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Management Practices in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Exploring Perspectives of Saudi Managers and Middle East Expats

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Abstract

This paper explores management practices in KSA on dimensions of management styles and perceptions on management with cultural background factors through in-depth interviews. Two group of managers have been described with common and different management perspectives: (1) Middle East originated expats and (2) Saudi managers. Findings indicate that majority of Middle East originated expats share Arab culture to a degree due to intensive social, economic and historical relations between KSA and regional expat providing countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. On the other hand, there are differences found among regional and local managers' practices. Uncovered emerging management practices in KSA are to be explored in this paper providing practical implications for international and multinational companies to understand and improve business(es) with or in KSA.

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Introduction

Although KSA has been a very important country regarding to its natural resources, host of extensive international business, home of holy lands for Muslims, and leading country of GCC, it is true that the Middle East and especially Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) are not very popular places for management studies probably because of different reasons like relatively closed environment, non or not easy accessible data, political situations, lingual and cultural barriers etc. It is also true that even the conducted studies on the region may be criticized with simplifying facts or findings in a stereotyped East-West perspective including Hofstede's cultural dimensions, or with focusing to satisfy some internal authorities and to sublime of local practices. It would be expected that the very complex social and business structure of KSA including different tribes, sects, ethnical groups, historical existence of expats and foreign workers, the different situation of women etc. could be a rich and fruitful source for management studies in interacting with other disciplines such as history, sociology, theology and geography, but it is not the case. However it may be argued that still offers great opportunities for management studies.

The purpose of this article is to present a deep insight on dimensions of management styles and perceptions on management with cultural background factors through in-depth

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interviews with managers working in KSA. Those interviews were conducted with only Middle East originated expats and Saudi managers mainly because of four reasons:

- Firstly it was suggested that the common –if there is- management styles and perceptions of management in KSA can be represented by ME expats and Saudi managers because of their common cultural, historical, lingual and religion references to some degree because KSA is briefly an Arab country like other origin countries of interviewed ME expats.
- Secondly the deep and long standing interrelations between KSA and other Middle East countries mostly based on obligatory working and staying of Middle East expats in KSA because of political (like instability and security problems) and economic (like lack of natural resources and enough job opportunities for the talents) situations in their home countries were assumed like a fusion process resulted with common understandings on management to some extent.
- Thirdly it was assumed that the organic interrelations between those countries' people mostly based on tribal and / or sectarian relations has been creating a wider and a more representative community including bot ME Expats and Saudi Managers.
- Lastly and even with Saudization - the national policy of KSA to encourage employment of Saudi nationals in the private sector - there are still a lot of expats in management positions in KSA, and only the perceptions of Saudi managers on management would not be representing KSA. However it was assumed that the sum of long staying ME Expats and Saudi Managers with common references is representative regarding to understand management, and neglecting the other expats relatively short staying and not sharing the common references would not be very important.

However it should be also stated that there are some important differences between Saudis and Middle East expats, and even in Saudis. At least the expats have been working in KSA under some strict legal regulations on residency permits and should be sponsored by some local persons or companies. It may have some effects on their perceptions and practices on management like short-term planning. It should be also mentioned that the life styles of them and understandings or practices on Islam as a base of mentioned common references are different. For the Saudis the origins, sects, big families and the origin cities may have some effects in differentiating the Saudis internally. It should be also stated that the classical definition on “nation” may not be easily applied to KSA whereas there are still more organic, tight and historically rooted common entities like tribes and big families rather than nation in KSA. Despite all of these the main assumption of this study is that Saudis and Middle East expats are much similar to each other regarding to other expats in management positions. Therefore for the purpose of this study two group of managers have been described with common and different management perspectives: (1) Middle East (regional expat providing countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Egyptoriginated expats and (2) Saudi managers. Uncovered perceptions and practices on management practices in KSA are to be explored in this paper providing practical implications for international and multinational companies to understand and improve business(es) with or in KSA.

This study is structured with a brief introduction on culture and recent literature beginning with 2000s on culture in management studies. It is assumed that the culture as a concept is a very useful tool to understand management perspectives. After this introduction the questions and the answers of the interviews had been executed with 10 different

managers in finance industry of KSA has been presented. For a representative structure 5 of them were selected from Saudis while the others from Middle East Expats. In the last section the findings and further discussions have been submitted.

What Is Culture And About Hofstede's Cultural Values Framework

Culture has been a concept widely used in of organizational studies. The term is first used by Cicero in his statement of “philosophy is the culture of the mind this it is which plucks up vices by the roots; prepares the mind for the receiving of seeds; commits them to it, or, as I may say, sows them, in the hope that, when come to maturity, they may produce a plentiful harvest.” using an agricultural metaphor for the development of a philosophical soul as the natural highest possible ideal for human development (1877). Samuel Von Pufendorf describes the terms as “all the ways in which human beings overcome their original barbarism, and through artifice, become fully human” in 17th century (Velkley, 2002). Edward Burnett Tylor describes the culture as: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” in 19th century (1871). Herskovits’s description is “the man-made part of the environment” (1948). Mead’s culture definition is “the total shared, learned behavior of a society or a subgroup” (1953). Malinowski's definition is “a well-organized unity divided into two fundamental aspects—a body of artifacts and a system of customs” (1931) Geertz defines the term as “a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols” (1973). D'Andrade states that “culture is often said to consist in rules... These rules are said to be implicit because ordinary people can't tell you what they are” (1995). Richerson and Boyd’ definition of culture is “information capable of affecting individuals' behavior that they acquire from other members of their species through teaching, imitation, and other forms of social transmission” (2005). And lastly Sperber describes culture as “widely distributed, lasting mental and public representations inhabiting a given social group” (1996). There are plenty of remaining definitions of culture not mentioned here, but in briefly most of the definitions share the same aspect on culture: culture is something widely shared by members of a social group to be belonging to that group.

In management studies Hofstede's Cultural Values Framework represents the rising of interest to the culture issue. It has been highly utilized in a wide variety of empirical studies. According to a review in 2006 it has been found referrals to Hofstede's cultural values framework in 180 studies published in 40 business and psychology journals and two international annual volumes between 1980 and June 2002 (Bradley, Kevin and Cristina, 2006). In those studies cultural values are associated with outcomes in management and applied psychology domains including change management, conflict management, decision-making, human resource management, leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, work-related attitudes, negotiation behavior, reward allocation; and individual behavior relating to group processes and personality. There are also some other studies not mentioned in that review but using the culture to explain the social behaviors and outcomes in organizational settings (Keesing, 1974; Nadler and Tushman, 1988), firm effectiveness (Denison and Mishra, 1995; Duncan, 1989), firm performance (Gordon 1985, Gordon and DiTomasso, 1992; Kotter and Heskett, 1992), corporate strategy (Wallach, 1983), job attitudes (Birnbaum and Sommers, 1986), administrative practices (Thomas, 1989), merger and acquisition outcomes (Weber and Shenkar 1996), technology transfer practices (Hussain 1998), and conflict resolution strategies in product innovation settings (Xie, X and Stringfellow 1998).

However Hofstede's work has been criticized for: reducing culture to an overly simplistic four or five dimension conceptualization; limiting the sample to a single multinational corporation; failing to capture the malleability of culture over time; and ignoring within-country cultural heterogeneity (Sivakumar and Nakata, 2001). There may be also other critics to the Hofstede's work regarding to its Western orientation or lack of multi perspectives, neglecting of religions and their effects on culture, standardization or making identical of cultures. However it should be stated that “who has a competing framework, credits Hofstede 'for opening management's eyes to the importance of the (cross-cultural management) subject” (Trompenaars, 1993)

Literature Review On Arab Culture In Management Studies

The previous literature on Arab Management summarized it as (1) older managers and respect for seniority as a result of high power distance, (2) negative perception on solicitation of participation as a sign of weakness, (3) a strong negative association between job satisfaction and loyalty showing the accordance with the needs of the group not personal interests, (4) participation and consultation as preferred values (Savvas, El-Kot, and Sadler-Smith, 2001). In some other studies Arab profile is summarized as: (1) are more likely to accept an unequal distribution of power; (2) expect to be directed by their supervisors (whose authority they respect and with whom they may be not be prepared to disagree); (3) are less likely to value or expect individual autonomy or expect to be consulted (4) are more likely to have centralized decision-making; (5) are more likely to have a management style that is autocratic or paternalistic; (6) are more likely to welcome the security afforded by working for the same organization for a long time, will feel a sense of belonging to their employing organization and to their workgroup with whom they act together; (7) are more likely to adopt risk-avoiding rather than risk-taking approaches to their work, and likely to expect advancement to be based on seniority rather than on individual performance (Sadler-Smith, El-Kot and Leat, 2003). A paradox in Arab culture having authoritarian style and “open door” consultative approach at the same time has been also found (Hickson and Pugh, 1995). It is stated that employees often tended to agree with their supervisors and that seeking subordinate participation is regarded as “weak” management in Arab culture (Parnell and Hatem, 1999), and Arab people is identified as preferring to work in / do the same business for a long time which may be an artifact of desire to avoid uncertainty in Arab culture (Nydell, 1996). In a comparison of two models of Chinese model *guanxi* and Arabic model *wastaas* strong family connections for business, Arab business practices are summarized as (1) highly subjective recruitment processes depending on personal contacts, nepotism, regionalism, and family name. (2) Higher commitment to family and friends, rather than organizational goals and performance, (3) Avoidance to identify an individual or group as having a problem or posing an obstacle (4) One to one consultation, but one man decision making style (5) different approach to use of time as not a wasted effort, (6) Status, position, and seniority are more important than ability and performance (Hutchings and Weir. 2006). Regarding to Arab nations falling between the extreme positions on the uncertainty avoidance index it is argued that Arabs are not frightened of other cultures, but they do not wish to become assimilated to them (Weir, 2003). In another study the term of “conformist” is used the term conformist to describe a value having lower tolerance for uncertainty, which is partly related to the Arab people’s need to avoid conflict (Ali, Azim, and Krishan, 1995). While they do express intense rivalry, it is very rarely manifest in overt conflict (Nydell, 1996). In different studies it is stated that Arab managers are reluctant to delegate authority; avoid responsibility and risk-taking; prefer stable a lifestyle over rewarding but challenging

work; and give priority to friendships and personal considerations over organizational goals and performance (Ali, 1995; Al-Hegelan and Palmer, 1985). Turkey as a country more near to Arab countries than the Western ones regarding to Hofstede’s cultural scores may be helpful to understand the Arab culture on management. In one study on comparison of moral reasoning in Austria and Turkey it is found that confirmation of moderately individualistic and very low power distance of Austria with its adherence to law & legality, and virtues representing the Western or Christian characteristics, and moderately collectivistic and medium power distance of Turkey with its adherence to stewardship and values representing the Eastern or Islamic characteristics (Srnlka, Gegez, Arzova, 2007).

A comparison of some Western and the Middle East countries in Hofstede scores may be also helpful to understand the inputs of some management studies on Arab business culture:

DIMENSION	SCORES											
	USA	FRA	DEU	GBR	NLD	AVG	KSA	UAE	LBN	JOR	EGY	AVG
Power Distance	40	68	35	35	38	43	95	90	75	70	70	80
Individualism	91	71	67	89	80	80	25	25	40	30	25	29
Masculinity	62	43	66	66	14	50	60	50	65	45	45	53
Uncertainty Avoidance	46	86	65	35	53	57	80	80	50	65	80	71
Pragmatism	26	63	83	51	67	58	36	NULL	14	16	7	18
Indulgence	68	48	40	69	68	59	52	NULL	25	43	4	31

Figure 1: Country Values – Hofstede Centre retrieved from <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html> on 19th of June, 2014

Family business is a common and widely accepted business practice in Arab countries. There are some finding on the relationship between retail small/medium enterprises (SMEs) that are family business owned, organizational commitment, and management and employee perceptions of customer service as explaining the lower service quality with the Middle East’s “fatalistic culture” suggesting that people have little control over events affecting their lives by suggesting that insha’ Allah” seems to mean to delay or reposition responsibility and decision making in Saudi Arabia, but also emphasizing that employees from high fatalism cultures may be more committed to the firm than those from lower fatalism countries (Dianne and Welsh, 2006). In the exploration of diversity of corporate governance practices in MENA region, and especially in Saudi Arabia and Egypt it is suggested that the main differentiators of the region from Anglo-American countries are the high levels of concentrated ownership and control, and the low levels of disclosure and transparency (Piesse, Strange and Toonsi, 2012). It is found that family members in Arab countries usually hold management and other key positions within organizations, tradition dictates that a sheik follows, rather than leads, tribal-family opinion, and participative management is not alien to the Gulf region, but is more common among managers who work with Western organizations. Briefly tribal-family relations and religion affect other aspects of management, and managers from the Gulf region tend to disregard rules and procedures as man-made prefects. It is also stated that stability and commitment are highly valued in Islamic culture. Therefore, managers and employees should have a strong commitment to the organization. When there is a higher commitment level, there should be greater perceived performance (Abbasi and Hollman, 1993). Additionally, family members often collect regular pay but are not required to work, and tribal family traditions can further reinforce

authoritarian management styles, but often support consultative management techniques as well (Ali, 1990). It is also found that smaller, family-controlled firms are less bureaucratic, authoritarian, and impersonal than larger firms that are not family controlled (Kets de Vries, 1993)

Wasta represents an important business concept in Arab business culture and can be summarized as a social network of interpersonal connections rooted in family and kinship ties. There are some differences regarding to the importance of concept of wasta in Arab business culture involving the exercise of power, influence and information sharing through social and politic-business networks for transmission of knowledge and the creation of opportunity similar to Chinese business culture in both the sharing of knowledge cannot be taken for granted outside this context of trustful relationships (Weir and Hutchings, 2005). Both China and Arab regions are regarded as low-context societies reflecting that in both cultures people must have acquired knowledge of their business counterparts and built a trust relationship prior to engaging in business (Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner, 1997).

There are some findings showing Saudis are more homogeneous as a group than U.S. managers, and they exhibit significantly more supporting and challenging behaviors named as coaching behaviors because of their culturally derived styles that combine traditional (familial and nurturing) and collectivist orientation (Noer, Leupold and Valle, 2007). Although Egyptian managers are supposed likely to be relatively respectful of leadership and hierarchical distance, fatalistic, inclined to act according to the particular relationship involved rather than in accord with general rules or standards, sensitive to personal relationships (especially with superiors), cautious, and slow to take decisions, there are some findings as both rational and political processes in Egypt appear to have more influence on strategic decision effectiveness than does intuition (Elbanna and Child, 2007). In a case study on Bahrain, Jordan, and Oman regarding to importance of women to economic development and the complexity of the interrelations between gender, organization, and Islamic values, it is suggested that gender roles as centrality of the family, man as the sole breadwinner of the family, a code of modesty that rests on family dignity and the reputation of the woman, an unequal balance of power in the private sphere that is anchored in family laws, and gender equality in education but not equality in employment (Weir, 2000) just like UNDP's and World Bank Reports (UNDP, 2003; World Bank, 2003). These suggestions are also parallel with Weir's integrative model of management describing Arab business culture as "moderately" masculine, and "high relation" attributes, in managing business (Metcalf, 2006). It is shown that banking in the GCC region is not, in principle, any less interested than those in the West in undertaking profitable business opportunities (Al Janahi and Weir, 2005). In an examination of relationships between initial public offering (IPO) underpricing, CEO duality, and strategic ownership in 12 Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region it is found that underpricing is higher in IPO firms that have CEO duality, and underpricing and strategic blockholding is greater for foreign strategic ownership than it is for domestic strategic ownership (Chahine and Tohmé, 2009). Regarding to IPO (initial public offering) firms it is mentioned that Arab firms suffer from the legacy of fragmented culture and a discontinuous history that is not conducive to the development of sound management practices (Ali, 1995). In direct comparisons of organizations in the Middle East (namely Iran and Jordan) with organizations in the West (namely USA) by criticizing culture-free hypothesis on organizations in the first one it is suggested that that organizational structure is conditioned in important ways by the unique culture and institutions of the nation-state by explaining it with negative effect of specialization on

standardization in USA whereas positive in Iran and Jordan, and very positive effect of specialization on centralization in Iran and Jordan compared to United States (Miller and Sharda, 2000). In the examination of the impact of work values on leadership styles in the Middle East, culture based work value orientations has been found (Hala, 2012).

Understanding the effect of Islam to culture from a managerial perspective may be helpful while the business culture of KSA has been strongly effected by Islam. One of the pioneers regarding to relation between Islam and management is mentioned as Ibn Zafar al-Siqilli, a distinguished Arab philosopher and political activist of the twelfth century (Dekmejian and Thabit, 2000). He was discovered in mid-nineteenth century by Michele Amari, an Italian Arabist, and he stated Ibn Zafar as a worthy precursor to Machiavelli. The basics of management under Islam according to Amari Ibn Zafar in his book of Sulwan al-Muta(Ibn Zafar, 1852) can be summarized as: (1) The severity of the government drives the subjects to revolution, because the use of force begets force as an explanation to revolution. (2) Ideal ruler is one who is not only watchful but also proactive in identifying problems as they arise, and dealing with them before they cause discord and sedition. (3) Those who long to obtain power, should know how to resign it. He especially emphasizes the importance between the determinism of human action and fate itself or to accept his fate and give up power, because this is God's will. In their comparative analysis between Ibn Zafar and Machiavelli Dekmejian and Thabit states that both place a strong emphasis on the determining role of human capability as a similar point, but they also points out the difference as Ibn Zafar's Muslim faith leads him to acknowledge the possibility of moderating human passions through religious teaching. However, when facing foes who are habitual wrongdoers, Ibn Zafar tells the prince to destroy them without compassion.

Islam is a comprehensive religion covering all social, political, military, moral and individual aspects. Hickson and Pugh (1995) state that “Nowhere else in writings on management is there such a recurring exposition of an ethical framework for business and administration” (p. 192) in referring to the Quran and the Islamic law. According to those any negative behavior is not only a bad practice but also a sin. Hard working, honesty and justice are encouraged qualities and virtues in business life(Yousef, 2001). Metcalfe, presents a valuable typology of gender organization and Islam (Metcalfe, 2006).Although her purpose is to show the constraints based on Islam that female professionals have been facing, her findings are useful to connect some Islamic / Arab concepts with management practices, or to understand the reasoning of those practices. In her typology the concepts and managerial implications are as below:

- Adl (Equilibrium): Commitment to harmony and stability in organizational culture
- Nasab (Heritage): Importance of familial ties in organizational and management relations
- Wasta (Connections or Contact): Vertical connections and informal relations important
- Shura (Consultation): Consultation and commitment to team decision making
- Diwan-i-kass: Consultative autocratic decision making
- Qiwama (Protection): In charge of/responsibility for (economic and welfare)

Management style is one contradiction that finds roots in differing Muslim sects. Authoritarian management is predominant in large organizations, while consultative methods prevail in other areas. Some Islamic sects prefer consultative methods of management, which is more consistent with tribalistic traditions (Ali and Al-Shakhis, 1986; Ali, 1989),while others prefer religious interpretations that promote authoritarian styles and encourage

absolute authority of rulers (Ali, 1990). Early colonial possession of the region also set a precedent of authoritarian management (Abbasi and Hollman, 1993; Ali, 1990).

Method & Questions

The interviews were executed as in-depth interview with face to face and open communication on questions and related topics that the interviewed person opened. In the beginning of interview the privacy of the interviewed person including titles and names of companies were guaranteed. At the end of each interview the written notes were sent to interviewed people to edit and to confirm. Totally 10 in depth interviews were executed with 5 Saudi manager, 4 Lebanese managers and 1 Palestinian manager.

In the beginning of each interview below personal data asked to the interviewed persons:

- Gender
- Age
- Total experience in years
- Total experience in management in years
- Education level
- Country of his / her university in pre-graduate degree
- Country of his / her university in master degree (if there is)
- Marital status
- # of kids (if there is /are)
- Any of his / her parents was also a manager

After personal questions the below questions below were asked in order.

1. What is management, an art or a science?
2. What is the importance of collaboration or cooperation and individualism or being on your way regarding to management?
3. What is the difference between leader and manager, if there is?
4. What are the different aspects of management in this region in positive and negative terms?
5. How did you become a manager?
6. What is the shares of luck, network, smartness and diligence to become a manager?
7. What are the most important characters of a manager?
8. What is the difference in management for a boss and for a professional manager?
9. What is the effect of bringing-up of children (terbiye) in becoming a manager within bringing-up traditions / habits in the region?
10. What do you understand from the statement of thinking global and acting local?
11. What is the positive effect of knowing Arabic as a native language in management here?
12. What is the time frame of management in this region: Short Term or Long Term?
13. What is the difference between manager and employee in being hard worker?

Findings With Questions And Answers

In this section the answers to the questions have been analyzed also by referring to mentioned literature on Arab business culture and management practices. Firstly the personal data collected in the beginning of each interview from interviewed managers is presented and analyzed below.

	SAUDIS					KSA AVERAGE	ME EXPATS					ME AVERAGE
	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Gender												
Age	36	48	33	30	33	36	31	33	54	43	39	40
Total experience in years	15	24	14	9	11	14.6	11	12	34	20	18	19
Total experience in management in years	9	16	3	3	4	7	7	8	11	15	15	11.2
Total years to be a manager	6	8	11	6	7	7.6	4	4	23	5	3	7.8
Education level	MBA	Bachelor	MBA	MBA	MBA	MBA	Bachelor	MBA	Bachelor	Bachelor	Bachelor	Bachelor
Country of his / her university in pre-graduate degree	KSA	KSA	KSA	KSA	KSA	KSA	Lebanon	Lebanon	Lebanon	Lebanon	Malta	Lebanon
Country of his / her university in master degree (if there is)	KSA	NULL	UK	USA	UK	UK, USA	NULL	UK	NULL	NULL	NULL	NULL
Marital status	Married	Married	Married	Single	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married
# of kids (if there is /are)	0	4	1	0	3	1.6	2	1	4	2	3	2.4
Any of his / her parents was also a manager?	Father	None	Father	None	Father	Father	Both	Father	None	Father	Father	Father

Figure 2: Personal Data Collected From Interviewed Managers

Interestingly the ages of the managers, their total experience and their total spent years to be a manager are similar although it is supposed that Saudis has some competitive advantages to be a manager because of Saudization and also being working in their own country without a need to have a sponsor for residence permit. It may be also stated that their averages are not so different from the managers working in Western countries. It is seen that majority prefer their country of origin for bachelor degree. The difference between Saudis and ME expats lays down in master degrees. Although all Saudis have master degree except one probably because of his age, only one of ME expats has a master degree. In the interviews it was learnt that the master programs for Saudis were sponsored by the government, and most of them had their master degree when they were working for governmental or semi-governmental organizations. Another interesting finding was that they were not asked for a mandatory working term for this sponsorship, and in most of the cases after having a master degree they started to work in a private company. It is suggested that KSA government has been supporting this process on purpose regarding to Saudization like Turkish model in 70s to 90s in which the local talents have been gaining experience in governmental industries and then transferring to private industries as managers. It is also shown that KSA was not selected for master degrees, but UK and USA. It may be because of relatively low quality of master programs in KSA, but more importantly a strategy for gaining experience and being cultured in Western countries for a mixture of traditional and modern business practices and life styles. For ME expats it may be suggested that the ME countries don't have this kind of supporting initiatives because of their economic conditions and / or having relatively more competitive work force. It should be also stated that in KSA having a master degree is very important, and it is clearly shown in business cards and official signatures. Although being married to be a manager was an expected fact, the number of the kids are below than expectations, and there are also married managers having no kid. It may be an interesting finding against to perceptions on number of kids of managers in KSA. Relatively increasing costs of growing up of children and changing understandings on family may be the reasons. Regarding to answers to if any or both of parents were also managers or in managerial positions the answers are not surprising according to status of women in business shown in the literature.

In analyzing the answers, the questions are grouped for a better understanding and because of inner relations between them.

Group 1: Manager and Management as Extraordinary Subjects or Not

Question 1: What is management, an art or a science?

Question 2: What is the importance of collaboration or cooperation and individualism or being on your way regarding to management?

Question 3: What is the difference between leader and manager, if there is?

Question 8: What is the difference in management for a boss and for a professional manager?
Question 13: What is the difference between manager and employee in being hard worker?

8 of the managers defined management as art supported by science or mostly art or a talent by birth. Only 1 of the managers gave equal shares to art and science, and only 1 of them stated rather science. It may be a supportive finding regarding to high Power Distance in the Middle East while the managers have been defined in Arab business culture as having authoritarian style, and seeking subordinate participation is regarded as “weak” management, status, position, and seniority are more important than ability and performance in the literature.

All the participants differentiated leader and manager by stating “leader has his own way”, “there is also a blood effect in being a leader”, “leader is admired by his team and has followers”, “management can be taught, but leadership is a skill by birth.”, “manager is empowered by positions, but leader empowers the position.”, “leaders are followed by others, but the managers only order within an authorization.”, “leader acts as a role model.”, “Bill Gates and Steve Jobs may be god samples for leaders left the university education.” Although 2 of the participants pointed out the overlapping between leaders and managers, all of them agree on the difference of leader than manager. It supports both high Power Distance in the Middle East and the previous statement on management as an art while the extraordinary character of leader cannot be gained via education, but probably by birth or blood. Being a member of a privileged family or community is sure an advantage in the Middle East like other countries, but because of relatively static and conservative social structure of tribes or big families, it may be stated that it is a more advantageous position in the Middle East.

Regarding to the difference in management for a boss and a professional manager, the same segregation comes to surface again while the boss is generally defined as or like leader. In most of the answers the differentiation is based on limited / formal authority and narrow specialization of professional manager and consultative, fatherly and result oriented styles of boss looking for solution not only procedures also by emphasizing the strategic and big picture view or coverage ability of boss. Most of the participants also mentioned that they called the boss as “Uncle”.

For the different meanings of hard working for a manager or for an employee, it was clearly stated that for a manager it means being creative and focusing to solving of problems while for staff it is more about meeting the deadlines of routine operations he / she is executing. Although the majority emphasized the importance of team working and equality of all to the some extent supporting the consultative approach mentioned in the literature, it was also stated that managers cannot consult everything with his / her staff and at the end he / she must decide taking all responsibility. It supports the mentioned having authoritarian style and “open door” consultative approach at the same time in Arab business culture as a paradox.

Lastly the answers for the importance of collaboration or cooperation and individualism or being on your way regarding to management support the consultative approach mentioned in the literature while all answers emphasized the importance of collaboration or cooperation. Interestingly collaboration and cooperation were underlined more strongly especially for mature and bigger organizations rather than family owned ones typically smaller and less mature. It may be also a contradicting finding regarding to

literature describing family-controlled firms as less bureaucratic, authoritarian, and impersonal than larger firms.

According to answers in the group no difference found between Saudis and ME expats. It may show a common understanding on manager or management as an extraordinary entity or specialization supported by science and education but mostly an output of a talent by birth or family or social group. Regarding to relatively conservative and stable social structure in the Middle East, it may be also a supportive finding of “fatalistic culture” suggesting that people have little control over events affecting their lives while they cannot change too much their lives

Group 2: Management in the KSA

Question 4: What are the different aspects of management in this region in positive and negative terms?

Question 6: What is the shares of luck, network, smartness and diligence to become a manager?

Question 7: What are the most important characters of a manager?

Question 10. What do you understand from the statement of thinking global and acting local?

Question 12: What is the time frame of management in this region: Short Term or Long Term?

In this group the answers to different aspects of management in this region and the most important characters of a manager have been analyzed together with the assumption of the most important characters are also representing the wanted but not existed aspects of management, briefly the opposite forms of mentioned negative aspects.

Negative aspects were mentioned as below in general:

- Lack of transparency, accountability and clear procedures especially in family owned organizations in spite of robust regulations for corporate governance. Regarding to that aspect bureaucracy was also stated as a negative aspect, and the heavy and unclear bureaucratic processes were explained as the result of they were being imported from Egypt in where these rules were developed by UK's colonial management for a tighter and strict control.
- Very centralized management stated as “one man show”, “the rigidity and conservative nature of the managers”, “less delegation to their subordinates”, “not sharing know-how to emphasize their personal power”, “dependency to “one man show” at the expense of limiting the progress of organization.”
- The importance of recommendations and advices of family members supporting the findings of higher commitment to family and friends, rather than organizational goals and performance, and giving priority to friendships and personal considerations over organizational goals and performance. It may also show the importance of *wasta* and personal relations.
- Lack of professionalism like mixing the business and private spaces, favoring his / her relatives in the business, lack of confidentiality on business matters. It may support the finding of highly subjective recruitment processes depending on personal contacts, nepotism, regionalism, and family name.

- Verbal managerial communication and decisions rather than writing which may support the finding of Arab managers' being reluctant to delegate authority, but to avoid from responsibility and risk-taking with mentioned consultative style highly preferred and executed.
- Indirect communication model which may support having lower tolerance for uncertainty and high score in Uncertainty Avoidance.
- Race, gender and nationality discrimination which may be understood as the side effect or results of Saudization, historical existence of slavery (KSA was the last country banning slavery in 1962) and house workers (maids, drivers etc. especially from the countries in Africa, India and Far East), and a supporting argument for gender equality in education but not equality in employment.
- Lack of respect to time and deadlines, and common short-term planning habits with lack of any succession plan. It may support the different approach in the Middle East in using of time as not a wasted effort, and also the existence of fatalistic culture in which the man has limited control over time. It may also support the suggestion of insha' Allah" seems to mean to delay or reposition responsibility and decision making in KSA. Regarding to that aspect it was also stated that "only past achievements as a base for merits of a manager and no emphasize to present & future.", so the different valuation of time as making past valuable and present & future not controllable. According to short-term planning habits it should be stated that all the participants described the time frame of management in the region as short term with a few exceptions of some multi-national or giant organizations in KSA.

During the interviews the instability of the neighboring countries, medium freedom of speech, and the low quality of public education were also mentioned as negative aspects. The last one may also explain the preference for other countries rather than KSA for master programs.

Positive aspects were mentioned as below in general:

- Having a more social or organic business society emphasizing social relations out of office which may support the finding of strong commitment to the organization and preferences to work in / do the same business for a long time in the Middle East. On the other hand this positive aspect may be the cause reason of lack of professionalism and confidentiality as negative aspects.
- Recognition of people as people not only professional assets, and its positive effect on loyalty supporting again strong commitment to the organization and preferences to work in / do the same business for a long time in the Middle East.
- Having the old values of trust stated as "word of mouth is one of the most efficient way in business. It is not easy but if you can gain the trust of locals, things will be getting much easier."
- The certain Islamic values protecting the employee as a human being and makes the interactions between managers and employees more humanistic than the Western part of world.
- The investment by government to local fresh graduates and talents, to the infrastructure which may be understood according to Saudization strategy.
- The internationalized environment because of expats enabling all to work in multi-cultural environments and learning / having experience on different management techniques and styles.

- The ability to act faster than other countries which also supports the lack of transparency, accountability and clear procedures, and verbal managerial communication and decisions.

When the mentioned most important characteristics of a manager is analyzed, it may be possible having a cross justification of mentioned both negative and positive aspects of the region. These characteristics were mentioned in general as below:

- Ability to convey a message properly
- Being a sample more than ordering
- Being honest and establishing mutual trust
- Career and success plan for the team
- Delegation, empowerment
- Effective time management and discipline
- Mentoring and monitoring
- Sense of humor and empathy
- Sharing of know-how and credits
- Team working and team motivation

It is not fair nor right to understand all mentioned characteristics as not existed but wanted aspects in management in the region, but it can be also stated that some of them emphasize the mentioned negative aspects as lack of transparency, accountability, clear procedures, respect to time and deadlines, verbal communication habits, and very centralized management, and the mentioned positive aspects as consultative approach and coaching, recognition of people as people not only professional assets, and the certain Islamic values protecting the employee as a human being. Regarding to sharing of know-how and credits, it may represent the negative perception on solicitation of participation as a sign of weakness, and a sign of changing in perception of manager whose authority is / was respectful and with whom cannot be disagreeable in the mentioned literature.

According to answers to questions of 4, 7 and 12, no difference found between Saudis and ME expats, but in answers to the 6th question on the shares of luck, network, smartness and diligence to become a manager. In this question it was asked to participants to distribute 100% to each of them and the results are as below. It seems there are some important differences between Saudis and ME expats. One of them is about the importance of network which Saudis gave more credits. It may be because of they have been working in their own country without restrictions or mandatory procedures on residence permit and with the competitive advantages of Saudization. In this content it may be argued that more important issue for Saudis to be a manager is having an effective network like *wasta*, and smartness and diligence are relatively less important. For the ME expats, it may be argued that they should trust their own smartness and diligence to be a manager while they have no or less efficient network because of mentioned restrictions, mandatory legal procedures and being working in a foreign country. Lastly it should be stated that most of the participants preferred to understand “luck” as a gift from Allah which also show the effect of Islam in management.

	SAUDIS					KSA AVERAGE	ME EXPATS					ME AVERAGE
Luck	10%	25%	25%	35%	30%	25%	40%	20%	0%	20%	34%	23%
Network	50%	25%	25%	15%	50%	33%	10%	20%	30%	20%	26%	21%
Smartness	20%	25%	25%	15%	10%	19%	40%	30%	0%	30%	26%	25%
Diligence	20%	25%	25%	35%	10%	23%	10%	30%	50%	30%	15%	27%

Figure 2 : The Personal Data Collected From Interviewed Managers

Lastly regarding to the statement of “thinking global and acting local” half of the participants found it meaningless or useless, and half of them as valuable and applicable. It may mean a synthesis process in the region including both “the wish not become assimilated to others” and the transition of management in the region with respect to global practices.

Group 3: Becoming a Manager and Effect of Family

Question 5: How did you become a manager?

Question 9: What is the effect of bringing-up of children (terbiye) in becoming a manager within bringing-up traditions / habits in the region?

Question 11: What is the positive effect of knowing Arabic as a native language in management here?

Regarding to participants' stories in becoming a manager, all of them emphasized their competitive advantages like having more experience, master degree, lack of enough experienced or skillful staff, and lack of available Western resources. Interestingly 3 of ME expats also stated some other proposals from other organizations and using those as a bargaining tool against to their management to be a manager. No Saudi mentioned a story like this. It may be argued that process of becoming a manager is more soft for Saudis with their mentioned competitive advantages and trust to their network, but harder for ME expats should “play the game” more lonely and basically by trusting to their own qualifications.

The effect of bringing-up of children (terbiye) to become a manager was an interesting question for all participants. Most of them narrated their own stories with their parents as role modelling of the father, given responsibilities to them when they were kids or teenagers, and limited budgets on purpose for example to buy an old fashioned car or to have to work to gain money if they already spent their budget. There were generally no mention to mothers or just operational duties of mothers with emphasize on father's role model again. Interestingly 2 Saudis mentioned the time limitations of fathers because of working as a reasoning of fathers' not spending too much time with their kids because they needed to be relaxed. No ME expats mentioned anything like this. Although most of the participants mentioned the heavy discipline they were facing when they were growing up, they criticized the current bringing-up of children model as “spoiled children”, “giving money or spending too much for the kids because of parents' tough life experiences when they were kids and not to wish same experience for their kids”, and “parents' behaviors to their kids as if the kids will always be kids, not adults.” One of the participants' statements on that issue deserves to quote verbatim:

“Here the style of bringing-up of children differs from privileged cities & families to unprivileged cities & families & minorities. If you are one from the privileged ones it is easier to be a manager, so the asked style may not be so important. For the unprivileged ones having the discipline and being a hard worker are the most important things, and these reflect also in the style because they know that without those they cannot arrive anywhere. In fact these habits hurt the private industries with the belief of privileged ones as having the right to be paid with high salaries without hard working. I believe that $\frac{3}{4}$ of managers in private industries of KSA are coming from those privileged cities & families.”

All the participants underlined the positive effect of knowing Arabic as a native language in management not only because of existence of some staff not knowing any other language, but more importantly to communicate and to understand deeply. It seems really an advantage when it is understood as an asset enabling the owners to communicate in similar / same structure that the language gives, and may support the findings of West and Graham's on linguistic-based measure of cultural distance and its relationship to managerial values (2004).

Results And Further Discussions

First of all it cannot be argued that this study represents the management perceptions and practices in KSA wholly. This study should be understood as a first step and a limited insight. However the findings based on in-depth interviews may be meaningful both in supporting some of the previous findings and contradicting with some of others.

One of the main assumptions of this study is that understanding of management cannot be independent from culture, and the identical culture-free assumptions on management have important limitations. For example sublimation of bureaucratic authority and humiliation of traditional one from a Weberian approach may not be helpful to understand management in the Middle East. KSA represents a very historical and deeply rooted social structure and culture, and also a highly internationalized environment with a huge amount of Western and Eastern expats. The ongoing experience of KSA in combination or synthesis of two main different management approaches as Western and Eastern provides unique opportunities for understanding the possibilities of hybrid management perspectives and practices for a better and more efficient management in the region. In this context the mentioned negative aspects may also be understood as side effects or temporary problems in a transition or transformation process.

The effect of Islam should also be studied deeply with all paradoxes in the region like the co-existence of authoritarian style and "open door" consultative approach at the same time, Islam's emphasize on individual but seemingly current collectivist structure of the society, and the importance of Consensus (Ijma) as being the third main source just after the Quran and the Sunnah (known practices of the Prophet Muhammad, and current "very centralized management style" or "authoritarian style". Regarding to those studies the definition of human being in the Quran as "Verily, We created man of the best stature (mould) (Al-Tin, 4) should also be taken into consideration from both managers and employees perspectives.

According to family-owned business in KSA, the definition of succession for Saudis should be studied in the content of eligible human resources for private industries in KSA. It may be supposed that foremost of Saudis the success in their career is to have his / her own business with the support of government in the huge market of KSA, and then holding the management, offering key positions within their own organizations to their family members, collecting regular pay but without any obligation to work. It may be an important risk in development of private industries with Saudi nationals in KSA or a root cause in shortage of eligible Saudi resources for private companies in spite of Saudization.

Lastly it may be argued that there is a kind of social relation circles in Saudi society with changing degrees of openness and communication. These circles may be classified from inside to outside as big family or tribe, other Arabs and the resting entities. (As a side note I would like to state that I have been working in KSA for 3 years and I have a lot of Saudi and ME originated colleagues. Although I'm from Turkey and also Muslim, not from Western part of the globe, I was only invited one time by a Saudi to his home and one time by a ME expat to his home during all those 3 years. This may be also a supporting fact of those circles, the similarities between Saudis and ME Arab Expats, and lastly the total representation value of Saudis and ME Expats for this study). These circled structure may explain some of the seemingly paradoxes in management like they may be perceived having authoritarian style, but in fact they may be very participative in their inner and organic environments. If it is the fact we may need a multi layered measurement of cultural dimension scores of KSA instead of current one. For example the measured score of 95 for Power Distance in KSA may / should change from circle to circle, Power Distance may be just seemingly respected by all. This possible circled structure may also mean a big constraint in collecting real data for managerial studies, but nobody said it would be easy.

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