UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

International Management & Consultancy: Leadership in Other Cultures

How Does Hierarchical Leadership in Egypt Affect High-Quality Production for The Export Market?

George Ayad
2647605(S)
University of Twente
P.O. Box 217, 7500AE Enschede
The Netherlands

ABSTRACT,

This study explores the impact of hierarchical leadership on high-quality production within the Egyptian export market. Leadership styles are deeply influenced by cultural norms and values, critically shaping organizational outcomes in Egypt, where Western leadership models may not directly apply. Through interviews with leaders of Egyptian companies engaged in international trade, this research examines how hierarchical leadership affects employee motivation, production efficiency, and overall organizational success. The findings suggest that while hierarchical leadership is prevalent, a blend of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, along with a strong sense of community, are all essential attributes for maintaining high standards in production. Additionally, the study highlights the unique challenges and strategies associated with adapting leadership styles in Egypt to meet the high-quality demands of the global market. Through multiple interviews with leaders, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of leadership in Eastern contexts, offering practical recommendations for enhancing management practices in Egypt and similar cultural environments.

Graduation Committee members:
Dr. Arnold Enklaar
Dr. Lara Carminati

Keywords:
Employee Motivation, Leadership Styles, Hierarchical Leadership, Cultural Norms & Traditions, International Egyptian Based Companies, Export Market.

1. INTRODUCTION

The current globalization of the world economy has dramatically affected leadership styles. Leaders dictate the internal and external dynamics and broader capability of the company they lead, their management can lead organizations to become more efficient, leading to significant increases in profitability. This is due to efficiency being directly affected by employee motivation dictated by the leadership style implemented (Chaudhry, 2012). Both of these are affected by the cultural context of the environment they operate in, forming a triad of variables that influence the success or failure of organizations (Lee et al., 2024).

Leadership styles range from authoritarian to democratic and define how an organization's goals are pursued. Leadership styles impact employees' motivation regarding their work performance and satisfaction (Podsakoff, 1990; Chaudhry, 2012). There are two types of motivation: intrinsic; self-motivation through personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement, and extrinsic; which is the motivation by external rewards or punishment (Howard, 2004). There is an apparent cause-and-effect relationship regarding the style of leadership employed in the motivation of employees.

Culture adds another layer of complication to this interplay as an active force determining the shape of leadership styles and motivational strategies. Every culture has its values, norms, and traditions integrated into the organization with a strong influence on business practices (El Zayaty, 2016). Western cultures are the most researched areas where leadership styles and motivation tactics have been tested on their implementation and success (Ibrahim, 2014). As the world evolves toward globalization, the traditional Western-centric leadership models are assumed to be universal remedies for organizational management and strategy (Ibrahim, 2014). However, due to the role of culture in business operations, the universality of Western leadership styles might not hold true.

According to the Implicit Leadership Theory (Alabdulhadi et al., 2017), employees have an image of what an exceptional leader should be, usually built from their experiences and traditions. In non-well-researched areas of the world, such characteristic traits are unknown, leading to the assumption that the best leadership styles are derived from Western ideologies. Egypt part of The MENA region is one of the least researched areas when it comes to leadership styles (Kabaskal et al., 2012). Yet a lot of the styles implemented in Egypt are Western though Egyptian tradition, norms, and values strongly differ from Western ones, and greatly influence business practices and day-to-day operations (El Zayaty, 2016). This results in reduced effectiveness and increased conflicts within the organization. In Western leadership models, high-power distance and high masculinity are frowned upon as it shows leaders cling to their power and authority and are described as being toxic traits. On the other hand, in Egypt, it is shown as a norm and desired by both leaders and subordinates (El Zayaty, 2016).

This research identifies the leadership tactics employed by companies that export their products abroad, as they usually face more stringent rules and regulations. These tactics will then be analyzed to assess the success of their implementation. leaders in Egypt will be able to discover new leadership tactics from this research and implement the ones that they believe are most suitable for their organization, allowing for growth in employee motivation and satisfaction. The importance of this research is crucial as limited research can be found regarding leadership styles in Egypt. The available research only covers surface-level theories such as transactional and transformational leadership styles. This research solves this through in-depth interviews with leaders to understand the motivation tactics used, the reasoning behind them, and the outcome of each. Elaborating on how the hierarchical leadership style is used in Egypt to reach the high-quality production standards that are demanded for the export market.

1.1 Problem Statement

Existing leadership strategies are primarily based on Western ideologies and cultures and therefore hardly applicable to other cultural, social, and economic contexts, including Egypt (Bass, 1997). As Bass (1997) stated the universality of leadership styles is not proven, especially in diverse global environments such as the MENA region, a place where cultural norms and traditions play an essential role in day-to-day interactions. For Egyptian leaders, the differences may be challenging to accommodate, especially when they try to introduce leadership styles taught abroad to lead their employees, leading to inefficiencies and demotivated employees.

Furthermore, consider entering and expanding into the international market or producing high-quality products. Those are demanding goals that compound the inefficiencies making them more apparent and a concern for organizations. High-quality goods depend on the effort excreted by employees to guarantee perfection and not only the raw material used (Takeuchi, 2014). This proves the need for Egyptian firms to adapt their leadership style to meet more rigid exporting standards in efficiency, quality production, and meeting time-based goals (Schellenberg et al., 2018). Usually, this adaptation process faces many barriers, which include a need for more culturally relevant research and practical guidance suited for the unique Egyptian context. Therefore, the importance of a tailored leadership strategy for the Egyptian culture stands as a gap of knowledge that would prevent the effective optimization of international operations. Highlighting the importance of leadership style, and the impacts it has on Egyptian employee productivity. Organizations seeking to develop their leadership strategies and culturally align them to enhance their effectiveness in Egyptian culture are a necessity to support their global growth ambitions.

The thesis answers how these styles and in particular hierarchical leadership influence organizational outcomes and what one can do to adapt these styles to motivate employees to produce high-quality export products while considering the Egyptian cultural context. The intention is to understand the hierarchical leadership impacts on motivation at Egyptian firms, from what influences employee motivation to the influence that a leader's decisions have on the dynamics of a team and the organizational outcomes in Egyptian companies in terms of production efficiency and quality. Understanding Egyptian leaders' tactics and how they adapt them to their needs and demands, overcoming the limitations of their leadership style. As when a hierarchical leadership style is pursued, there is a low level of dependency on intrinsic motivation; instead, it relies more on extrinsic motivation, such as monetary rewards and punishments for underperforming employees (Jago, 1977). This leads to limitations in performance and effort ceilings placed by employees, therefore hierarchical leadership style becomes costly and unsustainable in the long term, highlighted in the short-term orientation of Egyptian companies, as pointed out by Hofstede's cultural dimension theory (Geert Hofstede, 1980).

Additionally, viewing The GLOBE study (Kabaskal et al., 2012) helps support the assumption that each leadership style has a different effect depending on the socio-culture, where some leadership traits might have adverse effects or positive results depending on the culture in which it is implemented, such as

autonomy, a leadership style that is viewed positively in Western cultures, in Egypt it is regarded as a neutral attribute. A leader who induces conflicts is often regarded negatively as a team leader; however, in the Egyptian culture, due to the sense of community and unity, it is viewed neutrally (Kabaskal et al., 2012), as these leaders often try to open and heal wounds before they grow into unresolvable conflicts between employees in the office, with leaders acting more as a father figure.

Both autocratic and authoritarian leadership are commonly used alongside hierarchical leadership in Egypt; their benefits prevail when new employees need training, clear roles, and directives. These leadership styles, however, can significantly hinder employees' motivation, primarily when used consistently, resulting in demotivated, burned-out employees whose goals are detached from the organization's. Metwally & Punnett stated (2017), if hierarchical decisions are made charismatically and, in a team-oriented manner while considering the impact on followers, employees' motivation will not suffer. When hierarchical leadership is implemented in Western markets, it does not accommodate high-quality products. Due to the nature of producing such products, tedious employee attention to detail is needed (Takeuchi, 2014), which will not be achieved by demotivated employees supervised by line managers. The main problem this thesis focuses on is how such a hierarchical leadership style is implemented and how the adverse effects expected in American and European markets are avoided in Egypt.

1.2 Research Question

This leads to this thesis's main problem which will be solved in the later steps of *How Does Hierarchical Leadership in Egypt Affect High-Quality Production for The Export Market?*

1.2.1 Sub-Question:

Additionally, the sub-questions help rope together the theories and concepts analyzed from interviewing the leaders, building a constructive and concise theoretical framework to reach a beneficial conclusion. This is done by dividing the main question into various sub-questions listed below:

1. *What consequences does production for the export market have on the company?*
2. *What changes were needed to conform to the high-quality requirements of the export markets?*
3. *How are changes in employee behavior achieved?*
4. *What changes were needed in management style to accommodate the organization's goals?*

Each sub-question focuses on a critical variable, including employee management, leadership styles, leadership's effect on employees, and the culture's role and effect on all these variables while considering the extra hurdle of internationalizing.

1.3 Contributions

1.3.1 Practical contributions

This thesis bridges the knowledge gap by interviewing and assessing national Egyptian companies to gain insights into the hurdles and challenges they face, helping companies rethink their management style in Egypt. Through interviews with leaders who have had firsthand accounts of dealing with the international markets and analyzing the strict entry requirements and their toll on the company, the research will help better understand leadership and how it varies across different cultures. The research will go further in-depth, assessing different organizations and the leadership tactics they used in hopes of recognizing the best practices used by leaders regarding their environmental constraints. And how they strategically adapt leadership styles to fit their environment better. This newfound knowledge regarding adapting motivation techniques will help create new action plans and recommendations for leaders who wish to pursue efficient production while operating from Egypt. This will bring forward tactics from leaders operating in the Egyptian market, which could be implemented in other cultures. Similarly, other reports from different cultures with similar environments would provide best practices to be applied in Egypt, serving as practical recommendations for Egyptian leaders.

1.3.2 Academic contributions

Finally, previous research had its limitations, namely that it only assesses the employee's perspective and surface-level theories like transformational and transactional Leadership (El Zayaty, 2016). Ultimately, the research will contribute to the expansion of leadership theory academically by enhancing the understanding of leadership and motivation in a non-Western Cultural Context. Neglecting cultural context is one of the limitations of previous papers. While also shedding light on the structural changes needed for exporting to diverse markets, its regulations, and the implications such a strategy has on the organization.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Leadership

A prominent leadership style is transactional leadership. Transactional leadership motivates employees separately to achieve the organization's goals (Jones & Said, 2013). The interactions between leaders and followers are described as merely a transaction of rewards or punishments in exchange for employee productivity and efficiency. The two core components of transactional leadership are contingent reward and active and passive management by exception. A contingent reward is when leaders reward wanted behavior and punish unwanted ones (Srinivas et al., 2006). Active management by exception is when leaders actively take corrective action when deviations are observed. As for passive management by exception leadership, intervention only occurs when problems become too serious to ignore. Transformational management styles on the other hand focus on intrinsically motivating subordinates to transcend self-interest and focus on achieving results and self-improvement.

Other leadership styles include Servant, Laissez-faire, Participative, Autocratic, Situational, Democratic, Bureaucratic, Visionary, Affiliative, Coaching, Ethical, Pacesetting, Humble, Hierarchical, and Authoritative leadership styles among numerous other management styles (El Zayaty, 2016). An entire thesis could be written about all the different leadership styles. A focus is placed on leadership styles that could be prevalent in Egyptian culture. The most used in Egyptian culture is hierarchical leadership, and authoritarianism is also commonly used, as El Zayaty briefly mentioned and supported by the cultural dimension theory, which is explained in the cultural section of the theoretical background. Each leadership style varies based on the motivation used to inspire employees to achieve set goals and the amount of control and oversight that managers have, among many other factors such as decision-making, communication, goal setting, feedback, and adaptability. Additionally, each leadership style has different use cases where their strengths and weaknesses make them the ideal candidates for their environment and the organization's goals.

Autocratic leadership is described as centralized decision-making, where only the top managers and leaders make decisions with limited input from employees (El Zayaty, 2016). Strengths include transparent decision-making, quick actions, and clear direction, while the limitations include low employee morale, reduced innovation, and high resistance from subordinates; this leadership style becomes prevalent in high-pressure environments where new employees require clear directives and strict control over subordinates. Similarly, the authoritarian leadership style is characterized by highly centralized decision-making; however, all the power goes to the leaders, and no input is taken from employees as communication is only in a top-down direction, with little autonomy on how employees can perform tasks, this leads to devastating side effects as decision makers are often far removed from day-to-day operations, leading to uninformed decisions (Pizzolitto et al., 2022). Hierarchical leadership is defined as a pyramid-like organizational structure where each employee, manager, leader, and top executive has a defined and clear position, with power and authority increasing the higher a person is in the pyramid (Jago, 1977). Information flows vertically, and decisions are centralized to the most capable and knowledgeable individuals in each sector, with more critical decisions delegated to higher leaders in the organization. (Jones, 2008) Finally, Laissez-faire, a French term that translates to "let people do as they choose," falls on the complete opposite side of the spectrum where managers delegate entire tasks, roles, and decisions to employees, with full autonomy on how to do them. This leadership style fosters employee engagement, creativity, and innovation, which are extremely useful when employees are highly skilled and for environments requiring high innovation, leading to highly motivated and satisfied employees. For the West, such a style as laissez-faire would be assumed to be used for organizations that export their products, which require high quality and innovation. However, that is different in Egypt.

2.2   Motivation

Leaders pick their leadership styles based on multiple factors, as mentioned above, such as the environment, leader's experience, subordinates' skill sets, and team dynamics; however, one of the most important factors is the type of motivation that they would like to instill in their subordinates (Rayan & Deci, 2000). Leaders should not pick any leadership style to motivate their employees but understand their followers' needs and characteristics and match the best motivation type to suit them (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005). There are many types of motivation, such as achievement, competence, power, and fear motivators. However, the main are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is when leaders use rewards to motivate employees to perform or use fear of punishment to avoid unwanted behavior (Howard, 2004). Usually, rewards include monetary rewards such as bonuses or pay raises for achievements or milestones that employees accomplish, which are beneficial when fast results are needed. Punishments deter unwanted behavior, such as late arrivals to work, which could earn the employee an official warning on the first time, a pay deduction when it becomes frequent, and a contract termination when it becomes a habit. Western research believes that if extrinsic is the only motivation prevalent in an organization, it can lead to severe challenges such as effort celling. Once employees earn the reward, not much effort is exerted into continuing the leader's desired actions. The opposite is also true, where employees exert the minimal effort required not to receive the punishment. When regularly used, extrinsic motivation could lead to apathetic motivation, which is a lack of motivation.

On the other hand, intrinsic motivation refers to leaders appealing to the psychology of employees, making the activity or goal pleasurable, challenging, and exciting to achieve (Ponis et al., 2020). Such motivation could be achieved by changing job roles to make jobs less repetitive, giving employees autonomy on how and when tasks should be done, and challenging employees with more complex tasks while also developing their skills, referred to by many Western researchers as being superior to extrinsic but more challenging to implement. Intrinsic motivation leads to prosocial motivation, which is the desire to help or benefit others, not just a career advancement for the employee but also looking for the entire organization's greater good. However, intrinsic motivation is not always the better option as different motivators appeal to different needs of humans (Poston, 2009). Abraham Maslow (1943) coined the term Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which states that humans have needs that they are motivated to fulfill, starting with physiological needs defined as food and water, second comes safety needs such as financial security, thirdly love, and belonging needs like friendships, then comes esteem needs referring to achievement, and finally, self-actualization known as seeking personal growth. Maslow mentioned that these needs are valued in the order mentioned above, and leaders should assign the right motivation based on the step in The Hierarchy of Needs that employees fall into. However, a limitation is that not all employees place their needs in that same exact order, which could lead to the wrong motivation used. Therefore, leaders should get to know their subordinates personally to understand what they value and what motivation will fuel them to achieve the set goals. Which is highly affected by culture, where each environment has different norms, traditions, and values that are not only regulated by their geological location but also by their beliefs as the MENA region is a predominantly Islamic inhabited area with Islamic beliefs incorporated in the governmental regulations, and even in day-to-day activities (El Zayaty, 2016; Kabasakal et al., 2012).

2.3   Egyptian Culture

Multiple variables affect culture and, in turn, impact an individual's actions; therefore, Geert Hofstede (1980) came up with the Culture Dimension Theory, which divides cultural characteristics into six main aspects: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, indulgence, and long-term orientation, with each criterion being evaluated on a scale from zero-to-a hundred. When such a test is implemented in The Egyptian Culture, the results gained from the analysis uncover multiple underlying issues faced by organizations and help in the identification of leadership styles that are implemented and what are the best leadership traits that their subordinates envision them to have, the basis for the Implicit Leadership Theory. The ILT states that everyone has different mental ideas on the best leadership attributes that their leaders should possess. (Alabdulhadi et al., 2017).

The power distance index refers to the uneven distribution of power that is accepted by the members of the society, such as the difference between a monarchy and a democratic nation; Egypt scores a high seventy, revealing a highly centralized power and decision-making tradition in the culture. A high-power distance akin to the one in Egypt, in combination with a masculine society, reveals that the decision-making occurring is far removed from the day-to-day operations, which leads to wrong decisions taken. Still, if scrutinized about the decision, a high masculinity trait might lead to hostile situations, where leaders become combative about their decisions. Masculinity is the characteristics associated with the emotional range and behavior of a highly masculine individual and not the gender, which Egypt scored forty-five on.

Additionally, masculinity, combined with the high-risk avoidance of Egypt, eighty, leads to a combative mentality towards innovations due to the unforeseen risks, especially considering the low score of seven out of one hundred in long-term orientation. Finally, when adding collectivism, the importance of building and or being part of a social group, in combination with avoiding risk, masculinity, and power distance, might lead to new innovative ideas that benefit the entire organization being overthrown due to leaders preserving their power and authority in the organization. Even without combining the dimensions, specific weaknesses become apparent, such as leaders employing friends or family members over more qualified candidates due to high loyalty to the family, a characteristic trait attributed to collectivism. These factors hinder the organization's ability to perform efficiently (El Zayaty, 2016).

Egypt is considered the heart of the Arab world due to its long history that predates most of the other countries, often referred to as "Om El Donia," a term meaning mother of the world, a flattering term used to portray the historical span of the country. Additionally, it has a vast population, the largest in the Arab world and one of the biggest in land size and is located in between Africa, Asia, and Europe. Such attributes turn Egypt into a melting pot of different Arab nationalities that work and live together, most of whom unite under one language and religion. The Egyptian population speaks Arabic, while the educated individuals also speak English. French is a common third language for the highly educated due to the French and British colonization. 90% of the population comprises of Sunni Muslims, 9% Coptic Orthodox Christians, and the remaining are of Catholic and Protestant beliefs (Kabaskal et al., 2012). This is extremely important as religious law dominates the running of the state's political system, rules, regulations, and languages spoken. This could also be seen affecting multiple other factors, such as how, in Islam, "Allah" or God is viewed as being incomparable to anything. The religious figures and leaders in the country carry such a view forming an acceptance of authority and power inequality grounded by the 4.9 out of 7 seen in Egypt, which should be 3.24, a total of 1.68 higher than it should be grounded by the findings of the GLOBE study (Kabaskal et al., 2012), Kabaskal et al later goes on to state that leaders are seen as strong authority figures in Egypt that should not be questioned. In addition, it is carried out in other aspects of life, such as believing and trusting in one's fate where everything is already written in God's plan, supported by the low score of 3.86 in future avoidance, almost two total points lower than what individuals believe it should be at (5.8) supported by the findings from Hofstede's culture dimension theory.

Leadership styles, motivators, and culture have been addressed in detail, and as stated previously these three variables are affected by one another. Unfortunately, there is limited research being conducted in the MENA region regarding the effects of culture on both leadership and motivation. This can be seen when researching for the most prevalent leadership style in Egypt, as no article names a direct leadership style, moreover, some articles assume that Egypt uses extrinsic motivators over intrinsic ones without any support or examples, failing to mention the specific outcomes of such a style and whether it would be beneficial for implementation in the Egyptian culture, additionally, there is no information regarding exporting companies in Egypt. This research aims to contribute to the knowledge of leadership in Egypt by answering the questions of what the dominant leadership style is, the motivation tactics used, and how they are affected by the surrounding culture.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design of this paper took a focused approach in the analysis of leadership styles, attributes, and tactics, and analyzed their outcomes on employees. assessing the motivation behind leader's actions, their reasoning and thought process, dynamic human experiences, and thinking patterns, and whether the intended results that leaders aim for are reached. This leads to qualitative research since it is more cognition with no measurements considered but rather a success or failure, in achieving their intended outcomes which is subjective to every organization. Additionally, due to the knowledge gap in research found in Egypt, certain assumptions will need to be taken, and new data will be uncovered through each step of this research, both of which are not possible with quantitative research. In addition, quantitative research oftentimes leads to a funnel lens focused on validating their hypothesis, which oftentimes creates biases.

Understanding the reasoning for a person's actions takes time and effort. Thus, this research will follow an open-ended attentive approach, common for qualitative research, following an inductive research technique. Since no hypothesis has been constructed, there will be greater flexibility and openness to new theories and constructs, making it open-ended. Furthermore, the research builds on each other in additive theory development as more data is accumulated and analyzed, making it an iterative process. It was continuously refined and revised as new evidence is collected. Both are characteristics of inductive research, explaining how this report will build up into answering the sub-questions and, finally, the main question, which is impossible with a deductive approach as it cannot introduce new insights after the initial statements.

3.2 Data Collection

Due to the knowledge gap apparent in Egypt, the data collected cannot be found online through research, so it is important to get the information from first-hand sources. The data was gathered from first-hand accounts of leaders working for organizations operating in Egypt. The data was collected through interviews with specified individuals, a process known as purposeful sampling.

In the sampling, the research chose employees who work in organizations that operate in Egypt, as the Egyptian culture must be prevalent in both the individual and the organization to reach the answer to the question. Additionally, the organization they operate in must require a certain level of high-quality production as this is only achievable by high input from employees, which is why the other requirement is that they must work in an organization that exports internationally, this was done as internationalizing companies face more stringent rules and regulations of quality and sustainability, magnifying the leader's decisions and the subordinates' actions, making inefficiencies and limitations of leadership styles easier to recognize.

The interviews will be held with five leaders who each own different companies to try and reach as much saturation as possible. if a focus is taken on one organization, the research will only benefit organizations under the same specific conditions, and the goal of this research is to be beneficial for the biggest number of organizations as possible. Unfortunately, due to the limited reach of the interviewer, only five interviews will not be enough to reach full saturation, as more interviews need to occur for saturation to be reached, a limitation of this research.

Role	Age	Industry	# of Employees
Managing Director	51	Agriculture & Export	~500
Founder	37	Agriculture & Export	~300
CEO	59	FMCG	~300
COO	58	FMCG	~7000
Chairman	64	Tissue Manufacturing	~2000

3.3   Data Instrument

There were five interviews; all held with leaders from different organizations offering a plethora of products which ensure the applicability of results to various organizations. The interviews were conducted in person on a one-on-one basis. This reduced social barriers while increasing depth and openness in the interview ensuring that leaders felt at ease expressing their thoughts and opinions, additionally, the internet connection in Egypt is not optimal and might lead to phrases that are cut off due to poor network connection. The interviews will be semi-structured as the leaders don't all work in the same organization or field, and there will be the added benefit of probing the interviewee with various questions to reach a beneficial answer. Probing will be an important factor as the leader will fear giving a negative answer regarding their employee and be seen as egotistic.

3.4   Data Analysis

After conducting the interviews, the Thematic Analysis was used to interpret, analyze, and process the data into meaningful theories that could be used to answer the research question. (Braun & Clarke, 2012) The Thematic analysis is divided into six main parts, starting with familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming the themes, and finally, producing the report. This means that after conducting the interviews, it will be coded into text, making it easier to distinguish common underlying patterns and emerging themes that will be analyzed and compared to the theoretical background, naming the patterns into new theories, and finally conducting a report on how the leaders use these reoccurring themes to enhance their business operations. Additionally, such an analysis is vital as some leaders might not know the name of the leadership style they implement, but only its characteristics, which is considered when using the thematic analysis, defining the theories and concepts later after the patterns have been identified and studied.

4.   RESULTS

In this chapter, the interviewer used all the relevant answers received during the interview process in the form of quotes to reach meaningful data for this research. The interview questions started more generally by asking about the leadership style and dove deeper to understand the motivation tactics and the differences between Egyptian culture and Western culture and ended the interview by inquiring about the reasons behind exporting and the difficulties faced during the process of exporting.

4.1   Leadership

When first asked about leadership and the styles they implement in their organizations the respondents would show that they have a preference towards a structured leadership where every employee knows their roles and positions in the organization. This is proven by the participants' answers which are all similar "*The company is divided to a couple of business units it is a group of companies and every business unit has its own CEO, reporting to him are the heads of all the departments then the Managers then team leaders then supervisors, foremen, then workers so cascaded from highest job level to the lowest*". One of the interviewees when asked about the decision process added to this stating that "*Key decisions are usually decided with the high management team, and once we all agree, each manager is responsible to translate, communicate and divide these targets with his team*". Identifying a leadership style with clear roles and positions; specifically Authoritarian leadership (Pizzolitto et al., 2022), as information flows vertically and in only one direction. Later on, in the interview when probed more about the decision-making process and who takes part leaders said "*Decisions has to have people from the operations involved as they have the knowledge & ideas and by this you are able to reach the best decisions.*" Another leader added "*The people on the ground may have great ideas and management needs to take this into consideration*" supporting the assumption of hierarchical leadership, as defined earlier by Jago (1977). However, some of the interviewees deviated from this giving more power and authority to lower-level employees in their organization "*We share our objectives & targets and address them as heads and business owners of their departments to give support and ideas on how I can reach my objective, we leave them to put the best way to reach their targets*". According to the interviewee, this is done for two reasons; it is not such a huge corporation with fewer workers than the other organizations interviewed for this report, and the second reason was to motivate the employees which will be addressed in the next section.

4.2   Motivation

As also defined in the theoretical background the motivation tactic employed is important and can greatly affect the productivity and profitability of the organization (lee et al., 2024). Most interviewees did not specify the use of only one motivation tactic, but they used both intrinsic and extrinsic side-by-side for different scenarios (Poston, 2009). As evident by the response from one of the participants when asked if the rewards are only monetary he replied stating "*not always money, recognition: sharing their achievement is a form of reward, even sending an email and exposing their work to a higher level of management, this is a reward employee value when you speak highly of them when they do something different because this differs in their exposure and image in the organization*" later on he added that there are also achievement motivators "*We conduct internal competition rounds among them, competition on who will achieve better quality with the lowest cost*". Other leaders also pointed out different tactics they use like "*Bonuses and allowances such as transportation allowance or assigning a car for employees whose work requires a lot of commuting, Stars (*high performers*) are granted trips abroad as a reward to take training and develop their experience & skills*". Another leader's answers were affirming this, stating "*comparing employee's results, if any employee has a new idea? Is he innovative? You check employees' performance versus his peers, you cannot reward 100% of the organization as it automatically becomes an expectation and not about me as an employee achieving something that will get me rewarded in return.*" When asked

about punishment all leaders had the same reply "*Punishments in the form of firing? No, he is fired if he sabotages but if an error occurs due to bad decision-making from the employee, there might be an investigation, penalty, or warning letter. Firing is in the case of theft or sabotage only.*" Normal types of rewards are still used such as promotions, raises, and bonuses as evidenced by a leader in the export of fruits and vegetables "*There is a profit share percentage on every container that arrives successfully with no errors. The supervisor of the container receives a bonus Managerial levels receive bonuses as well, and the employees receive a smaller percentage.*"

4.3 Culture

Culture affects multiple aspects of the company this is seen in how the leaders address lower levels in the organization and in motivating the employees. As one leader mentioned "*Egypt is an influential country in the region with a rich history and culture, Egyptians are emotional, and passion-driven. Setting a culture of ownership is always a winner in Egypt as it gives confidence to the employee and gives him a sense of belonging. Yet we must protect this with a rigid appraisal system to create boundaries and accountability.*" Due to the high characteristic traits of a community employee sense of ownership seemed important aligning with Hofstede's culture dimension theory (1980) and also supported by another leader who stated "*We always communicate our targets clearly with the team …. we want to create a leader among everyone in the team …. striving to create an ownership culture where every employee thinks and works as an owner, this way they will have one goal to achieve*". This was best explained by a leader in the manufacturing industry in this metaphor "*We think of our company as if we are in a car traveling from point a to point b, and we tell our employees can you drive your car without a dashboard? Without a speedometer, fuel meter, or temperature meter. We communicate all our numbers to the management team whenever we have the chance and we see it fit for the business, and we encourage them to share it with their team respectively, so we all have the same dashboard*" Even the manner of how leaders and CEO treated and communicated with the subordinates and lower level employees was quite surprising for a hierarchical style, as one leader added, "*I am always available for a 1-1 with any employee in the organization, we even have regular meetings with the employees to give us* (the directors) *their feedback on their managers and any problems they have, …. Sometimes I have employees asking me if I can pay for some of their medical bills due to their son or daughter having an emergency, …. this helps us create a sense of family and gives more motivation to do their best performance.*" The researcher started probing more asking about any boundaries they have in place to which a leader replied: "*Yes, of course, we have a rigid appraisal system to create boundaries and accountability because once they get too used to the leader, they start thinking that he likes them and that they can start slacking off which isn't the case, and then they come complaining why they didn't take a bonus like every time* " This was taken further when a leader interviewed stated "*Egyptians are lazy, they want to make the money with minimal effort. Not all of them but a good percentage of them are like this, it is in their nature they enjoy hangouts with friends at cafes, they are content like this.*"

4.4 Exporting

Many leaders had indicated that exporting products abroad was a tedious task but was worth the effort as they stated "*We work in food manufacturing, our factory must have the international and local certifications to be allowed to export like the Food Safety, ISO22001, and National Food Safety Authority.*

Other certificates are required based on the order and country like Halal and Kosher" also backed up by a different leader "*We have an in-process control checklist that is checked every hour on all the critical points in the manufacturing process. This gives us full control to monitor everything in the product We even test it as soon as we take delivery of the materials and once it goes out for the final delivery to the ports.*" The leaders then mentioned how they produce identical products for the export markets as the domestic market "*We do the same test on our Local and Export products, we always produce both at the same time and on the same line.*" Supported by a leader in the food industries "*All raw materials and ingredients are the same, there is no difference they both have the same quality & standards. This is one of our strengths we have premium quality whether locally or internationally. In Egypt as well quality standards are important*". This was a contradicting discovery to the research conducted, as it was thought that Egyptian companies needed to increase efforts to meet international regulations (Schellenberg et al., 2018). Exporting comes with several rewards most notably the "*Price difference of course, selling abroad with a foreign currency compared to domestically, it becomes way more attractive the more the EGP (*Egyptian pound*) falls, as your profit margins grow without adding costs*" Of course this isn't true for all leaders as some interviewed for this paper indicated that they import their raw materials from abroad to ensure high quality, leading costs to significantly rise. While other leaders sell internationally out to necessity "*In Egypt we have a population of 100M+ we cannot sell to the local market. It is always challenging to reach this wide range of customers, but once it is achieved, it is a good sustainable revenue stream for the business.*" A leader in the export of agriculture stated that selling a high-quality product in Egypt is hard "*Quality is viewed in terms of size, pesticides, appearance, and rich taste. Abroad they only care about size and appearance, while in Egypt they care about all and additionally they also ban the sale of fruits and vegetables that are treated with pesticides*"

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Exporting

When asked why they choose to export quality goods abroad all organizations said that they were already manufacturing quality goods and selling domestically and found that due to the current currency crisis if they started exporting their profits would increase and the costs would only increase in distribution however no added manufacturing costs would be needed. As most of the international standards were already met, they only needed to apply and receive the certificates that proved that their quality met such standards which had negligible costs. For most leaders such a decision increased profit margins without baring extra cost, while also building an international brand reputation renowned for quality goods was sublime. However, this did not align with the research conducted as it stated that Egyptian companies had to dramatically change their manufacturing process to meet international regulations (Schellenberg et al., 2018). This might be since the companies interviewed for this research were pursuing a high-quality differentiation tactic, this proved to be a limitation of the interviewee selection process which could not be mitigated due to the limited number of leaders that were available and willing to be interviewed. Answering both sub-questions #1&2 *What consequences does the production for the export market have for the company? What changes were needed to conform to the high-quality requirements of the export markets?* For sub-question 1 the companies interviewed did not have any consequences but

only advantages such as building an international brand identity, and increasing profit margins, however, this would not be the case for organizations that mass produce low-quality products. One company stood out stating that Egypt does have a huge market that could be extremely beneficial, yet the cost of building such a distribution for all the cities and towns would be costly, compared to starting with export only and then having the added benefit of being an international brand and saving enough capital to start competing back home. This was supported by a company in the agriculture export industry stating that the Egyptian market for fruits and vegetables is more competitive and stringent as pesticides were not allowed and key quality indicators were size, outside appearance, and rich full taste, compared to Western markets that only evaluate on size and taste.

5.2   Employee Behavior

The interviewer then started probing more and asking questions regarding how the leaders would motivate and get the employees to perform the tasks efficiently while ensuring the employees are putting in the extra work to achieve the high quality they expect. To which the leaders collectively agreed that they use a combination of monetary or extrinsic rewards (Howard, 2004), often that would be the go-to reward for the factory workers but as the employees' needs were higher up in the hierarchical pyramid the more, they would rely on intrinsic reward aligning with the research stating that different motivation tactics are needed for different needs (Ponis et al., 2020). The leaders then started sharing examples from recognition, feedforward, internal competitions, and a work vehicle, and some leaders would even go as far as traveling the employee and his family abroad for skill and experience to be able to come back and implement it in their organization. (Abraham Maslow, 1943) The type of motivational tactics that would be used seemed to align with Maslow's Pyramid where it would go from monetary to physiological needs to building their self-esteem and giving them recognition for their work in the organization. Some leaders had also mentioned the importance of a "We & *Our*" mindset in the organization, where *We* are all one, and this is *Our* organization forming a sense of community and ownership in the organization and helping align the goals of the individual with the organization while making the individual feel responsible for their behavior and actions. This type of motivation was already expected due to the high community and collectivism found in Egyptians, answering sub-question #3 *How are changes in employee behavior achieved?* This research was conducted by interviewing the owners and CEOs of the organizations and their answers in the interviews were mostly regarding their subordinates who are also managers and directors of their departments. This is a limitation of this research as it would have been more beneficial to interview line managers who are in direct contact with employees and offers valuable insights into day-to-day employee interactions, while the interviews conducted helped in understanding leadership at a higher level and the reasons the companies leadership style while analyzing impacts organizational direction and productivity which lower-level managers would not have been able to provide and would have diverted the focus of the research from strategic leadership and decision-making processes, which were more relevant to the research question.

5.3   Culture

As stated, multiple times throughout this report culture is an extremely important aspect that should not be overlooked, affecting everything from day-to-day interactions to long-term outcomes. Its role in how leaders use it to their advantage cannot be understated, this could be seen especially clearly in the sense of a collective community where leaders work to help grow their employees' capabilities helping them contribute more to the organization. Simply stated by one of the leaders in the metaphor of a car the employees cannot drive correctly without having access to all the relevant information. The leaders do everything they can to give the subordinates all they need in terms of high-quality raw materials, tools, and knowledge and the rest is up to the employee to craft a high-quality product as stated by the Harvard business study (Takeuchi, 2014). However, that would be hard to do as one leader pointed out Egyptians are somewhat lazy and and once they have an excuse not to work, they will not, explaining why authoritarian leadership was avoided, as to not increase their laziness. This was mitigated by giving the employees a goal to work towards while making them motivated by giving them a sense of the importance of their actions and a sense of ownership of the organization. These are magnified when the employees are given the opportunities to have 1-1 meetings with the directors and owners of the organization. Especially in cases such as the ones where the owners help the employees when they were not obliged to like paying healthcare bills for their children as the employee cannot afford to or firing one of the managers for mistreating a subordinate. All these actions help create a bond between the leaders and the employees that otherwise would have never been there due to the vertical hierarchical distance found between them and hold the employees to be more dedicated and determined to prove that he was worth the hassle the leaders went through. However, if not careful this can go in the opposite direction where the subordinate thinks that now he is more privileged and does not need to put as much effort as before as now he's "*friends with the boss,*" which is why strict boundaries, appraisals, and power distances are set in Egyptian organizations. When asked why leaders would go out of their way to help employees even though it could backfire, they would say that it was the right thing to do. meaning that these actions could be traced back to the influence of religion in Egyptian culture. As religion guides their day-to-day actions, most religious books state that they should treat everyone the same way they want to be treated, showing kindness and mercy to all and not being egotistic, showing the high impact of religion on the Egyptian culture.

5.4   Management style

At the beginning of the results section, the assumption of a hierarchical leadership style being dominant in Egypt was confirmed by analysing the statements leaders made regarding their style. They described their organization as a pyramid-like shape where the CEO is on top then the directors, then the managers, then the employees, such a style supports the power distance and masculinity traits from The Globe study (Kabaskal et al., 2012). However, unlike a true hierarchical leadership style, the leaders also mentioned that they micro-manage and delegate tasks leaving the managers and employees to perform the tasks the best way they see fit this points to shared power in the organization. Additionally, transactional leadership also becomes apparent when the interviewees stated that they sometimes reward subordinates with cars to ease transportation and profit share to encourage more hard work. This decision of not having a true form of hierarchical leadership could be attributed to uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity (Kabaskal et al., 2012) where leaders know that they are not the most knowledgeable in that sector, and fear making mistakes Leading them to delegate it to another person where if they did the wrong decision they would be the ones at fault or if they achieved the desired outcome it would be a type of motivation giving them a higher monetary reward, more autonomy, control, and a valued

team member motivating them to continue producing high-quality work. Answering sub-question #4 *What changes were needed in management style to accommodate the organization's goals?* Adding a mixture of transactional to hierarchical leadership while sharing power and authority, helps promote innovative and novel thinking reaching the organization's goals efficiently and problem-solving their way out of problems that they may face in manufacturing.

6.   CONCLUSION

This study has set out to answer *How Does Hierarchical Leadership in Egypt Affect High-Quality Production for The Export Market?* High Quality is achieved in Egypt using several key extrinsic and intrinsic motivators such as monetary rewards and a sense of community while setting clear boundaries and power distances using a hierarchical leadership style to ensure that subordinates remain disciplined and focused. This approach prevents complacency and delays in work, thereby maintaining high standards of performance and productivity.

6.1   Practical Implications

By bridging the knowledge gap in Egypt and gaining insights on hurdles and challenges faced when producing high-quality products for exports, the research helps rethink management style in Egypt. Through firsthand accounts of dealing with the international markets and the strict entry requirements, the research helps to better understand the best leadership style for Egypt and similar cultures. Going further in-depth and recognizing the best practices and leadership tactics implemented. And how they strategically adapt leadership styles to fit their environment better such as the use of various intrinsic motivators. This newfound knowledge regarding adapting motivation techniques creates new action plans and recommendations for leaders who wish to pursue efficient production while operating from Egypt.

6.2   Theoretical Implications

This research has contributed to theories and research papers firstly by reinforcing Metwally and Punnett's statement (2017) of how hierarchical leadership can be implemented without leading to effort ceilings and apathetic motivation by providing first-hand accounts of how hierarchical leadership could be pursued if decisions are made charismatically and, in a team-oriented manner while considering the impact on followers. And supported El Zayaty's (2016) claims regarding the extreme influence of culture in Egypt. While reinforcing Hofstede's culture dimension theory and the GLOBE study.

6.3   Limitations

The two major limitations that were faced during the research for this paper were, that not enough participants were interviewed to reach data saturation, which could not have been reached in the limited time of this thesis, and the limited access to leaders who would agree to participate in interviews. The second limitation is that only leaders were interviewed meaning that the employee's perspective was not considered, additionally most of the time when the interviewees mentioned the subordinates, they meant office employees and not the factory workers. Additionally, the subordinates' perspectives would contribute greatly. A third limitation this research faced was that the companies interviewed already manufactured high-quality

products that did not need to change to meet international regulations, which should be considered for future research.

6.4   Future Research

Future research on this topic should be a total of 10 interviews with leaders and include at least one service provider to incorporate all industries. Conducting interviews with five subordinates for each leader interviewed. This would bring the total to 60 interviews which would help reach data saturation. Additionally, the companies interviewed should be random and not exporters only as they usually produce high-quality goods both domestically and internationally which does not portray the average company in Egypt.

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