
Research Article

A Study on the Influence of Immigrants' National Culture on the Leadership Styles of Construction Professionals in Toronto

Dave Estrella

Faculty of Engineering, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Article history:

Submission April 2026

Revised May 2026

Accepted June 2026

**Corresponding author:*

E-mail:

Estrellaengineering.TO@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Canada is often seen as an inclusive and welcoming country where people from many backgrounds live and work together with mutual respect. Toronto, in particular, is known for its rich cultural diversity, with residents representing 169 ethnic origins from around the world. Data from Statistics Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and the City of Toronto all support Toronto's reputation as one of the world's most multicultural cities. The history of immigration in Canada began with the French, then by the Englishmen. Subsequent waves of immigrants included those from Europe, Africa, and China. During the 1950s and 1960s, Italians made up approximately 65% of the workforce within Toronto's construction industry, and they remained the second most populous immigrant group in Toronto up until the 1980s. The Multiculturalism policy was introduced in 1972 marking a turning point, leading to increased immigration from around the globe. In recent years, the Philippines, India, and China have emerged as the top countries of origin for immigrants to Canada, with South Asians, Chinese, Blacks, Filipinos, and Latin Americans now forming the largest visible minority groups in Toronto. To support and at the same time enhance multiculturalism, a range of laws and policies are in place with the aim of promoting inclusivity and address any potential abuses within the system. Many construction companies operating in Toronto employ individuals from a wide array of ethnic backgrounds. This study examines how immigrants' national cultures influence the leadership and communication styles of construction professionals living and working in Toronto. This author used Hofstede's Values Survey Methods 2013 (VSM2013), followed by a face-to-face interview to confirm results. Respondents consistently indicated that both Canadians and immigrants collaborate effectively, setting aside cultural differences to ensure projects are completed on schedule and within budget. This underscores the genuinely accepting nature of Canadian society and the immigrants' cultural change, especially those coming from the East, accepting western cultural influences on Transactional and Transformational leadership.

How to cite:

Estrella, D. (2026). A Study on the Influence of Immigrants' National Culture on the Leadership Styles of Construction Professionals in Toronto. *The Advanced Social Science In Research Journal*. 1(3), 767 – 782. doi: 10.11594/assrj.01.03.19

Keywords: *Diversity, Multiculturalism, Leadership Style, Communication Style, Construction Management*

Introduction

Toronto is recognized as one of the most multicultural cities globally (Dodd, 2021), comprising residents from 169 different countries (Fernando, 2006). The city is often described as a “little United Nations” due to its incredible diversity. According to the 2021 Census, 46.6 percent of Toronto’s population are immigrants, with the majority originating from Asia. The largest groups come from the Philippines, China, and India. The top ten ethnicities in Toronto, in order, are Chinese, English, Irish, Scottish, Indian, Italian, Canadian, Filipino, German, and French (www.toronto.ca).

The first immigrants to Canada were French explorers, followed by British settlers loyal to the crown who moved north from the United States. At the onset of the twentieth century, more Europeans arrived, along with immigrants from China and Africa. This was followed by newcomers from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, and others (Burner and Palmer, 1988). After World War II, immigrants from Europe, especially Italy and Portugal, arrived in large numbers (Hiller, 1996). Most early immigrants were Caucasian and European, except for those from China and Africa, who were brought in to address labour shortages and help expand the Canadian economy (Plamondon, 2013).

Before 1972, Canada’s Immigrant population was still largely made up of people of European origin, while Chinese and African communities remained relatively small and were often treated unequally. During the leadership of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the Federal Government introduced the Multiculturalism policy, which marked a major shift in Canada’s social direction. In the years that followed, immigration grew substantially, with newcomers from many parts of the world choosing Canada as their new home. This policy marked the beginning of Canada as a multicultural society (Cameron, 2004).

The diversity of Toronto’s population increased rapidly after immigration policies changed. What was once a city largely

inhabited by people of British descent is now home to residents of every colour, nationality, culture, and religion (Fernando, 2006).

Torontonians are known for their tolerance and acceptance of all cultures. Residents live together peacefully, recognizing that most people or their ancestors were immigrants themselves. Although Canadian society is tolerant, assimilation into Canadian culture is essential for newcomers to succeed. Various government programs are available to assist with this process (Satzwich, 2011).

This paper examined the impact of national cultures in managing construction projects with the aim of examining whether these cultural differences, stemming from immigrants’ national backgrounds, affect both the leadership and communication styles of construction professionals.

Multiculturalism in the Construction Industry

The construction sector mirrors Toronto’s multicultural character. Construction professionals and tradespeople from diverse backgrounds work together on projects throughout the city. In the residential sector, immigrants make up nearly 41% of architects, 40% of engineers, 23% of urban and land use planners, and 24% of construction managers across Canada (www.canada.ca).

The construction industry in Toronto is highly fragmented, with each project involving several specialized sub-trade contractors. Sub-contractors are responsible for managing their tradespeople, while general contractors oversee the various sub-contractors. Occasionally, general contractors hire tradespeople directly. This division of management responsibilities means that both general and sub-contractors must navigate various cultural dynamics on their teams. Ultimately, everyone in the industry interacts with colleagues from different countries and cultures (Hughes, 2005).

Italian immigrants played a major role in shaping Toronto’s construction industry, contributing significantly to the city’s physical growth through their expertise in bricklaying,

cement work, and stone masonry. Although many were first employed as general labourers, a large number brought valuable trade skills with them. Over time, many of these workers chose to settle permanently in Canada (Di Sciascio-Andrews, 2007). During the construction boom of the 1950s and 1960s, people of Italian heritage accounted for approximately 60 percent of the workforce (Agnoletto, 2014).

Italian immigrants also applied their entrepreneurial abilities to establish businesses and provide services that benefited the wider community. By the 1980s, Italian Canadians had become the second-largest ethnic group in Toronto, after British Canadians (Fernando, 2006).

Today, Italians continue to hold influential roles in the construction industry, while immigrants from many other backgrounds play different roles to everyday operations in both corporate offices and on construction sites. As a result, leadership within construction projects has been shaped by the wide range of national cultures that make up Canadian society.

Leadership Styles in a Diverse Industry

Effective leadership plays a critical role in the successful management of complex construction projects (Arain, 2008). Construction professionals are expected to demonstrate integrity, strong leadership abilities, a readiness to lead change, and a clear understanding of both the project itself and the wider environment in which it operates (Arain, 2008). Leadership style also shapes organizational behaviour (Arain and Tipu, 2008) and is widely recognized as a key contributor to project success (Bennis and Nanus, 2003).

Bjorseth (2013) suggested that projects may be more successful when team members share similar national or cultural backgrounds, as common understandings can support stronger collaboration and clearer communication.

Cultural differences directly impact the leadership style adopted by project leaders (Rowlinson, et al., 1993). The behaviour of the project manager in leading a culturally diverse team can significantly influence project outcomes (Waheed, 2012).

While some individuals perceive cultural differences as obstacles, others view them as opportunities for growth. Diversity offers valuable opportunities to build stronger and more effective teams. Ultimately, cultural diversity does not negatively impact project results (Eisenberg and Williams, 2012); rather, effectively managing these differences can improve organizational efficiency (Kivrak, et al., 2009). Cultural differences tend to be more relevant in social settings and managing them is essential for project success (Benson and Stieglitz, 2013).

Sweeney and McFarlin (2014) emphasized that thoughtfully integrating the values and norms of employees from different cultural backgrounds can bring significant benefits to multicultural organizations. When diverse perspectives are used effectively, they can strengthen creativity, improve problem-solving, and enhance overall performance. At the same time, Janicijevic (2019) warned that cultural differences, if not managed carefully, may lead to conflict and misunderstanding, weakening cohesion and collaboration. Amir (2025) further noted that poor leadership in such settings can lower employee morale, reduce efficiency, and even lead to financial losses.

Preferences for leadership styles vary across industries, including construction, with bureaucratic approaches being the least favoured (Cunningham, Salomone, and Wielgus, 2015). Two main leadership behaviours are present in construction projects: task-focused and person-focused. Task-focused leaders prioritize the completion of specific objectives, while person-focused leaders are sensitive to the feelings and well-being of team members (Burke, et al., 2006).

Leadership is essential for motivating teams and supporting collaboration (Cunningham, Salomone, and Wielgus, 2015). In addition to technical knowledge and industry experience, strong leadership is a critical factor in the success of construction projects (Muller and Turner, 2010). Project success is typically assessed in terms of time, cost, scope (Meredith and Mantel, 2012), and efficiency (Malach-Pines, Dvir, and Sadeh, 2008). In this context, leadership capabilities, together with technical

and managerial skills, are fundamental to achieving successful outcomes (Turner, et al., 1998; Pinto and Slevin, 1988).

Leadership style is often shaped by the dominant culture of a country. Waheed (2012) argued that cultural diversity within a project team calls for leaders to adopt flexible and responsive approaches. Effective leaders help guide task priorities and allocate resources in ways that support project goals (Arain, 2008). Across construction teams, project directors, managers, site supervisors, estimators, coordinators, consultants, and other professionals all contribute to leadership and play a role in overall project success.

Many construction companies in Toronto employ workers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. To support effective teamwork, project management teams must recognize and respond to these differences with awareness and sensitivity.

The success of construction companies in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) depends heavily on leaders' ability to manage a diverse workforce effectively (Javidan, Waldman and Wang, 2021; Yakl and Gardner, 2019). Leaders play an important role in shaping employee motivation, setting strategic direction, and influencing overall organizational performance, all of which contribute to company success (Jain, 2025). At the same time, as Estrella (2016) noted, many construction professionals in the GTA choose to set cultural differences aside and focus instead on completing projects on time, within budget, and to acceptable quality standards. This practical mindset highlights the importance of professionalism and shared objectives in overcoming cultural challenges within the industry.

To understand clearly, the academic community provided more than 850 definitions of leadership. However, no clear and unilateral fine line characteristic separates a leader from a non-leader (Bennis and Nanus, 2003). Leadership style affects overall project performance. During the course of a project, project manager and his / her team develop certain leadership style (Yang, Huang and Wu, 2011).

Goleman, et al. (2002) identified these competencies and grouped into self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and

relationship management. Transformational leadership is more appropriate for project managers and construction professionals (Keegan and Hawlog, 2004). Simply put, management of construction projects is based on relationships. One must have an influence on the resources including sub trade contractors, in order to get the project completed on time and on budget. Transactional would be the preferred to straight forward engineering projects (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003; Muller and Turner, 2007). Benincasa (2012) suggested the following leadership style from their studies on different managers:

Commanding

The commanding style is direct and clear, often summed up as "Do as I tell you." It can be especially useful in urgent situations or emergencies when quick decisions are needed. However, if it is used too often, it may create distance between the leader and the team and make open collaboration more difficult.

Authoritative

The authoritative style is built around a clear vision and the ability to inspire others to move toward it. Often captured in the phrase "Come with me," this approach works well when a leader can provide direction with confidence and unite the team around a shared purpose. It keeps attention on the bigger picture while giving people responsibility for their part in achieving it.

Coaching

The coaching style focuses on helping people grow. A leader using this approach supports team members in recognizing their strengths, building their confidence, and finding ways to reach their goals. Over time, this style can help individuals develop their abilities and prepare for future leadership roles.

Democratic

The democratic style invites people into the decision-making process by asking, "What do you think?" It encourages discussion, shared problem-solving, and compromise. Unlike a more directive approach, this style helps team

members feel heard, valued, and more connected to the ideas they help shape.

Affiliative

The affiliative style puts people first and focuses on building strong relationships within the team. It is especially helpful when a leader wants to restore morale, reduce tension, or rebuild trust after a difficult period. By emphasizing connection and support, this style can create a stronger sense of belonging.

Pace Setting

The pace-setting style leads through example and can be described as "Do as I do, now." It can drive strong performance by setting high expectations and creating momentum. At the same time, if it continues for too long, it may place pressure on team members and eventually lead to stress or fatigue.

Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) examined the Competency School and acknowledged three leadership styles: Goal oriented, involving and engaging. They also emphasized that in any Project, there is one suitable leadership style depending on the complexity of the project and that certain leadership style can work better than the others.

Communication in a Diverse Environment

Open and honest communication is crucial for fostering harmonious relationships, both personally and professionally. Project managers must cultivate an environment of vulnerability and be willing to compromise, showing respect for all parties involved.

Dialogue is the most effective form of communication (Benson and Stieglitz, 2013). Effective communication involves understanding the perspectives of others (Scott, 2015) and is the only way to achieve alignment within a project team (Bennis and Nanus, 2003).

In diverse project management teams, communication plays a significant role in team cohesion (Ochieng and Price, 2009). Through effective communication, individuals can manage both self-perception and how others perceive them. Communication styles are tools for expressing and shaping these perceptions (Ivanov and Werner, 2010). Timi (2024) emphasized the importance of communication in

fostering understanding, respect, and collaboration, especially in a multicultural organization.

Lee (2025) suggested that cultural differences affect the way we communicate – our styles, the norms and expectations. In many western countries including Canada, a direct, explicit and to the point is the common style of communication, whereas its many recent immigrants prefer a more indirect, implicit and polite. Adding to the complexity, the indigenous peoples prefer storytelling, relational and contextual. There are also differences in non-verbal cues – Canadians would maintain eye contact while many immigrants avoid eye contact.

Brown (2024) pointed out that language barriers is one of the key challenges in a multicultural team which could pose a problem in miscommunication. Many of the older workers from a non-English speaking country would prefer to work with their own people. However, many of the younger generations can learn English easily and therefore can work with any other culture without any problems.

Aritz and Walker (2010) in their study, suggested that in multicultural teams of Americans and East Asians, there is no significant differences in the degree of contribution and participation in decision making. Estrella (2016) also suggested that construction professionals in Toronto prefer collaboration noting that communication is the key to a project team's success.

Guo, Ghanbaripour, Rajendra, Talebian, Lee, & Skitmore, (2025) offered four steps in effective communication in a multicultural construction project – identify stakeholders, establish communication plan, clarify information distribution methods and manage stakeholders' expectations. Solas and Greenberg (2021) emphasized the importance of a good communication plan to achieve the project's objectives, requirements, tasks, schedule, deliverables, risks, issues and solutions contributing to project success.

Estrella (2016) examined five common communication styles and how they can shape leadership in project teams. The way leaders communicate affects how they set

expectations, handle conflict, and build working relationships with others.

Assertive Communication

Assertive communication is confident, respectful, and fair. People who communicate assertively are able to express their thoughts clearly without dismissing the views of others. For leaders, this style encourages open discussion, sound decision-making, and healthier relationships within the team.

Aggressive Communication

Aggressive communication happens when a person focuses mainly on their own needs and gives little attention to the feelings or opinions of others. It may come across as forceful, hostile, or controlling. In a project setting, this style can quickly weaken trust, reduce teamwork, and create avoidable conflict.

Passive-Aggressive Communication

Passive-aggressive communication is often indirect. A person may seem agreeable on the outside while feeling frustrated or resentful underneath. Since concerns are not raised openly, this style can create confusion, reduce trust, and make problems harder to resolve.

Submissive Communication

Submissive communication occurs when a person regularly gives in to others, even when they have concerns or ideas of their own. While this may avoid conflict in the short term, it can also prevent honest feedback and allow important issues to remain unspoken. In leadership, too much submissiveness can limit collaboration and weaken problem-solving.

Manipulative Communication

Manipulative communication involves trying to influence others in a hidden or unfair way. Instead of being direct, a person may use guilt, pressure, or selective information to get the response they want. Over time, this style can damage transparency, weaken relationships, and reduce confidence in leadership.

Relationship Between Hofstede's Cultural Dimension and Leadership Behaviors

Individualism versus Collectivism

Hofstede and Minkov (2013) explain individualism as a cultural outlook where people are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families. In these cultures, personal independence, individual achievement, and making one's own decisions are often strongly valued.

Collectivism takes a different approach. In collectivist cultures, people tend to place more importance on loyalty to the group, shared responsibility, harmony, and agreement. Decisions are often made with the wider group in mind, rather than focusing only on what benefits the individual.

In the Hofstede data used for this study, Canada scores high on individualism, while the top three immigrant source countries score lower, with China showing the strongest contrast. This difference matters because it may shape how construction professionals lead, communicate, work in teams, and make decisions in multicultural project settings.

Power Distance

Hofstede and Minkov (2013) describe Power Distance as the extent to which less powerful members of a society expect and accept unequal distributions of power, including differences between upper and lower levels of management. High Power Distance cultures generally expect leaders to give clear direction, while Low Power Distance cultures tend to prefer more collaborative leadership styles. Based on Hofstede's data, Canada scores low on Power Distance, while the top three immigrant source countries score relatively higher, particularly the Philippines.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede and Minkov (2013) describe Uncertainty Avoidance as the degree by which the population itself is threatened by some unknown situations. However, some researchers find that UAI is not a valid index (Schmitz and Weber, 2014). High uncertainty avoidance cultures provide clear guidelines and structured processes, whereas there are more flexibility and adaptability in low uncertainty

cultures. Based on Hofstede's data, Canada along with the top three immigrant source countries – India, China and the Philippines, are similar in terms of uncertainty avoidance.

Masculinity versus Femininity

Hofstede and Minkov (2013) describe masculinity as a society that is assertive, tough and materialistic whereas femininity as modest, tender and with the quality of life as being important in one's daily life. Masculine cultures are more competitive and assertive whereas feminine cultures are more concerned with the quality of life and cooperation. Based on the information gathered on Hofstede's data, many of the immigrant source countries including China and the Philippines are relatively high on masculinity. This is consistent with the fact that many Asian immigrants are concerned about building wealth

while those who are born in Canada are more concerned with their quality of life.

Long Term Orientation

Hofstede and Minkov (2013) describe a culture with long term orientation as being thrifty, adaptive and exhibit perseverance. In the figure below, China and India both are high on long term orientation as compared to Canada and the Philippines. This certainly shows in the initial results in the indulgence index.

Indulgence versus Restraint

Hofstede and Minkov (2013) describe Indulgence index as self-gratification thru leisure, or parties and even sex. In the figure below, Canada and the Philippines have a high indulgence index as compared to China and India. This is consistent with the results on long term orientation.

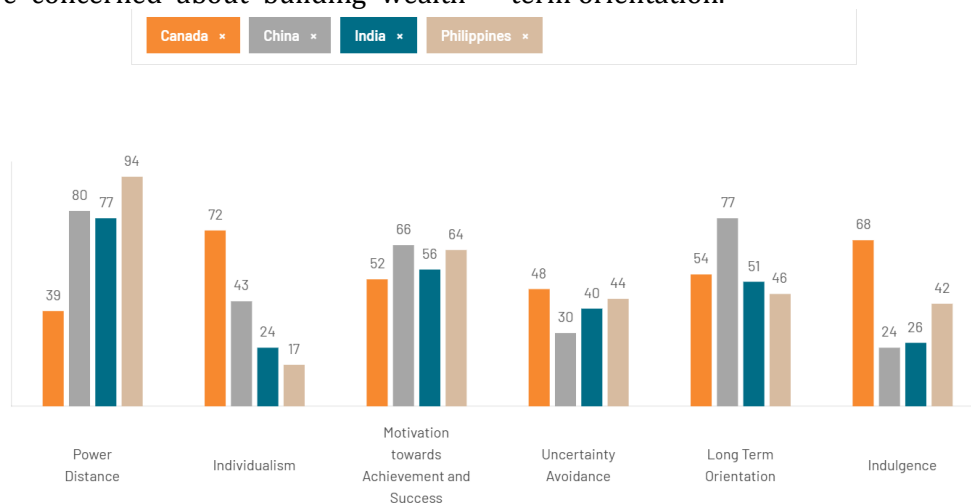


Figure 1. Cultural Index Comparison (Source: Country Comparison Tool)

Methods

The following steps were adopted in this research study:

- Literature review of numerous studies pertinent to the topic. Sources included materials gathered from the City of Toronto library, newspapers, and publishers in and around Toronto. Relevant online resources were also reviewed and incorporated into the study.
- Collection and analysis of statistical data from government agencies such as Statistics Canada (StatsCan), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), and the City of

Toronto. These statistics were accessed through their respective government websites.

- Qualitative and quantitative surveys were conducted among Construction Professionals in Toronto. This included the use of questionnaires, observations, and face-to-face interviews to gather comprehensive data.

Participants were drawn from a network of construction professionals who live and/or work in the GTA. They were selected based on their current professional roles, and their

relevance to the study was confirmed through industry credentials and LinkedIn profiles.

The original phase of the research used paper questionnaires, while the validation stage was conducted online through Google Forms. Quantitative tools were used to present participants' demographic profiles, and more open-ended discussion was introduced to capture richer accounts of respondents' experiences and deepen understanding of the topic.

Responses were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Statistical and descriptive methods were applied to support a thorough interpretation of the data. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted to further validate the survey responses.

Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

Questionnaires were distributed to verified project directors, project managers and coordinators, construction estimators, quantity surveyors and engineers living and working in the GTA ensuring the sample was relevant and to reduce potential bias.

The study targeted a 90% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, or better, to strengthen the reliability of the findings.

Research Instrument

The researcher drew on a range of online resources including statistical data from Statistics Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and the City of Toronto. Surveys were conducted using prepared questionnaires based on the Values Survey Module 2013 (VSM2013) which were distributed to professional contacts in the industry. Interviews were also carried out to validate the quantitative findings and provide a deeper understanding of the study.

Data collected from literature, journals, statistical sources, questionnaires, and interviews were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively by a statistician, who oversaw the validity of responses and provided comprehensive interpretations of the results. The integration of qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys offered a full picture of the research topic, with qualitative insights complementing statistical findings to strengthen the depth and reliability of the study.

Result and Discussion

There were 91 respondents – 41 of the respondents were born and raised in Canada while 50 respondents were internationally trained and are immigrants in Canada. VSM2013 requires a minimum of 20 respondents.

The following are the results of the study
Power Distance Index (PDI)

According to Hofstede and Minkov (2013) in the VSM2013 Manual, the index formula is:
 $PDI = 35(m07 - m02) + 25(m20 - m23) + C(pd)$

Where m07, m02, m20 and m23 are mean scores for the answers to question numbers 7, 2, 20 and 23 in the prepared questionnaire, respectively. C(pd) is a constant with a value of 20 for the samples collected in this research. The responses of the Immigrants are a little low as compared to the Canadians. This verifies the earlier assumption based on results provided by Hofstede's on different national cultures. However, when combined, the blended results are marginally close to that of Canadians and that of Hofstede's.

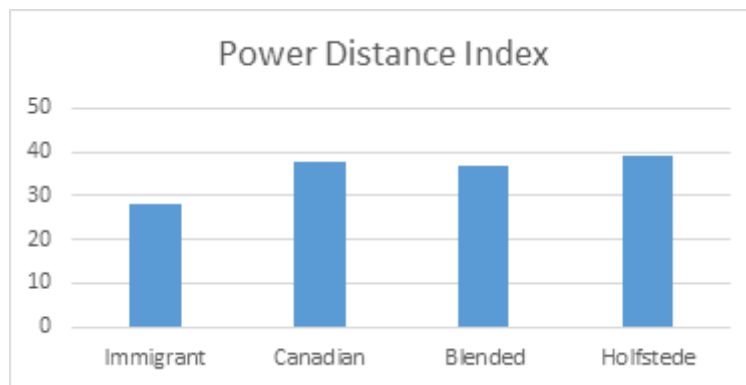


Figure 2. Results on Power Distance Index

Individualism Index (IDV)

According to Hofstede and Minkov (2013) in the VSM2013 Manual, the index formula is: $IDV = 35(m04 - m01) + 35(m09 - m06) + C(ic)$

Where m04, m01, m09 and m06 are mean scores for the answers to question numbers 4, 1, 9 and 6 in the prepared questionnaire, respectively. C(ic) is a constant with a value of 60

for the samples collected in this research. The responses of the Immigrants are a relatively lower than that of the Canadians. This verifies the earlier assumption based on results provided by Hofstede's on different national cultures. However, when combined, the blended results are still relatively low to that of Canadians and of Hofstede's.

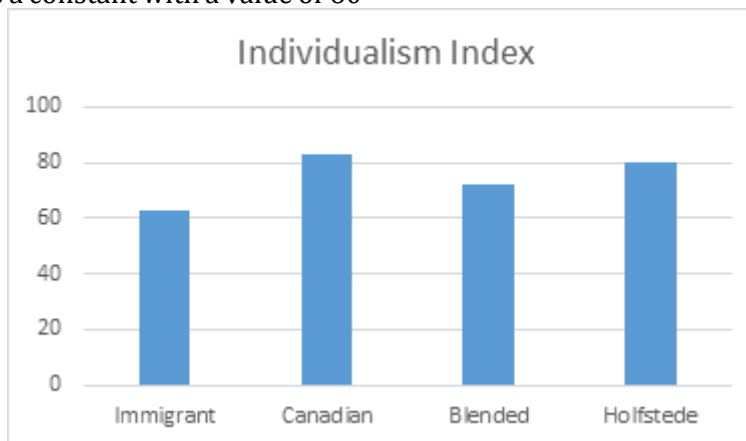


Figure 3. Results on Individualism Index

Long Term Orientation Index (LTO)

According to Hofstede and Minkov (2013) in the VSM2013 Manual, the index formula is: $LTO = 40(m13 - m14) + 25(m19 - m22) + C(is)$

Where m13, m14, m19 and m22 are mean scores for the answers to question

numbers 13, 14, 19 and 22 in the prepared questionnaire, respectively. C(is) is a constant with a value of 70 for the samples collected in this research. The responses of the Immigrants are a relatively higher than that of the Canadians.

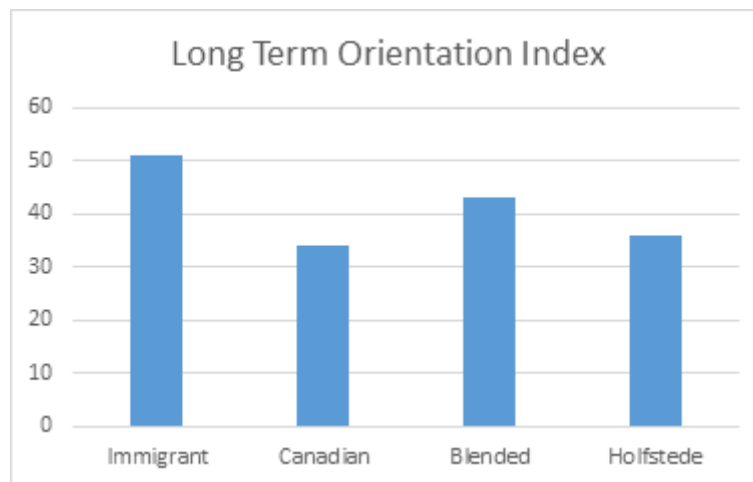


Figure 4. Results on Long Term Orientation Index

Masculinity Index (MAS)

According to Hofstede and Minkov (2013) in the VSM2013 Manual, the index formula is:
 $MAS = 35(m05 - m03) + 35(m08 - m10) + C(mf)$

3, 8 and 10 in the prepared questionnaire, respectively. C(mf) is a constant with a value of 40 for the samples collected in this research. The responses of the Immigrants are a relatively higher than that of the Canadians..

Where m05, m03, m08 and m10 are mean scores for the answers to question numbers 5,

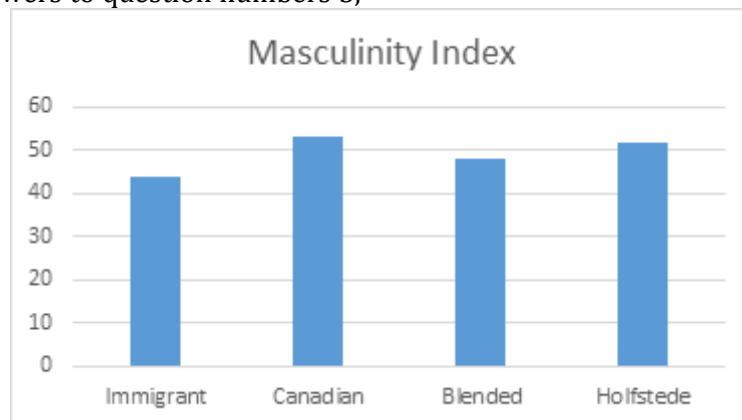


Figure 5. Results on Masculinity Index

Indulgence versus Restraint Index (IVR)

According to Hofstede and Minkov (2013) in the VSM2013 Manual, the index formula is:
 $IVR = 35(m12 - m11) + 40(m17 - m16) + C(ir)$

11, 17 and 16 in the prepared questionnaire, respectively. C(ir) is a constant with a value of 0 for the samples collected in this research. The responses of the Immigrants are a relatively higher than that of the Canadians.

Where m12, m11, m17 and m16 are mean scores for the answers to question numbers 12,

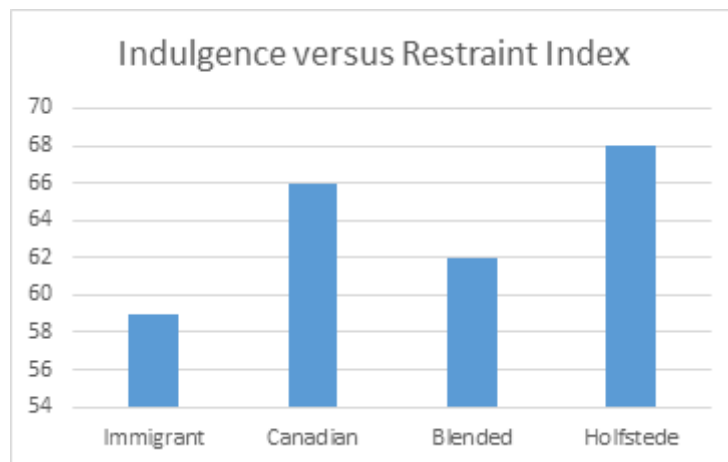


Figure 6. Results on Indulgence versus Restraint Index

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

According to Hofstede and Minkov (2013) in the VSM2013 Manual, the index formula is:

$$IVR = 40(m18 - m15) + 25(m21 - m24) + C(ua)$$

Where m18, m15, m21 and m24 are mean scores for the answers to question numbers 18,

15, 21 and 24 in the prepared questionnaire, respectively. C(ua) is a constant with a value of 100 for the samples collected in this research. The responses of the Immigrants are a relatively higher than that of the Canadians.

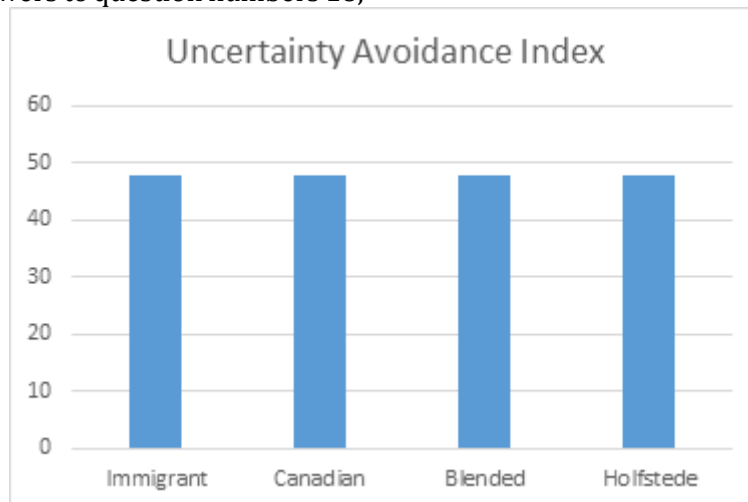


Figure 7. Results on Uncertainty Avoidance Index

Reliability Test

According to prior studies, the Cronbach's Alpha value for PDI, Alpha = 0.842; Alpha value for IDV, Alpha = 0.770; Alpha value for MAS, Alpha = 0.760; and for UAI, Alpha = 0.715. Generally speaking, a reliability test with an Alpha value of greater than 0.700 is considered

acceptable. Note that Alpha values for LTO and IVR are not proven although, their similarity to other indices are fairly acceptable. Samples below 20 should never be used. (Hofstede and Minkov, 2013). Hence, our sample collection is acceptable.

In summary, the following are the results:

Table 1. VSM2013 Analysis Results

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions	Hofstede Dimension Score	Survey Results
Power Distance	39	37
Individualism	80	72
Long Term Orientation	36	43
Masculinity	52	48
Indulgence	68	62
Uncertainty Avoidance	48	48

The above table clearly show that the Cultural Dimensions of the multicultural workforce in the GTA as calculated using VSM2013 follow the indices as previously studied by Hofstede and Minkov (2013).

The results also proved Waheed's theory that leadership style of all the immigrants were shaped by the Canadians (Waheed, 2012).

Face to face interviews were conducted after the initial conclusions above and based on the results and interviews, respondents most often described their leadership style as collaborative. Immigrant participants said their peers viewed them as open to suggestions and flexible in their approach. Canadian-born participants also emphasized collaboration, often paired with leading by example. One respondent said their style was seen as relaxed, upbeat, and consistently timely. Overall, approximately 78% of respondents described their leadership style as collaborative.

The first impressions of a person and their leadership style can be lasting. Although perceptions may change over time, the way subordinates initially view a leader often shapes a long-term impression. Perception is influenced by beliefs, feelings, and opinions, and it does not always reflect reality.

The respondents believe that a leader should demonstrate honesty as the most important values while openness, encouragement, and leading by example are also important.

Effective leaders communicate clearly and directly when giving instructions or sharing ideas, and honesty is central to that process. Strong leadership also depends on ethical standards, whether those standards are rooted in professional expectations or personal values.

Nearly half of the respondents indicated that leaders may struggle when they fail to communicate effectively with their project teams. In this sense, communication sits at the heart of leadership, with the power either to remove barriers or to create them within a team. Respondents also observed that leaders may be less effective when they are overly accommodating, as this can lead team members to view poor behaviour as acceptable, or when mutual respect is missing. At the same time, a few respondents suggested that project leaders do not truly fail but instead encounter setbacks that offer opportunities for learning and growth.

The interview findings support the study's hypotheses by showing that cultural background shapes leadership and communication practices among construction professionals in Toronto proving Bjorseth's suggestion (Bjorseth, 2013). Both immigrant and Canadian-born leaders tend to adopt collaborative approaches, although differences in values, ethics, and preferred communication styles reflect deeper cultural influences. Even so, multicultural teams regularly adapt, compromise, and focus on shared project goals while fostering an inclusive environment. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of cultural awareness and flexibility in multicultural project settings, suggesting that successful project delivery depends on integrating diverse perspectives while maintaining professional standards.

Limitations of the Study

Unlike Waheed's (2012) study conducted in the Middle East, this research was carried out with the context of Ontario's anti-racism and anti-discrimination legislation. As a result, the range of questions that could be asked was

more limited, and several potentially relevant items were excluded to avoid any perception of bias. These constraints may have narrowed the scope of cultural insight captured in the study and, in turn, affected the overall depth and comprehensiveness of the findings. Consequently, some more nuanced dimensions of cultural adaptation and leadership behaviour may not have been fully examined.

Recommendations for Future Research

To address these limitations, future research should consider developing culturally sensitive interview protocols in collaboration with legal experts. This would allow researchers to include important questions while remaining compliant with relevant legislation. Working with researchers from diverse backgrounds may also help broaden the range of perspectives captured and improve the validity of cross-cultural comparisons. In addition, larger sample sizes and mixed-methods designs could strengthen the reliability of the findings and support a more comprehensive understanding of multicultural project teams.

Conclusion

The findings reveal clear differences between immigrant and Canadian participants across several cultural dimensions, particularly Power Distance and Individualism, where the contrasts were most apparent. The interview results also confirmed that these differences influence both leadership and communication styles. At the same time, the study showed that construction professionals—whether immigrant or Canadian-born—generally set cultural differences aside in practice and work together to meet shared project goals, including completing projects on time and within budget.

In conclusion, this study shows that multiculturalism plays an important role in shaping leadership and communication practices in Toronto's construction industry. Although cultural differences influence how professionals lead, communicate, and interpret workplace expectations, the findings suggest that these differences do not prevent project success when they are approached with openness, honesty, and adaptability. Collaborative leadership

emerged as the most common approach among both immigrant and Canadian-born respondents, highlighting the value of flexibility, mutual respect, and shared goals in diverse project environments. Overall, the study reinforces the importance of cultural awareness and effective communication in building cohesive teams and delivering successful construction projects across the GTA.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Lord for giving me the courage and strength to revisit and validate this research after ten years.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Faisal Arain, Ph.D., the staff of the Toronto Public Library and the University of Bath Library, and all the construction professionals in Toronto who generously shared their valuable time despite their busy schedules. I am deeply grateful for their support and contributions. Special thanks go to the men and women of Highland Commons, HOEM2 and 307 Sherbourne projects for their valuable input in this research.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother Lucia, and my partner in crime, Vu, for their love and unwavering support.

References

- Agnoletto, S. (2014). *The Italians Who Built Toronto: Italian Workers and Contractors in the City's Housebuilding Industry, 1950-1980* Peter Lang AG, Academic Publishers, Bern, Switzerland
- Akalanka, D., Weerathunge, S., & Uduwage, N. (2025). Strategies to Enhance Productivity in Multicultural Project Management Teams in Sri Lanka https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-08992-2_93
- Amir, M. (2025). *Workplace Challenges and Leadership Issues: A Research Analysis on Toxi Leadership* Harvard University
- Arain, F. (2008). *Globalized Corporate Leadership: Aligning Construction Enterprises with Global Characteristics of Corporate Leadership*, Leadership Management in Construction

- Arain, F. & Tipu, S. (2008). *Determining the Emerging Leadership Styles Using the Leadership Grid*, Journal of Global Management
- Arain, F & Toor, S. (2006). *The Quadrilateral Model of Leadership, Findings from a Study on Mega Project*. International Journal of Construction Project Management.
- Aritz, J. and Walker, R. (2010). *Group Composition and Communication Styles: An Analysis of Multicultural Teams in Decision-Making Meetings* <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475751003787346>
- Benincasa, R. (2012). *Fast Company: 5 Minute Read – 6 Leadership Styles, And When You Should Use Them* [<https://www.fastcompany.com/1838481/6-leadership-styles-and-when-you-should-use-them>] November 10, 2015
- Bennis, W. and Nanus, B. (2003). *Leaders Strategies for Taking Charge, Second Edition*, Harper Business Essentials, New York, NY
- Benson, A. and Stieglitz, R. (2013). *Leadership Conversations, Challenging High Potential Managers to Become Great Leaders* Joseey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, San Francisco, CA
- Bjorseth, S. (2013). *The Impact of Cultural Differences on Project Management in the Norwegian Oil and Gas Industry, A Qualitative Research with Emphasis on Communication in International Project Management Teams*. MSc Dissertation Dublin Business School
- Brown (2024). *Cross-Cultural Communication: Challenges and Solutions* [<https://rlauterborn.com/cross-cultural-communication-challenges-and-solutions/>] October 11, 2025
- Burke, et. al. (2006). *What Type of Leadership Behaviors are Fundamental in Team? A Meta-Analysis Scopus Export 2000s. 8357*. <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/scopus2000/8357>
- Burner, J.R. & Palmer, H. (1988). *“Coming Canadians”: An Introduction to a History of Canada’s Peoples*. McClelland & Stewart Inc., Toronto, Canada
- Cameron, E (2004). *Multiculturalism and Immigration in Canada: An introductory Reader*, Canadian Scholars’ Press, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- Cunningham, J., Salomone, J., and Wielgus, N. (2015). *Project Management Leadership: A Team Member Perspective*, *International Journal of Global Business* 8(2) 27 – 54 December 2015, 27
- De Souza Sant’Ana, A, and Vargas, F. (2025). *Leadership Styles Across Cultures: A Comparative Study of Western and Asian Contexts Through Hofstede and Deleuzian Lenses* <https://doi.org/10.1177/09763996251370804>
- Di Sciascio – Andrews, J. (2007). *How the Italians Created Canada: From Giovanni Caboto to the Cultural Renaissance*, Dragon Hill Publishing, Edmonton, MB
- Dodd, C. (2021). *The World’s Multicultural Cities* [<https://www.worldatlas.com/cities/the-world-s-most-multicultural-cities.html>] February 13, 2026
- Dulewicz, V. and Higgs, M. (2003). *Design of a New Instrument to Access Leadership Dimensions and Styles* In Henley Working Paper HWP 0311: Henley Management College, UK
- Eissenberg, J. and Williams, G. (2012). *The Effects of Cultural Intelligence on Multicultural Teams’ Project Performance* IACCM Conference June 2012, Naples, Italy
- Estrella, D. (2016). *Toronto – A Multicultural City: The Impact of the Immigrants’ National Culture on the Leadership Behaviours of Construction Professionals in Toronto* University of Bath, UK
- Fernando, S. (2006). *Race and the City: Chinese Canadian and Chinese American Political Mobilization* UBC Press, Vancouver BC
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. and McKee, A. (2002). *The Emotional Reality of Teams* *Journal of Organizational Excellence* 21(2):55-65
- Guo, L., Ghanbaripour, D., Rajendra, S., Talebian, N., Ying Lee, C, and Skitmore, M. (2025). *Enhancing Communication in Multicultural Construction Teams – a Systematic Review of the Challenges and Solutions of Effective Communication in Construction Projects* *Construction*

- Innovation: Information, Process, Management*, pages 1 to 23
- Hiller, H. (1996). *Canadian Society: A Macro Analysis, Third Edition* Prentice Hall Canada, Inc. Scarborough, ON
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations, 2nd ed.*, Sage Publications, United States
- Hofstede, G., & Hofstede, G.J., and Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival*, McGraw Hill, United States, eBook loc. 647.
- Hofstede, G. & Minkov, M (2013). *Values Survey Module 2013 Manual* Geert Hofstede BV
- Hughes, S. (2005). *Coming to Canada: Building a Life in a New Land*, Maple Tree Press Inc., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, p. 8.
- Immigrants' contribution to the residential construction sector [<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/immigration-matters/growing-canada-future/residential-construction.html>] February 27, 2026
- Ivanov, M. and Werner, P.D. (2010). Behavioral Communication: Individual Differences in Communication Style *Personality and Differences* 49(2010), 19-23
- Jain, D. (2025). *The Role of Leadership in Enhancing Employee Motivation and Engagement* University of Delhi
- Janicijevic, N. (2019). The Impact of National Culture on Leadership *Economic Themes* 57(2):127-144
- Javidan, M. Waldman, D. and Wang, D. (2021). How Life Experiences and Cultural Context Matter: A Multilevel Framework of Global Leader Effectiveness *Journal of Management Studies* 58(5):1331-1362
- Kara, A., Meyer, L. & Genc, O. (2022). Challenges in Managing Multicultural Workforce in Construction Projects *3rd International Conference on Applied Engineering and Natural Sciences*, 2022, Turkey
- Keegan, A. and Hartog, D.N. (2004). Transformational Leadership in Project Based Environment: A Comparative Study of the Leadership Styles of Project Managers and Line Managers *International Journal of Project Management* 22(8), 609-618
- Kivrak, S. (2009). *Impacts of Cultural Differences on Project Success in Construction*. Procs 25th Annual ARCOM Conference, 7-9 September 2009
- Lee, S. (2025). Effective Communication in a Diverse World [<https://www.numberanalytics.com/blog/effective-communication-diverse-world>] March 12, 2026
- Malach-Pines, A., Dvir, D. and Sadeh, A. (2008). Project Manager – Project (PMP) Fit and Project Success *International Journal of Operations and Productions Management* 29(3), 268-291
- Merideth, J. and Mantel, S. (2012). *Project Management: A Managerial Approach, 6th Edition*. Wiley and Sons, Hoboken, NJ
- Muller, R. and Turner, R. (2010). Leadership Competency Priorities of Successful Project Type *International Journal of Project Management* 25(2007) 21- 32
- Ochieng, E. & Price, A.D.F. (2009). *Addressing Cultural Issues when Managing Multicultural Construction Project Teams* Loughborough University, UK
- Pinto, J.K. and Slevin, D.P. (1988). Project Success: Definitions and Measurement Techniques, *Project Management Journal* 19, 67-73
- Plamondon, B. (2013). *The Truth About Trudeau*, Great River Media, Ottawa, ON
- Rowlinson, S., So, T. and Yun, P. (1993) Leadership Styles of Construction Managers in Hong Kong, *Construction Management and Economics* 11(6), pp 455-465.
- Satzewich, V. (2011). *Racism in Canada*, Oxford University Press, Ontario, Canada
- Scott, C.L. (2015). The Futures of Learning 3: What Kind of Pedagogies for the 21st Century, *Education Research and Foresight Working Papers*, UNESDOC Digital Library
- Solas, J. and Greenberg, T. (2021). Project Management Communication Plan [<https://project-management.com/communication-plan/r>] January 13, 2026
- Sweeney, P. and McFarlin, D. (2014). *International Management: Strategic Opportunities and Cultural Challenges, 5th Edition*, Taylor & Francis Group, New York

- Timi (2024). Inclusive Communication Practices: Ensuring Effective Communication and Collaboration for All [<https://changingpaces.com/inclusive-communication-practices-ensuring-effective-communication-and-collaboration-for-all/>] February 13, 2026
- Toronto's Demographics, Economy & Labour Force [<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/toronto-economy-labour-force-demographics/>] January 13, 2026
- Tukaiainen, S., et. al. (2003). *Impacts of Cultural Dynamics on the Process and Outcomes of Global Engineering Project - a Case Managed by Finns and the Poles*. CRGP Working Paper No. 001
- Waheed, M.Z. (2012). *The Impact of National Culture on the Leadership Behaviours of Construction Project Managers*. MSc Dissertation, University of Bath.
- Yakl, G. and Gardner, W.L. (2019). *Leadership in Organizations, Global Edition (9th Ed)*, Pearson Education Limited
- Yang, L. Huang, C. and Wu, K. (2011). The Association Among Project Manager's Leadership Style, Teamwork and Project Success, *International Journal of Project Management* 29(2011), 258-267