

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON MONGOLIAN LEADERS' CHARACTERISTICS: A POINT OF VIEW FROM THE FOLLOWERS

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Abstract: We surveyed the Checklist of Admired Leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2007), ideal format, selecting seven out of the 20 most admired characteristics from 685 Ulaanbaatar residents. Among the most important ideal leader characteristics of UB residents were Broad-minded (61), Competent (58%), Forward-looking (49%), Cooperative (49%), Fair-minded (42%). Kouzes and Posner's result has been intensively selecting the top 4, and when comparing with the results of our survey the response was widely distributed, even the last characteristics was chosen by 20% of respondents. Also, there are only 2 characteristics which was selected by over 50% of respondents. Age accounted for the differences on Broad-minded, Cooperative, Imaginative, Ambitious and Independent.

Key words: leadership characteristic, mongolian's view of leadership

Хураангуй: Энэ өгүүлэлд Kouzes, Posner (2007) нарын боловсруулсан судалгааны аргазүйгээр Улаанбаатар хотын 685 иргэнээс, тэд манлайлагчдаас ямар шинж чанарыг илүү чухалчилдаг болохыг асуусан судалгааны үр дүнг нэгтгэлээ. Судалгааны үр дүнд Улаанбаатар хотын иргэд хүлээн зөвшөөрөгдсөн манлайлагчийн “Өргөн хүрээний олон талын мэдлэгтэй, бусдын санаа бодлыг сонсож хүлээж авдаг, уужуу ухаантай (Broad-minded) 61%”, “Чадвартай, хангалттай мэдлэг, ур чадвартай, мэргэжлийн чадвар туршлагатай (Competent) 58%”, “Алсын хараатай, ирээдүйн тэмүүлэлтэй (Forward-looking) 49%”, “Хамтач, бусадтай хамтран ажилладаг, нийтэч (Cooperative) 49%”, “Шударга, бусдын санаа бодлыг сонсдог, нээлттэй байдлаар аливааг харж, шүүж байдаг, шударга үнэнч зантай (Fair-minded) 42%” гэсэн шинж чанарууд хамгийн их санал буюу 40-өөс дээш хувийн санал авсан байна.

Түлхүүр үгс: манлайллаын шинж чанар, хүлээн зөвшөөрөгдсөн манлайлал

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Research background

Mongolia has experienced rapid urbanization since the 1950s when only about 20 percent of people resided in urban areas. From a historical pre-dominance of nomadic and rural habitats, Mongolia is now overwhelmingly urban with 68 percent of the total population living in cities and towns, much higher than the Asian regional average. The capital, Ulaanbaatar (UB), has been the engine of Mongolia's urbanization.

After 70 years of power being concentrated in the hands of one political party, Mongolia held its first free election in 1990 and the first democratic constitution was approved in 1992. The Constitution declared the people's ultimate goal to be the building of civil democratic society. These democratic changes in the political environment were crucial turning points in Mongolia's recent history. The country embarked upon an irreversible path towards a market economy in 1990 and today continues to implement political and economic reforms with the aim of becoming a democratic society with a free market economy [7]. This change in the economic system was acting largely on demographics. In 2017, over 1.3 million people or over 46% citizens live in the capital Ulaanbaatar [6].

Leadership has been studied by myriad of scholars in the 20th and 21st centuries and various theories had been published in the professional journals. One recent stream of research focuses on the followers of leaders. Today, fellowship is recognized as a construct that has value, and there is a broad call for additional research in this area [1]. Many leadership studies "separate 'leaders' from 'followers' and privilege the formers as the primary agents in these dynamics" [1].

For the leader's characteristics Kouzes and Posner did culmination of over 30+ years of study, research and writing about leadership. They have conducted large scale survey on leadership characteristics involving over seventy-five thousand people around the globe. The survey questionnaire gives situation where the respondents to imagine they are electing a leadership council of seven members and that there are twenty candidates in the running; these candidates possess all ideal qualities to be elected, but there is not specific individuals given privileges. Although all characteristics receive some votes, and therefore each is important to some people, what is most striking and most evident is that, consistently over time and across continent, only four characteristics have continuously received over 50 percent of the votes. Some of the other qualities have flirted with consensus, but what people most look for and admire in a leader has been constant [4]. As the data clearly show, for people to follow someone willingly, the majority of constituents must believe the leader is (for exact 20 characteristics please see the table 4).

- Honest;

- Forward looking;
- Competent; and
- Inspiring.

The top four characteristics—honest, forward-looking, competent, and inspiring—have remained constant in the ever-changing and turbulent social, political, and economic environment of the past thirty years. The relative importance of each has varied somewhat over time, but there has been no change in the fact that these are the four qualities people want most in their leaders. Whether they believe that their leaders are true to these values is another matter, but what they would like from them has remained the same [5].

Table 1 shows the data gathered over the last two decades by Kouzes and Posner. Fascinatingly, of even the countries that have different religions and traditions more than 50% of people choose the top 4 characteristics such as Honest, Forward-looking, Competent, and Inspiring.

Table 1. Top four leadership characteristics

Country	Honest	Forward-Looking	Competent	Inspiring
Australia	93	83	59	73
Canada	88	88	60	73
Japan	67	83	61	51
Korea	74	82	52	55
Malaysia	95	78	52	60
Mexico	85	82	52	71
New Zealand	86	86	68	71
Singapore	65	78	78	94
Sweden, Denmark	84	86	90	53
United States	88	71	69	63

Source: Kouzes, J. M. and B. Z. Posner. (2007), p31

Also, Chun-Lung Chen (2004) conducted similar study in Taiwan. The purpose of the study was to identify leadership characteristics employees expect ideal leaders to have in small and medium Commercial enterprises (SME) in Taipei, Taiwan and to compare this with the perceptions of the leaders themselves [2]. In this study a random sample of SMEs in Taipei was generated, from which 255 leaders and 699 employees participated. These were considered “General SMEs” while “Efficient SMEs” were from the largest corporations in Taipei and this group had 11 leaders and 59 employees. Most important ideal leader characteristics of General SME employees were Forward-looking (74%), Broad-minded (58%),

Caring (54%), Fair-Minded (54%), Honest (50%), Intelligent (49%) and Inspiring (44%). These were also the top seven for Efficient SME employees with slightly different percentages: Forward-looking (78%), Honest (68%), Caring (63%), Fair-Minded (58%), Broad-minded (53%), Intelligent (52%) and Inspiring (44%). The only significant difference between these two groups was for honest. There are some similarities and differences between the original study and Chen's study. Results of Chen's study there are 5 characteristics which is not included, or not having 50% vote, characteristics such as Broad-minded, Caring, Fair-minded, and Intelligent.

From the point of view of Mongolians perspective, we developed the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: From the difference of the culture and tradition, Mongolians' viewpoint of the ideal leaders' characteristics is totally different from the western study.

Hypothesis 2: Due to the recent 30 years' dramatic change in the economic, political and demographical change, each generations' viewpoint of the ideal leaders' characteristics is different.

Research Purpose and Methodology

Research Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify leadership characteristics Ulaanbaatar city (UB) residents expect ideal leaders to have in their organization.

Survey results for the ability to represent the UB city level, 99 percent of the sample, the probability of sampling error does not exceed ± 5 percent of all cases in this study it was deemed appropriate to gather data on 650 respondents. The sample number calculated using the following formula (table 2).

$$ss = \frac{Z^2 \times (p) \times (1 - p)}{c^2}; \quad \text{New } ss = \frac{ss}{1 + \frac{ss - 1}{pop}}$$

Z = Z value (e.g. 2.58 for 95% confidence level)

p = Percentage picking a choice (0.5 used for sample size needed)

c = Confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g. 0.05= $\pm 5\%$)

pop = Population

Table 2. Basis of the sample size

P_{op}	Z	ρ	c	ss	new ss (Sample size)
1,000	2.58	0.5	0.05	666	399.9
10,000	2.58	0.5	0.05	666	624.2
50,000	2.58	0.5	0.05	666	656.9
100,000	2.58	0.5	0.05	666	661.2
1,000,000	2.58	0.5	0.05	666	665.2
1,314,486*	2.58	0.5	0.05	666	665.3

Source: Authors' calculation

Note: * Total Ulaanbaatar city population (2014), NSOM website (www.1212.mn)

Survey result

A random sample of residents in UB was generated. We distributed 773 questionnaires to the public and private organizations and obtained 723 responses. Respondents completed the Checklist of Admired Leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2007), ideal format, selecting seven out of the 20 most admired characteristics. In our sample the percentage of male respondents was 60 percent, aged 21-30 years old were 45%, and almost half of the respondents' education was bachelor degree (47%). For the detailed information please refer to the table 3.

Table 3. General information of respondents (Age, gender, education)

Q1	Age	Respondents	Percentage
1	15-20	97	14%
2	21-30	305	45%
3	31-40	138	20%
4	41-50	73	11%
5	51-60	58	8%
6	61-70	12	2%
7	71 and over	2	0%
Q2	Gender	Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	275	40%
2	Female	409	60%
	NA	1	0%
Q3	Education	Respondents	Percentage
1	9 years (Secondary)	20	3%
2	12 years (Vocational Education)	37	5%
3	12 years (Full Secondary)	207	30%
4	16 years (Bachelor)	322	47%
5	18 years (Master)	67	10%
6	Doctor degree	32	5%

Source: Authors' survey result (2015)

Most important ideal leader characteristics of UB residents were Broad-minded (61), Competent (58%), Forward-looking (49%), Cooperative (49%), Fair-minded (42%). In table 4 we showed our survey results comparing to Kouzes and Posner's results. Kouzes and Posner's top four characteristics Honest, Forward-looking, Competent, Inspiring are gained the 36%, 49%, 58%, 32% of correspondents' votes respectively. Comparing to the previous study result has been intensively selecting the top 4, results of our survey the response was widely distributed, even the last characteristics was chosen by 20% of respondents. Also there are only 2 characteristics which were selected by over 50% of respondents. The results of our study showed the validation of our hypothesis and evidenced that Mongolians' viewpoint of the ideal leaders' characteristics is in some way different than westerners'. Evidently, it suggests that extensive cultural and traditional differences affect the perception about the leaders' characteristics.

Table 4. Percentage of Respondents Admiring Characteristic
(Compared to Kouzes, Posner's survey result)

		Mongolia (2015, n=685)			Previous Study Result (Kouzes and Posner)			
		Responses	Percentage	Rank*	2007	2002	1995	1987
1	Honest	248	36	6	89	88	88	83
2	Forward-Looking	339	49	3	71	71	75	62
3	Competent	398	58	2	68	66	63	67
4	Inspiring	218	32	12	69	65	68	58
5	Intelligent	208	30	11	48	47	40	43
6	Fair-minded	286	42	5	39	42	49	40
7	Broad-minded	418	61	1	35	40	40	37
8	Supportive	110	16	20	35	35	41	32
9	Straightforward	194	28	16	36	34	33	34
10	Dependable	260	38	7	34	33	32	33
11	Cooperative	335	49	4	25	28	28	25
12	Determined	182	27	17	25	24	17	17
13	Imaginable	229	33	10	17	23	28	34
14	Ambitious	195	28	14	16	21	13	21
15	Courageous	238	35	9	25	20	29	27
16	Caring	238	35	8	22	20	23	26
17	Mature	195	28	13	15	17	13	23
18	Loyal	143	21	19	18	14	11	11
19	Self-controlled	171	25	18	10	8	5	13
20	Independent	190	28	15	4	6	5	10

Source: Authors' survey result (2015)

Note: * Our survey result (2015), Relatively large number of respondents selected characteristics (over 40%) showed in bold letter. The total adds up to more than 100 percent, because we asked the respondents to select seven characteristics.

Furthermore, we carried out a comparative analysis by number of parameters like age, gender, and education level. Nevertheless, no significant differences between respondents on the basis of educational level and gender is observed from the study.

An age accounted for differences on characteristics like Broad-minded, Cooperative, Imaginative, Ambitious and Independent (table 5-6).

As table 5 & 6 the following differences in admiring leadership characteristics observed:

Elderly and those relatively mature respondents admire their leader's characteristics such as Broad-minded and Cooperative, while younger people tended to admire in their leaders characteristics as Imaginative, Ambitious and Independent

For instance, 40% of respondents between ages 15 to 20 are choose Ambitious as an admiring characteristic comparing to 13% of those over 41, as well as older people's preference or having good impressions from their "broad-minded" leaders.

The current results can be presumed by the differences in the education level and living environment during the Mongolian economic and political transition which is supported our second hypothesis.

Table 5. Comparison on the Respondents Age, Admiring Characteristics

Rank	Characteristics	Number of responses (n=685)	Percentage (%)	Age 15-20 (n=97)		Age 21-30 (n=305)		Age 31-40 (n=138)		More than 41 years of age (n=145)	
				Respon-ses	Percent-age (%)	Respon-ses	Percent-age	Respon-ses	Percent-age	Respon-ses	Percent-age
				1	Broad-minded	418	61	53	55	177	58
2	Competent	398	58	60	62	175	57	82	59	81	56
3	Forward-looking	339	49	53	55	152	50	62	45	72	50
4	Cooperative	335	49	44	45	138	45	67	49	86	59
5	Fair-minded	286	42	40	41	115	38	68	49	63	43
7	Dependable	260	38	31	32	112	37	60	43	57	39
6	Honest	248	36	31	32	107	35	46	33	64	44
8	Caring	238	35	34	35	97	32	53	38	54	37
9	Courageous	238	35	28	29	113	37	49	36	48	33

10	Imaginative	229	33	37	38	124	41	34	25	34	23
12	Inspiring	218	32	31	32	89	29	55	40	43	30
11	Intelligent	208	30	35	36	75	25	36	26	62	43
14	Ambitious	195	28	39	40	105	34	32	23	19	13
13	Mature	195	28	27	28	94	31	31	22	43	30
16	Straightforward	194	28	30	31	84	28	44	32	36	25
15	Independent	190	28	27	28	98	32	33	24	32	22
17	Determined	182	27	19	20	84	28	36	26	43	30
18	Self-controlled	171	25	23	24	84	28	33	24	31	21
19	Loyal	143	21	22	23	51	17	32	23	38	26
20	Supportive	110	16	15	15	61	20	22	16	12	8

Source: Author's survey result (2015)

Table 6. Deviation from the total means values

Rank	Characteristics	Number of responses (n=685)	Percentage (%)	Age 15-20 (n=97)		Age 21-30 (n=305)		Age 31-40 (n=138)		More than 41 years of age (n=145)	
				Percentage (%)	Deviation from mean (%)	Percentage (%)	Deviation from mean (%)	Percentage (%)	Deviation from mean (%)	Percentage (%)	Deviation from mean (%)
1	Broad-minded	418	61	55	-6	58	-3	66	5	67	6
2	Competent	398	58	62	4	57	-1	59	1	56	-2
3	Forward-looking	339	49	55	5	50	0	45	-5	50	0
4	Cooperative	335	49	45	-4	45	-4	49	0	59	10
5	Fair-minded	286	42	41	-1	38	-4	49	8	43	2
7	Dependable	260	38	32	-6	37	-1	43	6	39	1
6	Honest	248	36	32	-4	35	-1	33	-3	44	8
8	Caring	238	35	35	0	32	-3	38	4	37	2
9	Courageous	238	35	29	-6	37	2	36	1	33	-2
10	Imaginative	229	33	38	5	41	7	25	-9	23	-10
12	Inspiring	218	32	32	0	29	-3	40	8	30	-2
11	Intelligent	208	30	36	6	25	-6	26	-4	43	12
14	Ambitious	195	28	40	12	34	6	23	-5	13	-15

13	Mature	195	28	28	-1	31	2	22	-6	30	1
16	Straightforward	194	28	31	3	28	-1	32	4	25	-3
15	Independent	190	28	28	0	32	4	24	-4	22	-6
17	Determined	182	27	20	-7	28	1	26	0	30	3
18	Self-controlled	171	25	24	-1	28	3	24	-1	21	-4
19	Loyal	143	21	23	2	17	-4	23	2	26	5
20	Supportive	110	16	15	-1	20	4	16	0	8	-8

Source: Authors' survey result (2015)

Conclusion

A random sample of residents in UB was generated. We distributed the 773 questionnaires to the public and private organizations and obtained 723 responses. Respondents completed the Checklist of Admired Leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2007), ideal format, selecting seven out of the 20 most admired characteristics. With the exception of the 38 questionnaires due to its deficiency, we analyzed 685 answers.

The most important ideal leader characteristics of UB residents were Broad-minded (61), Competent (58%), Forward-looking (49%), Cooperative (49%), Fair-minded (42%). Kouzes and Posner's result has been intensively selecting the top 4, and when comparing with the results of our survey the response was widely distributed, even the last characteristics was chosen by 20% of respondents. Also there are only 2 characteristics which were selected by over 50% of respondents. This result supports our hypothesis 1.

Age accounted for differences on Broad-minded, Cooperative, Imaginative, Ambitious, Independent. Elderly and those relatively older admire their leader's characteristics as: Broad-minded, Cooperative. Youth and those relatively younger: Imaginative, Ambitious, and Independent. In other words, this result is presumed to be due to differences in the level of education and living environment during the Mongolian economic and political transition (hypothesis 2).

As the sample is included urban population, we accept the current study reflects only urban people's perception on leaders' characteristics. For further study, we will investigate the differences between local and urban residents, nomads as well as the influence of the generations' and cultural differences about the leaders' characteristics to reveal possible variations of the perception among diverse population.

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