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Empower me or not? Influence of societal culture

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to empirically investigate the relationships between societal culture value dimensions and employee preferences for empowerment behaviors by managerial leaders across societal cultures. To do this, the authors synthesize the extant literature to underpin this study and to set the research agenda for future empirical work.
Design/methodology/approach – Using field survey research method, the authors obtain and analyze data from ten samples in eight geographically and culturally diverse societies from a global longitudinal study of preferred managerial leader behavior.
Findings – Cultural value dimension predictor variables affect employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors in the societies studied. Some significant effects of gender and organizational factors on these relationships were found.
Research limitations/implications – Future research should expand upon variations in the meaning of employee empowerment across cultures, consider other cultural models and theories, and a more extensive set of personal, organizational and relational factors.
Practical implications – Employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors are more likely the result of the interplay, exchange and trade-offs between cultural, personal and organizational values. The effectiveness of employee empowerment is contingent upon well-designed training programs aligning management and worker values, goals and tasks.
Originality/value – The authors offer more realistic, objective and evidence-based insights into the cultural influences on the effectiveness of empowerment and employee cognitions towards it than the extant, conceptually and methodologically compromised, strategic cross-cultural studies.

Keywords Culture, Employee empowerment, Preferences, Leader behavior
Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present an in-depth empirical investigation of relationships between employee-perceived value of empowerment and societal cultural values within a global setting. Studies based on theories from "Western" societies have frequently failed to replicate socio-psychological findings in other societal cultures, throwing some doubt on their validity across cultures (Arnold *et al.*, 2000). The late Hofstede stated (1980) that the "nature of management skills is such that they are culturally specific: a management technique or philosophy that is appropriate in one national culture is not necessarily appropriate in another" (p. 61). One theoretical concept that has been erroneously labeled as culturally universal is employee empowerment.

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In her review of over 20 years of research on empowerment at work, Spreitzer (2008) explains that in the 1990s and subsequently, two complementary perspectives on empowerment at work emerged in the literature. The first perspective focuses on the social-structural and contextual conditions that are in place to enable empowerment in the organization; the second on the employees' psychological experience and perception of empowerment at work. We can distinguish these perspectives by comparing empowering organizational structures, policies and employee perceptions of empowerment (that is, individuals' reactions to the structures, policies and practices in which they are embedded). Both perspectives inform a theory of empowerment.

The social-structural perspective is embedded in the values and ideals of democracy. In a democracy, power ideally resides within individuals at all levels of a system, where employees at all levels can have a voice in managing a system when they have access to opportunity, information, support and resources. The idea of sharing power between superiors and subordinates to cascade appropriate decision-making power to lower levels of the organizational hierarchy is, therefore, at the heart of the social-structural perspective on empowerment (Liden and Arad, 1996). This perspective focuses on how organizational, institutional, social, economic, political and cultural forces can identify the conditions that foster powerlessness in the workplace (Liden and Arad, 1996). From a practical viewpoint, organizations can change organizational policies, processes, practices and structures away from top-down control systems towards high involvement practices where power, knowledge, information and rewards are shared with employees in the lower echelons of the organizational hierarchy (Bowen and Lawler, 1995). For example, management can change practices to allow employees to decide on their own how they will recover from a service problem, and then surprise-and-delight customers by exceeding their expectations rather than waiting for review and approval from a supervisor.

Our study employs a macro-environmental, socio-cultural context consisting of societal cultural value dimensions. We consider several well-established models of societal cultural values, such as Schwartz's Basic Value model (1992, 2012) and Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness model (GLOBE: House *et al.*, 2004), selecting, however, Hofstede *et al.'s* Value Survey Module (2008), seven-dimensional model. For our assessment of employee preferences for being empowered, we employ the *Tolerance of Freedom* dimension scale of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire XII: Tolerance of Freedom, which reflects to what extent the leader allows followers scope for initiative, decisions and action (Stogdill, 1969). These choices are discussed further below.

We present in-depth investigations of relationships between preferences for empowering behavior by a leader and societal cultural values in the global setting, and find empowerment (the practice of giving employees the autonomy to make decisions about how they go about their daily activities) to be viewed differently from culture-to-culture (see also Humborstad and Perry, 2011). Our literature analysis and cross-cultural empirical evidence show that, in some societies, employees respond less positively to delegated authority and work autonomy. Hence, the success of empowerment as a managerial practice depends on understanding the cultural and contextual assumptions, values and beliefs held by those being managed (Robert *et al.*, 2000). Lack of congruence between empowerment as a management practice and employees' societal cultural values may be most striking in High Power Distance societies, where subordinates are accustomed to unquestioningly accepting orders from their supervisors; hence, practices of subordinate autonomy would be foreign (Hui *et al.*, 2004; Humborstad and Perry, 2011). Littrell (2007) stated, "The conventional wisdom proposed in academic and professional theory and practice is that empowering employees anywhere, globally, leads to myriad individual, group, and organizational benefits" (p. 88). To the contrary, a rising body of cross-cultural studies reports significant societal culture influences on the effectiveness of employee empowerment and employee cognitions (i.e. perceptions and

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

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

We first present the findings of the extant literature on empowerment and cultural influences, and, based on this, hypotheses are developed. We then present our samples, the methodological procedures we deployed to collect and process data, and the results of our analyses. Finally, we discuss the implications and limitations of our study and outline future research directions in order to set the agenda on a culturally contingent approach to empowerment.

2. Literature review

Fayol (1949) introduced the concept of employee empowerment but called it "initiative" and claimed it to be, "one of the keenest satisfactions for an intelligent person to experience" (p. 39). According to Fayol (1949), "Employees should be encouraged to make suggestions to conceive and carry out their plans, even when some mistakes result. The manager must be able to sacrifice some personal vanity to grant this sort of satisfaction to subordinates" (p. 22). McGregor (1957) also proposed that employees might not be so different from managers and could be trusted. These French and US researchers essentially promote employee empowerment as a key aspect of effective management and leadership.

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

2.1 Conceptualizing empowerment

Organization-level research focuses on organizational design, processes, practices and policies that allow employees access to information, resources, opportunities to grow and learn, ensuring support and unleashing human capital (Randolph and Saskin, 2002; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Wong and Kuvaas, 2018). These include flat and horizontal organizational structures and processes that incorporate employee-involvement-oriented work practices and systems, i.e. team-based work structures, information sharing and participation in decision-making (Kazlauskaite *et al.*, 2012). The redistribution of decision-making power and organizational processes, thus, offers employees the experience of power (Menon, 2001).

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

Employee-level research adopts a behavioral and psychological approach to empowerment and focuses on employees' cognitions (i.e. perceptions of and attitudes

towards empowerment) and their congruent reactions to being empowered (Zhang and Begley, 2011). Elaborations of such dynamics differ, entailing many cognitive aspects and job-related concepts that have been aggregated in distinctive and sometimes overlapping sub-categories of discretion (i.e. perception of increased job autonomy and self-control; Fock *et al.*, 2013; Hui *et al.*, 2004), and cognitive empowerment (i.e. feelings and beliefs of trust, motivation, competence; Menon, 2001). The overarching logic is that the employees' beliefs about empowerment affect their intrinsic motivation, job attitudes and performance (Kim *et al.*, 2018) and may foster goal clarity.

In their seminal study on the effects of empowering behaviors by leaders, Cheong *et al.* (2016) propose that empowering leadership has universal positive effects on employee behavior, and engenders psychological empowerment, trust in leaders and positive leader–member relationships through motivational and exchange-based mediators. Conversely, if empowering behaviors do not facilitate the conditions to create empowerment, trust in leaders or positive leader–member relationships, empowering leadership may have deleterious effects on followers' behavior. The positive association of perceived organizational support with job and co-worker satisfaction, performance, organizational commitment, corporate social responsibility and turnover intention has newly gained attention in several cross-cultural and empowerment related studies (Amor *et al.*, 2021; Maan *et al.*, 2020; Malik *et al.*, 2021; Padash and Ghatari, 2020; Bouncken *et al.*, 2020; Rigaud, 2020).

On the one hand, followers may view leader behaviors, such as fostering participative decision-making or providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints, as an indication that the leader trusts them and is providing them with opportunities for self-development and growth. On the other hand, such behaviors could be interpreted as indicating that the leader lacks the ability to lead or is passing responsibility on to followers to avoid making difficult decisions.

In the first instance, empowering leadership behavior should enhance the subordinates' psychological empowerment, trust in the leader and foster good leader–member relationships among followers. In the latter example, followers may be uncertain about their role and, being frustrated by this uncertainty, may not participate in a positive exchange relationship with their leader. If the attributions of leader behavior are fundamental, it is vital that leaders are able to communicate the reasons behind their use of empowering behavior and the benefits for the followers.

2.2 Culture-based models of preferences for empowerment

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

2.3 The universal approach to empowerment

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

However, most researchers from Anglo-cluster countries, and from those with a similar cultural value dimension pattern, take a universal approach to the benefits of empowerment,

arguing that empowering employees inevitably leads to various types of individual, group and organizational improvements. Benefits at the employee level are said to be improvements in various attitudes and behaviors, including job satisfaction (Kele *et al.*, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2018), engagement (Albrecht and Andreetta, 2011), thriving at work (Li *et al.*, 2016), and organizational citizenship behaviors with outcomes such as increased productivity (Mohsin and Kumar, 2010) and creativity and innovation (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2015). Benefits at the group level entail team attitudes such as proactiveness and participation (Zhang and Begley, 2011), cohesion and outcomes of efficacy, and innovation and creativity (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014, 2015). These benefits also entail increased product and service quality (Jiang *et al.*, 2012); lower labor turnover; lower costs and increased profits (Kazlauskaite *et al.*, 2012).

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

2.4 The culturally contingent approach to empowerment

The culturally contingent approach contextualizes follower-centric behavioral and psychological perspectives on empowerment, arguing that societal culture influences how employees perceive, interpret and react to organizational practices and managerial behaviors that allow employee discretion and autonomy in the workplace. It posits that culture shapes followers' attitudes about such practices and behaviors, interpreting and evaluating the behaviors for compatibility with what they consider desirable and effective (House *et al.*, 2004). The more consistent the perceived practice or behavior is with such employee attitudes, the more positive the employee response. Conversely, if employee cultural values and norms are incongruent with perceived empowerment behaviors and practices, employees may become dissatisfied with those aspects of their jobs and unmotivated to display expected behaviors and performance (House *et al.*, 2004). As empowerment practices decentralize power by involving employees in decision-making, the behavior of a supervisor in providing employees with discretion and autonomy over their tasks may be culturally contingent (Hsieh and Chao, 2004). The subordinates' perception of their individual responsibility to manage events, situations and people they encounter at work will differ across nations and organizations. In some contexts, employees at the lower levels of organizations will be expected to "know best" and thus the leader's role should be to act as coach and mentor (Robert *et al.*, 2000), while in other cultural contexts, the opposite will be the norm, "the managers know best," and the subordinates await and follow orders.

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

2.4.1 Effectiveness of employee empowerment across societal cultures. Culture and behavior, attitudes and beliefs are frequently discussed in relation to Hofstede's Power Distance dimension due to its focus on power and decision-making authority and expectations. High Power Distance has been assigned both positive and negative influences, as well as a moderating role in the relationship between employee empowerment and employee effectiveness (Hofstede, 1980, 2001).

The literature suggests that High Power Distance values hinder the effectiveness of employee empowerment due to the cultural disinclination of managers to share power, along with their tendency to lead in a directive way, and of employees being inclined to expect direction and to obey instructions from a higher authority. This research direction (Ahmad and Gao, 2018; Fock *et al.*, 2013; Hauff and Richter, 2015; Hui *et al.*, 2004; Jiang *et al.*, 2016; Kim and Beehr, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2018; Zhang and Begley, 2011) indicates that High Power Distance values weaken the effects of leader behavioral, structural and psychological empowerment on employee job attitudes, behaviors and outcomes including:

(1) employee satisfaction
(2) commitment
(3) motivation
(4) engagement
(5) team participation and performance
(6) operational effectiveness
(7) interpersonal conflict
(8) citizenship behavior
(9) creativity
(10) general performance

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

Additionally, results from some culture and empowerment studies conducted in High Power Distance contexts have been inconclusive (Hui *et al.*, 2004; Humborstad and Perry, 2011); for example, Robert *et al.* (2000) failed to obtain significant findings. The empowerment–job satisfaction relationship was negative in an India sample, but this relationship was found to be positive in other samples from High Power Distance countries. Similarly, Hauff and Richter (2015) failed to obtain significant findings for the same relationship across 16, High and Low Power Distance nations, but did find it significant and negative when using revised Hofstede scores (Taras *et al.*, 2012). In contrast, Hui *et al.* (2004), after controlling for extraneous variables, provided support for variation in empowerment effects on job satisfaction as Zhang *et al.* (2017) did on employee feedback-seeking behaviors. Chen and Chen (2008) found that while some of the sub-dimensions of empowerment were positively correlated to organizational commitment, others were negatively, or not correlated.

Due to the growing economic importance of remote leadership of global, cross-cultural teams in disruptive times as the "new normal", it is important that this uncertainty around the effectiveness of employee empowerment be explored further in cross-cultural setting.

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

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

Sigler and Pearson (2000) and Jiang *et al.* (2016) contend that empowerment should be effective in collectivist societies as it facilitates the achievement of group or organizational goals by improved individual contributions, fosters team performance and inhibits intra-group conflicts. Empirical evidence, however, suggests that individualism negatively affects the link between employee psychological and structural empowerment and employee engagement (Zheng and Tian, 2019), and that it does not affect the link between structural empowerment and employee satisfaction (Robert *et al.*, 2000).

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

Conversely, Randolph and Sashkin (2002) and Magnini (2009) proposed that societies with High Power Distance and High Uncertainty Avoidance values have employees that are "mentally programmed" to be dependent and have lower demand for personal autonomy. In such cultures, employees are more cognizant of authority and reluctant to challenge leaders (Boudrias *et al.*, 2004).

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

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

Empirical research, however, does not provide unequivocal support for such postulates. Kirkman and Shapiro (2001) and Sigler and Pearson (2000) found support for a link between collectivism and employee psychological empowerment. Zheng and Tian (2019) found a

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

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

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

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

2.5 Conceptual and methodological issues

We find that cross-cultural studies have not provided unequivocal insights into the influences of culture on the effectiveness of empowerment and employee cognitions towards it. Alongside mixed findings, we identified in our literature review several conceptual and methodological flaws causing this inconsistency. First, despite almost universal adoption of Hofstede's cultural theory in both the universal and culturally contingent streams, researchers have selectively involved dimensions in their studies, accentuating some while neglecting or even completely omitting others from their analyses, especially in empirical studies. Considering the holistic character and multidimensionality of culture, this represents a significant methodological failure as omitted values may be equally or more meaningfully related to the phenomena studied. Many theorists (e.g. Hofstede, 2001; Schwartz, 1992) have long demonstrated that isolated, single-value dimensions or limited theoretical applications of culture ignore the fact that opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are not guided by the priority given to a single value, but by trade-offs among competing values that are involved simultaneously in a behavior or attitude. Schwartz (1996) emphasized that studies using incomplete cultural theories and value dimensions lead to a fragmented accumulation of bits of often unrelated and misleading information about dimensions that is not conducive to the

development or testing of coherent theories. Schwartz (1992) also argued that the reliability of any single variable is quite low when employed to characterize a culture, and random effects can play a significant role in attempts to identify significant associations with single values isolated from a full multi-dimensional model of culture.

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

2.6 Research focus and hypotheses

While we acknowledge the relevance of research that examines cultural influences on the effectiveness of empowerment, in this study we examine the cultural contingency of employee cognitions, i.e. attitudes towards empowerment. We use a follower-centric perspective and define employee empowerment as a culturally contingent attitude, opinion or belief about being empowered on the part of employees, expressed through, or manifested in, preferences for empowering behaviors by leaders (Littrell, 2007, 2013).

Due to the often-contradictory results noted in our literature review, we have elected to employ two-tailed testing of null hypotheses (Bland and Altman, 1994), as predicting a direction of correlation of cultural value dimensions and preferences for empowerment is problematic (see Daniel and Cross, 2013). A null hypothesis, and the probabilities of the results occurring "due to chance alone" is tested, but the data collected reasonably suggest that something in the studied environment and/or population leads to a difference or relationship or pattern between them (see Leedy and Ormrod, 2015; Pierce, 2008). A null hypothesis is used to draw conclusions from the collected data that are different from the expected outcome (results) of chance alone (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). When the results are due to "something other than chance", the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, i.e. that differences observed are due to a relationship between the variables (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015).

We, thus, hypothesize that:

H0a. Societal culture does not influence employee preferences for managerial leader empowerment behaviors.

H0b. Other factors, such as gender, do not have effects in these relationships.

3. Method

3.1 Sampling, data collection and research polygons

We applied random quota sampling, selecting from finite populations; in this case, employed businesspeople from various country and sub-country culture areas and (to a lesser extent) part-time working university business students. Data were collected via:

(1) Mailed paper surveys to organization managers and executives to seek participation and distribution within their organization,

(2) Manual distribution and retrieval of paper surveys by volunteer students, faculty members and researchers,

(3) Online surveys (e.g. Google Forms and Qualtrics surveys)

Sample details are presented in Appendix 1. Research polygons include Russia (samples from the Siberian Region and Western/European region), the US (Southwest, primarily Texas–*SW*, and Northern Midwestern sample, primarily North Dakota – *MW*), Iceland, Norway, Lithuania, Indonesia, Peru and Turkey (in and around Istanbul). The number of participants varies across countries involved in the study, ranging from 55 (Peru) to 890 (Lithuania), totaling 3,478 participants. All participants are citizens and residents and report spending their careers and lives in their respective countries.

Gender distribution in the global sample leans slightly towards female participants and is relatively equal in the Norwegian, Siberian–Russian and Turkish samples. Men dominate in the Icelandic, Indonesian and US–Midwestern samples, and women in the Lithuanian, Western Russian and South-Western US samples. The most commonly represented educational level across the samples is a bachelor's degree, while the job level of participants varies randomly and entails all levels across samples. Most participants work in private organizations in service industries.

After data collection, only participants who provided responses for a minimum of 80% of the items defining culture and leader behavior dimension data were retained. The data on culture and leader empowerment behaviors are reported well above this threshold for all countries and samples. With the exception of Indonesia and Peru, participants in the samples reported demographic, organization and industry-related data above an 80% threshold. The samples are large and diverse enough for us to assume they are a sufficiently broad sample of opinions, attitudes and beliefs in the societies participating in the study. This allowed us to draw conclusions about the effects of higher and lower national average scores of key variables as discussed below.

3.2 Research instrument and variable operationalization

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

We employed the Brislin model for instrument translation (Brislin, 1970), using at least two independent bilingual translators for each translation. After this initial translation, local collaborating researchers administered pilot studies, distributing the translated survey to a smaller number of participants (20–50) for discussion of the face validity of the items and dimensions. Data obtained were subjected to standard descriptive and inferential parametric statistical tests to facilitate making inferences from the analyses. In cases where unusable data were obtained in pilot studies, a focus group study was carried out with the test sample, revising items to achieve equivalence between the original (English) and local language (see Littrell *et al.*, 2018 for further details of the survey validation).

3.2.1 Measurement model for culture. There are several cultural theories appropriate for investigating the effects of societal culture on employee attitudes towards empowerment. Along with Hofstede's, which is the most frequently used, cultural theories in leadership research include the GLOBE (House *et al.*, 2004) and Schwartz's Basic Value theory (Schwartz, 1992, 2012). We selected Hofstede's theory and adopted his Values Survey Module 2008 (VSM08, see: http://geerthofstede.com) for several reasons.

First, there is a significant body of research related to the effects of empowerment using Hofstede's model of culture. Second, Hofstede's conceptualized cultural values as personal preferences of people in a society related to different aspects of life. GLOBE and Schwartz's theories conceptualized cultural values as norms, ideological abstractions or guiding principles in life (House *et al.*, 2004; Javidan *et al.*, 2006; Minkov *et al.*, 2019). Hofstede's model is, therefore, conceptually better related to our definition and operationalization of employee empowerment, which may allow for different and perhaps more realistic and objective findings. Third, VSM08 dimension scores have been shown to be adequate for meaningful analysis in terms of physiological gender (female vs male) and application to geographical regions within a country or across countries (Hofstede *et al.*, 2008). Considering our hypotheses and samples, this is important for our study. Revised VSM scores have been proposed (Taras *et al.*, 2012), however, these are conceptually and methodologically consistent with older versions (VSM82 and VSM94) that comprise fewer value dimensions (four for 82 version and five for 94 version) than those in VSM08 (seven dimensions) and VSM13 (six dimensions), which is a subset of VSM08. Finally, the volume of research using and validating Hofstede's theory and the instrument is significant (for in-depth reviews see Kirkman *et al.*, 2006; Taras *et al.*, 2010).

Publication of Hofstede's *Cultures Consequences* in 1980 led to an explosion of interest in the measurement of culture, although attempts to quantify various aspects of culture can be traced further back in time (Taras, *et al.*, 2010). Hofstede's cultural dimensions have inspired thousands of empirical studies (Kirkman *et al.*, 2006), but his work has been criticized for being US centered and outdated and based on a consultancy project conducted at IBM in the 1960s (Javidan *et al.*, 2006). A further critique by McSweeney (2002) is that "such extreme, singular theories, such as Hofstede's model of national culture, are profoundly problematic as his conflation and uni-level analyses precludes consideration of interplay between macro and micro (i.e. societal, organizational, occupational) cultural levels" (McSweeney, 2002, p. 113). Williamson (2002), however, refutes this critique indicating that the research praised by McSweeney (i.e. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997) has priory shown significant differences between national cultures when controlling for the effect of extraneous factors such as gender and occupation. Hofstede *et al.* (1990, 2008) and Hofstede (2001, 2006) make a similar argument reporting that in their research project across 20 different organizations within two countries, responses to VSM varied less across organizations within a country than across countries. McSweeney is, further, concerned that Hofstede credits absolute causality to national cultures, exemplified in responses to VSM as being "caused by culture" (2002; p. 102). While not advocating for such extreme determinism, Williamson (2002) challenges this argument with McSweeney's omission of Hofstede's VSM response stratification whereby differences in responses between gender and age were found less significant than those between countries. Hofstede (2006) emphasizes that the cross-national analysis developed its rigorous theoretical concepts from the global VSM database files, and the constructs have both an empirical foundation and a theoretical (or even philosophical) rationale.

Alternative functionalist cultural models, including Project GLOBE (House *et al.*, 2004) and that from Schwartz (1992) or Trompenaars (1993), offer much merit to theoretically underpin our measurement of independent cultural variables in this study, instead of Hofstede's seminal constructs. They are, indeed, more comprehensive than Hofstede's as in sensitive to interaction of factors and inclusive of core and peripheral values (Williamson, 2002). However, despite facilitating the power to explain cultural differences in more detail, these characteristics also reduce models' parsimony. Trompenaars' and Schwartz's surveys have a more non-business respondent tradition, using more precise, narrowly applicable descriptions. Hofstede and GLOBE models, in addition to being designed specifically for business settings and, thus, more adequate for our study, are also more parsimonious,

robustly approximating descriptions or even predictions of phenomena across a wide range of situations (Taras *et al.*, 2012; Williamson, 2002). Indeed, Williamson (2002) highlights that to capture variety in values between nations within the functionalist paradigm, one seeks a robust theory such as Hofstede's, as it is relatively easy to explain, to communicate and to apply. Corroborating the parsimony of Hofstede's model are just 34 culture-related survey items relative to much larger number thereof in all other mentioned models, which also pragmatically facilitates the response rate in our data collection using VSM08 in our study. Additionally, all authors of this article used methodological insights gleaned from their roles as official GLOBE and GLOBE 2020 CCIs, and Hofstede country collaborators to select Hofstede's VSM08 items in this study. The stated evidence and insights provided us with strong arguments to employ this theory and the instrument to conceptualize and operationalize culture.

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

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

Note(s): Cultural value index abbreviations: PDI-Power Distance; IDV-Individualism; MAS-Masculinity; UAI-Uncertainty Avoidance; LTO-Long-Term orientation; IVR-Indulgence; MON-Monumentalism
Two-character country abbreviations from ISO, International Organization for Standardization, are used in this study report–IS: Iceland; RU (SI): Russia (Siberia); RU (W): Russia (Western/European); ID: Indonesia; NO: Norway; TR: Turkey; LT: Lithuania; US (MW): USA (Midwest); PE: Peru; US (SW); USA (Southwest)

Table 1.
Raw score means for Hofstede's cultural dimensions of the samples

3.2.2 Employee preferences for leaders' empowerment behaviors. Leader empowerment behaviors were operationalized using the *Tolerance of Freedom* dimension of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire XII (LBDQXII; Stogdill, 1963). Based on the work of Hemphill and Coons (1957), Stogdill (1963) developed an assessment of 12 leader behavior dimensions with the LBDQXII, consisting of 100 items with Likert-type response categories. These include (see Stogdill, 1963 for detailed description):

(1) Representation

(2) Demand Reconciliation

(3) Tolerance of Uncertainty

(4) Persuasiveness

(5) Initiation of Structure

(6) Tolerance of Freedom

(7) Role Assumption
(8) Consideration
(9) Production Emphasis
(10) Predictive Accuracy
(11) Integration
(12) Superior Orientation

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

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

Table 2. Tolerance of Freedom dimension of the LBDQXII

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

From this scale, we measured self-reported employee preferences towards empowerment behaviors of the ideal managerial leader, which we refer to as Preference for Empowerment. Despite receiving, some criticism, such as inflating relationships between variables, self-report is a generally accepted practice in measuring cognitive attitudes towards employee empowerment (see, for example, Dimitriades, 2005; Hui *et al.*, 2004).

Littrell (2013) discusses confirmatory factor analysis employing structural equation modeling (SEM), indicating fit to the model. Results range from a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.006 to approximately 0.11 across samples, indicating variations in goodness of fit from that technique. Varimax rotation confirmatory factor analysis was applied using 21 samples from 14 countries. Results indicated that the Preference for Empowerment model for the Tolerance of Freedom scale across samples frequently consists of three well-defined components that appear to be related to the phraseology of the following

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

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

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

Note(s): (Range: maximum 5, minimum 1)

4. Results

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

In Appendix 2, we present the correlation matrix for the two sets of dimensions from the VSM08 and the LBDQXII for our aggregated samples. The results indicate several significant Pearson correlations between the two sets of dimensions: we attribute this to the large sample size, as the actual correlation coefficients are quite small, with the largest being 0.235.

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

There are multiple significant correlations between several cultural value dimensions and the Tolerance of Freedom dimension. These, however, are weak, with the strongest positive correlation identified between the Indulgence vs Restraint index and Tolerance of Freedom ($r = 0.11$) and a single negative correlation between Uncertainty Avoidance index and Tolerance of Freedom ($r = -0.14$). Across individual samples, coefficients for significant correlations display a slightly larger magnitude, ranging from $r = -0.23$ between the Uncertainty Avoidance index and Tolerance of Freedom in the Midwest US and Turkish samples, and $r = 0.27$ between Power Distance index and Tolerance of Freedom dimension in the US (Midwest) sample.

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

Further, to investigate common method bias and the threat of preferred managerial leader behavior reflecting people's attitude towards their manager and not their empowering behaviors, the participants' self-reported job level in the organization was

Table 4.
Correlations between means of cultural dimensions and LBDQXII dimensions of the aggregated samples

		Tol_Free	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MON
Tol_Free	*P*	1.00							
	Sig								
	N	3,204							
PDI	*P*	0.03	1.00						
	Sig	0.089							
	N	3,171	3,171						
IDV	*P*	0.07	0.03	1.00					
	Sig	0.000	0.135						
	N	3,176	3,157	3,176					
MAS	*P*	0.00	0.06	−0.06	1.00				
	Sig	0.891	0.000	0.000					
	N	3,168	3,151	3,155	3,168				
UAI	*P*	−0.14	0.00	−0.07	−0.03	1.00			
	Sig	0.000	0.849	0.000	0.060				
	N	3,188	3,166	3,171	3,163	3,188			
LTO	*P*	−0.03	−0.01	0.01	0.04	0.15	1.00		
	Sig	0.103	0.755	0.484	0.033	0.000			
	N	3,171	3,151	3,155	3,150	3,166	3,171		
IVR	*P*	0.11	0.02	0.14	−0.04	−0.31	−0.11	1.00	
	Sig	0.000	0.186	0.000	0.014	0.000	0.000		
	N	3,172	3,153	3,158	3,153	3,167	3,151	3,172	
MON	*P*	0.06	0.03	0.08	0.01	−0.11	−0.06	0.14	1.00
	Sig	0.001	0.057	0.000	0.670	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	3,170	3,151	3,155	3,148	3,165	3,150	3,154	3,170

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

correlated with their self-rated empowerment score using the Spearman correlation coefficient for Russia, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Turkey, Indonesia and the USA. Job level data were not collected for Peru. Ratings ranged from 1. CEO/Managing Director: Maximum score, to 5. Worker/General Staff: Minimum score. The results are depicted in Table 5. The correlations were not significant, indicating similar preferences for empowerment at all job levels in the samples.

			Job Level	Tol_Free
Spearman's rho	Tol_Free (RU_SI)	Correlation Coefficient	0.009	–
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.871	
		N	338	338
Spearman's rho	Tol_Free (RU_W)	Correlation Coefficient	−0.039	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.767	
		N	59	107
Spearman's rho	Tol_Free (TR)	Correlation Coefficient	0.107	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.114	
		N	221	235
Spearman's rho	Tol_Free (LT)	Correlation Coefficient	0.006	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.857	
		N	845	877
Spearman's rho	Tol_Free (ID)	Correlation Coefficient	−0.090	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.094	
		N	351	351
Spearman's rho	Tol_Free (US)	Correlation Coefficient	−0.020	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.743	
		N	277	344
Spearman's rho	Tole_Free (IS)	Correlation Coefficient	0.074	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.271	
		N	223	230
Spearman's rho	Tol_Free (NO)	Correlation Coefficient	0.030	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.397	
		N	777	777

Table 5.
Spearman correlations between preference for empowerment and job level in organization

There is support in the research methods literature implying that low and significant correlations in large samples, such as ours, are considered stable, reliable and less spurious, that is, less likely to arise by chance than in smaller samples (Evans, 1996). However, we believed a deeper analysis was warranted to assess the predictive power of cultural values in employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors and to allow interpretation that is more thorough. Hence, we performed regression analysis for the overall and individual samples. Table 6 displays results for the overall sample. Regression coefficients indicate a weak relationship ($R = 0.183$), while the determination coefficient shows ($R^2 = 0.034$) that culture accounts for only 3.4% of the variance in the Tolerance of Freedom relationships.

Model Summary

					Change Statistics				
Model	*R*	*R* Square	Adjusted *R* Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	*R* Square Change	*F* Change	df1	df2	Sig. *F* Change
1	0.183[1]	0.034	0.031	0.622	0.034	15.252	7	3,078	0.000

Note(s): [1]Predictors: (Constant), PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI, LTO, IVR, MON

Table 6.
Regression model for the overall sample for culture dimensions and Tolerance of Freedom

Unstandardized beta coefficients (Bs) for the entire set of cultural dimensions in the overall sample are 0.000, indicating that cultural values have no significant effect on the Tolerance of Freedom dimension scores. Regression and Determination coefficients vary across individual samples, ranging from $R = 0.157$ and $R^2 = 0.025$ in the Siberian Russia sample to $R = 451$ and $R^2 = 0.203$ in the US Midwestern sample. Nevertheless, statistics scholars agree that even a small R showing significant relationships between variables can provide a unique contribution to new knowledge in management studies (Cohen, 1988; Hair *et al.*, 2006). In social science studies, it is not possible to include all the relevant predictors to explain an outcome variable, hence for a Pearson correlation, the correlation effect size is suggested to be significant when $r = 0.10$: a small significant effect and $r = 0.30$ a medium significant effect (Hair *et al.*, 2006; Pallant, 2002). Consequently, we posit that our significant statistical findings contribute to new knowledge.

We uncover methodological flaws in the extant literature, whereby cultural value dimensions have been used selectively and separately. Due to the consequent lack of unequivocal insights in the relations between cultural values and preferences for empowerment and unanswered calls for the rectification of these omissions, we executed slope analyses to examine whether the interactions between cultural values affect these relationships. The results are consistent with prior analyses, indicating that the predictor variables with a significant effect on Tolerance of Freedom remained such and vice versa. The interactions between predictor variables were mostly insignificant; however, there were some notable exceptions. These may be viewed in Table 7 for the global sample and indicate that the interactions between Long-term Orientation and Power Distance, Long-term Orientation and Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism and Masculinity, and Individualism and Indulgence vs Restraint, indeed, have a significant effect on Tolerance of Freedom.

The nature of these effects varies across the predictor variables; however, the effects uniformly become significant when the interacting variable is less expressed (on lower levels). The effect of Long-term Orientation to Tolerance of Freedom becomes significant and negative when Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance are lower. The effect of Power Distance becomes significant and positive when Uncertainty Avoidance is lower, and the effect of Masculinity becomes significant and positive when Individualism is lower. The nature of the interactions between Indulgence vs Restraint and Individualism is such that their effect on the Tolerance of Freedom becomes (more) significant and stronger (positive) when the other interacting variable is lower. The standardized Bs for the stated interactions are low and range between −0.075 for the interaction between Long-Term Orientation and Power Distance to 0.140 for the interaction between Indulgence vs Restraint and Individualism.

In relation to our first hypothesis, therefore, we conclude that the effect of culture on employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors does exist statistically but holds marginal predictive or explanatory power.

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

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

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	*t*	Sig
1	(Constant)	3.808	0.016		240.902	0.000
	Centered_LTO	−0.001	0.000	−0.063	−2.457	0.014
	Low_UAI	−0.001	0.000	−0.143	−8.038	0.000
	Centered_LTOxLow_UAI	6.781E-6	0.000	0.081	3.183	0.001
1	(Constant)	3.628	0.016		229.083	0.000
	Centered_LTO	0.000	0.000	0.039	1.729	0.084
	High_UAI	−0.001	0.000	−0.143	−8.038	0.000
	Centered_LTOxHigh_UAI	6.781E-6	0.000	0.071	3.183	0.001
1	(Constant)	3.703	0.016		233.797	0.000
	Centered_LTO	−0.001	0.000	−0.075	−3.089	0.002
	Low_PDI	0.000	0.000	0.030	1.703	0.089
	Centered_LTOxLow_PDI	7.991E-6	0.000	0.072	2.960	0.003
1	(Constant)	3.741	0.016		236.216	0.000
	Centered_LTO	0.000	0.000	0.022	0.901	0.367
	High_PDI	0.000	0.000	0.030	1.703	0.089
	Centered_LTOxHigh_PDI	7.991E-6	0.000	0.071	2.960	0.003
1	(Constant)	3.814	0.016		243.374	0.000
	Centered_PDI	0.001	0.000	0.064	2.465	0.014
	Low_UAI	−0.001	0.000	−0.146	−8.272	0.000
	Centered_PDIxLow_UAI	−4.092E-6	0.000	−0.044	−1.703	0.089
1	(Constant)	3.630	0.016		231.159	0.000
	Centered_PDI	8.682E-5	0.000	0.008	0.363	0.717
	High_UAI	−0.001	0.000	−0.146	−8.272	0.000
	Centered_PDIxHigh_UAI	−4.092E-6	0.000	−0.038	−1.703	0.089
1	(Constant)	3.771	0.016		237.099	0.000
	Centered_MAS	9.247E-5	0.000	0.009	0.494	0.622
	High_IND	0.001	0.000	0.075	4.222	0.000
	Centered_MASxHigh_IDV	5.239E-8	0.000	0.037	2.098	0.036
1	(Constant)	3.674	0.016		232.005	0.000
	Centered_MAS	0.000	0.000	0.046	2.036	0.042
	Low_IND	0.001	0.000	0.076	4.273	0.000
	Centered_MASxLow_IDV	−6.544E-6	0.000	−0.061	−2.675	0.008
1	(Constant)	3.761	0.016		237.848	0.000
	Centered_IVR	0.001	0.000	0.072	3.011	0.003
	High_IND	0.001	0.000	0.056	3.155	0.002
	Centered_IVRxHigh_IDV	−4.595E-6	0.000	−0.053	−2.217	0.027
1	(Constant)	3.690	0.016		231.150	0.000
	Centered_IVR	0.001	0.000	0.140	6.035	0.000
	Low_IDV	0.001	0.000	0.056	3.155	0.002
	Centered_IVRxLow_IDV	−4.595E-6	0.000	−0.051	−2.217	0.027
1	(Constant)	3.659	0.016		229.901	0.000
	Centered_IDV	0.001	0.000	0.091	3.983	0.000
	Low_IVR	0.001	0.000	0.106	5.948	0.000
	Centered_IDVxLow_IVR	−4.595E-6	0.000	−0.050	−2.217	0.027
1	(Constant)	3.793	0.016		239.559	0.000
	Centered_IDV	0.000	0.000	0.022	0.910	0.363
	High_IVR	0.001	0.000	0.106	5.948	0.000
	Centered_IDVxHigh_IVR	−4.595E-6	0.000	−0.054	−2.217	0.027

Table 7.
Slope analyses of the interaction between cultural value dimensions and Tolerance of Freedom

Results also indicate significant ($p < 0.0005$) variances in attitudes towards empowerment across all other factors in the overall sample. For example, employees with most positive vs most negative attitudes for empowerment are those from organizations with mixed ownership vs those from non-profit and non-governmental organizations. Attitudes differ also in those working in education vs in financial services, senior managers vs supervisors of workers, and employees with post-graduate degrees vs those holding professional certifications. The significance of variances of these factors varies across individual samples. Future research should investigate these differences further.

As ANOVA results imply that the effect of gender and organizational factors on Tolerance of Freedom exists, we proceeded to test their explanatory and predictive power. We performed hierarchical regression modeling for the overall sample as may be seen in Table 8. We executed three loadings: (1) gender, (2) our set of demographic, industry and organization related variables, and (3) data on cultural dimensions.

Model Summary

						Change Statistics			
Model	*R*	*R* Square	Adjusted *R* Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	*R* Square Change	*F* Change	df1	df2	Sig. *F* Change
1	0.084[1]	0.007	0.007	0.65	0.007	15.560	1	2,209	0.000
2	0.195[2]	0.038	0.035	0.64	0.031	14.232	5	2,204	0.000
3	0.231[3]	0.053	0.048	0.64	0.015	5.068	7	2,197	0.000

Note(s): 1. Predictors: (Constant), Gender
2. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Industry, Age, Level_of_educ, Level_in_org, Org_type
3. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Industry, Age, Level_of_educ, Level_in_org, Org_type, PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI, LTO, IVR, MON

Table 8.
Hierarchical regression results for the overall model

Regression and determination coefficient dynamics display a rise across the loadings but remain low, ranging from 0.084 to 0.231 (R) and from 0.007 to 0.048 (R^2). Furthermore, changes in determination coefficients show marginal differences between loadings, with the second loading explaining 3.1% more of the variance of the Tolerance of Freedom dimension than the first loading and the third loading explaining 1.5% variance more than the second loading.

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

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

5. Discussion

In this study, we demonstrate diverse effects of empowering employees in organizations with different societal cultural paradigms. We use a follower-centric, culturally contingent approach to examine cultural influences on employee attitudes, as in preferences for leader empowerment behaviors. We also examine the effects of gender and organizational factors. In doing so, we combine two standardized, rigorously validated and tested instruments, conceptually and methodologically aligning culture and employee attitudes towards empowerment, thus rectifying stated deficiencies in existing research. Our study is the only one we are aware of that indicates only marginal cultural effects on employee attitudes towards empowerment.

Despite the fact that we, the authors, may be constrained by our own cultural biases which relate to our multi-national backgrounds, as researchers we have continuously challenged our interpretations of the previous literature and scrutinized our own societal perspectives. We are, therefore, confident that the concepts we present in this paper make a substantial contribution to the debate on the cultural effects on employee perceptions of empowerment and will help to re-think underlying assumptions and reasoning on the issue. We, thus, offer more realistic, objective and evidence-based knowledge on the role of culture in such employee attitudes. Even though our findings may seem to be a corroboration of the universal literature on empowerment, we discuss below why this is an incorrect interpretation, and elaborate the theoretical, empirical and managerial implications for international businesses.

5.1 Contributions to the literature and theoretical implications

Research relying on the universal theory of empowerment argues for the irrelevance or non-existence of the relationships between cultural values and employee attitudes toward and effectiveness of empowerment. However, it fails to replicate previous findings and postulates in non-Western societies. The culturally contingent research stream resting on contextual and psychological socio-cultural perspectives on empowerment and arguing for the centrality of culture in defining such attitudes and effectiveness, on the other hand, did not succeed in providing unequivocal evidence for its postulates and has misused or even abused the concept and methodology in doing so. For this reason, many scholars (recently, Minkov and Kaasa, 2021) called for a stronger focus on empirical confirmation and replication within strategic cross-cultural studies, rather than excessive faith in such fascinating yet unproven theory, and this has been our goal. Our findings counter those in the existing literature, to a certain degree, on the relationships between culture and empowerment and, we do agree, represent a somewhat surprising empirical contribution. We, however, do not shy away from this fact and take the position that our study offsets this literature in the direction of an empirically neglected but fruitful theoretical domain.

Hence, we counter the universal literature on empowerment with additional evidence related to the importance of cultural effects, adding to the fallacy of the universal approach, globally. Cultural values influence employee attitudes, opinions and perceptions of empowering behaviors by managerial leaders (Cheong *et al.*, 2019; Sharma and Kirkman, 2015). Assuming, therefore, that empowerment is a universal solution appropriate to all organizations in all circumstances and that employees will simply welcome the new way of working, is not only empirically baseless and theoretically incorrect, but also, from the effectiveness standpoint, a detrimental position. Our study, therefore, shows that culture and cultural influences have an important role in theoretical discussions, empirical examinations and practical implementations of empowerment programs across societal cultures.

In this study, we transcend conceptual and methodological flaws persistent in the culturally contingent stream of literature to show that cultural influences of employee empowerment are different from those previously presented. We thus contribute to this literature by showing that cultural effects on employee attitudes towards empowerment are marginal and not absolute. Culture, gender and organizational factors affect but do not define them. This highlights areas where research efforts could fully unpack the factors, conditions and dynamics between them that ultimately define empowerment values across cultures. Further, we corroborate theoretical notions in the literature that cultural values are not "stand-alone" constructs, that an interaction and tradeoff exist between these values, and that this calls for an "in unitus" empirical examination in order to obtain realistic, evidence-driven conclusions.

In addition, our findings confirm, to a certain extent, those in the literature, showing that, in terms of empowerment, some cultural values (i.e. Power distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism) are more salient than others. We, however, invalidate the obvious

misconception that, probably *per se* and per their content, some values (i.e. Indulgence vs Restraint, Monumentalism) have no place in empowerment studies. To the contrary, we show that no cultural values are irrelevant, dormant or deactivated, but rather interact to affect individuals' opinions related to empowerment and empowering practices in the workplace.

The literature on the effectiveness of employee empowerment is fairly simplistic and selective as well, lacking consistent findings. In our literature review, we found evidence demonstrating the effect of various situational factors on the effectiveness variables associated with empowerment projects in various countries. These even include the bastions of empowerment, the USA, UK and Canada, where studies indicate that numerous contingencies within organizations affect empowerment initiatives. We found this interesting and very promising as empowerment, itself, is frequently not analyzed in relation to contingencies or ecologies.

For example, Jiang *et al.* (2012) emphasized that managers should focus more on the implementation process of involvement in work systems, provide training in the necessary skills for the successful implementation of such practices and ensure that employees understand what is expected from them and what actions need to be taken to accomplish an organization's goals. Similarly, when providing recommendations to American managers in Brazil, China and Egypt, Javidan *et al.* (2006) pointed out that although employees in High Power Distance cultures are not accustomed to participatory practices, managers can encourage more participation by creating an emotionally safe work environment and providing clear instructions. Similarly, research (Fock *et al.*, 2013; Hui *et al.*, 2004; Kim and Beehr, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2018; Rauniyar *et al.*, 2017; Vidyarthi *et al.*, 2014; Zhang and Begley, 2011) shows that High Power Distance values can hinder the effectiveness of employee empowerment due to the cultural disinclination of managers to share power, along with their tendency to lead in a directive way, and of employees to expect and obey instructions from a higher authority. Zhang and Zhou (2014) showed that High Uncertainty Avoidance values have a negative effect on preference for empowerment. However, high levels of trust in leaders can overcome the effect. Robert *et al.* (2000) made an overarching conclusion that the success of empowerment as a managerial practice depends on managers' and leaders' accommodation of the cultural and contextual assumptions, values and beliefs held by those being managed. These studies lend support to the idea that the effectiveness of empowerment is not necessarily influenced by culture but from well-designed training and implementation. This pattern of findings supports a contingency theory of empowerment rather than cultural, and especially universal.

Thus far, research has yet to fully investigate cultural and other effects on employee attitudes towards empowerment and the effectiveness of it. However, as we discuss in synthesis with the extant literature, our findings reveal the directions managers could follow to increase or maximize the effectiveness of empowerment programs across cultures and open a multitude of promising research avenues with strong potential to revise cultural theories of employee empowerment.

5.2 Managerial implications

A substantial research corpus implies that uniform application and implementation of empowerment programs across varying societal cultures does not automatically result in satisfactory, and especially, optimal performance. This literature posits that culture is a determining factor of both employee attitudes towards and the effectiveness of empowerment. The contingency view of empowerment, prevalent in research on effectiveness, namely the practical implementation of empowerment, argues that the effectiveness of empowerment is dependent upon a well-designed employee-training program based on the alignment of management and worker goals and the tasks and duties of employees in each contextual setting.

The synthesis of these approaches to employee empowerment within our own study enables us to propose a managerial approach with the potential to increase or optimize the effectiveness of employee empowering initiatives across societal cultures. As shown in our findings, there are significant relationships between cultural values and employee preferences for empowering behaviors by managerial leaders. Unlike the majority of the extant literature, however, we contend that employees' cultural values provide guidelines related to appropriate, acceptable and desirable business practices and operational modalities, rather than specifically determining what these are or should be and whether they can be successfully implemented or not. We therefore believe that the effectiveness of such practices lies at the intersection of cultural and contingency outlooks on employee empowerment. Managers need to understand employees' cultural backgrounds and use them as guidelines in developing their empowering programs. The design and implementation of such projects should, therefore, rest on the harmonization of managerial expectations regarding employee roles, tasks, duties and performance, and employees' cultural values, their needs, desires and goals.

5.3 Limitations and directions for future research

As the preference for empowerment is an attitude, opinion or belief on the part of the employee, cross-cultural differences relating to what empowerment means to the employee is expected. Echoing this notion, scholars (Wood *et al.*, 2021) recently argued that a deeper understanding of empowerment requires more culturally contextualized definitions to be of greater value for international development practices. As we did not include this distinction in our study, future research should. For example, researchers could initially use self-report methods, employing free-form statements from employees and managers in different countries, and create adjective checklists and descriptive statement checklists for validation and development into a cross-cultural empowerment attitude assessment instrument.

As shown in Appendix 1, although the overall representation of women and men is almost equal, individual samples have considerable gender differences. Further, despite not being the direct focus of this research, more data on the educational background of the sample could potentially provide more fine-grained understanding of the preferences within samples. Even though our analyses straightforwardly indicated no significant correlations with preferences for empowerment, this notion applies for job level as well, where a more consummate data and, in some cases (i.e. Peru) larger samples are needed to confirm this finding, which is even more important considering the inter-level power relations in organizations. In addition, even though we obtained data from culturally and geographically distant societies, future research could further disperse and differentiate data collection sites. Hence, it would be interesting and desirable to collect and process data from locations differing across additional criteria closely related to societal culture, such as religion or language (e.g. Muslim-majority countries, Arabic-speaking and non-Arabic-speaking countries, etc.).

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

Similarly, our study confirmed notions in the literature that there are dynamics between cultural values, which affect the power and direction of their influence on employee preferences for empowerment. For example, we found that when Uncertainty Avoidance is

low the effect of Power Distance on employee preferences for empowerment becomes significant and positive. A possible explanation is that when people are comfortable with uncertainty, they may become more willing to take on additional responsibilities and authority despite possible societal pushback, as they are less worried about possible detrimental consequences such a decision may bring. Similarly, our findings indicate that when Individualism is low, Masculinity tends to have a significant and positive effect on employee preferences for empowerment. This may mean that when individual values and identities, including gender, are less emphasized in a society, masculinity values may prevail and lead men to become more willing to take on expanded authorities and power in the workplace. Future research should, therefore, entail explorations and explanations of these and other possible interactional configurations between cultural values on different samples from diverse societal cultures. It should also focus on the discovery of possible legalities within these dynamics.

As mentioned, in addition to Hofstede's, there are other cultural models that researchers can consider in investigations of cultural effects on employee empowerment, such as the GLOBE project or Shalom Schwarz's theories. These are less parsimonious but more comprehensive than Hofstede's and, withstanding conceptual alignment with employee empowerment, could provide fresh insights on these effects.

In the absence of stronger relationships between dimensions of culture and employee attitudes on empowerment, as has been shown in our research, researchers must inevitably turn to constructs on other levels. For example, personal values affect people's decisions, choices, behavior, what they perceive and attend to, the way they interpret information and their attitudes (Schwartz, 1996; Hofstede, 2001). Members of a specific society exhibit a generally consistent set of values because they are socialized by, and must adapt to, common family, educational, interpersonal, social, legal, media, market and governmental systems (Littrell, 2013). However, personal values are also products of the individual's shared and unique social experiences and genetic heredity. Hanges *et al.* (2000) empirically confirmed that employees' perceptions of leadership were influenced by their view of both themselves and their cultural background. Individual factors may also influence employee emotional and subjective well-being orientations, thereby affecting their beliefs about empowerment (Judge and Illies, 2002).

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

As for gender groups, despite differences being marginal, our findings indicate that the effect of gender on employee preferences for leader empowerment behaviors consistently exists. Gender-related variances in Tolerance of Freedom factor are insignificant in some country samples, however, as discussed earlier, balancing gender distribution and optimizing individual country sample sizes may reveal more pronounced effects. Additionally, the global context of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the related threat to job

security may have influenced the attitudes of some women and men to relinquish or expand their responsibilities and authorities. These amendments and circumstances should be included in future studies.

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

Interpersonal relationships represent another interesting empowerment-relevant domain to explore. Littrell (2007) studied Tolerance for Freedom in a sample with two groups of managers, expatriate and local, in a foreign-owned hotel company in China. He found that, contrary to most research into management and supervision of Chinese workers (which indicates a desire for close supervision and fear of punishment for initiative), the group with local Chinese supervisors indicated the ideal leader should exhibit tolerance of freedom (empowerment) more frequently than the group with expatriate supervisors. Littrell explains this may occur due to a tendency of the members of a group to assume the characteristics of the group leader over time, the ultimate expression of this being "hero worship" (p. 104). If employees with expatriate managers respected their manager, as required under Confucian rules, then the less-tolerant expatriate could be the ideal leader.

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

6. Concluding observations

In reviewing empowerment studies and spotlighting research on the impact of culture, we were struck by the degree of inconsistency and complexity of the findings. Our study indicates national culture as a construct influences but does not singularly define, employee

preferences for leader empowerment behaviors and, congruently, the effectiveness of such programs. These findings put forth the need to shift the focus of future studies from singular effects to multilevel cultural, organizational and individual dynamics that shape employee cognitions and responses to empowerment. Research with such a focus is much more likely to significantly contribute to the understanding of the perceptions and value of empowerment across societal cultures, as well as provide more effective practical guidelines and recommendations for international businesses.

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Appendix 1

Table A1.
Details of samples

Variable	Category	Overall	IS	ID	LT	NO	PE	RU(SI)	RU(W)	TR	US (MW)	US (SW)
Sample size		3,478	231	364	890	792	55	358	108	291	225	164
Age (Min/Max/Av.)		18/82/44	25/69/49	23/67/46	19/68/42	18/82/49	21/66/31	22/68/45	19/63/27	18/64/35	24/70/48	51/75/58
Gender (*N*/%)	Males	1537/43.9	171/74.3	258/70.9	138/15.5	390/49.2	26/47.3	173/48.3	36/33.3	123/42.3	163/72.5	60/36.6
	Females	1802/51.5	42/18.3	94/25.8	735/82.6	387/48.9	28/50.9	160/44.7	71/65.7	112/38.5	57/25.3	104/64.4
Education (*N*/%)	Elem./Mid. School	258/7.4	15/6.5	197/54.1	1/0.1	24/3.0				10/3.4	10/4.4	1/0.6
	High/Sec. School	617/17.6	38/16.5	123/33.8	16/1.8	211/26.6			4/4.6	45/15.5	117/52.0	56/34.1
	Not finished University	355/10.1		22/6.0	2/0.2	313/39.5	7/12.7		9/8.3	18/6.2		
	Graduated 2/3 year college, lower than bachelor	369/10.5	33/14.3		10/1.1	211/26.6	1/1.8			53/18.2	28/12.4	25/15.2
	Graduated Vocational school	233/6.7	32/13.9		85/9.6	18/2.3	1/1.8		6/5.6	65/22.3	20/8.9	6/3.7
	Bachelor degree	676/19.3	51/22.2		314/39.6		11/20.0	182/50.8	87/80.6	41/14.1	26/11.6	37/22.6
	Post-graduate (non-PhD)	512/14.6			333/37.8		12/21.8	151/42.2			12/5.3	23/14.0
	Professional certification	172/4.9	58/25.2				13/23.6				6/2.7	2/1.2
	PhD	37/1.1	3/1.3		34/3.9							
Job level (*N*/%)	No paid job (includes full-time students)	335/9.6	7/3.0	203/55.8	84/9.5			7/2.0	18/16.7	15/15.2		2/1.2
	Unskilled or semi-skilled manual worker	321/9.2	46/19.9	47/12.9	23/2.6	6/0.8		54/15.1	8/7.4	30/10.3		8/4.9
	Generally trained office worker or secretary (non-managerial)	277/7.9	52/22.5	43/11.8	73/8.3	12/1.5		51/14.2	17/15.7	3/1.0		26/15.9
	Vocationally trained person (non-managerial)	452/12.9		22/6.0	250/28.3	47/5.9		77/21.5	10/9.2	37/12.7		10/6.2
	Supervisor of workers	206/5.9		20/5.5		54/6.8		66/18.4	7/6.5	21/7.2		38/23.1
	Academically trained professional or equivalent (non-managerial)	350/10.0	32/13.9		194/22.0	49/6.2				46/15.8		15/9.1
	Manager of one or more subordinates	120/3.4	2/0.5		28/3.2	61/7.7		78/21.8		8/2.7		21/12.8
	Middle-level manager	217/6.2			78/8.8	28/3.5				19/6.5		14/8.5
	Senior-level manager	211/6.0			120/13.6	78/9.8				13/4.5		
	Self-employed owner of the business	159/4.5				124/15.7				12/4.1		23/14.0
	CEO	308/8.8				219/27.7				3/1.0		
	Other	18/0.5	86/37.2			99/12.5				15/5.2		3/1.8

(*continued*)

Table A1.

Variable	Category	Overall	IS	ID	LT	NO	PE	RU(SI)	RU(W)	TR	US (MW)	US (SW)
Industry (*N*/%)	Government	259/7.4	4/1.7			158/19.9			6/5.6	65/22.3	2/0.9	24/14.6
	Education	547/15.6			301/34.1	102/12.9	13/23.6		57/52.8	41/14.1	1/0.4	31/18.9
	Manufacturing	317/9.1	39/16.9		33/3.7	74/9.3	4/7.3	55/15.4	3/2.8	7/2.4	99/44.0	3/1.8
	Marketing/Sales	262/7.5	24/10.4		20/2.3	65/8.2	7/12.7	63/17.6	15/13.9	43/14.8	3/1.3	22/13.4
	Finances	157/4.5	12/5.2		9/1.0	33/4.2	3/5.5	54/15.1	6/5.5	16/5.5	2/0.9	23/14.0
	Consulting	291/8.3	32/13.9		11/1.2	120/15.2	8/14.5	52/14.5	13/12.0	14/4.8	8/3.6	13/7.9
	Retail	366710.5	25/10.8		218/24.7	34/4.3		51/15.1	5/4.6	20/6.9	1/0.4	12/7.3
	Other	712/20.3	76/32.9		234/26.5	191/24.1	9/16.4	58/16.2	1/0.9	23/7.9	96/42.7	22/13.4
Organization type (*N*/%)	Government-owned or predominately government-supported enterprise	972/27.8	9/3.9		502/56.9	272/34.3	7/12.7		59/54.6	68/23.4	4/1.8	50/30.5
	Private	1507/43.1	206/89.2		339/38.4	412/52.0	28/50.9	99/27.7	41/38.0	138/47.4	173/76.9	71/43.3
	Non-profit/NGO	262/7.5	4/1.7		18/2.0	84/10.6		121/33.8	3/2.8	15/2.4	3/1.3	14/8.5
	Mixed ownership	41/1.2	3/1.3			9/1.1			4/3.7		20/8.9	6/3.7
	Other	113/3.2						113/31.6				

Note(s): Two-character country abbreviations from ISO, International Organization for Standardization, are used in this study report–IS: Iceland; RU (SI): Russia (Siberia); RU (W): Russia (Western/European); ID: Indonesia; NO: Norway; TR: Turkey; LT: Lithuania; US (MW): USA (Midwest); PE: Peru; US (SW); USA (Southwest)

Appendix 2

Table A2.
Correlations of LBDQXII and Hofstede's seven-D model dimensions

Correlations	*p*: Pearson Correlation	Represen	Dmd Rec	Tol Uncert	Persua	Init Struct	Tol Free	*Role Asmp*	*Consid*	*Prod Emph*	*Pred Acc*	Int	Sup Orient
PDI_UNC	*p*	0.070**	0.129**	0.060**	0.090**	0.141**	0.032	*0.227***	*0.154***	*0.022*	*0.066***	0.140**	0.074**
	Sig	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.073	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.207*	*0.000*	0.000	0.000
	N	3,171	3,171	3,171	3,171	3,171	3,171	*3,171*	*3,171*	*3,171*	*3,171*	3,171	3,171
IDV_UNC	*p*	0.020	0.073**	0.149**	0.093**	0.050**	0.074**	*0.169***	*0.189***	*0.043**	*0.032*	0.053**	0.092**
	Sig	0.249	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.000	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.014*	*0.069*	0.003	0.000
	N	3,176	3,176	3,176	3,176	3,176	3,176	*3,176*	*3,176*	*3,176*	*3,176*	3,176	3,176
MAS_UNC	*p*	0.071**	0.022	−0.020	0.066**	0.028	0.003	*0.038**	*0.006*	*0.047***	*0.041**	0.038*	0.030
	Sig	0.000	0.216	0.264	0.000	0.121	0.865	*0.033*	*0.721*	*0.008*	*0.022*	0.030	0.090
	N	3,168	3,168	3,168	3,168	3,168	3,168	*3,168*	*3,168*	*3,168*	*3,168*	3,168	3,168
UAI_UNC	*p*	−0.089**	−0.166**	−0.224**	0.009	−0.114**	−0.144**	*−0.144***	*−0.161***	*−0.053***	*−0.092***	−0.138**	−0.110**
	Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.621	0.000	0.000	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.003*	*0.000*	0.000	0.000
	N	3,188	3,188	3,188	3,188	3,188	3,188	*3,188*	*3,188*	*3,188*	*3,188*	3,188	3,188
LTO_UNC	*p*	−0.025	−0.046**	−0.051**	−0.006	−0.024	−0.027	*−0.024*	*−0.035**	*0.001*	*−0.017*	−0.050**	−0.017
	Sig	0.157	0.009	0.004	0.742	0.170	0.130	*0.176*	*0.046*	*0.956*	*0.344*	0.005	0.336
	N	3,171	3,171	3,171	3,171	3,171	3,171	*3,171*	*3,171*	*3,171*	*3,171*	3,171	3,171
IVR_UNC	*p*	0.031	0.147**	0.227**	−0.033	0.119**	0.116**	*0.159***	*0.146***	*0.022*	*0.064***	0.099**	0.114**
	Sig	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.000	0.000	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.210*	*0.000*	0.000	0.000
	N	3,172	3,172	3,172	3,172	3,172	3,172	*3,172*	*3,172*	*3,172*	*3,172*	3,172	3,172
MON_UNC	*p*	0.078**	0.151**	0.159**	0.169**	0.151**	0.059**	*0.235***	*0.223***	*0.158***	*0.131***	0.113**	0.105**
	Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	*0.000*	0.000	0.000
	N	3,170	3,170	3,170	3,170	3,170	3,170	*3,170*	*3,170*	*3,170*	*3,170*	3,170	**

Note(s): Cultural value index abbreviations: PDI-Power Distance; IDV-Individualism; MAS-Masculinity; UAI- Uncertainty Avoidance; LTO-Long-Term orientation; IVR-Indulgence; MON-Monumentalism
UNC: uncentered, raw data
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)