

Determinants of managerial performance among middle level managers: A preliminary investigation in an Egyptian context.

Dr. Ghada A. El-Kot, College of Management and Technology, AAST-MT, Egypt

Abstract

Culture differences have been asserted among different authors as one of the important issues that affect managerial practices in organizations. Six performance determinants that were found among middle-level managers in United States, China, India and Philippines; which are planning and decision making ability, self-confidence and charisma, educational achievements, communication skills, past experience and leadership ability, were investigated in this research among middle-level Egyptian managers in some organizations in Egypt. Questionnaire was used as a data collection technique. Descriptive statistics, correlation and Exploratory Factor analysis were used in this research. The finding from the EFA showed five important managerial performance determinants in Egypt. The findings from this research supported the importance of planning and decision making ability, self-confidence and charisma, communication skills, past experience and leadership ability. While there was no clear support to the educational achievements as a managerial performance determinants as perceived by a sample of middle-level managers in Egypt.

Key words: Managerial determinants, managerial performance, culture, and Egyptian managers.

Introduction

Buchanan and Hucznski (2004) argued that the increase use of the multinational organizations and the effects of the GATT agreement in many countries had been made some pressures on organizations to find a way to cope with the changes and challenges in the work environment; which would affect their work related aspects in their own culture and the national culture as well. In the same

direction, organizations are facing some challenges in their work environment such as the workforce diversity, competition level and other economic factors, which raised the importance of studying work related aspects and the managerial practices for organizational success to prepare employees to work in different work context, and to be able to select, recruit, train, motivate and evaluate expatriate managers; which will lead to increase employees' satisfaction and performance (Werther and Davis, 1995, Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang, 2000 and Dessler, 2003).

One of any organizations' goals is to achieve high performance among its employees; which might be accomplish -as argued by some authors- if the employees are working in positive work conditions and if they are motivated towards their jobs and satisfied to stay in the organization (for example: Dessler, 2003 and Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004). The importance of job satisfaction and managerial performance were studied for years and still seen as important issue especially in the new century. For example; Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) argued people's motives are considered as major determinates of their behaviors and performance.

Determinants of Managerial Performance

Kirchmeyer (1998) investigated the performance determinants, which argued for its importance for management career success. The study focused on the effects of four categories of performance determinants for career success. Two of these were objective indicators of success; personal income and

hierarchical level, while a subjective indicator was a perceived success. The final category was related to four human capital variables; experience, tenure, career interruption and professional degree. Kirchmeyer (1998) focused upon human capital, individual, interpersonal, and family as performance determinants for management career success.

Valos and Baker (1996) identified the determinants of performance of Australian exporters by using a model that has come up with tangible export performance determinants and intangible export performance determinants such as attitudinal, skill and knowledge factors. It is concluded that Australian export performance could be improved by focusing on these determinants particularly in terms of confidence and knowledge and skills. While, Koh and Robicheaux (1988) found other performance determinants such as manager's motivation, level of effort, manager education, extent and frequency of market research, and manager's perception of product uniqueness.

Performance determinants was also studied by Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang (2000) who examined the differences in what affects managerial performance of middle level managers in four countries; China, India, Philippines and USA. They found that culture has a significant impact on managerial practices. Their findings also provided some important factors that might lead to effective managerial practices and effective job performance. Their study is considered as a part of a global study, which tracks managerial performance in various

countries. Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang (2000) made a plea for further studies to measure the cultural orientation of the managers as their study only focused on four countries. They requested that further studies is needed for better knowledge of culture's impact on managerial performance.

Culture effects on management practices

Hofstede (1980, 1984) argued that management practices, organizational structure, all work-related aspects are influenced by national culture. Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang (2000) revealed that each culture environment had an impact on create a unique set of managerial values in each country. Earley and Erez (1997) argued for a direct relationship between culture and managerial practices, which would shape the work related aspects. Earley and Erez (1997) and Hofstede (1980) argued that managerial practices that work effectively in one culture might work poorly in others or could not fit in another county. This means there is no universal management practices, but there are some differences in management practices depends on the cultural environment of each county.

Thus studying the culture differences consider an important issue because of its influences and impacts on the managers-subordinates relationships and on the whole managerial practices. Hofstede (1980) argued for four dimensions for culture differences, which are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, Masculinity–femininity and individualism–collectivism. Milliman, Von Glinow and Nathan (1991) and Morais (1993) found that human

resource management, training, gender, managerial satisfaction, compensation and motivation were found as important managerial factors affected the managerial practices in different counties. As Hofstede (1980) argued each culture has its unique set of values, beliefs, work-related behaviors and attitudes that would have impacts on organizational values and managerial practices. Therefore, individualism or collectivism would have different impact on the managerial practices within each county.

Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang (2000) asserted that each culture should be studied within its own context, which would facilitate understanding the important determinants of managerial performance in a particular organization within each country. Therefore, they presented six factors after studying four different countries to determine the managerial practices determinants. These six factors are: planning and decision making ability, self-confidence and charisma, educational achievements, communication skills, past experience and leadership ability. They found the similarity on the underlying dimensions of managerial performance as perceived by the middle-level-managers in four different countries.

Egypt, as one of the Arab counties, has various work forces, different investors and also applied Western management practices as a result of having some multinational organizations working in Egypt in addition to sending employees to attend training programs abroad, which might affect the managerial

practices in Egypt. The Egyptian practitioners need to adapt different management practices to deal with the new century demands. Studying the Egyptian work environment and investigating the managerial performance determinants among some middle managers in different Egyptian organizations would help identifying the suitable determinants for positive work environment in Egypt that would help prepare, select, train, motivate and evaluate expatriate managers for Egyptian context and also for Egyptian managers to know how to cope with the future demands.

Method

Aim

This research aims to: (i) investigate the managerial performance determinants among Egyptian middle-level managers to determine the important factors that might lead to effective managerial practices and effective job performance in Egypt and (ii) to determine the relationships among each of these managerial determinants to compare it with the same managerial determinants in other countries. In order to explore these issues the study was conducted into two stages in the Egyptian context: (1) Stage 1 examined the performance determinants using exploratory factor analytical procedure; (2) Stage 2 examined the relationships among managerial performance determinants and to compare them with other countries.

Stage 1:

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Using exploratory factor analysis, responses to the managerial performance determinants will yield a six factor solution comprising planning and decision making ability, self-confidence and charisma, educational achievements, communication skills, past experience and leadership ability.

Sample and Procedures

Managers who are working in the middle level management in four large, successful manufacturing Egyptian organizations were employed in this research ($N=102$). A questionnaire was used as a data collection method in this research. The used questionnaire was distributed by the researcher with no time constrain to the respondents in their work place (August, 2002) and collected back from them after completed (January, 2003). Completed questionnaires were returned directly to the researcher. Of 200 distributed questionnaires, only 102 questionnaires were involved in this research with a % 51 response rate.

Measure

Managerial performance determinants: In this research same questionnaire that was implemented by Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang (2000) was employed to measure managerial performance among middle management level. The scale comprises 18 items, item 1 and 2 measure leadership ability, item 3 and 4 measure communication skills, items 5-9 measure decision making ability, items 10 and 11 measure educational achievements, items 12

and 13 measure past experience and items 14-18 measure self-confidence and charisma. Respondents were asked to read the scale and express their opinions on a Five-point Likert scale; (1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree).

Results

The results will be considered in three sections: (i) characteristics of sample; (ii) the descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha and the correlation for the six managerial performance determinants; and (iii) Exploratory factor analysis for the managerial performance determinants.

Sample characteristics

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample in terms of gender, educational level and department. It may be seen from the Tables that the majority in the sample were men and the majority had a college degree.

Category	Frequency	Per Cent
Gender		
Male	98	96
Female	4	4
Education		
College degree	99	97
Post graduate degree	3	3
Department		
Finance	23	22.6
Marketing	20	19.6
Human resources	15	14.7
Production	20	19.6
Sales	24	23.5

Table1: Sample Characteristics

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha and inter-correlation among the six determinants of

managerial performance. Cronbach alpha for the whole scale = 0.90.

Scale	M (N=102)	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. leadership	3.96	0.82	0.88	0.73**	0.72**	0.03	0.36**	0.51**
2. Communication	3.83	0.77		0.60	0.58**	0.08	0.45**	0.51**
3. planning and Decision Making	3.94	0.66			0.83	0.16	0.52**	0.65**
4. Educational achievement	3.68	0.93				0.73	0.32*	0.14
5. Past experience	3.96	0.73					0.58	0.64**
6. Self-confidence and charisma	3.93	0.67						0.85

Table 2 : The Descriptive statistics (M and SD), the inter-reliability (α coefficient) on the diagonal and the scale inter-correlations. Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Exploratory factor analysis

Table 3 shows the Factor analysis for the managerial performance determinants examined in this research. Factor analysis was used in this research to assess the inter-relationships of the selected variables without imposing a predetermined structure by using an exploratory factor analysis, EFA (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 1995 and Child, 1995). Factor analysis was conducted to determine whether data from Egypt share similar data structure with the data from other four countries. Hair *et al.* (1995) argued for running the EFA at different sample sizes, with factor loading of 0.55 for sample size 100. Therefore, in the current research, it was decided to use a factor loading of ≥ 0.55 as being significant. In this research the principal component analysis was carried out. The Kaiser-Myer-Olkin (KMO) measure of the sample adequacy was 0.81. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$), which showed that it is acceptable to proceed with the analysis. The number of factors to be extracted, according to the eigenvalue greater than 1.0 criterion, was five factors and these accounted for 79.02 per cent of the variance (see Table 3).

Scale	Unrotated Component					Rotated Component				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership_1	<u>.756</u>	-.443	.192	.136	-.120	<u>.809</u>	.190	.360	.008	-.009
Leadership_2	<u>.780</u>	-.316	.254	.235	.003	<u>.773</u>	.198	.418	.002	.126
Communication1	<u>.583</u>	-.428	.203	.317	-.202	<u>.823</u>	.004	.156	.003	-.002
Communication2	<u>.762</u>	-.144	-.252	.248	-.138	<u>.638</u>	.496	.004	.285	.009
Decision making_1	<u>.808</u>	-.006	.412	-.190	.149	.436	.165	<u>.792</u>	.179	.009
Decision making_2	<u>.863</u>	-.005	.009	-.101	.296	.406	.480	<u>.645</u>	.119	.173
Decision making_3	<u>.662</u>	.004	.358	-.321	.111	.223	.126	<u>.745</u>	.250	.004
Decision making_4	<u>.625</u>	-.459	.145	-.131	-.123	.495	.192	<u>.567</u>	.009	-.297
Decision making_5	<u>.559</u>	.470	.009	-.205	<u>-.598</u>	.134	.002	<u>.851</u>	.261	.102
Education_1	.251	<u>.628</u>	.142	<u>.578</u>	.281	.006	.001	.001	.009	<u>.936</u>
Education-2	.345	<u>.650</u>	.212	.142	.237	-.009	.004	.316	.272	<u>.692</u>
Past experience_1	<u>.572</u>	<u>.584</u>	-.101	-.119	-.358	.004	.195	.155	<u>.832</u>	.254
Past experience_2	<u>.734</u>	.002	-.255	.330	-.190	.579	.444	-.003	<u>.585</u>	.238
Self-confidence 1	<u>.827</u>	.009	-.271	.238	-.002	.509	<u>.572</u>	.114	.369	.298
Self-confidence 2	<u>.720</u>	.236	-.192	-.261	-.209	.182	<u>.564</u>	.301	.641	.001
Self-confidence 3	<u>.715</u>	-.002	<u>-.557</u>	-.146	.287	.160	<u>.909</u>	.212	.167	.003
Self-confidence4	<u>.689</u>	-.178	-.494	-.196	.313	.203	<u>.874</u>	.270	.005	-.007
Self-confidence 5	<u>.708</u>	.270	.242	-.210	.189	.148	<u>.642</u>	.273	.321	.274
Eigenvalue	8.37	2.27	1.41	1.15	1.02					
% Variance	46.53	12.61	7.82	6.39	5.67					

Table 3: The rotated and unrotated factor matrix. (loading >0.55 underlined). Zeros are omitted from the factor loading.

In this research, there are four items loaded on Factor 1 (with factor loading of over 0.60). This factor is concerned with two issues, which are related; the first is leadership ability and the second is communication skills. Therefore, F1 is labeled 'Communication and leadership skills'. There are five items loaded on factor two (with factor loading of over 0.55). There is a clear association between the variables within this factor; all of the five items in this factor are self-confidence and charisma. Hence, it is easy to label this factor as 'Self-confidence and Charisma'. Factor three comprises five items and is concerned with planning and decision making ability, (all with factor loading of over 0.55). Therefore, F3 is labeled 'Planning and Decision making'. Factor 4 is made up of two items concerned with past experience (with factor loading of over 0.55). Hence, the factor is labeled 'Past experience'. Factor 5 is made up of another two items (all of which have factor loading of over 0.60). This factor is concerned with educational achievement issues; hence, the label for this factor is 'Educational achievements'.

Discussion

Table 1 shows the sample characteristics. It may be seen from the Table that the majority in the sample were men and the majority had a college degree. This indicated a sample encompassing five departments in the chosen companies. Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations and internal consistencies. The internal consistencies (Cronbach's α) for leadership ability, communication skills, planning and decision making

ability, educational achievements and self-confidence and charisma exceeded the minimum value of 0.60 for organizational research suggested by Finklestein (1992), while only past experience was below the accepted value (0.58).

Table 2 also shows the scale inter-correlations for the instrument administered to the sample. There were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) correlations between leadership ability and communication skills, planning and decision making ability, past experience and self-confidence and charisma. There were also statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) correlations between communication skills and planning and decision making ability, past experience and self-confidence and charisma. There were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) correlations between planning and decision making ability and past experience and self-confidence and charisma. There was a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) correlation between past experience and self-confidence and charisma. There was a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation between educational achievements and past experience.

The Factor analysis in Table 3 shows the underlying structure dimensions of managerial performance, which suggested that the underlying structure dimensions of managerial performance as perceived by the middle managers in Egypt were very similar with those found across the four countries, except for the leadership ability and communication skills as both loaded in the same factor based on the Egyptian managers' perceptions compared with

perceiving them as two factors among middle-level managers in the four countries.

The findings supported the hypothesis that managerial performance determinants may be disaggregated into different factors, however, the findings not accepted the six factors as suggested by previous studies, and provided evidence of being five factors namely: (1) Communication and leadership skills, (2) Self-confidence and Charisma, (3) Planning and Decision making, (4) Past experience and (5) Educational achievements.

Stage 2

Hypothesis: The correlation among the five managerial performance determinants will be statistically significant and positive.

This main hypothesis will be tested by the following sub hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There are positive relationships between Communication and Leadership skills as an indicator to managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants.

Hypothesis 2: There are positive relationships between Self-confidence and Charisma as an indicator to managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants

Hypothesis 3: There are positive relationships between Planning and Decision making as an indicator to managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants.

Hypothesis 4: There are positive relationships between Past experience as an indicator to

managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants.

Hypothesis 5: There are positive relationships between Educational achievements as an indicator to managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table 4 shows means, standard deviations, internal consistencies (Cronbach α) and inter-correlations for the five performance determinants as found from Stage 1 in the chosen sample. The inter-correlation among managerial determinants in general were vary, while some correlations were high and statistically significant, there were also some correlations low and not statistically significant (r ranged from 0.10 and 0.70). This was contrary to our expectation. Cronbach alpha for the five performance determinants are above the accepted level ($\alpha > 0.60$) for leadership and Communication skills, planning and decision making ability, Educational achievement and self-confidence and charisma and below the accepted level only for past experience ($\alpha = 0.58$).

Scale	M (N=102)	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. leadership& Communication	3.85	0.80	0.87	0.70**	0.10	0.47**	0.62**
2. Planning and Decision Making	3.94	0.66		0.83	0.16	0.52**	0.65**
3. Educational achievement	3.68	0.93			0.73	0.32*	0.14
4. Past experience	3.96	0.73				0.58	0.64**
5. Self-confidence and charisma	3.93	0.67					0.85

Table 4 : The Descriptive statistics (M and SD), the inter-reliability (α coefficient) on the diagonal and the scale inter-correlations. Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

To test Hypothesis 1 (in Stage 2) the correlation between communication and leadership skills as an indicator of managerial determinants and the other managerial performance determinants were computed. There were positive and statistically significant correlations between communication and leadership skills and with only planning and decision making ($r = 0.70$), past experience ($r = 0.47$) and with self-confidence ($r = 0.62$). Hence Hypothesis 1 was partially supported for the positive relationship between communication and leadership skills as managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants.

To test Hypothesis 2 the correlation between self-confidence and charisma as an indicator of managerial determinants and the other managerial performance determinants were computed. There were positive and statistically significant correlation between self-confidence and charisma and with only communication and leadership skills ($r = 0.62$), planning and decision making ($r = 0.65$) and with past experience ($r = 0.64$). Hence Hypothesis 2 was partially supported for the positive relationship between self-confidence and charisma as managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported as the correlations were low and non-significant with the educational achievements.

To test Hypothesis 3 the correlation between planning and decision making as an indicator of managerial determinants and the other managerial performance determinants were computed. There were positive and statistically significant correlation

between planning and decision making and with only communication and leadership skills ($r = 0.70$), self-confidence and charisma ($r = 0.65$) and with past experience ($r = 0.52$). Hence Hypothesis 3 was partially supported for the positive relationship between planning and decision making as managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported as the correlations were low and non-significant with the educational achievements.

To test Hypothesis 4 the correlation between past experience as an indicator of managerial determinants and the other managerial performance determinants were computed. There were positive and statistically significant correlations between past experience and with other managerial performance determinants as expected; communication and leadership skills ($r = 0.47$), planning and decision making ($r = 0.52$), educational achievements ($r = 0.32$), and self-confidence and charisma ($r = 0.64$). Hence Hypothesis 4 was supported for the positive relationship between past experience as managerial performance determinants and the other managerial performance determinants. However, the correlations were low and significant with the education.

To test Hypothesis 5 the correlation between educational achievements as an indicator of managerial determinants and the other managerial performance determinants were computed. There was only a low positive and statistically significant

correlation between educational achievements and past experience ($r = 0.32$). Hence, Hypothesis 5 was rejected as the correlations were low and non-significant.

Discussion and conclusion

The Egyptian managers should develop sufficient self-knowledge to become as effective manager who would be able to compete globally. Therefore, a comparison between the findings from the Egyptian sample as found in the current research and the findings found in Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang (2000) in other countries is important. However, before making these comparisons to determine the similarities or the differences in the managerial performance determinants, an investigation to the similarities in the work related issues as studied among different cultures by Hofstede (1991) should be examined because in many companies that share common task environment, there are tendency to develop similar structures across cultures. In Neelankavil *et al.* study (2000) the comparison made among four countries, however, the comparison with the current research findings will focus only on two countries (India and Philippines). The reason behind that choice could be explained as there are some similarities in the culture and the work context as found by Hofstede between Egypt as one of the Arab countries and India and Philippines. Hofstede (1980) classified Egyptian culture as large power distance and collectivism and masculine as India and Philippines. El-Kot and Leat (2002) found the same findings related to the Egyptian context. While India and Philippines are classified in one group as weak

uncertainty avoidance, Egypt as one of the Arab countries classified as strong uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980 and El-Kot and Leat, 2002). Hofstede argued that in Egypt (as one of the Arab countries), the preferences in organizations would be in the pyramid of people as the culture was described as large power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance. While in India and Philippines, the preferences would be in family business as there were large power distance and weak uncertainty avoidance. These comparisons were important to show the managerial determinants that we could implement in Egypt compared with other similar cultures.

An investigation to assess the perception of Indian and Pilipino middle-level managers with respect to the importance of the factors which could contribute to managerial performance was made by Neelankavil *et al.* (2000) which indicated that Pilipino and Indian managers tend to be similar on some factors in determining managerial performance such as communication skills, leadership skills and self-confidence and charisma, While, there are some differences in past experience, planning and decision making and educational achievements. Understanding the managerial determinants in Egypt compared with other cultures will help to help managers to create a positive work environment and also to understand why subordinates work and react in a certain way in a specific work environment. (See Table 5).

<i>Managerial determinants</i>	<i>Indian managers</i>	<i>Pilipino managers</i>
Leadership skills	Great important	Great important
Communication skills	Important	Important
Planning and Decision Making ability	Least important	Great important
Educational achievement	Near the overall mean	Very high
Past experience	Low important	Important
Self-confidence and charisma	Important	Important

Table 5: The comparison between the perception of Indianan and Pilipino middle-level managers with respect to the importance of the determinants of managerial performance.

The findings from this research provided insight into the factors that lead to effective managerial practices in a sample of Egyptian managers. The findings indicated that there are some factors are seen by the middle-level managers as much more important than the others. It can be also concluded from these findings that for the managers to be effective, they should have communication and leadership skills, planning and decision making ability, past experience and self-confidence and charisma, while the findings did not support the relationship between the educational achievements and any of the other managerial performance determinants among the middle-level managers in the chosen sample. These findings are similar to what found by Indian and Pilipino managers concerning the importance for communication and leadership skills, and self-confidence and charisma. While, Egyptian managers (in the chosen sample) were similar to Pilipino

managers in respect to planning and decision making ability and past experience. These findings revealed that there are some similarities in the managers' perceptions in the managerial determinants; however, each unique culture would have its own effect on the work related aspects.

This study might add some knowledge which could help in selecting, training, motivating, evaluating expatriate managers to Egyptian context, which thought to be the case in the coming days, which is important to give advices to organizations how to create and develop an effective global human resource strategy to deal with subordinates and managers in Egypt. However, further studies are needed with a larger sample in the Egyptian context.

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