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From the Editor

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Welcome to the 31st issue of the *International Leadership Journal,* an online, peer-reviewed journal. This issue contains five articles.

In the first article, Thomas and Rahschulte measured the effects of empowering leadership on psychological empowerment and self-leadership in two cultural contexts—Rwanda and the United States, representing both high and low power distance and individualism/collectivism—to explore how empowering leadership behaviors affects the empowerment of subordinates. Their results show that empowering leadership has a significant positive effect on both psychological empowerment and self-leadership in both cultural contexts and that power distance moderates these relationships, especially in high power distance cultures.

Mapalala, West, and Winston used a single-scale measure for organizational learning and organizational performance to determine if the five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation, moderated by organizational learning, impact organizational performance. Based on their findings from 298 Tanzanian CEOs, they determined that autonomy and competitive aggressiveness demonstrated positive, linear, causative effects on organizational performance, and that organizational learning demonstrated moderating effects on those two causative relationships

Thomason and Halkias's article addresses gaps in the literature on how design thinking, as a business model, provides a dynamic capability and competitive advantage by enhancing an organization's absorptive capacity to acquire, assimilate and apply external knowledge. Their case study describes one organization's readiness to absorb new knowledge to drive change initiatives.

In their article, Guha and Fish report empirical testing of the threshold traits level of the theoretical pyramid model of global leadership developed by Bird and Osland (2004). They measured the manifest factors from survey data of two samples of U.S. business professionals—those with no international experience based in the United States and U.S. expatriates based in Egypt. The results support three constructs of the Bird and Osland model (integrity, humility, inquisitiveness), while one of the constructs (resilience) is not as well supported.

Finally, Toms examines the four levels of ethical reflection that individuals engage in when approaching differences in opinion and conflict in four case scenarios: the Cerner Corporation CEO email, the Trump travel ban, the Sainsbury's–Asda merger, and the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) report on anti-Semitism on Twitter. His review provides evidence of the need to focus on all four levels of ethical reflection in lieu of solely focusing on the expressive-level comments of leaders and followers.

Joseph C. Santora, EdD
Editor

ARTICLES

The Moderating Effects of Power Distance and Individualism/Collectivism on Empowering Leadership, Psychological Empowerment, and Self-Leadership in International Development Organizations[*]

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The importance of finding appropriate leadership styles to use in cross-cultural situations is paramount. Development organizations and multinational organizations both struggle to find forms of leadership that are effective in mobilizing the workforce in highly diverse cultural contexts. In this article, the effects of empowering leadership on psychological empowerment and self-leadership are measured in two cultural contexts—Rwanda and the United States, representing both high and low power distance and individualism/ collectivism—to explore how empowering leadership behaviors affects the empowerment of subordinates. First, hierarchical regression analysis shows that empowering leadership has a significant positive effect on both psychological empowerment and self-leadership in both cultural contexts. Second, hierarchical regression analysis with tests for moderation shows that power distance moderates these relationships, especially in high power distance cultures, while individualism/collectivism moderates these relationships only occasionally. This article provides evidence that empowering leadership is an effective form of leadership that produces employee empowerment in diverse cultural contexts. It also provides new insights into appropriate forms of leadership for international development organizations when working in different countries.

Key words: cross-cultural leadership, empowering leadership, empowerment, leadership in Africa, psychological empowerment

Empowering leadership holds promise as a type of leadership that encourages autonomy, develops subordinates' ability to work autonomously, and increases psychological empowerment, which is linked to a myriad of positive work outcomes (Maynard, Gilson, & Mathieu, 2012; Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011). Although cross-cultural research in organizational leadership has grown considerably since Hofstede (1980) introduced the measurement of cultural values, some researchers have observed that about 98% of leadership theories and empirical evidence are American or Western in character (House & Aditya, 1997). In a review of two decades of empowerment research, Maynard et al. (2012) note the lack of cross-

cultural research and call for research that considers two or more cultures. Amundsen and Martinsen (2014a), the authors of the Empowering Leadership Scale (ELS), also request further research that investigates the impact of culture on empowering leadership and outcome variables. Furthermore, Walumbwa, Avolio, and Aryee (2011) found that little empirical or theoretical work addresses leadership in Africa. Numerous African leadership authors have proposed that leadership research in Africa needs to identify appropriate forms of leadership for Africa to combat the economic difficulties it faces (Edoho, 2001; Kuada, 2010; Muchiri, 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2011). This study ascertains if empowering leadership is as powerful in non-Western cultures as it is in Western cultures. For this reason, this study addresses the effects of empowering leadership on psychological empowerment and self-leadership in two cultural contexts—Rwanda and the United States—that differ in the cultural values of power distance and individualism/collectivism.

Empowering Leadership

Empowerment theory originated in the 1970s (Kanter, 1977) and has continued to be relevant and generate considerable research interest today (Kim, Beehr, & Prewett, 2018). Empowered employees positively affect organizational commitment, job performance, job satisfaction, affective commitment, creative process engagement, as well as other positive work and organizational factors (Dewettinck & van Ameijde, 2011; Hill, Kang, & Seo, 2014; Maynard et al., 2012; Schermuly, Schermuly, & Meyer, 2011; Spreitzer, 2008; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). As the field of empowerment research matured, the leader behaviors associated with creating empowerment became known as *empowering leadership* (Arnold, Arad, & Rhoades, 2000; Konczak, Stelly, & Trusty, 2000).

Empowering leadership is defined as "leader behaviors directed at individuals or entire teams and consisting of delegating authority to employees, promoting their self-directed and autonomous decision making, coaching, sharing information, and asking for input" (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015, 194). It is unique in that it transfers power to subordinates while providing the necessary support to be sure employees

are capable of taking on new responsibilities (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a; Sharma & Kirkman, 2015). Previous studies have confirmed that empowering leadership is distinct from other forms of leadership such as leader-member exchange (LMX), transformational, transactional, and situational, with a specific focus on sharing power with subordinates through collaborative decision making and the promotion of autonomy and interdependence (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014b; Sharma & Kirkman, 2015).

Psychological Empowerment and Self-Leadership

Leadership as an antecedent to employee psychological empowerment has been examined by researchers more than any other antecedent (Seibert et al., 2011). The rich stream of research linking various forms of leadership to positive effects on psychological empowerment has supported leadership behaviors as strong, positive antecedents to employee empowerment. Empowering leadership has the explicit purpose of creating empowerment amongst employees and the potential for an even greater impact on employee empowerment than other forms of leadership (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a).

Amundsen and Martinsen (2014a) identify the "be and do" characteristics of empowered subordinates as psychological empowerment and self-leadership (491). *Psychological empowerment* is increased intrinsic task motivation that is exhibited in four cognitions: sense of impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). When these cognitions are internalized, the person is actively oriented toward the work role (Spreitzer, 1995). If empowering leadership has had its effect, the affected person should experience high psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment alone, however, is not sufficient evidence of an empowered person (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a).

While psychological empowerment is the *being* state of empowerment, self-leadership is the *doing* state of empowerment. The self-leadership literature precedes empowering leadership theory, and the basis of empowerment is derived from the concept of helping subordinates to become self-led (Manz & Sims, 2001). A subordinate who is capable of self-leadership behaviors has been empowered to perform his or her work autonomously. Together, psychological empowerment

and self-leadership measure the true and complete state of follower empowerment.

Numerous studies have considered the effects of transformational leadership (see Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Jung & Sosik, 2002; Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Martin, 2006; Özaralli, 2003; Pieterse, van Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2009) and LMX (see Aryee & Chen, 2006; Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007; Collins, 2007; Harris, Wheeler, & Kacmar, 2009; Hill et al., 2014; Keller & Dansereau, 1995; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000) as well as authentic leadership, participative leadership, ethical leadership, and managerial use of power bases (see Emuwa, 2013; Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2009; Randolph & Kemery, 2011; Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004) on psychological empowerment and found a positive effect. Although each of these forms of leadership have positive effects on the empowerment of employees, there is evidence that empowering leadership is a more significant contributor (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a). Self-leadership has also been linked to empowering leadership, although not as frequently and consistently as psychological empowerment (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a; Yun, Cox, & Sims, 2006). Empowering leader behaviors facilitate follower self-leadership through a modeling process whereby the leader models all forms of self-leadership and followers grow in self-leadership as a result (Houghton & Yoho, 2005; Manz & Sims, 2001). Amundsen and Martinsen (2014a) assert that further research "should investigate the impact of culture on the relationship between empowering leadership and outcome variables, since previous studies (Robert, Probst, Martocchio, Drasgow, & Lawler, 2000) have suggested such coherence" (507).

Cross-Cultural Research on Empowerment

Previous research has indicated that the two cultural measures with the greatest impact on leadership variables are individualism/collectivism and power distance. Triandis and Gelfand (1998), after many years of conducting cultural research, argue that individualism/collectivism is perhaps the most impactful dimension of culture in regards to leadership. In a review of 25 years of cultural research that utilize Hofstede's (1980) measures, Kirkman, Lowe, and Gibson (2006) note that

most cross-cultural research only considers individualism/collectivism. Although they agree that this is an important variable, they discovered that power distance has a stronger effect on variables in some instances. Tsui, Nifadkar, and Ou (2007), while reviewing cross-cultural organizational behavior research, found that individualism/collectivism and power distance are the two cultural variables that have the most impact on leadership studies. Finally, in a review of two decades of empowerment research, Maynard et al. (2012) note the lack of cross-cultural research and call for more research on empowerment that considers at least two cultures and measures both individualism/collectivism and power distance. For these reasons, both individualism/collectivism and power distance are measured in relation to the empowerment variables.

Individualism/collectivism are seen as opposites on one continuum and measure the degree to which individuals "express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations, families, circle of close friends, or other such small groups" (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007, 3). In an individualist society, each person is defined by personal characteristics and expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivist societies, on the other hand, encourage strong cohesive group environments in which self-identity is found in the group and relationships are mutually dependent and loyal (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

Power distance can be measured as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede et al., 2010, Chapter 3, "Power Distance Defined," para. 5). High power distance cultures differentiate between people of differing power status and tend to create hierarchical organizational relationships. Low power distance cultures create less distinction between people of different power levels and encourage consultation between superiors and subordinates, flattening hierarchical relationships.

This study considers individualism/collectivism and power distance in two dissimilar cultures to obtain a wide variability in culture scores. General statistics from the GLOBE study (Chhokar et al., 2008) and Hofstede (1984) indicate that

African countries have high collectivism (GLOBE scores of 5 to 6 out of 7), while the United States has one of the lowest scores in collectivism (4.3). The GLOBE study also indicates that Africa is one of the highest in preference for power distance (up to 5.9), while America has a low to medium power distance score (4.8).

Previous research on empowering leadership and culture has indicated that culture has an impact on empowerment, but mixed results as well as unreliable and inconsistent measurements of culture do not create a clear picture of how culture affects empowering leadership. For example, Robert et al. (2000) found that empowerment had a positive effect on high and low collectivism countries except for India (high collectivism). Chen, Sharma, Edinger, and Shapiro (2011) found that Americans, high in individualism and low in collectivism, reported higher levels of empowerment than their Chinese counterparts and found collectivism to be positively related to psychological empowerment, although no statistically significant relationship was found. These studies do not offer clear conclusions as to how culture influences these variables. In a recent literature review on empowering leadership, Sharma and Kirkman (2015) propose that high power distance will be negatively associated with empowering leadership while collectivism will be positively associated with empowering leadership and call for further research to explore these cultural effects.

African Context

Although empowering leadership has been studied extensively in Western societies, the question remains if empowering leadership is equally effective in other societies. This study tests the effects of empowering leadership on employee empowerment (self-leadership and psychological empowerment) in an African context in development organizations. In cross-cultural development work, the aim is to empower native people through the development process. International development efforts are only successful if they are able to empower and motivate the national population to take part in their development efforts.

Deciphering the preferred leadership style in the Sub-Saharan context is an important first step in determining if empowering leadership is appropriate in that

context. The GLOBE study, the largest cross-cultural leadership research to date, sheds light on African forms of leadership (Chhokar et al., 2008; House, 2004). In measuring culture and leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa, the GLOBE study discovered high collectivism and high power distance (Chhokar et al., 2008; House, 2004). Wanasika, Howell, Littrell, and Dorfman (2011) propose that African history has shaped the forms of leadership that are seen as culturally appropriate. A combination of tribal society, scarce resources, and highly collectivistic values results in an autocratic style of leadership that is tempered by a leader's sense of duty to care for family and group needs (Wanasika et al., 2011). This creates a kind of paternalism that Kauda (2010) calls "autocratic-benevolence" (18). Other authors have observed that the default leadership styles in Africa tend toward autocratic, directive, and hierarchical leadership that increases dependence in followers (Bolden & Kirk, 2009; Kuada, 2010).

The normative leadership styles in Africa have strengths and weaknesses. Kuada (2010) articulates a balanced view of African leadership when he argues "there are elements of African culture that promote unique and positive leadership behaviors. But some of the cultural rules of behavior tend to act as drags on effective leadership and management practices and thereby constrain entrepreneurship and economic growth" (15). There are problems that ensue from traditional forms of leadership in Africa, including the misappropriation of resources by leaders, followers who are disempowered and motivated to cover up their own and leaders' mistakes, and a tendency toward unproductive organizational structures (Kuada, 2010). Taking this view—that there are elements of African preferred leadership styles that are positive and worth supporting and others that hinder economic growth and needed change—allows space for suggesting alternate styles of leadership. Kuada (2010) calls for African leadership research that can identify leadership styles that help boost organizational performance and enhance employee empowerment. Poverty breeds in situations of dependence. For Africa to move from poverty toward economic growth, new, more appropriate forms of leadership are needed. Empowerment of employees is central to addressing the issues that Africa faces, and Kuada (2010) calls for further study of

empowering leadership in the African context. The continued empirical study of leadership in Africa is imperative for Africa to move out of economic despair. Empowering leadership offers an alternative style of leadership that may be acceptable and effective in the African context, offering a tool to deal with some of the challenges facing African leaders.

Empowering leadership is different from the preferred African leadership styles, but at the same time it overlaps with some widely held leadership values. In the Sub-Saharan sample of the GLOBE study (House, 2004), participative leadership was one form of leadership that was seen as universally contributing to outstanding leadership. The GLOBE study defines *participative leadership* as a form of leadership that involves others in making and implementing decisions and was measured by reverse scoring non-participative leadership and autocratic leadership. Empowering leadership shares some characteristics with participative leadership, and therefore may be aligned with the espoused values of participative leadership, even though it differs significantly from paternalistic leadership. Empowering leadership uses the sharing of power as well as the development of individuals' capabilities to influence subordinates, while paternalistic leadership holds power with a top few leaders who are responsible for taking care of those they are responsible for leading. The sharing of power in empowering leadership involves individuals more directly in leadership and helps them to participate in the leadership process, enabling them to grow and develop and take on some parts of leadership themselves.

Empowering leadership also meets the needs of sustainable development in Africa, which require leadership that empowers the population. African leadership research needs to identify leadership styles that help boost organizational performance and enhance employee empowerment, according to Kuada (2010). He argues that autocratic leadership styles impinge on organizational learning and employee creativity, both of which are needed to enact sustainable development. Empowering leadership can help development organizations put the power back into the hands of nationals while making sure they have the knowledge and skills to take the work forward in a meaningful way.

Hypotheses

This study measures empowering leader behaviors—autonomy support and development support—and the effect these behaviors have on the psychological empowerment and self-leadership of subordinates in development organizations in African and U.S. contexts. In this way, the leadership side of empowerment and the felt and experienced side of empowerment are measured together.

Although some research has examined empowering leadership in various cultural contexts, this research is scant and does not involve any African countries (Kim et al., 2018). This study hypothesizes that empowering leadership positively affects both psychological empowerment and self-leadership. Many previous studies have provided support for the relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment (e.g., Albrecht & Andreetta, 2011; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a, 2015; Auh, Menguc, & Jung, 2014; Houghton & Yoho, 2005; Randolph & Kemery, 2011; van Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2012). Konczak et al. (2000) created a measure for empowering leadership and found that empowering leadership had a positive effect on psychological empowerment, which fully or partially mediated the relationship between empowering leadership and the subordinate outcomes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Raub and Robert (2010) found that psychological empowerment mediated the relationship between empowering leadership and challenging extra-role activities in a sample population from Middle Eastern and Asian countries. Chen et al. (2011) found that psychological empowerment mediated the relationship between empowering leadership and team members' innovative behaviors, teamwork behaviors, and turnover intentions. In a study conducted by Auh et al. (2014), psychological empowerment partially mediated the relationship between empowering leadership and citizenship behaviors for individuals. These studies are a sampling of the empirical research that demonstrates a strong positive connection between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment and establishes psychological empowerment as the mediating variable between empowering leadership and other positive outcomes. This study proposes to test

the effect of cultural values on this established relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment.

Self-leadership has often been presented as a primary mechanism for facilitating empowerment (Houghton & Yoho, 2005; Prussia & Anderson, 1998; Shipper & Manz, 1993). Self-leadership is a distinct concept from psychological empowerment, although both can be seen as outcomes of empowering leadership and signs of an empowered employee (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a). While psychological empowerment is the psychological state of a subordinate including four specific cognitions, *self-leadership* refers to a subordinate's perception of being competent, self-determined, and affecting the meaningfulness of his or her work (Lee & Koh, 2001). Self-leadership is a process of using a set of strategies that empower personal achievement (Houghton & Yoho, 2005). This study considers both psychological empowerment and self-leadership to be foundational conceptions of employee empowerment. The following hypotheses test the perceived empowering leadership of leaders (including the two dimensions of autonomy support and development support) and the psychological empowerment and self-leadership of followers in Rwanda and the United States:

Hypothesis 1: The autonomy support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to (a) psychological empowerment and (b) self-leadership in the Rwandan sample.

Hypothesis 2: The autonomy support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to (a) psychological empowerment and (b) self-leadership in the U.S. sample.

Hypothesis 3: The development support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to (a) psychological empowerment and (b) self-leadership in the Rwandan sample.

Hypothesis 4: The development support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to (a) psychological empowerment and (b) self-leadership in the U.S. sample.
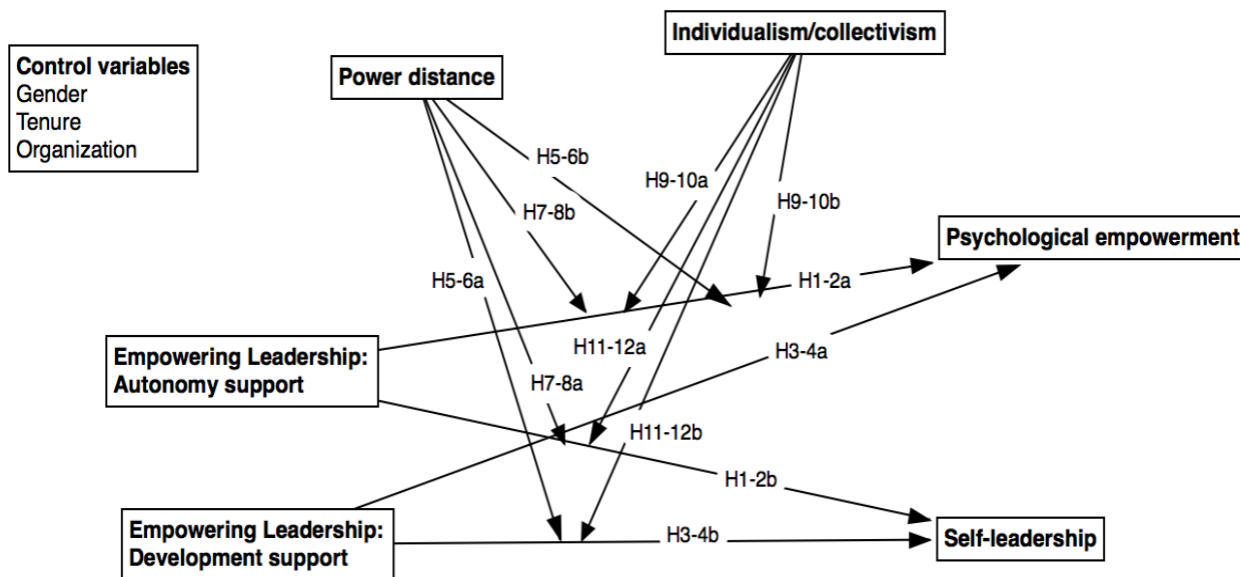
Figure 1. A model representing the hypotheses

This study also seeks to ascertain the effects of individualism/collectivism and power distance on the relationship between empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, and self-leadership. To explore these relationships, this study measures the two cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism and power distance in two highly variable cultural contexts (Rwanda and the United States) to ascertain the moderating effect of these two cultural aspects on the effects of empowering leadership on subordinates' psychological empowerment and self-leadership. The following hypotheses guide this portion of the study:

Hypotheses 5/6: Power distance moderates the relationship between the (a) autonomy support and (b) development support factors of empowering leadership and psychological empowerment in such a way that high power distance decreases the positive relationship in the Rwandan sample (Hypothesis 5) and low power distance increases the positive relationship in the U.S. sample (Hypothesis 6).

Hypotheses 7/8: Power distance moderates the relationship between the (a) autonomy support and (b) development support factors of empowering leadership and self-leadership in such a way that high power distance decreases

the positive relationship in the Rwandan sample (Hypothesis 7) and low power distance increases the positive relationship in the U.S. sample (Hypothesis 8).

Hypotheses 9/10: Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between the (a) autonomy support and (b) development support factors of empowering leadership and psychological empowerment in such a way that high collectivism increases the positive relationship in the Rwandan sample (Hypothesis 9) and high individualism in the U.S. sample decreases the positive relationship (Hypothesis 10).

Hypotheses 11/12: Individualism/collectivism moderates the relationship between the (a) autonomy support and (b) development support factors of empowering leadership and self-leadership in such a way that high collectivism increases the positive relationship in the Rwandan sample (Hypothesis 11) and high individualism in the U.S. sample decreases the positive relationship (Hypothesis 12).

The literature has shown that the relationships between these variables are likely to vary by country. For this reason, the model is tested by country to ascertain the differences. Furthermore, the following research question addresses the country differences in the studied concepts:

Research Question: Is there a difference in autonomy support, development support, psychological empowerment, self-leadership, power distance, and individualism/collectivism as perceived by U.S. and Rwandan employees?

Method

This study utilized a quantitative, nonexperimental research design with a cross-sectional approach. Participants completed a series of validated research measurement instruments in a single session in their work environment. Self-report data are preferred for this research since the perception of empowering leadership behaviors, as well as the perception of personal psychological empowerment and self-leadership, are measured with regard to the individual's personal cultural values.

Participants and Design

The sample population consisted of employees of nonprofit and aid organizations operating in Rwanda and in U.S.-based offices. Many of these organizations are led by Americans or other expatriates who are likely to have an empowering leadership style, so the sample provides a large population of Rwandans who are experiencing some form of empowering leadership. Employees of World Relief (n = 66), World Vision (n = 21), Compassion International (n = 90), Hope International (n = 37), ALARM (n = 6), and Navigators (n = 25), all located in Rwanda, took part. The sample population included the Rwandan offices' employees (high power distance and collectivism; n = 121), and the main U.S. offices' employees (low power distance and high individualism; n = 124) to best compare a wide variation of power distance and individualism/collectivism and their correlation with the other variables in two different cultural contexts. Surveys were provided in English and Kinyarwanda, in both paper copy and an Internet survey. Each individual chose the most convenient survey format. Translation of the survey into Kinyarwanda was accomplished using a back-translation process, as outlined by Brislin (1970). A small group of Rwandans, including the two translators, also met to discuss the actual meaning of each question, ensuring that this was maintained in the Kinyarwanda survey instrument. Forty of the 121 Rwandan participants used the Kinyarwanda version of the survey. Table 1 shows the demographics of the Rwandan and American participants.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants

Variable	Combined *N*	U.S. *n*	Rwanda *n*
Gender			
Female	122	80	42
Male	123	44	79
Organization			
World Relief	66	19	47
World Vision	21	0	21
Compassion Int.	90	48	42
Hope Int.	37	34	3
ALARM	6	4	2
Navigators	25	19	6
Total *N*	245	124	121

Measures

Empowering leadership was measured using the 18-item ELS (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a). The scale is two-dimensional, including autonomy support and development support. The ELS study went through three rounds of rigorous testing in a *Leadership Quarterly* article and was shown to be valid each time. The coefficient alpha was .94 for both culture samples in this study. Answers were rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always).

Psychological empowerment was measured using Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item, four-dimensional scale. The four cognitions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact were each measured with three questions on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always). According to a review of literature on psychological empowerment, the scale has been scrutinized in many studies, and both convergent validity and discriminate validity have been found in many samples, including multiple international samples (Maynard et al., 2012). Through a meta-analytic review of the antecedents and consequences of psychological empowerment, Seibert et al.'s (2011) results provided strong support for using psychological empowerment's unitary construct, or *gestalt,* that reflects the four specific cognitions. The coefficient alpha was .88 for both culture samples in this study.

Self-leadership was measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always) using the Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire (ALSQ; Houghton & Dawley, 2012), an abbreviated version of the widely used Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ; Houghton & Neck, 2002). Houghton and Dawley (2012) encourage the use of this instrument when researchers "wish to measure self-leadership as one variable of interest in the context of a larger model and who therefore find it impractical to use the full 35-item RSLQ" (227). The coefficient alpha was .80 in the Rwandan sample and .78 in the U.S. sample in this study.

Power distance and individualism/collectivism were measured using Dorfman and Howell's (1988) cultural values scale—a version of Hofstede's (1980) cultural values scale that has been calibrated for measuring culture individually. It includes

six questions for each scale and had a reliability of .86 (power distance) and .74 (individualism/collectivism; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a; Brown & Fields, 2011; Eom & Yang, 2014; Fock, Hui, Au, & Bond, 2013; Hui, Au, & Fock, 2004; Lee, Scandura, & Sharif, 2014). The coefficient alpha for power distance was .62 in the Rwandan sample and .57 in the U.S. sample; for collectivism, it was .77 in the Rwandan sample and .71 in the U.S. sample in this study. Answers were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Control variables are gender, years worked for a leader, and organization.

Measurement equivalence was established for the two sample populations in this study by conducting an exploratory factor analysis and a reliability analysis for each scale on the two different samples. The rotated factor matrix, which contains the correlations of each of the items with the extracted factors, was used to test for significant differences between the two subsamples by using the *r* to *Z* transformation. Furthermore, the factors were then built using the actual factor loadings as weights, creating separate scales for each culture group.

Procedure

Relative to data analysis, hierarchical regression was used to test the first four hypotheses, while hierarchical regression with tests for moderation was used to test Hypotheses 8 through 12. The procedure of testing for moderation includes the control variables, the independent variable, the dependent variable, and the interaction of the product of these two (Baron & Kenny, 1986). A *t*-test was used to compare the variables as measured in each of the two cultural samples. The differences between variables in the two cultures were compared and analyzed to gain insight into the way culture affects these variables.

Results

Hierarchical Regression Analysis (Hypotheses 1–4)

Correlation coefficients were computed between the independent variables, the dependent variables, and the control variable of years worked for supervisor. The results of correlation analysis are shown by culture group in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation for Rwanda

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Years	PE	SL	EL/AS	EL/DS	COL	PD
Years	5.92	5.21	–						
PE	6.02	.65	.18*	–					
SL	5.86	.71	.04	.74**	–				
EL/AS	5.45	.97	.16	.63**	.47**	–			
EL/DS	4.48	1.36	.17	.34**	.30**	.69**	–		
COL	4.28	.86	.07	.18	.19*	.11	.06	–	
PD	2.41	.69	-.00	.05	.03	.05	.11	-.07	–

Note: *n* = 121. PE = psychological empowerment; SL = self-leadership; EL-AS = empowering leadership autonomy support; EL-DS = empowering leadership development support; COL = individualism/collectivism; PD = power distance.
*p < .05 level, two-tailed. **p < .01 level, two-tailed.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation for the United States

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Years	PE	SL	EL/AS	EL/DS	COL	PD
Years	3.35	3.44	–						
PE	5.47	.87	.25**	–					
SL	4.95	.95	-.07	.55**	–				
EL/AS	5.65	1.04	.13	.66**	.41**	–			
EL/DS	4.30	1.48	.10	.33**	.24**	.65**	–		
COL	3.86	.72	.01	.12	.09	.19*	.22*	–	
PD	1.86	.41	-.19*	-.11	.19*	-.01	.09	.22*	–

Note :*n* = 124. PE = psychological empowerment; SL = self-leadership; EL-AS = empowering leadership autonomy support; EL-DS = empowering leadership development support; COL = individualism/collectivism; PD = power distance.
*p < .05 level, two-tailed. **p < .01 level, two-tailed.

Testing autonomy support and psychological empowerment (Hypotheses 1–2a) with multiple regression analysis on the Rwandan sample (p = .00) and the U.S. sample (p = .00) shows the relationship between autonomy support and psychological empowerment is significant in both cultures. Similarly, testing autonomy support and self-leadership (Hypotheses 1–2b) with multiple regression analysis on the Rwandan sample (p = .00) and the U.S. sample (p = .00) shows the relationship between autonomy support and psychological empowerment is significant in both cultures.

Testing the second factor of empowering leadership, development support, and psychological empowerment (Hypotheses 1–2b) with multiple regression analysis on the Rwandan sample ($p = .001$) and the U.S. sample ($p = .000$) shows the relationship between development support and psychological empowerment is significant in both cultures. Similarly, testing development support and self-leadership (Hypotheses 3–4a) with multiple regression analysis on the Rwandan sample ($p = .00$) and the U.S. sample ($p = .01$) shows the relationship between development support and psychological empowerment is significant in both cultures, although less significantly in the U.S. sample. The results of multiple regression analysis indicate that both factors of empowering leadership had a significant effect on both psychological empowerment and self-leadership in both cultures, indicating acceptance of the hypotheses.

Table 4: Summary of Hypotheses' Significance

1a: The autonomy support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to psychological empowerment and in the Rwandan sample.	Supported: relationship is significant ($p = .00$).
2a: The autonomy support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to psychological empowerment and in the U.S. sample.	Supported: relationship is significant ($p = .00$).
1b: The autonomy support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to self-leadership in the Rwandan sample.	Supported: relationship is significant ($p = .00$).
2b: The autonomy support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to self-leadership in the U.S. sample.	Supported: relationship is significant ($p = .00$)
3a: The development support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to psychological empowerment in the Rwandan sample.	Supported: relationship is significant ($p = .00$)
4a: The development support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to psychological empowerment in the U.S. sample.	Supported: relationship is significant ($p = .00$)
3b: The development support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to self-leadership in the Rwandan sample.	Supported: relationship is significant ($p = .00$)
4b: The development support factor of empowering leadership is positively related to self-leadership in the U.S. sample.	Supported: relationship is significant ($p = .01$)

Tests of Moderation of Power Distance and Collectivism (Hypotheses 5–12)

These hypotheses, based on a recent literature review on empowering leadership (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015), propose that high power distance will be negatively

associated with empowering leadership while collectivism will be positively associated with empowering leadership. Table 5 gives a synopsis of the results.

Table 5: Summary of the Moderating Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Country	Independent	Dependent	Hypothesis Supported?	Direction of Moderation
Moderator Power Distance					
5a	Rwanda	AS	PE	Yes	Increase
5b	Rwanda	DS	PE	No	
6a	United States	AS	PE	Yes	Increase
6b	United States	DS	PE	No	
7a	Rwanda	AS	SL	Yes	Increase
7b	Rwanda	DS	SL	Yes	Increase
8a	United States	AS	SL	No	
8b	United States	DS	SL	No	
Moderator Collectivism					
9a	Rwanda	AS	PE	Yes	Decrease
9b	Rwanda	DS	PE	No	
10a	United States	AS	PE	No	
10b	United States	DS	PE	Yes	Increase
11a	Rwanda	AS	SL	No	
11b	Rwanda	DS	SL	No	
12a	United States	AS	SL	No	
12b	United States	DS	SL	No	

Note: AS = autonomy support; DS = development support; PE = psychological empowerment; SL = self-leadership

When considering power distance as a moderator, for the hypotheses to be supported, the higher power distance of Rwanda should moderate the relationship in the Rwandan sample so as to decrease the relationships (Hypotheses 5, 7). The findings show an increase in three of the four tested relationships for the Rwandan sample. This finding indicates that high power distance has a positive effect on employees' experiences of empowering leadership and its effect on their

psychological empowerment and self-leadership; thus, the hypothesis is not supported.

In the U.S. sample, the hypotheses state that the low power distance should increase the relationships in the model (Hypotheses 6, 8). This is true in one out of four of the tested relationships, and so the hypotheses are supported for one relationship (autonomy support and psychological empowerment) and not supported for the other three.

In considering individualism/collectivism as a moderator, the hypotheses state that the higher collectivism of Rwanda should moderate the relationships in the Rwandan sample so as to increase the relationships (Hypotheses 9, 11). The findings show a decrease in one of the relationships (autonomy support and psychological empowerment) and no significant effects on the other relationships. The hypotheses are not supported, and the opposite effect in one relationship indicates that collectivism actually has a slightly negative effect on the impact of empowering leadership.

In the U.S. sample, the hypotheses state that high individualism (low collectivism) should moderate the relationships so as to decrease the relationships (Hypotheses 10, 12). The results show an increase in one relationship (development support and psychological empowerment) and no other significant results. The hypotheses are not supported, and the opposite effect in one relationship indicates that individualism actually has a positive effect on the impact of empowering leadership.

Research Question

The research question inquires if there is a difference in autonomy support, development support, psychological empowerment, self-leadership, power distance, and individualism/collectivism between the two cultures. Table 6 on the next page summarizes these differences.

Table 6: t-Test Results Showing Differences by Country on All Variables (Research Question)

	M		
Variable	**Rwanda**	**United States**	*t*

Autonomy Support	5.45	5.65	-1.61
Development Support	4.48	4.30	.99
Psychological Empowerment	6.03	5.47	5.72***
Self-Leadership	5.86	4.95	8.54***
Power Distance	2.41	1.86	7.60***
Individualism/Collectivism	4.28	3.86	4.11***

$*p < .05.$ $**p < .01.$ $***p < .001.$

There is a significant difference in autonomy support between the Rwandan and U.S. samples ($p = .04$), with the U.S. sample having a higher score than the Rwandan sample. Americans experienced higher autonomy support from their leaders than did their Rwandan counterparts. However, both scores are still high and show that employees in both countries perceived a high level of autonomy support from their leaders. There was no significant difference found for the experience of the development support factor of empowering leadership between the cultures.

There was a significant difference between the cultures in both psychological empowerment and self-leadership, with the Rwandan sample showing higher levels than their American counterparts. The overall experience of psychological empowerment and self-leadership were greater for Rwandans than for Americans.

There was also a significant difference in power distance and individualism/collectivism. Both cultural measures were higher in the Rwandan sample, which reflects the expected higher power distance and collectivism in the Rwandan culture as well as the lower power distance and higher individualism in the American culture.

Discussion

The first four hypotheses produced significance levels of $p = .000$, except for development support and self-leadership in the U.S. sample, which produced a significance level of $p = .01$. These significance levels, along with large percentages of variability, show that both factors of empowering leadership significantly affect both psychological empowerment and self-leadership in both culture samples. It is also evident that the impact of autonomy support accounted

for more of the variance on both dependent variables in both samples (between 18% and 39%) than the variable of development support (between 6% and 10%).

These results support a number of premises set up in this study. The Empowering Leadership Scale (ELS) is shown to be valid and reliable in this study in two separate cultures. Furthermore, the assertion that empowering leadership may be a powerful and effective form of leadership that produces empowerment in the African and U.S. contexts is confirmed. An extrapolation from these results is that empowering leadership may also be an effective form of leadership in other countries with high power distance and high collectivism.

Power distance is a moderator in some of these relationships but does not consistently moderate them across both cultures. While three of the four relationships were moderated by power distance in the Rwandan sample, only one of the four was moderated by power distance in the U.S. sample. This indicates that power distance has a stronger effect in the Rwandan sample than it does in the U.S. sample. This may indicate that with individuals who have higher power distance preferences, power distance is more likely to moderate the relationship between empowering leadership and employee empowerment.

In this study, the individual measure of individualism/collectivism was found to moderate one of the four relationships between the two factors of empowering leadership and the two dependent variables in each culture group. In the Rwandan sample, higher collectivism decreased the relationship between empowering leadership and employee empowerment, as the hypothesis suggested. In the U.S. sample, the moderation effect of individualism increased the relationship between development support and psychological empowerment. Although individualism/collectivism has some moderation effect on these relationships in both cultures, individual levels of collectivism cannot be generally seen as consistently moderating the effects of empowering leadership.

The literature has shown that the relationships between the variables in the current study are likely to vary by country. Although both cultures saw a high level of autonomy support in their leaders, the U.S. sample was significantly higher in reporting autonomy support in their leaders than those in the Rwandan sample.

The development support factor of empowering leadership did not vary significantly by culture. Generally, both cultures saw a high level of autonomy support in their leaders and fairly high levels of development support. This indicates that empowering leadership is being enacted by leaders and perceived by employees in both cultures in the development organizations that took part in the study. Psychological empowerment and self-leadership were both significantly higher in the Rwandan population, and both samples experienced high levels of these qualities in themselves. This is a surprising difference between cultures since it was hypothesized that while empowering leadership may have a positive impact on Rwandans, it may be less positive than the impact that it had on Americans. Conversely, empowering leadership had a stronger effect on Rwandan's psychological empowerment and self-leadership, even though they experienced less autonomous support from their leaders.

One possible reason for this surprising finding is that an authoritarian or paternalistic form of leadership is most common in the Rwandan context (e.g., Kirk & Bolden, 2006; Kuada, 2010). When employees are expecting these forms of leadership and instead experience empowering leadership, their levels of psychological empowerment and self-leadership increase dramatically. While the U.S. sample likely expects a certain level of empowering leadership and reacts positively to it, the Rwandan population reacts significantly more positively because it is less expected.

Another explanation for these surprising results comes from Peterson (2009), who notes that positive responses are generally higher in high power distance countries than in lower power distance countries. Peterson believes that the concept of *saving face* or making oneself and one's organization look good may cause an inflation of scores in the high power distance country of Rwanda. This score inflation in high power distance cultures may be the cause of the significantly higher scores in the Rwandan sample. The important finding is that in both countries, employees experienced high levels of psychological empowerment and self-leadership, which are related to the high levels of empowering leadership they experienced from their leaders. Also, the Rwandans' experience of high levels of

psychological empowerment is a significant finding, showing empowering leadership to be highly effective in producing psychological empowerment in the Rwandan sample.

The Rwandan sample was found to be significantly higher in individual levels of power distance and collectivism than the U.S. sample, which was the hypothesized outcome. African countries tended to be higher in power distance and higher in collectivism in both Hofstede's (1984) studies and the GLOBE studies (Chhokar et al., 2008; House, 2004). The current research confirmed these previous findings for a sample of the Rwandan and U.S. population, although the cultural values of this study cannot be applied to the whole country population of either culture.

Theoretical Implications

This study makes numerous theoretical contributions to the field of empowering leadership, empowerment studies, cross-cultural studies, and African leadership studies. The authors of the ELS (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014a) requested further testing of their instrument with diverse populations, including cross-cultural research involving more than one culture. This study tested the ELS on a unique set of participants and found the scale to be reliable and valid in two separate culture samples. The ELS is a reliable instrument for measuring empowering leadership in various cultural contexts and should be used in further cross-cultural studies. Through factor analysis and Z-tests, this study found that there were few significant differences by culture in the factor loadings of the ELS.

This study also tested the premise that Amudsen and Martinsen (2014a) set forth: that an employee's personal empowerment is made up of both psychological empowerment and self-leadership and that empowering leadership will have a positive effect on both of these variables. This study indicates that empowering leadership has a significant and positive effect on both the psychological empowerment and the self-leadership of employees in both culture samples. Measuring personal empowerment through the two variables of psychological empowerment and self-leadership is supported in this study.

This study establishes empowering leadership as an effective producer of empowerment in employees in the United States and Rwanda, which represent

both high and low power distance and individualism/collectivism values. This is a significant finding since the GLOBE study (Chhokar et al., 2008) found that leadership preferences vary by culture and that some forms of leadership are only effective in a portion of countries. This study shows that empowering leadership may be a form of leadership that is acceptable in multiple cultures. Although this study does not prove that empowering leadership is appropriate and effective in all cultures, it does indicate that it may be effective in cultures that vary significantly on the cultural values of power distance and individualism/collectivism. Empowering leadership is established from this study as a set of leadership behaviors that consistently produce empowerment in subordinates with differing individual cultural values.

Numerous authors have proposed that leadership research in Africa needs to identify appropriate forms of leadership for Africa to combat the economic difficulties that it faces (Edoho, 2001; Kuada, 2010; Muchiri, 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2011). Kuada (2010) proposes that empowerment of employees is central to addressing the issues that Africa faces and calls for further study of empowering leadership in the African context. This study's results show that empowering leadership is indeed an effective form of employee empowerment in one African culture and suggests it may be a form of leadership that can be implemented in other African contexts to increase the empowerment of employees. Walumbwa et al. (2011) argue that a country's economic performance is largely contingent on the effectiveness of the leaders' ability to "unlock the potential of its workforce to effectively implement the strategic goals of organizations" (425). Empowering leadership offers an organizational tool that can unlock the potential of the workforce by producing psychologically empowered employees, which could have a positive impact on fighting poverty in the African context.

Future Research

This study contributes to the research of empowerment and empowering leadership by measuring perceptions of these concepts in employees who vary in levels of power distance and individualism/collectivism. Further research needs to consider the effectiveness of empowering leadership in producing empowerment

in different African cultural contexts as well as in other diverse cultural contexts, including Asian and other cultures that are high in power distance and collectivism.

In this study, the U.S. sample perceived a significantly higher level of autonomy support in their leaders than the Rwandan sample. The education level of employees may be a factor influencing employees' perception of empowering leadership qualities. Since the Rwandan employees likely have a much lower education level than the U.S. employees, and education level may affect the perception of leadership, it is possible that education level influences this variable. In future studies, the education level of the employees should be considered as a covariate to ascertain if education levels affect employee perception of empowering leadership.

This study tested the two factors of empowering leadership separately on each of the dependent variables. In future studies, both factors of empowering leadership could be considered simultaneously as independent variables. This may reveal further insights into how empowering leadership effects psychological empowerment and self-leadership in the two culture samples.

Now that empowering leadership is firmly established as an antecedent to both psychological empowerment and self-leadership, the effects of these two *be and do* aspects of personal empowerment on other work and organizational outcomes should be researched more thoroughly. Use of these two aspects of empowerment as antecedents to various work outcomes should also be considered in further studies.

This study highlighted the need for more highly reliable scales of individually measured cultural values. Many other studies have reported low reliability in all of the variations of individual measure of cultural value scales as well. Individual measurement of cultural values in cross-cultural studies is widely encouraged (Culpepper & Watts, 1999; Scandura & Dorfman, 2004; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; Tsui et al., 2007), and yet the scales that measure cultural values at an individual level suffer from low reliability. New cultural value scales need to be created to measure values individually. Further study needs to create scales that have consistently reliable alpha measurements. For example, research that converts the

GLOBE study scales into a reliable measure of individual cultural values would add value to the field of cross-cultural research. Valid and reliable scales of individual measure of culture are much needed in the further research of leadership and culture.

Further research is needed in the area of measurement equivalence in studies that involve more than one culture to determine if the alternative method utilized in this study is acceptable and produces similar results to the method set forth by Riordan and Vandenburg (1994). When structural equation modeling is not a viable option, the methods of establishing measurement equivalence in this study may be considered as a viable option.

Limitations

The GLOBE study (Chhokar et al., 2008) measured nine aspects of culture, and Hofstede (1980) measured five. Only two aspects of culture were measured in this study—the two that the literature has shown are the most impactful for leadership: individualism/collectivism and power distance. It is possible that other aspects of culture also affect empowering leadership.

Rwandan and American participants indicated their individual cultural preferences. The results of cultural preferences may not be typical of the general Rwandan population since many participants will have a higher level of education, speak English, and work for an international organization. Although the results cannot be generalized to the overall Rwandan culture, they may be generalized to other contexts in which aid organizations work in a culture with high collectivism and high power distance.

Organizational culture may influence the results of this study. The study specifically measures cultural variables, but the culture of the organization may affect the individuals' experience of culture. This study proposes that employees will reflect many aspects of their national culture and is not interested in organizational culture. For this reason, multiple organizations with different organizational structures and organizational cultures are studied and organization is included as a control variable.

Another limitation to this study is its cross-sectional design, which does not allow for direct causality to be determined. Further research could improve on this design by gathering data before and after an empowering leadership training program. This would increase the possibilities of identifying the effects of empowering leadership on self-leadership and psychological empowerment.

In a study design such as this one, in which data are collected by self-report questionnaires, there may be a question of internal validity. Podsakoff and Organ (1986) propose that common method variance can be a serious threat to internal validity and occurs when all data are gathered from the same subjects. However, Conway and Lance (2010) found that using self-report data from one source does not inflate common method correlations through common method bias. In a review of research with various research designs, Lance, Dawson, Birkelbach, and Hoffman (2010) found that although common method variance does inflate observed relationships, the effect is almost completely offset by the effect of measurement error. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) suggest techniques for controlling for common method bias, some of which are employed in this study. This study protects respondent anonymity and reduces evaluation apprehension, which reduces common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The instructions to the survey assure anonymity as well as request honest answers from respondents. Also, the questions are counterbalanced, as suggested by Podsakoff et al., to offset common method bias. Questions relating to each variable are mixed together in the survey so that respondents are not likely to answer similar questions in a similar manner when they are grouped together. This ensures that respondents consider each question individually and are more likely to offer an honest response rather than answering automatically.

Conclusion

This study suggests that empowering leadership can be effective in cultures like Rwanda with high power distance and high collectivism. The experience of having an empowering leader has a powerful effect on employees in both Rwanda and the United States. Rather than exercising caution implementing empowering

leadership in foreign countries with high power distance and collectivism, or adopting a more culturally appropriate form of leadership, empowering leadership should be practiced vigorously and taught outright in development organizations. This will greatly increase empowerment in the workforce, which has been shown to have many positive organizational and work outcomes. As noted previously, a country's economic performance is largely contingent on the effectiveness of the leaders' ability to "unlock the potential of its workforce to effectively implement the strategic goals of organizations" (Walumbwa et al., 2011, 425). Empowering leadership offers an organizational tool that can unlock this workforce potential by producing psychologically empowered and self-led employees, which could have a positive impact on fighting poverty in the African context.

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Examining the Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organizational Performance: The Moderating Role of Organizational Learning[*]

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The purpose of this study was to use a single-scale measure for organizational learning and organizational performance to determine if the five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation, moderated by organizational learning, impact organizational performance. Two new single scales were created to measure organizational learning and organizational performance from the items used to measure these constructs. CEOs from 298 Tanzanian businesses provided data about their subjective views of their firms' entrepreneurial orientations, organizational learning, and organizational performance. Moderated hierarchical regression analyses was used to determine that two of the five entrepreneurial orientations—autonomy and competitive aggressiveness—demonstrated positive, linear, causative effects on organizational performance, and that organizational learning demonstrated moderating effects on those two causative relationships.

Keywords: entrepreneurial orientation, organizational learning, organizational performance, resource-based view

In this study, we examined the causal relationship of the five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation (EO; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Lyon, Lumpkin, & Dess, 2000) with three dimensions of organizational performance (OP; Murphy, Trailer, & Hill, 1996), moderated by the two dimensions of organizational learning (OL; Zahra, Nielsen, & Bogner, 1999). We followed Venkatraman and Ramanujam's (1986) recommendation to measure OP with a subjective measure. We used a composite variable for OL. Thus, we tested the theoretical model shown in Figure 1.
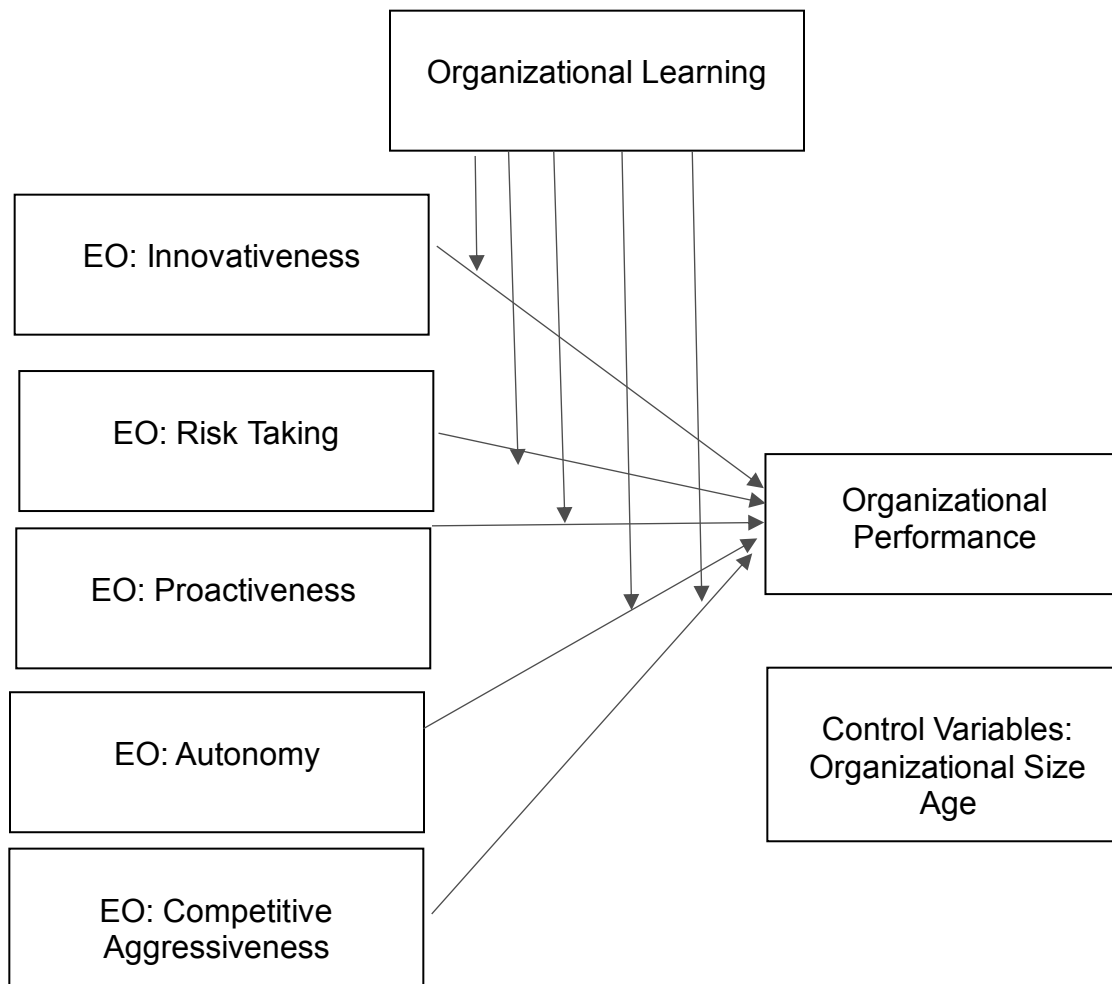
Figure 1. Theoretical model

Theoretical Concepts

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Research on the relationship between the concepts of EO and OP has produced inconsistent results (Li, Huang, & Tsai, 2008; Lisboa, Skarmeas, & Lages, 2011; Tang, Tang, Marino, Zhang, & Li, 2008). Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin, and Frese (2009); Wiklund (1999); and Zahra and Covin (1995) suggest that a strong relationship exists between EO and OP. Covin, Slevin, and Schultz (1995); Dimitratos, Lioukas, and Carter (2004); Matsuno, Mentzer, and Özsomer (2002); and Zahra (1991) demonstrated that negative, weak, and nonsignificant relationships exist between these concepts. Additionally, Miller and Friesen (1983) report finding mixed results in their study of these concepts. Li et al. (2008) assert

that such inconsistent research findings raise the question: Does EO present a suitable strategic orientation in all settings, or is its relationship with OP more multifaceted? Lisboa et al. (2011) suggest that inconsistent findings restrict the appreciation of the role of entrepreneurship in organizational achievement and reflect the need for more research on how EO relates to OP. This research inconsistency provided the impetus for this study.

To deal with the inconsistent results, researchers have called for investigations into organizations' internal and external characteristics that could moderate the relationship between EO and OP (Lisboa et al., 2011; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Rauch et al., 2009; Thoumrungroje & Tansuhaj, 2005). Therefore, we also chose to examine how OL might moderate the EO–OP relationship. In addition, researchers have posited that the examination of EO and its effects on OP in developing countries has proven very limited to date (Liu, Luo, & Shi, 2003; Tang et al., 2008; Wales, Gupta, & Mousa, 2011; Zhao, Li, Lee, & Chen, 2011). Consequently, we examined the EO–OP relationship in Tanzania.

Covin and Slevin (1991) describe *entrepreneurial orientation (EO)* as a dimension of strategic posture, characterized by an organization's risk-taking tendency; its propensity to behave in competitively aggressive, proactive behaviors; and its dependence on regular and wide-ranging product innovation. EO functions as an organizational-level concept because it relates to the strategic posture of the entire organization (Covin & Slevin, 1991). Covin and Slevin observe that organizations exhibiting EO demonstrate specific, regular behavioral forms that permeate the entire organization and represent senior managers' general strategic thinking on effectual management behavior. These important observations represent why we adopted an organizational level of analysis. Covin and Slevin (1989) developed a nine-item self-response instrument to measure EO, and they consider EO a unidimensional construct in the sense that the three dimensions of EO do not vary independently and are generally aggregated to form a single scale. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) suggest that two additional dimensions of EO exist—competitive aggressiveness and autonomy—so they consider EO a multidimensional construct in that the dimensions of EO vary independently from

each other and are not generally aggregated to form a single scale. Lumpkin, Cogliser, and Schneider (2009) and Lumpkin and Dess (2001) subsequently developed instruments to measure autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. Lumpkin and Dess's two additional dimensions of EO add to the three original dimensions of EO suggested by Covin and Slevin (1989)—innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness—making EO a five-dimension construct. We adopted the five-dimension conceptualization of EO, as did Mapalala (2017).

Covin and Slevin (1989), Lumpkin and Dess (1996), Lyon et al. (2000), and Miller (1983) describe *innovativeness* as a tendency to involve in creativity and experimentation via the introduction of new products or services and engaging in technological leadership through research and development (R&D) in new processes. These researchers describe *risk taking* as the tendency to take daring actions by venturing into unknown markets, borrowing heavily, and committing substantial resources to undertakings in uncertain environments that have possibilities for very high returns. *Proactiveness* represents an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking outlook, characterized by the introduction of new products and services ahead of competitors and acting in anticipation of future demands (Covin & Slevin, 1989, 1991; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Lyon et al., 2000; Miller, 1983). Lumpkin and Dess (1996, 2001) define *competitive aggressiveness* as an organization's actions that are intended to overcome its competitors by demonstrating an aggressive posture or the strength of an organization's efforts to beat industry competitors as represented by a strong reaction to competitor's actions. Lumpkin and Dess (1996, 2001) define *autonomy* as an organizational member's capacity to independently search and support promising entrepreneurial ideas and programs. It represents a self-determining behavior intended to provide a business concept or vision and its implementation.

Entrepreneurship literature has recognized the importance of EO to the survival and performance of organizations (Hunt, 1995; Hunt & Morgan, 1996, 1997; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Rauch et al., 2009). Hunt (1995) and Hunt and Morgan (1996, 1997) explain that the resource-based view (RBV) theory positions EO as a resource that can allow an organization to perform better than its competitors

and gain competitive advantage. Barney (1991) and Newbert (2007) posit that the RBV represents one of the most acknowledged concepts for explaining variances in performance across organizations.

Lumpkin and Dess (1996) suggest that EO leads to superior OP by facilitating an organization's capacity to recognize innovative opportunities that offer higher potential returns, target premium market segments, and gain first-mover advantages. According to Lumpkin and Dess, various organizations consider entrepreneurial behavior vital for survival in a world that progressively experiences accelerating change. Li et al. (2008) similarly observe that because of the significance of entrepreneurship to OP, EO represents a central measure of how members can structure an organization to take advantage of market opportunities. Nevertheless, Lisboa et al. (2011) caution that those who use RBV can use EO as a resource with only a potential value and that exhibiting EO represents an essential, but not fully adequate condition for value delivery. Therefore, it appears necessary for an organization to apply suitable strategic behaviors, such as adopting a learning orientation (LO), to exploit the advantages of EO more fully (Lisboa et al., 2011).

Organizational Learning

Desset al. (2003) observe that although some theorists have typically suggested that EO affects OP positively, this relationship entails a broader examination of the intermediate steps between EO and OP. Rhee, Park, and Lee (2010) propose that as EO grows, concerns with and dedication to learning quickly increase, thus allowing members with opportunities to gather pertinent information. According to Huang and Wang (2011), OL behaviors drive an organization's corporate intelligence in gathering, sharing, and distributing the market and entrepreneurial information needed to successfully transform it into a market- and entrepreneurial-driven organization. Researchers have defined *organizational learning (OL)* as the process in which organizations change or adapt their mental models, rules, processes, and knowledge, to maintain or enhance their performance (Alegre & Chiva, 2013; Dibella, Nevis, & Gould, 1996; Lado, Boyd, & Wright, 1992).

Prajogo and Ahmed (2006) note that the business environment has become more uncertain and complex because of the advent of globalization. They also note that this has resulted in continuous and rapid changes in the environment, market, and customer needs. Chapman and Hyland (2004) suggest that organizations must acquire the knowledge necessary to create new products in response to constantly changing customer needs and to satisfy new markets and customer demographics. Subsequently, Real, Roldán, and Leal (2014) highlight that OL represents a dynamic process of knowledge creation formed at the core of the organization through its members.

Dess et al. (2003) posit that an organization's EO stimulates the acceptance and implementation of innovative, proactive behavior that encourages OL and the knowing process. There is mounting evidence (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2011; Real et al., 2014; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003; Zhao et al., 2011) that links entrepreneurship to OL.

To measure OL, we took the items that Mapalala (2017) used to measure the two sub-concepts of OL and conducted a principal component analysis. We found two factors, but with extensive cross-loading. We removed the cross-loaded items and reran the analysis, only to find more cross-loading. We then removed those cross-loaded items and finished our analysis with a six-item scale designed to measure leaders' perceptions of OL, as shown in Table 1. The six items included 65% of the associated variance. The items had a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test value of .87, and Bartlett's test for sphericity was significant at $p < .000$, and Cronbach's alpha was .89.We averaged the scores for each item to form the OL score.

Table 1: Organizational Learning Scale Items

Item	Factor Loading
Collection of new and important information	0.85
Collection of information on consumer needs and preferences	0.83
Sharing experience of serving customers	0.81
Cooperation among departments and job functions	0.81
Motivation to learn among departments	0.80
Collection of information on technical developments	0.73

Note: Extraction method: Principal component analysis

Organizational Performance

According to Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), three areas represent the significance of OP to strategic management: theoretical, empirical, and managerial. In theoretical terms, the construct of OP relates centrally to strategic management, as most strategic management theories either directly or indirectly accentuate performance implications. In empirical terms, OP represents the primary concept used to analyze various strategy content and process issues in strategy research (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). Richard, Devinney, Yip, and Johnson (2009) observe that OP represents one of the essential concepts in management research and that many researchers consider it the variable with the highest level of dependability in strategic management research (Sapienza, Smith, & Gannon, 1988).

   The extant OP literature presents disagreements among researchers regarding what constructs contribute to OP (Ford & Schellenberg, 1982; Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). Ford and Schellenberg (1982) contend that these disagreements mainly center on issues regarding methodology or differences in the concepts or constructs of performance. Regardless of these disagreements, Ford and Schellenberg identify three main perspectives of OP. The first perspective they describe includes Etzioni's (1960) goal approach, which purports that all organizations seek to achieve some ultimate and recognizable goal. The goal approach defines performance as being centered on goal achievement (Etzioni, 1960). The second perspective includes the system resource approach proposed by Yuchtman and Seashore (1967). Researchers who use this approach

have considered the interaction between the organization and its environment, thus defining OP as an organization's capacity to acquire scarce and valuable resources. The third perspective includes Steers' (1977) process approach, in which OP is defined as the behavior of organization stakeholders. According to Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), strategic research incorporates these three conceptual viewpoints of organizations by discussing OP measurement as a multiple hierarchical concept.

Ford and Schellenberg (1982) note how the measurement of OP had become a topic of widespread and burgeoning empirical and theoretical research. Murphy et al. (1996) stress the importance of developing and using precise and suitable measures of OP in entrepreneurship research because the absence of adequate measures could result in the inhibition of theory, which could further lead to problems in developing beneficial guidelines for entrepreneurs. Richard et al. (2009) note the importance of measuring OP because of its use as the predominant evaluative criterion, due to its prevalent use as a dependent variable in a wide number of studies. Richard et al. also state that measuring OP is important because it enables researchers and managers to assess the specific behaviors and actions of organizations and managers. In this study, we measured the specific behaviors and actions of organizations and leaders to assess whether EO positively influenced them.

Haber and Reichel (2005) observe that previous studies used various objective measures of OP, such as revenue, cash flow, return on assets, and return on equity. However, researchers contend that such objective measures of OP, though important, may not adequately depict overall OP (Aggarwal & Gupta, 2006; Murphy et al., 1996). Subjective, nonfinancial measures of OP include indicators like perceived market share, perceived sales growth, customer satisfaction, loyalty, brand equity, change in employees, net profit margin, and gross profit margin (Haber & Reichel, 2005; Murphy et al., 1996). Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) argue that subjective measures of performance demonstrate consistency with objective measures and enhance the reliability and validity of objective measures. Venkatraman and Ramanujam thereby conclude that researchers

could use subjective measures to accurately measure OP. This also proves important to our study. Specifically, we based our use of subjective measures to evaluate OP on these findings.

Using the same analysis method that we used for the six-item single scale for OL, we conducted a factor analysis of the items used by Mapalala (2017) to create two components of OP. As with the OL variable, we found two factors and extensive cross-loading. Upon removing the cross-loaded items and rerunning the principle component analysis until no cross-loading occurred, the results yielded a three-item scale to measure leader reports of OP. The scale had a KMO value of .72, Bartlett's test for sphericity demonstrated significance with $p < .000$, and Cronbach's alpha was .83. Table 2 shows the three items and factor loading.

Table 2: Items for the OP Scale

Item	Factor Loading
Satisfaction with sales growth	0.88
Satisfaction with return on sales	0.87
Satisfaction with employee growth	0.84

Note: Extraction method: Principal component analysis

Research Questions and Hypotheses

We sought to answer the following two research questions in this study:

Research Question 1: Does EO positively influence OP?

Research Question 2: Does OL moderate the relationship between EO and OP?

To answer the two research questions, we sought to test the following research hypotheses using moderated hierarchical regression:

Hypothesis 1a: The EO dimension of innovativeness positively relates to OP.

Hypothesis 1b: The EO dimension of risk taking positively relates to OP.

Hypothesis 1c: The EO dimension of proactiveness positively relates to OP.

Hypothesis 1d: The EO dimension of autonomy positively relates to OP.

Hypothesis 1e: The EO dimension of competitive aggressiveness positively relates to OP.

Hypothesis 2a: OL moderates the relationship between innovativeness and OP.

Hypothesis 2b: OL moderates the relationship between risk taking and OP.

Hypothesis 2c: OL moderates the relationship between proactiveness and OP.

Hypothesis 2d: OL moderates the relationship between autonomy and OP.

Hypothesis 2e: OL moderates the relationship between competitive aggressiveness and OP.

The moderating variable in the regression models was created by multiplying OL by each of the five EO dimensions.

Data and Analysis

Research Participants

Data were collected from senior managers of 298 Tanzanian organizations by using the key informant approach, which is seen as a methodologically suitable way of collecting data and is consistent with previous research (Hughes, Hughes, & Morgan, 2007; Lisboa et al., 2011; Real et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2008). The key informant approach is demonstrated by meticulously questioning one or a few special people and placing trust in their answers (Campbell, 1955). Campbell (1955) posits that a *key informant* is a person who is well informed on and is prepared to respond on the issues under deliberation. According to Hughes et al. (2007), key informants typically control the general activities of the organization and have a good understanding of the general strategies of their organization. Accordingly, senior managers of organizations area key source of information on strategic processes and are also the predominant source of information on the practices, processes, and outcomes of an organization (Hughes et al., 2007).

Sample Demographics

Of the 1,000 questionnaires distributed, we received 520 completed questionnaires. Of those, we found 20 unusable for various reasons, including that some respondents had left too many items unanswered and others had marked multiple responses for the same items. After removing the unusable questionnaires, this represented a 50% response rate. For questionnaires with only a few missing values, we replaced 20 missing values with the series mean

computed through IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20 (2011), as suggested by Pituch and Stevens (2016). Because the organization served as the level of analysis, we averaged multiple responses from a single organization to provide one response. This resulted in a sample size of 298 participating organizations. The number of participants exceeds Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson's (2014) recommended minimum of 15 participants per predictor variable. The average organizational size, measured by the number of full-time employees, was approximately 55 members (*SD* = 23.45). The average age of the organizations included in the sample was approximately 19 years (*SD* = 5.02). The industries represented in the sample included 0.3% in the retailing and distribution industry, 0.3% in auditing and assurance services, 9.7% in information and communications technology, 25.2% in banking and financial services, 0.3% in construction, 21.1% in insurance, 31.5% in social security, 10.4% in postal and related services, 0.7% in management consulting, and 0.3% in valuation and real estate (numbers do not add to 100% due to rounding).

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the seven variables. The skewness results indicate the data skews to the high end of the range, while the kurtosis results indicate light tails compared to the center of the distribution.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Seven Variables

	Min	Max	Mean	*SD*	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Innovativeness	2.33	7.00	4.717	0.9039	-0.171	0.141	-0.260	0.281
Risk-Taking	2.50	7.00	4.951	0.9074	-0.239	0.141	-0.102	0.281
Proactiveness	1.00	7.00	4.638	1.1550	-0.425	0.141	0.148	0.281
Autonomy	1.67	7.00	4.931	1.0571	-0.686	0.141	0.342	0.281
Competitive Aggressiveness	1.50	7.00	4.773	1.0948	-0.286	0.141	-0.144	0.281
OL Single Scale	2.00	7.00	5.118	1.0052	-0.966	0.141	0.809	0.281
OP Single Scale	1.00	6.67	4.275	1.2034	-0.839	0.141	0.499	0.281

Note: *N* = 298

Regression Models

Table 4 presents the three models of the moderated hierarchical regression. The first model consists of the dependent variable and control variables. The second model consists of the dependent variable, the control variables, and the independent variables. The third model consists of the dependent variable, the control variables, the independent variables, and the moderator variable. The results caused us to accept four of the hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1b: The EO dimension of risk taking positively relates to OP.
- Hypothesis 1e: The EO dimension of competitive aggressiveness positively relates to OP.
- Hypothesis 2a: OL moderates the relationship between innovativeness and OP.
- Hypothesis 2d: OL moderates the relationship between autonomy and OP.

We rejected the other hypotheses for failure to demonstrate significant relationships.

Table 4:Regression Models of EO (independent variables) on OP (Dependent Variable) Moderated by OL

Variable	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3			
	B	*SE*	β	*p*	**B**	*SE*	β	*P*	**B**	*SE*	β	*p*
Constant	5.5	.53			1.54	.54			3.07	.65		
Age	-.27	.19	-.09	.14	-.36	.15	-.12	.018*	-.35	.14	-.11	.017*
Organizational Size	-.13	.08	-.10	.10	-.04	.07	-.03	.539	-.03	.06	-.02	.636
EO: Innovativeness					-.03	.07	-.02	.717	-1.03	.35	-.77	.003**
EO: Risk Taking					.10	.07	.07	.177	.37	.37	.28	.307
EO Proactiveness					.05	.07	.05	.445	-.05	.30	-.05	.876
EO: Autonomy					.47	.07	.41	.000**	1.02	.29	.90	.001**
EO: Competitive Aggressiveness					.21	.08	.19	.011*	-.24	.43	-.22	.579
EO: Innovativeness*OL									.19	.07	1.24	.006**
EO: Risk Taking*OL									-.06	.07	-.40	.367
EO Proactiveness*OL									.02	.06	.17	.692
EO: Autonomy*OL									-.15	.06	-1.13	.006**
EO: Competitive Aggressiveness*OL									.08	.08	.59	.331
R^2	.02				.39				.46			
F	3.35*				26.26**				20.05			
Df	2				7				12			
ΔR^2					.37				.07			
R^2adjusted	.02				.37				.44			

Note. N = 143
*p < .05. **p< .01

Discussion

Model 3 of the regression explained 46% of the variation in the dependent variable (F[12,297] = 20.04, p< .001), which compares to Mapalala's (2017) finding of 36%. Perhaps the new single scales for OL and OP simplify and clarify the measures. We can now answer the two research questions. Regarding Research Question 1, which asked if EO positively influences OP, we found that the EO dimensions of autonomy and competitive aggressiveness positively influence OP. As the results of this study indicate, among the five EO dimensions, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness play the most important roles in enhancing OP. These results imply that, with all other things equal, CEOs of Tanzanian organizations who adopt higher levels of autonomy and competitive aggressiveness will have greater ability to enhance the performance of their organizations than those who adopt lower levels of these two dimensions. Tanzanian CEOs who do not fear competitive pressures and decide to adopt competitive and aggressive marketing strategies will more likely improve the performance of their organizations than those who choose to avoid competitive frameworks. Competitive and aggressive marketing strategies may include attempting to expand market share by lowering prices, becoming fast followers in imitating successful products, expanding product range and marketing channels in new and existing markets, espousing unconventional strategies to challenge industry leaders, targeting competitor weaknesses, focusing on high value-added products, and concentrating on quality (Coulthard, 2007). However, the results of our study also indicate that innovativeness negatively relates to OP. This result implies that Tanzanian CEOs should take extra care when adopting innovative strategies, as they could prove detrimental to the performance of their organizations. In general, these findings demonstrate that each EO dimension does not necessarily prove desirable in pursuing enhanced OP. These findings also provide empirical support for Lumpkin and Dess's (1996) suggestion that the EO dimensions may vary independently, depending on the environmental and organizational contexts, and that entrepreneurial activities or processes could sometimes lead to desirable results on one performance dimension and undesirable results on another performance dimension.

However, the results of our study could have been affected by cultural values and understandings. Tanzania forms part of the East African country block which has been characterized by Hofstede (1983) as collectivist with a high power distance but weak uncertainty avoidance. According to Hofstede, high power distance denotes the low presence or complete absence of subordinate consultation with supervisors, as employees are afraid to disagree with supervisors. This is not a conducive environment for creativity and innovation, as senior organizational managers have the responsibility of creating an environment that will foster innovation by listening to subordinates' ideas and providing moral and material support to encourage them. We therefore argue that high power distance could be an important contributor to the negative relationship between innovativeness and OP.

Bird (1989) and Carland, Hoy, Boulton, and Carland (1984) argue that assigning the role of innovator to the entrepreneur implies that successful entrepreneurs adopt and implement competitive strategies such as introducing new products and services, creating new methods of production, opening new markets or sources of supply, or even reorganizing an entire industry. Hofstede (1980) observes that people in collectivist cultures (such as Tanzania) are born into extended families or clans that protect them in exchange for loyalty, and social identity is based on group membership. According to Hofstede, in collectivist cultures there is greater emphasis on belonging as opposed to personal initiative. Thus, individual initiative is not highly valued and deviance in opinion or behavior is typically punished. In collectivist cultures, group decisions are considered superior to individual decisions (Hofstede, 1980). Mueller and Thomas (2000) note that in individualistic cultures (as opposed to collectivist cultures), social identity is founded on personal contribution, and fundamental social values focus on individual initiative and success. Autonomy, variety and individual financial security is more important than group loyalty. Mueller and Thomas posit that entrepreneurial orientation signifies a person who is self-reliant and self-confident, with strong determination and the perseverance to initiate and grow an enterprise. They further argue that people with both an internal locus of control and innovative predisposition are prevalent in

highly individualistic cultures that support the sturdily autonomous and tenacious element of entrepreneurial behavior and simultaneously back creativity and innovative problem solving for dealing with uncertainties (Mueller & Thomas, 2000). We further suggest that collectivism could be an important explanation for the negative relationship between innovativeness and OP.

Regarding Research Question 2, which asks if OL moderates the relationship between EO and OP, we found that it does for the EO dimensions of innovativeness and autonomy. Tanzanian CEOs who decide to adopt autonomy strategies to enhance OP should introduce OL strategies, beforehand or concurrently, for greater OP results than by adopting autonomy strategies alone. Similarly, the moderating relationship between the EO dimension of innovativeness and OP implies that CEOs of Tanzanian organizations who decide to adopt innovativeness strategies to enhance OP would do well to introduce OL in the relationship to improve OP over and above what can be achieved by adopting innovativeness strategies alone. Interestingly, the coefficient for innovativeness indicated that it negatively relates to OP. This means that as innovativeness goes up, OP goes down. A case study might contribute to a deeper understanding of the innovativeness relationship with OP.

Conclusion

Although the findings of our study have important implications for organizational leaders, these findings are subject to some limitations. First, we conducted the study in the context of a developing country in Africa, namely Tanzania. Because EO studies are rare in Africa, replication of this study in other African countries will help create more generalizable findings and, in turn, provide a basis for comparing EO practices between developing countries and advanced economies. Second, in conducting this study, we used a cross-sectional research design. Stam and Elfring (2008) note that cross-sectional data do not provide a good understanding of the dynamic relationship among EO, OL, and OP and consequently limits our ability to make causal inferences. We, therefore, recommend that longitudinal data be used to study these relationships because, according to Jiménez-Jiménez and Sanz-

Valle (2011), longitudinal data provide more understanding of the changing importance of the different EO dimensions as they move through the lifecycle of the organization or changing economic conditions. Third, contrary to the general belief that EO is universally beneficial, our findings suggest that although EO may beneficial in improving OP, it may not be a suitable strategic orientation in all contexts. We, therefore, recommend that further research is needed to determine the causes of variances in the EO–OP relationship and the contexts in which this concept is applicable.

The findings of our study show that the EO–OP relationship is much more complex because each EO dimension, depending on the context, may or may not be helpful in improving OP. It is therefore important for organizational leaders to understand the impact of each EO dimension on OP and how they can apply the different EO dimensions in the context in which they find themselves. Our findings further suggest that there is a contingency relationship between EO and characteristics internal and external to the organization such as OL. This suggests that under certain circumstances, both EO and OL are important strategic elements that combine and reinforce each other in the process of improving OP. However, we caution organizational leaders that OL has varying moderating impacts in the EO–OP relationship. Therefore, organizational leaders should also understand how the different EO dimensions interact with OL, and which combinations of EO dimensions and OL are beneficial in enhancing OP.

Based on the results of our study, we recommend that organizational leaders in Tanzania emphasize and strengthen autonomy and competitive aggressiveness, as they have the effect of enhancing the performance of their organization. Because Tanzania has been categorized as a low uncertainty avoidance country (Hofstede, 1983), we suggest that Tanzanian CEOs assume moderate calculated risks when they venture into new undertakings. To reverse the negative relationship between innovativeness and OP, we suggest that the issue of culture be taken into consideration because culture is perceived as a possible condition for entrepreneurship that engenders variations from country to country (Mueller & Thomas, 2000). We suggest that Tanzanian CEOs focus on changing cultural

values that impede the adoption of innovativeness as a strategic option to improve OP. As suggested by Mueller and Thomas (2000), it is important for would-be entrepreneurs to obtain support from political, social, and business leaders, and more importantly, it is crucial to develop a supportive culture to nurture the mind and attitude of the potential entrepreneur. It is necessary that would-be entrepreneurs see themselves as competent and psychologically prepared to confront the opportunities and threats of a global, competitive marketplace. In a collectivist country like Tanzania, we support the suggestions offered by Mueller and Thomas that business education is essential in providing the technical tools and serves to reorient people toward self-sufficiency, autonomy, creativity, and flexible thinking.

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Leadership Readiness to Assimilate, Internalize, and Utilize New Knowledge to Drive Change Initiatives[*]

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Absorptive capacity has been shown to be a key mechanism for organizational outcomes, such that a firm's absorptive capacity is largely dependent on the leadership strategy adopted for using knowledge. If deployed correctly, a readiness assessment can help evaluate this capacity and provide a basis for planning the appropriate alignment of resources to increase both this capacity and the likelihood of success in driving change initiatives. This study addresses gaps in the literature on how design thinking, as a business model, provides a dynamic capability and competitive advantage by enhancing an organization's absorptive capacity to acquire, assimilate and apply external knowledge. Only limited attention has been given to the dynamic interplay between individual and organizational antecedents in knowledge identification, assimilation, and commercial application processes. This qualitative, archival case study describes one organization's readiness to absorb new knowledge to drive change initiatives. Secondary archival data was provided by XYZ Corporation's HR organization in its assessment of organizational readiness. The study contributes further practical research examining performance improvements in organizations achieving unique and superior outcomes. Future research opportunities exist for capturing similar data from other large organizations to augment the existing data and broaden the literature on dynamic design thinking and absorptive capacity.

Key words: absorptive capacity, change initiatives, readiness assessment, strategic change

Practical insight into how organizations achieving unique and superior outcomes can be designed to further enable innovation and agility remains an under-researched area in the existing literature (Mohrman & Lawler, 2012; Richard, Devinney, Yip, & Johnson, 2009). This descriptive case study contributes empirical data observed and sourced within a large, stable, and highly innovative firm. The purpose was to document and describe the readiness of the human resources (HR) organization of XYZ Corporation to assimilate, internalize, and use new knowledge to drive change initiatives. A descriptive case-study design and a secondary data collection method were used to document and describe the organization's readiness process to absorb knowledge and transform these

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learnings into practical actions. The secondary archival data was collected in preparation for a major organizational change initiative.

The findings of this investigation could prove important for the growing body of research in change management and help address the research gap in how contemporary organizations redesign themselves with features that enable agility and drive change initiatives (Nickerson, Yen, & Mahoney, 2012; Smits & Bowden, 2015). Utilizing insights from this study, mechanisms can be initiated or reinforced to help accelerate the propensity for learning and ultimately build appropriate mechanisms for driving change. This study also addresses the lack of a theoretical foundation on how design thinking as a business model provides a dynamic capability and competitive advantage by enhancing an organization's *absorptive capacity,* or ability to acquire, assimilate, and apply external knowledge.

XYZ Corporation's HR Change Management History

XYZ Corporation, an online retailer, has experienced unprecedented growth in almost all product and service diversifications since its inception in the mid-1990s. To support this growth, the HR organization needed to adapt to handle the sheer scale of workforce growth. Human capital management and other systems had to scale significantly over time and orchestrate high-volume recruiting strategies. The HR organization also had to expand an employee lifecycle support model to facilitate operations in North and South America; in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA); and the Asia Pacific (APAC) regions. In addition to rapid growth in the number of employees, the variety of worker types has continued to proliferate. Ultimately, this exponential growth has forced the HR organization to not just scale operations and services, but also to ensure that the technical solutions in place can scale appropriately and support for those systems can be maintained through a greater reliance on self-service automation.

Program Description and Goals

In January 2014, the operations arm of the XYZ HR organization stood at 65 employees and has since grown to over 1,400—it was projected to exceed 2,800 by the end of 2017 (XYZ Corporation HR Internal Communication

Memorandum, October 2016). Until 2014, HR operations were largely supported and conducted by local country HR departments. A decision was made to consolidate regional HR services into four regions: Americas, India, EMEA, and APAC. Between January 2014 and September 2016, all HR services were consolidated to regional hubs in San Jose, Costa Rica; Hyderabad, India; Prague, Czech Republic; and Beijing, China. As part of these consolidation efforts, teams were built to manage the design and implementation of technology solutions, with the mandate to embrace economies of scale through global service catalogs and a managed product suite. While the approach was often successful in actual solution delivery, feedback suggested a less-than-ideal situation for those impacted by the change. Poor communication, insufficient training, and leaderless launches often led to low-quality launch delivery with a high level of frustration from those expected to adopt these new systems.

By the end of 2015, it was clear to the leadership team that if they wanted to scale change initiatives across the globe, appropriate procedural mechanisms were necessary to maintain a consistent framework for orchestrating change project delivery and build accountability into the delivery pipeline. To meet the needs of those impacted by these change projects, a more formal approach to supporting change was needed. To this end, the HR organization initiated a readiness assessment. The intent was to gauge the sentiment across the organization of its capacity to deliver change initiatives and then propose a means to close gaps that were uncovered during the assessment. Data collection for this study comprised two sets of secondary archival data sourced from XYZ's HR organization.

Literature Review

Early change models were based on the psychological state of the organization as the change process progressed (Lewin, 1947). Through the mid- to late-1990s, models for change emerged—Kotter's (1996) eight-step model, Prosci's ADKAR model (2004), and Worley, Hitchin, and Ross's (1996) integrated strategic change model—which ultimately developed into an industry of change practitioners and

consultants. The field of change management expanded further to consider a range of pre-change factors that could potentially influence successful change outcomes and be facilitated through the lens of the learning-based organization (Senge, 1990). More recently, the Association of Change Management Professionals' (ACMP, 2014) Standard for Change Management focuses on a wide array of key antecedents in consideration for developing organizational change readiness. However, much of the existing literature on change readiness focuses on this readiness as an early snapshot assessment targeting social cognition (attitudes, commitment, openness to and alignment with the organizational vision) or strategic elements (skills and knowledge, leadership capacity) within the organization (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Holt, Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 2007; Shah, Irani, & Sharif, 2016; Vakola, 2013). Stevens (2013) argues that these are narrow definitions of change readiness, yielding questionable validity and generalizability and poor psychometric properties. Instead, a process-based approach for actionable realignment to the change over the life of the change process is suggested.

Other researchers have examined and proposed a multi-level analysis that examines individual, group, and organization interaction as a predictor of change, therefore fulfilling a more realistic and holistic evaluation of the dynamics contributing to change readiness (Bouckenooghe, 2010; Kozlowski & Klein, 2000; Rafferty, Jimmieson, & Armenakis, 2013). Pellettiere (2006) contends that there is a need for a thorough diagnostic investigation that includes cultural and climate gauges of the organization. The successful example of the 1990s Bell Atlantic (now Verizon Wireless) transformation—using a highly structured approach to accommodate both anticipated and unanticipated change implications (before, during, and after the change, which supports Stevens's 2013 assertions), mechanisms for managing the impact of change on key stakeholder groups, and appropriate reward and performance measures—exemplify the benefits of taking a holistic and multi-faceted approach to change management. The conceptual framework proposed by Holt and Vardaman (2013) takes both individual and organizational factors into consideration, and therefore shows considerable

promise, building on calls for multidimensional factors to be included in the readiness assessment. Specific tools for assessing readiness have historically tended to focus on the individual level (Holt, Armenakis, Feild, & Harris, 2007; Vakola, 2013) and are more readily available than organizational readiness tools, which have largely been criticized for limited validity (Patterson et al., 2005). While questionnaires have been used extensively, most contemporary research calls for a wider net for studying organizational readiness, effectively using a triangulation method that includes qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys (Piderit, 2000; Rafferty et al., 2013).

R&D spending was largely the focus when absorptive capacity was first formulated as a conceptual framework for examining organizational performance and has, since then, largely influenced research focus. Research has converged on the realization that organizational absorptive capacity depends on the absorptive capacity of its individual members (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Drzensky, Egold, & van Dick, 2012; Holt, Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 2007; Lichtenthaler, 2016; Vakola, 2013; Volberda, Foss, & Lyles, 2010; Wales, Parida, & Patel, 2013; Zahra & George, 2002). However, contemporary research has focused on considerable variability in the application of absorptive capacity and its effect on organizational performance and shown complexity in the different levels of absorptive capacity. The right balance of absorptive capacity within an organization has been shown to vary relative to its size (Volberda et al., 2010), and investigation into the optimal level of investment in this capacity indicates financial returns can be both enhanced and diminished at certain levels (Lichtenthaler, 2016; Wales et al., 2013). The relationship between absorptive capacity and an organization's strategic response to demand for products was also found to be non-linear (Dobrzykowski, Leuschner, Hong, & Roh, 2015). Research focusing on social capital, aligned to the framework of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), has shown that a considerable range of social antecedents influence absorptive capacity: past performance and previous history of change (Fuchs & Edwards, 2012); team and cross-team dynamics (Backmann, Hoegl, & Cordery, 2015); individual's identity with the organization itself (Drzensky et al., 2012); influence of middle management (Drzensky et al., 2012); and the building of trust,

norms, and identification between individuals (Kittikunchotiwut, 2015; Vakola, 2012).

  Antecedents of absorptive capacity extend across a range of investigational sources, and investment in these antecedents is directly tied to relevance of knowledge area to an organization's strategy (Lane, Koka, & Pathak, 2006). Therefore, organizations are understandably discriminating and pragmatic when it comes to where they invest resources. Jansen, Van den Bosch, and Volberda (2005) segment absorptive capacity into potential and realized absorptive capacity, whereby *potential absorptive capacity* comprises the acquisition of knowledge and *realized absorptive capacity* is the assimilation and exploitation of that knowledge. They suggest that a firm's socialization capabilities play a significant role in realizing absorptive capacity. Building on this, research suggests that organizational mechanisms are of critical importance for the realization of transformative learning behaviors of an organization's employees (Martinkenaite & Breunig, 2016). Studies identify external and internal knowledge acquisition as fundamental antecedents for absorptive capacity (Dobrzykowski et al., 2015; Guimaraes, Thielman, Guimaraes, & Cornick, 2016; Lichtenthaler, 2016; Müller-Seitz, 2012; Tzokas, Kim, Akbar, & Al-Dajani, 2015), and that knowledge acquisition may be relative to the position in the internal knowledge sharing structure (Tortoriello, 2015). Soo, Tian, Teo, and Cordery (2017) suggest that hiring practices, reward systems, and other aspects of HR management are key antecedents for realized absorptive capacity. They note that in order to realize performance improvements at the organizational level managers need to develop collaborative structures and mechanisms to generate capabilities that lead to effectively transformation and exploitation of the new knowledge through recruiting and developing talent. Guimaraes et al. (2016) identify both charismatic and transactional strategic leadership as key antecedents, suggesting that the former is much more challenging (and therefore rare in today's organizations) compared to the latter. Supporting readiness-increasing organizational cultures characterized by learning, open communication, supportive working relationships, and participative decision making enhances the readiness for change at both the

individual and collective levels (Gärtner, 2013; Guimaraes et al., 2016; Soo et al., 2017).

Individual Perceptions and Sentiment for Internal Change Capability

As part of the organizational assessment, 30 functional, program, and leadership management employees of XYZ's HR organization were interviewed. The subjects represented HR services directors and respective HR service owners, with HR directors representing global talent management; compensation and benefits; HR operations; product managers; business analysts; and project, change, process improvement, learning solutions, and customer service managers. The interviews were unstructured. The notes from these interviews explore various aspects of the change management process, including organizational structure and culture, general awareness of the change management process, the organization's overall ability to conduct large-scale change, communications and learning support for change, individual perceptions regarding the ability to deliver projects, existing reporting and accountability processes, project successes, and the involvement of leadership.

The notes were reviewed and broken down into themes to identify related issues and categorize them. Several sub-themes were also identified. For content validity, Lawshe's (1975) content validity ratio method was used (Ayre & Scally, 2014; Gilbert & Prion, 2016), whereby three change management subject matter experts (SMEs) were consulted to align topics discussed within the interviews with the six main overarching themes, from which the remainder of the analysis was built on and discussed. These six broad primary themes are organizational; customer experience; project management; change management; functional support–communications; functional support–learning, and training. Fifty-six distinct topics were found within the interview notes and aligned into themes. Of the 56 topics, just seven items resulted in SME disagreement as to their placement. Each of these outlier topics was discussed with the full group present, and agreement was reached as to the appropriate alignment of these topics within the themes based

on shifting assumptions as to how they would be processed during the analysis. Three of the seven items were split across two themes given their multidimensional scope, resulting in 59 items being categorized across the six themes. The results of the classification of topics into themes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Breakdown of Interview Themes and Topics Within Themes

Theme	Topic (Number of Respondents > 1 Addressing Issue)
Organizational	1. Lack of business continuity planning 2. Large programs with no global owner 3. Need to build a culture to support change (incl. international) 4. Governance of content–policies/retention and storage (2) 5. Sheer volume of changes and decisions needed are excessive (5) 6. Expanding into a fourth region—means consistency needed 7. Consolidation of operational support to regional hubs (2) 8. Team composition—inappropriate staffing (3) 9. Differences in regional org. structure/service models (6) 10. Don't have sufficient mechanisms to create good repeatable processes
Customer Experience	1. Project delivery results in a poor customer experience (3) 2. Lack of follow-up after launch with customers 3. Project delivery must be frustration-free for the customer (3) 4. Quality of deployments is highly frustrating for customers 5. Poor deployments mean poor feedback 6. Planning should start with working backwards from the customer to deliver the appropriate solution
Project Management (PM)	1. Lack of a formal portfolio structure across HR 2. Financial metrics are lacking for any given project 3. No accountability and inconsistent approach used for project delivery (6) 4. Need a standard approach for PM (3) 5. Need to mandate the use of lessons learned after launch 6. Lack of project reviews, results in misalignments and insufficiently thought-out solutions with no process rigor 7. No portfolio tool to manage the list of projects globally 8. Uncertain as to how projects get initiated 9. Volume of projects (backlog/stacking of priorities) is a problem we need to fix (4) 10. Prioritizing projects needs regular discussion (5) 11. Change management should be integrated as a function of the project plan 12. Need to drive a project portfolio with transparency and regular audits (3)
Change Management (CM)	1. CM has historically been a last mile exercise 2. Need to build consistent processes for delivering repeatable high-quality delivery for the customer with consistent branding and using a variety of communications channels 3. More people need to understand CM process—some good tools available, but need to understand the "how" (4) 4. Fire-load-aim is the typical modus operandi for change 5. Considerable lack of CM expertise common across teams 6. A consistent templated approach has been set up 7. Localized communications is key to successful CM

8. It is challenging creating momentum for change
9. Better stakeholder management is necessary with appropriate socialization of the pending change (3)
10. How can I get support from the CM support team on my projects? (5)
11. CM efforts are sorely lacking: poor quality, no real effort on behalf of the customer; don't work well at all (3)
12. Execution sequence is inconsistent (front-end good, back-end poor)
13. Reinforcement of the change is non-existent
14. Change projects need the right team composition: change manager, communications specialist, and learning SME
15. Critical need for CM training: hands-on instruction and a component to socialize the approach globally (8)
16. Consistent change model because we use an inconsistent approach to change
17. Change management toolkit (6)
    a. is widely known across HR since launch
    b. contains good user-friendly templates
    c. provides access to CM tools
    d. re-evaluate user interface to easily find resources
    e. serves a purpose, but more "hands-on" education needed

Functional Support–Communications	1. Need a global standard approach to communications with local delivery (5)
	2. E-mail is the usual delivery of communications (6)
	3. Communications are usually handled late in the process
	4. Overuse of e-mail: we should encourage use of the full spectrum of communication modes: posters, badges, reports, all-hands meetings, etc. (5)
	5. Whenever a communication is sent that describes a change in a role, this results in a fear of job losses
	6. Sponsor communications need to be vetted appropriately for accuracy and target the right population
	7. Evolve a global communication strategy that explains how to effectively use proper communication channels
	8. Consistent messaging and branding (4)
Functional Support–Learning and Training	1. Learning teams are involved much too late in the launch process
	2. Learning teams need greater headcounts to meet the demand for an ever-growing launch portfolio
	3. Front-end training often lowers adoption (when delivered too early)—need a "just-in-time" training delivery model
	4. Need greater awareness for the appropriate learning approach to take for each respective project or change
	5. Need to repurpose materials and use them consistently across project launches to save time and costs
	6. Translations to be handled consistently in local market

Training and Skills

The second data set contained a quantitative survey that was distributed to a wider sampling (5,500) across the same population. The purpose of the survey was to determine gaps in change management training: to expose both the extent to

which untrained personnel were already working to deliver change projects and reveal their desire for further skills training. The survey was comprised of 14 questions: 13 scaled items and 1 open-ended item. Twelve of the scaled questions used a five-point Likert scale for responses across the categories: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. One of the scaled questions used a range to quantify the number of projects managed by the respondent. The open-ended item posed the question "What change management topics would you like additional training in?" The survey was initially sent to HR leadership for dissemination to their respective teams, and then on to the wider HR groups across XYZ, with roughly 5,500 potential responders. The response rate was approximately 10.4% (570).

The first three questions in the survey concerned existing roles and expectations and produced interesting results. Of the 570 respondents, the majority are expected to perform project or change management functions (485 and 424, respectively), but have a role within the organization that does not require project or change management credentials to perform in the role. This suggests a potential skills gap, particularly given the next revelation. Of the 536 valid responses, 96 respondents claimed to have not run any significant change projects to date; 227 had managed three to five projects; 127 had managed six to nine projects; and 86 had managed ten or more projects. As such, at least 440 of the 570 respondents have managed change projects without an official project or change manager designation. The one caveat here is that some of these employees may, in fact, have had familiarity with change or project management, and therefore the remaining questions endeavored to assess the extent to which training is desired or necessary. From the total, 87.7% (500) of respondents stated they were interested in developing their skills as a change manager; 67.7% (386) reported their responsibilities as a change manager were not clearly defined; and 61.4% (350) noted they would like to lead larger change management projects, suggesting an appetite for skills enhancement or professional growth opportunities.

The next section in the survey sought to examine the skills gap in more depth. Each question asked if the respondent believed he or she had the skills capability to competently manage one of five areas of change management tactical delivery. Surveying specific skills competency required for delivering change projects produced mixed results, indicative of self-bias.

- Manage a stakeholder analysis produced a composite agreement of 50.8% (8.6%, or 49, strongly agreed and 42.2%, or 241 agreed) versus a composite disagreement of 41.8% (34.6%, or 197, disagreed and 7.2%, or 41, strongly disagreed); 7.4% (42) neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Manage a change impact analysis produced a composite agreement of 37.9% (6.5%, or 37, strongly agreed and 31.4%, or 179, agreed) versus a composite disagreement of 54% (45.6%, or 286, disagreed and 8.4%, or 48, strongly disagreed); 3.5% (20) neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Manage a communications plan produced a composite agreement of 73% (17.4%, or 99, strongly agreed and 55.6%, or 319, agreed) versus a composite disagreement of 19.1% (16.3%, or 93, disagreed and 2.8%, or 16, strongly disagreed); 7.5% (43) neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Manage a learning (training) plan produced a composite agreement of 59.7% (12.5%, or 71, strongly agreed and 47.2%, or 269, agreed) versus a composite disagreement of 31.5% (28%, or 160, disagreed and 3.5%, or 20, strongly disagreed); 7% (40) neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Build a change strategy produced a composite agreement of 42.8% (7%, or 40, strongly agreed and 35.8%, or 204, agreed) versus a composite disagreement of 49.2% (43.9%, or 250, disagreed and 5.3%, or 30, strongly disagreed); 7.4% (42) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Limitations of the Case Study Analysis

Lawshe's (1975) content validity method suggests identifying five or more SMEs for the content validation panel (Ayre & Scally, 2014; Gilbert & Prion, 2016). This study coordinated and utilized a panel of three SMEs for categorization of interview topics across the six primary themes. However, inter-rater reliability was strong

among the 56 topics, and disagreement on seven of the topics was further discussed, resulting in the breakdown of three topics into two additional topics to align to the themes, resulting in 59 topics in total.

For the qualitative archival data, non-probability sampling was used. In conducting the interviews, the initial researcher deliberately chose the individuals to participate in the study to obtain a cross-section of the relevant groupings within the organizational structure and distribution in other global regions. The quantitative data, however, is representative of probability sampling, whereby every individual in the population had an equal chance of being selected as a subject for the survey. As biases affect the perspective of the research being conducted, the researcher must consider biases based on the social, economic, cultural, and educational circumstances leading to skewed research. Self-assessment data from survey respondents is highly likely to contain self-perception bias, either positively in the form of self-enhancement bias or negatively in the form of self-diminishment bias (John & Robins, 1994).

Another limitation is that employee data provides a snapshot in time of perceived sentiment, which may of course change when viewed with a temporal lens or through a longitudinal study. However, the actual analysis from the archival data is reproducible and therefore is not cause for concern when interpreting this study's implications. The limitation of examining a single organization, which may reduce the possibility of generalizing the results (Vakola, 2012), is also worth stating. To counter this, common-method variance was used (both qualitative interview and quantitative survey data) to help converge and tie in the relationship between the data and identified key sentiments. The findings from both sources of data resulted in specific outcomes aligned to themes identified in the analysis of the data. XYZ Corporation took specific measures to address gaps in core competencies to realize its strategic outcomes. The concept of a readiness assessment (knowledge acquisition) leading to the assimilation and utilization of that knowledge was, of course, the purpose of this research. With regard to the survey data, while a wider population sample was used (570 respondents from 5,500 surveyed; a 10.36% response rate), the data is subject to the limitations of self-report data.

In terms of validity, the questionnaires contained in the secondary data were constructed specifically for the purpose at hand. While both the questionnaires and the interviews were specifically designed for use in XYZ's HR organization, these tools use common language and lines of questioning that could easily be generalized for developing a similar readiness approach beyond the specific organization in terms of external validity and reliability. Comparable studies across organizations within XYZ would find this data useful, in addition to cross-organizational studies. Unfortunately, given confidentiality constraints, data used for the current study may not be available for the latter research.

Discussion

Evaluation of the data suggests a baseline of change management and some significant challenges in deploying change projects from a process and structural mechanisms standpoint. Another key finding was concern for the volume of projects, prioritization, and limited project accountability. Analysis of the survey results suggests a critical gap in skills capability. Individual and collective sentiment from the survey and the interview findings are combined and discussed in terms of the readiness assessment categories presented hereafter. The categories used align to the four primary factors for determining individual sentiment toward change, based on the work of Holt, Armenakis, Harris, & Feild (2007), Vakola's (2012) systematic inquiry model, and the readiness assessment work of Holt and Vardaman (2013), whereby *change* is defined as "the extent to which employees are individually and collectively primed, motivated and technically capable of executing a change" (9).

Category 1: Appropriateness of the Proposed Change

Across leadership, middle management, and functional teams, interview respondents indicated that modifications to the way in which change projects were managed needed to be re-examined and the processes tightened up in order for change projects to be successful. This indicates a vested interest in the change and an inherent appropriateness for modifying existing processes, primarily as an output from the readiness assessment and part of the proposed change in and of

itself. Respondents specifically described the need for a formal portfolio tool and a set of project gates to manage the list of projects consistently around the globe. Each project would move through a series of review gates as the project progresses through each respective phase. This would assuage other concerns—accountability for project deliverables and inconsistent approaches to change and project launch. Lack of project reviews had, in the past, resulted in misalignment between teams and, in some cases, projects being initiated in multiple teams. Poorly designed solutions with no process rigor was another symptom of the lack of accountability.

Also articulated was the need for a standard project management methodology aligned to the project portfolio tool. To make things more useful for the project team, establishing a process for change management that transparently ties into the project management methodology and integrated deliverable checklists into the project review gates would complete the picture. Another expectation for the revised approach was addressing the concern that project teams were staffed insufficiently. Often, analysts were asked to perform the function of change or project managers without possessing the skills or discipline to manage the process effectively, essentially setting these individuals up for failure. Having appropriate resources staffed from the appropriate functional team as a matrixed organizational approach would help resolve this issue.

The use of lessons learned during post-project reviews was also articulated as an essential process if the organization was to focus on a process of continual learning, such that project teams could use tribal knowledge from one project for the benefit of the next project and hopefully mitigate issues from repeating. Respondents also suggested that initiating projects was not only a different process in each region but a black-box of uncertainty as to where the approval to begin a project would originate. A formal process would be the means to address this issue. Given the lack of skills, a targeted and well-designed training program would help close the gap in project and change expertise common across teams.

Category 2: Leadership's Support of the Change

While the individual leader's current self-perception of their role comprised largely self-enhancement bias, the interviewed leaders were self-critical in not fully understanding their ongoing role as change sponsors and lacking the necessary understanding of how to fulfill that role. This manifested later during a skills module for leadership and a series of discussions to implement a specific role for project sponsors. Other respondents confirmed this and were critical of leadership when it comes to sponsoring change and presenting timely communications to the target customer base. Their perceptions suggested that while pre-launch e-mail communication to the targeted customers can be requested of leadership, reinforcement messaging of the change was nonexistent post-launch.

All tiers of interview respondents addressing this issue stated that sponsor communications needed to be vetted appropriately for accuracy and targeted to the right population in preparation for a project launch. Respondents also mentioned a lack of project prioritization discussion with leadership in determining where to focus scarce human and other capital resources. Most respondents mentioned awareness of a basic framework for managing change had been communicated by leadership, which had helped bind the organization to the need for a change management process, but little else existed to support that initiative beyond the website. One senior leader was quoted as saying, "Unfortunately, fire-load-aim seems to be the typical modus operandi for change."

Category 3: Individual Capability for Making the Change Successful

The survey data indicated a skills gap in both project and change management. However, many of the interview responses suggest that individuals are hindered from delivering successful change projects due to the lack of awareness for change management processes or use of the tools and templates already in existence within the organization. Respondents stated that they were aware of the website for change management, the processes outlined, and the templates available, but were unaware of the appropriate use of the templates and how to effectively manage and implement change. Many of the how-to concepts were missing from their capability to make changes successful.

In addition to a lack of change management expertise across teams, the volume of projects was called out as a huge detractor for quality change implementations due to the need to switch between projects quickly, multiple projects being worked on simultaneously, and no downtime between projects being delivered and the next one being started (this also accounted for why lessons learned were not part of standard operating procedures). Responses from those working on projects also pointed to a lack of consistent project management and accountability for decisions made during the planning and execution phases of each respective project. The lack of project reviews with no process rigor was again highlighted in terms of poorly designed solutions, and insufficiently staffed teams resulted in a lack of personal discipline and fundamental skills for focusing the direction and function of the project team.

Category 4: Personal Benefits of Enacting the Change

Referred to as "What's in It for Me?" (WIIFM), these sentiments speak to the individual's need to tie the strategic vision for the change to personal goals or benefits. From the survey and interview data, the primary request from respondents focused on the need to build personal skills enhancement in both project and change management. The understood sentiment suggests that respondents saw training as the means to enhance their abilities and prepare them for greater responsibility within their department and the organization as a whole and possibly leading to a promotion or alternate assignment. Some saw the opportunity to drive larger projects as a driving force for being involved in the change process. Respondents also proposed that in the absence of an existing training program, being able to obtain consulting assistance from SMEs would help resolve some of the challenges on a case-by-case basis.

Findings in the Context of the Research Questions

The research questions developed for this study formed the basis of the inquiry. Findings from the analysis of both the interviews and survey data are discussed in the context of these questions.

Research Question 1: What evidence from XYZ Corporation indicates the organization's readiness to assimilate new knowledge for driving change initiatives?

The Project Management Institute (2017) first published the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®) in 1996 as a guide to help the development of the project management profession. Since that time, the integration of project managers as an integral discipline across all industries has proliferated across the globe. As of January 31, 2018, there were 833,025 project management professionals (PMP®) worldwide (360PMO, 2018).

Similarly, change management courses have been offered by institutions of higher education and other private training organizations for many years. However, as a discipline with a professional following, a global standard was released by the ACMP in 2012, and a globally recognized title, the certified change management professional (CCMP™), was established in 2016. The relative youth of change management as a recognized profession has, in many ways, only just started to yield impactful growth. XYZ's HR organization hired a principle change consultant in the spring of 2016 in anticipation of, and in preparation for, scaling operations to meet intended employee growth projections.

In terms of evidence indicating the organization's readiness to assimilate new knowledge for driving change initiatives, XYZ's HR organization had the foresight to hire change managers to conduct a readiness assessment and propose a framework for closing gaps in delivering change initiatives. To determine the appropriate steps to take (e.g., interviews of key personnel and surveys to evaluate skills), these gaps were used. These data formed the basis for the present research study. The interviews outlined a number of very explicit concerns for the organization, including the lack of accountability on projects, no standard processes for change project delivery, ineffective use of communications, and an organizational structure that differed across regions. Sentiments indicating that team composition was inconsistent and insufficient and that integrating change management should come earlier in the process were worthy of attention. Many called for greater understanding of how change management processes work, which translates to the need for training. As a response to concerns about skills, a

survey was used to specifically define the gap. The results of the survey indicate that roughly 50% of respondents did not feel competent to build a change strategy, and 42 to 73% felt they lacked the skills to adequately manage a training plan, a communications plan, a change impact analysis, or a stakeholder analysis. Interestingly, 10% stated they had little interest in learning anything beyond the basic information to get the job done. The one open-ended item asked respondents to suggest additional change management topics (in addition to stakeholder analysis, change impact analysis, and communication and training plans) about which they were interested in learning. The suggestions included various aspects of change management and delivery: change measurement and evaluation, using metrics, leading others through change, influencing stakeholder teams and resistance management, planning change stabilization, having agile change management, dealing with the impacts of using change management and learning plans, adapting change management across different corporate and international cultures, developing an effective change strategy, and defining best practices. The survey and the interview notes contributed directly to a readiness assessment from which a planned approach to address these deficiencies can be proposed and enabled.

Research Question 2: What evidence from XYZ Corporation indicates the organization's readiness to internalize new knowledge for driving change initiatives?

In terms of assimilating or integrating the new knowledge, the readiness assessment components, which the interview and survey data partly comprise, were used to build consensus for developing the programmatic mechanisms. The change consultant used the interview and survey data, along with other indicators from leadership across the organization, to develop a proposal to address the issues that emerged. Once the proposal had been socialized with leadership and other key personnel across the organization, specific structural mechanisms were designed, reviewed, built, and deployed in rapid succession over the next three quarters. As one example, a project portfolio tool was developed and launched across all regions over the course of two months, and a gating process (essentially, a means to analyze the progress of a project from initial business case through to

post-launch results) was introduced. This gating process ensured accountability was embedded in a formal framework that then enabled a consistent approach to project delivery.

Based on the information gathered in the readiness assessment, XYZ's leadership concurred that support mechanisms were indeed needed and put in place as a direct result. A change management community began to meet quarterly to discuss and present change management topics as a group, and to review project launch challenges to refine the process moving forward. A quarterly newsletter was also established to notify employees of upcoming workshops on change management, to highlight high-profile change projects and support, and to announce the availability of consulting help from certified change managers. A network of qualified change managers was hired, with an SME located in each geographical region to advocate for the change management framework, and existing online support materials were refined for easier access and search-and-find capability. In addition, a multi-tiered internal training and certification program was developed that was specifically targeted to staff working on change initiatives. This program incorporated external change models and documented best practices to produce a grounded, externally relevant development tool. An added bonus was that this program could be used as a professional development goal and motivator with internal managers and was useful in the fulfillment of external professional learning credits toward reissue of the PMP® or CCMP™ designation.

To help close the change management skills gap and address a variety of different needs, the training was tiered as Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 training. Level 1 focused on basic awareness of the change management process, useful for staff who work on small change initiatives and need a basic primer on the overarching process and tools. Participation in Level 2, open by invitation only, was targeted at individuals in strategic roles who need a more fundamental grounding in change management practices and beyond. This more advanced level paired participants with mentors for three to six months. Level 3 required the participant to manage a self-driven change project under the supervision of a mentor, culminating in a certification review board meeting and the certification

designation. The program was considered a bar-raising experience, and several hundred employees took the Level 1 training. Level 2 training was piloted with SMEs and launched in the first quarter of 2017. A project management training program was scheduled to launch on the heels of the change management training program (XYZ Corporation HR internal communication memorandum). This training program uses a similarly multi-tiered approach, incorporating mentors in the advanced levels.

Research Question 3: What evidence from XYZ Corporation indicates the organization's readiness to utilize new knowledge for driving change initiatives?

The effort to embed this new knowledge into the organization's operating practices was a large change project in itself and managed as such. The utilization of new knowledge following the work undertaken for the organizational readiness assessment manifested in two primary forms. Building out procedural, systemic, and workforce support mechanisms assimilated and utilized the knowledge captured in the readiness assessment components and demonstrated absorptive capacity at the organizational level. Often, organizations hire consultants, pay large sums for those consultants to explore and report over a series of weeks or months, and then ultimately ignore the recommendations for any number of reasons. The capacity to absorb this knowledge demonstrates a unique level of design thinking that can ultimately result in extraordinary outcomes for the organization. In the case of XYZ Corporation, this has been demonstrated time and again. Using consistent feedback loops, evidence has surfaced that suggests the team feels more empowered with these new support mechanisms and has greater capability for driving projects to a higher standard of customer satisfaction, largely due to better quality deliverables from a more rigorously challenged execution process.

At the individual level, utilization of the knowledge from participation in the training programs will, it is hoped, permeate that knowledge into the core of the organization for the immediate betterment of change project initiatives and their corresponding outcomes. The extent to which this permeates into all regional change initiatives remains to be seen. At the individual level, enhancing a person's

ability builds self-worth and the perception that the organization is helping an individual grow through more targeted recruitment and personal development (Soo et al., 2017). These intrinsic motivators have already manifested themselves internally, as staff lobby for admission to advanced levels of the training program. The training program has contributed to building rewards and recognition as part of a more positive performance evaluation process based on strengths and tangible goals. The ultimate measure of whether these change initiatives have truly made a difference will be realized over several quarters, as the organization deploys trained personnel to change initiatives and then measures the results relative to before the organizational overhaul. Preliminary data looks promising.

Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

XYZ Corporation took specific measures to address gaps in core competencies, which surfaced through the research data, to realize strategic outcomes in the months subsequent to acquiring the initial data. A readiness assessment is a fundamental input for building awareness of critical gaps, serving as a key tool for identifying issues and deficiencies that could be mitigated through development of a roadmap of actions, prior to embarking on organizational change initiatives. In the absence of such an approach, organizations lose an important opportunity to redress critical skills and knowledge gaps, effectively ignoring individual impediments to change and organizational level deficiencies. These impediments and deficiencies are often an organization's Achilles' heel, which, if not attended to, can significantly hinder the capacity of an organization to deliver on strategic goals and effect change successfully.

Findings relevant to readiness to assimilate new knowledge imply that large organizations can be open to implementing broad and dynamic design thinking, particularly when presented with qualitative and quantitative evidence that existing processes are detrimental to their goals. They also indicate that the voice of the workforce can have a considerable impact on the organization when appropriately channeled. Generalized sentiment from assessing readiness for change can help an organization define a course of action to not only lift morale and potentially

realign employee identification within the organization, but also to enhance desired skills within the workforce to build internal bench strength. Regarding readiness to internalize new knowledge, the findings indicate that large organizations can and do internalize new knowledge. Not only is this taking place in today's competitive corporate environment as an agility lever to help retain a competitive edge, it can be realized through a wide range of different operational structures and support mechanisms, limited only by an organization's creativity. Regarding readiness to utilize new knowledge, building out procedural, systemic, and workforce support mechanisms can empower and afford those affected by the change with an increased capability of driving projects to a higher standard of customer satisfaction.

One practical application of readiness assessment is that alignment of appropriate resources to mitigate issues that surface through new knowledge acquisition prior to embarking on a strategic mission could save significant costs in the short and medium terms. In the long term, progressive design thinking can refine an organization's competitive advantage as a tool leveraged for strengthening organizational agility. A second practical application is that an organization's HR department can utilize such new knowledge to inform a new approach to its workforce competencies and annual performance program, with important implications for talent recruitment and development and the betterment of the organization, holistically.

Further analysis of the data might well be useful for researchers examining the interdependencies between individual sentiment at both the beginning and the end of a major change initiative, deemed beyond the scope of this paper. Comparable studies across organizations within XYZ Corporation would find this data useful, in addition to cross-organizational studies. However, this data may not be available for research external to XYZ Corporation. Future research should focus on and capture findings from other large organizations across a broad industry base, to further examine the propensity to acquire, assimilate, and utilize knowledge prior to embarking on large strategic initiatives. This will both broaden the literature on organizational capacity for dynamic design thinking, absorptive capacity, and

produce literature demonstrating organizational capacity for agility in the marketplace. Additionally, related research should consider the longitudinal effects of knowledge acquisition and the need to refresh that knowledge periodically through ongoing assessments. Another recommendation is for future research to examine the comparative cost of implementing mechanisms in response to a failed initiative, relative to return on investment and costs saved by implementing these mechanisms ahead of an initiative.

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Measuring Requisite Expatriate Personality Traits: A Partial Validation of the Bird and Osland Global Leadership Model[*]

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This study reports empirical testing of the threshold traits level of the theoretical pyramid model of global leadership developed by Bird and Osland (2004). The research utilizes a pre-tested instrument to measure the manifest factors from survey data consisting of two independent samples of U.S. business professionals—those based in the United States with no previous international experience and U.S. expatriates based in Egypt. An exploratory factor analysis recommends the manifest factor loadings and these are used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis to test the rigor of fit with the latent theoretical constructs of humility, integrity, inquisitiveness, and resilience. Finally, the authors conducted hypothesis testing on the items that entered the confirmed model across both samples. The results support three constructs of the threshold traits section of the Bird and Osland model (integrity, humility, inquisitiveness), while one of the constructs (resilience) is not as well supported. Additionally, by using previously published scales, the authors developed a single instrument that can be used as a screening tool for those seeking international assignments.

Key words: confirmatory factor analysis, expatriates, global competencies, global leadership

The investigation of global leadership seeks to understand and clarify the impact of globalization on leadership. Globalization causes increased complexity along three features: ambiguity, multiplicity, and interdependence (Lane, Maznevski, Mendenhall, & McNett, 2004). *Ambiguity* denotes the lack of information clarity and/or multiple understandings of the same facts due to intercultural differences that are increased in global settings. *Multiplicity* involves the need for global leaders to deal with numerous disparate interests, such as customers, governments, stakeholders, and competitors. *Interdependence* deals with the more complex systems of technological and human interaction than those confronted by domestic leaders. Given this concept of globalization, many scholars conclude that global leadership differs considerably from conventional leadership, which requires studying it as a separate phenomenon (Canals, 2014; Herman &

Zaccaro 2014; Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, & Osland, 2012; Osland, Bird, Mendenhall, & Osland, 2006).

 Global leaders desiring sustainable business models require a new set of skills. They need advanced interpersonal skills that allow them to influence people and the intercultural systems in which they work, both internal and external to their organizations. These new global leaders embrace the notion of their firms becoming *global business citizens*—firms that sensibly exercise their rights and execute their duties to societies, individuals, and, stakeholders within and across national and cultural borders (Wood, Logsdon, Lewellyn, & Davenport, 2006). Given today's environment, with the growth in virtual work assignments and anticipated increases in global work relocations, there is increased pressure to identify, attract, and retain global leadership talent (Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall, & Osland, 2017).
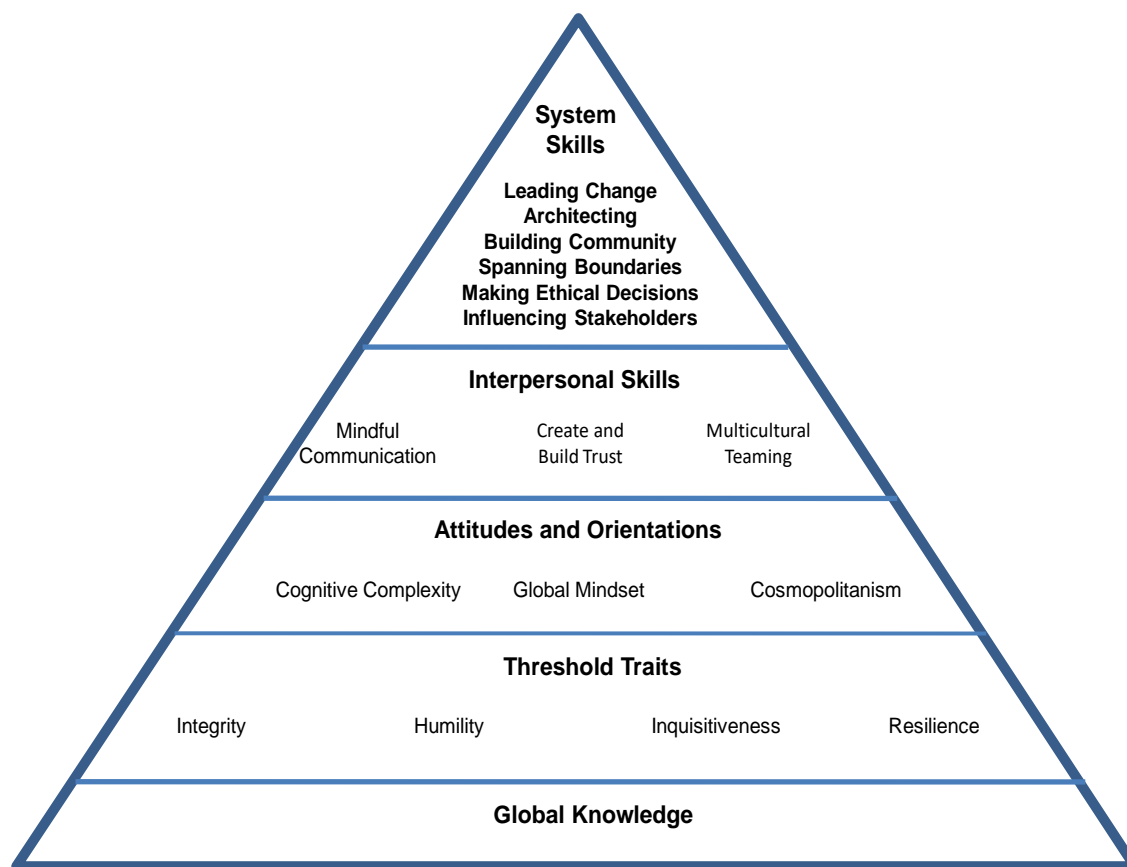

Figure 1. The pyramid model of global leadership Adapted from: "Global Competencies: An Introduction," by A. Bird and J. Osland, 2004, in H. W. Lane, M. L. Maznevski, M. E. Mendenhall, & J. McNett (Eds.), *The Blackwell Handbook of Global Management: A Guide to Managing Complexity,* p. 66; as amended in Mendenhall, Osland, Bird, Oddou, & Maznevski, 2008.

Bird and Osland's (2004) pyramid model of global leadership, shown in Figure 1, suggests an evolution of traits and skills that are cumulative, advancing from bottom to top. More elemental concepts are at the pyramid's base—knowledge of how business is done internationally, fundamental concepts of international marketing, finance, and human resource management. The second level consists of personality, or threshold, traits that are advised for international managers by the literature and may be more elemental to an individual's personality. The third level deals with attitudes and orientations that influence global leaders' perceptions and interpretations. For example, *cognitive complexity* is a gauge of a global leader's ability to balance contradictions and ambiguities while holding opposing interpretations. *Cosmopolitanism* deals with an orientation toward the external environment and an ability to engage and learn from foreigners, while a *global mindset* allows leaders to see beyond the narrow confines of their own culture. Global mindset is deemed essential for leadership development, especially in today's business environment, in which virtually all business organizations are touched by global complexities even if they do not have geographically dispersed operations (Javidan & Walker, 2012; Story, 2011).

The model's upper levels display advanced skill sets. The fourth level deals with interpersonal skills that global leaders need to cross cultures and have been shown to be key elements in facing leadership challenges. The fifth level involves skills that are actually a consolidation of other boundary-spanning skills that permit leaders to work with different functional areas, external organizations, and stakeholders. Tomorrow's global leaders must be able to build a sense of community that includes not only owners and employees, but other stakeholders as well. They will lead change on a global level and be able to architect by designing and building an organization that accommodates change rather than block it. They will need to be able to make ethical decisions based on a global perspective for all parties concerned.

The threshold traits of the model are integrity, humility, inquisitiveness, and resilience. Mendenhall et al. (2008) state that these are stable personality traits and therefore could be used as selection criteria for expatriate leadership. These

were originally brought into the model based on the findings of Wills and Barham (1994), who found that successful international managers had personal morality, a sense of humility, curiosity to learn, and resilience, among other things. The purpose of this study is to empirically test the threshold traits level of the model with a secondary purpose of developing an instrument that could assist practitioners in evaluating professionals who aspire to be global managers by providing an accurate measure of a candidate's threshold traits.

Review of Leadership Assessment Instruments

For the purposes of this article, we use Jokinen's (2005) definition of *global leadership*, as adopted by Mendenhall et al. (2008), which is

> those universal qualities that enable individuals to perform their job outside their own national as well as organizational culture, no matter what their educational or ethnic background is, what functional area their job description represents, or what organization they come from. (65)

Historically, instruments that purport to be useful in assessing potential global leaders fall into three categories: recognizing cultural differences, cross-cultural adaptability, and leadership competency. Cultural differences have been used extensively by practitioners and academics for a number of years. These instruments are used more in pre-deployment expatriate training and/or international management and marketing efforts than in global leadership assessment (see Taras, 2006, for a comprehensive catalog of these instruments).

The investment required for expatriate deployment overseas is expensive, and failures are costly. Accordingly, a number of instruments are designed to measure cross-cultural adaptability in managers. Costa and McCrae (1985) proffer the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI) to measure personality traits and predict performance. They focus on five factors (often referred to as the "Big Five"): extraversion, openness to experience, neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Follow-up studies have used these personality traits to successfully predict expatriate performance. Conscientiousness and openness were found to be predictors of expatriate success (Deller, 1998; Sinangli & Ones,

1997). *Neuroticism,* or one's emotional stability, was found to be predictive of expatriate adjustment (Caligiuri, 2000).

Kelley and Meyer's (1995) Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) measures competency across four facets: flexibility/openness, emotional resilience, personal autonomy, and perceptual acuity. The instrument has been employed to measure effectiveness of cross-cultural training programs (Cornett-DeVito & McGlone, 2000; Goldstein & Smith, 1999). However, there are no studies regarding the CCAI's ability to predict successful cross-cultural behavior in expatriate managers.

The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000) focuses on measuring five personality dimensions used to predict expatriate intercultural adjustment: cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, and flexibility. A study of Taiwanese expatriates demonstrated the predictive ability of the MPQ with respect to job satisfaction, social support, and personal adjustment (Van Oudenhoven, Mol, & Van der Zee, 2003).

The Intercultural Readiness Check (IRC; Van der Zee & Brinkman, 2004) was developed to measure six factors for predicting cross-cultural success: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, intercultural relationship building, conflict management, leadership, and tolerance of ambiguity. Regardless, there is little empirical evidence to support the IRC's predictive ability.

Since the turn of the century, two salient instruments that could potentially provide a more direct measure of global leadership emerged: the Kozai Group's (2002) Global Competencies Inventory (GCI) and Kets de Vries, Vrignaud, and Florent-Treacy's (2004) Global Executive Leadership Inventory (GELI). The GCI measures three factors: perception management, relationship management, and self-management, with each factor having numerous subdomains. *Perception management,* which deals with how people mentally approach cultural differences, has five subdomains: nonjudgmentalness, inquisitiveness, tolerance of ambiguity, cosmopolitanism, and category inclusiveness. *Relationship management* measures an individual's orientation toward developing relationships and has five

subdomains: relationship interest, interpersonal engagement, emotional sensitivity, self-awareness, and behavioral flexibility. *Self-management* purports to assess self-identity and the ability to manage thoughts and responses to stressful situations. Its subdomains are optimism, self-confidence, self-identity, emotional resilience, non-stress tendency, stress management, and interest flexibility. Furuya, Stevens, Oddou, Bird, and Mendenhall (2007), in a longitudinal study of Japanese international managers, found higher GCI scores were positively correlated with global business acumen, employee management skills, and global administrative skills.

   The GELI attempts to avoid the potential bias of self-assessment inherent in most inventory type instruments. Kets de Vries et al. (2004) noticed that the gap between a leader's self-assessment of capabilities and the measure of those same abilities in the leader by others was often significant. Therefore, they used both a self-assessment instrument and an assessment instrument completed by at least two observers of the leader—a coworker, acquaintance, or supervisor or other superior. The GELI focuses on two roles that global leaders often have—being a charismatic leader and being an architect of systems and processes. The roles contain 12 subdomains: visioning, empowering, energizing, designing and aligning, rewarding and feedback, team building, outside orientation, global mindset, tenacity, emotional intelligence, life balance, and resilience to stress. Although Kets de Vries et al. claim a high predictive ability for GELI, there is no supporting published finding.

Threshold Traits Measurement and Mapping to Model

The *Oxford Dictionary* (2018) defines *integrity* as "the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles." Bird and Osland (2004) identify it as a threshold trait based on its importance to expatriate leaders' success, as indicated in the literature. In their pyramid model, Bird and Osland present the traits in the manner that complements and builds on each other from left to right; humility is thus directly linked to integrity. They contend that global leaders without sufficient levels of

humility will not be open to learning from other cultures or organizations. In other words, global leaders need humility to be teachable and willing to listen.

Humility is understudied in the literature, perhaps because it has proven difficult for researchers to isolate and measure independently. It is usually measured with modesty, honesty, or arrogance (Rowatt et al., 2006; Tangney, 2002). Therefore, we chose to measure these first two traits using the honesty/humility items from the HEXACO Personality Inventory–Revised (Ashton & Lee, 2008).

Inquisitiveness is the desire to have new experiences and to learn from them (Mendenhall et al., 2008). It is an active variety of openness. For global managers, it means a deep curiosity of the cultures around them and the willingness to explore them and experience life far beyond experiences in domestic settings. Dannar (2014) argues that inquisitiveness is a fundamental pillar upon which global leadership is built and that it is required to excel in a boundaryless world. To measure this trait, we again turned to the HEXACO-PI-R model and employed the 10 items from the openness to experience domain. The items include direct measures of inquisitiveness as well measures of unconventionality, creativity, and aesthetic appreciation that combine to provide a robust indication of an expatriate's interest in new experiences.

The final threshold trait, resilience, is well grounded in the literature. *Resilience* predicts an expatriate's ability to function in a foreign situation. It is the optimism and persistence required to make progress in the face of adversity. It can be viewed as the linchpin trait of expatriate success because a global leader may have integrity, humility, and inquisitiveness in great amounts, but without a decent level of resilience, failure is guaranteed. To measure resilience, we used 11 items from the Resilience Scale (RS; Wagnild & Young, 1993) converted to a five-point Likert scale.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a technique used to explore the dimensionality of a measurement instrument by finding the smallest number of interpretable factors needed to explain the correlations among a set of variables. It is exploratory

in that it places no structure on the linear relationships between the observed variables and on the linear relationships between the observed variables and the factors, specifying only the number of latent variables. The EFA model is $Y = X\beta + \varepsilon$, where Y is a matrix of measured variables; X is a matrix of common factors; β is a matrix of weights (factor loadings), and ε is a matrix of unique factors (error variation).

Fish, Guha, and Relyea (2012) tested the resulting 31-item instrument on 245 business students with 238 usable records. The varimax rotation yielded the expected three-factor solution. Appendix A provides details of the measurement scale, listing the measurement items or manifest factors with the corresponding latent constructs. The factor loadings based on EFA are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Exploratory Factor Loadings

Latent Constructs (from Model)	Manifest Factors/Measurement Items
Honesty/Integrity—Humility	2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 16, 18, 20, 26, 30
Inquisitiveness	4, 7, 9, 13, 17, 19, 21, 23, 27, 29
Resilience	1, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, 22, 24, 25, 28, 31

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The results of the EFA of the survey data was used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the leadership traits scale to test the nature and rigor of fit with the theoretical constructs. *CFA,* a technique that tests the nature and rigor of "fit" for a theoretical factor model, was conducted using panel data combining two samples. The samples were U.S. expatriate professionals living and working in Cairo, Egypt (*n* = 96), and domestic U.S. professionals who had never lived or worked outside the United States for three months or more (*n* = 62).

The initial CFA showed that items 10 and 26 loaded onto the latent construct of resilience instead of the construct of honesty/humility, as expected from the EFA. Therefore, we removed them from subsequent runs. The CFA was then conducted using 29 manifest factors, not the 31 in the measurement scale. After subjecting these to varimax rotation, the Cochran's alpha was 0.711, considered very robust in

the applied CFA literature. Using a cutoff value of 0.560 on the varimax rotation eigenvalue, the path created for the final CFA is depicted in Figure 2.
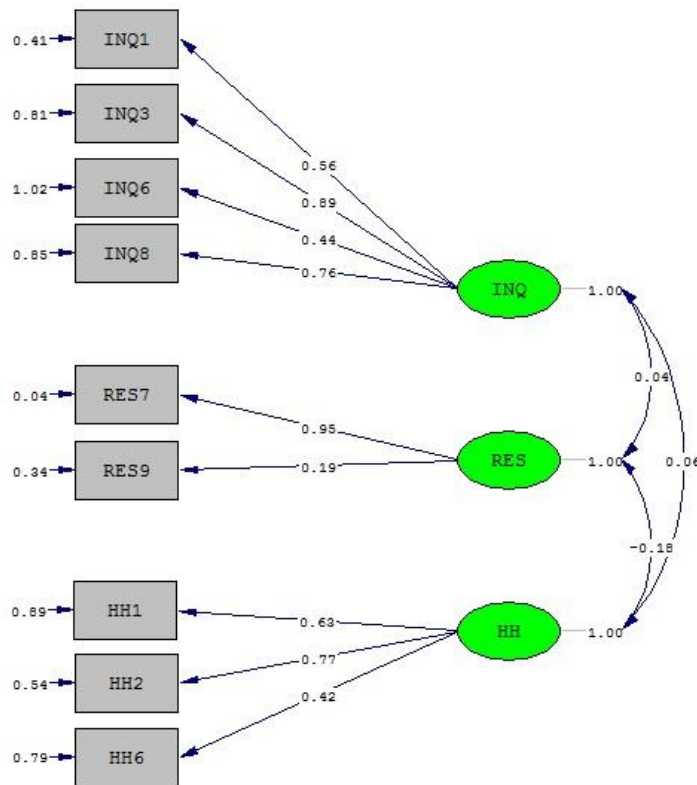
Chi-Square=24.92, df=24, P-value=0.40990, RMSEA=0.016

Figure 2. Factor loading paths and associated statistics

The goodness of fit statistics from the final CFA run (see Table 2 on the next page) show that the CFA model meets or exceeds all standard goodness of fit benchmarks cited in the literature (Fan & Sivo, 2007; Leach et al., 2008).

Table 2: Fit Indices for the Global Competencies Measurement Model

Index	Statistics Generated by This CFA Model	Benchmark Cited in the Literature
Chi-Square (χ^2)	194.762	N.A.
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	**0.9940**	> 0.9300
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	*0.8720*	> 0.9300
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	**0.9950**	> 0.9300
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	**0.0500**	< 0.0800
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	**0.0156**	< 0.0800

Table 3 matches the latent constructs (the threshold traits from the pyramid model of global leadership) with a reduced number of manifest factors that display rigorous fit after the CFA. The original measurement item number, as listed in Appendix A, is shown in parenthesis for comparison.

Table 3: Reduced Number of Manifest Factors Based on CFA/Goodness of Fit

Latent Constructs (from Model)	Reduced Manifest Factors (Item #)
Honesty/Integrity—Humility	HH-1 (2), HH-2 (3), HH-6 (16)
Inquisitiveness	INQ-1 (4), INQ-3 (9), INQ-6 (19), INQ-8 (23)
Resilience	RES-7 (22), RES-9 (25)

Validation Testing

The Bird and Osland (2004) pyramid model posits that expatriates possess certain personality traits that lend themselves to the development of global leadership skills. In order to validate the threshold traits portion of the model, we measured these traits in the expatriate sample using the scale items included in the confirmed model and then compared levels of the traits to that of domestic professionals without international experience. Using the same samples for the CFA, we hypothesized that the expatriate professionals will have higher levels of the respective threshold personality traits than the domestic professionals and that such results would provide empirical support for the model. Hypotheses testing

looked for differences between the sample groups using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to test the arrays of means on each trait.

Hypothesis 1: The U.S. expatriate professionals will have higher levels of honesty and humility than the U.S. domestic professionals.

A major assumption of MANOVA is independence of samples. This is met as the samples are from two sets of professionals that have different international experiences. Another major assumption is multivariate normality. This was tested by the observation of Q-Q plots on all variables, and we concluded that all items met this assumption. A lesser assumption of MANOVA is equality of covariance matrices, which is verified by Box's M test. It tests the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups. In this case, it had a .779 significance, and therefore, the assumption is met. As the significance for MANOVA is .001, we rejected the MANOVA null hypothesis that the arrays of means are equal for the two samples and interpret the grand mean of 3.96 for U.S. expatriates as significantly different and higher than that of the U.S. domestic professionals at 3.51.

Hypothesis 2: The U.S. expatriate professionals will have higher levels of inquisitiveness than the U.S. domestic professionals.

Here, the equality of covariance matrices assumption is not met with a Box's M test significance of .025; however, Stephens (1992) states that this is not an issue if the group sizes do not vary greatly and are larger than 20 since the power is adequate and the Type I error is only slightly affected. The arrays of means are different with a MANOVA significance of .002; the grand means for the U.S. expatriate professionals and the U.S. domestic professionals were 3.74 and 3.34, respectively.

Hypothesis 3: The U.S. expatriate professionals will have higher levels of resilience than the U.S. domestic professionals.

With this hypothesis test, the equality of covariance matrices assumption is not met with a Box's M Test significance of .001, but we base our interpretation on

Stephens (1992). The arrays of means are different with the MANOVA significance of .002; the grand mean was 4.01 for the U.S. expatriate professionals and 4.32 for the U.S. domestic professionals.

Conclusion

We attempted to validate the threshold traits level of Bird and Osland's (2004) pyramid model of global leadership by comparing levels of those traits in U.S. domestic professionals without any meaningful international experience to levels found in U.S. professionals in an expatriate environment. By hypothesizing that the expatriate professionals would likely have higher levels of the requisite traits than professionals with no international experience, and testing for differences in those levels, we found empirical support for the model.

Indeed, expatriates had higher levels of honesty, humility, and inquisitiveness than non-expatriates and provided empirical support for the model. However, our results run counter to our hypothesis about resilience, as non-expatriates reported higher levels than expatriates. In fairness to Bird and Osland (2004), we acknowledge that they only posited requisite amounts of the traits in global leaders and not necessarily that those levels would always differ and be higher than in non-global leaders. Thus, it is worth noting that a level of 4.01 in resilience is still higher than other levels of threshold traits reported here by expatriate professionals.

We strongly recommend that this instrument be subjected to further testing. For purposes of generalizability, there is a need to gather data from other sources beyond the two samples used in this study. Traits should be tested against a broad spectrum of cultures to determine if any (e.g., resilience) are culturally specific. Efforts to further validate the model might include a comparison of successful high-level global managers with successful high-level domestic managers. Would the global managers have higher levels of the threshold traits in their personalities? If so, it would add support to the threshold trait concept of the global leadership model and the further validation of the 29-item measurement instrument as a screening device. The leadership traits scale can also help to eliminate biases in

the expatriate selection process because demographic differences, such as gender and/or race, and associated stereotypic assumptions can bias expectations and the perception of performance-related evidence (Insch, McIntyre, & Napier, 2008; Robertson, Galvin, & Charles, 2007). Additionally, exogenous individual-level factors may also bias the accuracy of talent pool inclusion processes such as superior language skills (Makela, Bjorkman, & Ehrnrooth, 2010). The selection of professionals for overseas assignments is not a trivial process, and this instrument could be used as part of the battery of tests and interviews that candidates undergo to help select the best candidates for global leadership.

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Appendix A

Leadership Traits: Manifest Factors/Items–Latent Constructs

Observable Factor/Item (Likert Five-Point Scale)	Latent Construct
1. I usually manage one way or another.	RES1
2. I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed.	HH1
3. If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes.	HH2
4. People have often told me that I have a good imagination.	INQ1
5. I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.	HH3
6. I usually take things in my stride.	RES2
7. I've never really enjoyed looking through an encyclopedia.	INQ2
8. I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.	HH4
9. I don't think of myself as the artistic or creative type.	INQ3
10. If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars.	HH5
11. I have enough energy to do what I have to do.	RES3
12. I keep interested in things.	RES4
13. I would be quite bored by a visit to an art gallery.	INQ4
14. I am friends with myself.	RES5
15. I can get through difficult times because I've experienced difficulty before.	RES6
16. I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.	HH6
17. I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries.	INQ5
18. I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.	HH7
19. If I had the opportunity, I would like to attend a classical music concert.	INQ6
20. Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.	HH8
21. I find it boring to discuss philosophy.	INQ7
22. My belief in myself gets me through hard times.	RES7
23. I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting.	INQ8
24. I feel proud that I have accomplished things in my life.	RES8
25. I am determined.	RES9
26. I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.	HH9
27. I like people who have unconventional views.	INQ9
28. When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it.	RES10
29. I think that paying attention to radical ideas is a waste of time.	INQ10
30. I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.	HH10
31. My life has meaning.	RES11

Note: HH: Honesty/Humility, INQ: Inquisitiveness; RES: Resilience.

Expressive-Level Comments and Social Media: Challenging a Model of Ethical Reflection[*]

William M. Toms

An ethical decision-making model proposed by Cooper (2012) utilizes a framework by Aiken (1962) to examine four levels of ethical reflection that individuals engage in when approaching differences in opinion and conflict. When the levels were first conceptualized, the expressive level, characterized by the initial response or first publicly expressed reaction to a situation or problem, did not account for social media access providing a forum for public attention to focus primarily on the early, spontaneous responses to problems or conflicts. A review of expressive level comments in four case scenarios: the Cerner Corporation CEO email, the Trump travel ban, the Sainsbury's–Asda merger, and the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) report on anti-Semitism on Twitter, provides evidence of the need to focus on all four levels of ethical reflection in lieu of solely focusing on the expressive-level comments of leaders and followers.

Key words: ethical decision-making model, ethical reflection, executive communication, leadership, social media

Research and analysis on ethical dilemmas have offered valuable insight on how leaders, followers, and organizations confront and approach differences in opinion and conflict (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Knights & O'Leary, 2006; Shollenberger, 2015). Such research has yielded conceptual frameworks and various models for examining and explaining methods for dealing with social and organizational dilemmas (Jones, 1991; Kelley & Elm, 2003; McDevitt, Giapponi, & Tromley, 2007). Some of these models offer a rationale for how human behavior, specifically emotional utterances, fit into the mosaic of ethical decision making. The emergence of social media and the expansive use of technology have provided the impetus for society to hyperfocus on a single phase or action that can strain a well-developed model. Resultantly, the intense social focus on a person's or group's emotional utterances when dealing with differing opinions or conflict can often be portrayed in a negative light. Although an appropriate level of circumspection and analysis of expressiveness displayed by an individual or group of individuals is healthy for a number of reasons, there is a need to consider these

emotional utterances not just in a vacuum, but also along a continuum of responses relative to how ethical behavior evolves and contributes to ethical decision-making.

Ethical Decision-Making

Ethical decision-making models often begin with the recognition of a problem or by defining a problem. Cooper's (2012) review of one such model recognizes that an ethical problem needs to be perceived, described, and defined before alternatives can be identified and chosen to resolve the dilemma. Cooper posits that individuals need to assess their values to use an ethical decision-making model effectively. Considering this prerequisite, Cooper relied upon the framework of Aiken (1962) to examine the levels of ethical reflection individuals engage in when beginning to deal with ethical dilemmas. This framework is comprised of four levels of ethical reflection: expressive, moral rules, ethical analysis, and post-ethical. The *expressive level* can be characterized by the initial response or first publicly expressed reaction to a situation or problem. The *moral rules level* is based upon the application of socially acceptable maxims or customs that help guide moral templates for action. The *ethical analysis level* can involve the reconsideration or revision of moral rules that may be ineffective or problematic when applied to certain situations. The *post-ethical level* is not always reached, as it often invokes the evaluation of religious canons, philosophical foundations, or the tenets of knowledge creation to view ethical dilemmas through a different lens.

Expressive-Level Emotional Utterances

The public scrutiny of emotional utterances about social and organizational matters often focuses on the expressive level of ethical reflection. Aiken (1962) recognized that any discussion about moral principles might continue in a protracted manner, but would generally include a shifting perspective. What was not conceived by Aiken was the social media access that now provides a forum for public attention; a forum that often seems to focus on early spontaneous responses to problems or conflicts made during the expressive level of ethical reflection. These types of

generally expressive (not necessarily reflective) statements may demonstrate an individual's initial emotional reaction to a situation or express a personal position; the mere reaction is neither a directive nor a solicitation necessitating comment or response from others. Nonetheless, these types of utterances often gain significant notoriety on social media because of their perceived evocative call to action or their potential foundation for future action. However, the perceived nexus of these utterances to future action may not be aligned with or subjected to the rigor of an objective analysis.

When individuals, especially those in powerful or trusted positions, comment on differences in opinion, conflict, or potentially divisive issues in the public domain, the comments must be considered within the appropriate context in which they are made. The comments must also be reviewed within a continuum of ethical reflection, as offered by Cooper (2012), which he believes is necessary to advance problem-solving and ethical decision-making. Although expressive level comments may not deliberately be made to influence others, they certainly provide insight into what a person is thinking. Unfortunately, many individuals and entities have been publicly embarrassed or shamed because of expressive-level comments made by themselves, their employees, or their organizations. In an effort to reduce an organization's exposure to embarrassment or liability for its members' comments, many organizations have created policies to control or limit employees' expressions in the public domain. For example, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP, 2010) offers a model policy for police agencies that provides guidance for off-duty law enforcement officers. This policy notes that personnel are prohibited from utilizing speech on social media that reflects "behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible" (Personal Use, Precautions and Prohibitions, 5b). The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE, 2018) notes in its model policy—offered to govern the actions of employees of client companies—that employees should be aware that their personal use of social media should not be inappropriate or harmful to their company, fellow employees, or customers. The social media policy of the American Hospital Association (AHA, 2018) notes that social media is about civil

discourse and that it reserves "the right to take appropriate actions against dialogue participants who fail to observe our guidelines respecting the proper use of our social media sites" (Social Media Is About Dialogue with Members, Media and the Public, para. 1). Massachusetts General Hospital's (2018) guidelines for the personal use of social media advise employees "to post only something you would want your manager to see" (Content, para. 1).

While First Amendment rights guarantee people in the United States the freedom to express themselves, most organizations have found enough examples of problematic uses of email and social media to carefully generate codes of social media conduct and social media policies. These guidelines attempt to contain or mitigate employees' problematic uses of technology and social media, while steering clear of constitutionally protected rights of expression and employment rights under the National Labor Relations Act. Although the public scrutiny of statements and utterances may not interpret such utterances within the carefully considered continuum as do Aiken and Cooper, this publicized attention can convey a deeper meaning of the utterances or project future concerns for various stakeholders.

Case Scenarios

The consideration of four case scenarios helps to examine the spontaneous, emotional aspect of expressive-level commentary and the projection of inferred prescient properties of such statements.

Cerner Corporation

Case studies on executive communication often cite the instance of the Cerner Corporation, a healthcare software company, and its chief executive officer's March 2001 email to company managers. CEO Neal Patterson sent a harsh email to 400 managers criticizing them on the culture they created as evidenced by the lack of employee vehicles in the company's parking at 7:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. The email, sent in the latter part of the morning after Patterson's earlier arrival to his office and his observations about the lack of employee vehicles in the parking lot, threatened managers who created this permissive or apathetic culture with

punishments including layoffs and benefit freezes (Wong, 2001). The collateral impact of this email was not predicted or contemplated. The email, sent in a "fit of pique" (Burton & Silverman, 2001), went public on a social media message board less than 10 days after it was sent to managers. The company's publicly traded shares, usually around 650,000 daily, swelled to four million daily shares, and share value dropped by more than one-third. Patterson, a man described as arrogant, candid, and passionate by some, decided to react within the time span of a morning to a condition that had evolved over quite some time (Wong, 2001). Patterson's reaction was this email, which attempted to correct the perceived problem through fear and intimidation.

As a result of this expressive level of ethical reflection, financial analysts and industry experts alike considered this social media posting, based on Patterson's email, to be indicative of much more serious underpinnings at the company. Patterson's future efforts to guide his company to increased value in future years received much less public scrutiny or accolades in media headlines than did his March 2001 email chastising his managers.

Trump Administration Travel Ban

While on the campaign trail for president of the United States, candidate Donald J. Trump made numerous campaign pledges via Twitter and in-person appearances to put a Muslim travel ban into place if he was elected president. On December 7, 2015, arguably hours after a new poll indicated that fellow candidate Senator Ted Cruz had overtaken him for the top primary position in Iowa, Trump tweeted support for a travel ban moments after he emailed a policy calling for the "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" (Healy & Barbaro, 2015, photo caption). Since the 2016 election, President Trump's administration has made several attempts to put a travel ban into place that would restrict the travel of Muslims from a number of majority-Muslim countries. The attempts have all been met by some opposition in the courts as well as in the court of public sentiment.

On April 25, 2018, the United States Supreme Court held oral arguments to broadly examine the president's motivation for these travel restrictions. When

challenged by the justices about the ban as it relates to the intentions of then-candidate Trump before he became president-elect and president, Solicitor General Noel Francisco indicated that the emotional tirades of a candidate should not be considered in assessing the motivation of the travel ban. Francisco stated:

> We are very much of the view that campaign statements are made by a private citizen before he takes the oath of office and before, under the Opinions Clause of the Constitution, receives the advice of his Cabinet, and that those are constitutionally significant acts that mark the fundamental transformation from being a private citizen to the embodiment of the executive branch. So that those statements should be out of bounds. (*Trump v. Hawaii*, 2017/2018, 28)

While it is difficult to separate the statement of intentions (campaign tweets) from follow-up actions (a proposed travel ban), the response of Solicitor General Francisco is consistent with the theoretical lens noted by Cooper (2012). This vantage point generally holds that after the tweets and campaign rhetoric (expressive level), the message and intent is modified by examining constitutional protections (moral rules level) and considering the Cabinet advice (ethical analysis level). Thus, the argument here by the solicitor general is that expressive level rhetoric does not always foreshadow future actions, especially when subjected to the benefit of ethical reasoning.

Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's, the second-largest supermarket chain in the United Kingdom, announced in April 2018 that it would be merging with Asda, the third-largest chain. In a tweet announcing the merger, Sainsbury's News (2018) noted that the deal would

> offer more opportunities for over 330,000 colleagues at all levels within the enlarged group, drawing on the shared values and heritage of both businesses. We don't plan to close any Sainsbury's or Asda stores as a result of the combination.

On the same day, Sainsbury's CEO Mike Coupe went on ITV News to discuss the merger, which Coupe stated would generate £500 million in profit for Sainsbury's (Butler, 2018). However, while waiting for his interview to begin and unaware a video camera and a microphone were recording him, Coupe began singing "We're in the Money" from the musical *42nd Street* (ITV, 2018).

Positive emotion, in this case possibly originating from being happy about a business transaction, can still cause adverse reactions. The recorded video surfaced on social media later the same day, prompting an outcry from unions impacted by the merger (GMB Union, 2018). Such concern is understandable, as Bargeron, Schlingemann, Stulz, and Zutter (2009) note that CEOs navigate mergers for their own personal success at the cost of stockholders and others. This might also be why a Sainsbury's spokesman later referred to the singing as a "personal moment" without any wider meaning ("Sainsbury's chief sings, 2018).

This focus on statements (inclusive of singing) classified as expressive levels of emotion might help identify motivation for future action, but such motivation is often mitigated by other dynamics. For example, although Sainsbury's claimed that they did not intend to close any stores, within four weeks of the merger announcement, analysis by a British think-tank indicated that the merger could result in the U.K. grocery store supply chain losing up to 2,500 jobs (New Economics Foundation, 2018). Additionally, regulatory oversight may also impact future Sainsbury's operations. The Competition and Markets Authority, a U.K. government department that oversees anti-competitive practices in the marketplace, announced shortly after the merger that it would review the details of the deal (Competition and Markets Authority, 2018). Such a review could force the hand of Sainsbury's to close stores and lay off workers for the merger to be approved by anti-trust regulators. Impacted workers and unions could ostensibly point to the singing CEO celebrating his fortunes as proof that Sainsbury's did not care about the workers or keeping stores open, but forces external to Sainsbury's may dictate a reduction in Sainsbury's/Asda locations and employees to protect the greater U.K. workforce.

ADL Twitter Analysis

Sometimes it is not the expressive-level remarks of a leader that spark scrutiny and dismay, but the emotional commentary offered by the followers or critics of leaders and persons of interest. This is evidenced in the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL, 2018) report that examines the plethora of anti-Semitic tweets on Twitter during a one-year period. The analysis in the report, *Quantifying Hate: A Year of*

Anti-Semitism on Twitter, also highlights how hateful tweets are connected to leaders (ADL, 2018).

The report notes how anti-Semitic tweets were used to attack Jewish billionaire philanthropist and business leader George Soros, inclusive of accusing Soros of being responsible for the deadly Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia (ADL, 2018, Chapter 12). Expressive-level comments that include stereotypical accusations, as noted in the ADL report, show how a small number of users can have a wider impact beyond their Twitter followers by implicating a much broader audience; in this case George Soros and an entire religion. The report's examination of this disturbing social media discourse is brightened by the critical examination of the problem and recommendations offered to deal with the expressive-level tweets. When the spirit of the recommendations is reviewed, it is apparent that the recommendations move beyond the expressive-level comments and invoke the moral rules, ethical analysis, and the post-ethical levels of ethical reflection.

Discussion

Emotional utterances can have wide-ranging effects that impact millions of people. Consider some of the diverse groups impacted by the expressive-level comments made in the case studies under examination. For example, in addition to its 3,100 employees in 2001, the Cerner Corporation had thousands of clients, partners, and associates worldwide that were impacted by the company's decline in value of more than 30% in the days after CEO Neal Patterson's email appeared on social media (Burton & Silverman, 2001). The U.S. President's tweets can impact 328 million U.S. citizens (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). The travel ban tweeted about by then-candidate Donald J. Trump, in its current 2018 amended status, impacts almost 150 million Muslims from five majority-Muslim countries—Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia (Pew Research Center, 2011). Sainsbury's, once it merges with Asda, will have a combined workforce of 330,000 employees, revenue of £51 billion, and control approximately one-third of the U.K. grocery store market (Butler, 2018). The ADL's (2018) report on anti-Semitic tweets revealed that 4.2 million

anti-Semitic tweets were detected in the English language over the course of a one-year period, between and among three million different Twitter accounts. This directly exposes almost six million English-speaking Jews in the United States, over 40% of the world's Jewish population, to anti-Semitic rhetoric (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018; Jewish Virtual Library, 2017).

A number of issues suggested in these cases explore the impact that expressive-level comments have on future actions. The comments of Cerner CEO Patterson certainly got the attention of analysts and adversely impacted share value. Sainsbury's CEO Coupe asserted that no workers would be displaced and no stores would be shuttered. However, outside forces and market conditions not under his control could directly or indirectly influence decisions to dismiss workers or close stores. In the case of the Trump travel ban, questions proposed by Supreme Court justices in *Trump, D. J. v. Hawaii, et al.* on April 25, 2018, indicated that they were considering how time constraints might mitigate a candidate's expressive rhetoric. Particularly, Chief Justice John Roberts mused about whether a reasonable time constraint or statute of limitations on campaign statements was needed so that campaign comments couldn't be used against successful candidates for their entire time as officeholders.

While expressive-level comments in the social media domain can be extremely inappropriate at times, attempts to halt them can be difficult. Social media expert Clint Watts (2018) notes that Facebook and Google failed in their efforts to fact-check every news article and instead suggested that these platforms rate news outlets based upon the veracity and objectivity of stories they publish. Following this suggestion, it might be wise to cease and desist attempts to stop or limit individuals from making expressive comments on social media for similar reasons; efforts to do so may ultimately end in failure. More importantly, the expressive comments provide some excellent insight into the thinking of leaders, candidates, organizations, and followers. If legal procedures, employer policies, or social media companies' terms of service (TOS) halt these individuals and entities from expressing themselves, this could artificially delimit data needed for assessing how persons move through the levels of ethical reflection, especially when confronting

ethical dilemmas. More importantly, this might lead to the general public having less means to assess the thoughts of people with significant power and influence.

Conclusion

Expressive-level comments, even harassment consisting of "speech that is crude, obnoxious, and boorish" (*State v. Burkert*, 2017, Justice Albin delivered the opinion of the Court, para. 1), are permitted in many public venues. Social media is one venue in which such comments are generally permitted. Although emotional utterances on email and social media were not considered by Aiken (1962) when developing the expressive level of his ethical reflection framework, focusing exclusively on the immediate impact of the utterances neglects the three subsequent phases of ethical reflection. Society in general would benefit tremendously if expressive-level comments were treated as indicia to monitor future action and invoke the application of the moral rules, ethical analysis, and the post-ethical levels of ethical reflection. Cooper's (2012) assessment of antecedents recognizes that an ethical problem needs to be perceived, described, and defined before alternatives can be identified and chosen to resolve the dilemma. This assessment also considers the relevant context surrounding emotional utterances and the need to consider them within an overall ethical decision-making model. The benefits of learning how to ethically transform problematic expressive-level comments and how to mitigate their hurtful impact will do more for protecting individuals and groups than merely focusing on the absurdity or repulsive nature of utterances that do not necessarily evidence ethical reflectiveness.

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