvarajah et al., the profiles of excellent Dutch and British managers was derived. The profiles of Dutch and British high performing managers can be described by a four-dimensional factor structure consisting of Managerial behaviours, Environmental influences, Personal qualities and Organizational demands. Based on these validated profiles, the similarities and differences in attributes for managerial success between Dutch and British high performing managers can be identified.

Keywords: country or area studies, Europe, comparative organizational studies, human resource management (HRM), management effectiveness, organizational performance

INTRODUCTION

National culture is related to workplace behaviors, attitudes and other organizational outcomes (see Kirkman, Lowe &Gibson, 2006, for an elaborated literature overview). Hofstede (1980: 25) defined culture as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another.' Merchant and Van der Stede (2003) argued that national culture has a direct effect on organizational performance because it can cause organizational members, with managers being no exception, to react differently on similar situations. Hoecklin (1995) stated that there is an intimate relationship between national culture and organizational culture; and asserted that companies cannot develop an organizational culture that does not incorporate, substantially, the prevailing cultural factors of the country in which it operates. In this respect, organizational culture has been described as 'something to do with the people and the unique quality and style of organization' (Kilmann, Saxton & Serpa, 1985: 11) or 'the way we do things around here' (Deal & Kennedy, 1982: 12).

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According to Lee and Yu (2004) organizational culture has an impact on a variety of organizational processes and performance due to a wide range of social interactions among organizational members. More specifically, organizational culture is associated with different determinants of high performance, in terms of the traits, attitudes, and behaviors that people see as valuable to become performance-driven (Sparrow & Hiltrop, 1997; Iguisi, 2009).

Notwithstanding the supposed influence of national culture, some studies showed that there are certain traits contributing to managers being high performing which are the same across cultures (see for instance Dickson, Den Hartog & Mitchelson, 2003). Analogously, the outcomes of the Globe study performed by House, Wright and Aditya (1997) indicated that there are some leader attributes and behaviors that are universally accepted and considered to be effective, regardless of the specific national culture. Brodbeck et al. (2000) investigated the cultural variation of leadership prototypes across 22 European countries and found that several positive leadership attributes turned out to be the same across all these countries. In the same vein, Robie, Johnson, Nilsen and Hazucha (2001) and Lesley and Van Velsor (1998) reported that US and European managers had the same attributes with regard to effective managerial performance. Moreover, numerous studies (e.g., Dorfman et al., 1997; Boehnke, Bontis, DiStefano & DiStefano, 1999; Juhl, Kristensen, Kanji & Batley, 2000; Mehta, Larsen, Rosenbloom, Mazur & Polsa, 2001; Silverthorne, 2001; Zagersek, Jaklic & Stough, 2004; Matič, 2008; Bret Becton & Field, 2009) reported common attributes among effective managers in diverse cultures. Hazucha, Hezlett, Bontems-Wackens and Ronnkvist (1999) explained this similarity by stating that the resemblance of the nature of managerial work across countries has resulted in a convergence of the attributes that are associated with being successful in that managerial work. Taras, Rowney and Steel (2009) remarked that specific attributes linked to national culture might become obsolete because in today's global village geographic boundaries are becoming less relevant. Zagersek, Jaklic and Stough (2004: 31), alike, concluded: 'Culture does matter. But its impact is not as strong as is commonly thought. Maybe the world is actually becoming a 'global village' after all.' Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, Dorfman and GLOBE Associates (1999), however, warned that although the type of leader attributes that are assumed to be important for success can be similar for different cultures, the perceived importance of these attributes may still vary across cultures. Therefore, this study focuses upon traits of high performing managers (HPMs) comparing Dutch and British ones, as the latter may be different depending upon national culture (Gerstner & Day, 1994; Gabrielson, Darling & Seristö, 2009).

Up to now, much of the research into the attributes of HPMs has been conducted using frameworks and models which were developed based on Western literature (i.e., building upon studies done in organizations situated in Western countries). Thus there is a lack of scholarly literature on non-Western research into the attributes of HPMs, mainly due to the fact that this kind of research, if undertaken, is then often not described in English. The implication of this is that potential important leadership attributes could be missing from 'the Western models.' In addition, globalization increasingly causes non-Western managers to transfer to Western countries to take up jobs in Western-based organizations, which could influence the attributes of HPMs both in Western and non-Western countries (Zagersek, Jaklic & Stough, 2004). It has to be noted that we are talking about leadership as a process rather than the 'leader' versus 'manager' issue (Yukl, 1989) and as such we do not make a distinction between leader and manager in our study.

In the research described in this article a leadership framework, which was developed in Asia based on a mix of Western and Eastern literature (i.e., literature on studies done in organizations based in Western as well as Asian countries), has been applied. This so-called Asian Perspectives on Excellence in Leadership (APEL) framework (Selvarajah, Duignan, Nuttman & Suppiah, 1995) can be interpreted as a framework that has a global outlook, and therefore, might be more balanced than frameworks that solely focus on Western and specifically US managers, and that ignore the concept of cultural relativism. Moreover, next to

the strong US bias (see Hoppe, 2004) and despite the rapidly increasing globalization of business and industry, there is a serious lack of cross-national and cross-cultural comparative research. This lack may be partly attributed to the lack of global constructs and theories, the complexity of measuring country-level effects, and the difficulties of cross-cultural research design.

In this article, we aim to explore culture influences that might influence managerial leadership behaviors in the Netherlands (Germanic cluster; Hofstede, 1980) and the United Kingdom (Anglo-Saxon cluster; Hofstede, 1980). This approach has not been used before and, as such, adds to the scholarly work in the field of validating managers' profiles. In addition, the attributes used in our empirical study are – in contrast to the work done by Hofstede and by House and colleagues in the GLOBE project – translated in actual behaviors, herewith further increasing the added value of our approach. This article is organized as follows. In the next section, the APEL framework that forms the basis of our study is introduced. Then, building upon the cultural frameworks from Hofstede (1980, 2001) and the ones used in the GLOBE project (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004), our research hypotheses dealing with the similarities and differences between Dutch and British HPMs are presented. Our article ends with a discussion of the outcomes, followed by an outline of the limitations of the research, recommendations for further study, and practical implications.

THE APEL FRAMEWORK

In order to identify the attributes of HPMs, the APEL framework of Excellent Leadership by Selvarajah et al. (1995) was chosen as it is based on a multi-cultural approach and it has been thoroughly validated in previous research (de Waal, Heijden, van der, Meyer& Selvarajah, 2012; Selvarajah, Meyer & Davuth, 2012; Selvarajah, Meyer, Jeyakumar & Donovan, 2013a, Selvarajah, Meyer & Donovan, 2013b; Shrivastava, Selvarajah, Dorasamy & Meyer, 2014). In this framework, the concept of excellence in leadership is viewed as being a combination of dimensions of behavioral values needed to create good leadership in a certain context (Selvarajah et al., 1995), and 'excellence' is defined as 'surpassing others in accomplishment or achievement' (Taormina & Selvarajah, 2005: 300). Selvarajah et al. (1995) have operationalized these behavioral dimensions by creating 94 'excellence in leadership' value statements. These statements were formulated in terms of behaviors exhibited by a person in a managerial position, rather than in terms of personal traits or personal characteristics as these are difficult to observe (Selvarajah & Meyer, 2008). The statements were based upon an in-depth study of scholarly work on leadership and management excellence, both from the *Western* and *Eastern* literature. Then, a group of researchers from six Asian countries categorized the statements within dimensions, creating a balanced international perspective. The four dimensions identified were: (1) Personal qualities; (2) Managerial behaviors; (3) Organizational demands; and (4) Environmental influences (see Selvarajah et al., 1995). *Personal qualities* are the personal values, skills, attitudes, behavior and qualities of an individual, emphasizing morality, religion, inter-personal relationships, and communication. *Managerial behaviors* cover a person's nature, values, attitudes, actions and styles when performing managerial duties, emphasizing persuasive powers. *Organizational demands* refer to the ways a manager responds to the goals, objectives, structures and issues in an organization, emphasizing the importance of organizational prosperity. *Environmental influences* refer to external factors that influence the success of the entire organization, emphasizing the importance of scanning and evaluating the external environment in search for opportunities. *Excellent leadership,* being the dependent variable in the APEL framework, comprises the combination of behaviors and attitudes that are desirable for good leadership within a certain cultural context (see e.g., Selvarajah, Meyer & Davuth, 2012; Selvarajah et al., 2013a; Selvarajah, Meyer & Donovan, 2013b). The 94 'Excellence in leadership' value statements were subjected to the Q-sort technique (Kerlinger, 1973) using the above described dimensions as the framework for categorization. The Q-sort was performed by Asian managers who

were attending executive programs at the Asian Institute of Management in Manila and the Southeast Asian Management Education Organization Institute located in Brunei Darussalam. All statements were printed three times on small cards, and the managers were asked to sort these sets of cards in three different ways. The first sorting was used to determine the importance of each statement for excellence in leadership. The second sorting was used to determine to which of the four dimensions each statement belonged, and the third sorting was used to determine the importance of each statement, in terms of its chosen dimension (i.e., the importance of each statement in proportion to the other statements assigned to the same dimension). Several previous studies (e.g., Taormina &Selvarajah, 2005; Selvarajah & Meyer. 2007, 2008; Selvarajah, 2008) have already shown that valid measures that are applicable in several Asian countries can be developed in this manner. Moreover, these previous studies reported that the specific factor loadings of the statements on specific dimensions differed across Asia, showing that there are indeed cultural differences in leadership behaviors and values. De Waal et al. (2012) reported that the leadership framework could also be used in the context of a Western country, in their specific case, the Netherlands. Following on the cross-validation of the APEL framework in the Netherlands (de Waal et al., 2012), we will continue our efforts regarding cross-national and cross-cultural comparative research in this field by incorporating two European samples (the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) and identifying possible (dis)similarities of the Dutch and British managers that influence leadership behaviors.

HYPOTHESES' DEVELOPMENT

We developed hypotheses based on the framework of Selvarajah et al. (1995) and the cultural frameworks from Hofstede (1980, 2001). There has been quite some criticism on Hofstede's scholarly work. For instance, McSweeney (2002) stated that culture is not stable over a longer period of time and that big changes such as governmental restructuring or rapid economic and population growth will have an impact on the cultural dimensions of a country. Hofstede's investigation took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s and since then the world has changed considerably, which might have affected the original cultural dimension scores per country. McSweeney (2002) also argued that all respondents in the study of Hofstede were from one company only (IBM) and from only a few different departments, and it has not been proven that the IBM respondents were representative for their country's culture. Javidan, House, Dorfman, Hanges and De Luquet (2006) critiqued Hofstede's work on various aspects, among others that it was not action-based and too much focused on one company. Baskerville (2003) went one step further in her critique and stated that Hofstede never actually studied cultures but instead reviewed nations, and that as such his dimensions say more about a country and its national character then about the various cultures that can exist in one country. We however decided to use Hofstede's dimensions in our research for two reasons: Hofstede's model has dominated empirical cultural research in the last decennia (Harrison & McKinnon, 1999); and Hofstede's framework is relatively simple, just four dimensions, with a clear distinction within dimensions (opposites) that have shown stability (Girlando, Anderson & Zerillo, 2004). However, we are well aware that only using Hofstede's model might be too limited and therefore we also incorporated the results of the GLOBE research project (House et al. 2004) in our research.

The base-line assumption underlying our research is that HPMs in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom can be validly described using the APEL framework of Excellent leadership. Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis was formulated:

> Hypothesis 1. A four-dimensional factor structure consisting of Personal qualities, Managerial behaviors, Organizational demands, and Environmental influences is valid to describe Leadership excellence in Dutch and British HPMs.

To distinguish between national cultures, Hofstede identified the following four dimensions (Hofstede, Pedersen & Hofstede, 2002): (1) uncertainty avoidance, which is the extent to which people in a society feel comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty; (2) individualism versus collectivism, which is the extent to which one's identity is derived from one's self as opposed to the group of which the individual is a member; (3) power distance, which is the extent to which members of a society accept that institutional power is distributed unequally; and (4) masculinity versus femininity, being the extent to which the social gender roles in a society are clearly masculine (assertive and hard) or feminine (equality, solidarity, and consensus). Hofstede (2001), in his book *Cultures' Consequences,* reported the empirical results for the Netherlands using a scale ranging from 0 to 100: uncertainty avoidance (53), individualism versus collectivism (80), power distance (38), and masculinity versus femininity (14). To summarize, these results for the Netherlands indicated a feminine-oriented society with relatively low power distance, medium uncertainty avoidance, and a highly individualistic culture. Hofstede (2001) also came up with the scores for the United Kingdom: uncertainty avoidance (35), individualism versus collectivism (89), power distance (35), and masculinity versus femininity (66). The latter results indicated a masculine-oriented society with relatively low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, and a highly individualistic culture.

More specifically, from his website (http://geert-hofstede.com) we can grasp a thorough understanding of the (dis)similarities of the two nations, and resulting effects in terms of country styles. The Netherlands is a *feminine* society wherein it is important to protect one's work/life balance and to make sure that all employees are included in the organization's processes. Effective managers are supportive to their people and decision-making is achieved through involvement. Managers strive for consensus and people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromising and negotiation; the Dutch are known for their long discussions until consensus has been reached. The British, on the other hand, are a masculine society: highly success-oriented and success-driven. A key point of confusion for a non-British individual lies in the apparent contradiction between the British culture of modesty and understatement which is at odds with the underlying success-driven value system in the culture (http://geert-hofstede.com).

As regards the dimension of *power distance*, the Dutch style can be characterized as follows: being independent, observing hierarchy for convenience only, equal rights, accessibility to superiors, coaching leaders, and management that facilitates and empowers. Power is decentralized, managers rely on the experience of their team members, and employees expect to be consulted. Control is disliked and the attitude toward managers is informal and on a first name basis. Communication is direct and participative. Britain sits in the lower rankings of power distance as well. Interestingly, the research shows that the power distance to be lower among the higher levels of society in Britain than among the British working classes. This score at first seems to be incongruent with the well-established and historical British class system and it exposes one of the inherent tensions in the British culture: between the importance of birth rank on the one hand, and a deep seated belief that where you are born should not limit how far you can travel in life on the other hand. A sense of fair play drives a belief that people should be treated in some way as equals.

As regards *uncertainty avoidance*, the Dutch exhibit a preference for avoiding uncertainty. They maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. There is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work), time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm, innovation may be resisted, and security is an important element in individual motivation. On the contrary the British score low on uncertainty avoidance, which means that as a nation they are quite happy to wake up not knowing what the day brings thus happy to 'make it up as they go along,' changing plans as new information comes to light. They are comfortable in ambiguous situations, and there are, generally, not too many rules in the British society (but those that are there are adhered to). In work terms, this

results in planning that is not detail oriented. The end goal will be clear (due to high masculinity) but there is not much detail on how to get there, and the actual process will be flexible in order to deal with the emerging and changing environment. Planning horizons will also be shorter.

As regards the *individualism versus collectivism* dimension, the Dutch have a high preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. In individualistic societies offence causes guilt and a loss of self-esteem, the employer-employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only, and management is the management of individuals. The British are highly individualistic and private people as well. Children are taught from an early age to think for themselves and to discover what their unique purpose in life is and how they uniquely can contribute to society. The route to happiness is through personal fulfillment. Based on the above outline, we will now formulate the next set of research hypotheses and summarize the rationale for them.

In a feminine-oriented culture, like the Netherlands, it is more likely that a manager, when evaluating the performance of an employee, takes into account the well-being of the person concerned. Thus there will be a strong drive to avoid conflicts by striving for consensus and being a team player (Hofstede, 2001: 316). In contrast, in a masculine-oriented culture like the UK managers are more decisive, assertive, aggressive and competitive. They resolve conflicts by denying them or fighting them until 'the best man' wins (Hofstede, 2001: 318). This leads to the following hypothesis which relates to the managerial perceptions of the importance of Personal qualities:

> Hypothesis 2. Value statements which emphasize managers' respect for their employees are more important for the Netherlands, which is characterized by a feminine culture, than for the United Kingdom, which is characterized by a masculine culture.

In a society with low power distance, such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, creating an egalitarian society with equality between people is necessary, as managers and employees are basically considered equal. Subordinates expect to be consulted because their opinions are important to management (Hofstede, 2001: 108). This suggests the following hypothesis which relates to managerial perceptions of the importance of Organizational Demand:

> Hypothesis 3. Value statements which emphasize managers' drive for consensus are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a low power distance.

People from the Netherlands scored higher on the uncertainty avoidance dimension compared to the ones from the United Kingdom. This means that, according to Merchant and Van der Stede (2003) and Chong and Park (2003), in comparison with the United Kingdom, there is a stronger focus for managers in the Netherlands to use elaborate formal planning systems with many procedures, rituals and targets, in order to diminish the uncertainty level of organizational members. These systems are expected to reduce the uncomfortable feelings people experience in unstructured situations (Hofstede, 2001: 169). This brings us to the following hypothesis which relates to managerial perceptions of the importance of Environmental Influences:

> Hypothesis 4. Value statements which emphasize managers' preference for rules, procedures and formal systems are more important for the Netherlands, which is characterized by a medium level of uncertainty avoidance, than for the United Kingdom, which is characterized by a low level of uncertainty avoidance.

In individualistic cultures, such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, people are more self-oriented than organization-minded and individual initiative and individual decision making are encouraged (McCoy, Galletta & King, 2005). Also, individuals are supposed to look

after themselves rather than to remain integrated into a group (Hofstede, 2001: 244). This leads us to the following hypothesis which relates to manager's perceptions of the importance of Managerial behavior:

Hypothesis 5. Value statements which emphasize managers' self-orientation are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a highly individualistic culture.

Hofstede (2001) has indicated that his cultural framework is not a finished product but, rather, a base for further empirical investigation. Several researchers (e.g., Javidan & House, 2001; House et al., 2004) have responded to this call for more research and have formulated the following nine dimensions, aiming to more elaborately distinguish between national cultures (House et al., 2004): (1) assertiveness, which is the degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational and aggressive in their relationship with others; (2) collectivism I (institutional collectivism), which is the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action; (3) collectivism II (in-group collectivism), which is the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families; (4) future orientation, which is the extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors, such as delaying gratification, planning and investing in the future; (5) gender egalitarianism, which is the degree to which a collective minimizes gender inequality; (6) humane orientation, which is the degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring and kind to others; (7) performance orientation, which is the degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence; (8) power distance, which is the degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equal; and (9) uncertainty avoidance, which is the extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events.

In House et al.'s (2004) empirical work, the results for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for these nine dimensions are given (on a scale of 1–7) as follows: assertiveness (4.46 vs. 4.50), future orientation (4.72 vs. 4.13), gender egalitarianism (3.62 vs. 3.36), humane orientation (4.02 vs. 4.18), performance orientation (4.46 vs. 4.45), power distance (4.32 vs. 4.92), institutional collectivism (4.62 vs. 4.21), in-group-collectivism (3.79 vs. 4.22), and uncertainty avoidance (4.81 vs. 4.15). We will develop additional hypotheses using the nine-dimensional framework of House et al. (2004). However, no additional hypotheses have been developed for power distance, collectivism and uncertainty avoidance as these have been addressed previously while discussing Hofstede's dimensions. Neither has a hypothesis been developed for gender egalitarianism because this has more to do with the number of female managers and their position in society, than with the feminine orientation of a culture (House et al., 2004).

According to House and associates (2004), the Netherlands and the United Kingdom score high on the assertiveness dimension: value dominant behavior, have sympathy for the strong, value competition, try to have control over the environment, stress competition and performance, emphasize results over relationships, value taking initiative, and expect demanding and challenging targets. This leads us to the following hypothesis which relates to managerial perceptions of the importance of Managerial behavior:

Hypothesis 6. Value statements which emphasize the strength of managers are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by an assertive culture.

In societies like the Dutch and the British that score relatively high on family orientation, values of altruism and generosity have high priority, personal and family relationships are important, and people are expected to promote paternalistic norms and relationships (House et al., 2004). This leads us to the

following hypothesis which relates to managerial perceptions of the importance of Organizational demand:

> Hypothesis 7. Value statements which emphasize managers' ability to create a family-like organizational culture are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a medium humane-oriented culture.

In societies like the Dutch and the British that score higher on performance orientation, there is a tendency to emphasize results more than people. Therefore, performance is rewarded, assertiveness and competitiveness are valued, giving feedback is seen as necessary for improvement, having a sense of urgency is important, and being direct and explicit in communications is valued (House et al., 2004). Hence, our final hypothesis is formulated as follows, relating again to managerial perceptions of the importance of Personal Qualities:

> Hypothesis 8. Value statements which emphasize direct and straight-forward communicating managers are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a highly performance-oriented culture.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and procedure

This study examined the attributes of Dutch and British HPMs working at all managerial levels in Dutch and British organizations. A managerial position is defined as a position in which the person has one subordinate or more. Potential participants in the Netherlands were approached through the internet – in the period January to July 2009 – by means of the newsletter of the largest management periodical in the Netherlands, *Management Team* (48,000 subscribers, mostly managers), and directly at five organizations which were known to the authors (~500 managers in total) (convenient sampling strategy). With 1,094 respondents in total, the response rate was 2.26%, which is quite low given the expectations regarding response rates from on-line surveys, yet, as an absolute figure high enough for statistical analysis (Deutskens, Ruyter, De Wetzels & Oosterveld, 2004; Millar & Dillman, 2011). The research sample in the United Kingdom consisted of employees working at a consortium of five Information & Communications Technology companies. Neither the respondents nor their organizations were identified in order to protect anonymity and to increase the response rate. After checking its content, a total of 808 usable questionnaires were received for the Netherlands, while 286 usable ones were received for the United Kingdom. Of the Dutch respondents, 66% were men and 34% were women; 12.9% were younger than 35 years, 20.2% of the respondents was between the ages of 35 and 40, 19.9% between 41 and 45, 20.2% between 46 and 50, 24.8% between 51 and 55, none of the respondents were between the age of 56 and 60, and 2.0% were over the age of 60. Of the responding organizations, 59.7% were profit organizations, and 40.3% were not-for-profit ones; of the profit organizations there were 10.3% were family-owned businesses, 25.0% were quoted on the stock-market and the remaining 24.4% were privately held companies. The largest industry represented in the sample was education (21.3%), followed by construction (10.6%), professional services (10.5%), government (7.7%), financial services (7.5%), production (6.8%), accountancy (5.3%), consultancy (5.0%), healthcare – elderly care (4.8%), healthcare – hospitals (4.7%), Information & Communication Technology (4.5%), and others (11.3%). Of the British respondents, 85% were men and 15% were women; 9.4% were younger than 35 years, 15.0% of the respondents was between the ages of 35 and 40, 24.2% between 41 and 45, 20.2% between 46 and 50, 18.2% between 51 and 55, 10.2% between 56 and 60, and 2.8% over the age of 60. All of the respondents worked for profit companies within the Information & Communications Technology sector.

There were some differences between the Dutch and UK samples, in terms of gender and age, and these will be considered when interpreting the results.

Measures

The respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the 94 statements from the APEL framework of Excellent Leadership (Selvarajah et al., 1995), in the context of an excellent leader in the organization, using an importance scale ranging from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important). As such, the questionnaire elicited respondents' perceptions on what good management behavioral values should be (Laurent, 1983). *Excellent leadership* was assessed with a scale of eight items, *Personal qualities* was measured using a scale of 13 items, *Managerial behaviors was assessed* with a scale of 12 items, *Organizational demands* with a scale of eight items, and *Environmental influences* with a scale of seven items (see Table 2 for an overview of all items).

Analyses

Confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS version 21 was conducted in order to test whether the 'Excellent leadership' framework (Selvarajah et al., 1995) fitted both the Dutch and the British data, as suggested in our first hypothesis. This test involved creating measurement models for the four hypothesized dimensions of leadership as well as for the Excellent leader construct itself. The measurement models showed acceptable validity (Byrne, 2001) with goodness of fit indices (GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI) all above 0.90, an SRMR below 0.05, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) below 0.08, for each of the four Excellent Leadership dimensions as well as for the Excellent Leader construct. Tests for discriminant validity were supported for these five dimensions (the four sub dimensions and the dependent variable Excellent leader). The value of the χ^2 goodness of fit statistic deteriorated significantly ($p < .01$) when, one at a time, the correlations between the five measurement models were forced to equal one. The summated scales constructed for these five constructs showed acceptable reliability (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998), with Cronbach's α values close to or above 0.70, and with correlations ranging from 0.487 to 0.715 as shown in Table 1.

Subsequently, the first hypothesis was tested by evaluating each of the above-mentioned measurement models for configural invariance across managers located in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The results showed that the first hypothesis was supported with configural invariance found for all five dimensions (RMSEA < 0.05). In addition, for each of the dimensions a test of measurement invariance was performed in order to determine whether the items comprising each dimension received similar weighting in the case of managers from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The remaining hypotheses were tested by determining whether the dimensions, operationalized by means of the specific value statements as proposed by Selvarajah et al. (1995), supported the work done by Hofstede (2001) and the research carried out by the Globe project (House et al., 2004).

TABLE 1. CORRELATIONS FOR SUMMATED SCALES

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Organizational demands	1	0.588	0.615	0.619	0.588
Personal qualities	0.588	1	0.509	0.715	0.600
Environmental influences	0.615	0.509	1	0.530	0.487
Excellent leader	0.619	0.715	0.530	1	0.592
Managerial behaviors	0.588	0.600	0.487	0.592	1

RESULTS

As stated above, confirmatory factor analysis was used to investigate whether the hypothesized framework was supported by the empirical data. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis in total 57 of the initial 94 items were omitted from both the Dutch and British data. In a similar vein, Selvarajah (2008) omitted 47 items in a Cambodian study. The initial single-sample analysis suggested configural invariance with a good fit obtained for managers from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (RMSEA < 0.05). However, tests for measurement invariance suggested similar weights only in the case of the *Personal qualities*, *Environmental influence* and *Organizational demands* dimensions, with dissimilar weights in the case of *Managerial behavior* dimension and the Excellent leader-dependent variable. The results given in Table 2 show a significant difference in the perceptions of *Excellent leadership* for managers from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom ($\chi^2 = 13.10$, $df = 5$, $p = .022$), with British managers giving more weight to the motivation of employees and the need to continuing learning how to improve performance compared to the Dutch managers.

Managerial behaviors entail a person's nature, values, attitudes, actions and styles which are shown to the outside world when performing managerial duties. Our outcomes indicate that there are significant differences between the measurement weights for Dutch and British managers ($\chi^2 = 30.417$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$), with British managers attributing more importance to delegation, persuading others to do things, and trusting those to whom work is delegated. *Organizational demands* relate to the way a manager responds to the goals, objectives, structures and issues in an organization. There appears to be no significant difference in the weights for the United Kingdom and Dutch managers as shown in Table 2 ($\chi^2 = 6.771$, $df = 5$, $p = .238$), suggesting that UK and Dutch managers' perception of Organizational demands is similar. *Environmental influences*, such as economic circumstances, political situation, and cultural and legal factors, are external factors that influence the success of the organization. There are no significant differences between the Dutch and British managers in terms of the weights for this construct ($\chi^2 = 7.065$, $df = 4$, $p = .132$). *Personal qualities* comprise the personal values, skills, attitudes, behavior and qualities of an individual. As Table 2 shows, the loadings are similar for managers from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. More specifically, there is no significant difference between the weights for these two sets of managers ($\chi^2 = 7.566$, $df = 9$, $p = .578$). In summary, the perceptions of managers from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are similar in terms of *Personal qualities*, *Organizational demands* and *Environmental influence*. However, there are significant differences in terms of perceptions relating to the constructs of *Managerial behavior* and *Excellent leader*. British managers consider three managerial behaviors to be more important than managers from the Netherlands do: 'trusting staff to do their jobs,' 'persuading others to do things,' and 'delegation.' In addition, British managers appear to attach more weight to 'employee motivation' and 'continuing to learn how to improve performance,' being important aspects for an excellent British manager compared to a Dutch manager.

The significantly higher proportion of females in the Dutch sample urged us to conduct invariance tests for gender. No significant differences were found for the measurement models for men and women, suggesting that the above-mentioned differences between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom cannot be attributed to gender differences (Mohr & Wolfram, 2008). This is a highly interesting outcome in the light of arguments regarding the suitability of women for leadership positions (Bosak & Sczesny, 2011). In a similar vein, invariance tests comparing the outcomes according to age category showed no significant differences, implying that the above-mentioned differences between the two countries cannot be attributed to age differences either.

Multivariate analysis of variance test showed that there were significant differences in the average scores for Dutch and British managers ($F(5, 1088) = 34.558$, $p < .001$, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.137$). As Table 3 shows, British managers attributed significantly higher importance to *Managerial behavior*, *Personal qualities* and

TABLE 2. ITEMS IN THE EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR DUTCH AND BRITISH MANAGERS

	Loadings for the Netherlands	Loadings for the United Kingdom
Excellent leadership value statement		
EL1. Have confidence when dealing with work and people	0.608	0.764
EL2. Give recognition for good work	0.631	0.701
EL3. Create a sense of purpose and enthusiasm in the workplace	0.630	0.765
EL4. Motivate employees	0.560	0.815
EL5. Continue to learn how to improve performance	0.502	0.716
EL6. Have a strategic vision for the organization	0.446	0.461
RMSEA	0.026	0.075
GFI	0.994	0.973
CFI	0.994	0.979
Personal qualities value statement		
PQ1. Respect the self-esteem of others	0.565	0.688
PQ2. Be consistent in dealing with people	0.585	0.746
PQ3. Accept responsibilities for mistakes	0.515	0.702
PQ4. Deal calmly in tense situations	0.523	0.658
PQ5. Be dependable and trustworthy	0.566	0.770
PQ6. Write clearly and concisely	0.444	0.527
PQ7. Listen to the advice of others	0.454	0.643
PQ8. Be an initiator, not a follower	0.392	0.587
PQ9. Have a sense of humor	0.392	0.480
PQ10. Follow what is morally right, not what is right for self or for the organization	0.403	0.418
RMSEA	0.034	0.074
GFI	0.983	0.934
CFI	0.970	0.942
Managerial behaviors value statement		
MB1. Make work decisions quickly	0.523	0.658
MB2. Select work wisely to avoid overload	0.506	0.497
MB3. Make decisions without depending too much on others	0.465	0.385
MB4. Trust those to whom work is delegated	0.401	0.612
MB5. Listen to and understand the problems of others	0.453	0.595
MB6. Focus on the task-at-hand	0.504	0.597
MB7. Delegate	0.360	0.610
MB8. Persuade others to do things	0.426	0.653
MB9. Keep up-to-date on management literature	0.382	0.260
MB10. Be logical in solving problems	0.441	0.472
RMSEA	0.054	0.078
GFI	0.971	0.935
CFI	0.907	0.902
Organizational demands value statement		
OD1. Sell the professional or corporate image to the public	0.626	0.686
OD2. Support decisions made jointly by others	0.537	0.595
OD3. Share power	0.561	0.641
OD4. Give priority to long-term goals	0.395	0.503
OD5. Focus on maximizing productivity	0.399	0.551
OD6. Adjust organizational structures and rules to realities of practice	0.332	0.439
RMSEA	0.021	0.056
GFI	0.99	0.98
CFI	0.99	0.97
Environmental influences value statement		
EI1. Have a multicultural orientation and approach	0.604	0.711
EI2. Identify social trends which may have an impact on the work	0.587	0.695
EI3. Be socially and environmentally responsible	0.548	0.771
EI4. Be responsive to political realities in the environment	0.342	0.457
EI5. Constantly evaluate emerging technologies	0.280	0.458
RMSEA	0.015	0.025
GFI	0.997	0.992
CFI	0.997	0.997

TABLE 3. COMPARISON OF MEAN VALUES FOR SCALES

	Country	Mean	SD	F(1,1092)	p-value	Partial η²	Cronbach's α
Organizational demand	The Netherlands	3.8315	0.48815	6.479	0.011	0.006	0.66
	United Kingdom	3.9225	0.60013				
Personal qualities	The Netherlands	4.2099	0.38051	36.208	0.000	0.032	0.78
	United Kingdom	4.3783	0.47338				
Environmental influence	The Netherlands	3.7691	0.51436	22.500	0.000	0.020	0.63
	United Kingdom	3.5825	0.70892				
Leadership excellence	The Netherlands	4.4282	0.42046	2.983	0.084	0.003	0.76
	United Kingdom	4.4819	0.53143				
Managerial behavior	The Netherlands	3.8438	0.48370	29.004	0.000	0.026	0.75
	United Kingdom	4.0308	0.55935				

Organizational demands, while Dutch managers attributed significantly higher importance to *Environmental influence*. However, the size of these effects was small when considered individually, and there was no significant difference as regards the importance of *Leadership excellence*. These results provide some support for Hypotheses 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 which suggested similarity for managers from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In addition, Hypothesis 4 is supported in that managers from the Netherlands appear to attach more importance to *Environmental influence* than UK managers, allowing these managers to better avoid uncertainty. However, there is no support for Hypothesis 2 in that, contrary to our expectation, the *Personal qualities* associated with respect for others were considered more important by the UK managers than the Dutch managers considered in this study. Interestingly, multivariate analysis of variance test showed that there were neither significant gender nor age differences between the UK and Dutch managers for any of the leadership dimensions [$F(5, 1085) = 2.10$, $p = .064$; $F(5, 1086) = 1.40$, $p = .222$, respectively], suggesting that the above-reported unexpected result cannot be attributed to gender or age imbalances in the UK and Dutch samples.

DISCUSSION

The results that have been outlined above show that the framework for Excellent leadership developed by Selvarajah et al. (1995) is valid for both the Dutch and British context. Concrete, we have found that the five-factor structure is a valid representation, portraying reliable factors that are important to characterize Dutch and British HPMs. This suggests strong support for the first hypothesis. Table 4 provides an overview of the outcomes concerning the other seven hypotheses. As our approach concerned an exploratory study, we selected those value statements, construct-wise, that appeared to suitably cover and explain the specific hypothesis. For example, Hypothesis 6 – *Value statements which emphasize the strength of managers are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by an assertive culture* – is best described by items EL1 'Have confidence when dealing with work and people,' PQ4 'Deal calmly in tense situations' and MB3 'Make decisions without depending too much on others.' These items all refer to managers who are confident in their work and consequently are seen by employees as being strong in their managerial duties. Subsequently, for those items the loadings for the Dutch and British HPMS were compared in order to evaluate whether the hypothesis will be confirmed. If the loadings for an item for both countries differed <0.1 they were deemed to be virtually similar, and the item was interpreted as being equally important for the Netherlands as for the United Kingdom. Moreover, if more than half of the value statements

TABLE 4. MATCHING HYPOTHESES WITH VALUE STATEMENTS FOR THE DUTCH AND BRITISH HPMS

Hypothesis	Value statements	Loadings of the Netherlands versus the UK loadings	Confirmed?
H2. Value statements which emphasize managers' respect for their employees are more important for the Netherlands, which is characterized by a feminine culture, than for the United Kingdom, which is characterized by a masculine culture	EL2. Give recognition for good work PQ1. Respect the self-esteem of others MB4. Trust those to whom work is delegated	EL2: similar PQ1: lower MB4: lower	No
H3. Value statements which emphasize managers' drive for consensus are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a low power distance	OD2. Support decisions made jointly by others OD3. Share power MB3. Make decisions without depending too much on others (–)	OD2: similar OD3: similar MB3: similar	Yes
H4. Value statements which emphasize managers' preference for rules, procedures and formal systems are more important for the Netherlands, which is characterized by a medium level of uncertainty avoidance, than for the United Kingdom, which is characterized by a low level of uncertainty avoidance	OD6. Adjust organizational structures and rules to realities of practice (–)	OD8: lower	No
H5. Value statements which emphasize managers' self-orientation are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a highly individualistic culture	PQ10. Follow what is morally right, not what is right for self or for the organization OD2. Support decisions made jointly by others OD3. Share power (–) MB3. Make decisions without depending too much on others	PQ10: similar OD2: similar OD3: lower MB3: similar	Yes
H6. Value statements which emphasize the strength of managers are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by an assertive culture	EL1. Have confidence when dealing with work and people PQ4. Deal calmly in tense situations MB3. Make decisions without depending too much on others	EL1: lower PQ4: lower MB3: similar	No
H7. Value statements which emphasize managers' ability to create a family-like organizational culture are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a medium humane-oriented culture	EL3. Create a sense of purpose and enthusiasm in the workplace EI1. Have a multicultural orientation and approach EI4. Be socially and environmentally responsible MB2. Select work wisely to avoid overload	EL3: lower EI1: lower EI4: lower MB2: similar	No
H8. Value statements which emphasize direct and straight-forward communicating managers are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a highly performance-oriented culture	PQ6. Write clearly and concisely MB5. Listen to and understand the problems of others	PQ7: similar MB5: lower	No

Notes. 1: (–) denotes that the loading for this specific value statement illustrates the opposite of the specific hypothesis.
2: when the difference between the loadings for the Netherlands and the UK is <0.1, the scores are denoted to be similar.

supported the specific hypothesis it was confirmed. In the case of Hypothesis 6, the loadings for value statement MB3 were similar, differing by <0.1. However, the loadings for El1 and PQ4 appeared to differ by >0.1 between the two countries. With these outcomes, Hypothesis 6 was rejected.

From the seven hypotheses in Table 4, three appeared to be supported. Possible explanations for the rejected Hypotheses 2, 6, 7 and 8 can be found in the work by Suutari (1996). Specifically, Suutari (1996) categorized European countries using the Ronen and Shenkar (1985) country cluster classification. Suutari placed the United Kingdom in the Anglo-Saxon cluster (together with Ireland), while the Netherlands was categorized in the Nordic cluster (together with Sweden, Finland and Denmark). Suutari's research did not incorporate data for the Netherlands but it did so for Sweden, so we took the corresponding scores for the latter country as a proxy for the Dutch scores. When looking at the scores for the United Kingdom and Sweden, for the 14 scales developed by Suutari (1996), many scores appeared to highly correspond with one another. The largest differences could be noticed for the scales 'decision participation,' 'individualized consideration,' 'conflict management, and 'role clarification,' where the United Kingdom scored higher than Sweden so, by proxy, higher than the Netherlands.

'Decision participation' comprises the extent to which managers consult their subordinates and allow them to participate in making decisions. As the Netherlands scored lower than the United Kingdom, in this regard, managers in the Netherlands appear to be less willing to involve their employees in decision making. This outcome is in line with the results for 'individualized consideration,' that is, the extent to which managers treat each employee as an individual and give personal attention to each follower's needs and hopes, where the Netherlands again scored lower than the United Kingdom. Hypothesis 2 (Value statements which emphasize managers' respect for their employees are more important for the Netherlands, which is characterized by a feminine culture, than for the United Kingdom, which is characterized by a masculine culture) is therefore not confirmed with our data. 'Conflict management' comprises the extent to which managers help subordinates to resolve conflicts and quarrels and can be seen as being part of direct and effective communication, and the ability to keep 'peace in the family.' As the Dutch respondents scored lower compared to the British ones, managers in this country appeared to have a lower need for eliminating conflict. This might partly explain the lack of confirmation for both Hypothesis 7 (Value statements which emphasize managers' ability to create a family-like organizational culture are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a medium humane-oriented culture) and Hypothesis 8 (Value statements which emphasize direct and straight-forward communicating managers are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by a highly performance-oriented culture).

To find a possible explanation for the rejection of Hypothesis 6 (Value statements which emphasize the strength of managers are equally important for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which are both characterized by an assertive culture), we turn to the outcomes that were found in the GLOBE project. This project distinguished between ten culture clusters (Gupta, Hanges & Dorfman, 2002), with the Netherlands being classified in the Germanic Europe group (together with Austria, Germany, and the German-speaking part of Switzerland) while the United Kingdom was categorized within the Anglo-Saxon group (together with Australia, the English-speaking part of Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, white-sample South Africa and the United States). The Germanic Europe group was characterized as having a high focus on participative leadership and on cooperation between management and employees for the good of the organization, thereby lowering the need for managers to be individualistically strong (Szabo, Brodbeck, Den Hartog, Reber, Weibler & Wunderer, 2002). In contrast the Anglo-Saxon group was much more oriented toward individualistic performance (Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts & Earnshaw, 2002). This could partly explain the lack of confirmation for Hypothesis 6.

LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The main limitation of this study lies in the fact that the findings are based upon reports from one single source; namely managerial perceptions. Hence, common-method effects may have inflated the correlations.

The magnitude of such effects is subject to intense debate (Crampton & Wagner 1994; Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). However, most researchers agree that potential risks can be reduced by a careful questionnaire design (e.g., changes in the response format, anonymity, and encouraging participants' openness), which we paid specific attention to by testing the questionnaire beforehand among a small group of volunteers, and by stressing the anonymity of the questionnaire. Another limitation comprises the risk of a structural bias in the data as only two countries were represented in the sample data. Further research, using data from more countries and different industrial sectors, is needed to be better able to explain inter-country variations, and to flush out variances caused by industry or firm-size effects (see Beugelsdijk, Van Schaik & Arts, 2006; García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2008). Additional research is also needed in order to establish whether the four behavioral dimensions have predictive validity, for instance in terms of both managerial as well as organizational success. This should be done using a longitudinal design, in order to test for causality. Another research opportunity is to extend the British data, originating from the IT industry, to other parts and industry sectors in the United Kingdom. This is especially important as there are indications that there exist multiple cultures within one country (Beugelsdijk, Van Schaik & Arts, 2006; García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2008).

There are two main practical implications of our research. The first is that managers from both countries (the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), using the outcomes of our study, can immediately focus on improving concrete and tangible leadership behaviors in order to increase organizational performance in their respective national contexts. The second is that multinational companies have to take the differences in HPM attributes across national cultures – and thus different managerial behaviors – into account when training their managers for overseas' assignments (Smith, 1992). As managers cannot rely unconditionally on the attributes which made them successful in their home country, they need to be aware of the requirements they have to face in order to become effective managers in another country (Suutari, 1996; Bennett, Aston & Coiquhoun, 2000; Puck, Kittler & Wright, 2008). Thus, when managers transfer from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom or vice versa, they ought to familiarize and prepare themselves with the behaviors they need to display in order to be effective and successful in the country they are going to work in. We also call for Human Resource Management staff to formulate and follow up on practical guidelines that organizations can use in order to better structure their management development programs, fostering the right attitudes and behaviors to minimize destructive managerial behavior in the organization (Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen & Einarsen, 2010; Hoel, Glasø, Hetland, Cooper & Einarsen, 2010). Obviously, it is highly important to adopt recruitment and selection strategies which will enable the allocation of capable managers that are capable of showing behaviors identified in the APEL framework of Excellent leadership. That is, to select and train managers to have the personal qualities and managerial behavioral repertoire needed to respond to organizational demands and environmental influences within a specific national culture.

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