Challenges and Eight Secret Strategies for Success of Iranian American Leaders in the United States

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The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges Iranian American leaders experience and the secret strategies they develop to overcome these challenges. The study showed that they face significant work-related, cultural, social, and financial challenges as they try to start a new life in the United States. The strategies they used were described as follows: believe in yourself and pursue your dream, be true to yourself and true to others, be committed to your business, don't give up, see challenges as opportunities, interact and communicate with others, keep learning, and become a bridge between the American and the Iranian culture.

INTRODUCTION

During the first half of the 20th century, the National Origins Quota Acts favored immigration of northern and western Europeans into the United States. Since the liberalization of the U.S. immigration laws in the 1960s, the racial composition and cultural composition of this nation has significantly changed (Kelley, 1993). In recent decades, the United States has received immigrants from across the globe, including many third-world countries. According to the 2000 census, foreign-born residents make up about 11.1% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The large influx of Iranian immigrants in the United States since 1979 has been a direct consequence of the Islamic Revolution, which resulted in the overthrow of the monarchy in Iran and the subsequent establishment of the theocracy of the Islamic Republic. Many Iranians left their homeland for social, political, and religious reasons and chose to make their new home in the United States. Mostofi (2003) stated that Iranian immigrants came as mistreated intellectuals, oppressed minorities, rich professionals, educated workers, students, families, or individuals. These immigrants constitute a heterogeneous group that lived very different lives in Iran and endured extremely distinct experiences during the revolution. According to Mostashari and Khodamhosseini (2004), Iranian Americans are far more numerous in the United States than census data indicate. In 2004, the Iranian Studies Group estimated the number of Iranian Americans at 691,000—more than twice the figure of 338,000 cited in the 2000 U.S Census (Iranian Studies Group, 2004). It is estimated that approximately 500,000 Iranian immigrants live in Southern California (Kelley, 1993).

Iranian Americans are among the most highly educated ethnic group in the United States (Mostashari & Khodamhosseini, 2004). Unlike immigrants from many other nations, many Iranians came to the U.S. with strong educational backgrounds or solid professional credentials (Amanat, 1993). According to Bozorgmehr, Sabagh, and Del Martirosian (1993), the vast majority of Iranian immigrants who came to the Unites States after the revolution were college and university students from Iran's professional and entrepreneurial class. Although some students returned to Iran after the revolution, many other stayed on after earning advanced degrees, often working at menial jobs as they tried to become established, and were later joined by their family members (Brin, 2004). Thus, "a combination of affluent and skilled exiles and former college students account for the unusually high socio-economic status of Iranians in the United States" (Bozorgmehr et al., 1993, p. 69). According to the 2000 census, the percentage of Iranians older than 25 years who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher was 57.2% compared with 24.4% for the rest of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). In addition, more than one out of four Iranian Americans (27.5%) hold a master's or doctoral degree, the highest rate among the 67 ethnic groups listed. Iranian Americans hold five times the number of doctorates than the national average.

According to Mostashari and Khodamhosseini (2004), many Iranian Americans have achieved a high level of success in the United States and contribute substantially to the U.S. economy. The per capita average income for Iranian Americans is 50% higher than that of the nation, while family average income is 38% higher. Among the 12% of Americans with per capita incomes of $100,000 or more, there is a disproportionate number of Iranians. According to Vaziri (2001), there are many successful Iranian Americans in management and leadership positions in corporate America. *Fortune* 500 companies and other major corporations identified more than 50 Iranian Americans in senior leadership positions at companies with more than $200 million in asset value, including GE, AT&T, IBM, Verizon, Intel Corporation, Cisco Systems, Motorola, Oracle, Nortel Networks, Alcatel-Lucent, and eBay (Iranian Studies Group, 2004). Iranian Americans have also achieved outstanding positions in academia, with hundreds of tenured professors teaching and doing research at top-ranked U.S. universities. Studies showed that because immigrants went through the experience of leaving a known environment for a more uncertain and risky one, they are more likely to start their own businesses than are native born residents (Bianchi, 1993). Iranian immigrants have been successful entrepreneurs, investing in real estate, construction, and retail businesses. According to Bozorgmehr (2000), some Iranians turn to self-employment largely for the benefit of independence and higher earnings, although some others chose self-employment to escape discrimination.

Unlike many other immigrant groups, the Iranian American community faces a unique challenge of demonstrating its professional success while at the same time having to maintain a low profile in light of its perceived association with support for anti-U.S. terrorism. Because of current Iranian stereotypes, there is a perceived lack of pride in Iranian Heritage that leaves the Iranian American community's youth lacking strong role models. In the absence of such role models, who have successfully navigated through the challenges of starting a new life in a foreign country, present and future generations of Iranian Americans may not be able to achieve a similar level of success.

Although Iranian Americans demonstrate exceptional success and make numerous contributions to this country, there is no documented research on how and why they have succeeded. Corporate globalization is expanding and companies increasingly look for leaders who understand cultural differences and have the ability to manage successfully a diverse workforce. This should result in greater attention on identifying the factors that contribute to the achievement of ethnic minority and immigrant leaders. The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges Iranian American leaders experience and the secret strategies they develop to overcome these challenges. By exploring the success strategies of Iranian American leaders, this study: (a) acknowledges the contributions of Iranian Americans to the U.S, society and helps fill the literature gap that exists about the success stories of the Iranian minority in America; (b) provides American youth of Iranian origin with role models and a sense of respect for their heritage, and encourages the Iranian American community to become more involved in corporate, academic, or political leadership; and(c) provides American leaders with an opportunity to understand better some of

the challenges ethnic minority groups face in the workplace and some of the factors that contribute to their success.

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed purposefully to be exploratory, qualitative, and descriptive, in order to gain a thorough understanding of a relatively unknown phenomenon by focusing on a small group of participants. Through the use of maximum variation criterion sampling, including gender and profession, 12 Iranian American leaders were selected from a pool of candidates known by the authors, recommended by experts, referred by other participants, or known through the media. The leaders chosen in this study—eight men and four women—were born in Iran, migrated to the United States mainly because of social changes in Iran, and later became U.S. citizens or residents. All participants are fluent in both English and Persian languages. Some attained leadership positions at companies with more than $200 million in asset value. Others attained tenured academic positions at top-ranked U.S. universities, received national honors, founded for profit or not-for-profit organizations, or were involved in U.S. politics. Three research questions were asked each respondent:

- What challenges did you, as an Iranian American leader, have to overcome?
- How did you overcome these challenges?
- What are the characteristics that you believe made you successful?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in a way that allowed participants freedom to express their views in their own way. Each interview was recorded and verbatim transcriptions became the source of raw data. Data analysis was performed independently by three researchers using a phenomenological model that allows the identification of meaning units through the coding of respondents' statements (Creswell, 1998). A consensus of themes, patterns, and keywords was achieved through the comparison of the results the three researchers obtained.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of our study in two parts: (a) the challenges Iranian American leaders face, and (b) the secret strategies Iranian American leaders develop to overcome these challenges.

Challenges

Migration is a challenging event, regardless of whether a person immigrates to a new country voluntarily or involuntarily. The 12 participants included in this study reported experiencing challenges in the following four areas: work-related, cultural, social, and financial.

Work-Related Challenges

Issues related to finding stable, long-term employment in the U.S. was the most important issue reported by the Iranian American leaders. All respondents but one reported having experienced difficulties caused by the lack of a work permit or U.S. residency, the lack of professional network and job experience, and/or the challenge of finding their venue. Statements illustrating this theme are: "I didn't have a job, I didn't know America. My challenge was trying to get a work permit, trying to find out what I could do, trying to make a living for my family"; "The biggest challenge was starting a business which I knew nothing about and had no connection"; or "We didn't know the American way of negotiating."

Cultural Challenges

Cultural challenges were also a major concern for the survey participants. Of the 12 Iranian American leaders, 10 reported experiencing cultural challenges, including cultural shock (individualistic vs. collectivistic culture), stereotyping and discrimination based on religion and national origin, and language deficiency. Relevant statements referring to this theme are: "When I came to the U.S., I didn't know

much English. I went through a cultural shock"; "Cultures are not just different but opposite"; "A lot of times, I felt my subordinates were embarrassed when they introduced me as their boss"; "Religious discrimination and being a foreigner, so I couldn't work and decided to resign"; or "I had to prove to people that I wasn't a threat to them but I was ready to cooperate."

Social Challenges

As expected, social challenges were another area of concern for Iranian Americans. Of the respondents, 10 reported having experienced social problems when they immigrated to the U.S., including the lack of social support, family-related challenges, changing established paradigms, and ignoring conventional norms. Relevant statements illustrating this theme are: "There was no Iranian community established here because of the hostage crisis that had backlash on Iranians"; "When you don't belong to a special group, they turn against you"; "This was a very painful experience for me because I was alone in this country"; "I tolerated my long-distance relationship with my husband to get to my goal"; or "I still feel the pain of nostalgia, separation anxiety."

Financial Challenges

Interestingly, financial challenges were not the most prevalent issue facing Iranian American leaders. Only seven respondents reported experiencing financial difficulties. Relevant statements referring to this theme are: "I didn't have enough money to pay my rent"; or "It was hard to get established a credit card"; or "a problem for this project was endowment or financial."

Eight Secret Strategies for Success

To overcome the challenges of starting a new life in an unfamiliar environment, Iranian American leaders develop and use various strategies that rest upon a set of personality traits, abilities, and skills. The eight strategies that have contributed to the success of Iranian American leaders in the United States follow.

Believe in Yourself and Pursue Your Dream

All respondents cited self-confidence (the ability to be sure about one's competencies and skills) and self-discovery (the ability to understand one's own strengths, values, and goals) as two essential instruments of their success. The theme of vision, defined as the leader's ability to envision an uplifting future and pursue a dream, was cited by 11 respondents. Relevant statements referring to self-confidence include: "I decided to choose my way and go alone"; "I wanted to prove myself, or show I could do it"; "I reached it myself, I am proud of that"; or "Believing in yourself and in what you do and having a passion makes it happen." The theme of self-discovery can be illustrated by the following statements: "Choose something you like or are good at"; "Look at yourself, inspect yourself, see what you like to do and what you don't like to do. Stick to the things you like to do"; "I chose a profession that allowed me to progress toward self-actualization." The following statements: "Make sure you pursue your dream"; or "I had a dream and wanted to live in freedom and liberty" illustrate the theme of vision.

Be True to Yourself and True to Others

The theme of work ethic-values, which includes values of honesty and trustworthiness, was also cited by all respondents. The importance of ethics in the success of Iranian American leaders is best illustrated by the following statements: "Honesty is number one ingredient; you have to be true to yourself and true to others" and "I am honest and people appreciate that too."

Be Committed to Your Business

According to the study participants, being committed to the organizational goals and showing a drive to work for reasons that go beyond money or status are also instrumental to the success of Iranian American leaders. The theme of commitment, defined as establishing challenges and expectations, and applying them with focus and patience, can be illustrated by the following statement: "To be successful in

any business, you really have to make a very serious and long-term, if not lifetime, commitment to that business." The statement "If you work 50 times harder, you will be luckier than the other people" is relevant to the theme of drive or motivation.

Don't Give Up

Persistence helps Iranian American leaders overcome the challenges they experience. The theme of persistence was defined as the ability to follow through, not to give up in the pursuit of goals, and being enduring. This theme is best illustrated by the following statements: "You just have to persevere until you get to a point where suddenly you break through the initial barrier, then you start seeing possibilities" and "Have a dream, don't give up."

See Challenges as Opportunities

Having the ability to see challenges as the beginning of a new success and the willingness to tolerate frustration and delay with a positive-optimistic outlook (resiliency) has significantly contributed to the success of Iranian American leaders. Statements referring to this theme include "Be positive, try to be part of the solution not the problem"; "I see challenges as opportunities"; "I always think this is temporary, there is an end to it, and it's going to turn for better"; "I viewed future with hope and optimism"; and "You have to accept that there might be failure along the way."

Interact and Communicate with Others

All Iranian American leaders indicated that building strong relationships and teamwork, as well as getting involved in the community, help them achieve their goals. Relevant statements illustrating these themes are: "You have to be able to work with every one, whether it is an employee, supervisor, or customer. You have to be able to know exactly what the important things that make employees excited about their work are"; "Never consider others followers. Always consider them cooperators"; "I got involved serving society"; "I tried to create a sense of family that replaced what I was missing." Of the respondents, eight also mentioned the importance of good communication skills, including listening and public speaking skills, as an instrument of their success. As a respondent declared, "In 2 minutes, you have to be able to form a thought and articulate it in a way that has an impact."

Keep Learning

Among the Iranian American leaders, nine reported that attaining a solid education and continuously learning plays a determining role in surmounting the difficulties associated with their immigrant status. As some respondents cited, "Good, solid higher education gave me the ability to see the bigger picture"; "A master in Business Administration gave me the background and the business language"; "I took extension law classes to learn how to carry the life here."

Become a Bridge Between the American and the Iranian Cultures

The desire to learn work- and culture-related habits in an effort to embrace both cultures is a theme that surfaced among 10 of the participants. Examples of statements referring to this theme include: "You got to understand the society you live in and also you want to make sure you keep your culture"; "I cannot be completely American, I cannot be completely Iranian, but I can be something in between, I can be a bridge between the two worlds"; "I bought something more trendy, changed my hair cut…because the presentation layer was much more acceptable or attractive." Among the respondents, nine reported that their multicultural background helps them develop a creative approach to solving problems. A statement relevant to this theme is: "Work habits of different cultures gave me creative problem-solving skills." The findings are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1
SUCCESS STRATEGIES, PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES, AND SKILLS IDENTIFIED AS INSTRUMENTAL IN OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES IRANIAN AMERICAN LEADERS FACE IN THE UNITED STATES

Challenges	Success Strategies	Personal attributes and skills
Work-related, Cultural, Social, Financial	Believe in yourself and pursue your dream	Self-confidence, Self-discovery, Vision
	Be true to yourself and true to others	Work Ethic, Honesty, Trustworthiness
	Be committed to your business	Commitment, Drive
	Don't give up	Persistence
	See challenges as opportunities	Resiliency, Optimism, Hope
	Interact and communicate with others	Social Skills, Communication Skills
	Keep learning	Desire to Learn
	Become a bridge between the American and the Iranian cultures	Multicultural Skills

DISCUSSION

This study showed that in addition to work-related and financial difficulties, Iranian American leaders face significant cultural and social challenges as they start a new life in the United States. Our findings are consistent with those of Budman, Lipson, and Meleis (1992), who showed that the difficulties most frequently experienced by Iranians migrating to the U.S. were in the areas of English language, discrimination, cultural values, social life, and dating customs.

The study participants reported experiencing culture shock when they arrived in the United States because of the greater degree of individualism present in American society. Two cross-cultural studies of leadership styles conducted in the 1970s (Hofstede, 1980) and the 1990s (House, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2004) led to the conclusion that Iranian society was more family oriented and collectivistic than American society. Other major cultural differences between the two countries were highlighted by the GLOBE Research Program. This study showed: (a) Iranian society was more risk-averse than American society; (b) power, wealth, and status were shared more equally in America as compared to Iran; (c) Iranians were less confrontational in their relationship with others and less engaged in future-oriented behaviors than Americans; and (d) gender differentiation was more accentuated in Iranian society than in American society (Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts, & Earnshaw, 2002; Dastmalchian, Javidan, & Alam, 2001).

If adjusting to the American culture was not easy for Iranian American leaders, perhaps even more daunting was the challenge to overcome prejudices and stereotypes. Because of diplomatic tensions between Iran and the U.S. that resulted from the Iran hostage crisis—in which 52 U.S. diplomats were held hostage for 444 days by a group of revolutionaries—Iran became an adversary of the United States (National Iranian American Council, 2003). In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, all Americans were reeling from a combination of anguish, loss, uncertainty, and insecurity. Like other immigrants from the Middle East, Iranian Americans wondered daily about whether they were feared or hated by other Americans. According to Kelley (1993), only a small number of Americans realize that Iranians in the U.S. are not ethnically and religiously homogeneous. They fail to understand that each Iranian American is one among a range of Iranian subgroups in the pan-Iranian community. Each subgroup that is relocated to America has its own distinctive history and culture, thus there have been widely held misunderstandings and stereotypes about Iranians in the U.S. As a result, Iranian Americans,

despite achieving outstanding success, often choose to maintain a low profile and are sometimes reluctant to introduce themselves as Iranian. If political tensions between Iran and the U.S. make it harder for Iranian immigrants to find acceptance in American society, then racial prejudices may simply occur as a result of their immigrant status. By examining the challenges Asian, African, and Hispanic American managers and executives face in the United States, Thomas and Gabarro (1999) showed that the prevalence of racial stereotypes was still a major issue for ethnic minorities in predominantly White corporations. As a result of prejudices, ethnic minority managers reported being kept from ascending to particular positions and delayed in their promotion to the upper-management level. This study also showed the preference of White employees to work with people who were racially similar as a means of avoiding risks and feeling more comfortable. In addition, the authors showed that White managers had a tendency to give higher performance ratings to members of their own group. As a result, ethnic minority managers were more likely to stay longer in a lower-level management position than their Caucasian peers.

The study participants experienced a loss of social network and support when they left their home country. A lack of an established Iranian community in the United States amplified the nostalgia and separation anxiety felt by most Iranian immigrants. According to Mostofi (2003), the lack of an Iranian community is mainly a result of the heterogeneity of the Iranian American population in terms of religion, historic background, and postmigration experiences in the United States (Min & Bozorgmehr, 2000). However, as Mostofi (2003) pointed out, the possibility of constructing a future communal identity exists: Symbols of Iranian culture such as food, pre-Islamic holidays and traditions, history, domestic values and kinship ties, and etiquette could serve as reminders of Iranians' shared origin while helping to establish a united identity.

This study identified eight strategies and a set of personal attributes and skills that are instrumental to the success of Iranian American leaders in the United States. The findings showed that Iranian American leaders possess many of the attributes that leadership trait theorists identified as contributing to the success of corporate American leaders in the 1970s. Stodgill (1974) identified persistence, self-confidence, drive, commitment, optimism, honesty, trustworthiness, social, and communication skills as important attributes of effective American leaders. More recently, the GLOBE researchers demonstrated that some of these traits—honest, trustworthy, optimistic, communicative, and team builder, along with visionary—were universally regarded as contributing to outstanding leadership (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman, 2006; House & Howell 1992).

The findings also showed that Iranian American leaders possess some of the key characteristics of effective ethnic minority or immigrant leaders. Luthans, Norman, and Jensen (2007) identified self-confidence, efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency as elements of psychological capital that immigrant entrepreneurs must possess and seek to develop to become successful. During the last 2 decades, self-leadership studies have emphasized the importance of self-discovery as a key to outstanding leadership; to be effective, leaders must develop a deep understanding of their own strengths and values, and strongly believe in their ability to achieve their goals and potential (Alves et al. 2006; Neck & Houghton, 2006). Self-discovery was found to be a common trait that Asian, African, and Hispanic American managers need in order to climb the corporate ladder of predominantly White organizations (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). Ethnic minority managers reported that their decision to pursue a career in a specific field was based on their personal interests and aptitudes. According to the authors, by matching their personal interests and strengths with their career choice, ethnic minority managers were able to create an internal drive that enabled them to succeed in the long run.

The importance of social networking and teamwork reported by Iranian American leaders is consistent with the findings of Luthans et al. (2007), which demonstrated that social capital, that means group members securing some benefit as a result of their membership in social networks or related social structures, was critical to the immigrant entrepreneurs' development. Because immigrants do not have business connections when they arrive in the U.S., they need to develop a network of personal and professional relationships, within and beyond their ethnic community, in order to secure the support and information they need to be successful in an unfamiliar environment. The development of a social and

professional network was also found to be instrumental to the ethnic minority managers and executives' ascension in corporate America (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). The authors mentioned that mentoring, coaching, and sponsoring ethnic minority managers provided them with the assistance, support, and advice they needed to make better decisions and reinforce their self-confidence and credibility. Ethnic minority managers reported that relationship development with superiors, peers, and subordinates throughout their careers was critical to their success.

Thomas and Gabarro (1999) showed that early exposure to American culture helped ethnic minority (Asian, African, and Hispanic American) managers become bicultural and, as a result, more comfortable in a predominantly White environment. According to Kelley (1993), the successful integration of Iranian immigrants into American society can partly be explained by the Westernization policies initiated in Iran prior to the Islamic revolution by Mohammad Reze Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran. However, Mostofi (2003) argued that, regardless of their familiarity with Western standards, Iranian Americans are an example of an immigrant group that simultaneously identifies with its ethnic characteristics and American civic nationalism based on notions of liberalism, democracy, and laws. The author described the Iranian American identity "as a combination of American notions of freedom and liberty and Iranian cultural traditions and concepts of family" (p. 682). Askari (2003) showed that well-adapted Iranian immigrants are those who have successfully melded the strengths of both cultures into their own personal strengths. Porter and Rumbault (1996) and Mostofi (2003) argued that Iranians' ability to move up the socioeconomic ladder was credited to their ability to "act white" (p. 693) and embrace the perceived American culture in the public sphere, while maintaining their Iranian identity within the private domain of their home and among their trusted family and friends. Finally, Youssef and Luthans (2003) showed that because immigrants can better understand different cultures and adopt a multicultural problem-solving approach, they were better prepared to overcome the business challenges of a culturally diverse and global marketplace.

Even if education were not the theme most often cited by the survey participants, other studies showed that Iranian Americans tend to "put a great deal of value on education, more than on other aspects of life" (Brin, 2004, p. 3) and "see education as an asset that can last throughout their lifetimes" (p. 3). Education was found to be a critical factor associated with immigrants' positive adaptation as well as a way of lowering stress (Alkhazraji & Gardner, 1997; Askari, 2003). According to Askari, the relationship between stress and education exists because: (a) education is a personal resource because problem analysis and problem-solving skills are usually instilled by formal education and contribute to better adaptation, and (b) education is correlated with other resources such as income and support network, all of which are protective factors. Luthans et al. (2007) showed that, knowledge, skills, and education that are greatly valued in the host country were critical factors to the success of immigrant entrepreneurs. Thomas and Gabarro (1999) showed that preprofessional experience, including family, education, and early exposure to a multiracial environment, as well as the challenges encountered within the early stages of career development, provided ethnic minority managers with the essential personal resources needed to succeed in their professional life. According to the authors, ethnic minority managers were more likely than their Caucasian peers to acknowledge the importance of their education and continuous improvement of skills and knowledge as instruments of their professional success. In addition, ethnic minority managers were found to emphasize more strongly the role that their families played in their success, as compared to White managers. Respondents reported that their parents served as role models, taught them the importance of hard work and ethics, and instilled in them inspiration and drive.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

By exploring the success strategies of Iranian American leaders, this study contributes to the acknowledgement of the contribution of Iranian Americans to U.S society and helps fill the literature gap that exists, chronicling success stories of the Iranian minority in America. This study showed that Iranian-born leaders who demonstrated exceptional success in the United States possess some of the personality traits identified by the GLOBE researchers as universal contributors to outstanding leadership. These

include honest, trustworthy, optimistic, visionary, communicative, and team builder. Other attributes, such as persistence, drive, commitment, and self-confidence identified among Iranian American leaders were also found in the profile of effective American leaders. This study revealed some similarities between Iranian American leaders and foreign-born leaders of other ethnic origins with respect to the success strategies deployed to overcome the daunting challenges of starting a new life in a developed Western nation. The findings demonstrated how self-confidence efficacy, self-discovery, hope, resiliency, education, social skills, and multicultural skills play a critical role in the success of Iranian American leaders.

Future research should attempt to determine whether the success of Iranian American leaders can also be attributable to some culturally contingent leadership characteristics identified among effective Iranian leaders, such as family orientation and humility. If such case, future studies should investigate how some leadership attributes positively endorsed in Iran might appeal to the American workforce. Another direction for further research could be to investigate how the second generation of successful Iranian American leaders compares with the first generation, in an attempt to measure how the experience of living in a Western society has impacted the Iranian American leadership style.

This study provides American youth of Iranian origin with role models and a sense of respect for their heritage. Documenting the success of Iranian-born leaders in numerous business spheres can significantly help future generations of Iranian Americans become more comfortable with their ethnic identity, inspire them to take on similar challenges, and motivate them to maximize their talents and abilities. For those hoping to become corporate, academic, or political leaders, practical solutions to overcoming cultural, social, and work-related challenges are addressed. Despite the growing recognition among Iranian American leaders about the importance of getting involved in civic life and using their collective voice to influence U.S. foreign policy regarding Iran, the researchers believe that more should be done to address the needs of Iranian American immigrants and create positive change among the young generation. Successful Iranian Americans should take a proactive role in establishing a community that would enable Iranians of all ethnic backgrounds to celebrate their heritage and provide new Iranian immigrants with the social support they need. Iranian Americans should also develop stronger ties with U.S.-born citizens and other ethnic minority groups in order to become more familiar with the cultures that make up American society and overturn the cultural and religious stereotypes they experience.

With the ongoing globalization of the world's economy, many organizations have committed to pursuing cultural diversification as part of their business strategy. In order to attract, hire, and retain employees who can navigate between cultures and use a bicultural perspective to solve problems, it is critical that corporate leaders develop a better understanding of the unique needs, challenges, success factors, and leadership styles of ethnic minority employees. It is also the responsibility of business leaders to create a work environment and an organizational culture that are conducive to the development of ethnic minority leaders and their advancement to upper-management positions. This study provides insights to CEOs, managers, and human resources professionals seeking to manage successfully a culturally diverse workforce. The researchers believe that the findings could be used in the design of cross-cultural training and leadership development programs to educate employees at all levels about the unique challenges ethnic minority groups face and the factors that contribute to their career success.

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