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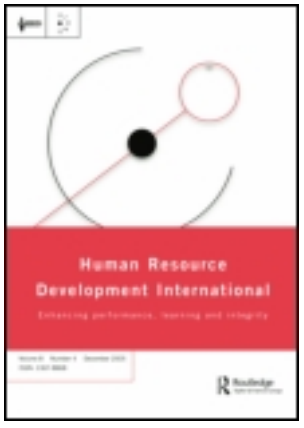

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Deducing a taxonomy of perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness: a comparative study of effective and ineffective managerial behaviour across three EU countries

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Deducing a taxonomy of perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness: a comparative study of effective and ineffective managerial behaviour across three EU countries

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This qualitative multiple case derived etic study focuses on perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness. It explores what employees in various organizations, organizational sectors and culturally diverse nations perceive as effective and ineffective managerial behaviour. Empirical findings from six emic replication studies carried out previously within three European Union countries were subjected to cross-case, cross-sector, and cross-nation comparative analysis. High degrees of sameness and similarity were found. Further analysis led to the emergence of a behavioural taxonomy comprised of 10 positive (*effective*) and 9 negative (*ineffective*) behavioural criteria. We find that managers and non-managerial staff in British and Romanian public-sector hospitals, and in British and German private-sector companies, perceive effective and ineffective managerial behaviour in much the same way. Our findings challenge past literature which argues that managers need to adopt different managerial behaviours to be effective in different organizational sectors and countries.

Keywords: perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness; taxonomy; cross-sector; cross-nation

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Introduction

Although past research has provided important insights into the nature of management, little has been done to relate managerial behaviours to effectiveness measures (Noordegraaf and Stewart 2000). Similarly, despite considerable research on the topic, leadership remains an elusive topic (Jackson 2005). As various writers have noted, we are no closer to a consensus regarding the definition and theorization of leadership or to having a practical grasp on its commensurability than we were before (Glynn and Raffaelli 2010). Several behavioural taxonomies of managerial performance, managerial competence, and effective leadership behaviour have been developed (Borman and Brush 1993; Yukl, Gordon, and Taber 2002). However, these have been derived almost exclusively from studies conducted in the US from

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the mid-1950s through to mid-1980s. Since then few researchers have carried out similar studies, with the exception of Cammock, Nilakant, and Dakin (1995) who identified a lay model of managerial effectiveness within a public-sector organization in New Zealand. Following Cammock et al. (1995), we and various co-researchers have completed studies of perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness within several public and private-sector organizations in Germany, Romania and the UK (see Hamlin 2009; Hamlin and Patel 2012).

The aim of this study is (i) to search for relative generalizations across the findings of six of our past emic studies, and (ii), to evaluate whether emergent generic behavioural categories might provide a basis for developing a European-based taxonomy of perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness. Throughout this paper, the term leadership refers to the everyday 'supervisory leadership' of managers/leaders in general, and not to the 'strategic leadership' of organizational leaders as defined by House et al. (2004) in the GLOBE study.

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Literature review

Next, we review literature on managerial and leadership effectiveness, and the supposed impact of national culture and organizational sector specificities on the same.

Managerial and leadership effectiveness

Since the 1950s, most managerial behaviour research has focused selectively on duration and frequency of managerial activities (Martinko and Gardner 1985). The different definitions, predictors, measurement criteria and coding categories used have resulted in lack of comparability between studies and little agreement on what constitutes managerial effectiveness (Cammock, Nilakant, and Dakin 1995). Dissatisfied with the dearth of managerial and leadership effectiveness research, many scholars have called for studies focusing on what behaviourally distinguishes effective managers/leaders from ineffective ones (Glynn and Raffaelli 2010). The need for such research has become more compelling because of advances in technology, transportation and communications (House et al. 2004) and the decline of political boundaries and trade-barriers between nations. These trends have led to increased scope for international business, not least within the European Union (EU) (Zhu 2007), and to greater frequency in the transnational employment of managers (Brodbeck et al. 2000). This calls for a deeper understanding of how better to transform domestic managers/leaders into effective global managers/leaders and to develop intercultural competencies among them (Harris and Kurma 2000). Furthermore, 'international leadership' has become a fertile area for theoretical development, particularly in light of recent calls to move away from its overly American emphasis and towards a more international perspective (Glynn and Raffaelli 2010).

Managerial and leadership effectiveness and national culture

Extant literature provides evidence for both universal and contingent approaches to the study of effective/ineffective manager/leader behaviour. The universal approach assumes that behaviours that managers/leaders need to demonstrate in order to be

effective are independent of national culture and other situational variables (Horner-Long and Schoenberg 2002). Haire, Ghiselli, and Porter (1966) studied attitudes towards leadership styles in 14 countries and discovered that only 28% variance could be explained by nationality. Similarly, Bass (1996) argued that very little variance in leader behaviour could be justified by culture, and that there was far more universalism in leadership than had been believed previously. Despite compelling logic, the universality of effective leader behaviours is yet to be empirically demonstrated (House, Wright, and Aditya 1997).

Conversely, contingency scholars have argued that leaders need to adapt their behaviours to the environmental and organizational context in order to be effective, and have claimed that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon similarities between the national cultures of leaders and followers (Brodbeck et al. 2000). Managers/leaders are believed to be more effective when working in host nations with national cultures similar to their own (Wendt, Euwema, and Emmerik 2009). According to a distinct school of thought within the contingency literature, every individual has his/her own set of beliefs, convictions and assumptions about leaders which are collectively termed as his/her *implicit leadership theory* (ILT) (Eden and Leviatan 1975). Followers use their ILT or cognitive prototypes to assess the ethics, morality and behavioural effectiveness of their leaders (Hall and Lord 1995). Engle and Lord (1997) have argued that these cognitive prototypes are influenced by environmental variables such as national culture. To have effective outcomes the leader prototypes should be positively related to cultural characteristics of followers (Shaw 1990). The recognition of national culture as an important variable influencing an individual's ILT has resulted in what is referred to as *Culturally-endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory* (CLT) (Hanges, Braverman, and Rentsch 1991).

Somewhere between the universalistic and contingency approaches, a third viewpoint has emerged which suggests there can be both similarities and differences in perceptions of managerial behaviour across nations. Dorfman and Howell (1997) demonstrated cultural universality across North America and Asia for some leader behaviours, and cultural specificity for others. Martin et al. (2009) found that leaders from Germany and the US identified the same aspects of ethical behaviour as being important, although the degree of importance attributed differed. Similarly, Black, Morrison, and Gregersen (1999) found two-thirds of the characteristics of effective global leaders to be generalizable across nations.

In conclusion, there is little agreement in past literature regarding whether or not national culture influences perceptions of managerial/leadership effectiveness. We accept that managers/leaders need to adapt their behaviours to situational variables, but we are not convinced that national culture is the only or the most significant variable to be considered.

Managerial and leadership effectiveness across organizational sectors

Much research on leadership in public organizations was conducted during the 1980s (van Wart 2003). More empirical research is now warranted, especially in light of the ongoing modernization of the public-sector in many countries (Wallis and McLaughlin 2007). Rainey (1989) called for more comparative research between public and private organizations because of significant inherent differences between them. Unlike private companies where goals are clear and measurable, it is suggested that public-sector organizations simultaneously pursue multiple goals and the rate of

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employee turnover is higher than in private companies (Baldwin 1987). Although public-sector employees are thought to enjoy greater job security (Baldwin 1987), they experience invariant job designs, higher levels of accountability, and more constraints than private-sector employees (Hooijberg and Choi 2001). Furthermore, they attach less importance to career development, believe that promises regarding financial rewards are rarely fulfilled (Willem, de Vos, and Buelens 2010), and are generally less satisfied than private-sector employees with their work environment.

While many researchers have examined differences between public and private-sector organizations, few have questioned whether leadership styles would also vary across sectors (Hooijberg and Choi 2001). Among those who raise this question, Fottler (1981) concluded that managers/leaders need to behave differently to be effective in these two sectors. Conversely, Hooijberg, and Choi (1998) found no significant difference in subordinates' and superiors' perceptions of leadership roles across sectors, although they did find differences in the self-perceptions of leaders. Finally, Lau, Pavett, and Newman (1980) identified similarities between leaders' roles, their activities, the complexity in their jobs and their job characteristics across sectors. Since extant literature provides little clarity regarding the transferability of manager/leader behaviours across sectors, we address this issue in our present study.

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Research questions

We address the following research questions and sub-questions:

RQ1. To what extent are the behavioural indicators of managerial/leadership effectiveness obtained from previous emic replication studies conducted in public and private-sector organizations in three EU countries, similar to or different from one another?

(1) *SQ1*. Can the differences identified by *RQ1* (if any) be explained by differences in national culture?
(2) *SQ2*. Can the differences identified by *RQ1* (if any) be explained by organizational sector specificities?

RQ2. Can the similarities between the cross-nation and cross-sector behavioural indicators as identified by *RQ1* (if any) be expressed in the form of a taxonomy of perceived managerial/leadership effectiveness?

Method

In conducting our multiple case cross-sector/cross-nation study, we adopted Tsang and Kwan's (1999) notion of *empirical generalization* replication, and Berry's (1989) *derived etic* approach based on 'replication logic' and 'multiple cross-case analysis' (Eisenhardt 1989). Berry evokes the benefits of using a combined emic–etic approach to reach valid derived etic generalizations. This involves the same phenomena being explored in varied contexts using a common methodology. A cross-case comparative analysis of the findings of these emic studies is then carried out and common features, if any, are identified. Without necessarily assuming universality, the approach provides the possibility of drawing conclusions about derived etics across the compared cases; and progressively across more and more specific contexts and cultural settings. Because we were searching for commonalities and variform

universals across cases, we assumed a post-positivist ontology (Ponterotto 2005) and a realist epistemology (Madill, Jordon, and Shirley 2000).

Sampling

The empirical source data upon which our derived etic study was based were obtained from a convenience sample of six past emic replication studies of perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness. These were carried out by us with various co-researchers in British and German private-sector companies and in British and Romanian public-sector hospitals. Consequently, we had access to all the data and findings from these studies. The subject focus and other details of the six studies are given in Table 1.

Four of the six studies were carried out by Author 2 with various co-researchers in four British organizations: a public-sector 'acute' NHS hospital (Case UKA), a public-sector 'specialist' NHS hospital (Case UKB), a private-sector communications company (Case UKC), and a private-sector telecommunications company (Case UKD). The two other studies were conducted by Author 1 with indigenous co-researchers from Germany and Romania. The German study (Case GER) was conducted within a wide selection of private-sector companies, whereas the Romanian study (Case ROMA) was conducted in one public-sector hospital.

The data used for the present study were the sets of effective and ineffective behavioural statements (BSs) generated by each study, a particular strength of which was that (i) the BSs were derived from concrete examples of effective and ineffective managerial behaviour as perceived by employees of the studied organizations, and (ii), the researchers had used Flanagan's (1954) critical incident technique (CIT) to collect these critical incidents (CIs) of managerial behaviour. Critical incident technique is one of the best methods for focusing on effectiveness of managerial behaviour (Latham and Wexley 1981), and for sampling important performance-related behaviour (Borman and Brush 1993). Analysing CIT derived source data collected from multiple sites means that 'the researcher can look for evidence of commonalities in themes which increase the generalizability' (Chell 1999, p. 55). By encouraging informants to provide spontaneous examples of the phenomenon being explored, CIT eliminates the need to choose between response categories, thereby averting two errors to which cross-cultural research is particularly susceptible: *social desirability*[1] and *rating scale formats*[2] (McKie 2003). To ensure consistency in the application of CIT, our co-researchers followed a common protocol under the guidance of Author 2. In five of the emic studies, the CIT informants comprised of voluntary yet purposeful samples of managers drawn from all hierarchical levels, and also non-managerial staff. With regard to Case UKD for which the subject focus was top managers only, informants were drawn from the population of top, senior and middle-level managers. Before the interview, each informant received a briefing on the purpose and process of the research, the meaning of such terms as '*critical*', '*incident*' and '*critical incident*', the academic code of ethics that would be applied, and the two following definitions: (i) Effective managerial performance is '*behaviour which you wish all managers would adopt if and when faced with a similar circumstance*', and (ii), Ineffective managerial performance is '*behaviour which, if it occurred repeatedly, or was seen once in certain circumstances, might cause you to doubt the ability of that particular manager in that instance*'. The CIs could relate to behaviours exhibited by managers above them, at the same level, or below them in the organization. Under a strict code of anonymity,

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Table 1. Empirical source data used for the current derived etic study.

Six emic studies from which the empirical source data were obtained	Subject focus of studies*	No. of CIT informants	No. of CIs collected	No. of effective BSs	No. of ineffective BSs	Total Number of BSs
Public-sector hospitals						
Case UKA Hamlin (2002) *An 'acute' British hospital*	S, M. and FL	57	405	26	26	52
Case UKB Hamlin and Cooper (2007) *A 'specialist' British hospital*	S, M and FL	60	467	25	24	49
Case ROMA Hamlin and Patel (2012) *A Romanian public hospital*	T, S, M and FL	35	313	28	26	54
Private-sector companies						
Case UKC Hamlin and Bassi (2008) *A British communications company*	S, M, and FL	55	555	31	35	66
Case UKD Hamlin and Sawyer (2007) *A British telecommunications company*.	T only	37	370	16	13	29
Case GER Patel et al. (2009) *A range of German private companies*	T, S, M and FL	64	154	13	16	29
Total		308	2264	139	140	279

Note. CIT = critical incident technique; CIs = critical incidents; BSs = behavioural statements; T, S, M, FL = Top, senior, middle and first line managers.

informants were not allowed to reveal the identities of managers whose effective/ineffective behaviours they had described. Furthermore, managers were not allowed to offer CIs based on their own practices. In total, our empirical source data comprised of 279 BSs derived from 2264 CIs collected from 308 CIT informants between 2007 and 2011 (see Table 1).

Data analysis

The unit of analysis was the BS. We engaged in 'realist qualitative analysis' (Madill, Jordon, and Shirley 2000) by examining inductively and deductively at a semantic level (Braun and Clarke 2006) the organization-specific, sector-specific and nation-specific BSs obtained from the six replication studies. This multiple cross-case analysis was carried out first using a form of open coding to classify and where necessary 'disentangle' the units of meaning of all the BSs. Axial, selective and thematic coding was then used to identify and differentiate sub-categories, categories and core categories (Flick 2002). Initially, this involved searching for evidence of sameness, similarity, or congruence of meaning[3] between the BSs. The coded BSs were accordingly grouped into thematic domains (core categories) using two criteria. First, each BS had to have primary relevance for one core category, although it could have secondary relevance for other core categories. Second, each core category had to contain BSs from at least two of the three countries. The resulting core categories were interpreted to identify the meaning held in common to all of the respective constituent BSs and labelled accordingly.

Ensuring internal validity, reliability and consistency

Internal validity and reliability were addressed through 'realist triangulation' (Madill, Jordon, and Shirley 2000) using empirical source data from multiple sources and from three culturally-diverse countries. Although comparing data from different contexts can be challenging, we deemed that our six data sets were strongly comparable for several reasons. First, the researchers of the respective emic studies had replicated previous UK-based studies of Author 2, and had adopted the same research design and protocols, thereby ensuring consistency in the research process. Second, 'functional equivalence' (Lyons and Chryssochoou 2003) was assured because the problem focus of all six studies was the same – namely directly observable managerial behaviour. Third, for Cases GER and ROMA, 'semantic equivalence' was ensured through the rigorous 'back and forward' translation from German to English and Romanian to English, as reported by the respective researchers.

The convergence and mutual confirmation identified by the realist triangulation provides evidence of the accuracy and objectivity of our study (Knafl and Breitmayer 1991). Reliability was ensured through 'investigator triangulation' (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe 1991), whereby the core categories resulting from the initial inductive cross-case analysis carried out by Author 2 were used as coding categories by Author 1 for her independent comparative analysis. Both authors then engaged in code cross-checking (Gibbs 2007) to arrive at a mutual confirmation of where their respective analyses converged/diverged. The agreement was 97% for the effective and 98% for the ineffective behavioural categories, respectively. Where discrepancies arose, these were resolved through critical examination and discussion. Once consensus had been reached, the lists of behavioural categories and their constituent BSs were sent to

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a confirmatory auditor for counter-checking. Where the auditor expressed disagreement, the researchers reworked their elaboration of the relevant category.

Results

Fourteen effective and 13 ineffective behavioural categories were identified (see Table 2).

Regarding the effective categories, seven (P1 to P7) are underpinned by BSs from all six emic cases which means they are grounded across the two organizational sectors and three countries. Another five effective behavioural categories (P8–P12) are underpinned by BSs from five of the six cases. Of these five categories, three (P8, P9 and P10) are generalized across the two sectors and three nations, even though they are present only in one of the two UK private-sector cases (either Case UKC or Case UKD). The other two categories (P11 and P12) contain BSs from all except the German study. The remaining two effective behavioural categories (P13 and P14) are

Table 2. Emergent behavioural categories of perceived managerial/leadership effectiveness.

	Effective behavioural categories
P1	Provides help and support to staff through active supportive leadership
P2	Gives recognition, thanks and praise to staff when they do well
P3	Delegates to and/or empowers staff
P4	Is responsive to and deals sensitively with difficult personal/work situations confronted by staff
P5	Fights in the interests of own department and staff, and actively addresses their learning and development needs
P6	Is open and approachable to staff, develops a trusting relationship with them and with other people
P7	Includes staff in decision-making and problem-solving
P8	Is good in planning and organizing
P9	Uses a personal approach to managing and leading staff
P10	Keeps staff well informed on organizational decisions/changes and other matters directly affecting them
P11	Is good at making decisions and solving problems effectively
P12	Is good at execution and control
P13	Consults with staff, seeks their ideas
P14	Meets regularly with staff
	Ineffective behavioural categories
N1	Shows lack of care and concern for the well-being and welfare of staff
N2	Autocratically makes and imposes decisions or changes on staff without consulting, involving or collaborating with them
N3	Is unfair, inconsiderate, inconsistent, selfish and/or self-serving
N4	Engages in activities and behaviour that undermine staff and/or other people
N5	Is poor in planning, organizing, decision-making and/or controlling
N6	Abdicates from responsibilities and/or shows lack of ownership and accountability
N7	Withholds from staff and/or other people important information and feedback
N8	Exhibits a closed mind and negative approach
N9	Shows a lack of sensitivity to difficult circumstances, situations and problems experienced by staff, and fails to support them
N10	Behaves in a way that intimidates, humiliates, and/or de-values people
N11	Deprives staff of praise, encouragement, support, training, and/or development
N12	Slack management and/or tolerance of sub-standard performance from others
N13	Exhibits ignoring and avoidance behaviour

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underpinned by BSs from only four of the six cases. Neither is underpinned with BSs from the German study. Furthermore, P13 and P14 do not contain underpinning BSs from the UK private-sector (Case UKC) and UK public-sector (Case UKB).

Of the 13 ineffective behavioural categories, eight (N1 to N8) are underpinned by BSs from all six cases. The other five categories (N9 to N 13) are underpinned by BSs obtained from five of the six cases. Although three of these five categories (N9, N10 and N11) contain no BSs from one of the British private-sector studies (Case UKD), they are still generalized across the two organizational sectors and three countries. The other two ineffective categories (N12 to N13) contain no BSs from the German study, but are underpinned by BSs from the other five cases. The extent to which the 27 behavioural categories are underpinned by BSs from different cases is summarized in Table 3.

As can be seen, of the 27 behavioural categories 55.56% ($n = 15$: P1 to P7; N1 to N8) contain BSs from the six emic studies and are generalized across the six cases, two organizational sectors and three countries. A further 22.22% ($n = 6$: P8 to P10; N9 to N11) are generalized to the German private-sector, Romanian public-sector, and either to one of the two British private-sector cases or to one of the two British public-sector cases. Thus, in total, 77.78% ($n = 21$) of the behavioural categories are generalized across the two sectors and three countries. Six of the 27 behavioural categories (P11 to P14; N12 to N13) are not underpinned by any of the German BSs. The reason for this is not known, but it may be the result of comparatively small numbers of CIs having been collected in the German study from a large heterogeneous mix of companies, whereas for the other studies large numbers of CIs were collected from single organizations.

Space constraints prevent us from presenting details of all behavioural categories and their underpinning BSs. However, in Table 4 we offer one example of the effective and one of the ineffective behavioural categories.

Discussion

Regarding RQ1, we find that respondents within British/Romanian public-sector hospitals and British/German private-sector companies perceive managerial/

Table 3. Deduced behavioural categories generalized across the six cases, two sectors and three countries.

	Public sector emic studies			Private sector emic studies		
	Case UKA	Case UKB	Case ROMA	Case UKC	Case UKD	Case GER
The identified *effective* behavioural categories						
P1 to P7	X	X	X	X	X	X
P8	X	X	X		X	X
P9 and P10	X	X	X	X		X
P11 and P12	X	X	X	X	X	
P13	X	X	X		X	
P14	X		X	X	X	
The identified *ineffective* behavioural categories						
N1 to N8	X	X	X	X	X	X
N9 to N11	X	X	X	X		X
N12 to N13	X	X	X	X	X	

Note: The Xs indicate the behavioural categories that contain BSs obtained from particular emic studies/cases.

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Table 4. Illustration of the convergence of meaning of the underpinning BSs of two behavioural categories.

Effective behavioural category	
Gives recognition, thanks and praise to staff when they do well	
Case UKA:	Thanks people and gives praise for a job well done (*e.g. makes the effort to thank the individualor the team*).
Case UKB:	Values work of team and acknowledges work completed to a high standard.
Case ROMA:	Encourages staff to achieve high performance and congratulates and gives encouragement when they deliver good results. Shows appreciation and says 'thank you' when members of staff perform well. Reacts quickly and gives help to staff experiencing problems
Case UKC:	Thanks whole team for hard work and commitment. Rewards and thanks individuals for high performance and extra effort, Recognizes good performance through giving tangible non-financial rewards, Gives praise and constructive feedback to staff, influencing and motivating staff
Case UKD:	Recognizes hard work and commitment from others.
Case GER:	Appreciates performance/gives rewards/incentives/shows satisfaction.
Ineffective behavioural category	
Engages in activities and behaviour that undermine staff and/or other people	
Case UKA:	Undermines or dismisses the efforts of staff (*e.g. dismissive in dealing with staff ideas, makes cutting remarks; appears uninterested, does not give adequate feedback to the individual*). Ignores policies/rules and attempts to by-pass the system. Overrides colleague managers, goes behind the back of or over the heads of other managers, and/or omits to use the proper lines of management communication *(e.g. skipping levels of authority; breaking the line of command*). Exhibits manipulative, politicking and undermining behaviour (*e.g. saying one thing but doing another; using delaying tactics; playing one person/group off against another*).
Case UKB:	In meetings criticizes or acts in negative way towards staff. Fails to be open and honest with staff and 'plays one member of staff against the other'.
Case ROMA:	In giving staff feedback, focuses solely or too much on their weaknesses and negative performance. Exhibits selfish or self-serving behaviour at the expense of his/her staff.
Case UKC:	Makes derogatory comments about the business, colleagues or other managers. Talks to staff in a patronizing, condescending or derogatory way
Case UKD:	Does not demonstrate personal commitment/respect to others, or recognize [their] contribution.
Case GER:	Behaves in an impolite way/has an inadequate style of communication (*e.g. shouts/becomes emotional*) and/or insults employees.

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leadership effectiveness in much the same way. The vast majority of BSs were found to be the same or similar in meaning, with just 3.94% ($n = 11$) being case-specific. In response to SQ1, we find no reason to believe these case-specific BSs are related to differences in the national cultures of Germany, Romania and UK. Although Romania is rated high on power distance and low on individuality as compared to Germany and UK (Hofstede 1984), these differences do not seem to impact respondents' perceptions of managerial behaviour. This, coupled with the large similarity found in the effective and ineffective behavioural categories across the six cases, raises questions about past claims (see House et al. 1997, 2004) that national culture and CLT guide followers' perceptions regarding manager/leader behaviours. Regarding SQ2, we find that effective and ineffective managerial behaviours are not perceived so differently across the public and private sectors as

past studies suggest (see Baldwin 1987). Our findings pertaining to RQ2 are discussed next.

Deducing a taxonomy of perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness

Most BSs underpinning the deduced ineffective behavioural category *Shows a lack of sensitivity to difficult circumstances, situations and problems experienced by staff, and fails to support them* (N9) were found to be acts of omission. Most of these BSs described the absence of managerial behaviours indicated by BSs underpinning the effective behavioural category *Is responsive to and deals sensitively with difficult personal/work situations confronted by staff* (P4). Thus, these two categories could be seen as 'polar opposites' of the same behavioural construct. The same applies for the two ineffective categories: *Is poor in planning, organizing, decision-making and/or controlling* (N5) and *Slack management and/or tolerance of sub-standard performance from others* (N12). These categories appear to be 'polar opposites' of the following three effective behavioural categories: *Is good in planning and organizing* (P8); *Is good at making decisions and solving problems effectively* (P11) and *Is good at execution and control* (P12). The ineffective behavioural category *Autocratically makes and imposes decisions or changes on staff without consulting, involving or collaborating with them* (N2) might be the polar opposite of the two effective behavioural categories *Consults with staff, seeks their ideas* (P13) and *Keeps staff well informed on organizational decisions/changes and matters directly affecting them* (P10). However, all of their underpinning BSs describe the presence of observable behaviours that managers need to avoid if they are to be perceived effective.

Based on these findings, we now tentatively offer an emergent *Taxonomy of Perceived Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness* comprised of behavioural categories that are generalized across the two organizational sectors and three countries. Thus, the two ineffective behavioural categories underpinned by BSs describing the absence of effective BSs are not included. In its current state, our taxonomy is comprised of 10 effective and 9 ineffective behavioural categories which, from here on, we refer to as generic behavioural criteria (see Table 5).

These criteria demonstrate how employees within British and Romanian public-sector hospitals and British and German private-sector companies define managerial/leadership effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Our findings contribute to extant literature in two ways. First, they help make the field of management and leadership more international and less US-centric (Jackson 2005) by offering insights into perceived effective and ineffective managerial behaviour across three European countries. Although Brodbeck et al. (2000) explored leadership in 21 European nations, Romania was not one of them. Furthermore, the level of 'universality' found between our Romanian, German and British results was much higher than anticipated. One potential explanation is that Romania's transition from a command to a free-market economy has led to a concurrent harmonization in perceptions of management/leadership among Romanian employees and their British and German counterparts. Second, while most past studies focus either on private companies (House et al. 2004) or public-sector organizations (Leslie and Canwell 2010), we focus on both and show that there is a high degree of universality between employees' perceptions of managerial/leadership effectiveness across sectors. We find little evidence to support past claims (see Baldwin 1987) that the inherently different nature of these two sectors

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Table 5. Emergent taxonomy of perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness.

Effective generic behavioural criteria
1. Provides help and support to staff through active supportive leadership
2. Gives recognition, thanks, and praise to staff when they do well
3. Delegates to and/or empowers staff
4. Is responsive to and deals sensitively with difficult personal/work situations confronted by staff
5. Fights in the interests of own department and staff, and addresses their learning/development needs
6. Is open and approachable to staff, develops a trusting relationship with them and with other people
7. Includes staff in decision-making and problem-solving
8. Is good in planning and organizing
9. Uses a personal approach to managing and leading staff
10. Keeps staff well informed on organizational decisions/changes and other matters directly affecting them
Ineffective generic behavioural criteria
1. Shows lack of care and concern for the well-being and welfare of staff
2. Autocratically makes and imposes decisions or changes on staff without consulting, involving or collaborating with them
3. Is unfair, inconsiderate, inconsistent, selfish and/or self-serving
4. Engages in activities and behaviour that undermine staff and/or other people
5. Abdicates from responsibilities and/or shows lack of ownership and accountability
6. Withholds from staff and/or other people important information and feedback
7. Exhibits a closed mind and/or negative approach
8. Behaves in a way that intimidates, humiliates, and/or de-values people
9. Deprives staff of praise, encouragement, support, training and/or development

automatically lead to different expectations regarding managerial/leadership behaviours. Additionally, we offer four theoretical contributions:

(1) Having compared data from Germany, Romania and the UK – three countries whose national cultures are supposedly very different from one to another (Hofstede 1984) – we find the extent of similarities between employees' perceptions of what behaviourally distinguishes effective managers/leaders from ineffective ones is greater than expected. That 77.78% ($n = 21$) behavioural categories are generalized across two sectors and three countries lends support to those who theorize the 'universalistic' nature of perceived managerial/leadership effectiveness (see Robie et al. 2001). It follows that the concept of national culture should be used with more caution in management/leadership studies (McSweeney 2009).

(2) A related theoretical contribution is that our findings tentatively question the usefulness of CLT. While it may be true that people's cultures influence their preferred leader prototype, focusing on their perceptions of manifested behaviour rather than on their implicitly-held leader prototypes, reveals more universalism across nations and sectors than previously reported. Also, we wonder whether CLT has the same relevance for countries-in-transition such as Romania, as it does in more stable environments (McKie 2003). Generational replacement over several decades significantly impacts values in a given country (Abramson and Inglehart 1995). Two decades of post-communism may have influenced the values of the Romanian work-force,

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thereby creating more harmony between their preferences and those of their British and German counterparts.

(3) As various writers have observed, due to the lack of agreement about which behavioural categories are relevant for leaders, it is difficult to integrate results from studies using different sets of behavioural categories (Yukl et al. 2002), or to compare behavioural theories against other approaches (Glynn and Raffaelli 2010). Yet, commensuration at multiple levels, both within and across theories is important for the theoretical advancement of the field. Our study offers a set of generic behavioural criteria of perceived managerial/leadership effectiveness. Testing and refining these criteria through more replication studies in other countries could contribute towards making the management and leadership domains more commensurate.

(4) Past researchers have focused mostly on effective behaviours of managers/leaders, while ignoring ineffective behaviours (Toor and Ogunlana 2009). Yet ineffective leader behaviours have a significant influence on subordinate performance and perceptions of leader support; affective reactions to ineffective behaviours are stronger than those to effective behaviours (Amabile et al. 2004). Unlike our predecessors, we have given equal attention to effective and ineffective managerial behaviour in our study. Our deduced taxonomy contains both *effective* and *ineffective* behavioural criteria.

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Implications for HRD practice

Organizations that introduce behavioural competency frameworks do so for the purpose of assessing managers for development, improving managerial performance, and managing progression more effectively. In many cases, the benefits of such competency-based systems do not match expectations and managers find them hard to use, because the frameworks are either too general or too cumbersome (Hamlin 2010). We suggest a potential solution to this problem might be the body of generalized knowledge resulting from our study, which provides new insight into the critical behaviours that differentiate between effective and ineffective managers. Furthermore, our emergent taxonomy may have the potential to be used by HRD professionals: (i) to critically review existing managerial competency-frameworks, (ii) to refine in-company behavioural definitions of managerial and leadership effectiveness, (iii) to inform management recruitment strategies, (iv) to develop management competency-frameworks that have both international and domestic relevance, (v) to shape the creation of tools such as competence-based interviewing aids, 360° appraisal instruments, and self-assessment personal development plans, and (vi) to inform HRD/OD interventions.

Our study goes some way toward addressing calls for research on how to develop effective managers operating in national, international and global contexts (see Noordegraaf and Stewart 2000). We recommend that management and leadership development programmes should focus more on creating greater awareness regarding managerial behaviours as indicated by our deduced taxonomy. As managers become more self-aware they should be able to better understand how their behaviours are perceived by subordinates, peers and superiors. Consequently, they should be better able to identify specific behaviours that need to be changed in order for them to become more effective (Atwater et al. 1998).

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Limitations and directions for future research

The study has two limitations. The first relates to the variability in size of the compared data sets. Whereas the number of CIT informants interviewed in four of the six studies conformed with Flanagan's (1954) recommendation of 50–100 interviewees, only 35 and 37 people were interviewed by the Case ROMA and Case UKD researchers. This led to just 313 and 370 CIs being collected, respectively, which falls somewhat short of the 400 to 550 CIs collected by the other researchers. Additionally, although the Case GER researcher interviewed 64 CIT informants, she only collected 154 CIs. It is possible that if more CIs had been collected in all six studies to the point of data saturation, then perhaps a higher degree of overlap and other behavioural categories would have emerged. Since each of our emic studies generated a different number of CIs, comparing the findings of these studies might be considered problematic. However, qualitatively this is no different from comparisons carried out across data units in qualitative studies that use semi-structured interview and non-cross-sectional data indexing methods. In such studies, data might be different in content, scope and depth from one data unit to another; yet patterns emerging from one data unit are compared to those emerging from others.

The second limitation relates to 'meaning equivalence'. This is often a cause of concern for cross-cultural researchers who are advised to ensure that the values studied have the same meaning in different cultures (Singh 1995). For our replication studies, we ensured meaning equivalence by following rigorously the CIT protocol which required the collected CIs to be recorded in the informant's own words. Thus, some form of informant validation was ensured as an inherent part of the CIT interview. However, the credibility and trustworthiness of findings from the six emic studies, and consequently of our empirical source data, could have been further enhanced by resorting to informant validation after each interview.

Our emergent taxonomy has been derived from just six cases and needs to be tested and refined by adding more cases. To this end, we are currently conducting replication studies in Germany, France and Ireland, and suggest equivalent studies should be carried out in more EU countries. Our work is part of a larger project in which other co-researchers have conducted replication studies in Canada, Egypt and Mexico, with more indigenous studies planned in other countries. A direction for future research could be to extend our work by using the findings of all these replication studies to develop, if possible, a universal taxonomy of perceived managerial/leadership effectiveness.

Conclusion

An advantage of studying managerial behaviours rather than implicit values is that – being tangible – behaviours can be influenced and changed in ways so as to produce desired outcomes. However, we do not erroneously assume that human behaviour is divorced from underlying values and assumptions. We recognize that organizational politics, self-interest and lack of information may also have an impact on how managers behave. Therefore, understanding what behaviourally distinguishes effective from ineffective managers, and using this to inform and design HRD/OD interventions may not be sufficient. Indeed, these efforts may need to be complemented by other HR strategies, including those related to reward and punishment.

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Notes

1. Social desirability – when interviewees tend to present themselves in a favourable light to the interviewer (Podsakoff, Todor, and Skov 1982).
2. Rating scale formats – when members of different cultures react differently to rating scales with some habitually using extremes, while others consistently limit themselves to moderating their responses (Smith and Schwartz 1997).
3. *Sameness* was deemed to exist when the phrases used to describe two or more BSs were identical or near identical. *Similarity* existed when phrases describing the BSs were different, but the underlying meanings were the same. *Congruence* existed where there was an element of sameness or similarity in the meaning of certain phrases or key words.

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