The Role of Authentic leadership During COVID-19 (An Empirical study of Egyptian Employees)

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Abstract :

- This paper aims is to examine COVID-19 and its influence on Authentic leadership.
- The research aims to identify the main items of CoronaVirus affecting Authentic leadership. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The survey included 305 employees from different occupations and different age group. A convenient sample was used. The hypotheses were tested using Correlation and Regression analysis.
- A reliability analysis was firstly investigated to ensure that the data was reliable once this was ensured a Correlation and Regression analysis was investigated. This research shows how Authentic leaders helps employees in dealing with COVID-19 during pandemic. Findings of this research are interesting and beneficial. The results showed that there is a Correlation between Covid-19 and Authentic leadership. And Covid-19 affected Authentic leadership. Greeting had a major impact then Opinion and Isolation and finally comes wearing masks. The study recommended the importance of increasing the awareness of the Egyptian employees and workers towards Covid-19. As well as giving Authentic leaders workshops to

give effective methods to deal during Covid-19 pandemic Keywords: Isolation, Symptoms of COVID-19, Authentic leadership, Ethics, Preferences of others, Listening to opposers, Admitting Mistakes, Considering the opinion of others

> دور القيادة الحقيقة خلال كوفيد-١٩ (دراسة تجريبية علي الموظفين المصريين) د/أماني ابراهيم شاهين استاذ مساعد بكلية التجارة قسم ادارة الاعمال - جامعة حلوان

الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إل معرفة تاثير كوفيد ١٩ علي القيادة الحقيقة لدى الموظفين و العمال المصريين ، واستخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي الارتباطي و معامل الانحدار ، حيث تكون مجتمع الدراسة من وظائف مختلفةو اعمار مختلفة. وبلغ حجم عينة الدراسة (٣٠٥) تم اختبار هم باستخدام العينة المتاحة. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة قد تم عمل استبيان لجمع المعلومات و ذلك لقياس عناصر من كوفيد ١٩. قد تم عمل تحليل الموثوقيية لمعرفة جودة البيانات و فد تم التاكد من ذلك.

تم تحليل الاستبيانة باستخدام معامل الانحدار و الارتباط بيرسون لمعرفة طبيعة العلاقة و التاثير بين متغيرات الدراسة وتوصلت الدراسة إلي عدد من النتائج و هي: هناك ارتباط بين كل من كوفيد-١٩ و القيادة الحقيقة و ان هناك تاثير بعض عوامل لكوفيد-١٩ علي القيادة الحقيقة. الاكثر تاثيرا التحية وقت كوفيد-١٩ ثم الاراء ثم الاعراض و اخيرا ارتداء الماسكات و اوصت الدراسة بضرورة توعية الموظفين و العمال المصريين بمعلومات عن كوفيد-١٩ و كيفية التعامل معة اتناء الجائحة والتعامل مع القيادة الحقيقة. ممكن عقد دورات تدريبية وورش عمل من اجل التوعية القيادة الحقيقية عن كيفية التعامل في وقت جائحة كورونا الكلمات الافتتاحية: الانعزال ، الاعراض ، القيادة الحقيقية ، الاخلاق ، اختارات

1. Introduction :

- In the work environment Authentic Leadership is an important component. Actually today organizations value leaders who influence employees to high performance and who encourage change (Christian, Graza & Slaughter, 2011). Authentic leadership stem from transformational leadership which is concerned with inspiring employees (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bass,1985; Bass&Avolio,1994). As Amor et al. (2020) indicated transformational leadership is a process that stimulates high level of work engagement and enhances followers' motivation.
- On the other side, Authentic leadership also includes negative aspects as they may cause serious physical and psychological damage to their employees (Monami, 2018).
- COVID-19 represents today's crisis that will leave damage for a long time, it affected health, social, economic and political environments all over the world. This disease causes respiratory illness symptoms can appear in 14 days this includes cough, fever and difficulties to breath. (9 News, 2020).

- There was an assessment of the knowledge, perceptions and attitude of the Egyptian public towards Covid-19 disease. Five hundred and fifty nine Egyptian adults were investigated. Participants had good information about the disease and a positive attitude towards protection. However, more effort is needed to educate and support the lower economic groups. If a vaccine is approved, we recommend a government control over its use and to be affordable for the poor people (Abdel hafiz et. al.2020).
- Authentic leaders play a great role for the success and survival of any organization they are very important during pandemic. The role of leaders is essential to investigate the perception and attitudes of employees. The present research investigates the role of Authentic leadership in dealing with COVID-19. This reserch is essential for focusing on the present situation and investigating the methods to deal with it.

The Present Situation of Leadership

- The present situation of leadership was the interest of many researchers. The charismatic leadership, was the concern of House's (1977). He concentrated on organizational performance and the well-being of followers. Burns (1978) identified transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is one person who contactes others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things. While, Transformational leadership, occurs when one person engage with others so that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation.
- Bass (1985) took a different view from Burns concerning the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership. Actually, Burns saw transformational and transactional leadership as two different forms of leadership, While, Bass argued that the same leader could exhibit both patterns of leadership.
- Bass (1985) identified two types of transactional leadership which are the contingent reward and management-by-exception

- (1)contingent reward in which leaders promise rewards in exchange for satisfactorily performing the assignment and (2)management-by-exception which involves active management-by-exception and passive management –by exception. Active management by exception in which leaders actively monitor mistakes and takes corrective action as necessary. While, passive management-by-exception in which leaders wait for errors and, mistakes to occur and then take corrective action.
- However, Bass identified three forms of transformational leadership which are charisma, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation.
- Later Avolio, Waldman & Yammario (1991) identified four aspects of transformational leadership, they are called the four Is. The concepts of individualized consideration and inspirational motivation remained, but the concept of charisma was replaced by idealized influence and intellectual stimulation.
- (1)Idealized influence in which leaders become role models for their followers they are admired, respected and trusted and avoid using power for personal gain.
- (2) Intellectual Stimulation in which leaders help followers to innovate and be creative.
- (3) Individualized Consideration in which leaders treat each subordinate in a different way according to his or her particular needs.

- (4) Inspirational motivation in which leaders motivate and inspire followers around them.
- The idea of Transformational leadership proved to be effective and nowadays the focus is on it as it is suitable and effective. New approaches as ethical leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership and others in this trend are widely applied. This paper concentrates on authentic leadership and its role in COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

2. Authentic Leadership

- The Authentic leadership and the transformational leadership evolve around the same idea. The Authentic leadership stems from the transformational leadership.
- Geroge (2003) defined the concept of authentic leadership as a process that allows him to build positive relationships, inspire and encourage employees in the right ways. An atmosphere of openness is used. It requires a leader to be self-aware and have the ability to recognize and acknowledge his own strengths and weaknesses.
- Authentic leadership emphasizes that a leader could build trust through developing honest relationship with followers. It revolves around the leader's ethical behavior. (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).
- Authentic leadership scholars would argue that benevolence is the value of effective authentic leadership. (Qiua et al, 2019).

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- An authentic leader is one who depends on his own personal experiences, wants, thoughts, emotions, preferences, and beliefs. They act in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings according to there true self, expressing oneself (Harter, 2002).
- Walumbwa et. al (2008) defined Authentic leadership as internal moral perspective, and transparency of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. It is a pattern of behavior that promotes both a positive ethical climate and positive psychological capacities to foster greater selfawareness.
- Authentic leadership is highly related to creativity (Shanga et al, 2019) and it helps human resources to attain more credibility and authenticity in the organization (Gilla et. al, 2018). It was recently found that authentic leadership increases their work engagement. and reduces leaders' stress (Weiss et al 2018).

Styles Authentic Leadership

- Gardner et al. (2011) stated that authentic leadership is a valuebased leadership style. This value-based view stems from the four dimensions
- 1) Self-awareness means that authentic leaders are clear about their weaknesses and strengths. This enables authentic leaders to become aware of the consistency between their behaviors and their true values (Kernis, 2003; Kernis and Goldman, 2006).

- 2) Internalized moral perspective encourages authentic leaders to make decisions following their true values and in highly stressful situations (Avolio and Gardner 2005).
- 3) Balanced processing of information enables authentic leaders to deliberate different points of view. This encourages authentic leaders to have an open mind (Kernis 2003).
- Relational transparency, enables authentic leaders disclose their thoughts and inner feelings (Kernis 2003; Goldman, 2006). So followers can more easily detect their leaders' underlying true values.
- Bensen et. al (2017) identifies that authenticity is has four main points
- a) Self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, values and emotions
- b) Fair processing of objective acceptance of attributes;or relevant information
- c) Authentic behavior is acting according to one's true self;
- d) Relational authenticity: striving to achieve honesty and openness in intimate relationships.
- According to Towler, (2019, Febraury 17) Authentic leadership involves the following steps:
- 1) Self-awareness: An authentic leader shows self-awareness through reflecting on their own strength and weakness and values.
- 2) Relational transparency: An authentic leader openly share their own beliefs and thoughts.

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- 3) Authentic leader solicits opinions of subordinates and welcome opposing views
- Authentic leadership is an approach of leadership in generating enthusiastic support and building trust of subordinates. Authentic leaders are able to improve team performance and individuals.

3. Positive Views

- Authentic leadership refers to positive leadership that we use as a positivity in leadership studies. (Alvessona & Einolab ,2019).
- Authentic leadership motivates followers and promotes individual, team, and organizational effectiveness (Gardner et al., 2011).
- Authentic leadership lead to all kinds of positive outcomes. Subordinates are assumed to experience improved attitudes, exert greater effort, and engage in organizational citizenship,. They are assumed also to have increased trust, positive emotions, higher motivation, and more satisfaction, greater empowerment, and moral development (Caza & Jackson, 2011).
- Authentic leaders show confidence, hope, and optimism in the workplace (Gardner, Avolio, 2005). These positive attitudes and emotions may cause leaders to foster positive emotional and cognitive development among their followers. Also, authentic leaders create a fair and open environment in the workplace in which employees are aware of the importance of helping other people and encouraged to do so (Walumbwa, 2010).
- Actually, authentic leaders are capable of enhancing students' promotion-focused behavior because they can put students in

a situation where they develop a passion for participating in a challenging task (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

- Authentic leaders are characterized by internalized morality, higher self-awareness, relational transparency, and balanced processing.
- Authentic leadership accordingly, had relations with many categories. The relationship between authentic leadership and customer-oriented was partially mediated by trust in leaders. (Qiua, et al. 2019). Being able to develop strong power sources is essential in the promotion of students' ideals and advancement at work (Hollander&Offermann,1990). Actually students' promotion-focused behavior mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and their creativity (Shang et al. 2019).
- Actually, authentic leadership reduces leaders' stress and increases their work engagement. However, while many researches has demonstrated the effectiveness of authentic leadership in providing positive follower behaviors. The effects of authentic leadership on leaders themselves remain poorly understood (Gardner et al., 2011).
- Some authentic leaders who desire high power, status and wealth, may lead to negative follower outcomes. They might become involved in unethical behaviors to guarantee their fulfillment of high power needs, especially when they feel challenged or threatened by their followers. Actually, the positive relationship between authentic leadership and followers'

performance could be reversed when leaders are driven by their high power values (Qiua et al. 2019).

Authentic leaders with high power values seem to represent the dark side of authentic leadership (Qu et al 2018). Security in organizations should consider recruiting and developing authentic leaders to foster risk management and positive safety climates (Nelson et al 2013).

4. Covid-19 and Authentic Leadership

- The virus emerged in Asia late 2019, and it spread to every part of the world. COVID-19 is considered today the health crisis of our time. COVID-19 is not only a health crisis, it also affects socio-economic crisis. It has the potential to create economic, social, and political effects that will last for a long time. People are losing jobs and income actually, unemployment is tremendously increasing all over the world with no way of knowing when normality will return. (United Nations Development Programme, 2020)
- COVID-19 is stressful for everyone. Social and Financial insecurity have affected a large number of the population. Quarantine measures has accentuated feelings of loneliness.
- Fear of getting infected, grief for people who have been affected, and the need to adopt social isolation worry many people.
- It is important to reduce the impact of stress and cope with this situations and this could be done through, accepting to feel

bad in the current situation, coping with the situation and practicing meditation (Brietzke, 2020).

- COVID-19 is a disease which is newly discovered . Being informed properly about the virus is the best way to prevent and slow down transmission of the disease. It is important to know all information about Corona Virus and the up to date news. You could protect yourself and others from infection by using an alcohol, not touching your face and washing your hands. (World health organization, 2020).
- Authentic leaders have to deal with COVID-19 at work. In this disastrous case they have a challenge to handle the case with the minimum loss by trying to minimize loss of profit and productivity as well as employees psychological effects.
- Authentic leaders are faced with a critical situation which they have to deal with effectively. This study investigates the authentic leadership during COVID-19 through Egyptian employees. Authentic Leadership in this research consists of the following: Leadership ethics, Preference of others interests, Listening to employees, Admitting mistakes, and Concerning others opinions
- The approach of authentic leadership was chosen, and this is a good example to investigate their methods in dealing with the COVID-19 during pandemic.

5. Research Hypotheses

This study aims to test the following thypotheses:

- H1 Authentic leadership has a positive correlation with COVID-19
- H2 During Covid-19, Opinions has the greatest effect and Wearing masks has the least effect in the Egyptian culture.
- H3 COVID-19 has a positive impact on Authentic leadership

6. Methodology

- The research aims to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on authentic leadership. A hypotheses testing research which is the Convenience sampling was used to collect data because it was considered quick and cheap.
- A likert scale was used in the questionnaire it consisted of 5 items. Actually,(5) referred to strongly agree (4) agree (3) neutral (2) disagree and (1) strongly disagree. This indicated that (5) strongly agree referred to a very high degree of acceptance or very low degree of refusal, while (1) strongly disagree referred to a very high degree a very high degree of refusal.
- Questionnaires were distributed among the employees. A version was distributed in English and another one was translated into Arabic, so that the respondents choose the language suitable for them. The survey included different occupations, age groups, and experiences of Egyptian employees.
- The research included employees from banks, schools, and food industries. Ages from 22 till 58. A total of (305) usable questionnaires were investigated

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- The first section of the questionnaire was descriptive. It included descriptive information about occupation, age and experience. While, the second section included information about authentic leadership and COVID-19.
- The first ten questions were asking about the authentic leadership during the Corona crises. Authentic Leadership in this research consists of the following: Leadership ethics, Preference of others interests, Listening to employees, Admitting mistakes, and Concerning others opinions. Questions six till twelve were asking about COVID-19.
- Covid-19 in this research consists of seven items they are:
- Opinions, Worries, Greetings, Washing hands, Wearing masks, Isolation and Symptoms.
- Reliability analysis was conducted to ensure that the data is reliable. Once this was ensured a correlation analysis and a regression analysis was conducted to test the variables.
- Firstly a table was designed to relate the questions asked in the questionnaire with the variables. Then another table was designed to relate the hypotheses with the number of the questions asked.
- The following section shows us all these tables and results of our hypotheses.

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Questions	Variables	
1)Take actions that reflect his ethics 2)Ethics is the main concern for him	Leadership Ethics	
3) Usually prefers the benefit of the group4)Benefit of the group is his priority	Preferences of others interests	
5) listens carefully to those who oppose him6) Opposers are considered	Listening to employees	
7)Admits his mistakes 8)Wills to correct his mistakes	Admitting mistakes	
9) Doesn't emphasize his own pointof view at the expense of others10)Others view are important	Concerning others opinions	

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11) I think that the COVID-19 is a	
dangerous disease	
12) I wash my hands every now and then	
13) I greet people from a far	
distance	
14) I usually wear a facemask for protection	Opinion of COVID-19
15) I am worried of being infected	
16) I will be isolated at home If I	
contacted a person infected with	
the virus	
17) I will get isolated at home If I	
have any of the symptoms	

Hypotheses and variables investigated are shown in the following table.

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Table 2 Hypotheses and Variables investigated			
H1	Q.1-10 &11-17		
H2	Q.11-17		
H3	Q.1-10 & 11-17		

The correlation and impact of COVID-19 on authentic leadership was measured using correlation and regression analysis. The correlation was used to measure the relationship while the regression analysis was conducted to explain the relation between the dependent variable and the independent variables (Haire et al, 1995).

8.1 Reliability Analysis

Actually, before conducting a correlation and regression analysis it was essential to conduct a reliability analysis to ensure the reliability of the variables. Internal reliability was used as it raises the question of whether each scale is measuring a single idea (Bryman and Carmer,1998). According to Bryman and Carmer (1998) the most widely used methodology for estimating internal reliability is cornbach's alpha. In this research cornbach'salpha was calculated for each set of variables aiming to measure a single idea. The Item to Total Correlation (ITTC) was measured for each variable representing authentic leadership and corona virus.

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Table 5 Kenability Analysis					
VARIABIES	ITEM TO TOTAL CORRELATION (ITTC)	CORNBAH'S ALPHA			
ETHICS	.481	.871			
PREFERENCES	.647	.856			
LISTENING	.684	.854			
ADMITTING	.677	.854			
CONCERNING	.523	.865			
OPINIONS	.543	.865			
WORRIES	.684	.859			
GREETINGS	.597	.860			
WASHING HANDS	.391	.871			
WEARING MASKS	.630	.858			
ISOLATION	.522	.866			
SYMPTOMS	.592	.860			

 Table 3 Reliability Analysis

The results of this process show that a range of ITTC of the variables were between .391 and .684 and the cornbach's alpha for each scale ranged from .854 and .871. This indicates an acceptable degree of reliability.

8.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlation indicates the relationship between a pair of variables and the strength and direction i.e positive or negative (Amin, 2008). In our research we will use Pearson Product Moment Correlation because this measurement is suitable for our variables which are considered interval.

Leadership and Covid-19				
Features	Authentic	Sig (2		
	Leadership	tailed)		
Opinions	.450**	.000		
Worries	.350**	.000		
Greetings	.518**	.000		
Washing	.364**	.000		
hands				
Wearing	.283**	.000		
masks				
Isolation	.438**	.000		
Symptoms	.394**	.000		

 Table 4 The correlation between electronic Authentic

 Leadership and Covid-19

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows a strong positive correlation between Authentic leadership and Covid-19. Actually, Authentic leadership is positively associated with the Opinions at .450** Sig at .000, with Worries at .350** Sig at .000, with Greetings at .518** Sig at .000 and with Washing hands at .364** Sig at .000. with Wearing masks at .283** Sig at .000 with Isolation at home at .438** Sig at .000 and Symptoms of Covod-19 at .394** Sig at .000 So our first hypothesis is accepted.

8.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis in the form of multiple regressions was the most widely used method for conducting multivariate analysis (Bryman & Carmer, 1998). In this research we used the stepwise method as it is useful for exploratory studies

(Field, 2003). COVID-19 was considered as an independent variable and authentic leadership was considered as a dependent variable.

- Authentic leadership entered the equation which are (Leadership ethics, Preference of others interests, Listening to employees, Admitting mistakes, and Concerning others opinions). Each one entered the equation separately.
- COVID-19 consisted of seven items in this research; all of them were investigated and entered the equation. This includes views of COVID-19 as the following (Opinion of COVID-19, Washing hands, Greetings during COVID-19, Wearing masks, Worries of COVID-19, Isolation and symptoms). The results of this analysis are explained in the following table.

Model	Standardized coefficients		
	Std Error	Beta	Sig.
Constant	1.569		.000
Greetings	.491	.284	.000
Opinion	.417	.239	.000
Isolation	.334	.133	.029
Wearing masks	.311	.106	.036

 Table 5 Impact of Covid-19 on Authentic leadership

All of the factors of COVID-19 entered the equation and four of them remained. Greeting during Corona Virus had the greatest impact on Authentic Leadership, while Wearing masks had the least impact. R square which is the percentage of variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable was 0.343 and the F test was 39.173 sig. at 0.000. The T test and the beta coefficients were presented in the table. For Greetings during Corona Virus the Beta was and 2.172 the T test was 4.419, for Opinion of Corona Virus the Beta was 1.832 while the T test 4.397, for Isolation during Corona Virus the Beta is .734 and the T test is 2.196. Finally Wearing masks during Corona Virus the Beta is .653, while T test 2.102. Greetings during Corona Virus (as a factor of Corona Virus) have a major impact on Authentic leadership, while Wearing masks has the least impact on Authentic leadership. This shows that the second hypothesis is partially accepted and the third hypothesis is accepted.

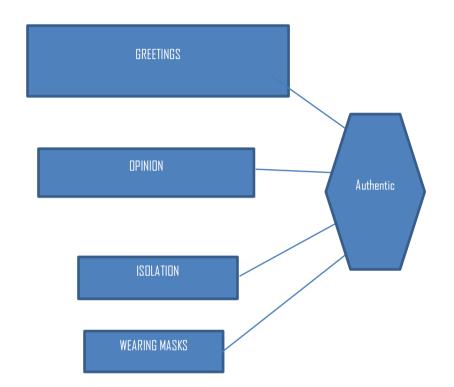


Fig.1 Authentic Leadership & Covid-19

The figure shows the results of the study which indicates three main Covid-19 features which influence Authentic leadership. The four Covid-19 features are Greetings, Opinions and Isolation and Wearing masks. These are the most important features of Covid-19 for the Authentic leadership for the Egyptian employees. This gives an indication for managers to focus on these aspects for the performance of Egyptian employees at work.

7. Discussion

The results of the study supported most of our hypotheses. According to the correlation analysis all of the features of Covid-19 and Authentic leadership are strongly positively correlated with Authentic leadership. While, according to the regression analysis, Covid-19 has an impact on Authentic leadership. Actually, Greetings during Corona Virus, Opinion of Corona Virus, Isolation at home and Wearing masks affected Authentic leadership.

Statistically, the most important contributor on Authentic leadership is Greetings during Covid-19 then comes Opinion of Covid-19 and Isolation However, Wearing masks is the least important factor

It seems that Greetings and Opinion of Covid-19 have a major impact in the Egyptian culture. Greetings during Covid-19 and Opinions of Covid-19 also affect the Authentic leader. Employees greet from a faraway distance and their Authentic leader is a guide for that. Opinions of Covid-19 decreases when there is an Authentic leader, employees are not worried due to their social culture as well as their trust in their leader. Opinion of Covid-19 has a great impact on Authentic leadership. Convincing employees, giving them instructions, and comforting them is also the role of the Authentic leader. This ensures that

their employees are protected and have up to date information about the virus and know what exactly to do.

- The Egyptian people need their Authentic leader when they need Isolation. Here the role of the leader is to comfort employees and give them free time to rest at home and check for the PCR. This enables them to return to work in a contentment situation and their performance becomes higher. The employee feels that the leader cares for him as a person and this increases his performance.
- Wearing masks is also important for them as the Authentic leader. The protection of their employees and making sure of their safety is an important role for any Authentic leader. They also keep a social distance between employees for their safety.

8. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study investigates Covid-19 for Egyptian employees. The results of this study gave us an indication of Covid-19 affecting Authentic Leadership. It is essential to increase the people's awareness of the Covid-19 and its effects and to provide employees with information about the Virus, ways of protection and how to deal at work. It is also very important to Increase the Egyptians awareness especially the elder employees with Corona Virus and its effects, as well as orienting the Egyptian employees to deal in the crises of Corona Encouraging working online and explaining the

importance as well as the advantages of this industry is of crucial importance in the Egyptian environment.

Further research is needed to illustrate the Covid-19 and its impact in different occupations in Egypt and other Arab countries. This helps to facilitate business in Egypt. This issue is worthy of further research and more questions need to be tackled.

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