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Employee Empowerment: The Impact of Organizational Culture in Egypt

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ABSTRACT: This research aims to assess the employees' perception of their leaders'/managers' empowering behavior. It also aims to test the relationship between organizational culture and employee empowerment in a selection of Egyptian companies. It uses a sample of 331 employees, working for different Engineering, Electronic, and Electric industrial organizations, located in Al-Ahram, and Al-Giza industrial zones, Giza, Egypt. It was found that Egyptian employees' perception of their leaders' empowering behavior is very weak. It was also found that there is a significant positive relationship between the employees' perception of their leaders' empowering behavior and "doing orientation " and "collectivism" dimensions of culture. Finally, it was found that there is a significant negative relationship between the employees' perception of their leaders' empowering behavior and the "power distance " dimension of culture. It is recommended that if an organization is attempting to implement and enhance its employees' perception of empowerment it has to study carefully its culture to foresee its potential impact on empowerment efforts.

Introduction:

Managers are expected to help their organizations achieve its objectives effectively and efficiently through people, hence; the issue of the manager-employee relationship becomes of considerable importance to the organizations. Efficiency refers to the resource usage, and it is commonly accepted that people are one of the key resources that organizations utilize, accordingly; to efficiently use its human resource organizations need to depend on managers who are ready, willing, and able to make use of both the physical and mental abilities of their employees. Moreover, it is widely accepted that skillful managers usually possess four skills: (1) conceptual; (2) human; (3) technical; and (4) political (Robbins and De Cenzo, 2008). Human skill refers to the manager's ability to treat people (employees) as a human being and as an asset not a liability. One of the key concepts that may reflect the human skill of the manager as well as the nature and strength of the manager-employee relationship is the manager's empowering behavior.

Finally, it seems that it is not possible to answer the question of "to empower or not" without discussing the issue of the organizational culture, as it is believed that culture is one of the main factors that may affect the manager's attitude toward empowerment as well as the employees' perception of their managers' empowering behavior.

Hence; this research aims to assess the employees' perception of their managers' empowering behavior as well as it aims to test the relationship between organizational culture; using the "doing orientation", "collectivism", and "power distance" dimensions of culture, and employees' perception of empowerment in a selection of Egyptian industrial companies.

Theoretical Background:

Employee Empowerment

Empowerment has recently become one of the most celebrated managerial remedies, as the dynamic business environment has been forcing organizations to modify their traditional management techniques (Hancer and George, 2003; (jal-Or and Amit, 1998). "'In today's competitive, global business environment, managers and employees are held accountable tor customer satisfaction and organizational performance. Amid the increased focus on customer service and satisfaction, companies worldwide have expanded their customer-contact employees with the hopes of improving levels of service" (Rapp, Ahearne. Mathieu, and Schillewaert. 2006: 279). With this growth in employees, many firms have examined different management styles to improve organizational effectiveness and meet customer needs (Babakus, Cravens, Johnston, and Moncrief, 1996). However, some practitioners and researchers have noted that failures to meet customers" needs often occur because employees that were the real contact point between the business and its customers were not empowered to make decisions or act to fulfill customers' needs (Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Consequently, many organizations have welcomed the notion of empowering employees which will enable them to be more adaptive and responsive to customers' needs and thereby become more efficient and effective. Ihe concept of empowerment has been defined differently. It has been defined as intrinsic task motivation (e.g.. Conger and Kanungo. 1988; Ihomas and Velthouse. 1990) or motivation relleclive of the person environment fit (Zimmerman. 1990).

Other scholars have defined empowerment as perceptions (Parker and Price. 1994) and as commiimeni-based designs (Spreit/.er. 1996). It has also been defined in terms of job structure the transfer of power or authority (e.g., Burke. 1986; Kanter. 1977) and/or job support structures such as the sharing of resources and information (e.g., Blau and Alba, 1982; Hardy and I.eiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). Empowerment has also been described as dependent on management or leadership actions (e.g., Bennis and Nanus. 1985; Block, 1987) and human resource practices such as training programs or reward systems (e.g.. Conger and Kanungo. 1988; Lawler, 1986). It has also been used with reference to behavioral or performance-related outcomes (e.g.. Zimmerman. 1990).

One of the most frequently used definitions of empowerment has been offered by Conger and Kanungo (1988) who define empowerment as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness, and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information. This definition implies strengthening the effort-to-performance expectancy or increasing employee feeling of self-efficacy (Ugboro and Obeng, 2000). Bowen and Lawler (1992) have developed a more operational-level and process-oriented definition of empowerment. They define empowerment as sharing with front-line employees' information about an organization's performance, information about rewards based on the organization's performance, knowledge that enables employees to understand and contribute to organizational performance, and giving employees the power to make decisions that influence organizational direction and performance. Zemke and Schaaf (1989) define empowerment as turning the front-line loose, and encouraging and rewarding employees to exercise initiative and imagination. According to Menon (2001), employee empowerment can be classified into three major categories: (1) an act: the act of granting power to persons being empowered; (2) a process: the process that leads to the experience of power; and (3) a psychological state that manifests itself as cognitions that can be measured. To "empower", argue Littrell (2007), means to enable, to allow or to permit, and can be conceived as both self-initiated and initiated by others; hence;

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empowerment is the process of enabling employees to set their own work-related goals, make decisions and solve problems within their spheres of responsibility and authority.

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) conceptualize empowerment as a set of four task assessments or cognitions that individuals make as they attempt to interpret their work situation. (1) Meaning: is described as the value of a work'goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own standards or ideals. Meaning involves a comparison between the requirements of a work role and an individual's beliefs and values such that the individual perceives the task to be of value to him/herself. (2) Impact: is the degree to which an individual feels he/she can influence outcomes at work (Ashforfh, 1989). Impact is assessed as a belief that one can influence others' work and decisions at all levels. (3) Competence: is an individual's belief in his/her ability to perform activities with skill (Gist, 1987). Competent individuals feel that they can master their tasks and know that they can perform if they exert effort. (4) Choice: implies that individuals have autonomy in making decisions about beginning and changing work behaviors (Deci, Connell, and Ryan, 1989), or that they have a sense of personal control over their immediate work situation (Greenberg and Strasser, 1991).

The varied empowerment definitions and approaches have made it difficult to compare and integrate empirical findings across empowerment studies (Robbins, Crino, and Fredendall, 2002). One of the main disadvantages of having these varied empowerment definitions and approaches is the lack of an agreed upon definition and terminology (Lashley, 1996). For instance, much of the literature on employee empowerment interchanges terms of employee involvement (Cotton, 1993), and employee participation (Plunkett and Fournier, 1991) with employee empowerment without defining the similarities and differences between them (Lashley, 1996). Robbins et al., (2002) added "Fundamental to this lack of common definitions is a belief that empowerment is a single, easily defined construct, when, in fact, empowerment is an on-going process, taking place in a dynamic environment, involving many elements that operate at different levels of analysis. Much of the work in this field has focused on only portions of the overall empowerment process, viewing each in isolation and consequently providing an incomplete picture of the dynamics of the process" (p. 420).

Antecedents and Outcomes of Employee Empowerment

Antecedents and outcomes of empowerment were explored by many researchers. For example, Corsun and Enz (1999) found that when peer helping and customer supportive relationship exist, employees feel more empowered. Lashley and McGoldrick (1994) indicate that in terms of the hospitality industry, human resource management strategies, such as competition through service quality, have been associated with employee empowerment. It was also indicated that hospitality businesses shouldjchoose forms of empowerment according to their organizations' culture, their perceptions of organizational needs, and the definitions of empowerment. Reorganization and its impact on empowerment were further studied by Ashness and Lashley (1995). In these works, the need for strong orientation and programs communicating the i reasons of empowerment and change were emphasized. Lashley (1999) emphasized that there ! was not a standardized empowerment program that can be used for a certain type of organization. A framework analysis based upon a number of key dimensions was needed before implementing an empowerment program. Luthans (1992) suggests the following ways in which management can empower employees:

- Express confidence in employees' abilities.
- Hold high expectations concerning their performance. [v]
- Allow employees to participate in the decision-making process.

- Allow employees freedom and autonomy in how they perform their jobs.
- Set inspirational or managerial goals for employees
- Use position power in a prudent.and positive way and limit the use of coercive power.

Moreover, a 12-country study by Bass. Burger, Doklor. and Barrett (1979) revealed that managers from all countries indicated a desire to get work done while using less authority; that is, they desire to successfully "empower" employees. Smith and Peterson (1994) found that managers in 25 countries representing a wide variety of cultures report satisfaction with events for which they were delegated substantial discretion. That is, they desire "empowerment" themselves.

Empowering includes delegating and providing more autonomy and discretion to subordinates than exists at the moment. F.mpowennent is a distinct form of leadership (Leana, 1987; Yukl and Ku, 1999). Initial phases of effective leadership arc establishing credibility with followers (and in some circumstances, superiors), motivating followers, and mobilizing follower motivation (Chemers. 2000). Once a leader has established credibility and mobilized follower motivation, the resultant energies, knowledge, skills, and material resources must be harnessed and directed to achieve success in the group's mission.

Organic structure, organizational support, access to strategic information, access to organizational resources, and organizational culture are identified ;is social structural antecedents of psychological empowerment (Hancer and George, 2003).

As far as the outcomes of employee empowerment are concerned, management practitioners report numerous benefits of employee empowerment linpowerment can help companies keep their best people by giving them better training, more responsibility, and a greater role in determining their firm's destiny (Gal-Or and Amit. 1998) Ffficiencs and productivity increases, restoration of individual and corporate vitality, quality improvements, and an ability to respond taster to changes in the market place are also thought to be outcomes *ol~* an empowerment culture in a corporation (Baukol, 1991; Bowen and Lawler, 1992; I'rey, 1993, 1994; Nelson, 1994; l'reece, 1994; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996). Empowerment has been perceived as a relational construct (e.g., Pfeffcr. 1981; I.idcn and Tewksbury. 1995). and as a motivational construct (e.g., McClelland, 1975), hence; some potential advantages that may emerge from sharing power (or authority) over organizational resources were pointed to. It is suggested that empowerment enhances the manager's personal efficacy by making him/her feel more powerful (Thomas and Velthousc, 1990; Liden and Arad, 1996; Fylon, 1998). To take advantage of information that is dispersed throughout an organization, principals must either elicit this information through costly communication, or delegate decision making. However, delegation creates opportunities for managers to appropriate informational rents by withholding information from the owners who make resource allocation decisions (Melumad, Mookherjee, and Reichelstein, 1992). Innovation, upward influence, and self and managerial effectiveness are identified as the behavioral outcomes of empowerment (Hancer and George, 2003).

Moreover, employee empowerment receives wide recognition as an important subject in management practices for several reasons (Ergeneli, Ari, and Metin, 2007). First, personnel empowerment is one of the fundamental elements of managerial and organizational effectiveness and that effectiveness increases when power and control are shared (Keller and Dansereau, 1995). Second, empowerment has been reported to be a facilitating factor in responding to environmental changes at the right time, such as meeting customer demands on time and increasing their satisfaction. Bowen and Lawler (1992: 33-34) stress that "empowered employees become a great source of service ideas. Empowered employees not only respond to customer needs directly during service delivery but also deal with dissatisfied customers during

service recovery". Bowen and Lawler consider employees' increased job satisfaction, warmer and more enthusiastic interaction with customers and customer retention through word-of- mouth advertisement as the major benefits of personnel empowerment. The third reason is the expected beneficial results of personnel empowerment, which in some studies have shown increases in higher customer satisfaction, fewer customer complaints, sales and profit, cost reduction, increased effectiveness, higher numbers of customers, increased loyalty to the organization, effective problem solving (as well as problem prevention) and increased coordination between functions (e.g., Spreitzer, 1995; Fulford and Enz, 1995; Klagge, 1998; D'anunzio and McAndrew, 1999; Siegal and Gardner, 2000; Sigler and Pearson, 2000; Niehoff, Moorman, Blakely, Fuller, 2001; Alan and Sashkin, 2002).

Finally, Herzberg (1968) spoke for Elton Mayo, Frederick Herzberg, Rensis Likert and Douglas McGregor when he said: "The primary function of any organization, whether religious, political or industrial, should be to implement the needs of men to enjoy a meaningful existence" (quoted in Mumford, 1995: 66). A meaningful existence means providing freedom in work, opportunities for personal development, and the treatment of employees as partners rather than subordinates, sowing the seeds of today's "empowerment" of employees.

Organizational Culture

Culture may be defined as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the member of one category of people from others (Hofstede, 1991). This definition applies to organizations as well as to nations, professions and generations. Organizational culture is the collective unconscious feeling of individuals in an organization about good or evil, normality or abnormality. As such these value systems form a frame of reference for all kinds of daily routines, behavior and practices and for passing judgment on persons' actions and objectives. It thus shapes what people in an organization do. It controls the daily routines and daily execution of operational tasks. The shared values and assumptions guide behavior in an organization. Schein (1992) developed a detailed description of specific shared assumptions that evolve in organizations. These assumptions concern the nature of reality, truth, time, space, human nature, human activity, and human relationships.

Assumptions about the nature of reality and truth define what is real and what is not in a culture. An organization may determine what is real by using the results of a scientific study, by debate and conflict, or by asking an authority figure. To the extent that there is consensus on this issue, it is a characteristic of the culture.

Assumptions about the nature of time include how time is defined and measured, how many kinds of time there are, and the importance of time. Time may be considered either monochrome (where only one task can be accomplished at a time) or polychrome (where several tasks can be done simultaneously). A manager working on monochrome time would schedule private meetings with employees while a manager who views time as polychronic may work on a report, answer the phone, and address other employee's concerns during a meeting.

Assumptions about the nature of space may also be used to describe the culture of an organization. In some organizations, the size of one's office indicates power and status. In other organizations, employees may share one large open space as compared to distinct individual offices.

Another basic assumption of cultures has to do with the nature of human nature. An organization may hold assumptions about whether humans are basically good, evil, or neutral and develop policies and procedures in response to these assumptions. Tight managerial controls may

develop in an organization that assumes humans are inherently evil while participative management techniques may emerge when people are believed to be good.

Assumptions about the nature of human activity inform organization members of the right way to relate to the environment. Employees may assume that the environment can be controlled and take steps to change it, or they may assume that nature is all-powerful and resign themselves to responding to whatever happens. This assumption may translate to the organizational level where the group views itself as either able to dominate and change its environment or defenseless in the face of environmental forces.

Assumptions about the nature of human relationships influence the way people relate to one another in order to make the group safe and productive. Organizational members must determine how to deal with issues of power, influence, and peer relationships. These assumptions inform decisions about the level of employee participation that is appropriate and the extent to which the organization focuses on individual or group achievements.

Building on the work of Schein (1992), it is proposed that organizational culture is particularly important lo organizations that are attempting to influence employees' perceptions of empowerment. Employees learn from experience how to act and how to relate lo others in their organization.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Maznevski and DiStefano (1995), Hofslede (1980). And Schein (1992) developed a more precise and simple description of specific shared assumptions thai evolve in organizations.

(1) Assumptions about the appropriate way for humans (and groups) to act in relation to their environment, which can be described by looking at what is called (he doing orientation". Levels of appropriate human activity (Kluckhohn and Strodlbeck. 1961) can range from "doing" to "being." Individuals with a doing orientation take for granted that the proper thing for people to do is to take charge and actively control their environment; those with a being orientation focus on the present, enjoyment, and accepting whatever comes their way (Schein, 1992).

(2) Assumptions about relationships which can be examined through measures of "collectivism" and "power distance" (llofstede 1980; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961; Maznevski and DiStefano, 1995; Schein. 1992). Whereas a collective culture favors interdependence and loyalty to one's family or group, an individualistic culture stresses independence and individual initiative. A tight social framework in which people expeel others in their groups to look after them and protect them when they are in trouble characterizes collectivist cultures. Individualistic cultures are more loosely knit social frameworks in which people are expected to look after their own interests.

The power distance (Hofstede, 1980), on the other hand, refers to the extent to which culture members accept an unequal distribution of power. A culture characterized by high power distance accepts wider differences in power, and employees are expected to show a great deal of respect for those in authority. In contrast, a culture of low power distance plays down inequalities as much as possible. Efforts to minimize differences between employees and managers should support empowerment efforts by making everyone seem equally valued by the organization. For the sake of this research the precise and simple description of specific shared assumptions developed by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Maznevski and DiStefano (1995), Hofstede(1980), and Schein (1992) is adopted.

Employee Empowerment: The Impact of the Egyptian Culture:

The historical, social, and geographical features of the Egyptian society indicate signs of centralization of power and high power distance, collective, and being oriented culture.

Historically, Egypt has been described as being highly centralized, with the nationalization of major economic activities. Bureaucrats from the government were appointed to manage public organizations. They tended to emphasize centralized decision making, management by extensive procedures and red tape. All public organizations were controlled by holding companies, groups of which were allocated to ministries. These ministries and holding companies made decisions regarding investment, production, pricing and employment. Very little was left to the actual managers. This shows how centralized the government in Egypt was after nationalization, and the extent of position power in the Egyptian environment (Zahra, 1983). In the past, all of the authority was in the hands of the pharaoh, and the Wali, and nowadays it is in the hands of the president (Ayubi, 1980, 1989).

Hofstede's (1990) findings classified Arab countries, including Egypt, as high power distance countries. Egyptian managers, in a high power distance culture (Hofstede, 1980), are unlikely to find it easy to delegate authority, or to be flexible in executing decisions or to respond well to criticism.

Finally, Arab organizations, including Egyptian organizations, are centrally controlled with a low level of delegation, i.e. the power to decide is centralized and rarely delegated. The opportunities for lower-level managers to bear responsibilities and initiative can be restricted. So too can the opportunities for those at the top to appreciate what is happening below. And in as much as both those below and those above have a personalized concept of power, failures are blamed on the head of the organization personally and the solution is seen in his removal as much as in an analysis of what is wrong. Subordinates in Arab organizations act with deference and obedience in the formal hierarchy of authority. Authoritarian management style is predominant in Arab organizations. Decision-making is constantly pushed upwards in the organization. There is an absence of Western-style democratic systems in the decision-making process. Organization members are motivated by affiliation and power needs rather than by performance objectives (Hickson and Pugh, 1995). Atiyah (1992) concluded that the main features of organizations and management in Arab countries are over centralization and emphasis on control.

From an investigation in 31 Egyptian State owned organizations, Badran and Hinings (1981) found that these organizations are highly structured and highly centralized. From Another study of 825 Egyptian public employees, Palmer, Yassin, and Leila (1985) found that Egyptian officials attempted to concentrate as much authority as possible in their hands and they tended to resist the delegation of authority. They considered three themes, the first was historical in nature, the second stressed the patriarchal nature of the Egyptian culture, and the third theme considered centralization as motivated by personal concerns of power. According to Hofstede (1980) Arab countries such as Egypt are characterized by high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. Hickson and Pugh (1995) wonderfully described the Arab culture as having two paradoxes, first Arabs are disposed to handle authority with high power distance, yet at the same time they aspire to an open door for all comers. Secondly, they pursue their own individual interests yet do so by collectivistic means through personal relationships (Hickson and Pugh, 1995:195-196).

Although centralization of power seems to be a dominant factor of the Egyptian culture, recent researches show a trend towards participation, as a way of sharing decision making. For instance, Parnell and Hatem (1999) compared the Egyptian and American management styles. The study was conducted at the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt. The Egyptian sample reflected the desire for participative style of leadership. Atiyah (1992) concluded that the main features of organizations and management in Arab countries are over centralization and emphasis on control. However, he noticed that the results with respect to leadership styles of Arab managers are conflicting. Some follow an authoritarian style, which could be linked to the

traditional leader in Arab societies, while others follow a consultative style. To conclude, it was found that some researchers identified the existence of concentration of power as a main dominant factor controlling public organizations in Egypt and therefore conclude that it has a wide impact on leadership (Palmer et al., 1985; Badran and Minings, 1981; Kabasakal and Bodour, 2002) while others referred to the existence of participation for Egyptian leadership styles (Parnell and Hatem, 1999).

As far as collectivism is concerned, it refers to the concern for the priorities and rules of the group to which he or she belongs, but on the contrary, individualism is a concern for oneself (Hofstede, 1980). Arab countries, including Egypt, report a low score on this dimension, they arc collectivist. The low individualism (high collectivism) cultures have the following features:

- Involvement of individuals with organisations primarily moral.
- Employees expect their organisations to look after them like family - and can become very alienated or unstable if the organisation dissatisfies them.
- Organisation has great influence on members' wcllbcing.
- Employees expect their organisation to defend their interests
- Promotion is from inside and is based on seniority.
- Less concern with fashion in management ideas.
- Policies and practices vary according to relations.
- Belief in group decisions.
- Emphasis on belonging to organisation; membership ideal.
- Organisations and clans/groups to which the individuals belong invade private life; opinions are predetermined.

In Egypt family members have very close relationships. The father or grandfather has complete authority over members of his family and the final word for any discussion is usually his. Members of the family are integrated and look after each other (Hopwood, 1993). People in Egypt fear loneliness they usually like to be integrated with each other. Saying no is something hated by Egyptians and saving face is of great importance for them (Middle East Times, 1996).

Finally, geographically, Egypt as a society in which people's lives depend on the water, cooperation and coordination among people is noticeable as water has to be shared and has to irrigate the land, at the same time this life leads to concentration of power (Hopwood, 1993).

To conclude, the historical, social, and geographical features of the Egyptian culture indicate that Egyptian organizational culture is expected to be being oriented, collective, and high power distanced.

Research Hypotheses:

Based on the previous theoretical background, this research aims to test the following hypotheses:

H1. Egyptian employees' perception of their leaders' empowering behaviors is very weak.

H2: Employees' perception of empowerment is positively related to perceptions of a doing orientation in the organizational culture.

H3: Employees' perception of empowerment is positively related to perceptions of collectivism in the organizational culture.

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H4: Employees' perception of empowerment is negatively related to perceptions of power distance.

Research Objectives:

This research aims to assess the perceived employees' perception of their leaders' empowering behavior among a sample of Egyptian employees. It aims also to test the relationship between empowerment and the "doing orientation"; "collectivism"; and "power distance" dimensions of culture. It uses a sample of 331 employees, working for different Engineering, Electronic, and Electric industrial organizations, located in Al-Ahram, and Al-Giza industrial zones, Uiza, Egypt.

Methodology:

Sample:

This research aims to survey a selection of employees working for different Engineering, Electronic, and Electric industrial organizations, located in Al-Ahram, and Al-Giza industrial zones, Giza, Egypt. As the population size has reached approximately 2400 elements (Industrial Development Authority, Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2010), the calculated sample size is 331 subjects/employees (Sekaran, 2003: 294). The gender composition of the sample was 80% male (N = 265) and 15% female (N - 66).

Measures:

All constructs were measured with existing scales. All scales were 5 point Likerl and anchored with I - strongly disagree and 5 - strongly agree. *Perceived Employee Empowerment*
Leader empowering behaviors were assessed using a twelve item scale that focused on (a) enhancing the meaningfulness of work (3 items, a - 0.84), (b) fostering participation in decision making (3 items, a = 0.81), (c) expressing confidence in high performance (3 items, u ^ 0.86), and (d) providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints (3 items, a = 0.82). This scale was developed on the basis of the conceptual work of Conger and Kanungo (1988) and the empirical work of Ahearne, Mathicu, and Rapp (2005) and Thomas and Tymon (1994) (Rapp et al., 2006). In the current research the calculated alpha for the perceived employee empowerment scale is 0.80.

Organizational Culture

"Doing orientation", "collectivism", and "power distance" are the three dimensions of organizational culture that were examined in this research:. For each scale, surveyed employees were asked the extent to which they believed most employees in the organization would agree or disagree with each statement. All organizational culture scales were taken from Maznevski and DiStefano (1995) (Sigler and Pearson, 2000), who developed items specifically to measure the orientations described first by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961): "doing orientation" items were chosen from their "activity-doing" scale (reliability ranging from 0.66 to 0.77); "collectivism" items were chosen from their "relational-collective" scale (reliability ranging from 0.58 to 0.73); "power distance" items were chosen from their "relational-hierarchical" scale (reliability ranging from 0.67 to 0.82).The six items from each scale that had the highest loadings on the factor analyses in Maznevski and DiStefano (1995) and that were easiest for respondents to read and comprehend were chosen.

In this research, the calculated alpha for the perceived "doing orientation", "collectivism", and "power distance" scales are 0.86, 0.79, and 0.87 respectively.

Data analysis and results:

Means and standard deviations of the 331 surveyed employees were calculated. Table (1) presents the calculated means and standard deviations of the perceived leaders' empowering behavior and "doing orientation", "collectivism", and "power distance" dimensions of culture.

Table (1): Empowerment and Culture: Means & SDs

	Empowerment	Doing Culture	Collectivism	Power Distance
Mean	14.27	8.60	7.41	25.62
SD	3.26	3.69	2.66	4.08

As far as the first research hypothesis is concerned, Table (1) shows that the sample mean of the perceived leaders' empowering behavior tends toward its lowest score (12.0), and the standard deviation is not considerable (3.26), which may mean that there is no dispersion among the surveyed employees' perception of their leaders' empowering behavior, hence; the first research hypothesis which states that "Egyptian employees' perception of their leaders' empowering behaviors is very weak" is accepted.

Moreover, the "doing orientation" mean tends towards its lowest score (6.0), and the standard deviation is not considerable (3.69), which may mean that surveyed employees believe that one of the main features of their organizational culture is that it is a "being orientation" and not a "doing orientation".

The surveyed employees also believe that they are working in an "individualistic" and not a "collective" organizational culture, as the "collectivism" mean tends towards the lowest score (6.0), and the standard deviation is also not considerable (2.66).

Finally, the "power distance" mean tends towards its highest score (30.0), and the standard deviation is not considerable (4.08), which may mean that surveyed employees believe that one of the main features that characterizes their organizational culture is the high "power distance".

As far as the second, the third, and the fourth research hypotheses are concerned, the correlation coefficients were calculated and the multiple regression analysis was used. Table (2) shows that there are positive relationships between perceived leaders' empowering behavior and 'doing orientation" and "collectivism" dimensions of culture, (Spearman's *rho* -0.740 and 0.644 respectively), and these relationships are significant at the 0.01 level *(p < 0.01)*. Hence; the second research hypothesis which states that "Employees' perception of empowerment is positively related to perceptions of a doing orientation in the organizational culture", and the third research hypothesis v/hich states that "Employees' perception of empowerment is positively related to perceptions of collectivism in the organizational culture" are accepted.

Table (2) shows also that there is a negative relationship between perceived leaders' empowering behavior and "power distance" dimension of culture (Spearman's *rho = -* CT.253),

and this correlation is significant at the 0.01 level *(p < 0.01)*. Hence; the fourth research hypothesis which states that "Employees' perception of empowerment is negatively related to perceptions of power distance" is accepted.

Table (2): Correlation Coefficients (Spearman's *rho*)

		Doing Culture	**Collectivism**	**Power Distance**
Perceived Empowerment Behavior	*rho*	0.740**	0.644**	-0.253**
Significance Level		.000	.000	.000

♦♦Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Moreover, although in understanding the relationships between two or more variables the correlation coefficients can be used to determine how strong the relationship between two variables is, one step further is taken by using the multiple regression analysis to analyze the relationship between two or more independent variables (doing orientation, collectivism, and power distance dimensions of culture) with one dependent variable (perceived leaders' empowering behavior) (Black. 2008).

When the multiple regression analysis was used, the findings support that perceived leaders' empowering behavior can be predicted by "doing orientation", "collectivism" *(p - 0.01)*. and "power distance" *{p < 0.05)* dimensions of culture, hence; the second, the third, and the fourth research hypotheses were supported.

Discussion:

The first research hypothesis asserted a weak level of perceived leaders' empowering behavior. and was derived from much of the earlier work referred to in the earlier sections of this research. In general, earlier work suggests that the authoritarian style of management which is the dominant style among Egyptian managers/leaders does not support the availability of a high level of empowerment.

Testing the second research hypothesis asserted a significant positive relationship between perceived leaders' empowering behavior and the "doing orientation" dimension of culture, and was derived from much of the earlier work referred to in the earlier sections of this research. Generally speaking, earlier work suggests that when the organizational culture is described as "doing oriented" and not "being oriented", employees' perception of their leaders' empowering behavior becomes strong or high. While in "being oriented" culture, the reverse becomes true. As I'ar as the Egyptian organizational culture is concerned, much of the earlier work supports that Egyptian organizational culture tends considerably toward the "being oriented" culture, which means that "doing orientation" culture is not dominant in the Egyptian organizations. There is no evidence to support the suggestion that no relationship exists between perceived leaders' empowering behavior and the "doing orientation" dimension of organizational culture.

The third research hypothesis states that "Employees' perception of empowerment is positively related to perceptions of collectivism in the organizational culture". This hypothesis was developed based on a considerable number of previous researches mentioned in the earlier

sections of this research. One of the main features of collective organizational cultures is the belief in group decisions, which plays a central role in enhancing the perception of their manager's empowering behaviour. This feature has to be treated with caution when discussing the case of the Egyptian organizations, as employees are also expecting their organization to defend their interests; organisations and clans/groups to which the employees belong invade private life; opinions are predetermined; and organizations have great influence on members' wellbeing. The findings of this research concerning the "collectivism" dimension of culture in Egypt are not supported by the majority of previous research, as in most of the previous research, Egyptian culture was described as collective not individualistic. From the researcher's point of view some critical changes have occurred in the Egyptian society that may have led to the shift from collectivism to individualism. For instance, involvement of Egyptian employees with their organisations tends not to be moral, and Egyptian employees start to defend their interests instead of waiting for their organizations to defend it. Moreover, promotion, especially in private and multinational organizations working in the Egyptian market, tends to be based on merit or performance/efficiency but not on seniority. These changes may justify the low scoring of the surveyed employees on the "collectivism" dimension of organizational culture, which may mean that the surveyed employees report that their organizational culture tends to be individualistic not collective.

Finally, the fourth research hypothesis asserted that "Employees' perception of empowerment is negatively related to perceptions of power distance", and was derived from much of the earlier work referred to in the earlier sections of this research. In high power distance cultures, managers are unlikely to find it easy to delegate authority, or to be flexible in executing decisions or to respond well to criticism. In such cultures employees are asked to follow orders and to implement decisions and not to do or make decisions or even to participate in decision making, which may mean that such managers are not willing to empower their followers, hence; employees in high power distance cultures perceive their managers' empowering behaviour negatively. There is no evidence to support the suggestion that no relationship exists between perceived leaders' empowering behavior and the "power distance" dimension of organizational culture.

Conclusion:

The main conclusion to be made here is that the degree of employee empowerment available to the surveyed Egyptian employees is very weak. This weak level of perceived employee empowerment could be due to some of the main characteristics of the Egyptian organizational culture. The main characteristics here are the "doing orientation", "collectivism", and "power distance". In being oriented and individualistic organizational cultures, the level of employee empowerment tends to be very weak/low, i.e. the relationship between "doing orientation", and "collectivism" dimensions of organizational culture and employee empowerment is positive. On the contrary, the relationship between "power distance" dimension of culture and employee empowerment tends to be negative, i.e. in high power distance cultures employees tend to negatively perceive their leaders' empowering behavior, as in such cultures it seems that managers/leaders do not pay attention to empowering their followers and the one man show style is extensively adopted.

Recommendation:

Based on the findings of this research some recommendations are offered. If an organization is attempting to implement and enhance its employees' perception of empowerment, it would be well recommended to study carefully its culture to foresee its potential impact on empowerment efforts. "Although it is clear that culture is not the sole determinant of what happens in organizations, it is an important influence on what they accomplish and how. Organizational culture has the potential to shape attitudes, reinforce beliefs, direct behavior, and establish performance expectations and motivation to fulfill them" (Schermerhorn, 2010: 71). The single most important factor in cultural change is the role of top management in providing commitment, leadership, and example for empowering employees.

Managers can create an organizational culture that supports empowerment as culture tends to be rooted in and transmitted through the behavior of organizational leaders. Organizational members interpret culture based on what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control and the ways that leaders react to critical incidents and crises (Schein, 1983). Specific actions managers can take include: creating formal statements of organizational philosophy that support the desired culture, role modeling desired behaviors and coaching others, developing explicit reward systems to support the new culture, and developing new criteria for recruiting and selecting members (Schein, 1983). Managers may also support cultural change by modifying existing rites or by developing new rites (Trice and Beyer, 1985).

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تمكين العاملين: أثر الثقافة التنظيمية في مصر

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مستخلص البحث

"تمكين العاملين: أثر الثقافة التنظيمية في مصر"

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تقييم إدراك عينة من الموظفين في بعض الشركات المصرية لسلوك مديريهم فيما يخص تمكين العاملين في العمل. كما يهدف كذلك إلى اختبار العلاقة بين الثقافة التنظيمية — بأبعادها الثلاثية — في مصر وبين تمكين العاملين في العينة المستقصاة.

ولقد اعتمد البحث على عينة مكونة من ٣٣١ مفردة تم تجميعها من شركات صناعية من قطاع الصناعات الهندسية والإلكترونية والكهربائية، وتعمل جميع هذه الشركات المستقصاة في منطقتي الأهرام والجيزة الواقعتين في محافظة الجيزة — جمهورية مصر العربية.

ولقد توصل البحث إلى مجموعة من النتائج أهمها:

أولاً: انخفاض مستوى تمكين العاملين المتاح للعاملين في الشركات المستقصاة.

ثانياً: وجود علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الثقافة التنظيمية — بأبعادها الثلاثة المستخدمة في هذا البحث —وبين مستوى تمكين العاملين المدرك من قبل عينة البحث.

وفي نهاية هذا البحث — وفي ضوء النتائج التي توصل إليها — تم تقديم بعض التوصيات، أهمها ضرورة قيام الشركات المصرية المستقصاة — في حالة رغبة هذه الشركات في رفع مستوى تمكين العاملين المدرك بين العاملين فيها — بدراسة الثقافة التنظيمية السائدة بعناية للتعرف على أثارها على الجهود المبذولة لتمكين العاملين.