



Leadership, Organizational Commitment, and Customer Satisfaction Across MNCs: The Moderating Influence of National Culture in MNCs

¹Jemima N. A. A. Lomotey, ²Anthony K. Apekey

¹ PhD, University of Phoenix, AZ, USA

² PhD, University of Ghana, Legon, GH

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.07.1026.3287>

ABSTRACT :

This study examined how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in multinational companies (MNCs) operating in Ghana. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from 370 frontline employees and 1,110 customers across seven MNCs in the banking, telecommunications, and hospitality sectors. Leadership perception was measured using the GLOBE leadership scales, employee commitment was assessed using Meyer and Allen's three-component commitment scale, customer satisfaction was measured using SERVQUAL-derived scales, and national culture was operationalized through Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and hierarchical regression with moderation analyses were conducted. Results revealed that national culture significantly moderated the relationship between leadership perception and affective commitment ($\beta = -0.21, p < .001$) and between leadership perception and customer satisfaction ($\beta = -0.18, p < .01$), such that these relationships were stronger in high collectivism contexts. Ethical leadership attributes demonstrated consistent positive effects on commitment across cultural contexts, suggesting universal applicability of certain leadership behaviors. The findings highlight that culturally congruent leadership practices enhance employee commitment and customer satisfaction. Implications for cross-cultural leadership development and service quality management in Ghanaian MNCs are discussed.

Keywords: National Culture, Leadership Perception, Employee Commitment, Customer Satisfaction, Multinational Companies, Ghana, Cultural Moderation

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized business environment, multinational companies (MNCs) face the complex challenge of leading culturally diverse workforces while maintaining consistent service quality and customer satisfaction across different national contexts (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). National culture—the values, beliefs, and assumptions learned in early childhood that distinguish one group from another—profoundly influences how employees perceive leadership, develop organizational commitment, and deliver service to customers (Hofstede, 2001). Understanding how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership, commitment, and customer satisfaction is essential for MNCs seeking to optimize performance across culturally diverse operations.

Leadership perception—employees' subjective evaluations of their leaders' behaviors and effectiveness—has been consistently linked to employee commitment and customer satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002; Schneider et al., 2005). However, the strength and nature of these relationships may vary across cultures due to differences in cultural values, leadership expectations, and implicit leadership theories (House et al., 2004). The cultural fit between leadership behaviors and employee expectations is critical for positive organizational outcomes. A positive appraisal of managerial practices can positively impact satisfaction, focus, comfort, and commitment, while a negative appraisal can have the opposite effect.

Employee commitment particularly affective commitment, reflecting emotional attachment to the organization is a critical determinant of employee service behaviors and customer satisfaction (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Research has demonstrated that collectivism as a national culture significantly moderates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment. Collectivistic cultures, where group harmony and loyalty are prioritized, may amplify the positive effects of supportive leadership on commitment. Conversely, individualistic cultures may emphasize different leadership attributes and commitment mechanisms. In the Ghanaian context, high collectivism and high-power distance shape employee expectations of leaders as benevolent paternalistic figures who demonstrate concern for employee welfare (Igusi, 2009).

Customer satisfaction, a critical outcome of service delivery, is influenced by employee commitment and service quality (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997). Employees who are committed to their organizations are more likely to deliver superior service, resulting in higher customer satisfaction (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). However, the strength of the commitment-customer satisfaction relationship may vary across cultures

due to differences in customer expectations, service norms, and cultural values (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2018). In collectivistic cultures, customers may place greater emphasis on relational aspects of service, while individualistic cultures may prioritize efficiency and task completion.

Despite the recognized importance of national culture in shaping organizational outcomes, limited empirical research has examined how culture moderates the leadership-commitment-customer satisfaction relationships in the Ghanaian MNC context. Studies have explored cultural fit and leadership effectiveness, the moderating role of national culture on organizational culture and commitment, and ethical leadership across cultures. However, comprehensive studies examining the complete chain from leadership perception through employee commitment to customer satisfaction, with national culture as a moderator, remain scarce in Ghana. This study addresses this gap by examining how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in MNCs operating in Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

Customer satisfaction is essential for the success of multinational companies operating in culturally diverse environments. Leadership perception significantly influences employee commitment, which in turn affects customer satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002; Schneider et al., 2005). However, national culture may moderate these relationships, as cultural values shape employee expectations, leadership perceptions, and service delivery norms (House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 2001). In Ghanaian MNCs, limited empirical research has examined how national culture moderates the leadership-commitment-customer satisfaction chain. This gap hinders the development of culturally congruent leadership and service quality strategies. This study addresses this gap by examining how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in MNCs operating in Ghana.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in multinational companies operating in Ghana. Specifically, the study aims to assess the direct effects of leadership perception on commitment and customer satisfaction, and to determine the moderating role of national culture dimensions on these relationships.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between leadership perception and employee commitment in MNCs operating in Ghana.
2. To assess the relationship between employee commitment and customer satisfaction.
3. To examine the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction.
4. To determine the moderating effect of national culture on the leadership perception-commitment relationship.
5. To determine the moderating effect of national culture on the commitment-customer satisfaction relationship.
6. To provide recommendations for culturally congruent leadership and service quality strategies in Ghanaian MNCs.

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical foundation of this study draws from national culture theory, leadership theory, organizational commitment theory, and the service-profit chain framework. National culture theory, as articulated by Hofstede (2001), identifies key cultural dimensions—power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, long-term orientation, and indulgence—that shape values, attitudes, and behaviors across societies. These dimensions influence employee expectations of leaders, the nature of workplace relationships, and service delivery norms. Studies have shown that national culture can act as either a moderator or mediator in the relationship between leadership style and organizational outcomes. National culture partially mediates the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance.

The cultural fit hypothesis posits that leadership practices congruent with local cultural values are more effective than those that are culturally incongruent (House et al., 2004). Research has demonstrated that fit between national culture and managerial practices significantly impacts leader evaluation, employee attitudes, and work performance. For example, supervisors from low power distance cultures were rated higher on leader communication, delegation, approachability, and team-building, while managers from high uncertainty avoidance cultures were rated higher on leader control and lower on delegation. In the Ghanaian context, high power distance means that the ideal manager is benevolent paternalistic.

Organizational commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991) distinguishes between affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (moral obligation to stay). Cultural values influence the development and expression of these commitment types. In collectivistic cultures, affective commitment may be particularly important, as emotional bonds and group identification are culturally emphasized. Research has shown that collectivism as a national culture significantly moderates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment. Leaders who demonstrate concern for sustainability, people-orientation, clear direction, integrity guidance, and power sharing positively influence affective commitment.

Ethical leadership has emerged as a critical construct in cross-cultural leadership research. Studies have shown that ethical leadership attributes positively relate to affective commitment across cultural contexts. Authentic leadership dimensions have demonstrated positive relationships with

organizational commitment and perceived leader effectiveness among Nigerian employees. However, the moderating effects of national culture suggest that some leadership behaviors may translate differently across cultures.

The service-profit chain theory (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997) links internal service quality, employee satisfaction and commitment, service quality, and customer satisfaction. This framework suggests that leadership creates conditions for employee commitment, which drives service quality and customer satisfaction. However, national culture may moderate these relationships by shaping employee expectations, service norms, and customer satisfaction criteria.

Empirical Literature

Empirical research has established the moderating role of national culture on various organizational relationships. Bokhari and colleagues (2024) found that collectivism significantly moderates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment in SMEs. Similarly, studies in the hotel industry have demonstrated that national culture moderates the relationship between organizational culture and organizational effectiveness. Research in African contexts has shown that ethical leadership positively influences affective commitment, with cultural implications for how fairness and commitment relate.

Studies on cultural congruence in leadership have demonstrated that employees with culturally similar supervisors perceived their supervisors differently than those with culturally dissimilar supervisors. Perceptions of goal clarity and overall satisfaction with the organization varied between culturally congruent and incongruent groups. This stream of research highlights the importance of cultural congruence for positive organizational outcomes.

Research on leadership across cultures has shown that authentic leadership behaviors positively relate to organizational commitment and leadership effectiveness among Nigerian employees. The study found that contingent reward behaviors reduce the effects of the internal moral perspective dimension of authentic leadership, suggesting that some combinations of behaviors should be considered to effectively meet situational needs. This finding underscores the importance of cultural context in understanding leadership effectiveness.

Studies have also explored cultural dynamics in African management practice. Igusi (2009) found that Nigeria is still highly collectivistic and characterized by high power distance, meaning that the ideal manager is benevolent paternalistic. The study proposed a "management heterogeneity" concept that reflects the blending of Western and traditional values into new practices that fit the managerial requirements of a given group of organizational members. This perspective endorses the view that leadership practices are developed differently in different cultural societies and organizations.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction. The cross-sectional design was appropriate for collecting data at a single point in time to assess relationships and test the hypothesized moderation model (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sampling

The target population comprised frontline employees working in MNCs in Ghana and their customers. Seven MNCs were purposively selected: three banks (Standard Chartered Bank Ghana, Ecobank Ghana, Stanbic Bank Ghana), two telecommunications companies (MTN Ghana, Vodafone Ghana), and two hospitality organizations (Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City, Labadi Beach Hotel). These organizations were selected based on their multinational status, significant customer base, and representation of service sectors.

For employees, stratified random sampling was employed. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table, a total of 370 frontline employees were selected. Inclusion criteria required that employees had been with their organization for at least one year and had direct customer contact. For customers, systematic random sampling was employed. A total of 1,110 customers (three per employee) were selected to provide customer satisfaction data.

Data Collection Instruments

Four primary instruments were used:

1. **Leadership Perception Scale:** The GLOBE leadership scales (House et al., 2004) were used to assess employees' perceptions of their leaders' behaviors. The scale measures six leadership dimensions: visionary, participative, charismatic, team-oriented, humane-oriented, and autonomous leadership.
2. **Employee Commitment Scale:** Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component commitment scale was used, consisting of affective (6 items),

continuance (6 items), and normative (6 items) commitment subscales.

3. **Customer Satisfaction Scale:** A 10-item scale adapted from SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) assessed overall satisfaction, service quality perceptions, and likelihood of recommendation.
4. **National Culture Scale:** An adapted scale based on Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions measured employees' cultural value orientations across power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity.

Validity and Reliability

A pilot study with 50 employees and 150 customers was conducted. Cronbach's alpha values were 0.92 for leadership perception, 0.90 for employee commitment, 0.91 for customer satisfaction, and 0.88 for national culture, all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data Collection Procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Permission was obtained from participating organizations. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires during working hours (employees) and at service points after service encounters (customers). Confidentiality and anonymity were assured.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 and PROCESS macro for moderation analysis (Hayes, 2018). Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlations, and hierarchical regression with moderation analyses were conducted. Variables were mean-centered before creating interaction terms. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, confidentiality was maintained, and participants could withdraw at any point.

Analysis and Results

Descriptive Statistics

The study sample consisted of 370 employees and 1,110 customers. The employee sample comprised 53% male and 47% female participants, with a mean age of 34.4 years ($SD = 7.5$). Educational levels included 44% bachelor's degrees, 31% master's degrees, 15% diplomas, and 10% other qualifications. Sector representation included 34% banking, 39% telecommunications, and 27% hospitality. Customer demographic characteristics were similar to the employee sample.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed significant positive correlations between all study variables. Leadership perception was significantly correlated with affective commitment ($r = 0.49$, $p < .001$) and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.45$, $p < .001$). National culture (collectivism) was positively correlated with leadership perception ($r = 0.28$, $p < .001$) and affective commitment ($r = 0.32$, $p < .001$).

Hierarchical Regression with Moderation Analysis

Hierarchical regression analyses tested the moderating effects of national culture (collectivism). Control variables were entered in Step 1, main effects in Step 2, and interaction terms in Step 3.

Table 1: Moderation Analysis - Leadership Perception and Affective Commitment

Model	Predictors	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
2	Leadership Perception (LP)	0.44	0.04	0.42	9.12	.000

	National Culture (NC)	0.15	0.04	0.14	3.45	.001
	$R^2 = 0.32$, $F(8, 361) = 21.45$, $p < .001$					
3	LP $\times$ NC Interaction	-0.18	0.05	-0.21	-3.78	.001
	$R^2 = 0.36$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $F(9, 360) = 22.87$, $p < .001$					

The interaction term (LP $\times$ NC) was significant for affective commitment ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < .001$), adding 4% incremental variance. Simple slope analysis revealed that the positive effect of leadership perception on affective commitment was stronger when national culture (collectivism) was high ($b = 0.52$, $p < .001$) compared to when it was low ($b = 0.34$, $p < .01$).

Table 2: Moderation Analysis - Leadership Perception and Customer Satisfaction

Model	Predictors	B	SE	B	t	Sig.
2	Leadership Perception (LP)	0.36	0.05	0.34	7.45	.000
	National Culture (NC)	0.12	0.05	0.11	2.45	.015
	$R^2 = 0.26$, $F(8, 361) = 15.67$, $p < .001$					
3	LP $\times$ NC Interaction	-0.15	0.06	-0.18	-2.78	.006
	$R^2 = 0.29$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $F(9, 360) = 16.34$, $p < .001$					

The interaction term (LP $\times$ NC) was significant for customer satisfaction ($\beta = -0.18$, $p < .01$), adding 3% incremental variance. The positive effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction was stronger in high collectivism contexts.

Table 3: Mediation Analysis with Moderation

Conditional Indirect Effect	Indirect Effect	Boot SE	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Interpretation
Low National Culture/Collectivism (-1 SD)	0.18	—	0.11	0.25	Significant
High National Culture/Collectivism (+1 SD)	0.28	—	0.19	0.37	Significant
Index of Moderated Mediation	-0.08	—	-0.14	-0.03	Significant

Mediation analysis with moderated mediation revealed that the indirect effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction through affective commitment was stronger in high collectivism contexts (indirect effect = 0.28, 95% CI: 0.19 to 0.37) compared to low collectivism contexts (indirect effect = 0.18, 95% CI: 0.11 to 0.25). The index of moderated mediation was significant ($\beta = -0.08$, 95% CI: -0.14 to -0.03).

Discussion of Results

The findings provide robust support for the moderating role of national culture on the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in Ghanaian MNCs. The significant interaction effects confirm that cultural congruence between leadership behaviors and employee expectations is critical for positive organizational outcomes.

The significant moderation of the leadership-commitment relationship by national culture ($\beta = -0.21, p < .001$) aligns with research demonstrating that collectivism moderates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment. In high collectivism contexts, where group harmony and loyalty are valued, supportive leadership has stronger effects on employee commitment. Employees in collectivistic cultures are more responsive to leaders who demonstrate concern for group welfare and interpersonal relationships, consistent with the benevolent paternalistic leadership ideal identified in African contexts.

The significant moderation of the leadership-customer satisfaction relationship ($\beta = -0.18, p < .01$) extends understanding of cultural influences on service outcomes. In collectivistic contexts, leadership may have stronger effects on customer satisfaction because employees who feel valued and committed deliver service that aligns with relational cultural values. Customers in collectivistic cultures may also be more attuned to the quality of interpersonal interactions, which are shaped by leadership.

The positive relationship between ethical leadership attributes and affective commitment across cultural contexts suggests that certain leadership behaviors have universal applicability. However, the moderating effects of national culture indicate that cultural context shapes the strength and nature of these relationships. The findings support the "management heterogeneity" perspective, which endorses the view that leadership practices are developed differently in different cultural societies but can be brought together in a positive synergistic blend.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study examined how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in MNCs operating in Ghana. The findings revealed that national culture significantly moderates the leadership-commitment and leadership-customer satisfaction relationships, with stronger effects in high collectivism contexts. The indirect effect of leadership on customer satisfaction through commitment was also stronger in high collectivism contexts. The findings highlight that culturally congruent leadership practices enhance employee commitment and customer satisfaction.

Recommendations

1. **Culturally Congruent Leadership Development:** MNCs should develop leadership practices aligned with Ghanaian cultural values, including collectivism and benevolence. Leaders should demonstrate concern for employee welfare, participative decision-making, and respect for hierarchical relationships.
2. **Cultural Intelligence Training:** Organizations should provide cultural intelligence training for expatriate and local leaders to enhance understanding of cultural differences and adaptive leadership capabilities.
3. **Commitment-Enhancing HR Practices:** Organizations should implement HR practices that build affective commitment, including recognition programs, career development, and supportive workplace cultures.
4. **Culturally Sensitive Service Protocols:** Service quality strategies should reflect local cultural values, emphasizing relational aspects of service delivery.
5. **Further Research:** Future research should examine the moderating role of specific cultural dimensions across different sectors and countries.

REFERENCES

- Bokhari, S. A. A., Ali, M., Yaqub, M. Z., Salam, M. A., & Park, S. Y. (2024). Moderating role of national culture on the association between organizational culture and organizational commitment among SME's personnel. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 9(4), 100–118.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement,

and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(2), 268–279.

- Hayes, A. F. (2018). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Heskett, J. L., Sasser, W. E., & Schlesinger, L. A. (1997). *The service profit chain*. New York: Free Press.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.). (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Igusi, O. V. (2009). *Cultural dynamics of African management practice* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Stirling.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607–610.
- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, 1(1), 61–89.
- Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnytsky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(1), 20–52.
- Njanji, J., & Antunes, M. A. (2024). The impact of ethical leadership, affective commitment, and national culture: An African perspective. *Journal of Management Studies*, 61(3), 456–473.
- Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Offermann, L. R., & Hellmann, P. S. (1997). Culture's consequences for leadership behavior: National values in action. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 28(3), 342–351.