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Cultural Issues in Communication Technology an Egyptian Perspective

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of communication technology on culture. The study aims to identify them in the Egyptian environment, and to highlight the main factors influencing the Egyptian students. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey from 280 Egyptian students from different age groups. Hypotheses were tested and analyzed by means of a regressions analysis.

This study extends current research by investing communication technology among Egyptian students in the Egyptian environment. This clarifies how Egyptian culture has been affected. Power distance and uncertainty avoidance as dimensions of culture were investigated. Findings of this study were interesting and give a guide to managerial policy makers.

Keywords: Communication technology, Facebook, Twitter, Mobiles, Internet, WhatsApp, Culture, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance.

I.   Introduction

Culture is one of the major external factors affecting management and in particular communication.Culture is a popular word which is used in our daily life. Culture is a word which is deep in meaning and has overlapping definitions. However, in the world of communication technology it connects the world together, and makes the ideas of people close.

Communication technology influences business and society by making the exchange of ideas and information more efficient. Communication technologies include the Internet, multimedia, e-mail, telephone and other sound-based and video-based communication means. Communication technology specialists design and maintain technical systems of communication, according to the needs of a specific business, industry or market.

Communicationtechnology became very important all over the world.It is considered a necessity rather than a convenience. This widespread use of Mobiles, Internet, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter brought an increasing acceptance of their use in virtually all social situations. Calls and messages are no longer seen as interruptions of the primary activity taking place, but areconsidered important communications. Proximity is becoming inconsequential in terms of social interaction. This study seeks to determine how communication technology has changed our culture and identifies the ways in which we now perceive socially acceptable communication.

It is becoming increasingly acceptable touse these devices (Mobiles, Internet, Facebook, What's App and Twitter) in social situations. These applications are now used almost by everyone by his Smart phone Mobile.The way we view communication and the appropriateness of certain types of communication behaviors is fundamentally changing.

II.   Literature Review

Concepts of Culture

Culture is one of the external factors affecting management. In the 1950s the dominant belief was that management was something universal. Later in the 1970s this belief was abandoned and it slowly became clear that culture is very important for management. (Hofstede,1983)

The word Culture is derived from the Latin word "Culura" which means agriculture, but whose meaning has expanded to cover all kinds of marks that human have left in history (Aaltio-Majosola, 1991). Anthropologists view culture as a system of assumptions, values, and norms (Schusky et al, 1967; Gertsen et al,1998).

Types of Culture

The influence of culture on the operations of the companies working on the global basis can be investigated at different levels of analysis. At the highest level is the culture of the national society. The way in which attitudes are expressed within a specific organization is described as organizational culture. While at the narrow level there is the professional culture (Trompenaars and Hampden,1988).

National Culture

National culture could be considered the culture which differentiates one society from another. When cross national borders you notice differences between people in each society. These differences can be seen in different forms of interpersonal interaction. (Olie, 1995). According to Erez and Early (1993) members of the same culture are more likely to interpret and evaluate situational events in a similar way than those from a different culture. There are subcultures inside each national culture. These subcultures could be regional, religious, linguistic, gender, and social class. (Hofstede, 1991) Based on the review of literature it is suggested that national culture can be viewed from a social perspective, a historical perspective or an individual perspective.

National culture is a relevant variable in all areas of operations management research that the direction and strength of its impact remain undetermined (Boscari et al., 2018)**.**

Social Perspective

The social perspective considers culture from a social point of view. Culture was defined as a feature of social life,(Greetz, 1973). While, (Child, 1981) defined it as an action and social relationship which can be combined by other cultural contextual variables. Cuplan (1993)considered culture in terms of the elements of the economy, policy, religion and family. One of the most important considerations from a social perspective is the generation gap.

Historical Perspective
From a historical perspective culture viewed from a historical perspective refers to values which are inherited in the population of a particular nation. Evans, (1977) defined culture as all those historically created designs for living which exist in any given time as a potential guide for the behavior of man.

Individual perspective
The individual perspective takes a view of culture in which the values and norms of individuals are highlighted. Triands (1972) defined culture as cultural group characteristics and considered it as a way of perceiving man-made parts of his environment.
Recent definitions defined culture as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another. And it is defined as shared values and meanings among groups. It is also defined as a set of values that underlie attitudes and actions of social groupings. (Hofstede, 1991)

Organizational Culture
As organizations grow they start to have an organizational culture. The concept of organizational culture has been defined as a set of assumptions or beliefs that are shared by members of an organization (Berryman,1989). Recently it was defined by Hofstede (1998) as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one organization from another. A deeper view was given by Schein(1992) he distinguished three level of culture (1) artifacts, this includes visible organizational structures (2)espoused values this includes strategies, goals and philosophies (3) basic underlying assumptions and this includes unconscious taken for granted beliefs.

Professional Culture:
Professional culture is narrower in scope than organizational culture. Despite this it still has some degree of importance. Bloor and Dawson (1994) investigated the nature of professional culture. They suggested that professionalism took place through such stages of the formation of professional associations, the development of minimum standards of

professional training the pursuit of professional knowledge and the development of a code of ethics and political agreement in order to gain public support for the chain of professional status.

Culture is a popular word which is used in our daily life, but what is the real meaning of culture and what is its impact on our lives. Although many authors have contributed to this subject, these questions are still without definite answers. Identifying the precise meaning of culture is very difficult. Culture is a word which is deep in meaning and has overlapping definitions.

The role of Culture in Communication Technology

We have moved into an era where Smart Phone Mobiles are very important. It is a constant companion that accompanies a person throughout their daily life and allows them the convenience of easy communication and access to information.   People are expected to be accessible at all times, and in any physical location.There is no longer any assumption of private time. These devices are creating a cultural shift within our society.Social media technologies have opened new possibilities for sharing personal information with online networks. (Pinchot, Paullet & Rota, 2010).

Kakabadse, Bailey & Myers (2009) surveyed 1, 277 students, ages 11-18, in regard to mobile phone calls and text messaging. A total of 267 surveys were returned. Ninety-five percent of students reported having access to a computer/laptop, mobile phone and /or the Internet. This study was a convenience sample surveying 88 undergraduate and graduate students. The researchers administered the survey to students from the School of Communications and Information Systems during scheduled class times in January 2010. Students were informed that taking the survey was voluntary and would not impact their current or future relations with the university

Disclosure of information

Disclosure of information fulfills fundamental needs for social connectedness and belonging and is intrinsically rewarding (Tamir & Mitchell, 2012), but it carries risks of information loss because a discloser gives up some degree of privacy and personal control by sharing information with others (Altman, 1975).People from different social groupsand different life periods are gathered intoone network. This is complicated as disclosers have to address different audience values simultaneously (Krämer & Haferkamp, 2011).

 A study by Bazarova & Hyung, 2014, eighty-one undergraduate students (72.7% female) from a university in the northeastern United States who had a Facebook profile were recruited to participate in this study.Empirical study examining self-disclosure motivations and characteristics in Facebook status updates, wall posts, and private messaging support the factor that motivational drivers are the main driver of self-disclosure in social media.

Mobiles libraries were originally seen as a way of offering a library service. Mobiles nowadays offer all the facilities of a modern branch library. (Want,1990)

Family & communication

Family communication is very important for their children subsequently for college students' family communication environments may influence their adjustment during the first year of college. We propose that family communication will predict perceptions of family support as well as the quality of advice received from parents, which in turn should promote student adjustment.(Hall, McNallie, Custers, Timmermans, Wilson and Bulck, 2017).

Critical family communication considerations of power connection of private family spheres to larger public discourses and structures; and inherent openness to critique, and resistance (Suter,2016)

Family communication influence perceptions of social support from family. Students feel comfortable when they ask for help and talk openly with their parents even about difficult topics. (High & Scharp, 2015).

The new technologies impose greater foreign domination and control of economic, social, political and cultural thinking and orientation in the developing countries.Modern computers are the communications revolution in the information age that challenge time and distance. (Ciboh,,2005).

Types of Communication Technology
Communication technologies became very important all over the world. It is considered a necessity rather than a convenience. This widespread use of Mobiles, Internet, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter brought an increasing acceptance of their use in virtually all social situations.
Internet plays a major role, in expanding the global knowledge base and provided a variety of ways to bring people and cultures closer together. The Internet provides a platform where companies that are thousands of miles apart can communicate and share information. On a social level people can make new friends around the globe via social networking sites (WWW.Techwalla.com). The internet has changed the advertising industry. Indeed, digital platforms, involving browsers, Webpages and social media advertising have confronted the important role of television, radio and newspapers in advertising. (Handley,2017)

The transition from traditional advertising to online channels has been motivated by consumers' preference ((Hussain and Lasage, 2014). Companies receiving more engagements were more efficient than those receiving fewer engagements; and companies adopting one main Facebook page were more efficient than those adopting multiple Facebook pages, the size and length of history of an organization were not found to affect efficiency outcomes significantly (Ye ,Lan,Cheong, Yunjae 2017).

Social media platforms are used to connect with friends and brands (Rambe and Retumetse, 2017) and influencers (Casalo et al., 2018), and to access information about current news (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017) and event.

A View of the Egyptian Culture

The historical and geographical features of the Egyptian society indicate signs of centralization of power. Concentration of power could be considered position power. It indicates that power is in the hands of those at the top of the organizations because of their position.

Historical features
Ancient Egypt was governed as one entity covering both Delta and Upper Egypt. Egypt at that time was an example of a highly centralized power government. All of the authority was in the hands of the pharaoh. After the fall of the pharaohs, the Arab Islamic rule started in 639 A.D. under this rule again Egypt was ruled as one entity. The ruler of Egypt known as the Wali had complete power over the country (Ayubi, 1980).

After the French occupation of Egypt, Muhammad Ali came to power, he ruled Egypt since 1805. He deeply believed in concentration of power. After the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 Egypt was still controlled by a centralized government. By 1956 GamalAbd El-Nasser came to power, he was an example of a charismatic leader who inspired the Egyptian people. The government at that time was highly centralized (Quardt, 1996; Anonymous, 1998). Zahra (1983) referred to this stage of the Egyptian history as being highly centralized, with the nationalization of major economic activities. Bureaucrats from the government were appointed to manage public organizations. They tended to emphasize centralized decision making, management by extensive procedures and red tape. Zahra also identified another source of bureaucracy as being the multiplicity of controls inside and outside the organization. All public organizations were controlled by holding companies, groups of which were allocated to ministries. These ministries and holding companies made decisions regarding investment, production, pricing and employment. Very little was left to the actual managers. This shows how centralized the government in Egypt was after nationalization, and the extent of position power in the Egyptian environment.

Nowadays Egypt is a presidential state, and the president has a dominant political and government authority (Ayubi, 1989).

Geographical features
Egypt is a country bordering Africa, Asia and Europe. A unique geographical feature is the Nile which is of crucial importance in terms of agriculture, industry and trade. However, this geographical feature led to the existence of a centralized government, as well as cooperation and coordination among people (Hopwood, 1993). In a hydraulic society people's lives depend on the water, this life lead to cooperation and coordination among people as water has to be shared and has to irrigate the land. At the same time this life leads to concentration of power.
The geographical and historical features of Egypt played a very important role for the embedding of concentration of power in the Egyptian culture. The social feature of Egypt also played a crucial role which could not be ignored.

Social features

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

Concentration of power and social integration are deeply ingrained features of the social life of Egypt. The Islamic religion which emphasized family traditions greatly enhanced both these aspects in the Egyptian culture.

The historical, geographical and social features of the Egyptian culture indicate that concentration of power is a dominant factor in this culture. This concentration of power could be considered a form of position power were control is in the hands of the ruler because of his position and his power to control. This throws the light on coercive, reward and legitimate power as essential bases of power in the Egyptian society. However, referent power also has a vital role. The inspirational effect of the charisma of political leaders, such as GamalAbd El-Nasser, indicates the existence of referent power in the Egyptian culture. Also social features to some extent show the existence of referent power from the father's or grandfather's power. This power could also be included as a form of position power where the father owns this power as the head of the family.

Ekhouly(1996) found that Arab countries including Egypt use an integrating and avoiding style in handling interpersonal conflict. This is in accordance with the results found by Hofstede (1980) concerning Egypt and other Arab countries as Egypt is considered to have high power distance.

Contradiction of power in the Egyptian Culture

Although centralization of power seems to be a dominant factor of the Egyptian culture, recent researches show a trend towards participation, as a way of sharing decision making.

From an investigation in 31 Egyptian State owned organizations, Badran and Hinings (1981) found that these organizations are highly structured and highly centralized. From Another study of 825 Egyptian public employees, Palmer et al (1985) found that Egyptian officials attempted to concentrate as much authority as possible in their hands and they tended to resist the delegation of authority. They considered three themes, the first was historical in nature, the second stressed the patriarchal nature of the Egyptian culture, and the third theme considered centralization as motivated by personal concerns of power. Kabasakal and Bodour (2002) studied the common managerial aspects between Morocco, Turkey, Kuwait and Qatar. This was the Arab cluster of the Globe Project. It was considered a cluster as they have been under the influence of Europe and Ottman Empire. It was found that these countries' leadership includes team oriented and charismatic attributes. The result of this research is another support of the two dominant factors of the Egyptian culture which are social integration and concentration of power. According to Hofstede (1980) Arab countries such as Egypt are characterized by high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. Hickson and Pugh (1995) wonderfully described the Arab culture as having two paradoxes, first Arabs are disposed to handle authority with high power distance, yet at the same time they aspire to an open door for all comers, high or low consultation in the manner of sheikhs. Secondly, they pursue their own individual interests yet do so by collectivistic means through personal relationships. (Hickson and Pugh, 1995)

Other researchers found that Egyptian managers consider participation as one of the most important managerial aspects in organizations. From a study of 17 Egyptian industrial organizations, El-gamal (1993) found differences in managerial profiles which revolved around planning and issues of participation. Parnell and Hatem (1999) compared the Egyptian and American management styles. The study was conducted at the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt. The Egyptian sample reflected the desire for participative style of leadership.

Atiyah (1992) concluded that the main features of organizations and management in Arab countries are over centralization and emphasis on control. However, he notes that the results with respect to leadership styles of Arab managers are conflicting. Some follow an authoritarian style, which could be linked to the traditional leader in Arab societies, while others follow a consultative style.

Actually we find that some researchers identified the existence of concentration of power as a main dominant factor controlling public organizations in Egypt and therefore conclude that it has a wide impact on leadership (Palmer et al, 1985; Badran and Hinings, 1981; Kabasakal and Bodour, 2002) while others referred to the existence of participation for Egyptian leadership styles (Elgamal, 1993; Parnell and Hatem, 1999).

III. Research Design and Methodology

Research Hypotheses

This study aims to test the following hypotheses:

H1 Egyptian Students Communication has a positive impact on National Culture

H2 Egyptian Students Communication has a positive impact on Power Distance

H3 Egyptian Students Communication has positive impact on Uncertainty Avoidance

The survey was conducted on Egyptian students. The survey included different age groups of Egyptian students. Questionnaires were distributed to Egyptian students the results were a total of 280 usable responses from 300 distributed questionnaires

The first five items were asking about the communication technology used (Facebook, Twitter, Internet, Mobile Calls, and WhatsApp) the following five items concentrated on the National Culture (Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance). Hofetede (1991) identified Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance as main dimensions of Culture.

It was essential to study Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance as dimensions of Culture as they are very important in the Egyptian culture. Power Distance is the extent to which less power members accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.While, Uncertainty Avoidance refers to the degree to which a culture accepts risks. (Hofstede, 1980, 1991).

Table 1.1 Questions and Related variables

Questions	Variables
Using Facebook is one of my daily activities	Facebook
Twitter is essential for me	Twitter
Internet is very important for my daily work	Internet
Mobil calls are now part of my life	Mobile Calls
Whats App is now essential in my day	WhatsApp
I take my decisions in an autocratic way	Power Distance

I am usually nervous	Uncertainty Avoidance
I listen to any disagreements with my opinon	Power Distance
I usually respond to needy people if I could	Uncertainty Avoidance
When taking any decision I consider the moral and ethical consequences	Uncertainty Avoidance

As the hypotheses were mentioned previously we are going to see how they are investigated by variables.

Table 1.2 Hypotheses and Variables investigated

H1	Q. 1-5 and Q.6-10
H2	Q. 1-5 and Q.6, 8
H3	Q.1-5 and Q.7,9,10

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section was descriptive. It included information about age and experience. The second section included information about communication technology (Facebook, Twitter, Internet, Mobile Calls and Whats App) and Culture.

Firstly, a regression analysis was conducted to measure the impact of Egyptian Students Communication factors as an independent variable on the Culture as a dependent variable. Secondly, a regression analysis was also conducted to measure the impact of Egyptian Students Communication on Power distance and Uncertainty Avoidance.

Firstly, a regression analysis was conducted in this case the use of regression was necessary because we aim to predict and explain the relation between the dependent variable and the independent variables (Haire et al, 1995). Regression analysis in the form of multiple regressions was the most widely used method for conducting multivariate analysis, particularly when more than three variables are involved (Bryman&Carmer, 1998). It provides a method of assessing the predictive power of a set of independent variables. The stepwise method was used in this study as it is useful for exploratory studies (Field, 2003). The regression analysis was conducted at two stages. In the first and second stages Communication was considered asan independent variable. In the first stage the impact on Culture was investigated, while in the second stage the impact on the items of culture (power distance and uncertainty avoidance) were considered. Culture in both cases was considered a dependent variable. Table 1.3 show the regression analysis.

Table 1.3 indicates the impact of Communication on Culture. Five factors entered the equation, Facebook, Twitter, Internet, Mobile Calls and WhatsApp. The results of this analysis are explained in the table.

Table 1.3 *Impact ofItems of Communication on Culture*

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	2.717	.232		11.696	.000
Facebook	.271	.026	.302	8.377	.000
WhatsApp	.305	.033	.335	9.372	.000
Twitter	.233	.022	.366	10.402	.000
Mobiles	.218	.025	.299	8.612	.000
Internet	.251	.040	.227	6.300	.000

All of the factors of communication entered the equation and all of them remained. Facebook had the greatest impact on Culture, while Internet had the least impact. R square which is the percentage of variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable was 0 .645 and the F test was 108.055 sig. at .000. The T test and the beta coefficients were presented in the table. For Facebook the Beta was .302 and the T test was 8.377, for WhatsApp the Beta was 0.335 while the T test 9.372, for Twitter the Beta is 0.366 and the T test is 10.402, for Mobiles the Beta is 0.299 while T test 8.612 Finally for Internet the Beta is 0.227 and T test is 6.300. This indicates that Facebook (as a factor of Communication) has a major impact on Culture, while Internet has the least impact on Culture. This indicates that the first hypothesis is accepted.

On the other hand the impact of Communication on Power Distance was also indicated. All factors of Communication entered the equation. This includes Facebook, Twitter, Internet, Mobiles and WhatsApp,. These factors were the independent variables, while Power Distance was the dependent variable. Table 1.4 shows this regression analysis.

Table 1.4*Factors of stress with productivity coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	2.554	.188		13.621	.000
Facebook	.118	.045	.151	2.646	.009

Table 1.4 shows that Facebook is the only Communication factor affecting Power Distance.. The R square was .023 and the F test was 7.002 sig. at .009. The Beta and the T test for Facebook were 0.118 and 2.646 they were sig. at 0.09. This indicates the positive impact of Facebook on Power Distance. This indicates that the second hypothesis is partially accepted.

Finally, the impact of Communication on Uncertainty Avoidance was also indicated. All factors of Communication entered the equation. This includes Facebook, Twitter, Internet, Mobiles and WhatsApp,. These factors were the

independent variables, while Uncertainty Avoidance was the dependent variable. Table 1.5 shows this regression analysis.

Table 1.5 *Factors of Communication with Uncertainty Avoidance*

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	2.995	.264		11.334	.000
WhatsApp	.120	.041	.168	2.918	.004
Internet	.116	.050	.133	2.314	.021

Table 1.5 shows that WhatsApp and Internet are the only Communication factors affecting Uncertainty Avoidance. The R square was .050 and the F test was 8.917 sig. at .000. The Beta and the T test for WhatsApp are .168 and 2.918 they are sig. at 0.04. While for Internet Beta is .133 and the T test is 2.314 they are sig. at .021. This indicates the positive impact of WhatsApp and Internet on Uncertainty Avoidance. WhatsApp is shown to have a greater impact. This indicates that the third hypothesis is partially accepted.

IV.   Discussion

The results of the study supported some of our hypotheses. According to the regression analysis, Communication has a positive impact on Culture. Actually, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Mobiles and Internet affect Culture. Statistically the most important contributor on Culture is Facebook then comes WhatsApp, However, Twitter, Mobiles and Internet. Facebook are the most effective factor on Culture and Internet is the least important. This supports our first hypothesis. While for Power Distance (as a factor of culture), Facebookhad the only impact on Power Distance. It had a positive impact indicating that Facebook has a strong effect on Power Distance. This indicates that our second hypothesis is partially accepted. For Uncertainty Avoidance (as a factor of culture) which represents our third hypothesis, WhatsApp and Internet had an impact on Uncertainty Avoidance. WhatsApp had a greater impact in this case. The third hypothsis is partially accepted.

It seems that Facebook and WhatsApp have a major impact in the Egyptian culture. The Egyptian youth represented in undergraduate students use Facebook and WhatsApp daily. It is considered a nature of their lives. Keeping in contact with their family, friend's relatives and colleagues is now through Facebook and WhatsApp, it replaced Mobile calls and internet which was used excessively in the past years. This could be because it is cheaper to use them for the Egyptian students and more modern as they want to be up to date in communicating.

V.   Conclusion & Recommendations

The study investigates communication technology for Egyptian students in the Egyptian context. The results of this study gave us an indication of communication technologyaffecting Culture. It is essential to increase the people's awareness of the communication technology used nowadays. It is important to consider the following:

- Increase the Egyptians awareness especially the elder people with the communication technology used and preferred by the youth
- Orient the Egyptian employees to accept and deal with any changes in the economy due to changes in generations.
- Provide elders with information about the different communication technology they should deal with to keep in contact with the youth
  Further research is needed to illustrate the communication technology methods preferred by different age groups and different occupations in Egypt and other Arab countries.A comparison between communications used in Arab

countries and those used in Europe or U.S.A.is necessary. This helps to facilitate business all over the world. More questions may be needed to elicit more information on communication. This issue is worthy of further research.

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