

Chinese Leaders Abroad: Case in the Netherlands

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Abstract : To achieve aggressive expansion goals, many Chinese companies are seeking resources and market around the world. To an increasing extent, Chinese enterprises recognized the Netherlands as their gateway to Europe Market. Yet, large cultural gaps (e.g. individualism/collectivism, power distance) may influence expat leaders' influencing process, in turn affect intercultural teamwork. Lessons and suggestions from Chinese expat leaders could provide profound knowledge for managerial practice and future research. The current research focuses on the cultural difference between China and the Netherlands, along with leadership tactics for coping and handling differences occurring in the international business work. Exclusive 47 in-depth interviews with Chinese expat leaders were conducted. Within each interview, respondents were asked what were the main issues when working with Dutch employees, and what they believed as the keys to successful leadership in Dutch-Chinese cross-cultural workplaces. Consistent with previous research, the findings highlight the need to consider the cultural context within which leadership adapts. In addition, the findings indicated the importance of recognizing and applying the cultural advantages from which leadership originates. The results address observation ability as a crucial key for Chinese managers to lead Dutch/international teams. Moreover, setting a common goal help a leader to overcome the challenges due to cultural differences. Based on the analysis, we develop a process model to illustrate the dynamic mechanisms. Our study contributes to the better understanding of transference of management practices, and has important practical implications for managing Dutch employees.

Keywords : Chinese managers, Dutch employees, leadership, interviews

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