Employees' perceptions of supervisory facets

An investigation within an Egyptian context

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this paper is to explore the supervision facets from the employees' perception in Egypt. Another aim is to explore the relationships between the supervisors' facets and their satisfaction level.

Design/methodology/approach – To achieve the aims of this research, the researchers collected data from different employees in deterrent organizations in Egypt ($n = 272$). Validity and reliability tests were computed for the measures used in the research. Descriptive statistics, inter-correlations were computed for the variables used in this research to test the research hypothesis.

Findings – The similarities with the non-western contest were found in some facets of supervisors, while others are not. Significant relationships were found between supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction from their supervisors.

Practical implications – Some practical conclusions which would lead to effective and successful organizations in the Egyptian context are: creating a positive environment by focusing on the social relationships between employees and their supervisors and developing a clear job description to help employees understand what they have to do, along with allowing some real participation by the employees in making decisions.

Originality/value – Investigating such concepts will provide the basic information needed to develop a clear understanding for supervisory-employees relationships in a non-Western context, which is not available currently.

Keywords Line managers, Employee relations, Egypt

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Human resources are a vital asset to any organization; and these include two sets of people: supervisors and employees. Organizations need effective employees and supervisors to achieve their objectives. Understanding such a relationship, and how they can work together, is considered a key for organizational success. Noe *et al.* (2003) argued that many organizations try to foster a culture of shared values among employees; which will have a positive effect on employees' satisfaction and performance.

They argued that increasing job satisfaction can be derived from congruence among supervisors and employees. Also, employees might be satisfied from the supervisors who provide social support, feedback and advise them at work when needed. This means focus on creating a supportive environment; which some organizations foster

by moving towards building team working. The importance of supervision role was also mentioned by Satava and Jim Weber (1998) who referred to what so-called ABCs of supervision, which is considered by them as the skilled supervisor, who can manage, direct, monitor, and motivate employees to work better in a friendly culture.

The HR department in organizations is facing a challenge to develop a committed and productive workforce in a turbulent environment and in order to achieve organizational success. Forster (2006) argued that finding and keeping talented employees had become one of the main issues confronting companies due to the rapid changes in the environment, including the technical environment. Buhler (2007) mentioned that the nature of leadership, the supervisory role and the managerial roles are facing some changes due to the new technologies implemented in this century. Humphrey and Stokes (2000) also argued for the importance of the role of the supervisors in the workplace; which would have positive effects on organizations' success.

Supervisors facets

Weiss (2007) focused on effective supervisory leadership and argued that supervisors need individual characteristics, such as problem-solving skills, being fair, production concentration, recognizing others' work, taking positive action and giving feedback to employees, in addition to being energetic, being able to create new ideas and being confident; all of which would help in performing the job well. Buhler (2007) argued that an effective leader is able to identify how to lead depending on people and the situation. The focus was on the interpersonal skills and communication skills and argued for situational leadership as there is no one-size-fits-all leadership style that is appropriate for all situations for all people.

Humphrey and Stokes (2000) mentioned some important skills that supervisors need to lead their organizations in the twenty-first century. These skills are divided into three categories; people, technical and administrative. Cropper (1994) added that organizations' success comes from the motivated, committed, skilled employees with positive attitudes towards their organizations and he referred to the supervisors who play the key roles to create the environment where these characteristics occur naturally and consistently. Balser and Stern (1999) focused on how supervisors manage employee performance problems and found that supervisors enact their role as agents of the organization. Challagalla and Shervani (1996) found supervisory control to have an indirect impact on performance of salespersons and have direct and indirect effects on satisfaction.

Wiley (1992) found that employee productivity could be increased by creating a motivating-supportive environment that requires the integration of four vital components as represented by the personal characteristics of employees, the job framework, the distinctive traits of supervisors, and the corporate philosophy. She argued that supervisors should be capable of nurturing a team spirit, maintaining open communications with subordinates and employing participative management techniques in order to display qualities such as fairness, honesty, supportiveness and accessibility. Wiley (1992) also added that there are certain qualities that supervisors possess which enable them to be a motivating factor for employees. Some of these qualities are honesty, supportiveness, empathy, accessibility, fairness, and openness. She argued that supportive supervisors exhibit a team spirit and a participative management style.

Snowden (2007) referred to a leader's framework for decision making and focused on the importance of some skills that each leader should have such as; knowing how to react with the complex situational context that organizations face these days by having a sense of work, the ability to analyze situations and respond to it. Innovation, creativity, communication and planning are important skills needed to help leaders perform effectively.

Rodriguez (2007) added that an effective leader is one who encourages free and open communication, and trains team members in the best possible way to guarantee effective performance. Stahl (2007) focused on the characteristics of an influential leader in the corporate world. He believes that the key to effective leadership is the ability to influence people. In order to influence others, leaders should understand the targeted audience, build rapport and present the content effectively in real time. McDonald (2007) referred to how leaders can influence others to think and perform in new ways and argued that leadership skill is number one in any paradigm shift towards better performance.

Supervisors' facets, employees' satisfaction and performance

Govindarajulu and Daily (2004) studied the importance of top management role/supervisory role by focusing on employer and employee factors affecting environmental performance in organizations. They argued for the importance of the integration between top management commitment, employee empowerment, rewards, feedback and review, and environmental performance. Orpen (1994) referred to the crucial role that supervisors play in organizations and perceived them as more central to effective organizational performance than anybody else. He argued that in manufacturing organizations, supervisors are typically felt to have more influence, for both good and bad, than other groups of employees on such outcomes as absenteeism, product quality, cost reduction and labor relations.

Macneil (2001) referred to the importance of supervisors in their firms, because they are at the interface between the organization and its work teams. He argued that supervisors who are effective facilitators will utilize their own learning and interpersonal skills to encourage informal learning opportunities through knowledge-sharing in their work teams, thus improving the team's performance. Pechlivanidis and Katsimpra (2004) explored the role of the manager-leader when decisions are being implemented. They focused on contingency theories of leadership which focused on the choice of a specific version of his/her supervisory style. Camuffo and Gerli (2007) investigated the nature of the competencies for production supervisors in northeast Italian firms and argued that their results which emphasised the supervisor's top-down trust of the subordinate employees may be more effective in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures.

Bettencourt and Brown (1997) found that contact employee prosocial service behaviors and job satisfaction were products of fairness of job supervision, pay and promotion rules and supervisor administration. They addressed the issue of workplace fairness; which refers to employee perceptions of the "rightness" of outcomes, procedures and interactions within the firm. They found fairness of job supervision is a significant, positive predictor of all three types of contact employee prosocial behavior. The same findings were found by Moorman (1991) and Niehoff and Moorman (1993); which identified a significant influence of fairness of supervisory behaviors on cooperation, but no influence of fairness of formal rules.

Costigan *et al.* (2007) examined the relationship of a supervisor's affect- and cognition-based trust to a subordinate employee's self-ratings of enterprising behavior, which includes creativity, risk taking, initiative, motivation, and assertiveness, and to the supervisor's and coworker's ratings of the subordinate's enterprising behavior. The findings of their study showed that the supervisor's cognition- and affect-based trust of the employee are associated with that employee's enterprising behavior.

Tabak (1997) referred to the factors that may influence employee creativity as studied by Oldham and Cummings (1996). These four factors are creative personality, job complexity, supportive supervision and non-controlling supervision. Their results suggest that the four factors all have to be present to maintain creative performance. Challagalla and Shervani (1996) studied the impact of dimensions and types of supervisory control on salesperson performance and satisfaction. Results show that supervisory controls are found to have an indirect impact on the performance of salespersons, and to have direct and indirect effects on satisfaction.

Shelton (2000) referred to the relationship between supervisor and employees by investigating how a supervisor's attitude can affect employee's performance. He argued that many problems with employees in organisations stem from the relationship between employee and supervisor. He noted that understanding supervisor-employee interactions or relationships would help in creating a more productive working relationship by focusing upon increasing supervisory self-awareness of their employees and establishing a better relationship with employees through supervisor-employee feedback. El-Kot (2004) investigated the determinants of managerial performance among middle-level managers in Egypt and provided insight into the factors that lead to effective managerial practices. 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.

Different authors identified the relationship between leadership style and organizational effectiveness and success depends on the situation and the situational factors involved. For example, Greenberg and Baron (2000) explained the situational factors, which are individual factors, social factors and environmental factors and discussed how each manager/supervisor or leader should behave in a certain situation. The contingency leadership models, which focused on the situation and the ability to isolate situational factors, such as: the Fiedler contingency model, the leader-participation model, the path-goal theory and Hersey and Blanchard's situational theory. Reviewing these models and investigating the main idea behind each one can conclude some of the main important features that should be related to the leaders' behaviors. The Fiedler contingency model focused mainly upon the task-oriented and the relationship oriented, the leader-participation model focused mainly upon the degree of participation, the path-goal theory focused mainly upon the directive leader, the supportive leader, the participative leader, and the achievement-oriented leader, Hersey and Blanchard's situational theory focused mainly upon task-relationship dimensions with four possible behaviors; high task-low relationship or high task-high relationship or low task-low relationship, or low task-high relationship.

Supervisors' roles in satisfying employees and improving their performance were also examined by previous researches, for example, Cully *et al.* (1998), Greenberg and Baron (1997) and Mullins (1996) who found that job satisfaction could be also enhanced by giving the employees some degree of autonomy and participation in making

decisions that might affect their jobs. They also argued for enhancing employees' satisfaction by improving the employee-supervisor relationship. They found high level of job satisfaction among employees who believe that their supervisors are competent and treat them with respect. Mullins (1996) noted that effective supervisors might have been seen as necessary for enhancing job satisfaction. Mullins (1996) and Savery (1996) revealed the importance of the organizational climate and working condition to enhance employees' satisfaction. Mullins (1996) also added the importance of some other issues such as; salaries and wages, job variety, clarity of goals, security, social issues and interpersonal issues such as growth, in enhancing employees' satisfaction. Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006) found a significant relationship between participative leadership styles and employees satisfaction. El-Kot (2003) in a survey of employees and managers in manufacturing and service Egyptian organizations found that participative management, as a management style, was found in some Egyptian organizations and also that there is a positive relationship between the use of participative management style and employees' job satisfaction. These finding were based on two samples ($N_1 = 472$ and $N_2 = 230$).

Egypt
There is still relatively little knowledge about supervisors' aspects which have direct and indirect effects on employees' satisfaction and performance at work in the Middle East. There is a similar shortage of research evidence concerning management or supervision styles in the Middle East. Some researchers found certain influences of western management approaches and practices in Middle Eastern countries, as they open themselves up to foreign investment and become more involved in – and subject to – the pressures of international business and increased competition, as well as become more aware of alternative management theories and practices through going abroad to study and obtain management qualifications. Budhwar and Mellahi (2007) conclude from the relatively limited evidence available that Middle Eastern countries appear to have management systems similar to most other developing countries and that these emphasise sensitivity to local cultural norms, which influence values, expectations, attitudes and behaviour, and restricted participation in decision making. They also identify the considerable influence of Islamic work ethics (IWEs) and principles. Egypt was one of the Middle Eastern countries to pursue an open-door policy to foreign investment and exhibits many of the characteristics of Middle Eastern countries. As far as the authors of this study are aware, there are no reported studies examining or investigating supervisors' facets in Egypt or investigated these facets with employees' satisfaction; which are the subject of this study.

Socio-cultural context
The Egyptian culture is a blend of Arab and Middle Eastern influences. In his original research, Hofstede (1980) did not specifically examine work-related values in Egypt. However, he does present findings relating to Arab societies in general. Hofstede (1980) classified Arab-speaking countries as demonstrating high-power distance, moderately strong uncertainty avoidance, low individualism and moderate masculinity.

The high-power distance suggests that employees are likely to accept an unequal distribution of power and expect to be directed by their supervisors whose authority they respect. The moderately strong desire to avoid uncertainty suggests that employees are

likely to welcome the security afforded by working for the same organization for a long time, having clear career paths and clearly specified job descriptions. The low individualism suggests that relationships are likely to be emphasised at the expense of the task and team working and a team focus are likely to be congruent with this orientation.

Support for the appropriateness of Hofstede's (1980) findings and their implications is provided for example by Nydell (1996) who referred to respect for seniority in Arab countries and in Egypt, and Parnell and Hatem (1999) who noted employees often tended to agree with their supervisors. They confirm the importance of relationships over the task and the importance of loyalty to the group. They also comment that friendship is a cornerstone of the Egyptian culture.

Religion

While other religions are present in Egypt, Islam is the dominant religion and a number of authors have referred to and examined the impact of Islam, for example: Hickson and Pugh (1995), Ali (1996), Parnell and Hatem (1999) and Yousef (2001). The IWE as found by Yousef (2001) emphasizes and encourages hard work, which is perceived as; a virtue through which sins can be resolved, a source of financial independence and a means of achieving personal growth, self-fulfilment, self-respect and self-satisfaction. The IWE also emphasizes cooperation in work and consultation, the latter being seen as a way of overcoming obstacles or avoiding mistakes. Social relations at work are also encouraged, it is important to have good relationships at work with both equals and superiors partly for the satisfaction this brings of itself and partly because links inside and outside work can be vital to survival and success. Yousef (2001) also comments that his research suggests that those who support the IWE are more committed to their organizations and more satisfied with their jobs.

Aim

There is still relatively little knowledge about employee expectations, behavior and perceived outcomes of and from work in the Middle East. Budhwar and Mellahi (2007) referred to the growing emphasize on the development of the human resources aspects in most of the countries in the Middle East region. They referred also to the shortage in the literatures found examine or investigate HRM in the Middle East region. Atiyyah (1993) and Parnell and Hatem (1999) noted that there has so far been relatively little research undertaken into the management practices employed in Arab countries. The aim of this research is to explore certain features related to management practices in the Egyptian context by investigating the supervision concepts from the employees' point of view in some chosen organizations. Investigating these concepts will provide us with the basic information needed to develop a clear understanding of supervisory-employees relationships in a non-western context; which is not available up-to-date. Part of this aim also is to explore the relationships (if any) between the supervisors' facets that Egyptian employees perceive about their supervisors and their satisfaction. Previous studies indicated some important variables for determining supervision concepts in different cultures, however, in an Egyptian culture the views might vary according to the culture differences. Therefore, investigating supervision concept and its relationship with employees' satisfaction in Egypt would add knowledge to previous studies in the Middle East region in general and to the Egyptian context specifically.

Reviewing the Arab literature revealed that no up-to-date study investigated the supervisors' facets from employees' perspective in the manufacturing or service organizations in the Egyptian context. This adds importance to this research so that we form a better understanding of supervisory facets along with their impact on employees' satisfaction in Egypt.

Sample
To achieve the aims of this research, the researchers collected data from different employees working with the same supervisor in the chosen organizations. Collecting data in Egypt is really difficult as not all managers will allow the researchers to deal with the employees in the work setting. Therefore, a convenience sample was chosen as one of the researchers got an access to some organizations, Sekaran (2003) argued for the possibility of using convenience sample for social research. The sample used in this research comprised ($n = 272$) from different employees from different manufacturing and services organizations in Egypt.

Measure: two measures were employed in this research
   (1) The scale used in this research is a part of the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire by Cammann *et al.*, 1979 and Seashore *et al.*, 1982. The scale compromises 30 items, which measuring ten supervision concept (facets) based on employees' perception towards their supervisors. Three items for production orientation, five items for control of work, three items to measure work facilitation-goal setting, two items for work facilitation-problem solving, seven items for work facilitation-subordinate relations, two items for bias, three items for consideration, two items for participation, two items to measure decision centralization and one item for competence. The scale used is a five-point Likert scale ranged from 5 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree. Three items from the scale were revised scores as suggested from the original scale (see the Appendix for items).
   (2) The second scale used in this research is the job satisfaction measure: three items of Job Diagnostic Survey by Hackman and Oldham (1975) was employed in this study to measure employees' satisfaction towards their jobs mainly by focusing upon their supervisors. Respondents were asked to read the scale and express their opinions on a five-point Likert scale; (1 – strongly dissatisfied and 5 – strongly satisfied) (see the Appendix for items).

Procedures
A questionnaire as a data collection method was used in this research. The questionnaires were distributed and collected back via the researchers with no time limit for completing them. Respondent were asked to read the questionnaire items carefully and express their opinion towards each item. Data were collected between September 2006 and March 2007. Of 450 distributed questionnaires; only 272 completed and returned questionnaires were employed in this study with a 60 percent response rate.

Results
This study will be divided into two stages; Stage 1 with the aim of investigating the supervisors' facets by using factor analysis and Stage 2 by focusing on investigating

the relationship between the supervisors' facets – as perceived from the employees in the chosen Egyptian sample – and employees' satisfaction.

Stage 1: investigating supervisor's facets: reliability and validity of the scale
Reliability assessment. Alpha coefficients (Table I) were calculated for each dimension of the scale. All α coefficients, representing the scale's internal consistency, are quite high. Alpha coefficients for each dimension range from 0.64 to 0.81 except for only one dimension, which is 0.58; which is considered as marginal by Finkelstein (1992).

Exploratory factor analysis. The aim is to explore the issues identified in the foregoing discussion by testing the following hypotheses in an Egyptian context:

H1. Using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), responses to the supervision scale will yield a ten-factor solution comprising production orientation, control of work, work facilitation-goal setting, work facilitation-problem solving, work facilitation-subordinate relations, bias, consideration, participation, decision centralization and competence factors.

Factor analysis was used in this research to assess the inter-relationships of the selected variables without imposing a predetermined structure by using an EFA (Hair *et al.*, 1995). Factor analysis was conducted to determine whether data from Egypt share similar data structure with the data from other studies in different settings. Hair *et al.* (1995, p. 385) argued for running the EFA at different sample sizes, with factor loading of 0.30 for sample size 350 and with factor loading of 0.35 for sample size 250. Therefore, in the current research, with a sample size of 272, it was decided to use a factor loading of ≥ 0.35 as being significant.

An EFA was conducted on a full sample ($n = 272$). A principal components analysis revealed that six principal components (factors) had Eigenvalues greater than one (KMO test of sampling adequacy $= 0.89$; Bartlett's test of Sphericity, $p < 0.0000$), which showed that it is acceptable to proceed with the analysis. These six factors accounted for 58.12 percent of the variance and the six extracted factors were inter-correlated ($0.001 \leq r \leq 0.73$). The results of EFA with the full sample $n = 272$ is shown in Table II. As seen from Table II, the pattern of factor loading was as expected for some dimensions and not as expected for others. From Table II, it is clear that there are some differences in understanding and interpreting the supervision facets from the employees' perspective in Egypt when compared with research findings elsewhere.

Scale dimensions	Number of items in each dimension	α Coefficients
Production orientation	3	0.64
Control of work	5	0.73
Work facilitation-goal setting	3	0.74
Work facilitation-problem solving	2	0.68
Work facilitation-subordinate relations	7	0.41 and 0.79 if one item deleted
Bias	2	0.79
Consideration	3	0.70
Participation	2	0.58
Decision centralization	2	0.81
Competence	1	Not applicable on one item

Table I.
α coefficients for each dimension of the scale as well as for the total scale

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
My supervisor demands that people give their best effort	.127	.087	.166	−.257	*.656*	.071
My supervisor insists that subordinates work hard	.130	−.033	.114	.007	*.763*	−.234
My supervisor demands that subordinates do high-quality work	.176	.087	−.002	.159	*.725*	−.006
My supervisor keeps informed about the work which is being done	*.577*	.194	−.069	.088	.292	−.135
My supervisor plans out work in advance	*.557*	.245	.055	.105	.260	.185
My supervisor handles the administrative parts of his or her job extremely well	*.612*	*.409*	.059	.169	.128	−.078
My supervisor maintains high standards of performance	*.401*	.083	.276	.274	*.378*	−.139
My supervisor knows the technical parts of his or her job extremely well	*.549*	.022	*.511*	.085	−.004	.006
My supervisor makes sure subordinates have clear goals to achieve	*.668*	.264	.115	.133	.234	.011
My supervisor makes sure subordinates know what has to be done	*.630*	.076	*.379*	.127	.102	−.120
My supervisor makes it clear how I should do my job	*.675*	.063	.284	.028	.047	−.003
My supervisor helps me solve work-related problems	*.531*	*.410*	.248	−.068	−.032	−.082
My supervisor helps me discover problems before they get too bad	*.649*	*.559*	.111	.073	−.032	−.167
My supervisor keeps informed about the way subordinates think and feel about things	.238	*.713*	.029	.050	.001	−.068
My supervisor keeps subordinates informed	.338	*.553*	.126	−.054	.001	−.100
My supervisor helps subordinates develop their skills	*.455*	*.531*	.201	.010	.208	−.154
My supervisor has the respect of subordinates	.197	.316	*.679*	−.014	.168	−.063
My supervisor deals with subordinates well	.245	.135	*.744*	.075	.105	−.047
My supervisor is always fair with subordinates	.216	.330	*.614*	.155	.091	−.036
My supervisor tends to play favorites	−.121	.039	*−.511*	−.168	−.071	*.353*
My supervisor is biased on the basis of race	−.029	−.003	−.054	−.180	−.102	*.858*
My supervisor is biased on the basis of gender	.119	.125	.164	−.065	.124	*.441*
My supervisor helps subordinates with their personal problems	−.037	*.598*	*.377*	.134	−.004	.206
My supervisor is concerned about me as a person	.214	*.602*	.275	.296	.088	.095
My supervisor feels each subordinates is important as an individual	.109	*.490*	.336	*.446*	.211	.010
My supervisor encourages subordinates to participate in important decisions	.059	.267	*.426*	*.386*	.037	−.033
My supervisor encourages people to speak up when they disagree with a decision	−.218	−.067	−.123	*−.793*	−.008	.166
My supervisor makes most decisions without asking subordinates for their opinions	−.102	−.002	−.039	*−.828*	.055	.204
My supervisor makes important decisions without involving subordinates	.168	.346	.153	*.498*	.090	−.086
My supervisor is competent	*.727*	.087	.166	−.257	.056	.071
Eigenvalue	8.93	2.41	1.90	1.35	1.178	1.09
Percentage of variance	30.78	8.30	6.56	4.67	4.06	3.76

Notes: Zeros are omitted from the factor loading; loading ≥0.35 italicized

Table II.
The results of EFA, the rotated factor matrix

Some dimensions are the same as found in different settings or as seen by different employees in western cultures, while others are not. For Factor 1, 11 items are loaded on this factor; which concerned with control of work, work-facilitation-goal setting, work-facilitation problem solving and competence. It seems that all of these items focused upon the competence of the work as guided from the supervisors to their employees, therefore, F1 labeled as "Supervisory Competence". Six items were loaded on Factor 2; which focused three items of work facilitation-subordinate relations and three items of consideration, therefore, "Supervisory facilitation" was the labeled suggested for this new factor as it is presents the different ways that supervisor can use from the employees perception to facilitate their jobs by dealing with personnel issues or personnel relations. For Factor 3, four items from work facilitation-subordinate relations were loaded upon this factor; therefore, the label for this factor is "Supervisory-subordinate relations." Four items were loaded on Factor 4; which are participation and decision centralization, therefore, the label for this factor is "employees' involvement in decision making." Factor 5 compromised all items that related to production orientation, therefore, this factor labeled "Production orientation." Factor 6 compromised two items related to bias, therefore, this factor labeled "bias."

The similarities with the non-western context were found in production orientation and bias as they were clear as seen and found by other employees in other cultures. However, the Egyptian sample – in this study – referred to different understanding as they combined the role of supervisor in participation and decision making together. They also separated subordinate relations into two sets. There is also a combination of control of work, goal setting, problem solving and competence together; employees in Egypt perceive these aspects of the supervisory role as one component.

Stage 2: supervisors facets and employees' satisfaction in an Egyptian context
The aim of this part is to investigate the relationship between the supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction.

Descriptive statistics and correlations
Table III shows means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations for supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction. The internal consistency for the employees' satisfaction from their supervisors was (0.88) which are considered as acceptable level as suggested by Finkelstein (1992) and Nunnally (1970).

Scale	M (n = 272)	SD	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
F1: supervisory competence	4.04	0.58	1	0.71**	0.68**	0.25*	0.49**	−0.07	0.56*
F2: supervisory facilitation	3.76	0.62		1	0.62**	0.15*	0.40**	−0.06	0.73**
F3: supervisory-subordinate relations	4.05	0.65			1	0.24*	0.45**	−0.12	0.54**
F4: employees' involvement in decision making	3.25	0.47				1	0.56*	−0.32	0.53**
F5: production orientation	4.44	0.51					1	−0.15	0.63**
F6: bias	2.24	1.20						1	−0.23*
F7: employees' satisfaction from their supervisors	4.06	0.92							1

Table III.
Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations for supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction

Based on the findings from previous studies (Moorman, 1991; Emmert and Taher, 1992; Wiley, 1992; Niehoff and Moorman, 1993; Mullins, 1996; Challagalla and Shervani, 1996; Bettencourt and Brown, 1997; Greenberg and Baron, 1997; Cully *et al.*, 1998; Balser and Stern, 1999; Eby *et al.*, 1999; Kim, 2002) that focused on measuring the relationship between supervisors and employees' satisfaction, the following hypotheses will be tested in the Egyptian context:

H2. The correlation between the supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction from their supervisors will be statistically significant and positive (except for bias).

To test *H2* for the relationship between supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction from their supervisors, a correlation was computed. The correlation between supervisors' facets and employees satisfaction about their supervision were moderate and statistically significant (r ranged from 0.23 to 0.73). There was positive and statistically significant correlation found between supervisory competence and supervisors' facets as an indicator of job satisfaction ($r = 0.56^*$). There is a positive and statistically significant relationship found between supervisory facilitation and employees satisfaction from their supervisors ($r = 0.73^{**}$), the correlation between supervisory-subordinate relations and employees satisfaction from their supervisors were statistically significant ($r = 0.54^{**}$). The correlation employees' involvement in decision making with employees satisfaction from their supervisors was also statistically significant ($r = 0.53^{**}$). The correlation between production orientation and employees satisfaction from their supervisors job satisfaction were statistically significant ($r = 0.63^{**}$). There was low but some of them are have statistically significant correlation between bias and employees satisfaction from their supervisors ($r = -0.23$). Hence, *H2* was accepted for the significant and positive relationship between supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction from their supervisors-except for the bias; which is significant and negative as expected.

Based on the findings from employees satisfaction; it can be concluded that based on the chosen sample in the Egyptian context, employees are satisfied with their supervisors based on the supervisors facets investigated in this study. This would raise an important issue; which is what is the rank of importance of the supervisors' facets from the employees' perception? Therefore, a short questionnaire was distributed among some employees ($n = 50$) asking for the rank of importance from their point of view towards the six supervisors' facets found in Egypt. Table IV shows the rank of importance for the six supervisors' facets in the chosen sample.

Based on the findings in Table IV, employees rank as first in importance the facilitation that their supervisors would provide them, followed by the relationship that they have with their supervisors at work. The level of involvement in the decision-making process is

Scale	Frequency ($n = 50$)	Rank of importance
F1: supervisory competence	27	4
F2: supervisory facilitation	43	1
F3: supervisory-subordinate relations	38	2
F4: employees' involvement in decision making	36	3
F5: production orientation	21	5
F6: bias	18	6

Table IV.
Rank of importance for the six supervisors' facets with a sample of 50 employees

seen by them as the next most important after the relationships with their supervisors. This is what we would expect in an Egyptian culture (see Discussion).

Discussion

Supervisors are regarded as an effective tool in influencing employees' performance in organizations. Previous studies identified the importance of the link between satisfied employees and a number of work factors; such as relationships with the management team, with supervisors, with pay and promotion.

The aims of this paper were to investigate the supervisors' facets in the Egyptian context; which would help understanding supervisor-employees relationships and to investigate the relationships between supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction based on employees' perception. Based on these research findings, it can be concluded that the six supervisors' facets as perceived by the employees in Egypt are; supervisory facilitation, supervisory competence, supervisory-subordinate relations, employees' involvement in decision making, production orientation and bias.

Some differences have been found compared with the previous findings in a western context. In the western context, the employees perceive their supervisors' facets as ten facets; which are production orientation, control of work, work facilitation-goal setting, work facilitation-problem solving, work facilitation-subordinate relations, bias, consideration, participation, decision centralization and competence factors. These findings might be explained by the effect of the culture dimensions. Egypt is described as high-power distance culture (Hofstede, 1984); which would foster employees to follow what they have been told by their supervisors as they might be afraid to disagree with them, this is also due to the moderately – strong uncertainty avoidance dimension and consistent with Islamic belief that if you stick to the rules given by supervisors; every thing will be well. This might have an explanation of the employees' perception towards the role of their supervisors; which they found as a source of facilitation to achieve their work perfectly.

This paper also aimed to investigate the relationship between the supervisors' facets and employees' satisfaction with their supervisors and we have found some significant relationships between the supervisory facets and employees' satisfaction with their supervisors in the Egyptian context. Positive and significant relationships were found between; supervisory facilitation, supervisory competence, supervisory-subordinate relations, employees' involvement in decision making, a production orientation (as supervisors' facets) and employees satisfaction. There is also a negative and significant relationship found between bias (as part of supervisor's facets) and employees' satisfaction with their supervisors. These findings are consistent with the findings of Challagalla and Shervani (1996) and Bettencourt and Brown (1997); which found significant relationships between supervisors and satisfaction. These findings also support previous research which referred to the important role that supervisors play in satisfying employees (Cully *et al.*, 1998; Mullins, 1996). Therefore, the second research hypothesis was accepted.

These findings might be explained by the effect of the work related issues such as the IWEs; which is perceived by employees in Arab countries as a source of job satisfaction (Yousef, 2001). The IWE emphasizes and encourages employees to work with high level of cooperation and consultation with others, fosters hard work, and encourages social relations at work including good relationships at work between employees and their supervisors.

By asking employees to rank the importance of the six supervisors' facets based on their perception, we discover that they ranked as most important the facilitation, support and help, that their supervisors would provide them, followed by the relationship that they have with their supervisors at work. The level of involvement in the decision-making process is seen by them as the third most important after the relationships with their supervisors. This ranking is consistent with what we would expect in an Arab country influenced by Islam which emphasizes the importance of supportive and good social relationships at work (Leat and El-Kot, 2007; Parnell and Hatem, 1999). Also, Camuffo and Gerli (2007) suggested a level of sharing and trust between supervisors and employees to be more effective in a collectivist culture and Egypt is described as moderate to high in collectivism (Hofstede, 1984). Therefore, supportive social relations are very important at the workplace and as a source of employee satisfaction. The emphasis placed on participation in decision making is consistent with the findings of El-Kot (2003) who found a positive and significant relationship between participative leadership style and employees' satisfaction in the Egyptian workplace.

Conclusion

From the above findings, we might be able to draw some tentative conclusions regarding the practices that should be pursued in order to help practitioners in the organizations understand and improve the supervisory-employees relationships in Egypt and in turn improve employee satisfaction with all the benefits that this offers in terms of contributing to organizational effectiveness and success. Egypt is an Arab country and is influenced by Islam which would point up the importance of social relationships at work. Some of these practical implementations are: first, create a positive environment by focusing on the supportive and social relationships between employees and their supervisors. Second, develop a clear job description to help employees understanding of what they have to do and to determine the relationships with their supervisors. Third, allow employees to play a real role in making decisions. Fourth, focus on developing a high level of trust between employees and their supervisors to guarantee a high level of cooperation in the workplace.

Further research

In this research, we have found significant relationships between supervisors' facets and job satisfaction but there are other aspects of the supervisor-subordinate relationship which also need to be examined for their influence on employees satisfaction including the style of supervision and the role and influence of consultation and participation in decision making, the individual differences among employees and the organizational culture in order to determine the sources for developing positive work environment in Egypt; which would increase employees' satisfaction and improve employees' performance in an Arab context.

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Appendix

(1) My supervisor demands that people give their best effort.

(2) My supervisor insists that subordinates work hard.

(3) My supervisor demands that subordinates do high-quality work.

(4) My supervisor keeps informed about the work which is being done.

(5) My supervisor plans out work in advance.

(6) My supervisor handles the administrative parts of his or her job extremely well.

(7) My supervisor maintains high standards of performance.

(8) My supervisor knows the technical parts of his or her job extremely well.

(9) My supervisor makes sure subordinates have clear goals to achieve.

(10) My supervisor makes sure subordinates know what has to be done.

(11) My supervisor makes it clear how I should do my job.

(12) My supervisor helps me solve work-related problems.

(13) My supervisor helps me discover problems before they get too bad.

(14) My supervisor keeps informed about the way subordinates think and feel about things.

(15) My supervisor keeps subordinates informed.

(16) My supervisor helps subordinates develop their skills.

(17) My supervisor has the respect of subordinates.

(18) My supervisor deals with subordinates well.

(19) My supervisor is always fair with subordinates.

(20) My supervisor tends to play favorites.

(21) My supervisor is biased on the basis of race.

(22) My supervisor is biased on the basis of gender.

(23) My supervisor helps subordinates with their personal problems.

(24) My supervisor is concerned about me as a person.

(25) My supervisor feels each subordinates is important as an individual.

(26) My supervisor encourages subordinates to participate in important decisions.

(27) My supervisor encourages people to speak up when they disagree with a decision.

(28) My supervisor makes most decisions without asking subordinates for their opinions.

(29) My supervisor makes important decisions without involving subordinates.

(30) My supervisor is competent.

Employees' satisfaction from their supervisors

(1) The degree of respect and fair treatment I receive from my boss.

(2) The amount of support and guidance I receive from my supervisor.

(3) The overall quality of the supervision I receive in my work.

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