

Empower Me or Not? Influence of Societal Culture

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Abstract

Our review of the literature discussing cross-cultural studies of employee empowerment finds frequent theoretical and methodological flaws, leading to inconsistent and often contradictory findings. With these deficiencies in mind, we carry out an empirical study of the relationship between the late Geert Hofstede's seven-dimensional model of national culture and employee preferences for employee empowerment behaviors by managerial leaders. We employ data obtained from ten samples in eight countries, from a global study of preferred managerial leader behavior across cultures. Empirical analyses indicate that cultural value dimension predictor variables affect, but do not explain, employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors in any of the societies studied. Our findings indicate the importance of engaging in future investigations of the dynamics among cultural, organizational, and personal values, and contingency factors, to advance the understanding of employee attitudes toward, and leader effectiveness of, empowerment styles across societal cultures.

Keywords

Culture, employee empowerment, preferences, manager and leader behavior

“Western” theories of leadership, conformity, perception and attribution, behavior, and effectiveness, in Western studies have frequently failed to replicate socio-psychological findings in other societal cultures, throwing some doubt on their validity across cultures (Arnold, Arad, Rhoades & Drasgow, 2000). The late Geert Hofstede stated (1980) that the “nature of management skills is such that they are culturally specific: a management technique or philosophy that is appropriate in one national culture is not necessarily appropriate in another” (p. 81). One theoretical concept that has been erroneously labeled culturally universal is employee empowerment.

We present in-depth investigations of relationships between preferred empowering behavior and societal cultural values in the global setting and find empowerment, the practice of giving employees the autonomy to make decisions about how they go about their daily activities, to be viewed differently from culture to culture (see also, Humborstad & Perry, 2011). Empirical evidence shows that in some societies, employees respond less positively to delegated authority and work autonomy, hence, the success of empowerment as a managerial practice depends on understanding the cultural and contextual assumptions, values, and beliefs held by those being managed (Robert, Probst, Martocchio, Drasgow & Lawler, 2000). Lack of congruence between empowerment as a management practice and employee cultural values may be most striking in high power distance nations, where subordinates are accustomed to unquestioningly accepting orders from their supervisors; hence practices of subordinate autonomy would be foreign (Hui, Au & Fock, 2004; Humborstad & Perry, 2011). Littrell (2007) stated, “The conventional wisdom proposed in academic and professional theory and practice is that empowering employees anywhere, globally, leads to myriad individual, group, and organizational benefits” (p. 88). To the contrary, a rising body of cross-cultural studies reports significant societal culture influences on the effectiveness of employee empowerment and employee cognitions (i.e., perceptions and attitudes) toward empowerment

(see e.g., among many, Hui, et. al, 2004). Due to methodological flaws, however, cross-cultural research has not been able to deliver unequivocal insights into such influences and has produced conflicting findings.

In this study, we empirically examine cultural effects upon employee attitudes toward empowering behaviors by managerial leaders to produce defensible findings. We examine these effects using data from a longitudinal, global research project described in Littrell (2013), and Warner-Søderholm, Minelgaite and Littrell (2019), assessing employee opinions, attitudes and beliefs relating to preferences for leader behaviors by multi-country samples of businesspeople and business students. Our study includes samples from eight geographically and culturally diverse nations. These represent members of organizations in Russia, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Turkey, Indonesia, the USA, and Peru.

We first present the findings of our literature review on empowerment and cultural influences and, based on this, we develop our hypotheses. We then present our samples, the methodological procedures we deployed to collect and process data, and the results of our analyses. Finally, we discuss the implications and limitations of our study and outline future research directions.

Literature Review

Fayol (1949) introduced the concept of employee empowerment but called it “initiative” and claimed it to be “one of the keenest satisfactions for an intelligent person to experience” (p. 39). According to Fayol, “Employees should be encouraged to make suggestions to conceive and carry out their plans, even when some mistakes result. The manager must be able to sacrifice some personal vanity to grant this sort of satisfaction to subordinates” (p. 39). McGregor (1957) also proposed that employees might not be so different from managers and could be trusted. Their words essentially promote employee empowerment as a key aspect of effective management and leadership.

The literature on employee empowerment from the mid-20th century interweaves a myriad of organizational, leader, and employee-centric conceptualizations across two dominant research streams: universal and culturally contingent.

Conceptualizing Empowerment

Organization-level research focuses on organizational design, processes, practices, and policies that allow employees access to information, resources, opportunities to grow and learn, ensuring support and unleashing human capital (Randolph & Saskin, 2002). These include flat and horizontal organizational structures and processes that incorporate employee-involvement-oriented work practices and systems, i.e., team-based work structures, information sharing, and participation in decision-making (Kazlauskaitė, Buciuniene, & Turauskas, 2012). The redistribution of decision-making power and organizational processes thus offers employees the experience of power (Menon, 2001).

Manager-level research uses a behavioral approach to empowerment and focuses on leaders' empowering behaviors towards employees, such as avoiding an autocratic leadership style (Robert, et. al., 2000). Behaviors include encouraging employees to take initiative in their work roles and to focus on goals to facilitate performance (Arnold et al., 2000), as well as delegating and/or redistributing decision-making authority, and performing employee-supporting actions (Fock, Hui, Au, & Bond, 2013). Researchers (Kele, Mohsin & Lengler, 2017) propose behaviors such as recognizing and releasing into the organization – by preparing or authorizing employees – the power of employee knowledge, experience, motivation, and employee training; and allowing or offering employees control, freedom, information, resources, and participation in decision making (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012).

Employee-level research adopts a behavioral and psychological approach to empowerment and focuses on employees' cognitions (i.e. perceptions of, attitudes toward empowerment, etc.) and congruent reactions to being empowered (Zhang & Begley, 2011).

Elaborations of such dynamics differ, entailing many cognitive aspects and job-related concepts that have been aggregated in distinctive and sometimes overlapping sub-categories of discretion (i.e. perception of increased job autonomy and self-control; Fock et al., 2013; Hui et al., 2004), and cognitive empowerment (i.e. feelings and beliefs of trust, motivation, competence; Menon, 2001). The overarching logic is that the employees' beliefs about empowerment affect their intrinsic motivation, job attitudes, and performance (Kim, Beehr, & Prewett, 2018) and may therefore foster goal clarity.

In their seminal study of the effects of empowering behaviors by leaders, Cheong, Spain, Yammarino & Yun (2016) found that empowering leadership has positive effects on employee behavior and that it is essential that empowering behavior engenders psychological empowerment, trust in leaders, and positive leader–member relationships. Through these motivational and exchange-based mediators, empowering leadership has significant positive effects on followers' behavioral outcomes. Conversely, if empowering behaviors do not facilitate the conditions to create empowerment, trust in leaders, or positive leader–member relationships, empowering leadership may have deleterious effects on followers' behavior. This suggests that ultimately the effects of empowering leadership are determined by how followers perceive their leaders' behavior. On the one hand, followers may view leader behaviors, such as fostering participative decision making or providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints, as an indication that the leader trusts them and is providing them with opportunities for self-development and growth. However, such behaviors could be interpreted as indicating that the leader lacks the ability to lead or is passing responsibility on to followers in order to avoid making difficult decisions. In the first instance, empowering leadership should enhance the psychological empowerment, trust in the leader, and good leader–member relationships of followers. In the latter example, followers may be frustrated and uncertain about their role and may not participate in a positive exchange

relationship with their leader. If the attributions of leader behavior are fundamental, it is vital that leaders are able to express the reasons behind their use of empowering behavior and the benefits for the follower.

Culture-based Models of Preferences for Empowerment

The proliferation of research using culture-based models and theory in the literature on empowerment has resulted in conceptual confusion. The only consensus is the lack of unanimous findings and conclusions and the lack of a globally accepted definition of empowerment. Such confusion spreads across the two dominant research streams, universal and culturally contingent. The universal stream focuses on effectiveness while the culturally contingent stream adds cognitive aspects (i.e. perceptions, attitudes) of employee empowerment.

The universal approach to empowerment.

As noted, some findings in the literature indicate negative effects of employee empowerment. These imply that organizations and leaders misuse empowerment as a disguise for work intensification and employee exploitation (Gkorezis & Petridou, 2012) and that empowerment results in poor decisions by empowered employees who lack experience and competencies for autonomous decision making (Randolph & Saskin, 2002).

However, most researchers from Anglo-cluster countries take a universal approach to benefits of empowerment, arguing that empowering employees inevitably leads to various types of individual, group, and organizational improvements. Benefits at the employee level are said to be improvements in various attitudes and behaviors, including job satisfaction (Kele, et al., 2017; Kim, et al., 2018), engagement (Albrecht & Andretta, 2011), thriving at work (Li, Liu, Han & Zhang, 2016), and organizational citizenship behaviors with outcomes such as increased productivity (Mohsin & Kumar, 2010), creativity and innovation (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). Benefits at the group level entail team attitudes such as

proactiveness and participation (Zhang & Begley, 2011), cohesion and outcomes of efficacy, innovation and creativity (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; 2015). These benefits also entail increased product and service quality (Jiang, Lepak, Hu & Baer, 2012); lower labor turnover, lower costs, and increased profits (Kazlauskaite et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, we find problems with much of the literature that argues for the universality of benefits and employee appreciation of empowerment without regard for the implications of cultural influences on employee attitudes towards empowerment. Research taking the culturally contingent view argues that the omission of cultural influence undermines and may neutralize the generalizability and applicability of empowering behaviors across differing societal cultures.

The culturally contingent approach to empowerment.

The culturally contingent approach contextualizes follower-centric behavioral and psychological perspectives on empowerment, arguing that culture influences how employees perceive, interpret, and react to organizational practices and managerial behaviors that allow employee discretion and autonomy in the workplace. It posits that culture shapes followers' attitudes about such practices and behaviors, who interpret and evaluate them for compatibility with what they consider desirable and effective (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). The more compatible the perceived practice or behavior is with such employee attitudes, the more positive the employee response is. Conversely, if employee cultural values and norms are incongruent with perceived behaviors and practices, employees may become dissatisfied with those aspects of their jobs and unmotivated to display expected behaviors and performance (House, et. al., 2004). As empowerment practices decentralize power by involving employees in decision-making, the behavior of a supervisor in providing employees with discretion and autonomy over their tasks (Hsieh & Chao, 2004) may be culturally contingent. The subordinates' perception of their individual responsibility to

manage events, situations, and people they encounter at work will differ across nations and organizations. In some contexts, the people at the lower levels of organizations will be expected to “know best” and thus the leader’s role should be to act as coach and/or mentor (Robert et al., 2000), while in other cultural contexts, the opposite will be the norm.

Cross-cultural literature on empowerment is most often based upon Hofstede’s models of national cultural values (Hofstede, 1980, 2001) in conceptualizations of culture and on data from societies with dissimilar cultural values such as North vs. Latin America or Western vs. Eastern societies. The literature, however, varies in the conceptualizations of empowerment used and explanations of cultural effects on both the employee cognitions and responses (i.e., implementation, effectiveness) to empowerment.

Effectiveness of Employee Empowerment across Societal Cultures.

Culture and behavior, attitudes, and beliefs are frequently discussed in relation to Hofstede’s Power Distance dimension, due to its focus on power and decision-making authority and expectations. High Power Distance has been assigned both positive and negative influences, as well as a moderating role in the relationship between employee empowerment and employee effectiveness.

Literature suggest that High Power Distance values hinder the effectiveness of employee empowerment due to the cultural disinclination of managers to share power, along with their tendency to lead in a directive way, and of employees to expect and obey instructions from a higher authority. This research direction indicates that High Power Distance values weaken the effect of leader behavioral, structural, and psychological empowerment on employee job attitudes, behaviors; and outcomes including (Flock et al., 2013; Hui et al., 2004; Kim & Beehr, 2017, Kim et al., 2018; Zhang & Begley, 2011):

- employee satisfaction
- commitment
- motivation
- engagement

- team participation
- operational effectiveness
- interpersonal conflict
- citizenship behavior
- creativity
- general performance

Offering a competing perspective of employees' cultural tendencies to comply with authority, behave submissively, avoid disagreements and insubordination, and feel dissonance and discomfort when failing to meet employers' expectations, research shows that High Power Distance values can also strengthen the effect of structural empowerment (involvement in work systems) on operational effectiveness (Jiang et. al, 2012). High Power Distance can also strengthen the influence of empowerment by leaders and employee psychological empowerment on employee satisfaction (Fock et. al, 2013). Robert et al. (2000) also showed that High Power Distance can strengthen and weaken the link between empowerment behaviors by leaders and employee effectiveness in different societal cultures.

Results from some empowerment studies conducted in High Power Distance cultural contexts have been inconclusive (Hui et al., 2004, Humborstad & Perry, 2011). For example, Robert et al. (2000) failed to obtain significant findings. The empowerment–job satisfaction relationship was negative in the India sample, but this relationship was found to be positive in other samples from High Power Distance countries. In contrast, Hui et al.'s study (2004), after controlling for extraneous variables, provided support for variation in empowerment effects on job satisfaction. Chen and Chen (2008) found that while some of the sub-dimensions of empowerment were positively correlated to organizational commitment, others were negatively or not correlated. Due to the growing economic importance of remote leadership of global, cross-cultural teams in disruptive times and the “new normal” it is important that this uncertainty around the effectiveness of employee empowerment be explored further.

Studies on the moderating effect of other cultural values are sparse, and the findings are inconsistent. Some researchers argue that the need for safety, security, and structure

prevail over the need for achievement, and the unwillingness to take unfamiliar risks in High Uncertainty Avoiding cultures render empowerment ineffective and induces employee stress and withdrawal (Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004). Empowerment was argued to be more effective in weak Uncertainty Avoidance cultures, where employees are motivated by the prospect of self-development and growth (Durcan & Kirkbride, 1994). Indeed, research showed that leader empowerment behaviors were positively associated with employee job satisfaction and decision commitment in Low Uncertainty Avoidance cultures (Hoffman & Shipper, 2012). However, Zhang and Zhou (2014) found that empowering leadership facilitated employee creativity in High Uncertainty Avoidance cultures, depending on a high level of trust towards the leader.

Sigler and Pearson (2000) contended that empowerment should be effective in Collectivist societies as it facilitates the achievement of group or organizational goals by improved individual contributions. Empirical evidence, however, suggests that Individualism negatively affects the link between employee psychological and structural empowerment and employee engagement (Zhang & Tian, 2019) and that it does not affect the link between structural empowerment and employee satisfaction (Robert et al., 2000).

The Effect of Culture on Employee Cognitions toward Empowerment.

Research on the cognitive effect of culture on employee empowerment, i.e., numerous employee perceptions and attitudes toward empowerment, entail a larger set of cultural values but is more descriptive and similarly inconsistent. Littrell (2007) noted that employees in Low Uncertainty Avoidance societies have fewer rules and regulations to follow have looser management control and marginalized needs for stability and security, are more prone to risk-taking, and perceive empowerment more favorably.

Conversely, Randolph and Sashkin (2002) and Magnini (2009) proposed that societies with High Power Distance and High Uncertainty Avoidance values have employees that are

“mentally programmed” to be dependent and have lower demand for personal autonomy. In such cultures, employees are more cognizant of authority and reluctant to challenge leaders (Boudrias, Gaudreau, & Laschinger, 2004).

Magnini (2009) found that High Power Distance and High Uncertainty Avoidance negatively influence employee psychological empowerment and that Individualism negatively affects employee perceptions of psychological and structural empowerment. Conversely, Zhang and Tian (2019) found that High Power Distance positively affects psychological and perceived structural empowerment. Dimitriadis (2005) found that High Uncertainty Avoidance actually results in higher levels of preference for psychological empowerment, while Zhang and Tian (2019) found no significant relationship between Uncertainty Avoidance and employee psychological and perceived structural empowerment.

Littrell (2007; 2013) further argued that people in Collectivist cultures generally prefer to not accept responsibility, are comfortable with close supervision, and fear punishment for initiative, especially failed initiative. Authority is, thus, not delegated, changes are not supported, communication is not channeled, and information is not shared, implying that empowerment practices would not be embraced by managers or their subordinates. Ho and Chiu (1994) supported these arguments that Individualistic societies value individual autonomy, achievement, self-reliance, and responsibility. Hence, empowering employees by showing trust, delegating authority, and allowing participation in decision-making, should be welcomed in such societies. Kirkman and Shapiro (1997) proposed the opposite, arguing that the more Collectivist a culture, the more likely workers are to accept autonomous team-based work arrangements.

Empirical research, however, does not provide unequivocal support for such postulates. Kirkman and Shapiro (2001) and Sigler and Pearson (2000) found support for a link between Collectivism and employee psychological empowerment. Zhang and Tian

(2019) found a negative link between Individualism and psychological and perceived structural empowerment. On the other hand, Magnini (2009) found support for a link between high Individualistic values and high preference for psychological empowerment.

Randolph and Sashkin (2002) provided one of the few theoretical discussions involving Hofstede's Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation and Masculinity vs. Femininity cultural dimensions. They argued that men in societies with High Masculinity scores are accustomed to having a relatively large amount of power, compared to women. The men are accustomed to making decisions, and it might be hard for them to accept a decision made by a woman higher up in the hierarchy. If a man made such a decision, it might be easier to accept. Women in High Masculinity cultures are more likely to be accustomed to being told what to do by men than in High Femininity cultures. In High Femininity cultures, women are more likely to be treated equally to men and more likely to have power. Men in such cultures are accustomed to women being equals at work. Randolph and Sashkin (2002) believe that women have preferences for empowerment in High Femininity cultures but not in High Masculinity cultural settings, while men have preferences for empowerment in both settings. Kim et al. (2018), however, indicated that women have a more positive attitude toward empowering leader behaviors than men in High Femininity (Asia/China) and High Masculinity (North America/Canada) cultures.

Randolph and Sashkin (2002) also proposed from their analyses that people in societies with High Long-Term Orientation like to plan as far ahead as possible, meaning that empowerment has less influence on daily life as the plans are followed. In Short-Term Oriented cultures, people are accustomed to being in a changing environment and reacting to events more than the lockstep carrying out of plans. Decisions at the worker level may not follow a planned schedule but involve reacting to the unexpected or the unplanned. Hence, empowerment in a Short-Term Oriented society should be a desirable behavior as empowered

employees are expected to make decisions more quickly and more often. However, empirical evidence on the proposed effects of Long-Term Orientation vs. Short-Term Orientation on employee empowerment was yet to be demonstrated prior to our study.

Adding to these omissions is a lack of theoretical postulates and empirical research on the effects of Hofstede's cultural dimensions of Indulgence vs. Restraint and Monumentalism vs. Self-Effacement on the application and cognitions of empowerment across societal cultures.

Conceptual and Methodological Issues

We find that cross-cultural studies have not provided unequivocal insights into the influences of culture on the effectiveness of empowerment and employee cognitions toward it. Alongside mixed findings, we identified in our literature review several conceptual and methodological flaws causing this inconsistency. First, despite almost universal adoption of Hofstede's cultural theory in both the universal and culturally contingent streams, researchers have selectively involved dimensions in their studies, accentuating some while neglecting or even completely omitting others from their analyses, especially in empirical studies.

Considering the holistic character and multidimensionality of culture, this represents a significant methodological failure as omitted values may be equally or more meaningfully related to the phenomena studied. Many theorists (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Schwartz, 1992), have long demonstrated that isolated, single-value dimensions, or limited theoretical applications of culture, ignore the fact that opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are not guided by the priority given to a single value, but by tradeoffs among competing values that are involved simultaneously in a behavior or attitude. Schwartz (1996) emphasized that studies using incomplete cultural theories and value dimensions lead to a fragmented accumulation of bits of often unrelated and misleading information about dimensions that is not conducive to the development or testing of coherent theories. Schwartz (1992) also argued that the reliability of

any single variable is quite low when employed to characterize a culture, and random effects can play a significant role in the attempts to identify significant associations with single values isolated from a full multi-dimensional model of culture.

Second, while culture is frequently conceptualized with Hofstede's model, conceptualizations of employee empowerment are numerous, diverse, and simplistic, particularly as a cognitive construct, i.e., employee perceptions of whether or to what extent the empowering organizational practice or leader behavior is non-empowering. Studies relating culture to such conceptualizations contain questionable, or completely omit, reports of validation of the employee empowerment construct. Hence, a misuse of conceptual elements of both constructs produces invalid and misleading results. The opportunistic selection of cultural value dimensions allows and even facilitates the development of conflicting interpretations of such results. This also leaves an impression of bias whereby research findings more likely reflect the desires and intentions of the researchers and not the views of the participants.

Research Focus and Hypotheses

While we acknowledge the relevance of research that examines cultural influences on the effectiveness of empowerment, in this study we examine the cultural contingency of employee cognitions, i.e., attitudes towards empowerment. We use a follower-centric perspective and define employee empowerment as a culturally contingent attitude, opinion, or belief about being empowered on the part of employees, expressed through or manifested in preferences for leader empowerment behaviors (Littrell, 2007; 2013). Taking into consideration the conflicting theoretical conjectures regarding the influences of culture on employee perception of empowerment in the literature, we choose not to engage in the development of alternative hypotheses. Due to the literature supporting both sides of findings regarding cultural effects on employee cognitions toward empowerment, we believe such

hypotheses would be tautological. Rather, as the null hypotheses are generally assumed to be true until evidence indicates otherwise, and the existing evidence is inconclusive, we opted to take this default position and propose null hypotheses that counter the existing research findings.

We, thus, hypothesize that:

H0^a: *Societal culture does not influence employee preferences for managerial leader empowerment behaviors.*

H0^b: *Other factors, such as gender, do not have effects in these relationships.*

Method

Sampling, Data Collection and Research Polygons

This study is based on data from a large-scale global study comparing managerial leader behavior preferences across societal cultures (ongoing from 1997. For details see: Littrell, 2013 and Warner-Søderholm et al., 2019). We applied random quota sampling, selecting from finite populations, in this case employed businesspeople from various country and sub-country culture areas and (to a lesser extent) part-time working business students. Data was collected via 1) mailed paper surveys to organization managers and executives to seek participation and distribution within their organization, 2) manual distribution and retrieval of paper surveys by volunteer students and faculty members, and 3) online surveys (e.g., Google forms and Qualtrics surveys).

Sample details are presented in Appendix A. Research polygons include Russia (samples from the Siberian Region and Western/European region), US (Southwest, primarily Texas – SW, and Northern Midwestern sample, primarily North Dakota – MW), Iceland, Norway, Lithuania, Indonesia, Peru, and Turkey (in and around Istanbul). The number of participants varies across countries involved in the study, ranging from 55 (Peru) to 890

(Lithuania), totaling 3,478 participants. All participants are citizens and residents and report spending their careers and lives in their respective countries.

After data collection, only participants who had responses for a minimum of eighty percent of the items defining a culture and leader behavior dimension data were retained. The data on culture and leader empowerment behaviors are reported well above this threshold for all countries and samples. With the exception of Indonesia and Peru, participants in the samples reported demographic, organization, and industry-related data above an eighty percent threshold. The samples are large and diverse enough for us to assume they are a sufficiently broad sample of opinions, attitudes, and beliefs in the societies participating in the study. This allowed us to draw conclusions about the effects of higher and lower national average scores of key variables as discussed below.

Research Instrument and Variable Operationalization

We adopt a positivist and quantitative methodological approach employing previously developed reliable and valid survey instruments to assess subjects' opinions, attitudes, and beliefs concerning leader behaviors and cultural values. Two standardized and validated survey instruments with a five-anchor Likert scale were employed to collect data measuring national culture dimensions and preferred leader behavior dimensions, as discussed below.

We employed the Brislin model for instrument translation (Brislin, 1970), using at least two independent bilingual translators for each translation. After this initial translation, local collaborating researchers administered pilot studies, distributing the translated survey to a smaller number of participants (20–50) for discussion of the face validity of the items and dimensions. Data obtained were subjected to standard descriptive and inferential parametric statistical tests to facilitate making inferences from the analyses. In cases where unusable data were obtained, a focus group was administered with the test sample, revising items to achieve

equivalence between the original (English) and local language (see Littrell et al., 2018 for further details of the survey validation).

Measurement Model for Culture

There are several cultural theories appropriate for investigating the effects of societal culture on employee attitudes toward empowerment. Along with Hofstede's, which is most frequently used, cultural theories in leadership research include the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness project (GLOBE; House et al., 2004) and Schwartz's Basic Value theory (Schwartz, 1992). Hofstede conceptualized cultural values as personal preferences of people in a society related to different aspects of life. GLOBE and Schwartz's theories conceptualized cultural values as norms, ideological abstractions, or guiding principles in life (House et. al., 2004; Javidan, Dorfman, De Luque & House, 2006).

We selected Hofstede's theory and adopted his Values Survey Module 2008 (VSM08, see: <http://geerthofstede.com>) for several reasons. First, there is a significant body of research related to the effects of empowerment using Hofstede's model of culture. Second, it is conceptually well related to our definition and operationalization of employee empowerment, which may allow for different and perhaps more realistic and objective findings. Third, VSM dimension scores have been shown adequate for meaningful analysis in terms of the physiological gender (female vs. male) and application to geographical regions within a country or across countries (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov & Vinken, 2008). Considering our hypotheses and samples, this is important for our study. Finally, the volume of research using and validating Hofstede's theory and instrument is significant (for in-depth reviews see: Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson, 2006; Taras, Kirkman & Steel, 2010). This evidence provided us with strong arguments to adopt this theory and the instrument to conceptualize and operationalize culture.

We employed the full set of cultural dimensions, including Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Collectivism vs. Individualism, Long-Term Orientation vs. Short-Term Orientation, Indulgence vs. Restraint, and Monumentalism vs. Self-Effacement (Hofstede et al., 2008). We computed mean scores of the dimensions for samples involved in the study following the VSM08 Manual (Hofstede et al., 2008) with the results presented in Table 1 (we used raw, uncentered data, hence the negative values in some dimensions and samples).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Employee Preferences for Leaders' Empowerment Behaviors

Leader empowerment behaviors were operationalized using the Tolerance of Freedom dimension of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire XII (LBDQXII; Stogdill, 1963). Based on the work of Hemphill and Coons (1950), Stogdill (1963) developed an assessment of 12 leader behavior dimensions with the LBDQXII, consisting of 100 items with Likert-type response categories. These include (See Stogdill 1963; for detailed descriptions):

- representation
- demand reconciliation
- tolerance of uncertainty
- persuasiveness
- initiation of structure
- tolerance of freedom
- role assumption
- consideration
- production emphasis
- predictive accuracy
- integration
- superior orientation

Most approaches to the study of leadership are leader-centric and define implicit characteristics. However, the LBDQXII employs the less common follower-centric procedure, measuring a group's beliefs about descriptions of its leader's explicit behavior. This is consistent with Hofstede's conceptualization of culture and our conceptualization of employee empowerment. The LBDQXII questionnaire has more than 50 years of continuous, extensive use, and a considerable amount of research supports its test-retest reliability, construct validity (Rodriquez, 2013) and use in cross-cultural settings with accepted reliability and validity (Selmer, 1997; Littrell et al., 2018). LBDQXII reliability studies included Cronbach's α -based reliability analysis and item-to-scale correlational analyses (alphas in the 0.6 to 0.8 range).

The survey uses the Tolerance of Freedom dimension to indicate the amount of autonomy delegated to employees to self-manage their daily task responsibilities. From this basis, empowerment is operationalized by a 10-item scale that reflects to what extent the manager allows followers scope for initiative, decision and action, freedom and autonomy in decisions and job performance, while limiting coercive power, as presented in Table 2:

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

From this scale, we measured self-reported employee preferences towards empowerment behaviors by their managerial leaders, which we refer to as *Preferences for Empowerment*. Despite receiving some criticism, such as inflating relationships between variables, self-report is a generally accepted practice in measuring cognitive attitudes toward employee empowerment (see, for example, Dimitriadis, 2005; Hui et. al, 2004). Littrell (2013) discusses Confirmatory Factor Analysis employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), indicating fit to the model. Results range from a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.006 to approximately 0.11 across samples, indicating variations in goodness of fit from that technique. Varimax rotation Confirmatory Factor Analysis was applied using 21 samples from fourteen countries with results indicating that the

Preference for Empowerment model for the Tolerance of Freedom scale across samples frequently consists of three well-defined components that appear to be related to the phraseology of the following items: preference for the managerial leader to (1) assign a task and allow the group to do the work the way they think best, (2) give freedom stemming from trust, and (3) allow the group to use their initiative. Lending further support, de Jong and de Ruyter (2004) have indicated the Tolerance of Freedom dimension of the LBDQXII to be a useful and valid indicator of empowerment of followers. These and the results mentioned above indicate satisfactory cross-cultural equivalence for the LBDQXII Tolerance of Freedom scale. LBDQXII dimension mean scores for Preference for Empowerment for the samples were computed for each sample and appear in Table 3.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Results

Our analyses employ standard descriptive and analytical statistical techniques as implemented in SPSS® version 27. Where there is missing item data, we employ the SPSS “Exclude cases pairwise” option.

Pearson product–moment correlations were calculated for the relationships between the sample means of countries involved in the study, and the overall sample, for Hofstede’s seven cultural value dimensions and preference of empowerment behaviors. Table 4 displays the correlation matrix for the overall sample.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

There are multiple significant correlations between several cultural value dimensions and the Tolerance of Freedom dimension. These, however, are very weak, with the strongest positive correlation identified between the Indulgence vs. Restraint index and Tolerance of Freedom ($r=0.11$) and a single negative correlation between Uncertainty Avoidance index and Tolerance of Freedom ($r=-0.14$). Across individual samples, coefficients for significant

correlations display a slightly larger magnitude, ranging from $r=-0.23$ between Uncertainty Avoidance index and Tolerance of Freedom in the Midwest US and Turkish samples, and $r=0.27$ between Power Distance index and Tolerance of Freedom dimension in the US (Midwest) sample.

There is support in the research methods literature implying that low and significant correlations in large samples, such as ours, are considered stable, reliable and less spurious, that is, less likely to arise by chance than in smaller samples (Evans, 1996). However, we believed a deeper analysis was warranted to assess the predictive power of cultural values in employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors and to allow more thorough interpretation. Hence, we performed regression analysis for the overall and individual samples. Table 5 displays results for the overall sample. Regression coefficients indicate a weak relationship ($R=.183$) while the determination coefficient shows ($R^2=0.034$) that culture accounts for only 3.4 % of the variance in the Tolerance of Freedom relationships.

Correlation matrixes revealed the presence of coefficients of 0.3 and above. Moreover, a Harman 1 factor analysis indicates that this dataset does not deviate from the common method bias issue as only 21.9% of variance is explained by a single factor. In initial confirmatory factor analysis, factors 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11 showed coherent item-factor loadings. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values were .96, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1970). Bartlett's tests of Sphericity (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1967) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrixes. One possible explanation as to why confirmatory factor analysis tests did not all produce acceptable results for all variables could be that the sample size is quite large and these fit indexes are sensitive to sample size (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003).

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Unstandardized beta coefficients (B) for the entire set of cultural dimensions in the overall sample are .000 indicating that cultural values have no significant effect on the Tolerance of Freedom dimension scores. Regression and Determination coefficients vary across individual samples ranging from $R=.157$ and $R^2=.025$ in the Siberian Russia sample to $R=.451$ and $R^2=.203$ in the US Midwestern sample.

In relation to our first hypothesis, we conclude that the effect of culture on employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors does exist statistically but does not hold either predictive or explanatory power.

To test our second hypothesis on whether other factors, such as gender, affect employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors, we first performed analyses of variance (ANOVA). Since the VSM instrument we use to operationalize culture included data on age, nationality, education level, job position, and industry, and with the LBDQXII initially developed for examination of leader behaviors across different types of demographics and organizations, we included these as exploratory variables in the analysis. This is consistent with notions in the literature that a more powerful test of the full empowerment model should entail organizational differences (Spreitzer, 1995).

Results indicate that there are significant (Sig. <0.0005) differences in the attitudes of men and women toward leader empowerment behaviors, with women generally (in the overall sample) having more favorable attitudes toward such behaviors than men. These differences are insignificant across samples with women rating leader empowerment behaviors as more preferable than men do in the Lithuanian, Norwegian, Russian, and Turkish samples.

Results also indicate significant (Sig. <0.0005) variances in attitudes toward empowerment across all other factors in the overall sample. For example, employees with most positive vs. most negative attitudes for empowerment are those from organizations with mixed ownership vs. those from non-profit and non-governmental organizations; those

working in education vs. in financial services; senior managers vs. supervisors of workers; and employees with post-graduate degrees vs. those holding professional certification. The significance of variances of these factors varies apparently randomly across individual samples.

As ANOVA results implied that the effect of gender and organizational factors on Tolerance of Freedom exists, we proceeded to test their explanatory and predictive power. We performed hierarchical regression modeling for the overall sample as may be seen in Table 6. We executed three loadings: (1) gender, (2) our set of demographic, industry, and organization related variables, and (3) data on cultural dimensions.

INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

Regression and determination coefficient dynamics display a rise across the loadings but remain low, ranging from 0.084 to 0.231 (R) and from 0.007 to 0.048 (R²). Furthermore, changes in determination coefficients show marginal differences between loadings, with the second loading explaining 3.1% more of the variance of the Tolerance of Freedom dimension than the first loading and the third loading explaining 1.5% variance more than the second loading.

Unstandardized beta coefficients (B) imply all of the effects are insignificant except those of gender and organization type (Sig.<0.0005). However, the strength of the gender effect continues to be weak, ranging from 0.111 to 0.087 across loadings. The effect of the organization type on Tolerance of Freedom is negative and weak, standing at -0.128 in the second loading and 0.117 in the third.

Therefore, for our second hypothesis, we conclude that gender and organization factors do affect employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors. This effect, however, is marginal and without predictive or explanatory power.

Discussion

In this study we demonstrate diverse effects of empowering employees in organizations with different societal cultural paradigms. We use a follower-centric, culturally contingent approach to examine cultural influences on employee attitudes, as in preferences for leader empowerment behaviors. We also examine the effects of gender and organizational factors. However, we find some of the effects to be marginal. Our conceptual and methodological approach, and our findings, provide multiple contributions to theory and research.

We combine two standardized, rigorously validated and tested instruments, conceptually and methodologically aligning culture and employee attitudes toward empowerment, thus rectifying stated deficiencies in existing research. In doing so, we offer more realistic, objective, and evidence-based knowledge on the role of culture in such employee attitudes.

Our study is the only one we are aware of that indicates only marginal cultural effects on employee attitudes toward empowerment. Even though this may seem to be a corroboration of the universal literature on empowerment, we discuss below why this is an incorrect interpretation.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As the preference for empowerment is an attitude, opinion, or belief on the part of the employee, cross-cultural differences relating to what empowerment means to the employee is expected. As we did not include this distinction in our study, future research should. For example, researchers could initially use self-report methods, employing free-form statements from employees and managers in different countries, and create adjective checklists and descriptive statement checklists for validation and development into a cross-cultural empowerment attitude assessment instrument.

Further, as shown in Appendix A, although the overall representation of women and men is almost equal, individual samples have considerable gender differences. Further, despite not being the direct focus of this research, more data on the educational background of the sample could potentially provide more fine-grained understanding of the preferences within samples. The same applies for job level, which is even more important considering the inter-level power relations in organizations. In addition, even though we obtained data from culturally and geographically distant societies, future research could further disperse and differentiate data collection sites. Hence, it would be interesting and desirable to collect and process data from locations differing across additional criteria closely related to societal culture, such as religion or language (e.g., Muslim-majority countries, Arabic-speaking and non-Arabic-speaking countries, etc.).

Culture is conceptualized as a societal construct. However, cultures consist of individuals who differ. Characteristics can be shared by groups of individuals within and across cultures. Mooij (2013) showed that VSM survey items composing Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance Index correlated across 53 countries but weakly or even negatively across individuals. This implies that in High Uncertainty Avoidance societies there are more rule-oriented people seeking stable employment and experiencing higher stress levels. Hence, examining whether these and other characteristics shared by groups across societies affect their attitudes towards empowerment is necessary.

As mentioned, in addition to Hofstede's, there are other cultural models that researchers can consider in investigations of cultural effects on employee empowerment, such as the GLOBE project or Shalom Schwarz's theories.

In the absence of significant relationships between dimensions of culture and employee attitudes on empowerment, as it has been shown in our research, researchers must inevitably turn to constructs on other levels, which we omitted. For example, personal values

affect people's decisions, choices, behavior, what they perceive and attend to, and the way they interpret information and their attitudes (Schwartz, 1996; Hofstede, 2001). Members of a specific society exhibit a generally consistent set of values because they are socialized by, and must adapt to, common family, educational, interpersonal, social, legal, media, market, and governmental systems (Littrell, 2013). However, personal values are also products of the individual's shared and unique social experiences and genetic heredity. Hanges, Lord, and Dickson (2000) empirically confirmed that employees' perceptions of leadership were influenced by their view of both the self and their cultural background. Individual factors may also influence employee emotional and subjective wellbeing orientations, thereby affecting their beliefs about empowerment (Judge & Illies, 2002).

Personal values interact with organizational norms and practices (Hofstede, 2001; Littrell, 2013; Schwartz, 1996). Both intentionally and inadvertently, personal values influence organizational views of what is good and desirable, directly through formal and informal discussions about the organization, proposals about desirable characteristics of new employees, how to induct them into the organization, and how to praise or condemn their actions. Influential members of organizations build structures within organizations that promote those individuals' preferred values through designing practices (e.g., reward systems based on sales revenue or seniority) and physical settings (e.g., open or enclosed workspaces). Employees can also be bicultural. Bicultural individuals acquire a different cultural ethos when they are exposed to a second cultural context (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez, 2000), leading to the process of acculturation which then also takes part in the personal-organizational dynamics. Hence, investigations of the relations between personal and organizational shared values (e.g., culture) and their influences on employee preferences for empowerment are also warranted in future studies.

As for gender groups, despite differences being marginal, our findings indicate that the effect of gender on employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors consistently exists. In general, women perceive empowerment behaviors by leaders more favorably than men, corroborating earlier studies (Kim et al., 2018). Leadership scholars suggest that due to the dissimilar male and female characteristics, males and females would prefer certain leader behaviors more than others because leaders are expected to follow societal norms (Erez & Early, 1993). Due to dissimilar social indoctrination (e.g., through child-rearing practices and socialization), experiences and expectations, females tend to be raised and socialized to be more dependent and nurturing, whereas males tend to be raised and socialized to be more independent and aggressive (Alvesson & Billing, 2009). As such, females are typically described as more communal, inclusive, participative, interpersonal, thus preferring power-sharing, and nurturing of followers, and vice versa (Yukl, 2002), which is one possible explanation for our findings. Eagly & Carli (2003) also showed that the male managerial leadership model is the norm in most societies that prefer High Masculinity leader behaviors. Kanter (1993) argued that minority groups in organizations – for example females in most business organizations – are more likely to feel less empowered due to their often token status (a position of the few among the many). The view that, in general, men tend to hold more power in organizations than women is also pervasive (Mainiero, 1986). Women may thus perceive leader empowerment behaviors more favorably than men. Hence, more research is needed to delve deeper into the reasons for gender-related differences in employee attitudes toward empowerment.

Interpersonal relationships represent another interesting empowerment-relevant domain to explore. Littrell (2007) studied Tolerance for Freedom on a sample with two groups of managers, expatriate and local, in a foreign-owned hotel company in China. He found that, contrary to most research into management and supervision of Chinese workers

(which indicates a desire for close supervision and fear of punishment for initiative), the group with local Chinese supervisors indicated the ideal leader should exhibit tolerance of freedom (empowerment) more frequently than the group with expatriate supervisors. Littrell explains this may occur due to a tendency of the members of a group to assume the characteristics of the group leader over time, the ultimate expression of this being “hero worship” (p. 104). If employees with expatriate managers respected their manager, as required under Confucian rules, then the less-tolerant expatriate could be the ideal leader.

Similarly, leader–member exchange (LMX) dynamics, as a relationship-based approach to leadership, focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Better LMX results in a higher degree of mutual trust and leaders in organizations with better LMX were shown to give more resources to subordinates and be more willing to share their knowledge. Research has been conducted on national culture and LMX but the relationships are still awaiting definitive investigation and results. Existing evidence indicates that the relationships between LMX and employee attitudes and behaviors are stronger in horizontal individualistic cultures than in vertical collectivist cultures (Rockstuhl, Dulebohn, Ang, & Shore, 2012). LMX dynamics and relations thus represent another valuable research avenue in which to explore influences on employee preferences for empowerment. This research stream should also be extended in new empirical studies.

Understanding what shapes employee attitudes toward empowerment, and how, will facilitate understanding of their responses, i.e., the effectiveness of employee empowerment. The literature is fairly simplistic and selective, without consistent findings. In our literature review, we found evidence demonstrating the effect of various situational factors on the effectiveness variables associated with empowerment projects in various countries. These include even the bastions of empowerment, the U.S.A., U.K., and Canada, where studies indicate that numerous contingencies within organizations affect empowerment initiatives.

Jiang et al. (2012) emphasized that managers should focus more on the implementation process of involvement in work systems, provide training in the necessary skills for the successful implementation of such practices, and ensure that employees understand what is expected from them and what actions need to be taken to accomplish the organization's goals. Similarly, when providing recommendations to American managers in Brazil, China, and Egypt, Javidan et al. (2006) pointed out that although employees in High Power Distance cultures are not accustomed to participatory practices, managers can encourage more participation by creating an emotionally safe work environment and providing clear instructions. These studies lend support to the idea that the effectiveness of empowerment is not necessarily influenced by culture but from well-designed training and implementation. This pattern of findings supports a contingency theory of empowerment rather than cultural, and especially universal.

Hence, despite the volume of studies, much cross-cultural research is selective of variables, simplistic, and methodologically and conceptually flawed. Research has yet to fully investigate cultural effects on employee attitudes toward, and the effectiveness of empowerment. The findings of our study show cultural effects on employee attitudes toward empowerment are marginal. Culture, gender, and organizational factors affect but do not define them. These attitudes are more likely to be the result of the interplay, exchange, and tradeoff between cultural, personal, and organizational values. The effectiveness of empowerment in an organization is more likely to be contingency related and dependent upon a well designed and implemented training program based on the alignment of management and worker values, goals, and tasks. Future investigations should explore these implications.

Concluding observations

In reviewing empowerment studies and spotlighting research on the impact of culture, we were struck by the degree of inconsistency and complexity of the findings. Our study

indicates national culture as a construct influences, but does not singularly define, employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors and, congruently, the effectiveness of such programs. These findings put forth the need to shift the focus of future studies from singular effects to multilevel cultural, organizational, and individual dynamics that shape employee cognitions and responses to empowerment. Research with such focus is much more likely to significantly contribute to the understanding of the perceptions and value of empowerment across societal cultures, as well as provide more effective practical guidelines and recommendations.

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TABLES, FIGURES, AND CHARTS

Table 1^{1,2}: Raw Score Means for Hofstede’s cultural dimensions of the samples

	IS	ID	NO	LT	PE	RU (SI)	RU (W)	TR	US (MW)	US (SW)
PDI	6.1	1.3	24.5	32.6	8.2	-2.5	53.8	-42.2	24.0	32.7
IDV	-24.2	2.0	49.0	11.3	25.9	-3.1	26.5	-17.0	22.6	8.9
MAS	4.1	-4.8	-0.9	9.7	9.1	6.2	25.9	-4.5	0.9	9.3
UAI	-88.0	-5.2	-76.6	-32.9	-81.8	6.0	-23.9	-38.7	-65.7	-61.3
LTO	-20.5	16.3	-4.1	3.8	2.3	-4.1	-1.4	4.0	-21.8	-19.8
IVR	78.5	-0.2	80.0	16.7	95.8	1.2	88.7	25.2	59.9	64.6
MON	-20.4	16.7	37.1	16.4	48.7	-1.6	62.6	50.1	68.5	79.1

Table 2: Tolerance of Freedom dimension of the LBDQXII

Count	Survey item number and item text
1.	5. Allows the members complete freedom in their work.
2.	15. Permits the members to use their own judgment in solving problems.
3.	25. Encourages initiative in the group members.
4.	35. Lets the members do their work the way they think best.
5.	45. Assigns a task, then lets the members handle it.
6.	55. Turns the members loose on a job and lets them go to it.
7.	65. Is reluctant to allow the members any freedom of action (reverse scored).
8.	75. Allows the group a high degree of initiative.
9.	85. Trusts members to exercise good judgment.
10.	95. Permits the group to set its own pace.

¹ Cultural value index abbreviations: PDI-Power Distance; IDV-Individualism; MAS-Masculinity; UAI-Uncertainty Avoidance; LTO-Long-Term orientation; IVR-Indulgence; MON-Monumentalism

² Two-character country abbreviations from ISO, International Organization for Standardization

Table 3: Mean scores for the Tolerance of Freedom dimension for the samples

	IS	ID	NO	LT	PE	RU (SI)	RU (W)	TR	US (MW)	US (SW)
Tol Free	3.77	3.25	3.76	3.93	3.48	3.36	3.63	3.94	3.77	3.88

(Range: maximum 5, minimum 1)

Table 4³: Correlations between means of cultural dimensions and Tolerance of Freedom of the overall sample

		Tol_Free	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MON
Tol_Free	P	1.00							
	Sig								
	N	3204							
PDI	P	.03	1.00						
	Sig	.089							
	N	3171	3171						
IDV	P	.07	.03	1.00					
	Sig	.000	.135						
	N	3176	3157	3176					
MAS	P	.00	.06	-.06	1.00				
	Sig	.891	.000	.000					
	N	3168	3151	3155	3168				
UAI	P	-.14	.00	-.07	-.03	1.00			
	Sig	.000	.849	.000	.060				
	N	3188	3166	3171	3163	3188			
LTO	P	-.03	-.01	.01	.04	.15	1.00		
	Sig	.103	.755	.484	.033	.000			
	N	3171	3151	3155	3150	3166	3171		
IVR	P	.11	.02	.14	-.04	-.31	-.11	1.00	
	Sig	.000	.186	.000	.014	.000	.000		
	N	3172	3153	3158	3153	3167	3151	3172	
MON	P	.06	.03	.08	.01	-.11	-.06	.14	1.00
	Sig	.001	.057	.000	.670	.000	.000	.000	
	N	3170	3151	3155	3148	3165	3150	3154	3170

³Pearson Correlation (**P**), Sig. 2-tailed. The correlation coefficients of the individual samples are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Table 5: Regression model for the overall sample for culture dimensions and Tolerance of Freedom

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.183 ^a	.034	.031	.622	.034	15.252	7	3078	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI, LTO, IVR, MON

Table 6: Hierarchical regression results for the overall model

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.084 ^a	.007	.007	.65	.007	15.560	1	2209	.000
2	.195 ^b	.038	.035	.64	.031	14.232	5	2204	.000
3	.231 ^c	.053	.048	.64	.015	5.068	7	2197	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Industry, Age, Level_of_educ, Level_in_org, Org_type

c. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Industry, Age, Level_of_educ, Level_in_org, Org_type, PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI, LTO, IVR, MON

Appendix A

Details of Samples

Variable	Category	Overall	IS	ID	LT	NO	PE	RU(SI)	RU(W)	TR	US (MW)	US (SW)
Sample size		3478	231	364	890	792	55	358	108	291	225	164
Age (Min/Max/Av.)		18/82/44	25/69/49	23/67/46	19/68/42	18/82/49	21/66/31	22/68/45	19/63/27	18/64/35	24/70/48	51/75/58
Gender (f/ %)	Males	1537/43.9	171/74.3	258/70.9	138/15.5	390/49.2	26/47.3	173/48.3	36/33.3	123/42.3	163/72.5	60/36.6
	Females	1802/51.5	42/18.3	94/25.8	735/82.6	387/48.9	28/50.9	160/44.7	71/65.7	112/38.5	57/25.3	104/64.4
Education (f/ %)	Elem./Mid. School	258/7.4	15/6.5	197/54.1	1/0.1	24/3.0				10/3.4	10/4.4	1/0.6
	High/Sec. School	617/17.6	38/16.5	123/33.8	16/1.8	211/26.6			4/4.6	45/15.5	117/52.0	56/34.1
	Not finished Uni.	355/10.1		22/6.0	2/0.2	313/39.5	7/12.7		9/8.3	18/6.2		
	Graduated 2/3 year college. lower than Bachelor	369/10.5	33/14.3		10/1.1	211/26.6	1/1.8			53/18.2	28/12.4	25/15.2
	Graduated Vocational school	233/6.7	32/13.9		85/9.6	18/2.3	1/1.8		6/5.6	65/22.3	20/8.9	6/3.7
	Bachelor degree	676/19.3	51/22.2		314/39.6		11/20.0	182/50.8	87/80.6	41/14.1	26/11.6	37/22.6
	Post-Graduate (non PhD)	512/14.6			333/37.8		12/21.8	151/42.2			12/5.3	23/14.0
	Professional certification	172/4.9	58/25.2					13/23.6			6/2.7	2/1.2
	PhD	37/1.1	3/1.3		34/3.9							
	Job level (f/ %)	No paid job (includes full-time students)	335/9.6	7/3.0	203/55.8	84/9.5			7/2.0	18/16.7	15/15.2	
Unskilled or semi-skilled manual worker		321/9.2	46/19.9	47/12.9	23/2.6	6/0.8		54/15.1	8/7.4	30/10.3		8/4.9
Generally trained office worker or secretary (non-managerial)		277/7.9	52/22.5	43/11.8	73/8.3	12/1.5		51/14.2	17/15.7	3/1.0		26/15.9

Variable	Category	Overall	IS	ID	LT	NO	PE	RU(SI)	RU(W)	TR	US (MW)	US (SW)
	Vocationally trained person. (non- managerial)	452/12.9		22/6.0	250/28.3	47/5.9		77/21.5	10/9.2	37/12.7		10/6.2
	Supervisor of workers	206/5.9		20/5.5		54/6.8		66/18.4	7/6.5	21/7.2		38/23.1
	Academically trained professional or equivalent (Non- managerial)	350/10.0	32/13.9		194/22.0	49/6.2				46/15.8		15/9.1
	Manager of one or more subordinates	120/3.4	2/0.5		28/3.2	61/7.7		78/21.8		8/2.7		21/12.8
	Middle-level Manager	217/6.2			78/8.8	28/3.5				19/6.5		14/8.5
	Senior-level Manager	211/6.0			120/13.6	78/9.8				13/4.5		
	Self-employed owner of the business	159/4.5				124/15.7				12/4.1		23/14.0
	CEO	308/8.8				219/27.7				3/1.0		
	Other	18/0.5	86/37.2			99/12.5				15/5.2		3/1.8
	Government	259/7.4	4/1.7			158/19.9			6/5.6	65/22.3	2/0.9	24/14.6
	Education	547/15.6			301/34.1	102/12.9	13/23.6		57/52.8	41/14.1	1/0.4	31/18.9
	Manufacturing	317/9.1	39/16.9		33/3.7	74/9.3	4/7.3	55/15.4	3/2.8	7/2.4	99/44.0	3/1.8
	Marketing/Sales	262/7.5	24/10.4		20/2.3	65/8.2	7/12.7	63/17.6	15/13.9	43/14.8	3/1.3	22/13.4
	Finances	157/4.5	12/5.2		9/1.0	33/4.2	3/5.5	54/15.1	6/5.5	16/5.5	2/0.9	23/14.0
	Consulting	291/8.3	32/13.9		11/1.2	120/15.2	8/14.5	52/14.5	13/12.0	14/4.8	8/3.6	13/7.9
	Retail	366/10.5	25/10.8		218/24.7	34/4.3		51/15.1	5/4.6	20/6.9	1/0.4	12/7.3
	Other	712/20.3	76/32.9		234/26.5	191/24.1	9/16.4	58/16.2	1/0.9	23/7.9	96/42.7	22/13.4
	Government-owned or predominately government-supported enterprise	972/27.8	9/3.9		502/56.9	272/34.3	7/12.7		59/54.6		4/1.8	50/30.5

Variable	Category	Overall	IS	ID	LT	NO	PE	RU(SI)	RU(W)	TR	US (MW)	US (SW)
	Private	1507/43.1	206/89.2		339/38.4	412/52.0	28/50.9	99/27.7	41/38.0	138/47.4	173/76.9	71/43.3
	Non-profit/NGO	262/7.5	4/1.7		18/2.0	84/10.6		121/33.8	3/2.8	15/2.4	3/1.3	14/8.5
	Mixed ownership	41/1.2	3/1.3			9/1.1			4/3.7		20/8.9	6/3.7
	Other	113/3.2						113/31.6				