SIGMA Assessment Systems
Cross-Cultural Application

Assessing Leadership Across Cultures with SIGMARadius

SIGMA
ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS INC.

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Leaders are role models for their organization. They are responsible for completing their own work but also for motivating other employees to produce high quality work, develop their skills, and stay loyal to their company.[1,2] Thus, leaders are central to the success of their organization. Today, companies are seeking to grow in a global environment by increasing diversity, collaborating with international teams or departments, and broadening their client base. As a result, there has been an increasing need to address what makes a good leader across various contexts.[3]

Leader success can be examined in various ways, and there are different competency models that can be used to assess leader traits and behaviors. Regardless of what approach is used, it is important to consider how broader variables can influence the way a leader is evaluated by others. This includes organization-specific variables (e.g., company norms, organizational culture), as well as more macro variables such as national culture. In this guide, we will expand on how culture might influence perceptions of leadership and how SIGMARadius has been validated with these cultural variables in mind.

SIGMARadius and 360 Degree Feedback

SIGMARadius is a 360 degree measure of individual behavior at work. 360 degree feedback measures are unique from other performance appraisal measures in that information is collected from relevant individuals. Specifically, multiple perspectives are gathered from leaders, colleagues, direct/indirect reports and self-ratings, and this results in a holistic understanding of a leaders' performance.

SIGMARadius was created using best practices for 360 degree feedback systems combined with a validated model of leadership competencies. Feedback captured with SIGMARadius includes both numerical ratings and narrative comments about the ratee's behavior, providing individuals with the opportunity to build self-awareness about their strengths and potential development opportunities.

SIGMARadius is specifically designed to help build and develop essential leadership competencies, such as Integrity, Conflict Management, and Communication. These critical leadership competencies, based on SIGMA's scientifically validated leadership competency model, capture various behaviors associated with effective leadership.

Cultural Differences in 360 Degree Feedback

It is important to consider how 360 degree feedback systems may be influenced by the culture in which they are implemented. Though research has generally supported the use of 360 degree approaches cross-culturally,[4] a critical first step when administering a 360 degree feedback system in a new cultural context is to ensure that the competencies that are being measured are relevant within that context.[5] In a large cross-cultural sample of leaders, GLOBE researchers set out to answer how cultural context influenced leadership perceptions. The project included over 70 researchers, more than 1,000 CEOs and 5,000 senior executives across 24 countries and various industries. Results showed that leadership styles focused on Motivating Others, Integrity, Teamwork, and Interpersonal Relations (e.g., charismatic or team-oriented leadership) were most positively valued across cultures.[6] Examples of charismatic leadership include the ability to engage employees and motivate them toward a specific vision, whereas team-oriented leadership involves working with others, delegating tasks effectively, and promoting group cohesion. In contrast, competencies such as Ambition are characteristic of self-protected leadership styles. Self-protected leadership is focused on individual status and is preferred more among Eastern cultures than Western ones.

The GLOBE findings highlight how important it is to measure leadership competencies that are valued universally in addition to considering specific leadership preferences based on the culture one is in. The 50 competencies in SIGMARadius' model contain both those widely desirable leadership behaviors as well as behaviors that may vary slightly due to preferences across cultures. This inclusive model of leadership competencies allows for a dynamic understanding of a leaders' performance based on their specific cultural workplace context.

SIGMARadius can also be modified to better fit a particular company culture. This is done via benchmarking, a process where the report content is narrowed to focus only on the most important competencies for a given context. Organizations can decide which of the 50 competencies align best with their company's values to focus the report exclusively on relevant competencies. This flexible approach allows companies to customize SIGMARadius to meet the needs of specific sub-cultures or niche departments within their organization.

The Big Picture: Using SIGMARadius Across Cultures

Though culture may influence preferences for leadership styles or approaches, research indicates that 360 degree feedback systems can be successfully implemented across cultures.[4] An important consideration for organizations that are expanding in a global environment is to carefully consider how the specific culture they are in might influence how a leader is evaluated. This is because facilitating leader development via performance management is key to organizational success. Thus, ensuring that leaders are evaluated on relevant competencies can unlock important information about how to grow within their role and beyond.

Get Started with SIGMARadius Today

SIGMARadius is an easy-to-use, adaptable measure of performance that can meet the specific needs of an organization. With comprehensive coverage and flexible administration, organizations can be confident that SIGMARadius captures the essential components of leadership, regardless of culture or other external factors. Paired with coaching, SIGMARadius is a valuable tool for employee development and growth. Contact us to learn more about how SIGMARadius can help your organization select and develop strong leaders.

How SIGMA Can Help

If you'd like help developing your leadership competencies and using assessments like SIGMARadius, check out SIGMA's individual and group coaching, custom consulting, and succession planning services. To learn more about our solutions and how SIGMA can help your leadership team, click here, or contact us directly for more information.

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