Cultural and Managerial Styles: A Study of Potential Managers in Malaysia

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Abstract: Multimedia University, (MMU) is the oldest and largest private university in Malaysia (a multiracial country). Its main campus in Cyberjaya, Selangor has four Faculties: Creative Multimedia (FCM), Information Technology (FIT), Engineering (FOE) and Management (FOM). English is the language of instruction. A questionnaire based on Basse (1982) was used and 931 usable responses obtained (about a quarter of the population). The independent variables were age, race (Malay, Chinese, Indian, Others’), year of study and the Faculty. The dependent variables were the five managerial styles (Factual, Intuitive, Analytical, Normative and European) as measured by the questionnaire (Cronbach’s alpha >0.9). Using One-way ANOVA etc. It was found that there were significant differences (at p<0.05) in managerial styles between races and academic years. FCM students were unique in that they preferred the Factual style, those from other Faculties preferred the Analytical style. Malay and Chinese students preferred the Analytical style, Indian students preferred the Factual style. Undergraduate courses at MMU are designed, inter alia, to produce managers for the students’ chosen profession. The implication of this and the results obtained are discussed in terms of national and individual needs and the possible desirable changes in the courses at MMU and other institutions of higher learning.

Key words: Managerial styles, factual, intuitive, analytical, normative, European, races

INTRODUCTION

Managerial styles in an organization: Organizations look for managers who can manage effectively and efficiently. But each manager is unique with his or her style, or styles, depending on the situation. Managerial style is the patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that a manager uses to deal with people and situations. A manager has several managerial styles such as analytical, intuitive, factual, normative and European, according to [1]. There are managers with only one managerial style. However, most managers have a combination of these five managerial styles, although they can be classified in various ways [2,3,4]. Managerial styles have a great impact on the organization’s operation. Effective managerial styles can increase productivity, increase empowerment, boost up employees’ morale, motivation and contribution to the organization and so on. Thus, managerial styles are important and need to be identified carefully and polished in order to improve the productivity of the organization and enhance the well-being of its members.

The nature of the problem: Many organizations spend considerable capital on solving the managerial issues every year [5]. Much of it is spent on the study of managerial behavior. Our assumption is there are specific appropriate behaviors required for managers to be successful in their relationships with subordinates. Generally, the managerial styles of a manager in an organization will influence the performance of his subordinates: This is axiomatic.

The aim: The aim of the study reported was to investigate the managerial styles of students from the four different faculties namely Faculty of Engineering (FOE), Faculty of Information Technology (FIT), Faculty of Management (FOM) and the Faculty of Creative Multimedia (FCM) in Cyberjaya Campus, Multimedia University (MMU).

Background: Students of a university are potential managers. Their preferred managerial styles will certainly influence the operation and function of an organization. Implementing an appropriate managerial style may help the organization to enjoy internal and external benefits. Internal benefits include better communication and trust between superiors and subordinates, encouraging more participation and increased morale and loyalty among employees. These internal strengths will lead to external benefits such as the reputation of and good will for the organization.
The managerial styles: Using the theory of\(^1\) there were five managerial styles studied, namely 'analytical', 'intuitive', 'factual', 'normative' and 'European'. Managers who practice the analytical style are impersonal and objective in their dealings. The manager is a force of law and order in their organization and progress through the management hierarchy is along conventional promotional lines. Factual managers use available data and information to make decisions based on facts. Normative managers are idealistic. They are concerned with how things should be done. Managers who practice the European managerial style like to use political power and informal influences. They spend most of their time on management and communication activities and relatively less in human resource activities\(^6\).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Methodology:** A pilot test with 30 questionnaires was carried out. Furthermore, a reliability test was done by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 10.0.

A random sampling was used in this study. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents (students from first year to final year) on the Cyberjaya Campus. The respondents were undergraduate students from the Faculty of Engineering (FOE), Faculty of Information Technology (FIT), Faculty of Management (FOM) and the Faculty of Creative Multimedia (FCM). In order to ensure a high response rate, the questionnaires were handed out personally to the respondents and collected immediately once they were completed by the respondents. In addition, some lecturers helped to collect the completed questions from their students during lecture and tutorial sessions.

The significance level of \(p<0.05\) was used in this study.

**Problem statements:**

- There is a significant difference in management styles among students from the four faculties
- There is a significant difference in management styles between races (i.e., Malay, Chinese, Indian and 'Others')
- There is a significant difference in management styles among students from different academic years

**Data analysis:** A total number of 931 fully completed questionnaire was used. The reliability test showed the value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.9058, i.e., \(>0.7\). Thus, the questionnaire was reliable for this study.

Table 1 shows that slightly more than 50\% of the respondents were aged between 20 to 21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group number of respondents</th>
<th>18-19</th>
<th>20-21</th>
<th>22-23</th>
<th>24- and above</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>482</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-23</td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24- and above</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Number of respondents according to race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Number of Respondents According to Year of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of study</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First year</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third year</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Number of Respondents According to Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of creative multimedia</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of information technology</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of engineering</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of management</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the ranking of managerial styles preferred by the respondents from different faculties. Factual style was ranked the highest by FCM students with a mean score of 24.1245. Students from FIT, FOE and FOM ranked analytical style the highest.

Table 6 shows the ranking of managerial styles according to different races. Malay, Chinese and other races ranked analytical style the highest. Indians preferred factual style.

Table 7 shows that first year students preferred factual style. Second year students and third year students ranked intuitive style and analytical style as their first preference respectively.

Table 8 shows that managerial styles are associated with races and years of study. The significance values are 0.009 and 0.012 respectively.

Table 9 shows that factual style and European style are significantly different between faculties, at \(p<0.05\).
Table 5: Ranking of Managerial Styles According to Faculties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FCM</th>
<th>FIT</th>
<th>FOE</th>
<th>FOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>23.8830</td>
<td>23.4709</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>23.7660</td>
<td>23.3140</td>
<td>Factual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European</td>
<td>23.6642</td>
<td>22.9070</td>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>22.8491</td>
<td>22.5988</td>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Ranking of managerial styles according to races

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Races</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>23.8111</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>23.7596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>23.7465</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>23.5774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>23.5253</td>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>23.3552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European</td>
<td>23.0553</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>23.0128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>22.7281</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>22.9144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Ranking of managerial styles according to years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>23.8599</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>23.6387</td>
<td>Factual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>23.6275</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European</td>
<td>23.0924</td>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>22.8039</td>
<td>Normative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Correlation between managerial styles and faculties, races and years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman’s rho</th>
<th>Managerial styles</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>0.0052</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>7.162</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>1.223</td>
<td>0.300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>0.916</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.973</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>6.474</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: ANOVA analysis for managerial styles and faculties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Race (1)</th>
<th>Race (J)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Mean difference (I-J)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.162</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.223</td>
<td>0.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.916</td>
<td>0.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.474</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Post Hoc analysis for managerial styles and faculties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Faculty (1)</th>
<th>Faculty (J)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Mean difference (I-J)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>FCM</td>
<td>FIT</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.8434</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FOE</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.8008</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FOM</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.0058</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>FCM</td>
<td>FIT</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>1.0499</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FOM</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.9286</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: ANOVA analysis for managerial styles and races

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Race (1)</th>
<th>Race (J)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Mean difference (I-J)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.245</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.342</td>
<td>0.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.366</td>
<td>0.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Post Hoc analysis for managerial styles and races

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Race (1)</th>
<th>Race (J)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Mean difference (I-J)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.3709</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.886</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.4925</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>0.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>1.1056</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.511</td>
<td>0.675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: ANOVA analysis for managerial styles and years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Race (1)</th>
<th>Race (J)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Mean difference (I-J)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.868</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>0.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.767</td>
<td>0.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.511</td>
<td>0.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 shows that 'factual' style is significantly different between students from FCM and students from FIT, FOE and FOM, at p<0.05. European managerial style is significantly different between students from FCM and students from FIT and FOM.

Table 11 shows that 'factual' style is significantly different between races and none others. Table 12 shows that 'factual style' is significantly different between the Indian and the Malay and Chinese.
Table 14: Post Hoc analysis for managerial styles and years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Mean difference (I-J)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>0.1254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.6593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 shows that only 'factual style' is significantly different between years of study.

Table 14 shows that 'factual style' is significantly different between the first year students and the third year students.

**DISCUSSION**

The results of this study show that students from the FCM have a stronger tendency to use data and information available to make decisions compared to students from other faculties, see Table 10. Besides, FCM students also prefer to use informal influences compared to students from FIT and FOM. The ranking of Factual and European managerial styles by FCM students was higher than the ranking given by students from other faculties. Another result is that the ranking of Normative and European managerial styles is consistently low across the faculties.

Managerial style was correlated with races for the subjects in this study. Factual style was significantly different for the Indians, Malays and Chinese. The positive values of mean difference in Table 12 reveals that the Indian students have a higher preference for the Factual style than either of the other two races.

Table 13 and 14 show that the more senior students are less concerned with the Factual style than their juniors. This suggest that maturity does not change the student preferences regarding managerial style, assuming that each first year cohort is the same as the previous first year cohort in this regard. More importantly Table 7 shows that the Factual style for students overall becomes decreasing important across the three years of their study whilst the European and Normative style remain roughly constant with the Analytical style becoming paramount in their final year. If this is due to their MMU education then many would say the university is achieving the most desirable changes in attitudes among their students.

Many observers would expect that FCM students should become increasingly intuitive during their degree course. This is only partly borne out by the results of this study, so further investigation on this issue is needed.

This research reinforces the view that the assumption that Malaysia is culturally homogeneous was unjustified.

**CONCLUSION**

For the sample investigated it may be concluded that:

- FCM students' preferred managerial style is different from students from other Faculties, who preferred the Factual style. Students from other faculties preferred the Analytical style
- Indian students favor the Factual style. Malay, Chinese and 'Others' favor the Analytical style
- The importance of Factual style decreased from first year students to third year students. Analytical style became most important among the final year students. Thus, MMU produces future managers with the Analytical style
- Normative and European styles were ranked fairly low in this study, thus MMU students do not favor these two managerial styles. The reasons for this are not clear and require further research
- FOM and FOE students have an almost identical ranking of preferences for managerial styles. This is surprising
- Malay and Chinese students appear to have almost similar preferences for managerial styles

To what extent these conclusions can be generalized to all universities in Malaysia is problematic, however, this study serves as a pilot study for further research.

**REFERENCES**

