

2023-2024 Leadership Academy Project Executive Summary

By Sujata Ives, PhD

Title: *“A Needs Analysis:
Diversity Management and Culturality
in NCDA Leadership Styles for Mental Wellbeing”*

Submitted: April 2, 2024

Abstract

The premise of this year-long study was to ascertain NCDA member views pertaining to the constructs of 1. Diversity 2. Cultural Humility 3. Interculturalism, and 4. Leadership Styles.

The first three constructs alluded to the amalgamation of diverse cultures, while the fourth one referred to current NCDA leadership styles. The second one addressed cultural humility that ties all the other constructs together through acceptance and empathy.

Through the 178 responses of the surveyed members, it was found that the first three constructs were being utilized interchangeably, thereby causing confusion, where certain members stated the word ‘diversity’ as a North American construct concerning Black American history. It is the author’s recommendation to clarify the terminology being used, and to create two separate NCDA programs that delineate both Diversity (as a movement in the Western Hemisphere) and Interculturalism (as promoting the Eastern Hemisphere). A distinction is, further, warranting strategic and sustainable NCDA goals for the future.

Findings also indicated that a portion of members could not differentiate all four constructs, thereby indicating a need to educate the membership population, clarify terminology, and integrate or create new and appropriate programming to all niches of the collective membership.

The author’s recommendation to achieve the aforementioned would be to create apt goals and programs, that address both Diversity and Interculturalism, through the cultivation of cultural humility and competencies via suitable leadership styles (as indicated in the responses).

Goals

1. Collect and assess definitions, practices, and insights for the terms “Diversity, Cultural Humility, Interculturalism, and Leadership Styles”, from current NCDA members.
2. Review current NCDA documents that address: Diversity, Cultural Humility, Leadership Styles, and Interculturalism.
3. Detect a need to clarify cultural terminologies.
4. Survey national and international members in the constructs of Diversity, Cultural Humility, Leadership Styles, and Interculturalism.

5. Propose recommendations to the NCDA board, to improve member engagement, programming, and to activate success for sustainable leadership.

Assumptions

1. The word “Diversity’ has different interpretations and meanings.
2. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory applies to national and international members; Ipso Facto, members have Cultural needs that must be met.
3. There is a need to proliferate Cultural Humility with regard to Leadership Styles.
4. The external environment has an effect on internal mental health and well-being.
5. It is through discernment (perspicacity) that a change occurs in the thinking brain.

Literature Review & Procedure

6. The author utilized tenets from NCDA’s Mission, Vision, the 2019 Values Report, and Strategic Plan.
7. The author used Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs as a foundational theory. This theory is a Humanistic theory and requires Empathy. For this project, the Needs were viewed as “Values”.
8. The author used socio-emotional theories of Bandura, Vygotsky, and Bronfenbrenner that state how the external environment has an effect on the internal mental well-being of an individual via the construction of personal Schema (beliefs, assumptions, bias). Schema, then, can affect leaders who choose to use a particular style.
9. The author chose this subject matter for three reasons:
 - a. Passion for the topic as a Southeast Asian immigrant
 - b. 1/3 of NCDA’s members are either foreign or foreign-born practitioners,
 - c. The number of foreign-born practitioners is expected to become a ratio of 1:5 during this decade (Source: US State Department).
10. This author conducted a literature review by reading all of the NCDA website documents and theories pertaining to the topic.
11. This author assessed Diversity Management and Culturality through: Diversity (DEI), Cultural Humility, Interculturalism, and Leadership Styles.
12. She used Survey Methodology, created a survey that was sent out by NCDA’s SurveyMonkey Link to national and international members.
13. NCDA gave her their data after the closure of the survey window time.
14. She analyzed the data from 178 respondents.
15. She wrote a white paper report.
16. She created a PPTX presentation to be presented at the NCDA 2024 San Diego, CA Conference.
17. She also constructed a Toolkit that delineates how leaders can espouse Interculturalism in their leadership styles, as well as in Committees and affiliates.
18. A new theory has emerged from this project, and is called the “*Ives Neuro-Dots Theory*”. This theory takes Carol Dweck’s mindset of Fixed Thinking that is located in the Limbic System vs. Growth Thinking that is located in the Prefrontal Cortex further. Dr. Ives discovered that the brain can take thinking even higher from growth to perspicacity/discernment/Aha awakenings via Neuro-Dots that connect as a result of

cathartic knowledge, values, and free will. Here, in this study such a result was seen in the progression of the responses where there was an attitudinal shift into cultural humility when respondents understood the value for cultural humility, interculturalism, and an inclusive leadership style. This knowledge gave them the perspicacity/discernment to gain a much greater understanding of and empathy for culturality and diversity management.

Literature Review

An extensive literature review of current documents on the www.ncda.org website was conducted in 2023-2024 for the purpose of conducting a Needs Analysis.

According to the Mission and Vision of NCDA: While Diversity is listed on this page, it was found that there is no mention of Interculturalism, Cultural Humility, or Leadership Styles.

Questions Posed for the Premise of the Study Based on Literature Review

1. If NCDA's top Value is "Diversity and Cultural Inclusion" (2019 report on Values, slide #4), then what is membership reaction with regard to Diversity Management?
2. If NCDA's second Value is "Innovation", then is there a need for innovative diversity management? Are members able to define diversity and culturality constructs such as: Diversity, Cultural Humility, Interculturalism, and Intercultural Leadership Style?
3. If NCDA's top third Value is "Community", then how much do members (national & international) feel engaged?
4. If NCDA's fourth Value is "Accountability", then to what degree do Leadership Styles have an effect on member engagement and sense of community?

Working Definitions for the Study

Diversity – Statement taken from NCDA Website, "The National Career Development Association (NCDA) acknowledges the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of everyone by honoring diversity and promoting social justice. NCDA views diversity from an intersectional perspective, acknowledging the ways in which identities operate within systems of power, privilege, and oppression. NCDA strives to be a diverse organization in its membership and leadership. (Approved by the NCDA Board - March 21, 2017)"

Interculturalism – Taken from UNESCO, is defined as "the abilities to navigate complex multicultural environments and interact effectively with others across differences (age, gender, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation), be it within or across borders. These include intercultural and socio-emotional skills such as listening, empathy, respect, perspective-taking and critical thinking.

Cultural Humility – Taken from UNESCO, Culture is who we are, and what shapes our identity. Placing culture at the heart of development policies is the only way to ensure a human-centered, inclusive and equitable development.

Mental Well-being – all constructs of Maslow’s theory, plus tenets of DEIBA & values of NCDA published by NCDA, with respect to activating success in life goals and mental health.

Survey Design and Responses

A brief survey was created by the author, Dr. Ives, and disseminated to all members via the NCDA Board’s Membership & Conference Assistant Director, Ms. Brianna Navarro.

178 responses, through qualitative and quantitative questions, were collected.

A summary of each question and responses showed:

1. What constituency group do you belong to? The largest group of 43.50% was from Higher Education; and the second highest group of 36.72% was from Private Practice/Industry.
2. How many years have you worked in your field? 35.96% have worked over twenty years, and the next highest group of 23.03% have worked between ten to twenty years.
3. From the leadership styles listed below, what style do you prefer most from your leaders? 71.91% preferred a Transformative leadership style.
4. Do you believe these leadership styles foster inclusive and engaging pathways? 85.55% said Yes.
5. Please write your definition of “Engagement”. 162 respondents wrote words such as: support, care, meetings, eye-contact, listening, understanding”.
6. Do you know the meaning of “Cultural Humility”? 58% knew the meaning.
7. Please write down your definition for “Cultural Humility”. 147 respondents wrote words such as: “sincerity, empathy, humble, not arrogant, acceptance, and cares”.
8. Cultural Humility supports diversity and inclusion. Do you believe that a leadership style that adopts cultural humility can benefit NCDA by increasing inclusion? 96.47% said Yes as beneficial for inclusion purposes.
9. Have past leadership training trained you in Cultural Humility? Only 21% had past training.
10. If yes, then please explain how that training helped you. 76% responded favorably.
11. True or False. “I believe there is a distinction between DEI and Interculturalism”. 68% felt there was a difference between the two constructs.
12. Please explain why you chose T or F for item #11. 148 respondents wrote the difference between the two constructs as pertaining to various cultures versus the American culture.
13. Please write your definition for Interculturalism. 137 respondents used the words “acceptance, openness, understanding, and empathy”.
14. Do you believe that NCDA can benefit from Intercultural Leadership Style? 94.48% said Yes.

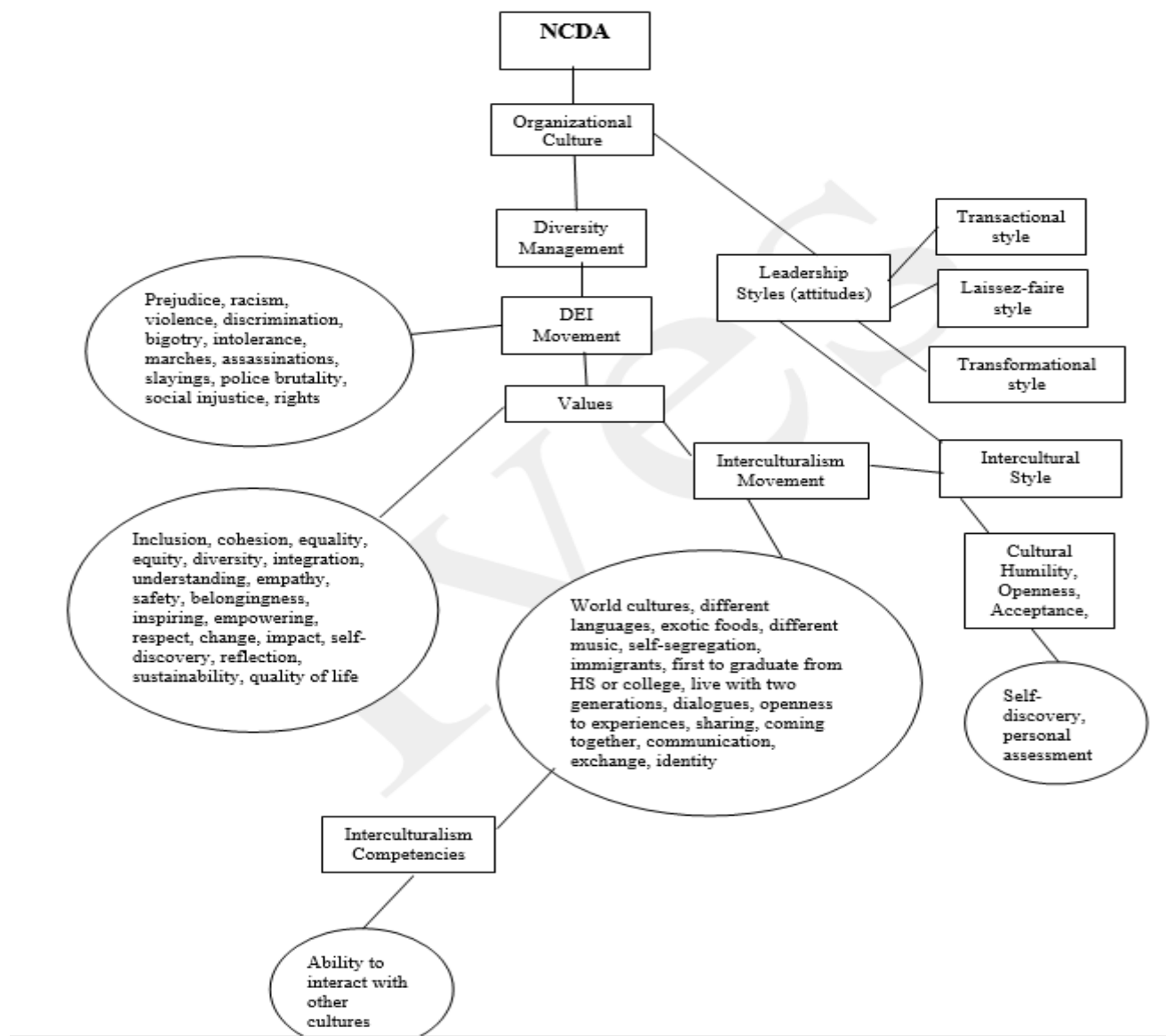
Interpretation of Findings:

1. NCDA has a Need for Diversity Management and Culturality with regard to the 2019 Values Report: “diversity” and “cultural inclusion” are unfortunately lumped together and causing confusion for international members.
2. NCDA has a Need in professional development concerning Cultural Humility and the impact of Leadership Styles on national and international members.

3. NCDA has a Need in diversity management training, knowledge expansion, and leadership progress with regard to Cultural Attitude, Skills, and Competencies.
4. NCDA has a Need with regard to Leadership from Cultural Humility (attitude), Intercultural Competencies (skill), and Leadership Style (expertise) perspective.
5. Survey responses warrant an activation of success for: Life goals that emerge from cultural humility, member engagement, appropriate programming, and inclusive leadership style.

Thematic Construction of Findings

Figure 1. Thematic analysis of the constructs and results from Ives study. (N = 178).



Recommendations

1. Clarify the distinction between Diversity and Interculturalism, to create a sense of community for international members.
2. Increase international membership through Intercultural programming.
3. Offer awards that can be properly recognized in foreign nations.
4. Continue to emphasize forums that NCDA deems relevant, i.e. LinkedIn, APCDA, GCC, and create an Intercultural Group, headed by Dr. Ives.
5. Increase opportunities for Mentoring between East & West, and create a Mentoring group for foreign-born counselors and expats.

Strong Considerations to Activate Success:

1. Board Leadership discussion and/or training in Interculturalism.
2. Embed Interculturalism discussion and/or training in the Leadership Academy.
3. Create two distinct avenues to gain perspicacity in this subject matter: one for Diversity/DEIBA topics and one for Interculturalism.
4. Create a Committee for Interculturalism, headed by SME Dr. Ives.
5. Consider opening a Trustee Group for Interculturalism, headed by SME Dr. Ives.

The author heartily thanks the NCDA board for the opportunity to conduct a Needs Analysis and recommendations to remedy the gaps found.

The author is grateful to the NCDA Board for choosing her to participate in the 2023-2024 Leadership Academy class.

It is to this end that this author respectfully submits her Leadership Academy Project Summary through great hope for future implementation of her recommendations to further activate NCDA organizational success.

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End of Report