# Culture and Leadership:

# Comparing Egypt to the GLOBE Study of 62 Societies

Eahab Elsaid, Ph.D
Assistant Professor of Finance
Odette School of Business
University of Windsor, Canada
E-mail: elsaid@uwindsor.ca

Abdel Moneim Elsaid, associate professor
Faculty of Commerce, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt
E-mail: drelsaid78@yahoo.com

Received: May 2, 2012 Accepted: May 17, 2012 Online Published: June 5, 2012
doi:10.5430/bmr.v1n2p1 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/bmr.v1n2p1

**Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to improve our understanding of the western conceptions of leadership in competition with emerging leadership paradigms in non-western societies. We examine the societal culture in Egypt using GLOBE's nine cultural attributes and dimensions. Paired sample t-tests were used to test for differences in the Egyptian data that was collected. The data was collected from 142 Egyptian middle managers from 19 organizations from 2008 to 2011. It was compared to the data collected as part of the GLOBE research project. The results showed that Egyptians are most interested in reducing the power distance and increasing the future orientation aspects of their societal culture.

**Keywords:** Egypt, Culture, Leadership, GLOBE, Middle East

## 1. Introduction

There has been a considerable growth of interest in societal culture and leadership in recent years even though there is no shortage of research on either topic. Numerous papers and books have been written on what they mean and why they are important (Alder, 1984; Alder et al., 1986; Bass, 1997; House et al., 1997; Javidian and House, 2002). These topics have been heavily researched because it is believed that tremendous benefits can be gained when leaders understand the reasons why certain practices and behaviors are successful. More importantly, tremendous benefits can be gained when leaders truly understand the differences in cultures across nations, and incorporate this understanding in their leadership styles (Dorfman et al., 1997; Dastmalchian et al., 2001; Gupta et al., 2002b; Javidian and Carl, 2004). The cross-cultural studies focus on the necessity of avoiding global generalizations and focusing on local cultures. This in turn, highlights the limits of the generalizability of assumptions regarding cultural norms, practices and effective leadership characteristics (Kabasakal and Dastmalchian, 2001).

Contemporary thinking has moved away from the simple notion that a global measure of leadership style could by itself account for any substantial amount of the variance in performance which varies from one country to the other. This research paper argues that in order to adequately understand a given leader's behavior that behavior must be examined both in terms of a general and a specific structural context across cultures. Most researchers, such as Misumi (1985, 1992); Misumi and Peterson (1985) and Smith et al., (1989) argue that there is a certain underlying universal structure to the way a leader's behavior is interpreted. On the other hand some researchers, such as Yukl (1989, 1998), Ardichvili, and Kuchinke (2002) and Grint (2005), argue that most, if not all, of the research on leadership during the past half century was conducted in the United States (US), Canada, and Western Europe which does not present an accurate and true indication of leadership worldwide.

Furthermore, Hofstede (1993) states that in a global perspective, the US management theories contain a number of idiosyncrasies not necessarily shared by managers elsewhere. Cross cultural psychological, sociological, and

anthropological research shows that many cultures do not share the same assumptions underlying leader behavior and style (Den Hartog et al., 1999; Gratchev, 2001; Peppas and Yu, 2009). As a result there is a growing need for a better understanding of the way in which leadership is enacted in various cultures and a need for an empirically grounded theory to explain differential leader behavior and effectiveness across cultures.

## 2. Western Conceptions of Leadership in Competition with Emerging Leadership Paradigms

At a fundamental level, literature on leadership has mainly been driven from and representing primarily Western cultural assumptions. Thus, the concept of leadership in its entirety is more than likely a western construct, which does not necessarily take into account other non-western constructs. Furthermore, leadership styles and theories developed in the western world assume that the rest of the world will abide by the same rules and concepts (Misumi, 1985, 1992; Smith et al., 1989). The argument is that human beings are similar all over the world, and by the same token, human behaviors ought to be similar in their leadership styles and concepts. The current study argues that this notion is flawed since different parts of the world have different concepts of leadership style and behavior (Yukl, 1998; Grint, 2005; Jamali and Mirshak, 2007).

There is an emerging tendency to conduct research on cross cultural aspects of Leadership (Abdalla and Al-Homoud, 2001; Dastmalchian et al., 2001; Ardichvili, and Kuchinke, 2002; Javidan and Carl, 2004). Much of that research has appeared to take for granted the cross cultural validity of the existence of the concept of leadership and leader style, and test the applicability of western forms of those concepts to foreign cultures and countries. This paper argues that much of the results and findings from such research are not very comprehensive since it does not take into account the variations of those concepts across the rest of the world.

Based on the previous argument, it should be considered that the universal concept of leadership style is not necessarily the one that has been developed in North America or the western world in general, but there could be other concepts of leadership style in other parts of the world (Bass, 1997; April and Hill, 2000; Gupta et al., 2002a; Peppas and Yu, 2009). In addition, it is doubtful that there exists a universal concept of leadership style. For example, if we assume that there is a concept of leadership style developed in a country such as Egypt. The Egyptian leaders will abide and believe in the concept of leadership style that has been developed and widely accepted across Egyptians rather than a leadership style that has been developed in the west, since they believe that the concept developed in Egypt is the one that best fits the Egyptian culture (Stoval, 1990; Magd and Curry, 2003; Rice, 2006a). As a result, leadership researchers should proceed with caution when attempting to examine leadership concepts across cultures and nations and try to avoid falling into the trap of the misconceived notion that a universal agreed upon and widely accepted western theory of leadership exists.

### *2.1 Dimensions of Culture*

In order for researchers to better understand how to conduct leadership research across culture, it is necessary to understand the dimensions of culture and be able to define culture in measurable terms. But, in order to understand the dimensions of culture, it needs to be defined first. According to Dimmock and Walker (2000), culture means "the values, customs, traditions, and ways of living which distinguish one group of people from another". This definition aligns with that of Hofstede (1991), who defines culture as "patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting underpinning the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another". In Hofstede's definition of culture, the collective programming of the mind refers to the shared beliefs, values, practices of a group of people, whether that group be a society, nation state, or organization.

In regard to the measurement of cultures, Hofstede (1991, 1994) advocates the development of cultural dimensions as ways of describing, measuring, and comparing cultures. Culture dimensions are defined as core axes around which significant sets of values, beliefs, and practices cluster (Dimmock and Walker, 2000). Furthermore, Hofstede took the position that culture dimensions are constructs that should not be reified. Hofstede further states that dimensions which aids in measuring culture do not exist. Those dimensions are merely tools for analysis which may or may not clarify a situation. In sum, neither Hofstede nor Dimmock and Walker provided a straight forward answer to the following question: *what are the culture dimensions that researchers should abide by when conducting their research on different cultures?*

We argue that there is no one true dimension of culture. The logic behind our argument is that there could be one tool as a measure of culture which could adequately determine a dimension in a certain instance, and fail to determine the same dimension in a different context. These confusions regarding cultural dimensions could easily lead to serious misconceptions among leadership researchers, and could hinder the findings that this study is attempting to provide.

### *2.2 Leadership and Culture in the Middle East*

In general, there is little research done on leadership across cultures in the Middle East. As a result, there is scarce knowledge on societal culture and leadership practices in the Middle East (Assaad and Arntz, 2005, Rice, 2006a). We argue that research which focuses on values, practices, and effective leadership attributes that are widely shared in Middle Eastern societies is needed in order to have a better understanding of how Middle Easterners view leader style and behavior theories. Often national boundaries are utilized to approximate societal culture and leadership preconceptions. This is not usually adequate in order to effectively examine the various behaviors of leadership in that part of the world. The reason is that cultures do extend beyond national and geographic boundaries (Kabasakal and Dastmalchian 2001). For example, the northern part of Egypt differs culturally from the southern part. By the same token, the southern part of Egypt is very similar to the northern part of Sudan, although Sudan is not in Egypt's geographical boundaries.

The findings of Kabasakal and Dastmalchian (2001) have important implications for both managers in organizations dealing with cross national business and academics developing theories. Those findings have shown that there are major similarities in the societal and organizational culture in Middle Eastern countries in general (Mostafa, 2005). Some of the similarities that they found can be explained by the common Islamic religion that most populations of these countries share (Swatrz, 1996; Tayeb, 1997; Hicks, 2002; Rice, 2006b). On the other hand, differences in languages, ethnic backgrounds, and economic and social institutions account for the differences in their cultures and implicit leadership theories as well. So, religion brings those countries together in some aspects, and language and ethnic background differentiates them in other aspects. These similarities and differences could produce conflicting results and findings if they are not thoroughly studied and examined. Nevertheless, it has been shown in Kabasakal and Dastmalchian (2001) that industry culture may have a stronger influence on expected behaviors and norms of leaders which may override the influence of organizational cultures (Dastmalchian et al., 2000). While the societies in the Middle East do not usually engage in future oriented behaviors such as planning and investing in the future, organizations have more future oriented practices which contradict the norms of their own societies (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007).

In line with organizational cultures, implicit leadership theories in non-western societies involve more performance and future orientation as well as other universal attributes such as charisma and supportive behavior (Bass, 1997; Javidian and Carl, 2004; Rice, 2006a). Organizational leaders are expected to be sensitive to local cultures and traditions yet at the same time become initiators of change. This combination could be quite challenging for leaders. Thus, training programs for managers in organizations and academics would increasingly need to involve a combination of universal cultural dimensions with culture specific manifestations of these attributes and local traditions in mind, which is by no means an easy task to accomplish (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007; Burke & El-Kot, 2010).

### *2.3 Conceptions of Culture Dimensions across Non-Western Societies*

Peters and Waterman (1982) argued that Middle Eastern cultures are considered to be strong and coherent because they are infused with a system of values, beliefs, and ideals that are well understood and adhered to by all members of society. These values and beliefs are reinforced by rituals and a rich mythology about past events in the history of their culture. The members of such cultures take extreme pride in their heritage and previous accomplishments. In order to develop adequate leadership style and behavior theories for this part of the world, these aspects should tie closely and be incorporated with those theories. Furthermore, Den Hartog et al., (1999) found several attributes of leadership style to be culturally contingent. As a result, in some countries a certain leader style or behavior is seen as contributing to outstanding leadership, whereas in other countries that same style or behavior is seen as impeding such leadership. In short, leader attributes can be universally endorsed as positive, negative, or be culturally contingent (Peppas and Yu, 2009).

Hofstede's dimensions of culture are uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity-femininity, individualism-collectivism, and future orientation. According to Hofstede's dimension of individualism versus collectivism, Egypt would be categorized as a collectivist society while North America would be categorized as an individualistic one. In a collectivist society, leaders tend to work in groups, and have a higher ordinal goal that they are working towards, while in an individualist society, leaders tend to work alone, and have a specific tangible material goal that they are working towards. Furthermore, according to Hofstede's dimension of masculinity versus femininity, Egypt and North America categorize as a masculine society. Thus, the two cultures of Egypt and North America are different in some aspects and similar in others. The similarity in some dimensions of culture and differences in others could lead to mixed and confusing results.

## 3. A Glance at Leader Style and Behavior in Egypt

Egyptians have traditionally viewed men as possessing the following characteristics: leading, independent, aggressive, and dominant. However, women were traditionally seen as passive, dependent, gentle, and responsible for household tasks (Baron, 1994; Mensch et al., 2003). Congruent with these traditional views, existing research conducted in Egypt (Amin and Al-Bassusi, 2002; El-Laithy, 2003) showed that throughout Egypt's history, women in particular, simply because of their sex, were discriminated against in the workplace and constrained to the roles of care givers, child bearers, and nurturers in their families (Burke and El-Kot, 2010). Egyptian women, once they became mothers, were pressured into leaving their jobs and becoming stay-at-home mothers (Mostafa, 2003). At the same time, men assumed the role of the bread winner and were responsible for providing food, shelter, clothing, and the rest of life's necessities for the women (Naguib and Lloyd, 1994; El-Ghannam, 2001, 2002; Riddle and Ayyagari, 2011).

As far as economic activities not based on the family unit were concerned, the norms and customs were that Egyptian women could only work as wage workers in agriculture and industry when their families were in need of their financial assistance (Amin and Al-Bassusi, 2002; Burke and El-Kot, 2010). As a result, women found themselves categorized as the "reserve army of labour" despite their recent advancement in the field of education (Japer, 2001; Riddle and Ayyagari, 2011). Al-Shaikh (2004) found that the participation of women in the labour force was less than 20% in the Arab world compared to 44% in industrialized countries. A 2005 study by the World Economic Forum attempting to assess the gender gap in 58 countries found that Egypt ranked last, number 58, in the extent that women have achieved equality with men in five critical areas: "economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, and health and well-being" (Lopez-Claros and Zahidi, 2005).

Historically, the Egyptian labour market has had glaring gender differentials (Evans-Klock and Lim, 1998). Egypt faced a low rate of labour force participation (45% in 2008) due to low involvement of women in the market economy and high unemployment of the educated labour force, particularly educated women (Nassar, 2010; Riddle and Aayyagari, 2011). The 1996 Egypt Human Resources Development Survey, which was carried out to document changes in labour demand and in the occupational distribution of employment, found that women accounted for only 13% of the total workforce covered in the survey (Evans-Klock and Lim, 1998). Between 1988 and 1998 the female participation rate in the labour force increased by 4% in Egypt (Assaad, 2002). In the late nineties, the share of women in the labour force, though still much lower compared with men, grew in employment requiring higher education (De Gobbi and Nesporova, 2005). In 2002, women in Egypt contributed 21.8 % of the total labour force (Abdel-Fattah, 2004). Over the past few years, Egyptian women have started to enter the labour force in large numbers (De Gobbi and Nesporova, 2005; Nassar, 2010). This influx of women into the labour force notwithstanding, Egypt still has one of the lowest wage labour participation rates for women in the world (Baron, 1994; El-Laithy, 2003; Elsaid & Elsaid, 2012). Recently, Egyptian women have been increasingly participating in the salaried labour force and are rising to managerial positions (Shami et al., 1990; Handoussa and El-Oraby, 2004; Omair, 2008; Burke and El-Kot, 2010). However, Abd El-Latif's (1988) study found that the Egyptian society has negative attitudes towards women in top managerial positions. Hence, at least hypothetically, both Egyptian men and women are expected to sex stereotype managerial positions against women (Elsaid and Elsaid, 2012) based on the type of jobs women held in the past such as clerical, secretarial, tourist guides, waitresses, etc.

We add one more crucial and vital dimension that Hofstede did not include in his dimensions of culture. This additional dimension would be religion and spirituality (Cavenaugh, 1999; Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Barrett, 2003; Fry, 2003; Rice, 2006b). In Egypt, religion plays a major role in people's day to day lives, while this is not usually the case in North America and the west. Thus, it could be assumed that religion guides the behaviors of leaders to a great extent in order to be viewed as honorable leaders by society (Rice, 2006b). Western and North American leaders do not face this social pressure from their society as long as they are law-abiding. In Egypt, the laws are not based on the Islamic religion (Sharia' Law); they are mainly based on the French law which is not based on any specific religion. Egyptian leaders could abide by the laws and not be viewed as honorable leaders since they are not abiding by the Islamic religion, while Western and North American leaders could abide by the laws and be viewed as honorable leaders since the society does not exercise additional religious pressures on them.

## 4. Literature Review on GLOBE

The initial aim of the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) research project was to develop societal and organizational measures of culture and leadership attributes that are appropriate to use across cultures (House et al., 1999; Javidian and House, 2002; House et al., 2004). GLOBE is a multi-phase, multi-method project initiated by Robert House in 1993. It examines the interrealtionships among societal culture, organizational culture, and organizational relationships using multiple methodologies. Over 170 social scientists and management

scholars from 62 countries in all major regions throughout the world have engaged in the study of the relationship between culture and leadership (House et al., 1999; House et al., 2004). Egypt, which is the focus of this study, is one of the 62 countries that are included in the GLOBE research project. According to GLOBE, Egypt lies in the Middle Eastern cluster which also includes Turkey, Kuwait, Morocco and Qatar.

GLOBE was designed to investigate the existence of universally acceptable and universally unacceptable leadership attributes, and to identify those attributes that are culture specific. The theoretical base of this research program is grounded in the notion of the *implicit theory of leadership* which argues that individuals have implicit theories about the attributes and behaviors that distinguish leaders from others, and effective leaders from ineffective leaders, and moral leaders from immoral leaders (House et al., 1999; House et al., 2004; Elsaid and Elsaid, 2012).

The GLOBE team reached consensus on the definition of the two central concepts: leadership and societal culture. House et al., 1999 defined leadership as "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members." House et al., 1999 defined societal culture as "the commonality among members of collectives with respect to the psychological attributes … and the commonality of observed and reported practices of entities such as families, schools, work organizations, economic and legal systems, and political institutions."

## 5. Sample, Data Collection and Methodology

Insert Table 1 Here

Our sample consists of 142 Egyptian middle managers from 19 organizations in three industries. Panel A of Table 1 shows that the three industries were banking (28.87%), telecommunications (33.10%), and food processing (38.03%). The reason for the selection of these particular industries is the consensus among GLOBE researchers that those three industries exist in all of the 62 participating countries (House et al., 1999). The reason for the selection of middle managers is due to their accessibility and willingness to participate in this study compared to top level executives. All the questionnaires were translated into Arabic, which is the native language in Egypt in order to avoid any confusion in the responses provided by the participants, and then translated back into English. The decentring method, first suggested by Werner & Campbell (1970), which is based on the back-translation procedure that is commonly used in cross-cultural research (Brislin, 1976) was used to translate the questionnaires from the English to the Arabic. The instruments were originally in English, and a fluently bilingual native Egyptian graduate student translated the questionnaires into the Arabic. A second fluently bilingual native Egyptian graduate student blindly translated the questionnaires back into the original language, English. The original and translated English language questionnaires were compared and examined for differences and it was determined that no differences existed between the two (original and translated) English language questionnaires. Thus, no adjustments were necessary.

Panel B of Table 1 shows that the average age of the respondents was 37.6 years, with an average of 13.7 years of work experience, and an average of 9.3 years in the same organization. Ninety seven percent of those who responded to the education level question had a university degree. The average size of the organizations represented was 1,864 employees. The data collection process was completed during 2008 to 2011.

Paired sample t-tests were used to test for differences in the Egyptian data that was collected. The data in our sample was compared to the data collected as part of the GLOBE research project. A detailed account of the GLOBE project is provided in House et al.'s (1999) paper. The GLOBE dataset is available upon request from the University of Calgary. The theoretical base of The GLOBE research program is grounded in the notion of *implicit theory of leadership* (House et al., 1999; House et al., 2004).

Insert Table 2 Here

GLOBE measured societal culture using nine cultural attributes. They are uncertainty avoidance, power distance, societal collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, humane orientation, and performance orientation. Table 2 shows the definition of each of the previous cultural attributes.

## 6. Results

Insert Table 3 Here

The results of the societal cultural dimensions for the Egyptian sample are shown in Table 3, Panel A. As shown in the table, for all the cultural dimensions except for the power distance and in-group collectivism, the "should be" scores are higher than the "as is" scores. That is, the respondents feel that, on average, the societal culture in Egypt should change in that more uncertainty avoidance, more gender egalitarianism, higher levels of societal collectivism, more humane orientation, more performance orientation, more future orientation and assertiveness should be the norm in the

society. Power distance on the other hand is perceived to be high and the perception of the individuals surveyed is that the emphasis on this aspect of culture should be reduced. In-group collectivism is another cultural dimension that according to the data should be less emphasized. Table 3 Panel B, shows the range of scores for "should be" and "as is" scales for the entire GLOBE sample of 62 countries.

Insert Table 4 Here

In Table 4 we compare the "as is" and "should be" scores of the Egyptian data with the GLOBE data. It is evident that the Egyptian sample scores fairly high for power distance and in-group collectivism. In fact in terms of in-group collectivism, Egypt's mean score for the "as is" scale was 6.03 as compared with the overall "as is" GLOBE range of 6.36 – 3.18. Egypt has the third highest score on this dimension (after the Philippines and Georgia). A prominent feature of the Egyptian societal culture is the extent to which Egyptians demonstrate loyalty, express pride and cohesiveness towards family, organizations, and other in-group collectivities. This is a sharp contrast to the picture that emerges when we considered societal collectivism. Egypt scored comparatively quite low on this dimension with a mean score for "as is" societal collectivism of 3.88. The overall "as is" GLOBE range for societal collectivism was 5.22 – 3.25 (Egypt in fact was the 13$^{th}$ lowest country in terms of ranking on this dimension). Therefore, the results show that Egypt has one of the lowest scores on societal collectivism while it demonstrates one of the highest scores on in-group collectivism.

Egypt scores high on power distance (Egypt's "as is" score of 5.43 compared with the "as is" GLOBE maximum of 5.8). That is, according to the respondents the present societal norm reflects an unequal sharing of power in the society. The "should be" score on power distance is equally revealing, in that the desire of the society to alter this aspect of the culture is by far the greatest among all the dimensions of culture under study. The absolute difference between the "as is" and the "should be" scores is highest for power distance (5.43 vs. 2.8), and lowest for in-group collectivism (6.03 vs. 5.86). The results in Table 4 also show that Egypt scored in the lower range in the GLOBE sample for "as is" assertiveness (Egypt's mean score was 4.04, which was the 24$^{th}$ lowest score in the GLOBE list). That is, compared to the 62 GLOBE societies, Egyptians are less confrontational and aggressive in social relationships.

Among the other more interesting observations regarding societal culture was the finding that gender egalitarianism is not highly emphasized (Egypt's score on gender egalitarianism is the 8$^{th}$ lowest score among the 62 countries). That is, the norm in the Egyptian society is to maximize, or at least not minimize gender role differences and gender discrimination (Amin and Al-Bassusi, 2002; El-Laithy, 2003; Elsaid and Elsaid, 2012). Another noteworthy observation is that there does not appear to be a strong desire in the society to change this (the absolute difference between "as is" and "should be" scores is 0.76 (2.99 vs. 3.75) – the second lowest among the nine dimensions). Humane orientation, on the other hand, is a strong societal cultural norm in Egypt in that being friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others is highly emphasized and rewarded (Egypt's score is 4.23 which is in the top 30% for the ranking of the 62 countries).

The results reported in Table 4 also show that the societal norms in Egypt support performance orientation, improvement, and excellence (Egypt's score on "as is" performance orientation was 4.58, while the maximum score for all the GLOBE countries was 4.94, ranking Egypt 8$^{th}$). Future orientation as a cultural value receives relatively low emphasis in Egypt (score of 3.7 for "as is" ranking Egypt 20$^{th}$ in the GLOBE sample) indicating that planning, investing, and future oriented behaviors are not highly emphasized. However, comparing the difference between "as is" and "should be" scores from Table 4 indicate that future orientation received the second highest absolute value (3.7 vs. 5.84). That is, the desire to make future orientation a societal norm is very high according to the respondents. Similarly, uncertainty avoidance as a cultural value is not highly emphasized (Egypt scored 3.67, the 8$^{th}$ lowest score amongst the 62 GLOBE countries). However, there appears to be a desire to change that as reflected in the "should be" score and the absolute difference between "as is" and "should be" scores (3.67 vs. 5.36).

In summary, the data reported in this study shows that the societal culture in Egypt is characterized by a strong cultural value on in-group collectivism, low uncertainty avoidance, high performance orientation, high power distance, and low societal collectivism. A moderate emphasis on humane orientation and moderately low assertiveness and future orientation are also among the cultural attributes of Egyptian society.

## 7. Conclusion and Discussion

The current research is an exploratory one because it took the first step to study Egypt, a Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern country. There is very little research done on Egypt due to the scarcity of data. However, in light of the "Arab Spring" that took place in the Middle East in 2011, it has become essential to study and try to understand countries in that part of the world. Our study's findings are a small step towards universally exploring the true meaning of leadership style

and behavior. It contributes to the understanding of the western conceptions of leadership in competition with emerging leadership paradigms in non-western societies by examining the societal culture of Egypt with the aid of the GLOBE research project. As far as we know, no prior research has addressed the same issues that this study is addressing with a focus on Egypt.

The conceptual and methodological aspects of the study have been guided by the GLOBE research project. The purpose of the study was to examine the societal culture in Egypt in relation to leadership attributes. It also reported and elaborated on the dimensions of Egypt's culture using GLOBE categories. When we examined the societal culture using the nine GLOBE dimensions, Egypt appeared to have relatively lower scores on assertiveness, uncertainty avoidance, societal collectivism, future orientation, and gender egalitarianism. On the other hand, Egypt had the third highest score on in-group collectivism, and had relatively high scores on performance orientation, power distance, and humane orientation. In terms of the desires to change the culture, the data showed that Egyptians are most interested in reducing the power distance and increasing the future orientation aspects of their societal culture.

Leaders of the future need to be able to recognize the limitations that could hinder their performance if they strictly follow the leadership style and behavior theories that are available in the current literature. As was discussed earlier, the current literature is mainly applicable on western cultures and is not considered to be qualified as universal theories that are widely accepted throughout the world. Future research should extend this study by developing a profile of effective leadership in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries such as Tunisia.

The findings raise important questions about how culture affects leadership and business as globalization flattens the world around us. The practical implications of the study is that western and multi-national firms that have investments in the Middle East should provide appropriate cultural training for their leaders. In most cases, especially in very conservative cultures, it is preferable to have a native in the leadership position. This facilitates interactions with the local staff and dealings with government agencies. Another practical implication is that besides the leader style and behavior, the leader's gender is also important. Middle Eastern businesses that engage in international trade with western countries are less likely to develop relations with companies that have females in roles of leadership. Western and multi-national firms should consider whether it would be culturally acceptable to appoint females in leadership positions at their Middle Eastern divisions.

The study has some limitations. We use Egypt as an example of a Middle Eastern country. However, it should be noted that the Middle East includes countries with different cultures, such as Israel. It should also be noted that about 10% of Egypt's population are Coptic Christians who do not necessarily share the same cultural beliefs as the country's Muslim majority.

**References**

Abdalla, I., & Al-Hamoud, M. (2001). Exploring the implicit leadership theory in the Arabian Gulf states. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 50, 506-531. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00071

Abd El-Latif, H. (1988). Education, women's work, and economic development in Egypt. *Journal of the Social Sciences*, 16 (3), 119-137.

Abdel-Fattah, M. (2004). Employment flexibility in Egypt. Unpublished manuscript, Employment Strategy Department, International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland.

Adler, N. (1984). Understanding the ways of understanding: Cross-cultural management methodology. In R. N. Farmer (Ed.). *Advances in International Comparative Management* (pp. 31–67). Greenwich, CN: JAI Press.

Adler, N., Doktor, R., & Redding, S. (1986). From the Atlantic to the Pacific Century: Cross cultural management reviewed. *1986 Yearly Review of Management of the Journal of Management*, 12, 295–318. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/014920638601200210

Al-Shaikh, H. (2004). Recent economic challenges and their impact on the participation of women in the labour market. Unpublished manuscript, Paper presented in the 2nd Arab forum on the Role of Women in National Development in the Gulf States, 12 February, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Amin, S., & Al-Bassusi, N. (2002). Wage work to prepare for marriage: Labour force entry for young women in Egypt. Unpublished manuscript, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, 9-11 May, Atlanta, USA.

April, K., & Hill, S. (2000). The uncertainty and ambiguity of leadership in the 21st century. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 31 (2), 45-54.

Ardichvili, A., & Kuchinke, K. (2002). Leadership styles and cultural values among managers and subordinates: A comparative study of four countries of the former Soviet Union, Germany and the US. *Human Resource Development International*, 5, 99-117. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13678860110046225

Assaad, R. (2002). *The Egyptian labour market in an era of reform: Economic Research Forum for the Arab Countries, Iran and Turkey*. Cairo : The American University in Cairo Press.

Assaad, R., & Arntz, M. (2005). Constrained geographical mobility and gendered labor market outcomes under structural adjustment: evidence from Egypt. *World Development*, 33 (3), 431-54. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2004.08.007

Barrett, R. (2003). Culture and consciousness: Measuring spirituality in the workplace by mapping values. In R. A. Giacalone, & C. L. Jurkiewicz (Eds.). *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance* (pp. 345–366). New York: M. E. Sharp.

Bass, B. (1997). Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? *American Psychologist*, 52 (2), 130–139. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037//0003-066X.52.2.130

Brislin, R. (1976). Comparative research methodology: Cross-cultural studies. *International Journal of Psychology*, 11 (3), 215-229.

Burke, R., & El-Kot, G. (2010). Correlates of work-family conflicts among managers in Egypt. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, 3 (2), 113-131. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17538391011054363

Cavenaugh, G. (1999). Spirituality for managers: Context and critique. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 12, 186–199. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09534819910273793

Chemers, M. (1981). Social organization and leadership in cross-cultural psychology. Unpublished manuscript, Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association. Available: http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED217330.pdf (March 20, 2012)

Dastmalchian, A., Javidan, M., & Alam, K. (2001). Effective leadership and culture in Iran: An empirical study. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 50, 532–58. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00072

Dastmalchian, A., Lee, S., & Ng, I. (2000). The interplay between organizational and national cultures: A study of Canada and South Korea. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(2), 388-412. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/095851900339927

De Gobbi, M. and Nesporova, A. (2005). Towards a new balance between labour market flexibility and employment security for Egypt. Unpublished manuscript, International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland. [Online] Available: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_elm/documents/publication/wcms_114145.pdf (March 22, 2012)

Den Hartog, D., House, R., Hanges, P., & Ruiz-Quintanilla, S. (1999). Culture Specific and Cross Culturally Generalizable Implicit Leadership Theories: Are attributes of charismatic/transformational leadership universally endorsed? *Leadership Quarterly*, 10 (2), 219-258.

Dimmock, C., & Walker, A. (2000). *Globalizations and societal culture: Redefining schooling and school leadership in the twenty-first century*. London: Falmer Press.

Dorfman, P., Howell, J., Hibino, J., Lee, J., Tate, U., & Bautista, A. (1997). Leadership in Western and Asian countries: commonalities and differences in effective leadership processes across cultures. *Leadership Quarterly*, 8 (3), 233–74.

El-Ghannam, A. (2001). Modernisation in Arab societies: The theoretical and analytical view. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 21, 99-131. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01443330110789727

El-Ghannam, A. (2002). Analytical study of women's participation in economic activities in Arab societies. *Equal Opportunities International*, 21 (1), 1-18. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02610150210787037

El-Laithy, H. (2003). The gender dimensions of poverty in Egypt. Unpublished manuscript, Economic Research Forum, Cairo, Egypt. [Online] Available: http://www.erf.org.eg/CMS/uploads/pdf/0127_Elleithy.pdf

Elsaid, A., & Elsaid, E. (2012). Sex stereotyping managerial positions: A cross-cultural comparison between Egypt and the USA. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 27, 81-99. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17542411211214149

Evans-Klock, C., & Lim, L. (1998). Options for human resources development in Egypt: The labour market context. Employment and Training Papers [35], International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland. [Online] Available: http://ilo-mirror.library.cornell.edu/public/english/employment/strat/publ/etp35.htm

Fry, L. (2003). Toward a theory of spiritual leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 693-727. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.001

Gratchev, M. (2001). Making the most of cultural differences. *Harvard Business Review*, 79, 28-30.

Grint, K. (2005). *Leadership: Limits and Possibilities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gupta, V., Hanges, P., & Dorfman, P. (2002a). Cultural clusters: methodology and findings. *Journal of World Business*, 37 (1), 11–15. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1090-9516(01)00070-0

Gupta, V., Surie, G., Javidan, M., & Chhokar, J. (2002b). Southern Asia cluster: Where the old meets the new? *Journal of World Business*, 37 (1), 16–28. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1090-9516(01)00071-2

Handoussa, H., & El-Oraby, N. (2004). Civil service wages and reform: The case of Egypt. Unpublished manuscript, Egyptian Centre for Economic Studies, Cairo, Egypt. [Online] Available: http://www.eces.org.eg/Uploaded_Files/%7B652708C2-C309-4BBF-B0E5013B91FB347B%7D_ECESWP98e.pdf

(March 18, 2012)

Hatem, T. (1994). Egypt: Exploring Management in the Middle East. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 24 (1), 116-136.

Hicks, D. (2002). Spiritual and religious diversity in the workplace: Implications for leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 13 (4), 379-396.

Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw Hill. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.3920040314

Hofstede G. (1993). Cultural Constraints in Management Theories. *Academy of Management Executive*, 7 (1), 81-94. http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AME.1993.9409142061

Hofstede, G. (1994). The Business of International Business is Culture. *International Business Review*, 3, 1-14. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0969-5931(94)90011-6

House, R., Wright, N., & Aditya, R. (1997). Cross-cultural research on organizational leadership: A critical analysis and a proposed theory. In P. Earley, & M. Erez (Eds), *New Perspectives in International Industrial Organizational Psychology* (pp. 535-625). San Francisco, CA: New Lexington.

House, R., Hanges, P., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P., & Gupta, V. (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

House, R., Hanges, P., Ruiz-Quintanilla, S., Dorfman, P., Javidan, M., Dickson, M., & Gupta, V. (1999). Cultural influences on leadership and organizations: Project GLOBE. *Advances in Global Leadership*, 1, 171-233.

Jaber, N. (2001). Bargaining with a patriarchy: Gender, voice and spatial development in the Middle East. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 23 (3), 101-102.

Jamali, D., & Mirshak, R. (2007). Corporate social responsibility (CSR): theory and practice in a developing country context. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 72, 243-262. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9168-4

Javidan, M., & Carl, D. (2004). East meets west: A cross-cultural comparison of charismatic leadership among Canadian and Iranian executives. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41 (4), 665-691. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2004.00449.x

Javidan, M., & House, R. (2002). Understanding cultures and implicit leadership theories across the globe: An introduction to project GLOBE. *Journal of World Business*, 37, 3–11.

Kabasakal, H., & Dastmalchian, A. (2001). Introduction to the special issue on leadership and culture in the Middle East. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 50 (4), 479-488. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00069

Lopez-Claros, A. and Zahidi, S. (2005). Women's empowerment: Measuring the global gender gap. Unpublished manuscript, World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland. [Online] Available: https://members.weforum.org/pdf/Global_Competitiveness_Reports/Reports/gender_gap.pdf (March 10, 2012)

Magd, H., & Curry, A. (2003). An empirical analysis if management attitudes towards ISO 9001:2000 in Egypt. *The TQM Magazine*, 15 (6), 381-390. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09544780310502714

Mensch, B., Ibrahim, B., Lee, S., & El-Gibaly, O. (2003). Gender-role attitudes among Egyptian adolescents. *Studies in Family Planning*, 34 (1), 8-18. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3181148

Misumi, J. (1985). *The behavioral science of leadership: An interdisciplinary Japanese research program*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Misumi, J. *(*1992*).* PM Theory of leadership from a cross-cultural perspective. In S. Iwawaki*,* Y Kashima*,* & K. Leung (Eds.), *Innovations in cross cultural psychology* (pp. 18-27)*.* Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Misumi, J., & Peterson, M. (1985). The Performance-Maintenance (PM) Theory of Leadership: Review of a Japanese research program. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 30 (2), 198-223.

Mitroff, I., & Denton, E. (1999). *A spiritual audit of corporate America: A hard look at spirituality, religion, and values in the workplace*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mostafa, M. (2003). Attitudes towards women who work in Egypt. *Women in Management Review*, 18 (5), 252-266. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09649420310485096

Mostafa, M. (2005). Factors affecting organizational creativity and innovativeness in Egyptian business organizations: An empirical investigation. *The Journal of Management Development*, 24 (1), 7-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02621710510572326

Naguib, N., & Lloyd, C. (1994), *Gender inequalities and demographic behaviour: Egypt.*New York: Population Council.

Nassar, H. (2010). Growth, economic policies and employment linkages in Mediterranean countries: The case of Egypt. Unpublished manuscript, Employment working paper, International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland.

Omair, K. (2008). Women in Management in the Arab context. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 1 (2), 107-123. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17537980810890293

Peters, T., & Waterman, R. (1982). *In search of Excellence: Lessons from America's best run companies*. New York: Harper & Row.

Rice, G. (2006a). Individual values, organizational context, and self-perceptions of employee creativity: evidence from Egyptian organizations. *Journal of Business Research*, 59 (2), 233-241. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2005.08.001

Rice, G. (2006b). Pro-environmental behavior in Egypt: is there a role for Islamic environmental ethics? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 65 (4), 373-390. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-0010-9

Riddle, L., & Ayyagari, M. (2011). Contemporary Cleopatras: The business ethics of female Egyptian managers. *Education, Business & Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues,* 4 (3), 167-192. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17537981111159957

Shami, S., Taminian, L., Morsy, S., El Bakri, Z., & El-Wathig, M. (1990). Women in Arab society: Workpatterns and gender relations in Egypt, Jordan, and Sudan. New York: Berg Publishers limited & UNESCO.

Smith, P., Misumi, J., Tayeb, M., Peterson, M., & Bond, M. (1989). On the generality of leadership style measures across cultures. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 62 (2), 97-109. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1989.tb00481.x

Peppas, S., & Yu, T. (2009). Codes of ethics: A comparison of the attitudes of future managers in China and the USA. *Management Research News*, 32 (4), 383-391. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01409170910944326

Stoval, H. (1990). Doing business in Egypt, legal issues and problems: A guide to foreign firms. *Business Monthly*, 24, 24-26.

Swatrz, D. (1996). Bridging the study of culture and religion: Pierre Bourdieu's political economy of symbolic power. *Sociology of Religion*, 57 (1), 71-85. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3712005

Tayeb, M. (1997). Islamic revival in Asia and human resource management. *Employee Relations*, 19 (4), 352-364. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01425459710170086

Tucker, J. (1985). *Women in nineteenth century Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Werner, O., & Campbell, D. (1976). Translating, working through interpreters, and the problem of decentering. In R. Naroll, & R. Cohen, (Eds.), *A handbook of method in cultural anthropology* (pp. 398-420). New York: American Museum of Natural History.

Yukl, G. (1989). Managerial leadership: A review of theory and research. *Journal of Management*, 15 (2), 251–89. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/014920638901500207

Yukl, G. (1998). *Leadership in organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Table 1. Panel A: Observations by Industry Classification

| Industry | Freq. | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Food Processing | 54 | 38.03 |
| Banks, Insurance Companies, and Other Financial Service Providers | 41 | 28.87 |
| Telecommunications | 47 | 33.10 |
| Total | 142 | 100.00 |

Panel B: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

| Variable | Average |
|---|---|
| Age | 37.6 |
| Work Experience | 13.7 |
| Tenure within the Organization | 9.3 |
| Number of employees in the Organization | 1,864 |
| Percentage of Respondents with an Undergraduate Degree | 97 |

Table 2. Variable Description

| Cultural Attributes | |
|---|---|
| Variable Name | Definition |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | The extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events. |
| Power Distance | The degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally. |
| Societal Collectivism | The degree to which societal institutional and organizational practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action. |
| In-group Collectivism | The degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. |
| Gender Egalitarianism | The degree to which the collective minimizes gender inequality. |
| Assertiveness | The degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others. |
| Future Orientation | The extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future. |
| Humane Orientation | The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others. |
| Performance Orientation | The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performace improvement and excellence. |

Table 3. Societal Cultural Dimensions

Panel A: Egyptian Data

| | Egyptian Data | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | As Is | | Should Be | | |
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | Standard Deviation | Paired Sample T-test |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | 3.67 | 0.98 | 5.36 | 0.76 | -8.594*** |
| Gender Egalitarianism | 2.99 | 1.02 | 3.75 | 0.56 | -10.737*** |
| Societal Collectivism | 3.88 | 0.93 | 5.54 | 0.72 | -15.598*** |
| In-group Collectivism | 6.03 | 0.57 | 5.86 | 0.76 | 12.693*** |
| Humane Orientation | 4.23 | 0.98 | 5.61 | 0.72 | -13.447*** |
| Power Distance | 5.43 | 0.93 | 2.8 | 0.8 | 19.381*** |
| Performance Orientation | 4.58 | 0.86 | 6.08 | 0.6 | -11.297*** |
| Future Orientation | 3.7 | 0.92 | 5.84 | 0.63 | -9.481*** |
| Assertiveness | 4.04 | 0.73 | 4.99 | 0.65 | -11.405*** |

*** Significant at 0.001, ** Significant at 0.01, * Significant at 0.05

Panel B: Overall Globe Data

| | Overall GLOBE Data | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | As Is | | Should Be | |
| | Highest Score | Lowest Score | Highest Score | Lowest Score |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | 5.37 | 2.88 | 5.61 | 3.16 |
| Gender Egalitarianism | 4.08 | 2.50 | 5.17 | 3.18 |
| Societal Collectivism | 5.22 | 3.25 | 5.62 | 3.83 |
| In-group Collectivism | 6.36 | 3.18 | 6.52 | 4.06 |
| Humane Orientation | 5.23 | 3.18 | 6.09 | 3.39 |
| Power Distance | 5.8 | 3.25 | 4.35 | 2.04 |
| Performance Orientation | 4.94 | 3.2 | 6.58 | 2.35 |
| Future Orientation | 5.07 | 2.88 | 6.2 | 2.95 |
| Assertiveness | 4.8 | 3.36 | 5.56 | 2.66 |

Table 4. "As Is" and "Should Be" Societal Cultural Dimensions

| | **Egyptian Data** | | | | **Overall GLOBE Data** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | As Is | | Should be | | As Is | | Should Be | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Highest Score | Lowest Score | Highest Score | Lowest Score |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | 3.67 | 0.98 | 5.36 | 0.76 | 5.37 | 2.88 | 5.61 | 3.16 |
| Gender Egalitarianism | 2.99 | 1.02 | 3.75 | 0.56 | 4.08 | 2.50 | 5.17 | 3.18 |
| Societal Collectivism | 3.88 | 0.93 | 5.54 | 0.72 | 5.22 | 3.25 | 5.62 | 3.83 |
| In-group Collectivism | 6.03 | 0.57 | 5.86 | 0.76 | 6.36 | 3.18 | 6.52 | 4.06 |
| Humane Orientation | 4.23 | 0.98 | 5.61 | 0.72 | 5.23 | 3.18 | 6.09 | 3.39 |
| Power Distance | 5.43 | 0.93 | 2.8 | 0.8 | 5.8 | 3.25 | 4.35 | 2.04 |
| Performance Orientation | 4.58 | 0.86 | 6.08 | 0.6 | 4.94 | 3.2 | 6.58 | 2.35 |
| Future Orientation | 3.7 | 0.92 | 5.84 | 0.63 | 5.07 | 2.88 | 6.2 | 2.95 |
| Assertiveness | 4.04 | 0.73 | 4.99 | 0.65 | 4.8 | 3.36 | 5.56 | 2.66 |

SD: Standard Deviation